Burying things; practices of cultural disposal at late Neolithic Domuztepe, southeast Turkey

Citation for published version (APA):

Published in:
Remembering and Commemorating the Dead

Citing this paper
Please note that where the full-text provided on Manchester Research Explorer is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Proof version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version.

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Explorer are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Takedown policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please refer to the University of Manchester’s Takedown Procedures [http://man.ac.uk/04Y6Bo] or contact uml.scholarlycommunications@manchester.ac.uk providing relevant details, so we can investigate your claim.

Download date:25. Apr. 2020
REMEMBERING THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST
REMEMBERING THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Recent Contributions from Bioarchaeology and Mortuary Archaeology

EDITED BY

BENJAMIN W. PORTER AND ALEXIS T. BOUTIN

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF COLORADO
Boulder
This book is dedicated to five very cool kids:
Rosey, Eva, and Charlie Harris
&
Quinn and Desmond Jacobs Porter
Contents

List of Figures ix
List of Tables xiii
Acknowledgments xv

1 Introduction: Bringing Out the Dead in the Ancient Near East
   Benjamin W. Porter and Alexis T. Boutin 1

2 Burying Things: Practices of Cultural Disposal at Late Neolithic Domuztepe, Southeast Turkey
   Stuart Campbell, Sarah Whitcher Kansa, Rachel Bichener, and Hannah Lau 27

3 Strange People and Exotic Things: Constructing Akkadian Identity at Kish, Iraq
   William J. Pestle, Christina Torres-Rouff, and Blair Daverman 61

4 Commemorating Disability in Early Dilmun: Ancient and Contemporary Tales from the Peter B. Cornwall Collection
   Alexis T. Boutin and Benjamin W. Porter 97
5 Bioarchaeological Reconstruction of Group Identity at Early Bronze Age Bab edh-Dhra', Jordan 133
  
  Susan Guise Sheridan, Jaime Ullinger, Lesley Gregoricka, and Meredith S. Chesson

6 Identity, Commemoration, and Remembrance in Colonial Encounters: Burials at Tombos during the Egyptian New Kingdom Nubian Empire and Its Aftermath 185
  
  Stuart Tyson Smith and Michele R. Buzon

7 Abandoned Memories: A Cemetery of Forgotten Souls? 217
  
  Gretchen R. Dabbs and Melissa Zabecki

Contributors 251

Index 255
Figures

2.1 Location of Domuztepe, with site plan 29
2.2 The main phases in the Death Pit 32
2.3 Dog cranium from phase 5a of the Death Pit 36
2.4 Looking east along the Red Terrace 41
2.5 Stone bowl with three milk teeth 48
2.6 Painted vessel with the unusual building motif that is frequently found in the Ditch assemblage 50
3.1 Map of Mesopotamia showing location of Kish and plan of the city 66
3.2 Two-dimensional Multidimensional Scaling of positive standardized Mean Measure of Divergence results 79
3.3 Typical A “Cemetery” grave 80
3.4 Pair of copper-alloy clappers 83
3.5 Akkadian-style Mackay Type A vessel from grave A106 84
3.6 Akkadian-style copper-alloy straight pins with pierced shank from grave A104 85
4.1 Peter Cornwall and his hired laborers in front of an unspecified tumulus 104
4.2 A map of the central Gulf region 106
4.3 Medial view of proximal end of 12-1046’s right humerus 110
4.4 Posterior view of articulation of right humerus with scapula at shoulder joint 111
4.5 Anterior photograph and anterior-posterior radiograph of 12-10146’s right femur 111
4.6 A small alabaster juglet
4.7 A cylindrical wheel-thrown ceramic jar (9-4680) associated with individual 12-10146
5.1 Topographic map of Bab edh-Dhra‘ with a map of the Dead Sea Plain
5.2 Tomb configurations at Early Bronze Age Bab edh-Dhra‘, showing schematics of an EBIA multichamber shaft tomb
5.3 Artistic representation of EB II–III charnel house A22
5.4 Adult aging techniques using the Todd Pubic Symphyseal morphology method: (a) % right faces, (b) % left faces, (c) % right faces with combined stages, and (d) % left faces with combined stages; and Cranial Suture Closure; (e) % crania in each stage on the vault; and (f) % closure on the lateral-anterior portion of the skull
6.1 Map of Egypt and Nubia
6.2 King Ramses I and Queen Ahmose-Nefertari
6.3 Scene of a scribal bureau overseen by General Horemheb
6.4 Plan of Tombos
6.5 Ushabti of the Scribe and Priest Ti
6.6 New Kingdom Nubian–style flexed burial
6.7 Pyramid tomb of the scribe and priest Tuy and associated finds
6.8 Plan of the Unit 26 tumulus and burial with items from Unit 27
7.1 General map of Amarna
7.2 Excavation areas of the South Tombs Cemetery
7.3 Burial pits of the Upper Site of the South Tombs Cemetery
7.4 Stick matting coffin typical of the South Tombs Cemetery 230
7.5 Demographic profile of the skeletal remains from the South Tombs Cemetery 237
7.6 Articulated skeletal remains excavated outside of the burial pit 239
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Species distribution by context</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Domuztepe element distribution by taxa</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Evaluated cranial nonmetric traits</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Evaluated dental nonmetric traits</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Standardized MMD values and significances, all traits by mound/area</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Standardized MMD values and significances, significantly varying traits only by mound/area</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Standardized MMD values and significances, all traits by mound/area and sex</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Standardized MMD values and significances, significantly varying traits only by mound/area and sex</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Descriptions of Bab edh-Dhra’ skeletal remains by time period, tomb group, tomb type, and current location as referenced in the published literature</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Measurements of the basilar portion of the (a) occipital bone, (b) femoral length, and (c) width of the ischium for EBIA and II–III Bab edh-Dhra’ subadults</td>
<td>161, 162, 163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>MNI/Pair matching / MLNI calculations for the EB II–III collection using the talus, calcaneus, and proximal femur</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Cranial nonmetric trait frequencies for the EB IA and EB II–III collection by (a) sex, (b) time period, and (c) side</td>
<td>166, 168, 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>MMD values for EB IA and II–III with nineteen comparative sites using metopism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ossicles at lambda, parietal notch bones, ossicles at asterion, and coronal suture ossicles

6.1 Overview of burials at Tombos
ABSTRACT

Human burial is generally treated as a discrete category of behavior, something that is distinctive and unique. While this may be partially true in contemporary Western society, it was not necessarily the case in the past. This chapter seeks to link patterns of human burial with a wider pattern of burial and structured disposal of things, drawing particularly on the archaeological record of late Neolithic Domuztepe in southeast Turkey. Parallels can be observed in the way in which some animal remains were disposed of, particularly striking with dogs and feasting debris, as well as a broader practice of the deliberate burial of certain types of objects. This suggests a new view, both of the meanings attached to the things buried and of the practice of burial itself, which can in turn inform our understanding of the treatment of human remains in this time period and the close ties of commemoration and remembering/forgetting with physical acts of burial. Central to these meanings may be processes through which attachment to place was defined and links to past events were embedded in particular locations within the settlement.

INTRODUCTION

While burial is often assumed to be an action particularly related to the disposal of the human dead, it is not only human bodies that can be buried, and not all bodies need end as a simple burial in the ground. Instead burial can be a much more complex process, involving a series of actions, agents, objects, and contexts. Through a consideration of things that may be
buried, the ways in which burial can take place and sometimes the way in which material is not buried, we shed some light on the extent to which burial in the late Neolithic of the Near East can be considered as a set of interrelated practices. The treatment and burial of human remains certainly relate to ways in which the dead may have been remembered and commemorated (and forgotten and transformed), but they should be understood within a wider set of behaviors through which material culture might be used in the maintenance of cultural memory.

This chapter focuses on northern Mesopotamia; most of the examples are drawn from the first half of the sixth millennium calibrated (cal.) BCE,\(^1\) a period generally referred to as the Halaf. There is a deliberate concentration on material from the site of Domuztepe in southeastern Turkey (Figure 2.1). The richness of this material and our familiarity with it allow us to look at related practices within a more specific time frame and from a single geographical location. However, many of the patterns we identify were typical of a much wider geographical area, and elements can be recognized throughout the seventh and sixth millennia cal. BCE. Although the specific cultural practices would have diverged in different contexts, we believe that they drew on similar motivations and related understandings of the world.

Although archaeological practice has almost always given human remains a distinctive status, the recognition that acts of deposition, including burial, belong within a wider set of behaviors has a long history. Even in 1972, Schiffer argued that “all remains in a site are refuse when uncovered in archaeological context,” including elements deriving from ritual activities (Schiffer 1972:163). A series of studies carried out within British prehistory has drawn on the notion of structured deposition (Richards and Thomas 1984), emphasizing the range of practices through which even the deposition of mundane material might impose meaning on places. Thus, refuse from feasting might be intentionally incorporated into a meaningful landscape (McOmish 1996), anchoring particular activities to a particular place. This is not to deny that burial of culturally generated material may also have utilitarian motivation, and this applies to the burial of human remains as well as more general refuse.

Processes and meaning of deposition ought to be a concern of Near Eastern archaeology, simply because so many sites take the form of classic tells and tepes that are produced through successive phases of deposition. However, we agree with the recent statement that “the social meanings of stratigraphy-making tend not to be critically probed or extensively discussed” (McAnany and Hodder 2009:2). The burial of culture material, especially burial practices that incorporate human remains, is an act embedded in a location and situated
within a wider practice that is constantly covering (and at times uncovering) phases of human activity (Chapman 1997; Steadman 2005). Most of the burials discussed here do not simply concern the excavation of a hole and its subsequent infilling. Instead, burial is a means of incorporating material from the present into other cultural remains from the past. Even the act of digging a pit disturbs earlier deposits. Burial practices of all sorts therefore intersect with other cultural practices, many of which have similar ambiguity between utilitarian and symbolic elements and often relate to issues of time, the past, locality and identity (Campbell 2012).

The link between human burials and wider patterns of depositional activity has been highlighted elsewhere. Shell mounds in the San Francisco Bay area have been seen as deliberate cultural features, where debris from large-scale feasting was used to create prominent middens, whose significance was then enhanced by the burial of both humans and sacred birds (Luby and Gruber 1999). Cheryl Claassen has recently observed similar patterns of human and dog burials associated with Archaic freshwater shell mounds in the Ohio River valley (Claassen 2010). Torres Strait Islanders produced large-scale bone
and shell mounds, the refuse from ceremonial feasting accumulated over long time periods providing a relationship with both the recent and distant past. Associated human and dog teeth do not seem to relate to food remains, but may represent “a form of referencing that helped connect this deposit to various families and households” (McNiven 2013:573). Associations between the burial of feasting refuse and human remains can also been seen in the southern Levant during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period at Kfar HaHoresh (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004).

THE DISPOSAL OF HUMAN REMAINS IN LATE NEOLITHIC NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

There is a wide variety of funerary practices known from the seventh and early sixth millennia cal. BCE in northern Mesopotamia (Akkermans 1989; Campbell 1992; Campbell 2007–8; Hole 1989; Pollock 2011). Simple inhumations do occur, usually crouched and often accompanied by a limited range of grave goods. Some of these occur within settlements, but unlike the earlier Neolithic, they are not usually beneath the floors of houses and were often in open areas within the settlement. Recent excavations at Tell el-Kerkh (Tsuneki 2010; Tsuneki 2011) and Tell Sabi Abyad (Akkermans 2008) have demonstrated the presence of sizable cemeteries during the late Ceramic Neolithic in this region, and the burials on the abandoned mound of Yarim Tepe I (Merpert and Munchaev 1973:108) suggest that they may be an under-recognized feature of the Halaf period as well.

However, there is a wide range of other funerary practices attested from both the Halaf and in the preceding millennium. Individual interments are most common, but group burials are also known, with bodies in a range of positions. Inhumation dominates but cremation also occurs. In some instances, bodies are fully or partially disarticulated, and there are examples of the burial of detached skulls. Grave goods may or may not accompany human remains. Burials may occur within settlements, in abandoned areas of settlements, and outside settlements. Human remains were not always buried; for example, they have been found in architectural contexts at Bouqras (Merrett and Meiklejohn 2007) and Tell Sabi Abyad (Verhoeven 2000). The frequent occurrence of fragmentary human remains documented at Fıstıklı Höyük (Pollock 2011:50) and Sabi Abyad (Aten 1996) may result from the disturbance of earlier burials (Aten 1996:118), but we agree with Susan Pollock (2011:50–51) that they often derive from activities carried out on the dead body prior to, or as an alternative to, burial. Two recent discussions of Halaf burial practices have suggested that
this diversity may actually be a key characteristic (Campbell 2007–8; Pollock 2011). Pollock (2011:47) has drawn attention to the potential for improvisation within individual acts of burial and the idea that “ritual specialists might use the opportunities for creative performance to deliberately enhance the distinctiveness of their own practice in comparison to those of other communities, thereby reinforcing their own authority.”

In this wider cultural setting, it is, therefore, not surprising that Domuztepe also shows a diversity of funerary practice. The most striking example is the funerary activity that took place in and around the so-called Death Pit, and that shows several different treatments of human remains associated with a single context. This complex burial deposit was created over a short timeframe, around 5575 cal. BCE. Portions of a minimum of thirty-five disarticulated individuals were buried in the pit itself, in phases 5a and 6 (Gauld et al. 2012). This was, however, not a simple burial in the sense of being related primarily to the disposal of the bodies. The remains had been highly processed, with extensive, deliberate disarticulation and fragmentation taking place prior to deposition. Patterned blows to the skull, thermal alteration, and human tooth marks suggest that these activities involved killing or sacrifice and some form of cannibalism (Kansa et al. 2009a). Undoubtedly this processing was an important focus through which identities and relationships might be strengthened or severed. It is possible to construct a range of interpretations for the disarticulation and mixing of body parts, ranging from a transformation of the individual dead into more generalized ancestors, to a deliberate destruction of identities, possibly even of a social group.

The Death Pit, however, was more complex than a simple hole in the ground for the disposal of human remains (Figure 2.2). Its earliest phase consists of a complex subdeposit that included large quantities of animal bones (phase 1). The inclusion of cattle bones, in particular, suggests feasting (see below) and points to the importance of the wider rituals through which the Death Pit gained its meaning. The Death Pit also incorporated large quantities of artifacts, particularly in phases 5a and 5b. These included sherds, lithics, stamp seals, and bone tools, which do not seem to be conventional grave goods (Campbell and Healey 2011; Fletcher and Campbell forthcoming). It is far from clear that these items are simply coincidental, incorporated into the Death Pit along with a more general soil matrix. The whole of the Death Pit was finally covered by a thick layer of ash, transported from a fire that took place elsewhere (phase 7), again attesting to the importance of a diverse range of rituals behind the “funerary” deposit itself. Intentional burial of the human dead is certainly part of the story of the Death Pit, but it was only one part.
Phase 1: A scoop was made into the southern face of a terrace. Three or four shallow pits were dug into the base of resulting hollow and each filled with large quantities of articulating animal bones, stones, and pot sherds (shaded).

Phase 2: More material was placed over the pits in the bottom of the larger hollow.

Phase 3: The hollow was then flooded and allowed to dry out, leaving a thick deposit of silt. This may have happened twice.

Phase 4: A small pit was probably cut into the silt lenses and filled with animal bones.

Phase 5a: In the northern part of the Death Pit, animal and human bones, especially the latter, were tightly compacted within a largely pisé-like matrix (shaded). The top of this hard-packed deposit was modeled to create a shallow raised hollow.

Phase 5b: At the same time in the southern part of the Death Pit, more material was deposited, possibly to maintain a level with the hollow created by Phase 5a. This deposit contained abundant animal bones but few human remains.

Phase 6: Further bones, roughly equal proportions of humans and animals, were placed in the base of the raised hollow (shaded).

Phase 7: The entire area of the Death Pit was covered by a thick layer of ash, which probably lay over an area of 10–15m in diameter (hatched). Either at the same time as the ash was deposited or very shortly before the body of a child was placed on the southern edge of the Death Pit.

Figure 2.2. Summary of the main phases in the Death Pit, Domuztepe.
After the primary material was deposited in the Death Pit, it remained a focus of later activity. In part, this is visible in the human remains that were deposited around it, either laid on the surface or buried in shallow pits. These included one inhumation of an adult female laid on its back with tightly flexed legs, and two skulls as well as fragments of skulls, finger bones, and pieces of jaw. However, there was also a pig skull and other nonhuman bones along with a series of ash-filled pits. Other deliberately deposited remains may have been present that we failed to distinguish during excavation from the wider background of artifacts and ecofacts included in the site matrix.

These post–Death Pit deposits emphasize that burial can be a matter of degree. As well as material that was simply placed on the surface and remained visible, some material was probably only covered by a thin layer of soil rather than being deeply buried. The location of the inhumation, in particular, seems to have remained visible with the body perhaps only superficially obscured. The disturbed soil would have been obvious and the grave may have been detectable by other senses; smell in particular may have been significant as the body decomposed (Croucher and Campbell 2009). The site would also have required active monitoring to stop it being disturbed by animals. The shallow covering of soil over the corpse may have been because burial was not intended to be the end of interaction between the living and the dead. Four small pits were subsequently dug in the region of the legs. One of them allowed a femur to be removed and replaced after having been rotated through 180 degrees.

The deposition of fragmentary remains suggests that the remainder of the original whole must have been retained or deposited elsewhere. This may have created important links to other locations (possibly even other Death Pits) or social groups on site (cf. Chapman 2000). While the fragments of human bodies may be most striking, the fragmented nonhuman remains and artifacts may have been equally important, either in defining specific relationships or as indicators of more complex ritual actions that may not have been focused primarily on funerary or ancestral activities at all.

The creation of the Death Pit certainly transformed the use of space in its vicinity. It was marked by two large posts, and subsequently this part of the site changed from being a zone of domestic buildings to one in which there is little evidence of activity for perhaps seventy to eighty years. In changing the nature of the place in which it was situated and even the resonances of movement around the settlement, memories would have been created that had a powerful reconfiguring influence on the living population (Atakuman Eisenstat 2004; Campbell 2007–8). This, however, was not simply the product
of the activities associated with the death of people. It was an association created by a much wider set of events, rituals, objects, and artifacts.

Beyond the Death Pit, there are a number of other contexts in which human remains occur at Domuztepe. There is one possible cluster of inhumations in pits. However, this had been truncated by a later cut, and only two inhumations were preserved to any extent. Both were crouched with heads to the east, and neither was accompanied by grave goods. Another crouched inhumation of a female adult was also found within the Red Terrace (see “The Ditch in the Red Terrace”), although this does not seem to have been in a cut; instead, it was placed on the surface of the terrace and covered by a thin layer of red soil. Another poorly preserved burial of a subadult was found within an earlier phase of the terrace and, elsewhere, a damaged infant burial was excavated under the base of a wall. It seems clear that individual burial of humans within the settlement was an exception. Individual fragments of human bone also regularly occur in more general deposits. The rarity of formal graves at the site strongly suggests that these remains do not simply derive from disturbed burials. These fragmentary remains include occasional complete or near complete skulls and fragments of skulls and jaw bones, as well as other body sections. Occasionally, there are indications of possible curation of human remains. In two cases associated with the Death Pit, fragments of human bone were found within pots, although those pots had ultimately been buried themselves.

These fragmentary remains may have provided links between the living community and buried deposits such as the Death Pit. Parts of bodies may have been buried while other parts were retained either for later disposal or for curation among the living. Equally, the appearance of these fragments in what was excavated as “general deposits” may suggest that that term is misleading. The term is used here to refer to a wide range of deposits that represent primary or secondary refuse, wall collapse, and erosion products. While these might seem to be the routine, meaningless material of site formation, accumulating through random processes, the occurrence of fragmented human remains should alert us to the possibility that these deposits may have carried particular significance and meaning. Site formation was itself a cultural practice.

**BURIAL OF DOGS**

Dog remains in association with buried human bones are often assumed to have belonged to the buried people, but this assumption is simplistic (Morey 2006) and the dog remains at Domuztepe are a case in point. The majority of
the domestic dog specimens identified at Domuztepe come from the Death Pit, where they make up just under 2 percent of the faunal assemblage. Here, dog remains come from all parts of the skeleton, the most complete of which included one almost-complete skull and a complete humerus. Five mandibles and two maxillae also came from the pit and its environs, as well as four paws and a tail from one animal, which probably came from a pelt (Kansa et al. 2009a). The Death Pit contained partial remains of at least six dogs, and evidence for butchery or processing was rare (Bichener in prep).

The initial deposition of dog remains was of the dog pelt, placed into one of the shallow hollows made in the base of the larger pit during phase 1 of the Death Pit (Kansa et al. 2009a). The pelt itself was probably originally wrapped around something, which is no longer preserved. There are several possible interpretations: it could have represented specifically “dog remains,” in the sense of fragmented parts of a dead dog; it could have been a specific piece of material culture, such as clothing; alternatively, it could also have served to bestow a doglike identity on the entity around which it was wrapped. In several respects this is rather similar to the use of fragmentary human remains to manipulate identities and create new meanings and links between different events.

Dog remains occur in a different form in phase 5a of the Death Pit. Significantly, this is the phase with the greatest concentration of fragmentary human remains. It also contained the majority of the dog bones from the Death Pit, and indeed the majority of dog bones from the site as a whole. There were three dog crania (Figure 2.3), a humerus, and four mandibles. After the sealing of the Death Pit, individual dog bones were placed around its periphery in a way that parallels the distribution of human bone fragments in the same area. Here, dogs are represented by isolated elements: mandibles, limb, and foot bones (Kansa et al. 2009a).

Elsewhere on the site, dog remains are very rare. Together with the coincidence of human and dog remains, this suggests that dogs were not common food animals. This is also suggested by fragmentation patterns more comparable to human bones than those of domestic ungulates (Kansa et al. 2009a). A similar observation has been made at contemporary sites, such as Tell Sabi Abyad (Russell 2010). Humans and dogs in the Death Pit tend to be represented by the same body parts, chiefly the head and limbs. Even the methods of dispatch (blow to the side of the head) and butchery (beheading and mandible removal) were strikingly similar (Kansa et al. 2009a). Body part selection may be significant. The head carries the most recognizable features of a person or animal and may
have been selected to either represent individual identity or a specific aspect of an individual identity (Croucher 2010; Fowler 2004; Strathern 1988). Perhaps the dog pelt was important in a similar way, retaining some aspect of identity or acting with a specific agency.

The placement of dogs in the Death Pit may also carry significance. Dogs are mainly placed among the human remains, perhaps suggesting a protective aspect. The dog elements later placed above and around the Death Pit could also be seen as guarding the remains within the pit or, conversely, protecting those still living from danger from the buried material. Certainly the area of the Death Pit subsequently remained distinct from domestic activities, which may suggest that, despite being in the heart of the settlement, burial alone was not sufficient to achieve a distance between the living and the buried.

There is a rich literature attesting to recurrent concepts of dogs guarding boundary zones. Dogs are seen guarding the boundary between the living and the dead, such as the Greek Cerberus or the Vedic Shyma and Sabala (White 1989). Dogs as protective agents appear in mythologies of the ancient world, including the Mesopotamian goddess of healing, Gula (Edrey 2008), the healing dogs of the Greek Asclepius (Day 1984), and the dogs used in purification and healing rituals by the Hittites (Collins 2002). Dogs could also be associated with more general liminal spaces, such as the animals offered to Hecate in Classical Greece (Bevan 1986) or the model dogs placed under thresholds in later Babylonian houses (West 1995). While we cannot claim that a similar
role is demonstrated at Domuztepe, these parallels point to the potential variety and richness in the interpretation of buried deposits. While all the objects in a particular context may have been buried, they may have been attributed to distinct types of symbolism and agency.

BURIAL OF FEASTING REMAINS AND OTHER PROCESSED ANIMAL BONES

Most deposits of animal bones at Domuztepe are consistent with food refuse. Although many of these bones come from midden deposits or from secondary contexts where disposal appears to have been informal, some contexts suggest much more structure in disposal of faunal remains. There has been extensive discussion of the important role that feasting played in prehistoric societies (e.g., Dietler and Hayden 2001; Helwing 2003; Twiss 2008), and where structured deposition has been discussed in other contexts, the remains of food animals often have been found along with human remains. However, teasing out a specific pattern of behavior is more complex.

It is difficult to distinguish the refuse from ritual activities involving food from debris from daily or mundane meals, particularly because the distinction between ritual and mundane is almost always unclear. Every meal involves ritual behaviors and symbolic actions, often referenced and magnified in more formal situations. The challenge lies in distinguishing the symbolic elements of consumption in the archaeological record from the more generalized background of refuse disposal. Thus, and obviously, we must consider not only the food remains but also the nature of the deposit itself. Various criteria mark a deposit as distinctive, where location, context, and modification add symbolic or ritual significance (e.g., Hayden 2001; Helwing 2003). We explore four types of deposit at Domuztepe in order to gain a better understanding of the interplay between food, repeated behaviors, and community participatory events and the way in which they may be represented in the disposal of food remains.

Quotidian Deposits

Faunal remains from mundane, domestic contexts form the basis of our understanding of the quotidian subsistence economy at Domuztepe. We have defined Domuztepe’s quotidian faunal assemblage through the analysis of tens of thousands of specimens, most from primary or secondary refuse deposits from across the site (Kansa et al. 2009b). The quotidian assemblage is dominated by the traditional suite of Near Eastern domesticates: sheep, goats,
pigs, cattle, and, to a considerably lesser extent, dogs (Table 2.1). Ovicaprids (i.e., sheep and goats) dominate the assemblages, and a focus on older sheep suggests nonintensive wool production (Kansa et al. 2009b:909–10). Pigs constitute approximately 25 percent of the assemblage, and cattle remains vary between 21 percent and 28 percent of identified specimens. Fragmentation of the bones of food taxa suggests full carcass processing, and the presence of all body parts indicates onsite butchery (Kansa et al. 2009b). These data from quotidian deposits establish a baseline of the day-to-day exploitation of animals at Domuztepe against which we compare faunal remains from three extraordinary deposits below. The three deposits demonstrate a diversity of feasting behaviors at Domuztepe. Rather than conforming to a single well-defined “feasting signature,” it is the ways that they differ from the quotidian deposits that make them significant.

**The Ditch in the Red Terrace**

The Red Terrace (Figure 2.4) is a striking feature running east-west across the southern part of Domuztepe, and probably only one of several long, linear boundaries that structured activity within the settlement. It has been excavated over a length of 50 m, although its full length may have been closer to 100 m. In excavation, it was marked by a distinctive strip of red soil, 10–15 m wide, although its exact width was altered at several points during its lifetime (an estimated 500–600 years). It was probably maintained through a series of regular refurbishments, perhaps through annual ceremonies carried out by large numbers of people. The Red Terrace acted as a boundary between activity zones. At times, it marked a limit to groups of domestic structures, while at others it demarcated more open areas. It was also the site of distinctive activities, some involving water-related processes such as clay levigation (Campbell 2012:316) and others probably connected to feasting. In particular, we would highlight the repeated occurrence of large ovens throughout the life of the Red Terrace, sometimes occurring in small groups suggesting cooking at a scale considerably beyond the individual household.

There was a secondary feature running for ca. 25 m on the same east-west alignment along the center of the Red Terrace. This was made up of a series of shallow intercutting pits, repeatedly dug along the same alignment. The composite of all these individual shallow pits is what we have loosely termed the “Ditch.” While the terrace as a whole had few finds, the density of archaeological material in these pits points to the deliberate, recurrent disposal of refuse in this area. The practice of repeated small-scale actions aggregating to
Table 2.1 Species distribution by context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxon</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Quotidian NISP</th>
<th>Quotidian %</th>
<th>Death Pit NISP</th>
<th>Death Pit %</th>
<th>Ditch NISP</th>
<th>Ditch %</th>
<th>Op III NISP</th>
<th>Op III %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Bos taurus</em></td>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>1278</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ovis aries, Capra hircus</em></td>
<td>Sheep, Goat</td>
<td>2684</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>1485</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ovis aries</em></td>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Capra hircus</em></td>
<td>Goat</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sus scrofa</em></td>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>1529</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Canis familiaris</em></td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bos taurus cf. primigenius</em></td>
<td>Wild cattle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ovis orientalis, Capra aegagrus</em></td>
<td>Wild sheep, wild goat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ovis orientalis</em></td>
<td>Wild sheep</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Capra aegagrus</em></td>
<td>Wild goat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gazella sp.</em></td>
<td>Gazelle</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cervus elaphus</em></td>
<td>Red deer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dama dama</em></td>
<td>Fallow deer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cervus, Dama</em></td>
<td>Red deer, fallow deer</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Capreolus capreolus</em></td>
<td>Roe deer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sus scrofa</em></td>
<td>Wild boar</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued on next page*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxon</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Quotidian NISP</th>
<th>Quotidian %</th>
<th>Death Pit NISP</th>
<th>Death Pit %</th>
<th>Ditch NISP</th>
<th>Ditch %</th>
<th>Op III NISP</th>
<th>Op III %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equus asinus, Equus hemionus</td>
<td>Wild ass, onager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equus sp.</td>
<td>Equid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canis sp.</td>
<td>Canid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canis sp., Canis lupus</td>
<td>Dog, wolf</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canis aureus</td>
<td>Jackal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martes cf martes</td>
<td>Pine marten</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursus arctos</td>
<td>Brown bear</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulpes vulpes</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panthera pardus</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lepus spp.</td>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castor fiber</td>
<td>Eurasian beaver</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodentia</td>
<td>Rodent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tesudines</td>
<td>Tortoise/turtle</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aves</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatinae</td>
<td>Duck</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6035</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>1995</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>3689</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>352</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.4. Looking east along the Red Terrace, Domuztepe. The Ditch lies between the stone lines in the center of the photograph.
a large-scale archaeological deposit is very similar to the formation of the rest of the Red Terrace. Although most of the individual pits could not be fully distinguished in excavation, we suspect that the Ditch was the product of hundreds of individual acts of digging and deposition.

Much of the refuse in the Ditch is composed of animal bones, which plausibly relate to feasting events. These discrete assemblages seem to have been quickly sealed, with little evidence of gnawing, weathering, or trampling. Although analysis is ongoing, there are some patterns that span the entire Ditch and differ in statistically significant ways from both the quotidian refuse and the other two feasting contexts. These patterns include an increase in the quantity of ovicaprids (65 percent) as compared to all contexts, and a slight decrease in the amount of pig (22.6 percent) relative to the quotidian contexts. What is most striking, however, is the comparative dearth of cattle (10.5 percent of the assemblage) and the lack of dog remains as compared both to the other feasting deposits and to the quotidian deposits. This pattern suggests the participants deliberately chose not to include these animals for the category of events that produced the fill of the Ditch.

Ovicaprid remains are characterized by an overrepresentation of butchery waste (skull and foot bones) and a dearth of the high meat package areas (upper portions of forelimbs and whole hind limbs; Table 2.2). There is a surprising overrepresentation of complete (or nearly complete) lower portion of forelimb bones (radii and ulnae), relative to humeri, femurs, and tibias. The abundance of complete proximal radii and ulnae, and the frequency with which one element can be matched with another, may suggest they were deposited while still bound by soft tissue. These data suggest that the contents of the Ditch may be refuse from meal preparation, and the meaty parts were taken elsewhere.

The Ditch and Red Terrace ovens together seem to represent the remains of repeated episodes of community feast preparation. The butchery refuse from this food preparation was not simply discarded. Instead, it seems to have been incorporated into a special zone within the Red Terrace itself. This could be interpreted in different ways, which need not be mutually exclusive. It may parallel the disposal of the distinctive pottery in the same context, which may have been to control socially powerful materials (Campbell 2010:154). The incorporation of feasting refuse in the Red Terrace may have tied the feasting to a particular location, embedding community memories in a particular place. Or it may have been linked to other meanings of the Red Terrace, perhaps symbolically offering food to a location that may have been deeply linked to the settlement’s past (Campbell 2012). The use of the shallow scoops along
### Table 2.2 Domuztepe element distribution by taxa

#### Sheep/Goat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skeletal Element</th>
<th>Ditch</th>
<th>Ditch</th>
<th>Death Pit</th>
<th>Death Pit</th>
<th>Op III</th>
<th>Op III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scapula</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humerus</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radius</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulna</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacarpal</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femur</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astragalus</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcaneus</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metatarsal</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph. 1</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph. 2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph. 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Cattle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skeletal Element</th>
<th>Ditch</th>
<th>Ditch</th>
<th>Death Pit</th>
<th>Death Pit</th>
<th>Op III</th>
<th>Op III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scapula</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humerus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radius</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulna</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacarpal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astragalus</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcaneus</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metatarsal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph. 1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph. 2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph. 3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued on next page*
the line of the Ditch for the disposal of this type of material lasted for at least 50–100 years. The food preparation and feasting must have been highly structured, made up of ritualized steps that explicitly referenced the many times the same actions had been carried out in the past.

**Operation III**

A second extraordinary deposit comes from the northern part of the site, in Operation III, dating to ca. 5650–5500 cal. BCE. The relevant deposits are at the base of developed soil horizons, so contextual information is poorly preserved. A dense spread of animal bones lay on a discontinuous surface marked by patches of small pebbles, extending over an area of $2.5 \times 1.5$ m. These faunal remains are plausibly the remains of feasting episodes, but we do not know the context in which the feasts took place. Several episodes of dumping of refuse seem to be represented, which strikes a parallel with the Ditch in that these deposits are the products of repeated actions. However, on this occasion, no pits or scoops were dug in which to bury the refuse.
The faunal remains from Operation III show a high occurrence of cattle. Almost half (42.6 percent) of the 352 identified bones come from cattle, and these come from prime-age animals (see Table 2.1). The meaty parts of cattle carcasses (forelimb, hind limb, and back) are overrepresented at the expense of head and foot bones, relating the deposit to consumption rather than to preparation. The cattle bones show a high number of articulations (10 percent, as opposed to 2 percent in the quotidian areas), suggesting quick deposition that was not left open to scavengers. In contrast to the cattle, ovicaprid and pig bones from Operation III reflect a more normal signature, with few articulations (2 percent for ovicaprids and none for pigs) and all body parts present. We would suggest that the cattle remains, in this case, were the distinctive contents and were repeatedly added to a midden that was already accumulating, and each time quickly covered over.

**The Death Pit**

The Death Pit has already been discussed with reference to both human and dog remains. However, there were also processed bones from a minimum of 11 cattle, 21 sheep and goats, and 8 pigs. In essence, evidence of food animals from the Death Pit points to an event potentially involving hundreds of people who butchered, processed, and consumed extremely large amounts of meat over a short timeframe (Kansa et al. 2009a).

Remains from the primary domestic animals occur in all phases of the Death Pit; however, while animal remains are abundant in all phases, they are only strongly associated with human remains in phase 5a and phase 6 (Figure 2.2). Spatial analyses have suggested some clustering with cattle bones more common in the eastern half, pig bones in the Southeast, sheep/goat bones in the North and West, and, as mentioned above, dog bones concentrated in the area where most of the human bones were found. We consider that the phases represent spatially or temporally distinct deposits (Kansa et al. 2009a:table 3b). These patterns may relate to deliberate placement of feasting remains, basket-dumping episodes, or the temporal sequences of activities occurring outside the Death Pit.

The bones (both animal and human) in the Death Pit display evidence for cut marks, fragmentation, and body part representation consistent with the preparation and discard of food debris (Gauld et al. 2012). However, the Death Pit contains a higher relative proportion of cattle and dogs, as well as three times fewer pigs than have been recovered from all non–Death Pit contexts. The cattle bone assemblage reflects culling of a living herd—prime-age
females and their young, as well as one male (Kansa et al. 2009a). The same pattern was observed on wild cattle bones from a similar feasting assemblage at Kfar HaHoresh (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). Regardless of the motivation for its creation, the animal contents of the Death Pit reflect an enormous expense of cattle, whose milk and breeding would be sorely missed. The sheep and goats show a similarly narrow range of ages and a preponderance of females (Kansa et al. 2009a). Articulating elements, which suggest primary deposition, occur for 5 percent of both cattle and sheep/goat specimens, but do not occur at all for pigs. The pig bones found in the Death Pit may thus reflect background “noise” rather than intentional deposition. Their remarkably low occurrence in a site where pork consumption was extremely common points to their intentional exclusion from the Death Pit feasting event(s).

The animal remains in the Death Pit differ in several ways from those recovered from the Ditch and Operation III. They are part of a much more complex set of deposits that were not produced by repeated action. The scale of the feasting was probably much larger. The food refuse is also much more deeply buried. The Ditch deposits were only placed in shallow scoops and must have been disturbed each time a new scoop was dug in the same location, while the deposits in Operation III may have been simply covered over. The depth of burial and degree of separation from the everyday world may suggest different ways in which discard could be managed. The position of the bones in the Death Pit may also suggest a more complex rationale. Many of the animal bones were placed beneath the human remains, suggesting that the deposition of the food refuse in some way prepared the spot for the deposition of the human remains, possibly by drawing on their role in large-scale community feasting. This may be supported by other evidence for the preparation of the Death Pit; it was twice inundated with water immediately before the human bones were deposited (Campbell 2007–8:127).

That structured deposition at Domuztepe seems to be intimately associated with feasting should come as no great surprise, but it does give us important leverage in understanding acts of burial as part of social processes rather than simply as archaeological deposits. At times these may have involved very large numbers of people. Faunal evidence indicates that some of these activities occurred at specific times of the year (Kansa et al. 2009b). We can trace this pattern across different scales, ranging from large, spectacular one-off events such as the Death Pit, through regular, repeated practices that had an important connection to the large-scale structure of the settlement, as in the Ditch, down to less archaeologically visible scales. We should probably see
this pattern extending all the way to everyday acts of consumption. Feasting was a key context in which social relations and interactions would be defined and redefined—and it produced material remains that required careful disposal due to the power and meaning derived from their creation. It is obvious, but still worth noting, that feasting is notable partly because it readily leaves archaeological remains but it may be taken as a proxy for community actions that otherwise leave little trace. Other activities, such as dancing or storytelling, might also be considered but are less visible.

**BURIAL OF OBJECTS**

At both Domuztepe and at other contemporary sites, objects could be buried on their own in ways that are reminiscent of the treatment of human remains. For example, there is a series of finely made small stone pots, often with short spouts, which seem to have been deposited individually in pits shortly before the final abandonment of Domuztepe, ca. 5450 cal. BCE (Campbell 2013). These are isolated finds, and only one has an association with other material remains. In that example, however, three human deciduous teeth were found in the fill of the vessel (Figure 2.5). This find strongly suggests a possible link between the stone pots and people, perhaps marking a particular stage in the development of an individual. Burial in this case might be linked not to death but to the living. Or, put another way, it might be linked to the loss or discard of a dividual aspect of a human identity during the life cycle of a person (Croucher 2012:9–12; Fowler 2004).

The incorporation of artifacts, sometimes fragmentary and possibly originating in refuse or midden material, alongside human remains in the Death Pit has already been noted. These do not seem to have been grave goods in any meaningful sense; they seem to have been objects that, if they were deliberately included in the burial, may have brought their own sets of meanings. Any refuse incorporated in the Death Pit was only selected because the Death Pit was a suitable place of disposal. The refuse may have been created in processes associated with other material in the pit (e.g., feasting). The context may have allowed for the disposal of dangerous material that needed to be contained in some way. Or the refuse may have been necessary to prepare the pit for the remainder of the deposits. It is unlikely that the soil and the apparently broken, mundane artifacts used to construct parts of the Death Pit were randomly selected. They may have come from specific places that brought into being important processes of enchainment, linking different places and contexts together through the associations that were created (Chapman 2000).
Although we tend to prioritize the human remains and consider them the primary feature of the Death Pit, less obvious aspects of the material buried in it may have carried equal importance.

One of the most striking examples of the burial of objects comes from a contemporary site. An exceptional vessel/figurine was found in a pit in the Halaf levels of Yarim Tepe II in north Iraq, broken and associated with
burning (Merpert and Munchaev 1987). It had been treated in a way that is analogous to human funerary treatment, which sometimes also has elements of burial, fragmentation, and burning (Campbell 2008). The removable head was not found with the rest of the pot, a practice that may parallel the special treatment occasionally given to human skulls. It is probable that this vessel/figurine represented a specific mythical or supernatural being and, therefore, possible that its burial was considered the burial of an “individual.” However, nonanthropomorphic objects could be treated in a similar way, including a second vessel/figurine of a pig from Yarim Tepe II.

Some objects may have acquired specific power and agency (Campbell 2010). At Domuztepe, a series of fragmentary pottery vessels from the Ditch were painted with representations of houses, usually in combination with trees and other figurative motifs (Figure 2.6). These designs contrast markedly with the usual geometric patterns on Halaf pottery. The decoration probably carried particular symbolic meanings, perhaps relating to social narratives and mythologies. It is undoubtedly significant that these fragmentary vessels were associated with the remains of food preparation, and they probably had a role in the ritual practices. These were objects with powerful meanings derived from both their design and their use. They needed to be disposed of in particular ways, perhaps to control powers that they were endowed with or perhaps incorporating their associations into the place in which they were buried.

**BURIAL OF ARCHITECTURE AND SOIL**

Architecture is often rebuilt and modified over long periods and, at Domuztepe, we have speculated that buildings were sometimes dismantled and destroyed. This may suggest a structured pattern in which buildings were deliberately forgotten or obscured. Indeed, settlement mounds like tells or tepes might be thought of as settlement systems that constantly obscure their earlier phases by burying them but also convert them into a very visible signal of the continuity between the distant past and the present. Elsewhere the maintenance of architecture played an important role in signaling lineages (Hodder and Pels 2011; McAnany and Hodder 2009). At Domuztepe, houses tend to be relatively short-lived and their incorporation into the matrix of the site fairly rapid, but there are other structures where processes related to burial had a much longer-term role in managing links between the present and the past.

An example of what might be termed continual burial comes not from a building but from the Red Terrace, discussed in a different context above. It
is surprising that the terrace started to be formed at the beginning of the Halaf (ca. 6100 cal. BCE), while we can date its final stages to around 5500 cal. BCE. The processes that maintained the terrace lasted up to six hundred years. Although the depth of deposits that make up the Red Terrace is almost 2 m, it is not a single structure. Instead, it is the product of repeated actions that were maintained over a long time period. The terrace was repeatedly scraped clean and refurbished through the deposition of small quantities of red soil brought from beyond the settlement, probably from soil that had washed off the low hills to the west of the site (Gearey et al. 2011). This constantly obscured previous modifications of the terrace and, over time, buried early phases deep under the surface.

This process of refurbishment and renewal occurred regularly, possibly annually. It seems to be part of a larger process through which meaning was re-created, validated, and reinforced. Crucially, it included mechanisms of burial and deposition that could obscure as well as clarify and remodel. Earlier configurations were covered over, and the layout of walls and ovens reestablished in

Figure 2.6. Painted vessel with the unusual building motif that is frequently found in the Ditch assemblage (digitally restored).
different locations. Earlier phases rarely seem to have been destroyed. Instead, they were buried and incorporated into the steadily accumulating monument. Undoubtedly, this process of change and renewal was an important focal point in the production of memory as well as creating a constant element of ritual practice, against which the rhythm of daily life might be set (Campbell 2012). The process does not seem to have been centrally connected to funerary activities. Two burials within the Red Terrace have already been mentioned, and the Death Pit was ultimately cut into its southern edge, so it could in some way be augmented by the burial of the dead. However, these deposits seem secondary and were only added to the main monument after several hundred years of previous existence.

An even more unexpected example of the power and importance of burial at Domuztepe came to light in 2011 (Campbell and Healey 2012). One of the features cut into the later stages of the Red Terrace was a deep shaft, circular in plan and approximately 1.1 m in diameter, with an original depth of more than 9 m. The bottom of the shaft penetrated the water table. The shaft could have, therefore, functioned as a well. However, it seems only to have been in use for a very short period, perhaps to draw water out for a specific purpose. Even more surprising is that the deposits that had been excavated from the bottom 3.5 m of the shaft appear to have been carefully replaced. The artifactual assemblage within this deepest fill belonged entirely to the earlier Ceramic Neolithic. There was no contamination of the distinctly different material that would have dated to the time at which the shaft was dug. Strata from which such an assemblage could have derived were ca. 6 m below the surface, so an alternative source of an uncontaminated early Ceramic Neolithic assemblage is very unlikely. This strongly suggests that the population who first excavated this “well” shaft into the early Ceramic Neolithic levels recognized the material as something different and set it aside until the shaft was finished; they then buried it where it had come from, almost as though they did not want to disturb their ancestors. Excavation may have had the power to access but also to disturb what was buried, while burial may have had the power to reinstate and control.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Although this analysis draws heavily on the evidence from Domuztepe, contemporary sites suggest similar patterns. While these are often less explicit—due to issues of preservation, excavation or publication—we suggest that burial is an action with widespread cultural significance. This significance is unlikely
to be restricted to the Halaf. For example, parallels with Kfar HaHoresh in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period have already been cited, and there are many echoes of related practices at Çatalhöyük (Hodder and Pels 2011; Meskell et al. 2008; Russell et al. 2009).

Burial, therefore, needs to be reclaimed from being a simple funerary behavior. Burial was a process that could be applied to a wide range of material. Bearing in mind the nuances of context and the interred material, it may be useful to consider burial as a type of transformation that could be applied to culturally significant objects. The transformation might achieve different outcomes, but it was a way of taking socially charged material and changing its relationship with the world. Burial might hide and obscure, aiding in processes of forgetting. It might incorporate material into a place, promoting remembrance and augmenting spatial meanings. It might utilize the properties of a location to control the material that had been buried and to separate the material from the everyday world, perhaps as part of processes through which liminality was defined and maintained. Practical elements would certainly have been a factor too; burial of decomposing material, whether human or animal, is also a hygienic procedure. These different types of transformation were probably not exclusive and are certainly not exhaustive.

It is certainly true that the human body was the focus of attention and special treatment. However, this did not always result in the final burial of a body, and the focus was not unique to the human body. Animals such as dogs could apparently be treated in ways that were very similar to the treatment of humans, including the occasional selection for burial. This may suggest either that dogs could be seen as aspects of the identity of people, living or dead, or were ascribed agency or social personae in themselves (Dwyer and Minnegal 2005; Jones 2009). The selection of some objects, such as the female vessel/figurine at Yarim Tepe I, for burial may also suggest that objects either had agency in their own right or through representation of other beings. Other buried material may have had different cultural associations and power. There is a repeated suggestion that debris associated with the preparation or consumption of food as part of feasting events was given special attention. Placing the debris in the ground may have created a “durable trace of their memory” (Thomas 1999:72), but it could have buried more abstract elements of human social events. Metaphorical links between eating, dying, and memory (Hamilakis 1998) may be extended into parallel processes of burial. These links may be seen in the wider context of societies living in locations where burial of previous settlements was an important element of life.
Burial was probably used to achieve several different aims. In general, it might be thought of as something connected to embedding meaning in places, to practices of remembering and forgetting, as well as investing social capital in specific locations. In part, this is a way of creating and managing the past as part of the present, lived world. This might be particularly relevant when it is associated with fragmentation of bodies and objects, with only parts of the whole being buried, perhaps as a way of enchaining the buried (the past) with the present.

Other meanings might also be attached to the practice of burial. Burial as an action creates a boundary between the buried object and the living world, placing the buried object in a different context hidden from everyday life. Unlike some transformations, burial can be reversed. In some cases at Domuztepe, later excavation allowed subsequent access to the buried object and might have been a way in which that different context could be contacted—perhaps even a way of interacting with the past. Burial can also act as a mechanism through which potent, potentially dangerous material can be contained and controlled. Indeed this interpretation can be applied to decaying rubbish as well as more obviously ritual material (cf. Hill 1996:20–22). However, many of the processes through which artifacts and refuse become socially charged is through their role in a ritual context, whether that is achieved through feasting, ceremonies around death, or other processes.

It is perhaps also useful to consider burial more generally as an action that can sustain many metaphors. Burial is something that naturally occurs in several stages. A pit is dug, objects are placed in it, it is refilled, and perhaps its location marked before it gradually becomes incorporated into the matrix of the site. This cycle permits a rhythm of execution, as well as creating a frame that has both a beginning and an end. Each stage has the potential to be dramatic and filled with symbolism. Pollock’s (2011) recent analysis of Halaf burial practices has drawn on Frederik Barth’s (1987) ethnographic analysis of ritual practices among the Baktaman to emphasize the role of ritual specialists as performers, borrowing and improvising in response to the occasion and their audience rather than following static and homogenous scripts. The act of burial offers attractions to the ritual practitioner as something that draws a diversity of potential symbolism together with a staged process that could help provide structure to a performance, as well as leave a permanent link between place and memory.

While this discussion may have established burial as a process applicable to a range of material, it is useful to bring the discussion back to human remains. Human remains were probably never a simple, unified category in the way that we are familiar with in our contemporary lives. Some bodies were buried
shortly after death, with no apparent processing of the body and no later disturbance. However, this was far from a standard practice during the Halaf. Bodies could be broken up and mixed together. They could probably also be consumed, at least in particular circumstances (Kansa et al. 2009a). We suspect that they had complex identities that could sometimes be unpacked by treatment after death. Some of these aspects of identity may also have been shared by other things, both animals and objects, particularly those generated through powerful cultural processes. So human remains in an archaeological context should not always be thought of as a human body belonging to a specific, self-contained individual. Instead, perhaps they should be considered as part of a culturally created entity—something not inherently different or distinct from other types of socially powerful material. Burial is then something that could be used on some occasions for specific reasons, within a set of creative ritual practices. It was used with intentionality, to transform, to control, to make links to place, to structure ways of remembering or forgetting as well as to fulfill dramatic needs of ritual. It may have gained its meaning and power through its use in multiple contexts. In fact, there may be relatively few instances in which burial was used simply to dispose of human remains. More commonly, it may have been used as an action on a set of culturally significant items that sometimes included human remains.

Reclaiming burial from being a simple shorthand for funerary practice and placing it as a much wider cultural practice does not diminish the importance of the burial of human remains in the prehistoric Near East. Instead, it highlights the extent to which burial is not simply a grave cut or an archaeological feature. It is part of a much richer set of cultural practices that relate to past cosmologies, ritual practices, and ways in which people interacted with their worlds. For archaeologists, of course, burial is a particularly significant act, because it is that action that has often ensured preservation in the archaeological record. Indeed, burial and subsequent excavation also offer modern archaeologists a role in the continued processes of memory and the creation of new links from the present to the past.

NOTES

1. Calibration is required to convert radiocarbon (14C) dates to calendar years.
2. It should be emphasized that we are drawing on a Domuztepe-specific definition of “mundane” practices. Domuztepe exhibits just one example of the continuum of subsistence strategies employed by Neolithic people during the Halaf.
REFERENCES


Tsuneki, Akira. 2010. “A Newly Discovered Neolithic Cemetery at Tell el-Kerkh, Northwest Syria.” In Proceedings of the 6th International Congress on the Archaeology of...


