

# **Burial Practices of the Third Millennium BCE in the Middle Euphrates**

## **Region: An Interpretation of Funerary Rituals**

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The third millennium BCE has witnessed a dramatic transformation of social, economic, and cultural values in the Ancient Near East. The Early Bronze Age (EBA) marked the second florescence of urban, complex society in Syria, evident both archaeologically and textually, including urban centers with hierarchical political systems, monumental architecture, writing, and increased economic specialization discernible by at least 2500 BCE.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to use one sub-region - the Middle Euphrates region - as a focus in this paper is based on the fact that this area has been characterized by the richness and complexity of 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium burial practices of the communities that populated it during a time of emerging new social and political entities in Syria, since a series of archaeological activities were recently conducted in the region in response to large-scale dam projects. An important consequence of recent work has been the discovery of EBA monumental tombs, which required mobilization of labor for their construction and played a significant role in the life of their communities after the death of the interred individuals. The excavations at sites located in the close proximity in the region like Jerablus Tahtani, Ahmar, Banat settlement complex, and Gre Virike have recently revealed the existence of such impressive, aboveground mortuary monuments (e.g., Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, The Hypogeum re-opened at Tell Ahmar, Tomb 7 and White Monument at Banat, and three chamber tombs at Gre Virike).<sup>2</sup> The size and lavish contents of the mortuary monuments, on the one hand, testify to their high status; on the other hand, some distinctive elements of the tomb contents allow for new perspectives on burial ritual associated with religious or mortuary beliefs in the third millennium BCE beyond only issues of status.

In this work, I will present mortuary data from the aforementioned sites in the light of recent excavations and investigate their mortuary customs in the crucial millennium, when urban centers rose, flourished and declined. The conspicuous funerary monuments stand out of all the contemporaneous graves on these sites, since they are characterized by the visibility, wealthy contents, and integration with the large contemporaneous architectural spaces. Further, I argue that they can be interpreted to reflect complex series of funerary and mourning rituals. The ceremonies in honor of prominent persons buried in such monumental tombs occurred repeatedly and persisted a lengthy of time after the death of the interred individuals. Rituals associated with the monumental tombs that occurred during/after the interments are strategic representations, so that elites of Middle Euphrates valley found the veneration of illustrious ancestors useful for the reinforcement and

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<sup>1</sup> Akkermans – Schwartz 2003: 233-87.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary reports of Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, see Peltenburg *et al.* 1995-6, 2000; see also the Jerablus Tahtani Project web site, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/jerahome.html>> (22.01.2004). The Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, see Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936; Bunnens (ed.) 1990; Bunnens 1989, 1992; Roobaert – Bunnens 1999. Tomb 7 at Tell Banat, see Porter 2002 a-b; the White Monument at Tell Banat North, see McClellan 1998. Chamber tombs at Gre Virike see Ökse 2002, 2005.

legitimization of their status and authority.<sup>3</sup> One can observe that the rituals accompanying publicly visible/accessible mortuary monuments markedly contrast with the rituals accompanying other hidden burials with limited access at these sites. It is to be expected that the relative simplicity of the contents and contexts of the EBA tombs considered this study would be understood as a reflection of funerary rituals in the communities of minor political influence in the Euphrates Valley, as opposed to the great centers of power like Ebla and Mari. However, it must be noted that these inferences on funerary ritual will largely be preliminary and speculative.

## 1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN MIDDLE EUPHRATES REGION

The first half of the last century marked the dawn of archaeology in the Middle Euphrates, including the advent of investigations undertaken near a remarkable city center, namely, Carchemish. The expeditions of the British Museum collected information on burial customs through the excavations of tombs at Carchemish between 1911 and 1914.<sup>4</sup> Tell Ahmar with the occupation in EBA times has initially attracted attention from archaeologists, since an extraordinary two-chambered tomb, the so-called hypogeum, was excavated by a French team directed by Thureau-Dangin in 1928 and from 1929 to 1931.<sup>5</sup>

In the second half of that century, the region experienced a flurry of international archaeological activities, since numerous rescue excavations were conducted in response to the large-scale dam projects: the Tabqa Dam in the 1980s created Assad Lake, and the more recent Tishrine Dam.<sup>6</sup> These recent rescue projects have revealed the richness of EBA mortuary activities along the downstream of the Euphrates River (e.g., Jerablus Tahtani, Ahmar, Banat settlement complex and Hadidi).<sup>7</sup> Among these, Tell Ahmar is noteworthy in that it has been re-investigated since a half century ago. Other EBA sites along the Euphrates valley (e.g., Halawa, Tawi and Wreyde) provide further evidence for burials that were discovered and excavated by the German expeditions at the time.<sup>8</sup> Initially regarded as a case-study for the subject of process of urbanization in the Euphrates valley, excavations in the mid-1970s and during 1989-1991 revealed that a site - namely, Tell es-Sweyhat - was a complex urban center in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE.<sup>9</sup>

More recently, a number of excavation campaigns have been conducted to the south of Carchemish, such as Titriş Höyük, and Gre Virike, and to west of the Euphrates, like Tell Umm el-Marra.<sup>10</sup> These fieldworks raised issues of the emergent regional states and urbanization in N. Syria and of how they became dominant.

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<sup>3</sup> Porter 2002 a-b; Schwartz 2007; Peltenburg 2007-8.

<sup>4</sup> Woolley 1921; Woolley – Barnett 1952.

<sup>5</sup> Thureau-Dangin 1929; Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 96-108.

<sup>6</sup> The salvage project of Tabqa Dam included a series of excavations at e.g. Hadidi, Selenkahiye, and Shiyukh Tahtani. The rescue excavations due to the building of Tishrine Dam in 1990s were conducted at e.g. Tell Ahmar (re-investigated) Banat, and Jerablus Tahtani.

<sup>7</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995-6, 2000; see also the web site, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/jerahome.html>>; Bunnens 1989, 1992; Roobaert – Bunnens 1999; Bunnens (ed.) 1990; McClellan – Porter 1999; Dornemann 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Orthmann 1989; Kampschulte – Orthmann 1984; Orthmann – Rova 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Holland 1976, 1977.

<sup>10</sup> Algaze *et al.* 1995; Matney – Algaze 1995; Ökse 1999, 2001-2, 2004; Schwartz *et al.* 2000, 2003, 2006.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Excavations</i>	<i>Conducted by</i>	<i>Projects</i>
First half	Ahmar	1936	Thureau-Dangin	
of the last century	Carchemish	1914-21	Woolley – Lawrence	British Museum
	Selenkahiye	1967,1972-5	Von Loon	Tabqa dam
	Hadidi	1974-8	Dornemann	Tabqa dam
	Tawi	1975,1978	Othmann	
	Halawa	1977-9, 1980-6	Othmann	
Second	Wreyde	1979-80	Othmann – Rova	
half of	es-Sweyhat	1976-7, 1989, 1991	Holland Zettler	Pennsylvania Museum and Chicago’s Oriental Institute
the last century	Ahmar	1988, 89-92, 97-9 2000 onwards	Bunnens Russell	Tishrine dam
	Jerabuls Tahtani	1992-4, 1995-6, 98-9	Peltenburg <i>et al.</i>	Tishrine dam
	Shiyukh Tahtani	1993-5	Falsone	Tabqa dam
	Banat	1994-5	Porter – McClellan	Tishrine dam
	Titriş Höyük	1991-6, 1998-9	Algaze – Matney	California University, San Diego and Regional Archaeological Museum of Şanlıurfa, Turkey
	Umm	1996-7,		
2000s	el-Marra	1999-2000, 2002-4	Schwartz <i>et al.</i>	Hopkins-Amsterdam Project
	Gre Virike	1999-2001	Ökse	Ihsu and Carchemish Dam Reservoirs

Table 1. 1 Discovery of sites in the Euphrates Valley and its adjacent areas.

### 1.3 GEOGRAPHIC SETTING AND ENVIRONMENT

Ecological factors that might have influenced the nature of social organization have to be considered. The primary aim of this part is to place the sites with the existence of mortuary monuments within a broader regional context. Recent investigations provide new evidence for the geographical characteristics of the Euphrates valley.<sup>11</sup> This zone is not a homogenous entity in geography, and within it one can recognize a number of topographies and landscapes as shown on figure 1.1.

<sup>11</sup> Wilkinson 1999, 2004.

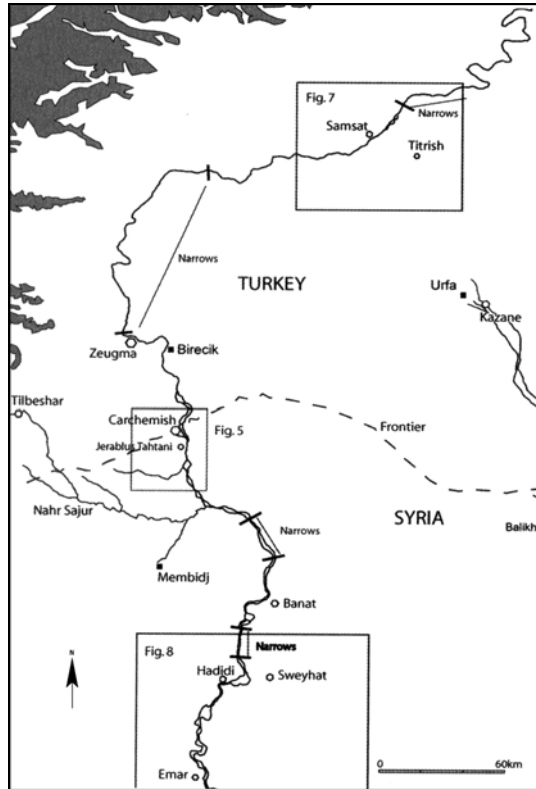


Fig. 1. 1 Geographic landscape of the Middle Euphrates valley (after Wilkinson 2007, Fig. 2.1).

The specific region begins in Karababa Basin in south-central Turkey with the Samsat-Lidar (fig. 1.2: 58, 45) area along the Euphrates, and extends down the river, continuing past the important Hellenistic/Roman city of Zeugma (fig. 1.2: 53) to the Syrian/Turkish border at ancient Carchemish (fig. 1.2: 14). From here, our area of interest extends south to Qara Quzaq (fig. 1.2: 54), past the small embayment in which Tell Banat and its satellite sites (fig. 1.2: 8) are situated, and finally, down into the “Big Bend” of the Euphrates, stretching from Tell es-Sweyhat (fig. 1.2: 68) to Emar (fig. 1.2: 47) in central Syria. In disregarding distinctions based upon modern political boundaries between Turkey and Syria, Peltenburg in his paper divides this zone into four discrete sectors where conditions favor human settlement, including Samat-Lidar, Carchemish, Banat, and Tabqa sectors from north to south along the Middle Euphrates valley.<sup>12</sup> He further suggests that Carchemish sector should be subdivided into three geomorphologic zones. From north to south, these are: (1) the Zeugma-Carchemish area, some 10 km upstream of modern Birecik, (2) a 4-5×25 km plain from the dog-leg above Birecik to the Carchemish narrows, and (3) the 28 km long plain of variable width from Carchemish to Qara Quzaq.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Peltenburg 2007: Fig. 1.2.

<sup>13</sup> Peltenburg 2007: 7.

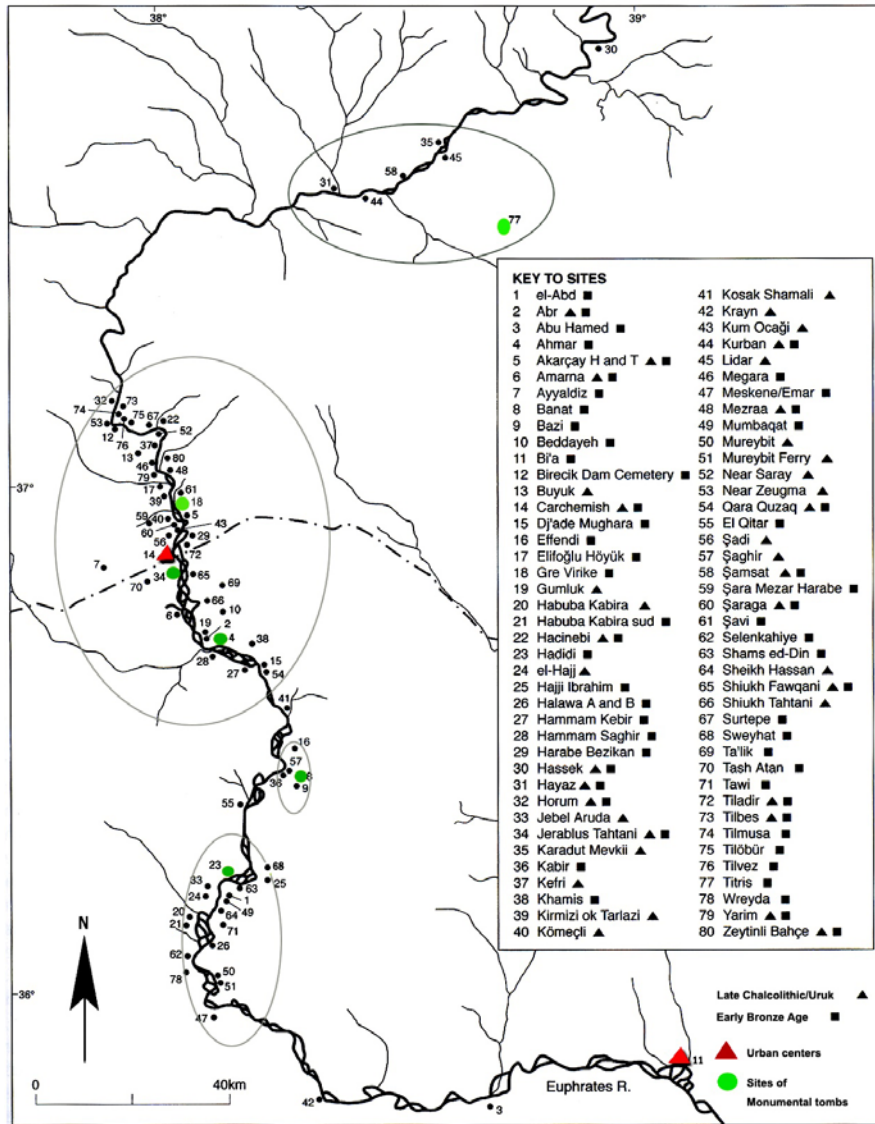


Fig. 1. 2 Sites along the Middle Euphrates valley during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> millennia BCE (after Peltenburg 2007, Fig. 1.1).

Work by Wilkinson has strongly impacted on our understanding of the environmental conditions of the Euphrates valley.<sup>14</sup> Along the 100 km long valley, communities were confronted by contrasts dry and marginal farming regimes. Notable is that the annual rainfall is ca. 300-500 mm in the northern sectors, far more sufficient than the annual rainfall, only ca. 200 mm, in the Tabqa area to the south. Such differences in the rainfall may result in different agricultural landscapes between the north and south of Middle Euphrates valley: the northern area is suitable for the establishment of mixed farming, while the southern area requires irrigation. Intensive surveys and rescue excavations over the last 40 years have revealed a dramatic increase of sedentary communities within the cultivable lowlands in the Euphrates valley as well as its adjacent areas to the east and west during the EBA. In terms of the subsistence economy, staple production in the form of cereal and legume cultivation took place on the Pleistocene terraces, and the steppe beyond acted as a pastoral resource. One may note that each sub-basin contained at least one conspicuous, visible mortuary monument/complex

<sup>14</sup> Wilkinson 2007.

with rich inventories found in the major EBA centers (table 1.2).

<i>Lowlands</i>	<i>Sites</i>		<i>Mortuary Monuments</i>
	<i>large</i>	<i>small</i>	
Jabbul plain	Tell Umm el-Marra (ca. 25 ha.)		mortuary tomb complex
Carchemish plain		Gre Virike (ca. 1800 m <sup>2</sup> )	monumental tombs and rows of chambers
		Jerablus Tahtani (ca. 0.9 ha.)	Tomb 302
		Tell Ahmar (ca. 2 ha.)	hypogeum
Banat plain	Tell Banat (ca. 25 ha.)		Mortuary Mound II, Tomb 7
	Banat North		White Monument
Tabqa-Emar plains	Tell Hadidi (ca. 55 ha.)		Area D tomb, Area L I tomb

Table 1. 2 Mortuary monuments/complexes in the Euphrates valley and Jabbul Plain (*after the preliminary reports of each site*).

Tell Umm el-Marra is located outside the Euphrates valley in the Jubbul Plain. Here Schwartz has uncovered a mortuary complex consisting of graves and related installations on the high point in the center of the site acropolis.<sup>15</sup> The complex contained a successive multiple burials over a period of some 300 years, from c. 2500 to 2200 BCE. So far, six tombs, installations for the interment of equids and infants are recorded. A 35×50 m platform was raised 15 m above the valley floor on the east bank of the Euphrates at Gre Virike, a site that lies 10 km north of Carchemish (fig. 1.2: 18). Built on the paved summit, there were initially a series of installations for a water cult, followed by a complex that consists of limestone-built chamber tombs and three rows of small, unroofed chambers for mortuary ceremonies.<sup>16</sup> Jerablus Tahtani was located immediately south of Carchemish (fig. 1.2: 34), where a stone-walled two-chambered tomb, Tomb 302, was constructed above an imposing mound, dating to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE.<sup>17</sup> Situated further to the south along the Euphrates on the opposite side, Tell Ahmar (fig. 1.2: 4) consisted of a free-standing mausoleum - namely, the Hypogeum - that was extremely elaborately provisioned and integrated into an imposing complex constructed on the top of the mound. More recent excavations have revealed that the Hypogeum and adjacent northern room did co-exist on the site acropolis over a considerable period in the second half the third millennium.<sup>18</sup> The most abundant evidence for the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium mortuary activities is provided from Banat settlement complex, where an ostentatiously built and furnished mausoleum, namely, Tomb 7, was an integral part of a public, terraced building.<sup>19</sup> An artificial conical mound, referred as to Tell Banat North, is located about 200 m northeast of Tell Banat itself. It eventually reached a diameter of 100 m and a height of 20 m and enclosed tumuli and other structures associated with secondary human burials commingled with animal bones.<sup>20</sup> In sum, the above sites with the building of conspicuous aboveground funerary monuments are located in the neighborhood along the river channel with a distance ca. 15-30 km apart from one another. The southernmost sector in the Euphrates valley is Tabqa dam region located on a largest embayment of

<sup>15</sup> Schwartz *et al.* 2006; Schwartz 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Ökse 2005, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Peltenburg 1999 a-b and forthcoming.

<sup>18</sup> Dugay 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Porter 2002 a-b.

<sup>20</sup> McClellan 1998; Porter 2002 a-b.

upstream of Emar. This sector is also comprised of a series of important settlements with abundant evidence for EBA burials. Cemeteries comprised of hundreds of single graves were discovered at sites like es-Sweyhat, Shams ed-Din West<sup>21</sup>, Tawi, Halawa, and Wreyde; in contrast, the excavations at Tell Hadidi (fig. 1.2: 23) have revealed above ground monumental tombs. The Area D tomb was entered by a stair on the east leading to a small rectangular anti-chamber which has burial chambers to its north and south.<sup>22</sup> The total length north-south is 15 m; the tomb chamber walls were constructed with roughly shaped stones and were roofed over the long, heavy, flat stone slabs. Another stone-built tomb with an oval shaft was recovered from Area L.<sup>23</sup> Additional examples of large and impressive mortuary monuments are also known from some significant sites downstream of Tabqa dam region (e.g., Grabbauten der Herrscher at Hügel E at Tell Bi'a, tombeux 300, tombeaus 241et 242 at Mari).<sup>24</sup>

## 1.4 CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Before specifically focusing on funerary data from the four selected sites in the Middle Euphrates region, a chronological sequence of the third millennium BCE in the region should be well understood. The Middle Euphrates region shares a great number of similarities with other cultural zones in the Near East, including the Balikh valley, Khabur plains, western Syria as well as South Mesopotamia. The chronological framework presented here has been worked out through a combination of ceramic analyses in terms of vessel fabrics, forms and decorations, radiocarbon dates and comparisons with the aforementioned correlated zones on basis of the previous studies (table 1.3).

Traditional Syrian chronology dates the earlier phases of the Early Bronze Age (I/II) in the first half of 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE, EBA III/IV in the middle of that millennium, commensurate with Banat Period IV, dating to ca. 2600-2450, EBA IVA comparable to Banat Period III, dating to ca. 2450-2300, and EBA IVB towards the end of that millennium, ca. 2300-2000. Jamieson, in his comprehensive analysis of the EBA ceramic traditions in Euphrates valley, has tried to construct a ceramic sequence, which is sub-divided into four continued pottery horizons, i.e., from horizons 1A/B to 2A/B, that spanned ca. 3100/3000-2000 BCE.<sup>25</sup>

Pottery material of EBA (I/II) is still imperfectly understood. There are three main ware types, e.g., Plain Simple Ware (PSW), Cooking Pot Ware (CPW), and Late Reserved Slip Wares (LRSW). It is in this period that PSW is the predominant ware type, incorporating a marked diversity of vessel types and shapes: conical cups, cyma-recta bowls, and small/medium-sized jars. Jars with bell-shaped pedestals and bowls/cups with long, heavy stems, the latter referred as to “champagne cups” or “fruit stands”, are among the most characteristic PSW vessel forms in the EBA I/II assemblage in the Middle Euphrates region. LRSW has commonly been found in form of large jar with everted rims, which is applied by a light-colored slip to the exterior surface of the vessel and

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<sup>21</sup> Meyer 1991: Cemetery A in Shamseddin West.

<sup>22</sup> Dornemann 1979: Figs. 7-9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.: Fig. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Strommengen – Kohlmeyer 2000: 9 ; Jean-Marie 1990: Les tombeaux en pierres de Mari, 306-36.

<sup>25</sup> Jamieson 1993.

then wiped off oblique radial lines to expose the darker clay underneath. This ware type is thought to be a development from the Early Reserved Slip Ware (ERSW) predominated in the preceding Uruk period.<sup>26</sup> Akkermans and Schwartz consider this ceramic horizon in the EBA I/II Middle Euphrates region as to be commensurate with Ninevite V assemblage in the Khabur plains and in the Upper Tigris.

Evidence for pottery material of EBA III/IV has revealed some important differences from the preceding periods in both vessel forms and ware types. Since much of the published pottery material, which predominately comes from funerary contexts and must have been used over many generations, the chronological sequence could be biased and remains to be explicitly understood. Notable of a range of new and more specialized fabric types are Euphrates Banded Ware (EBW), Horizontal Reserved Slip Ware (HRSW), Comb Wash Ware (CWW) and Metallic Ware (MTW). The earliest well-defined phase is provided by Banat Period IV, dating to ca. 2600-2450.<sup>27</sup> PSW remains the predominant ware type in this period, but several new forms are added to this fabric type are open bowls with everted rims, small spouted and tripod feet vessels, and miniatures. EBW had a very fine, high-fired and thin fabric, and the surface was smoothed, sometimes slipped and marked by horizontal ring burnishing. Some of the vessels were painted with red horizontal bands found either on the necks or upper bodies. A range of EBW shapes were recorded at Banat complex, including tall-necked ledge-rimmed jars, champagne cups, and small open bowls, and they were primarily recovered from funerary contexts at Tell Banat main mound and Tell Banat North.

Next in the chronological sequence is Banat Period III, and it belongs to EBA IVA in the Syrian traditional chronological sequence, also referred to as the 2B ceramic horizon in Jamieson's system.<sup>28</sup> Almost all the forms in the preceding period continue in use in Period III. Notable of the new PSW bowl types are the open bowls with curved sides and either ring or disc bases, which are typical of the "caliciform" assemblage in western Syria. The mass-produced "caliciform" assemblage marked a major technological advance over the older PSW bowls. Other new features of this period include the increased use of corrugated cups with small ring bases, also referred as to "Hama" type goblets, and the introduction of a PSW fabric of the same cup shape. It is in this period that EBW variations appear in significant quantities, most notably with the introduction of the black version, namely, Black Euphrates Banded Ware. Hand-made, often burnished cooking jars with triangular lugs at the rim also become common, as well as large bowls with thick bead rims and jars with horizontal reserved slip. Evidence for the new ware type is Grey Spiral Ware (GSW) is provided from tombs at Tell Ahmar (child burials: 19.81 and 19.74) and Gre Virike (e.g., L8/12/G and K9/9), and the most recognizable shape of this ware type is small ceramic "Syrian bottles". In sum, the new features of this period are related to the expansion of settlement size and construction of city fortifications. Many specialized varieties of pottery vessels may reflect the intensification of craft specialization of this period in the Middle Euphrates valley.

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<sup>26</sup> Akkermans – Schwartz 2003: 225-6.

<sup>27</sup> Porter 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Jamieson 1993: 52-58, 68-71, Fig. 4.



The “caliciform” assemblage characteristic of the preceding episode continues in use till the end of the third millennium (EBA IVB), and it is well attested at sites like es-Sweyhat, later Selenkahiye, and Banat settlement complex (Period II).<sup>29</sup> New vessel forms added to the PSW tradition include shallow bowls with vertical rims and goblets with collared rim, while EBW red painted jars completely disappeared.

<b>Sub-Regions</b> <b>Chronology</b>	<i>Western Syria</i>	<i>Middle Euphrates</i>	<i>Upper Khabur</i>	<i>Middle Khabur</i>	<i>Southern Mesopotamia</i>
2000-					Ur III
2100- EBA IVB	Mardikh IIB2 Amuq J	Banat II			
2200-					Akkadian empire
2300- EBA IVA	Mardikh IIB1 Amuq I	Banat III	Leilan IIB		
2400-				Bderi IIIb	
2500-		Banat IV	Leilan IIA	Raqa'i 2 Bderi IIIa	Early Dynastic IIIb
2600-			Leilan IIId	Raqa'i 3 Bderi II	Early Dynastic IIIa
EBA II	Amuq H				
EBA I	Amuq G				

Table 1. 3 Chronological sequence of the third millennium in North Syria and South Mesopotamia.

## 1.5 STUDIES OF MORTUARY PRACTICES IN THIRD-MILLENNIUM MIDDLE EUPHRATES REGION

In general, every discipline follows a trace of development, wherein it descends from the previous works, proceeds with new perspectives and sloughs off inexplicit presuppositions, so does the studies with a particular emphasis on funerary activities. The complexity of 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium burial practices in the Middle Euphrates region is often used as a focus for the analyses and interpretations, which at the same time provide me with an opportunity to take inspiration from the previous studies in this specific field.

As early as 1980s, there was a contribution from Orthmann with respect to burial customs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium in the Euphrates valley. Nevertheless, the hypotheses that he proposed should be tested carefully due to a lack of sufficient evidence for undisturbed burials having been excavated at the time.<sup>30</sup> The next contribution enriching the knowledge of burial customs in the region was from

<sup>29</sup> Akkermans – Schwartz 2003: 247.

<sup>30</sup> Orthmann 1980.

Carter and Parker, who developed a typology of tombs based on considerable EBA burial data in North Syria and South Turkey.<sup>31</sup> The authors addressed the major issue as to whether cultural zones are consistent with specific mortuary variations. Due to the impact of rescue archaeology, one of the salient aspects of EBA mortuary practices in the Middle Euphrates valley that has recently come into

<i>Author</i>	<i>Typology</i>	<i>Quantity of Sites</i>	<i>Published Year</i>
Orthmann	individual: plain inhumations	5	1980
	stone cists		
	collective: chamber tombs of dolmen type shaft and chamber graves		
Carter – Parker	inhumation: pits	13	1995
	ossuaries		
	ceramic tombs: cooking pots		
	pithoi		
	cremation urns		
Laneri	constructed cist	7	1999
	tombs: galleries and dolmens		
	shaft and chamber graves		
Porter	intra-mural	12	2002 a
	extra-mural		
	necropolis far from the settlement		
	above-ground tombs, mounds and dolmens shaft and chamber graves		
Cooper	stone-lined cists	27	2007
	stone-capped pits		
	plain pits		
Cooper	pit burials, cists, pithoi, stone chamber graves, earth or	27	2007
	rock-cut shaft graves, monumental stone-build shaft and chamber graves, monumental burial tumuli.		

Table 1. 4 Classification of burial types in the Euphrates Valley during the 3rd millennium BCE.

focus is the considerable variability in the funerary architecture. It is of paramount importance to recognize an overall landscape of burial types co-existing during the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE. Many scholars did the classification of burial types in their studies (table 1.4), such as Orthmann, Dever, Carter and Parker, Laneri, Porter, Cooper, etc.<sup>32</sup> In her comprehensive analysis of EBA burial types within the northern Euphrates valley, Cooper has hypothesized that ethnic distinctions account for the differences in burial types between North and South Euphrates valley region.<sup>33</sup> A further aspect of space, including the division between intra- and extra-mural burials and specific association

<sup>31</sup> Carter – Parker 1995.

<sup>32</sup> Orthmann 1980; Dever 1987: Fig. 1 (a-e); Carter – Parker 1995: table 14. 3; Laneri 1999: 222; Porter 2002 a: table 2; Cooper 2007: Fig. 4.3.

<sup>33</sup> Cooper 2007: 65, Fig.4.1.

between the living and the dead, has recently widely discussed.<sup>34</sup> Laneri, for example, posits that the appearance of intramural tombs indicates radical change of funerary traditions from extra-to intra-mural within the process of urbanization and state formation by ca. 2500.

According to different rescue projects of the construction of dams, scholars as directors or participants made further investigations on specific tomb contents, including physical remains of human and animal, pottery, copper/bronze, and biological samples - if there are any left. Burials without grave goods were not common, even relatively simple pit graves often contained a few pottery vessels, while the ostentatious and conspicuous funerary monuments contained lavish contents impressively both in quantity and quality. Schwartz has interpreted the remarkable mortuary complex at Tell Umm el-Marra as a materialization of elite ideology.<sup>35</sup> Legitimization of the authority and status of elites in early Syrian complex society is carried out through funerary ritual activities. The individuals buried in such impressive monumental tombs were venerated as ancestors, and Porter made an extensive discussion of the role of ancestor veneration in third-millennium Syria.<sup>36</sup> Peltenburg has interpreted the discovery of numerous champagne cups in the lower levels of Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani to reflect a mortuary feast.<sup>37</sup> He also relates several discrete “caches” in the upper levels of the tomb to secondary commemorations identified in the same locale during the post-interment period. Funerary data from Titriş Höyük allow Laneri to develop socio-historical perspectives on social stratification and its establishment in the EBA Syria.<sup>38</sup> These studies provide valuable insights into the interpretation of mortuary activities in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Middle Euphrates region as well as its adjacent areas; however, they are largely confined to evidence from single sites.

## 1.6 RITUAL PERSPECTIVES

Prior to a particular emphasis on the analysis and interpretation of funerary rituals according to archaeological evidence, it is necessary to review present ritual studies and theories. In the initial phase, studies of ritual were associated with a prolonged and influential debate on the origin of religion. The major issue of this controversy was whether religions and cultures have their origin in myth or in ritual.<sup>39</sup> More recently, the concept of ritual has been interpreted in a broader social sense, linked not only with a religious phenomenon but also a secular experience. Although there is no a clear-cut definition of ritual in the history of theory, Bell, in her comprehensive overview of theoretical and applied perspectives of ritual, argues that ritual is useful tool for analysis and reflection: ritual could be regarded as “the expression of paradigmatic values of death and rebirth, ritual as mechanism for bringing the individual into the community and establishing a social entity, or ritual as a process for social transformation, for catharsis, for embodying symbolic value...”<sup>40</sup> The highlight of ritual pattern of thinking is to provide us a category of interpretation for the understanding human behaviors and meanings embedded in the ancient and modern societies.

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<sup>34</sup> e.g. Laneri 1999 and forthcoming; Peltenburg 2007-8.

<sup>35</sup> Schwartz 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Porter 2002 a-b.

<sup>37</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b.

<sup>38</sup> Laneri forthcoming.

<sup>39</sup> Bell 1997: 3.

<sup>40</sup> Bell 1997: 89.

Nowadays ritual theories are known to us from a wide variety of fields of scholarship, such as theology, sociology, anthropology, history, psychology, and archaeology. Almost all theories of ritual come with their own typologies or classification systems for analyzing ritual activities (table 1.5). Immense variation of their supporting evidence prevents the drawing of universal conclusions so that there is currently a marked diversity of perspectives on the interpretation of ritual experience. Equally, a wide variety of approaches and methods have been utilized in these ritual perspectives, and Michaels distinguishes the many different approaches to four main categories: practical, communicative, performative, and cognitive approaches.<sup>41</sup>

<i>Author</i>	<i>Classification</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Published Year</i>
Van Gennep	3	a pre-liminal phase (separation), a liminal phase (transition), and a post-liminal phase (re-incorporation).	1960
Durkheim	2	negative; positive.	1947
Turner	2	instrumental; expressive.	1967
Grimes	16	rites of passage, marriage rites, funerary rites, festivals, pilgrimage, purification, civil ceremonies, rituals of exchange, sacrifice, worship, magic, healing rites, interaction rites, meditation rites, rites of inversion, and ritual drama.	1985
Bell	6	rites of passage, calendrical and commemorative, rites of exchange and communion, rites of affliction, rites of feasting and festival, and political rituals.	1997

Table 1. 5 Classification of different patterns of rituals.

Significant contributions from Turner and Douglas, for example, investigated various anthropological contexts and provided the interpretation of ritual with symbolism.<sup>42</sup> Since then ritual has been recognizable when there is a relationship existing between human behaviors and symbolic meanings. Performance appears to be among the most importance elements during the enactment of ritual, as Rappaport argues, “there can be no ritual without performance”.<sup>43</sup> Turner views ritual as a social drama, and his notion of social dramas led him to envision social structure not as a static organization but as a dynamic process.<sup>44</sup> Further, he argued that social dramas with a temporal or processual structure could be analyzed in terms of four main stages: a rupture/breach in social relations, a crisis that cannot be handled by normal strategies, a remedy/redress to the initial problem, and the re-establishment of social relations.<sup>45</sup> Human culture is not only expressed statically in the form of monuments and documents, but also in processes and performed actions. Ritual

<sup>41</sup> Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels, who made a speech in the conference of “Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual” held from 29.09.08-02.10.08 in Heidelberg. Representative scholars of practical theory are e.g. Durkheim (1947), Douglas (1986), Bourdieu (1991). For communication theory approach: e.g. Bloch (1974), and Rappaport (1999). For performance theory approach: e.g. Turner (1974), Tambiah (1979), Grimes (1985), and Schechner (1993). Cognition theory: e.g. D’Aquili *et al.* (1979), McCauley – Lawson (2002).

<sup>42</sup> Turner 1974; Douglas 1986.

<sup>43</sup> Rappaport 1999: 37.

<sup>44</sup> Turner 1974: 23-35.

<sup>45</sup> Turner 1974: 35-41.

performances also convey how differing social roles actively interact with one another within a given community. The combined use of different media is necessary for the enhancement of the communicative power of ritual performances, since media itself is an influential factor which allows for the placement of a sacred ritual within a secular context and the transformation of static prescriptions of ritual into communal emotion.<sup>46</sup> The ritual experience also has an importance transformative element; Van Gennep, in his impressive analysis of ritual in the book, namely, *The Rite of Passage*, argued that ritual is viewed as a rite of passage that changes the status and social condition of individuals within their communities.<sup>47</sup>

While keeping in mind these aforementioned broad perspectives on ritual and its application, we also need to take into account the points related to funerary rituals which are reflected in the archaeological evidence for burial practices. Mortuary activities in ancient Near East were inextricably related to rituals. From Mesopotamian ritual texts, we are well informed that providing the dead with certain burial and funerary rituals is consistent with beliefs about death, the afterlife, and the fate of the dead in the afterlife. Supplementing these ritual texts is an extremely rich archaeological record in Mesopotamia. As Hertz mentioned in his book, religious beliefs are expressed through funerary ritual events, which involve the role of mourners, corpses and souls.<sup>48</sup> For the ancient Mesopotamians, there was a sort of existence after death; in other words, the deceased individual initiates a new life in the form of a spirit in the netherworld. Funerary and mourning rituals seem to have served a variety of purposes. With the evidence for Sumerian literary texts that sketch the pattern of funerary ritual, Katz argues that burial ritual liberates the soul from the dead body and takes care of the corpse which is doomed to decay.<sup>49</sup> The immediate purpose of the performance of proper rituals for the dead was to appease the ghosts of the deceased. Without proper care of the dead, the neglected spirit would turn malicious haunting the living and causing misfortune. Conversely, when the dead are properly buried and receive continued offerings made by their surviving descendants, friendly ghosts would be kept at peace and even bring blessings upon the living. In preparation of burial, the corpse was washed, oiled or perfumed and then dressed or wrapped in clean clothing. The dead may have also been accompanied by personal items, such as adornments, toys, weapons and so on. The role played by animals is a significant component of funerary rituals in honor of elites or kings. Recorded in Sumerian ritual texts, a large number of sacrificial animals were delivered for funerary rituals honoring Šu-Suen, the fourth king of the third Ur dynasty (2037-2029 BCE), perhaps intended for major deities in the netherworld or the ancestral spirit.<sup>50</sup> In order to ensure the dead well-being existence in the afterlife, it is therefore necessary to provide them with a variety of offerings during mourning rituals. This is especially true in the case of prominent persons, for whom commemorative ceremonies could last as many as several days after the interments or persisted long after the death of the illustrious ancestors with lavish sets of prestigious items and necessary goods. In Mesopotamia, offerings were made twice at new moon and full moon in the cult of the deceased royalty; however, for ordinary people, funerary offerings seem

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<sup>46</sup> Kus 1992.

<sup>47</sup> Van Gennep 1960.

<sup>48</sup> Hertz 1960.

<sup>49</sup> Katz 2007.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: 174-80.

to have come due at the end of the month, with an especially long celebration in the month of Abu (July/August).<sup>51</sup>

## 1.7 OBJECTIVES

This work focuses on mortuary data for comparing different patterns of funerary practices in the early urban civilizations emerging in one of sub-regions of Syria, i.e., the Middle Euphrates valley. In particular, there will be a concentration on four sites located in the close proximity in the region (e.g., Jerablus Tahtani, Ahmar, Banat settlement complex, and Gre Virike), in which archaeological investigations have recently revealed large mortuary monuments as well as their related installations. The primary objective of these investigations is to relate ritual to the archaeology of mortuary practices. While the richness of 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium burial practices in the Middle Euphrates region is often used as a focus for the discussion upon the definition of cultural zones, ethnicity and social stratification as mentioned above, burial data provide the most accessible evidence for cult and ceremony that remain to be explicitly understood. Contributing to this situation is the fact that the third-millennium North Syria lacks written texts that recorded funerary rituals except for those from the Ebla and Mari archives, and the previous studies of mortuary practices that were more or less confined to evidence from single sites may be partially responsible for this state of affairs. My purpose here is to demonstrate ancient funerary rituals performed in the early Syrian complex societies. We must examine the specific archaeological manifestations of the practice of funerary ritual before any effort can be made to interpret their funerary activities. A number of crucial questions are addressed as follows, which will point out the way to further avenues of this study in this specific field.

How could the tomb contents, including human/animal skeletal remains and artifacts, be interpreted as material remains or manifestations of various ritual acts? How will further analysis of contextual associations among specific different categories of remains confined to the tombs as well as data beyond a certain tomb with respect to chronological sequence and spatial relationships, help to refine and expand our understanding of the rituals performed at these sites? How will the evidence for the conspicuous, above ground mortuary monuments with lavish contents located in the centers of communities be understood as a reflection of complex series of ritual performances? How long did they last, how many stages did they have? How are the funerary rituals accompanying other contemporary burials co-existing with monumental tombs within the communities like? Are there any differences in the enactment of funerary rituals among different mortuary variations within the same community? When mortuary customs of the communities were changed, such events that would be expected for social political or reasons, their attendant rituals must have equally been changed? Which role is played by mortuary rituals in the creation of the social and cultural values, and how do they actively interact with other factors, such as religious beliefs, veneration of ancestors, and legitimization of elite authority?

Although these inferences from material remains will always pose special challenges, I still attempt

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<sup>51</sup> Scurlock 1995: 1889.

to argue that mortuary data can be understood as a materialization of ritual ideology in praxis. Funerary ritual, as with many other expressions of human culture, is practiced by living beings, who were engaged in funerary activities – tomb building, treatment upon the dead body, mourning, feasting, gatherings, processions, deposition of grave goods, and veneration. The real attempt of the potential reconstruction of funerary ritual is to understand behaviors of the living in ancient communities in the face of the death.

## CHAPTER 2 JERABLUS TAHTANI

### 2.1 SETTINGS OF THE SITE

Jerablus Tahtani is situated on the west bank of a branch of the Euphrates River and some 5 km north of Carchemish (Lat 36°48'N; Long 38°1'E). The oval, steep-sided mound with a southern spur is approximately 16 m high and measures 180×220 meters. The site was founded directly on a flat, fertile floodplain, which lies between limestone hills and the Euphrates River, in contrast to other adjacent tells, most of which are set well back from the river, or located on high terraces.

The site initially attracted attention from archaeologists in 1920s, when Woolley led expeditions and conducted a series of excavations at Carchemish nearby. He mentioned Jerablus Tahtani and referred to it as Tell Alawiyeh, “the little tell...on the river front”.<sup>52</sup> In 1970s, Copeland and Moore surveyed Jerablus Tahtani, and in a study of its finds, and de Contenson noted the existence of several periods of occupations: Early-Middle Bronze Age, Roman-Byzantine and Islamic.<sup>53</sup>

The first systematic excavations were undertaken by a team from the University of Edinburgh under the auspices of the Syrian General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums’ Tishrine International Rescue Programme.<sup>54</sup> Extensive excavations have been conducted annually, from 1992 to 2000.<sup>55</sup> Fortunately, Jerablus Tahtani has been not affected by the dam waters and still remains intact on the northern margins of the new lake. Previous fieldworks have demonstrated that Jerablus Tahtani had a rather long life. The periodization of the site was first made by de Contenson, but more recent excavations established that the site comprises five major periods of occupation (table 2.1). The first two successive periods (1 and 2) that spanned two millennia, from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE, are of greater significance than other occupations examined in excavations at the site. As a consequence of the analysis of new discoveries especially in seasons 1999 and 2000, the site phasing has been refined so that Period 1 is divided into the Local Late Chalcolithic (Period 1A) and Uruk periods (Period 1B), while Period 2 has also two sub-phases, the pre-fort (Period 2A), the fort and its extra-mural occupation (Period 2B).

<i>Site Period</i>	<i>General Period</i>	<i>Principal Characteristics</i>
<b>Recent</b>		Burials
<b>5</b>	Islamic	Large building and village
<b>4</b>	Roman	Buildings
<b>3</b>	Iron Age	Objects, burial

<sup>52</sup> Woolley 1921: 35.

<sup>53</sup> Sanlaville (ed.) 1985: 53, 70, Fig. 14.

<sup>54</sup> The Tishrine dam is located at the headwaters of Lake Assad on the Euphrates River and its construction was closed in August 1999. Before this year, many sites have been flooded.

<sup>55</sup> For preliminary reports on the excavations, see Peltenburg *et al.* 1995, 1996, 1997 and 2000; Peltenburg 1999 a; see also Jerablus Tahtani Project web site, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/jerahome.html>> (22.01.2004).



HIATUS	HIATUS	HIATUS	HIATUS
2B	Early Bronze Age	Fortified	Fort, postern, extra-mural terrace and passage, intra-and extra-mural burials and a high status extra-mural tomb.
2A	Early Bronze Age	Pre-fortified	Open? Village
1B	Late Uruk		Buildings, burial
1A	Late local Chalcolithic		Domestic occupation

Table 2. 1 Site periods with main characteristics at Jerablus Tahtani (after the identification from Peltenburg).

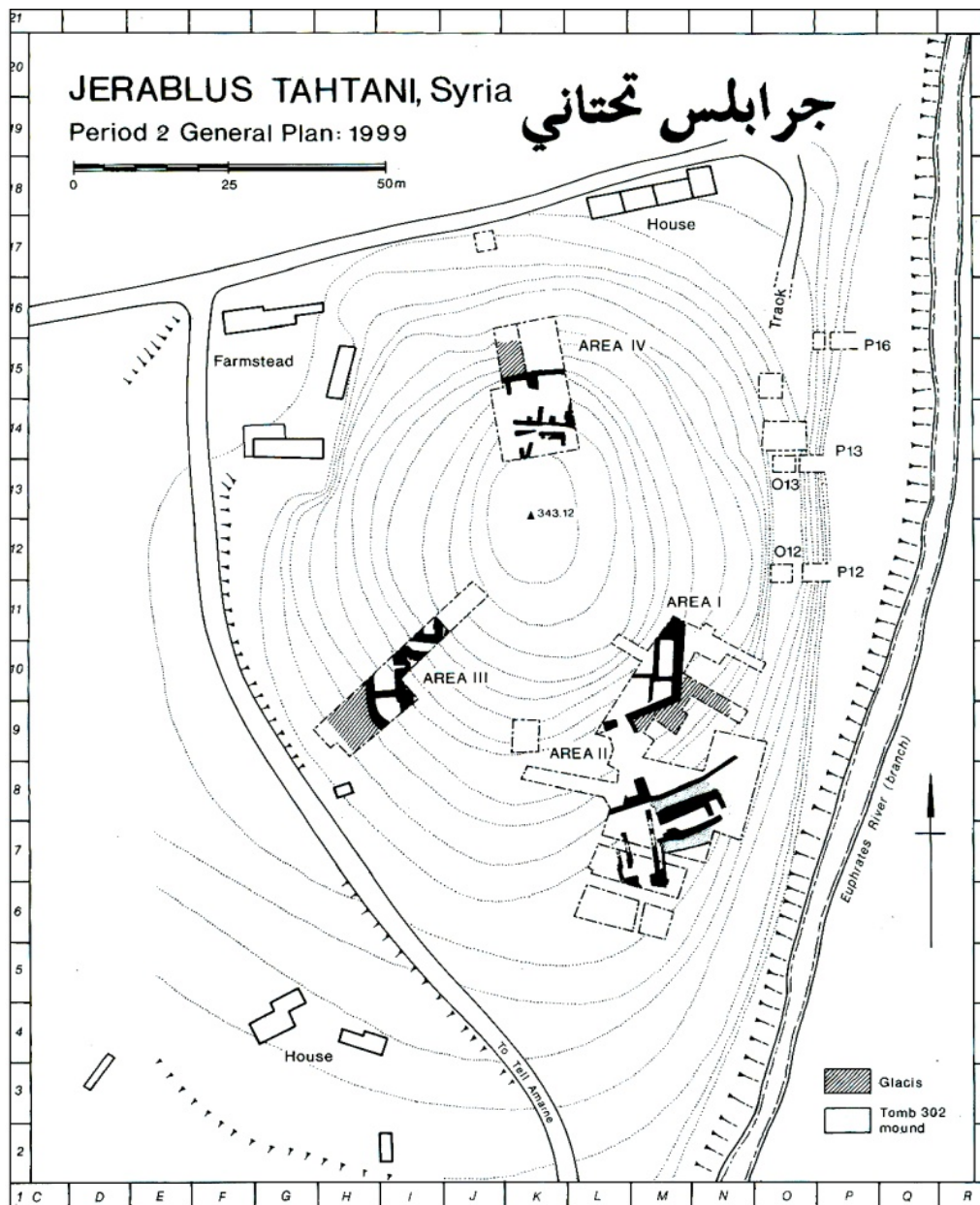


Fig. 2. 1 General plan of Jerablus Tahtani Period 2: 1999 (from Peltenburg et al. 2000, Fig. 1).

Currently, soundings on the eastern side of the tell and four major exposures (Areas I-IV; fig. 2.1) had been opened, mainly comprising remains of the Uruk and Early Bronze Ages (table 2.2).

- Area I is located on the southeast of the tell and comprises the EBA fort of Period 2B. Its wall here is multi-phased, and suggests that we have a fort, extension and annex.
- Area II is southern extra-mural zone, comprising a South Terrace which extends in front of the annex where it is linked Area I with Area II to the south. Also a monumental Tomb 302, erected against South Terrace during the mature phase of EBA fort, had been excavated in this Area.
- Area III is the only one that uncovered on the western side of the mound. There are abundant domestic occupations located both inside/outside and below the Early Bronze fort wall.
- Area IV on the north of the site was cut back to the top of the tell. In contrast to Area I, the area characterizes the initial occupation when EBA fort wall firstly was erected, and here we can see occupations and burial records as intra/extra-mural graves of the period.

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Site period</i>	<i>General period</i>	<i>Discoveries</i>
<b>III</b>	West of tell	1A/B	Late local Chalcolithic/Late Uruk	Domestic buildings, pits;
		2A	EBA pre-fortified	Buildings, jar burial;
		2B		Fort, occupation inside the wall.
<b>IV</b>	North of tell	2A	EBA pre-fortified	Pottery;
		2B	initial phase of fort	Fort, passages, intra-mural graves, and extra-mural cemetery.
<b>I</b>	Southeast of tell	1	Late local Chalcolithic/Late Uruk	Domestic buildings, Uruk pits, burials;
		2A	EBA pre-fortified	Rectilinear buildings ;
		2B	development of fort	Fort, extension, annex, grain storages outside fort.
<b>II</b>	South of site, extra-fort zone	2B	EBA south part of fort	Fort, south terrace, passages, tomb 302, satellite graves, burial mound.

Table 2. 2 Significant discoveries in Areas I-IV, Jerablus Tahtani.

## 2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Most of the surviving remains in the mound belong to the Early Bronze Age in the third millennium BCE, during which two major phases of occupation are identified: Period 2A, an earlier open settlement, and 2B, a later fort and its extra-mural occupation. EBA deposits at Jerablus Tahtani are much more extensive than those of Late Chalcolithic and Uruk Periods (1A/B) and are preserved with the most depth of 16 m examined in Area IV.<sup>56</sup> Well- preserved evidence for the pre-fortification phase is reported from exposures in Areas I, III, where three levels of rectilinear structures have been thus far excavated. Apart from domestic buildings, the only substantial evidence for mortuary practice of this period is provided by a jar burial, namely, T. 1610, which was found below a stone structure (Room 1006) in Area III. Apart from stratigraphic evidence, the analysis of

<sup>56</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: 1.

ceramic type associated with the tomb confirms its chronology.<sup>57</sup> The burial differs from the majority of jar and pithos burials from post-fort period (see below) in its vertical position in a narrow pit, in its use of pottery dish as a lid, and in its relatively sparse grave goods, merely a few disc beads. The jar burial contained a body interred secondarily with the skull placed on top of the rest of bones. A seal impression, rolled onto the exterior of a jar found in rectangular structures, is also of great chronological significance.<sup>58</sup> The Jerablus impression depicts a long-horned quadruped and serpent between a partially persevered rosette and a quadruple spiral set on a register composed of triangles, and similar instances are known from other EBA (III/IV) sites (e.g., Mumbaqtat and Shamseddin).<sup>59</sup> The succeeding fort was imposed, thus it terminated the settlement planning of the pre-fort period in destructions. Evidence from excavated areas I, II and IV indicate a dramatic change of the settlement in the middle of that millennium. At the time, the fort was constructed around the previous open village and an extra-mural zone was projected at the southern spur of the mound, where a mortuary complex was then built along the bank of the Euphrates.

Large-scale excavations were constantly conducted from 1998 to 1999. At the time, fieldworks between Areas I and II shed light on a sequence of fort's evolution, which could be sub-divided into four phases. The history of fort's expansions includes, therefore, three conspicuous changes. A substantial stone-founded wall was erected and enclosed an area of about 300 m<sup>2</sup> over the earlier burnt settlement in Areas I, III, IV (fig. 2.2). Subsequently, the fort was radically altered when the interior of the fort was raised and an artificial bank was thrown up against the exterior of the wall. The construction of the new bank evidently took place in three areas. In the cases of Areas III and IV, the bank was preserved to a width of 12 m and its surface seems to have been coated with lime plaster<sup>60</sup>. This additional massive bank did change the appearance of the site, from one surrounded by a free-standing circuit wall to one artificially rising beside the river. Evidence from newly exposures in Area I has revealed two enlargements of the fort, i.e., an extension and an annex.<sup>61</sup> A stone-fronted terrace (South Terrace) recovered in Area II was constructed on top of extension material and against the annex wall, thus this feature must be regarded as a latest expansion.

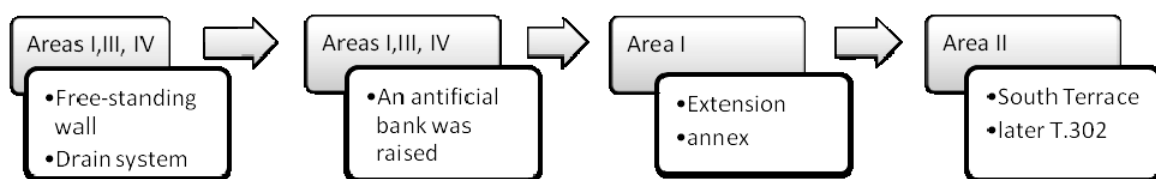


Fig. 2. 2 Four phases of the fort's evolution during Period 2B.

Several levels with stone-founded buildings have been exposed in Area IV, but because of erosion it is not certain if they are contemporary with, or post-date, the fort wall described above. One of these, multi-roomed building 1000, consists of narrow rectangular chambers with benches, bins and other

<sup>57</sup> The pottery material has been attributed to Horizon 1B by Jamieson in his paper, dating to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE, see Jamieson 1993: 46-8, 62-4, Fig. 2; Peltenburg 1999 a: 100.

<sup>58</sup> Peltenburg 1999 a: Fig. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Peltenburg 1999 a: 100.

<sup>60</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: 8.

<sup>61</sup> Peltenburg Jerablus Tahtnai 2000, see the Jerablus Tahtani Project website, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/JT2000/>> (22.01.2004).

installations for food processing. A variety of well-provisioned burials were gradually placed in the close proximity of stone buildings, indicative of an intra-mural funerary custom. The intra-mural burials display considerable variability in funerary structures and containers, include horizontally laid cooking pot burials for infants, pit and pithos burials, cists and corbel-walled tombs.



Fig. 2. 3 Overhead view of Area II with T. 302, South Terrace, and lower sector further to south (from Peltenburg et al. 2000, Fig. 15).

On the south side of the fort, an unusual funerary monument-namely, Tomb 302- was cut into a pre-existing silo that stood beside South Terrace (fig. 2.3). Thanks to the intensification of excavations from 1994-2000 within Area II, now a mortuary complex including Tomb 302, related passages and an imposing mound beneath it has been identified. Despite the facts that the tomb was looted and the area was subject to exceptional floods, the contents of the tomb are abundant in both quantity and diversity (see below).

Geomorphological studies show there was a high Euphrates flooding toward the end of the EBA.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the site was abandoned for some 1500 years. The population of Jerablus Tahtani may have moved to the neighboring places, probably Carchemish, where an extent of the city grew to its

<sup>62</sup> Peltenburg 1999 a: 103.



peak from the end of the third millennium to the first half of the second millennium. No archaeological evidence is obtained until the Iron Age (Period 3), Late Roman (Period 4), and Islamic periods (Period 5).

### 2.3 A CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Most burials recovered in Jerablus Tahtani are attributed to Period 2 (Early Bronze Age), especially the fortified phase. Such results were on the basis of the analysis of stratigraphical contexts. A focus upon ceramic assemblages during EBA times primarily is to strengthen our understanding of the internal chronology of the site, whereby it also provides the possibility to place burial data within a more accurate chronological context.

In terms of status of ceramics of the period, apart from tomb assemblages either from T. 302 or other tombs, there is still another main source, strata in domestic deposits. The excavation of greater amounts of stratified deposits in the pre-fort phase of Area III and near the summit of the tell in Area IV, as well as more detailed analysis of the assemblages from around T. 302, have allowed three broad assemblages (A, B, and C) to be isolated. Because much of ceramics are compiled from a mixture of funerary and domestic contexts, its composition may well be biased, but some characteristics seem clear. Discussion about ceramic assemblages in this part is based on pottery materials related to Early Bronze Age published in the preliminary reports of 1995, 1996 and 1997.<sup>63</sup> A comprehensive understanding will await a final report, thus it must be acknowledged that ceramic analysis will largely be preliminary.

- Ceramic traits of assemblage A are present in the strata of pre-fort deposits in Areas I and III. The most notable forms are bowls, jars and vessels with pedestal vessels, all belonging to Plain Simple Ware tradition. Typical bowls include open bowls with plain rim, and classic “cyma recta profiled” bowls with beaded rims and small ring bases. Jar forms which seem to be characteristic of this phase, include some with bow-rimmed and one with a much exaggerated flare.<sup>64</sup> Pedestal vessels are common. Some are with short stem pedestals and others with long, straight stems with fenestration.<sup>65</sup> Consistent numbers of open bowls with clear Uruk affinities suggest that these levels may be linked to Uruk pottery as well.<sup>66</sup>
- Assemblage B is best seen in Area II in the primary levels of T. 302 and its adjacent passages. This assemblage continues the Plain Simple Ware tradition, including open bowls with plain rims and hemispherical bowls with out-turned rims or heavy bands<sup>67</sup>, which are lack of assemblages A and C; large jars with a drainage hole on side<sup>68</sup>. Tripod feet vessels seem to be particularly common in non-tomb contexts, but no profiles have been published in the preliminary reports probably by a reason that few examples are able be reconstructed. The most

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<sup>63</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 17-22; Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: 16-20; Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: 13-5.

<sup>64</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: Fig. 13 (9).

<sup>65</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: Fig. 13 (5, 6).

<sup>66</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: P16 0/2, a probable Late Uruk pottery, Fig. 27 (13).

<sup>67</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Fig. 27: 7, 12-3.

<sup>68</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: Fig. 18 (2).

distinctive types also comprise globular jars with a spout slightly beneath the rim and a shallow bowl with a cylinder handle under the rim.<sup>69</sup> They also include Red and Black Burnished bowls, which only are present in tomb contexts.<sup>70</sup> Large vessels with characteristic hole on the side of low body make their appearance.<sup>71</sup> This ware applied with new techniques, like Gray Spiral-Burnished Ware, appeared for the first time and is not unlike Plain Simple Ware in color and texture. This type, particularly characteristic of the Middle Euphrates valley, continues in use in the succeeding assemblage C. Large champagne vessels with a great quantity, have been totally over a hundred, generated from the tomb assemblages. Unfortunately, apart from a photo<sup>72</sup> and a drawing (see below, fig. 18: 3), most vessels have not yet published. According to description from Sertok, who visited campaigns on the site, he referred to types of champagne cups in Jerablus Tahtani as groups D and E.<sup>73</sup> Both are characterized by parallel grooves on the surface, or slip applied, produced on the fast wheels. To some extent, we could just assume according to relevant literal descriptions, still without firm evidence. Here the “champagne cup” is represented in form definitely with a long stem; its upper bowl and base are wide and shallow, as an obvious vertical contrast to the stem in-between, which is obviously different from pedestal vessel type.

- Assemblage C is closely related to tomb assemblages in Area IV, the deposits of later phases of T. 302, and some satellite burials, and the upper part of Area IV. There is a clear concentration of various new types having appeared. Plain Simple Ware assemblage continues, and represented by bowls, goblets, jars and jugs. In particular, shallow open bowls generally with ring bases and thickened rims become very common<sup>74</sup>, or occasionally with grooved-rims<sup>75</sup>, and some exceptional ones with an arc base<sup>76</sup>. A variety of small jars appear to belong predominantly to this assemblage. They have often a grooved-rim, and tall neck, otherwise, a type of jars with everted rims, globular bodies with no distinct neck.<sup>77</sup> Goblets have both smooth and corrugated exterior surfaces and also belong to this phase.<sup>78</sup> Pedestal vessels still continue to be used in this phase, occasionally incised by some potter markers.<sup>79</sup> In the domestic deposits, although they are rather less well known, a number of storage vessels are firmly associated with this phase. They include jars with vertical necks and quite heavily grit-tempered fabrics alongside finer large jars with out-turned rims, ring bases, in some cases, holes at the base.<sup>80</sup> Grey Spiral-Burnished Ware, developed from the preceding assemblage B, appears more frequently and remains various pottery types, like pedestal vessels, jars and bowls.<sup>81</sup> Amongst them, some pedestal vessels have been applied with painted red lines, also known as Euphrates Banded

<sup>69</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: Fig. 19 (7); Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Fig. 27 (6).

<sup>70</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: 14.

<sup>71</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: Fig. 18 (2)

<sup>72</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: photo 5.

<sup>73</sup> Sertok 2007: group D, see Figs. 16.1(14-6) and 16.4 (A-E), group E, see Figs. 16.1 (17-22) and 16.4 (F-I).

<sup>74</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Fig. 27 (4-5)

<sup>75</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: Fig. 8, the left shallow bowl.

<sup>76</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: Fig. 18 (5).

<sup>77</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: Fig. 18 (6).

<sup>78</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Fig. 28 (1-3, 5).

<sup>79</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: Fig. 19 (1).

<sup>80</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: Fig. 14 (1-5).

<sup>81</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: 17, Grey Spiral Ware could be seen in Fig. 18 (3-6).

Based on the forms, excluding the aspect of decoration, ceramic typology could be approached with 8 main types, including bowl, jar, bottle, goblet, pedestal vessel, spout pot, champagne cup, storage vessel (table 2.3). Here it is necessary to further divide the four types of them, since their forms are more complicated. Also, refining of those sub-divisions is essential to trace the evolution of ceramic assemblages, especially its subtle change. Definition of sub-divisions is treated as follows:

- The form of bowls consists of three types, termed as I, II, and III. Type I is represented by the form of bowls with beaded rims, “cyma recta profiles” with small ring bases. Typical bowls of II are completely different from I, and they normally have out-turned rims or heavy bands. III is characteristic of shallow open bowls with a ring base and a thickened rim.
- Jar includes two types, termed as I and II. Type Ia has a globular body with either of bow-rim, type Ib with everted rims. Type II often has a grooved rim and a tall neck.
- Pedestal vessels have two types, either with long, straight stems or short pedestals.
- Large vessels, probably applied for storage, could be isolated to three sub-types. Type I is a distinctive type of jar with a hole at the base. Type II characterizes the majority of storage vessels, including jars with vertical necks and quite heavily grit-tempered fabrics. Type III is represented by finer large jars with out-turned rims and ring bases.

<i>Typology</i> \ <i>Assemblages</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>
Bowls	I	II	III
Jars	Ia Ib		Ib, II
Jugs			×
Hama goblets			×
Pedestal vessels	I, II		II
Spouted vessels		×	
Champagne cups		×	
Tripod feet vessels		×	×
Storage vessels		I	I, II, III

Table 2. 3 Main pottery types in assemblages (Note: “×”points to the presence of this type in an assemblage).

Table 2.3 describes various forms of PSW vessels and their evolutions during the EBA times. Characteristics of three assemblages will present as follows, and factors about decoration and fabric are within the consideration. Some typical ceramics have parallels from the neighboring sites in the region, also compared with adjacent areas of western Syria (Ebla and Amuq) and Khabur plains. The comparisons of diagnostic ceramics will suggest a specific internal chronology of Jerablus Tahtani of

<sup>82</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: Fig. 18 (3).

EBA times with a broad historical background.

In assemblage A, ceramics is relative uncomplicated represented by Plain Simple Ware of bowls, jars and pedestal vessels. Bowls, all belonging to type I, are lacking in later contexts. Similar jars of type Ib are also present in assemblages C, so do pedestal base vessels. Together with the evidence of “cyma-recta profile” and Metallic Ware, it suggests the strata of pre-fort deposits in the site (Areas I and III), the contexts of assemblage A, are probably dated to the second half till the middle third millennium BCE, mostly parallel with Amuq H, EBA I/II.

Assemblage B is of more obvious chronological significance and it represents the plentiful ceramic types which indicate the peculiarity of the region for the period. Most of special types, such as tripod feet vessels, spout pots, large champagne cups appeared for the first time. The latter two types are related to tomb contexts, thus we could assume that they may have specifically used for mortuary practice. Applications of decoration are more common, along with types of Red and Black Burnished bowls, gray spiral-burnished jars. Unlike the Red and Black Burnished ware, gray spiral-burnished jars or bowls is characteristic of the middle Euphrates and western Syria. The decorated pottery was found in funerary contexts of Tomb 302 in quantity, may reinforce its high rank status. The advanced types of champagne cups were used extensively during mid-late EBA, or EBA III/IV. They were widespread along the Euphrates Valley and have also parallels to the west and the east.<sup>83</sup> In Jerablus Tahtani they were produced on fast wheels, high temperature fired, have parallel grooves on the surface, referred as Groups D and E, according to Sertok.<sup>84</sup> The Red-Black Burnished pottery firstly made its appearance to the west of Euphrates a date approximately as “cyma-recta profile”, parallel with Amuq H. It reflects a Transcaucasian style according to present studies in scholarship of Near Eastern archaeology.<sup>85</sup> Grey Spiral Ware vessels were common during the Banat Period III.

There are several distinguished pottery types, which are surprisingly given their presence in parallel assemblage in Tell Ahmar (the Hypogeum). They are tripod feed jars or bowls, a shallow bowl with a cylinder handle.<sup>86</sup> Globular jars with spouts beneath the rims found in Jerablus Tahtani include two examples with zoomorphic decorations on the mouth of spout.<sup>87</sup> Both types of spouted vessels are also known from the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar.<sup>88</sup> Thus, according to the above comparisons, most characteristic traits of assemblage B pertain to the mid-late third millennium. This period is related to the expansion of settlement size and the construction of city walls. That is also consistent with situation at Jerablus Tahtani that the deposits of assemblage B stratigraphically were as part of expansion of settlement after the construction of fortification.

Besides, the Red-Black Burnished Ware, out of an earlier tradition same period as “cyma-recta profile” dominated (Amuq H), indicates a continuity developed from EBA I/II. The significant

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<sup>83</sup> Sertok 2007: Fig. 16.6, distribution map of late champagne cups.

<sup>84</sup> Sertok 2007: group D, see Fig. 16.1 (14-16) and 16.4 (A-E), group E, see Fig. 16.1 (17-22) and 16.4 (F-I).

<sup>85</sup> Mentioned in Akkermans – Schwartz 2003: 226.

<sup>86</sup> Tripod-feed vessels, see Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pls. XXIV (15-17), XXV (1-5); shallow bowl with cylindrical handle, see Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Fig. 27 (6), its parallels see Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pl. XXVI (6-7).

<sup>87</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Fig. 27 (1).

<sup>88</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pls. XXIV (6-14) and XXVI (9-10).



changes in pottery assemblage with the disappearance of “cyma recta” bowls, compared to horizon 2A, mark a beginning of a new period in the historical developments of the Middle Euphrates region.<sup>89</sup> The new features in the pottery assemblage are characteristic of a range of different fabric types including Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware, Red Euphrates Banded Ware, etc. However, it is strange that such decorated types are absent in Jerablus Tahtani. Moreover, unlike Tell Banat (Period III), the “caliciform” assemblage of western Syria represented by small ribbed goblets is also totally absent in assemblage B, but appears in quantity in the succeeding assemblage C. That firmly indicates that a date of assemblage B is a little earlier than assemblage C, or partially overlapped with it, completely distinguished from the preceding assemblage A. In addition, this assemblage especially is closely associated with an unusual funerary context of lower Tomb 302, which reflects a funerary peculiarity very much, but not enough general for the site as a whole.

Assemblage C is flourishing of various types, such as shallow bowl, jug, Hama goblet, and groove-rimmed jar. The new features distinguish the assemblage C from the preceding one. The most obvious is the development of shallow bowls with ring base and thickened rim. These forms ceramics normally have wide parallels in the regions of the Euphrates valley and western Syria. Fine, thin-walled, mass-produced goblets often decorated with horizontal corrugations are part of “caliciform” assemblage originated from Ebla (IIB1), appeared in the mid-third millennium BCE of western Syria, found at Banat III and Tell Ahmar, commensurate with EBA IVA and Amuq phase I.<sup>90</sup> They continue in use in the later millennium and are well attested at Sweyhat, later Selenkahiye and Banat II (ca. 2300-2000 BCE), comparable to EBA IVB, Ebla IIB2 and Amuq J.<sup>91</sup> In the case of Jerablus Tahtani, pottery assemblage C with appearance of “Hama” type goblets for the first time would better pertain to a later episode of EBA IVB. A period of later 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, as this pottery assemblage displays, experienced impacts from Ebla state, and regional communications occurred more frequently than before. Jerablus Tahtani as a small settlement nearby Carchemish also played a role in the dramatic transformation of the period.

EBA episode	Assemblage C				Assemblage A		Assemblage B					
	PSW				MTW	PSW		PSW		Champagne cups	GSW	EBW
	bowls with thickened rims	Hama goblets	pedestal Vessels	cyma-recta		tripod feet	spouted jars					
IVB	×	×	×	×								
III/IVA			×	×		×	×	×	×			
I/II			×		×						×	

Table 2. 4 Parallels of diagnostic pottery types with sequence of Early Bronze Age (Note: “x” points to the existence of this pottery form, shadows point these vessel types present both assemblages A and C).

A chronological sequence here is based on analysis on pottery assemblages above. The results have been made largely by focusing on the diagnostic pottery types, which appeared for the first time after

<sup>89</sup> Jamieson 1993: 48-52.

<sup>90</sup> Porter – McClellan 1998: Fig.13 (1); Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: a total of 190 goblets are described in page 99 and illustrated in Pl. XX (3-12).

<sup>91</sup> Akkermans – Schwartz 2003: 247.

finding parallels throughout the regions (table 2.4).

To sum up, it is evident that assemblage A is dated from the second quarter till the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium of EBA I/II repertoire, assemblage C must be dated to the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, mostly comparable to EBA IVB, and assemblage B is earlier than C and dated to the mid-late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, comparable to EBA III/IVA (table 2.5). Although the site with rich pottery assemblages uncovered from a monument tomb 302, cultural nature indicated by pottery assemblages A, B and C provides a view of ruralization in the period of Early Bronze Age.

<i>Pottery</i>	<i>Areas</i>	<i>Settlement sequence</i>	<i>T. 302 phase</i>	<i>Amuq phase</i>	<i>Banat phase</i>	<i>EBA episode</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>C</b>	Tombs and upper part in Area IV	Tomb mound	Phases 3-4	J	II	IVB	End of 3rd millennium
<b>B</b>	Passages in Area II	Post-fort	Phase 1	I	III	III/IVA	Mid-late 3rd millennium
<b>A</b>	Strata in Area I, III	Pre-fort		H		I/II	Second half of 3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium

Table 2. 5 Comparative EBA dates of Jerablus Tahtani based on the potter analysis.

## 2.4 BURIAL PRACTICES OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Mortuary evidence from Jerablus Tahtani has revealed quantities of burials during the third-millennium BCE, and a total of 62 tombs have been thus far documented. Burials of various types can be divided into three main categories (table 2.6): the first consists of plain pit graves; the second comprises a variety of stone-built graves covered with limestone slab/s, including small stone cist graves, rectangular chamber graves and the largest, most elaborate grave, namely, Tomb 302; the third is the placement in pithoi.

<i>Burial Type</i>	<i>Burial No.</i>	<i>Individuals</i>	<i>Human Remains</i>	<i>Grave Goods</i>
Pit graves	T. 2330	1	adult	jar, bowl, copper pendants, shell rings, beads, metal spiral sticks
	T. 956	1	35-40 of age	14 pottery vessels, 14 toggle-pins, beads
	T. 1703	1	juvenile	2 tubes and a crescentic axehead of copper
	T. 2618	----	-----	bowls, jars, copper bracelets and toggle pins, over 750 beads
	T. 290	1	infant	----
	T. 3234	2	infants	----
Stone-built graves	T. 787	9	2 adults, 3 children, 4 infants	animal copper plaque
	T. 1036	----	-----	pottery, pins, dagger fragments, incised bone, figurines, silver earrings and beads of precious materials
Pithos burials	T. 573	5	1 child, 1 juvenile, 3 adults	PSW vessels, MTW vessels, bronze toggle-pins and bracelets
	T. 612	2?	1 juvenile, 1 adult	
	T. 582	5	1 child, 1 juvenile, 3 adults	
	T. 643	1	1 child	

Table 2. 6 Selected burials of Period 2B at Jerablus Tahtani.

Most of burials were recovered in post-fort levels in Areas IV and II (fig. 2.4), as opposed to the

preceding phase characterized by the rarity of burials on the site. Burials of Period 2B were clustered in different places at Jerablus Tahtani, and the majority of them were confined to the fort, clearly representative of an intra-mural funerary custom (table 2.7). They were placed above, below or in contemporaneous levels to domestic buildings (e.g., Tombs 787, 965, 1036, 1518, 1526, etc.), with a smaller number of burials found directly beneath paved passages, like T. 1782.<sup>92</sup> In contrast to numerous intra-mural burials directly associated with domestic buildings, two pit graves like T. 2330 were found in a sounding 12 m north of the fort in Area IV, which may have been part of an extra-mural cemetery on this side of the tell.<sup>93</sup> In the extra-mural zone at the south end of the settlement (in Area II), a mortuary complex was then built against the South Terrace, consisting of Tomb 320 and a series of pithos and pit graves adjacent to the tomb. The following part will select some of burials as targets of research from all of the EBA funerary record before specifically investigating funerary practices and potential ritual activities associated with the burials. For the burials to be selected, several factors must be considered, such as relatively well preservation, ample contents of tombs and representation of EBA funerary styles.

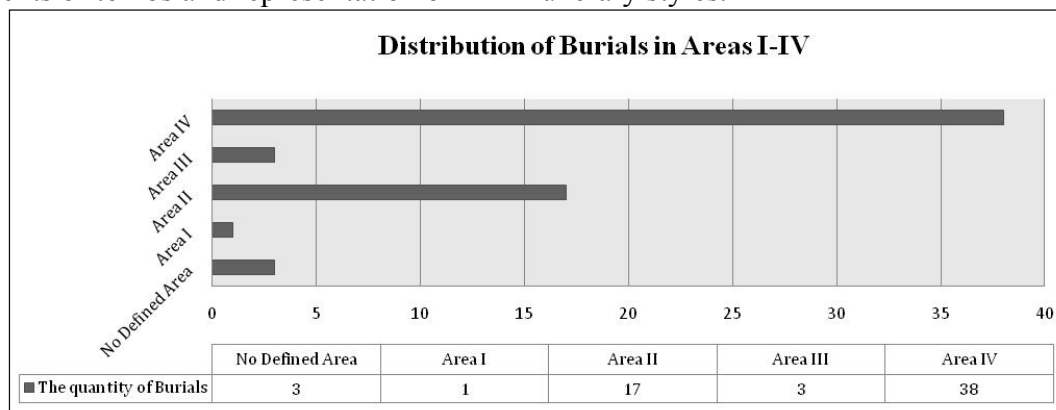


Fig. 2. 4 Illustration of burial distribution in Areas I-IV.

Chronology (BCE)	Settlement Plans	Ceramic Assemblages	Extra-mural Cemetery	Intra-mural Graves	Mortuary complex	
					T. 302	Satellite burials
ca. 2000	Tomb Mound	C			Phase 4	Simple Pit Graves
					Phase 3	
ca. 2500	South Terrace, Passages Extension, Annex Araised Bank	B			Phase 2	Pithos and Pit Graves
					Phase 1	
ca. 2750	Free-standing Fort Pre-fort	A				

Table 2. 7 EBA burials with the evolution of the settlement.

<sup>92</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 2000: Fig. 17.

<sup>93</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 2000: 72. It still remains to suspect, since the sounding is a very small exposure that needs to be expanded to affirm if concentration is representative.

### 2.4.1 Pit Graves

T. 2330 is pit grave found north of the fort and contained a primary interment of an adult. The deceased was laid on the left side and surrounded by grave goods (fig. 2.5). Against the back of the interred individual was the common serving set of jar and bowl, but in this instance the shallow bowl was a more elaborate black incised ware with well preserved lime encrustation. This rare type at Jerablus Tahtani has also been found in T. 302, where it occurred in primary levels. Other objects in the tomb included copper pendants, a smaller example of crescentic axehead than one found in T. 1703, plain shell rings on different parts of the body, beads and metal spiral sticks.

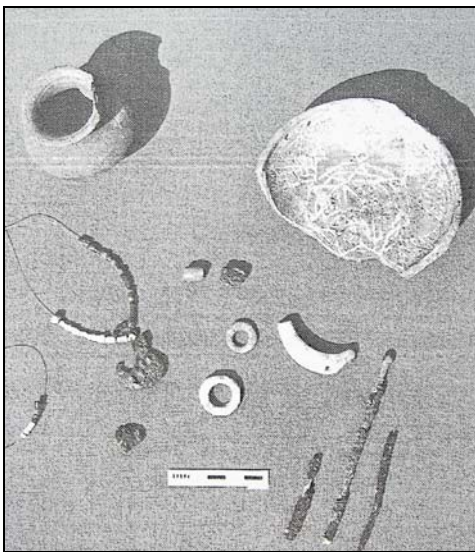


Fig. 2. 5 Selected grave goods from T. 2330  
(from Peltenburg *et al.* 2000, Fig. 20).

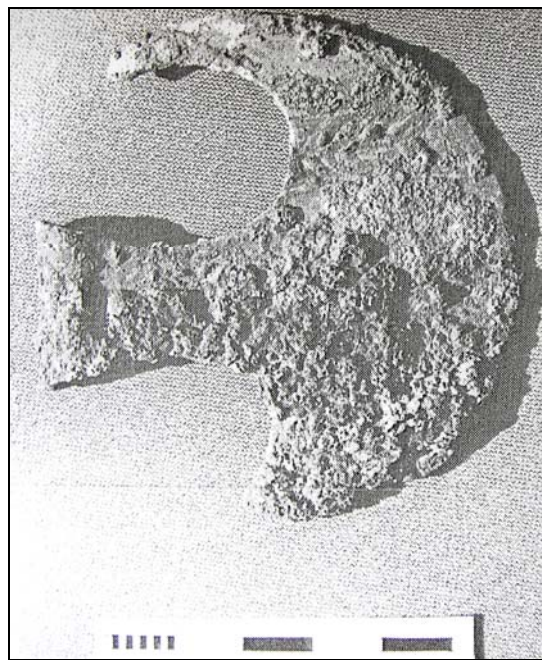


Fig. 2. 6 Copper pendant JT 2336 from T. 1703  
(from Peltenburg *et al.* 2000, Fig. 19)

T. 956 was a pit grave cut down to the top of B (=Building) 1000 and contained a primary interment of an adult of 35 to 40 years in a flexed position. Accompanying grave goods are a minimum of 14 pottery vessels, 14 copper/copper alloy pins and beads of precious materials, such as silver, rock crystal and carnelian. Among the toggle-pins, five examples were placed in a jar, while two examples were found at the shoulder with one at the chest on the skeleton. The position of the toggle-pins above the body supports for an interpretation of their having been used for the securing or fastening a garment. Apart from artefacts in the grave, a coarse limestone block lay in front of the face of the deceased individual (fig. 2.7). It may have been used as an ablution slab, since stones found near the dead body in third millennium graves to the east, from Leilan to Abu Salabikh, have been often interpreted to serve for such purpose.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1996: 11.



Fig. 2. 7 Pit grave T. 956 (after Peltenburg *et al.* 1996, Fig. 11).

T. 1703 was a pit grave and contained a primary interment of a juvenile. Two tubes of copper were collected at the base of the skull where they might have been used as hair ornaments. A large crescentic axehead hafting by the central, bent tang only was found lying on the chest (see above, fig. 2.6). Peltenburg has argued that it was a superficial crescentic axe used in the same manner as the one found in T. 2330.<sup>95</sup> But this argument seems to be invalid, since crescentic axes secured by means of a single tang have a broad distribution in Levant and Anatolia.<sup>96</sup> This rare type at Jerablus Tahtani is unlike the local EBA crescentic axes, which were often secured by means of rivets or of three bent tangs, thus this object must have been an imported one.<sup>97</sup> Considering the size of the axehead and its parallels in other regions, the crescentic axehead from T. 1703 at Jerablus Tahtani must have been a real weapon.

#### 2.4.2 Stone-Built Graves

T. 787 was a corbel-walled stone grave and aligned below Room 826 of B 1000. Although the tomb was seriously disturbed and robbed of grave goods, a zoomorphic copper alloy plaque and the bones of nine individuals (e.g., 2 adults, 3 children, and 4 infants) were found within. The animal plaque was in the form of a goat (?) with horns swept back to its shoulders. It is made of sheet metal worked flat for the body, in light relief for the head. The excavators have suggested that “it may have been an inlay, or secured to a backing or another object”, rather than being a pendant or an animal figurine.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 2000: 72.

<sup>96</sup> Hillen 1953: 211-2, the crescentic axeheads were secured by means of the central, bent tang only, as attested in Levant and Anatolia, such as, Jericho, Babedh-Dhra, Hesi, Kfar Monash and Satir Hüyük.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*: 211-2, in Mesopotamia and North Syria, where the axeheads of such type were secured using three bent tangs, evidenced from Agrab and Amarna; those secured to the haft by means of rivets are known from e.g. Tell Ahmar and Kish.

<sup>98</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: 9.



T. 1036 was built with vertical stone walls in a square plan, and it was inserted into the corridor against the southern wall of B 1000. The tomb must have been much disturbed, since there were no human skeletal remains found within. The tomb still contained a rich body of material, including pottery, pins, dagger fragments, incised bone, male figurines of unbaked clay (fig. 2.8: 1), silver earrings and beads of gold, carnelian, rock crystal, shell and vitreous-material. The bone tube is decorated with intricate, incised motifs consisting of four separate bands (e.g., horizontal lines, herring-bone lines, squares filled with triangles and crossing nets) rolled on the exterior (fig. 2.8: 2). Similar finds are also known from the burial contexts at Tell Banat settlement complex, such as in Tomb 1 and in the White Monument A.<sup>99</sup>

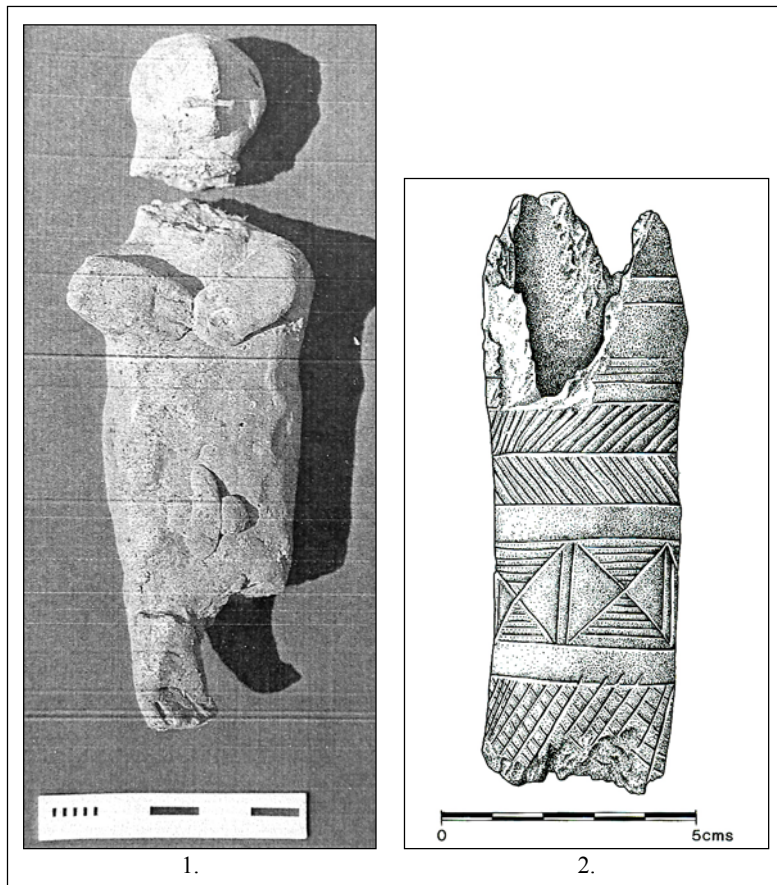


Fig. 2. 8 Objects from T. 1036: 1, unfired, male figure, JT 1213, Ht. 10.3 cm; 2, decorated bone tube, JT 1202, Ht. 10cm (after Peltenburg et al. 1996, Figs. 12-3).

T. 1518 was a small rectangular tomb (1.40×1.05×0.65 m) built with roughly corbelled stone side walls, end slabs and cover slab. It was dug into a final stone building and thus is dated to the latest EBA levels at the site. It contained a minimum of eight individuals belonging to 3 children, 5 infants.<sup>100</sup> One of the interments was set into a broken pithos which had been wedged into the tomb. Overcrowding may thus have led to the burial of a child in T. 1526, just outside the southern end of this tomb. A variety of grave furnishings were found within, including 19 pottery vessels, 5 toggle-pins, one bracelet and one spiral ring of copper alloy (fig. 2.9). The pottery from T. 1518

<sup>99</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 8; McClellan 1998: Fig. 13.

<sup>100</sup> See the Jerablus Tahtani Project web site, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/jerahome.html>> (22.01.2004): the catalog of the tomb contents.

included PSW ribbed/plain goblets, jugs with grooved rims and jars in black ware, namely, Black Euphrates Banded Ware.



Fig. 2. 9 Grave goods from T. 1518 (after Peltenburg et al. 1998, Fig. 8).

### 2.4.3 Monumental Tomb, Tomb 302

Tomb 302 was oriented from northeast to southwest, architecturally consisted of four features from west to east: a dromos, an entrance, a main chamber, and an annex. The tomb dromos was a small open area flanked by walls *in antis*. These walls projected from the tomb entrance, which was partially blocked by several stones, capped by a massive lintel (fig. 2.10). The off-center entrance was opened in the short, west side of the main chamber. A rectangular room is the main chamber (6.6×3.5 m), and its corbelled walls were constructed with six courses of massive, transversely laid limestone blocks. Situated at the rear of the main chamber is an eroded rectilinear annex (856), 3×5.5 m.

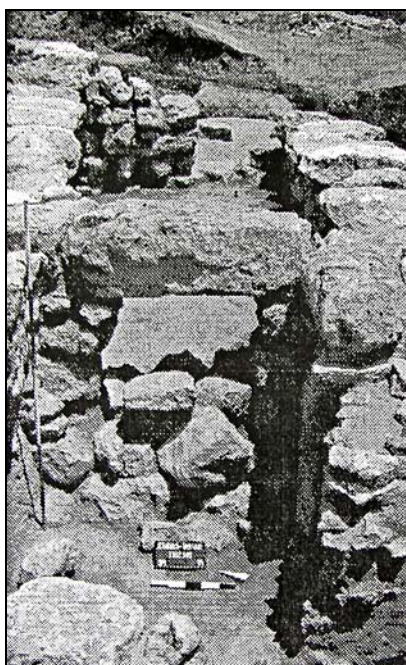


Fig. 2. 10 The tomb entrance  
(from Peltenburg forthcoming, Fig. 4).

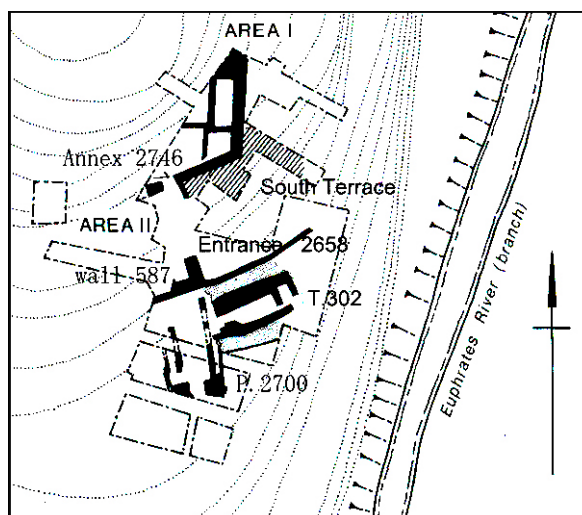


Fig. 2. 11 Map marked with important features around T. 302

T. 302 possessed no *in situ* or collapsed stone roofing or portal slabs, thus raising the question as to

whether it was roofed or its covering slabs were removed after the use of the tomb. As described in the preliminary report, a midden accumulated inside the main chamber upon the primary levels had the same composition as the principle mound material.<sup>101</sup> Presumably the tomb had been roofed, and then after removal of the capstones mound materials subsequently filled in the main chamber.

### **Passages, South Terrace and Burial Mound**

Access from the entrance of Tomb 302 to the fort was provided by a passage that passed at the right angle in front of tomb. The first version, namely, the passage 2700, was 3 m wide and bordered by substantial walls. It ascended 12 m up to doorway 2658 perched on top of the South Terrace (see above figs. 2.3, 11). This passage was succeeded by a later version, namely, passage 990, which was 20 m long and stone-paved.<sup>102</sup> It consisted of a ramp and a staircase of seven steps, leading up towards to the upper mound. Repeated access was assured by a small doorway from the passage into the dromos of the tomb.

To the north, the long north wall of T. 302 was constructed parallel with the South Terrace revetment wall, 578. The stone foundation wall 578, proven to be 1.4 m wide, flanks the northern side of T. 302 and runs at 90° to the passage 990.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the southern aspect of the site had a stepped appearance leading up from Euphrates through a passage besides a monumental tomb to a covered way into the fort annex. South Terrace itself was preserved to a width of 12 m and stood c. 2.4 m above the surrounding landscape overlying upon pre-existing extension of the fort. The remains on the terrace included rows of domestic houses and a passage. The covered passage ascended from an external entrance of the terrace (2658) and led to the annex entrance, 2746 (fig. 2.11).

In the lower sector beyond the South Terrace, earlier remains are two circular structures adjacent to one another built of *tauf*. They stand close to the terrace revetment wall. They have been interpreted as storage facilities, silos.<sup>104</sup> Subsequently, the whole area was redesigned at the time that a monument tomb (T. 302) was then built. It was constructed over one of the silos (1657) on its north-west corner. As currently understood, it is likely that T. 302 was mainly through passages-buildings connected with the rest of site. To its west, access to the west of settlement, was through the cross-passages in front of T.302 entrance. In association with the west, still waits to get answer closely in the future, since an area west to the Area II was unexcavated. To the north, probably as chief route access to the settlement, T.302 was firstly through a passage and several stairs connected with the upper South Terrace, and thereby it could have contacted with other domestic structures by roofed paths on the terrace into a gate of fort.

T. 302 was comprised of two stone rectangular chambers and built on an 8.6×3.4 mound with a

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<sup>101</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 24-5, it reports that principle mound material comprises distinctive orange bricky debris mixed with discrete, horizontal lenses of bone, pottery and pebbles.

<sup>102</sup> The preliminary reports in Peltenburg *et al.* 1996, 2000 mentioned two passages 2700 and 990, but we are not sure whether they are referred to as one passage, but have been given different numbers, or whether they are two different passages overlapping each other at the same place. Here I use the latter speak and regard the passages 2700 and 900 as earlier and later versions.

<sup>103</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: Fig. 12.

<sup>104</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: 10.



height of 2.5 m. A mound lay beneath the T. 302, and it comprises two distinct phases. On the long northern side are traces of a hard bricky, c. 2m wide revetment with the remains of a convex buttress near its better preserved base (fig. 2.12). Against this much eroded revetment and directly against the stone of the south wall lay the principle mound: bands of bricky constructional material, including distinctive orange bricks, interleaved with discrete, horizontal lenses of bone, pottery and pebbles.<sup>105</sup> This revetment may have served as a plinth, on which a superstructure may have stood. But if so, erosion has removed this structure and the extension is referred to here as a mound. To the west, it forms a vertical facade in line with the terminals of the walls *in antis* (fig. 2.12). In its final stage, therefore, T. 302 was at least 8×10 m, and probably higher than its preserved 2 m. As a consequence of excavations in 1998-9 campaigns, removal of most of mound materials, a succession of two southern stone kerbs, 2503, 2649, thus appeared. They were wedged into the southwest corner of T. 302 mound beside the passage 2700. It has been proven that they belonged to different phases of mound construction. They both demonstrate that in its latest phases, the southern mound was min. 2.8m wide and that the southwest corner of the mound facade was right angled.<sup>106</sup>

It deserves to notice the mound, since it was not only associated with the unusual tomb (T. 302), but also with satellite graves in forms of pithos and pits, which were placed in the vicinity of mound, or cut into it (see below). Besides, its distinctive surface is reminiscent of a huge mortuary mound, i.e., the White Monument found at Tell Banat North. In the case of Jerablus Tahtani, the mound comprised of mud brick debris mixed with Uruk bevelled-rim pottery sherds, which had originally come from Period 1 of the site and then may have been deliberately selected for the construction of the burial mound.

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<sup>105</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 10, Fig. 8.

<sup>106</sup> Summary report 1999, see the Jerablus Tahtani Project web site, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/jerahome.html>> (22.01.2004).

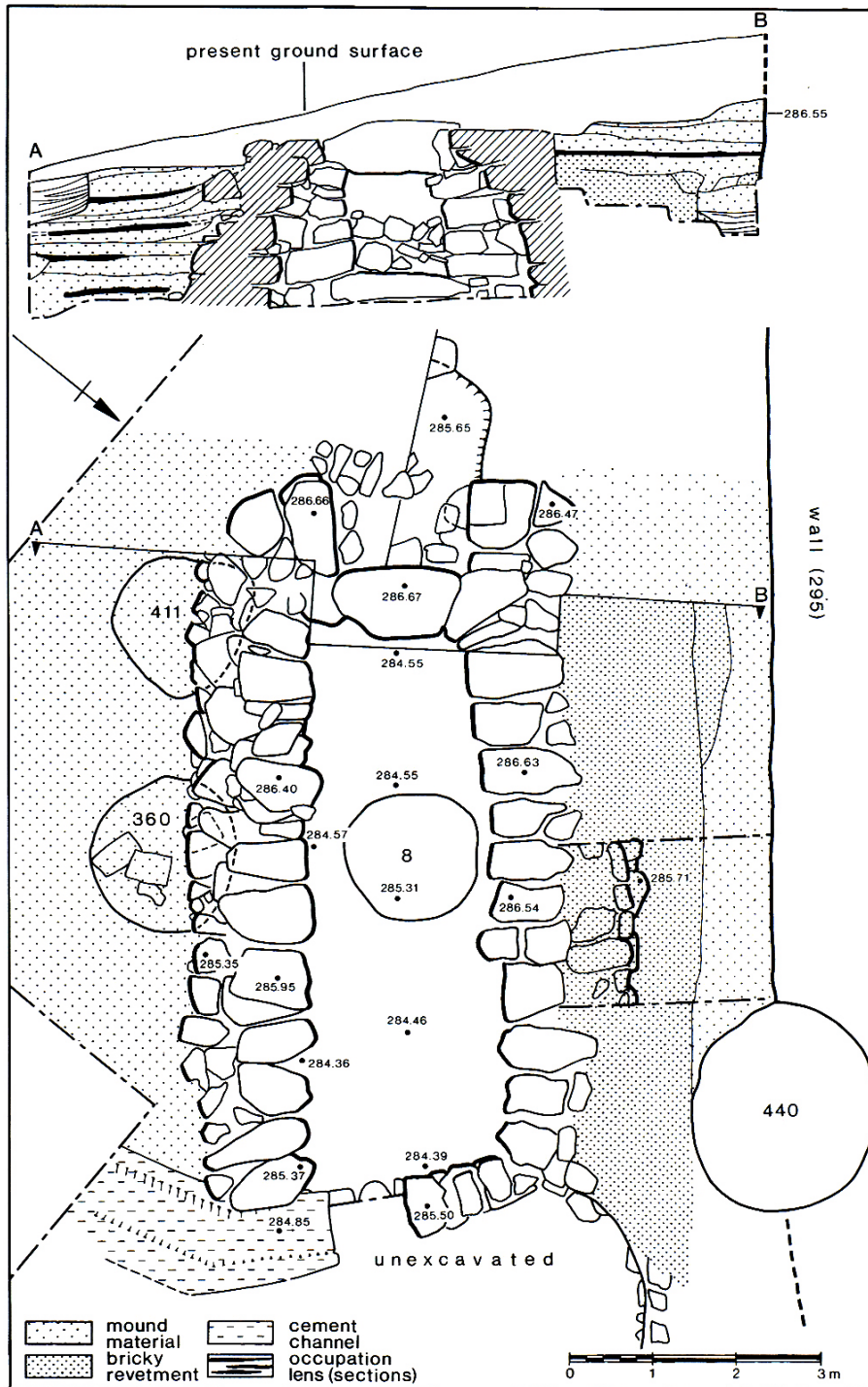


Fig. 2. 12 Plan and section of T. 302 in Area II (after Peltenburg et al. 1995, Fig. 8).

### Tomb Contents

In terms of specific contents of the tomb, they may be divided into four main contextual categories-human/animal remains, ceramics, and non-ceramic objects.

Human skeletal remains include 12 individuals with disarticulated skeletons: one infant in the perinatal period (an 8 month foetus), four children from 6 months to 12 years, two adults in the age

range 20-25 and five mature adults in the age range 25-35.<sup>107</sup>

Some 2.2 kg of animal bones were recovered from Tomb 302, of which the evidence is documented by excavator.<sup>108</sup> They include caprine remains (77% by weight of the identified fraction), amongst which sheep predominated over goats. All of this material was disarticulated, and some butchered, burnt or chewed by carnivores, whereas only dog and rock dove represent fairly complete animals. Of total of 202 identified caprine remains, 29% consist of cranial fragments, mainly isolated teeth, and 39% of phalanges, metapodial fragments, carpals and tarsals. Other medium-sized to large mammals are represented by cattle (11 fragments), pig (9), dog (5), equid (1) and fox (1). Small animals include hare. Rock dove, turtle dove, crow and other avian species are also present.

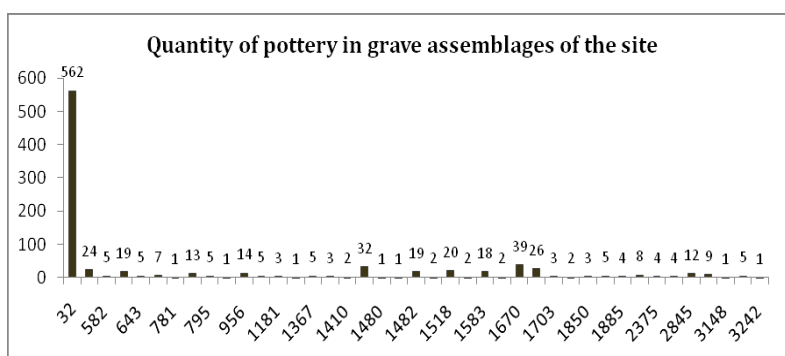


Fig. 2. 13 The number of ceramics from the EBA burials at JT (the quantity of pottery shown in figurines after footnote 109).

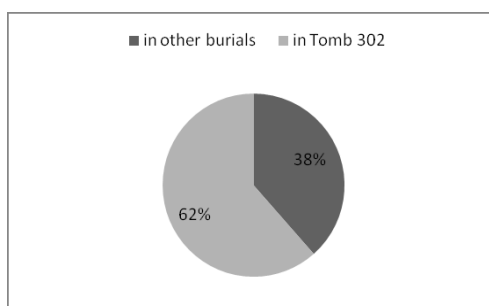


Fig. 2. 14 The percentage of T. 302 ceramics in the pottery material from the tombs on the site.

Tomb 302 has yielded abundant pottery vessels. Both complete (broken and unbroken) and fragmentary vessels are present. A total of at least 562 pieces, including both complete vessels and diagnostic sherds (rims, bases, handles and decorated body sherds) are documented (fig. 2.13).<sup>109</sup> Such strikingly huge quantity accounts for 62% of the pottery assemblage retrieved from the tombs on the site throughout the EBA times (fig. 2.14).

<sup>107</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 25-6; Peltenburg forthcoming: 4.

<sup>108</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 6.

<sup>109</sup> See the Jerablus Tahtani Project web site, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/jerahome.html>> (22.01.2004): the online archive, including unit-log, tomb units/summary, and tomb catalogue.

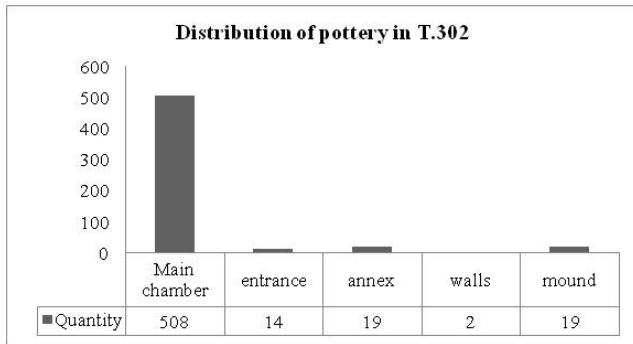


Fig. 2. 15 Pottery found within or around T. 302.

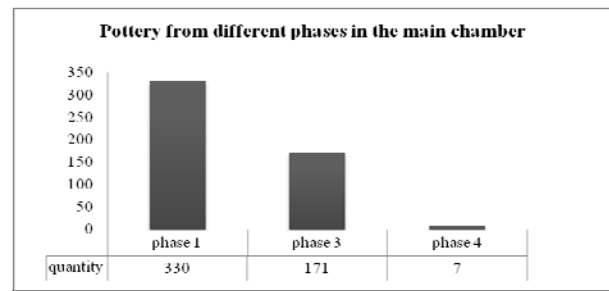


Fig. 2. 16 Pottery collected inside the tomb chamber.

The majority of the Tomb 302 pottery comes from the main chamber, with 508 pieces, while a smaller quantity of pottery vessels was found in the entrance, annex, tomb walls and mound (fig. 2. 15). According to the derivation of the main chamber's vessels, they are stratified and also reflect chronology (fig. 2.16). They seem to fall into two separate assemblages differing in vessel forms and ware types, referred to as assemblages B and C identified by Campbell.<sup>110</sup>

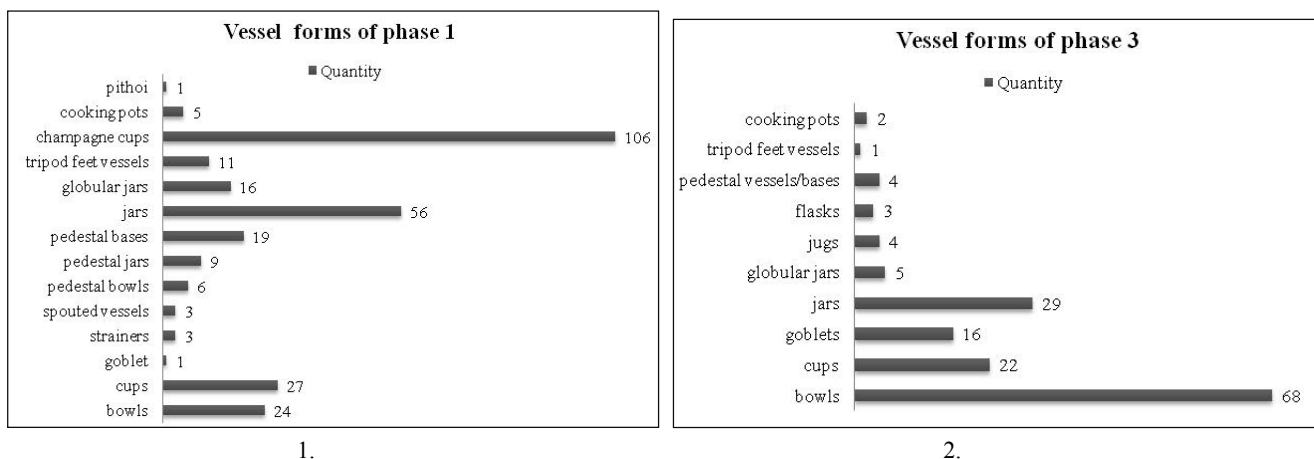


Fig. 2. 17 Main types of PSW vessels marked with the quantity from two stages (1 and 2: phases 1 and 3) in the main chamber of T. 302.

The broad range of Phase 1 pottery in quantity, corresponding to the assemblage B, accompanied the multiple burials in the lower levels of the tomb. They mainly consists of various PSW types, such as bowls, cups, jars, globular jars, pedestal bowls/jars, champagne cups, tripod feet and spout vessels (fig. 2.17: 1). Especially large champagne cups, which represent the most numerous types of the vessels with a total of 106 examples, are the most characteristic ones. These vessels were cumbersome, heavy items, up to 0.70 m tall (fig. 2.18: 3). The upper bodies are bowls, some of which are ribbed as shown in figurine 21, poorly attached to stems. The spouted vessels are constituted of globular jars with short spouts beneath rims (fig. 2.18: 5), and two examples of this type also have zoomorphic decorations on the mouths of spouts (fig. 2.18: 4). Another instance is provided by bowl forms from the primary deposits in the tomb, which often have out-turned rims or heavy hands (fig. 2.18: 1-2) lacking of the pottery assemblages before and after, i.e., A and C.

<sup>110</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1997: 13-5.

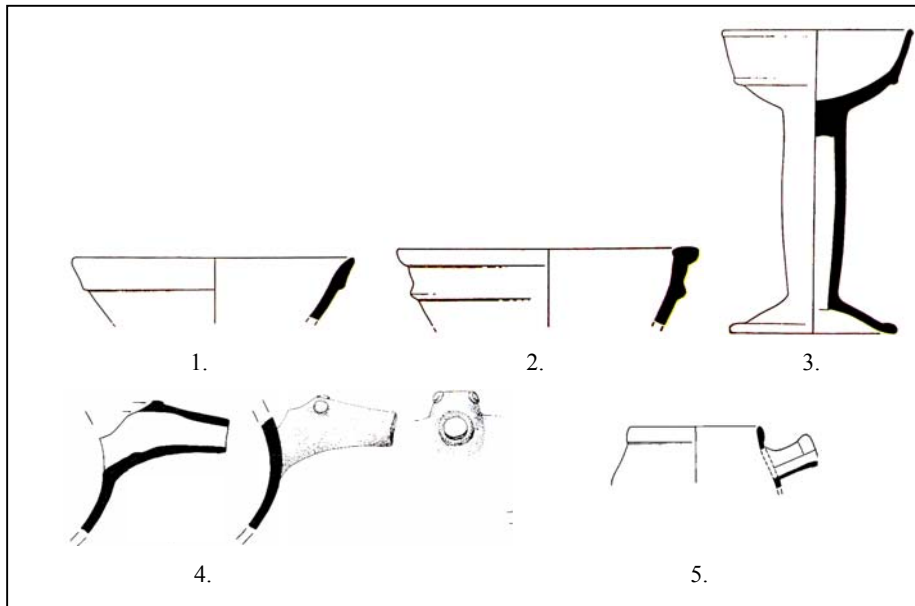


Fig. 2. 18 Selected pottery from phase 1 of T. 302: 1, II Unit 351/18; 2, II Unit 335/3; 3, JT 489, Unit 410; 4, JT 832, Unit 410; 5, Unit 502, not from the main chamber but in entrance; 6, JT 303 (after Peltenburg et al. 1995-6, Figs. 27 and 19; not to scale).

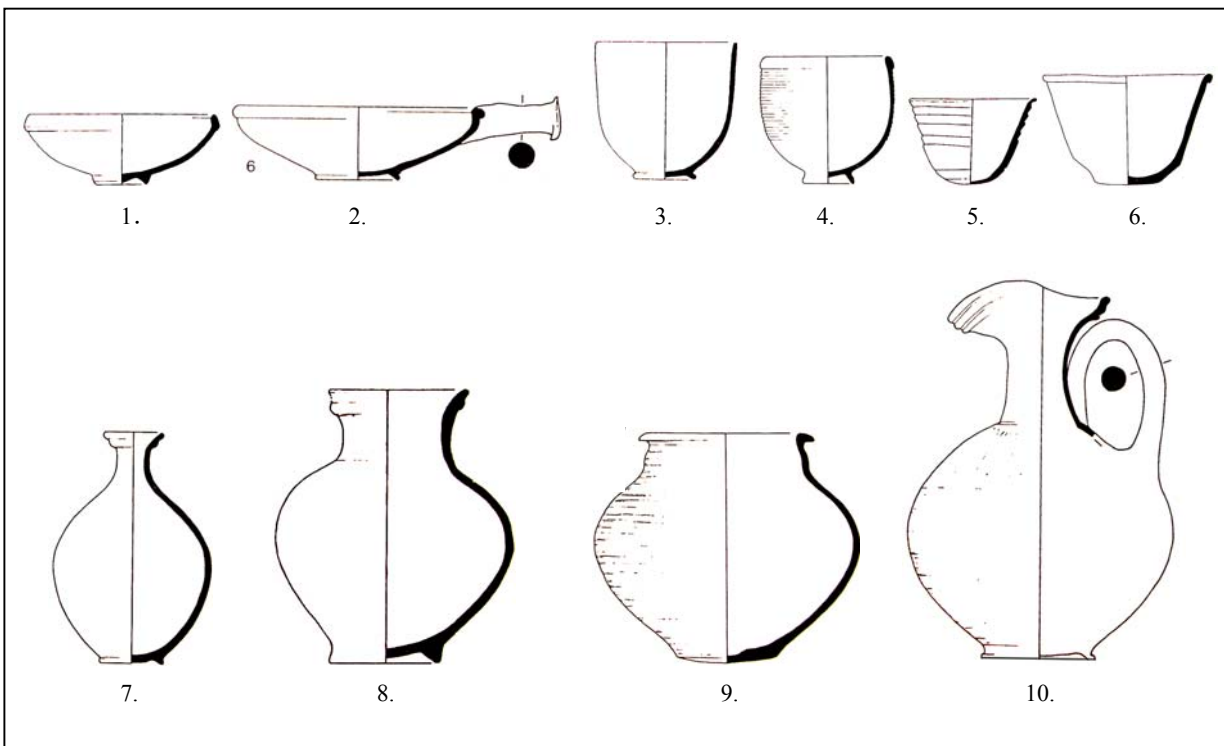


Fig. 2. 19 Selected vessels found in upper levels of T. 302: 1, JT 284; 2, JT 429; 3, JT 403, MTW; 4-6, JT 236, JT 57, and JT 53, not from T. 302 but Areas I/II; 7, JT 421; 8, JT 315, MTW; 9, JT 293, MTW with horizontal burnished lines; 10, JT 233, brittle orange ware (from Peltenburg et al. 1995, Figs. 27 and 28; not to scale).

A total of 171 pottery vessels were found in the upper levels (Phase 3; see above fig. 2.17: 2). With the current absence of some earlier types, such as the large champagne cups and tripod feet vessels,

there are clearly new types. Shallow bowls generally have ring bases and thickened rim (fig. 2.19: 1), as the most numerous types with 68 pieces. The number of these bowls indicates they were a result of mass production for conspicuous consumption. Small “Hama” goblets (16 pieces), both smooth and ribbed (fig. 2.19: 3-6) seem to mainly belong to this phase. The appearance of only one goblet in the lower levels is likely caused by the later disturbance. Flasks and jugs made their first appearance, characteristic of elongated neck, grooved rim and small ring base (fig. 2.19: 7-8). A possible example of orange brittle ware is the trefoil jug with a plain handle applied on the side of upper of body (fig. 2.19: 10), and its mouths is slightly waved with a spout-like jut. A large, shallow bowl with a cylinder handle (fig. 2.19: 2) has close parallels at Tell Ahmar.<sup>111</sup>

The vessels illustrated here (figs. 18 and 19) only present only a small selection of the vessel types. Collected from both lower and upper levels in the main tomb chamber, some distinguished PSW vessel types in noticeable quantities, such as champagne cups, tripod feet and spouted vessels, tall-necked jugs with trefoil-mouths, were rarely found elsewhere at the site, but these forms have close parallels at elaborated tombs along the Middle Euphrates valley, like in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar.<sup>112</sup> Apart from PSW vessels, other ware types in a limited number are represented by CPW jars, GSW jars (fig. 2.19: 9) and Red and Black Burnished bowls. Imports include black incised pottery with white infill, well known in EBA II Tarsus and present upstream at Lidar Höyük.<sup>113</sup> Evidence for the number of the entire pottery assemblage from Tomb 302 and the presence of decorated ware types and of the special PSW vessel forms with great funerary significance indicates that T. 302 is unquestionably the most prestigious EBA tomb at Jerablus Tahtani

Metal objects found in T. 302 were made with copper/copper-alloy. They can be divided into two groups, one derived from lower levels (Phase 1) and the other from upper levels (Phase 3). Metal objects of Phase 1 were fragmentary, and most of them must have been small artefacts, including pins, bands, rings, tweezers and a small tool, probably an awl (fig. 2.20: 1). Many fragments of sheet copper were also found. It is impossible to reconstruct their shapes from the fragmented remains. The form of pins with hemispherical head (fig. 2.21: 1) is particularly frequent. It is usually assumed that pins were used for the clothing which the corpses had worn or that they were used for closing the fabric in which the body may have been wrapped. Six fragments of bronze bands were found, and all of them were segments made of thin copper sheet.<sup>114</sup> It is still visible that one of them was curvedly formed. Similar instances were found at an EBA IV tomb in the Middle Euphrates Valley, Tomb 1 at Tell Banat, where three segments of a band are recovered.<sup>115</sup> The copper band seems to have been used as a strap, or as ornament on the hair. Tweezers (fig. 2.21: 2) were made from a substantial strip of metal of flattened lens-shaped cross-section, and were hammered to form terminals, which are slightly flared and of flat rectangular cross-section. This pair of tweezers seems to have been folded into simple U-shape. Similar instance was also known from Tomb 1 at Tell

<sup>111</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pl. XXVI (6).

<sup>112</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: champagne cups, see Pl. XXIII (5-9), tripod feet vessels, see Pls. XXIV (15-7) and XXV (1-5), spouted vessels, see Pl. XXIV (6-14), and a zoomorphic example, see Pl. XXVI (9-10).

<sup>113</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 12.

<sup>114</sup> See the Jerablus Tahtani Project web site, <<http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/arch/jerablus/jerahome.html>> (22.01.2004): tomb catalogue, in pp. 16, object nos. JT 787, 445, 788, 814, 819, 822 and 653.

<sup>115</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig.7 (A387, A575, and A389).

Banat.<sup>116</sup> Tweezers appear to have been restricted to high-status burials and almost certainly represent personal grooming equipments.<sup>117</sup> Taking the forms and the sizes into consideration, none of the coppers can be assigned to weaponry. Most of the types of copper/copper alloys, such as pins, band, and rings, may have been accessories or ornaments worn on the body, whereas the pair of tweezers seems to have been used as tool for grooming.

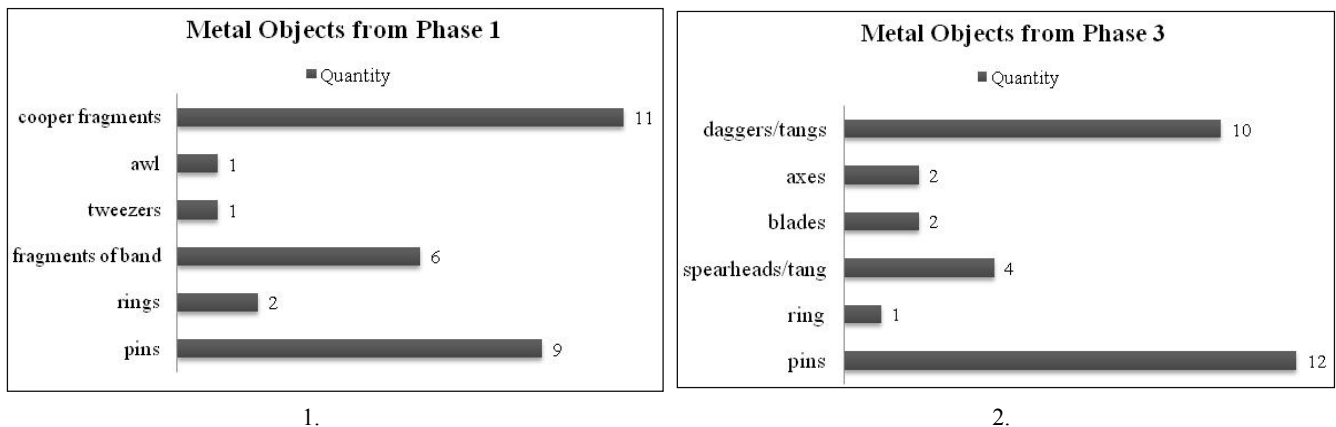


Fig. 2. 20 Copper/copper-alloy objects marked with the quantity from two stages (1 and 2: phases 1 and 3) of T. 302.

Metal assemblage retrieved from the upper levels shows various types (fig. 2.20: 2), amongst which weapons/tools are the most distinguished. They comprise specifically poker-butted spearheads, socket shaft axes, and thin-bladed daggers. In comparison with metals of Phase 1, some of the types of small artefacts, such as tweezers and bands, are currently absent. Toggle-pins with 12 pieces, although most were fragmented, are amongst the most numerous types, as 9 broken pins come from the phase 1 deposits. Spear heads have hook-ended narrow tangs with diamond sections (fig. 2.21: 3). Axes found in Tomb 302 are characterized by socket shaft forms (fig. 2.21: 4). Work by Philip has investigated the metalwork of the Carchemish region from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE and considered the appearance of socket-shaft axes, which seems to have superseded the preceding form of flat axes, as an indicator of technical innovation in metallurgy requiring two-piece moulds.<sup>118</sup> He thought that this form of axe was designed purely for fighting, and before his argument, other scholars termed the kind of weapon as “battle axe”<sup>119</sup>, which I prefer adopting in this paper. Battle axes present in T. 302 consist of plain shafts and short blades, in contrast to elaborated form with decoration on shaft represented in the Hypogeum at tell Ahmar.<sup>120</sup> They have two side edges paralleling with each other, vertical to cutting edge, and the plain cylindrical shaft with a round-formed hole through. Daggers occur, and these mainly consist of simple, small riveted blades (fig. 2.21: 5). However, the presence of a dagger blade bearing ribbed decoration (fig. 2.21: 6) has a good parallel at Tell Umm el-Marra.<sup>121</sup> Like the axes, the production of such daggers also requires two-piece moulds.

<sup>116</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig.7 (A386).

<sup>117</sup> Philip 2007: 192.

<sup>118</sup> Philip 2007: 192.

<sup>119</sup> e.g., Watkins 1983: 18-23; Philip 2007: 192.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter 3: Fig. 3. 23.

<sup>121</sup> Schwartz *et al.* 2003: 334, Fig. 21.



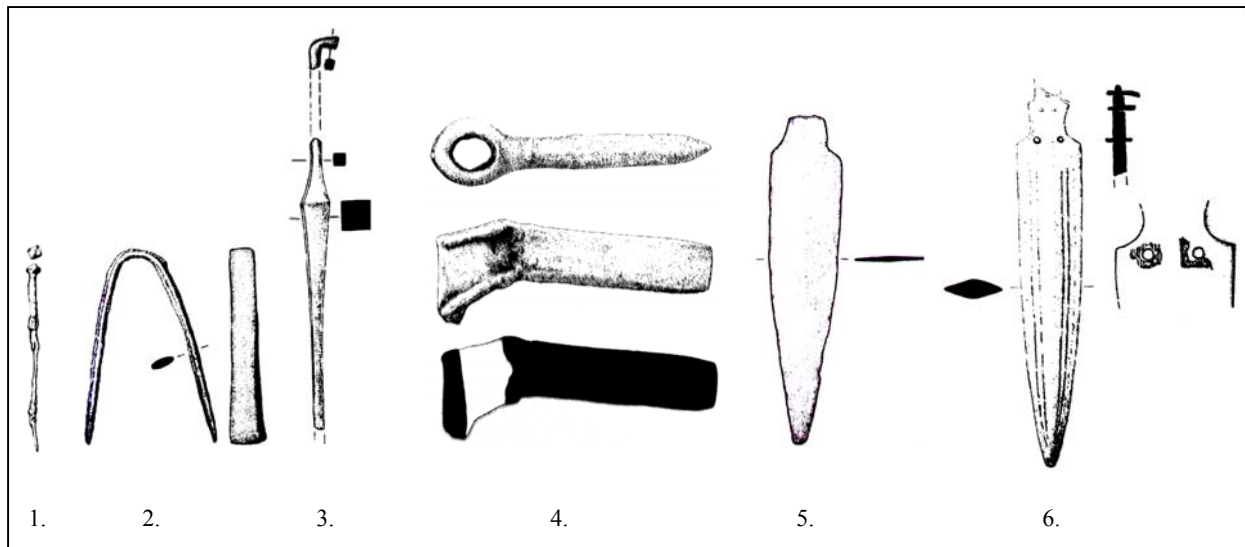


Fig. 2. 21 Selected metal objects from the tombs at Jerablus Tahtani: 1, toggle pin, JT 2288, T. 1687, L. 150 mm; 2, tweezers JT 654, T. 302, L. 80 mm; 3, spear head JT 363, T. 302, L. 143mm; 4, axe, JT 281, T. 302, L. 115 mm; 5, dagger blade, JT 449, T. 302, L. 153 mm; 6, dagger blade, JT 263, T. 302, L. 208 mm (after Philip 2007, Fig. 12. 1; not to scale).

Apart from ceramics and metals, other artefacts include a great deal of crystal beads made with gold and stone (fig. 2.22: 1), bone tubes, gold foil, a silver pin, a pierced shell amulet, ivory plaques, ivory dagger pommels, and ostrich eggshell fragments. One of the ivory plaques with incised border may have tapered into a triangle since traces of a transverse groove and tenon slots were found along its broken edge (fig. 2.22: 2). Nail holes in its surviving corners suggest that it was secured to a box as lid. A total of 18, coarse, partially-fired bull figurines (fig. 2.24, see below), were uncovered with a group of pots and other objects in the upper fills of the tomb. All of them belong to the tradition of coarse, hand-made clay works, and are analogous with male figurines found in T. 1036 as intra-mural grave in Area IV, which were prevailing throughout the EBA times.

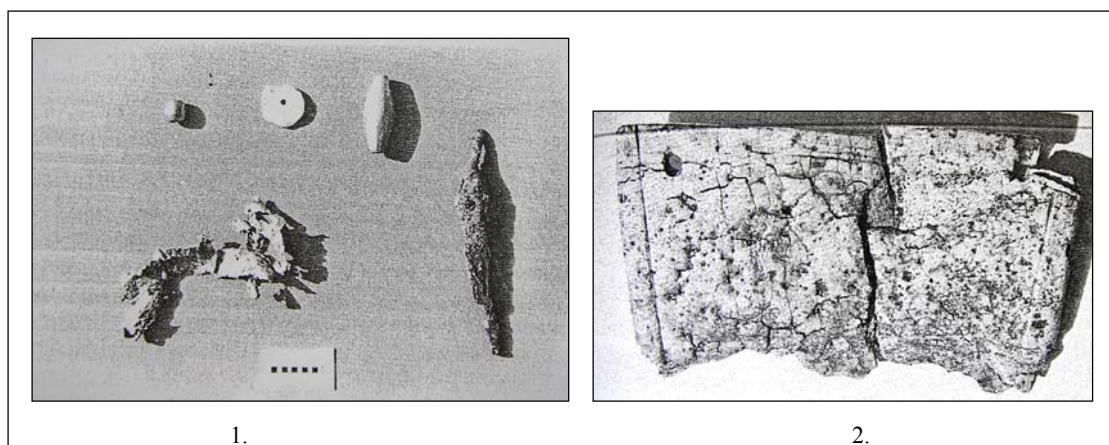


Fig. 2. 22 Selected objects from primary deposits in T. 302: 1, gold (JT 811-2), rock crystal (JT 813) beads, gold foil remnant (JT 793) and silver toggle pin (JT 821); 2, fragment of ivory plaque (JT 656), L. 10.1 cm, Ht. 5.2 cm (after Peltenburg et al. 1995, Figs. 12-3).



## Interpretation of the Contexts

The tomb was looted and the area was subject to exceptional floods.<sup>122</sup> Preliminary analysis of the tomb indicates a stratified sequence of deposits in the main chamber. Four separate phases have been identified from Phases 1 to 4 (table 2.8).<sup>123</sup> In fact, only Phase 1 is the primary deposits, which contained multiple burials with rich funerary inventory. As noticed by excavators, Phase 1 interments were affected by water action, removal of grave goods and human bones, and then were covered by phase 2 deposits.<sup>124</sup> Parts of bodies were removed, and some were found in front of the entrance to the tomb. In spite of the disturbed conditions, adult skulls had been carefully wedged into two corners of the main chamber. The skulls of earlier burials had been taken away from the bodies and placed in the corners. Why it was done is probably in order to make more room for a new one in the communal tomb.

<i>Phasing</i>	<i>Units and Concentrations</i>			<i>Elevation</i>	<i>Inclusions</i>
Phase 4	1			285.4-287.35	
	181				
Phase 3	395			? -285.27	171 Pottery vessels, metal objects, bull figurines and animal bones
	656		Conc. A		
	657		Conc. B		
	658	410	Conc. C		
Phase 2					Roof collapse, mound material, little object
Phase 1	385			284.66-285.4	330 pottery vessels, mainly of champagne cups, human/animal bones, metal objects, and other exotic objects.
	659		Conc. D		
	660	410	Conc. N		
	661		Conc. S		
	627		Charcoal	284.68-284.71	
	616		Mud-brick	284.52-284.77	

Table 2. 8 Separate phases of deposits in the main chamber of T. 302 (after footnote 109).

Apart from the disarticulated human bones, the inclusions of primary deposits are non-ceramic goods of exotic material and large numbers of containers. The non-ceramic goods of various types include ivory dagger pommels (JT 690 and 442), ivory plaques (JT 691 and 656), bone tubes (JT 2046-7), scraps of gold (JT 793), ostrich eggshells (JT 1785 and 679), gold/stone beads (JT 811-3), a silver pin (JT 821) and coppers/copper alloys. As documented in tomb catalogue, two gold beads and a rock crystal disc came from a same unit (616), which was assigned as mud brick, clay deposit in the corner of the main chamber, on the floor. These beads seem to have been part of a string varying in bead types. Metal remains were collected directly above the floor (unit 616) and in a corner (unit 627) of the main chamber. Peltenburg has noticed the absence of metal weapons from the primary

<sup>122</sup> Peltenburg 1999 a: 102.

<sup>123</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b: 431-3.

<sup>124</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 7.

deposits.<sup>125</sup> But his observation seems to be inaccurate, since pommels of weapons were discovered together with other exotic goods on the floor. Pommel known to us is a round part fixed on the end of the handle of a dagger. The pommel parts found in Tomb 302 although made with ivory are less valuable than the dagger blades, which were lost during or after the primary use of Tomb 302. The presence of the dagger pommels suggest that there would have been more objects accompanying the multiple inhumations, including at least dagger, or even other weapons. It is hypothesized that these were taken away by the living during the secondary burial practices, probably for recycling use because of their significant values, or they were robbed in the antiquity. In general, exotic goods were deposited as acts that allowed participants to further enhance their prestige. They would have been personal items belonging to the deceased in life, but it is also possible that all or part of them were donated by mourners as funerary gifts. On the other hand, rather than interpret these objects in functionalist terms, we can also consider them as symbolic artefacts utilized in funerary rituals.

About 330 pottery vessels are found in disarray with the remains of the deceased on the floor, and as other artefacts, not immediately associated with the human bones. It is almost certain that the very large number of pots had been deposited in the tomb over a considerable period of time. However, it is not certain that if they were introduced after multiple interments or gradually with each interment. Both complete (broken and unbroken) and fragmentary are present. The latter were almost certainly



broken after deposition and pieces lost as a consequence of extensively removal during the primary use of the tomb or of later disturbance. There is, however, a clear pattern of certain vessel types, notably the champagne cups. More than a hundred examples retrieved from the concentrations D, N, and S. (table 2.9) were piled on the floor against the southern wall and partly blocked the entrance. Judging from a photo (fig. 2.23), it seems that the heavy stemmed cups were initially stacked one on top of another. We may infer that the intact ones were deliberately broken by mourners. Several examples (3) were found in unit 385, which is located above the concentration D close to the phase 2 accumulations according to a diagram of pottery joins.<sup>126</sup>

Fig. 2. 23 Champagne cups in Concentration S in T. 302 (from Peltenburg *et al.* 1995, Fig. 11).

Besides, such vessels were also present in the tomb other than the main chamber, like in the entrance (2) and in the annex (2). They also have at least three similar examples found in pithos graves: two found in T. 573 and one in T. 612 (tables 2.9-10). The evidence can help dating the pithos graves and clarifying their comparative chronology: they were contemporary of or slightly later than the primary deposits of T.302. On the basis of the analysis of the contexts of these conspicuous vessels, it seems

<sup>125</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 10.

<sup>126</sup> Unit 385 is documented as grave fill of T. 302. This unit belongs to Phase 1 deposits above the concentration D, but due to its inclusion of silt and brick matrix, it seems to be close to phase 2 deposits; pottery joins analysis carried out by Jessica Tibbetts (1997), see Peltenburg 1999 b: Fig. 3.

that they arrived in the tomb as a result of different processes (table. 2.10). It is almost certain that large quantities of the cups were originally assembled in the tomb on the floor, and several examples occurred by chance in the entrance and annex probably as a result of the removal of bone remains and grave furnishings at later dates. Contemporary or slightly later than the primary use of Tomb 302, one to two champagne cups were deposited in the large jar graves accompanying the collective burials within.

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Contexts</i>
410	62	Fills of cons. C, N, S
659	10	Con. D
660	11	Con. N
661	19	Con. S
627	1	Charcoal deposit above the floor
385	3	Fill of the main chamber
<b>Total</b>	106	In the main chamber
554	2	Entrance of T. 302
697	2	Annex
573	2	Pithos tomb (573)
612	1	Pithos tomb (612)

Table 2. 9 Contexts of the champagne cups in T. 302 and pithos graves (*after footnote 109*).

<i>Contexts</i> <i>Sequence</i>	<i>Main Tomb Chamber</i>	<i>Other Features of T. 302</i>	<i>Pithos Graves</i>
phase 3	Con. C		
later than Phase 1		entrance and annex	Ts.573 & 612
phase 1	Cons. D, N, and S on the floor		

Table 2. 10 Different derivations of the champagne cups found in and around T. 302 (*according to table 2.9*).

Phase 2 deposits consisted of collapsed roof and mound material accumulated inside the main chamber, so the tomb was roofless with a subsided mound partly filled in the main chamber.<sup>127</sup> Over this distinctive aggregation, discrete concentrations of objects were located in loose, silty material along the north upper wall of the main chamber.<sup>128</sup> Recorded in the initial preliminary report of the excavations from 1992-4 seasons, Peltenburg described that concentrations A to C in the upper levels were characterized by the absence of champagne pots, relative scarcity of human bone, and the presence of weaponry and partially-fired bull figurines.<sup>129</sup> In a later work by him, which has specifically investigated mortuary practice at Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, he termed “caches” to

<sup>127</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 8, 10, where the hypothesis (4) points to the reason why Tomb 302 is roofless as excavated. This explanation meets most of the presently available evidence. In Peltenburg 1999 b, he assigned Phase 2 as the intervening accumulations; see also Peltenburg forthcoming: 8.

<sup>128</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b: 432, Pl. 4.

<sup>129</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 10, Figs. 14-6.

specifically illuminate the phase 3 deposits.<sup>130</sup> For one thing, it is very unclear what he has meant the “caches” actually represent. Cache generally means a hiding place used especially for storing goods or valuables. And then, we have little idea how many “caches” were uncovered in the upper fills. Shall we understand that the three concentrations (A to C) would imply a total number of these “caches”, or there would be more? But without any concrete description or explanation, it is hard to understand what “cache” implies. Whatever the discrete places termed as “caches” or as concentrations, they yielded a minimum of three (concentrations A to C) and are deliberately placed deposits separated from phase 1, since the intervening phase 2 accumulations existed between the phases 1 and 3, and pottery joins analysis also indicates that there is no links between phases 1 and 3. Significantly, the phase 3 deposits were not subject to disturbance.

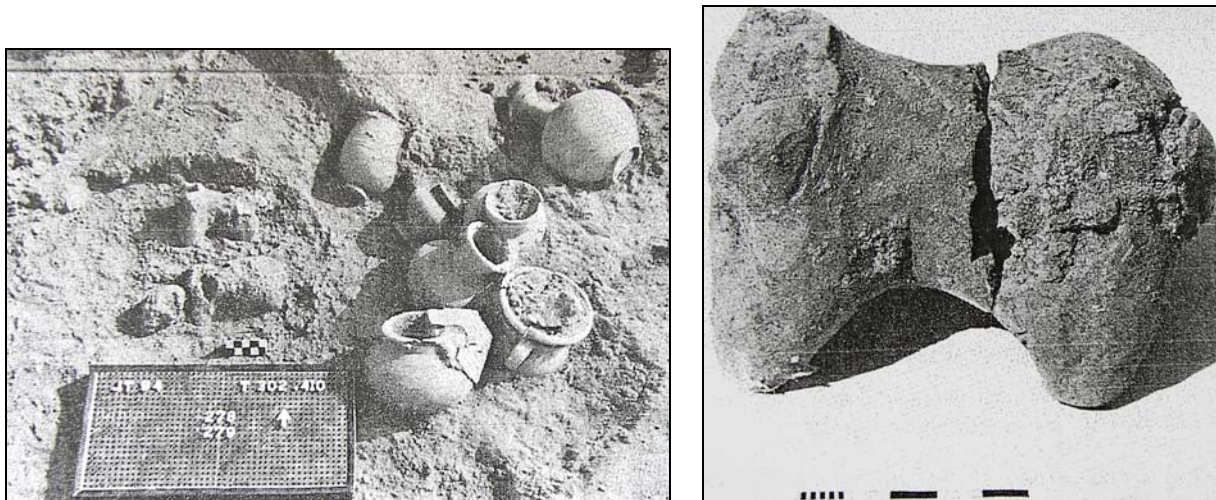


Fig. 2. 24 Offering items in discrete “caches” (from Peltenburg et al. 1995, Figs. 15-16).

Pottery material from the upper levels, although smaller in quantity than that from lower levels, is also numerous, with 171 pieces of pottery vessels. The majority of pottery vessels (ca. 108 pieces) of Phase 3 were found in three concentrations from A to C. According to a photo (fig. 2.24: left), we can have a look at the state of the grouping of the artefacts. There are three (or 4?<sup>131</sup>) bull figurines next to one another, and adjacent to them lies a variety of pottery vessels, including jars, a pedestal vessel, a goblet and a jug (a parallel one shown in above fig. 2.20: 10) placed above the cylindrical-handled bowl (see above fig. 2.19: 2). However, all the artefacts as documented come from unit 410 rather from the three concentrations, so shall we regard this unit as one of the “caches” that Peltenburg referred to?<sup>132</sup> As recorded in the tomb catalogue (table 2.11), each concentration contained a group of bull figurines in the range of 2 to 7 pieces (complete or fragmentary), a cluster of pottery vessels of various types, and metal objects, including especially a variety of weapons. Small flasks and jars (fig. 2.19: 7-8) found inside the shallow bowls, along with the Hama goblets and small cups, all were frequently found together in the concentrations (A to C). This group of

<sup>130</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b: 432, Pl. 4 shows one of the caches in phase 3 deposits of T. 302; see also Peltenburg forthcoming: 8-9, he mentioned again that phase 3 caches are deliberately placed deposits, securely separated from Phase 1.

<sup>131</sup> Four figurines in Unit 410 are documented with the nos. JT 388, 388.01-03, according to T. 302’s catalog see footnote 109 above. But from the photo, only 3 of them can be distinguished.

<sup>132</sup> All come from unit 410 as documented in the tomb (302) catalogue, see footnote 108 above.

pottery vessels was probably a fixed table set used by the living at that time. There is a debate as to whether vessels were material residues of commemorative celebrations during the post-interment period or to be intended for the ancestors in the afterlife.

It is almost certain that, as Peltenburg suggests, the unusual stratigraphic separation of phase 3 represents post-mortuary activities.<sup>133</sup> Apart from items clearly derived from the “caches”, large quantities of animal bones were scattered in the upper fills of the tomb. The first preliminary report says that in the matrix of inserted mound material and accumulated silts lay disturbed concentrations of disarticulated inhumations, animal bones and artefacts.<sup>134</sup> Peltenburg mentioned in his later work that most of animal bones are post-phase 1, thus he argued that they are unlikely remnants of primary burial rites.<sup>135</sup> It would be useful to have more contextual information on the animal remains. Nevertheless, this paper will adopt the latest analysis made from the excavator. Faunal analysis<sup>136</sup> indicates that body parts of the animals are common, and various. For example, some bones are from the meat-bearing parts of the animal, others, like the abundant caprine remains, come from extremities which carry little meat. The fact is that all of animal bones were disarticulated except for dog and rock dove as fairly complete animals, indicating that the animals were butchered before deposition, and some may have been cooked supported by the traces of burning. Dog and rock dove were slaughtered and laid in the tomb with complete bodies. In other words, persons may have conducted a series of procedures on the animals, such as slaughtering, cutting and cooking before body parts of animals and complete ones were deposited.

Artefacts	Type	Quantity		
		Conc. A	Conc. B	Conc. C
Pottery	Bowls	10	15	20
	Tripod bowl		1	
	Cups	6	5	7
	Goblets	4	4	3
	Jars	2	8	9
	Globular jar		1	4
	Pedestal jars	1	3	
	Pedestal flask	1?		
	Pedestal base		1	
	Bottle		1	
	Flask			1
	Cooking pot			1

<sup>133</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b: 432-3.

<sup>134</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 10.

<sup>135</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 6-7.

<sup>136</sup> Original analysis of faunal remains found in T. 302 was not published, so the evidence here predominately comes from the description from Peltenburg, see Peltenburg forthcoming: 6.

<b>Copper</b>	Pins		4	4
	Torc			1
	Spearheads/tang		1	1
	Axes			2
	Daggers/tang		1	4
	Blades			2
	Miscs.	1	7	3
	<b>Clay</b>	Figurines	2	7
<b>Other ornaments</b>	Bead			1
	Silver fitting			1

Table 2. 11 Artefacts from the concentrations A to C (after footnote 109).

#### 2.4.4 Satellite Graves near Tomb 302

Pithos and pit graves can be regarded as satellite burials, since they were either associated with Tomb 302 or the imposing mound. A series of pithos burials (e.g., Ts. 573, 582, 612, and 643) were horizontally placed in eroded levels to the south of Tomb 302, and thus they were contemporary to or slightly later than phase 1 of T. 302.<sup>137</sup> Most of the narrow-necked jars, some in brick-lined hollows, contained human skeletal remains from more than one individual. The number of individuals and the age range contained in the pithos graves (e.g., Ts. 573 and 582) may be indicative of some form of family relationship. Surrounded each of the burial pithos was a variety of vessels types and shapes: bowls, small and large jars, and miniatures. Both Plain Simple Ware vessels and Metallic Ware vessels are in evidence. Two of these pithos graves contained one or two examples of champagne cups, and this particular form in Plain Simple Ware is in quantity included in Phase 1 mortuary assemblage of Tomb 302. Apart from pottery, bronze adornments in the form of toggle-pins and bracelet were found within.

A total of 12 pit graves as a result of recent work were placed around the mound adjacent to the southern limit marked by two kerbs (e.g., 2503, 2649), whereas the earlier pithos burials were placed beyond the mound.<sup>138</sup> With the evidence for stratigraphic correlations with the passage in front of T. 302, the insertion of pit graves differs in time, at least four graves contemporary to the first version of the passage (2700) with the remaining ones, like T. 3242, slight later than the later passage (990). Evidence for the skeletal remains from the pit graves is very limited, and the majority of the graves contained pottery and other objects with the absence of human bones. For instance, T. 2618 contained a rich body of materials, including bowls, globular jars, copper bracelets and toggle pins, and over 750 beads (fig. 2.25). Only in two pit graves (e.g., Ts. 290 and 3234) one or two infants were identified. From this evidence we shall see that the pit graves should have contained infants, in contrast to the previous pithos graves of multiple inhumations.

<sup>137</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 13, Figs. 21-3; tomb numbers of pithos graves are according to those documented in the preliminary report of 2000 season published in the JT project website.

<sup>138</sup> In 1998-2000 campaigns, see "2000 report" published in the JT project website; see also Peltenburg *et al.* 2000: 71.

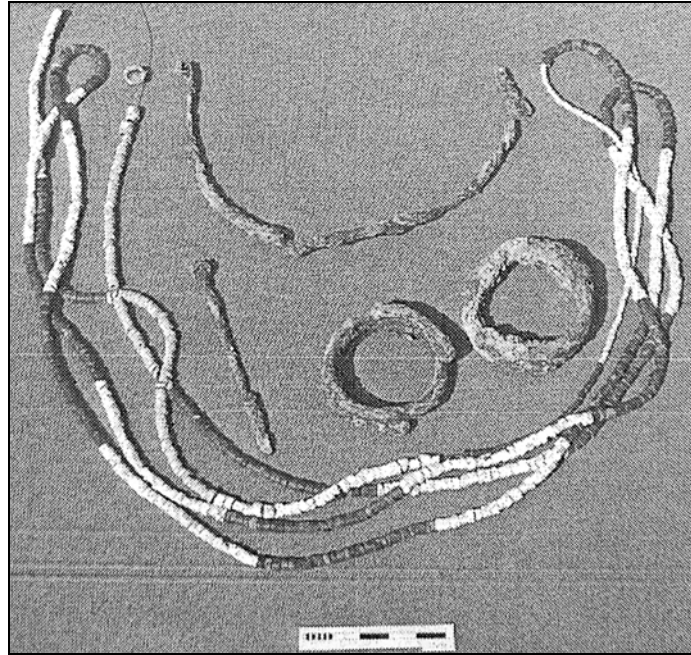


Fig. 2. 25 Selected grave goods from T. 2618 (after Peltenburg et al. 2000, Fig. 16).

In sum, during primary use of T. 302 the interments in pithoi took place outside the mound, whereas after the phase 1 of T. 302 more pit graves were inserted into the mound beneath the monumental tomb structure. The occurrence of the pit graves around Tomb 302 indicates that the function of the tomb was profoundly altered from initially being an actual burial place in the middle of the third millennium to being a cultic place of the dead towards the end of that millennium.

## 2.5 RE-CONSTRUCTING FUNERARY RITUALS RELATED TO TOMB 302

After full investigation of funerary data at Jerablus Tahtani mainly from post-fort EBA episode (Period 2B), Tomb 302 stands out of all the graves according to the aboveground monumental architecture, extra-mural location, association with an imposing mound as well as numerous satellite graves. Further, considering the tomb contents, it contained the largest number of individuals, some of object and ceramic types (e.g., tweezers, ivory plaques, ostrich eggshell, and champagne cups) not seen elsewhere on the site, and discrete offering places in the upper levels where large quantity of animal bones were also found. Its stratified deposits and contents of the tomb indicate recurrent use of the tomb structure, in contrast to other graves mainly comprised types which were accessible for only a very limited time. They were situated between and under house floors, and virtually all lacked arrangement for recurrent entry. They were rapidly covered by successive building levels so that there was soon little visible sign of the location of ancestors. The above characteristics of Tomb 302, on the one hand, undoubtedly indicate the high status of the interred individuals within, and on the other hand, can be interpreted to reflect complex series of funerary rituals, which are distinct from rituals accompanying other burials on the site. Its associated rituals are likely consisted of two stages. The first stage would then have comprised funerary and mourning rituals at the time of interments in Tomb 302.



### 2.5.1 Rituals during the Burial Process Itself

The evidence of Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani is restricted to funerary ritual which was in a small scale and compartmentalized in the chambered tomb. After the construction of the tomb, 12 individuals were subsequently transferred to the main chamber. The burial practices probably had many stages. The disarticulation of human bones might have been influenced by several external factors, such as bone preservation, and secondary burial process. It has been impossible to reconstruct complete skeletons from the commingled remains, since bone preservation was moderate to good, and the preliminary analysis on human dentitions shows that the overall state of the skeletal remains from Jerablus Tahtani is “brittle” and “much fragmented”.<sup>139</sup> It is to be noted that the Phase 1 interments were affected by lootings and water actions in antiquity. The relocation of the older inhumations may also account for the disturbance of human skeletal remains. Evidence for parts of bodies found in front of the entrance to the tomb suggests that the bodies were removed for secondary treatment. In spite of the disturbed conditions, skulls of adult were carefully deposited in two corners on the floor. Alternatively, the bodies could not be interred until the proper time, for reasons such as ritual restrictions on the acceptable moments to place a body in the tomb or the need to accumulate the necessary resources for a proper (or impressively lavish) ceremony.<sup>140</sup> All of the bone material is consequently anatomically not intact, raising the possibility for the interpretation that individual presence had been destroyed in order to transform individuals into a collective identity.

During the primary interments, grave furnishings of a variety of categories, such as pottery vessels in quantity, coppers and other exotic goods, were placed on the floor with the multiple inhumations. Various types of the non-ceramic objects, many of which are matched by those found in the contemporaneous tombs at Jerablus Tahtani, include toggle-pins, rings, daggers, crystal beads, bone tubes, silver and gold ornaments. They can be interpreted as personal belongings of the deceased individuals. They can be interpreted as personal belongings of the deceased individuals. The possibility exists, therefore, that some of the objects (e.g., ivory plaques, ostrich eggshells) that were totally absent from all the other tombs at the site were donated by persons who participated in Tomb 302 mortuary rituals. Ostrich egg fragments have parallels in the large, built tombs at Mari, in Tomb 7 (Chamber F) at Tell Banat, and in Royal Cemetery of Ur, suggesting that ostrich egg to be used for manufacturing decorated objects or this material itself may have been disbursed for the funerals of high-ranking persons.<sup>141</sup> The bronze pair of tweezers has been interpreted as implements for grooming, perhaps intended to provide a luxurious existence in the afterlife.

More than a hundred champagne cups were piled in the southwestern half of the main chamber. All of these stemmed cups vessels were found broken and stacked one on top of another. It can be inferred that the intact ones were deliberately broken by participants during the funerary rituals. The champagne cups found with disproportionately small cups probably as dippers, appear to have been a

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<sup>139</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 7; Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: 25-6.

<sup>140</sup> Schwartz 2007: 41; Bloch 1971.

<sup>141</sup> Jean-Marie 1990: 308, Pl. V. M (97-8); Porter 2002 b: an ostrich egg vessel shown in a photo beneath, 169; Woolley 1934.



set of drinking vessels.<sup>142</sup> The long-stemmed cup – namely, champagne cup or fruit-stand - is particular PSW vessel type and widespread in the Euphrates Valley from Carchemish Dam to Tishrin Dam basins, where its variations appear in significant quantities from the first half of the third millennium BCE.<sup>143</sup> Initially understood as the vessels exclusively to be manufactured for funerary use, more recent excavations have revealed that “they were also used within the contexts of daily life as extensively as in the tombs during early EBA”.<sup>144</sup> Peltenburg notices that a typical Euphrates champagne cup is carried by a lavishly attired female on a shell inlay from Mari and argues that numerous champagne cups discovered in Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani may have been used for ceremonial drinking in mortuary feasts.<sup>145</sup> Whatever their intended function, these specialized vessels found in association with funerary and domestic contexts may have involved in both funerary and life ceremonies in early complex societies along the Euphrates River. However, as other pottery vessels, it is not certain that if they were brought to the tomb after multiple burials or if they were introduced with each interment. Had the pottery vessels, including hundreds of the champagne cups, been introduced once accompanying the multiple interments, I would be agreed with the assumption from Peltenburg that the champagne cups are material residues of large mortuary feasts, in which a large number of participants may have been involved, as a case at Tell Ahmar would indicate.<sup>146</sup> Based on the burial population in the communal Tomb 302, the champagne cups with an average number of approximately 8 individuals along with about 20 other vessels arrived in the tomb with each interment.<sup>147</sup> Such a small quantity of pottery vessels does not fit his argument; equally, it is difficult to ascertain whether feasting indeed took place. Apart from the frequent occurrence of champagne cups consistent with use for ceremonial drinking, other vessels connected with the pouring and containing of liquids may also have been used in a ceremonial way.

Apart from some of the artefacts with the remains of the deceased which are reminiscent of ritual activities as discussed above, circumstances in the main chamber showed that a central path running through the length of the main chamber was largely devoid of objects and bones. This area may have served as passageway for the convenience of transportation of the grave goods. The role of the empty passageway allows us to infer that it may have allowed on-going funerary rituals to take place. Ultimately, the main chamber was filled with collapse roof and mound material, suggesting the completion of the associated ritual activities during the primary interments.

### *3.5.2 Rituals during the Post-Interment Period*

Evidence of secondary commemorations is usually identified where residues are found outside the tomb. At Tell Umm el-Marra, the interments of animals, especially equids, and human infants took place in the installations adjacent to a series of tombs (6 tombs thus far excavated), perhaps as

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<sup>142</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 5.

<sup>143</sup> Sertok 2007: Fig. 16.5.

<sup>144</sup> The champagne cups were recovered in domestic layers at sites Horum Höyük, Zeytini Bahçe, Mezra Höyük and Shiyukh Tahtani, see Sertok 2007: 243-4.

<sup>145</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 5, Fig. 6.

<sup>146</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b: 432; Peltenburg forthcoming: 5, where he mentioned that in a large number of participants are indicated by the quantities of the champagne cups in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar. However, in the case of the hypogeum, only dual inhumations were found, this evidence that is quite different from that of T. 302.

<sup>147</sup> 106 pieces divide 12 interments, an average number is 8.83.

Schwartz suggests, as secondary offerings.<sup>148</sup> Another example may include a pithos burial laid out on the top of the covering slabs of K 9 chamber tomb at Gre Virike.<sup>149</sup> Depositional history of Tomb 302, therefore, enables us to isolate different, sequential mortuary practices in the same locale. Since phase 3 deposits were not affected by later disturbance, it is possible to reconstruct the activities that took place after the primary interment rituals. Many generations after the completion of the primary interments and when the tomb was roofless, persons, who may have had family affiliations with the ancestors, periodically, deposited objects in the discrete places, namely “caches”, above the accumulation of roof collapse and mound material in Tomb 302. Each of such “caches” consists of a similar mixture of corresponding categories of artefacts, including bull figurines, mass-produced pottery vessels, and metal objects. The fact that the artefacts were virtually reflected in grave assemblages from the tombs at Jerablus Tahtani, suggests they although not associated with human skeletal remains were funerary. The non-ceramic objects, like bull figurines and metal objects can be interpreted as offerings for the ancestors made by persons who participated in post-interment commemorative rituals. A variety of pottery vessels, many of which were matched by those found in the contemporaneous contexts either of funerary or domestic on the site, includes flasks, jars, shallow bowls, goblets and small cups. As mentioned above, it is not certain that if they were used as fixed table set by the living in ceremonial feasts<sup>150</sup> or if they were intended for the ancestors in the afterlife. To interpret the motivation of separate deposition of the artefacts in the “caches” during post interment period, Peltenburg argued that the acts of remembrance allowed participants to lay claim to privileged affiliation with the ancestors, thus further enhancing their prestige.<sup>151</sup>

Apart from the artefacts found in the discrete offering places, large quantities of animal bones were scattered in the upper fills of the tomb. The animal remains in terms of the weight and the richness in species apparently indicate that animals represented by body parts or occasionally complete bodies had played important role in the commemorative rituals. In terms of the interpretation of the abundant animal remains, there is currently no substantial evidence that would support the assumption proposed by Peltenburg that the animal remains were remnants of mortuary banquets.<sup>152</sup> Had the meat been eaten by humans, the bones with chewing marks would have been food remains of meals; otherwise we should consider that they were generally caused by carnivores. If such animals served as food offerings, they should have been intended for the ancestors in the afterlife because of the inclusion of the upper fills in the chamber of Tomb 302 is absent from human bones. Here, the question arises that why the food offerings of animal meats were not made by the living in mortuary rituals associated with the burials, rather they were frequently made in the post-interment rituals? Although the possibility of the occurrence of such offerings during the interment rituals still exists, there is a lack of excavated evidence which would confirm such an act.

Philological record related to *kispu(m)* rites in later texts may provide useful clues to the

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<sup>148</sup> Schwartz 2007: 51.

<sup>149</sup> Ökse 2002: 275-6; Ökse 2005: 38.

<sup>150</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b: 433, he mentioned that the phase 3 caches may be equated with *kispu* offerings; Peltenburg forthcoming: 9; Tsukimoto 1985.

<sup>151</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 9.

<sup>152</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 6.

interpretation of the conspicuous consumption of animals during post-interment period.<sup>153</sup> Kispu(m)-celebration, i.e., “Kispu(m)-Feier”, often was held in honor of ancestors, usually dead kings.<sup>154</sup> Not only descendents of kings, but also soldiers, princes, and many other social groups, who were not privileged to have ritual tendances (“rituellen Pfleger”) after death, were invited to the celebrations, in which food and drink (“Essen und Trinken”) were served.<sup>155</sup> The occurrence of considerable amounts of animal bones in the upper fills of Tomb 302 is consistent with the kispu(m) practice, especially the kispu(m)-celebration. In this regard, we can infer that the acts concerned with making artefacts’ and animals’ offerings probably served similar purposes, that is to legitimize the status of the donors by conducting ritual performances of commemoration for the ancestors. With current evidence, we have little idea where ritual activities might have taken place.

It is suggested at that time, the function of the tomb was shifted. The tomb was regarded as a cultic place rather than an actual burial ground. The satellite graves confirms this opinion, since, as discussed above, their placements were either associated with Tomb 302 or the mound, whereas burial had previously been confined to the fort (intramural graves as discussed above) or to outside the fort to the north (in Area IV, extramural graves). They included multiple burials in pithoi and one to two infant interments in plain pits. The pithos burials on the basis of the tomb assemblages seem contemporary or slightly later than the primary use of Tomb 302. They were intentionally placed in a horizontal level to the south of the monument Tomb 302. After the mound was put up, pit graves were inserted to the mound. All of the satellite graves seem to have been a desire to locate as close as possible to Tomb 302. As Peltenburg argued, “the tomb became a monument for the perseverance of tradition and memory, possibly a marker of descent lines or other forms of group affiliation”.<sup>156</sup> We can also consider that persons who lost their lives so young were privileged to be buried within this cultic place.

In summary, the funerary rituals related to the monumental Tomb 302 comprise many stages. The burial ritual itself comprised the transformation of life cycle of the individual into that of the family unit, by the repeated practices of insertion of the deceased in a family tomb. A ritual act may have been performed each time an interment was inserted, demonstrated by deposition of the exotic goods either as personal ornaments of the deceased individuals or as donations and large quantities of pottery vessels served for the deceased’s afterlife. During post-mortuary period, the tomb was regarded as a cultic place, around which satellite graves were then placed. Within the chamber of Tomb 302 in the upper deposits, a series of ritual activities for commemoration took place. Persons periodically deposited rich offering for the ancestors in the discrete places and conducted kispu (m)-celebration involving the consumption of the animal.

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<sup>153</sup> Tsukimoto 1985.

<sup>154</sup> Tsukimoto 1985: 68

<sup>155</sup> Tsukimoto 1985: 68-9.

<sup>156</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 8.

## CHAPTER 3 TELL AHMAR

### 3.1 SETTINGS OF THE SITE

Tell Ahmar is located on the east bank of the Euphrates, at some distance downstream from the confluence of the Sajur River. It is located in a fertile plain: about 28 km length and a maximum width of 10 km (fig. 3.1). Evidence from Neo-Assyrian inscriptions has revealed that Tell Ahmar is the site of ancient Til Barsib, one of the major cities of the Aramaean tribal state of Bit Adini.<sup>157</sup> Neo-Hittite inscriptions from Tell Ahmar as well as other places indicate that the site was also called Masuwari in Luwian.<sup>158</sup>

With the discovery of stone sculptures and inscriptions dating to the Iron Age, the site initially attracted attention from archaeologists early in the last century. Subsequently, it was excavated by a French expedition directed by Thureau-Dangin in 1928 and from 1929 to 1931.<sup>159</sup> The result of this together with a brief review of previous studies was published in 1936. One of their major findings was an extraordinary Early Bronze Age stone built tomb, namely, “l’hypogée”, from which over a thousand pottery vessels and an impressive collection of bronzes were retrieved.<sup>160</sup> A half century after the significant publication, Tell Ahmar was reopened. Guy Bunnens started a new excavation programme in 1988, first with the University of Melbourne and then with the University of Liège from 2000 onwards. The renewed interest in a site was due to the building of the Tishrine dam on the Euphrates, near the village of Yusef Pasha, which was threatening many historical sites over a distance of about 70 km along the river up to the Turkish border. Several significant sites, therefore, were chosen, and Tell Ahmar was one of them. It was a large site in the EBA times and measured ca. 2 ha., comparable to Carchemish, which occupied c. 4 ha. confined to the main mound in the third millennium.<sup>161</sup> Also like Carchemish, the morphology of the entire mound was made up of three main parts (fig. 3.1):<sup>162</sup>

- An Acropolis (the main tell) was originally 25 m above the surrounding plain, a feature c. 250×150 meters in area on edge of the natural terrace that overlooks the alluvium plain of the Euphrates.
- The Middle City extends over some 350 m to the west of the site acropolis. It is about 10-15 m above the surrounding plain to the north and partly covered by the modern village and cemetery.
- The Lower City describes a half circle to the north of the Acropolis and the Middle City; it is

<sup>157</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 163.

<sup>158</sup> Bunnens 2006: Figs. 21-2.

<sup>159</sup> Thureau Dangin 1929: 185-205.

<sup>160</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 96-108.

<sup>161</sup> The main mound of Carchemish was identified as 300 m long and 100 m wide, and plus an estimation of 0.5 ha. for the minimum occupied area, in total a surface of ca.4 ha., see Bunnens 2007: 44-5, table 3.1.

<sup>162</sup> Bunnens (ed.) 1990: Fig. 1; Verardi 2007: Fig. 1.

about 1200 m in diameter. It has been observed from excavations in 1988 that the plain of the Lower City has been flattened for the reason of intensive bulldozing made by modern villagers. The semi-circular shape of its boundary is, however, still visible.

The periodization of the site was first made by the French archaeologists, who reported that Tell Ahmar had a rather long life (e.g., Ubaid, Early Bronze Age IV, Iron Age II/III, and Hellenistic; see also fig. 3.28 below).<sup>163</sup> The site phasing has been refined as a result of more recent excavations, and a continuing stratigraphic sequence from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age down to Roman period has been established, comprising the following phases (table 3.1): Early Bronze Age<sup>164</sup>, Middle Bronze Age<sup>165</sup>, Late Bronze Age<sup>166</sup>, Iron Age<sup>167</sup>, Persian, Hellenistic<sup>168</sup> and Roman periods<sup>169</sup>, Islamic and modern. According to archaeological material, the periods of the Early Bronze, Middle Bronze and Iron Ages are of greater significance than other occupations examined in excavations at the site.

<i>General Period</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Stratum</i>	<i>Principal Characteristics</i>	<i>Location</i>
<b>Islamic</b>			Burials	Top levels
<b>Late Hellenistic&amp;Roman</b>			A stone structure	Acropolis & Area C
<b>Persian and Hellenistic</b>			Pits, ceramics, clay figurines	Area B
<b>Assyrian Iron Age</b>	ca. 900-700		A complex of three buildings, urban layout, Assyrian palace, Lion gate, statue, carved ivories. etc.	Areas C, D, and E.
<b>Pre-Assyrian period</b>	ca. 1000		Luwian inscription “ hieroglyphs” Aramaean level	Area C above Hypogeum
<b>Late Bronze Age</b>	Second millennium		A mud-brick wall, stone foundation, pottery sherds	Area S
<b>Middle Bronze Age II</b>		VIII-XI	Buildings, ceramics, objects	Area S
<b>III/IV</b>	Mid-3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium		Hypogeum, a huge stone building	Acropolis Area S
<b>Early Bronze Age</b>				
<b>I/II</b>	Early-3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium	1-5	Domestic buildings, pottery	Area A

Table 3. 1 Site periods with main characteristics at Tell Ahmar.

Extensive excavations have been conducted annually, from 1988 to 2001. Currently, several soundings for the purpose of stratigraphic investigation in Area S and twelve major exposures (Areas A- C, CJ, and D-M; fig. 3.1) had been opened. Main deposits of Early Bronze Age were encountered in Areas A and S. The Hypogeum previously excavated by the French expedition was re-identified by the team from the University of Melbourne in 1988.<sup>170</sup> From then on, its immediate vicinity to the

<sup>163</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: plates volume.

<sup>164</sup> Bunnens (ed.)1990: 11-105; Bunnens 1992: 1-2, Fig. 2; Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 164-6, Figs. 2-3.

<sup>165</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: Figs. 4-5.

<sup>166</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 166.

<sup>167</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 170-2, Figs. 6-13.

<sup>168</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 75-83; Bunnens 1989: Fig. 2.

<sup>169</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 167, Fig. 3.

<sup>170</sup> Bunnens (ed.)1990: 15.

north has been explored.<sup>171</sup> Due to the general aim of this dissertation to focus on mortuary practices during the third millennium, domestic/funerary contexts beyond this millennium will be under the general consideration but not specifically presented in the following.

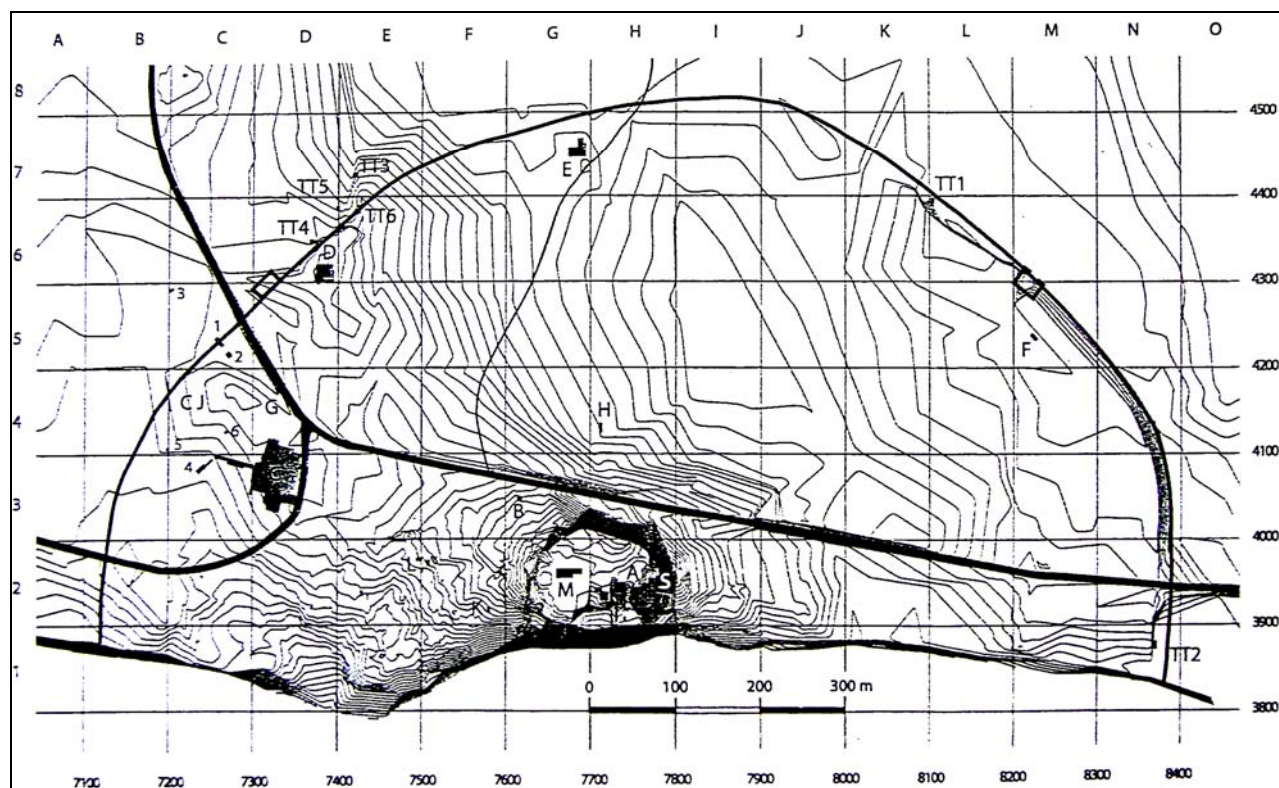


Fig. 3. 1 Map of the site showing areas that have been excavated since 1988 (after Verardi 2007, Fig. 1).

- Areas A is located on the Acropolis (the main tell), to the south of the Hypogeum. Excavations of this area were conducted in 1997 and 1998 (not yet published). During the first campaign in 1988, a series of soundings were set up in the southeastern part of to the Acropolis. The location of the exposures was considered to link up the work with predecessors. It was still clearly visible that a deep trench to the north and the Hypogeum on its right side corresponding to an excavation of the French. The soundings were numbered from Loci 1 to 8 ranging between  $6 \times 2$  m and  $5 \times 7$  m in size, with the majority of them extending from north to south and two soundings operated to the west.<sup>172</sup> Five strata (1-5) there beneath thick top soils were identified, which yielded domestic small buildings with one or two rooms. Exposures in Area A have revealed the existence of a level pertaining to the first stages of the Early Bronze Age (EBA I/II).
- Area S is located on the south-eastern slope of the Acropolis. This area was one of few places on the main tell that was not occupied by modern houses and gardens or covered with dump tipped out by the French excavators. In this case, Area S was selected in 1991 to start a new stratigraphic investigation.

<sup>171</sup> Bunnens 1992: 1-2; Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 164; Dugay 2005.

<sup>172</sup> Bunnens 1993-4: 142; Bunnens (ed.) 1990: 11, Fig. 7.

### 3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Although the French excavations reported a few pottery sherds dating to the Ubaid period, occupation of the site is by no means earlier than the Early Bronze Age according to Bunnens.<sup>173</sup> Most surviving remains of the Early Bronze Age were encountered in Areas A and S. An early phase of Early Bronze Age (EBA I/II) is best represented in Area A, where five strata (numbered from 1 to 5) of domestic buildings were identified under uneven top soil. A burial deposit (F42) contained a primary interment found underneath the wall of a building, neither with grave structure nor container.<sup>174</sup> It was dug from an occupational floor of stratum 1b and entirely comprised in the lower stratum 2a. The individual was buried in the flexed position with the head to the west, facing south. A few sherds, possibly intrusive, and a reconstructed pot of the so-called Late Reserved Slip found near the feet of the body were only material recovered from this burial deposit.<sup>175</sup> Similar burials of such type are also known from the next chronological sequence (EBA III/IV) on the site. According to the stratigraphic contexts of the burial deposit related to strata 1b and 2a as well as the Late Reserved Slip Ware vessel, it belongs to the Early Bronze Age I/II.

Judging from these remains, Tell Ahmar was probably a small village in the first half of the third millennium BCE. The second half of the third-millennium has witnessed a significant change from the previous period at Tell Ahmar. The Hypogeum, a corbel-walled two-chambered tomb, testifies to this change. The French regarded it as an isolated structure, but more recent excavations established that this partially aboveground mausoleum was integrated into a complex.<sup>176</sup> The mortuary complex included not only the Hypogeum but also a series of thirteen stone steps to the north-west of the Hypogeum and a building surrounded by large stone walls containing six child burials and two plastered pits north of the Hypogeum (fig. 3.4). The Hypogeum has yielded strikingly large quantities of pottery vessels and impressive collections of bronze objects. According to the previous studies, the pottery material in terms of vessel forms and ware fabrics is dated to the mid-third millennium BCE, while bronze assemblage including especially a variety of weapons is suggested to belong to the EBA III/IV.<sup>177</sup>

A transformation from EBA III to EBA IV is demonstrated by a great increase of the emergence large urban centers as Ebla in the west, Tell Chuera, Tell Mozan, Tell Beidar, Tell Brak, and Tell Leilan in the east, and Mari in the middle. Apart from the ostentatious and conspicuous funerary monument, another indication of the transformation at Tell Ahmar is given by a large stone building coated with white plaster situated on the southeastern slope of the mound, contemporary with or slightly later than the construction of the Hypogeum. The excavation in Area S has revealed one of its corners built with the stone walls of ca. 1.5 m thick, extending eight meters in the north-west/south-east direction and ten meters in the north-east/south-west direction. According to the monument's unusual

<sup>173</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 120-4; Bunnens (ed.)1990; Bunnens 1992; Roobaert – Bunnens 1999.

<sup>174</sup> Bunnens 1990 (ed.): 12, Figs. 9, 14, 15.

<sup>175</sup> Bunnens 1990 (ed.): Fig. 44.

<sup>176</sup> Bunnens 1992: Fig. 2; Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: Fig. 2; Dugay 2005: Fig. 1.

<sup>177</sup> Mallowan 1937: 335-9, he suggests a date close to 2500 BCE for the Hypogeum pottery; Jamieson 1993, "Horizon 2B"; Tubb 1982: 4, 9, 11; Watkins 1983: 18, 20, 22.

feature, Bunnens is convinced of its significance and considers this building to serve for public use.<sup>178</sup>

Directly above the Hypogeum was the so-called Aramaean “Bâtiment Est” examined in the initial excavations. The structural relationship between the Hypogeum and the “Bâtiment Est” was clarified by the Melbourne University team in 1988.<sup>179</sup> Room 13 of this structure was exactly erected above the main chamber of Hypogeum, which suggests that the builders of the “Bâtiment Est” must, therefore, have known the location of these tomb walls. Added with the evidence for a few finds (e.g., clay figures and two casting moulds) associated with this building, Bunnens suggests that the “Bâtiment Est” initially dating to the Iron Age seems to belong to a period much closer to the Hypogeum, probably dating to Middle Bronze Age.

### 3.3 A CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Pottery material belonging to the earlier phases of the Early Bronze Age (I/II) predominately stems from domestic levels in Area A. There have been no objects found in these strata thus far; therefore, the archaeological chronology of this period has been worked out through detailed and comparative ceramic analysis.<sup>180</sup> A total of nearly five thousand body sherds and more than four hundred diagnostic sherds (e.g., rims, bases, handles and decorated body sherds) were specifically studied. In the comprehensive work from Jamieson, he suggests that the Area A pottery is a homogenous group referred as to the 1A ceramic horizon in the Euphrates Valley from the first half of the third millennium.<sup>181</sup> There are three main ware types, e.g., PWS, CPW, and LRSW, in the forms of “S”-profiled cups, bowls and small/large jars. Among these, Late Reserved Slip Ware is thought to be a development from the Early Reserved Slip Ware in the preceding Uruk period.<sup>182</sup> However, the Uruk assemblage is not totally absent, since a body sherd applied with a small lug retrieved from stratum 3, a beveled-rim and an incised body sherd both found in the stratum 4 make the existence of the Late Uruk period likely.<sup>183</sup>

Evidence for pottery material of the EBA III/IV has revealed some important differences from the preceding period in both vessel forms and ware types. It is to be noted that pottery material of this period, which predominately comes from funerary contexts (e.g., the Hypogeum, six child burials and five constructed graves) could be biased, since there is few comparative material from other contemporaneous contexts at the site, neither from domestic structures in Area A nor the large public building in Area S. It is in this period that PSW remains the predominant ware type and almost all the PSW vessel forms from the preceding period continue in use. Of several new forms added to this fabric type in this period are goblets with corrugated surfaces, elongated jars with grooved rims, jugs with handles and/or spouts, pedestal vessels, long-stemmed champagne cups, and tripod feet and

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<sup>178</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 166, Fig. 3.

<sup>179</sup> Bunnens (ed.) 1990: 16-7.

<sup>180</sup> Bunnens (ed.) 1990: 25-105.

<sup>181</sup> Jamieson 1993: Fig. 1.

<sup>182</sup> Bunnens (ed.) 1990: Figs. 44-5.

<sup>183</sup> Bunnens (ed.) 1990: 14, 25.



spouted vessels. EBW appears to constitute a significant part of the ceramic assemblage in funerary contexts. This ware type consists of fine, highly fired and thin-walled vessels. The most characteristic shapes of this fabric type are pedestal jars and tall-necked globular-bodied jars. The surface was sometimes marked by horizontal ring burnishing over the entire body, while some of the vessels were painted with red horizontal bands either on the neck or upper body of the vessel. The Hypogeum pottery otherwise comprises Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware (HRSW) in the form of pedestal jars (fig. 3.12: 4 and 5) and Metallic Ware (MTW) represented by bowls and jars.

Each PSW vessel form has a much higher frequency in the Hypogeum than in any other funerary contexts, and some distinct vessel shapes of this fabric type, like multiple joined bowls, bowls with cylindrical handles, and highly decorated vessels, seem to be confined exclusively to the Hypogeum. The ceramic material of child burials is very similar in composition to that of the Hypogeum, consisting of a majority of Plain Simple Ware forms - bowls, jars, goblets, champagne cups, tripod feet bowl, and spouted and Euphrates Banded Ware jars. Grey Spiral Ware (GSW) jars were also found (Burials 19.81 and 19.74), with two examples in form of squat-shaped jars not seen elsewhere at Tell Ahmar. The Cooking Pot Ware (CPW) jars containing the child burials (Burials 19.81 and 19.120) were typical of that fabric type being a coarse, hand-made ware with large white and grey inclusions. The fragmented sherds of CPW were also noted in a pit burial (Burial 19.74). The stone cist graves consisted of only PSW vessels including relatively simpler forms, such as pedestal cups, bowls, jars and miniatures, and, in Tomb 4, champagne cups.

This period is commensurate with the EBA IVA, also referred to as the 2B ceramic horizon in Jamieson's system, most notably with the plentiful PSW vessel types, including especially "Hama" type goblets, and the appearance of new ware types (e.g., EBW, GSW, HRSW and MTW).<sup>184</sup> Dugay has recently suggested a date for the ceramic inventory from the child burials to the second half of the third millennium BCE.<sup>185</sup> The stratigraphic evidence indicates that the construction of the Hypogeum (Phase C 10) was definitely prior to these graves (Phase C 8), while the satellite graves near the Hypogeum, namely, five stone- and mudbrick-built graves (Tombs 1-5), may post-date the mortuary monument.

### **3.4 BURIAL PRACTICES OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM**

Mortuary evidence from Tell Ahmar has revealed a number of burials during the second half of the third millennium, as opposed to the first half of that millennium characterized by the rarity of burials. Apart from two burials exposed on the open ground, there are four main conventional categories: the first consists of plain pit graves (Burials 19.74 and 19.113); the second comprises stone-built graves covered with limestone slabs, including cist graves (Tombs 1-2, 4-5) and two-chambered monumental tomb, namely, the Hypogeum; the third is mud-brick tomb, only one tomb of such burial type has been found, that is Tomb 3; the fourth is the placement in Cooking Pots (Burials 19.81 and 19.120). When the human skeletal remains are well preserved, it appears that only primary

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<sup>184</sup> Jamieson 1993: 52-58, 68-71, Fig. 4.

<sup>185</sup> Dugay 2005: footnote 1, an appro. date of Phase C8 is between 2600 and 2350 BCE.

inhumations were practiced. It is important to note that the dead in primary contexts were buried in the flexed position, and in one case in the crouched posture (a child skeleton in Tomb 3); in contrast to Tell Banat complex, there is no evidence of secondary inhumation or intentional manipulation of human bones. Furthermore, burials of this period were confined to the mound summit, and there seems to have been a desire to locate as close as possible to the Hypogeum, since six child interments gradually took place in the northern room of the Hypogeum with other constructed tombs clustered in its adjacent areas to the west or east. They were all integrated into the central complex on the high point of the site, indicating the incorporation of the funerary cult into the scale of public and community rituals. However, considering the funerary structure, quantity and quality of grave goods, the Hypogeum apparently stands out from all the burials on the site.

### *3.4.1 Monumental Tomb, the Hypogeum*

More recent excavations have revealed that the Hypogeum was partially sunk into the ground, rather than being a complete subterranean structure identified by French archaeologists when the Hypogeum was first excavated.<sup>186</sup> The Hypogeum was covered by five enormous slabs of limestone and conglomerate that were laid crosswise, and each measured approximately 2.25-2.50×0.90-1.40×0.40 m. Its floor was completely paved with irregular stones, which formed a hump extremely stressed in the north-south direction. The tomb, with the orientation from east to west, mainly consisted of a vertical entrance shaft on the west (ca. 2.20×1.40×2.50 m) and a main chamber on the east (ca. 5.35-5.40×3×2.10 m), both features that were connected by a narrow passageway (fig. 3.2).<sup>187</sup> The main chamber was built as a unit, rectangular in shape, and it was surrounded on four sides by walls constructed with large undressed stones. While its walls on the east and west were built vertically, the walls on both long sides strongly curved inwards and its arch has a depth of 0.45 m.<sup>188</sup> The exterior walls of the main tomb chamber measures eight meters on the long, south-north side recorded in the preliminary report of 1988 excavation, attesting to the thickness of walls, about 1.25 m.<sup>189</sup> Opened at the south-western corner of the main chamber, its entry was blocked with a large slab placed upright together with other small stones and capped by a massive lintel on top. The floor of the passageway (ca. 1.60×0.65 m) was about 0.15 m higher than that of the main chamber. On the bottom, a stone threshold was preserved to a height of 0.15 m above the passageway floor. The entrance shaft was built with polished stones next to the main chamber on the west. This rectangular, small-sized structure does not fit the main chamber exactly, but it lies several centimeters southward.

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<sup>186</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 164; Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 96-108.

<sup>187</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Fig. 8.

<sup>188</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 96.

<sup>189</sup> Bunnens (ed.) 1990: 15.

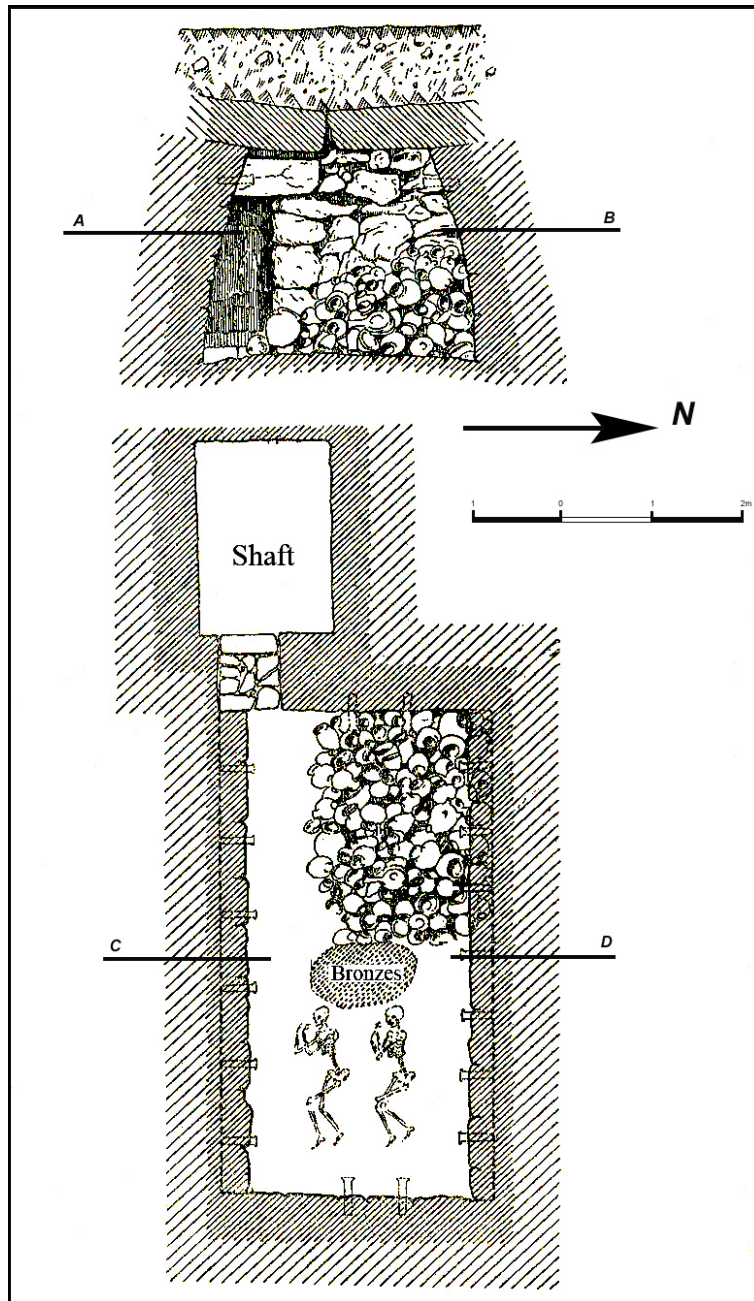
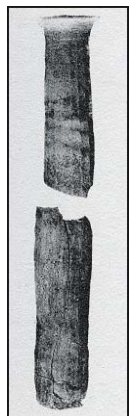


Fig. 3. 2 Section (upper) and plan (lower) of the Hypogeum (after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Fig. 8)

An interesting discovery is a total of seventeen large “nails” of terra-cotta found about 0.30 m beneath the ceiling in the main chamber.<sup>190</sup> They were horizontally driven half-way into the walls, i.e., with half their length protruding from the surface of the walls. These “nails” were regularly distributed at intervals of 0.60-0.80 m: seven in the northern side wall, six in the southern side wall, and two in the eastern and western side walls, as shown in the plan of the tomb (fig. 3.2). The nails were approximately 0.40 m long and hollow inside, and all were broken at the time of excavation, with the exception of only one example (fig. 3.3). Evidence for large terra-cotta “nails” inserted into the upper walls of the tomb is not attested in the Euphrates Valley or in Northern Syria, nor recorded in contemporaneous literal texts. These unusual objects found in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar raise

<sup>190</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pl. XX (2).

the question of interpretation and function. In the absence of supporting evidence, there is many ways these artefacts might have been utilized: as substantial nails for decorating the tomb walls, as



libation pipes for ritual purposes. In Mesopotamia, funerary ritual may include the pouring of liquids by means of a clay pipe inserted into the ground, a ceremony that may have been intended to give the deceased a drink.<sup>191</sup> The same function might be expected for the case of the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, but more evidence will be required to support such a proposition or supply other interpretations.

Fig. 3. 3 Terra-cotta nail (after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936, Pl. XX: 2).

### The Complex to the North

In the initial phase (Phase C 10), the large-scale complex mainly consisted of the Hypogeum and a stone structure built against the northern wall of the Hypogeum (fig. 3.4). The function of the northern room in the first phase is still ambiguous, with little artifactual material associated with it. However, its thick stone walls, central location, and proximity to the contemporaneous mortuary monument indicate its special status and probable communal and ritual significance.

In the later phase (Phase C 8), the indication of its funerary use is given by a series of child interments as well as the associated plastered pits, both types of remains dug into the earlier deposits of this room. Sometime after the use for funerary and ritual purposes, the northern structure was refurbished with several new floors and then divided into two rooms. To the northwest of this building was found a series of thirteen stone steps extending along its western wall. According to the latest report, this staircase may have existed there as early as in the first major phase of construction (Phase C10).<sup>192</sup> As found, it began from a stone-paved room and went down in a southward direction to another room. Bunnens has suggested the possibility that the square-shaped room which the staircase ended up with was a shaft of another chamber tomb.<sup>193</sup> However, the area further to the west of the staircase or further to the north of the northern room was never excavated, since it was totally destroyed in antiquity or has modern houses built upon. Current evidence obscures the probable connection between the monumental tomb and the complex to the north, but it is clear that the thick-walled building, staircase and other possible structures or chamber tombs in the vicinity must have been part of substantial, an imposing complex on a high point of the site.

<sup>191</sup> Black – Green 1992: 117; Scurlock 1995: 1889.

<sup>192</sup> Dugay 2005: 37.

<sup>193</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 165.

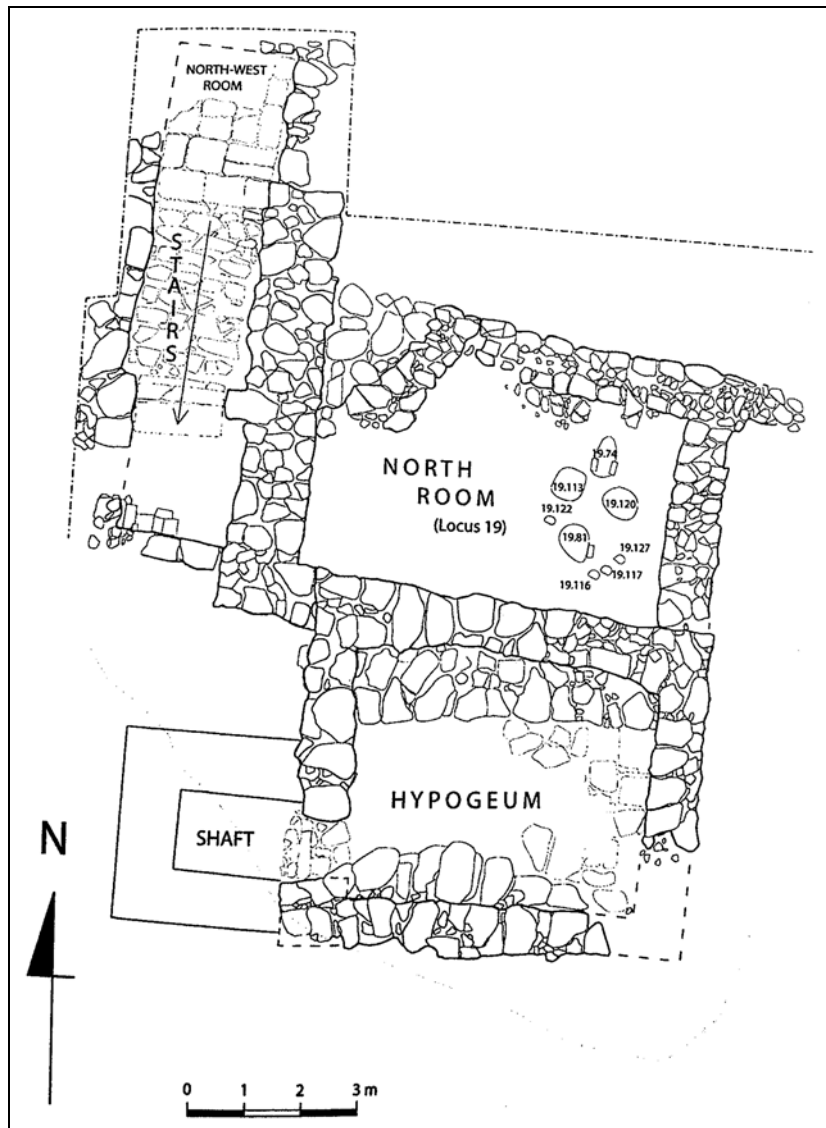


Fig. 3. 4 Plan of the Hypogeum complex (after Dugay 2005, Fig. 1).

## Tomb Contents

The specific contents of the Hypogeum, all found on the floor of the main chamber, can be divided into four major categories: human/animal remains, ceramics and bronze objects.

### *Human/Animal Skeletal Remains*

The Hypogeum contained two adult individuals with articulated skeletons found on the floor in the eastern half of the main chamber, but their exact age and gender were not able to be determined.<sup>194</sup> Although human skulls were partially damaged due to the collapse of the ceiling downward, their skeletons were placed in perfect anatomical order, as shown in the tomb plan (see above fig. 3.2, lower). Such a favourable preservation of human bone material is less commonly seen in the ancient Near East in the third millennium BCE. In the case of the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, the dead were

<sup>194</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 97.

buried in flexed positions on their right sides, with the arms together, bent towards the faces. The bodies were oriented west-east, with the head facing south. Between the two human skeletons were large amounts of animal bones belonging to goats. Unfortunately, the analysis of the bones lacks detail. For instance, the exact derivation of the animal bones is unclear, and it was not determined from which part of the animal the bones came.

### Pottery Assemblage in the Hypogeum

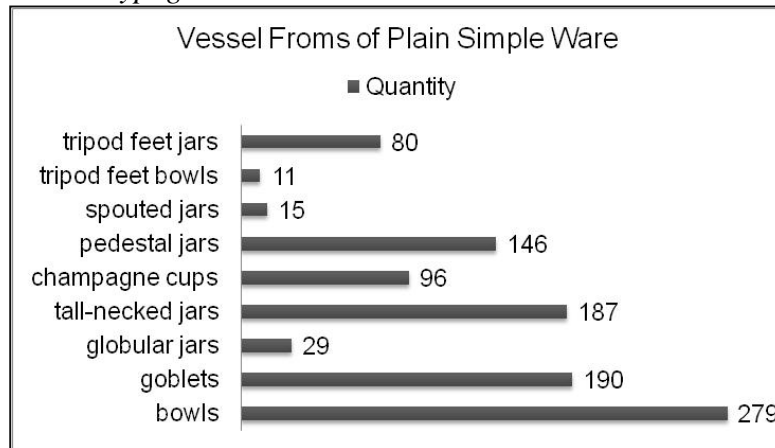


Fig. 3. 5 Various PSW vessel forms from the Hypogeum.

A vast quantity of pottery vessels were retrieved from the main tomb chamber at the time of French excavations. The vessels included in the Hypogeum did not suffer serious disturbance, and 1045 complete vessels survived. They exhibit a marked diversity of vessel shapes and types: cups, bowls, goblets, tall-necked and globular jars, pedestal jars, long-stemmed champagne cups, tripod feet and spouted vessels, and miniatures (fig. 3.5). Four ware types are represented: a majority of Plain Simple Ware vessels, Euphrates Banded Ware jars, pedestal jars of Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware (see below fig. 3.12: 4-5), a noticeable quantity of Metallic Ware in forms of bowls and jars.<sup>195</sup>

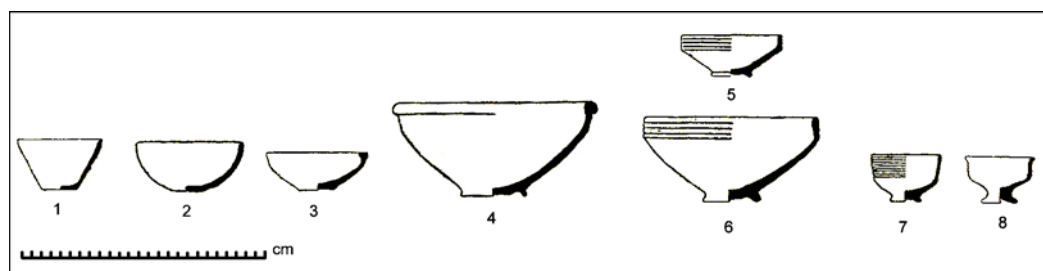


Fig. 3. 6 Bowls from the Hypogeum (all line drawings illustrated in this part after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Figs. 29-32).

As a core type of Plain Simple Ware tradition, bowl shape (up to 279 pieces) mainly consists of small simple open bowls with plain rims or in-turned rims (fig. 3.6: 1-3); medium-sized hemispherical bowls with small ring bases. Open bowls of the first category vary from profiles: straight (fig. 3.6: 1),

<sup>195</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 105-6.

hemispherical (fig. 3.6: 2) and S-profiled (fig. 3.6: 3). Hemispherical bowls of the second category vary from rims: thickened (fig. 3.6: 4), vertical (fig. 3.6: 5) and/or multiple grooved (fig. 3.6: 6). Of note are other examples of the bowl type: concave-based bowls with the attached cylindrical handles (fig. 3.7); a shallow bowl was provided with a horizontal handle and numerous perforations on the bottom which presumably served as a strainer or sieve.<sup>196</sup> Multiple joined bowls are distinct from all the bowl shapes in that two or three bowls with vertical/grooved rims stick together with specialized pedestals on the bottom (fig. 3.8). A number of miniature cup/bowls were frequently found with distinct ring bases or pedestals (fig. 3.6: 7 and 8).

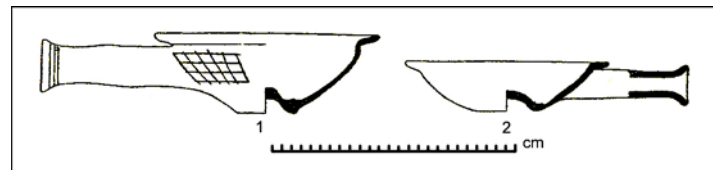


Fig. 3. 7 Bowls with cylindrical handles.

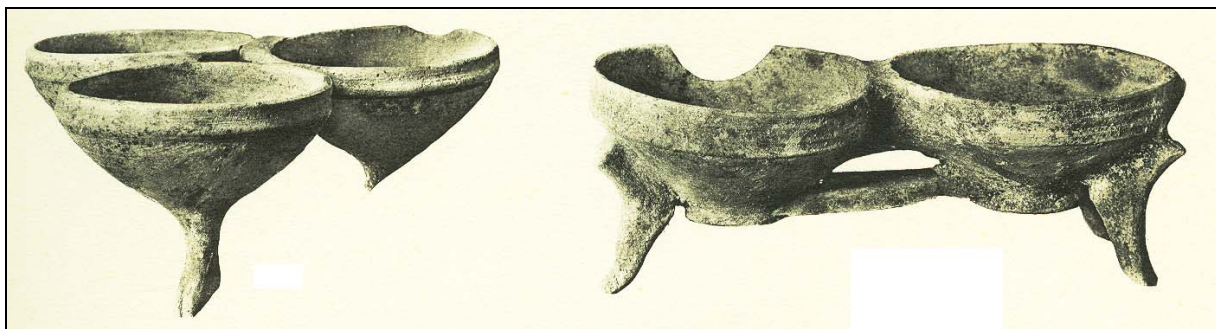


Fig. 3. 8 Multi-joined bowls (not to scale; from Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pl. XXV (9-10)).

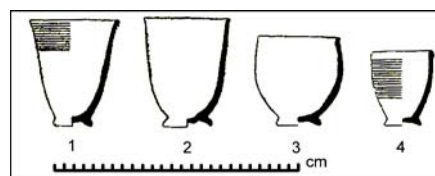


Fig. 3. 9 Goblets from the Hypogeum.

Goblets are among the second most numerous types, with a total of about 190 pieces. They are commonly very small ranging from 8-13 cm in height in average, and they also have some examples as high as 15 cm and as short as 4.7 cm. The goblets from the Hypogeum are characterized by barrel-shaped bodies, ring bases, and slightly thickened rims and some have corrugated exterior surfaces (fig. 3.9: 1, 4). These small goblets are termed as “Hama” type as part of “caliciform” assemblage and have a wide distribution along the Euphrates, and its adjacent regions to the west and east. The appearance of “caliciform” assemblage exhibits an advance degree of technical specialization, i.e., mass-produced. Meanwhile, it suggests a development in the ceramic sequence over the older forms of Plain Simple Ware in Northern Syria.

<sup>196</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pl. XXVI (8).



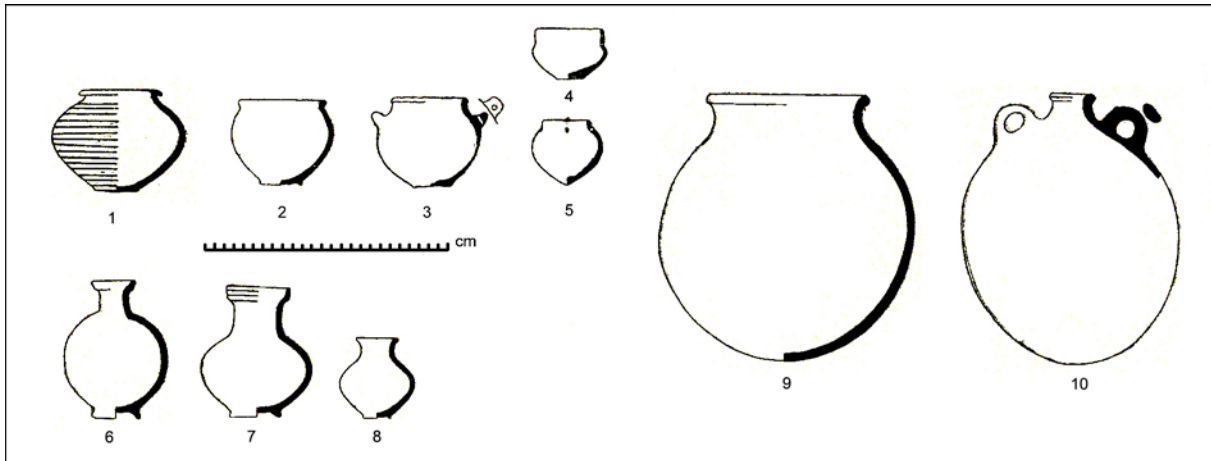


Fig. 3. 10 Jars in the Hypogeum.

According to the morphological shape, medium-sized jars could be divided into two types: globular jars with short necks (fig. 3.10: 1-3), and jars with restricted concave necks (fig. 3.10: 6-8). The latter type in noticeable quantity seems to be predominant jar forms. Some examples of the first jar type have spherical bodies, everted rims, and sometimes corrugated surfaces (fig. 3.10: 1). Other examples are characterized by a big mouth, ring base and relatively moderate globular body (fig. 4.11: 2). The tall-necked jars have beaded rims or multiple grooved rims (fig. 3.10: 6-7). Large-sized jars are globular-bodied and round-based (fig. 3.10: 9), and occasionally have two applied loop handles (fig. 3.10: 7). Miniature jars cover almost all the shapes of jars but in small versions (fig. 3.10: 4, 5, 8).

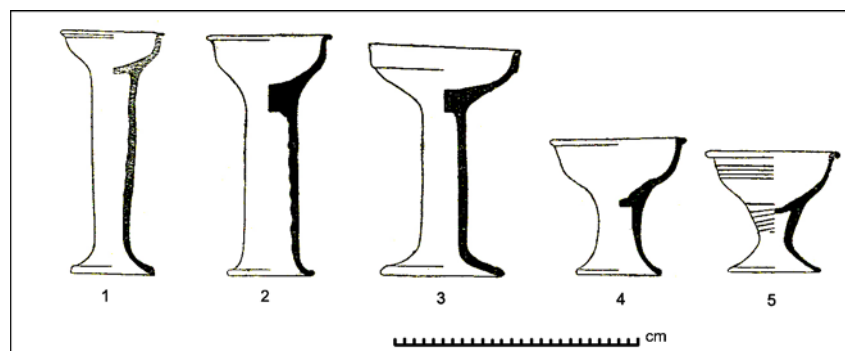


Fig. 3. 11 Selected champagne cups from the Hypogeum.

Numerous champagne cups with a total of 96 examples were recovered from the Hypogeum. The upper bodies are bowls, sometimes with carinated profiles (fig. 3.11: 3), attached to stems. Some examples of this vessel form have extremely long, heavy stems, making the entire vessels up to 0.30 m high (fig. 3.11: 1-3). Other examples with short stems of minimum 0.10 m high were sometimes marked by horizontal burnish rings on exterior surfaces (fig. 3.11: 5).



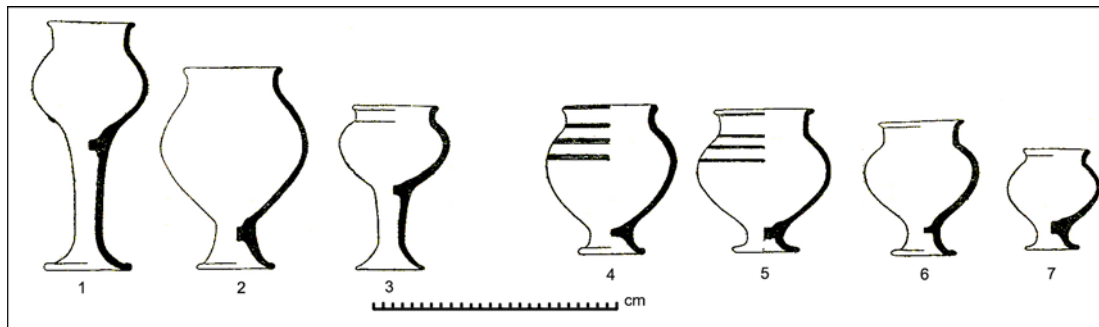


Fig. 3. 12 Selected pedestal vessels from the Hypogeum.

Pedestal vessels with their pedestal bases vary in length, from exaggerated long (fig. 3.12: 1), medium (fig. 3.12: 2-3), to short (fig. 3.12: 4-7). It is clear that the entire vessel of this type is a combination of globular jar and bell-shaped foot. The pedestal vessels are often decorated with horizontal reserved slips (fig. 3.12: 4-5), namely, Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware.

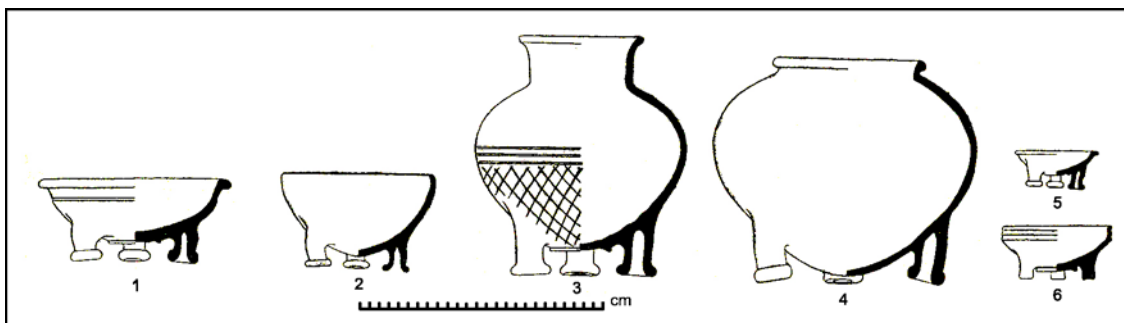


Fig. 3. 13 Tripod feet vessels from the Hypogeum.

The main body of the tripod feet vessel is often a complete vessel in the form of bowl slightly varying from its shape (fig. 3.13: 1-2, 5-6), or sometime of large jar (fig. 4.14: 3-4). Both types of the main body are attached to the cylinder tripod feet.

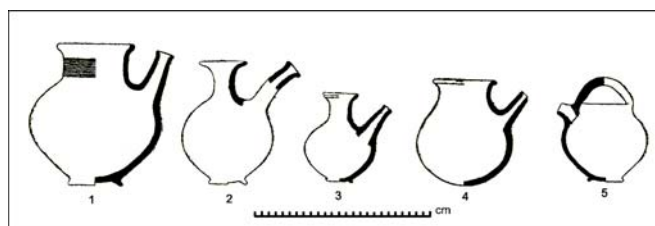


Fig. 3. 14 Selected spouted vessels in the Hypogeum.

Spouted vessels are represented by two categories. The first category is more numerous (15 intact pieces) and is characterized by tall-necked jars and long spouts (fig. 3.14: 1-3), whereas the second type is represented by globular jars and shorter and wider spouts, and, in one case, with zoomorphic ornament on the spout.<sup>197</sup> The short spouted jars with a curvilinear handle on top of the mouth looks exactly like a “tea pot” for today (fig. 3.14: 5).

<sup>197</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pl. XXVI (10).

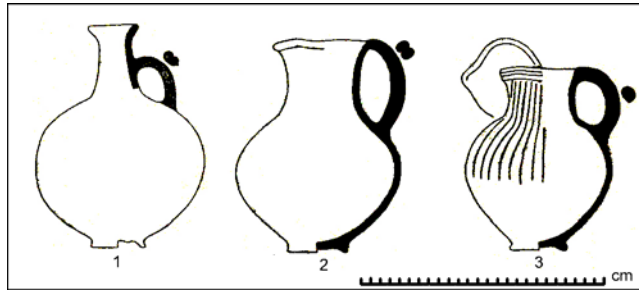


Fig. 3. 15 Selected jugs with handles.

The jug is characteristic of a trefoil-mouth like a spouted jut and of an applied plain or curled handle on the upper body (fig. 3.15).



Fig. 3. 16 Decorated vessels from the Hypogeum (after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pl. XXVII).

Apart from the vessel types presented above, a group of decorated vessels illustrated in figure 4.16 is notable. These remain a consistent component of the PSW tradition. Four examples were published, including a pedestal vessel with zoomorphic patterns on the mouth of spout and main body of the vessel and a sieve implement filling in the mouth (fig. 3.16: 1). Two jugs are characteristic of tall-necks, grooved rims and handles on the upper bodies of the vessels (fig. 4.17: 2, 4). An intact vessel was applied with a naked, model male sitting on the body of the vessel and keeping his mouth open like singing (fig. 3.16: 4). The fourth one is distinct from the other vessels in that it appears to imitate an entire animal, with head, long neck, globular body and short tail discernible (fig. 3.16: 3). Especially, the main body of the vessel was completely decorated with numerous vertical raised lines, perhaps imitation of the animal feather. With their peculiar shapes and multiple decorations, these

vessels were apparently not those for domestic use. These prestigious items seem to have been utilized in a ceremonial way during funerary rituals.

### *Bronze Objects in the Hypogeum*

A total of thirty-four objects of bronze were retrieved from the Hypogeum, and there is a marked diversity of object forms: pins, needle, bracelet, rein-ring, a variety of weapons and miniature bowls.



Fig. 3. 17 Selected pins in the Hypogeum  
(*metal objects shown here after Thureau-Dangin*  
–*Dunand 1936, Pls. XXXVIII-XXXI*).

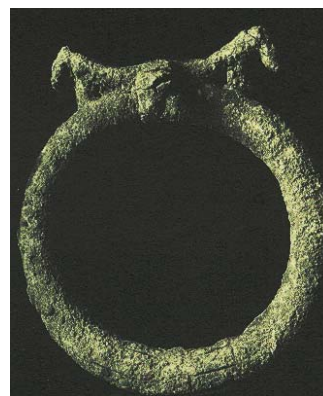


Fig. 3. 18 Bracelet in the Hypogeum

Three examples of plain pins with no decorations were published. After a preliminary distinction of pins based on the presence/absence of a hole in the shaft, attributes such as head shape, shaft pattern are considered, all possibly significant features for defining cultural and/or chronological differences. An unperforated pin has a plain shaft with a rolled loop-shaped head (fig. 3.17: 1). Perforated type with two published examples (fig. 3.17: 2-3) seems to be much common than the former. These bent-shank toggle-pins have hemispherical-shaped or spherical heads with eyelet or round small perforations on their shafts. Another example is an exception, since it has an extreme point end and a plain square-sectioned shaft (fig. 3.17: 4). On the shaft is a perforation that was unfinished at the time of deposition or concealed by corrosion. Alternatively, it may be used as a needle.

Two interesting artefacts were documented and illustrated in the first preliminary report.<sup>198</sup> One is a ring with zoomorphic decorations surmounted on the top (fig. 3.18). The other object is a rein-ring surmounted by two symmetrical, model animals (fig. 3.19: 1). The animals that appear to be wild asses or horses stand on top of a double-looped rein-ring with their forelegs leaning on a stick projected from the junction of the rings below. Similar instances of electrum, silver and copper have been found at Sumerian sites such as Ur and Kish.<sup>199</sup> A silver rein-ring illustrated on the figure 3.19 (2) is surmounted by an electrum equid and mounted on a single vertical bar, from Puabi's tomb, Royal Cemetery of Ur, dating to ca. 2600-2400 BCE.<sup>200</sup> In the case of the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, one of the double rings on the right was broken and the entire base was missing; nevertheless, this

<sup>198</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 107-108, Pls. XXX (1), XXXI (7).

<sup>199</sup> Mallowan 1948: Pl. VII; Zettler – Horne (eds.) 1998: 165-6, catalogue no. 139, Figs. 51-2.

<sup>200</sup> PG 800, Height 13.5 cm, currently in the British Museum, London, see Zettler – Horne (eds.) 1998: Fig. 52.

object is noteworthy in that its design on the whole resembles typical Sumerian rein-rings.

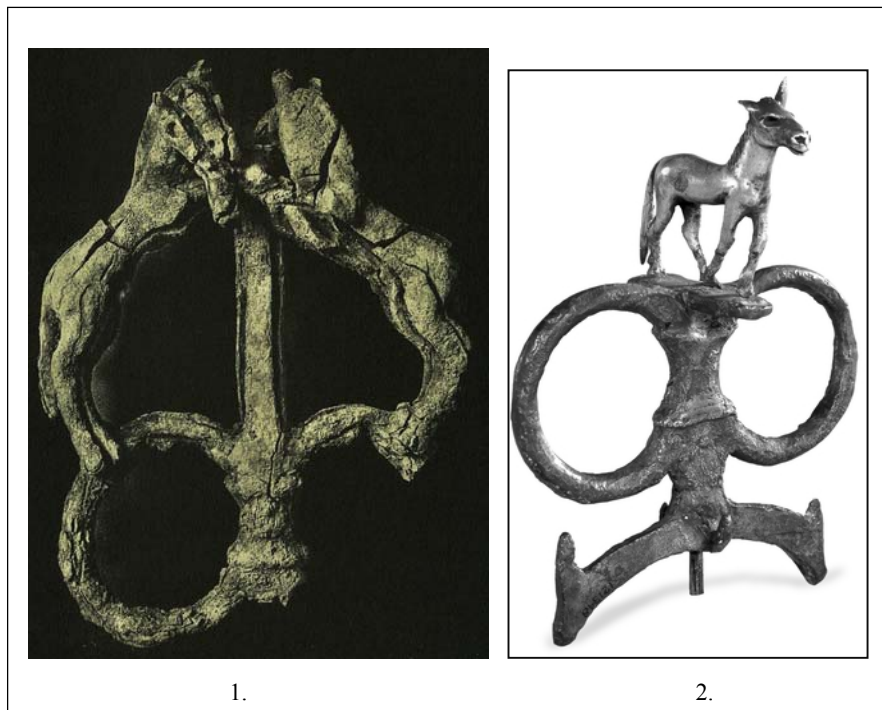


Fig. 3. 19 Rein-rings: 1, bronze rein-ring from Hypogeum; 2, silver rein-ring from Royal Cemetery of Ur (*1, after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936 XXXI: 7; 2, after footnote 200*).

The Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar contained a weapon assemblage impressive in both diversity and quality. A total of twenty-four weapons, most of which were intact as found, were documented and illustrated in the preliminary report of the initial excavations, and their categories are represented by spearheads (6), flat dagger blades (8), flat axes (4), and socket-shaft axes (6).<sup>201</sup>

<sup>201</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Pls. XXVIII-XXXI.

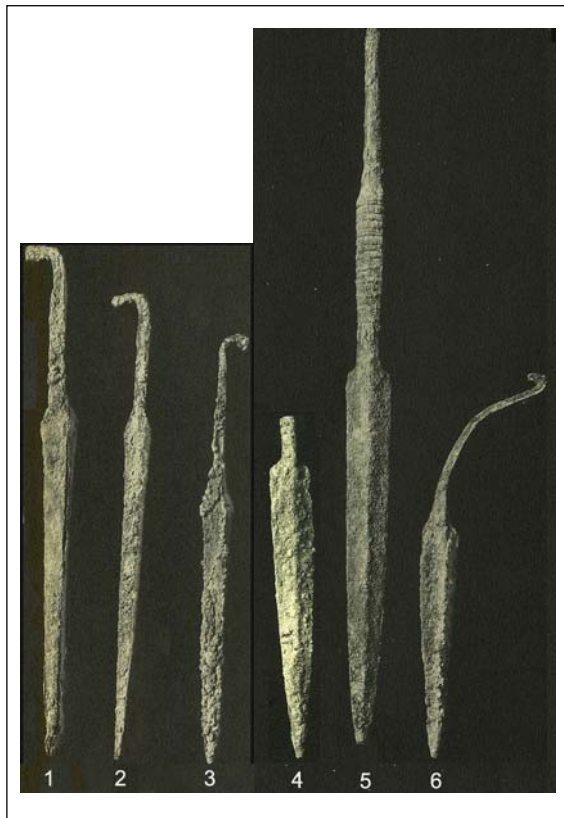


Fig. 3. 20 Spear heads from the Hypogeum.

Spear heads are typical of two specimens based on distinctive shape of the blade. Spear heads with bipartite structure, the so-called “poker-butt” type, vary in blade length (fig. 3.19: 1-3). They have hook-ended narrow tangs with diamond sections. The other considerable group is tripartite spear heads (fig. 3.19: 4-6). There is at least one elegant spearhead, with leaf-shaped blade and long butt, and chisel-ended straight tang (fig. 3.19: 5).

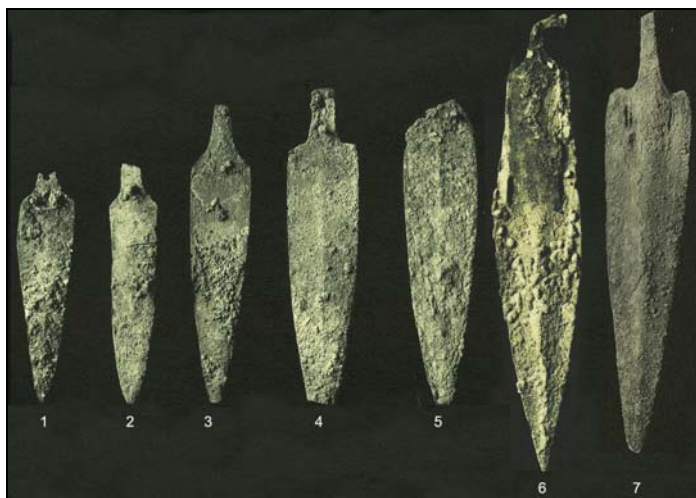


Fig. 3. 21 Flat dagger blades from the Hypogeum.



The most common group is represented by flat daggers with sharp shoulders and flat narrow tangs. One or two rivets were preserved on the junction of blade and tang (fig. 3.21: 1-5). Besides, dagger blades bearing ribbed decoration were also present (fig. 3.21: 6-7). One of them seems to be unique in that it has a leaf-shaped blade and a small hooked-tang, in contrast to the majority of daggers with straight tangs.

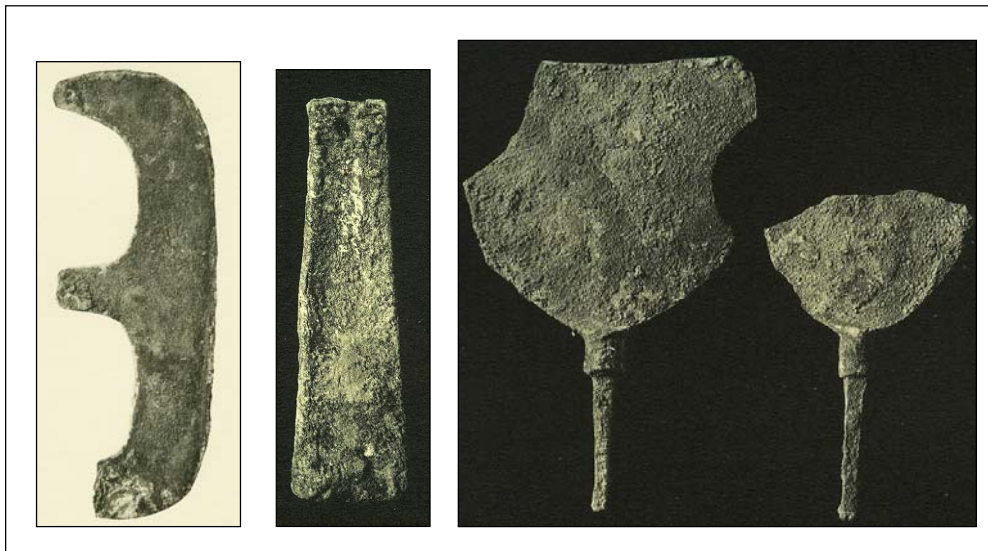


Fig. 3. 22 Flat dagger blades from the Hypogeum.

Flat axes occur, and they can be divided into three categories. The first category of this axe type is represented by the so-called crescentic axe with three short tangs pierced for rivets (fig. 3.22: 1). This example shown here was well-preserved of ca. 24.7 cm long, although one tang damaged. Another type of the flat axe often has parallel side edges and a slightly concave blade. In one case, a rivet-hole is preserved at the butt end (fig. 3.22: 2). The third category is less common, since there are no similar instances known from other contemporary sites in the Northern Syria. Fragments of two examples of such type indicate semi-circular blades with concave cutting edges and tangs of square section (fig. 3.22: 3-4).

The axes with shaft-holes are among the most characteristic Hypogeum weapon types, since this form of weapon has been interpreted to be manufactured and used purely for fighting, referred to as “battle axe” as mentioned in the preceding chapter (fig. 3.23). Six examples of the battle axes were collected from the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar. Based on the distinction how the axe blade attached on the shaft, these can be divided into two categories: I, and II. Type I is the most common group, which has three variations. The simple battle axes (Ia) normally have two side edges parallel with each other, with a cutting edge slightly round, and the plain cylinder shaft with a round-formed hole through (fig. 3.23: 1-2). As for another type as Ib, the blade is almost the same in shape as that of the first type, but the shaft has been formed with a breach on the top (fig. 3.23: 3-4). One of the type Ib axes is decorated with horizontal ribbed patterns on the surface of the shaft. Another axe shape as Ic is characterized by a shaft applied with multiple zoomorphic patterns (fig. 3.23: 6). The patterns are very ornate, with four pieces protruding above the exterior surface of the shaft. This shape of

socket-shaft axe has close parallels found in Luristan. In contrast to the type I, the other type (II) has a blade vertically attached to the shaft on top. The shaft has a horizontal ribbed decoration with η-shaped end (fig. 3.23: 5). This pick-shaped socket-shaft axe, characteristic of the narrowing blade leading to a point, is capable of piercing armor, and for this reason this form of battle axes became one of the most devastating weapons of the ancient world by 2500 BCE.

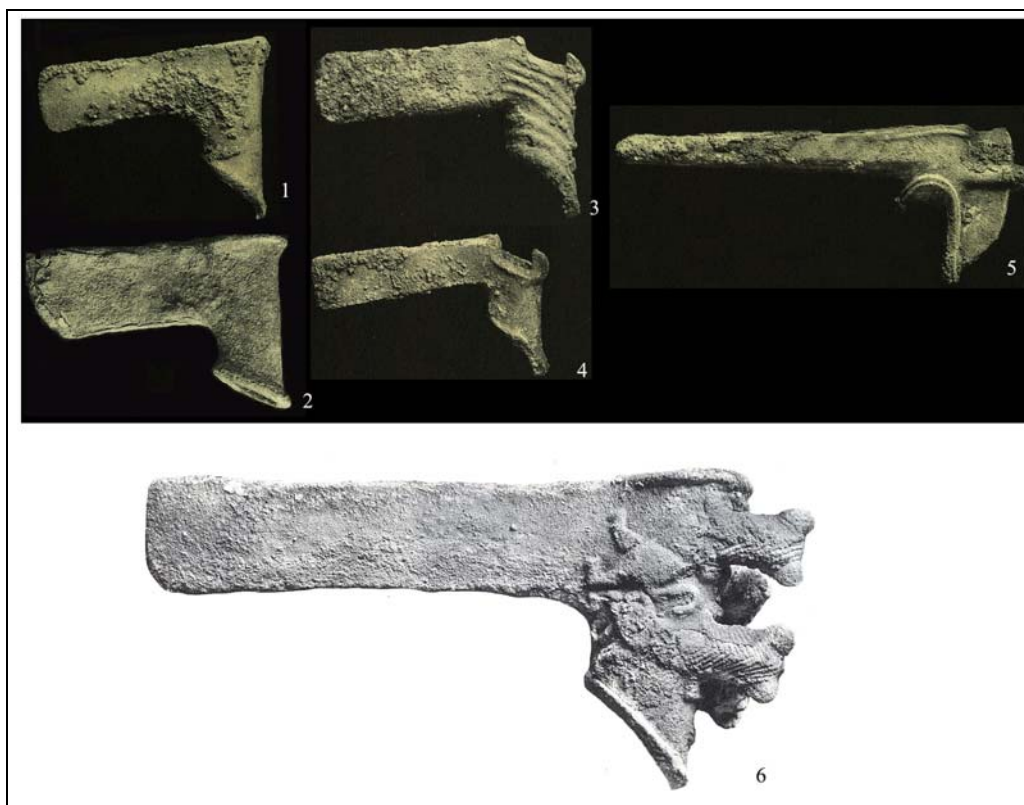


Fig. 3. 23 Socket-shaft axeheads from the Hypogeum.

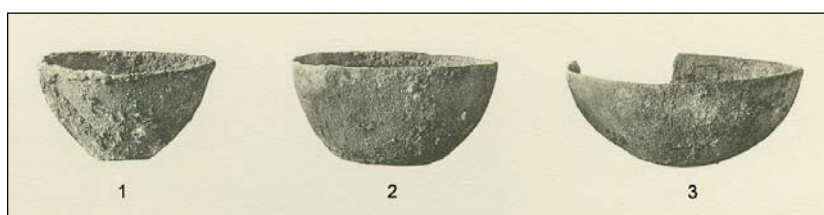


Fig. 3. 24 Three bronze vessels in the Hypogeum.

In addition to weapons of various types, three examples of bronze vessels are plain, small open bowls with flat or rounded bases (fig. 3.24). They slightly vary in dimension ranging from 7 cm to 9.8 cm in diameter and from 3.7 cm to 4 cm in height. They were manufactured by tin-bronze, hammered from metal sheet into bowl shape.

Amongst the large collection of metal objects, characteristic of the richness of various types from the Hypogeum, weapons/tools are the most distinguished. The crescentic type of flat axe and pick type of battle axe are of greater chronological significance than other forms. As for typology of crescentic

axes, Hillen has identified two main groups: those secured to the haft by means of rivets, and those secured by means of the central bent tang only and of three bent tangs.<sup>202</sup> The Hypogeum crescent axe is typical of the first group. Typologically, a very similar axe heads was found in burial 34 of A Cemetery at Kish (fig. 3.25: 2).<sup>203</sup> It has a rather wide blade with the very short tangs. Hrouda and Karstens dated the period of the “A” cemetery at Kish from EDII to the EDIII period.<sup>204</sup> However, according to the study of tomb assemblage, Moorey maintains that the cemetery was in use of a relatively short time during the EDIII period, ca. 2400-2300 BCE.<sup>205</sup> Another smaller example of this axe shape comes from Amlash (fig. 3.25: 3).<sup>206</sup> Stronach, in a study of the crescentic axes from Anatolia, included a previously unpublished example from the Yortan cemeteries at Bayındırköy.<sup>207</sup> This has a simple crescentic shaped blade with a rather broad central tang, provided at its end with a single rivet hole (fig. 3.25: 4). It is particularly interesting in that the rivet itself has been preserved; square in section and 3.3 cm long. Although formally rather different, it shows that the same typological stage of development as those from Ahmar, Kish and Amlash and a parallel dating would seem appropriate (table 3.2). In term of similar axeheads illustrated here concerning their dates, the development is therefore roughly contemporary with a period from the late EBIII to early EBAIV.

<b>N. Syria</b>	Tell Ahmar	hypogeum	fig. 3.25: 1	Thureau-Dangin — Dunand 1936: pl. XXVIII (6)	EBIII-IV <sup>208</sup>
<b>Balyonia</b>	Kish	T. 34 of A cemetery	fig. 3.25: 2	Langdon 1924: pl. XIX (1)	EDIII, ca. 2400-2300
<b>Iran</b>	Almash	Foroughi collection	fig. 3.25: 3	Calmeyer 1969: fig. 29	Same as the above two <sup>209</sup>
<b>Anatolia</b>	Bayındırköy	Yortan cemeteries	fig. 3.25: 4	Stronach 1957: fig.14 (2), pl. VII (b2)	

Table 3. 2 Selected crescentic axeheads from Ahmar, Kish, Almash and Bayındırköy.

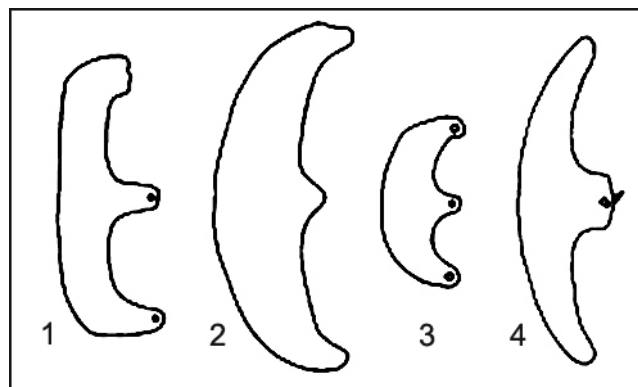


Fig. 3. 25 Crescentic axe heads (1-4) of table 3. 2; not to scale.

In terms of a battle axe of type II from the Hypogeum (figs. 3.23: 5, 3.26: 4), one may note similar close parallels found from Luristan/Iran weapon assemblages (table 3.3). Two unstratified examples

<sup>202</sup> Hillen 1953: 211-2, the crescentic axeheads with bent tangs are well attested in Levant and Anatolia, where they were secured by means of the central tang only (Jericho, Babedh-Dhra, Hesi, Kfar Monash and Satir Hüyük), while in Mesopotamia and North Syria were the axeheads of such type secured using three bent tangs, evidenced from Agrab and Amarna.

<sup>203</sup> Langdon 1924: Pl. XIX (1).

<sup>204</sup> Hrouda – Karstens 1967: 260-7.

<sup>205</sup> Moorey 1978: 74-5.

<sup>206</sup> Calmeyer 1969: 30, Fig. 29.

<sup>207</sup> Stronach 1957: 122-5, Fig. 14 (2), Pl. VIII (b2).

<sup>208</sup> Tubb 1982: 4.

<sup>209</sup> Tubb 1982: 6.



come from Luristan (fig. 3.26: 1-2) with the third one from Nimrud in Iran (fig. 3.26: 3). All the examples are characteristic of  $\eta$ -shaped sockets and shafts with ribbed decorations. With the evidence for the cutting manners, they must have been functioned as picks. Maxwell-Hyslop has studied the material across the Near East and he referred the pick-shaped battle axe as type 9B.<sup>210</sup> He has suggested an approximate date contemporary with the Akkad period in Southern Mesopotamia.

<b>Iran</b>	Luristan Nos. 0936	Brussels Mus. Royaux	fig. 3.26: 1	Maxwell-Hyslop 1949: pl. XXXIII (5)
	Luristan		fig. 3.26: 2	Pope 1938: pl. 51 C.
<b>S.Mesopotamia</b>	Nimrud	Oxford Ashmolean Mus.	fig. 3.26: 3	Calmeyer 1969: Abb. 34
<b>N.Syria</b>	Tell Ahamr	hypogeum	fig. 3.26: 4	Thureau-Dangin — Dunand 1936: pl. XXIX (5)

Table 3. 3 Selected battle axeheads from Iran and North Syria.

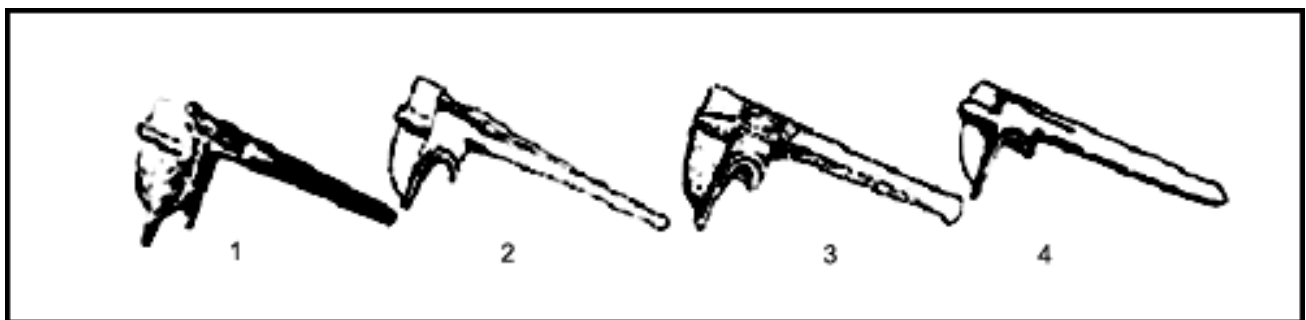


Fig. 3. 26 Battle axeheads (1-4) of table 3.3; not to scale.

According to the comparisons with their similarities in the region of Near East, weapon assemblage from the Hypogeum should be dated to EBA III-IV in the traditional Syrian sequence, comparable to EDIII-Akkad period in South Mesopotamia, approximately 2400-2300 BCE. In addition, evidence for the use of the "advanced" alloy tin-bronze indicates that the Syrian smiths were running parallel with their Sumerian counterparts during the mid-third millennium.

### Interpretation of the Contexts

The Hypogeum was dug into a layer, where the walls were made of long bricks. These mud-brick structures may have been part of a larger structure consisting of several cells prior to the construction of the Hypogeum located at the high point of the mound. However, their intended function is still ambiguous, since these features were not specifically identified in the initial excavations. These structures were partially destroyed by the Hypogeum as well as the adjacent stone cist graves, indicating that they were no longer in use at the time.

Recorded in the preliminary report of the initial excavations, the entrance shaft was filled with sands, probably as a result of water actions; in addition only a thick layer of dusts spread on the floor in the main tomb chamber. In addition, the Hypogeum was solidly constructed, and this may be one of the factors that account for the tomb contents having been well preserved over thousands of years.

<sup>210</sup> Maxwell-Hyslop 1949: 99.

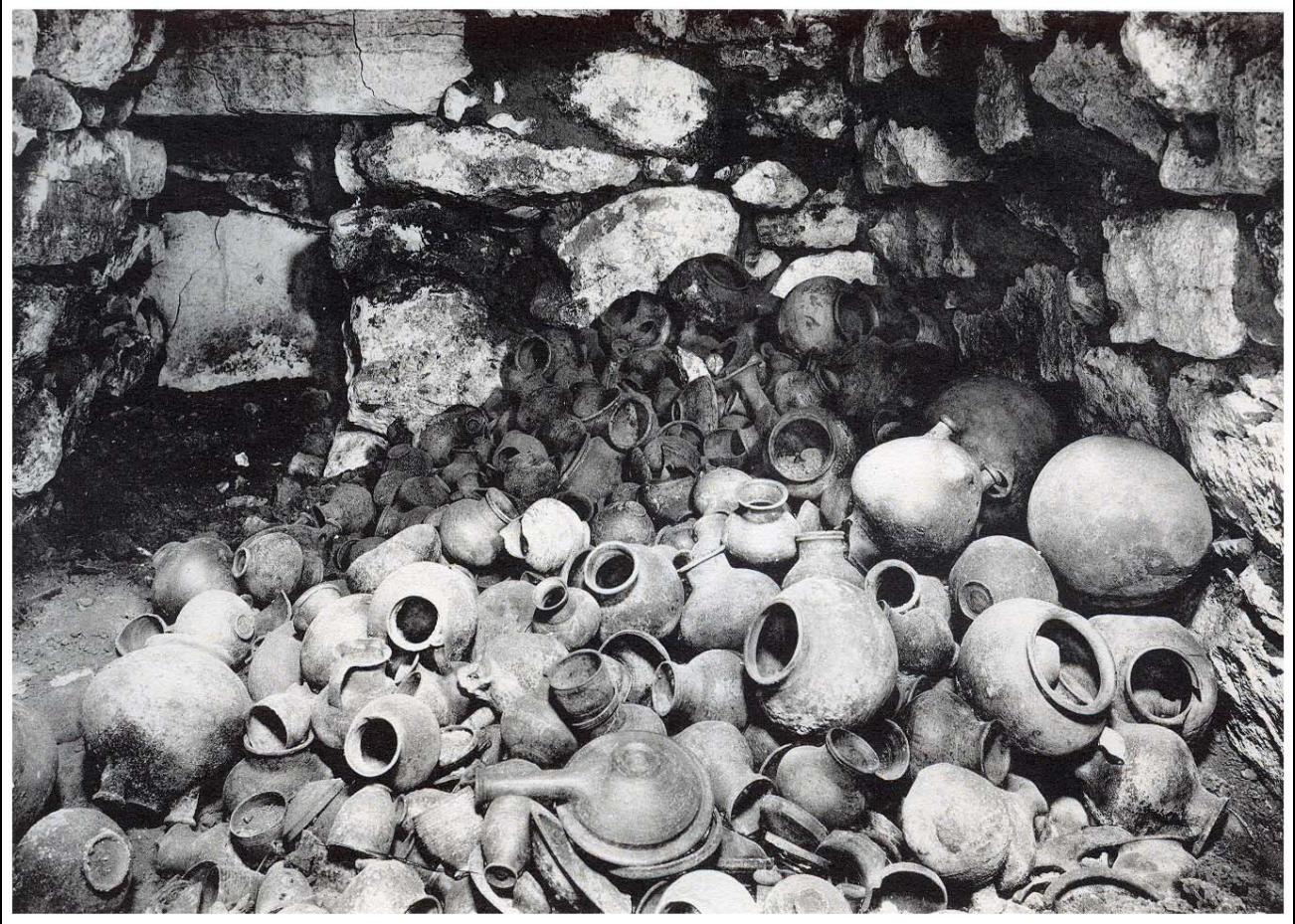


Fig. 3. 27 Pottery vessels from the Hypogeum (*after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936, Pl. XX: 1*).

The tomb contents were all concentrated in the main chamber and could be divided into three parts. In the eastern half, two individuals were buried parallel to each other on the floor, partially damaged by the collapses of the ceiling downward. Between them were numerous goat bones. In the middle of the main chamber, objects of bronze were placed as a heap in front of the human skulls. More than one thousand pottery vessels were primarily found stacked one on top of another forming an enormous heap along the western and northern inner walls in the western half of the main chamber (fig. 3.27). It is evident that they were originally deposited separately from the human skeletal remains and installed together with themselves in the fixed place. No order can be observed in a way they were arranged, although small cups/bowls were sometimes inside the big containers. All of the vessels were completely empty inside, and there were neither corns nor bones, not even sands which could have infiltrated into the vessels. Of note is that a stretched area along the southern wall in the main chamber, beginning at the front of the entry and extending to the rear wall of the tomb (c. 5.35-5.4 m), was largely devoid of grave goods and bone remains. This area seems to have deliberately been unoccupied, and why it was done is presumably intended for the transportation of large quantities of grave goods time after time in rituals.

### 3.4.2 *Child Burials and Plastered Pits in the Northern Room*

Excavations during the 1998 and 1999 seasons in Area A at Tell Ahmar have revealed that six child burials were concentrated in the southeast section of the room north of the Hypogeum (fig. 3.4). The human skeletal remains of individual inhumations were exposed on the ground and placed in Cooking Pots and pits. They were located within the same context but in some cases one cut through another. This indicates that these burials and burial deposits occurred over a period of time that was long enough for the exact location of the earlier burial to be unknown. Two conical-shaped plaster-lined pits were also found in the northern room adjacent to the child burials, may hint of their use in funerary rituals.<sup>211</sup>

Two burial deposits (19.116 and 19.127) containing human bone remains were placed directly on a dirt surface, with no grave structure or grave goods associated with them. The skeletal remains were highly disturbed and fragmented; however, the size and fragility of the bones were consistent with the remains of a very young child, possibly under one year. Due to extremely poor state of bone preservation, it was impossible to estimate the number of individuals in each burial; however, the quantity of the bone material suggests that each burial contained no more than one infant. In the well-preserved burial (19.127), small pebbles which seem to have been originally placed around the skull were identified; in addition to the bones from skull, no skeletal remains were associated with this burial.

Cooking Pots (Burials 19.81 and 19.120) containing the remains of infants were horizontally set into pits, and both were oriented north-south with their mouths facing north. Two burial jars were similar one to another in fabric, size and shape, and both were large, globular vessels of typical hand-made and coarse Cooking Pot Ware (CPW) with round bases, and plain, out-rolled rims. One jar was covered by a large sherd of PSW as lid, with the other covered by a medium-sized bowl on top of the mouth. In one case, the skeletal remains although very disarticulated were represented by skull fragments, rib bones, long bones and vertebrae and belong to an infant under one year, while inside the other jar an infant of less than one year old with partially disarticulated skeleton was identified. Also in this burial, an interspersing phenomenon has been observed by Dugay that the skeletal remains were found at the upper part of the vessel with the legs of the interred body missing.<sup>212</sup> In this case one may infer that the infant was interred anatomically intact and at some later date, the burial was re-opened and the skeleton was partially fallen out the Cooking Pot. However, it is uncertain whether partial removal of the interred body was the result of an accident or an intentional practice related to the secondary burial ritual. Accompanying the first jar burial was a total of 14 pottery vessels, including 12 intact vessels. They have been specifically studied, and two ware types are represented: a majority of PSW vessels including five small bowls and six pedestal jars, five jars of Grey Spiral Ware (GSW). The second jar burial to the north was accompanied only by two items: one was a PSW bowl with a modeled, out-turned and everted rim and a ring base, which served as lid of the burial jar; one was a small, perforated shell found close to the right hand of the skeleton within

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<sup>211</sup> Dugay 2005: 37.

<sup>212</sup> Dugay 2005: 40, Fig. 3.

the jar, suggestive of its use as personal adornment, perhaps as a gift offered by the parents at the time of interment.

At the northernmost of all the burials in the room was a pit grave (Burial 19.74; ca. 1×0.40-0.50 m) with the orientation in the north-south direction. The human skeletal remains from the grave were much disturbed and contained the bones of a child represented by long bones, rib bones and cranium bones. A black, ashy deposit was visible beneath some of the bones; curiously, the body itself was unburnt. The grave contained 17 reconstructable pottery vessels, comprising a predominance of Plain Simple Ware vessels (e.g., seven small bowls, five pedestal jars, and one squat-shaped jar), one pedestal jar of EBW, and one squat-shaped jar of GSW. One may note that the placement of small bowls on top of, or inside bigger jars. Apart from the complete vessels, it is estimated from 27 diagnostic pottery sherds that there were an additional minimum number of 22 pottery vessels, including PSW, EBW and CPW fabrics. In addition to the vessels forms presented above, the fragments of vessels indicate other Plain Simple Ware vessel types, such as medium-sized bowls, and corrugated goblets, which had also been originally deposited in the burial. Another example of a plain pit grave exists 0.40 m to the west of the first one. This well-preserved burial (19. 113; c. 0.7×0.8 m) appears to be the largest one among all the burials found in the northern room. It contained a 12-months-infant with largely articulated skeleton buried in a crouched position facing east. The majority of the pottery material was deposited to the east of the interred body with a smaller quantity of pottery vessels found beneath the body. Evidence for several ceramic vessels deposited above the skeleton indicates that their deposition may have taken place after the interment of the infant within. However, with current evidence, it is uncertain if they were installed slightly after the primary interment, or if they were material residues of secondary commemorative rituals when the tomb was re-opened. A total of 21 pottery vessels were recovered from the burial with a marked diversity of vessel shapes: nine small/medium-sized bowls, one tripod feet bowl, two long-stemmed champagne cups, four pedestal jars, four long, straight necked jars with globular bodies and thickened rims, one spouted jar with a sieve covering across the mouth. These vessel shapes have close parallels found in the Hypogeum, where there are more numerous examples for each form, such as tripod feet bowls with 11 examples, champagne cups with over 90 examples, and the spouted jar with a sieve within similar to one illustrated on the figure 4.17 (1). As in other burials, this burial contained pottery material mostly in Plain Simple Ware tradition, with two examples of Euphrates Banded Ware (e.g., a champagne cup and a globular-bodied jar with long neck) decorated with red painted bands on the neck and upper body. Non-ceramic objects included two identical pierced shell beads, one of which derived from adjacent to the neck and skull of the interred body. As the similar instance seen from the jar burial (Burial 19.120), the infant may have worn these beads of shell on the body at the time of interment.

Apart from the burials with substantial human skeletal remains mostly of infants, there were two conical-shaped plastered pits (19.117, 0.32 m in diameter and 0. 15 m in depth; 19.122, 0.45 m in diameter and 0.30 m in depth) located in the vicinity of the child burials. One pit contained bones of small rodent and flecks of charcoal although the pit itself was not subject to the fire. The other pit was covered with a stone lid and its inclusion was comprised of basalt pebbles and broken PSW



pottery sherds. Similar instances come from Gre Virike, where numerous plastered pits filled with ash/charcoal or broken jars were set in the small, unroofed chambers, suggestive of their use for cooking or libations in the commemorative rituals in honor of the people buried in the adjoining tombs. However, in the cases of Tell Ahmar, their intended function is ambiguous, with little artifactual material associated with them. The unusual character of careful plastering and proximity to the contemporaneous burials or burial deposits suggest that they were probably ritual installations, perhaps also connected with the cooking of food provided by the evidence for a Cooking Pot exposed on the floor adjacent to one of the plastered pits.

### 3.4.3 Satellite Graves near the Hypogeum

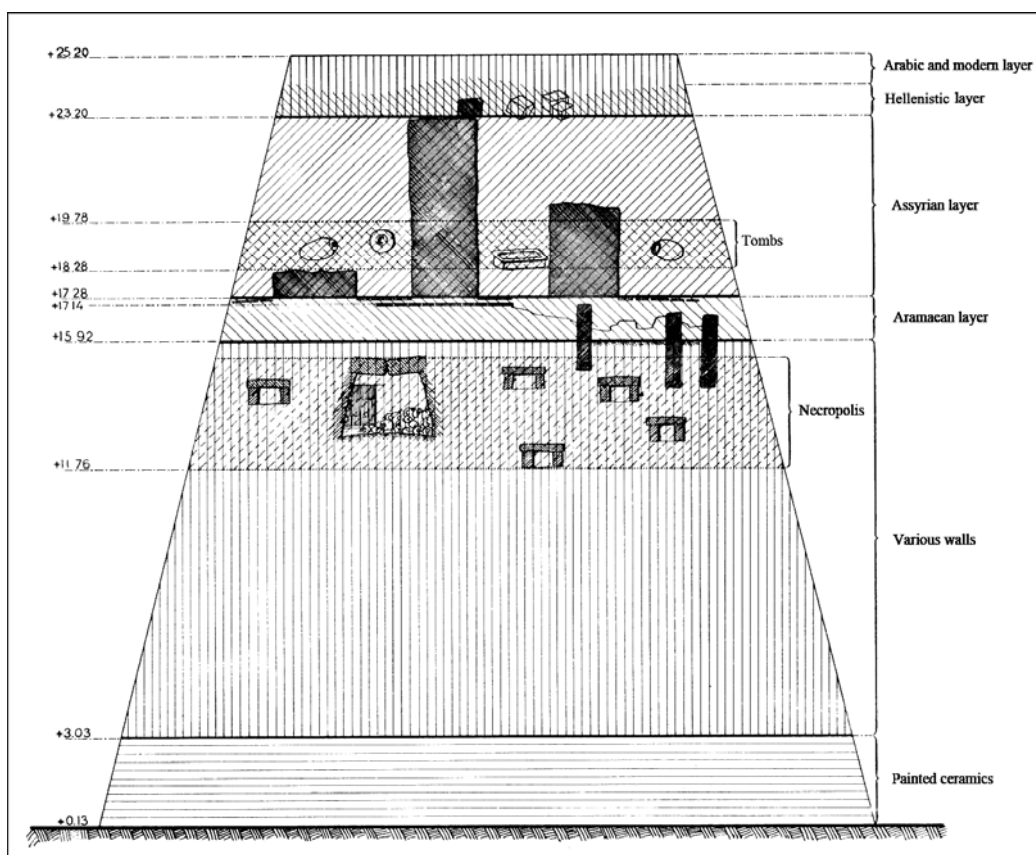


Fig. 3. 28 Diagram of the cist graves around the Hypogeum (Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936, plates volume).

Five constructed tombs including four stone, cist graves, and Tomb 3, a mud-brick tomb, can be regarded as satellite burials, since they were built in the vicinity of the Hypogeum either to the west or east (fig. 3.28). Their location related to the Hypogeum is specifically described in the 1936's report: Tombs 1/2 were built next to each other and situated to the west of the Hypogeum, next to its shaft to the south; Tombs 3/4/5 were probably arranged as a row from west to east, near the eastern wall of the Hypogeum.<sup>213</sup> They exhibit a homogenous architectural character: vertical limestone slabs formed a cist, covered with massive slabs, and stone-paved floors, with the exception of Tomb 3, which was built with mud bricks. They include well-preserved human skeletal remains of primary

<sup>213</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: 108-110, Pl. XXXII.

interments and accompanying grave goods, predominantly pottery. Stratigraphic evidence indicates that these adjacent graves were dug into the same structural horizon as the Hypogeum came from. Pottery material recovered from these graves is all in Plain Simple Ware tradition, of which the vessel forms are entirely comprised in the pottery assemblage from the Hypogeum. As for their comparative date, these graves are contemporary with or more likely post date the Hypogeum in the second half of that millennium.

### Tombs 1-5



Fig. 3. 29 Tomb 1 at Tell Ahmar, view from northeast (after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936, Pl. XXXII: 1).

Tomb 1 is located near the Hypogeum to the south-west, approximately one meter over the level of the threshold. It was a small cist (0.89×0.45×0.40 m; fig. 3.29) built with four limestone slabs each of about 0.11 m thick and dug into the previous layer of mud-bricky walls. The tomb was covered by a massive slab and its floor was paved with flat and irregular stones. The tomb contained an individual of ambiguous age and sex interred primarily, and the body was found in the flexed position, lying on the left side, with the head to the west facing north. As the legs, the hands were flexed toward the face. Accompanying this burial is only pottery of Plain Simple Ware. A hemispherical bowl (fig. 3.30: 1) with a pedestal cup (fig. 3.30: 2) inside was found next to the feet of the body, while other vessels were found along the northern side, including an open bowl of distinctive shape (fig. 3.30: 3) and a globular-bodied jar with a short neck and a flat base (fig. 3.30: 4).

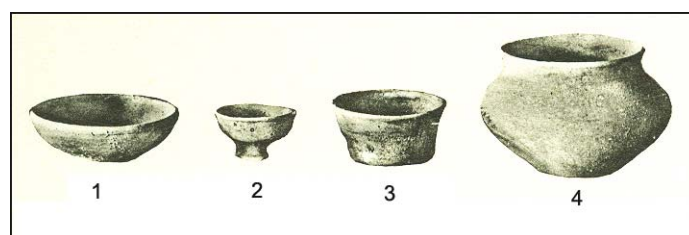


Fig. 3. 30 Ceramics from the Tomb 1(not to scale; after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936, Pl. XXXIII).





Fig. 3. 31 Tomb 2 at Tell Ahmar, view from north (after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936, Pl. XXXII: 2).

Tomb 2 was located next to Tomb 1 and smaller in size (fig. 3.31). As Tomb 1, it was constructed with four vertical limestone slabs and roofed by an irregular limestone slab bigger than the tomb itself. Its floor was paved with pebbles. The tomb also contained an individual interred primarily, and body's position and orientation are exactly the same as in Tomb 1. Small to medium-sized globular-bodied jars were identified (fig. 3.32: 3-4), while three open shallow and hemispherical bowls with thickened rims and ring bases were also present (one was broken; the others see fig. 3.32: 1-2).



Fig. 3. 32 Intact pottery vessels from Tomb 2; not to scale (after Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936, Pl. XXXIII: 4-8).

Tomb 3 was found in a corner of a previous structure east of the Hypogeum. It is curious that the tomb was constructed by only two walls with the long side measuring 0.50 m and the short side of 0.31 m long. Tomb 3 differs from the other stone cist graves in its construction of raw mud bricks and in the orientation of the body south-north. The human skeletal remains contained in the tomb were identified to belong to a child, this may account for the grave goods including, in addition to pottery, a carnelian bead and a leaky white stone disk. Three pottery vessels were placed near the body: a hemispherical bowl (fig. 3.33: 1) with a globular-bodied flat-based jar (fig. 3.33: 3) inside lying next to the feet of the body and an open bowl with everted rim (fig. 3.33: 2) lying behind the

skull.



Fig. 3. 33 Pottery from Tomb 3 (not to scale; after Thureau-Dangin –Dunand 1936, Pl. XXXIII: 1-3).

Tomb 4 (1.25×0.80×0.80 m) was bigger than the tombs presented above and contained two primary interments in the southern half of the grave. The bodies were buried in the flexed position with the heads lying to the west and facing north. A larger quantity of pottery vessels was found in this tomb than in other cists, and the PSW vessel forms especially include several champagne cups with carinated profiles on the upper bodies (fig. 3.34: 6-7), which were not found in other stone cist graves. The pottery vessels were clustered in the north-eastern corner of the tomb, with the exception of a pedestal cup (fig. 3.34: 2) lying next to the feet of the body.

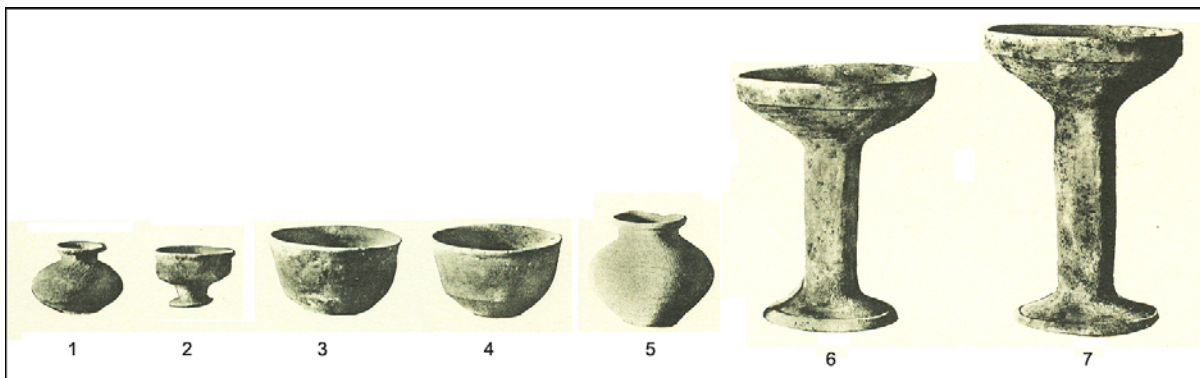


Fig. 3. 34 Pottery from Tomb 4; not to scale (after Thureau-Dangin –Dunand 1936, Pl. XXXIII: 13-9).

Tomb 5, east of the Tomb 4, measures 1.40 m in length and at least 1 m in width and appears to be the largest one among all the stone cist graves. As the other similar tombs, Tomb 5 was built with vertical limestone slabs and paved with irregular stones on the floor, but there is no evidence for its covering slabs. As Tomb 4, it contained two human skeletons buried in the flexed position with the heads lying on the west. Four pottery vessels were retrieved from this tomb, including two cups, a globular jar and a pedestal cup lying next to the feet of the body.

### Contents and Contexts

Evidence from these well-preserved satellite graves indicates that the contents of the tombs contained articulated human skeletons, a limited number of ceramics ranging from 3-7, and, in Tomb 3, two non-ceramic objects. A single burial was found in Tombs 1-3, whereas dual inhumations were contained in Tombs 4-5. The dead were usually buried in the flexed position. The bodies were oriented west-east with the heads facing north, with the exception of Tomb 3, where the head was placed to the south rather than to the west as others. In terms of the body's manipulation, the stone



cist graves and the Hypogeum have many in common: primary interments, the dead buried in the flexed position, the orientation of the body west-east, and, in Tomb 1, hands flexed toward the face. However, one can observe that the heads of the dead buried in these tombs faced north, as opposed to the Hypogeum, where the heads faced south. As in the Hypogeum, the same direction faced by the corpse can be observed in the burial deposit of the earlier period on the site (EBA I/II). Slight differences in the facing direction of the dead between the Hypogeum and its satellite graves may help to reveal a change of mortuary behavior, or difference between groups within the same settlement.

Pottery material is represented by only Plain Simple Ware of less numerous vessels forms: bowls, small/medium-sized jars, pedestal cups, and, in Tomb 4, large champagne cups. There is an absence of luxury wares that were recovered in the Hypogeum and child burials in noticeable quantity. In several cases, one can observe “sets” of vessels of differing sizes, placed one inside another, and apparently to be used together (e.g., the pedestal cup or globular-bodied jar inside larger bowls in Tombs 1 and 3). In contrast to the Hypogeum, the vessels included in these graves were placed adjacent to the skeleton/s. In Tomb 3, an open bowl was laid behind the skull, but in others single pedestal cups or sets of vessels were found next to the feet of the body. Apart from pottery, the only evidence for non-ceramic objects is provided from Tomb 3, where a carnelian bead and a leaky stone disk were found. The bead of precious material was probably an item of personal adornment and the stone disk might be understood as child’s toy; these objects may have been possessions of the deceased in life, or mourner’s gifts to their child.

### 3.5 RE-CONSTRUCTING FUNERARY RITUALS IN THE MORTUARY COMPLEX AT TELL AHMAR

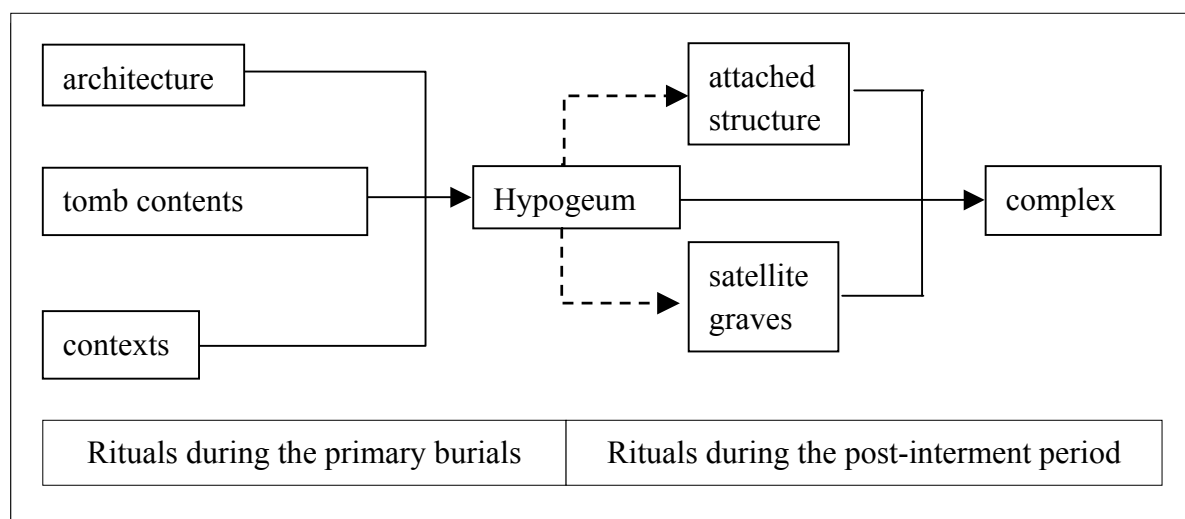


Fig. 3. 35 Diagram of funerary rituals related to the Hypogeum.

After full investigation of funerary data at Tell Ahmar mostly from the second half of the third

millennium BCE, the conspicuous, aboveground mortuary monument - namely, the Hypogeum - stands out of all the graves on the site. There is no substantial evidence for burials at Tell Ahmar to enable us to assess the evolution of mortuary practices at the site, but the Hypogeum that was elaborately built and lavishly provisioned, on the one hand, undoubtedly indicates its high status. On the other hand, the wealthy contents of the Hypogeum, central location, and proximity to the contemporaneous large complex can be interpreted to reflect complex series of funerary and mourning rituals, as opposed to the rituals accompanying other small burials on the site. The Hypogeum mortuary rituals, therefore, consists of two stages (fig. 3.35): rituals that occurred at the time of interments, and rituals that persisted long after the death of the interred persons.

### *3.5.1 Rituals during the Burial Process Itself in the Hypogeum*

The Hypogeum was preserved almost intact and not subject to lootings in antiquity. In spite of the collapse of the roof partially damaging the skulls of the dead, the depositional contexts of bone remains and grave goods largely remained untouched as the time of excavations. In addition to the human skeletal remains, the Hypogeum contents include animal remains, ceramics, and bronze objects. Among these, large amounts of animal bones belonging to goats were closely in association with the deceased individuals. Unfortunately, the remains of goats were not specifically analyzed, thus it is difficult to judge whether they were cooked or raw, entire or dismembered at the time of deposition. Equally, it is difficult to ascertain the role of goat remains and their association with the interred individuals. Whatever their intended function, there can be little doubt that the role played by animals is of great mortuary ritual importance. In rituals associated with the burials, the goats may be highly symbolic of something else, such as a source of food nurturing the surviving spirit, sacrifices offered to netherworld deities or ancestors, or the so-called “man substitutes” used in Mesopotamian rituals to divert sickness or portend evil from the deceased.<sup>214</sup> In the case of Tell Ahmar, presumably the role of goats continues in the mortuary context as a major source of food, but intended for the deceased’s afterlife. A clue to support for this hypothesis is that all of the animal bones were collected among the human skeletal remains, not related to pottery or bronzes in the main tomb chamber. The fact is that no animal remains were found in other mortuary contexts at the site, suggesting that the animals were privileged to be used in rituals honoring of the high-ranking persons buried in the Hypogeum.

Grave goods found in the Hypogeum included impressive collections of bronze objects and large quantities of pottery vessels. In the middle of the main chamber, bronze artefacts were found together in front of the heads of the dead, including toggle-pins, needle, bracelet, rein-rings, a variety of weapons and miniature bowls. Some of the bronze objects are primarily items of personal adornment in forms of pins (2) and bracelet (1). It is evident that personal adornments represented by only several examples were not placed above the skeletons, but were found together with other bronze objects in a group at some distance from the skeletal remains. This makes it unlikely that the ornaments were used by the deceased individuals in life. These objects with their shapes consistent with personal adornment were probably the gifts donated by funerary participants; alternatively, the

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<sup>214</sup> Black – Green 1992: 32.

decision to deposit them separately from the body in the tomb chamber is due to some reasons, such as ritual restrictions on the proper time to place grave gifts in the tomb or the need to accumulate necessary recourses for the occasion of a lavish death ritual.

The elaborate rein-ring discovered from the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar appears to have several aspects in common with those found in Sumerian sites such as Ur and Kish in terms of size, double-ring terrets, and decoration with animal models. They might be a variant form of the latter, or its form largely imitated the Sumerian rein-rings of this type. In a functionalist term, double-ring terrets were fitted to the shafts of wagons behind the necks of draught animals; the semicircular base sitting on the shaft was probably secured by a leather thong and the reins passed from the animals' noses through the rings.<sup>215</sup> In the case of Tell Ahmar, the Hypogeum rein-ring might have been used in the same way.

Other objects found in the Hypogeum, like three examples of bronze bowls, pose the questions of interpretation and function. It is curious that they are so small, and perhaps only small quantities of precious liquids could have been used with them. In the same bronze deposit were a variety of weapons impressive in both quality and diversity. They may be personal possessions, indicators of the elite status, profession, manhood, or some combination of the above. The evidence from the Royal Cemetery at Ur in Southern Mesopotamia indicates that weapons were usually immediately in association with a particular individual, who is suggested to be a warrior.<sup>216</sup> In the case of Tell Ahmar, one may presume that both adults were warriors, or individuals of warrior status, and they might have felt diminished without spear, dagger and axes even though these need never have been used in battle. Based on the chronological analysis of two characteristic weapon forms above, the weapons may have been deliberately accumulated over a period of time prior to deposition, as well as thousands of pottery vessels. The bronze objects, including especially weapons of elaborate forms, may be items specifically reserved for the occasion of a lavish death ritual.

As in other EBA monumental or wealthy tombs in the Middle Euphrates region, a strikingly huge quantity of pottery vessels were deposited in the Hypogeum. They were primarily found stacked one on top of another, forming an enormous heap along the western and northern inner walls in the western half of the main chamber. In several cases, one can observe “sets” of vessels of differing sizes, placed one inside another, and apparently to be used together. The majority of vessels were manufactured from Plain Simple Ware (PSW). In particular, bowl shapes of PSW is the most numerous type of vessels (up to 279 pieces), mainly consisting of small open bowls, and medium-sized hemispherical bowls. Barrel-shaped, corrugated goblets are among the second most numerous types, with 190 pieces. Tall-necked jars are also one of the predominant PSW forms, with 187 pieces. According to Carter and Parker, the elite status in North Syria and South Anatolia is signaled by number rather than heterogeneity of grave goods, and the quantity clearly much depends on the burial population in a communal tomb.<sup>217</sup> This may be true for a similar monumental tomb at Jerablus Tahtani, where this free-standing corbelled tomb (Tomb 302), although robbed, still

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<sup>215</sup> Zettler – Horne (eds.) 1998: 165.

<sup>216</sup> Pollock 1991: 376.

<sup>217</sup> Carter – Parker 1995: 96-116.

contained the remains of twelve adults and children and rich accompanying grave goods, including non-ceramic objects of precious materials and more than three hundred pottery vessels.<sup>218</sup> However, in the case of Tell Ahmar, this argument is probably invalid, since the Hypogeum contained only two interred persons. Here the question arises: whether the more than a thousand pottery vessels were assembled together, at the time, during the interments, or whether they were added gradually in later years? As discussed above, the Hypogeum pottery demonstrates a homogenous ceramic group that should not be subdivided into earlier and later ceramic periods, and there is no substantial evidence for a recurrent use of the tomb; therefore, it is unlikely that the vast quantity of pottery was added over many generations after the death of the interred individuals. Pottery vessels may have been kept for many years prior to their deposition, or perhaps awaiting for a lavish ritual in celebration of the death of the elite persons. It is still possible that many of them were donated by family members, close friends or other people in the community, who were invited to participate in funerary rituals.

One can infer that these vessels arrived in the tomb as a result of different events. Sets of vessels were probably material residues of a funerary banquet or banquets. Numerous champagne cups with extremely long, heavy stems were recovered from the Hypogeum, with a total of 96 examples. These specialized vessels may have been used as ceremonial drinking vessels<sup>219</sup>, while long-spouted jars suggest the importance of the ritual pouring of liquids, and, presumably, of libations as inferred by other scholars.<sup>220</sup> Of note is that several examples of highly decorated vessels from the Hypogeum are very peculiar that are not seen from elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Thus, their specific use remains to be determined. Despite of differences in morphological shape of each vessel, all of them seem to have been used for the pouring of liquids. Presumably they functioned in the same way as the long, spouted jars in the rituals; an alternative is that they carried other meanings, symbolic or magical. While the numerous ceramic vessels in the tomb may be interpreted as the material remains of various funerary rituals, there is no reason to exclude a general understanding of the vessels as being intended, along with their contents, for use in the afterlife. However, the French archaeologists have observed that all of the vessels were totally empty in addition to small cups/bowls sometimes placed inside the bigger containers. This makes it unlikely that they contained substantial material at the time of deposition.

While some aspects of animal remains and artifactual materials bear the indications of funerary rituals, circumstance in the tomb chamber may facilitate these to take place. A stretched area along the southern wall in the main chamber, beginning at the front of the entry and extending to the rear wall of the tomb (ca. 5.35-5.4 m), was largely devoid of grave goods and bone remains. This area seems to have deliberately been unoccupied, and it is natural to connect to its function with the transportation of tomb contents, including especially large quantities of pottery vessels, time after time during rituals. Although it was too small (less than one meter wide) to contain many funerary participants, one can infer that the mourners traversed the length of the main chamber and brought funerary gifts into the tomb. Ultimately, the entrance of the main chamber was blocked with stones, indicative of the finishing of complex series of funerary rituals, and the remains of ritual

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<sup>218</sup> Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Figs. 11-3.

<sup>219</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 5.

<sup>220</sup> Winter 1999; Porter 2002 a: 21; Schwartz 2007: 51.

performances partly remained in the tomb.

### *3.5.2 Rituals during the Post-Interment Period*

Contemporary with the construction of the Hypogeum, the stone, thick-walled building and staircase of thirteen stone steps were built to the north of the Hypogeum. They together with the aboveground mortuary monument formed an imposing complex which occupied the summit of the site acropolis. This partially preserved complex may also include other structures or chamber tombs and raise the possibility for the connection with the large public building situated on the southeast slope of the mound, but we have no chance to examine them in excavation. According to the latest report, the adjacent northern room contained multiple layers of construction, use, renovation, re-use and destruction, and stratigraphic evidence indicates that this structure was built as early as the construction of the Hypogeum and existed largely corresponding to the existence of the Hypogeum till the end of the third millennium.<sup>221</sup> In other words, the Hypogeum and adjacent northern room did co-exist over a considerable period in the second half of the third millennium. As the question addressed above, the initial function of the northern room is uncertain, its location in the close proximity to the Hypogeum may hint of the use of the building in some way associated with the mortuary monument. Similar evidences have been produced from other EBA sites along the Middle Euphrates valley (e.g., Jerablus Tahtani, Tell Banat and Gre Virike), where the free-standing mausoleums were integrated into the passage (Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani), large courtyard of a public, terraced building (Tomb 7 at Tell Banat), or mortuary complex (three chamber tombs at Gre Virike).<sup>222</sup> These spaces are suitable for sizable ritual activities, such as processions, ceremonies, and gatherings, which occurred at the time of interments or persisted long after the death of the interred individuals. In the case of Tell Ahmar, it is highly probable that the northern room is a facility of funerary and mourning ceremonies in honor of the high-ranking humans buried in the nearby tomb.

At a later date, we have evidence that the northern room contained the remains of babies interred in pits/Cooking Pots and exposed on the ground. Two plaster-lined pits that have been interpreted as ritual installations were found adjacent to the burials. The interment of babies as well as related installations was still associated with the commemorative rituals conducted in the post-interment period of the Hypogeum? Alternatively, it would be natural to bury babies died of natural or other causes in Cooking Pots and/or under the floor of house, a practice that was relatively common for prehistoric cultures all over the world. However, with no other EBA mortuary activities at Tell Ahmar for the comparison, there is a debate as to whether these funerary/ritual remains contained in the adjoining building were associated with the mortuary monument, or they reflect another mortuary behavior in the succeeding period on the mound summit at Tell Ahmar.

After the Hypogeum was constructed, satellite graves were placed near the Hypogeum to the west and east. They include single/dual individuals primarily interred in constructed graves, including four

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<sup>221</sup> Dugay 2005.

<sup>222</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: Fig. 3; Porter 2002 b: 157; Ökse 2005: Fig. 3.

cists and one mud-brick grave. Their stratigraphy and contents indicate that they were built contemporary with or slightly after the construction of Hypogeum in the second half of that millennium. But it is uncertain whether the satellite graves were placed around the Hypogeum as single events, or added gradually in later years. Another issue is that these small constructed tombs provide no chronological evidence which would compare to other EBA structural and funerary contexts on the summit of the mound more specifically. At least, we are acknowledged that during the post-interment period of the Hypogeum, six child interments, five satellite graves and two ritual installations were subsequently placed on the high point of the site. These funerary/ritual remains in the succeeding period are confined to the close proximity of the adjoining, mortuary monument. In this period, the mound summit at Tell Ahmar continuously served for mortuary-related rituals up to the end of the millennium.

## CHAPTER 4 TELL BANAT SETTLEMENT COMPLEX

### 4.1 SETTINGS OF THE SITE

Tell Banat settlement cluster is located on the left bank of the Euphrates, approximately 50 km south of Carchemish. It lies in a fertile flood zone of the Tishrine Dam area, currently under construction. The geographic landscape indicates that Tell Banat cluster belongs to the middle sector, which has been designated as one of the geographic divisions in the region along the Euphrates as well as the adjacent areas to east and west. Geographically, the small embayment, in which Tell Banat and its satellites sites are located, should be treated as a discrete sector separated from the Carchemish plains to north by cliffs at Qulat' at Nedjim.

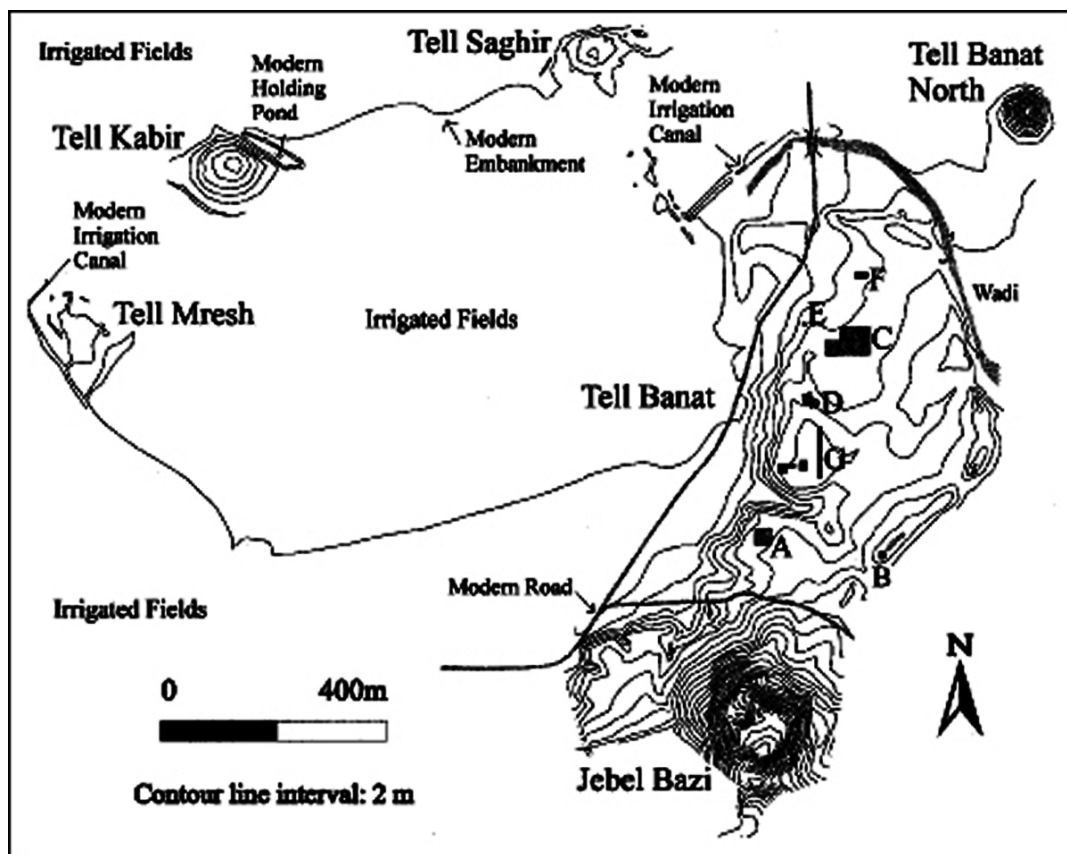


Fig. 4. 1 Tell Banat settlement complex (after Porter 2002 a, Fig. 2).

Tell Banat settlement complex consists of not one site, but a group of contemporaneous sites varying in size and function (fig. 4.1). Four sites are located in the vicinity within 1 km far one from another in this small agricultural basin: the main urban mound consists of Tell Banat (25 ha.) and Tell (Jebel) Bazi; the satellite site of Tell Banat North, a large burial mound built in three stages; Tell Kabir (2.3 ha.), a small site west of Tell Banat where a temple *in-antis* was located; and Tell Saghir (1.8 ha.)

An initial surface survey of the area was conducted in 1988, and in 1989 soundings were made on Tell Banat and Tell Kabir.<sup>223</sup> In 1990 excavation continued at Tell Kabir.<sup>224</sup> Work on the conical mound, Tell Banat North, was initiated in 1993 and a tomb (Tomb 1) on the west slope of the main tell was excavated.<sup>225</sup> Subsequently, the 1994 and 1995 campaigns of the Euphrates Salvage Project focused on Tell Banat and Tell Banat North.<sup>226</sup>

Most surviving remains belong to the Early Bronze Age from the second half of the third millennium. Four periods of occupation have been identified (table 4.1), Period IV, 2600-2450 BCE, for which we have evidence from Tell Banat and Tell Banat North (White Monument B); Period III, 2450-2300 BCE, found at Tell Banat, Tell Banat North (White Monument A) and Tell Kabir; Period II, 2300-2150 BCE, and Period I, 2150-2000 BCE, recovered primarily from Tell Kabir. The absolute dating derives from a combination of ceramic chronology, radiocarbon dates and objects comparisons.

Site Period	Date (BCE)	Tell Banat					Tombs	Banat North
		Area A	Area C	Area D	Area F	Area G		
II/I	2300						T. 9	
						Pottery production	T. 7	
III	2450	Pottery production	Public B. 6	Pottery production	Domestic houses	Pottery production	Ts. 2/4/6	WM A
IV	2600		Public B. 7	Pottery production	Public Building	Pottery production	Ts. 1/7	WM B
			Gravel platform	Pottery production				WM B2
V	?		MM II					WM C

Table 4. 1 Site periods of Banat settlement complex with main characteristics (Note: MM, Mortuary Mound; WM, White Monument).

Occupation at Tell Banat may be divided into four main contextual categories - distinguished by criteria of architecture, installation and general content - public, funerary, domestic and industrial or productive. The public contexts include Building 1 from Tell Kabir, the temple *in-antis*, and Buildings 7 and 6 from Area C at Tell Banat.<sup>227</sup> Funerary contexts are White Monuments A, B and C from Tell Banat North as well as extra-mural (Tombs 1/2) and intra-mural tombs (4, 5, 6, 7 and 9).<sup>228</sup> Materials which may be attributed to the purely domestic is thus far extremely limited, consisting of a few rooms and a street in Area F of the main settlement, but the productive context, including kilns, dumps and associated buildings, is extensive, consisting of Areas A, D, E, and G.<sup>229</sup> Most of deposits during the EBA times were encountered on the Tell Banat, Tell Banat North, and Tell Kabir. Due to the specific aim of this dissertation to focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium mortuary activities, other

<sup>223</sup> McClellan 1991: 701-2.

<sup>224</sup> Porter 1995 b: 125-63.

<sup>225</sup> Porter 1995 a: 1-50.

<sup>226</sup> McClellan – Porter 1997: 106-8; Porter – McClellan 1998: 11-63.

<sup>227</sup> Porter 1995 b; Porter – McClellan 1998: 9-25.

<sup>228</sup> The preliminary reports of Tell Banat North, see McClellan 1998; Porter – McClellan 1998: 32, Pl. 10 (a-b). Tomb 1, see Porter 1995 a. Tomb 2, see Porter – McClellan 1998: 32-4, Fig. 19, Pl. 9 d.

<sup>229</sup> Porter – McClellan 1998.



occupation at Banat settlement complex beyond this millennium will be within the general consideration but not be mentioned here.

- The mound of approximately 25 ha. is Tell Banat itself. It is a central walled city surrounded by several suburban sites. Extensive fieldworks have been conducted in eight areas, numbered from A to G. Deposits encountered here are extremely rich in various contexts in nature. Area C is the locus of an extensive public complex, the nature of which is as yet uncertain, but which may represent a palace – Building 7 is the earlier structure, which was reused and modified in Building 6. An intensive ceramic manufacturing quarter as well as the associated architectures has been retrieved from Areas E, D, G and A on the western side of the site; Area F is comprised of domestic houses, and the tombs are located in and around the main mound; in terms of funerary remains, the stone-built cist graves and Tomb 7 were concentrated in Area C where one of the mortuary mounds (Mortuary Mound II) was also excavated from the lowest deposits.
- Tell Banat North, a tall conical mound, is located about 200 m northeast of the main urban center of Tell Banat. It is an artificial structure rising out of the plain, reaches a size of 100 m in diameter and 20 m high. It was assembled in at least four phases over a span of some three to four hundred years, from at least about 2700/2600 BCE until 2300 BCE.<sup>230</sup> Excavations in Tell Banat North conducted from 1993 through 1995 revealed the presence of three separate entities, termed White monuments A, B and C.<sup>231</sup> The center of this mound was not reached through excavation, but neither conductivity nor magnetic surveys revealed evidence of any structure, such as a tomb, within the depths of the mound.<sup>232</sup>
- Tell Kabir was initially regarded as a small rural satellite of near-by Tell Banat, however, after one season of surface survey and two seasons of excavations at the site, evidence has indicated that a site with a long and complex occupational history that at times existed independently of Tell Banat.<sup>233</sup> At the end of the third millennium, the nature of occupation on the lower southwestern slope of Tell Kabir changed - the public building was abandoned, and the area covered by several large, round and deep pits. The subsequent building level, immediately above the pits, consists of a large domestic building of five rooms and an open yard.

## 4.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

First of all, funerary practices from the third millennium BCE at Banat will be specifically investigated in the following. The main occupation has thus far been divided into two periods: Period IV, and Period III. A mortuary complex comprised of conical mounds with inner cairn burials established at and near Tell Banat prior to more permanent settlement in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Porter 2002 b: 160.

<sup>231</sup> In previous publications, for example, in McClellan – Porter 1999, and McClellan 1998, two phases of the White Monument were designated as I (now A) and II (now B).

<sup>232</sup> McClellan – Porter 1999: 107.

<sup>233</sup> Porter 1991: 721-2; Porter 1995 b: 125-63.

<sup>234</sup> Porter 2002 a: 16-7, Fig. 6; Porter 2002 b: 158-9.



Fig. 4. 2 The public sector in Area C at Tell Banat from Periods IV till III (from Porter 2002 b, 157).

From the earlier phase, called Period IV, dating to 2700/2600-2450 BCE, elaborate public buildings and an extensive pottery production quarter have been retrieved. No segregated domestic housing was found at the site for this period, rather living and work activities on a domestic scale seem to have been mixed with large-scale productive facilities. At around 2600, perhaps as early as 2700 BCE, things started to change that at least one of the burial mounds and possibly more was covered over by an extensive gravel deposit. Overlaying on the western side of Mortuary Mound II (fig. 4.2) as excavated, the gravel deposit with a depth of 3.5 m extends some 60 m in diameter. It was an artificial construction. It would seem to form a platform deliberately for the next construction level. Magnetometry surveys revealed the platform to be clearly limited, rather than spread across the site as would be the case if it was the result of a flood or a natural Würm terrace. Subsequently, a large building complex, i.e., Building 7 (fig. 4.2), was directly built on top of the gravel platform. Building 7 is one of a series of public complexes dating to the mid-third millennium and usually interpreted as palace. The presence of the large public complex in the earlier phase of Period IV, would seem to indicate that the authority structures of the state were in existence at this time. These buildings are each quite individual in plan, and Building 7 is no exception. It was constructed over a sequence of artificial terraces at least three, descended from east to west across a distance of 45 m. These terraces

are dug into the gravel platform. On the second terrace, a series of rooms are arranged around a 7×7 m floor of baked brick that was heavily mortared with bitumen. This distinctive floor was a central plaza. Taking the plaza as a central locus, to the east is an open area dominated by large limestone column bases over a meter in diameter. To the south of the columned area is Tomb 7 (fig. 5.2). Structure of Tomb 7 consists of five chambers with connecting passages, entered by a short vertical shaft and dromos. In the first phase of use of the tomb roof, which consisted of massive limestone slabs each over a metric ton in weight, appears to have formed part of an open courtyard or outdoor area. A white surface made of crushed limestone surrounded the slabs. The entrance shaft would have emerged above ground level.

Also dating to Banat Period IV is an extensive pottery production quarter that covers two hectares of the site. Abundant evidence for pottery manufacturing is provided especially from Area D, where related contexts like dwellings and workshops have been also excavated.<sup>235</sup> Interestingly, the ceramic industry had been already existed before the construction of the public building at the center of the site, since several large pits that were subsequently sealed by Building 7 contained deposits of kiln ash, slag, wasters and etc., the detritus of pottery production. They also contained objects that are strongly associated with mortuary contexts, in particular incised bone tubes.<sup>236</sup> This may provide the first hint of the function of Tell Banat which began with a mortuary complex.

In addition to the public and productive facilities found at tell Banat, contemporaneous burials were recovered. Of particular note is an above-ground mortuary structure, known as the White Monument at Tell Banat North. Although it is not known what comprises the core of the monument, nor what is its earliest date, at least about 2700/2600 BCE, evidence from Tell Banat North indicates that it began to have functioned as a mortuary mound comprised of an earliest freestanding structure, White Monument C. Subsequently, but also within Period IV, a series of small earthen and stone tumuli containing human skeletal parts were cut into the sides of White Monument C. This phase of construction is called White Monument B2. Although the additional tumuli and deposits on the exterior of White Monument C accrued over a period of time, they were never freestanding and were intended to be incorporated into a large structure. White Monument C and the small tumuli were then unified by encasement under a thick coating of white terra pisé to form one tall elliptical mound, known as White Monument B.<sup>237</sup> This action was undertaken during the initial period of expansive occupation occurring at Tell Banat.

Another significant burial located inside the urban center of Tell Banat is Tomb 1, which was accidentally discovered by villagers and under excavation in 1993.<sup>238</sup> Unlike Tomb 7 as an organic part of the public sector, it was on the western ridge of the mound. It was an earth-cut and two-chambered tomb belonging to Period IV, contained the multiple and disarticulated inhumations with duplicated patterns of burial goods in each chamber.

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<sup>235</sup> Porter – McClellan 1998: 13-20;

<sup>236</sup> McClellan 1998: Fig. 13; Porter 1995 a: Figs. 8-9.

<sup>237</sup> McClellan 1998.

<sup>238</sup> Porter 1995 a: 1-50.

The subsequent phase (Period III), dating to 2450-2300 BCE, saw extensive changes in architecture and organization: the public center was rebuilt, the pottery quarter was re-arranged and relocated, and a domestic quarter consisting of small insubstantial buildings was newly established. At Tell Kabir, the nearby satellite site, a large temple *in-antis* was built, and that is Building 1, 13×22 m in size. This long-roomed temple employs the same techniques and design elements as Building 6, dating to the Period III.<sup>239</sup> At the same time, the monumental structure at tell Banat North was enlarged known as the last version of White Monument A. It was constructed as one single entity, reached a size of 100 m. in diameter and 20 m high, still visible today. It was created in Period III, at the same time as a number of other changes become evident at the settlement complex as mentioned above.

Building 7 was succeeded by another imposing and more solid structure, Building 6. The latter, dating to Period III, is a large edifice with thick walls built out of sizable boulders. For one thing, the terrace system was abandoned in favor of raising all parts of the new buildings to the same level. For another, the orientation of the complex changed from southeast-northwest in the earlier phase to northeast-southwest in Period III. Nevertheless, the area of the tiled plaza continued to comprise the central access of the complex. Tomb 7 was transformed from an accessible and unconcealed structure, for the roof and entrance at least had been opened to view in Period IV, to an entirely subterranean, and now sequestered, burial place.

At 2300 BCE occupation on the main mound of Banat seems to come largely to an end, although there are residual traces of productive activities found in one small part of Area G. At Tell Kabir the temple from the preceding period is abandoned and a series of roughly circular pits are dug into the collapsed mud brick superstructure of the building. Then, around 2100 BCE, a new phase of occupation is begun at Tell Kabir and domestic houses are constructed over the pit deposition. Surface surveys and selected soundings at Kabir indicate occupation continued there through the end of third millennium into the second millennium.

### **4.3 A CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM**

In the ceramic assemblage for Period IV there are two main ware types. The bulk of material is in Plain Simple Ware with a small corpus of ceramics in Euphrates Banded Ware. Vessel types in Plain Simple Ware include tall-necked jars with everted rims, bead-rimmed hemispherical bowls and cups, pedestal vessels. Euphrates Banded Ware consists of fine, highly fired and thin-walled vessels, most commonly tall-necked ledge-rim globular jars, frequently painted with red horizontal parallel bands on the neck and upper body of the vessel. Cooking Pot Ware comprises about 2% of the total assemblage of Period IV and there are individual pieces of true Metallic Ware and Red-Black Burnished Ware found in Tomb 1, statistically insignificant.

A different picture of the Period IV assemblage emerges when material from funerary structures is also considered, in comparison to the pottery assemblage recovered from Area D, the pottery's

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<sup>239</sup> Porter 1995 b: "Function and Date", 130-1.

quarter, and from Building 7. Tomb 1 has been studied in detail, and contained 128 PSW vessels, 29 EBW vessels, both wares incorporating a variety of shapes not found in noticeable quantity in contexts other than burial ones from this period. To some extent, ceramic assemblage from Tomb 1 serves as a standard of chronological sequence, through which to compare pottery found in other funerary contexts at the Banat complex. Notable are small spouted jars, tripod foot bowls, open bowls with everted rims and a number of miniatures, all in Plain Simple Ware. Euphrates Banded Ware types include champagne cups, small open bowls, straight-necked jars with everted rims and ring bases. In Period IV Euphrates Banded Ware constitutes a significant part of the assemblage only in funerary contexts, e.g., in tombs at Tell Banat and at Tell Banat North, although there is some indication that this ware might be manufactured at Tell Banat in Area D.<sup>240</sup> From the overall collection from the White Monument B, pottery assemblages in form and ware types can be compared to those found in Tomb 1.<sup>241</sup>

In Banat III dated c. 2450-2300, almost all the forms found in Period IV continue in use in Period III, and Plain Simple Ware remains the predominant ware type, with Euphrates Banded Ware continuing to be recovered primarily from tombs. This period can be comparable to EBA IVA, Ebla period IIB1 and Amuq I. However there are some important differences in the assemblage between the two periods. There is a shift in quantities of particular forms in Plain Simple Ware, and body shapes undergo slight morphological changes - the globular shapes become far more rounded, necks are longer and more pronounced. A greater range of fired color in Plain Simple Ware is evident, and this is in part because a finer version of Plain Simple Ware fabric becomes more common than in the previous period. Notable of the new bowl types are the open bowls with curved sides and either ring or disc bases, and are typical of the “caliciform” assemblage in western Syria. Other new features of Period III include the increased frequency of corrugated cups and the introduction of a Plain Simple Ware version of the same cup shape. Beaded-rim bowls of all sizes are now one of the predominant forms. Plain Simple Ware cups become inturned and hemispherical. It is in this period that variations in Euphrates Banded Ware appear in significant quantities, most notably with the introduction of the black version, namely, Black Euphrates Banded Ware. Syrian bottles appear in quantity in Black Euphrates Banded Ware, but there are also one or two red examples. Of the many new forms added to this ware type in this period are straight-necked jar with everted and grooved rim, or multiple grooved rims with ring bases and miniature jars.

In Period III, funerary material includes the small inhumations in the fill of White Monument A; Tomb 4, a small stone cist burial; Tomb 2, a large earth-cut shaft tomb, and Tomb 7, the five chambered stone-built tomb in the public sector. The ceramic assemblages of these burials are very similar in composition to those of the previous period, consisting of a majority of Plain Simple Ware forms-jars, bowls, cups, and spouted jars and Euphrates Banded Ware jars, with both plain everted rims, and grooved rims. A number of Black Euphrates Banded Ware vessels were also found, including forms not seen elsewhere at Banat-for example, squat jars with pieced lug handles. A limited number of Cooking Pots were also noted in each burial. Open bowls have a much higher

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<sup>240</sup> Porter 2007: Pl. IV (9), since a couple of nearly complete vessels was found in the collapse of Kiln 3, for example.

<sup>241</sup> McClellan 1998: Figs. 14-7.

frequency in tomb groups than in any other circumstance, and the rilled or grooved rims seem to be confined primarily to funerary contexts.

In the later third millennium, c. 2300-2000BCE, the caliciform assemblage continues in use and is well attested at Banat Period II. New types include shallow bowls with vertical rims and goblet with collared rim, while Euphrates Banded Ware painted jars disappeared. Although comparable to west Syrian sequence as Ebla IIB2, and Amuq J, so-called Early Bronze IVB, this Euphrates assemblage maintains its local peculiarities, eschewing the painted caliciform goblets common west of the valley.

#### 4.4 BURIAL PRACTICES OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

<i>Period/date</i>	<i>Tell Banat North</i>		<i>Tell Banat</i>	
	<i>monument</i>	<i>burials</i>	<i>intra-mural in public sector</i>	<i>extra-mural to the west/east</i>
			<i>stone-built tombs &amp; burial mound</i>	<i>earth-cut tombs</i>
Banat III 2450-2300	WM A	over 7 burial deposits	T. 9 T. 7 (D) Ts. 4 (I), 5, 6 (T)	4 tombs including T. 2 (T)
Banat IV 2600-2450	WM B WM B2 WM C	earthen mounds 3 earthen/stone tumuli	Tomb 7  MM II: a stone cairn	13 robbed tombs T. 1(M)

Table 4. 2 Selected tombs at Banat in the third millennium. (Note: D, dual inhumations; I, individual inhumation; M, multiple inhumations; T, tripartite inhumations.)

One of the pronounced aspects of the mortuary practice at Banat settlement complex is the considerable variability in the funerary architecture (table 4.2). Apart from burial deposits exposed on open ground, there are three main conventional categories: simple pit inhumations; a variety of stone-built graves including cist graves like Tombs 4/5/9, rectangular chamber tomb like Tomb 6, and largest multi-chambered tomb like Tomb 7; earth-cut shaft and chamber tombs like Tombs 1/2. Besides, it should be noticed that monumental mortuary mounds - namely, the White Monument and Mortuary Mound II containing earthen burial deposits or stone tumuli - stand out from all burial types on the site.

In addition to the funerary remains at the White Monument concentrated on Tell Banat North, EBA burials are distributed within the urban center of tell Banat as well as its adjacent area to the west and east. And, there appear to be other EBA tombs at the base of Jebel Bazi. Several probable tombs were located in fields north of the White Monument, as a result of magnetometer survey.<sup>242</sup> In fields east of tell Banat, between tell Banat and tell Banat North, four tombs have been brought to light. One of them was Tomb 2 that excavated in 1994 and dated to Period III.<sup>243</sup> Farther east, on the slope

<sup>242</sup> McClellan – Porter 1999: 108.

<sup>243</sup> Porter – McClellan 1998: 32-4, Pl. 9d.

of a hill just outside the river plain was encountered 13 robbed tombs that cut into limestone rock. Scattered potsherds in them are dated to Banat Periods IV/III.<sup>244</sup> Tomb 1 was located along the western ridge of the urban center at tell Banat, which is dated to Banat Period IV. One cist grave found in Area D, the potter's quarter, was robbed and devoid of objects. Several other burials were recovered in Area C, the location of a large artificial gravel deposit and two public buildings. In contrast to the largest and most elaborated Tomb 7, the inhumations near it including Tombs 4/5/6/9 were conducted in a variety of more simple styles. A burial mound, called Mortuary Mound II, was also partially exposed. It was stratified beneath the gravel platform and the public buildings of Period IV and Period III; in this regard this funerary structure should date to a period earlier than Period IV and it preceded the urban expansion. Compared to contemporaneous settlement plan in terms of distribution of the overall third millennium burials at Banat complex, they are represented as simply by three locations, intramural burials, extramural graves, and a large burial mound far from the center of the site.

The third-millennium mortuary data at Banat complex exhibits considerably ample tomb contents and a variety of mortuary practices and reflects urban expansion having started from the mid-late third millennium and cultural evolutions that spanned from Periods IV to III. The following part will select some of burials as targets of research from all the EBA funerary records before specifically investigating funerary practices and potential ritual activities associated with the burials. For the burials to be selected, several factors must be considered, such as relatively well preservation, ample contents of tombs and representation of EBA funerary styles.

#### *4.4.1 The White Monument and Mortuary Mound II*

As early as 1988, an extensive surface survey was conducted, including a prime task of artifacts' collection. In 1993, the excavation was initiated in a northeast quadrant at tell Banat. Artifacts in the northeast quadrant were infrequent; therefore, in the next season in 1994, a number of new squares were opened on the west side. In this season, excavations that were concentrated in an important square (SW41) on the southwest side reached a deeper level, and the corrugated surface of White Monument B was exposed. In 1995, work was continued in the upper southwest quadrant. Meanwhile, in 1995 during excavations within the main site of tell Banat, the upper part of a structure that is very similar in shape and construction to White Monument B was located underneath an artificial gravel platform up which building 6 and 7 were constructed. Thus, a similar mound comprised of the structure, has been partially excavated that year from the lowest deposits at tell Banat itself. The mound, used to be termed as White Monument III<sup>245</sup>, is now designated Mortuary Mound II.

After a series of excavations carried out in Tell Banat North and Tell Banat itself, four monuments as freestanding edifices, three of which overlying one another constituted an enormous mound of tell Banat North, have been brought to light. As a consequence, their striking monumental size,

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<sup>244</sup> McClellan – Porter 1999: Fig. 6.

<sup>245</sup> McClellan 1998: 246.



construction practice, and most importantly burial deposits related to each version of the monuments, have attracted broad attentions from archaeologists.

## Architectures

The earliest substantial structure is the White Monument C. Extensive exposures of the southern portion of the mound and a long trench through the western slope revealed detail on the construction and the history of this freestanding structure.<sup>246</sup> It appears to be somewhat pyramidal in shape, with the main face oriented toward the settlement of Banat. It was constantly re-plastered as its surface melted from weathering, indicating that it was exposed for a considerable period of time.



Fig. 4. 3 Tell Banat North: 1, White Monuments A/B, looking east; 2, details of corrugated surface at WM B (after McClellan 1998, Figs. 2, 7).

White Monument B, an artificial mound, is made of layers of earthen fill, covered with a corrugated mud plaster surface. The plan and photography show this most distinctive feature (fig. 4.3). The corrugations of the surface are the result of construction techniques: the coating had been formed in successive horizontal bands. Such pattern has given it a step-like appearance as much as intentional decoration. The slope was not initially a solid layer of mud in which the bands were later sculpted; rather the outer capping was laid horizontally from the bottom up, like coins on a hand-made pot. Of note is a detail that mud bricks that constituted an individual band were stacked in a vertically slanting pattern on their narrow sides, clearly visible along the edges of some bands.<sup>247</sup> This is the usual method for laying plano-convex bricks in southern Mesopotamia during the Early Dynastic II period. The tops of the bricks are covered by thick mud plaster, also a characteristic of plano-convex construction practice.<sup>248</sup>

At intervals the horizontal corrugations are separated into panels by flat bands that radiate from the top and center of the monument (fig. 4.3: 2). It is likely that these panels and their borders are part of

<sup>246</sup> McClellan 1998: Fig. 2.

<sup>247</sup> McClellan 1998: Figs. 8-9.

<sup>248</sup> McClellan 1998: 244.

the initial structure and reflect the way in which construction was undertaken in segments along the curving slope. Note that the horizontal lines from one panel to the next are not always in line. Narrow incised lines also run in straight paths up the slope, perpendicular to the horizontal corrugations, sometimes in the flat bands of the panels, but just as often not. In parts of sloping surface there were no corrugations and no indications of mud brick. In SW21/22 (southwestern squares) the smooth plain surface was frequently renewed, often with layers of white powdery marl or limestone. Note that the White Monument derives its name from the white powdery surface on the south side. The apex of the monument was probably conical or rounded and was simply eroded. The evidence of erosion and replastering in places (although to a much lesser degree than White Monument C) indicates it was too probably exposed sometimes prior to being covered by White Monument A.

White Monument A, the last version of the mound and the phase visible today, represents a single act of construction (fig. 4.3: 1). The interior of the monument comprised layers of orangish gravel, chunky marl and sloped out and downward when seen in sections perpendicular to the contours.<sup>249</sup> Their top surfaces were irregular, often filled with white and grey chunks of marl and larger pebbles. These parts were never exposed but were soon covered with higher soil deposits. The inner fill was built up in clear horizontal stages so that the outer structure once may have been had the appearance of a layer cake, or perhaps a stepped pyramid, before erosion dissolved its exterior definition.<sup>250</sup>

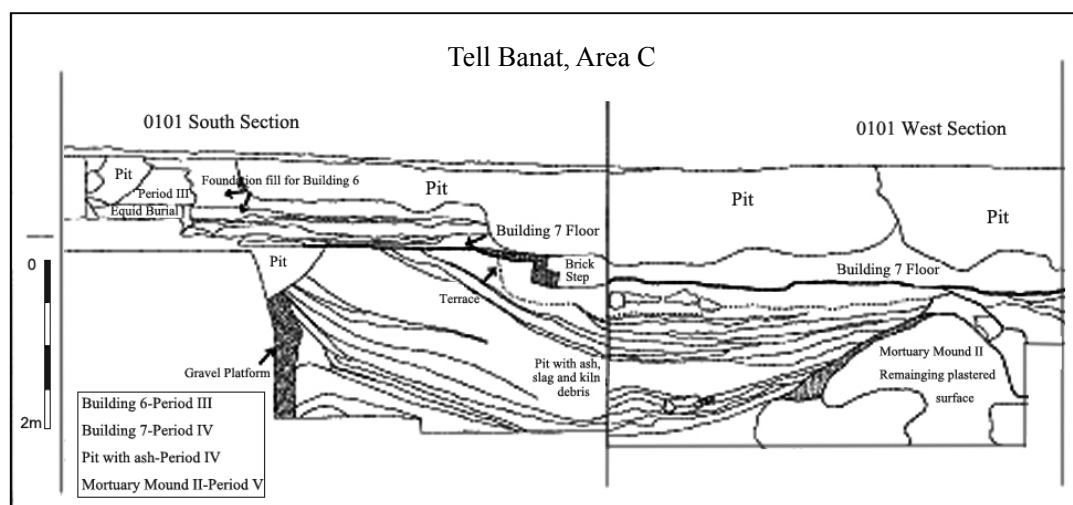


Fig. 4. 4 Section of Tell Banat, Area C (after Porter 2002a, Fig. 6).

Mortuary Mound II was located 15 m to the west of the Tomb 7 underlying the gravel platform upon which public buildings of Period IV-III were constructed, relevant details showed in section drawing of Area C (fig. 4.4). Excavation of this structure has been limited due to the constraints of the modern village. The diameter of the mound as excavated is 7.5 m, and it is at minimum 3 m deep, despite of its base having not been reached. Badly disturbed by later activities, including cuts into the surface, yet enough remains to ascertain that it is a sloping structure, which was made of layers of gravel and dirt covered by a whitish, hard-packed although fragile terra pisé coating. It is evident that

<sup>249</sup> McClellan 1998: Fig. 5.

<sup>250</sup> McClellan 1998: 244.

it once stood to a considerably greater height but was truncated in antiquity. The small portions of the terra pisé surfaces preserved on the western and eastern faces were corrugated. Thus, the upper part of the structure is very similar in shape and construction to White Monument B.

A conductivity survey of the main urban site of Banat, combined with the undulating topography of the area in which Mortuary Mound II is located, suggests that other such structures are to be found in that vicinity too.<sup>251</sup> Thus the mortuary mounds at Banat may constitute a field of such structures. Dating of the establishment of this practice at tell Banat is unknown, but the stratigraphy of the area clearly indicates that it preceded widespread occupation at the site of Banat Period IV and III.

<i>Monuments</i>	<i>Inner Fills</i>	<i>Coating</i>	<i>Outer Shape</i>	<i>Construction Technique</i>
<b>WM C</b>	unknown	plaster	pyramid	unknown
<b>WM B</b>	earth	white powdery limestone	corrugations, pannels	horizontally lay bands made of mud-bricks
<b>WMA</b>	layers of gravel, marl	none	stepped pyramid	horizontal stages
<b>MM II</b>	gravel, dirt	whitish, terra pisé coating		

Table 4. 3 Architectural characteristics of the White Monument and Mortuary Mound II.

Construction technique applied to the monuments' buildings at the White Monument and Mortuary Mound II differs (table 4.3). It appears to be at least three categories based on observation of consequence of construction practice and difference from material that had been utilized. Of these, one type is to lay bands horizontally around the mound as intentional decoration, giving it a step-like appearance, markedly represented at White Monument B (fig. 4.5), probably also at Mortuary Mound II in some places on the western and eastern faces. The horizontal bands were made of mud-bricks that were stacked in a vertically slanting pattern and constituted the coating of the monument. The material of the coating at White Monument B, which consists of layers of mud-bricks covered with mud plaster, is different from inner fill, which is made of layers of earthen fill. The corrugations of the surface are the result of such construction technique. The second is the placement of the layers of gravel and dirt and result in the outer structure with the appearance of a stepped pyramid represented in White Monument A (see below fig. 4.5). There is no extra coating applied on the exterior surface of the monument; in other words, material of outer structure is almost the same in composition as inner fills of the monument. The third is the application of whitish powdery limestone on the surface, such a practice well represented by the coating of Mortuary Mound II as well as in some places on the south side of White Monument B.

<sup>251</sup> The conductivity survey, apart from one made in Tell Banat North as mentioned above, also was undertaken in main mound of Tell Banat, see Porter 2002 a: 17.

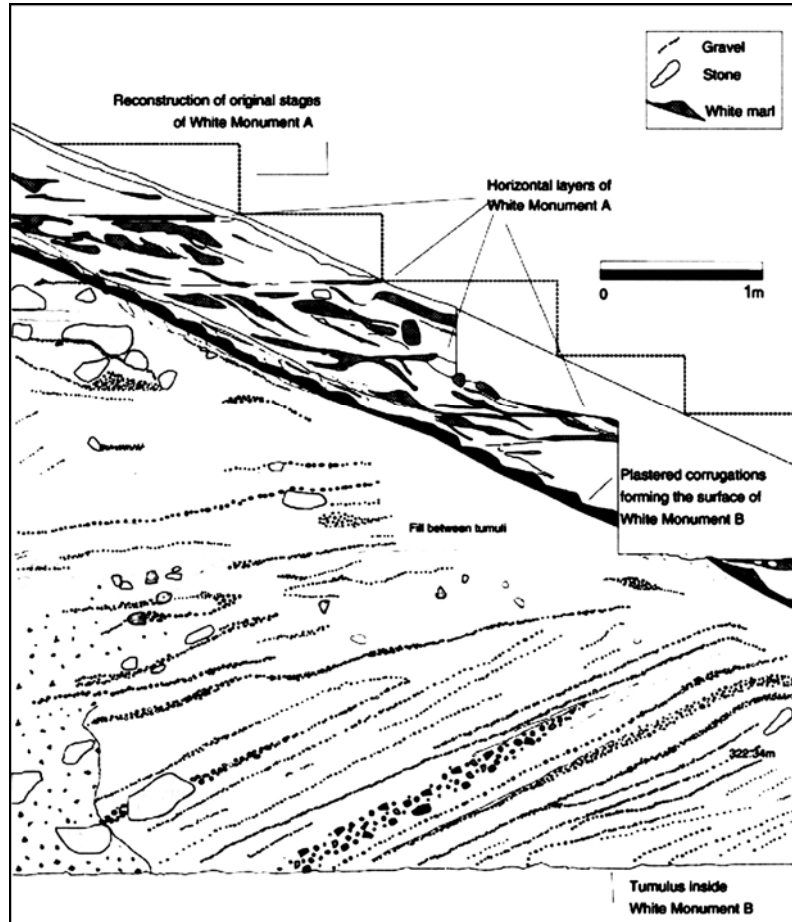


Fig. 4. 5 Section drawing comprising White Monuments A and B (from Porter 2002 b, 162).

Comparison with each monumental structure, construction practice occurring at White Monument B is the most sophisticated, characteristic of the intentional corrugated decoration of coating entirely covering the mound and upon the inner fill. This monumental structure in the chronological sequence of Banat complex could be comparable to a series of elaborated structures contemporaneously occurred at the main mound of tell Banat, including the public buildings in Area C, building 7, and that in Area F, as well as the construction of Tomb 7. In this regard, it is suggestive of the collective nature of the Monuments at tell Banat North, especially distinguished by Monument B; alternatively, construction of the White Monuments may have served as part of a series of constructions of enormous public buildings.

The labor investment for the monuments' construction is impressive. There are 52,360 cubic meters of imported soil in tell Banat North as calculated by excavators, and ground size is up to 7,854 at Monument A and 3,848 at Monument B.<sup>252</sup> The statistics seems to indicate the labor and energy expended in the construction of White Monuments are great, especially at White Monuments A and B, which could be comparable to other third millennium BC monuments of southern Mesopotamia and Egypt.<sup>253</sup> The act of constructing the monuments had taken a large number of workers much

<sup>252</sup> McClellan 1998: 247.

<sup>253</sup> McClellan 1998: tables 1-2.

time and certainly required much of a communal effort.

## Funerary Remains

Very little human bone was related to the first version of mound, i.e. White Monument C, since the inside of the mound was not excavated. Therefore, the contents associated with the burial mound, including human/animal remains, ceramics, and non-ceramic artifacts, stem predominately from White Monuments B2, B and A (table 4. 4).

<i>Location</i>	<i>Burials</i>	<i>Individual (MNI)</i>	<i>Human Remains</i>	<i>Condition</i>
WM A	over 7 earthen deposits	8	3 sub-adults 1 infant	fragments
WM B	earthen mounds	6 (from a mound)	3 adults: 1 male, one between 17 and 25 years 2 children younger than 14 years	
WM B2	3 earthen and stone tumuli	3	1 female adult: 25-30 of age 1 adult 1 subadult	complete skull
		5	2 male adults of advanced age 1 juvenile: 15-18 of age 1 child: 6-7 of age 1 female	skulls teeth
		3	1 adult 1 juvenile under 18 years 1 child under 8 years	fragments
	surface collection	2	1 infant 1 male: 30-35 of age	

Table 4. 4 Human skeletal remains found within the White Monument.

White Monument B2 was identified as a next step in construction after White Monument C, and human skeletal remains assigned to this phase were associated with the surface of White Monument C, rather than within.<sup>254</sup> Most of the skeletal remains were recovered from the small earth and stone tumuli cut into the surface of White Monument C with several samples of human bone collected from the surface of the monument. In the first earth tumulus, three individuals are distinguished, represented by the almost complete skull of a female, 25-35 years old, the remains of another adult as well as a sub-adult individual. There are also two stone features constituting tumuli, one of which is characterized by a stone circle and contained human bones of a minimum number of five individuals. Remains include two skulls, both from male individuals of advanced age, one older than 40, the other probably older than 60 years, bones of a juvenile approximately 15-18 years old, the teeth of a child between 6 and 7 years and remains of a female individual of unknown age. Another stone tumulus contained a minimum of three: one adult, one juvenile under 18 years and one child

<sup>254</sup> Porter 2002 a: 14-5; Porter 2002 b: 160.

younger than 8 years. The samples collected from the surface of WM C contained remains of at least two individuals; these are a newborn infant and a male between 30 and 35 years of age. As for a single mound of White Monument B, human skeletal remains were found throughout the fill of it. Only one sample clearly yielded remains of more than one individual. The MNI (minimum number of individual) is six and included three adults, one of which is male, one individual between 17 and 25 years, and two children younger than 14 years. One of the children, aged approx. 11-13 years, was represented by a partial skull. Most of the crown of the calvarium and the mandibula were missing, as Wilhelm suggests, they must already have been absent at the time of deposition.<sup>255</sup> White Monument A contained a series of discrete burial deposits, of which at least seven contained human skeletal remains. Eight individuals were identified, including at least three sub-adults, one of them younger than 15 years, and one infant of 18-30 months. Sex could be assigned with confidence to only two males and one female.

	Longbones	Skull	Torso	Hands & Feet	Pelvis
<b>WMA</b>	63%	3%	23%	6%	5%
<b>WM B and WM B2</b>	53%	19%	27%	9%	2%

Table 4. 5 Major bone categories represented in the human skeletal remains found in White Monuments A, B and B2 (data according to Wilhelm 2006, Fig. 3).

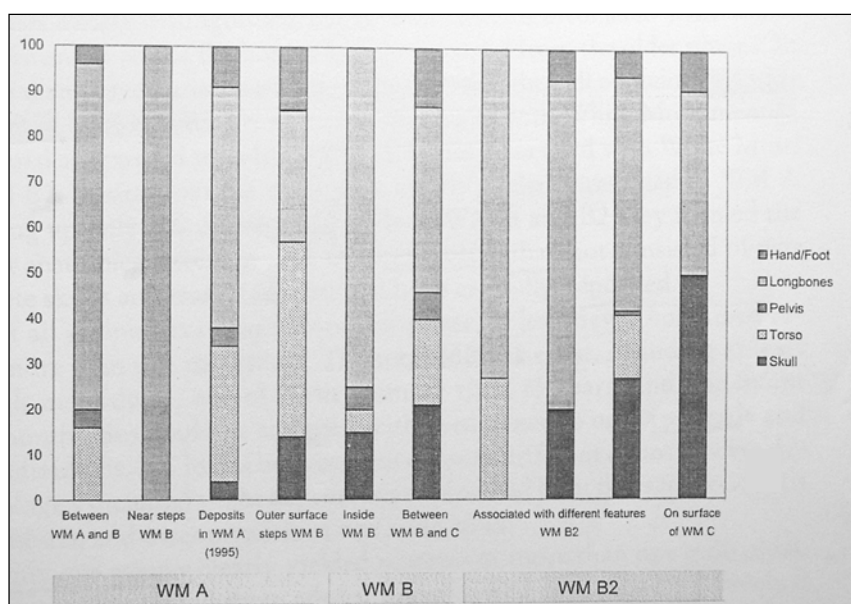


Fig. 4. 6 Major bone categories represented in the human skeletal remains within the White Monument related to different features (after Wilhelm 2006, Fig. 4).

In the overall collection of human remains, there is a strong bias towards the longbones of the upper and lower extremities, accounting for over 50% of the skeletal assemblage, and this is particularly marked in White Monument A at 63% (table 4.5). Bones from the skull were clearly underrepresented in WM A, making up only 3% of the total, whereas in WM B and B2 they were amongst the second largest anatomical group at 19% (see also fig. 4.6). Most other postcranial bones are represented at least once, but the selection is biased in favor of the calvicle, scapula, metacarpals

<sup>255</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 369-70.

and metatarsals, while vertebrae and ribs appear underrepresented. Bones from the pelvis are very rare; in contrast, small bones frequently occur. In a work by Wilhelm, which has specifically analyzed the bioanthropological data gained from the human skeletal remains found at the site, she argues that the human skeletal remains from the White Monument are the result of intentional selection.<sup>256</sup>

Apart from human bone remains, large amounts of animal bones were present in each phase of the White Monument, and such tendency is extremely apparent in the last phase. Animal bone remains account for 54% of all bones associated with White Monument A, and the bulk of them (40%) are of equid, with a secondary concentration of cattle remains. In contrast to the younger phase of White Monument, animal bones are comparatively rare in WM B/B2, making up 13% of all bones recovered, and they consist of primarily sheep/goat.

Under the circumstance that the interior of White Monument C was not excavated, all of the pottery material was retrieved from the multiple layers of plastering that covered its surface and consists of a few diagnostic pottery sherds indicating only an early date within Banat Period IV.

From the overall collection from White Monument B, pottery assemblage, as discussed above, are attributed to Banat Period IV and correspond to the ceramics found in Tomb 1. These are Plain Simple Ware vessels, such as round-based jars, miniatures, spouted jars, tripod vessels, open bowls and cups. Euphrates Banded Ware vessels occur in similar proportions as in Tomb 1 (see above, “chronological sequence”), with some fragments of Metallic Ware also present.

There are four vessels with complete profiles found in deposit 1, one of the small inhumations of White Monument A, including a small closed cup (fig. 4.7: 1), an open bowl with inverted and thickened rim and ring base (fig. 4.7: 2), straight-necked jars with everted or multiple grooved rims and ring bases (fig. 4.7: 3-4). Apart from the ceramics found within the bone deposits in excavation<sup>257</sup>, other pottery material, of which the vessels were mostly fragmentary, were collected from the surface of Tell Banat North in 1988 surface survey<sup>258</sup>. Pottery forms represented in the survey are limited, and correspond to the ceramics part of the burial deposits. The surface and excavation material from White Monument A seems to contain vessels typical of the forms dating to Banat Period III. Although several vessels types found in the surface collection have parallels to Banat Period IV, these types also continue into the next period, including the small, long-necked with strongly everted rims round bodies (fig. 4.8: 1-2) as are found in Tomb 1<sup>259</sup> (Period IV) and in Tomb 2 (Period III) in smaller quantities, round-based jars with flaring neck and interior-rim indentation<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 369.

<sup>257</sup> Some of these ceramics are represented in McClellan 1998, Figs. 18-9.

<sup>258</sup> McClellan 1998: Figs. 14-7, which present over 90% of the diagnostic ceramics from the surface collection. The largest number of pottery vessels was collected from Unit D at the base of the mound; on the other hand, a higher number of sherds were found in wedges 5, 6, and 7 on the west-southwest side of the mound, see also McClellan 1998.

<sup>259</sup> Porter 1995 a: Figs. 20-1.

<sup>260</sup> They are similar to those found in Tomb 1, see Porter 1995 a: Figs. 25 (P7), 26 (P2), 29 (P201), 30 (P45), and this type is more common in Period IV than Period III, there is a noticeable evolution in body shape over time, which is not evident unless a large part of the profile is available.



(fig. 4.8: 3-4) and large deep bowls with beaded rims<sup>261</sup> (fig. 4.8: 5-6). Many of the distinctive features of Period III are present, for example: Open bowls with grooved or inverted and thickened rims and ring or disc bases (fig. 4.8: 7-8), and black Euphrates Banded Ware vessels (fig. 4.8: 9).

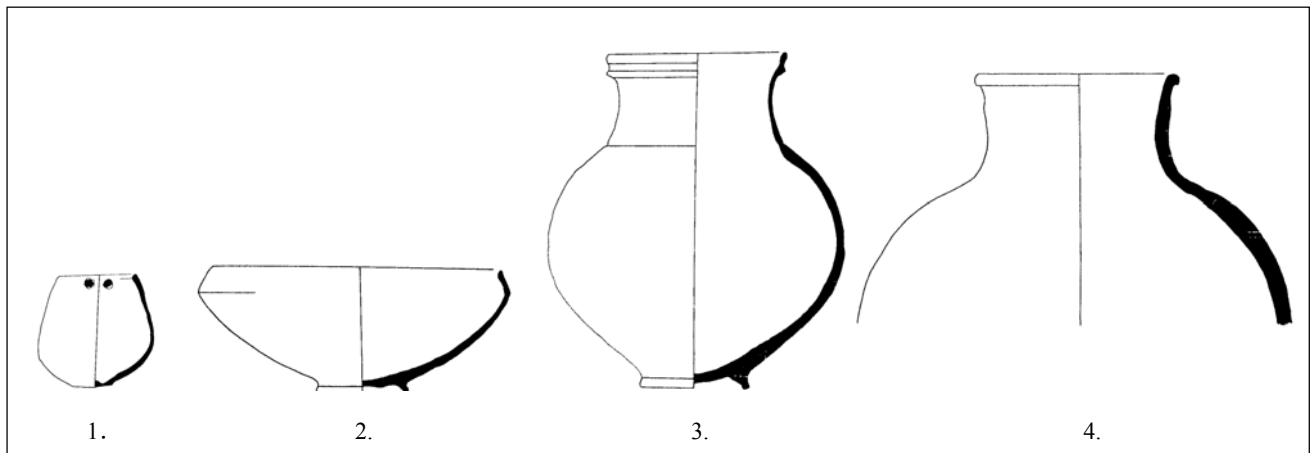


Fig. 4. 7 Vessels found in deposit 1: 1-2, nos. 2884-5, PSW; 3, no. 2887, PEBW; 4, no. 2886, OW. Note: PSW = Plain Simple Ware; PEBW = Plain Euphrates Banded Ware; OW = Orange Ware (after McClellan 1998, Fig. 18: 15-18).

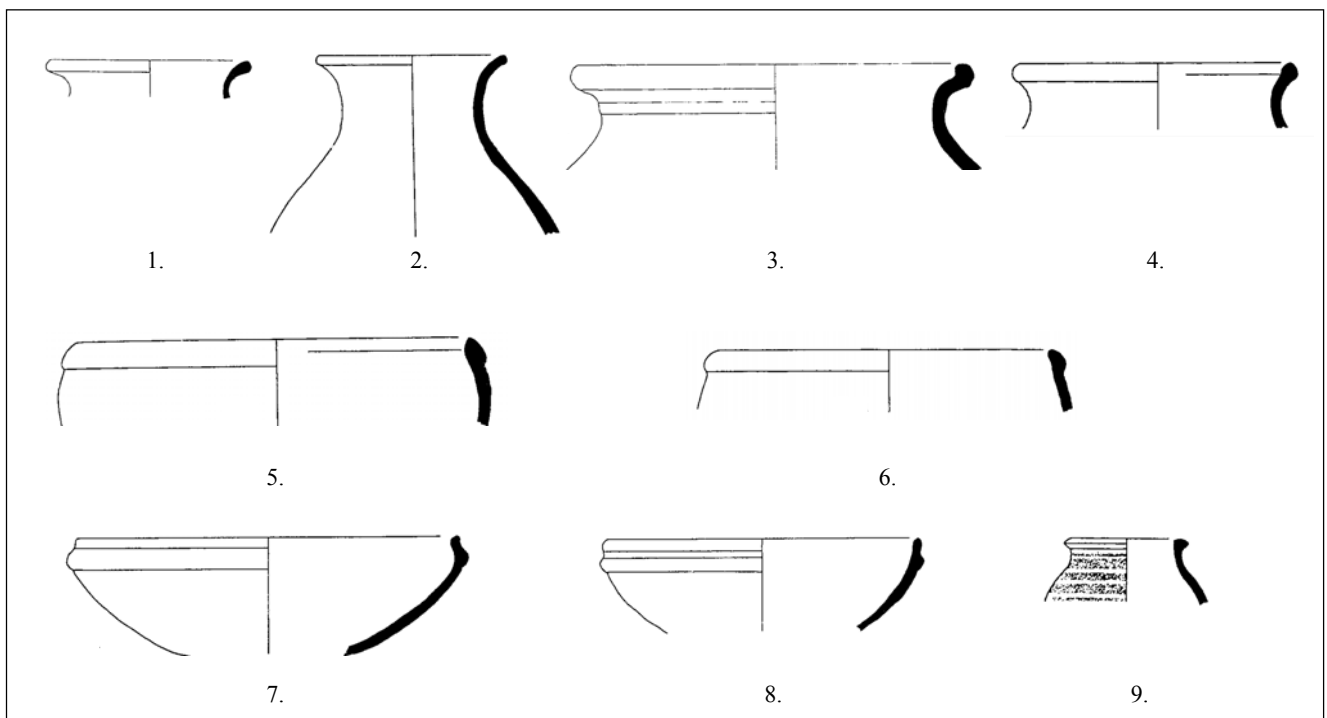


Fig. 4. 8 Selected vessels from White Monument A: 1, no. 40, PSW, from surface; 2, no. 3171, PSW, from SW14; 3, no. 88, PSW, from surface; 4, no. 41, PSW, from surface; 5, no. 39, PSW, from surface; 6, no. 4, PSW, from surface; 7-8, no. 3162-3, PSW, from SW14 and SW21; 9, no. 3161, BEBW, from SW14. Note: BEBW = Black Euphrates Banded Ware (after McClellan 1998, Figs. 14-16, 18).

<sup>261</sup> This form of bowls first appears in the first half of the third millennium BCE, see Porter 1995 b: Fig. 5 (11); Porter 1995 a: Fig. 32 (P22), but becomes more common in the second half of the millennium.

Non-ceramic objects were rarely found in the White Monument, but White Monument A also yielded some, including beads, an incised bone tube and biconical clay balls, all recovered in the interior fill of that structure. Of three types of objects, beads due to their morphological shapes can be interpreted as personal ornaments, for example, as part of necklace. The bone tube was found intact and its motifs consist of four zones separated by three bands. The zones on both sides are filled with cross-hatched incised lines, while one of the zones in the middle contains a herringbone pattern with the other containing alternating horizontally incised and plain triangles. The design motifs on this piece are reminiscent of those on the similar bone tubes in Tomb 1 at Tell Banat, which were found fragmentarily.<sup>262</sup> Its elaborate design motifs as well as a pierced hole on top of the bone tube are indications of ornamentation, such as pendant. The discovery of biconical clay balls in large quantities, more than 250, which were totally absent from the tombs at the site, is unusual. McClellan thinks that they are equated with slingshots, while Porter argues that they may have had a ritual or votive purpose, but in the absence of parallels to these objects found in the region, we have little idea in which way they may have represented symbolically.<sup>263</sup>

### **Interpretation of the Contexts**

Finds recovered from White Monument C mostly were ceramics, which come from within or between the plaster faces and could have been incorporated with the surfacing material, but as the excavator notices, there is at least one instance where a vessel had been deliberately broken and stones placed over the individual sherds.<sup>264</sup> This is suggestive of a ritual act that was perhaps performed each time the monument was repaired.

After the completion of the White Monument C, which had been constantly re-plastered and was exposed for a considerable period, a series of small tumuli containing multiple burials with disarticulated bones were placed on the slopes of the monument. One, located on the upper southeast side of WM C, consisted of two stone lines placed in a cut, filled and covered over with earth (Fig. 5.9). This construction consisted of multiple stone tiers one on top of the other. Fragmentary human bones were found between the stone lines, as Porter suggests that each of stone line “would appear to represent a separate interment of a group of secondary burials”. In one episode a skull of an adult female lacking only the mandible had been placed upright outside but immediately adjacent to the stones. Once-complete pots placed in and around each series of stone lines. In contrast to the above tumulus that was repeatedly constructed, other tumuli, one a small cluster of stones, and one a heap piled with stones and earth, are indications of a single construction event. It is possible that the additional tumuli accrued over a long period of time on the exterior of WM C, they and the older phase of mound were then encased by thick coating of white terra pisé, transforming them into a single mound, White Monument B. As mentioned above, inside the fill of the younger phase yielded abundant human skeletal remains, it would seem that they largely derived from a series of small,

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<sup>262</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 8 (A595, A587).

<sup>263</sup> McClellan 1998: 246; Porter 2002 a: 16.

<sup>264</sup> Porter 2002 a: 14.

mainly earthen, mounds in the interior fill that had been eroded out.<sup>265</sup> One of the skeletal deposits, as mentioned above, in which the human skeletal remains contained have been analyzed as yet, shows that a partial skull of a child aged 11-13 years was carefully positioned.

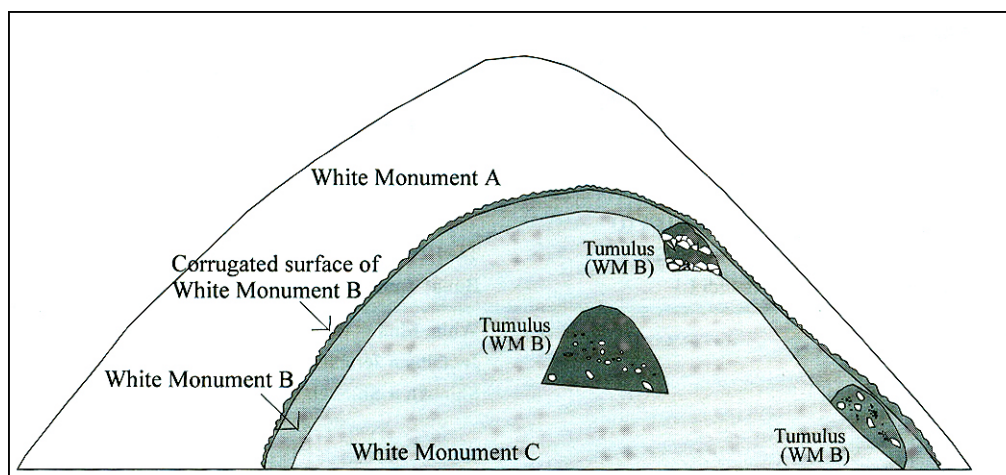


Fig. 4. 9 Three discrete burials on the surface of White Monument C (from Porter 2002 a, Fig. 4)

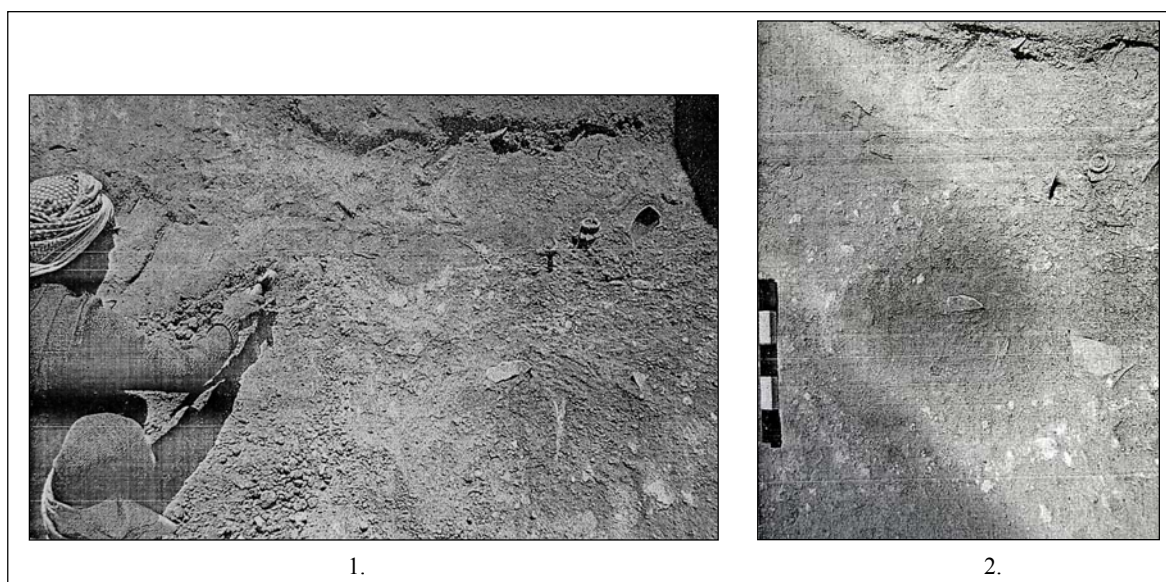


Fig. 4. 10 Deposit 1: 1, deposit 1 on one of the corrugated bands of WM B; 2, deposit 1, close-up (from McClellan 1998, Figs. 11-2).

The discrete burial deposits were deposited in the artificial fill of White Monument A, and on or above the corrugated surface of White Monument B (fig. 4.10: 1). The distinctive depositional contexts associated with these deposits led the scholars to think that they had been deliberately placed in the fill of the later phase during construction.<sup>266</sup> As one example quoted above, deposit 1 was delineated by an amorphous powdery white line (fig. 4.10: 2). In contrast to the older phases, the burial deposits were distinctive, well-defined, for a preliminary analysis of the burial data from the White Monument shows that each such deposit contains a mixture of human and animal bones and

<sup>265</sup> Porter 2002 a: 15, she mentioned that a deep trench cut into the southern slopes of Tell Banat north revealed the small earthen burial mounds, which were not excavated.

<sup>266</sup> McClellan 1998: 245; Porter 2002 a: 16.

ceramics. As mentioned above, pottery material of White Monument A stems not only from the excavations, but also from the surface collection. Most of surface material, as the excavator<sup>267</sup> suggests, probably derived from the burial deposits close to the surface that had been eroded out, particularly along the gully on the southwestern quadrant.

The non-ceramic objects recovered were not found directly in association with any deposit of White Monument A. Beads, although we don't know from which material they made, possibly were part of burial deposits, since hundreds of beads varying in types as personal ornaments were found in the tombs at Banat.<sup>268</sup> As discussed above, the incised bone tube found in White Monument A has close parallels in Tomb 1 and in a pit under the Building 7 in the public complex, which has been regarded as a center for mortuary-related ritual by all the indications (see below). Similar bone tube decorated with separate bands of incised design motifs is known from Jerablus Tahtani, in Tomb 1036. In the case of White Monument A, added with the evidence of its ultimate position in SW 32, we can infer that this object probably derived from a burial deposit, an assumption also made by the excavator.<sup>269</sup> Hundreds of biconical clay balls were scattered in the fill over White Monument B, concentrated in SW 42 and SW 41 (southwestern trenches). Therefore, the deposition of them must have been related to the burial deposits, some of which were excavated from the close proximity to these objects, also in the upper southwest quadrant. It is not certain as to whether the clay balls were part of the deposits as grave goods, since no parallels to this type of objects thus far have been found in funerary contexts at the site, or in the region.

To summarize, the overall pattern of burials inside the White Monument shows two quite separate processes, i.e., the way in which the earthen or stone tumuli were carried out. Considering the stratigraphical contexts of the small tumuli belonging to the phase of White Monument B2, it is almost certain that the multiple interments in each tumulus, which seem to have existed over a long period of time on the surface of the older phase of the mound, preceded the act of encasement as a whole under White Monument B. In other words, there are two separate events, interment and encasement, associated with the WM B2 small tumuli. Secondly, it has been well attested in excavation for the bone deposits inside White Monument A that they had been interred as the mound was compiled, not cut in after completion, nor incorporated randomly with imported fill. Although the practice of the small earth tumuli found in the fill of White Monument B cannot be reconstructed, such would follow a consistent manner as one in the later phase of the monument. In addition, inside Mortuary Mound II was a jumbled mound of large stones, found against the north, mosque bound balk. Badly damaged by subsequent building activities in antiquity, with only small patches of the surface remaining, nevertheless this edifice also comprises a burial mound/tumulus, with pile of large stones constituting an inner cairn. Although no human skeletal remains were recovered from it, this structure has been identified as a mortuary mound, since in the cairns smaller heaps of stones usually associated with human skeletal remains were found.

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<sup>267</sup> McClellan 1998: 245.

<sup>268</sup> For Tomb 7, see McClellan – Porter 1999: 110; McClellan – Porter 1997: 107. For Tomb 1, see Porter 1995 a: table 1. For Tomb 6, see Porter 2002 a: 18.

<sup>269</sup> McClellan 1998: 246.

#### 4.4.2 Monumental Tomb, Tomb 7

The tomb consisted of five rectangular chambers interconnected through four passages, entered by a short vertical shaft with several steps leading to a dromos (fig. 4.11). In my dissertation, I will adopt the numbers of five main chambers that have been already assigned by excavators as chambers A, B, C, D and F. I prefer tentatively assigning the four passages with numbers from 1 to 4 as illustrated below to distinguish them from the tomb chambers (fig. 4.12).

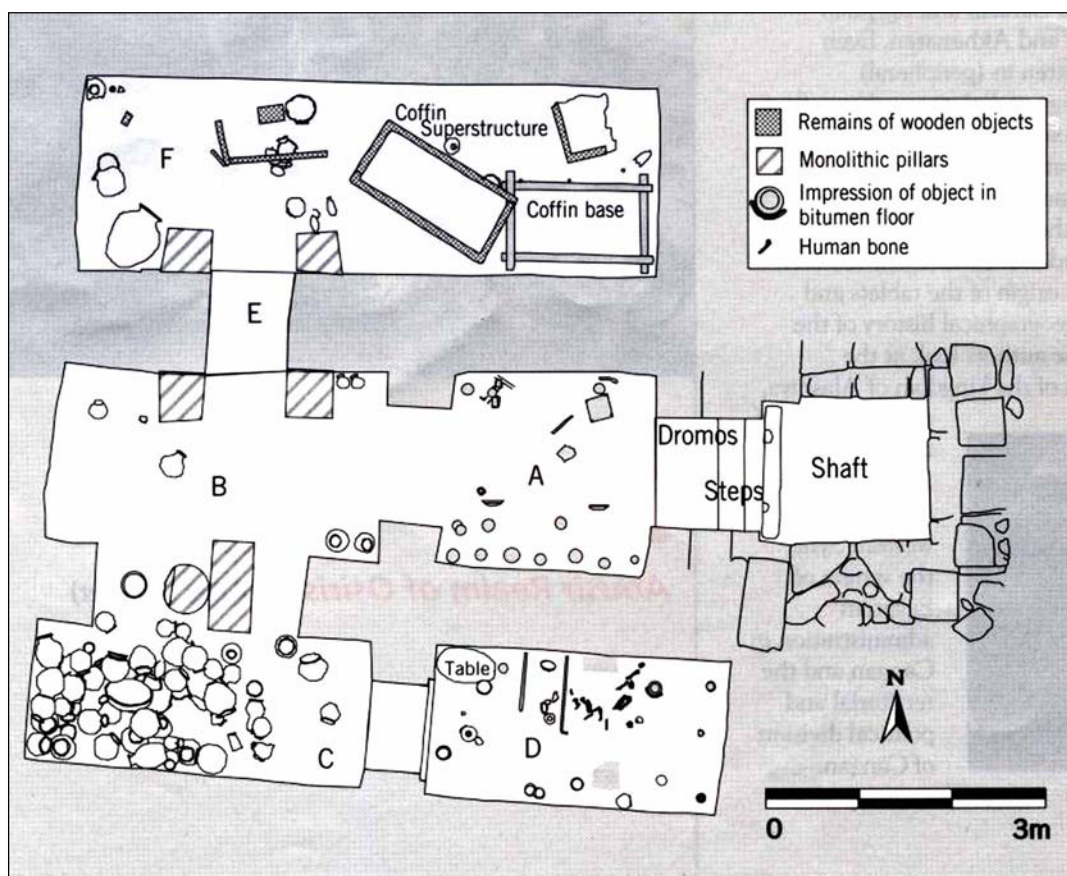


Fig. 4. 11 Tomb 7 and some of the contents (from Porter 2002 b, 156).

The entrance, dromos and long central chambers (A and B) run in a straight line from east to west on the axis, totally c.10 m in length. Chamber C is on the south side of chamber B, and from C one doubles back through a passage (4) to chamber D to the east. From chamber B one also passes through a short corridor (2) into chamber F. Five chambers constituted the tomb structure, almost a square, approximately  $8 \times 8 \text{ m}^2$ . The tomb structure is characteristic of symmetry; the tripartite plan consists of a central axis, from which the passageways lead to sided chambers. These architectural characteristics indicate that the tomb was well designed. Besides, the design of tripartite plan as a whole and that of sub-chambers reflect functional aspects, since the contents of the tomb differ from chamber to chamber (see below).



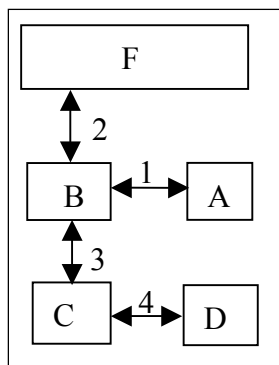


Fig. 4. 12 Diagram of passages among the chambers, T. 7.

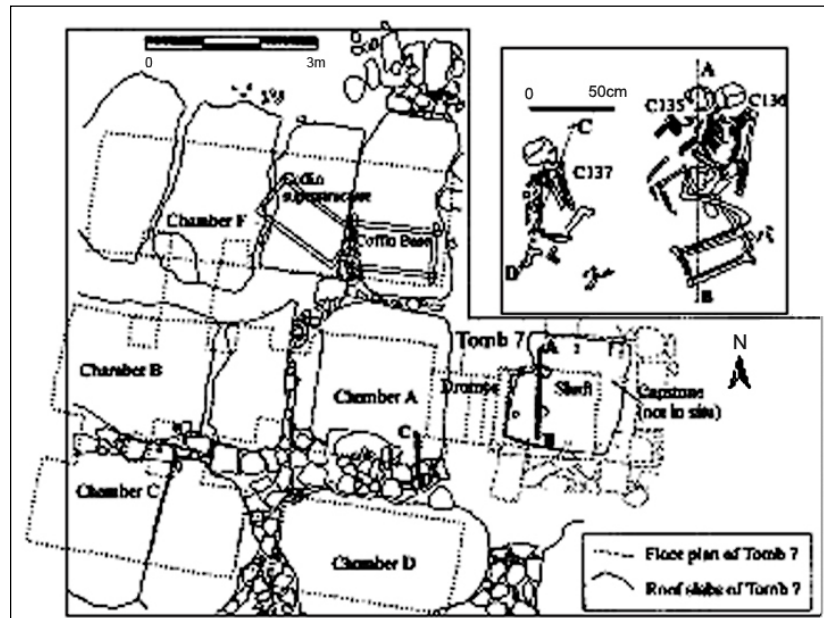


Fig. 4. 13 Floor plan and roof outlines of T. 7 (from Porter 2002 a, Fig. 7).

Besides, construction of the tomb is remarkable. Many aspects demonstrate that the tomb went through very sophisticated constructions: its roof consisted of ten large limestone slabs, each weighing several tons approximately 3×2 m in size (fig. 4.13); its walls were built with soft limestone blocks, which had been carefully cut and smoothed after they were set in place, giving the walls an unusually fine finished appearance; extensive use of bitumen in decoration, as for example the brick-tile floors are entirely coated with bitumen, which is also used to seal the massive roof slabs and mortar and patch the masonry of the walls. Further, the tomb had been renovated for many times as noticed by the excavator.<sup>270</sup> Renovations involved inserting heavy cut limestone post-and-beam supports on either side of the passageway between chambers B and F, while a large limestone pillar plus a limestone column were placed in the passageway between chambers B and C (fig. 4.11).

Tomb 7 was located to the southeast of buildings 6 and 7, and also cut into the gravel platform. In this regard, it was part of the complex of buildings and platform. Before the internal structure was exposed, excavators had observed that the top side of the roof slabs was flush with the floor of a courtyard. The courtyard was located on a terrace that was about two meters lower than the highest level of the gravel platform. The tomb roof appears to have formed part of the courtyard or an uncovered area, integral to the public building of Period IV. A white surface made of crushed limestone surrounded the roof slabs, such material similar to the coating of White Monument B. In

<sup>270</sup> McClellan – Porter 1999: 109

addition, the vertical entrance shaft stood a distance ca. 25-75 cm above ground and was closed by a capstone with two pierced holes in case of reopening (fig. 4.13).

## **Tomb Contents**

In terms of specific contents of the tomb, they may be divided into four main contextual categories-human/animal remains, ceramics, and non-ceramic artifacts.

Two individual inhumations were found in Tomb 7. The primary burial with articulated skeleton was found in the northernmost chamber (F) of Tomb 7. Due to the extremely unfavorable environmental conditions within the tomb likely caused by repeated water actions, the bones were completely deteriorated leaving only a powdered residue in the soil. Therefore, the age or gender was not able to be determined. The individual in flexed position, with head turned to the north, was found in a wooden coffin. Repeated flooding of the tomb had caused the upper part of the coffin to break away from its base and to float to its final position. The superstructure of the coffin positioned diagonally in the middle of the room, but the wood had decayed, leaving a thin wooden core encased by mud (fig. 4.11). The corners of the box were decorated by crossed bronze straps for each plank that once fit 2×2 cm staves. The base of the coffin was found in the northeastern corner of the chamber, against the rear walls on the northern and eastern sides. As early as third millennium BCE, such a practice with use of wooden coffin as burial container within a constructed tomb is unusual. The evidence of wooden coffins comes from Tomb 1 at Arslantepe in Anatolia, Umm el-Marra Tombs 1 and 6 in the Jabbul plain, and Bi'a down to the Euphrates River.<sup>271</sup>

The other inhumation was found in Chamber D. It is secondary burial with disarticulated bones. The skeletal remains showed a very poor state of preservation that only 20% of the bones were able to be identified with confidence.<sup>272</sup> They belonged to an individual of adult in the age range 20-35 as a result of the estimation of dental wears.<sup>273</sup> But the gender was not able to be determined. Several teeth showed marked but not extensive signs of linear enamel hypoplasia, attesting to recurring episodes of stress throughout this individual's childhood until the age about 13.<sup>274</sup> The pathological evidence of hard work and poor diet on the individual at least during the childhood indicates "a lesser degree of social stratification, and one where status mainly depends on an individual's achievements in life, consequently showed a more general spread of enamel hypoplasia throughout the population".<sup>275</sup> As Porter suggests, the two inhumations should be dated to Period III when the tomb was reused and modified.<sup>276</sup> Animal bones were also found in Tomb 7, where they were concentrated only in one place, together with pots and other objects immediately adjacent to the coffin burial in chamber F (details see below). The bone remains belonged to equid as identified.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Frangipane 1998: 295; Schwartz *et al.* 2003: 330; Schwartz *et al.* 2006: 608; Strommenger – Kohlmeier 1998: 35, 37, 45, Pl. 9 (1, 3).

<sup>272</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 363.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*: 363.

<sup>274</sup> Wilhelm 2006: PATHOLOGY, 371.

<sup>275</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 371.

<sup>276</sup> Porter 2002 a: 18-9.

<sup>277</sup> McClellan 1998: 246.



About 200 pots were found throughout the tomb, comprising as always a majority of Plain Simple Ware vessels and a smaller quantity of Red/Black Euphrates Banded Ware vessels, which, as Porter suggests, “can be confidently dated to Period III”.<sup>278</sup> Pottery vessels with large quantities retrieved from Tomb 7, especially the Plain Simple Ware vessels, should exhibit ample diverse shapes. Evidence for the ceramic material found in Tomb 7 is very limited. No ceramics with the illustration of vessel profiles has been published. Work by Porter has defined the ceramic horizon of the Early Bronze Age in the Upper Euphrates mainly by investigating the ceramic assemblages from Periods IV to III at Banat site.<sup>279</sup> The analysis in this article provides some useful information on the Tomb 7’s ceramics although lacks details. Plain Simple Ware forms consist of jars, bowls, cups and spouted vessels. A limited number of Cook Pots were also noted. Over 50 open bowls with grooved, rilled or drop shaped rims seem to be among the most common type of Plain Simple Ware vessels found in the tomb, and “this is one of the forms thought to indicate mass production and standardization”.<sup>280</sup> With the current available evidence, it is impossible for further understanding of the Tomb 7’s pottery vessels, especially in a functionalist term.



Fig. 4. 14 Gold beads from chamber F, T. 7  
(from Porter 2002 b, a photo upper, 169).

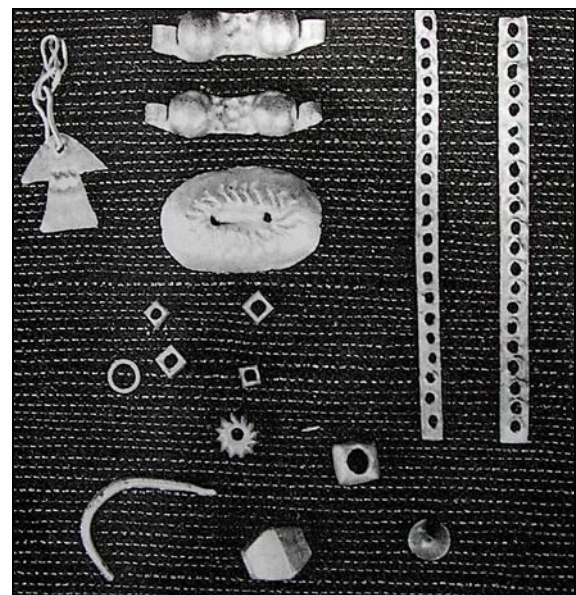


Fig. 4. 15 Other gold jewellery from chamber F, T. 7  
(from McClellan – Porter 1999, Fig. 11).

It is a distinctive feature of the Tomb 7’s objects that they were made of various exotic materials, including alabaster (fragments of vessels, a tabletop), lapis lazuli, stone, gold, bronze, silver and lead. Most of the objects were found in chamber F, where the primary coffin burial was contained. In particular, almost a thousand tiny, circular gold beads found there were cut from tubes, and there are a number of other distinctive types, such as bell beads, rilled beads, long-tube beads, and quatrefoil beads (fig. 4.14). Apart from the large quantities of gold/stone beads, there are several thin leaves of various shapes, which were evidently made by hammering on molds. Among them, a pendant is

<sup>278</sup> Porter 2002 a: 19.

<sup>279</sup> Porter 1999: 311-20.

<sup>280</sup> Porter 1999: 314.

threaded by a ring, which connects other two smaller rings rolled with wires, through the hole on top (fig. 4.15). Other gold leaves include two duplicate ones have rectilinear forms, while the third one is larger and oval in shape, with two pierced holes in the middle. Apart from the gold jewellery, some objects of types were not found anywhere else on the site, including eye and eyebrow inlays for statues; a small stone wig or hairpiece; several small objects of lapis lazuli, including jar stoppers inlaid with gold; decorated ostrich eggs (see below, fig. 4.17) and a large and intricately incised shell; and alabaster vessels. There is an impression that most of items were made with precious materials, elaborately manufactured and highly decorated, thus they are indicators of the high status of this burial. A variety of inlays made with stone, lapis lazuli and gold for various artefacts, such as statues, bottle stoppers and vessels reveal the high level of craft-manufactured techniques of especially inlay and incising. According to McClellan and Porter, the jewelry has many parallels with gold from Anatolia and the Aegean, while the lapis lazuli is part of the trade from Afghanistan to Ebla.<sup>281</sup> Apart from an example quoted above, the grave goods including especially ostrich eggs and inlaid objects also provide links with the royal cemetery of Ur.<sup>282</sup> Besides, the excavator has observed that traces of several pieces of inlaid wooden furniture were found.<sup>283</sup> But it is difficult to reconstruct them with only fragments. Of note is the discovery of wooden fragments adhering to bronze nails distributed throughout the tomb, which recalls the wooden coffin, whose corners were defined by bronze straps. This may be an indicator of a kind of technique prevailing at that time, i.e., the use of bronze nails or straps for securing wooden furniture.

A smaller proportion of non-ceramic objects were found in chamber D, where one of two inhumations was contained. They include a bronze pin, a intricately formed pendant of gold (fig. 4.16), two lapis lazuli “fly” beads, a alabaster tabletop (see below, fig. 4.20) and as well as other objects (their forms not known yet).<sup>284</sup> They are indications of the prestigious burial. It would seem that Chamber D initially contained more objects of organic and woven deposited adjacent to the



burial in the northeastern corner, but leaving only impressions in the bitumen floor as the time of excavations. With current evidence, it is difficult to judge what these impressions actually represent. In sum, considering the extraordinary wealth of funerary gifts, which included especially an unusually large number of ornaments and vessels made of precious material, it must have been the tomb of members of royalty or certainly of the elite.

Fig. 4. 16 Gold pendant found in chamber D, T. 7 (from McClellan – Porter 1999, Fig. 9).

### Interpretation of the Contexts

The use of Tomb 7 is connected to two succeeding levels of public buildings (7 and 6) of Periods IV and III. A preliminary analysis shows that the tomb was constructed in Period IV, commensurate with

<sup>281</sup> McClellan – Porter 1999: 110.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.: 110.

<sup>283</sup> Porter 2002 a: 19.

<sup>284</sup> McClellan – Porter 1997: 107.

Building 7. At the time the tomb was an accessible and unconcealed structure as part of the public sector, with the roof and entrance shaft at least having been opened to view. In subsequent Period III, a significant change occurred that the structure was transferred from a partially above-ground facility to an entirely subterranean and sequestered burial place. Two inhumations were found in Tomb 7, which can be divided into primary and secondary context and were dated to the later period when the tomb was reused and renovated. We may infer that during an earlier time before the dual burials were introduced, the tomb would have had older inhumations, which were probably removed out of the tomb to make room for the new interments.

As excavators notice, the contents and structure of the tomb were disturbed in antiquity in which the covering slab over the dromos was removed as well as some of its wall blocks.<sup>285</sup> All the chambers were filled with successive silt layers and some pots had floated high above their original position on the floor, indicating that the primary funerary deposits in the tomb were disturbed by repeated water actions.

Before examining circumstance in each chamber specifically, it will be useful to look at an overall pattern of the distribution of grave goods and bones. Chamber B was more or less empty except for two jars parallel to one another found in the corners, respectively, with other at least two small ceramic jars interspersing on the floor. In Chamber A, it is still visible that many vessels mainly of bowls lined the southern wall regularly parallel one to another, with other unknown items scattered in the northern part (see above, fig. 4.11). Two central chambers (A and B) on the axis were absent from bone remains; in particular, the central path running through the length of the chambers was largely devoid of grave goods. In fact, these chambers seem to constitute a main hallway, which is connected the internal structures of the tomb and the outside through the dromos and the entrance shaft. It can be inferred that the central path was intentionally unoccupied likely for the transportation of the large quantity of grave goods during primary burials. Two inhumations were found in two sided chambers (F and D), one on the north and the other on the south, and both are amongst the deepest chambers. This may account for the reason why the human burials were placed there. Further, the situation of human remains was hidden especially in chamber F, where the human skeleton was found in the wooden coffin. The coffin was originally placed against the rear walls, in the deepest corner. Furthermore, Chambers F contained the highest concentration of objects accompanying the coffin burial while the greatest concentration of pottery was in Chamber C. In sum, on the one hand, contents of the tomb vary from one chamber to another; on the other hand, the quantity of grave goods especially as to objects and pottery reflected in varied chambers is disproportionate. Therefore, the overall pattern of the distribution of grave goods and bones indicates that the chambers were designed to have functioned in a different way, which clearly much depends on where the burials were located.

Of note is that two passages (2 and 4) that are connected to the chambers containing human burials are narrower than other passages (1 and 3). Amongst the latter, one (1) is part of the main hallway on the central axis, and the other (3) between chambers B and C was widen probably for transferring the

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<sup>285</sup> McClellan – Porter 1999: 109.

large quantity of pottery vessels into the chamber C. The question arises: why the scale of passages 2 and 4 is far limited? One important clue as to the situation of the dual inhumations comes from chambers F and D, in which the human remains were hidden. We may infer that due to the same reason, the secrecy of the burials, these passages are restricted in width by comparison with passages 1 and 3. On the other hand, the design of the tomb, especially the chambers and passages associated with the deposition of burials, therefore, enables us to isolate different, sequential burial practices in the same locale. At beginning, mourners transferred the interments accompanied with objects and pots into the deepest chambers. These acts were apparently prior to the depositions of hundreds of pottery vessels in other chambers, especially in chamber C.



Fig. 4. 17 Selected objects found in Chamber F of T. 7: 1, a highly decorated shell; 2, ostrich egg vessel; 3, gold studs (from photos in Porter 2002 b, 169).

Chamber F was the principal room and the largest one among five chambers. Of a variety of contents in this chamber, including human/animal remains, pottery and non-ceramic artefacts, whatever was immediately in association with the human skeletal remains should be the first priority to be investigated. Inside the coffin, intermingled with decayed remains of the human skeleton were a thousand gold beads as well as many stone beads. Together with beads found above the bone residue were a group of gold ornaments, such as several mold-hammered thin leaves, a stick and two bars with numerous tiny perforations. One of the gold leaves was, as described above, probably a pendant with three wire-rolled rings to form a necklace, or to be fixed on the clothing. Others of peculiar shapes may have been part of ornaments for a garment in which the individual was buried. Taking the associated contexts into consideration that the variety of jewelry were immediately found above the human skeleton inside the coffin, added with evidence of their shapes, all strongly indicates that they were personal ornaments, which may have belonged to the deceased individual. The fact that virtually none of these types of objects were found outside the coffin in the Chamber D, confirms this opinion. Meanwhile, some questions arise: Why did the personal ornaments show an apparent preference of gold rather than other precious materials? Would the gold identify the status of this individual at best? Was this individual privileged to possess so many of gold during his/her life or



after death?

There seem to have been a series of wooden poles erected around the wooden coffin, where several circular impressions adjacent to the coffin were uncovered. It is possible that, as Porter suggests, the coffin “was once crowned by a cloth canopy hung from wooden poles”.<sup>286</sup> Below the superstructure of the coffin, in the middle of the room, equid bones were found together with various items, including pots and badly decayed alabaster jars, highly decorated, either by inlays or gold studs (fig. 4.17: 3), wooden and organic pieces, perhaps leather. Some aspects of the treatment of these animal remains parallel that of the human burials at Banat, especially the placement of large black pebbles and small ceramic bowls on the top of the bones.<sup>287</sup> It is plausible to suggest that the equid itself was a burial. Did the objects found around accompany this equid burial? Alternatively, were they with the equid burial intended for the coffin burial? Other artefacts were found in place as the time of excavation, such as a small shallow stone bowl with deep triangular incisions for inlay in the northwest corner of the chamber, and beside it a small broken bottle and two lapis lazuli bottle stoppers inlaid with florettes of gold. The northern niche was damaged by stone robbing in antiquity, but nevertheless contained a bronze pin with a bird-shaped head and an ostrich egg container with a white stone stopper inlaid with lapis lazuli (fig. 4.17: 2). There would have been more artefacts on the floor, which had decayed or had been removed in antiquity, but judging from the remnants remaining on the floor, the artefacts may include stone statues, ostrich eggs, incised shell and wooden furniture. Some grave furnishings of types found outside the coffin either on the floor or in the niche were totally absent from the tombs at Banat settlement complex. Unlike the gold jewellery as personal ornaments accompanying the burial in the coffin, they were more likely donated as funerary gifts by mourners, or by “a central authority”<sup>288</sup>, either at Banat or elsewhere. These donations of precious materials were probably manufactured and highly decorated for exclusive use for the Tomb 7 mourners. In sum, abundant personal ornaments, so many of funerary donations, were deposited as acts in behalf of further enhancing the prestige of elite groups. The burial practice that took place in the Chamber F indicates that the coffin burial stands out of other inhumations including one found in the Chamber D and those on the site. Obviously, the coffin burial was associated with a person of highest rank, probably a local ruler.

The secondary individual burial with disarticulated bones was found in a cluster in the northern half of Chamber D. In terms of the quantity and quality, the objects immediately associated with the human bones cannot be comparable to those found in the coffin. Further, each type of the objects (e.g., pin, pendant and bead) is represented only by one to two examples. There is debate as to whether they were primarily put on the body or to be offered by mourners as funerary gifts during the secondary burial practice. Judging by a photo (fig. 4.18), in which impressions of some items were recorded in the bitumen floor, organic, woven objects were probably deposited in northeast corner adjacent to the human bones to the west. There are about nine bowls mostly complete, roughly distinguished from figures 9 and 17, and they were interspersed on the floor in the western

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<sup>286</sup> Porter 2002 b: 156, according to the paragraph beside the figure that shows the contents of T. 7.

<sup>287</sup> Porter 2002 a: 19.

<sup>288</sup> Schwartz 2007: 44, he interpreted that some of the objects of precious material found in Tell Umm el-Marra tombs were donated by a central authority rather than being the personal possessions of the deceased individuals.

half. These mass-produced shallow open bowls with thickened rims and small ring bases are fairly homogeneous in shape. In the northwest corner of the chamber, a circular alabaster tabletop (fig. 4.19: 2) was leaned against the wall. The tabletop and its context are reminiscent of a similar case from an ante-chamber (1) in Tomb 1, where two stone slabs lay on the floor on both sides of tomb walls, especially one of them was found at the front of the entrance.

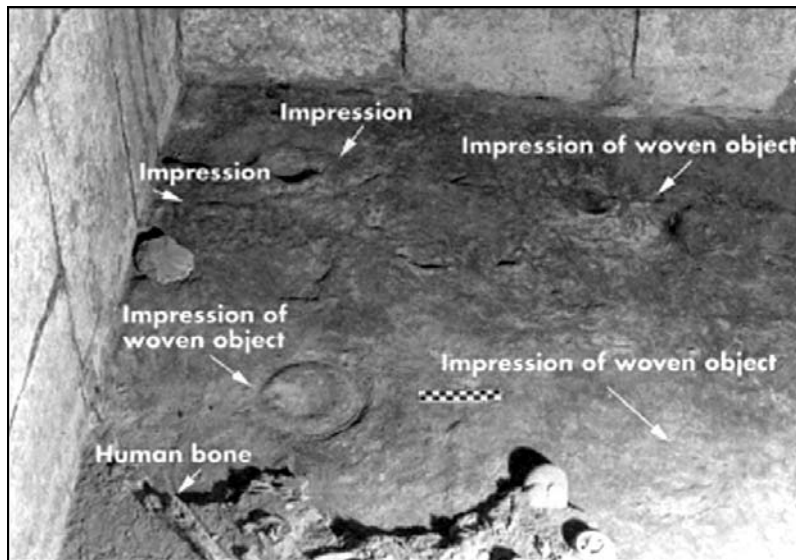


Fig. 4. 18 Impressions of woven items found in chamber D, T. 7 (from Porter 2002 a, Fig. 10).



Fig. 4. 19 Chamber D of T. 7: 1, floor of Chamber D; 2, alabaster tabletop (after Porter 2000, Pl. 14).

Chamber C next to the burial chamber to the west was filled with pottery vessels in situ. As seen in the photo (fig. 4.20), the vessels mainly of jars, were primarily found stacked one on top of another, against the rear wall of the chamber. Large quantities of pottery concentrated in a tomb chamber separated from the chamber where human burial was placed, such a practice is not well attested in the region along the Euphrates. Numerous pottery containers, although not immediately associated

with human remains, were found in the same chamber where the deceased individuals were located, such as in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar.<sup>289</sup> The excavator suggests that Chamber C's pottery accompanied the inhumation in chamber D.<sup>290</sup> But we have little idea for what reason this estimate was made, probably due to the proximate distance between the Chamber C's pottery and the Chamber D's burial or due to the homogeneous features between the pottery vessels found in Chamber C and in Chamber D?



Fig. 4. 20 Vessels found in situ in Chamber C, T. 7 (from the Banat project Web site, <http://euphratesarchaeology.com>).

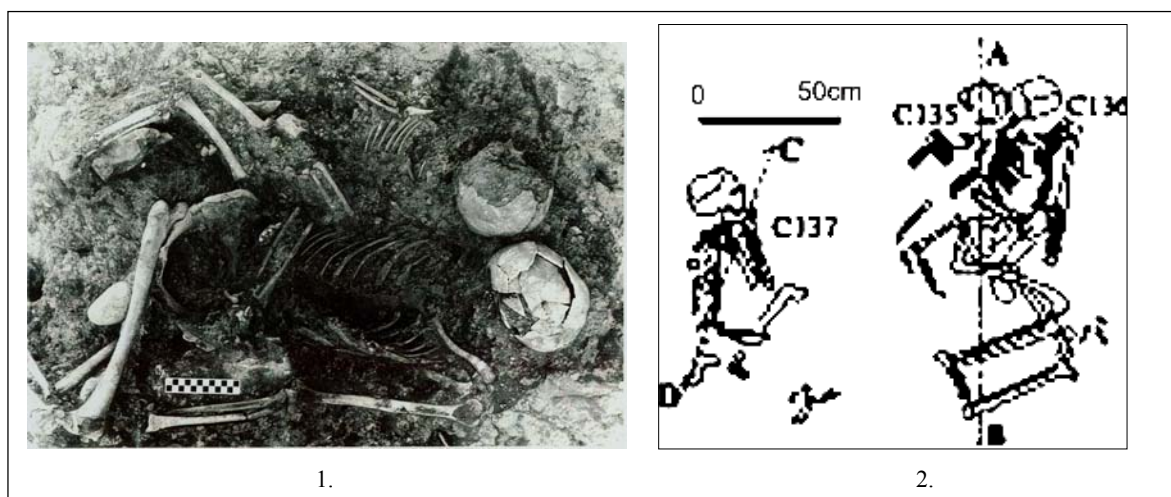


Fig. 4. 21 Articulated human skeletons (C135-7) found within and above T. 7 (1, after Porter 2000, Pl. 15: bottom; 2, after Porter 2002 a, Fig. 7).

Apart from the two individual burials in both primary and secondary contexts contained in the chambers of Tomb 7, a dual burial was found beneath the capstone and over the top of the entrance shaft of Tomb 7. Although the capstone was not found in place and the context associated the dual burial was disturbed in antiquity, the location of this burial is certainly within the entrance area on a layer of mudbricks. It contained two complete and articulated skeletons lying parallel one another, and they were buried in flexed positions (fig. 4.21: 1). They belonged to a female adult, 20-30 years old (C136), and a child of indeterminate sex, 2-4 years old (C135). From the same area above the entrance shaft, a third individual burial of a second child was also identified.<sup>291</sup> Human remains from this burial were represented by fragments of skull, as opposed to the human skeletons

<sup>289</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Fig. 8

<sup>290</sup> Porter 2002 a: 19.

<sup>291</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 364.



anatomically intact from the dual burial, indicating that it was badly disturbed in antiquity. This burial as well as the dual burial of articulated bodies shows the absence of grave container and grave goods, which markedly contrasts to the tombs found anywhere else on the site, of which grave structure was always recognizable. Moreover, the placement of the deceased individuals still within the monumental tomb strongly suggests a close connection between them. A similar example is quoted by a monumental stone-built tomb (Tomb 1) of EBA I period at Arslantepe, where the skeletons of four individuals lay on the tomb covering slab.<sup>292</sup> This unusual discovery led the excavator to think that they were buried “as part of a complex inhumation ritual”, probably being sacrificed individuals. In the case of Tomb 7, we can infer at least that the dual primary burials, or as well as the disturbed burial of the second child, were placed there slightly after the interments of the individuals within the tomb chambers.

Other burials were also found on top of roof of Tomb 7. The human skeletal remains indicate that these burials contained fragments of human bone with the exception that one of these contained articulated body (C. 137; fig. 4.21: 2, on the left hand). In contrast to the burials found in the entrance area without any discernible grave structure, these burials were covered with stones. As Porter suggests, remnants of the skeletal remains are the result from extensive removals in antiquity.<sup>293</sup> To interpret such acts, she further argues that the area over and around may have been used as a primary-stage decomposition ground in a multi-stage mortuary rituals.

#### *4.4.3 Earth-Cut Tombs*

##### **Tomb 1**

Tomb 1 was located on the western ridge of tell Banat and may have been extra-mural. It consisted of an ante-chamber (1) and two long and arched chambers (2 and 3) cut out of dense earth. The chamber 3 extends directly to the east from the chamber 1; chamber 2 opens at the conjunction of chambers 1 and 3 at a broad angle on the south side. The tomb runs east to west testified by the direction that chambers 1/3 extend to, additionally, with chamber 2 running NW-SE. Of note is that it is hard to tell, at least from a sketch plan of Tomb design (fig. 4.22), whether chambers 1 and 3 are indeed separate, for two chambers extend in the same direction east-west, and there is no borderline in the middle or at side-walls along the room. Despite a lack of specific explanation in the preliminary report why to divide the long narrow room into two chambers, the identification is probably due to the architectural feature that chamber 1 is not extremely arched, which is the typical feature of both chambers 2 and 3, and the floor level in chamber 1, approximately 4 m below modern surface, may be higher than that of the chamber 3. In addition, the deposition of artefacts over the floor of chamber 1 is not reflected in the main chambers, and some of artifacts of types are completely absent from those of the chambers 2/3 (see below). Small constricted tunnels led off each chamber.

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<sup>292</sup> Frangipane 1998: 294-5.

<sup>293</sup> Porter 2002 a: 19.

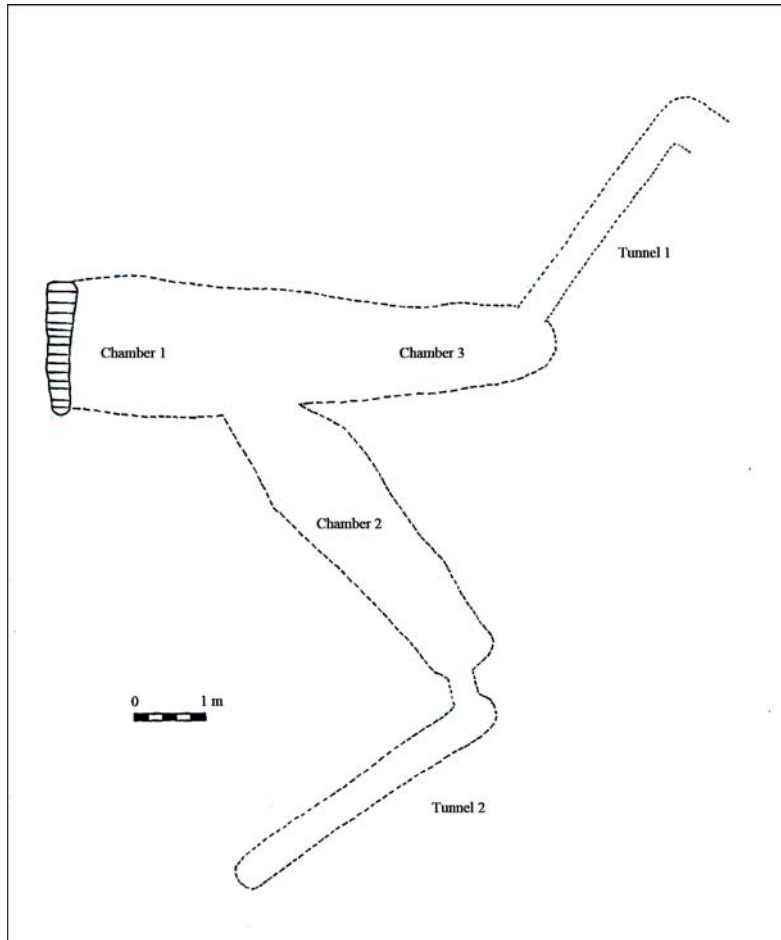


Fig. 4. 22 Sketch Plan of T. 1 (from Porter 1995 a, Fig. 1).

*Contents*

In terms of specific contents of the tomb, they may be divided into four main contextual categories-human/animal remains, ceramics, and non-ceramic objects.

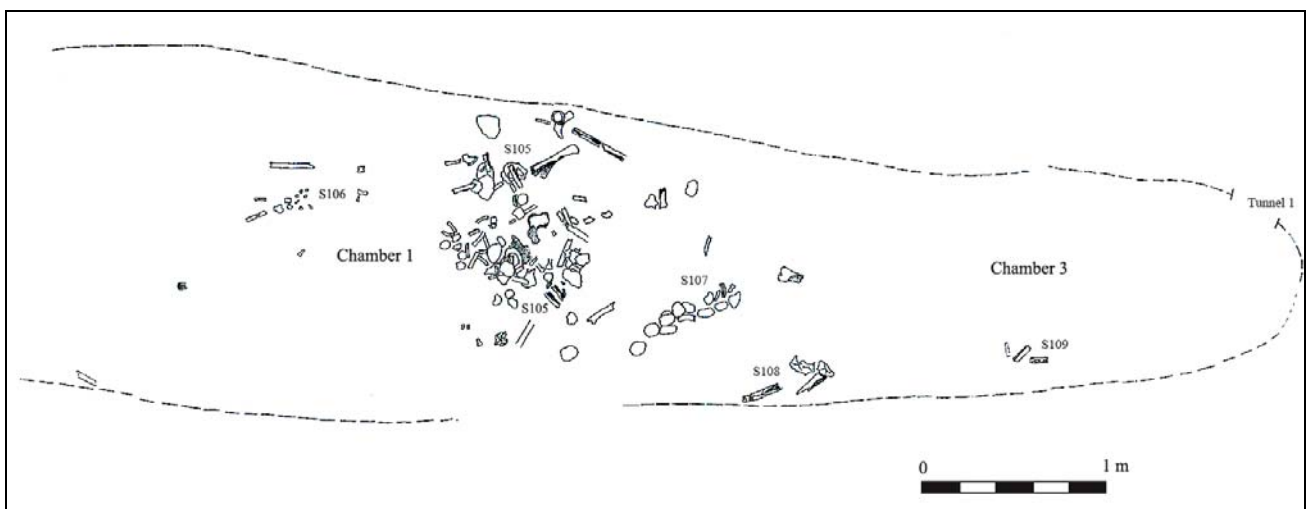


Fig. 4. 23 The distribution of bones in T. 1 (from Porter 1995 a, Fig. 2).

Human skeletal remains were widely distributed throughout chambers 1/3 (fig. 4.23). No discrete burial deposit was found in chamber 2, there were still a few slivers of undiagnostic bone and a single tooth recovered and a large bos bone was located in the upper layers of silting through flotation. As yet five clusters of human bones have been identified, S105-109.<sup>294</sup> Amongst them, S105 was the main skeletal deposit found in the middle of the ante-chamber 1 and chamber 3, and oriented towards the entrance to chamber 2. This represents a multiple burial of at least five individuals: three adults, one juvenile and one child.<sup>295</sup> Of adults, one was probably over 60 years of age and male. Another was a female aged 40-55 years. The third adult individual was 20-40 years old and may be female. The genders of both the juvenile and the child were not able to be determined; judging by the dimensions of the longbones and dentition, the child was between 4 and 7 years old. The juvenile was approx. 15 years of age. Fifty cm to the west of S105 were portions of a human jaw and several unattached human teeth (S106, see fig. 4.23). The correspondence between the ages of the individuals found in S106 and the ages of the individuals of S105, as well as the lack of teeth in S105, strongly suggests that the teeth were from the bodies deposited in S105.<sup>296</sup> Apart from S106, some isolated bones, some of which are animal, were found to the east of the main skeletal deposit, i.e., S107, S108, and S109. Thus despite the wide distribution of human skeletal remains throughout chambers 1/3 it is to be concluded that there was one burial group, S105, and that the individuals contained within it constitute the total number of occupants of the tomb.<sup>297</sup>

No articulated human remains were found. The state of disarticulated human bones might have been influenced by several external factors, such as bone preservation, and secondary burial process. Unfavorable environmental conditions in the tomb - attested by the brittle and fragmented bone material - led to generally poorly preserved bone remains. But the assemblage was too limited to account for the original deposition of complete skeletons.

Accompanying grave goods included 163 pots found primarily in mortuary context, and five ware types are represented in the ceramic material: a majority of PSW vessels (128), a small quantity of EBW pots (29), and three examples of CPW, two true MTW pots, and one of Red/Black Burnished Ware. A variety of shapes was not found in a noticeable quantity in the other contexts of this period. Notable are small spouted jars, tripod bowls and jars, open bowls with everted rims and a number of miniatures, all in Plain Simple Ware. Euphrates Banded Ware types include pedestal vessels, champagne cups, small open dishes, straight-necked jars with everted rims and ring bases.

Bronzes total 1006 grams in weight consist of at least 33 pieces, including types of bead, pins, daggers, axes, bands and tweezers. Pins, with twelve complete pins (four shaft pieces and three heads were also found), are remarkable homogeneous in morphological shape, size and weight. The form of toggle plain pins with spherical heads is particularly common; each example has a small round, or square-sectioned perforation upper on the plain shaft. Eight pins are of the bent-shank type<sup>298</sup>, four

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<sup>294</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 2.

<sup>295</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 364-5. The bones of Tomb 1 were first analyzed by Barbara Stuart of the University of Amsterdam and the results published in Porter 1995 a (2-5) and Porter 2002 a (17) are slightly different in age and sex assessment from Wilhelm's. This paper adopts the latest results of analysis of human skeletal remains from Banat made by Wilhelm.

<sup>296</sup> Porter 1995 a: 5.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.: 5.

<sup>298</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 5 (A384, A378, A560, A390, A574, A572 and A565).

have straight shanks<sup>299</sup>. Three fragments of bronze band were found, and all are segments broken from both ends, two of which were curvedly formed.<sup>300</sup> The three pieces might have constituted one bronze band. The copper band seems to have been used as a strap, or as ornament on the hair. A pair of tweezers with sharp end was found.<sup>301</sup> In addition to the example at Tomb 1 at Tell Banat, similar instances are documented at several other tombs in the Euphrates Valley, like in Jerablus Tahtani and in Halawa.<sup>302</sup> Tweezers appear to have been restricted to high-status burials and almost certainly represent personal grooming equipments.<sup>303</sup> Four flat dagger blades were found, and they are triangular in shape with three rivets placed on upper tang on both obverse and reverse.<sup>304</sup> Apart from daggers, a type of flat axes is also presented in weapon assemblage with two axeheads found.<sup>305</sup> They all have parallel side edges, but one blade was bent at butt end, likely for rivet and the other with a rivet-hole. Taking the morphology and the size of these bronzes into consideration, types include bead, pins and band, which were probably used as accessories or ornaments worn on the body, tweezers being a tool for grooming, and daggers and axes typical of weaponry.

The type of perforated toggle pins is characteristic of mid-third millennium, more common during phase 2 in Squadrone's system. The application of the "bow-shaped" (bent-shrank) perforated pins has been identified to be an essential type in defining distinctive traits of Carchemish area metal-works.<sup>306</sup> The flat daggers also shows a widespread distribution during mid-third millennium, and the flat axes found in Banat tomb 1 have parallels at sites along the Euphrates, which is one of the distinctive Syrian metal-works comparable to South Mesopotamian type. The appearance of the U-shaped tweezers has been identified to be typical object of type in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE.<sup>307</sup> The bronze assemblage from Tomb 1 is comparable to the similarities in the region of Euphrates valley during the mid to late third millennium. Therefore, the comparative chronology of the bronzes should be dated to the mid-late third millennium. A date between 2600-2300 BCE that the excavator suggested seems a little earlier.<sup>308</sup>

Fragments of decorated bone objects, A 595 and A 587, were recovered, enabling us for the identification of incised design (fig. 4.24).<sup>309</sup> Otherwise, over 100 beads were found (table 4.7 below), made of frit, stone, and shell (fig. 4.25). Of particular note are a group of nine mould-made frit beads (A569 a-i).<sup>310</sup> These feature stylized human faces. Found in association with them and possibly part of the same string, are three simple conical frit beads (A570 a-c).<sup>311</sup> Artefact (A379) is

<sup>299</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 5 (A377, A571, A385, and A585).

<sup>300</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 7 (A387, A575, and A389).

<sup>301</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 7 (A386).

<sup>302</sup> Tweezers JT 654, T. 302, see Philip 2007, Fig. 12.1(5); Orthmann 1981: 57, Pl.71.9.

<sup>303</sup> Philip 2007: 192.

<sup>304</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 6.

<sup>305</sup> Porter 1995 a: flat axeheads see Fig. 7 (A376 and A383).

<sup>306</sup> Squadrone 2007: 208.

<sup>307</sup> Philip 2007: 192.

<sup>308</sup> The date of the bronzes that Porter suggested is based on the analysis results from Watkins and Tubb. Actually these two scholars did investigation about metalworks throughout ancient near east, as importantly in the regions of Syria and South Mesopotamia, but their works were largely focusing on a special type of flat axe, that is the crescentic axe with three tangs. This type is absolutely absent in Tomb 1. Thus this provisional chronology made by excavator lacks of firm evidence.

<sup>309</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 8 (A595 and A587).

<sup>310</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 9 (upper A595 a-i).

<sup>311</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 9 (below A570 a-c).

a collection of forty rilled frit beads, the majority of which are blackened and burnt.<sup>312</sup> A cluster of 61 small perforated shell beads (A590) were found with two cylindrical beads of a crystalline stone (A591) and fragments of a long bead of polished shell (A580). These beads altogether likely formed a single string.

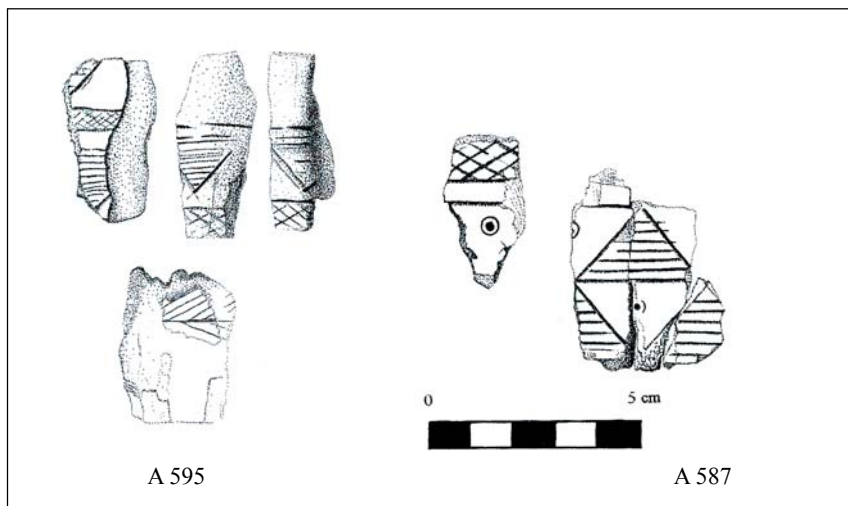


Fig. 4. 24 Fragments of incised bone tubes (A595 and A587) from T. 1 (from Porter 1995, Fig. 8).

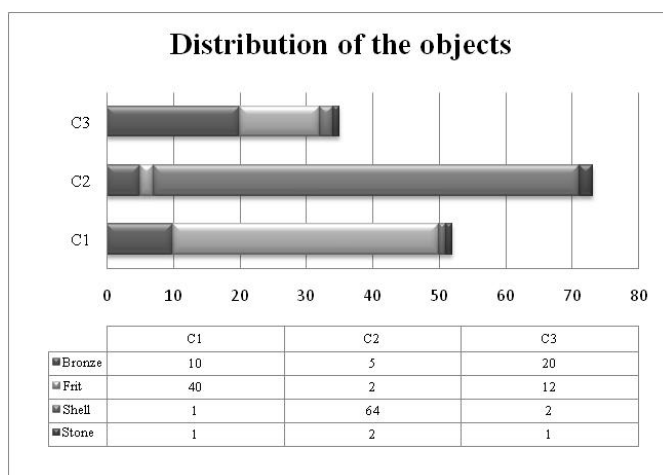


Fig. 4. 25 Illustration of objects of various materials from chambers 1-3 in T. 1 (database after table 4.7 below).

An attribution of this tomb group to the mid-third millennium is supported by the dating of the non-ceramic artifacts and by a C<sup>14</sup> sample that was retrieved from the floor of the tomb and around the skeleton. It gives a calibrated result within a range of 2890-2490 BCE.<sup>313</sup> According to the current understanding of the ceramic and artifactual material, the tomb may be dated to Banat period IV.<sup>314</sup>

### *Interpretation of the Contexts*

<sup>312</sup> Porter 1995 a: Fig. 10 (in the middle right A379 a-d).

<sup>313</sup> Porter 1995 a: 21-2.

<sup>314</sup> Porter 1995 a: 2-22, tables 1-2, Figs. 11-33.

In Tomb 1, the opening had been completely blocked by a wall two courses wide and consisting of large field stones. The deposition of ceramics, non-ceramic artefacts, and skeletal remains there represents a single use of this structure. However, the tomb was subject to the periodic floods deriving from the Euphrates River in antiquity, which renders the interpretation of the contexts of bones and objects in the tomb problematic.<sup>315</sup> Some bone matter may well have rolled or floated out of the original position as a consequence of the flooding, this is one of the external factors which may account for the wide distribution of the skeletal remains. For instance, of three chambers, chamber 2 was heavily affected by the water actions. It can be inferred that the single tooth and the fragments of bones recovered in chamber 2 may have floated to the final position through the entrance of chamber 2. With current evidence, it is impossible to determine whether parts of the interred individuals were deliberately located outside the main skeletal deposit S105, or whether they were the result of repeatedly water actions. Nevertheless, there was only one burial group of five individuals, which were initially deposited at the conjunction of three chambers on the floor, where now the main burial (S105) was found.

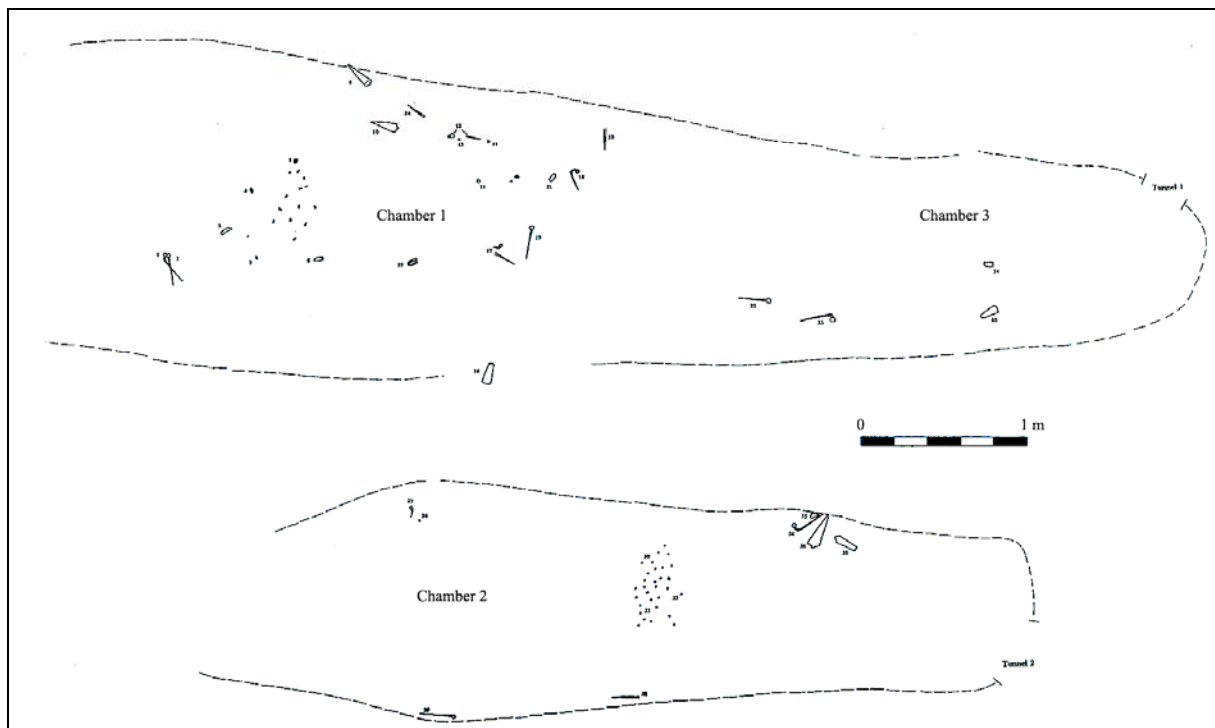


Fig. 4. 26 The distribution of objects in T. 1 (after Porter 1995 a, Fig. 3).

In the preliminary report, the position of grave goods was specifically described and clearly marked with number as shown on figures (4.26-7).<sup>316</sup> Of a variety of contents in this chamber, including human/animal remains, non-ceramic objects and pots, whatever was immediately in association with the human skeletal remains should be the first priority to be investigated. Three strings of beads varying in types, two of which were found immediately in association with teeth/tooth with the

<sup>315</sup> Evidence for the flotation is found in layers of silt and sand interspersed with collapsed material from the roof, patches of mud in and around several ceramics, particularly in chamber 2, and rivulets of mud adhering to the roof of the entrance to tunnel 2. That the sand is identical to that of the Euphrates suggests the flood episodes derived from the river, see Porter 1995 a: 5.

<sup>316</sup> Porter 1995 a: Figs. 3-4.

remaining one among the bones of the main burial. A string of 40 burnt frit beads (A379; no. 6 in the plan) was in association with the human teeth (S106). A string was found in the centre of chamber 2, including 61 small perforated shell beads (A590, no. 30) together with two cylindrical stone beads (A591, no. 33) and a polished shell bead (A580, no. 26). The string was found in association with the single tooth. In addition to these beads, there are 2 frit beads (A592, no. 31), which likely come from the string of numerous similar frit beads (no. 6) as mentioned above, suggesting that these beads were probably due to the flotation together with the tooth and the string of shell/stone beads moved into chamber 2. In the middle of the fragmentary bones of S105 was a string of at least 11 conical frit beads (A569 a-i and A570 a-c), nine of which (A569 a-i, no. 11 in the plan) are characteristic of stylized human faces. These beads seem to have been personal ornaments of the deceased individuals. The black river pebbles and a collection of smaller ceramic vessels had been placed on top of the bones of the main burial group (S105). This treatment of the human burials commonly occurs in burial contexts at Banat.

Bronzes were found on and around the main burial (S105) with a smaller quantity of bronzes lining the walls of chamber 2 (fig. 4.26). Of a variety of bronzes, including beads, pins, tweezers, daggers, and axes, all the daggers were found adjacent to the tomb walls. It is not certain as to whether the bronzes were deliberately separated and deposited in different places in the tomb, or whether such separate placement of the bronzes are the result of water actions after the use of the tomb. Some of the types of the bronzes recovered from tomb 1, like pins, daggers, and axes, consist of more than one example, which is remarkably consistent in form, size and weight. It would seem that the metal objects on a whole arrived in the tomb as a single event. This also corresponds to the fact that the tomb was primary, not being reopened.

The bulk of pottery vessels were concentrated behind the burial S105 in the main chambers 3/2 on the floor, of note is that none of these was immediately associated with the skeletal remains. The vessels were primarily found stacked one on top of another (fig. 4.27). Further, each chamber consists of a similar mixture of ceramic forms and ware types. For instance, in both chamber 3/2, against the rear wall of the chamber, there were a Plain Simple Ware pedestal vessel (P5 in C3; P200 in C2), a single Euphrates Banded Ware jar (P31 in C3; P234 in C2) as well as cups and bowls of varying sizes, notably in C 2 a large Red-Black Burnished Ware (P225) and in C3 a Plain Simple Ware bowl (P34) in imitation of the Red-Black Burnished Ware vessel as the excavator thinks<sup>317</sup>. Similarly, there is a champagne cup in Euphrates Banded Ware adjacent to the wall of the tomb on the left in C3 (P37) and on the right in C2 (P217)-and also a straight-necked vessel in Cooking Pot Ware (P43 in C3; P216 in C2). Although there are no discrete burials in chamber 2, this room seems to duplicate the chamber 3 in the way that the ceramics of the same types and wares were grouped and deposited. But the difference between these two chambers is apparent that the entire ceramic material in C2 was smaller in quantity than that of C3, and the examples of a given type in C2 were always smaller in size than that of C3.

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<sup>317</sup> Porter 1995 a: 9.





Fig. 4. 27 The distribution of ceramics in T. 1 (after Porter 1995 a, Fig. 4)

Turning to ante-chamber (1), it was unusual in two aspects: firstly, the contents comprise a hearth-like structure and two stone slabs, both types of remains absent from the chambers 2/3. Towards the entrance of the tomb a structure (fig. 4.27) was found, and it consisted of a thick rim of brick-like material, grey-brown in color, surrounding a soft reddish-colored central depression. This structure resembled a fireplace or hearth, perhaps not coincidentally, was located immediately adjacent to the tomb entrance. Although no direct attestations of recent use - such as ashes or charcoal - were encountered, the characteristics of this structure, as described above, indicates that it was utilized during the primary use of Tomb 1.<sup>318</sup> To the east of the hearth-like structure was a stone overlaying two daggers, while the second stone, which is large and flat, was found at the front of the entrance on the opposite side.

Pot-No.	Ware	Type	Description
27	PSW	T03	Small jar with round base, elongated and straight neck, everted rim.
26	PSW	T03	*
24	PSW	T03	*
25	PSW	T03	*
85	PSW	T17	Cup
76	PSW	T03	*
75	PSW	T03	*

<sup>318</sup> Porter 1995 a: 8; Porter 2002 a: 17; Wilhelm 2006: 370.

74	PSW	T03	*
23	PSW	T01	Medium-sized jar with rounded base, short neck, everted rim.
22	PSW	T10	A large beaded-rim bowl with short spout, rectangular ledge handle, a narrow convex base.
21	PSW	T22	A corrugated conical cup with thin walls, convex base and sharply everted rim.
72	EBW	T13	Small jar with cylindrical and corrugated neck, everted rim, ring base and three painted bands on the upper body.
28	PSW	T12	Small jar with bottle neck, flaring and inverted rim, globular body, round base.
65	MTW	T21	A jar with cylindrical neck, round body and base; bio-coloured, a grey body with red lip, interior and base.

Table 4. 6 Pottery collected in anti-chamber (1), T. 7. Note: “\*” points to the same description as that of No. 27 of type 3 (data after Porter 1995 a, table 2).

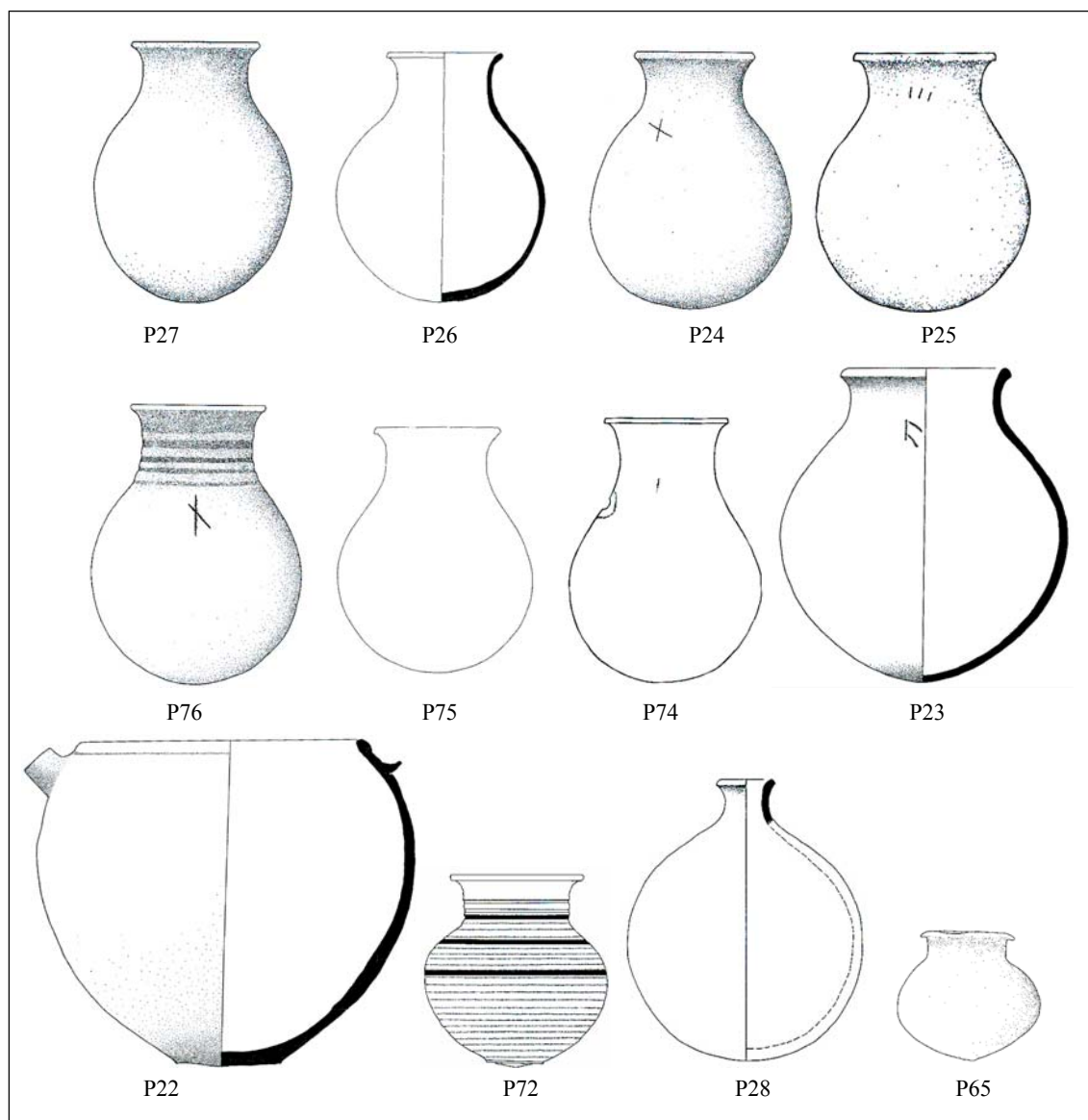


Fig. 4. 28 Selected pottery vessels in the ante-chamber, T. 1 (line drawings from Porter 1995 a, Figs. 14, 20-1, 24, 30, and 32; not to scale).

Secondly, the deposition of pottery vessels in chamber 1 is also distinctive. A series of pottery vessels were placed in a row along the southern wall of the chamber, behind the stone slab and the main skeletal deposit. Most of them were PSW jars (table 4.6), including especially seven small round-based jars with elongated necks and everted rims labeled as type 3<sup>319</sup> (nos. 24-27 and 74-76, fig. 4.28), one medium-sized jar with short neck (no. 23), one large beaded-rim spouted bowl (no. 22), and two cups (nos. 85 and 21). It seems that every two PSW jars were grouped. To the easternmost in this row was a small Euphrates Banded Ware jar typical of Banat Period IV (no. 72). On the opposite side, two round-based jars, one a globular Plain Simple Ware jar (no. 28), one a small Metallic Ware jar (no. 65), were found beside the hearth-like structure close to the entrance of the tomb. Of note is that almost all the pottery vessels in chamber 1, except for one small jar (no.72) of the Euphrates Banded Ware, were standing (fig. 4.27) as the time of excavation. Such pattern of the deposition of ceramic vessels in chamber 1 markedly contrasts to that of chambers 3/2, in which the vessels were set horizontally and in some cases were found stacked one on top of another. The flooding in antiquity must be taken into consideration as a factor of the severe disturbance of the pottery vessels in the main chambers.

In terms of evidence of burning, throughout the tomb, indeed some of the bones showed traces of light burning. So too did several of the beads. Artifact 379 is a collection of forty frit beads, the majority of which are blackened and burnt. However, in association of this string with S106, the bones were unburnt. In terms of animal remains, the preliminary report<sup>320</sup> says that the quantity of animal bone were recovered from the chamber floors, which would include those mixed with the human skeletal deposits, such as in S107, S108 and S109. Otherwise, animal remains also derived from within pots.

<i>Chamber</i>	<i>Plan. No.</i>	<i>Art. No.</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Weight</i>
		561	Bronze	Fragments	2	1
		584	Flint	Blade	1	1.75
	1	384	Bronze	Pin (B)	1	26.25
	2	385	Bronze	Pin (S)	1	22.25
	3	387	Bronze	Band	1	6
	5	557	Lead?	Ring	1	6
	6	379	Frit	Beads	40	9.5
<b>C1</b>	7	562	Stone	Bead	1	0.25
	8	391	Bronze	Cylinder	1	17
	9	382	Bronze	Dagger	1	48.75
	10	388	Bronze	Dagger	1	43.5
	13	561?	Shell	Disc	1	1.25
	15	386	Bronze	Tweezers	1	9.5
	20	566	Bronze	Pin-shaft	1	1.75
		579	Kohl	Kohl	1	22

<sup>319</sup> Porter 1995 a: 16-21.

<sup>320</sup> Porter 1995 a: 5.

	26	580	Shell	Bead	1	2.5
	27	573	Shell	Earring	1	8.5
	29	585	Bronze	Pin (S)	1	14.5
<b>C2</b>	30	590	Shell	Beads	61	14
	31	592	Frit	Beads	2	1
	32	586	Bronze	Pin-shaft	1	11
	33	591	Stone	Beads	2	0.75
	34	582	Bronze	Pin	1	17.5
	35	581	Bronze	Dagger	1	89
	36	576	Bronze	Dagger	1	168
		375	Bronze	Pinhead	1	
		378	Bronze	Pin (B)	1	20.75
		390	Bronze	Pin (B)	1	31.75
		558	Bronze	Bead	1	9
		559	Bronze	Pinhead	1	8
		560	Bronze	Pin	1	14
		567	Bronze	Fragment	1	0.5
		583	Stone	Bead	1	0.25
		556	Shell	Earrings	2	12.25
	4	570	Frit	Beads	3	7
<b>C3</b>	11	374	Frit	Beads	2	2.5
	11	569	Frit	Beads	7(9?)	6.25
	12	564	Bronze	Pin-shaft	2	8.5
	12	568	Bronze	Pinhead	1	19.75
	14	563	Bronze	Pin-shaft	1	2.5
	16	376	Bronze	Axe	1	176.5
	17	377	Bronze	Pin (S)	1	20.5
	18	565	Bronze	Pin	1	10.75
	19	574	Bronze	Pin (B)	1	25.25
	21	575	Bronze	Band	1	7.5
	22	571	Bronze	Pin (S)	1	22.5
	23	572	Bronze	Pin (B)	1	22.75
	24	389	Bronze	Band	1	4.5
	25	383	Bronze	Axe	1	125.5

Table 4. 7 Objects in T. 1 (after Porter 1995a, table 1).

## Tomb 2

Tomb 2 was located in the fields between tell Banat and tell Banat North. The structure was earth-cut and consisted of a shaft and a single chamber. The chamber was rectangular in shape and large rocks blocked its entrance at the base of the vertical shaft. It was excavated out of the conglomerate 6 m. below the modern surface (fig. 4.29).

Skeletal remains were found in several clusters throughout the tomb and show a thorough mixing of of both human and animal bone. Like Tomb 1, Tomb 2 contained multiple burials of at least at least three individuals: one male, 18-25 years old, one female and one individual of indeterminate sex, both adult.<sup>321</sup> As in Tomb 1, unfavorable environmental conditions in the tomb resulted in very brittle and fragile bones, and no complete skeletons were found in this tomb. The composition of the skeletal remains indicates no anatomical bias towards specific parts of the body. However, unlike in Tomb 1, three cases of anatomical articulation could still be detected. The articulated bones consisted of two thoracic vertebrae and - twice - of the corpora of five ribs. For the reconstruction of mortuary ritual this means that at least some bones were placed in the tomb while the ligaments connecting them were still intact enough to hold them together.<sup>322</sup> As in tomb 1, several of the human bones show evidence of burning.

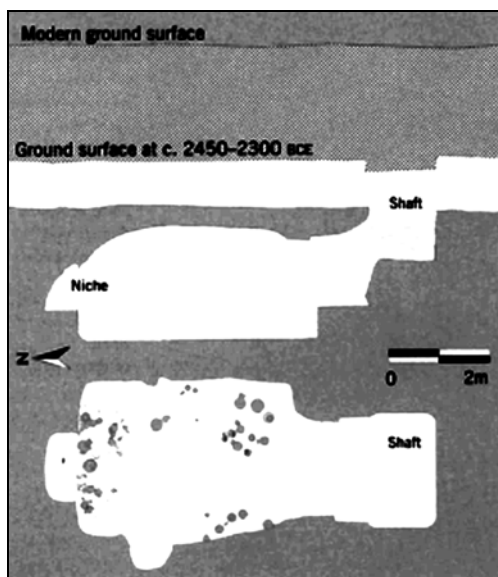


Fig. 4. 29 Tomb 2 (after Porter 2002 b, 164: upper).



Fig. 4. 30 Tomb 2: showing niches (Porter – McClellan 1998, Pl. 9: d).

The tomb contained over 90 pots in Plain Simple Ware and Euphrates Banded Ware. The ceramic contents over the floor of Tomb 2 seem to divide into three main grouping of vessels (fig. 4.29), one is against the rear wall, one is towards the entrance on the east side, and one is against the other side wall. The rear wall of the chamber contained two large niches, one of which contained one vessel (fig. 4.30). The ceramic assemblage from this tomb is in similar proportions of ware types as found in Tomb 1, but it has obviously undergone some modification, thus the tomb is dated later than Tomb 1. According to preliminary analysis of pottery assemblage, tomb 2 has been dated to the beginning of Period III. Of note is the discovery of two remarkable ceramic objects, one is a miniature round-based closed jar, handmade with zoomorphic head instead of opening, like a head of a bird, and a complete model of a covered wagon.<sup>323</sup> Additional grave goods include bronze toggle pins, dagger blades and spearhead, fragments of bitumen with reed impressions, probably the remains of containers, beads, and a braid of hair.<sup>324</sup>

<sup>321</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 366.

<sup>322</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 365.

<sup>323</sup> Porter – McClellan 1998: Fig.19 (1- 2).

<sup>324</sup> Porter – McClellan 1998: Fig. 23 (3, a riveted dagger blade; 4, a spearhead; 5-6, bent-shank toggle pins).

#### 4.4.4 Other Stone-Built Graves

A series of graves were located in the public sector in Area C at Tell Banat, in the vicinity of Tomb 7. In contrast to the largest and most elaborate burial at Tell Banat, Tomb 7, the inhumations near it were executed in a variety of more simple styles, comprising three small stone cist graves (e.g., Ts. 4, 5 and 9) and one stone-built chamber grave (Tomb 6). Tombs 4, 5 and 6 (see Fig. 4.31) were clustered in fields to the east of Tomb 7, and, Tomb 9 was located to the northwest of Tomb 7. Of the eastern group of graves, Tomb 5, very close to the surface, was badly damaged and contained no artifacts. In default of available evidence, this grave will be out of our attention.

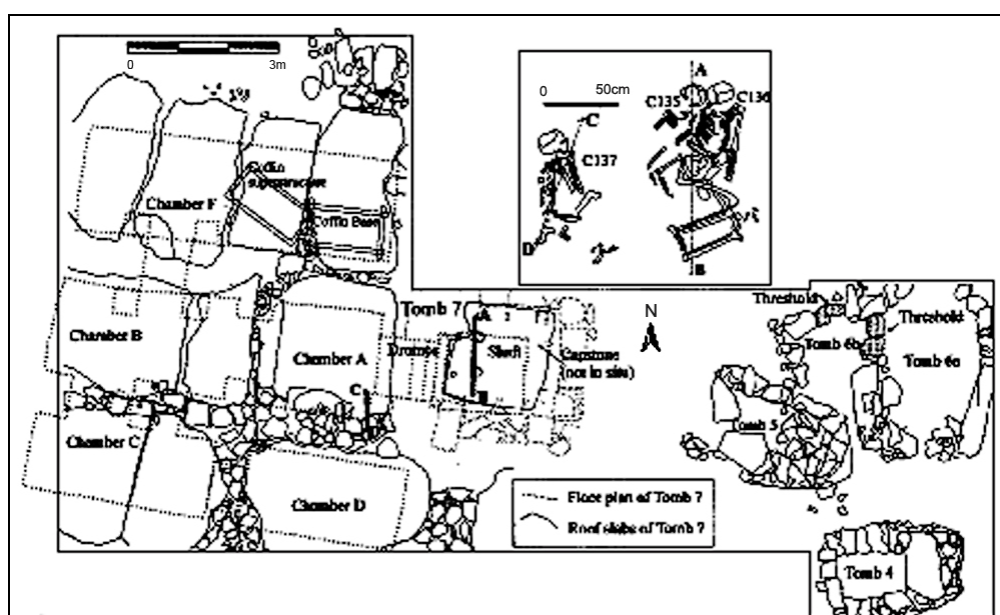


Fig. 4. 31 Tombs 4, 5, 6 and 7 as well as articulated skeletons C135-7 located in the public sector of Tell Banat (after Porter 2002 a, Fig. 7).

Tomb 4, a small stone cist grave, contained an adult interred secondarily. Although this tomb located immediately below the modern surface was opened prior to excavation, it contained fragmentary skeletal remains arranged in a neat pile against the eastern wall of the tomb and 14 pottery vessels. The pottery material was again comprised of the majority of Plain Simple Ware vessels and some Euphrates Banded Ware vessels. According to Porter<sup>325</sup>, the pots are consistent with a Period IV attribution and contain no clear indication of Period III, but the sample is really too limited for certainty and stratigraphically a Period III data is possible.

Located 70 cm to the north of Tomb 4 was the small square chamber delineated by stone walls that constituted Tomb 6 (fig. 4.31). Built in two phases, this tomb consisted of a small rectangular aboveground structure (6a) with a small forecourt (6b) added sometime later. While no remains were found in the chamber, the forecourt contained a mixture of human and animal bones. The human remains consisted of three individuals: two adults, the older one over 30 years old, and a child, 2-4

<sup>325</sup> Porter 2002 a: 17.



years old. Only three ceramic vessels were found, one of which was painted. A number of beads and several bronze pieces were also recovered.

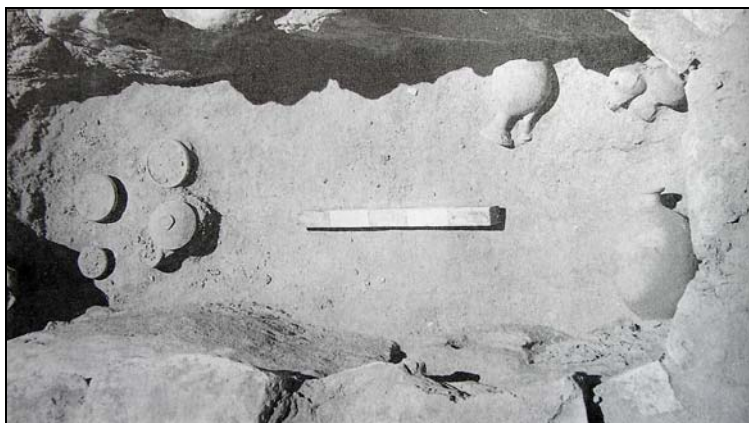


Fig. 4. 32 Floor of Tomb 9 with pottery but no skeletal remains (from McClellan – Porter 1999, Fig. 3).

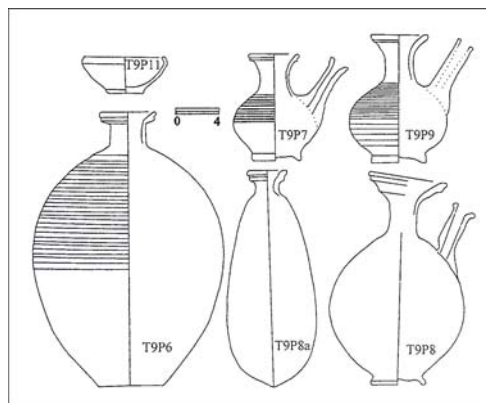


Fig. 4. 33 Selected vessels in Tomb 9 (from Porter 2002 a, Fig. 11).

Tomb 9, a very small stone cist grave, was located to the northwest of Tomb 7. Several ceramics were deposited in place but not intact, on top of the covering slabs. Tomb contained was no trace of either human or animal bones within (fig. 4.32). In the tomb, there were pots and, but it. Pottery vessels found in one corner of Tomb 9 included distinctive jars and miniature vessels that compare most closely with vessels from the Hypogeum at tell Ahmar. Amongst the collection of pottery, there are at least three examples of spouted jars characteristic of concave-necked jars with long spouts, which could compare to similar type in the Hypogeum at tell Ahmar (fig. 3.14: 2-3, in the Chapter 3)<sup>326</sup>; here two Black Euphrates Ware jars were also presented (T9P8a and T9P9; see fig. 4.33). A cache of silver neck and arm rings was also recovered.

#### 4.5 RE-CONSTRUCTING FUNERARY RITUALS RELATED TO THREE MOTUARY VARIATIONS

Many distinctive features have been highlighted in the ample funerary contexts at Banat settlement complex during the third millennium BCE, and some elements of the tomb contents allow for possible interpretation on funerary rituals associated with religious or mortuary beliefs at the time. It is demonstrated that funerary rituals are of multiple staged, and they are related to three variations of third-millennium burial practices, respectively. Corresponding with the change of mortuary customs throughout the third-millennium BCE, from corporate funerary monument (the White Monument), multiple burials (Tombs 1/2) to individual burials, funerary rituals also differentiate themselves from one to another.

<sup>326</sup> See also Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Fig. 30, Pl. XXIV (6-13).



### 4.5.1 *Rituals of Burial Mounds*

Recently the function of the Banat White Monument has been widely discussed, though different scholars have interpreted its function in different ways.<sup>327</sup> Certainly burials, or groups of burials that it contained, indicate a funerary ritual association. White Monuments A and B enclose large numbers of groups of individuals. The practice of multiple interments is especially pronounced in three small tumuli on the exterior surface of White Monument B, though varied in their actual construction technique. Each tumulus contained human skeletal remains from more than one individual up to three or five. The number of individuals and the age and gender range contained in burial groups may be indicative of some form of family relationship, but in the absence of supporting evidence there are any numbers of ways these relationships may have been constituted.<sup>328</sup> However, whatever the criteria for selection for each interment group, it is evident in the White Monument, where none of the deceased individual is anatomically intact, that individual identity is of minimal significance. Burials, or groups of burials, contained in these mounds, highlight the collective nature of the deceased, who after death were transformed from individuals into a collective identity and venerated as probably unnamed, ancestors.<sup>329</sup>

A preliminary analysis on the human bone material from the White Monument shows that all of this material was disarticulated, indicating that the core funerary ritual on completion of the dead in a biological way comprised repeatedly secondary treatments. The composition of the human skeletal assemblage presented above might have been compromised or influenced by several external factors, amongst which, as Wilhelm<sup>330</sup> has analyzed, excavation methods and environmental conditions which would affect bone preservation should be ruled out. The relocation of human bones from primary inhumations to their final position may also account for bone loss, where smaller bones might not have been collected or were lost during transport; but this scenario does not explain the absence or rarity of bigger bones, such as pelvis, as well as the presence of numerous small bones. It can be inferred that bone loss or underrepresentation is a result of intentional selection upon human bones after the process of secondary treatment. This practice of selection is somewhat unique, on the one hand, long bones, which predominated heavily over other anatomical groups in the overall collection of human remains in the White Monument (63% for WM A, 53% for WM B/B2; table 5.5 above), seem to be the first priority to be collected. On the other hand, as mentioned above, skull and mandible - when were collected - appear mostly complete and were carefully deposited, this bias is particularly marked in White Monument B/B2. When other postcranial bones were collected, the selection is biased in favor of the calvicle, scapula and bones of hands and feet with total absence of joint like carpals, tarsals and patellae. But the selective bias did not favor body parts in the middle of human anatomy, such as vertebrae, sternum, ribs and pelvis. The distinctive pattern represented in the selection of bones but in no association with either age or gender, may be related to some form of a mortuary belief system or to mortuary rituals performed after the secondary burial process.

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<sup>327</sup> McClellan 1998; Porter 2002 a-b; Peltenburg 2007-8.

<sup>328</sup> Porter 2002 a: 325, she argues that burial groups could be representative of household, selected kin relations that cut across household, nuclear family, or marriage practices, and other different lineage groups.

<sup>329</sup> Porter 2002 a: 23; Scurlock 1995: 1892.

<sup>330</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 369

After full investigation upon various types of contents (human/animal bones, pottery material and other objects) either related to the burials contained in the White Monument or to the structure itself, differentials appear to exist among rituals accompanying each version of the burial mound. The mortuary mound of the earliest phase was constantly re-plastered incorporating the pottery sherds for a considerable period it was exposed. The mortuary monument may have served as a cultic place long after the death of the interred persons, and rituals occurred each time it was repaired. Pottery sherds recovered within or between the plaster faces were probably material residues of these commemorative rituals. But all of the pottery material from the surface of White Monument C lacks of concrete descriptions or illustrations probably due to fragmentary conditions, it is uncertain as to whether these vessels were the result of events, for example, being used in celebrations, or to be connected with the repairing process of the structure. Presumable acts of deliberately breaking intact pottery vessels and then placement of stones over the individual sherds were probably part of complex series of ritual acts conducted by participants, even though there is only one example found at the time of excavation which supports this hypothesis. At WM B/B2, bones from the skull either of partial and complete were clearly represented, all of which were carefully deposited. This is especially pronounced by one example recovered from the repeatedly constructed tumulus of WM B2, where the skull was placed upright outside the stone feature. The pattern of deposition of skull is not matched by those found in the burial deposits at White Monument A or other multiple interments in Tombs 1/2 at Tell Banat, suggesting that the skulls were deposited for specific reasons connected to funerary rituals. Of partial skulls, most of the crown of the calvarium and mandible were missing, if, as Wilhelm suggests, they were absent at the time of deposition, these parts might have been taken away from the skull before deposition. But with current available evidence, we have little idea what this series of acts, including the selection of skulls, the removal of the top or lower part of the skull and the careful deposition, may represent. At least, we can infer that the practice related to the skull was part of secondary mortuary rituals taking place especially in White Monument B/B2. At WM A, the animal remains in terms of quantity and contexts in which most of them were mixed up with human bones apparently indicate that animals mainly of equid may have played important role in mortuary rituals during the burial process itself. Animal bones (54% of all bones) recovered from the inclusion of WM A even slightly predominated over the human bones found there. The analysis of the bones lacks detail, for instance, it was not determined from which part of the animal the bones came. But the deposition of animal remains appears on the whole to take place immediately associated with human bones, raising the possibility that they were intended for the deceased individuals, probably as a source of food for the deceased's afterlife. Apart from animal remains, grave furnishings mostly of pottery vessels with non-ceramic objects of types were also present, as opposed to the older phases with the absence or rarity of non-ceramic objects. All of the pottery material recovered from WM A either through the excavation or surface collection seems to have initially accompanied groups of burials, and of the non-ceramic objects, beads and the incised bone tube may have been part of burial deposits according to the analysis on objects comparisons above. Biconical clay balls of type have no parallels found in burial contexts at the site, thus it is not certain whether they, as other small finds, were part of the burial deposits. The deposition of them having taking place in the vicinity of the bone deposits suggests a close connection in some way with the groups of burials. We may consider them as residues of secondary commemorations, possibly part of

complex series of rituals for the deceased individuals contained in the burial monument.

In summary, the number of individuals contained in White Monuments A and B and the evidence of all of the skeletal material not anatomically intact, indicate that individual presence had been largely annihilated in an attempt to transform individuals into a collective identity. The burial ritual itself, on completion of the dead in a biological way, comprised secondary treatment. After the secondary burial process, mortuary rituals may have been performed each time when the deceased individuals were inserted into the burial mound of corresponding phase. The tendency of intentional selection upon human bones is represented in the overall collection of human remains in the White Monument, and careful and purposeful deposition of bones from the skull is particularly marked in White Monument B/B2. The deposited animal remains and the artefacts were probably necessary goods for the deceased's afterlife: animals being a source of food, vessels connected with the containing and consumption of foodstuffs and potable liquid. There is a lack of sufficient evidence which would confirm more complex interpretation on ritual action. During post-mortuary period, the burial mound of each version which had enclosed the ancestors was exposed for a considerable period of time. The mortuary monument characteristic of visibility, elaborated construction played an important role in the life of the community after the death of the interred individuals. The conspicuous burial mound was regarded as a cultic place, around which rituals for commemoration repeatedly occurred as being indicated, such as the frequent occurrence of pottery sherds incorporated with the surface material of White Monument C, and the deposition of numerous biconical clay balls in the fill of White Monument A.

#### *4.5.2 Rituals of Multiple Burials in Tombs 1/2*

Tombs 1/2 contained the multiple burials. The number of individuals (5 individuals in Tomb 1, 3 in Tomb 2) and the age and gender range contained in burial groups may be indicative of some form of kin or descent relationship. No complete skeletons were deposited in Tombs 1/2, they were thus probably the result of secondary burial process, although the unfavorable environmental conditions may account for the fragmented and commingled state of the human remains. An interesting feature is the bones with burn marks from Tombs 1/2. These range from a blackening of the cortical outside to a thorough blackening including trabecular structure inside, suggesting that the affecting heat ranged from about 300 - 400°C maximum.<sup>331</sup> The burnt human bones were found in a very limited number and showed non-adjointing parts of the anatomy: face, spine, foot and longbones. Whether or not they represent more than one individual was not determined, and information about sex and/or age was equally impossible to obtain. In addition to the burnt human skeletal remains, several animal bones and artifacts also showed strong indications of burning. However, no traces of burning were found in both tombs themselves. Wilhelm argues that the intentional cremation is not an interpretatory option, since no fully cremated bones were found and there is a general lack of cremation as funerary behavior in the region at the time.<sup>332</sup> The bones with burn marks from Tombs 1/2 at Tell Banat are reminiscent of a similar case from a well-preserved Royal Tomb at Qatna in

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<sup>331</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 370.

<sup>332</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 370.

second-millennium western Syria, where almost all of the human bones collected within the tomb were affected by heating ranging in temperature from 200° to 250°. <sup>333</sup> The excavators suggested that the burning was most likely conducted prior to the interments, since there were no traces of burning found in the chambers of the tomb itself, the same as the cases at Tell Banat. They further argued that the use of fire probably served for a hygienic purpose, like the drying of the corpses, or reduction of the smell from physical aspects of the corpse's decomposition, perhaps at the same time as a component of funerary rituals. The same role played by the fire might be expected for the cases at Tell Banat, where the practice of burning may have involved in the performance of primary funerary rituals.

As mentioned above, in the case of Tomb 1, the periodic flooding may account for the situation of the separate skeletal deposits. However, apart from the main skeletal deposit (S105) accompanied by a variety of grave furnishings, other isolated clusters of human bones were also found in association with beads (S106), black pebbles (S107), and animal bone remains (S107-S109). One important clue as to the contexts of the bones comes from another earth-cut underground tomb (2), where the skeletal remains were also found in clusters and mixed up with animal bones. Thus, the possibility of the intention of rearrangement of deposited bones and artefacts exists. The separate placement of the interred individuals as funerary practice is not reflected in other burial contexts at Banat, was such funerary behavior or ritual act exclusively conducted by the Tombs 1/2 mourners?

Accompanying the multiple burials in tombs 1/2, there were bronze objects including especially a variety of weapons (e.g., spearhead, flat daggers and flat axes). Although the number of examples of weapons recovered from tombs 1/2 is limited, the burials at Banat settlement complex contained funerary inventory with the absence or rarity of weaponry. The occurrence of bronze weapons may be consistent with the status of the individuals buried in the below-grounded earth-cut tombs. We can infer that the individuals were privileged to possess weapons during the life or after the death. During the primary interments, numerous beads of precious materials were deposited around the interred individuals; such a practice is especially marked in Tomb 1, where three strings of beads varying from bead types associated with human tooth/teeth were found. The artefacts including beads of precious materials and a group of bronze objects, immediately in association with the skeletal remains were likely personal possessions of the deceased individuals, such as jewelry, dress ornaments or weapons. <sup>334</sup>

Among three chambers in Tomb 1, some aspects of the ante-chamber in terms of the contents and the depositional contexts do not parallel those of the main chambers (2/3), suggesting that this room may have functioned in a different way. The hearth-like structure and two stone slabs were probably facilities of funerary rituals. However, with current evidence, it is hard to tell what they may represent, in rituals in which way they were utilized. Of note is that there was a series of pottery vessels, mainly of Plain Simple Ware jars, including especially several small round-based jars consistent in ware form and size. Almost all of the vessels remained standing lining the southern wall

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<sup>333</sup> Pfälzner – Pfälzner 2006: 89.

<sup>334</sup> These bronze objects found on the human bones of types were not specifically mentioned in the preliminary report of Tomb 1. They may include small objects like bead, pins and tweezers, which are marked in the plan around the main skeletal deposit.

of the chamber 1, rather than joining in the enormous groups of pottery vessels in the main chambers. Perhaps not coincidentally, the occurrence of these vessels may be consistent with use for special purpose. The deposition of them having taking place behind one large stone slab suggests the association with the use of the stone slab. In general terms, they were probably material residues of mortuary rituals. But in the absence of supporting evidence there are several ways these vessels may have been utilized: containing foodstuffs and portable liquids for use in the afterlife, to be used by the living in mortuary feasts, or connected with libation for the human bones.

Apart from portable artefacts in the tombs, one can observe that evidence from Tomb 1 indicates that bones from several body parts had been secondarily placed in a pot, suggesting that remnant bones had been indiscriminately collected for transportation in the course of the relocation of bone remains. The same pattern to put human bones as a result of secondary burial process in some pottery vessels is seen at Qatna, Syria, dating to the second millennium BCE, where pots containing fragments of human bones were found in Tomb VII.<sup>335</sup> Some reed impressions in the bitumen floor of Tomb 2 also bear indications that the bodies had been wrapped by reed or other organic materials. However, we have no knowledge of why this was done, maybe connected with some form of mortuary rituals after primary interments.

In summary, the funerary rituals of multiple burials in the below-group earth-cut shaft tombs (1/2) comprise multiple stages. Interment rituals consisted of the transformation of life cycle of the individual into that of the family unit. After the deposition of secondary interments, mourners conducted varied ritual activities, comprising burning treatment, relocation of the interred individuals, and then placement of the large black river pebbles, bronzes and smaller ceramics directly on top of the separate clusters of human bones. Persons also made rich offerings, including artefacts and animals, and simultaneously deposited large quantities of pottery vessels for the deceased's afterlife. Before the tomb was last properly sealed, ritual activities were restricted to a small scale adjacent to the entrance of the tomb.

#### *4.5.3 Rituals of Individual Burials in Tomb 7*

In terms of design, Tomb 7 containing five chambers is larger than required for the purpose of burial. Perhaps, the tomb structure itself is a facility of funerary rituals. Its stratigraphy and contents indicate that the tomb was built and used in a sequence that spanned about two or three centuries across both Banat periods (IV and III). Tomb 7 was initially built in Period IV, and in the succeeding period when the tomb was reused, two individual burials were subsequently transferred into the chambers (F and D) of the tomb. The burial found in Chamber F is the only one of the three individual inhumations recorded at Tell Banat with articulated skeleton.<sup>336</sup> This burial markedly contrasts to that found in Chamber D in terms of body treatment, the use of wooden coffin container, funerary inventory of the grave goods, their depositional contexts and the presence of animal bones. These

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<sup>335</sup> The evidence for Tomb VII excavated in 2009 at Qatna is provided via personal contact with one of the directors, Professor Peter Pfälzner, from Tübingen University, in Germany.

<sup>336</sup> Apart from one found in Chamber F, the other two individual inhumations are secondary, one found in Chamber D of Tomb 7 and one in Tomb 4.

characteristics, on the one hand, undoubtedly indicate the highest status of the deceased individual, and on the other hand, emphasize the differentials between rituals accompanying the Chamber F burial and rituals accompanying other burials on the site. The body remained anatomically intact, seeking to maintain the individual presence rather than destroying the individual identity. During the primary interment, the corpse was carefully laid inside the wooden coffin, where abundant jewellery of gold as personal ornaments was placed above the body. As the questions addressed above, it is not certain what the gold may represent, but it is almost certain that so many of the gold ornaments were privileged to be utilized during the death ritual for this interred individual. Further, the fact is that the large quantities of gold jewellery were not found anywhere else on the site, suggesting that they probably were reserved for the exclusive use of the Tomb 7 mourners. The wooden coffin appears to have been surrounded by a series of wooden poles, which may have served for hanging some textile canopy over the coffin.<sup>337</sup>

After the placement of the coffin in the southeastern corner of Chamber F, an equid was laid adjacent to it. The equid itself seem to have been a burial, since the treatment upon it is paralleled by that of human burials in secondary contexts well attested on Tell Banat. The remains of equid may render the interpretation other than as a source of food, probably as a sacrificial offering to the individual buried in the coffin. Alternatively, it may have been understood as transportation in the afterlife. One may also note that 40 percent of the animal bones retrieved from the last phase of the White Monument (A) are of equid. An equid burial with articulated bones took place in a room of the public building (Building 6; fig. 4.4 above), although not from a funerary context, indicates the ritual role of the equid in Banat society. In the case of Tomb 7, the contexts associated with the equid burial suggest that the area around the coffin certainly is of some particularly symbolic or ritual mortuary significance.

Chamber F also contained vessels of ceramic and alabaster, other highly decorated vessels of stone and ostrich egg, inlays, and other objects including inlay statue eye and eyebrow and wooden furniture. They were indications of offerings deposited either on the floor or in the northern niche, in contrast to the personal ornaments, which were put above the body of the deceased inside the coffin. Many of the various types of artefacts are not found anywhere else on the site, suggesting that the donations were probably manufactured for exclusive use for the participants who involved in the death rituals held for the person of highest rank. The separate depositional contexts between the personal ornaments and funerary offerings allow us to infer that, where the coffin was put down can be regarded as a cultic place. A series of ceremonial activities took place around the coffin in the chamber, where persons buried the equid and made rich offerings for the deceased's afterlife.

Chamber D contained a mature adult interred secondarily. The human remains of disarticulated body from Chamber D, as opposed to primarily human remains from Chamber F, indicate that the core funerary ritual on completion of the dead in a biological way comprised secondary treatment. This individual was accompanied with a much smaller number of objects of gold, bronze and lapis lazuli. Chamber D also contained some unknown objects of organic and woven deposited adjacent to the

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<sup>337</sup> Porter 2002 b: 156.

burial to the east, bead-rimmed shallow bowls interspersed on the floor in the western half, and the alabaster tabletop leaned against the wall in front of the entrance. It is difficult to understand what the depositional contexts of these objects would represent. Of note is that a group of Plain Simple Ware bowls in homogeneous forms was still left in the burial chamber (D), rather than joining in the enormous heap of pottery vessels in Chamber C. And, they were scattered on the floor, rather than stacked one on top the other, the way in which the Chamber C's vessels were arranged. This phenomenon perhaps is not coincident. The occurrence of such bowls is consistent with use for special purpose, probably associated with the use of the table. Support for this hypothesis includes a single such bowl leaned against on the edge of the tabletop as the time of excavation. Therefore, the bowls are probably utilized in banquets which were in a small scale and restricted to the burial chamber. There is a debate on whether the mortuary meals were served for the participants involved in ceremonial rituals or for the deceased's afterlife. A clue allows us to consider the first situation to be more possible that the tabletop had been leaned against the wall, suggesting the finishing of meals.

As discussed above, the deposition of the large quantities of pottery vessels in Chamber C took place probably after the interments as well as the accompanying artefacts that had been introduced in the Chambers D and F. Therefore, Chamber C seems like a hoard full of pottery vessels, mainly of jars, which were intended for the deceased's afterlife.

After the interments of the individuals within Tomb 7 and at the time the tomb was last properly sealed, burials were placed directly on top of the fills in the entrance shaft of Tomb 7. These included dual burials (a female adult and a child) of articulated bodies, and a disturbed burial of a second child. No burial pit or container was recognized, whereas the burials found anywhere else on the site were found always associated with grave structure. On the one hand, persons, including especially adult woman and children, were probably related to the descent group of the individuals within, thus after death they were privileged to be buried within the monumental tomb. On the other hand, their interments did not take place with the others inside the tomb chambers, but slightly beneath the covering slab, on top of the fills in the entrance shaft, in addition to no traces of either burial container or grave goods associated with them. Rather than interpreting these burials as demonstration of differentiation in social status, we should consider them as evidence for ritual activities of secondary commemorations. In other words, the acts of the interments of woman and children with intact bodies may have been part of complex series of rituals for the individuals of highest rank within the tomb. The same tendency to bury around large, significant tombs is seen from Arslantepe, where multiple burials occur on top of the roof. But in the case of Tomb 7 at Tell Banat, it is still unclear what these interments would specifically aim to. While in the case at Arslantepe, as Frangipane argues, the interments may have served as human sacrifices, such argument cannot be attested in the case of the three Banat skeletons.

After the monumental tomb was built up, satellite graves were placed over and around Tomb 7 in the urban center of Tell Banat, whereas secondary multiple burials included the earth-cut tombs (Tombs 1/2) located extramural to the west and east, and burials in cairns and in earth piles inserted into the



off-site burial mound, namely, the White Monument. The satellite graves included four under-ground burials in stone cists (Tombs 4/5/9) and in stone-built chamber (Tomb 6), and other above-ground burials under piles of stones. Several factors including that the small cist graves were rarely found intact and that small cairns contained few to no grave gifts render the chronological sequence, which would compare to Tomb 7, problematic. It seems that these satellite graves are largely contemporary with the history of Tomb 7 in Period IV. Nevertheless, there seems to have been a desire to locate as close as possible to Tomb 7, and the small burial cairns were directly placed on top of the roof of Tomb 7. The close proximity of the satellite graves to the elite Tomb 7 suggest this area, including previously Mortuary Mound II, the large artificial gravel deposit and the public buildings later constructed above, was a complex with strong ritual mortuary significance. Moreover, human skeletal remains found in the graves located in this area manifest that individual identity is of maximum significance, as opposed to below-ground earth-cut tombs and mound burials in White Monuments, in which individual presence was largely destroyed and transformed into a collective identity. The frequent occurrence of the satellite graves confirms the opinion that the monumental tomb became a landmark for perseverance of tradition and memory. The tomb structure as well as its satellite graves was part of the public complex of the settlement, which “was a center for mortuary-related ritual” by all indications. Furthermore, the public center is surrounded by industrial facilities to the west and south which seem to have domestic activities such as cooking, perhaps suggesting the incorporation of funerary rituals in the scale of community rituals.

In summary, the funerary rituals related to the monumental Tomb 7 comprise many stages. Interment rituals that took place in Chamber F likely consist of the maintenance of individual identity of the person of the highest rank, and many of gold jewellery as personal ornaments privileged to be utilized during the death ritual for the coffin burial. Further, a series of ceremonial activities took place around the coffin, concerned with the interment of equid and with making rich offerings for the deceased’s afterlife. Ritual activities related to the Chamber D burial are likely composed of the secondary treatment upon the deceased individual, and the mortuary meals in a small scale served for the participants. Chamber C was probably a special place to contain large quantities of pottery vessels intended for the deceased’s afterlife. Before the tomb was properly sealed, rituals probably in a way, which the last procedure of the complex series of the death rituals within the tomb was carried out, include the interments of adult woman and children primarily in the entrance area, beneath the covering slab. Secondary commemorative rituals during post-interment period for the illustrious ancestors buried in the monumental tomb were likely enacted in the public complex by indications of interments in the satellite graves clustered over and around Tomb 7.

## CHAPTER 5 GRE VIRIKE

### 5.1 SETTINGS OF THE SITE

Gre Virike lies 10 km north of Carchemish and 15 km south of Birecik (province of Şanlıurfa) on the east bank of the Euphrates River (Lat 36°56'N; Long 38°00'E). The mound, on a natural pebble terrace of the Euphrates Pleistocene formation, is approximately 15 m high and measures 70 m north-south and 60 m east-west.<sup>338</sup>

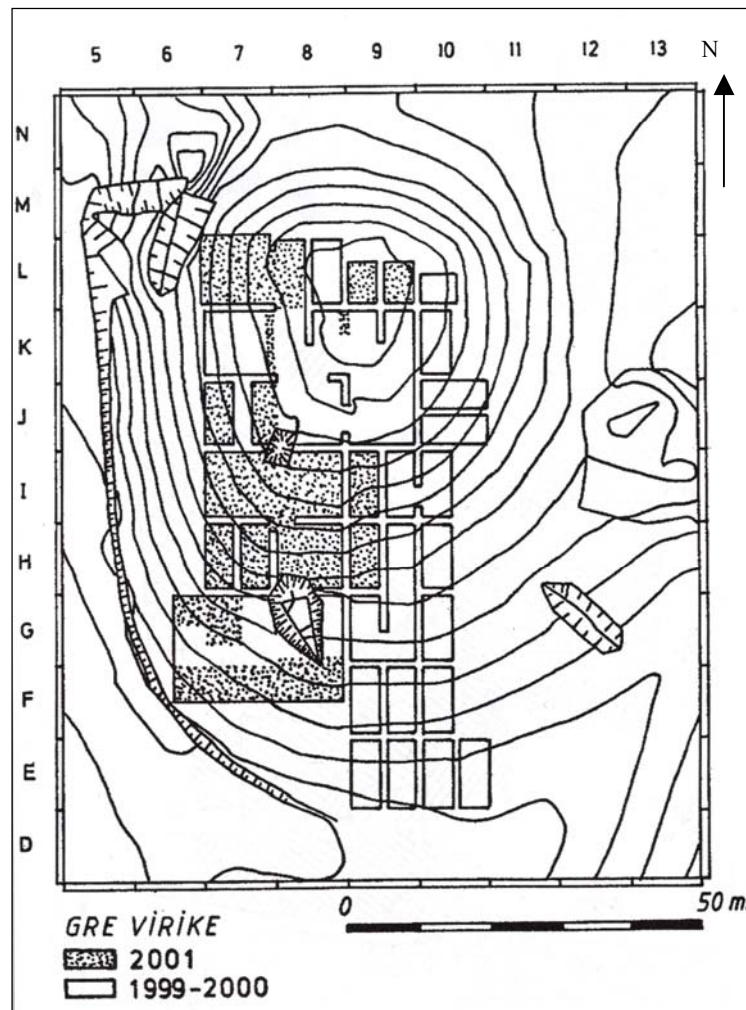


Fig. 5. 1 Plan of the excavations from 1999-2001 (after Ökse 2004, Fig. 1).

The site was first investigated by Guillermo Algaze and his team in 1989 during surveys of the Euphrates and Tigris Reconnaissance Project.<sup>339</sup> Ten years after the discovery of the site, extensive excavation campaigns were carried out at the mound (fig. 5.1), annually from 1999 to 2001 led by

<sup>338</sup> Algaze *et al.* 1994: 54-5.

<sup>339</sup> Algaze *et al.* 1991: 186, 232, 236, Fig. 25 (b), no. 82, Fig. 29; Algaze *et al.* 1994: 54-5, Fig. 8, no. 69, Figs. 16 (A-B), 18.

Tuba Ökse of Hacettepe University as part of the Carchemish dam.<sup>340</sup>

Dated comparative material retrieved from surface investigations suggests that the site of Gre Virike was settled down from the end of the Chalcolithic period until the Early Middle Bronze Age. Thanks to the salvage excavations, a remarkable discovery, therefore, came to light that an artificial mud-brick terrace surrounded with basalt walls dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE was located on the mound summit upon the natural pebble hill. On the terrace, ample funerary practices have been attested, consisting of the monumental chamber tombs and associated architectural remains, and in a later period graves of various types were set on and around the previous mortuary complex. Gre Virike has been identified to have a continuing sequence throughout the third millennium within the Early Bronze Age, comprising two periods (table 5.1).

<i>Site Period</i>	<i>General Period</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Stratum</i>	<i>Principle Characteristics</i>	<i>Location</i>
<b>III</b>	Medieval Period		1	Store-houses	Southeast of the mound
<b>IIB</b>	EBA IV	Last quarter of	2	Ten graves of various types	Mound summit and southern slope
		3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium		Free-standing rooms	Mound summit
<b>IIA</b>	EBAIII-IV	Second half of 3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium	7	Tomb K 9	East of the terrace
				Two disturbed tombs in L 8	North of the terrace
				Three chamber rows in J 9 and I-K 8	West of the terrace
<b>I</b>	EBAI-II	First half of 3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium		Two plastered pools, a basalt channel, four stone-built pits; a basalt stairway	On the terrace; at southwestern skirt

Table 5. 1 Site periods of Gre Virike with main characteristics.

Period I is mainly represented by a series of EBA I-II ritual structures, which contain pottery sherds and small finds dating to the first half of the third millennium BCE.<sup>341</sup> The succeeding period (IIA) consists of an EBA III-IV mortuary complex, in which pottery material was found, dating to the second half of the third millennium BCE.<sup>342</sup> Next in the chronological sequence, Period IIB demonstrates various graves mostly of EBA IV, and the pottery collected from the graves and adjacent area are dated to the last quarter of the third millennium BCE.<sup>343</sup> In addition, a mud-brick building complex including a number of small storing houses was located in southeastern part of the mound.<sup>344</sup> This complex represents the last phase of the site (Period III), and finds retrieved from these buildings are typical of the Medieval Period.<sup>345</sup> Since the dating of these domestic features is beyond the third millennium, they are out of the scope of this dissertation and won't be mentioned here.

<sup>340</sup> Preliminary investigation mainly consisting of pottery collection was conducted in 1998, see Ökse 1999. For preliminary reports on the excavations, see Ökse 2001, 2002 and 2004; Ökse – Bucak 2001, 2002 and 2003; Greaves – Helwing 2001: 495-96, 2003: 87-8. The excavations were carried out within the Salvage Project of the Archaeological Heritage of the Ilisu and Carchemish Dam Reservoirs in Turkey, organized by the Ministry of Culture and the Center for Research and Assessment of the Historic Environment of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, see Algaze 1999.

<sup>341</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 1-27.

<sup>342</sup> Ökse 2005: 21-46.

<sup>343</sup> Ökse 2006 a.

<sup>344</sup> Ökse 2001: 264, Fig. 5.

<sup>345</sup> Ökse 2001: 264-5, Fig. 20 (b); Ökse 2004: 221.

## 5.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

This part of the dissertation will investigate funerary practices at Gre Virike during the third millennium BCE. The main occupation of that millennium at the site can be divided into two periods: Period I, and Period II (A/B). At the beginning of the third millennium, Gre Virike began with a mud-brick terrace, which had been built on a natural pebble hill. The terrace was raised 15 m above the valley floor and covered an area of 35×50 m (fig. 5.2). It has irregular contour, approximately rectangular in shape with rounded corners. Its core was encased by large basalt blocks and stepped mudbricks. The 1800 m<sup>2</sup> summit was paved with regular rows of mudbricks unified in size (0.50×0.30×0.07 m), representing a single event of construction. The terrace was built up in clear steps especially in the south part, probably for the reason of fitting the natural slope there. Walls built with large basalt blocks around the terrace have been retained, comprising three sections (also see fig. 5.2): one of 12 m long at the northwestern corner (fig. 5.3), one surrounding the southwestern skirt of the terrace, and one of 5 m long erected on the southern side.<sup>346</sup> The huge mud-brick terrace surrounded with basalt walls does not have any installations which would be consistent with use for domestic purpose.

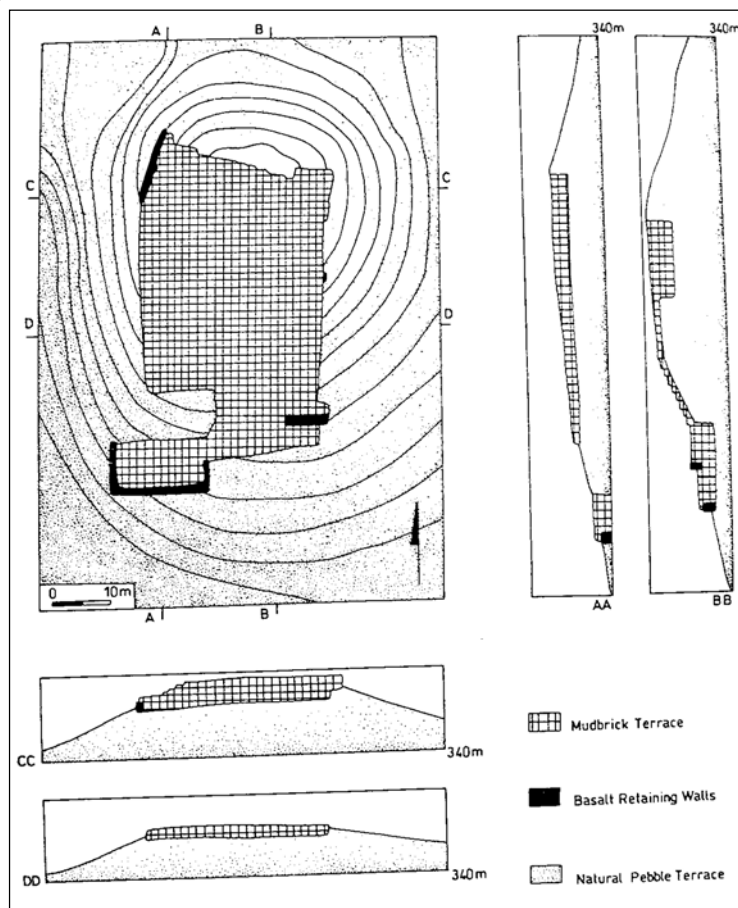


Fig. 5. 2 Plan and cross-sections of the terrace at Gre Virike (after Ökse 2007, Fig. 6.2).

<sup>346</sup> All retaining walls are 1.20-1.40 thick, were built with large basalt blocks with dimensions of 0.50-1.50 m in length, 0.60-1.20 m in width and 0.25-0.40 m in thickness, see Ökse 2007: 94, Figs. 6.5-6.8.

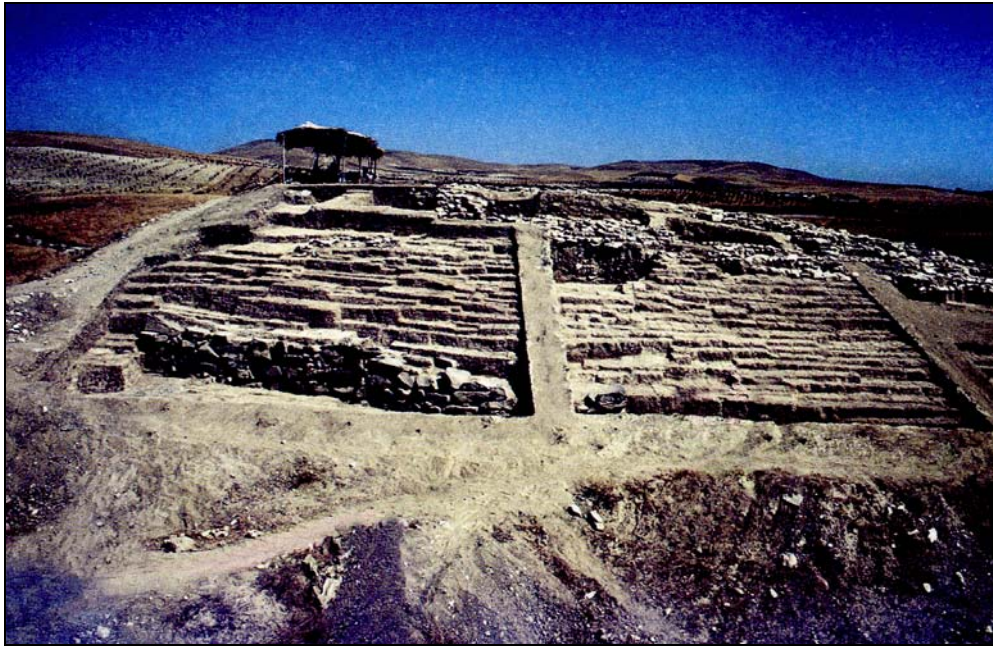


Fig. 5. 3 The northwestern terrace with retaining wall (after Ökse 2007, Fig. 6.5).

The three site phases all featured installations of a non-domestic character. During the earliest phase, Period I, comparable to the EAB I/II, remains include two plastered pools, a basalt channel, four circular, stone-built pits and a basalt stairway leading to an underground spring, all built on the mud-brick terrace (fig. 5.4).<sup>347</sup> Two plastered pools were inserted into the northeastern corner of the terrace. Of two pools, a well-preserved pool to the north is c. 10.20 x 5.40 m in size and is 2.20 m in depth. Its base and sides were coated with a thick lime plaster and the floor was covered with a fine clay deposit. There was a small number of pottery sherds retrieved in the deposit, and according to the excavator, all the pottery material is dated to the first half of the third millennium BCE.<sup>348</sup> A piece of plastered floor to the south of the pool contains a niche connected to the remaining floor of the south, which belongs to a second pool. In the succeeding Gre Virike period (Period II A), a limestone chamber tomb (in K 9) was built in this pool. This evidence suggests that the southern pool must have ceased to be used by the middle of the millennium, like the northern pool.

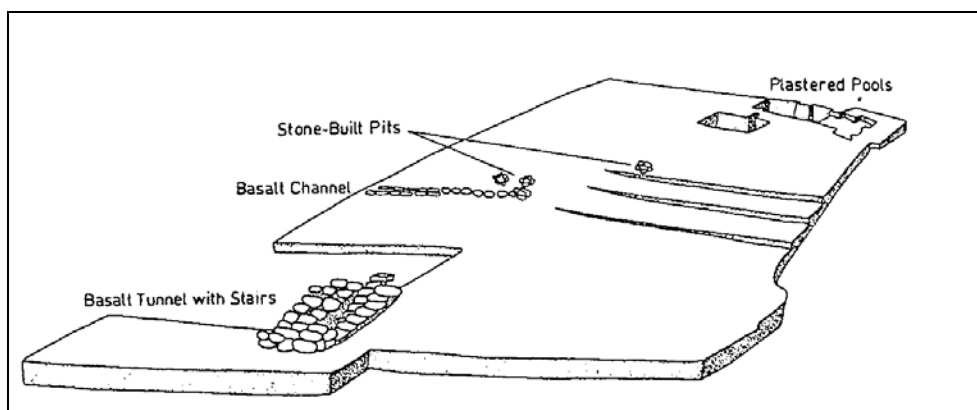


Fig. 5. 4 Reconstruction of Period I structures on the terrace (after Ökse 2007, Fig. 6.4: upper).

<sup>347</sup> Two plastered pools, see Ökse 2006 b: Fig. 2 (b-c); a basalt channel, see Fig. 2 (d); four stone-built pits, see Fig. 2 (f-I); a basalt stairway, see Fig. 2 (k).

<sup>348</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 2, Fig. 7.

On the southern slope in Trenches I 7-8, a 15m-long channel was built with large basalt slabs<sup>349</sup> extending in east-west direction. The fill in the channel contains a large amount of grains and pedestal sherds of coarse champagne cups with coarsely-incised decoration. The pottery sherds are dated to the EBA I-II. To the east of the channel, four circular pits were uncovered, three of which was surrounded by large basalt blocks and covered with a basalt slab on top.<sup>350</sup> Between the covering slab and surrounding blocks, areas covered with covered with hard clay plaster were uncovered, in which four to seven smaller pits full of ash and grains were found. The inclusions of the circular pits were large amount of grains (in pits g/h), mammal bones (in pits g/i) and pottery sherds (in pits f/g). Other artefacts retrieved from inside the pits include a flint tool (in pit g), a miniature flat axe and fragments of unbaked clay figurines (both found in pit i).<sup>351</sup> The axe seems too small to be used in life (4.6×3.4×1.2 cm), and Ökse Tuba has suggested the possibility that it is a votive object.

At the south-western skirt of the mound, a subterranean structure directly constructed on the natural pebble terrace, was built with large basalt blocks and then covered with mud bricks.<sup>352</sup> Unfortunately, this structure was heavily disturbed due to soil removals in 1980s; nevertheless, between the basalt blocks, a narrow tunnel containing a stairway with 12 steps was preserved. The stairway runs downward with a slope of 45° leading to the underground structure, which has been interpreted as being used as a water source for rituals.<sup>353</sup> After the collapse of the tunnel by the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE, the connection between the stairway-tunnel and the underground spring seems to have been cut off. The upper part of the stairway was filled with rubble, which also contained animal bones, grinding stones, sherds of various vessels dated to the EBA III-IV and other small artefacts. These include fragments of basalt vessels, a bird-shaped bell, a terracotta wheel, and a fragmented bull-shaped figurine.<sup>354</sup> One can infer that after the time when the tunnel with stairway had ceased to function as a passage to the below-grounded water supply, the upper part of the tunnel may have served as an offering pit. The inclusion of the upper part of the tunnel supports for this inference, and Tuba Ökse has suggested that animal bones and clay figurines, which were also found in and around the stone-built pits, were used in a ceremonial way and then thrown in to the tunnel after the collapse.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 3, Figs .4, 15.

<sup>350</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 3; pit (f), see Fig .16; pit (g), see Figs .16-7; pit (h), see Fig .17; pit (i), see Fig.18

<sup>351</sup> Flat axe (I9/44/R/01), see Ökse 2004: Fig. 9 (A); see also Ökse 2006 b: Fig. 8. Fragments of unbaked clay figurines from the pit are similar to those from the stairway, see Ökse 2006 b: Fig. 9.

<sup>352</sup> Ökse 2006 b: Figs. 6 (k) and 20.

<sup>353</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 7.

<sup>354</sup> Terra-cotta bull-shaped figurine (G7/34/S/11) from stairway fill, see Ökse 2004: Fig. 28.

<sup>355</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 8.



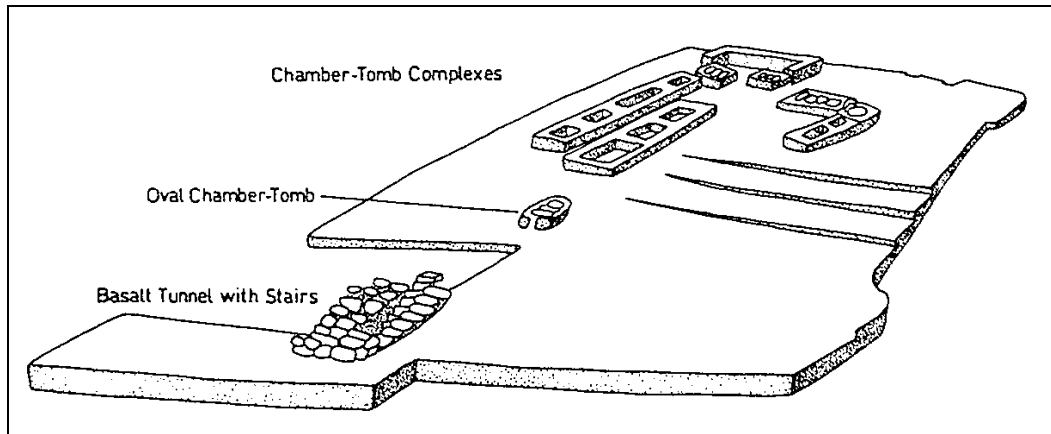


Fig. 5. 5 Reconstruction of Period II structures on the terrace (after Ökse 2007, Fig. 6.4: below).

Period II consists of two phases dating to EBA III/IV. In Period II A, limestone subterranean chamber tombs and rows of small chambers were built on the mound summit, which will be specifically described below (fig. 5.5). In Period II B, the mortuary complex was probably not in use, and eleven graves of various types were built over and around the earlier structures. The evidence gleaned from ceramics, however, indicates that some of these graves were contemporary with the mortuary complex of Period IIA. The southern edge of the mud-brick terrace to the south had collapsed and was supported by a limestone retaining wall.<sup>356</sup> In contrast to the chambers built in rows in Period IIA as part of the mortuary complex, small free-standing chambers of Period IIB did not form a row pattern but comprised free-standing single rooms distributed in different places on the terrace. Some of these (in J-K/8) were built directly on the walls of Period IIA chamber rows and thus were oriented in the same direction, namely, north-northeast to south-southwest, while the other chambers built slightly later were oriented from north to south. As preserved, three mud-brick steps (fig. 5.5) in the northwestern part of Trench I 9 on the south-eastern slope were covered with lime plaster. One plastered pit was dug into the third step, in which pottery vessels consisting of bowls and jars datable of EBA III/IV were found. Adjacent to the steps to the west, a later floor contained a mortar and a hearth with thick ash deposits found over the floor. In sum, the remains associated with this plastered area included plastered pit with ceramics set inside, basalt grinding implements and flint blades, similar to those found in the chambers within the mortuary complex of Period IIA. The latter has been interpreted as being associated with the preparation, cooking and consumption of food, thus they were probably used in a way as kitchens (see below). In this regard, “kitchens” still existed as a significant component of the complex from the succeeding period, but they were installed in the open air, rather than being installed within the small chambers.

### 5.3 A CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

As found, very little pottery material is related to Gre Virike Period I, since only a series of ritual installations were found on the paved summit of the terrace instead of domestic or funerary contexts, which normally yield more pottery vessels. A small number of pottery sherds stem predominately from within the northern pool in the fine clay deposit and in some of the stone-built pits. Pottery

<sup>356</sup> Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (o).



vessels all in Plain Simple Ware include types of shallow bowls with ribbed rims (fig. 5.6: 1), neckless jars with flared rims (fig. 5.6: 2), conical cups (fig. 5.6: 3) and long-stemmed champagne cups (fig. 6.7). The latter was coarsely made with “V” decorations and multiple horizontal, thin lines incised on the exterior surface of the stem.

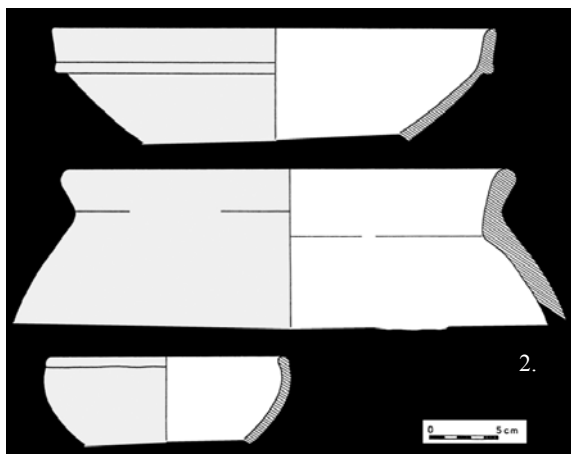


Fig. 5. 6 Selected pottery vessels from the northern pool (after Ökse 2006 b, Fig. 7).

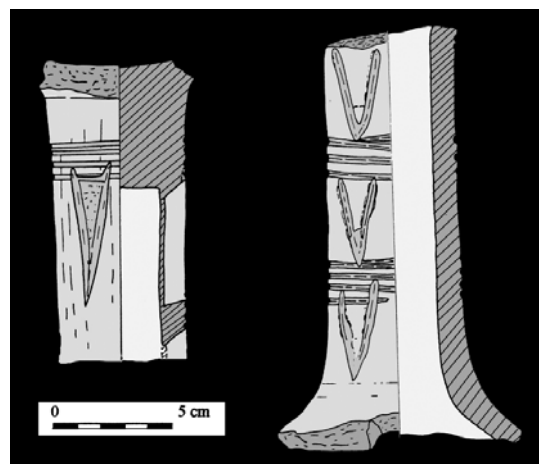


Fig. 5. 7 Stems of champagne cups from the channel and stone-built pit (f) (after Ökse 2006 b, Fig. 8: below).

In Gre Virike Period IIA, Plain Simple Ware remains the predominant ware type. K 9 chamber tomb has been studied in detail, and contained 43 Plain Simple Ware vessels, 19 Metallic Ware vessels of Khabur type, in local black pasted ware and in fine ware (fig. 5.14). Both wares incorporate a variety of shapes not found elsewhere from this period on the site, such as champagne cups (fig. 5.11: 1-3), tripod feet bowls (fig. 5.13), conical cups and a number of miniatures. Notable of the new ware types are Euphrates Banded Ware and Horizontal Reserved Slip Ware, although both appear with only one or two examples. These luxury wares were recovered primarily from this chamber tomb. A different picture of the Period IIA assemblage emerges when material from small chambers is also considered. Pottery vessels retrieved from the chambers (h/d) contained new PSW forms like elongated necked jugs (fig. 5.21: 3) and grooved goblets (fig. 5.21: 1), and large cooking wares (figs. 5.18: 4 and 21: 4). In contrast to K 9 chamber tomb, there is absence of luxury wares and some of PSW vessels types (e.g., champagne cups, pedestal jars and tripod feet bowls) were not found in these chambers. The different composition of pottery assemblage from the chamber tomb and small attached chambers likely reflects a chronological evolution, or possibly a separate function of vessel wares and forms in funerary contexts in comparison to in domestic contexts.

Evidence for pottery material of Period IIB has revealed some important differences from the preceding period. Notable of new Plain Simple Ware vessels types are globular-bodied bottle with rounded base (figs. 5.23, 37) and long-necked jug with grooved rim (fig. 5.25: 2), there are also two examples with trefoil mouths (fig. 5.25: 1). In Period IIB, Euphrates Banded Ware constitutes a significant part of the assemblage in funerary contexts. Of several new forms added to this ware type in this period are straight-necked jar with everted rim and small ceramics “Syrian bottles” (fig. 6.36: 2-4). Other new features of Period IIB include the increased frequency of corrugated cups both in Plain Simple Ware and Euphrates Banded Ware and the introduction of the black ware of the new

miniature jar shape (figs. 6.23 and 37).

## 5.4 MONUMENTAL MORTUARY COMPLEX IN PERIOD IIA

In the second half of the third millennium BCE, limestone subterranean chamber tombs attached by three rows of small chambers were built upon the mud-brick terrace on the mound summit (fig. 5.8). In the east part of the mound, a well-preserved chamber tomb (in K 9) was joined with two small rooms (in J 9) to the south. In the west part, there were two chamber tombs (in L 8), which had been much disturbed by later graves and robber pits, and thus few to no associated bone remains or grave goods were recovered. To the south, some ten one-roomed structures (in K L 7-8) built in two rows were uncovered. These chamber rows seem to have been attached to L 8 chamber tombs to the north in a similar way that the chamber tomb (K 9) with its additional structures was constituted. These structures will be specifically discussed in this chapter.

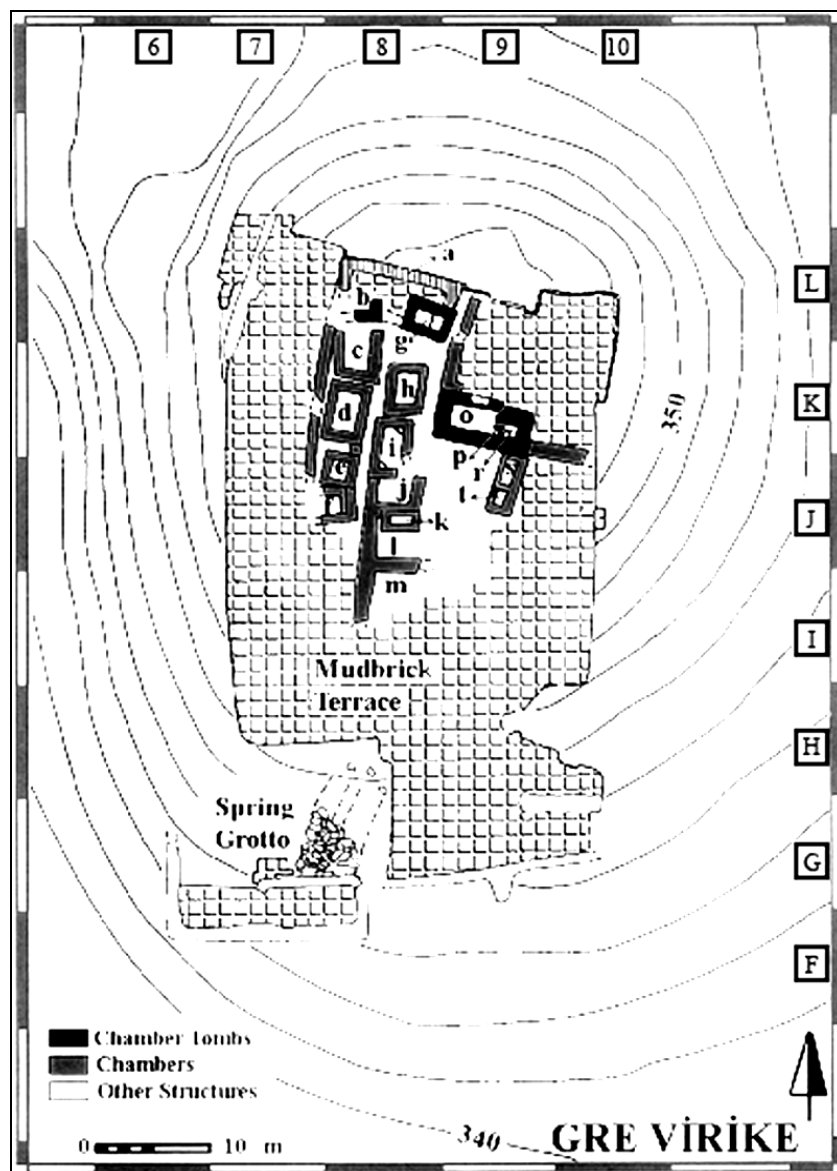


Fig. 5. 8 Plan of burial-chamber complexes on the mudbrick terrace at Gre Virike (after Ökse 2005, Fig. 3).

### 5.4.1 Well-Preserved Tomb K 9 and Two Disturbed Tombs in L 8

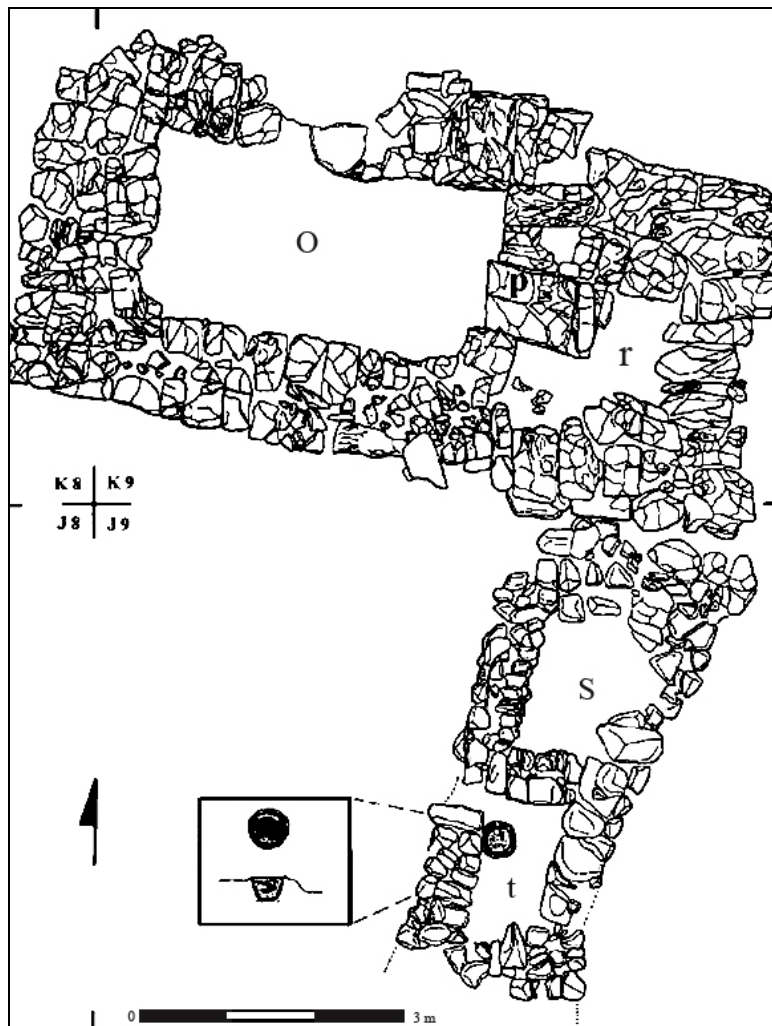


Fig. 5.9 Plan of T. K9 and two attached chambers (s/t) (after Ökse 2005, Fig. 4).

In the southeastern part of Trench K 9, a partially subterranean chamber tomb (K9/012) was set into the mud-brick terrace. The tomb structure consisted of a main chamber (o), an ante-chamber (r), and a passageway (chamber p; fig. 5.9). Its orientation is from east-southeast to west-northwest. The main tomb chamber was built as a unit, rectangular in shape with the dimensions of 2.30×3.70 m. It was surrounded by walls on the north, west, and south, which are still preserved 1.2 m in thickness and 1.70-1.90 m in height. Fragments of large limestone slabs found in the upper debris of the main chamber may have been part of roof on top of this room. The passageway was opened in the short, south side of the main chamber. The floor of the passageway is a small square, 0.90×0.90 m in size, and was paved with stone. The passageway was blocked by a limestone slab (0.24×0.90×0.57 m) placed upright to the east. The ante-chamber was built next to the main chamber on the east. This small-sized room, c.1.30×0.80 m, does not fit the main chamber exactly, but it lies about 20 cm southward (fig. 5.9). The ante-chamber is constituted of three side walls, a 1.50-m-thick northern wall, a 1.10-m-thick eastern wall, and a 1.30-m-thick southern wall. These walls still have been preserved to a height of 0.70-0.80 m. Floors of three sub-units were not built in the same level: the

floor of the main chamber is lowest one, the paved floor of the passageway is in the middle, about half meter higher, and the floor of the ante-chamber is the highest, c.0.40 m higher than that of the passageway.<sup>357</sup> As the excavator suggests, the entrance of the tomb must have been through the ante-chamber from the east. Supporting evidence is the discovery of a large basalt slab found in the north part of the ante-chamber. Although it was removed in antiquity, it may have been used for covering the entrance of the tomb.<sup>358</sup> Walls of the whole structure were found ca. 0.20 m below the present surface. Therefore, the roof of the tomb was probably visible from the surface at that time.

In the southwestern part of Trench L 8, a limestone structure (structure b) was disturbed by a deep robber pit (fig. 5.10). A limestone wall was the only feature that was preserved, and it is of 2.15 m long and 0.80 m wide situated at the southeastern corner of the structure. The retained wall was still of 1.05 m high with its highest level 352.79 m above sea level.

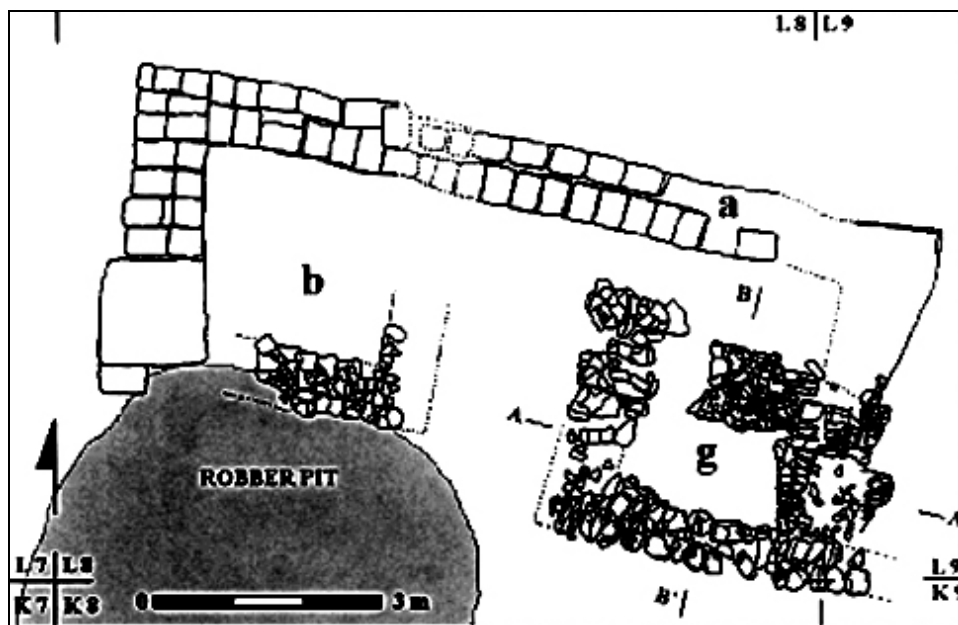


Fig. 5. 10 Two disturbed tombs in L 8 and a mud-brick wall to the north (after Ökse 2005, Fig. 18).

Another disturbed structure (structure g; fig. 5.10) was located to the east of the structure b, in the southeastern part of Trench L 8. The southern and western walls, which were built with limestone slabs, are 4.40 m and 3.40 m long, 1.00 m thick. An arch wall<sup>359</sup> to the north partly survived; it is c.4.00 m. long, 1.10 m wide and 1.10 m thick, and its arch is preserved at a depth of c. 0.40 m. In a later phase, a wall was built on the east connecting the southern and northern walls. Although these walls show no connections to each other, they enclose a rectangular area of 3.60×1.30 m, which, although smaller in size, is reminiscent of the main chamber of K 9 chamber tomb. Large, and flat limestone slabs under the southern wall may have been used as covering slabs of the tomb. Many stones of this structure were removed, and some were found in later structures. In short, the structure g was heavily disturbed after its use, but all the architectural characteristics indicate that it seems to have been a subterranean chamber tomb with arched walls built in the direction from east-southeast

<sup>357</sup> Ökse 2005: Fig. 7.

<sup>358</sup> Ökse 2005: 23.

<sup>359</sup> Ökse 2005: 20.

to west-northwest, the same as that of K 9 chamber tomb. The walls of the whole structure were found c. 15 cm beneath the present surface, indicating that the roof of the tomb was probably visible from the surface at that time.

A mud-brick wall (structure a; fig. 5.10) to the north of both structures was built in NW-SW orientation at the northern edge of the mud-terrace, and both ends (to the west and east) are bent to the south. The wall was constructed with two rows of red mud bricks, each measuring  $0.55 \times 0.35 \times 0.07$  m. According to the mud bricks in size the same as those used in the construction of the entire terrace, this line of wall appears to have existed since Period I. In the later period, the function of the wall was probably shifted, and its close association with the disturbed structures in L8 suggests that this facility is consistent with use for enclosing both structures to the north.

### *Contents*

No bone remains or pottery vessels were obtained from both chamber tombs in Trench L8, which had been much disturbed in antiquity. Therefore, the tomb contents stem entirely from K9 chamber tomb, including human/animal remains, ceramics, and non-ceramic artefacts.

The skeletal remains belonged to an adult male, 30-35 years old, and an adult of indeterminate sex<sup>360</sup>. The first individual is represented by joint, body parts and teeth. Body parts include long bones vertebrae, finger and toe bones, wrist bones and ribs. Very few bones from the skull were found. The second individual is represented by some skull, rib fragments and the left first incisor.

Most of the skeletal remains were disaggregated. In the case of limestone tomb at Gre Virike, environmental conditions affecting bone preservation must be taken into consideration, since almost all of the bone material was covered with calcite. Further, in the course of calcite formation, the earth in the tomb was calcified together with the bone. Therefore, extremely unfavorable soil conditions in the tomb may account for bone loss. Despite no traces of anatomical articulation, the skeletal remains from one individual comprise the bones from skull, teeth, joint and body parts, suggesting the interred body anatomically intact likely. But the bone assemblage was too limited to account for the original deposition of complete skeletons.

The bone fragments recovered in the main chamber also include young sheep/goat remains.<sup>361</sup> They are represented by joints of long bones, rib fragments, a shoulder bone, fragments of hip bones and a horn. The composition of animal skeletal remains shows no bias towards specific parts of the body, suggesting the body anatomically intact. An interesting discovery is the bones with cut marks, attested by 4-5 signs of butchering on a rib and one upon a hip bone. This may indicate that the complete lamb was dismembered before deposition. In absence of burn marks on the bone, the butchered lamb seems to have been laid in the tomb while raw.

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<sup>360</sup> Uysal 2002: 281.

<sup>361</sup> A small ruminant (a lamb or kid), see Uysal 2002: 282.



Fig. 5. 11 Pottery vessels from T. K 9 (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 24).

Type	Ware	Quantity	Description	Pot-Nos. (K9/22/S/no.)
champagne cups	PSW	20	carinated	10, 36-8, 59-60, 67-9, 72, 74, 75, 78, 80, 82-4, 86, 88, 91.
		3	S-profiled	34-5, 55
pedestal jars	PSW	7		11, 29, 31, 48, 53, 62-3, 65, 73, 76-7, 90.
tripod feet bowls	PSW	8		25, 28, 46-7, 81, 92.
wheel-made bowls	PSW	1	hemispherical	54
		1	S-profiled	50
		1	conical	87
		1	thickened-rimmed	93
miniature bowl	PSW	1		96
hand-made bowls	RBW	2		20,33
jar	HRSW	1		12
miniature jars		1	Khabur metallic	14
		4	local black ware	15, 41-2, 61.
		2	fine ware	45, 58.
conical cups	MTW	1	Khabur metallic	70
		12	local metallic	13, 19, 24, 30, 32, 56, 64, 66, 97, 99, 100.

Table 5. 2 Ceramics in the main chamber, T. K 9 (according to the analysis of pottery material, Ökse 2002, 276).



The main chamber has yielded abundant pottery vessels. A photo (fig. 5.11) illustrated above presents the entire pottery assemblage, which consists of sixty-six reconstructable vessels.<sup>362</sup> The pottery material of the tomb has been analyzed (table 5.2), and four ware types are represented: a majority of Plain Simple Ware vessels, one of Horizontal Reserved Slip Ware, a noticeable quantity of Metallic Ware in forms of conical cups and miniature jars, and two examples of Red Burnished Ware. Champagne cups of Plain Simple Ware are among the most common vessel types, with 23 pieces. Most of them have carinated bodies (fig. 5.12: 1-2), but three examples have round bodies and everted rims (fig. 5.12: 3). They are bowls or jars attached with rather long stem bases. Small conical cups of Metallic Ware make up the second most numerous types, with 13 pieces. Of eight tripod feet bowls, three examples have bull-shaped feet (fig. 5.13), whereas the pedestal vessels (7) are very consistent in form: globular body with short bell-shaped pedestal foot (fig. 5.12: 4). Miniature globular-bodied jars were produced in the Metallic Ware of Khabur type (fig. 5.14), in local black-pasted ware (fig. 5.12: 5) and in fine ware. There are four deep bowls, varying from profiles: hemispherical, S-profiled, conical, and externally thickened rimmed. Among Plain Simple Ware vessels, there is also a miniature bowl. Red Burnished Ware is represented by two hemispherical bowls. Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware is represented by a single jar.

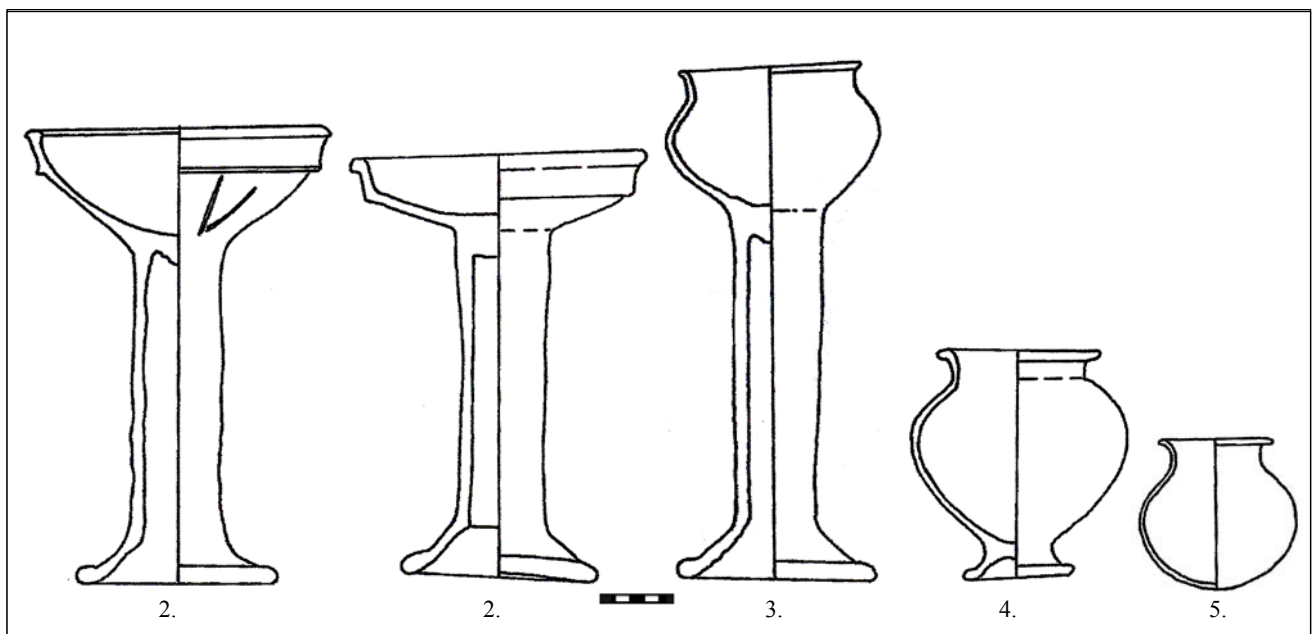


Fig. 5. 12 Selected vessels in the main chamber of T. K 9: 1-5, K9/22/S/37, 74, 35, 11 and 15 (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 7).



Fig. 5. 13 Tripod feet vessel (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 28).

<sup>362</sup> Ökse 2002: Fig. 24.





Fig. 5. 14 MTW vessels (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 25).



Fig. 5. 15 Metal objects in the main chamber of T. K 9: 1, bronze spearhead; 2, silver spiral (after Ökse 2002, Figs. 27, 26).

Non-ceramic artefacts recovered in the main tomb chamber included a bronze spearhead (fig. 5.15: 1) and a tanged flint arrowhead, both of which could be used as weapons or tools. Other objects consist of a toggle-pin, an agate bead, a silver hair-roundle (fig. 5.15: 2), and triangular pieces of inlay of animal shell.<sup>363</sup>

The champagne cups with long stem base made in Plain Simple Ware tradition is the initial group, typical of Groups A/C according to Sertok's definition and referred to as Horizon I A in Jamieson's system.<sup>364</sup> The use of the fast wheel is a significant feature in distinguishing the defined champagne cup's typology, thus this type of vessels of either carinated-profiled or S-profiled presented in K9 chamber tomb at Gre Virike produced on the slow-wheel appears in assemblages of middle and upper Euphrates valley in EBA I, and they disappear after EBA II.<sup>365</sup> Red Burnished Ware, Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware and Metallic Ware in the form of bowls, jars and conical cups

<sup>363</sup> Only a bronze pin was documented, see Ökse 2002: 276, given no. K9/22/V/09. However, she mentioned that three pins were retrieved from Tomb K 9, see Ökse 2005: 27.

<sup>364</sup> Sertok 2007: 239-42; Jamieson 1993: 42, Fig. 1: 7.

<sup>365</sup> Sertok 2007: 242.

appeared for the first time in the EAB III, comparable to Jamieson's Horizon 2A. The appearance of these new and more specialized fabric types corresponds with the significant development in the ceramic tradition of the Euphrates valley by the middle third-millennium BCE. The conical-bodied deep bowls and the hemispherical bowls with thickened rims appeared as early as the middle of the third millennium BCE, comparable to EBA III (Horizons 2A).<sup>366</sup> And, the vessels with applied tripod feet are only known from the funerary contexts dating to EBA III-IVa, such as in Tomb 1 at Tell Banat, in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar.<sup>367</sup> A variety of non-ceramic artefacts have many parallels found in the funerary contexts dating to EBA I-III in Northern Syria and Southern Mesopotamia.<sup>368</sup>

In sum, the tomb consisted of grave goods of types used over a considerable period of time across the first half of the third millennium BCE to the last quarter of the millennium. Unfortunately, there are no radiocarbon dates from Period IIA of Gre Virike to give the absolute dates to this tomb. In the light of the stratigraphic contexts of Gre Virike, the southern plastered pool of the Gre Virike Period I was succeeded by K 9 chamber tomb, since the tomb was built in this pool after it was out of use by the middle of the Millennium. Thus, the pottery material dating to EBA I-II retrieved in the tomb could have been early vessels of types used in a later period. The tomb seems to have been initially built in the beginning of EBA III, and was probably used till EBA IVa. The satellite graves - namely, two pithos burials and one stone cist grave - were set on and around K 9 chamber tomb sometime in EBA IV, the date of two examples of Euphrates Banded Ware "Syrian bottles" among the grave goods accompanying one of the pithos burials (K9/9). K 9 chamber tomb was partially damaged by two of these satellite graves, indicating that the tomb was no longer used by this time.

### *Interpretation of the Contexts*

For the K 9 chamber tomb, large limestone slabs to cover the whole structure and the large basalt slab to block the entrance of the tomb were removed, indicating that the tomb was probably subject to lootings. The tomb did not suffer serious disturbance, since tomb structure was relatively intact and most of the pottery vessels with complete bodies (broken or unbroken) survived. Unfortunately, due to the extremely unfavorable environmental conditions within the tomb, the skeletal remains were heavily affected by lime damage leaving bone fragments scattered above the floor in the eastern half of the main chamber. Among the human bones, bone fragments of a young sheep/goat were found. The tomb contained a mixture of artefacts' types used for over a considerable period of time, indicating recurrent use of the tomb structure. Most of the grave furnishings were heaped in the western half of the main chamber (fig. 5.16), including large numbers of containers and non-ceramic objects of bronze, silver, agate and flint. It is to be noted that some aspects of the mortuary contexts - the body sections of champagne cups in the main chamber, whose feet were found in the ante-chamber; two bronze pins, which should have been originally associated with the deceased individuals, were found in the passageway - indicate that the primary deposits were affected by removal of grave goods. Apart from the pedestal stems, two bowls and a miniature jar were also

<sup>366</sup> Hemispherical bowls with thickened rims, see Jamieson 1993: Fig. 3 (3, 16, 21 and 30); small conical cups, see Fig. 3 (5 and 32).

<sup>367</sup> Porter 1999: Fig. 2; Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936: Fig. 31, Pl. 24

<sup>368</sup> The result is according to the analysis of comparisons of small finds, see Ökse 2005: footnotes 5 and 11.

collected from the ante-chamber. They were unlikely the result of intentional deposition apart from the majority of pottery vessels deposited in the main chamber, rather they were caused by robbers' removal. Of note is that none of the artefacts were immediately in association with the skeletal remains. About sixty-six pottery vessels were primarily found stacked one on top of another, which is particularly marked against the northern wall of the chamber. Many parallels to some of types of objects, such as agate beads and toggle-pins, are frequently seen from the tombs at the site, in which they were always found on or around the human skeletal remains, as opposed to K 9 chamber tomb. Therefore, the objects may have been removed after deposition. The discovery of the fragments of inlay suggests there would have been more some highly decorated objects, which had decayed or had been removed by robbers in antiquity.

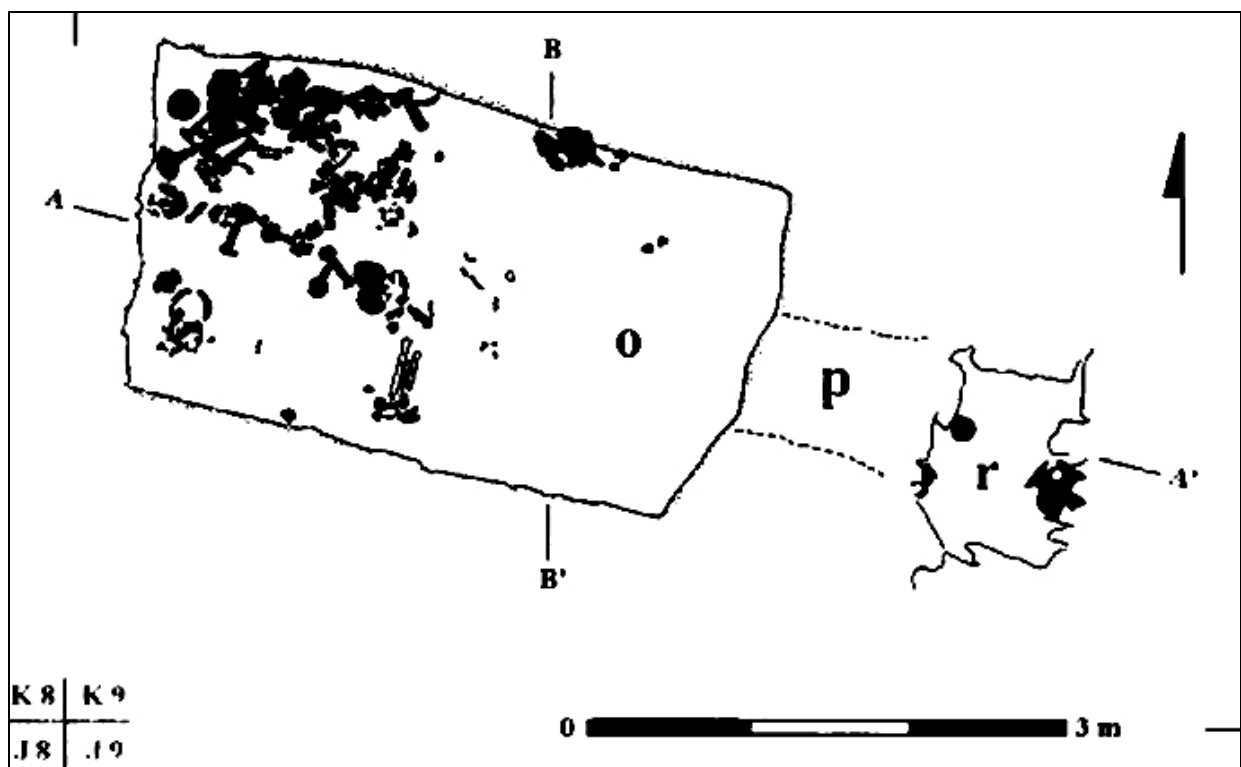


Fig. 5. 16 The distribution of grave goods *in situ* and bone remains in T. K 9 (after Ökse 2005, Fig. 10).

#### 5.4.2 Three Chamber Rows in J 9 and I-K 8

Small, unroofed chambers were built with low, limestone walls, and they constituted three such rows expanding horizontally to the south on the terrace, with orientation from north-northeast to south-southwest (fig. 5.8 above). One chamber row consisted of two chambers (s/t; fig. 5.9 above) built adjacent to each other found in the east part of Trench J 9, while other two rows consisting of ten chambers in Trenches I-K 8 (e.g., western row, chambers c-f; eastern row, chambers h-m) were separated by a corridor (1-0.7 in width). Chamber s measures 2.65×1.00 m, whereas chamber t is relatively smaller, c.1.30×0.80 m in size. On the floor of chamber s, pottery sherds and animal bones were collected, while on the floor of chamber t, there is a small plastered pit (27 cm in diameter), in which pottery sherds of a jar were found.



Fig. 5. 17 Plastered pits in chamber c (after Ökse 2005, Fig. 24).

In the western chamber row, chamber f is at the southernmost, where only the northeastern corner and one plastered pit on the floor were preserved. To its north is chamber e, two plastered pits on the floor at its northern wall (351.04 m above sea level) represent an earlier phase, while another two pits on the floor at its eastern wall (351.38 m) belong to a later phase. The pits on the floors of both chambers were full of ash and charcoal, which are indications of recurrent use. Chamber e was constructed after chamber f, since it was built against the northeast corner of chamber f in a slightly different direction. To the further north in the row, two chambers (d/c) were uncovered. Chamber d was built in the same direction as chamber e, and the space between both chambers, c. 0.80 m. wide, was paved with rubble stones. The northernmost chamber (c) was an open area (2.80×3.00 m), with the rubble-stone pavement c. 2.00 m. in width surrounding its floor area. The floor of chamber c is related to two phases of use, each with three plastered pits with broken bottoms of jars inside (fig. 5.17). The latest phase of this structure is represented by a limestone basin. All these chambers constitute a row of such structures built independently from one another. Their stratigraphic correlations indicate that chambers c and f were built earlier than chambers d and e.

Among four chambers in the western row, Chamber d is the largest one with dimensions of 3.60×2.20 m. Furthermore, some aspects in terms of construction technique indicate that this chamber stands out from all other chambers in both rows. It was built with mud-brick walls upon stone foundations, and its floor and inner faces of the walls were mud plastered. The floor of chamber d shows the traces of burning. On the burnt floor, two plastered pits were filled with ash. Pottery vessels found in the burnt debris consisted of a globular-bodied jar with short neck and small ring base (K8/7/S/01, fig. 5.18: 3), one conical goblet (K8/9/S/01; fig. 5.19: 1), and two hand-made cooking pots with triangular lugs on the rim (K8/7/S/02, fig. 5.18: 4). In the same debris was found a limestone model depicting a house with engraved door and windows, with the upper part broken (fig. 5.20: 1). The *in situ* material on the floor includes four bowls (K8/9/S/05, 09, 13, and 21; see figs. 5.18:1-2 and 19: 2), one miniature jar (K8/9/S/01), four wheel-made pots (K8/9/S/01, 02, 15 and 16), two conical goblets with grooved surfaces (K8/9/S/19, 20). Apart from pottery, there were several stone artefacts, including a stone vessel (K8/9/R/03), a mace-head (K8/9/R/07, 10 and 18), an oval basalt grinding stone (K8/23/R/01, fig. 5.20: 2), two stones (K8/9/R/11) probably used as grinding



stones or threshing stones, two stone loom-weights and flint blades.

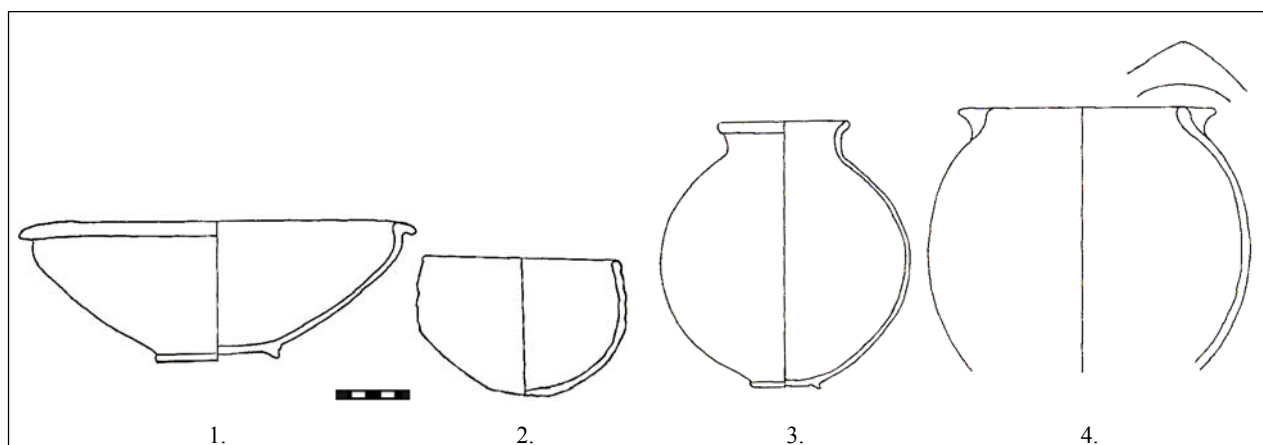


Fig. 5. 18 Selected vessels in chamber d (after Ökse 2001, Fig. 8: 12-15).

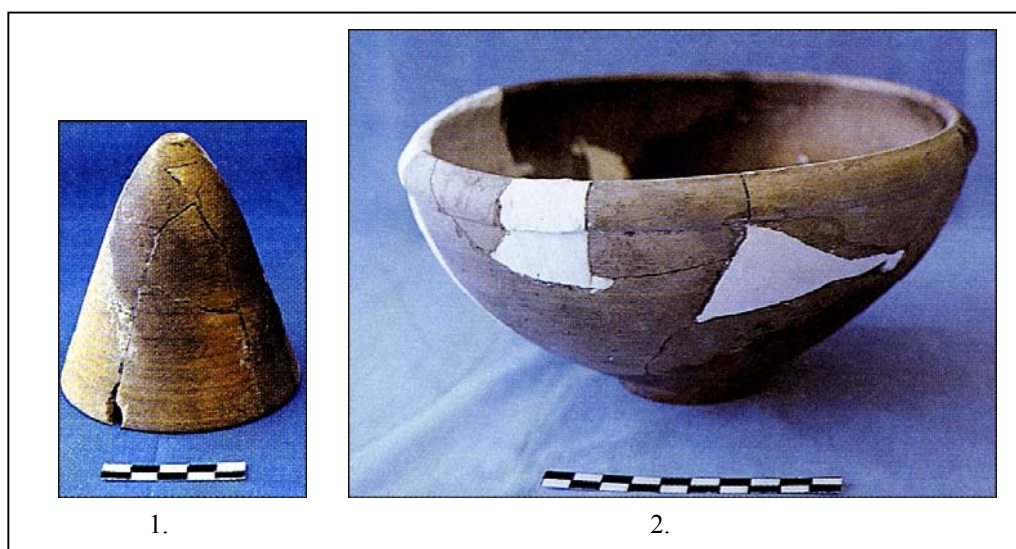


Fig. 5. 19 Photos of vessels from chamber d: 1, a goblet; 2, a deep bowl (after Ökse 2001, Fig. 19: b and a).

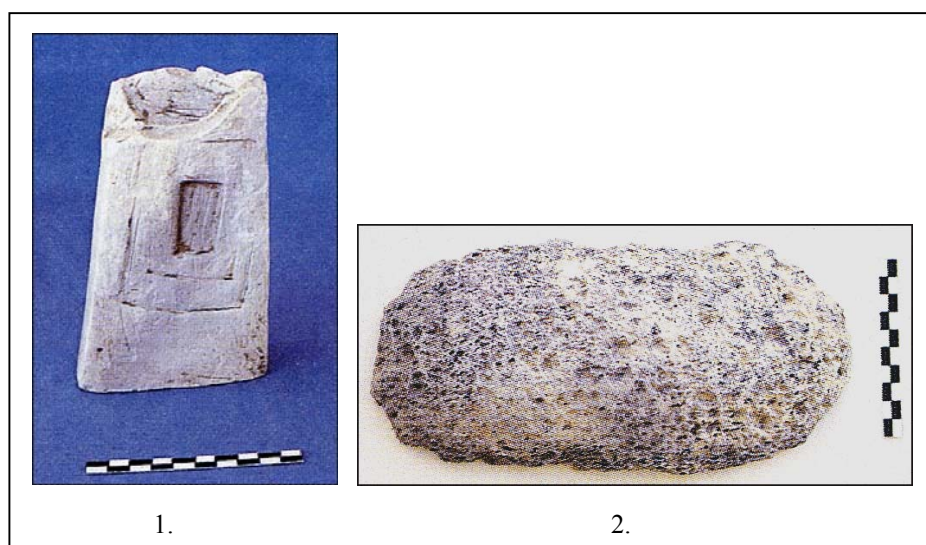


Fig. 5. 20 Photos of stone objects from chamber d: 1, limestone model; 2, grinding stone (after Ökse 2001, Figs. 19: d and 20: c).

A series of chambers, from Chambers h to m, constituted the eastern row, which was built on the whole parallel to the chamber row on the east. The lowest layer of this chamber row is represented by Chamber h. Its northern and western walls were built with limestone as a unit. The southern wall consisted of larger limestone, whereas the eastern side was built with rubble stones. The floor of this chamber (2.80×2.80 m) was also burned. On the burnt floor, thick ash deposits (c. 0.22 m in depth) contained cereals and animal bones. The deposits consisted of a variety of Plain Simple Ware vessels, including corrugated goblets, bowls, jars, and cooking pots (fig. 5.21).<sup>369</sup> To the north of Chamber h, there was a hearth c.0.90 m above the burnt floor, which was disturbed by a mudbrick cist grave (K8/24, see below) in Period IIB. The western wall of chambers i-m, c. 1.00 m thick, was built against the southern wall of chamber h. In chamber i (2.00×3.50 m), two plastered pits were found on its eastern wall, as the excavator suggests, their constructions probably took place in a later time of Period IIB.<sup>370</sup> Two semi-circular stone-paved platforms were built at two corners of the chamber: one at the northeastern corner, and the other at the southwestern corner. To its south was chamber j (3.40×3.00 m), its walls built with limestone are preserved to a height of c.0.90 m were. In the southern part, the stone-paved floor of the chamber is still partially preserved. The lowest layer of chambers i-m is represented by chamber l. The chamber, c. 4.00 m in length, is related to two building phases. During the earlier phase, the chamber l was an open area with a plastered pit and a lime plastered circular area on the floor (350.56 m). During the later phase, walls, with a height of c. 0.60 m as preserved, were built around the pervious open area. An extremely small structure, Chamber k (1.40×0.50 m), was later attached to Chamber l in the northern part, and was built partly on the southern wall of Chamber j. At the southernmost of this row is Chamber m. Unfortunately, it was not poorly preserved, probably as a result of the erosion or removal of its stones used as spoils in later structures. Amongst all the chambers in the eastern row, chamber h is the earliest. To its south, the stratigraphy shows three building phases: the early floor of chamber l represents the early phase; its walls built later and chambers j and m represent the middle phase; and chambers i and k are from the late phase.

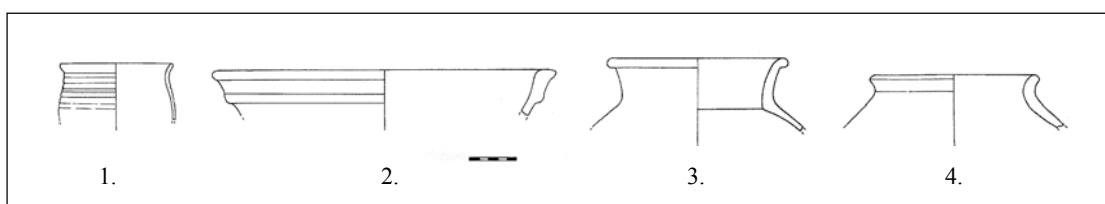


Fig. 5. 21 Selected pottery sherds from chamber h: 1 and 2, K8/37/S-b and a; 3, K8/39/S-b; 4, K8/38/S-b (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 9).

The material retrieved from chamber rows of Period IIA dates the earliest chamber (h) to the EBA II-III.<sup>371</sup> Thus, the earliest level seems to have been contemporary to the initial use of K 9 chamber tomb. According to the analysis of artefacts' comparisons, the *in situ* material found in the burnt debris of Chamber d represents the latest phase of the chamber rows, dating to the EBA III-IV.<sup>372</sup>

<sup>369</sup> Ökse 2002: Fig. 9.

<sup>370</sup> Ökse 2005: 35.

<sup>371</sup> Ökse 2002: 273-4; Ökse 2005: 39.

<sup>372</sup> Ökse 2002: 276-7; Ökse 2005: 39.

Therefore, Chamber d was built after the first phase of K9 chamber tomb and had been used until the tomb was abandoned.

### *Interpretation of the Chambers*

Of three rows, only J 9 chamber row was attached to the southern wall of the ante-chamber, K9 chamber tomb. The north part of the eastern chamber row was destructed by a mud-brick cist grave in Period IIB, while the western chamber row, which would extend further to the north, was broke off by a robber pit. Thus, the damage caused by the later grave and the robber pit obscured the probable connections between I-K 8 chamber rows and L 8 chamber tombs. With current excavated evidence, it is difficult to make a definite reconstruction, but these ten chambers might also have been related to the chamber tombs, in the same manner as the chambers s/t joining with K 9 chamber tomb.

Chamber Rows		Pottery Vessels	Animal Bones	Cereals	Plastered Pits with Ash and Charcoal	Plastered Pits with Jars inside	Limestone Basin	Burnt Floor	Hearth
J 9	s	×	×						
	t					1			
west of J-K 8	c					3 in each of two levels	×		
	d	×			2			×	
	e				2				
	f				1				
east of J-K 8	h	×	×	×				×	×
	i								
	j								
	k								
	l					×?			
	m								

Table 5. 3 Remains of a variety of categories found in and around three chamber rows. Note: “×” points to the presence of this category (*database from Ökse 2005, 34-37, Figs. 23-7*).

Chamber d, which consisted of cooking pots and ash-filled plastered pits on the floor, could be interpreted as a kitchen.<sup>373</sup> Other objects including a basalt grinding stone and flint blades representing cooking implements may add to support for this interpretation. Pottery vessels found on the chamber floor, namely four bowls, three goblets and six jars, may have been used during the preparation and consumption of the food. The burnt floor in Chamber d may have been the result of an accident, since the pits were frequently used, attested by accumulation of ashes and charcoal found within. Vessels found in the burnt debris show a general blackening on the exterior surfaces, indicating that the event of burning took place after the deposition of the pottery vessels. In Chamber

<sup>373</sup> Ökse 2005: 41.



h, the inclusions of thick ash deposits were cereals and animals, which had been probably set on fire and cooked, as a result, the floor underneath the deposits was burned. Perhaps, the stone structure itself and the hearth above its northern part are facilities used in a similar way as kitchens. Thus, among 12 rooms, Chambers h and d bear strong indications of cooking and consumption of food. Pottery sherds and animal remains found in Chamber s (see table 5.3) might be interpreted as the remnants of feasts, thus this room was a food-offering place.<sup>374</sup> Chambers c, l and t also contained numerous plastered pits (table 5.3), in which pottery jars that had been deliberately broken or scooped out were found. In contrast to the plastered pits full of ash and charcoal found in chambers d, e and f, the plastered pits with jars set inside were probably used in a way other than for cooking. Similar examples of jars set in pits near the graves are known from other sites in the ancient Near East, and a combination of jars with scooped-out bottoms and pits has been taken as evidence for a ritual event, like libation.<sup>375</sup> In the case of Gre Virike, at least eight plastered pits with jars set inside as well as a limestone basin placed in the upper debris of Chamber c may also corroborate the importance of libations. Although they could have been used as storage pits, it is tempting to see these pits as installations for libation in rituals related to the burials. However, the questions arise: which liquid was used in libation, for what the libation was intended, where the libation was poured, and so on. There is thus far a lack of sufficient evidence which would make more specific interpretation related to these libation installations. In sum, the discovery of animal bones and cereals, the diversity of vessels types and shapes (e.g., cups, bowls, small and large jars and cooking pots), plastered pits filled with ash/charcoal or sherds of jars imply activities associated with the cooking, consumption and offering of food, and possibly libation meant to take place within these features.

## 5.5 BURIALS OF VARIOUS TYPES IN PERIOD IIB

Mortuary evidence from Gre Virike has revealed a marked diversity of burials types in Period IIB (fig. 5.22), as opposed to the unified tomb architecture represented by limestone-built chamber tombs in Period IIA. Four burial variations have been attested, the first consists of several plain earth-cut graves such as I9/2, I9/3, and L8/3. The second comprises a variety of stone-built graves covered with limestone slabs, including one cist grave (K9/6), one circular shaft grave (J9/28), and one oval chamber grave (H-I/8). The third is mud-brick tomb; only one tomb of this burial type was found, that is tomb K8/24. The fourth is the placement in jars or in pithoi.

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid.: 41.

<sup>375</sup> Tell Chuera, see Orthmann 1995; the Mycenaean graves at Ugarit, see Schaeffer 1939: 50-3.

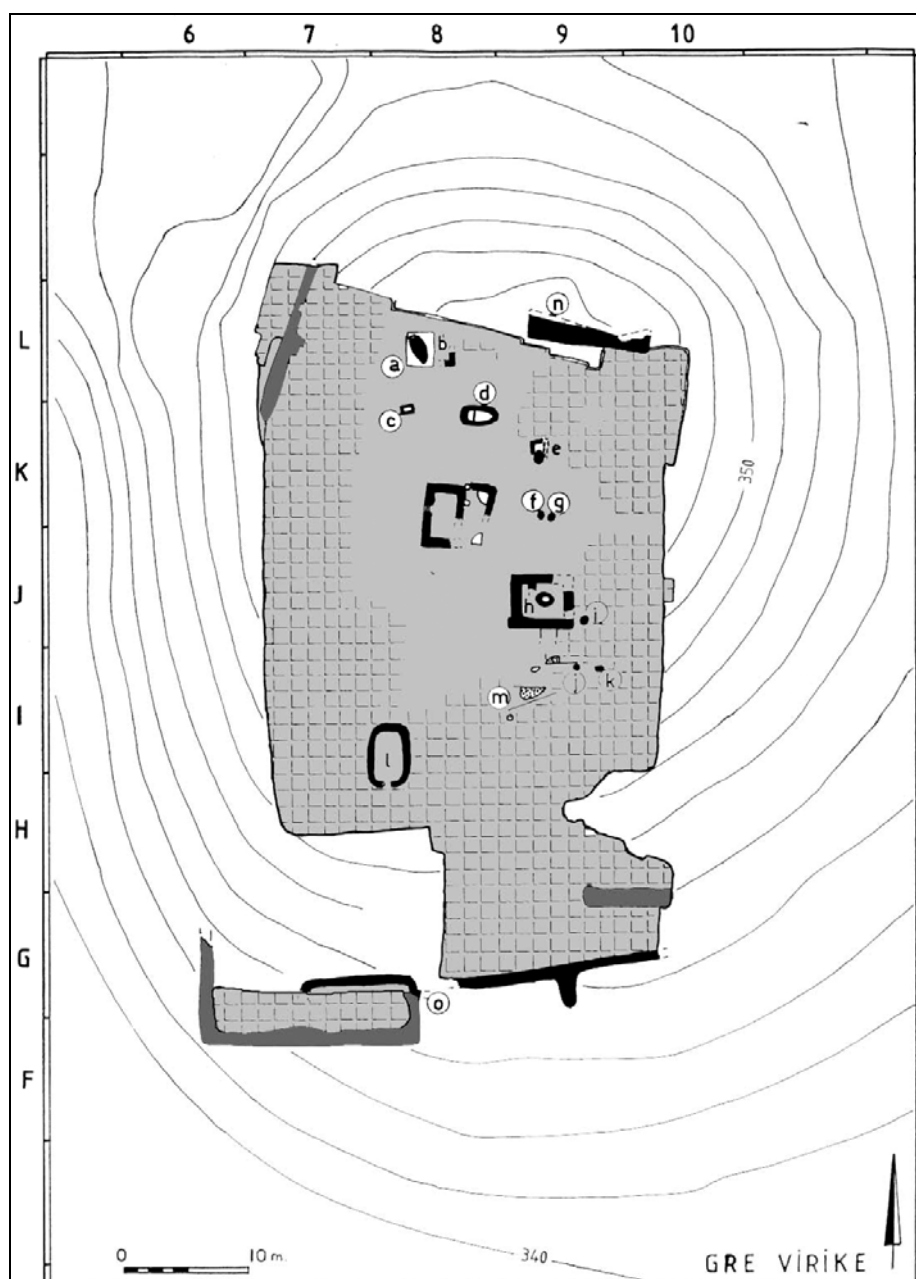


Fig. 5. 22 Plan of various graves and structures in Period IIB (after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 2).

### 5.5.1 Pit Graves

Tomb I9/2 (fig. 5.22: j) was a circular pit, 0.30 m in diameter, containing a one-year-old child.<sup>376</sup> To its east with a distance of 1.85 m was another pit grave I9/3, rectangular in form, c.0.80×0.40 m in size. This tomb consisted of bones of an infant, which was less than six months of age.<sup>377</sup>

Tomb L8/3 (fig. 5.22: b) was found at an inner corner of the disturbed limestone structure (g) of

<sup>376</sup> Ökse 2001: 301; Ökse 2006a: Fig. 2: j. The skeletal sample of the child is given with no. I9/7-2, see Uysal 2001: 303.

<sup>377</sup> Ökse 2001: 301; Ökse 2006a: Fig. 2: k. The skeletal sample of the infant is given with no. I9/8-3, see Uysal 2001: 303.

Period IIA.<sup>378</sup> Human skeletal remains were very limited in number, including bone fragments from the skull, which represents an individual.<sup>379</sup> Among the human bones, a long bone epiphysis belonging to a ruminant was found. Seven vessels were retrieved from inside the tomb, mostly dating to Early Bronze Age III.<sup>380</sup> They include a predominance of Plain Simple Ware vessels (6) - a globular-bodied bottle, a miniature pedestal jar, a shallow bowl with outrolled rim and carinated body and two deep bowls - and two miniature jars of Black Ware (fig. 5.23).

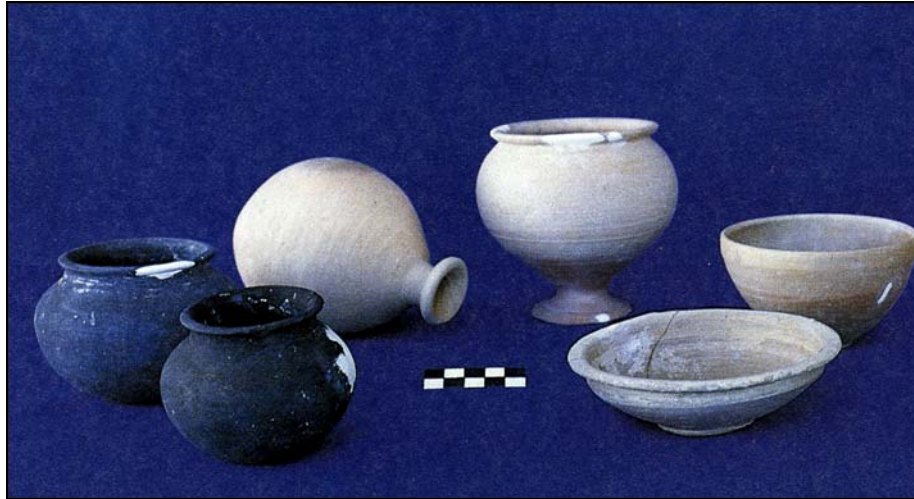


Fig. 5. 23 Pottery assemblage from T. L8/3 (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 22).

### 5.5.2 Stone-Built Graves

A stone-built grave (K9/6; fig. 5.22: e), with only the northeastern corner preserved, was set into the mudbrick terrace.<sup>381</sup> The tomb damaged the northern wall of K9 chamber tomb. The tomb was much disturbed in antiquity; as a result, a basalt slab (1.00×0.70×0.16 m) was removed and only two upright stone slabs as part of the cist structure were preserved. No bone remains or grave goods were found within the tomb, but the robbers' deposits contained a bronze toggle-pin and a stone bead which appear to have been part of deposited artefacts inside tomb.

In the southwestern part of Trench J9, another stone-built tomb J9/28 (fig. 5.22: h) was set into the mud-brick terrace, damaging a stone wall of a square building (J9/2) in Period IIB.<sup>382</sup> It was a circular shaft tomb, with dimensions of 1.20×0.95×0.7m. It was covered with several large limestone slabs placed in an area c. 1.80×1.55 m, larger than the tomb shaft itself. As found, a large stone slab measuring 0.50×0.35×0.80 m was erected at the eastern inner corner of the grave.

<sup>378</sup> Ökse 2002: 277, Fig. 22; Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (b).

<sup>379</sup> L8/05/I, see Uysal 2002: 282.

<sup>380</sup> Pots nos. L8/5/S/1-5, see Ökse 2002: Fig. 22.

<sup>381</sup> Ökse 2002: 278, Figs. 5, 17; Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (e).

<sup>382</sup> Ökse 2001: 299-301, Fig. 8 (17, 18 and 19c); Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (h).



Fig. 5. 24 Grave goods and ceramic coffin from T. J9/28 (after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 27).

The tomb contained three inhumations. An infant and a young child were laid in the eastern part, on the floor.<sup>383</sup> The infant of about six to twelve months of age with indeterminate gender, and the bones from body and skull were well preserved. The child of around 3-3.5 years old was laid with its head at the south and its feet at the north, but the bone preservation is extremely bad, as opposed to the infant. The third inhumation was found in a ceramic basin (51.3×33.6×24.5 m; fig. 5.24) placed in east-west direction overlying grave goods. The skeletal remains belong to an infant about 1-1.5 years old with its head at the east and its feet at the west.<sup>384</sup>

On the floor of the grave, thirty-two small vessels were found.<sup>385</sup> Three ware types are represented: a majority of Plain Simple Ware vessels, a noticeable quantity of Euphrates Banded Ware and one conical cup of Metallic Ware. All these vessels belong to the common pottery assemblage in Northern Syria and Southeastern Anatolia in the EBA III/IV episodes, including bowls (11; fig. 5.25: 4-6), bottles (7), goblets (5; fig. 5.25: 8-9), miniature bowls (4; fig. 5.25: 7) and jars (3), and jugs (2). These jugs characteristic of trefoil-mouths like a spouted jut (fig. 5.25: 1) occasionally applied with a handle on the upper body have many parallels found in funerary context, such as in Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, and also in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar.<sup>386</sup>

<sup>383</sup> J9/92/39, J9/92/40+41, see Uysal 2001: 303.

<sup>384</sup> J9/92/46, see Uysal 2001: 304.

<sup>385</sup> Ökse 2001: 300-1, Fig. 8 (1-10); Ökse 2006 a: Figs. 27-9, 41-2.

<sup>386</sup> In the discrete offering places in upper deposits of the tomb, see Peltenburg *et al.* 1995: Fig. 28 (6); Thureau-Dangin – Dunad 1936: Fig. 32, bottom right.

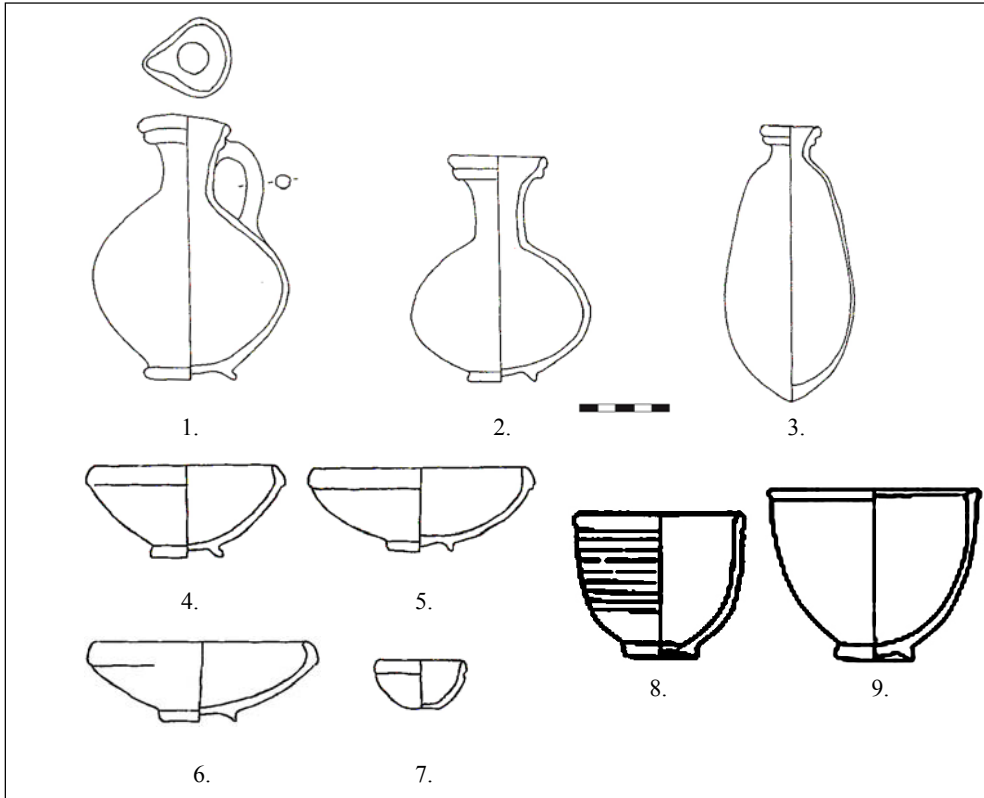


Fig. 5. 25 Selected pottery vessels from T. J9/28 (1-7, after Ökse 2001, Fig. 8:1-3, 5-8; 8-9, Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 41: 4-5).



One of the bottles was made of Spiral-Burnished Ware, similar to “Syrian bottle” (fig. 5.25: 3). Traces of net were found on the exterior surface of this bottle (fig. 5.26) indicate that the bottle was used with being carried by net of some organic material.

Fig. 5. 26 “Syrian bottle” from T. J9/28 (after Ökse 2001, Fig. 19: c).

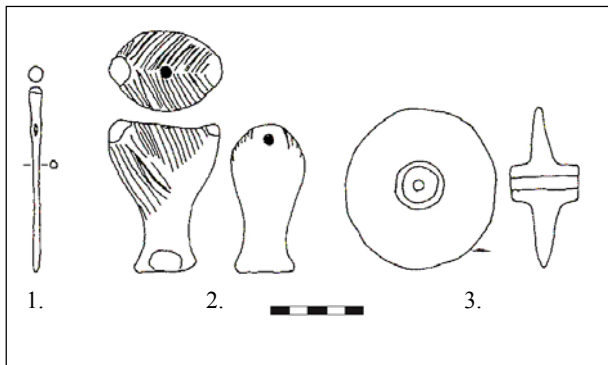


Fig. 5. 27 Selected objects from T. J9/28 (after Ökse 2001, Fig. 8).



Fig. 5. 28 Agate beads from T. J9/28 (after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 28).

Bronzes are represented by perforated pins, with three pieces. All have plain and straight shafts, and two of them are flat headed (see fig. 5.27:1) and the third with a spherical head. Apart from ceramic vessels and bronze objects, the grave inventory also includes interesting objects, such as a ceramic bird-shaped bell (fig. 5.27: 2), a model oxcart with two wheels (fig. 5.27: 3), and five agate beads (fig. 5.28). In the soft earth fill in the grave, there were twenty-four grains of barley and four beans, which were spread on the earth covering the bodies.

On top of the western part of the burial, there was a pit consisting of four miniature bowls and thin bones found at a higher elevation (ca. 30 cm) than the covering slabs. As identified, the bone material is probably of young sheep or goats. Their location indicates that smaller ceramics and the animal



bone fragments were deposited after the interments of individuals within. Miniature bowls of 4.9-5.8 cm in diameter and 2.7-2.8 cm in height (fig. 5.29) are too small to be used for providing foodstuffs, perhaps they were containers of precious liquids (perfumes, oils?). The segments of animals can be understood as joints of meat. It is difficult on combination of both types of remains to give a satisfactory explanation. At least these can be interpreted as material residues of rituals perhaps part of complex series of death rituals for the interred individuals.

Fig. 5. 29 Four miniature bowls on top of T. J9/28 (after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 25).

H-I/8 was an oval chamber tomb built with limestone (fig. 5.22: 1).<sup>387</sup> The tomb was dug into the slope of the mud-brick terrace. The tomb was oriented in the north-south direction with its long side 4.30 m from north to south and its short side 2.25 m from east to west. The covering slabs had collapsed and thus were found inside the tomb. The upper part of the tomb had been destroyed during the removal of bulldozing in 1980s. Corbelled walls of the tomb are approximately half meter thick; its northern wall is of 1.35 m high with nine courses of stones preserved, whereas its southern wall is almost missing with only a single row survived. An entrance opened at the southern wall and is of about 0.75 m wide. Near the entrance were found small fragments of bones, probably of an infant. A very limited number of grave goods were obtained due to serious disturbance, including two objects found in the vicinity of the skeletal remains, a bronze toggled-pin perforated on the shaft with spherical head and some fragments of a pot, and pottery sherds of jars and bowls recovered from within the tomb.<sup>388</sup> According to the excavator, the pottery sherds can be dated to EBA IV, comparable to the bowls from Amuq I.<sup>389</sup>

<sup>387</sup> Ökse 2004: 220, Fig. 23; Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (l).

<sup>388</sup> Nos. I8/31/V/2 and I8/31/S/1, see Ökse 2004: 220; nos. I8/23, 28, 31, 35, 49, see Ökse 2004: Fig. 9 (c).

<sup>389</sup> Ökse 2006 a: 19-20.



### 5.5.3 Mud-Brick Grave

Grave (K8/24; Fig. 5.22: d) was built in a rectangular form (2.14×0.84 m) with a single row of mudbricks and was oriented in east-west direction.<sup>390</sup> It was the only one mud-brick grave thus far discovered at Gre Virike. It was situated in a level on top of the chamber (h), damaging the floor and the hearth found on it. The tomb was partly destroyed by a stone-framed tomb (1.43×0.60×0.40 m; fig. 5.30) labeled as K8/29, which was built on the floor of grave K8/24 against its inner walls on the northern, eastern and southern sides with its stone walls 0.25 m in height preserved. As preserved, the mud-brick tomb contained the bones of a child of 7-8 years old found in the western part of the grave.<sup>391</sup> In the lower level, the stone-framed grave (K8/29) contained the bones of an adult male found in stone lining, associated with two gold leaves (fig. 5.31).<sup>392</sup> These small ornaments are circular in shape, measuring 1.97 and 0.32 cm in diameter. They are very thin, of c.0.10 mm thick, and apparently were manufactured by hammering on a mold. They may have been part of ornaments for garments in which the individual was buried. It seems likely that the interment in the stone-framed grave took place after the previous mud-brick tomb was out of use.



Fig. 5. 30 Photo of Ts. K8/24 and K8/29 (after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 32).



Fig. 5. 31 Gold leaf from a stone-framed grave K8/29 (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 29).

### 5.5.4 Pithos Graves

In the southeastern part of Trench J9, a half-preserved jar (J9/2; fig. 5.22: i) was set into the mud-brick terrace.<sup>393</sup> In a circular pit, the jar lay on its side with its mouth facing towards west, and a flat, limestone slab was placed upright in order to cover the opening of the jar.<sup>394</sup> The middle-sized jar has a globular body, flaring short neck and everted rim. No traces of the skeletal remains were retrieved from inside the jar. Nevertheless, two bronze perforated toggle-pins with spherical heads

<sup>390</sup> Ökse 2002: 277-8, Fig. 29; Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (d).

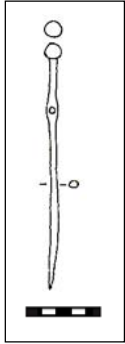
<sup>391</sup> K8/40/1, see Uysal 2002: 282.

<sup>392</sup> K8/43/1, see Uysal 2002: 282.

<sup>393</sup> Ökse 2001: 301; Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (i).

<sup>394</sup> Ökse 2002 a: Fig. 22.





(fig. 5.32) and a flat agate bead were found beside the jar. The position and dimensions of the jar as well as the occurrence of personal adornments adjacent to it, strongly suggests that it seems to have been a burial jar.<sup>395</sup>

Fig. 5. 32 Toggle-pin from T. J9/2  
(after Ökse 2001, Fig. 8: 11).

A broken jar was found in the upper debris of K 9 chamber tomb of Period IIA (fig. 5.22: f). The reconstructed large jar illustrated below (fig. 5.33) is 64.4 cm in diameter and 1.3 m in height. No skeletal remains or grave goods were associated with this jar. Similar pithoi, although smaller in size, such as K9/9 and L8/12, were also related to the chamber tombs (K 9 and structure b) and did contain the skeletal remains, either of infant and adult. Thus, we shall see that it was probably also a pithos burial, and its position on the large limestone slabs that had covered the main tomb chamber indicates the close association with K 9 chamber tomb. On the shoulder of one sherd of the pithos is a cylinder seal impression depicting two goats and a human facing an altar (fig. 5.34). The seal was carved in schematic fashion, carelessly and without regard to body proportions and anatomical structure. According to its style characteristics, the seal impression is the work of the regional style of North Syria, comparable to Early Dynasty III Age in Southern Mesopotamia.<sup>396</sup> Similar instances are also known from the Upper Khabur region at sites of tell Brak and tell Leilan 3 and depict large horned animals (goat/antelope) and human figures.<sup>397</sup> According to the excavator, the pithos is dated to the last quarter of the third millennium BCE.<sup>398</sup>



Fig. 5. 33 Reconstructed pithos  
(after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 33).

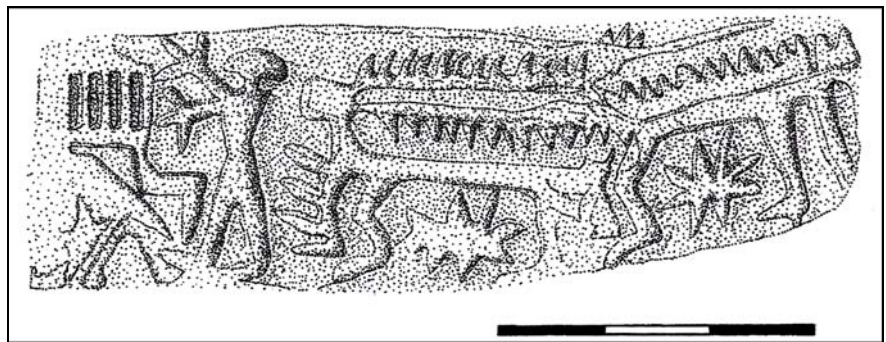


Fig. 5. 34 Seal impression on a sherd of the pithos (after Ökse 2002, Fig. 7)

Another jar burial (K9/9; fig. 5.22: g) was preserved intact and contained the bones of a

<sup>395</sup> Ökse 2006 a: 11.

<sup>396</sup> Ökse 2002: 276.

<sup>397</sup> Matthews 1991: 152, Fig. 2 (13-4); Parayre 1990: 557-8, Fig. 28 (4).

<sup>398</sup> Ökse 2005: 38.

nine-month-old infant associated with a bronze toggle pin.<sup>399</sup> The jar was slantingly placed into a stone-lined cavity (fig. 5.35: 1) partially opened on the southern edge of the southern wall of K9 tomb chamber of Period IIA. The burial jar was partly covered with a limestone lid (0.70×0.40 m), and the jar's neck was supported from both sides with limestone blocks. The burial jar itself is 37.2 cm in height and 36.2 cm in width with its mouth oriented to the north. A drainage hole (fig. 5.35: 2) just above the ring base had been made before the vessel was fired. Apart from bone remains and the toggle-pin within, a total of five intact smaller ceramic vessels were deposited to the north of the burial jar and beneath it (fig. 5.35: 2). They are three elongated necked jars in Spiral Burnished Ware (see below, fig. 5.36: 2-4), typical of small ceramic “Syrian bottles”, and two miniature bowls with thickened rims (fig. 5.36: 5). According to the Spiral Burnished “Syrian bottles”, the jar burial is dated to EBA IV.<sup>400</sup>



Fig. 5. 35 Jar grave K9/9: 1, the burial jar *in situ* and its adjacent vessels; 2, the burial jar and accompanying grave goods (1, after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 34; 2, after Ökse 2002, Fig. 23).

A pithos grave (L8/12/G; fig. 5.22: a) was found at the southeastern corner of the limestone structure (b) of the earlier phase at Gre Virike.<sup>401</sup> A plastered pit, 0.35 m in diameter and 0.28 m deep, was found on top of the pithos to the west, and it was surrounded by a square area (c.1.70×1.70 m) paved with small stone pieces. The pithos is 1.105 m in height and 0.61 m in diameter with the mouth facing southeast. The pithos contained the bones of an adult female accompanied by three bronze perforated pins with spherical heads.<sup>402</sup> An interesting discovery is the absence of the lower half of the interred body. It seems unlikely that the body was interred anatomically intact. It can be inferred that bone loss is generally the result of secondary burial process, and underrepresentation of the lower half of the body is probably due to the intentional selection upon human bones after secondary treatment. Why this was done is probably in order to correspond with the size of the pithos. Two miniature jars (fig. 5.37) were found beneath the pithos, including one globular-bodied jar with bottle neck and one short-necked jar in Black Ware.<sup>403</sup> These jars in form and ware type are similar to two

<sup>399</sup> Ökse 2002: 278-9, Figs. 5, 19; Ökse 2006 a: Fig. 2 (g); the skeletal sample of the infant is given with no. K9/35/I, see Uysal 2002: 282.

<sup>400</sup> Ökse 2005: 38.

<sup>401</sup> Ökse 2004: 220-1, Fig. 24; Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 2 (a).

<sup>402</sup> The skeletal sample of the adult female is given with no. L8/18-19/I, see Uysal 2004: 224.

<sup>403</sup> Nos. L8/19/S/5, L8/19/S/6, see Ökse 2004: Fig. 27.

of pottery vessels retrieved from the earth-cut grave (L8/3; see fig. 5.23 above).

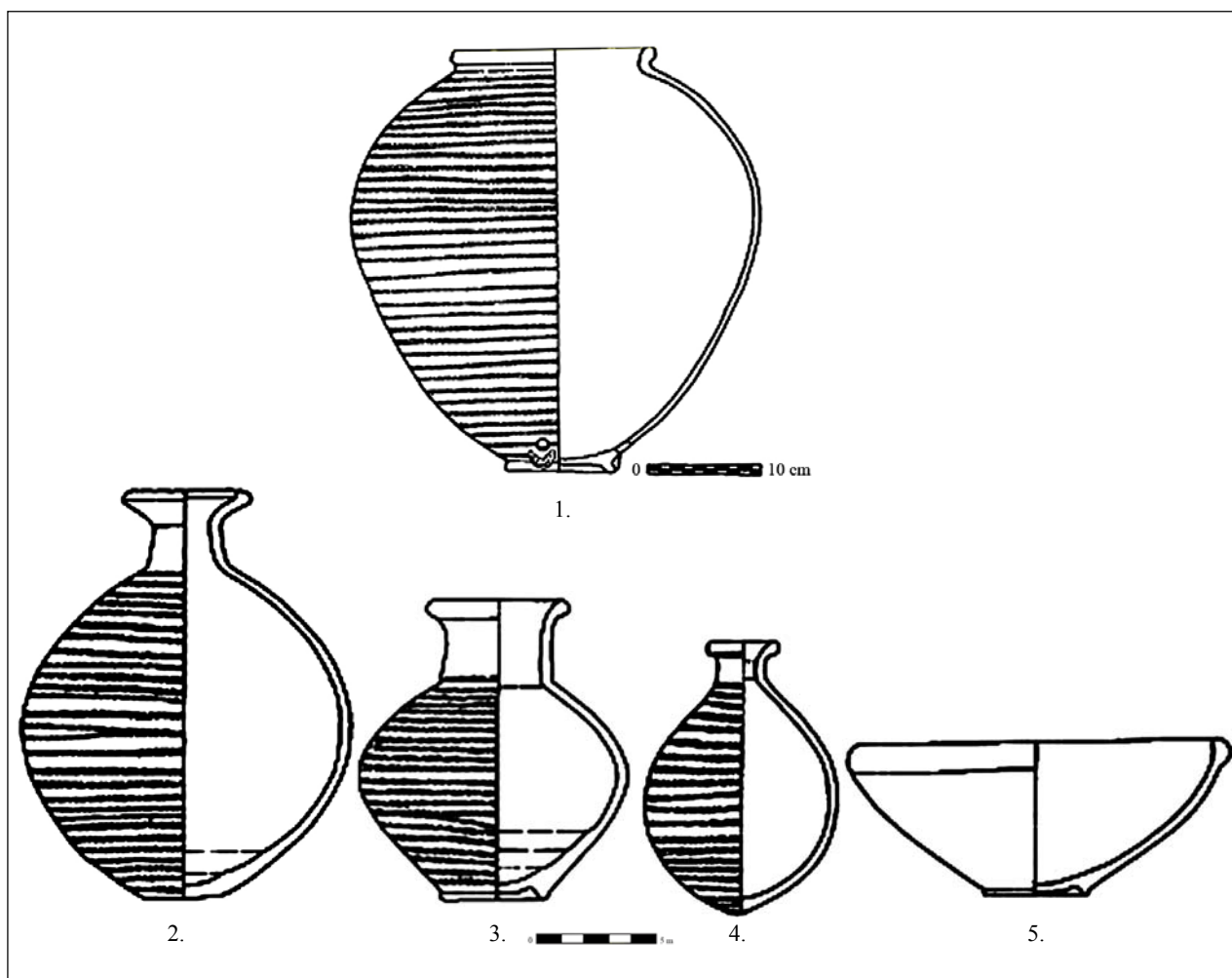


Fig. 5. 36 Vessels from jar grave K9/9: 1, burial jar; 2-4 three “Syrian bottles”; 5, PSW bowl (after Ökse 2006 a, Fig. 43).

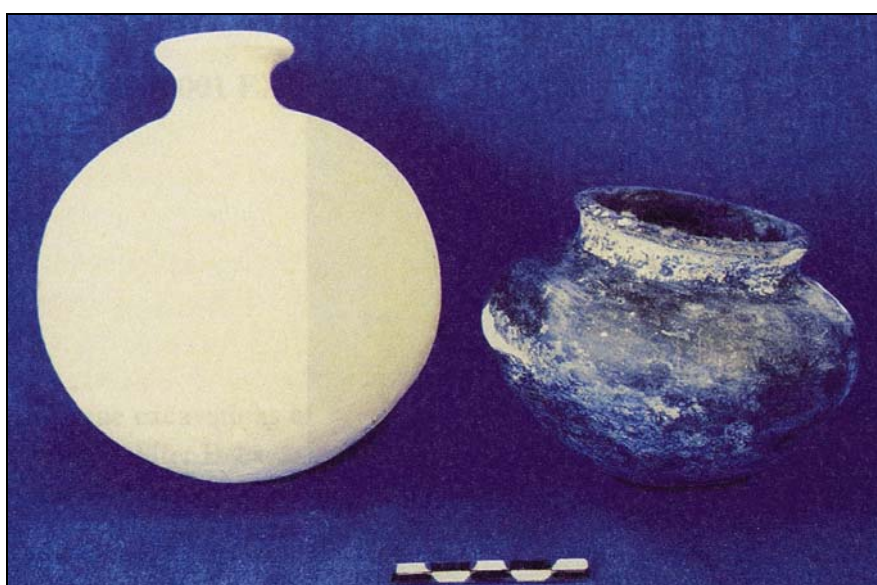


Fig. 5. 37 Miniature jars beneath the pithos grave, L8/12/G (after Ökse 2004, Fig. 27).

### 5.5.5 Contents and Contexts

Among ten graves of Gre Virike Period IIB, three burials - namely, the earth-cut grave and two pithos graves - that had been much disturbed in antiquity contained no skeletal remains but some grave goods remained within.<sup>404</sup> In terms of the physical remains of the deceased, the burials mostly contained infants or children, with two exceptions: the interments of adult male and female in the stone-framed and pithos graves (see table 5.4). Almost all of the bodies were interred primarily except for the female adult likely interred secondarily within the pithos grave (L8/12/G). One deceased individual was contained in the graves, but only in one case, three inhumations were identified in the circular, stone shaft grave (J9/28). Despite primary burials which should be represented by articulated skeletons, the composition of the skeletal remains was much influenced by the unfavorable soil conditions, attested by the incomplete and fragmented bone material. In the course of calcification or erosion, the bones of infants and children were easily disintegrated. Evidence from the circular, stone shaft grave (J9/28) indicates that the infant in primary interment was provided with a bathtub-shaped ceramic coffin, analogous to “larnax”. In the ancient Greece, the first larnakes attested in Minoan times during the Greek Bronze Age were often used for containing human remains of either a body buried in a flexed position or of cremated ashes.<sup>405</sup> When evidence survived, as in tomb J9/28, the bodies of primary interments were oriented either south-north or east-west. Apart from the human skeletal remains, the segments of animals were found among the human bones in the earth-cut grave (L8/3) and in an earthen pit above the circular, stone shaft tomb (L8/12/G).

Five of the graves were untouched and contained in situ grave goods dating to EBA III-IV. The most abundantly attested object type in the Gre Virike graves of Period IIB is pottery. A variety of vessels types and shapes include “common” wares (e.g., goblets, bowls, bottles, miniature and normal-sized jars) meant to providing food and drink for the deceased individuals in the afterlife. Adjacent to the jar burial (K9/9) and inside the circular, stone shaft grave (L8/12/G) are found several examples of small ceramic “Syrian bottles”, often thought to have served as containers for perfumes, oils, or unguents.<sup>406</sup> From these primary funerary contexts, the Syrian bottles were not found directly on the bodies, but were deposited together with other ceramics, and two bottles of such type were found with Plain Simple Ware bowls outside the pithos burial (K9/9). Thus, at least in the cases of Gre Virike, the associated contexts of the Syrian bottles do not hint to their use for anointing the corpse.

Apart from pottery, objects found in the tombs include bronze toggle-pins, beads, gold leaves, a bird-shaped bell of baked clay and a model oxcart with two wheels. In all the graves, at least one toggle-pin and one agate bead accompanied each interment, and it seems likely that they are primarily items of personal adornments. The agate beads, red in color, are commonly found in infant

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<sup>404</sup> Notable is that the mud-brick grave (K8/24) contained a stone-framed grave (K8/29) constructed later in its lower level.

<sup>405</sup> A larnax is a type of small closed coffin, box or “ash-chest”. Terracotta Minoan larnax with gabled lid was the standard burial vessel used in Crete from the early fourteenth to twelfth century BCE. The burials were sometimes accompanied by rich grave offerings, and their chest-shaped coffins were often elaborately painted with scenes of hunting and cult rituals; see the website, <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larnax>> (02.01.2010).

<sup>406</sup> Schwartz 2007: 51; Ökse 2006 a: 30.

and child burials at Gre Virike, and Tuba Ökse has suggested the possibility that they are amulets to protect children from evil spirits in the afterlife.<sup>407</sup> The bird-shaped bell and two terra-cotta wheels in the circular, stone shaft tomb (J9/28) associated with the infants and child might be understood as toys belonging to them in life, perhaps intended to provide amusements in the afterlife. Also in this tomb, an interesting discovery are grains of barely and leguminous plants in the upper debris.<sup>408</sup> Unfortunately, these biological samples were not specifically analyzed, thus it is difficult to judge whether they were burned or not. Had they not been burned at the time of deposition, they would not have been preserved in soil through time and discovered by archaeologists during the excavations. If the grains and beans were deliberately burned, like being cooked, it is equally difficult to ascertain the role of burnt remains and their association with the interred individuals buried beneath. Tuba Ökse suggests that grain symbolized birth and rebirth, and in Mesopotamian rituals grain was sprinkled on the graves for divinities in the afterlife, or for the ancestral spirits to divert illness.<sup>409</sup> After the graves were last sealed, funerary rituals, to some extent, doesn't seem to have ceased, although attested by only one case, in which four small-sized bowls and animal bone fragments were deposited in a pit above the capstones of the tomb (J9/28).

<i>Burial No.</i>	<i>Variation</i>	<i>Tomb's Orientation</i>	<i>MNI</i>	<i>Human Remains</i>	<i>Grave goods</i>
I9/2	Circular pit grave		1	1 child: 1 of age	
I9/3	Rectangular pit grave		1	1 infant: 0-6 months	
L8/3	Rectangular pit grave		1		7 vessels
K9/6	Stone-built cist grave	north-south	----	----	1 pin, 1 stone bead
K8/29	Stone-framed grave	east-west	1	1 adult ♂	2 gold leaves
J9/28	Stone-built circular shaft grave		3	1 infant: 6-12 months 1 child: 3.5-4 of age, oriented south-east 1 infant: 1-1.5 of age, oriented east-west	32 vessels, 3 pins, bird-shaped bell, a oxcart model, 4 agate beads
H-I/8	Stone-built oval chamber grave	north-south	1	1 infant	1 pin, pottery sherds
K8/24	Mud-brick cist grave	east-west	1	1 child: 7-8 of age	
J9/2	Pithos grave	west (mouth)	-----	-----	2 pins, 1 agate bead
K9/9	Pithos grave	north (mouth)	1	1 infant: 9 months	1 pin inside jar, 5 vessels outside the jar
L8/12/G	Pithos grave	southeast (mouth)	1	1 adult ♀	2 jars, 3 pins

Table 5. 4 Contents of eleven tombs from Period IIB (*database from preliminary reports, see Ökse 2001, 2002 and 2004*).

<sup>407</sup> Ökse 2006 a: 28.

<sup>408</sup> Ökse 2006 a: 15, where she mentioned that original information is from Oybak Dönmez and Doğan via personal communication.

<sup>409</sup> Ökse 2006a: 35.

## 5.6 RE-CONSTRUCTING FUNERARY RITUALS RELATED TO THE MORTUARY COMPLEX

After full investigation of the remains of a variety of categories (e.g., human/animal bones, pottery material and non-ceramic objects) found in the tombs or in the additional structures, some distinctive elements could be interpreted as being associated with ritual activities. Rituals related to the mortuary complex likely consist of multiple stages. The best preserved chamber tomb (K 9) containing dual burials with rich funerary inventory allow for possible inferences on funerary rituals during burial process itself.

### 5.6.1 *Rituals during the Burial Process Itself*

At the beginning of the third millennium, the high terrace with its summit paved with regular rows of mud-bricks was built in the open countryside at Gre Virike. According to the excavator, it was initially an open-air sanctuary for a water cult which was then converted to support a complex of limestone-built chamber tombs and three rows of small chambers.<sup>410</sup>

The stratigraphic contexts and contents of the earliest tomb, K 9, indicate that the tomb was built and used in a sequence that spanned about two centuries across EBA episodes III-IVa. As preserved, the tomb contained two adults. Although no complete skeletons could be detected in K 9 chamber tomb, the adult male may have been interred primarily, since the composition of this skeletal sample is indicative of body anatomically intact. The skeletal remains of both individuals were influenced by the extremely unfavorable environmental conditions, but the second adult was represented by fewer bone remains, suggesting that the body was removed for secondary treatment. Thus, the core funerary rituals on completion of the dead in a biological way also comprised secondary burial process. It is uncertain as to whether two individuals were interred together, or one by one was transferred into the tomb. The fact that the tomb was re-opened suggests the second situation likely. Why one of the interred individuals was removed for secondary treatment is probably in order to make more room for the new arrival.

Intermingled with human bones were bones of a young sheep or goat. With evidence for the composition of animal remains combined with evidence for several cut marks on the bones, it can be inferred that the entire lamb was dismembered while raw and was then laid adjacent to the body at the time of the funeral. The intention of butchering of meat before deposition is obvious, leading to the interpretation of providing food for the deceased individuals in the afterlife. Apart from physical remains of the deceased and animal, the tomb contained a variety of grave furnishings found not in association with bone remains. Some of the non-ceramic objects are primarily items of personal adornment (e.g., toggle-pins, bead and hair ornament), although they were not found adjacent to the body. The deposited weapons/tools include a bronze spearhead and a flint arrowhead, which were

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<sup>410</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 8-9.



absent from other funerary contexts at Gre Virike. They may be markers of the elite status, profession, or manhood (at least one adult male interred), but with only two examples as currently found, it is probable that they together with the adornments were possessions of the deceased individuals in life. The possibility also exists that the objects of precious materials not found anywhere else on the site, such as a silver spiral ring, a bronze spearhead and inlay of animal shell, may have been specifically reserved for funerary rituals, or items donated by participants as provision to be used in the afterlife.

The broad chronological range of pottery vessels in the main tomb chamber indicate that they had been deposited in the tomb over a considerable period of time. However, all of the pottery material was mixed up, thus we are unable to isolate different, sequential mortuary practices in the same deposit. Therefore, it is not certain that if they were brought to the tomb with each interment at the time of the funeral or added gradually in later years. Among various types of pottery vessels, champagne cups make up the most numerous ceramic types at about 28% of the total. As discussed above, it has been suggested that these vessels of such type were used for drinking and in scene on a shell inlay from Mari a champagne cup is shown in the hand of a lavishly attired female.<sup>411</sup> Therefore, they are of great funerary ceremonial significance. Apart from champagne cups, the pottery vessels include vessels for containing and consuming food and drink. As questioned above, it is difficult to judge whether they were intended, along with their contents, for use in the afterlife or they were material residues of mortuary feasts.

Since L8 chamber tombs were heavily disturbed and both tombs contained few to no bone remains or grave gifts, it is currently impossible to trace any element associated with ritual activities there. If those similar tombs also bore ritual indications, it would be useful to compare them with the practice of ritual indicated by K 9 chamber tomb.

### *5.6.2 Rituals during the Post-Interment Period*

After the chamber tombs were built up, the additional structures were built adjacent to the tomb structures to the south. As preserved, there were a total of twelve small, unroofed chambers constituting three rows. These chamber rows were oriented in the right-angled direction from the tomb structures, namely, north-northeast to south-southwest. They together with three chamber tombs formed a complex which occupied one third of the paved summit on the high terrace. The contents of these chambers indicate that they were built and used over a considerable period. The majority of the time corresponds to the history of K 9 chamber tomb. As discussed above, the discovery of animal bones and cereals, the diversity of vessels types and shapes (e.g., cups, bowls, small and large jars and cooking pots), plastered pits filled with ash/charcoal or sherds of jars imply activities associated with the cooking, consumption and serving of food, and possibly libation meant to take place within these features. In Syro-Mesopotamia, Kispu(m)-celebration attested in the second millennium BCE was held in honor of ancestors, usually dead kings; the locus of these feasts

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<sup>411</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: Fig. 6.



is ambiguous.<sup>412</sup> Not only descendents of kings, but also soldiers, princes, and many other social groups, who were not privileged to have ritual tendances (“rituellen Pfleger”) after death, were invited to the celebrations, in which food and drink (“Essen und Trinken”) were served.<sup>413</sup> In the case of Gre Virike, the close proximity of permanent kitchens to the mortuary structures as well as the types of goods in the kitchens, therefore, give us an indication of where the ceremonial feasts, analogous to Kispu(m)-celebration, may have taken place. In other words, three series of chambers themselves are facilities of ceremonial feasts. It can be imagined that the persons in the community including perhaps not only the family members of the interred individuals were invited to the celebrations. In addition to feasts, these commemorative rituals may also have included libation by the indications of numerous plastered pits with jar set inside as well as the limestone basin, or other forms of open-air rituals occurring in the rest of ample space on the high terrace. Successive building levels (7) related to two chamber rows (in I-K8), quantities of finds and prolonged chronology of the material imply the rituals for secondary commemoration occurred repeatedly and persisted long after the death of the interred persons in the nearby tombs. It seems likely that these ceremonies were organized by collectivities, since there is still no evidence for administrative centers or large specially constructed residences. The overall pattern of this complex suggests that from the middle of the millennium, the date of the earliest tomb (in K 9) and the date of the earliest kitchen (Chamber h), the incorporation of selected dead in the world of the living within the community. A cult place built on the elevated mud-brick terrace seems to have served for the public display, especially in the incorporation funerary rituals in a large scale of the community rituals. On combination of evidence for earlier ritual installations at Gre Virike, the cult place was profoundly altered from initially being associated with “fertility rituals” in the first half of the millennium to being associated with funerary rituals in the second half.<sup>414</sup>

Towards the end of the millennium, small graves of various types were subsequently placed on the platform. Five of these graves of Gre Virike Period IIB were immediately associated with the earlier chamber tombs, while the others were cut into the artificial mud-brick terrace. Associated with K 9 chamber tomb were three burials, including a large jar that had been smashed, possibly a burial, found above the covering slabs in the upper debris of the main tomb chamber, the stone cist grave (K9/6) and the pithos burial (K9/9) containing an infant cut into the walls of the main tomb chamber. Among the three satellite graves, the earliest tomb appears to be the first pithos burial. Several factors including that the capstones were not found in place, the burial container itself had been heavily disturbed, and no remains were found associated with the jar render the interpretation of mortuary behavior associated with this pithos burial problematic, but its immediate location strongly suggests that it had some connection to the monumental tomb. Further, the date of the jar and its position allow us to infer that at the time K 9 chamber tomb was last properly sealed, the pithos burial was laid directly on top of the roof of the tomb. The interment within pithos may have been part of the rituals honoring the high-ranking humans buried within the tomb chamber. The tendency to bury around large, significant tomb is attested elsewhere, in Tomb 7 at Tell Banat where a female and two children were placed beneath the covering slab in the upper fills of the entrance shaft, also in

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<sup>412</sup> Tsukimoto 1985: 68

<sup>413</sup> Tsukimoto 1985: 68-9.

<sup>414</sup> Ökse 2006 b: 9.

Tomb 1 at Arslantepe, where multiple burials occurred on top of the roof.<sup>415</sup> The earth-cut grave (L8/3) containing some skull of an individual and the pithos grave (L8/12/G) containing an adult female were set into the disturbed L 8 chamber tombs (e.g., structures b/g). Apart from the burials associated with the previous tomb structures, the mud-brick cist grave (K8/24) containing a child and an adult male was set up on one of the small kitchens (Chamber h), destroying its floor and the hearth found on it.

The number of graves and the diversity of grave types make the paved summit at Gre Virike an extraordinary cemetery.<sup>416</sup> Considering the stratigraphy and the contents of these graves, this cemetery was not built as a single event: some of the graves were contemporary with the history of Period IIA mortuary complex, while others were built after the complex was out of use. The cemetery was still in use by the end of the millennium, the date of the latest grave, namely, the circular, stone shaft grave, before the site was completely abandoned. At the time the large-scaled mortuary complex was partially or all abandoned, primary interments containing mostly infants took place on the paved summit, as well as other ritual facilities restored or built in Period IIB. This indicates that the elevated terrace continued to be used for ritual ceremonies in the cult of the dead up to the end of the millennium.

In summary, the funerary rituals related to the mortuary complex of Gre Virike Period IIA comprise many stages. The dual burials with rich funerary inventory in one well-preserved monumental tomb (K 9) bear ritual indications that the core funerary rituals included both primary and secondary burial processes; personal adornments/donations and butchered meat of lamb were brought at the time of funerary rituals as provisions for the deceased's afterlife; champagne cups have been interpreted as vestiges of funerary rituals, and they together with other receptacles consistent with use for food and drink in the afterlife were ultimately left at the grave. At the time K 9 chamber tomb last properly sealed, a ritual act performed as the last procedure of complex series of the death rituals was the interment within pithos above the covering slabs in the area of the main tomb chamber. After the interments within and the ritual activities associated with the burials, a remarkable mortuary complex was then built including not only the previous chamber tombs but also numerous small kitchens, which were interconnected by a corridor. In the complex, a series of commemorative rituals periodically took place, including ceremonial feasts and libations. Outside the complex, there was still ample space left on the paved summit, where some other form of open-air rituals may have simultaneously occurred. By the end of the third millennium, small satellite graves were placed over and around the previous mortuary complex, indicating the continuing funerary ritual role of the cult place in the community of Gre Virike.

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<sup>415</sup> For Tomb 7 at Tell Banat, see Porter 2002 a: 19. For Tomb 1 at Arslantepe, see Frangipane 1998: 294-5.

<sup>416</sup> Ökse 2006 a: 37.

## CHAPTER 6 INTERPRETATIONS OF MIDDLE EUPHRATES

### FUNERARY RITUALS

Evidence from four selected sites in the Middle Euphrates valley has revealed rich material of the tomb contents, which may be divided into four main categories-human/animal remains, ceramics, and non-ceramic objects. Some distinctive elements of the tomb contents allow for possible interpretations of funerary rituals associated with religious or mortuary beliefs at the time.

#### 6.1 INHUMATIONS

In the preceding four chapters, preliminary analysis of EBA funerary record with a particular emphasis on 52 burials in the Middle Euphrates region demonstrated a marked diversity of burial types: plain pit graves, earth-cut shaft and chamber tombs, a wide variety of stone-built graves, Cooking Pot or pithos graves, mud-brick tombs, and monumental mortuary mounds. Although burial types were widely diverse, the most usual burial practice throughout the third millennium seems to have been inhumation in the earthen pits, or in grave structures, with the exception of two cases (Burial deposits: 19. 116 and 19. 127) at Tell Ahmar, where the human skeletal remains were found directly on a dirt surface of a stone room with no grave structure or grave goods recognizable. This may suggest that exposing corpses on the ground was occasionally practiced even in the Early Bronze Age.

Primary inhumation with a single individual was often contained in the graves (e.g., pit graves at Jerablus Tahtani, Tombs 1-3 and two pit graves at Tell Ahmar, Chamber F burial at Tell Banat, and most of burials in Period IIB at Gre Virike). Dual inhumations in primary contexts have also been found, as seen at Tell Ahmar where the Hypogeum and stone cist graves (4/5) contained two human skeletons placed in perfect anatomical order. The evidence for three interred individuals is only provided from Gre Virike, where a circular, stone shaft tomb (J9/28) contained articulated human bones of an infant and a young child laid in the eastern part with a third infant placed in a bathtub-shaped coffin of ceramic. The preferred position of the skeletons seem to have been the flexed or so-called “sleeping” posture with the legs together, bent and body lying on the left or right side. Parker Pearson has suggested the possibility that the “sleeping” position is the prelude to rebirth or arrival in the land of ancestors.<sup>417</sup> Only in one case at Tell Ahmar, a primary interment of a 12-months-infant in a simple pit (Burial 19. 113) was laid in a crouched position with his/her legs tightly flexed and close to the chin. There has been thus far no evidence for the “stretched” posture with the body laid out full length and legs straight.

Orientation is often an important aspect of bodily positioning. The most abundant evidence for

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<sup>417</sup> Parker Pearson 1999: 54.

primary inhumations is provided from Tell Ahmar, where in the majority of cases, the preferred orientation is west-east with the heads facing south or north. At Gre Virike, primary inhumations took place in many different burial variations (e.g., pit graves, a variety of stone-built graves, mud-brick grave, and pithos graves), dating probably to the end of the third millennium (Period IIB). But most of the collected bone remains of infants and children were incomplete and fragmented, raising the difficulty to assess the orientation of the body. Only survived evidence is provided from the communal burial of three inhumations, where two individuals found on the floor in the eastern part were oriented south-north with the third one buried in the ceramic basin oriented east to west. Interestingly, differences in the orientation of the dead buried in the same tomb may help to reveal that they were interred not at the same time: two dead children were probably buried together and placed on the floor, with the third infant buried alone, earlier or later. In contrast to Gre Virike, three examples of the tombs with dual inhumations in primary contexts at Tell Ahmar exhibit completely homogenous aspects of the bodily positioning: both bodies were buried in a flexed position with their heads laid on the west. In addition to the examples of tombs listed above, the bodily orientation of other primary burials found at Jerablus Tahtani and Banat is not specifically recorded.

<i>Burial Type</i>		<i>Burial No.</i>	<i>MNI</i>
Stone- built	small cist grave	T. 4	1
	chamber tomb	T. 6	3
	large multi-chambered tomb	T. 7 (Chamber D)	1
Earth-cut shaft and chamber tombs		T. 1	5
		T. 2	3
Large multi-layered burial mound		WM A/B/B2	3-8

Table 6. 1 Secondary burials recovered at Banat.

The most abundant evidence for secondary burials is provided from Tell Banat settlement complex, where the secondary interments took place in all forms of burial types not related to a specific funerary architecture (table 6.1). Therefore, secondary burials appear to have been a major part of mortuary practices at the site, between 2600 and 2300 BCE. In addition to two individual interments in secondary contexts taking place in Chamber D of Tomb 7 and in Tomb 4, secondary burials were attested in the tombs which contained multiple interments ranging in number from at least three to at least eight individuals, found in earth-cut shaft and chamber tombs (1/2), in stone-built rectangular chamber tomb (6) and in earthen deposits or tumulus at the monumental mortuary mound (the White Monument). The number of inhumations and the age and gender range contained in the communal tombs, such as Tombs 1/2/6, may be indicative of familial relationship or other forms of group affiliation: in Tomb 1, three adults (1 male and 2 female), a juvenile and a child were identified; three adults including at least one male and one female were found in Tomb 2; two adults and one child were included in Tomb 6. As is the case with Tombs 1 and 2, where recovered human remains were extremely brittle and fragmented, the poor preservation of bones prevents to the identification of the bones from young children under the age of three years.<sup>418</sup> The funerary deposits from the

<sup>418</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 361-2.

White Monument, on the contrary, are relatively well preserved, and it is here that skeletal remains of children younger than two years were identified.<sup>419</sup> Especially large numbers of groups of individuals were contained in the younger phases of White Monuments A and B, where minimum number of sub-adult individuals is 12, equal to that of mature adults (see above table 4.4).

In terms of the interpretation of secondary burials, that bones of sub-adults were apparently represented in the burials or burial deposits from the White Monument has been interpreted to reflect an ancestral belief system, i.e., the incorporation of young children into ancestral groups, for the reason that sub-adults are less commonly viewed as ancestors.<sup>420</sup> Parker Pearson has similarly discussed the meanings and metaphors that secondary burial may represent and he follows Hertz's argument based on the analysis of various Dayak societies in Borneo, where the physical progression of the dead individual's remains, from fleshed to rotting corpse to clean bones, mirrors the spiritual journey of the dead person's soul from the land of the living to the land of the ancestral dead.<sup>421</sup> With other anthropological evidence concerned with the practice of secondary burials, the hypothesis he proposes is that "the remains of a dead body are recovered from their original place of deposition and moved to a new location".<sup>422</sup> This may be true, as Porter has argued for an area over and around Tomb 7 at Tell Banat to be used as a defleshing ground.<sup>423</sup> However, currently, there is no definite evidence from EBA tombs in the Middle Euphrates region or other regions in the ancient Near East, which would indicate the contexts of earlier funerary stages that secondary burials may be removed from. However, patterns that primary burials and the next stage of secondary burials took place within the tombs can be looked for archaeologically.

Evidence from Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani presents us with an example of a communal tomb, where burial process of many staged seems to have involved both primary and secondary treatments upon the deceased's bodies. Twelve individuals include one infant, four children, two younger adults and five mature adults and do not all belong to a single period. Like Tombs 1/2/6 at Tell Banat, the burial population in JT Tomb 302 lies within the range of a single family over several generations. One can infer that the life cycle of the individual was inserted within the life cycle of the descent group, by the repeated practice of insertion of the deceased in a family tomb. When a new body was introduced, overcrowding may thus have led to the removal of larger parts such as skulls or long bones to make way for a new arrival. In Tomb 302, parts of bodies were found in front of the entrance to the tomb and skulls of adult were carefully deposited in two corners of the main chamber. In this case, it can be inferred that the adults were interred anatomically intact and at some later date, after the flesh had decomposed, the tomb was re-opened and the skulls were deliberately separated from the bodies. In other words, the tomb itself can be regarded as a defleshing place, and the relocation of the older inhumations is consistent with the removal for secondary treatment. Similar pattern can be observed from K 9 chamber tomb at Gre Virike, where both primary and secondary inhumations were practiced. In sum, these are at least two examples of the tombs considered in this

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<sup>419</sup> Ibid.: 362.

<sup>420</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 362.

<sup>421</sup> Parker Pearson 1999: 50.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.: 50.

<sup>423</sup> Porter 2002 a: 19.

study, which have demonstrated that where secondary burials took place and their original place of deposition were within the same context. In this case, the mourners added new bodies of the deceased into the tombs together with the partial removal of the bone remains of older inhumations over a long intermediary period.

## 6.2 RITUAL TREATMENT OF THE DEAD

With evidence for the deposition of secondary burials that mainly took place in communal tombs, secondary burial rituals are widely performed in order to destroy individual presence and to rebuild a familial or a collective identity. It appears, therefore, that secondary burial rituals have been shown to emphasize on group unity over individualism. Primary burial rituals, on the contrary, have shown to maintain the individual identities of the deceased by means of interring bodies anatomically intact. The richness and complexity of the burials at Banat settlement complex provide useful clues to get access to the practice of ritual treatment upon the dead, which varies from one case to another.

A tendency to choose certain parts of the skeleton like long bones of the upper and lower extremities is seen from the overall collection of human remains at the White Monument. In addition, the skeletal remains collected in the White Monument include numerous small bones, as opposed to other secondary burials on the site with the absence or rarity of smaller bones. The selective bias did not favor body parts in the middle of human anatomy, such as vertebrae, sternum, ribs and pelvis. For Tombs 1, 2 and 6, no definite evidence for selection pattern exists, but Wilhelm has suggested the possibility that selection did take place, as the bones constituting each skeletal sample were too few to represent whole skeletons.<sup>424</sup>

One can also note that evidence from White Monuments B/B2 indicates that bones from the skull either of partial and complete were clearly represented. One of the small tumuli of WM B2, for example, contained successive deposits of secondary burials, and especially in one episode, a skull of an adult female was placed upright outside the stone feature. This is at least one instance that allows us to infer that the skull was deliberately separated from the rest of the skeletal remains and buried individually. Of partial skulls, one can observe that most of the crowns of the calvarium and mandible were missing and seem to have been taken away from the skull probably during secondary rituals, or even in later years. One can infer that such skull treatment served for a ritual purpose. Evidence from a pithos grave (T. 1610) at Jerablus Tahtani also presents us an example of cranial removal. The jar burial contained a body interred secondarily with the skull placed on top of the rest of bones.

Evidence from the earth-cut shaft and chambered tombs at Tell Banat indicates that disarticulated human bones of at least five individuals in Tomb 1 and at least three in Tomb 2 were found in several discrete clusters<sup>425</sup>, each of which was associated with a smaller number of “gifts”, suggesting the

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<sup>424</sup> Wilhelm 2006: 361.

<sup>425</sup> In Banat Tomb 1, five bone clusters were identified, S105-109, see Porter 1995 a: 5, Fig. 2. For Tomb 2, Wilhelm only mentioned “several” clusters of human bones mixed with animal bones, see Wilhelm 2006: 365.

intention of separate deposition of the single bone groups likely. In these cases one can infer that the bodies underwent secondary treatments and at some later date, some of the bones were collected. Then after transport they were deliberately divided into several clusters comprised of otherwise animal bones, sometimes covered with black river pebbles, beads and bronzes as having been found in Tomb 1. Also in Tomb 1 at Tell Banat, the pot adjacent to the main burial group (S105) contained bones from several body parts, may hint to its use for the collection and transportation of remnant bones in the course of secondary burials. These secondary burial rituals are not only linked with selection upon some parts of human bones, but also include rearrangement of the deposited bones and artefacts. Another similar case is also provided from Tell Banat, where Tomb 4, a small stone cist grave, contained a secondary interment of adult with his/her remnants of bones placed in a neat pile against the eastern wall of the tomb. As the case with Tombs 1/2/4 at Tell Banat, the practice of secondary rituals has shown to include tidying up bones remains of secondary burials, careful and probably purposeful placement of them in single piles. This pattern cannot evidently be observed from other secondary mortuary contexts at Banat or at additional EBA sites considered in this study.

Tombs 1 and 2 at Tell Banat contained a smaller quantity of human bones found with burn marks which were otherwise observed from several animal bones and artifacts found in both tombs. All of this material with burning traces was distributed throughout the main chambers, not specifically concentrated in one place, and no traces of burning were found in neither of tombs themselves. Moreover, the traces of burning upon human bones in many aspects are also obscured: the burnt human bones are very limited in number with the majority of the human skeletal remains unburnt, no fully cremated bones were found, and non-adjointing parts of the anatomy were burned. Current evidence raises the question of the interpretation of the burning practice. Nevertheless, as for the major issue as to whether the scattered burnt human bones were the result of cremation, all the evidences make it unlikely that the cremation occurred. Towards the entrance of Tomb 1 was a structure that resembled a fireplace or hearth, and the evidence of a general blackening may hint to its use at the time of interments. The occurrence of the hearth-like structure in the anti-chamber of Tomb 1 may give us some indication of the use of fire, more likely, during primary burial rituals conducted at the tomb; on the other hand, this archaeological record may suggest where the fire that resulted in some of the bone remains and artefacts with burn marks may have come from. Various categories of tomb contents with burn marks may be the result of the practice of burning. By comparison with a similar case derived from the second millennium Royal tomb at Qatna<sup>426</sup>, where all of the skeletal material was affected by the heating ranging in temperature from 200°C to 250°C, the use of fire in two cases at Banat probably served for a hygienic purpose, like the drying of the corpses, or the reduction of the smell from physical aspects of the corpses' decomposition. The role played by the fire was also connected to mortuary beliefs or ritual ceremonies associated with primary interments.

### **6.3 CONTAINING AND DRESSING THE BODY**

In addition to the physical remains of the deceased, one can observe that evidence from Banat Tomb

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<sup>426</sup> See chapter 4 above: the footnote 333.



7 indicates that the individual in primary interment was provided with a wooden rectangular coffin for the body. Another example is known from Gre Virike: a circular, stone shaft grave (J9/28), dating probably to the end of the third millennium, contained a skeleton of infant buried in a ceramic bathtub-shaped coffin, analogous to larnax<sup>427</sup>. Parker Pearson has discussed the major role of coffin in funerary practices and he has linked it to hygienic and sanitary facilities. His assumption is based on a general view that the function of the coffin is to hide and remove of the corpse from view so that the physical aspects of its decomposition do not attract attention.<sup>428</sup>

Apart from the coffin used for containing the body of the deceased, large, narrow-necked Cooking Pots or pithoi as containers of human burials are recovered from Jerablus Tahtani (5), Tell Ahmar (2), and Gre Virike (4). They were set into stone-or brick-lined hollows, some in earthen pits, usually covered with a single pottery dish/bowl on top of the mouth, but in one case at Gre Virike (K9/9), where a pithos grave used a limestone as lid. Disaggregated skeletal remains of a single infant or young child were often contained in the jar burials. A series of the pithos graves encircling the monumental tomb (302) at Jerablus Tahtani, in at least three cases, differs from the others in that they contained more than one individual in number up to five, including both adults and children (see table 6.7 below). There is no indication of primary burials placed in the jars, raising the possibility that these large pottery jars were containers specifically used for secondary inhumations. Certainly, the practice of secondary burial ritual accompanying the jar burials also involves partial removal of the interred body. Apart from the separation of the skull and subsequent placement on top of the rest of the skeletal remains as indicated by a single case from Jerablus Tahtani mentioned above, other parts of the skeleton, like the bones from the legs, may have been removed. Supporting evidence is provided by two jar burials, one at Tell Ahmar and the other at Gre Virike, and in both cases, the lower part of the body were missing and they must have been taken away from the rest of the human bones probably during secondary rituals.

The placement of large black pebbles on top of the animal/human bones is widely practiced in the tombs of secondary inhumations at Banat. In Tomb 1, for example, river pebbles, bronze objects and a collection of smaller ceramic vessels have been found above several single bone groups. Similar pattern of placing small pebbles around the skull of the deceased individual can be observed from a burial deposit (19.127) at Tell Ahmar. With the evidence for funerary practices in the ancient Mesopotamia, some have interpreted the discovery of stones and pebbles sometimes of differing colors carefully placed on the body to reflect their role as having symbolic or magical function.<sup>429</sup> We could also connect to this pattern of practice, i.e., the placement of some artefacts or stones over the skeletal remains, with the fear of the ghosts of the deceased, in case of some that would turn malicious, who come back and haunt the living.<sup>430</sup>

The fairly common occurrence of copper or bronze pins, often found on or around the skeletal remains does suggest that the body was usually dressed or wrapped. Secondary burials in Banat

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<sup>427</sup> See chapter 5 above: the footnote 405.

<sup>428</sup> Parker Pearson 1999: 55.

<sup>429</sup> Black – Green 1992: 61

<sup>430</sup> Scurlock 1995: 1889-92

Tombs 7 and 2 also bear indications that the human bones were placed in wrappings of organic materials, such as reed or woven. An interesting phenomenon has been observed by Uysal that almost all the bones of an adult male in primary interment Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike were covered with calcite.<sup>431</sup> Although this has been understood as being affected by lime damage from the limestone mortuary architecture itself<sup>432</sup>, one may note that the treatment of the dead consisting of the coating with lime plaster is practiced elsewhere in the mid-third millennium Syria<sup>433</sup>.

## 6.4 MATERIAL REMAINS OF FUNERARY AND MOURNING RITUALS

Grave goods seem to have served a variety of purposes. They may be personal adornments belonging to the deceased individuals in life, or items for use of the dead on the journey to the afterlife and after arrival in the afterlife (e.g., travelling vehicles, toys, grooming implements, receptacles, food, drink and oil, etc). Given Near Eastern textual sources, another category may include objects donated by funerary participants and intended as gifts to ancestors or netherworld deities.<sup>434</sup> Apart from the above possibilities on the positive side, grave goods may also serve to prevent the dead coming back to haunt the living. If it is natural to locate the important personal items or necessary goods for use in the afterlife accompanying the deceased individuals within the graves, the occurrence of animal remains in human burial contexts has much been debated, and immense variation of their depositional contexts prevents the drawing of universal conclusions. Nevertheless, the potential of animal remains to provide important insights into ritual activities or expressions related with religious traditions in early Syrian complex society is considerable. The contextual information about animal bones and grave goods associated with human skeletal remains within the graves, which will be discussed below, may hint to their intended purpose.

### 6.4.1 *Non-Ceramic Objects*<sup>435</sup>

Apart from the physical remains of the deceased, typical objects found in the graves analyzed in the preceding chapters include toggle-pins of bronze and silver, jewelry of precious materials, bronze weapons and tools, inlays of stone or shell, figurines of stone or unbaked clay, ceramic model wagons, an alabaster tabletop and large natural stone slabs (tables 6.2-4).

Of a variety of non-ceramic objects, those of precious materials were primarily items of personal adornment, such as dress ornaments, necklaces, bracelets, hair ornaments and headbands. It is natural to locate the more important and personal items close to the body, with other objects piled into the remaining space. The most common object type in mortuary assemblages of four sites is toggle-pin, of which the form with hemispherical head is particularly frequent. A pit grave (T. 956) at Jerablus Tahtani provides substantial evidence for its use in that two toggle-pins were found at the shoulder

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<sup>431</sup> Uysal 2002: 281.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*: 281.

<sup>433</sup> Schwartz 2007: 51.

<sup>434</sup> For example, Ebla texts reveal that royal palace often donated gifts to be used in the funerals of members of the elite at Ebla and other places, see Archi 2002.

<sup>435</sup> Here non-ceramic objects are especially the items other than pottery vessels.

with the third one found at the chest on the skeleton. The toggle-pins, therefore, may have used for securing garment and fastening clothing together. In one case (T. 1703 at Jerablus Tahtani), two tubes of copper were collected at the base of the skull where they might have been used as hair ornaments. Personal adornments found in high-ranking or wealthy tombs are especially impressive in both quantity and quality. One can observe that evidence from the coffin burial in Tomb 7 indicates that the high-ranking person wore a variety of gold jewelry on the body (e.g., mold-hammered thin leaves, bars with series of perforations, a stick and a thousand beads on the skeleton). Gold has been recognized as a regular component of symbols of power, such as “maces” and “sceptres”, as recorded in Ebla administrative texts that the gold artefacts were disbursed for the funerals of high-ranking Eblaite persons.<sup>436</sup> The secondary burial in Banat Tombs 7 also bears the indication that jewelry or dress fitting of precious materials had originally been put on the bodies: a bronze pin, a golden pendant and two beads of lapis lazuli were placed directly on the bones in chamber D. Also in Tell Banat, another wealthy tomb (Tomb 1) contained numerous beads of precious materials, which seem to have constituted three strings varying from bead types, one string of 40 frit beads, one string of 64 shell/stone beads, and one string of 11 conical, frit beads with nine beads depicting stylized human faces. Except the third string, the others were closely associated with human teeth or tooth, can be understood as necklaces. A few fragments of copper or bronze bands have been found in Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani and Tomb 1 at Banat, where it is still visible that they were curvedly formed. Although their original position associated with the body is impossible to obtain from the mortuary contexts, a similar instance is known from Tomb 1 at Tell Umm el-Marra, where a silver band was found in several segments near the head of an adult male (skeleton C) in the middle layer.<sup>437</sup> So, this evidence suggests the possibility that the bronze examples found in the tombs at Jerablus Tahtani and Banat were also used as headbands. Such objects may have been used by the deceased individuals in life.

Differences in the depositional contexts of objects in the tombs may be consistent with the distinction between personal possessions and donations. While abundant gold jewellery and many stone beads put above the body within the coffin in Tomb 7 at Tell Banat have been interpreted as personal ornaments, other decorated objects of alabaster, ostrich eggshells, lapis lazuli, etc., deposited on the floor in the same chamber were probably the items donated by funerary participants, who might have added them gradually in later years. An alternative is that these objects were part of grave gifts intended for the previous dead persons, whose physical remains had been removed by the time of the arrival of a new interment in the principal chamber (F) of Tomb 7.

Also found in the chamber F of Tomb 7, some of the objects with their shapes consistent with personal adornment were not immediately associated with the body within the coffin but were discovered either on the floor or in northern niche, a pattern that can also be observed in other well-finished EBA tombs in the Middle Euphrates region. In Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, for example, the ornaments (e.g., pins, tubes, beads, rings and bands) were found with other non-ceramic objects in a group adjacent to the skeletal remains. A similar case is reported from Gre Virike, where

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<sup>436</sup> Parker Pearson 1999: 79; Archi 2002.

<sup>437</sup> Schwartz *et al.* 2003: Figs. 18-9.

Tomb K 9 contained a bronze pin, an agate bead and a silver spiral found in disarray with quantities of containers at some distance from human bones. The primary deposits of both tombs were affected by rearrangement of grave goods, and disturbance caused by robbers may account for object loss. Therefore, it is impossible to reconstruct the original position of personal ornaments as well as their initial composition. As interpreted above, patterns of partial removal of the bone remains of older inhumations for secondary treatment are evident in both tombs. In this case, it is surmised that the ornaments that had been worn on the body were taken away from their original position and ultimately deposited together with other grave furnishings in the tombs.

However, evidence from the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar raises another possibility that the deposition of the ornaments in the tomb was originally separated from the body. In the Hypogeum, personal adornments represented by two toggle-pins and a possible bracelet were found together with other bronze objects (e.g., needle, rein-ring, a variety of weapons, and miniature bowls) in the area at front of the deceased's heads. Considering the untouched contexts of the tomb contents, it is evident that the ornaments were not placed above the skeletons. This makes it unlikely that they were used by the deceased individuals in life. Apart from the interpretation of gifts donated by celebrants, the decision to deposit them separately from the body in the tomb chamber is due to other reasons, such as ritual restrictions on the proper time to place grave gifts in the tomb or the need to accumulate necessary recourses for the occasion of a lavish death ritual.

Many of personal adornments of precious materials from these prestigious tombs were not found in other contemporaneous burials in their communities, suggesting that they were specifically reserved for funerary rituals in an attempt to publicly display the wealth and high status. Ultimately, these objects were laid in the tombs accompanying the interred individuals as acts that allow us to infer that the dead were sent on their last journey with personal belongings or donations that preserve their identity and rank.<sup>438</sup>

In contrast to personal ornaments, weapons and tools are not very common in the EBA burials from the Middle Euphrates sites considered in the study, but they were only found in high-ranking or wealthy tombs (e.g., Jerablus Tahtani Tomb 302, the Ahmar Hypogeum, Banat Tombs 1/2, Gre Virike Tomb K 9; see table 6.3). It would seem that the elites or wealthy individuals were accompanied by copper or bronze weapons as prestigious items. Their categories are represented by spearheads, flat daggers and flat axes, and in Tomb 302 and Hypogeum, socket-shaft axes. The discovery of ivory dagger pommels among the exotic goods found on the floor in Tomb 302 indicates that bronze weapons or at least daggers may have been originally deposited. One can infer that during repeatedly rituals held for the interred individuals, participants probably removed costly goods for circulation.

Weapons of copper, copper alloy or bronze could be understood as personal possessions, markers of manhood (e.g., one male over 60 years old in Tomb 1, and one male of 18-25 years old in Tomb 2), social status, profession, or some combinations of the above. The Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar contained a total of twenty-four weapons, most of which were intact as found, impressive in both

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<sup>438</sup> Katz 2007: 172.

diversity and quality, in contrast to personal ornaments represented by three examples in forms of toggle-pins (2) and bracelet (1). The socket-shaft axes are among the most characteristic Hypogeum weapon types, since this form of weapon has been interpreted to be manufactured and used purely for fighting, referred to as “battle axe” (see above, fig. 3.23). Six examples of the battle axe include especially a pick-shaped type with its blade vertically attached to the shaft on top (fig. 3.23: 5). This type characteristic of the narrowing blade leading to a point is capable of piercing armor, and for this reason this form of the socket-shaft axe became one of the most devastating weapons of the ancient world by 2500 BCE. The conspicuous consumption of bronze weapons may be consistent with the social status of the interred individuals. The evidence from the Royal Cemetery at Ur in Southern Mesopotamia indicates that weapons were usually immediately in association with a particular individual, who is suggested to be a warrior.<sup>439</sup> In the case of Tell Ahmar, one may presume that both adults were warriors, or individuals of warrior status, and they might have felt diminished without spears (6), daggers (8) and axes (10) even though these need never have been used in battle. These status goods may be items specifically reserved for the occasion of a lavish ritual in celebration of the death of the elite persons.

Apart from weapons, two pairs of tweezers were deposited with other bronze artefacts in mortuary contexts (e.g., Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, and Tomb 1 at Tell Banat), and Philip has suggested the possibility that they are grooming implements, perhaps intended to provide a luxurious existence in the afterlife.<sup>440</sup>

Other objects found in the tombs pose questions of interpretation and function (see table 6.3). The alabaster tabletop was leaned against the wall near the entrance of Chamber D in Banat Tomb 7, where about nine bowls homogeneous in form and ware type were placed around the table. Also at Tell Banat, another similar case comes from Tomb 1 in an ante-chamber (1), where two stone slabs lay on the floor, and eleven pottery vessels mainly of small round-based PSW jars stood behind one of the slabs. The most unusual feature is that these pottery vessels were separately deposited, not joining to the majority of pottery material in the chamber/s (e.g., Chamber C in Tomb 7, Chambers 2/3 in Tomb 1). The occurrence of the tabletop or flat stone slabs is associated with bowls or jars in the chambers where inhumations took place, suggesting that they were paraphernalia of rituals that may have been conducted at the tombs. But in the absence of supporting evidence there are many ways these objects may have been utilized: by the living in mortuary banquets which were in small-scale and restricted in the burial chamber; as necessary furniture similar to “tables” for presenting food and drink for the deceased in the afterlife; as ablution slabs with containers for washing water.<sup>441</sup>

A covered ceramic wagon was found in Banat Tomb 2, which may have been the substitute for wheeled vehicle intended to convey the deceased in the afterlife. Evidence of interesting small objects is also reported from Gre Virike. A ceramic bird-shaped bell and a two-wheeled model of terra-cotta were found in Tomb J9/28, where three inhumations of children were contained. These

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<sup>439</sup> Pollock 1991: 367.

<sup>440</sup> Philip 2007: 192.

<sup>441</sup> Black – Green 1992: 61.

may be understood as children's toys, perhaps intended to provide amusements in the afterlife. The Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar contained three miniature bowls of bronze, while in the principle chamber of Tomb 7 at Tell Banat, small highly decorated vessels of stone and ostrich egg were identified: a small shallow bowl with deep triangular incisions for inlay, and an ostrich egg container with a stone stopper inlaid with lapis lazuli. It is curious that these vessels are so small that only small quantities of precious liquids (perfumes, oils?) or powders (cosmetics) could have been used with them.

<i>Ornaments</i>		<i>Toggle-pins (Bronze/Silver)</i>	<i>Beads (Stone/Shell/ Gold/Frit/Agate)</i>	<i>Bone Tubes</i>	<i>Gold Jewellery</i>	<i>Bronze Rings</i>	<i>Bronze Bands</i>	<i>Spiral Rings Bronze/Silver</i>
<i>Sites</i>	<i>Tombs</i>							
Jerablus	T. 302 (phase 1)	× (silver)	×	×		×	×	
Tahtani	T. 302 (phase 3)	×				×		
Ahmar	Hypogeum	×						
Banat	T. 1	×	×	×			×	× (bronze)
	T. 2	×	×					
	T. 7	×	×		×			
Gre Virike	T. K 9	×	×					× (silver)

Table 6. 2 Personal ornaments of precious materials (Note: “×” represents the presence of this object type also hereafter).

<i>Weapons &amp; tools</i>		<i>Spearheads</i>	<i>Arrowheads*</i>	<i>Dagger</i>	<i>Flat Axes</i>	<i>Socket-Shaft Axes</i>	<i>Awl</i>	<i>Tweezers</i>
<i>Sites</i>	<i>Tombs</i>							
Jerablus	T. 302 (phase 1)			×?			×	×
Tahtani	T. 302 (phase 3)	×		×		×		
Ahmar	Hypogeum	×		×	×	×		
Banat	T. 1			×	×			×
	T. 2	×		×				
Gre Virike	T. K 9	×	×					

Table 6. 3 Copper/bronze weapons and tools of various types (Note: “\*” points to this object made from flint).

<i>Objects</i>		<i>Bronze Rein-ring</i>	<i>Vessels (Bronze/Alabaster/Stone)</i>	<i>Alabaster Tabletop</i>	<i>Stone Slabs</i>	<i>Plaques/ Pommels (Ivory)</i>	<i>Ostrich Eggshells</i>	<i>Ceramic Wagon</i>	<i>Inlays Stone/Shell</i>
<i>Sites</i>	<i>Tombs</i>								
Jerablus	T. 302 (phase 1)					×	×		
Tahtani	T. 302 (phase 3)								
Ahmar	Hypogeum	×	× (bronze)						
Banat	T. 1				×				
	T. 2							×	
	T. 7		×	×			×		×
Gre Virike	T. K 9								×
	T. J9/28							×	

Table 6. 4 Other object of as yet unknown function.

## 6.4.2 Pottery Vessels

The most abundantly attested object type in mortuary contexts is always pottery. Pottery vessels retrieved from the well-furnished chambered tombs far surpass those found in other contemporaneous funerary contexts on these sites in both quantity and diversity, and they did not suffer serious disturbance.

The Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar has yielded the most numerous pottery vessels, found with a total amount of 1045 complete vessels; 330 vessels of both complete and fragmentary were found in the primary deposits of Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani; about 200 pots were collected throughout Tomb 7 at Tell Banat, and 163 vessels were found primarily in Tomb 1 with over 90 pots contained in a similar earth-cut chamber and shaft grave (2) at the same site; at Gre Virike, Tomb K 9 contained 66 reconstructable vessels found in the main chamber.

<i>Tombs</i>		<i>T. 302</i>	<i>Hypogeum</i>	<i>T. 7</i>	<i>T. 1</i>	<i>T. K 9</i>
<i>Ware Types/ Forms</i>		<i>(phase 1)</i>				
PSW	champagne cups	106	96		5	23
	pedestal jars	15	146			7
	tripod feet bowls/jars	11	11/80		2/1	8 (bowls)
	spouted vessels	3	15	×	12	
	strainers	3	1			
	goblets	1	190			
	conical cups	27		×	27	
	bowls	24	279	50	11	4
	jars	72	216	×	52	
	miniatures			×	8	1
EBW	champagne cups				2	
	jars		×	×	20	
	bowls					2
	cup/dishes				1/6	
MTW	jars		×			7
	cups					13
	bowls		×		2	

Table 6. 5 Main vessel forms and ware types found in the significant tombs.

The majority of the recovered pottery vessels were manufactured by Plain Simple Ware (PSW), and there is a marked diversity of vessel types recovered in this ware: cups, goblets, bowls, pedestal and globular-bodied jars, spouted bowls/jars, tripod feet vessels, long-stemmed champagne cups and miniatures. The PSW bowls and jars from all of the EBA tombs included in this study are among the most common vessel forms. In the case of the largest monumental tombs (e.g., JT Tomb 302, Ahmar Hypogeum and Gre-Virike Tomb K 9), champagne cups are also one of predominant PSW variations



(table 6.5). Euphrates Banded Ware (EBW) vessels appear to constitute a significant part of the ceramic assemblage especially in the high-ranking tombs during the third-millennium. As a finer texture than PSW, the surface was sometimes marked by horizontal ring burnishing over the entire body of vessel, while some of the vessels were painted with red horizontal bands either on the neck or upper body. The majority of EBW vessels are jars, found in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, Tombs 7/1/2 at Tell Banat. Whilst reminiscent of Euphrates Banded Ware in ware quality, Metallic Ware is heavier and denser in fabric. Typical examples of this ceramic material in the form of bowls, conical cups and miniature jars were recovered at the Hypogeum, Tomb 1 at Tell Banat, and Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike. Other variations of pottery fabrics include Cooking Pot Ware (e.g., five CPW sherds in Tomb 302, a limited number of Cooking Pots in Tomb 7, three CPW examples in Tomb 1), and Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware vessels (e.g., pedestal jars in the Hypogeum, and a jar in Tomb K 9). Both “common” and “luxury” wares are in evidence.

A variety of PSW vessel shapes (e.g., champagne cups, vessels applied with spouts or tripod feet, and miniatures), EBW jars and MTW vessels were not found in a noticeable quantity in other tombs or other circumstances of the mid-third millennium. Therefore, these vessels in distinguished forms or in ware types of high quality may be prestigious items of the high-ranking persons interred within the tombs, they may have specialized function, they may be of funerary and ritual significance, or some combination of the above.

### **The Deposition of Pottery in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar**

While the aforementioned tombs all contained large numbers of containers impressive in both vessel diversity and ware quality, their depositional contexts within the graves vary from one case to another. The Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar was preserved almost intact and not subject to lootings in antiquity, as opposed the other tombs, in which their primary deposits were more or less affected by disturbance caused by natural actions or robbers, removal of furnishings and human bones. Evidence from the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, therefore, enables us to examine the original depositional contexts of pottery within the grave.

More than a thousand vessels were primarily found stacked one on top of another, forming an enormous heap along the western and northern inner walls in the western half of the main tomb chamber (see above fig. 3.27). Here pottery material has demonstrated a homogenous ceramic horizon (2B) in the Euphrates Valley, belonging to the EBA IVA in the Syrian traditional chronological sequence.<sup>442</sup> The Hypogeum pottery, therefore, cannot be subdivided into earlier and later ceramic periods, and this is consistent with the evidence for a single use of the tomb structure. Thus, the vast quantity of pottery was assembled together at the time of the dual interments, rather than being added gradually in later years. We may infer that pottery vessels in such a large quantity often derive from varied events. Like the bronze weapons, the pottery vessels may have been collected by the elite family for a period of time prior to their deposition, perhaps intended for a lavish ritual in celebration of the death of the elite persons. It is also probable that many of them

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<sup>442</sup> Jamieson 1993: 52-8, 68-71, Fig. 4.

were donated by family members, close friends or other people in the community, who were invited to participate in the Hypogeum rituals. Therefore, the vessels were probably deposited as acts that allowed their living descendants and other members of the society to claim their privileged affiliation with the illustrious dead.

In addition, the Hypogeum pottery assemblage with such a strikingly huge quantity has no parallels in other elaborate tombs in the Middle Euphrates region. In particular, there were only two dead persons interred primarily within the grave, as opposed to other high-ranking or wealthy tombs that were used for many generations and contained secondary burials. Where is problematic is in the explanation of the pattern to deposit over a thousand of vessels during the primary burial process.

In several cases, one can observe sets of vessels of differing sizes, placed one insider another, and apparently to be used together. We may highly assume that sets of vessels had been already used in some ritual event like funerary banquets before they arrived in the tomb. Peltenburg already argued for numerous champagne cups recovered in the monumental Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani to reflect a funerary banquet.<sup>443</sup> Alternatively, the Hypogeum mourners probably offered receptacles in order to symbolically represent a banquet, which would be held after the arrival of the spirits in the netherworld. Taking some of distinctive vessel types into consideration, fifteen examples of long-spouted jars from the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, for instance, might be expected as a set used for the pouring of liquids or libations in funerary rituals.<sup>444</sup> A total of 96 examples of champagne cups, some of which have extremely long, heavy stems with the height of the entire vessel of 0.30 m (see above, fig. 3.11: 1-3) were recovered from the Hypogeum. Peltenburg notices that a typical example of this vessel form is carried by a lavishly attired female on a shell inlay from Mari and argues their use connected to ceremonial drinking in mortuary feasts.<sup>445</sup> Whatever their specific function, it is likely that this particular vessel type widespread in the Euphrates Valley by the time of the mid-third millennium is of great ritual significance, related to the contexts of both funerary and daily life. The pottery assemblage from the Hypogeum is comprised of otherwise several examples of highly decorated vessels (see above fig. 3.16). They have very peculiar shapes that are not commonly seen elsewhere in the region. Their specific use may be associated with the pouring of liquids like the long, spouted jars, or they may have carried other symbolic or magical meanings.

With current evidence, it is still difficult to ascertain for what over a thousand vessels were actually intended. Finally, large numbers of ceramics eventually assigned to the grave could represent a public display of wealth and/or social status (warrior-class, for example) during primary burial ceremonies.

### **The Deposition of Pottery in Other Significant Tombs**

The excavations of other EBA mortuary monuments (e.g., JT Tomb 302, Banat Tomb 7, and

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<sup>443</sup> Peltenburg 1999 b.

<sup>444</sup> Winter 1999; Porter 2002 a: 21; Schwartz 2007: 51.

<sup>445</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 5, Fig. 6.

Gre-Virike Tomb K 9) and wealthy tombs (e.g., Banat Tombs 1/2) in the region have revealed the recurrent use of these funerary structures. Furthermore, it is likely that the skeletal remains of older inhumations within the graves were partially removed for secondary treatment in order to make more room for a new arrival, when the tombs were re-opened. As a result of the analysis of funerary pottery, these tombs contained a mixture of vessel shapes and ware types that appeared and dominated in a sequence across several centuries. It has been proven in the preceding chapters that the chronology of pottery vessels largely corresponds to the respective history of the monumental or wealthy tombs, which they were recovered from. It would seem, therefore, that the vessels were assembled in the tombs more than once, presumably a group of pottery vessels was deposited at a time when a new interment was buried within.

The quantity of pottery vessels may depend on the burial population in a communal tomb. Based on the number of interred individuals identified from a collective tomb (302) at Jerablus Tahtani, the average quantity of approx. 28 vessels may have been introduced with each interment.<sup>446</sup> If the same method is used to calculate how many vessels may have been brought along with each interment in other similar tombs combined with the human skeletal remains being well preserved and pottery vessels being specifically analyzed, such as Banat Tombs 1/2, and Gre-Virike Tomb K 9, we could get the average number of the vessels ranging from 30 to 33.<sup>447</sup> The assumed number of pottery accompanying each interred individual in the above tombs cannot be comparable to the case of the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, where each person would have been accompanied with more than 500 pottery vessels.

When the pottery material was found in situ, the majority of pottery vessels were found together in a specific area, as seen in Chamber c at Tomb 7 at Banat, and in the western half of the main chamber in Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike. But the pottery vessels retrieved in Banat Tombs 1/2 were deposited in several groups, and in Tomb 1, each group of vessels consisted of a similar mixture of ceramic forms and ware types found in the main chambers (2/3). Nevertheless, the pottery vessels collected in the above tombs were in no case associated with the human skeletal remains. If ceremony was performed at a time the tomb was re-opened, the celebrants might have brought pottery vessels within the graves accompanying a newly interred body. Before the tombs were last properly sealed or abandoned, the frequency of pottery brought in the tombs much depends on how often the attendant ceremonies concerned with making offerings were conducted.

## **In Summary**

Aboveground monumental tombs were visible signs of the location of ancestors, thus funerary rituals accompanying the illustrious dead are more complex and elaborate than rituals accompanying other tombs that were rapidly covered by earthworks. Considering the pottery material in quantity and diversity, their deposition was probably a significant component of funerary rituals. In other words,

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<sup>446</sup> 330 vessels of both complete and fragmented found in Tomb 302 divide 12 interments, the average number is 27.5.

<sup>447</sup> For Banat Tomb 1, the number is 32.6 by dividing 163 vessels into 5 interred individuals. For Banat Tomb 2, the number is ca. 30 by dividing over 90 vessels into 3 persons. For Gre-Virike Tomb K 9, the number is 33 by dividing 66 vessels into 2 individuals.

the vessels were the material residues of various funerary rituals for the veneration of the important ancestors. They were presumably left within the graves and did not continue to be used by the survivors. One can infer that the number of the funerary pottery, their forms and ware types is consistent with the need for a proper or lavish ceremony. Numerous long-stemmed champagne cups, for example, may have been used in a ceremonial way during the rituals (e.g., 106 examples found in the phase 1 deposits of JT Tomb 302, 96 in the Ahmar Hypogeum and 23 in Gre-Virike Tomb K 9). Tall-necked jars with long spouts, jugs with trefoil-mouths and handles on the upper body, and other vessel forms with their use for pouring liquids suggest the importance of ritual pouring of liquids, presumably, of libations. In functionalist terms, ceramic vessels retrieved in these lavishly provisioned tombs are primarily vessels for presenting, containing and consumption of food and drink, but virtually lack the categories for cooking and storing that were frequently found in domestic strata in the settlements.

In two cases from Tell Banat, a group of vessels was deposited separately from the majority of pottery materials in the tomb chamber/s and showed close association with “table” (e.g., nine bowls placed around the alabaster table in Chamber D of Banat Tomb 7, 11 pottery vessels standing behind one stone slab in anti-chamber of Banat Tomb 1). These examples exhibit the homogeneity in form and ware type (e.g., bead-rimmed shallow bowls in Tomb 7, seven of eleven small round-based jars with elongated necks and everted rims). Their intended function is still ambiguous, but there can be little doubt that they were used in rituals which differ from rituals related to the majority of pottery vessels deposited elsewhere. Perhaps their use may be connected with the “tables”, both having been utilized by the living in banquets which were in a small scale and restricted to the burial chambers.

However, there is no reason to omit an explanation for the deposition of pottery vessels in mortuary contexts as being intended, along with their contents, for use in the afterlife. Near Eastern literary texts underscore the importance of providing deceased individuals with food and drink in the afterlife, since the netherworld is believed to be infertile, devoid of basic necessities for existence.<sup>448</sup> In Sumerian underworld the dead consumed dust, while Assyro-Babylonian hell was peopled by a plethora of intimidating demons and monsters.<sup>449</sup> The most common among the funerary gifts, therefore, are ceramic vessels, which could have contained foodstuffs and potable liquids.

Support for this assumption is provided from small constructed graves near the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar: an open bowl was laid behind the skull in Tomb 3, in others single pedestal cups or sets of vessels were usually found next to the feet of the body. Another similar case is known from Jerablus Tahtani, where two well-preserved simple pits contained single primary interments with pottery vessels placed either at the back of the body or around the human skull. Curiously, a pit grave (19. 113) discovered in the adjacent northern room of the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar contained a smaller quantity of pottery found beneath and above the body with the majority of the vessels deposited to the east of the skeleton. Such pattern to cluster pottery above/beneath/around the skeletons is consistent with the general view that the dead is provided with a daily meal, like the living, for their

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<sup>448</sup> Katz 2007: 171.

<sup>449</sup> Black – Green 1992: 60.

sustenance in the afterlife, although archaeological data of the above tombs fails to indicate whether the vessels did include foodstuffs and potable liquids.

However, as mentioned above, the tombs of high-ranking or wealthy individuals contained large numbers of containers in no case associated with the body. In the case of the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, the French archaeologists have noticed that all of the vessels were completely empty inside, and there were neither corns nor bones, not even sands which could have infiltrated into the vessels. This makes it unlikely that the vessels contained substantial material at the time of their deposition. Parker Pearson asserts that funerary vessels need not have contained sustenance, and they may simply have stood for the symbolic meal partaken by the dead.<sup>450</sup> The mourners probably offered receptacles without any substantial provision inside, and they may have employed other means of food offerings. One may note that the frequent occurrence of animal remains in mortuary contexts and that the segments of animals immediately associated with human remains in the tombs at Ahmar (in the Hypogeum), Banat (in most of the EBA burial or burial deposits), and Gre Virike (in Tomb K 9 and pit grave L8/3) might hint to the role of animals as a food source for the deceased's afterlife (see below).

### 6.4.3 Animal Skeletal Remains

<i>Sites &amp; Tombs</i> \ <i>Species</i>		<i>Domestic Animals</i>					<i>Wild Animals</i>		
		<i>sheep/goat</i>	<i>equid</i>	<i>cattle</i>	<i>pig</i>	<i>dog</i>	<i>fox</i>	<i>hare</i>	<i>bird</i>
Jerablus Tahtani	T. 302	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Ahmar	Hypogeum	×							
Banat	Ts. 1/2	×		×					
	T. 7		×						
	WMA		×	×					
	WM B/B2	×							
Gre Virike	T. K 9	×							
	T. J9/28	×							

Table 6. 6 Species of faunal remains related to mortuary contexts in four sites (Note: “×” represents the presence of this animal type).

Evidence for faunal assemblage in mortuary contexts indicates a diversity of animal species, among which sheep/goat undoubtedly represents the most common type, and the remains of equid and cattle were also frequently found (table 6.6). For a single tomb, Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani has yielded the most abundant faunal remains, some 2.2 kg in weight, among which it is particularly evident that caprine predominated heavily over other animal species, making up 77% of the total amount. Archaeo-zoological investigations of economic system in pastoral society indicate that these animals (e.g., sheep/goats, equid and cattle) played an important role in the pastoral or partial pastoral society, the latter of which was incorporated with the elements of cultivated agriculture. It is acknowledged

<sup>450</sup> Parker Pearson 1999: 10.

that sheep and goats are most significant types among the animals being bred for domestic use (e.g., sheep/goats, equid, cattle, pigs and dogs) from the late Neolithic period, due to its predominant physical attributes of the rapid reproduction and well adapting to unfavorable environmental conditions.<sup>451</sup> The sheep and goats are of great importance of providing meat, milk and fur at the time. One of most important factors supporting the pastoral communities is the co-operation of breeding equid and cattle together with caprine, since the equids as transportation apart from used for conveying of people and stuffs were ridden to assist controlling and protecting herds.<sup>452</sup> Cattle do not require specific attendance and they are primary labor of the drawing of vehicles and ploughs at the time. Like sheep/goats, equids and cattle were originally domesticated, not just connected with their tasks as working animals, but also to provide food, including milk. Apart from domestic animals, the faunal remains in Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani include a limited number of fox, hare and a variety of avian species.<sup>453</sup> These wild animals were apparently the result of hunting and may have served as a supplement of food source.

Interpretation of faunal remains related to human burial contexts depends on several factors. In this case, depositional context and sequence are of paramount importance. Except for Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani and Tomb J9/28 at Gre Virike, animal remains were found immediately associated with the human skeletal remains within the graves. Large amounts of animal bones of goats were discovered among two human skeletons in the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar. The evidence for animal remains from Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike is more explicit. There bones of a lamb were intermingled with human bones. The composition of animal skeletal remains shows no bias towards specific parts of the body, suggesting the body anatomically intact. With evidence for several cut marks visible on the bones, it can be inferred that the entire lamb had been dismembered before deposition. In both cases as mentioned above, presumably the role of goats or a lamb continues in the mortuary context as a major source of food, but intended for the deceased's afterlife. A clue to support for this hypothesis is that all of the animal bones were collected among the human skeletal remains, not related to other types of remains in both tombs. In funerary rituals, the sheep or goats may be highly symbolic of something else, sacrifices required by netherworld deities or ancestors, the scapegoat (sheep) to carry away the faults and sins of the dead, or the so-called "man substitutes" (goat) used in Mesopotamian rituals to divert sickness or portend evil from the deceased.<sup>454</sup>

Curiously, evidence from Banat settlement complex indicates that the majority of disarticulated human skeletal remains were closely associated or commingled with animal bones. Animal bones from burial contexts show a definite selective bias towards elements from the right side of the animal's body.<sup>455</sup> In Tombs 1/2, each cluster of human bones was mixed with animal bones, which consist of primarily sheep/goat, little cattle, but no equid. White Monument A has yielded extremely abundant animal material, which slightly predominated over the human bones recovered, making up 54% of the total bone remains. Although cattle remains were also found, the equid seems to have

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<sup>451</sup> Bienkowski – Millard (eds.) 2000: see "Animals and Animal Husbandry".

<sup>452</sup> Chenchang 2008: 206, footnote 8 of chapter 6.

<sup>453</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 6.

<sup>454</sup> Black – Green 1992: 32.

<sup>455</sup> Porter 2002 a: 21; Wilhelm 2006: 37.

been primary animal represented in burial deposits of White Monument A, in contrast to White Monument B, when found, consisting primarily of sheep/goat. The faunal remains from settlement, as opposed to the faunal remains from White Monument A, are comprised of 80% sheep/goat and 20% cattle.<sup>456</sup> Here possibly the role of the sheep, goats and cattle also continues in mortuary contexts as a source of food nurturing the surviving spirits in the netherworld. With current evidence, it is difficult to ascertain the role of equid remains and their association with the individuals enclosed by the last version of the White Monument. Nevertheless, the patterns that all of the faunal material was closely associated or commingled with human skeletal remains were common in Banat society, indicating that the animals, although varied in animal species, must have been an important component of rituals accompanying primary burials.

Also at Banat, Tomb 7 provides further evidence for equid remains in a human burial, where they were found adjacent to the wooden coffin in the principle chamber (F) and covered with large black pebbles and small ceramic bowls. The equid was buried as if it were human. It may have been understood as transportation in the afterlife, or there is also the possibility that the equid had been ritually killed and served as sacrificial offering to netherworld divinities or ancestors. Presumably the interment of the equid was associated with the rituals conducted in honor of the high-ranking individual buried inside the coffin nearby. One may note the interment of equid with articulated bones taking place in the public building (Building 6), although not from a funerary context, indicating the ritual importance of equids in Banat society. The occurrence of the equid remains in human burials at Banat provides us an opportunity to consider the symbolic role of animals in early Syrian complex society as inferred by Schwartz with the evidence from a series of equid installations found near the elite tombs on the acropolis of Tell Umm el-Marra, rather than their role commonly considered as a source of food or labor.<sup>457</sup>

Literary texts have already indicated the ritual and symbolic significance of animals in Sumerian society towards the end of the third-millennium BCE. Working from a written account from Drehem, which lists the sacrificial animals delivered for the funerary rituals of Šu-Suen, the fourth king of the third Ur dynasty (2037-2029 BCE), Katz has recognized that a total of 152 animals were mostly sacrificed during the first three days. According to the reading of this document, she further argues that animals mainly comprised of sheep, goat and lamb were offered in different places, such as in the location next to a waterway, by the chair in the royal funerary chapel, in different shrines of the netherworld gods, and in the tomb of the king associated with the interment of the body.<sup>458</sup> During the four nightly rituals, these animal offerings may have served for a variety of purposes: purification of the dead king, admission into the next world, and giving satisfactory to major deities and the spirits. At the last stage of the three-day rituals - when the king was buried in the tomb and his spirit released, a large quantity of animals (67) were sacrificed at the gate of the canal which is related to the journey of the king's spirit to the netherworld and the animals were intended for a banquet after

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<sup>456</sup> Porter 2002 a: 21.

<sup>457</sup> Schwartz 2007: 53.

<sup>458</sup> Katz 2007: 174-80. The location next to a waterway is meant for the journey of the spirit to the netherworld. The chair symbolizes the sitting spirits, and perhaps the ancestors of the king and dead priests were seated for the expected banquet, waiting for the celebration of the king's arrival in the netherworld. Major deities in the netherworld received sacrifices in their shrines during rituals. A lamb was sacrificed in the last (fourth) ritual, during which the body of the king was interred.



his arrival.<sup>459</sup> This unique document has further expanded our understanding of the role played by animals in ritual performances associated with the burials.

The depositional history of faunal remains is often an important aspect in evaluation of potential ritual activities. Apart from animal remains closely in association with human skeletal remains in the above cases, animal remains have been found in the separate post-interment deposits of Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, posing the question of interpretation. Nevertheless, considering the animals abundant in both quantity and diversity, they may have played an important role in the commemorative rituals that occurred repeatedly and persisted long after the death of the interred persons. Evidence for the traces of butchering and burning visible on the bones allows for the possibility that persons conducted a series of procedures on the animals, such as slaughtering, dismembering and cooking before deposition. Whether they were eaten, sacrificed or for another use remains to be determined, although most of the animals with disarticulated bones are probably understood as the remnants of a feast<sup>460</sup>; certainly, the inclusion of entire animals in the tomb, like dog and rock dove, cannot be understood as banquet leftover, but they might have employed as sacrificial offerings to deities of the netherworld as mentioned above, or to ancestors. Whatever their intended function, it is likely that the consumption of animals during post-interment period was part of complex series of rituals that were performed in a community scale for the commemoration of the ancestors, analogous to Kispu(m)-celebration attested in the second millennium BCE. In the case of Gre Virike, thin bones of young sheep or goats were deposited together with four miniature bowls in an earthen pit over the covering slabs of a communal tomb (J9/28) comprised of three babies interred primarily. Certainly, here the combination of ceramics and animal remains is an indication of secondary offering and allows us to infer that they may symbolically represent a meal partaken by the deceased individuals in the afterlife. Alternatively, they were cultic objects ritually buried together. Either way, pottery and animal remains were probably not grave goods in the proper sense of the word; rather, their deposition may have been part of a ritual event that was performed slightly after the tomb was eventually sealed.

## 6.5 TOMB ARCHITECTURE

While some aspects of animal remains and artifactual materials bear the indications of funerary and mourning rituals, circumstance in the tomb chamber may facilitate these to take place. Evidence produced from Jerablus Tahtani, Tell Ahmar and Tell Banat indicate that a central or alongside path running through the length of the main chamber, as in Tomb 302 (6.6 m) and the Hypogeum (5.35-5.4 m), or one running through the length of two chambers on the axis as in Banat Tomb 7 (c. 8 m), was largely devoid of grave goods and bone remains. It would seem that these passages directly connected with the entrances of the tombs were deliberately unoccupied, perhaps intended for the funerary participants to transport grave furnishings time after time in rituals.

The conspicuous, aboveground mausoleums consisting of entrances and chambers are larger than

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<sup>459</sup> Katz 2007: 180.

<sup>460</sup> Peltenburg forthcoming: 6

required for the purposes of burial (e.g., Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, Ahmar Hypogeum, Banat Tomb 7, and Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike). There is the possibility that the tomb structure itself with the evidence for a recurrent use is a facility of funerary and mourning rituals. This hypothesis is strengthened by the evidence from Banat Tomb 7. This well-designed tomb is characteristic of a tripartite plan, consisting of a central axis including the shaft, dromos and two chambers, from which the passageways lead to three chambers on both sides. Further, the contents of the tomb vary from one chamber to another. Two central chambers (A and B) were characterized by the absence of bone remains and rarity of grave goods, as opposed to the sided chambers. There Chamber c contained the greatest concentration of pottery vessels, with the others amongst the deepest chambers containing individual inhumations elaborately provisioned. Therefore, the distribution of grave provisions and bone remains indicates that the tomb contained varied features that may have had different functions, which are apparently consistent with use for complex series of rituals associated with the burials. The entrances and anti-chambers of the tombs were more or less empty, but these sometimes contained disarticulated bones as in JT Tomb 302, where parts of bodies found in the dromos have been interpreted as evidence for the relocation of human bones involving secondary burial rituals. Evidence for secondary ceremonies has also been inferred in the lavishly furnished tomb at Tell Banat, where articulated skeletons of woman and children with no traces of either grave container or grave goods were found directly beneath the capstone on top of the fills in the entrance shaft of Tomb 7. This recalls another similar case reported from Gre Virike, where a smashed pithos that might have contained interment of child was laid directly on the covering slabs of Tomb K 9. An instance of such rituals is known from an early third millennium burial (Tomb 1) at Arslantepe in Anatolia, where four skeletons were found on top of the covering slab. On the basis of their unnatural posture, Frangipane has suggested the possibility that they were sacrificial individuals.<sup>461</sup> Such argument cannot be attested in the cases of the three skeletons at Banat and pithos burial at Gre Virike. But at least, we should consider them as evidence for ritual activities of secondary commemorations conducted simultaneously or slight after the tombs were last properly sealed. Apart from human skeletal remains, a smaller number of pottery and other artefacts were collected in the entrances and anti-chambers. In the majority cases, they are to be understood as a result of the removal of grave goods or disturbance in antiquity. However, a case of Banat Tomb 1 provides the hint of a ritual act taking place in the anti-chamber, where a hearth-like structure and two stone slabs were found towards the entrance of the tomb. However, there is a general lack of sufficient evidence which would make more specific interpretation on ritual action; the occurrence of the fireplace and “tables” perhaps not coincidentally in the anti-chamber may hint at their use in ritual ceremonies that were restricted to a small scale adjacent to the entrance of the tomb. In addition, the monumental tombs were intentionally visible and accessible at or near ground level. An archaeological example of arrangements for recurrent entry comes from Tomb 7 at Tell Banat, where the vertical shaft of the tomb stood at a distance of at least 25-75 cm above ground and was closed by a capstone pieced with holes used to facilitate reopening.

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<sup>461</sup> Frangipane 1998: 295.

## 6.6 THE DEAD AND THE LIVING

Evidence of secondary commemorations is usually identified where residues occur in or around the tomb, as seen at Jerablus Tahtani, Tell Banat and Gre Virike. Each context has been interpreted variously: in Tomb 302, persons periodically made rich offerings of bull figurines, pottery vessels and metal objects, and their deposition took place in the discrete places, namely, “caches”, over the deceased in the main chamber. The inclusion of the upper debris in the tomb otherwise comprised of animals both in quantity and diversity also requires explanation. The occurrence of considerable animal bones there may hint to the consumption or use of animals in commemorative rituals, analogous to Kispu(m) feasts in later texts held in celebration of the deceased kings. For Tomb 7 at Tell Banat, apart from the interments of woman and children with intact bodies under the capstone but on top of the fills in the entrance shaft as mentioned above, other piles of stones containing fragments of human bones were placed over Tomb 7. There are two examples quoted above at Gre Virike, where the pithos burial was laid out on the roof of K 9 chamber tomb, and the remains of grains and beans, which have been interpreted as material symbolism of fertility and regeneration, were deposited under the covering slabs but in the upper the debris of the shaft in the later stone-built tomb (J9/28). Also related to this tomb, an interesting discovery is an offering pit, which contained four small-sized bowls and bone fragments of young sheep/goats, located at some distance of at least 30 cm above the roof of the tomb. The combination of pottery and animal remains was probably not grave goods in the proper sense of the word; rather they were cultic objects ritually buried together. In these instances, the additional interments of humans, or making offerings of artefacts, grains and animals, were presumably part of the rituals honoring the people buried within the tombs, since their depositional contexts are suggestive of close connections with these tombs. In other words, we can infer that after the interments of the individuals within, ritual activities were then performed, involving various commemorative practices associated with human burials, animal remains, artefacts and grains.

Apart from the remains of commemorative rituals found within or around the tombs, the conspicuous, aboveground mortuary monuments in the Upper Euphrates valley implies that these monuments played an important role in the life of their communities after the death of the interred individuals. The centrality and visibility of the mausoleums are especially true for Tell Ahmar and Tell Banat, where the illustrious dead and the living stayed in close proximity, with the dead remaining part of the community<sup>462</sup>. The Hypogeum and related structures discovered at Tell Ahmar are located on the site acropolis, a feature ca. 250× 150 meters in area on edge of the natural terrace that was originally 25m above the alluvium plain of the Euphrates. Initially reported as an isolated monument, more recent excavations established that it was an integral component of a large complex, that it stood at least partially above ground and that it was attached by a stone, thick-walled room to the north. While the initial function of the northern room is uncertain, the close proximity to the Hypogeum may hint of its use in some way associated with the mortuary monument, perhaps served for funerary and mourning ceremonies in honor of the high-ranking humans buried in the nearby tomb. However,

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<sup>462</sup> Schwartz 2007: 45.

it is clear that the tomb was integrated into the imposing complex otherwise comprised of the stone building and staircase on the summit of the site acropolis, indicating the incorporation of the funerary cult into the scale of public and community rituals. In the succeeding period, the mound summit at Tell Ahmar continuously served for the purpose of mortuary-related rituals, since the interment of babies and related ritual installations took place in the adjacent northern room and small satellite graves were built in the vicinity of the Hypogeum. The setting at Tell Banat is more explicit, there Tomb 7 was an integral part of a public, terraced building (Building 7 succeeded by Building 6). Especially in the initial phase of use of Tomb 7 - when it stood at least partially above ground - its roof consisting of ten large limestone slabs may have formed an open area of at least about 60 m<sup>2</sup>, incorporated with the columned courtyard to the north. The tomb was integrated into the large courtyard of the impressive “palace”, which is suitable for funerary ritual activities, such as processions, ceremonies and gatherings. Furthermore, the public center is surrounded by industrial facilities to the west and south, where domestic activities like cooking, may have taken place, perhaps suggestive of the incorporation of funerary rituals into the scale of community rituals. Another example of a large attached tomb exists at Jerablus Tahtani. Tomb 302 was placed beside a broad passage (an earlier version passage 2700 succeeded by a later version, passage 990) that began from an external gate in the Lower Terrace and ascended by the ramp and staircase to the South Terrace from where one entered the fort proper. As the excavator suggests, the fortress lacked space inside for such a monument, which may account for the reason why the monumental tomb was extramural. Its prominence is nevertheless evident, since it was constructed above an imposing mound, and was visibly placed at the gate of the fort, which may be regarded as the equivalent of major buildings at other sites.<sup>463</sup> Access in and out the tomb was controlled by the construction of the passage, which may have served for processions and gatherings in rituals that occurred at the time of interments or in the post-interment period.

On the high mud-brick terrace at Gre Virike, a total number of twelve small, unroofed chambers with three chamber tombs, two of which had been heavily disturbed, formed a complex of mortuary ritual significance. As preserved, the only substantial hint of direct association between these chambers and the mausoleums is supplied by two chambers (s/t), which were attached to the southern wall of the ante-chamber, K 9 chamber tomb. In other cases, the archaeological data fail to indicate a definite connection due to the damage caused by the later grave and the robber pit. However, other two rows consisting of ten chambers (in I-K 8) built adjacent to one another might have also been related to the chamber tombs (in L 8), respectively. Further, these additional structures have yielded abundant remains of a variety categories, including animal bones (in chambers s and h), cereals (in chamber h), pottery vessels (e.g., cups, bowls, small and large jars and cooking pots from chambers s, d and h), and plastered pits filled with ash/charcoal (in chambers d, e and f). The close proximity of permanent kitchens to the mortuary structures as well as the types of goods in the kitchens, therefore, give us an indication of the ceremonial feasts involving the cooking, consumption and serving of food meant to take place in these features. The plastered pits from chambers t, c and l, where scooped-out bottoms of jars were set inside the pits, as well as the limestone basin placed in the upper debris of chamber c, corroborate the importance of libation as inferred by other scholars with the evidence of similar pits

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<sup>463</sup> Peltenburg 2007-8: 230.

for libation.<sup>464</sup> Apart from feasts, the commemorative rituals, therefore, may include libation, and recently, Peltenburg has raised the possibility that the entire mortuary complex only occupied one third of the paved summit, leaving most space free for open-air rituals.<sup>465</sup> One may note that the stone-paved corridor (ca. 1-0.7 m in width) extending between the longer chamber rows was firstly used to give access to the tomb like the similar case in Jerablus Tahtani; secondly, its purpose may be consistent with use for ceremonial rituals, such as processions and gatherings, associated with the burials in the adjoining tombs. A cult place built on the elevated mud-brick terrace at Gre Virike seems to have served for the public display, from initially an open-air sanctuary for a water cult in the first half of the millennium, to being associated with funerary rituals in the second half. Evidence for this mortuary complex at Gre Virike emphasizes the incorporation of funerary rituals honoring the high-ranking humans interred in the monumental tombs in the world of the living within the community by the middle of the millennium.

Apart from the evidence for conspicuous mausoleums that has revealed the duration of the ritual and its complexity, the White Monument at Tell Banat North is characterized by the visibility, impressive monument's construction, and secondary burial rituals. At the time that each version of the White Monument, which had enclosed large numbers of groups of individuals, was exposed for a considerable period of time, the burial mound was regarded as a cultic place, around which rituals for commemoration repeatedly occurred. For example, the mortuary mound of the earliest phase was constantly re-plastered incorporating large quantities of pottery sherds, and there is at least one instance where a vessel had been deliberately broken and stones placed over the individual sherds. This is suggestive of a ritual act that was perhaps performed each time the monument was repaired. In addition, numerous biconical clay balls scattered in the fills of White Monument A were not specifically associated with any burial deposit, may have had a ritual or votive purpose. Although the size and wealth of tumuli and burial deposits inside the White Monument do not testify to their high status, cultic attention was devoted to these "unnamed ancestors" as well. Communal and ritual performances in post-interment period at the White Monument of Tell Banat North, although less pronounced than those attested in the contemporaneous monumental tombs of high-ranking persons, indicate that the burial monument played an important role in the life of the community after the death of the interred individuals.

## **6.7 THE ILLUSTRIOUS ANCESTORS AND OTHER DEAD**

The evidence from four sites in the Middle Euphrates valley has revealed that the mortuary complexes included not only the large and most elaborate tombs, but also a series of inhumations executed in a variety of more simple styles. Their stratigraphy and contents indicate that they were built at the time when the adjoining, mortuary monuments had already been existed. There seems to have been a desire to locate them as close as possible to the monumental tombs. For the above reasons they are interpreted as "satellite graves".

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<sup>464</sup> Orthmann 1995; Schaeffer 1939: 50-3.

<sup>465</sup> Peltenburg 2007-8: 221.

Age		T. 302	T. 573	T. 582	T. 612	T. 643
Foetus	8m.	1	---	---	---	---
Child	6m-12 yr.	3/4?	1	1	---	1
Adolescent	15-20 yr.	---	1	1	1?	---
Adult	20-25 yr.	2	---	1	1?	---
	25-35 yr.	5	3	1	---	---
	35-45 yr.	---	---	1	---	---
Total		11/12?	5	5	2?	1

Table 6. 7 Human remains in JT T. 302 and pithos graves (after Peltenburg et al. 1995, table 1).

At Jerablus Tahtani, for example, there were a series of satellite graves in pithoi and pits. Four pithos graves were horizontally placed in eroded levels to the south of Tomb 302, commensurate with phase 1 of Tomb 302; in a succeeding period, more pit graves (at least twelve) were gradually inserted into the mound above which the monumental tomb was constructed. Moreover, their location in immediate proximity of Tomb 302 in the southern, extramural zone markedly contrasts to the previous burials, which had been confined to the fort or to outside the fort to the north of the site. Similar evidence is produced from Tell Ahmar, where five constructed graves (four stone cist graves, one mud-brick grave) occurred in the vicinity of the Hypogeum, including Tombs 1/2 situated to southwest of the Hypogeum and the others (Tombs 3/4/5) built in a row beside the eastern wall of the Hypogeum. Apart from these satellite graves, the interment of babies and related ritual installations were subsequently placed in the adjoining building to the north of the Hypogeum. However, with no other EBA mortuary evidence at Tell Ahmar for the comparison, there is a debate as to whether these funerary/ritual remains contained in the northern room were still associated with the nearby Hypogeum, or they reflect another mortuary behavior in a succeeding period on the mound summit at Tell Ahmar. Another example of satellite graves around the mortuary monument exists at Banat main mound, where Tombs 4/5/6 were clustered in fields to the east of Tomb 7, and, Tomb 9 was located to its northwest. The setting of Tell Banat is more explicit. There the satellite graves were gradually added in the area around Tomb 7 across both Banat periods (III and II), i.e., from the time when Tomb 7 was re-used to the time it was out of use. As in Jerablus Tahtani, the burials at Tell Banat had previously been located extramural to the west or east, such as the well-preserved Tomb 1 (Period IV), while large groups of individuals had previously been inserted into the off-site burial mound indicated by the younger phases of the White Monument (C in Period V, and B in Period IV). Although the satellite graves were rarely found intact, when evidence survived, a smaller quantity of pottery vessels and non-ceramic objects were originally contained in the graves. In some cases, they were comprised of some emulating categories, like champagne cups (e.g., one to two of such vessel form found in pithos graves, 573 and 612, at Jerablus Tahtani; at least two examples found in Tomb 4 at Tell Ahmar). However, considering the quantity and quality, grave goods from the satellite graves cannot compare to those from the tombs nearby that were lavishly provisioned. Apart from the disturbed conditions, differentiation in grave furnishings between the monumental tombs and their satellite graves may depend on several factors, such as the social status of interred individuals, or funerary rituals conducted in a different way. In terms of the physical remains of the deceased, both have similarities in some respects. The number of individuals and the age range contained in two

pithos graves (e.g., Ts. 573 and 582, see table 6.7) from Jerablus Tahtani may be indicative of the emulation of the collective system in Tomb 302. The evidence from Tell Ahmar has revealed that the burials in the Hypogeum have many aspects in common with those found in the adjacent graves: primary interments, body posture and orientation. This may reflect the imitation of the way that the deceased were buried in the Hypogeum. In other cases of satellite graves, they contained the human skeletal remains of young children or infants: Jerablus Tahtani had a child burial in pithos (T. 643) and one or two infants interred in pits (Ts. 290 and 3234), and Gre Virike has revealed abundant evidence for infants and children interred primarily in plain pits (J9/2 and 3), pithos (K9/9) and constructed tombs (J9/28, H-I/8 and K8/24).

In all the cases, we observe a tendency to cluster inhumations above or around mortuary monuments, which functioned as symbols of elite ancestors in the post-interment period. The number of the inhumations and prolonged chronology largely corresponding to the history of monumental tomb at each site indicate that the mortuary complex was not only the mortuary-related ritual center as interpreted above, but also the equivalent of a substantial cemetery. There is little doubt that these cemeteries were used over a number of generations, during which the burials or burial deposits were gradually added, rather than taking place as single acts. A major issue is that who after death were privileged to be buried within the extraordinary cemeteries. Did they necessarily have some relationship with the illustrious ancestors buried in the nearby tombs, perhaps servants who would be buried in the family cemetery, or other forms of group affiliation? Is there any other possibility, like who generally intended to claim closer proximity to the important ancestors was buried there? But in the absence of supporting evidence there are many ways that these relationships may have been constituted. Whoever they were, the practice of interring other dead in the immediate vicinity of the illustrious dead was relatively common in the third quarter of the third millennium BCE in the Middle Euphrates valley (e.g., Jerablus Tahtani, Ahmar, and Banat). We should consider this pattern as evidence for the long-lasting veneration of elite ancestors.

But some ancestors may not retain their exalted status over the long term. Funerary monuments at Gre Virike are distinct from the other similar tombs in that these as well as associated ceremonial cells were partly destroyed by some of satellite graves next in the chronological sequence at the site (e.g., Tombs K9/6 and K9/9 cut into the walls of the main chamber of Tomb K9, Tombs L/8 and L8/12/G set into the corners of L8 chamber tombs, and Tomb K8/24 damaging the floor and the northern hearth of Chamber h). One of the reasons is that these burials occurred over a period of time that was long enough for the exact location to be unknown, but another possibility of intentional desecrations cannot be simply ruled out. Such an event for political or social reasons would be expected. One can observe a pronounced change on the paved summit towards the end of the millennium. For one thing, the previous, large-scale mortuary complex, which consisted of aboveground, mortuary monuments and related, commemorative ritual installations, was largely abandoned; for another, the old tradition was replaced with a cemetery, consisting of primary interments mostly of infants or children, and other ritual facilities restored and built in the succeeding period, a much less impressive complex than the earlier one. However, one may note that the elevated terrace system was still in use at that time, indicative of its continuing ritual role of the dead



in Gre Virike community. The infants and children may have died of natural or other causes and then were buried in the cult place. But why those who lost their lives so young not individuals of more advanced ages were privileged to be interred here remains to be an open question.

## **CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS**

The primary objective of the analyses and investigations in this paper has been expected to explicitly relate ritual to the archaeology of mortuary practices. To determine how mortuary data are used to reconstruct ancient funerary rituals in the Middle Euphrates communities during the third millennium BCE, we have to examine the specific archaeological records, in which the acts and expressions involved in the practice of funerary rituals have left their material imprint, although in a very small proportion. The evaluation upon funerary practices in the Middle Euphrates valley with a particular concentration on the four sites in the close vicinity of the region demonstrates a dramatic increase of EBA funerary record by the middle of the third millennium BCE. Most of the surviving burials at these sites belong to the EBAlII-IV as well as EBA IVA, dating to the mid-late of the third millennium BCE (e.g., Period 2B at Jerablus Tahtani, Phases A-C at Tell Ahmar, Periods IV-III at Banat settlement complex, and Period IIA-B at Gre Virike), as opposed to the first half of that era that is characterized by the rarity of burials in their communities. Attempts to understand different patterns of funerary practices have emphasized the concept of ritual as our purpose of this study. The third millennium mortuary data from the Middle Euphrates sites considered in this study have revealed considerably rich material of the tomb contents, and some distinctive elements of human/animal remains and artifacts within these graves can be taken as material remains or manifestations of ritual acts at the time of interments. The mourners seem to have participated in primary burial rituals, mourning rituals, and secondary burial rituals - if there was any evidence for secondary inhumation. Ritual and ceremony triggered by a death consist of not only those performed at the time of interments but also commemorative activities that were conducted after the interments of the individuals within.

### **7.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR FUNERARY RITUALS**

The reconstruction of ancient funerary rituals from material remains was conducted through a process of interpretation that concerns funerary behaviors in the context in which they were enacted, with adopting ritual insights and perspectives. The following kinds of archaeological evidence will suit our task specifically and empirically.

#### **1. Burial Types**

In the preceding four chapters, the preliminary analysis of 52 burials selected from all of the EBA funerary record in the sites considered in this study have demonstrated the considerable variability in the grave structure. There are five main conventional categories: the first consists of plain pit inhumations (19); the second is comprised of earth-cut shaft and chamber tombs (2); the third category is a wide variety of stone-built graves covered with limestone slab/s, including small cists (8), rectangular/oval/circular chamber graves (6) and large, aboveground monumental tombs constituted by entrances and chambers (4); the fourth is the placement either in large Cooking Pots (2) or in pithoi (9); the fifth is the mud-brick tomb represented only by two examples, as seen at Tell

Ahmar (Tomb 3) and at Gre Virke (K8/24), a category that was not very common in the EBA burials from the Middle Euphrates sites included in this study.

Regarding the mortuary data included in this study, there is first of all a division between aboveground monumental tombs and other tombs that were rapidly covered by earthworks. The former-including several categories according to shape, structure, number and dimension of chambers-required massive amount of labor to construct and often contained large numbers of containers and impressive collections of non-ceramic objects. The size and lavish contents of the monumental tombs testify to their high status. The large graves were richly furnished, perhaps both to assure a luxurious afterlife and to display conspicuously social status or wealth of the prominent dead. The conspicuous, aboveground mausoleums consisting of entrances and chambers are larger than required for the purposes of burial (e.g., Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, Ahmar Hypogeum, Banat Tomb 7, and Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike). There is the possibility that the publicly visible/accessible tomb structure itself is a facility of funerary and mourning rituals. This hypothesis is strengthened by the evidence from Banat Tomb 7. This well-designed tomb consists of a central axis including the shaft, dromos and two chambers, from which the passageways lead to three chambers on both sides. Further, the contents of the tomb vary from one chamber to another: central chambers (A and B) were characterized by the absence of bone remains and rarity of grave goods; chamber c contained the greatest concentration of pottery vessels; and the deepest chambers d/f contained individual inhumations elaborately provisioned. Considering the distribution of grave provisions and bone remains, varied features of the tomb may have had different functions, perhaps intended to facilitate complex series of rituals to take place. One may note that the entrances of the tombs sometimes contained remnants of secondary burials as seen in JT Tomb 302, or additional interments of woman and children found in upper fills of the entrance shaft of Tomb 7 at Tell Banat. A central or alongside path running through the length of the main chamber, as seen in JT Tomb 302 (6.6 m) and the Ahmar Hypogeum (5.35-5.4 m), was largely devoid of grave goods and bone remains. These passages directly connected to the entrances of the tombs were deliberately unoccupied, perhaps intended for the funerary participants to transport grave furnishings time after time in rituals. Although the entrances and unoccupied area in the main chamber were too small to contain many celebrants, one can infer that these places facilitate mourning rituals, secondary rituals or some other form of commemorative activities to be conducted within the graves.

Apart from the burial types mentioned above, the most remarkable one is the evidence from Banat, where the magnificent mortuary mounds contained four freestanding edifices, three of which overlying one over another constituted an enormous mound - namely, the White Monument - located about 200 m northeast of the main urban center. The surveys and excavations carried out at Tell Banat North have revealed that White Monuments A and B did enclose large numbers of groups of individuals interred in earthen burial deposits or in stone tumuli. Although the size and wealth of tumuli and burial deposits inside the White Monument do not testify to their high status, cultic attention was devoted to these “unnamed ancestors” as well.

## 2. Placing of Graves

In terms of spatial distribution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium burials, evidence from Jerablus Tahtnai and Banat settlement complex indicates that funerary practices include both intra- and extra-mural funerary customs, and at Banat, a large burial mound far from the settlement. In both cases, the appearance of aboveground and impressive mausoleums (e.g., Tomb 302 at Jerblaus Tahtnai, Tomb 7 at Tell Banat) indicates a radical change of funerary tradition: the mortuary complexes were established and did not only include the largest and most elaborate tombs, but also incorporated other inhumations of more simple styles. At Jerablus Tahtani, for example, the mortuary complex was located in the southern, extramural zone of the mound, including Tomb 302 and a series of inhumations of single or more deceased individuals in pithoi and in pits. The location of this complex markedly contrasts to the previous burials, which had been confined to the fort or to outside the fort to the north of the site. In the case of Banat, a central complex incorporated Tomb 7 and at least four satellite graves that were gradually added in the area around the former across both Banat periods (III and II) within the public sector at the urban center. Prior to the construction of the monumental tomb at Tell Banat, a mortuary tradition had already existed in the form of free-standing conical mounds with inner cairns indicated by the White Monument C and Mortuary Monument II, installed in Banat Period V. Similar evidence is produced from Tell Ahmar. After the monumental tomb was closed, six child interments gradually took place under the floor of the attached northern room of the Hypogeum, and other small constructed graves were clustered in the adjacent areas of the Hypogeum to the west and east. All of the burials or burial deposits during the third millennium were confined to the mound summit at Tell Ahmar and there seems to have been a desire to locate them as close as possible to the Hypogeum. The limited scale of excavation at Tell Ahmar and a lack of comparative evidence from other contemporary mortuary data on the site may account for the predominance of the EBA burials spatially related to the monumental tomb, and we are likely to understand only a fraction of the mortuary behaviors at Tell Ahmar.

As the case with Jerablus Tahtani, Tell Banat and Tell Ahmar, we observe a tendency to cluster smaller graves above or around mortuary monuments. The number of the surrounding graves and their prolonged chronology largely corresponding to the history of monumental tombs at these sites indicate that such mortuary complex was the equivalent of a substantial cemetery. The practice of interring other dead near the illustrious dead may be understood as evidence for the long-lasting veneration of elites referred to as ancestors. But such was not always the case. In contrast to the evidence for ancestor veneration, Gre Virike presents us with a negative example. Specifically, the monumental tombs together with associated ceremonial cells constituting a remarkable complex of great mortuary ritual significance, which existed on the high terrace at Gre Virike in Period IIA, were partly destroyed or overlapped by the remains of young children and infants interred in pits, pithoi, stone-and mudbrick-built graves in the succeeding period (IIB). The elevated terrace system at Gre Virike continuously served for ritual ceremonies in the cult of the dead up to the end of the third millennium, but the large-scale mortuary complex previously built on the paved summit was replaced by a cemetery of infant interments and other ritual facilities at later dates. These disturbances are material manifestations of a profound change, for which political or social reasons would be expected.

### 3. Location of the Monumental Tombs

Although spatially contextual information for facilities of ritual ceremonies known to us is limited, evidence for the free-standing mausoleums indicates that they were integrated into the large contemporaneous architectural spaces which may have served for large-scale ceremonial events, such as feasting, gathering, or processions.

Also on the high mud-brick terrace at Gre Virike, the close proximity of permanent kitchens to the mortuary structures as well as the types of goods in the kitchens, therefore, give us an indication of the ceremonial feasts involving the cooking, consumption and serving of food meant to take place in these features. In addition to feasts, commemorative rituals may also include the possibility of libation, since numerous plastered pits with jar set inside were found in chambers c, l and t and a limestone basin was placed in the upper debris of chamber c. Other plastered pits filled with ash and charcoal found in chambers d, e and f bear strong indications of the cooking of food, thus a combination of jars with scooped-out bottoms and pits was apparently not used in a same way. Although they could have been used as storage pits, it is tempting to see these pits as installations for libation in rituals related to the burials. In addition, the remarkable complex constituted by three monumental tombs and their attached rows of ceremonial cells occupied only one third of the entire paved summit, as Peltenburg argues, suggesting the possibility that some other form of open-air rituals took place simultaneously in the rest of ample space on the high terrace.<sup>466</sup> One may note that the stone-paved corridor (ca. 1-0.7 m in width) extending between the longer chamber rows, on the one hand, was used to give access to the tomb like the similar case in Jerablus Tahtani; on the other hand, its purpose may be consistent with use for ceremonial rituals, such as processions and gatherings, associated with the burials in the adjoining tombs.

Another example of funerary facilities attached to the aboveground, impressive monumental tomb exists on top of the mound at Tell Ahmar. The imposing complex on the summit of the site acropolis included not only the mortuary monument but also a thick-walled, stone building next to the Hypogeum to the north and a staircase north-west of the Hypogeum. The adjacent northern room contained multiple layers of construction, use, renovation, re-use and destruction, and stratigraphic evidence indicates that this structure was built as early as the construction of the Hypogeum and existed largely corresponding to the existence of the Hypogeum till the end of the third millennium. As the question addressed in the preceding chapters, the initial function of the northern room is uncertain, however, its location in the close proximity to the Hypogeum could indicate its use in some way associated with the mortuary monument. As the case with what may have happened on the artificial imposing terrace at Gre Virike, the northern room also provides potential for the location where *kispu(m)* ceremonies may have taken place.

The centrality and visibility of the mausoleum are especially true for Tell Banat, where Tomb 7 was an integral part of a public, terraced building (Building 7 succeeded by Building 6). When Tomb 7 stood at least partially above ground in the initial phase of its use, its roof built with ten large limestone slabs formed an open area of at least about 60 m<sup>2</sup>, incorporated with a columned courtyard

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<sup>466</sup> Peltenburg 2007-8: 221.

to the north. The tomb was integrated into the large courtyard of the impressive “palace”, which is also suitable for sizable ritual activities. Furthermore, the public center is surrounded by industrial facilities to the west and south, where domestic activities like cooking, may have taken place, perhaps suggestive of the incorporation of funerary rituals into the scale of community rituals.

Another example of a large attached tomb exists at Jerablus Tahtani. Tomb 302 was constructed above an imposing mound, and it was visibly placed at the gate of the fort. In spite of its extramural location, the monumental tomb was placed beside a broad passage (passage 2700 succeeded by passage 990) that began from an external gate in the Lower Terrace and ascended by the ramp and staircase to the South Terrace from where one entered the fort proper. Access into and out of the tomb was controlled by the construction of the passage, which may otherwise have served for processions and gatherings in rituals that occurred at the time of interments or in the post-interment period.

#### 4. Primary Inhumations

The indication of primary interments is given by physical remains of the deceased with their skeletons placed in perfect anatomical order. Human skeletal remains in primary interments may thus provide useful clues to our observation of the number of the interred individuals, position and orientation of the body. Primary inhumations usually contained a single individual, with a limited number of tombs (4) containing dual or tripartite inhumations in primary contexts, as seen in Tell Ahmar and Gre Virike. The dead were usually laid on his/her side in the flexed or so-called “sleeping” position, though not often in crouched position, no case in “stretched” posture. Evidence for the overall 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium mortuary activities at Tell Ahmar presents us with a site, where primary interments were widely practiced with little evidence of secondary inhumation or intentional manipulation of human bones. It is here that the preferred orientation of the skeletons is west-east with the heads facing south or north.

A single individual in primary context was sometimes provided with wooden rectangular coffin or ceramic bathtub-shaped coffin, as attested in Tell Banat and in Gre Virike. The coffin was apparently manufactured and used purely for containing the physical remains of the deceased. This specialized container, in which primary interments with articulated skeletons were usually found, probably served for a hygienic purpose to hide and remove the decomposition of the corpse from the public eyes.

In the preceding chapters, the analyses and interpretations have revealed that a variety of tomb contents, including human/animal skeletal remains and grave furnishings, can be taken as evidence for funerary and mourning rituals during the primary burial process. The majority of the rituals occasioned by a death belong to this stage, during which the body of the deceased was interred anatomically intact, perhaps intended for the maintenance of an individual identity. The enactment of primary burial ritual seems to have involved other behaviors: the providing of the dead with clothing, wrappings, and adornments on the body, offering of the animals adjacent to the body, collection and deposition of weapons, pottery and other grave furnishings, and probably the use of fire. Substantial

hint of the practice of burning is supplied by a smaller proportion of bone remains and artefacts with burn marks found in Tombs 1 and 2 at Tell Banat. But there is no indication of the traces of burning upon both tombs themselves. And, we have evidence that at the front of the entrance of Tomb 1 was a hearth-like structure that may have been used at the time of interments. Various categories of tomb contents with burn marks attested in two cases at Tell Banat may be the result of the use of fire probably, a practice that may served for a hygienic purpose. Whatever its intended function is, the use of fire might have played an important role during mortuary ceremonies associated with primary interments.

## 5. Secondary Inhumations

In contrast to Tell Ahmar, mortuary data from Jerablus Tahtani and Banat settlement complex have provided abundant evidence for the practice of secondary inhumations with the disarticulated skeletal remains attested in different forms of burial types (e.g., two stone-built graves, the largest Tomb 302, and four pithos graves at Jerablus Tahtani; for Banat, see table 6.1 above). The occurrence of secondary inhumations was common in communal tombs, where multiple individuals ranging in number from at least three to at least twelve were found. The disaggregation of the body as the result of secondary inhumation may be an ideological imperative by which individual presence is destroyed and a collective identity is asserted.<sup>467</sup> The number of interred individuals and the age and gender range contained in these collective tombs may be indicative of familial relationship, including elders, adults, juveniles and sometime infants. In this case, one can infer that the insertion of the newly dead persons from kinship-based or other forms of group affiliation was repeatedly practiced. In other words, the deceased individuals may have been interred anatomically intact, but over a long intermediary period, after the flesh had decomposed, the tomb was re-opened and the bone remains of older inhumations were partially removed. Why this was done is probably in order to make more room for a new arrival. There is no indication of the placement of a secondary burial brought there from another context; rather, patterns that primary burials and the next stage of secondary burials took place within the same tombs are evident archaeologically.

Human skeletal remains of single or more deceased individuals, commonly disarticulated, were also placed in large Cooking Pots or in pithoi. In this case, the large, narrow-necked pottery jars with their use originally connected to the cooking or storing seem to have also been used for containing the dead body, specifically for secondary inhumations, as opposed to larger wooden or ceramic coffins as containers of primary burials.

If primary burial rituals represent the maintenance of the individual identities by means of interring the complete body of the dead, secondary burial rituals could mirror the transformation of individuals into a familial or group identity. With the evidence that bones of sub-adults were clearly represented in the composition of human bones collected from the White Monument (A/B) at Banat North, this may reflect the incorporation of young children into ancestral groups.

The richness and complexity of secondary burials considered in this study provide useful clues to our

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<sup>467</sup> Parker Pearson 1999: 52; Porter 2002 a: 23.



reading of aspects of the rituals prior to entombment. The practice of secondary burial rituals was widely diverse but certainly involved partial removal of the interred body for secondary treatment. In certain cases, such as the massive mortuary mound at Banat North, we find a pattern to select certain parts of the skeleton, such as long bones and small bones. Also at the White Monument, there is at least one instance which allows for the inference that the skull was deliberately separated from the rest of the skeletal remains and buried individually, since a skull of an adult female was placed upright outside a relatively large stone tumulus of WM B2. Similar indication is also provided from Jerablus Tahtani, where skulls of adult were carefully deposited in the corners of the main chamber of Tomb 302. Jerablus Tahtani provides another example of cranial removal that an earlier pithos grave (T. 1610) of pre-fort period contained a secondary interment with his/her skull placed on top of the rest of bones. In addition to the removal of the human skull, other parts of the skeleton, like the bones from the legs, may have been taken away from the rest of the human bones probably during secondary rituals, as being indicated by the evidence from two jar burials, one at Tell Ahmar and the other at Gre Virike.

Secondary burial rituals are not only linked with partial removal of some parts of the skeleton, but also include rearrangement of the deposited bones and artefacts. Three tombs (1/2/4) found at Tell Banat could be taken as supporting evidence for this unusual pattern. In Tombs 1/2, one can observe that the disarticulated skeletal remains comprised of human/animal bones were found in several discrete clusters, and each of single bone groups was covered with black river pebbles and associated with a smaller number of “gifts”. A pattern to carefully place bones remains of a secondary interment in a neat pile can be observed in a small stone cist grave, Tomb 4. Evidence for the pot adjacent to the main burial group in Tomb 1 at Banat that contained bones from several body parts suggests that the collection and transportation of remnant bones after decomposition by means of pottery, for example, was conducted during secondary burial rituals.

As the case with Tomb 1 at Banat, human and/or animal skeletal remains were covered with large river pebbles or smaller ceramic vessels, a practice that was relatively common in the tombs of secondary inhumations at Banat settlement complex during the EBA. Some have interpreted the stones placed on the body as having a symbolic or magical function<sup>468</sup>; or, they were probably cultic objects to prevent the angry ghosts of the deceased to come back and haunt the living. Either way, the stones and some artefacts found directly over the skeletal remains were probably not grave goods in the proper sense of the word. This is suggestive of a ritual act was perhaps performed after the partial removal of the bones for a secondary deposition.

## 6. Grave Goods

The deceased were often provided with personal items of precious materials such as bronze, gold, silver, lapis lazuli and shell, including toggle-pins, beads, pendants, toys, and hair ornaments, found above/around the body or human bones of secondary inhumations. Personal adornments found in high-ranking or wealthy tombs are especially impressive in both quantity and quality, as opposed to other burials, where only toggle-pins, beads or children’s toys were found. In Tomb 7 at Tell Banat,

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<sup>468</sup> See chapter 6 above: footnote 429.

for example, a high-ranking person wore abundant jewelry of gold on the body, including especially about a thousand gold beads varying in bead types. One can infer that the interred individual was privileged to possess so many of the gold ornaments having been elaborately manufactured during his/her life or after death. The fact that none of artefacts made from gold were found in anywhere else on the site suggests that the gold to be used as adornment on the body or this material itself may have special value.

The grouping of grave goods and their position associated with human skeletal remains within the graves may give us some indication of their intended purpose. In several cases, personal adornments were not always found immediately associated with the body; rather, they were found with other non-ceramic objects in a group adjacent to the skeletal remains (e.g., Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani), or they were recovered in disarray with pottery vessels at some distance from the skeletal remains (e.g., Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike). Both tombs bear the indication of partial removal of the bone remains of older inhumations for secondary treatment, thus it is likely that the ornaments that had been worn on the body were taken away from their original position and ultimately deposited together with other grave furnishings. However, evidence from the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, in which the ornaments were certainly not placed above the skeletons, raises the possibility of the interpretation other than being items used by the deceased individuals in life. They may be the items donated by funerary participants, perhaps intended as gifts to ancestors or netherworld deities. Finally, the dead were sent on their last journey with these adornments of precious materials as personal belongings or donations laid down during the primary burial rituals, perhaps intended to preserve the deceased's identity and rank. Apart from the ornaments that have been interpreted as personal possessions or donations, the deceased may be provided with clothing, furniture, weapons and living provision for use in the afterlife even though these need never have been used in life.

The most abundantly attested object type in all of the Middle Euphrates tombs studied in this paper is pottery. The vessels could have contained foodstuffs and potable liquids, either real or symbolic, so they were deposited within the graves but not used by the survivors in order to provide the dead with food and drink in the afterlife. Support for this hypothesis is the placement of pottery vessels above/beneath/around the skeletons, although archaeological data fails to indicate whether the vessels did include foodstuffs or potable liquids.

Pottery vessels retrieved from monumental or wealthy tombs far surpass those found in other contemporaneous burials on these sites in both quantity and diversity. As in other normal EBA tombs, it is here that the majority of pottery vessels were Plain Simple Ware bowls and jars. But in the preceding chapters it has been demonstrated that a variety of PSW vessel shapes (e.g., champagne cups, vessels applied with spouts or tripod feet, and miniatures), Euphrates Banded Ware jars and Metallic Ware in the form of bowls, conical cups and miniature jars were not found in a noticeable quantity in other tombs or other circumstances of the third millennium (see table 6.5 above). Six examples of the monumental or wealthy tombs have revealed large numbers of ceramic containers and the evidence of distinctive PSW vessel forms and ware types of high quality, perhaps both to assure the dead sufficient sustenance in the afterlife and to display publicly the wealth of the

deceased individuals.

Among the graves lavishly provisioned, the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, with the evidence of untouched contexts of the tomb contents, allows us to examine the original deposition of pottery within the grave. More than a thousand vessels as an enormous heap were concentrated in the western half of the main tomb chamber, where they were assembled together during the ceremony before the tomb was last properly sealed. The pottery vessels in such a large quantity may have been collected for a period of time prior to their deposition, including donations not only by their living descendants but also by other members of the society. The mourners deposited the vessels perhaps in an attempt to claim their privileged affiliation with the elite persons. The decision to collect the vast quantity of pottery is probably due to the need to prepare for a lavish ritual in celebration of the death of the interred individuals.

In other monumental or wealthy tombs, there are indications of the recurrent use of their funerary structures over many generations and the practice of secondary burials, as opposed to the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar, with the evidence for a single use and two deceased individuals interred primarily and simultaneously. If ceremony was performed at a time the tomb was re-opened, one can infer that the celebrants brought pottery vessels in the tomb to accompany a new interment. The newly added pottery might have been assembled together with other pottery that were laid down previously, as seen in Tomb 7 at Banat and in Tomb K 9 at Gre Virike, where the majority of pottery vessels were concentrated in a specific area (e.g., Chamber c in Tomb 7, in the western half of the main chamber in Tomb K 9). Alternatively, they may have been deposited in several single clusters, as seen in Tomb 1 at Tell Banat, where each group of the vessels consisted of a similar mixture of ceramic forms and ware types found in the main chambers (2/3).

A ritual act is evaluated in terms of the depositional contexts of funerary pottery. Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani, for example, has yielded more than a hundred champagne cups that were found broken and stacked one on top of another in the southwestern half of the main chamber. In this case, one can infer that the intact vessels were deliberately destroyed by participants during mourning rites, perhaps intended to protect the living from contamination by the dead.<sup>469</sup> Further, sets of vessels found in situ in the tombs were probably material residues of a funerary banquet or banquets. Other vessels with their specific forms may hint to their function consistent with ritual paraphernalia. The long-stemmed champagne cups may have been used for ceremonial drinking in ritual events. Tall-necked jars with long spouts, jugs with trefoil-mouths and handles on the upper body, and other vessel forms with their use for pouring liquids suggest the importance of ritual pouring of liquids, presumably, of libations. These inferences of the vessels as vestiges of funerary rituals must be largely preliminary and speculative, since few written records nor excavations in North Syria have provided useful information for how they were used by the living specifically involved in the ritual activities; what the ritual role played by the vessels was connected to: the interred persons, divinities, or performances of ritual; where such rites might have taken place.

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<sup>469</sup> Scurlock 1995: 1884.

The only substantial evidence for a correlation between the use of funerary pottery and other ritual paraphernalia is provided from Tell Banat. In Tomb 1, there was a series of pottery vessels, including especially several small round-based jars consistent in ware form and size. This group of vessels was deposited separately from the majority of pottery material in the main chambers. Perhaps not coincidentally, their deposition took place behind one large stone slab in the anti-chamber of the tomb, suggestive of their role connected to the use of the stone slab. Also in Tell Banat, another similar case is seen from Tomb 7, where a group of PSW bowls in homogeneous forms was found around the alabaster tabletop in the burial chamber (D), rather than joining in the enormous heap of pottery vessels in Chamber C. The occurrence of the tabletop or stone slab in association with bowls or jars in the chambers where inhumations took place suggest that both types of objects seem to have been ritually utilized together, such as in mortuary banquets confined to the burial chamber, ablution slabs with containers for washing water, or a component of complex series of rituals related to the burials. With current evidence, it is difficult to reconstruct more specific ritual action related to the combination of the vessels and “tables”.

## 7. Animal Remains

If it is natural to locate the important personal items or necessary goods for use in the afterlife close to the body, the occurrence of animal bones in human burial contexts must have carried special meanings. Animal remains, although varied in animal type and in their depositional contexts, unquestionably provide enormous potential for the interpretation of ritual activities.

Animal skeletal remains have usually been found within the graves, where the segments of animals were often collected among the human skeletal remains, not related to any other categories of tomb contents, as attested in Tell Ahmar (the Hypogeum), Banat (in most of the EBA burial or burial deposits), and Gre Virike (in Tomb K 9 and pit grave L8/3). Sheep/goat undoubtedly is the most common type of faunal remains represented in the tombs analyzed in this study, and the remains of cattle have also been found. In this case, there can be little doubt that the role of sheep, goats and cattle also continues in mortuary contexts as major sources of food but for the deceased's afterlife. Evidence for equid remains in human burials is only reported from Banat settlement complex. White Monument A has yielded extremely abundant animal material, consisting primarily of equid. The bones of equid were also discovered adjacent to the coffin burial in the principle chamber (F) of Tomb 7 in the public sector of the main mound. Some aspects of the treatment of this equid burial found in Tomb 7 parallel that of human burials at Banat, especially the placement of large black pebbles and small ceramic bowls on top of the animal bones. It is plausible to suggest that the equid was buried as if it were human. It might have been employed as transportation in the afterlife, or there is also the possibility that the equid had been ritually killed and served as sacrifice required by netherworld divinities. One may note the interment of equid with articulated bones taking place in the public building (Building 6), although not from a funerary context, indicating the ritual importance of equids in Banat society. The occurrence of the equid remains in human burials at Banat provides us an opportunity to consider the symbolic role of animals in early Syrian complex society rather than their role commonly considered as a source of food or labor. In sum, the patterns that animal remains were closely associated or commingled with human bones in the aforementioned

cases indicate that these animals, though varied in animal species, must have been an important component of the rituals, during which the body of the deceased was interred.

Jerablus Tahtani presents us with another depositional context of animal remains. Animal bones with the richness in both species and quantity have been found in the upper fills of Tomb 302. Whether they were eaten, sacrificed or for another use remains to be determined; nevertheless, the occurrence of considerable animal bones during the post-interment period may hint to the consumption or use of animals in commemorative rituals, analogous to Kispu(m)-celebration attested in the second millennium BCE. Similar evidence is reported from Gre Virike, where thin bones of young sheep or goats were deposited together with four miniature bowls in an offering pit over the covering slabs of tomb (J9/28). The combination of ceramics and animal remains may symbolically represent a meal partaken by the deceased individuals in the afterlife. Alternatively, they were cultic objects ritually buried together. Either way, pottery and animal remains were probably not grave goods in the proper sense of the word; rather, they can be taken as evidence for secondary offerings that were probably made slightly after the tomb was eventually sealed.

Apart from the presence of animal remains in human burial contexts, animal bones have been found in additional ritual facilities built adjacent to monumental tombs on the paved summit of the elevated terrace at Gre Virike. Among twelve unroofed ceremonial chambers, chamber s has been interpreted as a food-offering place, where pottery sherds and animal remains were found. Chamber h have revealed a hearth above its northern part and the evidence for cereals and animals included in thick ash deposits on the floor, suggesting that it may have been used as a kitchen or in such a similar way. Therefore, animal remains recovered in two chambers were probably remnants of ceremonial feasts held in celebration of the death of the elite persons buried in the nearby tombs.

#### 8. Secondary Ceremonies of Mortuary Monuments

After the interments of the individuals within, ritual activities, to some extent, do not seem to have ceased. This pattern is especially pronounced for conspicuous aboveground mausoleums. Evidence for secondary ceremonies is usually identified where residues occur in or around the tombs. In the lavishly furnished tomb at Tell Banat, articulated skeletons of woman and children with no traces of either grave structure or grave goods were found directly beneath the capstone on top of the fills in the entrance shaft of Tomb 7. A comparable case comes from Gre Virike, where a ritual act performed probably as the last procedure of complex funerary rituals was the interment of child within pithos laid out on the roof of Tomb K 9. Whatever the additional interments intended for, we should consider them as evidence for ritual activities of secondary commemorations conducted simultaneously or slightly after the tombs were last properly sealed. The deposition of unbaked clay bull figurines, pottery vessels and metal objects in the upper levels of Tomb 302 at Jerablus Tahtani may add support to an interpretation of secondary offerings made periodically in the later years, perhaps intended for major deities in the netherworld, or the elite ancestors with lavish sets of prestigious items and necessary goods. Other evidence for cultic attention devoted to “unnamed ancestors” is reported from Tell Banat North. At the time that each version of the White Monument, which had enclosed large numbers of groups of individuals, was exposed for a considerable period of

time, the burial mound was regarded as a cultic place, around which rituals for commemoration repeatedly occurred. For example, the mortuary mound of the earliest phase was constantly re-plastered incorporating large quantities of pottery sherds, and numerous biconical clay balls scattered in the fills of White Monument A, where the objects were not specifically associated with any burial deposit, may have had a ritual or votive purpose.

## **7.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

It is hoped that I have highlighted important issues with respect to the evaluation of mortuary data and the ways in which these data are used to reconstruct funerary ritual practices of the ancient communities in the third-millennium Middle Euphrates region. These analyses and investigations disclose profound differences in mortuary practices between above ground monumental tombs and other broadly contemporary tombs. These contrasts have been evaluated in terms of the architecture, location, grave furnishings, their depositional contexts as well as such funerary monuments being associated with the large contemporaneous architectural spaces and numerous satellite graves. While each context of the monumental tombs/mounds varies from case to case, all of them are characterized by the visibility, strategic location, and large labor and energy expended for their construction, and they played a significant role in the life of their communities after the death of the interred individuals. Aboveground mortuary monuments were visible signs of the location of ancestors, thus their attendant rituals seem to be “official” ones in contrast to private rituals accompanying other tombs that were rapidly covered by earthworks. While both kinds of rituals share the same method with each other, the ceremonies in honor of prominent persons buried in such monumental tombs have been demonstrated to be more complex and elaborate and their commemorative rituals have shown to involve a wider community and to persist long after the death of the interred individuals.

In the study and interpretation of ancient funerary rituals, one should emphasize on their relationship to other factors in the creation of the social and cultural values, such as religious beliefs, veneration of ancestors, and legitimization of social status, since the acts and expressions involved in the practice of funerary rituals are embedded within the social and cultural dimensions of the community of the living. Mortuary ritual should not be viewed as a static monument concerning the end of life, but rather as a dramatic monument in which complex symbols and metaphors express the various values, aims and attitudes of the living in the face of death. Funerary ritual could convey the beliefs about the nature of death, attitudes towards the afterlife, or other religious ideologies. Funerary ritual was conducted through a series of activities to assist in the accomplishment of transformation of the deceased status. As interpreted above, the majority of funerary rituals were performed in the course of primary interments, in which a variety of behaviors were involved, such as the dressing or wrapping of the corpses, adornment of the body with jewelry, deposition of personal items or donations to preserve their identity and rank, offering of the dead with food and drink for use in the afterlife, and probably the use of fire. Funerary ritual marks differential social status of the dead; the prominent dead buried in the monumental tombs were accompanied by the public funerary rituals, which seem to have involved a wider community and persisted a lengthy of time after the death of

the interred persons, with lavish sets of offerings that were repeatedly made. Funerary ritual is a fundamental occasion, in which the entire community reinforces its social collectivity and/or dominant ideologies through the performance of the ceremonies associated with the burials. Funerary ritual marks a changing sequence of traditions as a consequence of political and/or social processes; as seen in Tell Ahmar and in Gre Virike, their mound summits were again a sacred landscape towards the end of the third millennium, but their attendant rituals had probably changed. As many scholars have already recognized, a funerary ritual is a social practice by the living occasioned by a death, since the living in their communities take decisions how to treat the dead body, what to be left at the grave, where/when to offer funerary gifts, and how to deal with the ancestors.<sup>470</sup>

We are quite accustomed to thinking of mortuary activities in ancient Mesopotamia inextricably related to religious beliefs and funerary rituals. This may also be true for the ancient Syrian complex societies, where mortuary ritual as a critical element in the ancient funerary practices is less commonly recognized. This study has made us aware the considerable variability in the practice of funerary rituals (activities and expressions) even embedded within the communities of minor political influence in the Euphrates Valley (table 7.1), as opposed to the great centers of power like Ebla and Mari.

In this paper, the most elaborate efforts have tried to reveal the specific archaeological manifestations of funerary rituals performed in the Middle Euphrates region during the third millennium BCE, with the aim of providing some thought for the understanding of behaviors of the living in ancient communities in the face of the death. The issue of the reading and interpretation of ancient funerary rituals is one that pertains to every ancient civilization. But it is only now, when more archaeological or textual data as well as further analysis of data already collected have become available, that we can seriously begin to explore our understanding of the ancient funerary rituals in the light of Syrian facts. The process that emerges from such an exploration might be identical with those that have been hypothesized by me or other scholars, but it might also be significantly different. Either way, an interpretation of funerary rituals relying mainly on the specific archaeological evidence will provide valuable insights into the cognitive world of early urban civilizations emerging in the Middle Euphrates region: it will be confirmed through substantial new data, or it will be modified to some degree.

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<sup>470</sup> e.g., Parker Pearson 1995; Laneri 2007; Schwartz 2007; Stoddart 2007.



<i>Stages</i>	<i>Rituals</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Interpretations</i>
<b>Primary Inhumations</b>	<b>Funerary and Mourning Rituals</b>	in the main tomb chamber/s	whole skeleton/s, toggle-pins, personal ornaments, weapons, other artefacts, animals closely associated with the body, a diversity of PSW vessel forms, ware types of high quality (EBW and MTW), bones/artefacts with burn marks.	interring the body/bodies anatomically intact, “sleeping” position; dressing or wrapping, adornment of the body; to display social status/wealth, provisions for life in the netherworld; a source of food or labor, symbolic role, a component of funeral; to provide the dead with food and drink in the afterlife, vestiges of funerary banquets, ritual pouring of liquids; use of fire for a hygienic/ritual purpose.
<b>Secondary Inhumations</b>	<b>Secondary Burial Rituals</b>	within the graves	disarticulated human bones, human skulls, pot with body parts inside, single clusters of bones and “gifts”, pebbles or ceramics on top of the bones.	selection and removal of certain parts of the skeleton, the skull deliberately separated from the rest of human bones, collection and transportation of the remnants of bones, re-arrangement of the deposited bones and grave goods, cultic objects to prevent the ghosts to come back and haunt the living.
<b>Post-Interment Period</b>	<b>Secondary Ceremonies</b>	in (upper fills) or around the tombs	interments of woman/children, offering pits of weapons, ceramics and animals.	evidence for ritual activities performed after the interments of the individuals within.
	<b>Commemorative Rituals in the communities</b>	attached structures	Cooking Pots, cereals/animals, hearth, plastered pits, limestone basin.	facilities of kispu(m)-celebration involving the cooking, consumption and serving of food, the possibility of libation.
		passages, courtyard, palace, high terrace	large architectural spaces	suitable for sizable ritual events, like gatherings, processions, or some other form of open-air ceremonies.
	<b>Ancestor Veneration</b>	imposing mortuary complex/mound	satellite graves encircling the aboveground monumental tombs	symbols of the long-lasting veneration of elite ancestors, sacred landscape continuously intended for the cult of the dead.
freestanding, massive mortuary mounds		large numbers of groups of individuals, exposed, constantly replastered.	communal and ritual significance, cultic attention also devoted to the “unnamed ancestors”.	

Table 7. 1 Different kinds of ritual activities of the third millennium BCE in the Middle Euphrates region.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Art.	Artefact	ha.	hectare
approx.	approximately	HRSW	Horizontal Reserved-Slip Ware
B.	Building	Ht.	Hight
BEBW	Black Banded Ware	ibid.	cite a source already cited in the preceding footnote
ca.	circa	i. e.	id est
Con.	concentration	LRSW	Late Reserved-Slip Ware
CPW	Cooking Pot Ware	L.	length
CWW	Comb Wash Ware	JT	Jerablus Tahtani
ed./eds.	editor(s)	MM	Mortuary Mound
EBA	Early Bronze Age	MNI	minimum number of individual
EBW	Euphrates Banded Ware	MTW	Metallic Ware
ED	Early Dynastic	OW	Orange Ware
e. g.	for example	PEBW	Plain Euphrates Banded Ware
ERSW	Early Reserved-Slip Ware	PSW	Plain Simple Ware
etc.	et cetera	WM	White Monument
fig(s).	figure(s)	Trans.	translate
GSW	Grey Spiral Ware	Vol(s).	Volume(s)

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