Between Feasts and Daily Meals

TOWARDS AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF COMMENSAL SPACES

Susan Pollock (ed.)

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COMMENSALITY – EATING AND DRINKING together in a common physical and social setting – is a central element in people's everyday lives. This makes commensality a particularly important theme within which to explore social relations, social reproduction and the working of politics whether in the present or the past.

Archaeological attention has been focused primarily on feasting and other special commensal occasions to the neglect of daily commensality. This volume seeks to redress this imbalance by emphasizing the dynamic relation between feasts and quotidian meals and devoting explicit attention to the micro-politics of *Alltag* ("the everyday") rather than solely to special occasions. Case studies drawing on archaeological (material) as well as written sources range from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age in Western Asia and Greece, Formative to late pre-Columbian communities in Andean South America, and modern Europe.

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Summary

The centrality of commensality – eating and drinking together in a common physical and social setting – in people's everyday lives makes it a particularly important location from which to explore social relations and the working of politics. The recent focus in archaeology and related disciplines on feasting and other special commensal occasions needs to be balanced by attention to daily commensality, in which crucial elements of social reproduction take place. I highlight two particular forms of commensal practices, hospitality and provisioning, that resonate with many of the cases discussed in the papers in this volume. Finally, I point to a largely neglected area of study in archaeology, that of hunger and its implications for the politics of commensality.

Keywords: Archaeology; commensality; co-presence; hospitality; provisioning; daily meals; hunger.

Kommensalität – das gemeinsame Essen und Trinken in einem gemeinsamen physischen und sozialen Rahmen – spielt eine fundamentale Rolle im menschlichen Alltagsleben. Diese zentrale Bedeutung macht Kommensalität zu einem besonders wichtigen Ausgangspunkt für die Erforschung sozialer Beziehungen und politischer Mechanismen. Um die in jüngster Zeit in der Archäologie und verwandten Disziplinen zu beobachtende einseitige Fokussierung auf Feste und andere besondere kommensale Anlässe zu relativieren, sollte der Blick auf Alltagskommensalität gerichtet werden, in deren Rahmen sich entscheidende Prozesse sozialer Reproduktion abspielen. Ich werde zwei besondere Formen von kommensalen Praktiken hervorheben, Gastfreundschaft und die Zuteilung von bzw. Versorgung mit Lebensmitteln ("provisioning"), die in vielen Facetten in den Beiträgen dieses Bandes diskutiert werden. Schließlich erörtere ich den in der Archäologie weitgehend vernachlässigten Forschungsbereich Hunger und dessen Implikationen für die Nutzung von Kommensalität als Machtinstrument.

Keywords: Archäologie; Kommensalität; Co-Präsenz; Gastfreundschaft; Versorgung; tägliche Mahlzeiten; Hunger.

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1 Introduction

Food and food consumption as topics of contemporary popular discourse confront us at every turn. Food stands at the center of many current debates: is there too much or too little, fast food or slow food? Which food is safe to eat: only organic or also genetically engineered crops? How does food become contaminated with dioxin and other carcinogens, and who decides what are the "acceptable" levels of such poisons? Food prices on world markets fluctuate with breathtaking speed, due at least in some measure to speculation on "futures," while riots break out in many places when governments cut subsidies on staples. In a world where (some) people are as hungry for cheap energy and consumer goods as for food, prime agricultural land is rapidly turned over to the production of biofuels in a panicked attempt to counter rising oil prices and the ever more undeniable risks associated with atomic energy. At the same time "fresh" fish are flown half way around the world to appear on the tables of those affluent enough to afford them. Nearly one billion people out of an estimated world population of seven billion are hungry, according to statistics for 2010 compiled by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization; more than 20% of the populations of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Greece, Slovakia and Mexico are considered obese, and the figure for the United States stands at more than 30% (OECD data for 2003: http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/hea_obe-health-obesity). Against this background it is only appropriate that academic research, even in seemingly out-of-the-way fields such as archaeology, has also turned to the study of food.

In certain respects archaeology's interest in food is not new. Long-standing preoccupations with subsistence practices have been particularly closely associated with research on the Neolithic origins of food production – agriculture and animal husbandry. In studies focused on periods following this 'revolutionary' development, food has tended to recede to a shadowy presence in the background, discussed primarily in terms of catchment areas, population sizes, or the technological and social conditions that permitted greater or lesser degrees of 'freedom' from agricultural activities in favor of more specialized forms of craft production. Some researchers have emphasized the nutritional elements of food choice and health outcomes, placing the analytical burden on the individual or the population.[1] Others, including the authors of the papers published here, devote their attention to the intersubjective: the social rather than the biological body, food preparation and consumption as integral aspects of the building and maintenance of community, and symbolic elements of food.[2]

The papers collected in this special theme issue of *eTopoi* are the products of a two-day, international conference held in Berlin on 31 May – 1 June 2010 and sponsored by

1 E. g., Larsen 2006; Ungar 2007.

2 E. g., Elias 1977; Mintz 1996; Dietler and Hayden 2001; Atalay and Hastorf 2006; Twiss 2007.

Topoi.[3] The conference brought together scholars from a range of disciplines, including ancient and modern history, archaeology of Western Asia, South America, and Europe, and Assyriology. Among the themes underscored in the invitation to participants, two played a prominent role in the papers and discussions: foregrounding the central role of commensality in social life and investigating the relationships between feasts and quotidian meals. In this essay I explore these two themes as well as their implications for hospitality, provisioning, and hunger in the past.

2 Commensality

A fundamental element of meals, whether spectacular feasts involving numerous invited guests or humble repasts shared by family members, is commensality. The word derives from the Latin *com* = together with, and *mensa* = table. On the most basic level, commensality is about eating and drinking together, but it is far more than just a physical act: it also comprises the myriad social and political elements entailed in those occasions.

Underpinning commensality is co-presence, the relevance of which is central to an understanding of the sharing that is at the heart of the commensal act. As pointed out by Georg Simmel, people cannot actually share food – what one person has eaten, another cannot.[4] However, by being together in the same space, in both a physical and social sense – in other words being co-present[5] – people share in a different way in alimentary consumption. Acts of shared consumption consist of partaking together of food or drink, while at the same time a separation occurs through the apportionment of food or drink to others. Commensal acts are an integral part of sociality, which must be continually reinforced through practice; the giving and taking of food and drink represent an archetypal form of social practice.[6] From a *physiological* essential for survival of the newborn, the sharing of food becomes transformed into a *social* necessity.

3 The conference forms part of a larger project, "Commensality and Shared Space in the Context of Early State and Urban Development in Mesopotamia and Southwest Iran," that I am conducting within Topoi Area C-III "Acts." I am grateful to Topoi for the financial support and intellectual climate that makes such projects possible. I would particularly like to thank the many staff members at Topoi who helped with the conference organization, most especially Dr. Henrike Simon. I am also grateful to Ms. Jana Eger, Mr. Jannik Korte, and Mr. Kilian Teuwsen for their help with various aspects of conference logistics. I would especially like to express my appreciation to all of the conference participants. In addition to those who have contributed papers for publication, participants included Dr. Liliana Janik and Dr. Astrid Möller, and as discussants Dr. Robin Nadeau, Dr. Sabine Reinhold, and Prof. Joanne Rowland. For critical and constructive comments on this introductory essay, I am indebted to Reinhard Bernbeck and Carolin Jauß.

4 Simmel 1957/1910.

5 Goffman 1963.

6 Därmann 2008.

For Erving Goffman[7] co-presence is an integral part of the routinization of specific social gatherings that are crucial to the existence of social life.[8] Habitual forms of social interactions allow people to deal with each other on the basis of a fundamental, implicit trust. This trust rests, in turn, on the assumption that through some degree of shared experience actors understand enough of each others' actions and motivations to be able to anticipate responses to and outcomes of their participation in a social encounter. This leads to expectations that are based on "common ground" and are seldom contradicted in daily life, hence usually going unnoticed. Routine and trust do not just happen, however; they must be worked on via mundane conversation that often lacks any apparent goal because means and ends of an action coincide.[9] They result as well from a "reflexive self-monitoring"[10] of the minute details of one's own and others' gestures, movements, and body language and from a mutual coordination of interaction that is based on this monitoring.[11]

Conversation as well as extra-linguistic communicative acts are integral elements of co-presence in general and of commensality in particular. Although conversation may range from the apparently banal to highly stereotyped forms of politeness, its role in establishing, reinforcing as well as modifying social relations cannot be underestimated.[12] Coming together around a meal or a drink is not limited to the actual act of consumption; rather, the entire social act, from presentation of food or beverages to the seating and serving order, the utensils used, the setting, time of day, conversation, smells, sounds and tastes[13] all contribute to the perpetuation of as well as changes in social constellations and political relations. They comprise a *fait total social*[14] with ramifications throughout society.

It is exactly at the level of the micro-social and micro-political that commensality plays an essential part. In the same way that the *Alltagsgeschichte* ("history of the everyday") movement in history has drawn attention to the importance of the minutiae of everyday practices in understanding recent history, so, too, can the everyday-ness of commensality contribute to deep time archaeological and historical accounts that begin to unravel the intricate webs by which ordinary people's mundane acts constitute history. Tracking the flow of food and drink as well as the ingredients and the labor that go into producing them offers the potential to chart networks of established and shifting social relations. Through myriad, more or less repetitive acts of quotidian life, culture and social relations are reproduced. In the case of commensality, these acts are framed by the form and content of daily meals as well as their physical and social settings. Out of them comes an (implicit) expectation of stability in social relations.

7 Goffman 1963.
8 Giddens 1984, 72.
9 See also Habermas 1981.
10 Giddens 1984, 78.
11 Lenz 1991.
12 Goffman 1967; Habermas 1981.
13 Sutton 2001; Parker Pearson 2003, 6–7.
14 Mauss 1967/1925.

Alltagsgeschichte is not, however, about the blind repetition of meaningless routines but rather incorporates wider or more restricted *Handlungsräume*, which in turn permit some degree of latitude for experimentation, variation and small acts of subversiveness or *Eigensinn* that ultimately shape history at multiple levels. Practices may often adhere to expectations, but they also always contain the potential for negotiation and change, however incremental, that can ultimately transform them and their contexts in the long run. Histories of daily commensality that link the micro-level with larger-scale political changes remain as yet largely unexplored, but they represent one of the particularly promising possibilities for connecting multiple spheres of life and scales of analysis by drawing on fundamental aspects of labor organization and consumption practices across the political economic spectrum.[15] Similarly, the development of new tastes – for different kinds of foods, ways of preparing them, as well as the contexts in which they are consumed – represents an important and little examined research area, one that is situated at the intersection of micro-practices of food preparation, serving, and eating on the one hand and macro-political and economic shifts on the other. Research that investigates the reproduction of tastes cannot be simply predicated on the assumption that food tastes tend to be conservative. This is clear from even a brief reflection on Bourdieu's study of social distinction,[16] in which he demonstrates how socialization into particular class positions shapes tastes – in food, but also in a wide range of cultural activities – that then take on the *appearance* of being "natural." Studies of tastes must pay equal attention to the possibilities for intended and unintended changes that arise through daily practices associated with commensality.

As the papers in this volume demonstrate quite clearly, the question of who takes part in commensal occasions is highly significant. Whereas daily meals may form around a relatively stable core of participants, special commensal occasions encompass persons who do not usually eat or drink together. Widening the social circle brings with it a variety of other effects. Twiss proposes that commensality involves the "incorporation – embodiment – of social norms" that are ingested together with the food and drink that are consumed. When undertaken in a setting that includes more or different participants than the usual, the act is reinforced by being witnessed and shared by others outside one's regular social circle. This incorporation of social expectations and norms may also take place in a more durable material fashion. The appearance of mass-produced ceramic vessels, initially used for institutional food distribution, in elite as well as non-elite residential contexts at Late Chalcolithic Arslantepe in northern Mesopotamia points to their adoption as part of domestic tableware. With their incorporation into different physical settings came their social connotations as containers for distribution of food in contexts of socioeconomic inequality (D'Anna, Balossi Restelli). Sutton discusses a

15 Pollock 2013.

16 Bourdieu 1984.

related example from modern day Kalymnos,[17] where home-baked bread is taken to the church to be blessed and then distributed to other members of the community, thereby bringing an element of the sacred into the realm of daily life (see also Appadurai for a south Indian example[18]).

Commensality is clearly about creating and reinforcing social relations. The principal question is then, what kinds of social relations and what sorts of occasions? It is to these questions that the literature on food consumption and feasting has much to contribute.

3 Feasts and Daily Meals

In the last 15–20 years as archaeologists have begun to direct serious attention to food consumption, many scholars have become enamored by the issue of feasting.[19] For most scholars the focus on feasting goes hand-in-hand with a rediscovered interest in ritual, understood as a particular form of practice or performance.[20]

Studies of feasting in archaeology have directed attention to the social and political contexts of the consumption of food and drink as well as their roles in fostering and reproducing identities and social relations. In doing so, they draw on the pathbreaking work of cultural anthropologists and historians, including Douglas, Elias, and Appadurai.[21] While this archaeological work has resulted in many fruitful engagements with elements of the "micro-politics"[22] of feasting, it often leads to a one-sided emphasis on the extraordinary to the neglect of everyday commensality. People do not just feast; they also – and much more frequently – take part in quotidian meals that are eaten in the company of particular sets of commensal partners. In the realm of the mundane and ordinary, "gastropolitics"[23] also play a central, if often muted role. Here Foucault's contention that power – and thereby politics – is everywhere is clearly apposite.[24]

It is no small irony that archaeologists, who are particularly well positioned to examine general patterns of quotidian food consumption (*contra* Parker Pearson[25]), have instead devoted their attention primarily to the unusual in the form of feasts. Feasts often produce an array of durable and sometimes spectacular remains that may be easy to identify as the products of special occasions, although as Twiss this volume notes, the archaeological identification of feasts as something other than the ordinary means

17 Sutton 2001, 33–34.
18 Appadurai 1981, 506.
19 Dietler 1996; Dietler and Hayden 2001; Bray 2003; Jones 2007.
20 Bell 1992; Kyriakidis 2007.
21 Douglas 1966; Douglas 1975; Elias 1977; Appadurai 1981.
22 Dietler 2001, 6.
23 Appadurai 1981.
24 Foucault 1980/1976; Foucault 1995/1975.
25 Parker Pearson 2003, 10.

that the more they resemble everyday meals, the less we are likely to be able to distinguish them. "Ordinary" archaeological contexts commonly yield quantities of cooking and serving utensils (in particular pottery) as well as hearths, ovens and food remains in the form of faunal and floral elements. These speak to the multiplicity of situations in which people engaged in the often arduous tasks of acquiring and preparing food, the social contexts in which it was consumed, and the double form of reproduction – of the biological and the social body – that is thereby at stake.

Recentering the mundane and (seemingly) ordinary rather than giving pride of place to the unusual and spectacular harks back to the admonitions of early feminist anthropologists as well as practice theorists and historians pursuing the study of the everyday. Feminist scholars have pointed out that the common tendency to neglect the seemingly unspectacular productive and reproductive labor of women has led to a skewed picture of social and economic relations in the past and underpins the continuing devaluation of women's work in contemporary western societies.[26] In a related fashion scholars concerned with histories of the everyday have drawn attention to the historical relevance of elements of daily life that are often ignored in large-scale, structural histories.[27] Unpacking the 'black box' of domestic labor – to which food preparation and consumption are often assumed to be closely linked – sheds light on those elements of daily life that have been frequently downplayed or ignored in the writing of histories. These are principally the practices and the labor that contribute to social reproduction and thereby to continuities in social life, rather than to the transformative events associated with politics writ large that are often privileged in traditional historical accounts.

One of the principal aims of the Berlin conference was to encourage authors to re-center everyday commensality as an essential element of daily practice. In this way explicit attention is devoted to the micro-politics of *Alltag* ("the everyday") rather than solely to special occasions, and the existence of a fundamental relationship between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' commensality comes to the fore. From a semiotic perspective, the unusual – in this case the feast – must invariably make reference, even if indirectly, to the usual – the everyday meal – if only to allow the feast to distance itself from the ordinary repast.[28] Without the ordinary, it is impossible for something to be extraordinary. Against this background it is clear that studying feasts cannot ignore everyday meals, any more than consumption studies can ignore production. That we nonetheless routinely do so in archaeology may be connected to a long history in Western thought in which eating and drinking have been functionalized as purely physiological necessi-

26 Sacks 1974; Moore 1988; Brumfiel 1991; Watson and Kennedy 1991.

27 Le Roy Ladurie 1993/1975; Ginzburg 2002/1976; Lüdtke 1989; Iggers 1996; Brooks, DeCorse, and Walton 2008.

28 Douglas 1975; see also Dietler 2001, 69; Pollock 2003; Wills and Crown 2004; Twiss 2008, 419; Twiss this volume.

ties, base needs that link us to (other) animals[29] or to the "primitive"[30]. However, such approaches neglect the sociocultural role of tastes (*sensu*)[31] that can never be reduced solely to physiological bases.

3.1 Rethinking Feasts and Daily Meals in Archaeological and Historical Case Studies

Using a wide variety of different case studies and theoretical reflections, the authors in this volume refer to many of the frequently cited characteristics that distinguish feasts from daily meals. In doing so, their focus is often directed to the special and unusual, as an analytical step in distinguishing the usual. Importantly, however, the definition and exploration of forms of everyday commensality play a significant role in the discussions of commensal occasions, in contexts that range from Neolithic Çatalhöyük (Twiss), to Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities in northern Mesopotamia (Balossi Restelli, Kennedy), Late Bronze Age Tell Bazi (Otto), Formative Andean communities in the Lake Titicaca Basin (Hastorf), as well as Neolithic and Bronze Age Greece (Halstead).

The authors identify a wide range of ways in which daily commensal events are distinct from special occasions. These include the kinds and quantities of foods and drink prepared and consumed, the culinary equipment used in different kinds of meals, the settings in which people consumed food and drinks, performative elements such as singing, dancing, or elaborate rhetoric, as well as the participants. Unsurprisingly, the relative importance of these elements varies depending on the specific historical and cultural context.

Different kinds of foods may mark feasts as distinct from daily meals, with meat being a prominent feasting food, for example at Neolithic Çatalhöyük in Turkey (Twiss) and in mid-20th century rural Greece (Halstead), in contrast to a common emphasis on plant products as everyday staples. In the Andean case discussed by Hastorf, it is also the ways in which foods were prepared, in particular the use of boiling versus steaming, that distinguish daily from special meals. Another kind of differentiation is evident at Late Bronze Age Emar in northern Syria (Sallaberger). There bread was a staple, but it was also transformed into a food suitable for religious festivals by creating elaborate types that required substantial investments of labor to prepare. Only certain kinds of foods were appropriate for religious festivals in Emar: in addition to breads, these included beer, fruit, wine, and meat. Whereas onions and garlic were widely eaten and treated as delicacies in other contexts, they were considered impure and hence had no place in temple-based rituals.

29 Lemke 2008, 9.
30 Sutton 2001, 4.
31 Bourdieu 1984; see also Sutton 2001.

Otto notes that at Late Bronze Age Tall Bazi everyday meals tended to be more varied in composition than ritual ones. The former included bread, beer and groats, as well as different kinds of meats (albeit in small quantities), along with shellfish and vegetables. In contrast, ritual offerings at temples were restricted to beef, mutton or goat, bread and beer. Intriguingly, however, the ritual offerings to gods and ancestors that were performed within houses – in the same rooms where the residents ate their meals – consisted of small portions of the same foods and beverages consumed by people in their own meals.

Several authors point to the symbolic importance of drink, often primarily discernible in the form of the vessels used for consuming beverages. The special importance accorded to acts of drinking, in many cases associated with specific kinds of beverages, offers an interesting case in which the most fundamental form of consumption – drinking, without which it is nearly impossible to survive for more than a few days – is elevated into a carefully marked and ritualized practice. Balossi Restelli demonstrates that in the late Neolithic in the northern Levant, it was ritual drinking that helped to connect communities across substantial geographical distances. In Late Neolithic northern Greece, similarly decorated drinking sets consisting of ceramic bowls and jugs are repeatedly found in communities at some distance from one another, suggesting a shared, standardized ceremonial drinking (Halstead). Halstead notes a similar emphasis on drink, in this case in combination with special foods, for palace-based banquets in the Late Bronze Age in Greece.

Although culinary equipment is often considered a key element that differentiates everyday tableware from that used in feasting contexts, some of the studies presented here suggest that this may take unexpected forms. In Late Chalcolithic northern Mesopotamia (D'Anna, Balossi Restelli, and Kennedy) as well as in Late Bronze Age Greece (Halstead), vessels used in feasts consisted of undecorated and often relatively coarse mass-produced bowls that to some extent were also used in daily meals, although these might sometimes be accompanied by finer wares as well. In Tall Bazi culinary equipment in the temple was very similar to that found in everyday use in the houses, but with a somewhat greater tendency to be decorated. Vessels recovered in association with household altars were often unusual in one way or another, thereby expressly indicating the special nature of the offering. In the Formative Period in the Titicaca Basin of Bolivia, Hastorf notes the tendency for burnished and decorated ceramic vessels to be more frequently associated with ceremonial contexts than with domestic spaces where plainer containers were used.

The settings in which different kinds of commensal occasions take place may also be distinctive. In a consideration of late 5th millennium sites in northern Mesopotamia, Kennedy proposes that the standard argument for painted pottery being associated with elites or special commensal occasions should be turned on its head. Instead, he suggests

that fine painted wares were everyday dishes used in domestic contexts, whereas the coarse ware bowls were utilized in cooperative work events involving non-household members. In other words, the more public form of commensality was associated with plain pottery, whereas the more restricted domestic meals employed finer wares.

In Late Bronze Age Greece palaces become the locations for special banquets, with access to and circulation within them carefully controlled, and an accompanying iconography that indicates the existence of a specific "'toasting' etiquette" (Halstead). Structured depositions of animal bones in these palatial sites point to the large-scale butchery of cattle, which would have provided substantial quantities of meat for numerous guests. At Neolithic Çatalhöyük, feasting was spectacularly memorialized in the houses through the display of bucrania (Twiss). This contrasts markedly to the concealment in side rooms of stores of plant foods, which formed the basis of the everyday diet, pointing to a clear distinction among the settings in which feasts and quotidian meals took place.

Feasts may incorporate performative or "dramaturgical elements" (Bray). In Late Bronze Age Emar (Sallaberger), processions of people who brought prepared foods and sacrificial animals to the temple were accompanied by musicians and singers. Musical instruments found in association with a stone *huaca* in the Andean site of Tucume similarly point to the role of music in ritual commensality (Bray). The uses of tobacco at the Middle Formative site of Kala Uyuni, Bolivia (Hastorf) may also have been a way to enhance specific performative aspects of ritual meals. The memorialization of feasts at Çatalhöyük by placing bucrania so that they would have been immediately visible to people entering a house (Twiss) may have been intended to evoke dramatic elements of past feasts or the ways in which food was acquired for them. The prominence of tangible reminders of lavish feasts may be an indication of the importance of memorializing past feasts as a kind of "social storage." Sutton has made a similar argument in terms of witnessing: by talking about a past festive occasion, the good name of the host would thereby be perpetuated.[32]

The emphasis on dramaturgical components of feasts leaves unaddressed questions concerning the performative elements of daily commensality. Following Butler,[33] performances incorporate repetitive acts. These acts, performed in ways that are consistent with specific disciplinary regimes (in the Foucauldian sense), are crucial means by which subjects are constituted. In examining commensal practices it is not enough to focus on elaborate processions and associated rhetoric, dance, and music; rather, we must also explore the performative elements of everyday commensality. These performative acts may range from appropriate forms of conversation during a meal to acquiescing to the ac-

32 Sutton 2001, 45–52.

33 Butler 1990; Butler 1993.

cepted protocols of seating, serving, and table manners. Such quotidian protocols have their own histories that need to be explored.

The question of *who* participates in communal acts is addressed in various ways in the papers assembled here. The number of participants may itself be important, as noted by both Kennedy and Halstead, since a larger-than-usual gathering requires more food, more labor, and more time to orchestrate than the everyday meal. Otto draws attention to the presence of a large communal oven as well as a building seemingly dedicated to brewing, both of which she suggests were used in times of increased demand that could not be satisfied by baking bread and brewing beer in individual households. In these considerations the everyday tends to serve as a backdrop against which the unusual is framed. More direct attention to the labor and material requirements of everyday production is clearly called for, in order to foreground the basis of daily commensality in its own right (see Otto, Twiss, Halstead).

The specific social relations among those taking part in a commensal event form another crucial element in distinguishing the special and the ordinary. Balossi Restelli and Twiss mention encounters that take place beyond the household or outside one's group. D'Anna focuses on the status of being a guest, that is, someone who is not usually present at quotidian commensal events.[34] She demonstrates that a person may be included in or excluded from a commensal event to varying degrees. The Arslantepe temples were not fully closed off to those outside the elite-ritual sphere, as attested by windows located between the entrance room and the main chamber, with the effect that the smell and sights of cooking food may have reached those who were outside. Some of the food may even have been passed out from the temple cooking area to those privileged to be able to wait immediately outside, as hinted at by the presence of some vessels on the window ledges.

Bray suggests that ritual and quotidian commensality are distinguished principally by the types of persons who take part. Daily commensality reproduces social relationships in the domestic context, whereas ritual commensality establishes or reinforces "social relations with external others," thereby turning them into social beings or persons who are then, at least temporarily, brought into one's social circle. In the Andean case she discusses, this transformation involves *huacas* – which may include unaltered things, objects or places in a landscape – which are thereby turned into "other-than-human persons." This "animation" of physical objects is reminiscent of mouth-opening ceremonies in Mesopotamia that served to bring statues of deities or their symbols to life by applying particular substances, such as ghee, in an appropriate ritual context; subsequently the statues were able to eat, drink, and smell.[35] The transformation of non-humans into

34 Barlösius 1999, 191.

35 Walker and Dick 2001/1997.

social persons by means of commensality is similarly implied when commensality takes place with ancestors or deities.

Taking a very different context than the other authors, Shore traces the history of the restaurant in Western Europe. He demonstrates that a particular kind of commensal setting emerged that was at once public but that also, at least in its early history, served as a way to create a specific kind of private sphere. Eating in a restaurant was and is intentionally distinct from everyday meals at home, in terms of location, the protocol of serving and eating, and the particular participants who are present. Nonetheless the early development of restaurants was not about creating a kind of feast but in fact was a way to escape an increasingly oppressive form of commensal ritual at home.

Ultimately, the emphasis on feasting in archaeological and related research has left the unmarked category of daily commensality understudied. As Shore demonstrates, eating at home is not invariably a desideratum characterized by harmonious and straightforward relations. Histories of everyday commensality that do not consign these mundane practices to an unproblematic, unchanging background to the real drama of special feasts remain, for the most part, to be written.

4 Hospitality

Questions about who takes part in commensal occasions are also linked closely to the matter of hospitality: sharing of food and/or drink with those who are not ordinarily one's commensal partners. In this regard, hospitality may be understood as a kind of special commensal occasion beyond the ordinary and the daily.

The invitation by a host(s) to a guest(s) to partake of hospitality appears at first sight to be a straightforward notion, yet it has been the subject of philosophical reflections since at least the writings of Kant. Jacques Derrida has emphasized the relations of power and sovereignty that underline our widely accepted notions and practices of hospitality, which appeal to established customs regarding the definition and behavior of a guest. Except in what he calls pure or unconditional hospitality,[36] a situation Derrida considers to be an unreachable ideal, an offer of hospitality is always both inclusive and exclusive.[37] Even an 'open invitation' to everyone in a village, for example, effectively excludes those who are not part of the broad rubric of village members.

Hospitality is a prototypical Maussian gift.[38] As with other gifts, associated obligations entail not just offering hospitality ("hosting") but also accepting the gift and at

36 Derrida 2001/1997; Borradori 2003, 128–130.

37 Därmann 2008.

38 Mauss 1967/1925; Därmann 2008; *La Revue du M.A.U.S.S.*: http://www.revuedumauss.com.fr/Pages/ABOUT.html#Anchor-49575.

some point reciprocating it – that is, partaking in specific kinds of commensal occasions. To reject proffered hospitality and thereby refuse to engage in commensality is an offense, implying that the potential guest does not wish to uphold social relations with the would-be host.[39] Through this combination of intertwined obligations as well as the myriad variations on inclusion and exclusion, hospitality contributes in important ways to the micro-politics of commensality.

Having accepted an invitation the person who is a guest at someone else's table is obliged to return it by hosting the person who invited her or him. In some cultural contexts, however, those who offer food to others must be of a particular social status in relation to the receivers of the food.[40] That reciprocity in the form of commensality can be made socially, economically, or politically impossible is one of the fundamental bases of hierarchical relations of superiority and inferiority.[41]

Being a guest involves more than the right to observe or even to consume some of what is being served. This is perhaps most evident if one considers people who are physically present at a feast but who are nonetheless not considered guests. These may include those who serve or prepare the meal or musicians and dancers who stage performances, but there are also others who are even less visible around the margins, such as artisans who make tableware and other culinary equipment. Participating in a feast is in this way more than a matter of resources, such as time, labor, and materials: it is also very much a question of perspective. For whom is an event a feast, for whom is it a form of drudgery? To what extent may it be both?

Like commensality more generally, hospitality ranges from the relatively altruistic to the highly competitive, with participation being anything from a special privilege to a foregone conclusion. Even the 'right' to supply provisions for a commensal occasion may be bound up with the social position of the donor and the nature of the event,[42] thereby constructing yet further arenas for negotiation and competition.

4.1 Archaeological Approaches to Hospitality

The papers in this volume demonstrate that exclusion from and inclusion in commensal events need not be absolute categories. As D'Anna argues, some people may be partially excluded: they may be able to see, smell, and hear the sounds of a feast while having only limited access to the food and drink that are partaken by others. The distribution of food in communal spaces within the ritual-administrative sector at Arslantepe but without the possibility of the recipients being able to enter the actual halls of power (in this case, the temples) might be best described as a gesture of hospitality (Balossi Restelli), a "fake"

39 Ito 1985, 311–312.
40 Appadurai 1981.
41 Cf. Mauss 1967/1925.
42 Sallaberger this volume.

inclusion of the populace into an elite sphere rather than the "real thing." In Late Bronze Age Emar the food for specific temple-based festivities was provided by important individuals and institutions: the palace might supply fruit, the city sheep, and the king more sheep, but also cattle and wine, whereas common people furnished their labor to make bread and beer (Sallaberger). By topping up the provisions, the king was, according to Sallaberger, "fulfilling the duties of vertical solidarity, the care by the powerful for the poor, by the patron for his clients." From a less charitable perspective, one might see this as a way of ideologically binding the populace into the service of the elite through participation in community festivals, in which they contributed substantial amounts of labor in return for a share of the food.

Generous hospitality may also be an important way to attract needed labor, as Halstead demonstrates for modern Greece. In an intriguing twist on conventional arguments concerning the beginnings of corvée labor in Mesopotamia, Kennedy proposes that the "flint-scraped" (or Coba) bowls characteristic of the Late Chacolithic 1 period in northern Mesopotamia were not an early development of a ration system but rather were used to distribute food during work feasts. These feasts took place as part of cooperative work events involving labor of non-household members and would have been a way to attract extra labor needed for particular tasks.

5 Provisioning

A consideration of the nuances of hospitality suggests the need for a further distinction among commensal occasions, one that I propose to call "provisioning." Provisioning may be used to refer to occasions that imply specific kinds of asymmetrical relationships among participants. In contrast to those who take part in other forms of commensality, the recipients of provisioning do not consume the food or drink they are given in the same place and/or at the same time as the donor of the provisions. In this way provisioning emphasizes the separation between provisioner and recipient rather than that which they have in common, as well as the act of serving or presenting rather than a shared social space of consumption.[43]

In "downward provisioning" the receiving party *cannot* reciprocate, as happens, for example, in cases of ration distributions. In "upward provisioning" those receiving food or drink *should* not reciprocate or at least not in a direct fashion; here, one can think of offerings of food and drink presented to the gods. What is received in return – supernatural good graces, for example – is an imaginary that cannot be directly equated to

43 I am indebted to Carolin Jauß for drawing my attention to this last point.

what has been given. In contrast to provisioning, reciprocal invitations to commensal occasions may consist, at least in principle, of more or less equivalent meals.

Provisioning may be thought of as a kind of partial or skewed commensality. While acts of provisioning may involve the transfer or sharing of an 'essence' incorporated in the food, drink, or tableware used (see discussion in Section 2, above), it is not equivalent to a situation in which social relations are (re)produced via a sustained face-to-face interaction that takes place while eating and drinking together. By taking home a vessel in which rations were distributed or a piece of the offerings brought to the gods, a substance is transferred. However, there is no *acknowledgment* or *recognition*[44] as a guest, as someone who is thereby entitled not just to the material components of the feast but also to participate actively in the communicative aspects of the occasion. In a meal partaken face-to-face there is always the possibility that social relations will be altered, however slightly. When the other persons are not present, the possibilities of negotiation are more limited; one may repeat habitual actions and thereby uphold existing relations or seek to overturn them (for example, by means of a hunger strike). But the nuanced interplay among those who engage with one another face-to-face is not possible.

5.1 Archaeological Evidence of Provisioning

Downward provisioning is clearly evident in the cases of ration distributions described by Balossi Restelli and D'Anna for 4th millennium northern Mesopotamia. Balossi Restelli proposes that two distinct kinds of commensality arose in the Late Chalcolithic period. One of these continued a pattern of shared consumption by those who were of similar social standing, the other emphasized inequality among participants. The presence of the first coarse, mass-produced bowls is taken as an indication of the distribution of ration allotments in the context of institutional labor (for a different interpretation, see Kennedy). Balossi Restelli argues that these vessels were intended to produce a sense of unity among those who ate from them, while at the same time demonstrating the clear superiority of those who provided the food.

D'Anna contends that the ration system not only provided sustenance for laborers working in institutional contexts but also bridged the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary commensality. Rations were distributed and consumed in repetitive, quotidian rhythms, making them in many ways ordinary, but they were also something distinct from everyday commensality because their distribution and consumption occurred in formalized, institutional contexts.

An intriguing insight into downward provisioning comes from Late Bronze Age palatial feasting in Greece, discussed by Halstead. The palaces provided a luxurious venue and social milieu for large feasts, whereas the actual resources used to conduct

44 Honneth 2005.

the feasts, in the form of food and drink, derived mostly from diverted ration allocations and gifts given to the palace. Most of the feasting equipment consisted of undecorated, mass-produced vessels rather than sumptuous tableware. Halstead suggests that ultimately the palace hosts were able to make a significant net gain from the feasts they hosted, on the basis of the resources they were able to mobilize for them. In addition, if one assumes that only some guests were treated to the most lavish food and finest dishes and that many others had to be satisfied with lesser quality and amounts of food and drink served in mass-produced vessels, then it is a short step to proposing that only the former had direct contact with the host(s). Others may have remained "partial guests," similar to those in late 4th millennium Arslantepe discussed by D'Anna.

Upward provisioning is illustrated in the Emar texts analyzed by Sallaberger as well as through the evidence for offerings to the gods and ancestors at Tall Bazi (Otto). At Emar temples were the focal points of feasts, and it was to them that members of the community brought offerings for specific festivals and from which food was redistributed. Baking bread, brewing beer, and raising sheep all involved substantial investments of labor, which constituted significant, if somewhat hidden parts of the offerings to the temple. Sallaberger suggests that to be appropriate for these ritual occasions, foods and beverages had to be pure, but they also had to require substantial labor to prepare. Presentation of the offerings involved processions to the temple as well as the careful arrangement of cups of wine and joints of meat before the deity. This elaborate and, in part, widely visible presentation offered a marked distinction to everyday meals, which were principally prepared and eaten separately in each house. At contemporary Tall Bazi special vessels used for libations were found in houses in connection with altars and, in some cases, special meat offerings. Otto interprets these as the remains of acts of sharing with the ancestors and gods. It is noteworthy that in temple rituals the gods seem to have received minute quantities of beer in comparison to the amounts that the people who attended the ritual drank.

In the Andes offerings to *huacas* as well as meals and libations for the ancestors (Bray, Hastorf) are other examples of upward provisioning. Here, too, the receiving parties are not directly present and are not expected to reciprocate in kind.

6 The Production of Plenty, Problems of Hunger

A focus on commensality should not lead to the neglect of the production and distribution of food and drink as well as the raw materials out of which they are made. What we eat and drink, with whom, and under what circumstances all presuppose that someone procures, prepares, and serves food. These may be in part the same people who then consume the products, although it is most often the case that there are distinctions

based on age, gender, commensal occasion, social position, and so on. Food preparation in non-industrial and especially agricultural societies is often labor-intensive and time-consuming – something that is all too easy to forget in the contemporary world in which those of us with means can buy almost any kind of food at any time of the year, much of it already processed to a point that its preparation requires limited effort. These issues are of far more than peripheral importance. In addition to the intricacies of cooking on an everyday basis, the preparations for a feast require special planning, extra labor, and greater than average storage capacities (both physical spaces and prepared foods that *can* be stored). The extent to which those partaking of a feast also engage actively in its preparation is a revealing line of enquiry that is often overlooked, especially in archaeological accounts, but which is clearly present in many papers in this volume (Halstead, Hastorf, Kennedy, Sallaberger). In a wide range of cases, from feasting in the Formative Period in the Titicaca Basin (Hastorf) to Late Bronze Age Emar (Sallaberger) and Greece (Halstead), it is clear that large-scale feasting draws heavily on provisions supplied by the populace, who thereby effectively "fund" the occasion through their goods and labor.

When discussing the preparation of feasts but also the consumption of a daily meal, we tend to assume implicitly a condition of plenty or at least of adequate provisions. The flip side of eating, drinking and feasting is, however, hunger, a topic that archaeologists too rarely address.[45] Indeed, we seem to shy away from thinking about hunger. In a discussion of a figurine recently found at Çatalhöyük, which depicts a well-rounded female from the front but a back on which the vertebral column and ribs are clearly visible, Hodder and Meskell propose that it was meant to depict the fleshed and alive body versus the skeleton and death.[46] It could be equally argued, however, that the frontal depiction is that of a well-fed individual, the back a person who is hungry to the point of severe undernourishment. As Hastorf demonstrates in her contribution, isotopic analyses of human skeletal remains can distinguish the extent to which people in the past had access to similar or different kinds of foods. Bioarchaeological studies can also contribute to an understanding of health and disease, both of which are to some degree related to diet. But skeletal studies are not the only avenues for examining hunger in the past. Microstratigraphic and microarchaeological analyses demonstrate the possibilities for investigating the short term, including the fluctuations – whether in weather patterns or politically driven abundance or scarcity – that may have posed frequent risks of not having enough to eat to make it through to the next harvest.[47]

Hunger is not only a physiological issue of under- or malnutrition but a condition that results from and has implications for social relations and the content of social en-

45 But see Parker Pearson 2003, 17–18.

46 Hodder and Meskell 2011, 248.

47 Wright, Miller, and Redding 1980; Wright, Redding, and Pollock 1989; Pollock 2008.

counters. To what extent do people alter their usual commensal routines in situations of hunger? Do feasts and hospitality disappear when stocks of food run low,[48] or do they take on renewed importance? If commensality is a part of the constitution of personhood and reproduction of social relations, does it mean that allowing some people to go hungry amounts to a reduction of their personhood, as it excludes them from the very possibility of participating in fundamental social relations afforded by commensal acts? Many of these questions remain not just unanswered but also unasked in archaeological and other historical research. By continuing to ignore them, we promote a very one-sided view of commensality in the past.

48 Halstead and O'Shea 1989; Wills and Crown 2004, 156.

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Feast, Food and Fodder in Neolithic-Bronze Age Greece. Commensality and the Construction of Value

Summary

This paper explores the relationship between mundane domestic and more formal meals in recent rural Greece, as a prelude to a diachronic examination of the range of commensal behavior through the Neolithic and Bronze Age of the same region. Analysis of recent practices highlights the role of a hierarchy of low- to high-value foods. While Neolithic commensality beyond the household emphasizes equality and collective cohesion, formal commensality takes a strikingly and increasingly diacritical form through the Bronze Age. It is argued that Bronze Age diacritical commensality was part of a broader strategy of elite 'choreography' of social life. A hierarchy of foods, which linked diacritical behavior, labor mobilization and risk buffering, may have played a critical role in driving this trajectory of change.

Keywords: Prehistoric archaeology; Bronze Age archaeology; Greece; feast; food; fodder; Neolithic; Bronze Age; value.

Als Vorarbeit für eine diachrone Untersuchung des Spektrums kommensaler Verhaltensweisen vom Neolithikum bis zur Bronzezeit in Griechenland beschäftigt sich dieser Beitrag mit der Beziehung zwischen einfachen, häuslichen und förmlicheren Mahlzeiten im heutigen ländlichen Griechenland. Die Analyse gegenwärtiger Praktiken unterstreicht die Rolle, die die Hierarchisierung von Nahrungsmitteln spielt, denen mehr oder weniger Wert beigemessen wird. Während im Neolithikum Kommensalität jenseits des Haushalts Gleichheit und kollektive Zusammengehörigkeit betont, nimmt formelle Kommensalität in der Bronzezeit eine in auffälligem und zunehmendem Maße diakritische Form an, die gesellschaftliche Unterschiede betont. Der Beitrag argumentiert, dass die bronzezeitliche diakritische Kommensalität Teil einer umfassenderen Strategie der Elite war, das soziale Leben zu „choreographieren". Dabei kann eine Nahrungsmittelhierarchie, die diakritisches Verhalten, die Mobilisierung von Arbeitskraft sowie Risikoabsicherung miteinander verband, den Verlauf dieser Veränderungen entscheidend vorangetrieben haben.

Keywords: Prähistorische Archäologie Griechenlands; Kommensalität; Fest; Nahrungsmittel; Futter; Neolithikum; Bronzezeit; Wert.

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1 Introduction

This paper explores the relationship between mundane domestic meals and more formal commensal occasions in Neolithic and Bronze Age Greece, and the role of formal commensality in shaping inequalities of status between participants. It first outlines how the recent rural population of Greece used scarce ingredients and culinary elaboration to differentiate between daily meals within the household and commensality on 'special' occasions involving hospitality to 'outsiders.' A related hierarchy of value (fodder for livestock < food for the poor < food for the better-off) played an important role not only in social differentiation, but also in labor mobilisation and in buffering the uncertainties of agriculture, and thereby ensured close linkage between commensal politics and agricultural production. The paper then addresses similar issues for later prehistory, exploring the role of a hierarchy of foods and commensal occasions in legitimizing and also promoting institutionalized social inequality. It is argued that diacritical feasting, richly documented for the 'palatial' later Bronze Age of Greece, developed out of and elaborated on formal commensality in the Neolithic. Key to understanding the causes and significance of this development is the recursive relationship, practical and symbolic, between daily meals and ritual feasts, between low- and high-value foods, and between commensality and agricultural production.

2 Commensality in Recent Rural Greece

This study of commensality in prehistoric Greece begins with discussion of the twentieth century AD, because the recent past offers richer opportunities to investigate both subtle details of commensal provision and the dynamic interplay between the latter and household agricultural strategies. The results of this investigation are applied to the distant past *heuristically*, as a source of questions rather than ready answers about commensal politics in Neolithic and Bronze Age Greece. Some initial clarification is also necessary concerning the scope of the following discussion of commensal practices in recent rural Greece. First, *recent* refers to the mid-twentieth century, a period within

living memory but before widespread domestic refrigeration, so that the range, seasonality and 'shelf-life' of foods were limited by preserving techniques that bear comparison with later prehistory. Secondly, and for similar reasons, the focus is *rural*, because villagers tended to consume what they produced and preserved, with limited access to the more varied foods and tastes available to some urban dwellers. Thirdly, because published folkloric and culinary sources tend to emphasize regional traditions and food for special occasions, first-hand *interviews* with (and, to some extent, participant observation of) elderly villagers are the primary source used to sketch a general model of how daily meals were differentiated from formal commensality. Finally, the focus on *Greece* reflects not imagined culinary continuity from prehistory (although the diet of recent and prehistoric farmers faced similar climatic constraints), but the author's relative familiarity with Greek cuisine.

2.1 Family Meals and Household Hospitality in Rural Greece

The principal staple element of everyday domestic meals within the household was bread, home-baked on a roughly weekly cycle, or bread and rusks (*παξιμάδια*) baked at longer intervals. Depending on region, season and time of day, this was accompanied by relishes such as cooked pulses, cheese, eggs, olives, pickled vegetables, fresh salad, boiled gathered greens, or mushrooms; wine too was often consumed on a daily basis. Poorer households consumed more bread and fewer relishes, while their better-off neighbors enjoyed a more varied diet.

This simple fare was progressively elaborated on more formal occasions, when the household typically played host to a larger social group on a weekly (Sundays), annual (e. g., Easter) and generational (e. g., weddings) timescale. On Sunday, as the day of rest, the household might receive visitors – perhaps relatives from other villages. The main meal on Sunday was often differentiated from that on working days by addition of meat (a chicken or rabbit or preserved pork) or more elaborate cereal foods (perhaps cracked wheat – [*πλιγούρι* = *bulgur*], Cretan [*χόντρο*] – served like a rice *pilaf*; or savory or sweet pies made with thin *fillo* [φύλλο = pastry]). At Easter (and some other annual festivals), households might entertain affinal or ritual kin (e. g., parents-in-law, god-parents, god-children), making a gathering of one or two dozen persons, and differentiated this social occasion by provision of fresh meat (commonly roast lamb or kid) and elaboration of cereal foods (e. g., pies with meat rather than cheese or vegetable filling; wheaten bread, if the daily staple was barley). Weddings might bring together several dozen or even a few hundred relatives, neighbors and friends, and were ideally marked by generous provision of fresh meat (typically roast or boiled sheep or goat) and very elaborate cereal products (e. g., decorated loaves, sweets).

Daily, Sunday, Easter, and wedding meals thus constitute a hierarchy of commensal

occasions, of decreasing frequency and increasing number of participants and social significance. Higher-level occasions combined Goody's 'African' (abundant provision) and 'Eurasian' (*haute cuisine*, with scarce ingredients and elaborate preparation) strategies of commensal celebration.[1] The importance of abundance ('if it is not too much, it will not be enough') is highlighted in Greek commensal practice by leaving food on one's plate to indicate satiation. The most important scarce ingredient was fresh meat, usually roast but sometimes stewed, depending on species and age of animal. Some elaborate forms of preparation, such as heavily decorated wedding loaves or sweets,[2] may have copied urban *haute cuisine*[3]. Others may have been rural refinements: flour for pies passed through a finer sieve than that used in bread-making, to remove more bran; whiter *pilaf* produced by beating moistened grain to strip off the outer surface (in the manner of pearled barley); and 'split' pulses (*φάβα*) hand-milled to remove the outer seed coat, facilitating cooking and digestion (but reducing volume).

2.2 Inequality in Diet and Hospitality

The scale and culinary elaboration of commensality depended not only on the importance of the occasion but also on the means of the host. While better-off farmers fairly regularly ate at least preserved meat (e. g., sausages, pork sealed in fat) for weekday meals, the poorest might not have meat even for major festivals. As one informant recalled of his childhood in an almost landless household in the north Greek village of Assiros, "sometimes an uncle gave us a joint of meat at Christmas or Easter, but much of the time we waited impatiently for the weddings of the big landowners for the chance to eat a little meat." Differences in provision between richer and poorer villagers thus paralleled and cross-cut those between commensal occasions of greater and lesser significance.

As the account from Assiros makes plain, social inequalities in the quantity and variety of food available significantly affected villagers' sense of well-being, with lack of access naturally felt most by those who saw neighbors enjoying prized foods such as meat. Inequalities in the ability of households to offer hospitality also played a significant role in shaping social standing and future economic well-being. As elsewhere in the Christian Mediterranean, many Greek households slaughtered a pig or two in winter and preserved much of its carcass. Informants frequently rationalize this custom in terms of needing meat for unexpected guests: "there were no telephones, so visitors turned up without warning." Likewise, some women kept a small store of ground *bulgur*, dried *fíllo* pastry or home-made pasta so as to provide hospitality to visitors without delay. The quality of hospitality provided was a measure of a household's economic standing and, together with indices such as the clothes worn to church by family members or the

1 Goody 1982.

2 E. g., Psilakis and Psilaki 2001.

3 Cf. Vardaki 2004, 200–201.

appearance of work animals, could be a form of 'credit rating' that influenced marriage, ritual kinship, or commercial alliances. Creating a good impression in hospitality was important, therefore, not only to a household's prestige and social standing, but also to its future economic success.

A well-stocked larder was also important in securing the short- and long-term hired labor essential for large-scale surplus production. Landowners frequently provided daily meals, as well as pay, to seasonal workers from other villages and to long-term farmhands who became temporary household members. Landowners and laborers alike often refer to such provision with the same term ('I feed,' *ταίζω*) as for giving food to children and fodder to livestock. A reputation for 'feeding' well helped secure the best workers: in north Greek Paliambela-Kolindrou, an informant recalled that "we preferred to work for someone who fed well;" a neighbor, brought up in a household that employed two hired hands continuously and others seasonally, recounted how her father "killed two pigs at Christmas and made lots of cheese because we had workers to feed."In this region, the larger landowners were known as *tsorbatzídes* (τσορμπατζήδες – literally, 'soup-makers' in Turkish), because they fed workers well.

2.3 Food and Fodder, Feast and Famine: the Flexible Values of Staple Grains

Domestic production of white flour or 'pearled' bulgur was time-consuming, but also 'wasteful' of staple grains. The amount of bran removed was variable, ranging from perhaps 10% by weight of the milled grain for 'black' bread, through 20–30% for 'white' loaves, to nearly 50% for pies and sweets, so a household of five persons routinely consuming white bread might have sacrificed half or even all the grain requirement of an adult. To put this figure in context, fattening a pig is often said to require as much grain as maintaining an adult human and is also roughly comparable to the amount of grain needed to feed a draught ox engaged in heavy work (although livestock usually received grains of lower value). In practice, bran removed from refined cereal products was not wasted, but used in loaves baked for dogs that guarded livestock or mixed with by-products of the dairy, kitchen, or oil-press to fatten pigs. Routine consumption of white bread would be prohibitively costly, however, for any household not achieving significant overproduction of grain. The processing of cereals thus created a hierarchy of value: bran destined for animal fodder < unrefined grain products for routine human consumption < and refined grain products for consumption on festive occasions or by the relatively wealthy.

A similar hierarchy can be discerned among staple grain species. Of the principal cereals grown in Greece, oats were almost universally regarded as fodder; barley, maize, common millet, and rye variously as fodder or food for the poor; and free-threshing bread or durum wheat and rice as food for human consumption, if not reserved for

special occasions or privileged persons. Likewise, of the pulse crops, common vetch (*Vicia sativa*) and bitter vetch (*V. ervilia*) were almost invariably fodder crops; broad bean (*V. sativa*) and grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus*) of ambiguous status; and lentil (*Lens culinaris*), pea (*Pisum sativum*), chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*), black-eyed bean (*Vigna unguiculata*), and various New World beans (*Phaseolus* spp.) normally destined for humans. This ranking varied geographically. For example, in the semi-arid southeast Aegean, including much of Crete, rainfall is at the margins of viability for growing wheat, consumption of which was often restricted to bread offered in church at Christmas or Easter and to small quantities of groats served largely on special occasions; barley was the staple cereal for much of the rural population and was often too scarce for use as fodder. Einkorn, too, was animal fodder or food of the poor in northern Greece, among refugees from Bulgaria, before its cultivation was abandoned, but (like other glume wheats) it retains high status in a few localities around the Mediterranean through association with valued traditional dishes.[4] Despite such regional and local variability, a hierarchy of grains seems to have been universal, and relative rankings of species were reasonably consistent. In part this reflected the diffusion of cultural preferences, such as for white 'French' bread, the modern product of urban bakers, over dark, homemade 'village' bread. On Crete, this preference extended to growing spring barley, which produced lighter-colored flour than the more reliable and higher-yielding winter barley, as a substitute for wheat in liturgical loaves for Christmas and Easter. These relative rankings also had a practical basis. Free-threshing wheat needed more favorable soil and climatic conditions and was thus harder to grow than the darker cereals; if not highly valued, it would presumably have fallen out of cultivation rapidly. Similarly, pulses primarily destined for human consumption tended to have lighter-colored, thinner, and less toxic seed-coats and so were more appealing (in appearance and digestibility) and less harmful, but also more vulnerable to field- and storage-pests, than their fodder counterparts.

While the grain hierarchy helped differentiate mundane from special meals, its flexible application had additional significance. During the hungry winter of 1941–42, when many urban dwellers died of starvation, some rural inhabitants were reduced to eating fodder crops (e. g., toxic bitter vetch) or previously discarded cereal by-products (bran, even chaff). Others, accustomed only to wheaten bread, ate barley or maize that they normally fed to livestock. Less dramatically, in peacetime, poorer farmers routinely adjusted the grain rations of working cattle, fattening pigs, or breeding and milking sheep and goats, according to availability. After a good harvest, well-fed livestock worked better, put on more fat and produced larger offspring or more milk. After a poor harvest, with ambiguous food/fodder grains diverted to humans, livestock received 'maintenance' rations of straw and pasture. The grain hierarchy made rural food supply more reliable in

4 Ertug 2004; Papa 1996; Peña-Chocarro 1996.

three ways. First, use of low-ranking grains as fodder maintained an incentive to overproduction, even after a run of good years,[5] and thus reduced the risk of scarcity following a bad harvest. Secondly, the loss of face associated with eating low-value grains was a powerful disincentive to consuming them in good times and so undermining their role as safety net in bad times. For example, elderly villagers in Greece can still name the neighbors who resorted to demeaning ingredients for bread in the winter of 1941–42. Thirdly, households in need could exchange modest amounts of high-value grain (or livestock) for larger quantities of low-value staples. For example, in the 1930s in the Cretan village of Aloides, a farmer with a large family and limited land received news that an émigré relative had paid for a quantity of wheat to be available for collection from a merchant in the town. To the bitter disappointment of his children, who longed for white bread, he exchanged the wheat for a substantially larger amount of barley.

Recent rural communities in Greece used scarce ingredients and culinary elaboration to signal commensal occasions of varying cultural and social significance. Foods for special occasions might entail significant investment of labor and also of staple grains – whether in refining the latter (by removing bran or seed coats) or in feeding them to livestock. Generous and elaborate hospitality was thus a source of symbolic capital for the host, an index of economic well-being, and a means of mobilizing labor. A hierarchy of food values also provided a strong cultural incentive to overproduction and, for the less well-off, opportunities to 'trade down' high-value resources for larger quantities of lower-value alternatives and so compensate for any shortage of dietary staples. This hierarchy was thus central to, and strengthened the linkage between, diacritical use of food, inequalities of access to human labor, and buffering of risk to staple resources (Tab. 1). The potential significance of this linkage to prehistoric farmers in Greece, as a means of both stabilising household economies in the short term and promoting social inequality in the long term, is considered at the end of this paper.

5 E. g., Halstead 1990.

Food 'value'	Pulse species	Cereal species	Cereal processing	Cereal product	Animal protein	Consumer status	Commensal occasion	Economic context
high	–	rice	extra-refined white flour	decorated bread, pies	fresh meat	rich	wedding	good year
	pea, lentil	bread wheat	refined flour	'white' bread	preserved meat	middle	Easter	average year
	broad bean	barley, maize	wholemeal flour	'black' bread, rusks	cheese	poor	Sunday	bad year
low	bitter vetch	oat	bran	bran loaves	–	animals	daily	famine

Tab. 1 Relationship between cultural value of foodstuffs, status/wealth of consumers, importance of commensal occasion, and economic context. While relative rankings *vertically within* each column are fairly stable, correlations *horizontally between* columns are much more flexible.

3 Food and Commensality in the Neolithic of Greece

Charred seeds and animal bones from Neolithic sites in Greece are heavily dominated by domesticates (cereal and pulse crops; sheep, goats, cattle and pigs), identifying farming as the basis of human subsistence. Known Early ('EN') and Middle ('MN') Neolithic sites of mid 7th – early 6th millennium BC date occupy fertile lowlands especially in the east-central mainland. Most were small villages (perhaps a few dozen inhabitants), often long-lived and closely spaced, apparently occupied year-round, and so sustainable by small-scale crop husbandry or by large-scale stock husbandry with an emphasis on dairying. The invisibility of these early farmers in the palynological record, however, suggests modest numbers of livestock, as does the predominance of sheep in a wooded environment to which cattle, pigs and goats were better suited. Moreover, slaughter of juvenile and subadult rather than infant males would have maximized availability of meat rather than milk from domestic ruminants, thus limiting their overall productivity in calories. With livestock managed non-intensively and on a modest scale, early Neolithic villagers must overwhelmingly have depended on grain crops.[6] In the Late ('LN') and especially Final ('FN') Neolithic (late 6th–4th millennium BC), habitation proliferated in the semi-arid, agriculturally marginal southeast mainland and Aegean islands, mostly as small 'hamlets' housing perhaps up to two dozen persons. Although such dispersed settlement would have made reliance on livestock more feasible, available mortality evidence again indicates non-intensive 'meat' management, coupled with small-scale and stationary rather than large-scale and seasonally mobile herding, and so favors subsistence dependence primarily on crops.[7] Pathological and stable isotope evidence from LN and FN human skeletal remains, at the village settlement of Makriyalos in the north[8] and at 'marginal' hamlets and caves in the southeast[9] alike, is consistent with dietary dependence on grain. Accordingly, the following discussion assumes that livestock, though important to crop *production* for manure and labor,[10] were secondary to grain crops in contribution to human diet.

3.1 Daily Meals in the Neolithic

Early villages were comprised of houses and huts of variable form, construction and size,[11] but more suited to occupation by something like a nuclear or extended family than a larger social group or single person.[12] Rare examples of well-preserved, burnt

6 Halstead 2006a; Halstead and Isaakidou 2013.
7 Halstead 2008.
8 Triantaphyllou 2001.
9 Papathanasiou 2005.
10 E. g., Halstead 2006a; Isaakidou 2006.
11 E. g., Kotsos and Urem-Kotsou 2006.
12 Cf. Flannery 1972.

destructions in northern Greece and the neighboring northern Balkans have yielded diverse toolkits and evidence of bulk storage compatible with these structures sheltering 'households.'[13] Cooking pots, in small numbers from the MN and more frequent thereafter, are of a size suitable for a small family,[14] suggesting consumption of daily meals at a household level. Given the proposed subsistence reliance on grain, cereal- and pulse-based dishes without meat were probably the norm. Traces of ruminant milk and especially of adipose fat from both ruminants and non-ruminants (presumably pigs), in LN cooking vessels from Makriyalos and Stavroupoli,[15] may represent ingredients added to enhance grain-based dishes rather than milk- or meat-based dishes. Gathered fruits and nuts were also probably added as flavorings, but seasonally, as there is scant archaeobotanical evidence for their storage (even though charring can preserve fruits dried for storage as well as cereal and pulse grains). Daily household meals may not have been memorable sensory experiences.

Although 'domestic' architecture and cooking vessels suggest the organization of much routine social life at a household level, early farmers in Greece also invested heavily in village solidarity: through collective digging of enclosure ditches;[16] through burial practices emphasizing collective over individual identity;[17] and probably through rituals and dress codes defining age- and gender-based social categories.[18] The spatial organisation and material culture of early farming settlements thus imply a long-term and dynamic tension between collective and domestic solidarity. This in turn arguably reflects contradictions between collective responsibility for clearance, fencing, defence (if needed) and occasional redistribution of cultivable land, on the one hand, and household control of the husbandry, storage and consumption of staple crops, on the other.[19] Over time, however, a broad trend is detectable towards more monumental domestic architecture and clearer definition of individual households,[20] and this is paralleled by changes in commensality between households.

3.2 Commensality between Households in the Neolithic

EN-MN hearths are found both inside domestic structures and in intervening open spaces, implying cooking in private and in public, respectively, with the latter more subject to peer pressure to share cooked food. Access to outdoor hearths was progressively limited over time, however, as walls or ditches subdivided some LN villages into small groups of neighboring households and the cooking facilities of some FN and Early

13 Halstead 1995a; Marinova 2007; Crnobrnja, Simic, and Jankovic 2009.
14 Vitelli 1989; Urem-Kotsou 2006; Urem-Kotsou 2009.
15 Urem-Kotsou 2006; Evershed et al. 2008.
16 E. g., Pappa and Besios 1999.
17 Triantaphyllou 2008.
18 Mina 2008.
19 Kotsakis 1999; Kotsakis 2006; Isaakidou 2008; Halstead 2011.
20 E. g., Halstead 1995a; Halstead 2006b; Pappa 2008; Tomkins 2007.

Bronze Age ('EB' – 3rd millennium BC) houses were placed in the privacy of closed domestic yards or even indoor 'kitchen extensions.'[21] The implication that peer pressure to share cooked food was progressively suppressed is consistent with LN evidence for dietary inequality between households and individuals: the former reflected in variation in the types of fat residues (milk, ruminant adipose fat, non-ruminant adipose fat) found in cooking vessels at Makriyalos and Stavroupoli;[22] the latter in indications, from isotopic analysis of human skeletons, of variable animal and plant protein intake at LN Makriyalos.[23] Unfortunately, similar evidence is not yet available for the earlier Neolithic.

Despite the suggested trends toward greater household independence and suppression of food sharing, individual households are inviable in the medium and long term[24] and, throughout the Neolithic, must periodically have depended on neighbors for food, labor, and other forms of support. Commensality widely plays a central role in forging and affirming the bonds of kinship and neighborliness that are mobilized to provide mutual help, so the observed trends in domestic architecture and in the location of cooking facilities should reflect not the curtailment of commensality between households but a change in the basis on which it took place. Diachronic changes in ceramic tableware support this suggestion.

Ceramic vessels were absent at the beginning of the Neolithic, at least at Knossos on Crete, and were scarce through the EN.[25] The main function of these earliest vessels, few (if any) of which were used for cooking or bulk storage, was the presentation and consumption of food and drink.[26] In form and surface finish, many early vessels imitated wooden prototypes,[27] which may have been used for everyday meals, while the scarce ceramic skeuomorphs serviced more formal commensal occasions.[28] Given the greater obligation to share cooked than uncooked (stored) food, it may be significant that 'cooked' (ceramic) rather than 'raw' (wooden) vessels were used in formal commensality. Either way, EN tableware is strikingly uniform in appearance, underlining the equality or collective identity of those bound by commensality.[29]

From the MN onwards, the volume of ceramics discarded was strikingly greater, while cooking and bulk storage vessels progressively made up a significant proportion of the repertoire. Tableware was also much more frequent, however, perhaps now being used also for everyday meals, while a minority of fine and decorated vessels was reserved for more formal commensality. In addition, increasing diversity in the shapes[30] and surface treatments of tableware suggests increasing differentiation of commensal

21 Halstead 1995a.
22 Urem-Kotsou and Kotsakis 2007, 239; Kotsakis et al. 2008.
23 Triantaphyllou 2001, 137–138.
24 Sahlins 1974.
25 E. g., Evans 1973; Vitelli 1989; Tomkins 2007.
26 Vitelli 1989; Urem-Kotsou 2009.
27 Childe 1957; Tomkins 2007.
28 Urem-Kotsou 2009.
29 Kotsakis 2006; Tomkins 2007.
30 Papathanassopoulos 1996, 110–111 fig. 36.

occasions, as perhaps does the diversity of culinary methods implied by LN cooking vessels.[31] MN jars with interiors corroded by storage or transport of an acidic liquid are found widely in Greece and the north Balkans and suggest an important social role for some form of fruit-based or fermented beverage(s).[32] From the early LN in northern Greece, drinking sets, comprising similarly decorated jugs and bowls, suggest that at least some commensal acts involved ceremonial drinking that perhaps took a standardized form,[33] while grape pressings from Dikili Tash identify wine or grape juice as one of the beverages consumed.[34] A few early LN jars coated on the inside with birch tar imply that some liquids were highly valued.[35] Specific beverages cannot be linked to particular vessel types or contexts of consumption, but vessels similar in shape and surface treatment at sites located dozens of kilometers or more apart indicate replication of drinking ceremonies among communities using different forms of tableware for everyday consumption. Such shared customs in turn imply that drinking ceremonies played a role, *inter alia*, in *inter*-communal social intercourse.

If the carcasses of domestic animals were not a major component of Neolithic diet (see above), then meat, like prestigious beverages, may have helped to differentiate important commensal occasions from daily meals. Faunal evidence for timing of slaughter and subsequent carcass processing supports this expectation and adds some important detail. First, most surviving and ageable remains of domestic animals indicate slaughter from the latter part of the first year onwards, with high proportions of sub-adult and young adult deaths;[36] Knossos on Crete illustrates this pattern for all four principal domesticates over the entire Neolithic.[37] The overwhelming majority of animals for which we have evidence was thus killed at an age and carcass size too large for consumption fresh by individual households. Slaughter apparently throughout the year, however, argues against large-scale preservation and storage of meat (only really practicable in the winter months), while traces of butchery and bone fragmentation normally preclude significant wastage of carcasses. By default, carcasses must have been distributed for consumption between multiple households,[38] as bone dispersal at EN-FN Knossos also implies. Here, several excavation units yielded pairs or larger groups of articulating bones that presumably had not been disturbed since discard, but these were exclusively sets of bones not normally separated during butchery (e. g., radius-ulna, phalanx 1–2). Articulating bones routinely separated for cooking or consumption, such as humerus and radius, were not found together, implying that carcasses had been divided and dispersed *before* bone discard.[39] A similar pattern can be inferred on a smaller scale at Revenia-Korinou and Paliambela-Kolindrou, in northern Greece, where EN pit fills have yielded

31 Urem-Kotsou 2006.
32 Loughlin 2010; Urem-Kotsou pers. comm.
33 Urem-Kotsou and Kotsakis (in press).
34 Valamoti, Mangafa, et al. 2007.
35 Urem-Kotsou, Stem, et al. 2002.
36 E. g., Halstead 1996; Halstead and Isaakidou 2013.
37 Isaakidou 2006.
38 Halstead 2007.
39 Isaakidou 2004.

restorable ceramic vessels, again implying low levels of post-depositional disturbance, but no examples of articulating meat-bearing bones. These examples of pre-discard dispersal of carcasses are widely distributed in space and time and arguably represent a fairly general pattern. Moreover, most of the male (and some of the female) domestic animals represented on Neolithic sites could have been slaughtered younger, without significant sacrifice of secondary products, at a size of carcass more amenable to rapid consumption by a single household. Most Neolithic livestock were not only distributed between households for consumption, therefore, but were probably also reared for this purpose.

3.3 Neolithic Commensality: Communal or Regional Feasting?

While consumption of domestic animal carcasses beyond the household was seemingly the norm in the Neolithic, it sometimes involved commensality on a very large scale indeed as at LN Makriyalos I in northern Greece. Unlike the compact 'tell' villages with substantial houses,[40] Makriyalos is a 'flat-extended' settlement, covering 28 ha and characterized by insubstantial domestic architecture (semi-subterranean huts) but heavy collective investment in an enclosure ditch nearly 2 km long.[41] Use of this ditch for initial burial of subsequently scattered human remains highlighted collective identity,[42] while two large quarry pits were refilled with exceptional quantities of commensal debris. Pit 212, the richer of these pits in faunal remains, is discussed here.

The culturally rich basal fill of Pit 212 formed rapidly and, judging from numerous ceramic joins within individual excavation units, did not gradually accumulate elsewhere before secondary deposition in the pit. Accordingly, although the basal fill probably represents consumption over several months (based on ages at death of young livestock), this period is unlikely to exceed a year or two. The pit yielded remains of hundreds of animals (mainly pigs, sheep, cattle and goats) that would have provided a few tens of tons of meat; traces of butchery and of fragmentation for marrow do not suggest significant wastage. Slaughter on this scale, albeit over several months, implies both provision and consumption of animals by a very large social group – perhaps the entire resident community at Makriyalos (the size of which is unknown) or a gathering of the regional population.[43] An appropriate analogy for the commensal activity represented by Pit 212 may be the periodic, inter-communal goat and pig feasts that punctuate multi-annual cycles of herd growth in the highlands of Pakistan[44] and New Guinea[45].

While standardized cooking and serving vessels ostensibly confirm the collective nature of the Pit 212 'feasting cycle,' several hundred unique small cups, many with

40 Kotsakis 1999.
41 Pappa and Besios 1999.
42 Triantaphyllou 2008.
43 Pappa, Halstead, et al. 2004.
44 Parkes 1992.
45 E. g., Rappaport 1968; Sillitoe 2007.

zoomorphic handles perhaps signalling the symbolic importance of meat, highlight a contrasting dimension to such commensality. Likewise, the size of these cooking and serving vessels implies both that food was prepared and consumed in family-sized groups and that most carcasses were distributed between several such groups for cooking and serving.[46] Despite the massive scale of commensality that it represents, therefore, Pit 212 reveals simultaneous appeals to collective and domestic solidarity that exemplify the tensions inherent to Neolithic society.

3.4 Neolithic Commensality: Hosts and Guests

Commensality beyond the household was important enough to Neolithic society in Greece to play a significant role in shaping the development of ceramic tableware and, arguably, the management of livestock. Tableware highlights the role of such social occasions in reinforcing collective solidarity, but also hints at a more divisive dimension. The possibility that commensality promoted competition and inequality between households receives some support from the treatment of domestic animal carcasses.

Analysis of butchery marks on domestic animal bones at several sites, using the same recording and quantification protocols, indicates far less frequent traces of dismembering and filleting in Neolithic than Bronze Age assemblages, even though the switch from stone to metal cutting tools probably favored the opposite outcome.[47] Experiments (and common sense) suggest that butchery marks are more likely to be inflicted in cutting raw than cooked meat. At least in an uncooked state, therefore, Neolithic carcasses seem initially to have been butchered into large parcels of meat. In many if not most cases, these parcels were too big for available cooking pots and were presumably roasted in ovens or pits or next to open fires, incidentally implying that residues of adipose fat found in ceramics indeed result from subsequent use of fat or marrow as flavoring for grain-based dishes. It also implies that much of the distribution of meat, inferred from bone dispersal, took place in cooked form.

The terms under which cooked meat was distributed are difficult, but perhaps not impossible, to disentangle. Differential use of skeletal material as raw materials for tools and ornaments confirms a conceptual distinction in the Neolithic of Greece[48] and the northern Balkans[49] between domestic and wild animals and also, probably, between *small* game (exploited like domesticates) and *large* game.[50] This recalls Ingold's contention[51] that the key distinction between domestic and wild animals is that the former belong to someone. The distribution of *domestic* animal carcasses between households,

46 Pappa, Halstead, et al. 2004; Urem-Kotsou 2006; Urem-Kotsou and Kotsakis 2007.
47 Halstead 2007; Isaakidou 2007.
48 Isaakidou 2003.
49 Choyke 2007.
50 Halstead and Isaakidou 2013.
51 Ingold 1986, 113.

therefore, probably did not take place on the basis of a generalized obligation to share, as among non-storing foragers,[52] but earned prestige for the households or individuals who owned them and imposed an obligation to reciprocate.

In this context, the 'delayed' slaughter of male livestock may have been driven by competitive hospitality between households, with larger carcasses conferring greater prestige. A similar motive probably underlies the fattening of livestock, implied by dental microwear evidence that sheep and goats consumed in the 'feasting cycles' at LN Makriyalos had enjoyed an unusually soft diet in the days preceding slaughter.[53] LN animal dung also indicates consumption by livestock of figs and perhaps cereal grain,[54] although this evidence cannot be related to any particular commensal context. That individual households commemorated large commensal events is implied by *bucrania* (cattle skulls) that had probably adorned house facades[55] at LN Promachon in northern Greece. At MN Paliambela-Kolindrou, however, selective deposition of animal skulls in (or perhaps their display on the edge of) a MN circuit ditch,[56] together with scattered human cranial fragments,[57] suggests emphasis, at least overtly, on a collective rather than domestic social context.

It would be rash to read too much into the apparent contrast between MN Paliambela-Kolindrou and LN Promachon, but a diachronic shift from covert to overt competition would be compatible with indications of growing household independence through the Neolithic (above). Admittedly, there are also indications that asymmetries between provider and recipient of food were played down throughout the Neolithic. First, if cooked meat was indeed dispersed for consumption, this would have limited display by the host to the phase of carcass distribution, without opportunities for further choreography of the host-guest relationship during commensality in the strict sense of both parties eating together. Secondly, ceramic assemblages play down this asymmetry, as is perhaps most evident in the absence of spouts for pouring on Neolithic jugs.[58] Nonetheless, two related aspects of carcass processing may reveal a significant change in commensal politics during the Neolithic. First, EN and perhaps MN faunal assemblages seemingly underwent much heavier *pre-depositional* fragmentation (including fracturing of small sheep and goat phalanges) than those of LN and Bronze Age date. As well as enabling more thorough extraction of within-bone nutrients, this also arguably served to homogenize or mask differences between body parts in nutritional or symbolic value.[59] Secondly, in contrast with wholesale and uniform processing of carcasses at EN Revenia-Korinou and Paliambela-Kolindrou, there is evidence from LN Makriyalos for initial dressing of the carcass, involving removal and separate discard of

52 Barnard and Woodburn 1991.
53 Mainland and Halstead 2005.
54 Valamoti and Charles 2005.
55 Trantalidou and Gkioni 2008.
56 Halstead and Isaakidou 2011.
57 Triantaphyllou 2008.
58 E. g., Urem-Kotsou 2006.
59 Halstead and Isaakidou 2013.

the feet, and from LN Toumba Kremastis-Koiladas for structured deposition of dressed carcasses.[60] Selective treatment of particular body parts and structured deposition of faunal remains are relatively commonplace in FN and Bronze Age assemblages and may have played a significant role in the diacritical use of commensal occasions (see below).

Hints of a shift in the nature of commensal politics, from the earlier to the later Neolithic, are by no means unambiguous, thanks partly to the recent growth of research interest in this subject, and the consequent scarcity of relevant data, and perhaps partly to the 'noisy' and disputed nature of the development of household economies and the related tendency for architecture, portable material culture, and commensal debris to present mixed messages. Nonetheless, three temporal trends, admittedly of varying clarity, arguably point in the same direction. First, architecture and the spatial organisation of settlements suggest that the balance between collective and domestic solidarity shifted gradually through the Neolithic in favor of the latter. Secondly, ceramic tableware indicates progressive differentiation of commensal occasions and so, arguably, a tendency for hospitality to become increasingly *conditional* on social context and the relationship between the parties involved. Thirdly, faunal evidence for carcass processing and discard hints that consumption of animals was attended by greater formality or ceremony in the later Neolithic, with earlier emphasis on equality between consumers giving way to restrained highlighting of inequality among providers.

4 Bronze Age Commensality

A combination of archaeobotanical, palynological, zooarchaeological, and textual evidence shows that the Neolithic repertoire of domesticates was enlarged in the Bronze Age, most strikingly by tree crops (olive, fig, probably walnut, and chestnut), spices, and horses, donkeys, and mules, although there is no evidence that any of these additions made a *quantitatively* significant contribution to Bronze Age diet. The range of securely attested cereal and pulse crops also expanded,[61] with firm archaeobotanical evidence for cultivation of spelt wheat and free-threshing bread wheat particularly notable (see below) given that these displaced the Neolithic glume wheats across much of Europe during the Iron Age. Plant and animal remains from Bronze Age settlements again suggest grain crops and the initial suite of livestock species as the main sources of human nutrition, while the number and size of settlements and lack of specialized 'milk' mortality in domestic ruminants again leave little doubt that grain crops were the dietary mainstay.[62] There is Bronze Age archaeobotanical evidence for preparation of split pulses

60 Tzevelekidi 2011.
61 Valamoti 2007.
62 Halstead 1996.

and of both coarsely ground groats and finely ground flour from cereals.[63] The Neolithic record is too sparse for archaeobotanical demonstration (or rejection) of changes in food preparation techniques. In contrast with bread wheat (first securely documented, if not introduced, in the Bronze Age), however, the staple Neolithic glume wheats (emmer, einkorn, 'new' type) are usually considered better suited for making groats than bread. Stable isotope analyses of human skeletons of Early ('EB'), Middle ('MB') and Late ('LB') Bronze Age date are compatible with higher levels of animal protein intake than in the Neolithic.[64] On present evidence, however, this could equally reflect reduced dietary importance of pulses relative to cereals[65] or increased manuring of staple grain crops[66] or heavier skewing of surviving human remains to a privileged minority.

While collective efforts to assert equality and solidarity perhaps obscured the degree of inequality in Neolithic society, hierarchical distinctions within and between local communities were prominently displayed especially in the 'palatial' later Bronze Age of southern Greece. Macroscopic study of LB human skeletons from the Pylos region has revealed differences between individuals in physical well-being that seem correlated with mortuary evidence (grave type and associated goods) for social status,[67] while stable isotope analysis suggests that elite individuals in Grave Circle A at Mycenae enjoyed very privileged access to animal (including marine) protein.[68] At the other end of the spectrum, palatial texts listing rations to dependent workers suggest a tedious diet of grain, sometimes supplemented with figs and perhaps olives.[69] Overall, however, a strong research bias towards elite contexts means that the diet and daily meals of the many have received far less attention than the ceremonial commensality of the few. Accordingly, this section begins with later Bronze Age 'palatial' banqueting, before attempting to set this in a wider social and chronological context.

4.1 Diacritical Feasting: Palatial Banquets in Late Bronze Age Greece

One function of the architectural complexes known as 'palaces,' in later Bronze Age southern Greece, was as a venue for formal commensality. The evidence is richest and most diverse for the LB (later 2nd millennium BC) Mycenaean 'palaces.' For example, structured deposits of cattle bones at the 'Palace of Nestor,' Pylos, suggest simultaneous

63 Jones and Halstead 1993a; Sarpaki 2001; Valamoti, Samuel, et al. 2008.

64 Ingvarsson-Sundström, M. P. Richards, and Voutsaki 2009; Lagia, Petroutsa, and Manolis 2007; Petroutsa, M. Richards, and Manolis 2007; Petroutsa, M. Richards, Kolonas, et al. 2009; Petroutsa and Manolis 2010; M. Richards and Hedges 2008; M. Richards and Vika 2008; Triantaphyllou 2001; Triantaphyllou et al. 2008; Vika 2011.

65 Triantaphyllou 2001.

66 Bogaard et al. 2007.

67 Schepartz, Miller-Antonio, and Murphy 2009.

68 M. Richards and Hedges 2008.

69 Killen 2004.

slaughter of several large cattle that probably provided sufficient meat to entertain hundreds – if not thousands – of guests.[70] Linear B texts administering palace-organized banquets also indicate slaughter of multiple domestic animals, some fattened for the purpose, and provision of wine and a range of both staple and uncommon foodstuffs,[71] while stores of ceramic tableware confirm that some large-scale commensal events took place at the 'palaces' themselves.[72] The palaces provided a built setting for commensal events that was extremely grand, but with access closely controlled by courtyards, doorways, corridors and partitions,[73] and different categories of guests probably penetrated the complex to different degrees.[74] Inlaid dining furniture was provided probably for a small minority of guests,[75] and rank-specific garments, woven in palatial workshops, may have been distributed as gifts on such occasions.[76] Iconography reveals a 'toasting' etiquette, perhaps known only to higher-status guests,[77] while texts record not only scarce food ingredients but also culinary specialists, who presumably produced elaborate dishes for the few rather than the many.[78] The evidence from MB-early LB (early-mid 2nd millennium BC) Minoan palaces is sparser, but numbers and varieties of drinking vessels again imply provision for differential hospitality to the many and the few,[79] while architecture again provided a grand built setting with intensely graded access. Moreover, intensive and highly distinctive butchery of animal carcasses at the Minoan 'Palace of Minos,' Knossos, may reflect production of elaborate meat dishes, taking advantage of the variety of cooking methods implied by ceramics and iconography.[80]

In short, palatial banquets were carefully choreographed occasions, with built setting, furniture, dinner services, and probably clothing, etiquette and *haute cuisine* playing an active diacritical role. Moreover, the structured deposits of cattle bone at Pylos reflect 'sacrifice' of selected body parts stripped of meat, but (most unusually) not broken to extract marrow, before being burnt. If this ritual treatment represents 'sacrifice,' *sensu stricto*, it implies divine participation in these commensal events and thus divine approval of the highly inegalitarian social relationships that they perform.[81]

4.2 Bronze Age Diacritical Feasting: beyond and before the Palaces

Some of the commensal events recorded in Linear B texts, and thus involving some administrative role for the palace, took place in the modest settings of outlying shrines or

70 Halstead and Isaakidou 2004; Stocker and Davis 2004.
71 Killen 1994; Bendall 2008.
72 E. g., Whitelaw 2001.
73 E. g., Palaima and Wright 1985; Thaler 2006.
74 E. g., Bendall 2004.
75 Killen 1998.
76 Killen 1994.
77 Wright 1996.
78 Isaakidou 2007.
79 Hamilakis 1996; Macdonald and Knappett 2007, 164 fig. 6.1.
80 Isaakidou 2007.
81 Isaakidou, Halstead, et al. 2002; Isaakidou and Halstead 2013.

settlements. The graded access characteristic of palaces was also replicated on a smaller scale in lower-order settlements,[82] hinting that diacritical commensality was quite widespread in LB society, while Linear B texts account for consumption of only a small minority of the animals that must have been culled annually from recorded livestock, implying slaughter on a large scale in non-palatial contexts.[83] Graded access is also evident in a few earlier monumental buildings, notably at EB Lerna[84] but also at FN Mikrothives[85] and perhaps in the LN 'megaron' buildings at Dimini, Sesklo, and Visviki.[86] EB commensality may, as in the palatial context, have highlighted distinctions between different categories of participants, if widespread ceramic skeuomorphs of metal vessels mean that the latter too were used,[87] while jugs with exaggerated spouts that drew attention to the act of pouring arguably emphasized the distinction between host and guest,[88] in stark contrast with Neolithic drinking ceremonies.

The Pylos burnt bone deposits exemplify two aspects of carcass processing – anatomically selective treatment and structured deposition – that are fairly common in the Bronze Age and perhaps FN, but almost unknown in the Neolithic, especially EN and MN (see above, 3.4). *Anatomical selection* ranged from burnt sacrifice of mandible, humerus and femur at LB Pylos, through retention of femurs in domestic or culinary contexts at LB Pevkakia and Mitrou, to use of femurs and metatarsals as raw material for personal items found in funerary contexts in the EB southern Aegean.[89] In sharp contrast with the apparently uniform processing of carcasses in the earlier Neolithic, therefore, anatomically selective treatment played a diacritical role in distinguishing between consumers or contexts of consumption, although the beginnings of such selective treatment may be discernible in carcass dressing and separate discard of feet at LN Makriyalos and Toumba Kremastis-Koiladas. *Structured deposition* included the collection and burial both of selected body parts from several animals, as at LB Pylos, and of the butchered and consumed parts of individual animals, as at LB Knossos, EB Proskynas, and FN Mikrothives. Both forms of structured deposition stand out from the mixed bone refuse that makes up the overwhelming majority of faunal assemblages throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Age in the Aegean and served to highlight the significance of certain acts of consumption. In common with the distinction, evident from LN onwards, between primary carcass dressing and butchery for cooking and consumption, structured deposition helped to emphasize distinct stages in the cycle of slaughter, butchery, cooking, consumption, and discard. Such temporal and perhaps spatial segregation served to ritualize or formalize this cycle, while also enhancing the diacritical potential for restricted categories of people to participate in different stages.

82 E. g., Bendall 2004, 124–126; Thaler 2002.
83 Halstead 1999a.
84 Peperaki 2004.
85 Adrymi-Sismani 2007.
86 Theocharis 1973.
87 Nakou 2007.
88 E. g., Catapoti 2011; Peperaki 2004; Day and Wilson 2004.
89 Isaakidou and Halstead 2013.

4.3 Later Bronze Age Palatial Economies: Feasting and Mobilisation

While Mycenaean palace-sponsored feasting doubtless legitimized elite authority and attracted followers,[90] the palace was not the sole contributor of what was eaten and drunk on such occasions. 'Palatial' feasting consumed a lot of high-value resources provided by outsiders, as indicated by Linear B records of banquet supplies such as fattened livestock from high-and low-ranking individuals and groups or from local administrative entities,[91] and perhaps also reflected in iconographic representations of processions of people bearing gifts or tribute.[92] Even when texts do not specify an outside source, it is not clear whether the palace provided or merely collated and distributed banquet supplies.[93] The contribution of the palace to 'palatial' feasts apparently lay more in the provision of a prestigious venue or celebrity guests than of large quantities of luxury food and drink or high-quality tableware. Guests at the Pylos 'Palace of Nestor' were doubtless impressed by the elite ambience, but most were served in plain, mass-produced *kylikes*, the disposable equivalents of modern plastic cups. Even the grain that the palace allocated for feasts or festivals partly represented rations or payments to persons responsible for preparatory tasks[94] and anyway was overwhelmingly that represented by ideogram *121 (conventionally 'barley'), in the production of which the palace apparently played no part.[95] In sum, although the balance of palatial versus external contributions is difficult to quantify with such a fragmentary and enigmatic textual record, it is likely that the palaces were heavy net beneficiaries of the feasts and associated gift giving that they sponsored. Indeed, as has been argued elsewhere from combined analysis of Linear B texts and other archaeological evidence, 'gift' giving in feasting contexts may have played a major role in palatial resource mobilisation.[96]

The terminology of banquet provision texts implies that at least some such contributions were obligatory, and a broad correlation between status of contributor and size of contribution[97] suggests that such obligations accompanied high status. While contributions from low-ranking individuals perhaps sought palatial favor,[98] rank-specific textiles[99] made by palatial weavers may, if distributed at feasts (there is almost no direct evidence for their disbursement[100]), have conferred or reaffirmed high status. The capacity of the palace for resource mobilisation thus rested partly on its ability to define and confer status positions – with attendant obligations of contributions to palatial feasting. That palatial control of the value of people and things played a central role in mobilisation is underlined by the output of palace-sponsored craft production. While many

90 E. g., Bennet and Davis 1999.
91 Killen 1994; Bendall 2004; Shelmerdine 2008.
92 E. g., Wright 2004.
93 Shelmerdine 2008.
94 Killen 2001; Shelmerdine 2008.
95 Killen 2004.
96 Halstead 1999b; Bennet and Halstead 2014.
97 Shelmerdine 2008, 404.
98 Shelmerdine 2008, 405.
99 Killen 1985, 288 n 47.
100 Killen 1994.

such goods used scarce or exotic raw materials and skilled craftsmanship, high levels of labor specialisation and product standardisation created distinctive value-added artefacts[101] with a 'Palace™'[102] akin to modern 'designer labels.' The capacity of the palace to create value is perhaps clearest in textual evidence for selective use of cereals: *120 'wheat' was normally assigned as rations to groups of female workers; *121 'barley' for banquets, as religious offerings, in rations/payments for festival preparation and as rations to men; and *129 'flour' (of bread wheat?) for banquets, religious offerings and perhaps festivals.[103] Detailed interpretation is obscured by uncertainty as to whether the conventional identifications of *120 and *121 should be reversed[104] and, in either case, whether the wheat in question was free-threshing bread wheat or glume wheat(s) such as emmer and einkorn.[105] The selective use of different cereals, however, in mundane versus elite/religious contexts and in rations to women versus rations to men, recalls the hierarchy of grain values of the recent past and makes clear the potential for contexts of use and exchange to shape the value of things and people. This potential, in turn, was greatly enhanced by the use of material (e. g., graded-access architecture, elaborate décor, specialist craft goods) and non-material (e. g., religious ritual, etiquette, culinary knowledge) culture to distinguish practically and symbolically between different places, times, forms, and cultural contexts of social encounter.

5 Conclusion: Commensality, Inequality, and the Creation of Value

Palatial feasting in the later Bronze Age southern Aegean was highly diacritical, using a variety of material and non-material means to affirm or confer striking differences of status in an ostentatiously hierarchical society. Conversely, surviving evidence of Neolithic (and especially earlier Neolithic) commensality lacks obvious signs of diacritical behavior. As a corollary of this contrast (which somewhat recalls Goody's distinction between 'Eurasian' diacritical *haute cuisine* and 'African' quantitative emphasis on abundant provision), later Bronze Age feasting was arguably an important mechanism for elite mobilization of resources upwards from those of lower rank, whereas Neolithic commensality could involve massive expenditure of food resources, as at LN Makriyalos, with limited evidence that this was transformed into long-term or salient inequalities of status or rights to resources. The basis of later Bronze Age commensal mobilization, it is argued, was the added value that accrued to commensal events and craft goods by association with the palace and ostentatiously elite material culture; Bronze Age elites

101 Killen 1985.
102 Bennet 2008.
103 Killen 2004.
104 Palmer 1992.
105 Halstead 1995b.

exploited their ability to define value regimes as a means of mobilising the material resources and labor on which their privileged position depended. Conversely, Neolithic communities invested considerable food resources in commensal acts of collective solidarity that were orchestrated so as to blur rather than highlight inequalities.

This begs two questions. How were commensal practices transformed from a Neolithic force for collective solidarity and equality to a Bronze Age diacritical arena for upwards mobilization? And did commensality play an active part in this transformation or simply project changing cultural values and social relationships? Part of the answer to both questions is that Neolithic material culture, including that associated with commensality, simultaneously highlighted collective and domestic solidarity, reflecting the tension between these two social scales.[106] The transformation from cohesive Neolithic to divisive Bronze Age commensal practices was thus one of degree rather than kind – although the difference was considerable and had radical political, economic, and ideological consequences.

A second part of the answer is that the LB palaces manipulated value regimes by an elaborate choreography of social life, using material and non-material culture to differentiate the contexts of social encounters, consumption, and exchange. Significantly, architecture (e. g., graded access), tableware (e. g., elaborate spouts), and faunal remains (e. g., structured deposition, anatomically selective treatment) also point to clearly compartmentalized EB and perhaps FN social life, with commensal and other social encounters divided into temporally and spatially distinct stages, perhaps with different groups of participants. Moreover, although evidence for such social engineering is much richer for the Bronze Age and perhaps FN, it is not entirely absent for earlier periods. Scarce EN ceramic tableware imitating wooden prototypes probably identified some commensal occasions as unusually important, while increasing diversity of MN and especially LN tableware and the emergence of 'drinking sets' suggest growing differentiation of commensal occasions, and probably participants, such that obligations of hospitality became increasingly context-specific and thus conditional. LN spatial or temporal segregation of initial carcass dressing from subsequent dismembering and filleting implies modest scope for the differential participation in successive stages of animal consumption that was greatly elaborated in the Bronze Age, while the highlighting of some commensal episodes at LN Toumba Kremastis-Koiladas, by structured deposition of dressed carcasses, presages a practice more widespread in FN and Bronze Age contexts. Finally, there are early hints of differential value of food and drink: LN jars lined with birch tar presumably held a beverage of some value; and the importance of animal symbolism in LN zoomorphic cups, LN display of *bucrania* on house fronts, and perhaps earlier Neolithic zoomorphic figurines (most probably representing cattle) offer emic support for earlier arguments regarding the high cultural importance of meat. Whether or not

106 E. g., Kotsakis 2006; Halstead 2006b; Halstead 2011.

early cereal and pulse crops were valued differentially is more difficult to judge. It seems unlikely that consumers were indifferent to differences between crops in ease of growing and processing or to the contrast between toxic bitter vetch and non-toxic lentil, but such practically based variation in the attractiveness of different grains falls well short of the strong cultural connotations prevalent in the recent (and historical[107]) past and also apparent in the LB texts. Archaeobotanical studies of storage contexts and animal dung are too sparse (and associated methodological problems too great[108]) to determine systematically whether (and when) some grain crops were normally used as human food and others as animal fodder. Nonetheless, a cache of split and perhaps boiled seeds at EB Agios Athanasios[109] and widespread finds of fully cleaned grain in storage contexts at later Neolithic and EB Platia Magoula Zarkou[110] and Mandalo[111] and at LB Mycenae[112] and Assiros Toumba[113] suggest that bitter vetch, an unambiguous *fodder* crop in the recent past, was regarded more favorably in later prehistory. On *present evidence*, therefore, the sharp cultural distinctions between different staple grains, that are evident in the Linear B record, may tentatively be seen as a very 'economical' palatial innovation on the more 'costly' Neolithic strategy of differentiating commensal occasions and perhaps participants by provision of meat and rare beverages.

Bronze Age choreography of social life thus represents an intensification of Neolithic practices. Commensality seemingly played a significant role in *negotiating* the transition from covert to overt social inequality, but may also have actively *promoted* this change. The trend through the Neolithic to clearer household definition will have increased the potential to hoard surplus from good years rather than sharing it with neighbors, but the 'shelf-life' of grain is too short for storage alone to ensure the long-term livelihood of individual households. There will thus have been strong incentives to transform unused surplus: by feeding it to working cattle or adding indigent relatives and neighbors to the domestic workforce, and so securing additional labor for future production; or by hosting a feast that imposed an obligation on participants to reciprocate in kind, with labor or with other forms of support.[114] In bad years, neighbors in need probably welcomed the opportunity to work for a diet of staple grains, but in good times a feast that imposed obligations is more likely to have been attractive if surplus grain had been converted to a higher-value form, such as beer or a fattened carcass. Hints from dental microwear, that livestock slaughtered for major commensal episodes at LN Makriyalos had been fattened on a soft diet, offer support for such conversion of staple grain to a more prestigious form. Attempts by individual households to enhance domestic food security and mobilize labor would thus have provided an important practical

107 Garnsey 1999, 119–122.
108 Jones 1998; Valamoti and Charles 2005.
109 Valamoti, Moniaki, and Karathanou 2011.
110 Jones and Halstead 1993b.
111 Valamoti and Jones 2003.
112 Hillmann 2011.
113 Jones 1987.
114 E. g., Allan 1965; Dietler 2001.

rationale for the increasingly competitive and conditional commensality that can be discerned in the later Neolithic of Greece and would arguably have contributed to the transformation of the overtly egalitarian societies of the Neolithic into the strikingly inegalitarian polities of the later Bronze Age. Underpinning this argument is the observation that, in recent rural Greece (see above), a hierarchy of food values was common to, and a source of linkage between, household strategies of diacritical commensality, labor mobilisation, investment of surplus, and risk buffering. This in turn highlights the need for an approach to commensal *politics* that avoids a false opposition between 'cultural' and 'practical' reasoning,[115] but rather situates the *social* stratagems and *cultural* values of eating and drinking in company within the *economic* practicalities of food production and commensal provisioning.

115 Cf. Dietler and Hayden 2001, 12–16.

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The Complexities of Home Cooking. Public Feasts and Private Meals Inside the Çatalhöyük House

Summary

Feasting is generally a ritualized activity, and faunal and artistic evidence from Neolithic Çatalhöyük in central Anatolia support the symbolic importance and memorialization of feast animals. Both daily meals and feasting were constant presences within the household, suggesting that both were key components of household identity. However, the two phenomena were kept largely spatially segregated within the household. The Çatalhöyük evidence suggests that in the Central Anatolian Neolithic, daily meals and ritualized feasting played different – but both fundamental and arguably complementary – roles in specifically household identities. Both also take the broader community into account in terms of their household uses and placements, but in opposite ways.

Keywords: Near Eastern Archaeology; feasting; domestic meals; households; communality; Çatalhöyük; Neolithic.

Im Allgemeinen ist das Feiern von Festen eine ritualisierte Aktivität. Der Tierknochenbefund sowie künstlerische Zeugnisse der neolithischen Siedlung Çatalhöyük in Zentralanatolien unterstreichen die symbolische Bedeutung von Tieren, die für Feste geschlachtet wurden, sowie ihre Rolle in der Erinnerungskultur. Sowohl tägliche Mahlzeiten als auch Feste waren integrale Bestandteile von Haushalten, was darauf hindeutet, dass beide Schlüsselkomponenten einer dem jeweiligen Haushalt eigenen Identität waren. Jedoch wurden die beiden Phänomene innerhalb des Haushalts räumlich größtenteils getrennt gehalten. Der Befund aus Çatalhöyük legt nahe, dass im Neolithikum in Zentralanatolien tägliche Mahlzeiten und das ritualisierte Feiern von Festen zwar unterschiedliche – jedoch jeweils grundlegende und wohl auch sich ergänzende – Rollen speziell für die Identität von Haushalten spielten. Beide beziehen sich auch auf größere Teile der örtlichen Gemeinschaft, die sich innerhalb der Haushalte materialisieren. In dieser Hinsicht differieren Feste und Alltagsmahlzeiten jedoch stark.

Keywords: Vorderasiatische Archäologie; Verzehr; Feste; häusliche Mahlzeiten; Haushalt; Gemeinschaft; Çatalhöyük; Neolithikum.

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1 Introduction: Feasts and Domestic Consumption

The archaeological literature on food is rich in discussions of the definition of feasting, and of strategies for identifying feasting behavior in the archaeological record. Archaeologists investigate feasting in a tremendous range of cultures, and employ a wide variety of theoretical perspectives and methodologies.[1] However, virtually all of these studies present feasting as a segregated phenomenon, conceptualized both emically and etically as discrete from daily meals. In reality, while feasts are generally consciously distinguished from everyday meals, they are also closely related to such meals in form as well as in meaning: feasts commonly reiterate and enlarge the structure and contents of domestic meals, and the same food symbolism is relevant in both.[2] In other words, feasting is one aspect of a culture's food behavior; it is not an isolated phenomenon. Focusing solely on the *contrasts* between feasts and domestic consumption, therefore, and ignoring potential relationships between them, constitutes artificial isolation of one aspect of cultural behavior. The goal of this paper is to draw feasting and domestic consumption into conversation with each other, in hopes of creating a fuller and more complex view of life at the early agricultural site of Çatalhöyük in Turkey.

2 Feasts and Domestic Consumption at Neolithic Çatalhöyük

Çatalhöyük, a Neolithic 'megasite,' consists of two mounds – East and West – in central Anatolia's Konya Plain. The 13 ha mound of Çatalhöyük East was occupied from the late Aceramic into the Ceramic Neolithic, or ca. 7400–6000 BC calibrated; the later occupation of the West Mound lies beyond the scope of this paper. In the large farming village of the East Mound, small residential groups/families occupied rectilinear mudbrick houses crowded so densely together that they had to be entered through the roof via ladders.[3] Yet despite this extreme proximity, abutting houses lack shared or party

1 See Dietler and Hayden 2001; Wright 2004; Twiss 2008 and references therein.

2 Twiss 2007; Hastorf this volume.

3 Mellaart 1967; Hodder 2007.

walls, and cooking and storage facilities are found in each of them.[4] The site architecture thus suggests a careful balance between communal identity on the one hand, and household independence on the other. Additional data indicative of this balance include on the one hand a dearth of contemporary sites in the area, suggesting the social importance of communal living even at the megascale,[5] and on the other a total absence of communal buildings. These assorted data suggest a complex relationship between household and broader community, with independent households maintaining their individual identities even as they crowd themselves together in tight association.

Food offers a rewarding avenue for examining this complex relationship, because food activities are conducted primarily within basal social units: people farm, cook, and eat with those people who are most important in their lives.[6] Examining scales of food practice – household-level and community-level – can thus provide insight into the relative socioeconomic prominence of different scales of social interaction. It can also inform as to the articulation of these different scales of interaction.[7] This paper explores the interaction between domestic food storage and preparation and broader commensality, specifically feasts involving neighborhoods, kin groups, or potentially even the entire community.

To investigate domestic meals and feasting practices at Çatalhöyük, I use a variety of data sets: plant and animal remains deriving from the culinary processing and discard of plants and animals, architectural and artifactual evidence of food storage, and artistic representations of food animals. Particular attention is paid to burnt houses containing *in situ* plant/animal remains, which provide not only the architectural data retrievable from all structures, but also inform about emic placement of food stores and food residues. I acknowledge the possibility that primary deposits in burnt buildings reflect deliberate abandonment behavior rather than habitual practice. However, the composition and spatial patterning of ecofactual remains apparent in some of Çatalhöyük's burnt structures strongly suggests unintentional deposition and can be taken as a plausible reflection of actual practice.[8]

2.1 Evidence for Domestic Consumption at Çatalhöyük

Direct evidence for domestic *plant food* preparation – which is presumably closely related to the scale of consumption – comes from a series of *in situ* charred lenses deriving from individual plant processing events.[9] Recently excavated examples of such lenses were found not only in small, discrete firespots in midden areas, but also in what appears

4 E. g., Hodder and Cessford 2004.
5 Baird 2006; Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.
6 See also Bray this volume.
7 See also Otto this volume.
8 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008.
9 Bogaard, Charles, Ertu, et al. 2007, 201; Regan 2007; Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.

to be a house patio or yard area.[10] One of these lenses yielded pea pod fragments and peas (the byproducts of cleaning peas by hand before eating); others reflect episodes of hand-cleaning of glume wheat grain and perhaps crop fine sieving and hand-cleaning.[11] The small scale and discrete nature of these lenses indicates that restricted amounts of plant food were being processed in this house yard – several liters of peas or grain at the most – strongly suggesting plant preparation solely for domestic consumption.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from a botanical sample recovered from a 'storage and recovery' pit in the corner of a second, roughly contemporary building (Building 53, space 272). This sample appears to reflect small-scale winnowing and/or fine sieving of pounded glume wheat spikelets, prior to a household meal.[12] That such processing perhaps occurred in the relatively private[13] side rooms of individual houses is suggested by the association of a groundstone tool and a concentration of glume wheat spikelets in a third house, Building 77, as well as by a heavy concentration of wheat dehusking residues inside Building 45.[14]

Additional plausible evidence for small-scale plant food preparation comes in the form of discrete and diminutive deposits in larger middens. For example, Space 181, a midden area dating to the earliest levels of the site (Pre-Level XII), contains small, nutshell-rich deposits suggesting the shelling of only handfuls of nuts at a time. As noted by Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović,[15] we thus have evidence for the small-scale processing of both wild and cultivated plant foods, plausibly for individual households.

Finally, it is possible that certain features inside houses (e. g., basins) were used in plant food processing.[16] If so, they provide evidence for such processing as an indoor domestic activity. Furthermore, like the wheat spikelets and dehusking residues mentioned previously, these basins are often found in houses' side rooms, implying pronounced internalization rather than mere spatial association with a particular structure. These basins are also not very large, which is again consistent with small-scale, household-level processing.[17]

Ample architectural evidence reinforces this impression of plant foods being used primarily on the domestic scale and in pronounced privacy. This is very apparent when we consider the evidence for plant food storage. We are fortunate at Çatalhöyük to have multiple stores of botanical remains that were charred *in situ*, which shed light on the spatial distribution and scale of storage in the village. Remains found inside burned buildings are especially useful, as previously mentioned.

10 Space 314 external to Building 65: Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.

11 Bogaard, Charles, Ertu, et al. 2007, 201; Bogaard, Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013; Longford 2010.

12 Bogaard, Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013.

13 Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009; Bogaard, Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013, Fig. 1.

14 Bogaard, Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013.

15 Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

16 Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

17 Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

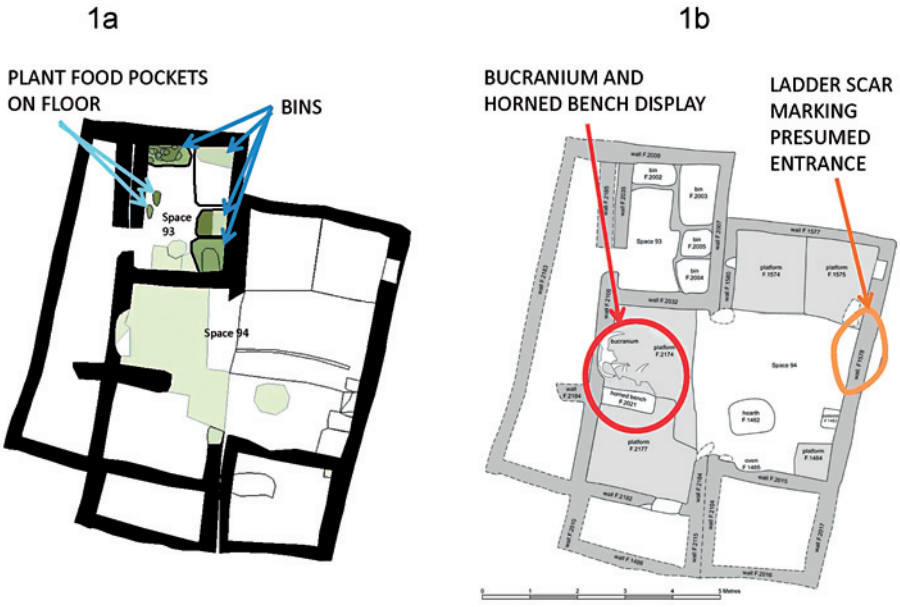

Fig. 1 (a) Densities of botanical remains in the eastern (main) and northern (side) rooms of Building 52 at Çatalhöyük, (b) Locations of ladder scar and bucranium display in Building 52. The western and southern side rooms of Building 52 were not in use at the time of the fire (Mackie 2008).

Of particular note on this score is burned Building 52. This building, which was excavated between 2005 and 2008, contained extensive *in situ* plant and animal remains; I will not describe them extensively here, as the house's architecture and contents have been published in some detail elsewhere,[18] but will merely summarize what we know.

Fig. 1a shows a GIS map of the distribution of botanical remains inside Building 52. While remains have been recovered from both the main and the side rooms of the house, *concentrations* of plant remains are limited to the bin-lined side room, Space 93. Very rich concentrations of plant foods were found in these bins, including free-threshing wheat grain below a spread of whole almonds in the northern bin, and several liters of peas in the south bin (along with numerous charred mouse pellets and burnt mouse bones, indicating an unfortunate infestation). Interestingly, while the eastern half of the central bin along the wall was filled with clay, its western half held over 30 liters of wild mustard seeds, probably used for their flavor and their oil. These seeds were hermetically sealed into the bin with a thick layer of very fine clay.[19]

18 Mackie 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009; Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

19 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009.

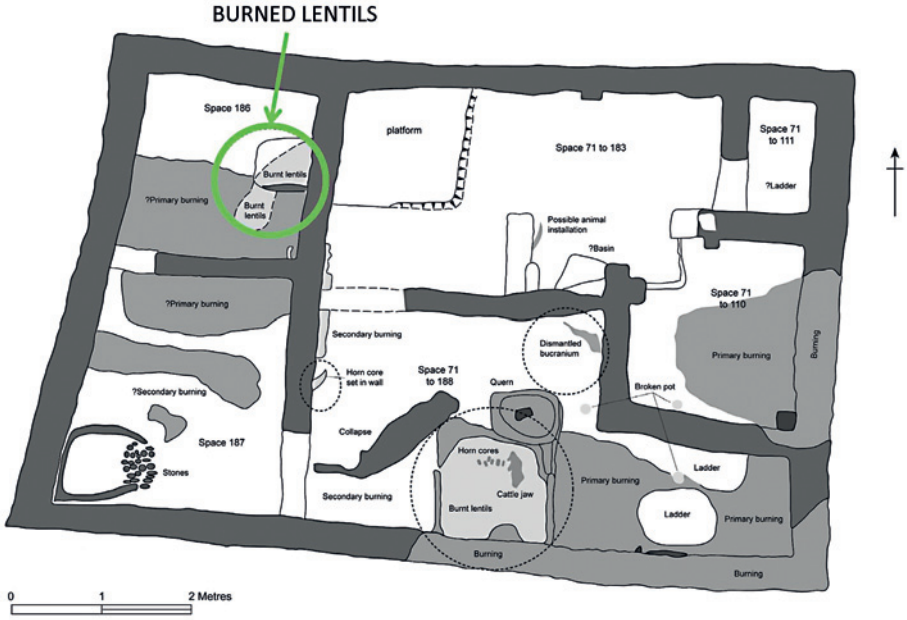

Fig. 2 Ecofactual distributions in Building 1.

Additional concentrations of plant foods are visible dotting the room outside the bins: these are cereal grain concentrations and more wild mustard seeds, the remains of bags or bundles of foodstuffs that at the time of the fire hung from the house's rafters. The pockets shown in Fig. 1a were found on the room's floor, but similar concentrations were found in the burnt debris above the floor layer, reinforcing the idea that stored material was falling from above.[20]

While Building 52's emphatic restriction of plant food stores to the side room is not universal at Çatalhöyük (see below), it does reflect a general pattern of botanical stores from well-sampled burned structures being concentrated in small side rooms.[21]

However, a few houses north of Building 52 lies another burned house, Building 1. Here, while concentrations of lentils, acorns, and wild mustard seeds were primarily found in side rooms, a bin-like feature in a central room contained a collection of lentils (Fig. 2). Admittedly, this bin feature's form and construction were unusual, and Building 1 did not end in a catastrophic fire as Building 52 did: only portions of the house were burned, in multiple and perhaps deliberate burning episodes.[22] It is possible, therefore, that lentil deposit in the main room may not reflect habitual storage practice: indeed,

20 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009; Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

21 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009; Fairbairn et al. (in press).

22 Cessford 2007, 118, 125–129.

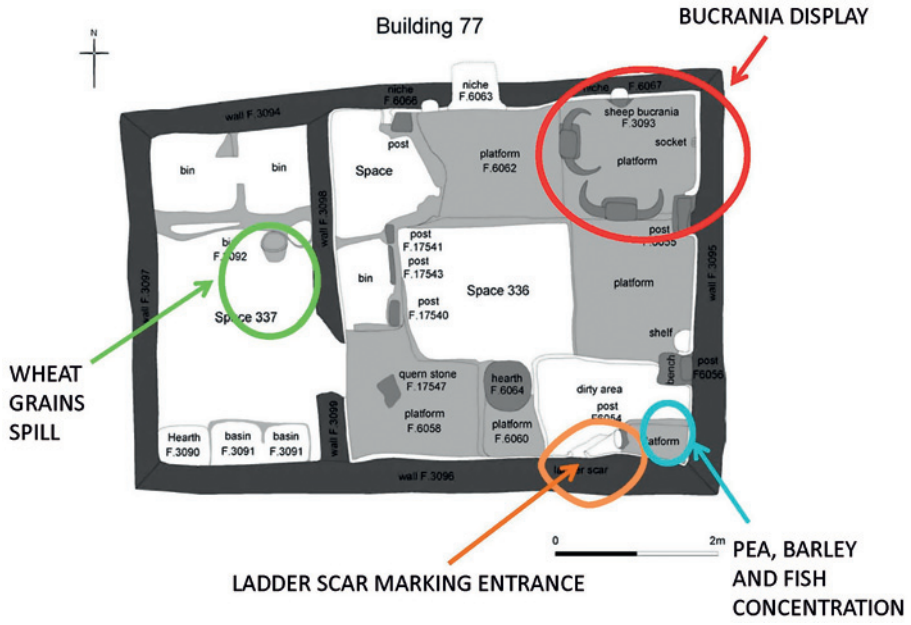

Fig. 3 Locations of plant food concentrations, ladder scar, and bucranium display in Building 77. Çatalhöyük Research Project.

the structure's excavator viewed the 'bin' contents, which also included a caprine scapula and at least 13 wild goat horns, as deliberate abandonment placements rather than *in situ* stores.[23]

Similarly problematic in terms of reflecting habitual storage practices are the remains from catastrophically burned Building 77, which lies in between Building 52 and Building 1, and burned Buildings 79 and 80, which are in a different area of the site. Excavated in the summer of 2008,[24] Building 77's side room contained partially processed cereal grain: pairs of hulled wheat grains still enclosed by glumes (Fig. 3). These grains, which lay in front of the room's bins, are not ready for consumption, but require additional threshing and winnowing/sieving.[25]

These side room botanical concentrations are consistent with the pattern observed in Building 52; most of the platform areas in Building 77's main space also accord with the Building 52 model in that they preserve only very low-density traces of plant use, presumably background noise.[26] However, Building 77's main room also yielded a deposit of cleaned peas and naked barley grain fused with small fish bones (cyprinids, 5–10cm

23 Cessford 2007, 479–482.
24 House and Yeomans 2008.
25 Bogaard, Charles, Ergun, et al. 2008; Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.
26 Amy Bogaard, pers. comm. 2010.

long; some segments remained articulated [Fig. 3]).[27] These remains were found, without any apparent container, by the foot of the house entrance ladder. While storage in the main room is certainly a believable practice in pragmatic terms, it is hard to conceive of a regular practice involving mixing together peas and anchovy-sized fish and leaving them by the front entrance: whatever this pea deposit represents,[28] it is obviously not a standard storage deposit.[29]

A charcoal-rich deposit atop the floor of the main room of Building 80, meanwhile, yielded three seed clusters, including a concentration of ca. 200 pea seeds and an almost pure collection of cleaned barley grains. These seed concentrations may have been in pouches or sacks hung from the roof or they may have been kept on the floor in containers. Building 80's excavator suggests that these plant foods may have been stored in a wooden loft or other structure, whose burning produced the charcoal; alternatively, they may have been a deliberately placed abandonment deposit.[30] (A spread of dehusked glume wheat both inside and outside a bin in Building 79 may also be a deliberate scattering on the occasion of abandonment.)[31] In either case, their presence in the main room is not necessarily evidence of their storage there.

On the whole, then, we have extensive evidence for storage of plant foods in house side rooms; the evidence for main-room storage of plant foods is arguable. We emerge with a strong impression of distinctly private storage of plant foods: not just storage at the domestic level, but storage placed inside the most concealed and secure spaces inside houses.

To the extent that we can assess the scale of these secluded domestic stores, it appears that they were best suited to supporting only the actual residents of each house. Averaging out house structure bin capacities gives an estimate of 1200 liters, or 1.2 cubic meters: ethnographically, one cubic meter of staple goods feeds a family of five to seven people for one year.[32] At Çatalhöyük, we obviously cannot account for the size of stores in perishable containers, abandoned buildings, or even offsite, nor for the amount of food reserved for seed corn or for Halstead's "normal surplus."[33] However, we can say, based on comparison with regionally appropriate ethnographic parallels, that the existing evidence suggests that domestic food stores did not include significant surplus.[34]

In contrast to the plant food data, evidence of domestic meat storage or consumption is at present limited. In addition to faunal concentrations preserved in primary storage contexts, possible evidence for domestic meat use includes filleting cut marks

27 Neer et al. (in preparation).

28 Neer et al. (in preparation), while not excluding the possibility of the remains being a stored deposit, suggest that they represent a cooked pea and barley dish, in which fish, perhaps in dried form, supplied flavor as well as animal fat and protein.

29 Bogaard, Charles, Ergun, et al. 2008; Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.

30 Regan 2010, 17.

31 Eddisford 2009, 22; Longford 2010.

32 Kramer 1982; Yalman 2005; Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

33 Halstead 1989.

34 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

Body part	Number in an intact carcass	Number recovered inside Building 77	Building 77 remains as of expected
Cranium *(Maxilla, Mandible)*	2	2	100.0
Axial Skeleton *(Vertebrae, Scapula, Pelvis)*	7	5	71.4
Forelimb (*Humerus, Radius, Ulna)*	10	3	30.0
Hindlimb (*Femur, Patella, Tibia, Os malleolare*)	12	7	58.3
Feet *(Carpals, Tarsals, Metapodia, Phalanges)*	36	26	72.2

Tab. 1 Sheep/goat body parts from Building 77 at Çatalhöyük: number of diagnostic zones in an intact carcass, and number of diagnostic zones recovered.

on bones (produced by stripping raw meat from the bone for cooking or preservation) and differential spatial representation of animal body parts. Filleting marks, which often reflect processing of animals for storage, can indicate that animals were not entirely consumed within a few days of slaughter; this accords with their use by groups of limited size such as households. Differential spatial representation of body parts suggests disbursement of slaughtered animals across houses and thus perhaps across households. (Refits of skeletal articulations across houses would provide ideal evidence for such disbursement, but no such refits have as yet been identified at Çatalhöyük.)

Collections of animal remains found inside Çatalhöyük storage areas reflect stockpiling of raw materials for bone and antler working far more clearly than they do amassing of food supplies. On the floor of Building 52's storeroom (Space 93), for example, lay a cluster consisting of 36 caprine metapodia, six pieces of antler, and pieces of boar- and cattle-sized ribs. The metapodia were surely intended for working (bone points made from caprine metapodia are ubiquitous at the site), and at least two of the antler pieces already show signs of working. Inside the room's storage bins, meanwhile, were an antler tool; another large piece of worked antler; two more long chunks of antler beam, one with its tines removed prior to working; several lengthy bone fragments from large animals, many of which were worked; a collection of at least three mandibles from infantile wild boars and one adult boar mandible; and assorted fragmentary bones in varying

stages of processing.[35] Domestic storage of useful animal materials is unmistakable in this room; domestic storage of edible meat is plausible but not conclusive, with the best evidence for it consisting of several large caprine fragments in one of the bins, including a more or less complete innominate, a largely complete scapula, a distal humerus, and a proximal radius and ulna that articulate with each other but not with the humerus.

0.2% of the Çatalhöyük faunal remains bear cut marks; of these, approximately 20% are filleting marks. The scarcity of cut marks does not mean that animals were left unprocessed: it may be due to skilled butchers who avoided nicking the bones and thus dulling their stone knives, or to general reliance on sharp obsidian tools that allowed precise cutting around bone.[36] Nonetheless, with only 0.04% of faunal remains at Çatalhöyük displaying filleting marks, little cut mark evidence points towards domestic meat storage at Çatalhöyük.

As for the distribution of animal body parts on site, burnt Building 52 contained all caprine body parts in approximately anatomical proportions. This suggests that either this individual household was consuming entire animals rather than sharing them with other households,[37] or it was conducting symmetrical sharing through time. In burned Building 77 (Tab. 1), all caprine body segments are again present; the moderate variation between their proportions is probably due to a small sample size combined with density-mediated attrition.[38] Anatomically equitable distributions of caprine remains generally characterize middens across the site.[39] Body part distribution patterns are thus generally consistent with single-household consumption of entire caprines, which implies that domestic storage of some meat was likely. However, as with the rest of the faunal data, alternative explanations are also possible, and household meat storage cannot be securely demonstrated.

2.2 Evidence for Feasting at Çatalhöyük

I turn now from evidence for domestic food practice to evidence for larger-scale food activities, specifically feasting. I have elsewhere outlined a series of common material correlates of feasting[40] for use in its identification in archaeological contexts. I rely here on these correlates as evidence for feasting at Çatalhöyük. Four are of particular importance:

35 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009.

36 Dewbury and Russell 2007; Russell and Martin 2005, 85.

37 Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

38 That density-mediated attrition is a factor in this assemblage is demonstrated by patterns of survival within elements: for example, both of the caprine humeral fragments in Building 77 are distal ends – (which are far denser than proximal humeral ends) and all of the femoral fragments are proximal ends (which are denser than distal femora).

39 Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

40 Twiss 2008.

– First, consumption of rarely eaten and frequently symbolically important foods

– Second, consumption of notably large animals

– Third, minimal processing of animal remains (especially when intensive processing is the norm)

– Fourth, display of commemorative items

Following these criteria, there is extensive evidence at Çatalhöyük for feasting, especially in the case of aurochsen, red deer, and perhaps equids and wild boar.

Aurochsen, or wild cattle, constitute on average 24.2% (NISP= 17,133)[41] of speciable faunal specimens recovered from Neolithic levels in Çatalhöyük's East Mound.[42] These animals, each of which would have provided hundreds of kilos of meat,[43] are known to have been quite dangerous to hunt. Furthermore, whereas intensive processing of bones was the norm at Çatalhöyük, not just for marrow but for grease as well,[44] many aurochs remains were not heavily broken up.

Finally, aurochsen are iconographically central at the site (as indeed they are throughout the southwest Asian Neolithic). Cattle are the most common animal represented in the zoomorphic figurine assemblage, and while we have only two certain examples of bulls on wall paintings (plus one more animal that may be a bull), both are among the most impressive paintings at the site: huge cynosures surrounded by smaller figures of humans and other animals.[45] Most famously, cattle horns and cranial remains (bucrania) were prominently installed in some houses.[46]

Red deer, another large species, are also standard artistic subjects at the site,[47] and their remains are well-represented in an off-mound deposit that has been identified as the residues of ceremonial activities.[48] Their antlers have been found in special deposits and perhaps architectural installations as well.[49]

Equid proportions are slightly elevated among the less processed deposits commonly identified as feasting remains, and wild boar remains are periodically used in special or ritual contexts.[50] Additional animal taxa may have been used as feasting foods as well, but the evidence is not clear at present.

We do not have good evidence for feasting with plant foods. Part of this lack, such as the dearth of large-scale botanical concentrations, may be attributable to taphonomic

41 Cattle provide 10.0% of the Neolithic diagnostic zones (DZs: see Russell and Martin 2005 for methodological details).
42 Russell, Twiss, et al. (in preparation).
43 Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007.
44 Russell and Martin 2005.
45 Russell and Meece 2005, Tab. 14.1.
46 House and Yeomans 2008; Regan 2010; Twiss and Russell 2010, 17–18; see also Figs. 1 and 3 in this paper.
47 Russell and Meece 2005, Tab. 14.1.
48 Russell and Martin 2005.
49 Russell and Martin 2005, 25; House and Yeomans 2008, 39; Russell and Twiss 2008, 155.
50 Russell and Martin 2005.

factors. However, we also lack evidence for plants as symbolically prominent foods or as displayed items. Ethnographic examples of plant art and decorated plant food containers abound;[51] Çatalhöyük's bins are plain, and its iconography surprisingly plant-poor.[52] It is entirely possible that plants were consumed at Çatalhöyük feasts, albeit perhaps in a secondary, minimally celebrated role, analogous to that of the mashed potatoes that accompany the iconic American Thanksgiving turkey. However, by far the strongest evidence of feasting we have involves animals, particularly aurochsen, and it is on their remains that I focus.

As is well known, feasting is a generally a ritualized activity, not just in the secular (i. e., formalized repetitive performance), but in the ideological (i. e., religious) sense. Indeed, Dietler[53] argues that feasts are intrinsically "a particularly powerful form of ritual activity" because food and drink are material representations of a society's cultural standards and relations of production and preparation. Communal consumption of food and drink thus constitutes literal incorporation – embodiment – of social norms, in a shared public setting. The symbolic potency of this activity is commonly reinforced with musical, dramatic, or dance performances that unite the symbolic with the sensual and fuse ritual with entertainment.[54]

As previously noted, such ritually significant feasts are often commemorated through display. Some commemorative displays are artistic depictions of feast foods; others are trophies from the feasts themselves – in several cases, the skulls and horns of the animals consumed.[55]

At Çatalhöyük, therefore, bucrania, and arguably other cachings of animal parts and artworks depicting food species, are plausibly viewed as not merely abstract symbolizations of the ritual importance of feast species, but as concrete memorializations of specific feasts. In other words, when we see a bucranium, we are not merely looking at a symbol of "Aurochsen are ritually important;" rather, we are looking at the remains of an animal that was actually consumed at a specific event: a trophy commemorating a particular feast. The installation of such an item, or of a horned bench, or a boar jaw, would thus memorialize a particular *communal* occasion.

Furthermore, presumably the individual or group who, at the end of a feast, retained or received an aurochs skull or horns for display would have been someone who played a prominent, even central, role in that feast. The host, the honoree, the hunter who originally slew the animal: the trophy would have gone to someone who had, in some

51 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009, Fig. 9.

52 Mellaart 1967 (161–163, Plate 41, Fig. 46) claims that the quatrefoils depicted in a painting from Shrine VI.B.8 are stylized flowers, but this identification is extremely arguable. He does note that there are no depictions of the site's most important crops, wheat and barley (p. 163).

53 Dietler 2001, 72.

54 E. g., Birket-Smith 1953, 108; Rappaport 1968; W. Powers and M. Powers 1984; Verbicky-Todd 1984; Kahn 1986; Colegrove 1990; Garine 1996; DeBoer 2001; Dietler 2001; Kirch 2001; Wiessner 2001.

55 Twiss 2008, 424.

way, earned it. Thus, installation of a bucranium or trophy bones memorializes not just *a* feast, but a moment of prestige, of social prominence in the general community. These festal remains constitute "social storage" not in the economic sense,[56] but in the sense of curating prestige, of demonstrating status in the community. This status may have been convertible into economic benefit, of course, but such conversion cannot be taken for granted.

It is important to reiterate that no temples, shrines, or other communal buildings have been found at Çatalhöyük (unlike at later southwest Asian sites such as those discussed by D'Anna and by Otto, this volume).[57] As a result, all of the site's bucrania and trophy bones, all of these memorializations of communal feasts are placed within homes. In other words, "social storage" of feasts and ritual activities was domestically curated. Furthermore, these memorial trophies were installed in house locations where they would be the first things that struck the eye of entering residents and visitors (e. g., Buildings 52 and 77: see Figs. 1b and 3). Whereas domestic food stores were kept in side rooms, out of the sight lines of casual visitors, bucrania, horned pillars, and horned benches we see placed as prominently as possible. They were situated so as to display the house's contributions to communal feasts as effectively as possible.

3 Discussion

With memorialization of communal feasts inside houses – domestic curation of feasts and ritual activities – we see feasting memorabilia in the same general household context as domestic food stores and cooking accoutrements. Both family meals and communal feasts were constant physical presences within at least some households. (Most houses were cleaned out completely at abandonment, including their installations, so it cannot be known what proportion of households owned feasting trophies.) The physical presence in the houses of both domestic and feast foods suggests that both intramural meals and ritualized community feasts were key components of *specifically household* identity.

However, domestic food stores and feast food remains were spatially segregated within the household: one kept secluded, the other on display. Whereas bucrania and other festal remains were placed to announce particular identities to others, plausibly as claims of power and prestige ("status symbols"), quotidian food stores were emphatically not on exhibit. Instead, they were largely kept in side rooms, out of easy sight: a

56 Halstead 1981; O'Shea 1981; Halstead and O'Shea 1982.

57 The apparent absence of communal buildings and large open spaces inside the village raises the question of where community feasts might have been held. No concrete answer is available, but logic as well as the off-mound discovery of probably ceremonial faunal remains, including very high proportions of cattle (Russell and Martin 2005), suggest that the site periphery may have been a preferred location.

practice constituting the opposite of wealth display or public status assertion. The placement of both feasting remains and domestic foods thus took the broader community into account, but in opposite ways, with one placed to draw attention and the other to hide from it.

It is important not to overstate the case: a few houses do have bins in their main rooms, and some domestic food preparation clearly took place out-of-doors, producing the small botanical lenses discussed earlier in this paper. However, of eleven fully excavated and well-documented house occupations, ten have bins only in side spaces,[58] while the eleventh has bins in both side and main rooms. As for the out-of-doors botanical lenses, having one's neighbors witness individual small cooking episodes is quite socially distinct from showing them one's accumulated food stores: the difference is analogous to spending some money in front of someone as opposed to showing them your bank account.

The aggregated evidence about domestic meals and feasts thus suggests that both were important to household identity, and furthermore, that each household had both its private and its communally advertised identities. There are even some indications that these private and public identities may have been emically perceived as discrete phenomena, as they are today in our society. This interpretation can be advanced not only because of the spatial segregation of the domestic food stores and the communal food trophies. In such a case, one could still have household food stores supporting village-level identities: for example, 'funding' of feasts via disbursement of domestic food surpluses.

As noted before, however, there is no evidence for storage of large-scale food surpluses at Çatalhöyük, and thus no obvious way for a house to accumulate private wealth to fund public display. Furthermore, while abandonment clearing-outs prevent one from using the amount of trophy bones found inside a house as reliable evidence for the amount of feasting memorabilia originally there, a rough comparison shows no correlation between the quantity of a house's domestic storage space available and its quantity of animal installations or artwork.

58 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009, Tab. 5. This tally excludes houses which lack bins, and includes one house where bins are located at the side of a single room.

Area	Building	No. bins	Bin location	Bin capacity (liters)†	Side room area (m^2)	Animal iconography	In situ food / animal installations on display	Reference*
	45	2	side room	318	11.8	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2004
	48	poor preservation			3.3	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2004
	49	side room	side room	1348	n/a	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2004, 2006; D. Eddisford pers. comm. July 28 2008
	52	4	side room	1225	10.0	0	Main room; bucranium; horned bench	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
	52, final phase (Building 51)	0	n/a	0	n/a		0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
	55	3	side room	536	5.0		0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
	57	poor preservation	–	–	6.0		0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
4040	58	poor preservation	–	–	6.7	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005, 2006
	59	10	side rooms	2688	24.4	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2007
	59 minus ? external bins	*7*	*side rooms*	*673*	–			
	64	poor preservation	–	–	13.6	*0*	*0*	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2006
North	1, phase 1.2B	1	side room	115		0	0	(Cessford 2007)

† Calculated using a bin height: diameter ratio of 1.1.

* All Archive Reports are available online at www.catalhoyuk.com/archive_reports.

Area	Building	No. bins	Bin location	Bin capacity (liters)^	Side room area (m^2)	Animal iconography	In situ food / animal installations on display	Reference*
North	1, phase 1.2C	2	side and main	711	–	0	Main room: Horn core embedded in wall	(Cessford 2007)
	1, Phase 1.4	0	–	–	–	0	0	(Cessford 2007)
	5, Phase B	6	side room	1148	14.7	0	0	(Cessford 2007)
	6 (E.VIII.10)	3	side room	1023	9.8	0	–	(Farid 2007 46, 57)
	18 (E.X.8)	4	side room	375	4.2	0	–	Farid 2007
	23 (E.X.1)	[1] side room unexcavated	[main room]	–	5.6	0	Main room: 8 bucrania/ovicrania‡	(Mellaart 1964, 70–3; Mellaart 1967, 104; Russell and Meece 2005, 11; Farid 2007)
	65	5	side room	1363	5.5	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2007
South	17, Phase B	[4] side room unexcavated	[main room]	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	17, Phase C	side room unexcavated	–	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	17, Phase D	side room unexcavated	–	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	17, Phase E	side room unexcavated	–	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	2, Phase 2.2	side room unexcavated	–	–	2.0	0	0	(Farid 2007)
Average♯				**986**				

‡ These installations are reported in Mellaart 1967; it is not clear whether there were actual skulls inside.

♯ The average excluding the questionable external bins associated with Building 59 is 803 m^3.

Tab. 2 Spatial distribution of functional vessel classes at Ubaid Kenan Tepe.

Tab. 2 is a chart of houses with well-documented architectural data. The green highlights show houses where the storage capacity is above average; the orange show houses with animal installations; the purple marks a house that is in the top three in both respects. The overlap between the two categories precludes dichotomous identification of some houses as 'feasting houses' and others as 'subsistence houses'. The overlap is limited: there is no clear correlation, either positive or negative, between feasting memorabilia and food storage capacity. These data are imperfect, but in their limited fashion they are again consistent with a lack of economic correlation between domestic and communal meals.

This apparent lack of correlation has important potential implications. The first has to do with the role of storage in early agricultural economies. As noted in Bogaard et al.,[59] private storage has often been viewed as the means through which "households formally took on the risks and rewards of producing for their own use (see also Banning 2003; Flannery [1972 and] 2002; Rollefson 1997)." Absence of a correlation between household economic goods (as measured in food stores) and household prestige markers (as measured in festal trophies) raises the possibility that social rewards (accrual of political capital, enhancement of interhousehold inequality) were neither a key motivation for, nor a strong result of, early Anatolian domestic storage. Economic risk reduction was its primary goal. This model echoes that advanced by Halstead for Neolithic Greece[60] in viewing surplus production as a fundamentally important economic insulator for early farmers. It also extends his point[61] that economic success does not necessarily lead to, or correspond with, social distinction. Halstead noted that *institutionalized* inequality will probably not occur without lengthy periods of economic imbalance; the Çatalhöyük data suggest that small-scale imbalances may not inevitably cause even temporary inequality.

Alternatively, the lack of correlation raises the possibility that different households undertook different strategies to secure their food supply: some emphasized physical storage of edibles, others focused more on social interactions that would oblige other households to provide for them in times of scarcity ("social storage" in the economic sense).[62] Certainly neither strategy could exclude the other, but individual households could have assessed their agricultural assets and their members' skill sets and slanted their food strategies accordingly. It must be reiterated, however, that both this possibility and the previous one are predicated on a correlation limited by both the sample size of fully excavated, well-preserved and well-documented houses, as well as by the Çatalhöyük tradition of house clearing-outs at abandonment.

59 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.
60 Halstead 1989 and this volume.
61 Halstead 1989, 79.
62 E. g., Halstead 1989, 73–75, 79.

Finally, the apparent structural segregation of domestic meals vs. feasts is interesting, as ethnographically the two are commonly very closely related.[63] Despite the widespread tendency in the archaeological literature to present domestic meals and feasts as contrasting rather than dialectically related phenomena, important structural as well as social relationships commonly exist between smaller and larger-scale consumption events.

Structural echoes between the two are well illustrated by Mary Douglas's account of British meals,[64] which she described as "ordered in scale of importance and grandeur through the week and the year. The smallest, meanest meal metonymically figures the structure of the grandest, and each unit of the grand meal figures again the whole meal – or the meanest meal." In other words, the feast's structure (a central protein accompanied by vegetable side dishes) echoed that of everyday meals. A feast was a scaled-up, expanded version of a normal dinner, perhaps including some moderately atypical foods and unusually large quantities of even the prosaic ones, but it was organized and conceptualized in clear relation to quotidian domestic meals. Douglas further emphasized that, "The perspective created by these repetitive analogies invests the individual meal with additional meaning."[65]

We do not, based on the evidence outlined here, see such repetitive analogies in use at Çatalhöyük. This does not necessarily mean that such analogies did not exist. The possibility always exists that the perceived dramatic separation between daily meals and feasts is a product of archaeological methodology. In the absence of documentary evidence, archaeological identification of feasting is accomplished primarily by looking for food practices distinct from the norm. Thus, the more that feasting foods or behaviors echo daily practice, the less likely we are to be able to identify them archaeologically. Using current feasting criteria, then, we cannot assess the extent to which Çatalhöyük feasts involved common foods, cooking methods, or locations. As a result we undoubtedly miss the full complexities of the relationship between daily meals and feasts in the Central Anatolian Neolithic.

Still, at Çatalhöyük, in a single house's food remains, we see plans for the future as well as commemoration of the past; we see domestic economic stores as well as ritualized social ones. The degree to which these different stores are kept separate may have differed somewhat between structures, along with the amount of each kind of storage. However, the general pattern appears clear: small-scale food supplies for the house, kept in side rooms out of public view, versus larger-scale commemorations of communal consumption, displayed prominently. We see surprisingly little evidence for socioeconomic interaction between the two modes of consumption. However, both the domestic stores and the festal trophies display consideration of the broader community in terms of their

63 E. g., Halstead this volume

64 Douglas 1975, 257–258.

65 Douglas 1975, 257–258.

use and placement – and in the end, both presumably played fundamental, and arguably complementary, roles in specifically household identities.

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TABLES: **1** After Russell and Martin 2005, © McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research / British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. **2** Katherin C. Twiss.

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Francesca Balossi Restelli

Eating at Home and 'Dining' Out? Commensalities in the Neolithic and Late Chalcolithic in the Near East

Summary

This paper attempts to draw a picture of different kinds of commensalities in the Near Eastern Pottery Neolithic (7th millennium BC) through an analysis of consumption vessels. The case study will be the Syrian and Turkish regions of the Northern Levant. I shall underline the strong symbolic function of vessels in distinguishing commensal events and argue that the basic role of commensality remains largely unmodified until the end of the Ubaid period (2nd half of the 5th millennium BC). The beginning of the Late Chalcolithic then marks a major change. At this point, the development of different types of commensalities leads to a decrease in the role of pottery as symbolic marker of commensal events.

Keywords: Near Eastern Archaeology; Near East Neolithic; Chalcolithic; commensality; consumption vessels; status.

Dieser Beitrag versucht, anhand der Analyse von Ess- und Trinkgefäßen ein Bild verschiedener Arten von Kommensalität im vorderasiatischen Keramischen Neolithikum (7. Jt. v. Chr.) zu zeichnen. Als Fallbeispiel dienen die syrischen und türkischen Regionen der nördlichen Levante. Ich erörtere die stark symbolische Funktion von Gefäßen zur Abgrenzung von unterschiedlichen kommensalen Anlässen und argumentiere, dass die grundlegende Rolle von Kommensalität bis zum Ende der Ubaid-Zeit (2. Hälfte des 5. Jt. v. Chr.) weitgehend unverändert bleibt. Der Beginn des späten Chalkolithikums markiert dann einen entscheidenden Wendepunkt. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt führt die Entwicklung von unterschiedlichen Arten von Kommensalität dazu, dass die Bedeutung von Keramik als symbolisches Zeichen für kommensale Anlässe an Bedeutung verliert.

Keywords: Vorderasiatische Archäologie; Neolithikum; Chalkolithikum; Kommensalität; Ess- und Trinkgefäße; Kochtöpfe; Status.

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here, and to Maria Bianca D'Anna, with whom I share the interest on these topics and the site we concentrate our study on.

1 Introduction

The seventh millennium BC northern Levant, together with Turkish Cilicia, is identified with the so-called pottery Neolithic Dark-Faced Burnished Ware Horizon – DFBW,[1] or Dark-Faced Ware Horizon – DFW,[2] a cultural region characterised by the presence of a dark coloured and often burnished, mineral-tempered, handmade ware, with specific recurrent shapes (Fig. 1).

There are three sub-categories of this pottery, all of which have a strong functional specificity. There is a Dark-Faced Unburnished Ware (DFunbW), out of which principally cooking pots were made, a Fine DFBW (FDFBW), highly polished and moulded into goblets and very small bowls, and the more classical DFBW, used mainly for larger bowls (Fig. 2). In addition to this pottery, sites in northern Syria and Lebanon, as in the Amuq and Rouj basins, also share other elements of their ceramic assemblage, which is composed of chaff-tempered storage vessels, chaff-tempered painted wares and other minor categories. In contrast, Turkish Cilicia, exemplified by the site of Yumuktepe, has in addition to the dark-faced categories completely distinct storage jars, with mineral temper and different shapes from those of their Syrian and Lebanese neighbours. These strong similarities in the pottery assemblage are certainly a testimony to the existence of frequent relations between these two regions. Cilicia was situated along the principal road to Central Anatolia, with its important obsidian sources, and this might explain such relations.[3] Sites in these two areas are small, essentially with domestic structures and an attested economy principally based on farming and herding, but at times also on hunting. The distinctiveness of part of their ceramic repertoires suggests the autonomy of these two regions;[4] extremely interesting, however, is their sharing of the same kinds of cooking, eating and drinking utensils (the DFW). Sites in these regions that belong to the 'DFW horizon' have very similar bowls and goblets, and, most importantly, they have no other consumption vessels. The set of food and drink-related pots is thus shared by distinct but neighbouring kin groups, which otherwise have a different ceramic assemblage. I take this as an important indicator of the existence of continuous contacts between these different kin, in which social relations and solidarity were reinforced through shared food consumption. The frequency and importance of these

1 R. Braidwood, L. Braidwood, and Haines 1960.
2 Balossi Restelli 2006, 210.
3 Mellaart 1961, 166; Özdoğan 2002, 255.
4 Balossi Restelli 2006.

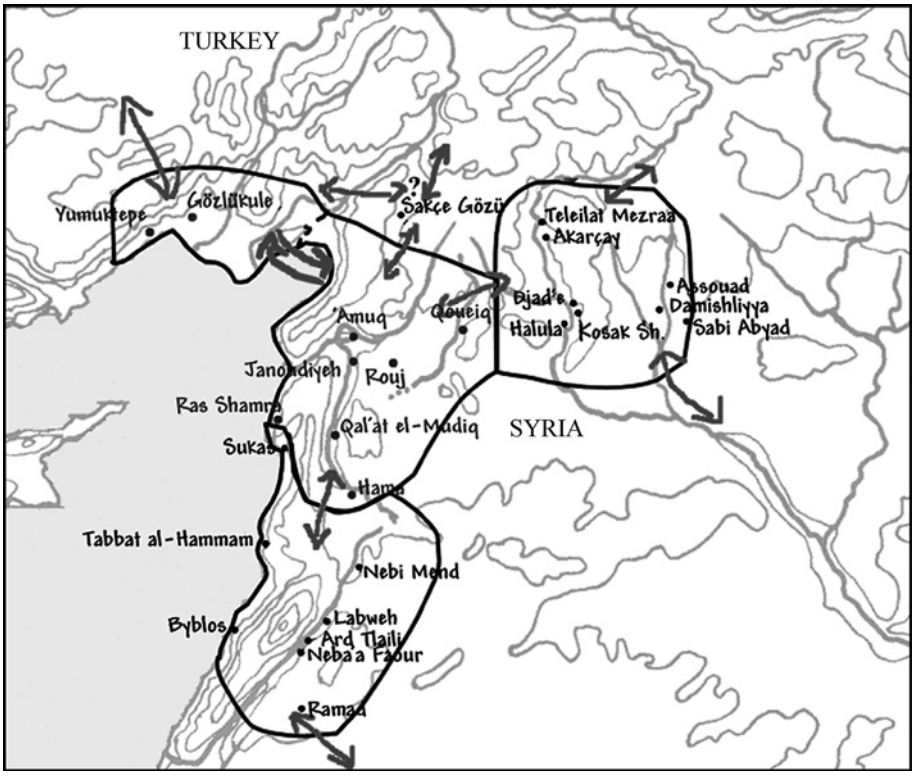


Fig. 1 Regional distribution of pottery assemblages during the Pottery Neolithic (7th millennium BC) in the northern Levant and Middle Euphrates, with indication of the major known sites.

acts possibly stimulated to the production and use of the same bowls. As Tilley[5] points out for the European Neolithic, symbolic elaboration, which sees a tremendous increase during the Neolithic, is often constructed through the preparation, cooking and sharing of food; the same seems to be the case here.

2 Identifying Commensalities in the Neolithic through Dark-Faced Wares

What kind of commensality can we imagine in these communities? What was used for cooking and how did people eat? The ways in which foods were presented, as well as the foods themselves, certainly varied along several dimensions, including whether the

5 Tilley 1996, 66.

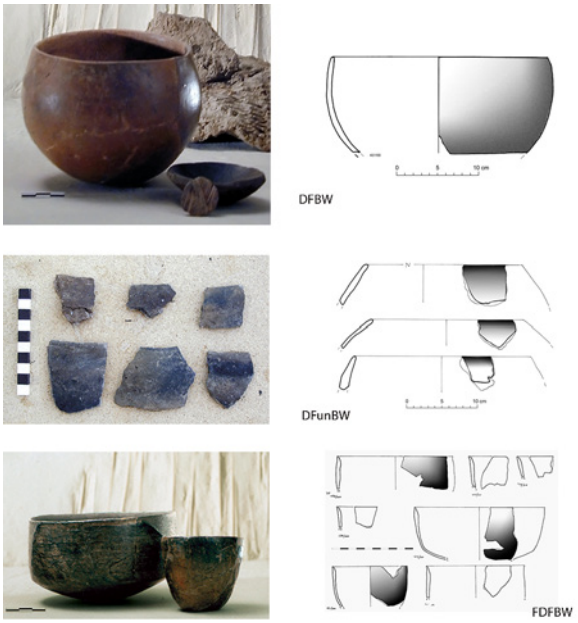


Fig. 2 Examples of the Dark-Faced Burnished Ware, the Dark-Faced Unburnished Ware and the Fine Dark-Faced Burnished Ware from the site of Yumuktepe, dated to the second half of the 7th millennium BC. Drawings and photographs by the author, except photo top left: Isabella Caneva, by permission.

setting in which meals were served was domestic or communal, and whether the group eating together was a nuclear family, a kin group or several kin groups.

Cooking pots were quite simple, hole-mouth jars, dark in colour and mineral-tempered. When we look at the shape details though, we notice that each site appears to have some particularity: vessels from the Amuq region often have small horizontal lugs, whilst in the Rouj basin we see small button-like, pierced applications or horizontal applied bands.[6] Thus, despite a general similarity of production, there is a certain stylistic personalisation in the cooking pots. This might suggest that cooking was not symbolically relevant during events of communal food consumption; cooking pots might not have been exposed during the intergroup meals.

In this respect, it might be useful to see where the cooking was taking place. In the Rouj 2c period (6300–6000 BC), both Yumuktepe and Ain el Kerkh have evidence of rectangular multi-room domestic buildings, inside which are hearths, probably used for cooking, and tannours (bread ovens; Fig. 3A–B). The specific function of outdoor spaces is not evident and no built cooking areas appear to occupy these spaces.[7] This would suggest that each family was preparing its own food. At the beginning of the VIth millennium BC (Rouj 2d), there is a shift to a less permanent occupation of the

6 R. Braidwood, L. Braidwood, and Haines 1960, 43; Tsuneki and Miyake 1996, 115.

7 Tsuneki, Hydar, Miyake, Akahane, Arimura, et al. 1999.

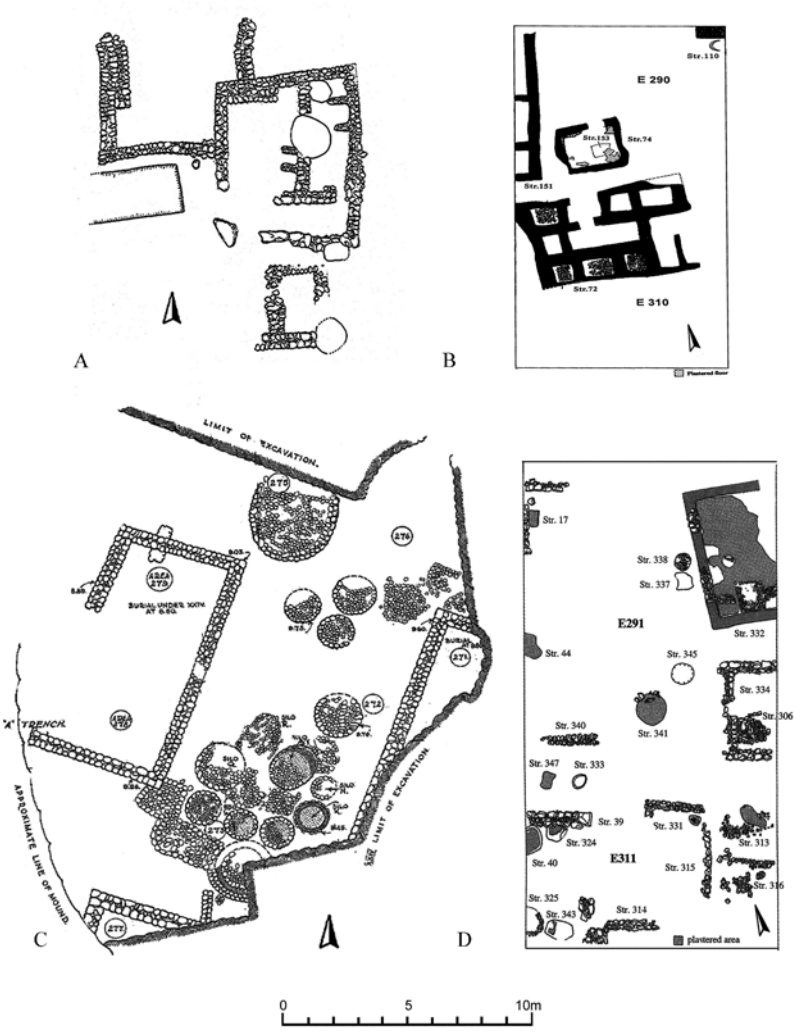


Fig. 3 Occupation at the sites of Yumuktepe and Ain el Kerkh: A. Yumuktepe XXVII, contemporary to Rouj 2c; B. Ain el Kerkh in the Rouj 2c period; C. Yumuktepe XIV, contemporary to Rouj 2d; D. Ain el Kerkh in the Rouj 2d period.

sites, with rectangular animal pens, storage silos, and traces of abundant outdoor activities (Fig. 3C–D). Tannours and hearths are found both outdoors and indoors.[8] This shift

8 Tsuneki, Hydar, Miyake, Akahane, Arimura, et al. 1999, 11.

to more shared activities coincides with an increase in sheep and goat herding, at the expense of the more sedentary cattle and pig.[9] There would thus appear to be a change in economic and settlement organisation. It is possible that this transformation of the primary economy brought about a more communal organisation of the group's life, where the single family unit became less important than the community in its entirety. A similar situation in the Near East somewhat later is that of the Halaf communities in the 6th millennium BC.[10] A more mobile group, strongly oriented towards herding, probably had a more collective organisation of the economy than that of the earlier sedentary groups. This might explain the presence of external cooking areas, and suggests that in this phase people might have been cooking, even on a daily basis, in highly visible, communal kitchen areas, as well as indoors. Nevertheless the available data do not show an increase in the size of cooking pots, which one might expect if cooking was for larger groups of people; we should imagine either new kinds of commensal events (that were prepared differently) or food preparation that varied according to the people present and participating (for example, there might be periods in which a mobile component of the community was away and others when it was present at the site). Food consumption areas in this period are not at all visible. No communal buildings are known. As for cooking and other activities, it is possible that external areas were used.

This phase also coincides with an important innovation in pottery production, namely the introduction of painted decoration on light-coloured pottery and pattern burnish on the DFBW.[11] I believe that the coincidence of these changes is not accidental. More mobile kin groups, with a rather weak political control of their territory, certainly encountered other kin groups with greatly increased frequency. This meant that symbolic meanings conveyed through the objects exposed in these encounters also needed to increase; painted decoration on ceramics, offering a wide stylistic variability, was certainly an excellent way of enhancing symbolic value.[12]

More frequent kin group encounters would increase both the number of intergroup commensal events and their importance in the maintenance of social bonds.[13] Changes in the ceramic drinking and eating vessels in this phase seem to confirm this supposition. In fact, the fine-paste eating and drinking ware is not present at all in the earlier phase at Yumuktepe; it appears towards the end of the 7th millennium BC and increases with the move to a more mobile life style around 5800 BC.

Concerning these consumption vessels, particularly interesting is the strong relation between their paste categories (temper type and dimension, texture, porosity, firing, colour), morphological types and dimensions. At Yumuktepe there is always a clear, direct relation between at least two of these variables. The two graphs in figure 4 plot

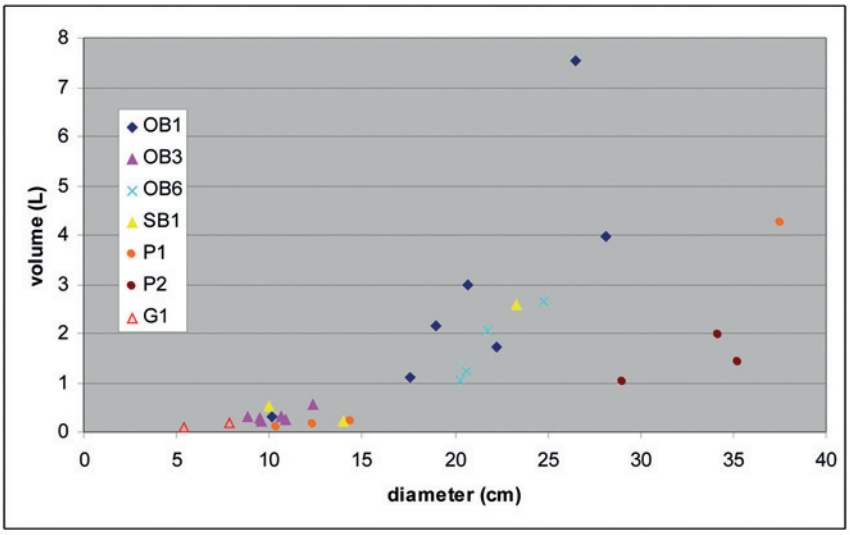
9 Tsuneki, Hydar, Miyake, Akahane, Arimura, et al. 1999, 28.

10 Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 127–130.

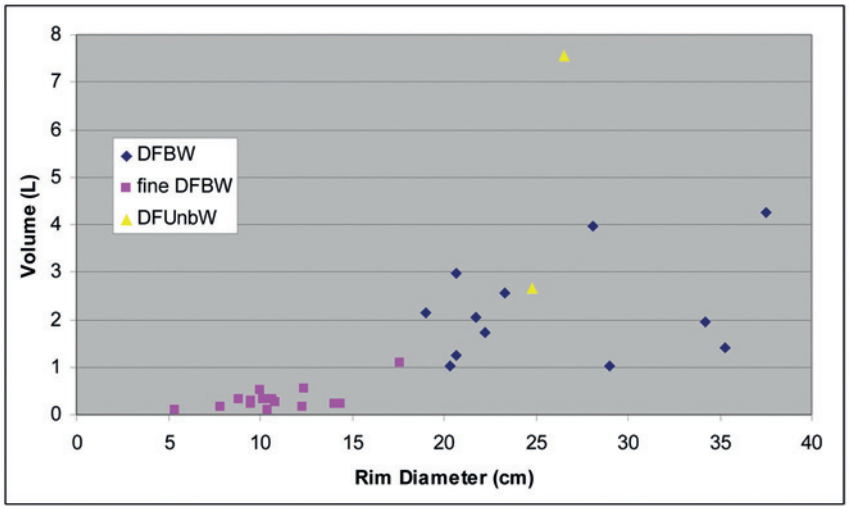
11 Miyake 2001.

12 Balossi Restelli (in press).

13 Appadurai 1981; Jones 2002.



A



B

Fig. 4 Consumption vessels from Yumuktepe plotted according to rim diameter (cm) and volume (litres): A. vessels are categorized according to their morphological type; B. the same vessels are categorized according to their paste category.

the same vessels, in one case categorized according to their morphological type (Fig. 4A) and in the other according to their paste category (Fig. 4B). As can be seen, clusters are rather tight. Where this is not the case, as in types oB1 and sB1, this is because the vessels of this shape are made from two different paste categories. The pots of the same

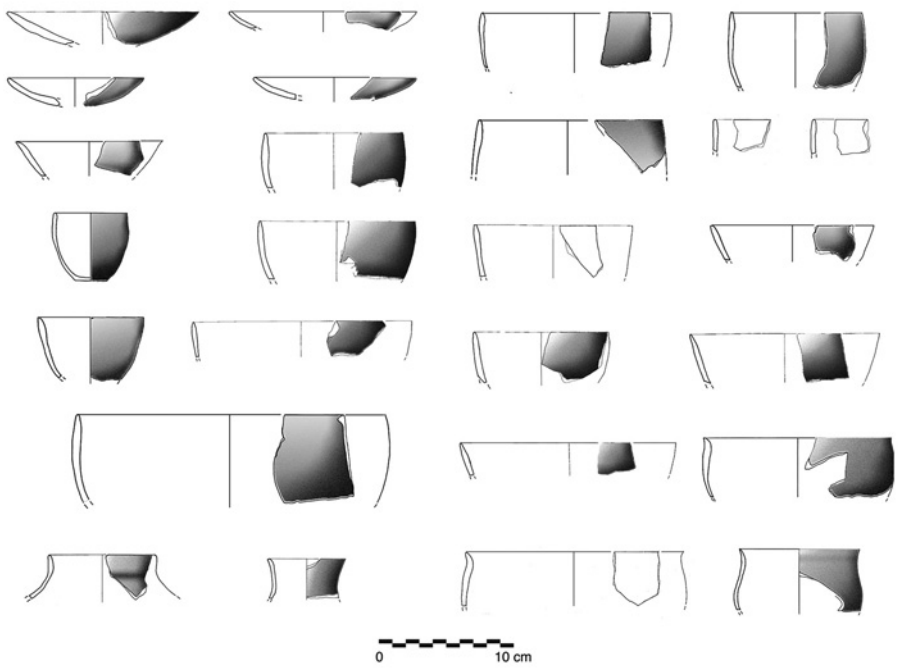


Fig. 5 Examples of Fine Dark-Faced Burnished vessels from Yumuktepe.

category have the same size and plot together. The fine, polished DFBW category is that with the greatest number of exclusive shapes, suggesting that it might have been used in a great variety of occasions (Fig. 5). I suggest that specific shapes may have been charged with specific meanings, as, for example, in terms of the kind of food eaten, the person eating it, or the context of consumption. Furthermore, the exclusivity and elaborateness of most of the shapes in this ware might suggest that they were used in important commensal occasions, whereas simpler plates, such as those made out of the DFBW category, could have more easily accompanied family meals.[14] Goblets are only made out of this ware. As is commonly understood, drinking is a fundamental social act, often more symbolically charged than eating.[15] Whereas we could imagine that in daily food consumption it might not be so important to underline drinking, the presence of these fine polished goblets does suggest particular commensal events. This category of vessels would thus appear to be used in more special or extra-family meals, those with stronger symbolic implications. These vessels are furthermore always of small size,

14 Welch and Scarry 1995.

15 Dietler and Hayden 2001; Pollock 2003.

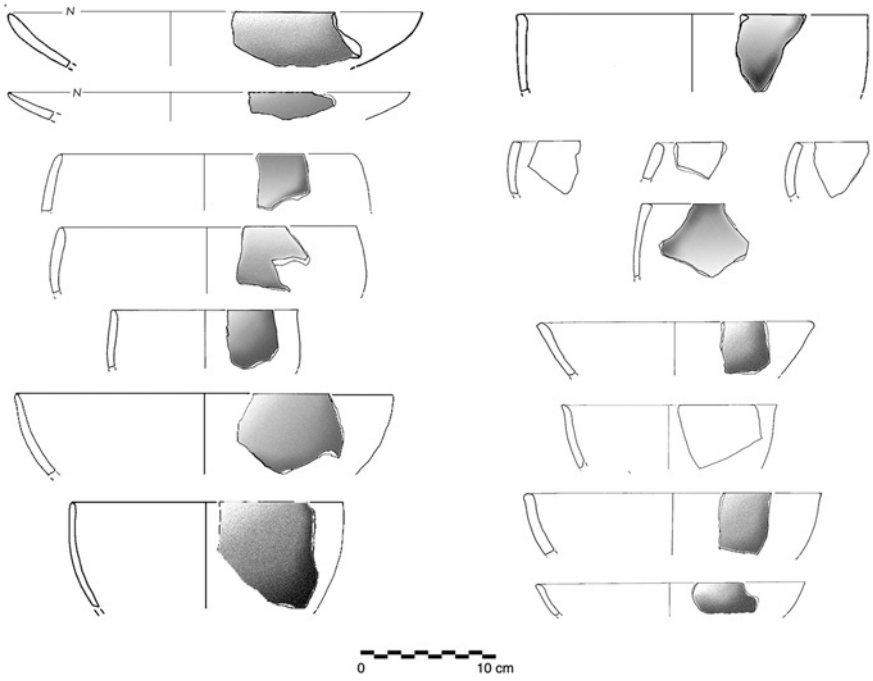


Fig. 6 Examples of Dark-Faced Burnished vessels from Yumuktepe.

suggesting that single, individual servings were used in symbolically more important meals.

The simple DFBW includes bowls of larger capacities and could have been used both for eating and for serving (Fig. 6). I would like to hypothesise that this unpolished ware, simpler in surface treatment and shapes, was the pottery used in common daily meals, whilst the polished ware was used on more important occasions. Data are unfortunately insufficient for the moment to demonstrate this. There is no good context permitting an analysis of the distribution of single shapes. The area investigated is furthermore too small and might be representative of a single type of commensal context, as could be suggested by the extremely high percentage of the small polished bowls and goblets in comparison with the unpolished ones (52% are polished). Daily domestic food consumption and communal dining are at this stage difficult to distinguish archaeologically, even though the pottery analysis seems to suggest that the paste category (Fine DFBW and DFBW) might correspond to these two different contexts.

Better contextual evidence is available concerning secular versus ritual consumption. Very interesting in this respect is the occurrence of three ritual pits at the site of

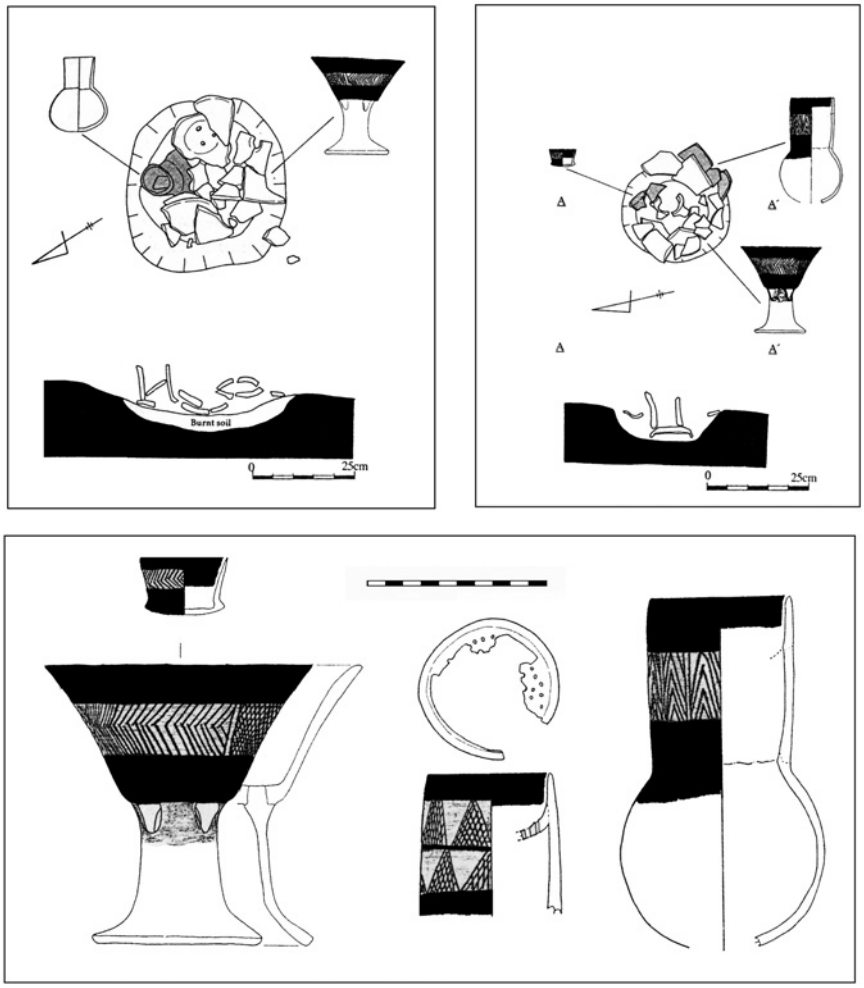


Fig. 7 Two of the ritual pits from Ain el Kerkh. At the bottom left are the drawings of some of the Dark-Faced Burnished pots found in them. At the bottom right is the neck of a vessel from another context, similar to the high-necked jar with sieve in the opening, found in the ritual pit.

Ain el Kerkh in the Rouj basin.[16] These pits were filled with ashes and fragments of purposely broken vessels laid out in an orderly fashion. In two of the pits the set of vessels present was composed by a so-called fruitstand and a long-necked jar, with a strainer at the mouth opening (Fig. 7). In one case a small 'cream bowl' was also present. Not of minor importance is the particular pattern burnish decoration on these vessels, which

16 Tsuneki, Hydar, Miyake, Akahane, Nakamura, et al. 1998.

distinguish them from the rest of the products. I believe that the necked jars were used to serve a drink that had been sieved from another vessel and that originally had undesired floating residues, as could be the case for beer with floating barley grain, or some other fermented beverage. Beer would have been initially put to ferment in large jars, from which it would then have been poured out into these bottles. The strainer at the mouth opening would prevent floating agents from entering the bottle, and the drink would thus be ready to be served, devoid of unpleasant bits. The small neck of these bottles would not allow one to drink directly from them, and I would thus imagine that the fruitstands were used for drinking. Adelheid Otto, in the present volume, illustrates how beer was normally drunk in later Bronze Age contexts in the Near East by using filters and straws. At Tell Bazi she has found only one, or maximally two, beer filters per house, even though drinking cups were numerous. Our Neolithic case shows a different way of consuming fermented drinks, but in both cases there is some degree of sharing of utensils among commensal participants. From the capacity of the bottles (1,7–3,7 l) I would argue that several people must have taken part in the ritual act. It is interesting that there is a single fruitstand in each deposit. I thus imagine that, during the ritual act, whilst something was being burnt inside the pit, the participants all drank out of the same drinking cup, passing it among themselves.

The three most interesting observations to be made from these deposits are first, that only drinking and not eating appears to have taken place in this ritual event (or at least, only drinking has left tangible traces); second, that specific and exclusive vessels seem to have been used – in fact the only contexts in which these shapes with the pattern burnish decoration have been found *in situ* are these ritual pits; and third, even though several people probably participated in this event, it was certainly not the whole community that took part.[17] Again, food preparation, or in this case drink preparation, does not appear to be part of the event.

Meaningful to notice is that at the contemporary but distant site of Sabi Abyad in the Balikh Valley, the dark-faced pots most similar to those of Ain el Kerkh are a fruitstand with pattern-burnish decoration and a high-necked DFBW jar.[18] People from Sabi Abyad probably did not have daily encounters with the inhabitants of the Rouj basin, and eating vessels are in fact distinct from those of the DFW region. Similarities in the material culture and these particular vessels suggest that groups from these two regions did, however, have some kind of relation.[19] The presence of the fruitstand and the high-necked jar suggests that meetings were characterised by ritual drinking between the two different kin groups or their representatives.

17 Pollock 2003.

18 Akkermans 1989; Le Mière and Nieuwenhuyse 1996.

19 Le Mière and Picon 1998.

A last interesting case concerning ritual events in this region during the Neolithic period is that of burials. Burial rituals generally take the form of a kind of feast, in which some consumption must have taken place;[20] in the cases known from Ain el Kerkh, however, we seem to have a rather distinct behaviour. Burials from Ain el Kerkh have one or two very simple undecorated small size necked jars, in which liquids (again, not solid foods) were possibly kept for the afterworld.[21] Differently to what was noted above, though, these pots are not the particular vessels used in the other ritual occasions, but simple vessels for daily use. Furthermore, their capacities do not suggest that many people had drunk or eaten from them. It would rather appear that if there were a consumption rite at the moment of burial, these were not the vessels used in that occasion. The utensils were probably kept and re-used on other similar occasions. The vessels found with the dead were thus simply part of the dead person's equipment for the afterworld and possibly also to be used by him/her in the particular commensal event of the burial rite, but not by the 'living' participants of the ritual. The simplicity of the pots might furthermore suggest that such a rite was open to wide participation by community members.

The evidence we have from the Neolithic period thus seems to suggest that the strong symbolic meanings with which food and drink consumption was charged were expressed and materialised in the typological complexity and wide distribution of consumption vessels. A shared food consumption event was an important social and political act, and this was clearly expressed in the style of dishes. And differentially elaborated recipes possibly correlated to these stylistic variables of dishes. As Paul Halstead underlines in this volume, food elaboration and recipes most probably change according to the importance of the meal.

I believe that, even though details and specificities into which I do not wish to enter here certainly changed, the later pottery Neolithic and the Early Chalcolithic periods of these regions are characterised by a similar role for commensality. The very wide distribution of the same kinds of pottery corresponds in the Halaf period to a high mobility of groups over very large areas, and the highly decorated and mostly open profile vessels are evidently used for food and drink consumption or serving. In the subsequent Ubaid period, the growth of extended kin family groups certainly led to an increase in inter-family encounters aimed at promoting cooperation and reinforcing social identity, materially expressed through events of commensality.

20 Winter 1999.

21 Tsuneki 2013.

3 Anatolian Late Chalcolithic 1/2: Developing Hierarchies and New Commensalities

With the terminal Ubaid period, something starts to change. During the Ubaid period we have the first evidence of differences in status between families[22] and with the end of Ubaid the distribution of the first mass-produced bowls and the administrative material testimonies for the existence of labourers working for different 'house units,' from which they receive, possibly in payment for their duties, food rations.[23] I shall not discuss the system of food redistribution, which is tackled in the present volume by Jason Kennedy for the Ubaid and by Maria Bianca D'Anna for the later Late Chalcolithic 5 (LC 5), but it is important to signal that from this moment on, we start having two distinct forms of commensality, one between 'equals' and another underlining social diversity.

Let me start with the first, the one that still follows the earlier tradition, commensality between 'equals,' represented by interfamily, intergroup or inter-kin dining events.

The LC 2 occupation at Arslantepe (4200–4000 BC), in the Anatolian Upper Euphrates region of modern Turkey (Fig. 8), is characterised by a domestic quarter with at least three distinct units.[24] Interesting here is the distribution of *in situ* vessels. It appears from the distribution of cooking pots, that food preparation took place only indoors (Fig. 8) and that each domestic unit had its own kitchen; it furthermore seems that food was prepared both for small-scale and large-scale dining, since cooking pot capacities in a single kitchen range between 3 and 13 litres. Extremely rare are *in situ* intact bowls. Rim sherds from a 10cm-thick deposit above the floor, however, indicate a particularly high presence of bowls in room A700 and in the courtyard. It is thus possible that the dining halls were outdoors or in the empty room to the south.

In the Neolithic variability in shape and size of bowls is very high: rim diameters range from less than 5 to more than 54cm and volumes from 100 ml to more than 7 l (Fig. 9a–c). This strong variability is found in the Arslantepe LC2 bowls, too, and, as in the Neolithic, LC2 evidences a strong correlation between morphology, size, and, in some cases, paste categories. Paste category correlates with shape, for example, in some very specific, very nicely burnished bowls (Fig. 9a–b) with a complex kind of multiple groove on the exterior of the rim (the so-called *graupolierte Keramik* of Oylum Höyük).[25] Is it thus possible that in these cases paste categories retained a specific meaning, which could underline, for example, as hypothesised for the Neolithic, the type of dining event (daily, communal, intergroup, ritual)?

If we plot the dimensions of bowls according to morphological type we see very clearly that each type is moulded in at least three different size groups (Fig. 10). Could the shape be associated with the kind of food or the context of commensalism and the

22 Roaf 1989; Bernbeck 1995; Frangipane 1997.
23 Pollock 2003.
24 Balossi Restelli 2008.
25 Özgen et al. 1999.

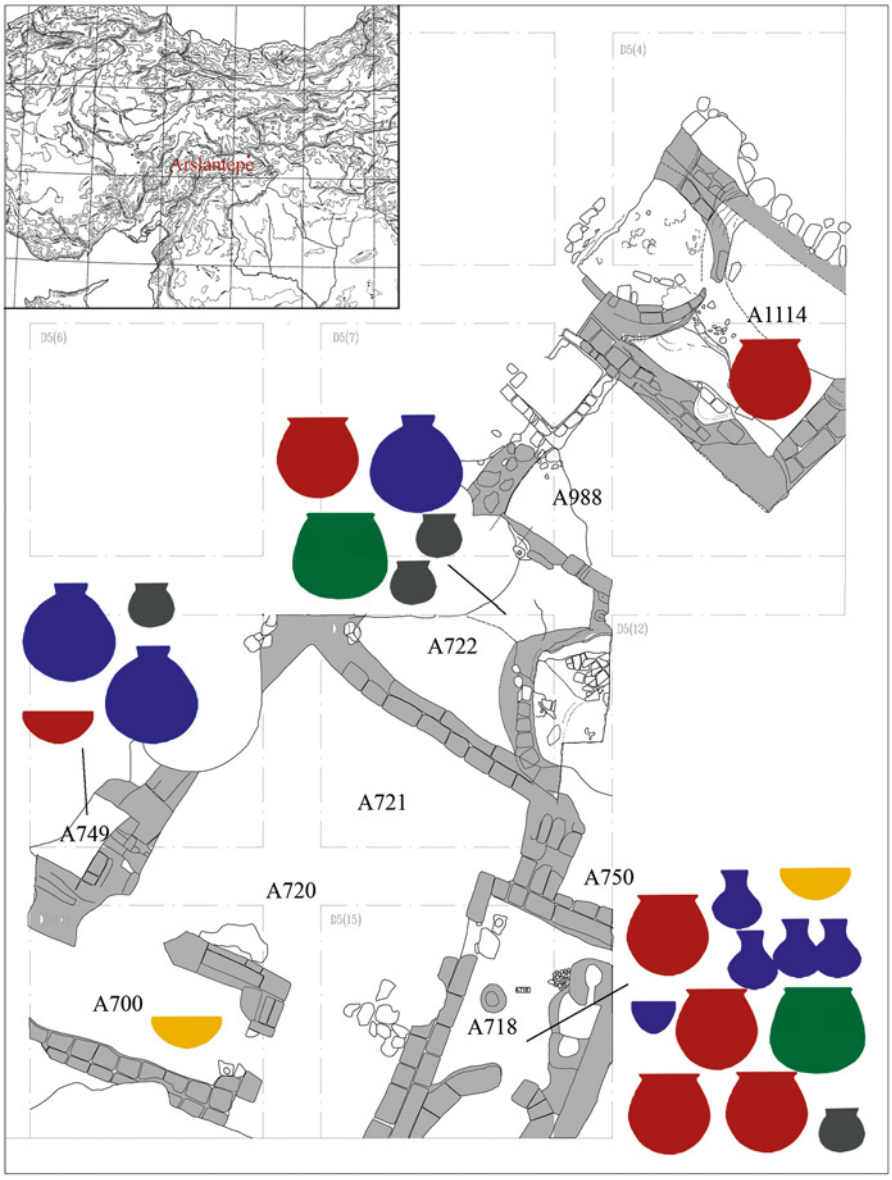


Fig. 8 Domestic quarter at Arslantepe period VIII, with indication of the *in situ* whole vessels found.

dimension indicate the person eating out of the bowl (child, adult male, adult female)? I would exclude the idea that differing pastes are solely representative of production units, as distribution of these different pastes and shapes in the dwellings is apparently

Fig. 9 Bowls from Arslantepe, a–c: period VIII (4200–4000 BC); d–e: period VII (3900–3400 BC). Photographs of the MAIAO (Missione Archeologica Italiana in Anatolia Orientale), by permission.

random. Since we imagine a domestic, or at least not specialized pottery production for this period, this distribution would rather appear to be due to use. Whatever the specific meaning, I take this to suggest that consumption vessels were still charged with symbolic meanings linked to the dining context and its participants.

At the same time, though, in the Arslantepe domestic dwellings we have mass-produced bowls.[26] These have a coarse paste, with very basic and unspecific profiles and rims and no decoration, and thus lack visual markers that suggest specific symbolic contexts of use, and probably convey no other meaning than the simple fact that food is being handed out (Fig. 9d–e). The only regular variability of these bowls is their dimension, clearly visible in the later period VII mass-produced bowls of Arslantepe. Measurements by Paolo Guarino have demonstrated two main clusters at 500ml and 900ml, interpreted as indicating different workers, as male and female, or unskilled and specialised workers.[27] In the use of this kind of vessel, there is, in my opinion, no intention of conveying other information related to what is being eaten and how. The commensal event is not one in which solidarity is enhanced. Even though it ideologically unites its participants,[28] and certainly in this sense the fact that bowls are all alike contributes to this, the gesture of handing out food becomes a strong symbolic act of superiority, where the

26 Frangipane 1993; Trufelli 1994.
27 Balossi Restelli and Guarino 2010.
28 Gero 1992.

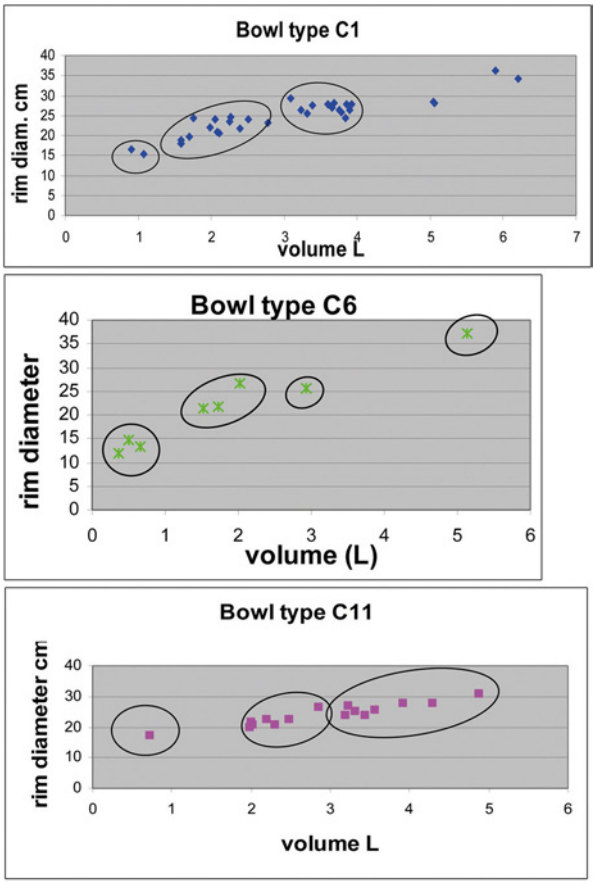


Fig. 10 Arslantepe period VIII bowls of three different morphological types (types C1, C6, C11) plotted against their rim diameter and volume. Each type is composed of 3/4 dimensional clusters.

person who is receiving food does not really feel compensated, but remains instead in a position of inferiority.[29]

In Arslantepe VIII these mass-produced bowls represent 11% of the total bowls from these levels. A significant part of the food was thus starting to be consumed using these bowls. Interesting is the fact that these are all non-elite domestic contexts. Had the bowls been used in these houses or in some other public space and then brought home? Were they re-used once at home?

29 Hayden 1996; Wiessner 1996.

4 Late Chalcolithic 3–5: The Loss of Symbolic Value of Consumption Vessels

The following period VII (3900–3400 BC) might help in discussing the problem mentioned above: the variability of vessels for food consumption appears to be strongly reduced in comparison to period VIII. Paste and shape variability is minimal. Wheel-made pottery appears, even though it does not completely take over the entirety of pottery production. Hand-made bowls with mixed temper do show more variability than their wheel-made counterparts, whilst the latter show a certain standardisation in shape and size. The majority of bowls consists of coarse, conical, flint-scraped, mass-produced ones. Another category of vessels, with a finer mixed temper, a red or orange slip and burnished, is mostly that of goblets.[30] Overall in period VII bowls are mostly mass produced, and goblets are primarily red slipped. I see this reduction in variability as an indication that, at least on certain occasions, consumption vessels were no longer used as a symbolic marker for the type of meal taking place; the symbolic value conveyed by the consumption vessels seems to me to have changed.

This is probably not surprising in the case of bowls used by the elites for the distribution of meals or rations, as is in fact the case in a large ceremonial building at Arslantepe VII that has an estimated number of more than 1100 *in situ* mass-produced bowls (Fig. 9d–e), of which 262 are fully intact.[31] As stated above, in this case the convivial event is intended as a way of strengthening political and social power.[32]

An elite residence and a series of long rooms with a possible storage function, dated to Arslantepe VII, have a majority of mass-produced bowls, even though the presence of the red-burnished goblets and bowls is higher than in other contexts. The very high percentages of mass-produced bowls and most of all the absence of any real alternative to these consumption vessels, indicate that these bowls were probably not only used in the distribution of meals to labourers, but they had started being of common, daily use in elite buildings, too. This might thus explain why, in period VIII, we start having mass-produced bowls in the houses as well (Fig. 9c).

Period VII non-elite domestic buildings, on the northeastern edge of the mound exhibit some variability in bowl types that recall period VIII. This suggests that at home pottery still partially distinguished different kinds of commensalities, but the increasing quantities of conical bowls accompany the disappearance of this tradition; the use of a specific plate for a particular purpose was no longer so important.

In comparison to the Neolithic, territorial boundaries of these communities were rather well defined, relations between groups were regulated by politics and economy, whilst in the Neolithic groups crossed into each other's territories continuously and

30 Frangipane 1993.

31 D'Anna and Guarino 2011.

32 Dietler 1996.

Fig. 11 Examples of consumption vessels from Arslantepe VIA. On the left are those of local tradition, whilst on the right are the Transcaucasian ones. Photographs of the MAIAO (Missione Archeologica Italiana in Anatolia Orientale), by permission.

thus had to constantly mediate and regulate relationships and resettle identities. Needs for these kinds of negotiations were probably less strong in the Late Chalcolithic phase. They had not disappeared, though, as the hand-made and red-slipped goblets and bowls testify; they were possibly used when families met to settle relations and discuss social or economic matters. The rarer fruitstands, possibly used in special, perhaps ritual events, may point to a similar phenomenon.

Thus, the mass-produced bowls that had possibly first entered the houses with rations came to be used as common consumption dishes. Furthermore, the identity of all consumption bowls possibly contributed to the construction of social identity in this period of growing elite power. The higher presence of red-slipped goblets in domestic contexts is probably not casual, because it is in these places that encounters between 'equals' – occasions on which social relations had to be concretely mediated – could still have taken place. It was on these occasions that the more particular vessels – again mostly drinking vessels – were used.[33] This greater importance of drinking in the encounters in which social solidarity was possibly sought further stresses, in my view, the distinction between this kind of commensality and that of period VII temple ceremonies, where the shape of the bowls would hint at the distribution of solid food instead.

Arslantepe period VIA (3300–3000 BC) commensality would appear somewhat similar to what was first seen in period VII. Consumption vessels – if we exclude again the special 'fruitstands' found in ceremonial contexts – are in fact, essentially the mass-produced conical bowls, suggesting that there was no need to differentiate dishes for

33 Hastorf and Johannessen 1993.

distinct consumption events; along with these, however, red-black cups and jugs of foreign origin appear (Fig. 11). Once again, where social relations have to be reinforced, as was the case of those between the inhabitants of Arslantepe and the newly arrived groups bringing a red-black pottery tradition, it is consumption vessels, and in particular drinking devices, that are shared and become symbolically important.[34] Within one's own territory, thus in intra-site relations, did the moment of food consumption lose its social cohesive power, becoming on the one hand an instrument of socio-political and economic control by elites over others[35] and on the other a simple act of eating? Whilst I believe that the first is true, I do not think so for the second statement. Food consumption was still an important social event, but pottery no longer visibly expressed the complex symbolism of dining. Instead of differentiating between the kinds of meals, food and participants, pottery rather suggested an overall identity of all consumers. Pottery was at that point very standardised as a consequence of the specialised production managed by central institutions, which were those promoting the first kind of commensality, the one expressing social distinction more than social solidarity. The centralised organisation of craft production might also be partly to blame for the loss of the symbolic role of consumption vessels as markers of distinct types of commensalities.[36] As regards commensality, furthermore, other symbolically relevant elements, which for the moment are invisible to us, must have remained, and these distinguished between different kinds of dining events; these could have been, for example, the kinds of food consumed or the places in which meals were eaten.

5 Conclusions

In conclusion, I hope to have demonstrated how the typological complexity of consumption vessels in the Neolithic period may reflect the centrality and variability of commensality in the daily life of communities. 'Dining,' intended as commensal and symbolically meaningful food consumption, and eating are inseparable concepts. The attributes of eating vessels were in my opinion symbolically representing the different foodways characterising this period. Drinking, within convivial events, would seem to have been reserved for the most particular and ritualised moments. Food preparation appears instead not to have been as symbolically charged.

This changes significantly in the Late Chalcolithic period. With the growth of a central political elite who exerted substantial economic control, we witness the separation of two kinds of commensalism: one promoting solidarity and the other instead forming the locus of strategic social and political legitimisation. The contexts of these different

34 Palumbi 2008, 312–314.

35 Potter 2000.

36 Pauketat and Emerson 1991.

commensalities are separate and, initially, the vessels used were also distinct, but pottery gradually loses its role of symbolic material expression of varying commensalities, and all dining events come to use the same dishes. When inter-group or inter-regional convivial encounters are involved, however, particular culturally and symbolically charged pottery is again used.

The data analysed has indicated a certain separation between cooking and eating activities, both in domestic and in public/ritual contexts. Maria Bianca D'Anna, in the present volume, suggests that cooking became an active part of the ceremonial commensalities of Late Chalcolithic 3–5 periods in which there was widespread participation. I believe this change is explainable by the new role of this type of commensality. These commensal events intentionally underline the gesture of giving, of handing out food from one part of the community to another: large cooking pots full of food would surely have been more impressive to look at than many single, small serving bowls, thus perfectly fulfilling the function of underlining the great generosity of elites in the distribution of goods to the rest of the community. After all, the Late Bronze Age ritual texts from Emar, which Walter Sallaberger discusses in the present volume, indicate very clearly how it was much more important to 'show off' how much food was offered to the gods than to actually feed them.

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Between Inclusion and Exclusion. Feasting and Redistribution of Meals at Late Chalcolithic Arslantepe (Malatya, Turkey)

Summary

The redistribution of meals and feasting practices in the early centralized society of Arslantepe VI A in south-eastern Anatolia (Late Chalcolithic 5 – 3300/3000 cal. BCE) are presented in this paper as examples of commensal politics. Within the framework of Mesopotamian early state formation, this period represents a stimulating case because of the evidence of economic centralization, the significant amount of materials found in *in situ* contexts, and the presence of functionally distinct architecture. Food and beverages were the economic base of the power of elites; yet it is not only through feasting activities that food enters Late Chalcolithic gastro-politics, but also through the meals disbursed in exchange for labor.

Keywords: Near Eastern Archaeology; Late Chalcolithic; Arslantepe; state formation; commensal politics; redistribution of meals; feasting.

In diesem Beitrag werden die Redistribution von Mahlzeiten sowie Praktiken des Festefeierns in der frühen zentralisierten Gesellschaft von Arslantepe VI A in Südostanatolien (Spätes Chalkolithikum 5 – 3300–3000 cal. BCE) dargestellt. Diese sind Beispiele für die Politisierung der Kommensalität. Im Rahmen der frühen Staatenbildung in Mesopotamien stellt Arslantepe, wo wirtschaftliche Zentralisierung nachgewiesen ist und wo erhebliche Mengen an in situ gefundenen Materialien sowie funktional unterschiedliche Architektur zutage kamen, einen bemerkenswerten Fall dar. Essen und Trinken bildeten die ökonomische Basis der Macht von Eliten; jedoch waren Lebensmittel nicht nur im Rahmen von Festen Aspekte der spätchalkolitischen „gastro-politics", sondern auch bei Mahlzeiten, die im Austausch für Arbeitskraft ausgeteilt wurden.

Keywords: Vorderasiatische Archäologie; Spätes Chalkolithikum; Arslantepe; Staatenbildung; Gastro-politics; Redistribution von Mahlzeiten; Feste.

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1 Introductory Remarks

One of the main tasks of archaeologists is to recover, analyze, and convey in discourse the traces left by the past activities related to production, consumption, or intentional and unintentional discard of materials. Food preparation and consumption are both activities that are fundamental to life, and it is thus unsurprising that their presence in the archaeological record is ubiquitous. The conservation, processing, and consumption of food often involve the use of ceramic containers and stone tools. Hence, along with unprocessed foodstuffs or remains of consumed meals, archaeologists also analyze pottery and lithic assemblages in order to assess food-related practices. The relationship between food management strategies and social as well as cultural identities is also crucial in understanding how a complex society is established and structured. In particular, to approach themes such as social identity and the rise of complex society in terms of commensality gives researchers the opportunity to integrate different analyses of diverse data sets. This approach is very productive when studying early complex societies such as those in Mesopotamia during the 4th millennium BCE, where food was the main economic basis of elite power.[1] How, where and among whom food was controlled and shared are all issues that have already shown strong heuristic potential in this regard.[2] The redistribution of meals and feasting practices in the early centralized society of Arslantepe at the end of the 4th millennium BCE, contemporary to the Late Uruk culture in Mesopotamia, are presented in this paper as examples of commensal politics.[3]

1 Frangipane 1996; Frangipane 2010b; Pollock 1999.

2 Bernbeck and Pollock 2002; Helwing 2003; Pollock 2003.

3 Dietler 2001; Bray 2003.

For many decades, the profound interaction with the disciplines of anthropology and sociology has led archaeologists to focus on social and cultural processes or practices rather than on an idealistic reconstruction of the past. This is particularly true for the burgeoning field of consumption studies. Consumption is not a passive act, rather it implies choices and modes that shape economies and social relations: "To a rationalized, expansionist and at the same time centralized, clamorous, and spectacular production corresponds *another* production, called 'consumption.' The latter is devious [...], because it [...] manifests itself [...] by its *ways of using* the products imposed by a dominant economic order."[4] A *vertical* approach that on a theoretical level integrates the analyses of systems of consumption with those of provision[5] may also combine on an analytical level these complex and interconnected social, economic, and cultural spheres. Moreover, consumption as "the social process by which people construct the symbolically laden material worlds they inhabit and which, reciprocally, act back upon them in complex ways"[6] is "an important arena of agentive social action, symbolic discourse, and cultural transformation."[7] In particular, food and drink in the form of meals are in this perspective "embodied material culture,"[8] and they define social and cultural identities.

The anthropological and ethnographic literature on food and eating is vast,[9] and studies on food systems in ancient cultures are equally numerous, also because:

> Looking at food [...] involves looking at the everyday as well as the exotic, the special as well as the mundane. It involves us in a varying level of analysis, from the individual, through the household, to the community (however defined) right up to the world economic system.[10]

Surely, "Food is not only a metaphor or vehicle of communication; a meal is a physical event. [...] Food may be symbolic, but it is also as efficacious for feeding as roofs are for shelter, as powerful for including as gates and doors."[11] People eat, but what, how, when, and with whom are all cultural choices: the social and cultural *milieu* of food-related activities is what marks these differences. In fact, all these activities are linked and depend on social relations, constituting at the same time the occasion to substantiate, challenge, and negotiate one's self identity. In particular through feasts, as ritualized

4 Certeau 1984, xii–xiii.
5 Fine and Leopold 1993.
6 Dietler 2010, 210.
7 Dietler 2010, 210.
8 Dietler 2006, 232.
9 See Messer 1984: it is interesting to note that while the various views expressed on food systems are based on the analysis of their material, socio-cultural, and medical dimensions, 'eating events' are part of research concerning cuisine tradition and ethnicity. Mintz and Du Bois updated Messer's overview and proposed a catalogue *raisonné* of ethnographic and anthropological works concerning food consumption in contemporary societies. They particularly refer to "classic food ethnographies; single commodities and substances; food and social change; food insecurity; eating and ritual; eating and identities; and instructional materials" (Mintz and Du Bois 2002,101).
10 Caplan 1994, 5.
11 Douglas 1984, 11.

events in which food and drinks are shared, food is a means of marking and reproducing social identities and, potentially, inequality.

Commensality has been defined as simply a set of social interchanges that take place between persons during meals, thus mainly focusing on how eating partners are chosen or excluded.[12] We can surely agree that commensality is based on the co-presence of people who share food and drink at a certain time, space, and circumstance. But commensality also implies a psychological and social interaction as well as a certain degree of emotional impact and gratification; often it is based on more or less reciprocal hospitality; and involves a sequence of actions that are more or less repetitively followed and which shape people's everyday life.[13] Both ordinary and extraordinary commensal events appear to be based on a certain degree of routine, while the presence of guests and the preparation of special meals consumed in an out-of-the-ordinary setting or using special tableware may distinguish extraordinary commensal occasions from everyday ones. Moreover, feasts may involve a higher degree of performance, which is an important means to reinforce the emotive involvement. During these events, food acts as a language and becomes also "a way of communicating with our fellow human beings or even our deities."[14] The routinized, structured, and highly symbolic dimensions of commensal practices place them very close to rituals. Operating both at a cognitive and emotional level, rituals and commensal practices may also have a strong homogenizing potential.

> In a cultural universe that sets considerable store by a host of heterogeneous persons, groups, forces, and powers, food [...] always raises the possibility of homogenizing the actors linked by it, whether they are husband or wife, servant or master, worshiper or deity.[15]

The context to which Appadurai refers is that of a contemporary Tamil Brahmin community in southern India, where – he remarks – the complex system of rules concerning food access and sharing may counteract the homogenizing power of food. Generally speaking, these processes of homogenization may be real or unreal. In the latter case, asymmetrical hospitality or public feasts may reproduce and reinforce social and economic inequality through egalitarianism that is only apparent.

12 Sobal 2000.
13 Certeau 1984.
14 Caplan 1994, 5.
15 Appadurai 1981, 507.

2 Mesopotamia in the Late Chalcolithic Period

Simplifying what is a hotly debated topic in Near Eastern archaeology, during the 4th millennium BCE the plain of southern Mesopotamia witnessed the emergence of the first cities and state societies, characterized by a hierarchically organized political system, monumental architecture, new technological achievements, highly standardized pottery, bureaucracy, and writing. In other, less euphemistic words, a highly unequal economic and political system established itself in southern Mesopotamia and Susiana and a significant number of sites dispersed over northern Mesopotamia, southeastern Anatolia, and western Iran echoed the exceptional relevance of the southern Uruk culture. Due to the political situation in Iraq over the last twenty years, archaeological research has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to undertake in the *core* of Mesopotamia, leading to an increase in the number and intensity of projects conducted in other Near Eastern countries, especially in Syria and Turkey. This has meant that there is an increasing abundance of data concerning the regions commonly referred to as the *periphery* of the Late Uruk world. This situation has also influenced the theoretical discussions taking place, which converged mainly on the nature of the relationship between northern and southern Mesopotamia from the Ubaid *κοινή* onwards, as well as on the originality and dependency of the so-called northern Uruk phenomenon. Studies concerning the social and political interactions in northern Mesopotamia between local Late Chalcolithic communities and southern Mesopotamian newcomers have focused on the relationship between material culture and social identities,[16] and also on food-related practices, such as butchering techniques and customs[17] as well as on different ways of cooking that may allow us to identify ethnic and cultural identities.[18] In particular, Pearce considers the ensemble of all activities concerning food and drink preparation, storing, and consumption as highly routinized domestic behaviors deeply linked to social and ethnic identity.

The historiographical analyses of the Uruk period frequently turn to themes that are central not only to Near Eastern archaeologists. The phenomenon of state formation in Mesopotamia is the pristine case that has shaped the very concept of urban revolution in archaeology.[19] The debate has centered on, and still involves, several key topics: how economic and social stratification became structured and established; what was the prevailing mode of production; where the elite based its economic power (with staple finance as opposed to wealth finance); how elites controlled large sectors of the population and craft production; the level of independence of households; the role of ideology in the formation and maintenance of social inequality and that of trade as a driving and structuring force for the elite.

16 E. g. Helwing 2000; Stein 2000; Frangipane 2002.
17 Stein 1999, 145 and Fig. 7.14.
18 Pearce 1999; Stein 1999, 148–149.
19 Childe 1935; Childe 1950.

The main economic characteristic of the Mesopotamian Uruk state system has been identified in the centralization of economic surplus and its redistribution in the form of rations. Thus it is not only the control over production that structurally characterizes the Late Uruk economy, but rather the control of labor – which becomes the alienation of labor – that is the most significant outcome of a long process.[20] Rations "sind regelmässige Verabreichungen von Nahrung zum primären Lebensbedarf. Sie müssen scharf von Lohn unterschieden werden, der auch oft in Form von Gerste ausbezahlt wurde."[21] A ration represents a standardization of the basic needs of a person given in exchange for his or her work. In his diachronic study of Near Eastern food ration systems Milano suggested that rations originated in the Late Uruk period and that "questa *straordinaria persistenza istituzionale* ha orientato gli studi piuttosto sugli aspetti strutturali del sistema che non sui suoi aspetti evolutivi."[22] Thus, it may be more appropriate to refer to redistributive *economies* and ration *systems* with a plural that would take into account not only geographical and chronological but also structural shifts. At any rate, by the Late Uruk period the distribution of meals, interpreted as an established ration system, has been identified in both literary and archaeological sources.[23]

If the objectification of the economic redistributive mechanism is the ration system, the objectification of the Late Uruk ration can be said to be the bevelled-rim bowls: found in their hundreds, they are coarse, quickly fired, and mould-made containers with a distinctive rim bevelled toward the exterior with the thumb and with the exterior surface always left unfinished. Describing the ration system in the Late Uruk period, different scholars observed that bevelled-rim bowls must have been used to contain and consume meals rather than to measure or transport them.[24] Considering the above, is it still possible to continue to refer to these meals as 'rations,' as proposed by Nissen?[25] Indeed prepared foods or drinks were to be distributed in the mass-produced bowls, but even though Late Chalcolithic meal disbursements did not share important characters with later rations redistribution (ingredients *vs.* prepared food; monthly *vs.* daily rhythm) and were not a regularly paid wage, neither were they only an occasional remuneration for irregular work. Pointing to the intrinsically economic nature of this food disbursement and to the transactions that it implied, food rations have been traditionally analyzed from a political economic perspective, and most scholars agree that a ration system was established in Late Uruk Mesopotamia. In fact, the mass production of bowls; their association with administrative materials; their excavation contexts – either discarded whole

20 Frangipane 1996; Frangipane 2001; Bernbeck and Pollock 2002, 194–195.

21 Stol 2007, 264.

22 Milano 1989, 65; emphasis mine.

23 In fact "tanto il termine per 'razione' (še-ba, lett. 'quota d'orzo'), quanto il termine per 'prezzo' (nì-sa$_{10}$: 'equivalente del valore') sono infatti presenti fin dai più antichi testi mesopotamici" (Milano 1989, 66).

24 Liverani 1988, 127; Frangipane 1989, 54; Pollock 2003.

25 Nissen 1970.

Fig. 1 The site of Arslantepe in the Malatya plain, Turkey. Photo M. Benedetti, Archive of the Missione Archeologica Italiana nell'Anatolia Orientale (MAIAO).

or ready for use and piled up in large numbers – are all factors which may imply that repetitive meal redistribution and consumption were habitual practices and thus point to the existence of one or more central authority(ies) with large numbers of personnel involved at various stages, in turn requiring a level of control over production.

The textual evidence is of great relevance too, as the majority of proto-cuneiform texts recorded administrative activities that included the disbursement of different kinds of rations. On the premise that this early form of writing diverged from the spoken language, Damerow observes: "in contrast to oral language, which is always contextualized […], administrative activities decontextualize information and reduce it to a few relevant dimensions;"[26] and a clear example of this mechanism has been found in the proto-cuneiform sign that represents a bevelled-rim bowl:

> Beveled-rim bowls used for the disbursement of rations represented by the sign GAR which could be used to designate a ration of a certain size or, in a semantically defined sign combination, an institution. In combination with a man's head it formed the sign combination GU_7, which later meant 'to eat' or, more generally, 'to consume.' In proto-cuneiform writing, however, this sign combination was exclusively used to represent a certain type of administrative activity related to the disbursement of rations.[27]

However, a ration system cannot be reduced or minimized to being merely the other side of centralization nor its epiphenomenon. In fact, the complex structure of unequal social relations that are no longer uniquely based on kinship can be said to be embodied in the ration system, which "became a way to create maintain relations of dependency,"[28] and in the objects used in transactions: the mass-produced bowls. Another element of

26 Damerow 1999, 8.
27 Damerow 1999, 8; fig. 3 caption.
28 Pollock 2003, 21.

novelty is the advent of depersonalized commensal practice and context, in which the people who receive the meal do not *dine out* but simply *eat together*.[29] These people are socially linked together by the fact that they work and eat together: this is their *everyday life*, or at least an important part of it. This new formal commensalism, as with other commensal occasions, is "excluded from the repertoire of figural representations in the late fourth millennium."[30] In her work, Pollock has looked at the ration redistributive system "within the broader economic context of early Mesopotamian states" also as a "formal commensal practice," which "involves the manipulation of meanings associated with food and beverages through their presentation and consumption in the service of political, religious, and other social goals."[31] During this period the primary goods, mainly food and beverages, are the economic base of the elite's power; yet it is not only through feasting activities that food enters Late Uruk gastro-politics and embodies the process by which this society forms its hierarchies. Rather, this can be said to occur through a ration practice that is not ordinary precisely because it is embedded in formalized contexts, nor is it extraordinary, as it takes place on a daily basis. Considered from this point of view, a formal commensal practice such as that of Late Uruk ration-meals system leads us to put aside the theoretical dichotomy between 'ordinary-extraordinary' that, although it might be heuristically useful in other contexts, cannot be applied in this case.

3 The Case of 4th Millennium Arslantepe: from Period VII to Period VI A

Moving north to the present-day arid ranges of the Antitaurus Mountains on the Anatolian highlands, the four hectare *höyük* of Arslantepe is the main prehistoric mound in the large plain of Malatya (Fig. 1). Arslantepe is surrounded by numerous springs, and the natural alluvial soil conditions associated with the abundance of water have long guaranteed a high level of agricultural productivity without the need for complex canalization.

In the first half of the 4th millennium, period VII testifies to a local formative process toward political complexity and a centralized economy.[32] Period VII is a long lasting cultural phase (c. 3800 to 3400 cal BCE) with several architectural levels that have been excavated in different areas of the Arslantepe mound. During this period, the primary economy remains traditionally centered on barley and different types of wheat

29 See Finkelstein as quoted in Fine and Leopold 1993, 167; but also Pollock 2003 and Balossi Restelli this volume.

30 Bernbeck and Pollock 2002, 191.

31 Pollock 2003, 19.

32 Frangipane 2002; Frangipane 2010a.

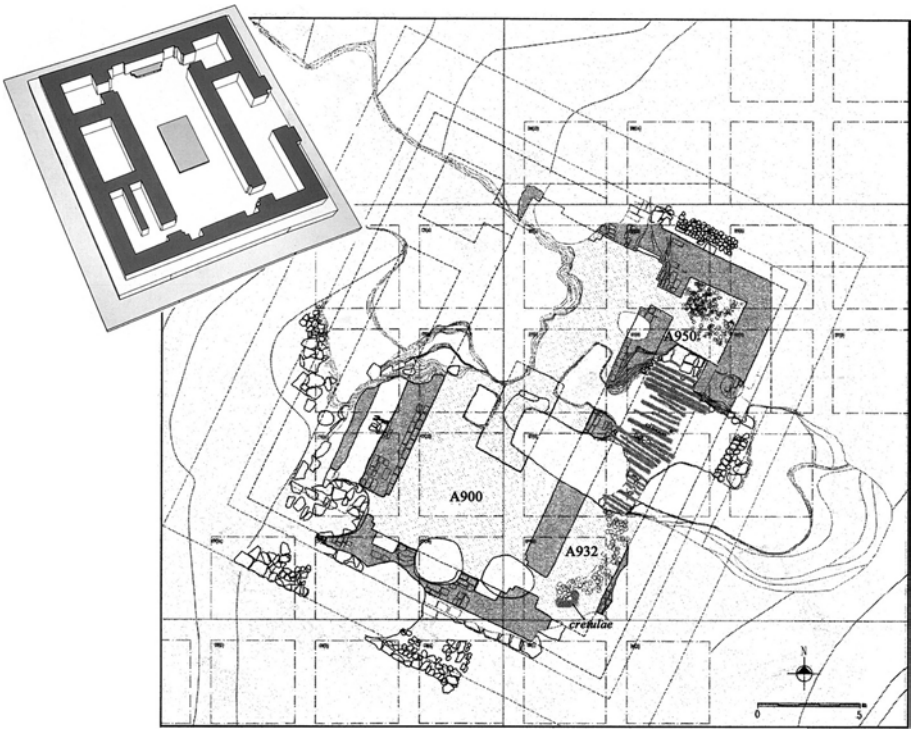

Fig. 2 Arslantepe Period VII: Temple C and mass-produced bowls from A900. Plan: Frangipane 2010a

agriculture and on mixed animal herding,[33] while structural changes in craft production constitute the most significant novelty in the economic sphere in comparison with earlier levels. The pottery production becomes characterized by a higher degree of standardization, the pervasive incidence of chaff-tempered fabrics that allow quicker firing, the use of turning devices, and the mass production of bowls.[34] Some of these phenomena begin to appear at Late Chalcolithic Arslantepe from the end of 5th millennium BCE (period VIII[35]). It is, however, during period VII that similar forms are produced in different ceramic classes; slow and, later on, fast wheels are used in manufacturing entirely or partially different vessels; potters' marks are now commonly incised on vessels, particularly on mass-produced bowls. In this phase the large scale of coarse bowl production has been interpreted as a marker for the establishment of a redistributive economy, in which the pottery craft would have been at least partially integrated. At the end of period VII, these bowls are found in huge quantities in a monumental and isolated tripartite building (Building XXIX or Temple C) that occupied the highest point of the settlement (Fig. 2).[36]

33 Bartosiewicz 2010.

Fig. 3 Arslantepe Period VII: Mass-produced bowls from A900. Photo R. Ceccacci, Archive MAIAO.

More than 1100 bowls were scattered on the floors of the large central room and piled ready to be used in two smaller side rooms, where some clay sealings were also set apart. Building XXIX contains a large platform with a fireplace at the center of the main room, which was decorated with niches and wall paintings. It has therefore been interpreted as a context for large, public commensal events possibly linked to collective work occasions.[37] These public events appear to be multi-sided and mutually integrated to a great extent: in fact, they imply the consumption of meals by large numbers of people, and they therefore mobilized significant amounts of food eaten with the help of specific objects (the mass-produced bowls); these meals were consumed together; their disbursement was under bureaucratic control (as the presence of clay sealings testifies), thus they were an economic transaction; they have a highly ritual character also displayed by the exceptional architectural setting. Furthermore "the frequent use of the mass-produced coarse bowls to redistribute and consume meals in a ceremonial context of public commensality seems to be evidence for a materialisation of asymmetric relations through an ostensible emphasis on equality."[38] Equality was reinforced by the high degree of inclusion and proximity of these commensal events, with large sectors of the population convening in one single place, attending the same event, and probably participating to the same degree: "The size of the audience and their proxemics to the performers are important variables in determining the potential effectiveness of the message(s) being conveyed during performances and its political implications."[39]

34 Palmieri 1985.
35 Balossi Restelli 2008.
36 Guarino 2008.
37 D'Anna and Guarino 2010.
38 D'Anna and Guarino 2010, 203.
39 Mills 2007, 211.

3.1 Arslantepe Period VI A: Structural Features and Material Culture of a Late Uruk Period Site on the Anatolian Highland

In the last three centuries of the 4th millennium BCE, a local early state society developed at Arslantepe, with its own architecture, pottery, glyptic, and metallurgy, but it certainly interacted with the Uruk world and other Anatolian communities. Despite local peculiarities, Arslantepe period VI A shares numerous features with Late Uruk culture. The centralization and redistribution of primary goods (essentially food) and the control of the labor force are the critical elements that may allow us to associate, at an analytical level, Arslantepe with the Late Uruk horizon. However, several features are peculiar to the Anatolian site as structural (e. g., the formation of a state in absence of real urbanization as pointed out by Frangipane,[40] or the internal organization of architectural spaces) and symbolic elements (e. g., the figurative repertoire in the glyptic and wall paintings).

The Period VI A pottery assemblage could be said to symbolize these complex relationships. A meaningful example: at Arslantepe, Uruk bevelled-rim bowls are rare and not found *in situ*, whereas the local wheel-thrown truncated conical bowls are mass-produced (Fig. 4). Moreover, these are the most common open containers in the VI A period repertoire and appear to be only similar to the so-called "flower pots," a Late Uruk wheel-thrown container less commonly attested than the ubiquitous beveled-rim bowls.

This difference is not merely a matter of form. The mass production of bevelled-rim bowls may also have involved a manufacturing process in which unskilled potters could easily have shaped the bowls in a simple mould, such as a hole in the ground,[41] while producing wheel-thrown vessels as simple as the Arslantepe VI A bowls, on a complicated tool such as the fast wheel, would have required a certain level of skill and experience. This does not imply that Arslantepe pottery production is more specialized than that at Late Uruk sites; it does rather suggest that the scale of pottery production and consumption at the Anatolian site is at a more restricted level: potters could satisfy the demand for mass-produced bowls and there was no need to involve unskilled workers. Most importantly, the mass production of bowls was not a novelty at Arslantepe; on the contrary, these objects appear to be part of a long-lasting local tradition, which, as I mentioned above, began during the previous period VII. However, it is not only a general link with the widespread mass production of bowls that is characteristic of the Late Ubaid and Late Chalcolithic communities, especially in the northern areas of Greater Mesopotamia.[42] The link between period VII and VI A mass-produced bowls is a cogent

40 Frangipane 2009.

41 Or see Nissen 1970, 139: "Um den Topf besser von der Form lösen zu können, bestreute man die Form wahrscheinlich mit Sand."

42 See Kennedy this volume.

Fig. 4 Period VI A mass-produced bowls. Photo R. Ceccacci, Archive MAIAO.

and strong one. In the course of Period VII, these vessels changed, from a round-based flint-scraped, hand-made version to a flat-based bowl, often shaped on a turning device. Their dimensions also diminished over time. In the context dated to the very end of period VII, there is a prevalence of smaller, flat-based, wheel-thrown bowls. In period VI A all of the bowls were made on the fast wheel, they became even smaller, and the shape of the rim was simple and rounded, whereas in period VII they had a typical interior bevelled lip.

The repertoire of shapes documented at Arslantepe VI A is less varied than at Late Uruk sites. This is also true when looking at open vessels. The set of bowls at Late Uruk sites, such as Habuba Kabira[43] or Hassek Höyük[44], is much more differentiated in both form and dimension when compared to the assemblage at Arslantepe where, besides the mass-produced bowls, there are a few other types of open-shaped vessels that were possibly used for consuming food and drink. There is a distinction between the manufacture of these containers in different wares, which may be linked both to the producers and the actual function of these objects: in the light pinkish, cream-colored plain simple ware (PSW), which is fine and wheel-made, there are some lipped bowls[45] and beaked bowls that must have had a special function linked to liquid contents.[46] Bowls of different dimensions and profiles, as well as mugs, were also produced in the Red-Black Burnished Ware (RBBW), which is characterized by shiny bichrome surfaces. They are not found in large quantities but they represent the main class of vessels realized in this special kind of hand-made pottery. High-stemmed bowls were produced in both PSW and RBBW; rarely, the light colored ones are painted with red stripes and/or dots (Fig. 5a).[47]

43 Sürenhagen 1974/75.

44 Helwing 2002.

45 Frangipane and Palmieri 1983, Fig. 30; from Temple B: Frangipane 1997, Fig. 12.4.

46 Frangipane and Palmieri 1983, Fig. 28.7 and 9.

47 Very few examples of high-stemmed bowls are found in the public storerooms, whereas they are found more commonly on the floors of both of the temples and in a large room (A127) next to the weapons room (A113) that is, unfortunately, only partially preserved. A few high-stemmed bowls were also found in the residential area, with the significant exception of room A747 (see *infra* 2.3).

Fig. 5 Period VI A high-stemmed bowls: (a) and (c) from A747, (b) from Temple B. A900. Photos R. Ceccacci, Archive MAIAO.

Period VI A in the Arslantepe sequence corresponds to a unitary architectonic level (Figs. 6 and 12). Brought to light in a widely excavated area, the buildings were constructed at different times and during their lifetime underwent critical changes.[48] Nevertheless, in the final occupational phase, they composed a system of related buildings used as a whole. This complex was destroyed all at once in a large fire. The sudden depositional process and the low level of post-depositional disturbance has allowed for a significant level of preservation of *in situ* materials.

To date, two areas with period VI A architectural remains have been excavated. In the area that is at a topographically higher level, a complex of not very well preserved rooms was found (Fig. 11). It contained no evidence of any administrative activities (such as clay sealings) or of the accumulation or redistribution of goods, but indications of food preparation, small-scale storage, and textile production at a household level were discovered, and thus this area has been interpreted as a residential zone.

48 Alvaro 2010.

The second well-known excavated architectural complex occupies the slope of the ancient hill and consists of monumental buildings that contain evidence of the exercise of power at different scales in separate spaces, such as wealth centralization, distribution of rations under administrative control, and ritual practices.[49] The public buildings are located on different terraces – and consequently at different heights – along a central axis: this is a kind of corridor-street that was only partially roofed, sloping down from northwest to southeast (Fig. 6).

The walls of passageways or those next to doors were frequently decorated with either impressions in the plaster or painted elements and scenes (Fig. 7). In just two cases the scenes are very well preserved due to wall or plaster restoration carried out during period VI A. One such case is that of the central room (A364) of the storeroom sector, where two human figures standing behind a short table were painted on both sides of the door that gave access to the back courtyard (Fig. 12b). When this door was sealed with a thin wall, the adjacent walls in A364 were plastered and replastered several times over the years with plain, white layers of plaster covering the original paint. It seems that when the door was sealed, it was no longer required that the paintings were visible.

3.2 Period VI A Commensal Politics in the Public Buildings

The access to the storeroom sector was from the corridor though the central room A364. When, as described above, the back door into the courtyard was closed, only the southern room A340 still had direct access through a small passage to the open space in the back. In contrast to what was found in the other storerooms, this room contained a few large storage vessels for dry and semi-liquid foodstuffs, a single bottle, a large quantity of mass-produced bowls, probably some sacks, and a lot of cattle and caprine bones from low and medium quality meat cuts. Some cooking pots were also present: they were mainly small in dimensions, but large fragments of a ca. 25 liter capacity pot have been also found on the floor of the room.[50] Numerous clay sealings were found near the vessels and grouped in one corner of the room.[51] All these elements point to an

49 Moreover, a unique find comprising a group of weapons of arsenical copper (nine swords and 12 spear points along with a quadruple spiral plaque) in one of the rooms of the complex (A113) points to a high level of specialization in metallurgical technology as well as a centralized control over the exercise of force and a certain degree of violence and conflict which was physically materialized in hand-to-hand combat (Frangipane and Palmieri 1983, 394–407; Di Nocera 2010).

50 In a preliminary analysis of the VI A pottery (D'Anna 2010) this vessel was not included in the study.

51 Frangipane 2007.

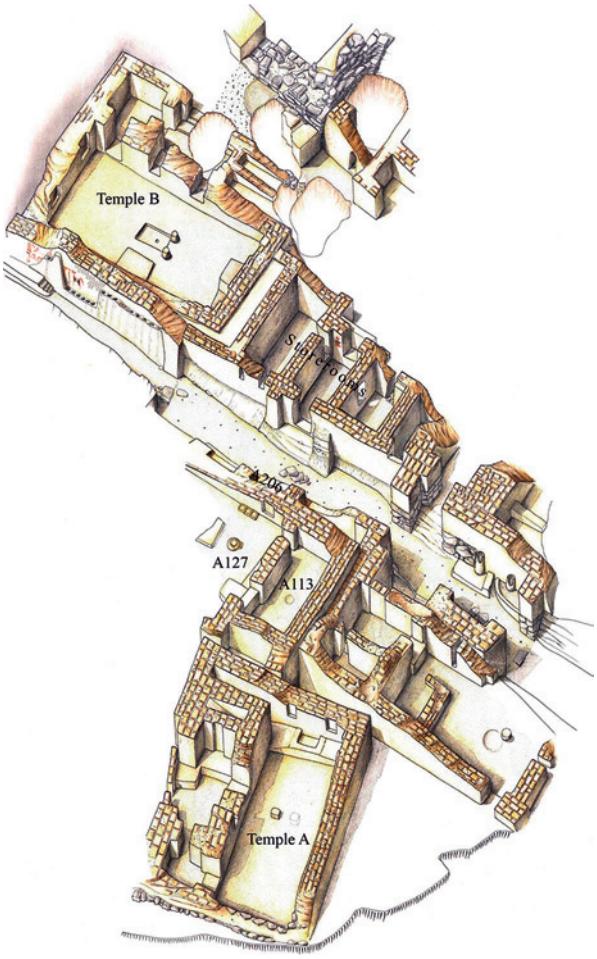

Fig. 6 The period VI A public building complex. Photo C. Alvaro, Archive MAIAO.

interpretation of A340 as a redistribution center.[52] The direct connection of A340 to the back courtyard appears to be significant. Open spaces are rare in the public building complex, which was progressively enlarged by abutting one building directly against the other in an agglutinative pattern. Although this courtyard or small plaza is located close to Temple B, it actually occupied a lower terrace. Temple B was in fact built at a notably higher elevation than the storeroom sector.[53] It seems highly probable that some people

52 The small dimensions of A340 as well as the absence of fire installations in this room attest that food was not cooked in here nor could this have been an area for butchering. Food and/or beverages must have been processed elsewhere within or outside the public compound.

53 In this area, two large pits destroyed the VI A level, hence it is unknown whether there was a stair or some other way to access the higher terrace or whether access to Temple B and the large building facing it was possible only from the northeast.

Fig. 7 Arslantepe VI A public buildings: possible passageway to the meal redistribution area. The location of painted and impressed decorations on walls is indicated in red.

could enter the public building complex from the southern gate, turn right after a few meters, then left and gain access to the redistribution area without really entering the complex, as well as remaining in an open space (Fig. 7). "For anyone with the necessary power and means, architecture is a very important way to influence others. People's movements through space are steered by the availability of circulation paths within and between buildings."[54] This open area was the place where distribution of rations from room A340 might have taken place, and it is highly probable that here people not only received but also ate the identical meal. Thus this area is perhaps the place where this new formal, impersonal, and even 'alienated' commensality might have taken place. In this case, the commensal practice itself and the use of the mass-produced bowls, more or less the same for everybody, are elements of homogenization among the people receiving the food. Further, by taking place within the public complex, this practice underscores a symbolic element of communality between the non-elite and the elite members. Yet it would seem that this unifying element is more ideological than real, and the fact that

54 Bernbeck and Pollock 2002, 184–185.

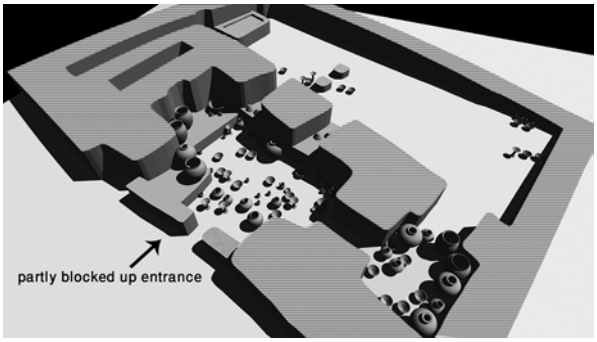

Fig. 8 Period VI A: Temple A.

this was only a partial, fake physical inclusion in those spaces where elites carried out their activities is undoubtedly meaningful.

In strong contrast to period VII, during period VI A the disbursement of rations is linked to specific places such as room A340 that seem to have only had this economic function.[55] The temple structures became mainly spaces for rituals that involved only a limited number of people, even though administration of goods was also practiced in these places of worship, as the presence of small numbers of clay sealings shows.[56]

Temple A's function is actually difficult to assess, since at the end of the period it underwent a significant structural change (two walls narrowed the entrance door: Fig. 8); moreover, so many vessels were lying on the floor of the two entrance rooms that walking through them may have been impossible. Food preparation and consumption certainly took place in Temple A, evidenced by the presence of animal bones,[57] stone tools with identifiable use wear traces,[58] storage vessels and cooking pots, along with a restricted amount of large mass-produced bowls and other open vessels (high-stemmed bowls; Red-Black Burnished bowls, mugs and jugs; beaked bowls).

At the time of its destruction, large storage vessels and bottles were present in the main room of Temple B (Fig. 9) and six cooking pots would have allowed for the processing of more than 140 liters of foodstuffs (Fig. 10).[59] This indicates that lavish quantities of food and drinks were stored, processed, cooked, and consumed inside the main room.

55 D'Anna and Guarino 2010; Frangipane 2010b. A large assemblage of mass-produced bowls has been found discarded together with more than 5000 fragments of clay sealings in the largest *cretulae* dump of period VI A (area A206: Frangipane 2007). The waste materials found in here originated from a complex economic and administrative sector, which "comprised several different rooms (8) closed using different systems" of pegs and locks (Frangipane 2007, 455). The co-occurrence of large quantities of clay sealings and small mass-produced bowls in A206 implies the presence of different storage areas and redistribution units in the complex of period VI A public buildings, and therefore of "circuits of circulation of surpluses which are at least partially detached from the ideological-religious and prestige sphere" (Frangipane 2010b, 290).

56 Frangipane 1997, 63.

57 Bartosiewicz 2010.

58 Lemorini 2010.

59 Frangipane 1997; D'Anna 2010.

Fig. 9 Period VI A Temple B: plan; access pattern; wall decorations; some of the pots found in A450. Photo R. Ceccacci, Archive MAIAO.

No botanical remains have been found in Temple B, but the pattern of the numerous animal bones left there[60] is characterized by remains uncommon elsewhere, such as hare and mature cattle, which could have been used to prepare sizeable meals. The occurrence of three of the largest bottles of period VI A in Temple B shows that sharing drinks played an important role during the feasts that took place there. The assemblage of open-shaped vessels gives some glimpse of the nature of the commensal ritualized events taking place in Temple B. The majority of vessels for eating or drinking are again the mass-produced bowls. Considering only the main room (A450), there were approximately 20 bowls, which were larger than those found ready to be used or discarded in A340 and in the main *cretulae* dump. The use of the same types of vessels as in the practice of ration distribution suggests that a strong symbolical emphasis was placed in

60 Bartosiewicz 2010.

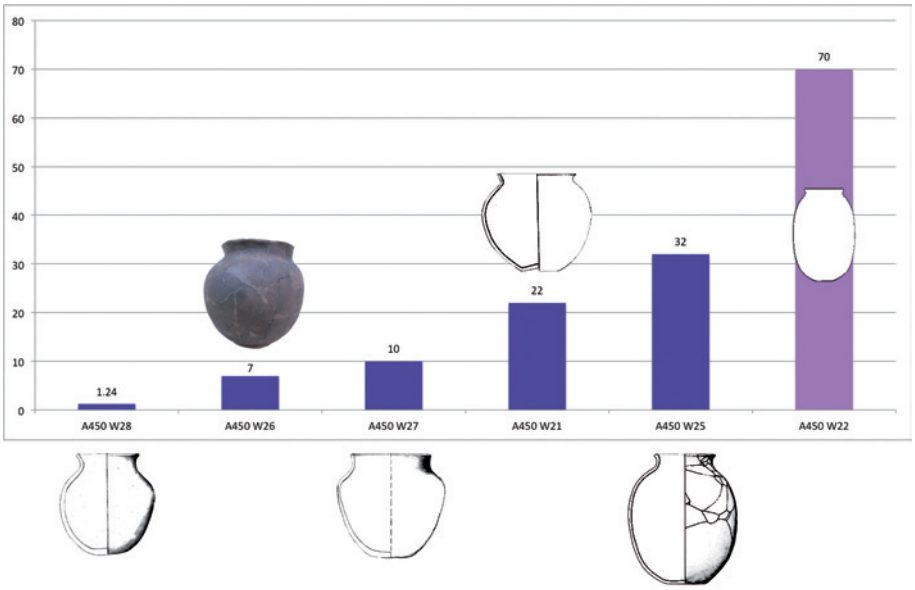

Fig. 10 Temple B cooking pot capacity (in liters). W22 is a *pithos* also used for cooking.

and through these rituals on equality between elite and non-elite people.[61] These commensal occasions may not have involved a large number of people: the temple room is small and contained few vessels for drinking and eating. The dimensions of the period VI A temple are much more restricted in comparison not only to the large Temple C of Arslantepe's previous period, but also to the contemporary Late Uruk ceremonial edifices in other sites. Access to the main room was circuitous: from the entrance room it was necessary to turn right, entering an anteroom, and then left to finally gain access to the main room. Direct communication between entrance room and main room was made possible by two windows (Fig. 9). Through these two windows, the ritual must have been visually accessible from the entrance room that was decorated with impressed concentric rhombuses painted in red, possibly symbolizing eyes. It is interesting that impressed decorations and pictorial depictions are located next to places where people passed by rather than inside the rooms, suggesting that the aesthetic and symbolic significance of these spaces consisted of their being a threshold, intrinsically denoting a boundary between two different places or situations.[62] A threshold is the physical transition from outside to inside, thus from exclusion to inclusion. Passageways are liminal zones, where people have the impression of being already inside, but actually are

61 D'Anna 2010.

62 Bourdieu 2005, 342–343.

not. The temple entrance room seems to share this liminal character.[63] The presence of a fireplace in the main room right in front of the two windows would have created suggestive plays of lights and shadows; the food cooked in the main room could also produce inviting smells that could have wafted into the entrance room; and the people standing there possibly received and shared some food, as testified by the presence of bowls on Temple A window sills and a bottle on the northern window sill in Temple B. "The variables of performances include lighting and visibility, sounds, smells, and taste,"[64] and all these elements are critical components of the feasting ritual also as a performance, which reinforce its emotional and cognitive significance. Once again also in this particular case, inclusion and exclusion are not absolute categories; rather, they are modulated materially and symbolically with different nuances, which might be related to different social and political roles in this early complex society.[65] Here the messages appear to be multifaceted and the vessels used for eating and drinking symbolize this apparent contradiction:

> The elite and those who worked for them (and in a status of labour alienation) may have all used the same plates, a coarse and mass-produced 'Ikea'-like service, as part of a formal aim of being inclusive rather than exclusive[66]. The idea of a 'fast-food mentality' which Pollock believes may have promoted a sense of unity, may have also been used to stress, although perhaps only at a superficial level, a form of unity between the elite and non-elite.[67]

Thus, on a symbolic level, the mass-produced bowls embody different forms of formal commensality and condense diverse homogenizing roles. This also implies a high level of multivocality for these objects: as proposed by David I. Kertzer, multivocality consists in, "The fact that the same symbol may be understood by different people in different ways."[68] and it is of crucial significance "in the use of ritual to build political solidar-

63 D'Anna 2010.

64 Mills 2007, 211.

65 We cannot exclude the possibility that other more open and inclusive forms of feasts, which could also incorporate commensalisms, took place during period VI A. Of particular significance is a ritualized threshing scene represented on a well-known seal impression uncovered in the main *cretulae* dump of A206: it depicts an "oxen-drawn sledge supporting a figure seated under a canopy and surrounded by retainers" (Pittman 2007, 311). The iconography is borrowed from the Late Uruk imagery of power. Similar elements (the bovines; the reins terminating in a ring held by the chariot driver; and possibly a sledge-chariot) recur on the painting found on one of the corridors, but in this case the iconography is local (Frangipane 2007). These representations might give a glimpse into some ritual activities linked to agriculture and food production with strong political implications and, probably, a high degree of inclusiveness.

66 Here the parallel between the widespread diffusion of Uruk material culture and pervasive diffusion of Ikea products (Lawner 2003) is used merely as a narrative license. In fact, the comparison to Ikea underlies the concept of modern globalization, which, as with the world system theory, is in my opinion totally anachronistic and of no heuristic worth.

67 D'Anna 2010, 187–188.

68 Kertzer 1988, 11.

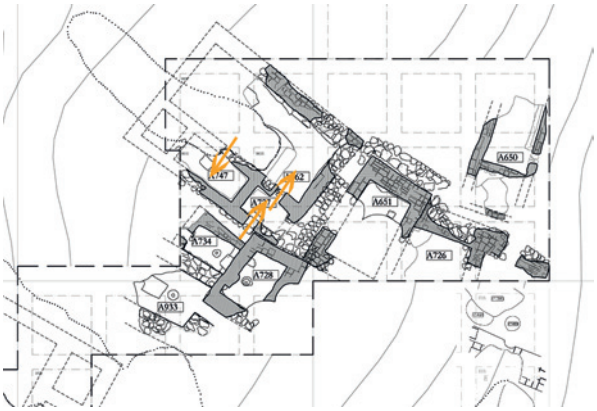

Fig. 11 Period VI A: the northern complex of residential buildings.

ity in the absence of consensus."[69] Conversely, a few special vessels[70] used in the ritual commensality in Temple B might have had a high visual performance character,[71] and they could have acted as diacritical devices for some particular acts and their performers.[72] I refer especially to the high-stemmed bowls (Fig. 5a–5c): their shape would have required completely different gestures by the people who used them. These gestures, along with the height and color differences of these vessels, demonstrate the presence of all important visual performance characteristics that – as stressed by Michael B. Schiffer and James M. Skibo[73] – would have easily caught the eye of observers.

3.3 Ritual Commensality in the Residential Area during Period VI A

In the residential buildings one room, unfortunately not completely preserved, seems to provide some important evidence of special, ritual commensality in the residential area. This is room A747, which has been interpreted by Frangipane[74] as a small shrine within a domestic environment. In brief, this room was part of an entire structure, divided into the typical bipartite module also found in the temples of this period. In this case, however, the entrance to the building is not through the central side room, but from the room located in the southern corner, which, most importantly, gives direct access to the large main room (Fig. 11). Thus, A747 is one of the small side rooms, but – as in the case of the temples' main rooms – it was necessary to pass through two other rooms in order to gain access to it from the outside. Though A747 is not the largest room in the building to which it belongs, the approach to it is, however, as indirect and complicated as that observed for the main room in the temples.

69 Kertzer 1988, 11.

70 One Red-Black Burnished, three light-colored high-stemmed bowls, and one fragment of a painted bowl of another pedestal vessel lay on the floor

Fig. 12 Mud tables in A450 (a) and A747 (c) during excavation, (b) one of the two human figures depicted I the storeroom A364. Photos R. Ceccacci, Archive MAIAO.

of the main room in Temple B. A fully preserved very fine small lipped bowl was also found. A fragment of a stone vessel was present in A450, but it was reused as a scraper (Lemorini 2010).

71 Mills 2007.
72 Dietler 2001.
73 Schiffer and Skibo 1997, 30.
74 Frangipane 1994.

Room A747 is exceptionally well furnished with a "square platform with one corner raised to form a small plastered mud post,"[75] situated in the middle of the room and facing the entrance. This platform consisted of four mud bricks superimposed and re-plastered several times. The last layer was white but it covered previous layers that bear traces of fire, thus it is possible that this structure was used as a fire installation. Three small mud tables were found on the floor of the room, two by the door and one closer to the eastern short wall (Fig. 12a). This resembles a similar movable small table found on the floor of the main room in temple B (A450) between the entrance door and the main group of vessels in the northwestern corner (Fig. 12c). These are the only examples of such furnishings found in period VI A buildings so far, and their raised edges resemble those of the tables depicted in front of the two human figures in room A364 (Fig. 12b). These objects are therefore possibly linked to peculiar ritual practices and gestures performed exclusively by distinct persons and must have had a strong symbolic meaning.

A noteworthy feature of A747 is also the presence of four outstanding vessels: two light colored high-stemmed bowls painted with red geometrical decorations and two RBBW high-stemmed bowls (Figs. 5c, 5a; 12f–i). Some mass-produced bowls (at least five) were also found together with other cups and bowls that stand out as unusual pieces in the period's repertoire. Two large basins complete the set of the open shaped vessels; one of them (Fig. 13) is a chaff-tempered container, whose internal surface shows dispersed abrasions over multiple contiguous areas. The other basin is finer and does not show any use wear traces (Fig. 14e). A complete spouted bottle was found in the southern part of the room (Figs. 13 and 14d). In the northern area of the room, a large fragment of a Red-Black Burnished jar with an applied decoration, possibly of a stylized caprid (Fig. 14c), was found together with one cooking pot suitable for cooking liquid or semi-liquid foodstuffs (Fig. 14a)[76] and another three-liter-capacity vessel with no use wear (Fig. 14b).

Some animal bones were also found in the room. The age of the cattle could be determined for some of the bones (22 out of a total of 46) and these were mainly from mature individuals (19). A similar pattern has also been found in the case of the cattle bones from Temple B.[77]

75 Frangipane 1994, 215.

76 It may be that its biconical profile and the relatively closed mouth were designed to help prevent the evaporation of its contents. Moreover, its base bears traces of a grayish external sooting, while on the internal surface a thin grey layer of deposit is visible on the bottom and darker, blackish spots on the walls under the carination. It seems that the pot was used either only briefly or for processing mainly liquid or very moist contents.

77 Bartosiewicz 2010. In general, cattle bones are more common both in the ritual and residential buildings of period VI A than in the redistributive sectors, where sheep and goats prevail (Bartosiewicz 2010). This latter pattern marks a clear distinction with respect to the previous period VII livestock breeding, with the VI A elites appearing to have preferred beef both in the ritual feastings and 'private' practices (Palumbi 2010, 154).

Fig. 13 One of the two basins and the bottle found in A747. Photo Archive MAIAO.

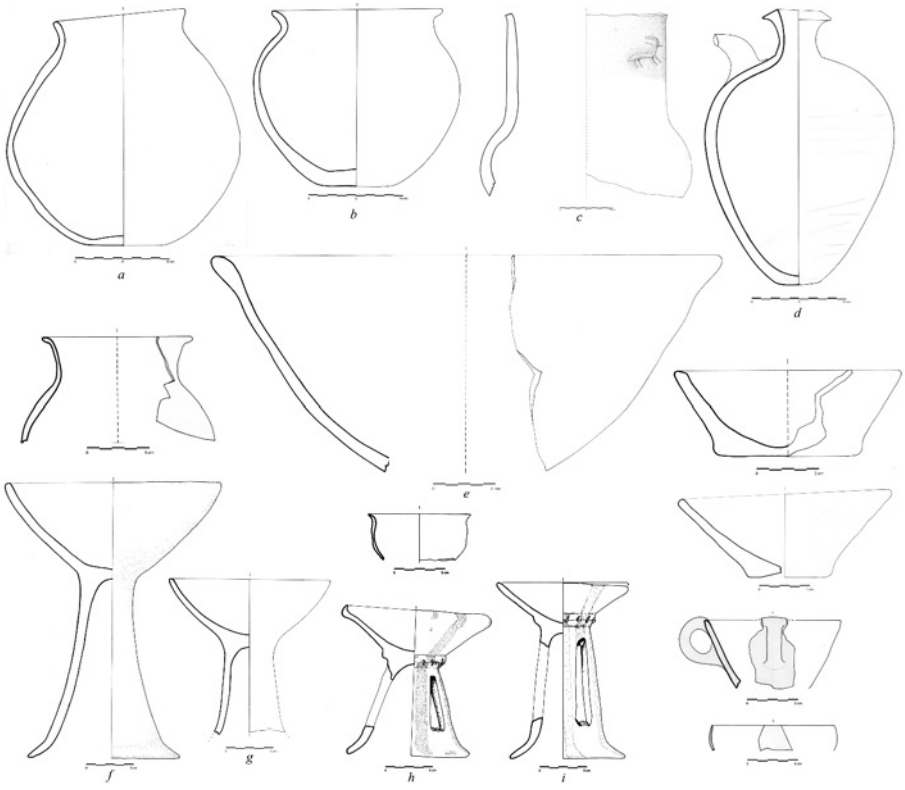

Fig. 14 Ceramics from A747.

All A747 features suggest that special commensal practices could have taken place in the residential units, too. Food could have been cooked on the central platform in the room or in another adjacent room.[78] Although A747 is not the largest space in the building, it is quite isolated from the outside and the number of people who could enter was very restricted, as has also been the case for the main room of both temples. As in the 'public' temples, drinking appears to be an important part of commensal events. Yet there are no large storage vessels present: only a five-liter-capacity cooking pot with uncommon use wear traces was found in the room. The dimensions of the open containers are very wide ranging, possibly implying the consumption of different food and beverages. The two large basins may have been used either to process some food (Fig. 13, with abrasion wear on the internal upper walls) or to eat together from the same big vessel (Fig. 14e). This would imply a strong – not only physical – proximity between the people sharing the food in A747 and would mark a crucial difference to Temple B, where no containers for communal food consumption have been found. The presence of high-stemmed bowls in both contexts suggests that a similar emphasis was given to some special foodstuff or drink and that similar practices and gestures were performed in the commensal events taking place in the 'public' and 'private' spheres.

3.4 Summarizing the Evidence

During period VI A commensality seems to have played important roles in substantiating social identities among elite and non-elite members of Arslantepe society. The case of meal/ration distributions is the more extended, inclusive case of formal commensality, which is anyhow characterized by a high degree of depersonalization and embodies labor alienation. On the other extreme, the rituals carried out in Temple B constituted a restricted form of commensality, in which large amounts of food and possibly special drinks were shared by a limited number of people. The abundance and, possibly, the variety of food prepared and consumed in the temples is testified by the large cooking pots present in A450 and by the incidence of mature individuals among the cattle bones, as well as by the presence of pig and hare bones in the Temple B assemblage and wild animals in the Temple A fauna.[79] As I have described above, the degree of exclusion from these feasting practices appears to be quite high, although some of those excluded from the main performance could have observed the events from the in-between location of the entrance room.[80] Through the windows people could watch the ritual, hear sounds and voices, smell the scent of food, and even receive foodstuffs and beverages. The high degree of proximity and intimacy among the restricted number of people

78 The presence of fire traces on the platform may also imply that a fire was built there to light and warm the room.

79 Bartosiewicz 2010.

80 D'Anna 2010.

who performed and actively operated in the feasts within the temple's main room corresponds to a high degree of exclusiveness of these events, not in the form of an absolute and total exclusion but rather modulated in different gradations. A high level of exclusiveness as well as the close proximity among the participants also characterized special commensal events in the private sphere.

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Commensality and Labor in Terminal Ubaid Northern Mesopotamia

Summary

Recent anthropological research on commensality has emphasized how food consumption creates and mediates social relations and social identities. The goal of this paper is to integrate the often neglected study of production and labor into studies of commensality. I will explore the commensal relationships formed by the consumption of food during cooperative communal work events through a discussion of the Terminal Ubaid levels from three sites in northern Mesopotamia. I have suggested that flint-scraped bowls were used to provide for extra-household labor recruited during times of labor shortage by households of similar social standing, while painted ceramics were used for daily food consumption. In this scenario flint-scraped bowls were used in different social contexts by people of similar social standing.

Keywords: Near Eastern archaeology; Ubaid period; organization of labor; work feasts; food production; ceramic use-alteration.

In der neueren anthropologischen Forschung zu Kommensalität wird betont, dass der Verzehr von Nahrungsmitteln soziale Beziehungen und soziale Identitäten kreiert und vermittelt. Ziel dieses Beitrages ist es, die häufig vernachlässigten Bereiche Produktion und Arbeit in die Forschung zu Kommensalität einzubeziehen. Ich erörtere kommensale Beziehungen, die durch den Verzehr von Lebensmitteln im Rahmen von Gemeinschaftsarbeit entstanden, anhand dreier nordmesopotamischer Fundorte der ausgehenden Ubaid-Zeit. Ich schlage vor, dass „flint-scraped bowls“ dafür benutzt wurden, zusätzliche Arbeitskräfte zu versorgen, die von einem Haushalt in Zeiten von Arbeitskräftemangel aus anderen Haushalten mit gleichem sozialen Status angeworben wurden. Dagegen wurde bemalte Keramik für den täglichen Gebrauch genutzt. In diesem Szenario werden „flint-scraped bowls“ in unterschiedlichen Kontexten von Leuten mit gleichem sozialem Rang benutzt.

Keywords: Vorderasiatische Archäologie; Ubaid-Zeit; Arbeitsorganisation; Arbeitsfeste; Nahrungsmittelproduktion; Gebrauchsspuren an Keramik.

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1 Introduction

In preparing a paper for this workshop we were asked to consider the ways in which the collective consumption of food affects the establishment and reproduction of social relations and identities. Given my own particular Marxist frame of reference, I reflected on the emphasis that has been placed on the processes of consumption in recent anthropological research. Many recent studies have emphasized the role of consumption and the ways in which people consume material goods to implicitly or explicitly shape social relations.[1] Some anthropologists, such as Daniel Miller,[2] have even suggested that consumption has replaced production as the prime mover of the "globalized" capitalist economy.

Following Theodor Adorno,[3] I suggest that this emphasis on consumption is largely related to the development of "Late Capitalism." The commodification of culture through mass media reifies the social relations between human beings in a decentralized global network, creating globalized unity in consumption. This view of consumption has neglected the process of production, creating studies that analyze consumption and production as separate moments, overlooking the complex interconnections between labor, production, and the act of consumption. Many studies focusing on consumption have failed to take into account Karl Marx's emphasis on the dialectical unity on production, consumption, distribution, and exchange.

Marx's emphasis on the unity of economic processes results from his belief that classical economic theory removes these processes from both the specific social structures that condition their operation, as well as the diachronic development of these move-

1 E. g., D. Miller 1995; Carrier and Heyman 1997; Tilley 2004; Meskell 2005;.

2 D. Miller 1995; D. Miller 2005.

3 Adorno 2002.

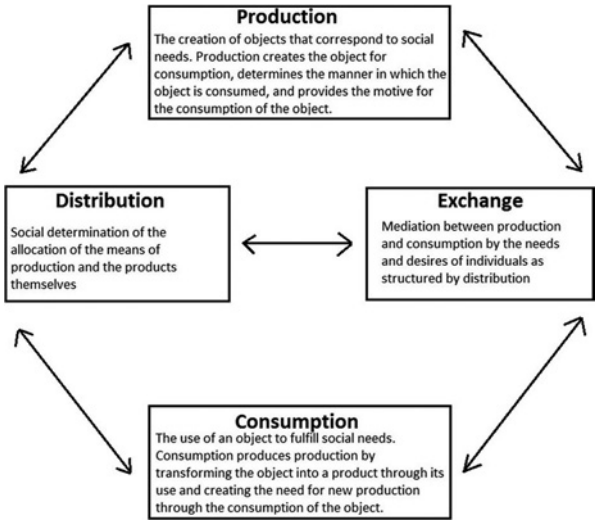

Fig. 1 Diagram of Marx's Productive Totality.

ments. In the *Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy*,[4] Marx outlines very specifically the relationship between production, distribution, exchange, and consumption. He writes that they "form a regular syllogism; production is the generality, distribution and exchange the particularity, and consumption the singularity in which the whole is joined together."[5] In such a formulation production, distribution, exchange, and consumption form a totality mediated by the "definite relations between these different movements."[6] Marx's schema is diagrammed in Figure 1.

These definite relations are the social relations created by the forces of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption, while at the same time they structure the continual reproduction of these processes. In *Capital*,[7] Marx emphasizes the social relationship between laborers and their objects and instruments of labor. Many current studies of consumption and materiality with an emphasis on the social meaning of an object for the consumer fail to incorporate the multitude of relationships between people and objects that are created and negotiated through the production, distribution, and exchange processes.

Marx[8] states that consumption produces production in two ways: (1) an object becomes a product when it is consumed, and (2) consumption creates the need for new production, or provides production with its "internally impelling cause." Likewise production produces consumption by creating the materials consumed and by determining the manner of consumption. I would argue that archaeologists need to forgo an

4 Marx 1993, 81–111.
5 Marx 1993, 89.
6 Marx 1993, 99.
7 Marx 1990.
8 Marx 1993, 91.

emphasis on the synchronic moments of this process (i. e. consumption) and seek to integrate Marx's productive totality to broadly understand social formations in the past. Thomas Patterson[9] has suggested that archaeologists account for not only how societies organized themselves for the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods, but also how human beings reproduce themselves through procreation as well as the knowledge and goods required to sustain the social formation. I suggest that this emphasis on the social reproduction of societies is the key for a more nuanced understanding of productive totalities.

An effective locus to begin studies of social reproduction and the relations of production are food-related practices. Susan Pollock has suggested this, because their "enormous plasticity allows them to play a role in a wide array of social relations."[10] The primary goal of this paper is to integrate the study of production and labor into studies of commensality. I hope to accomplish this by integrating a Marxist-inspired emphasis on the forces and social relations of production with an analysis of the daily practices of food consumption and commensality to understand local changes in the organization of labor during the Terminal Ubaid period in northern Mesopotamia.

2 Archaeological Approaches to Commensality

Anthropologists have been interested in food, commensality and feasting since the 19th century origins of the discipline.[11] Anthropologists have studied food and commensality in innumerable ways ranging from empirical studies of caloric intake to the symbolic meaning of consuming particular food items.[12] In archaeology, one of the more prominent avenues of research generated by this approach has been a focus on the analyses of the ritual practices of food consumption and the durable materials associated with distributing, preparing, and consuming food at feasts.

Many recent archaeological studies of feasting have focused on what Michael Dietler[13] called commensal politics, which builds on Arjun Appadurai's concept of gastro-politics."[14] Dietler emphasizes how the consumption of food is involved in the construction and maintenance of social relations of power and inequality.[15] Additionally some studies have emphasized food consumption as a symbolic event that positions individuals in the social collectivity through the foods that they consume and whom they consume them with.[16] Many studies of food consumption are designed to approach the

9 Patterson 2005.
10 Pollock 2010, 94.
11 Gummerman 1997.
12 Mintz and Du Bois 2002.
13 Dietler 2001.
14 Appadurai 1981.
15 Dietler 2001.
16 Bloch 2005.

social collective with a "bottom-up" approach to understanding socio-political organization in the past rooted in the "micro-politics" of everyday life.[17]

Archaeologists have recognized the ubiquity of feasting events in modern and ancient societies. In providing a definition of a feasting event, I follow Kathryn Twiss in defining feasts as "occasions consciously distinguished from everyday meals."[18] These distinctions include: a greater number of participants, large amounts of food and drink, the consumption of special foods, distinct methods of preparation and discard, the occurrence at specific times or places, the material culture used, or the performances undertaken. Twiss also states that "feasts are dialectically linked to everyday meals, both in form and in meaning, and are not isolated from quotidian social realities."[19]

Michael Dietler has outlined three directions in which an emphasis on feasting and commensal politics should lead archaeological research.[20] First, it should expand studies of politics and power beyond an analysis of state actions. Second, it should enrich interpretive possibilities by analyzing consumption as a political practice and by highlighting the importance of ritual as an active force in this process. And third it should expand the consideration of foods beyond the traditional means of subsistence to include their symbolic dimensions and the ways in which they operate in political processes.[21]

Dietler's suggestions for future research highlight the importance of feasting for political transformation and the conversion of economic capital into social capital. However, this approach downplays the role of feasting in the development, maintenance, and renegotiation of the roles of individuals in the social collectivity. Dietler argues that in societies with a prevailing egalitarian ethos feasting would have provided the primary means for social advancement, because feasting conceals or euphemizes the political machinations of the hosts through the socially valued and integrated institution of hospitality.[22] Taken to the extreme this approach merely substitutes feasting and commensal politics as the prime mover in the origin of social complexity.

I am not questioning the potential for feasting to create, maintain, and elaborate structures of social stratification, however it is important to remember that feasts create social cohesion as much as they promote or maintain hierarchy. In order to better understand the "micro-politics" of ancient societies we need to be able to fully contextualize the ways in which feasting and daily commensality work to maintain social cohesion and promote the reproduction of the social totality. In other words, what are needed are archaeological approaches that address both issues of consumption and production in their dialectical unity. Such an approach would address the two sides of consumption outlined by Marx.[23] The first form of consumption, called "individual consumption"

17 Bray 2003.
18 Twiss 2008, 419.
19 Twiss 2008, 419.
20 Dietler 2003.
21 Dietler 2003, 272.
22 Dietler 2001.
23 Marx 1990, 717–719.

refers to the consumption of food and drink by individuals that provides the basis for biological and social reproduction. Marx's second category, productive consumption, describes the use of materials, labor, and social capital to produce an object distinct from the individual or collective.

Michael Dietler and Ingrid Herbich have suggested that studies of the relationship between consumption and production should begin where they explicitly overlap: the mobilization of labor through commensality, or collective work events.[24] They define collective work events as feasting events where extra-household labor is called together to work on a specific, primarily agricultural project, in which participants are provided with food and drink, after which the host household owns the proceeds of the event.[25] Based on their ethnoarchaeological research among the Luo in East Africa, Dietler and Herbich posit that there are two polar forms of collective work events, the work exchange and the work feast. Work exchanges represent the gathering of limited groups of people, usually less than 15 people, organized through kinship or friendship networks. The food presented to invited laborers is often limited to ordinary refreshment; however, these events carry a strong moral obligation to reciprocate by working at the work exchanges of your guests.

Work feasts, as described by Dietler and Herbich,[26] are much larger in scale, up to several hundred participants recruited from far greater social networks without reference to kinship or social status. The food provided at such events is more copious and lavish than at work exchanges, which negates the obligation on the part of the host group to participate in the feasts of other participants. Additionally, Dietler and Herbich define two forms of work feasts, voluntary work feasts and obligatory work feasts.[27] Voluntary work feasts rely on the reputation of the host and the lavishness of the comestibles to draw laborers to the event. Obligatory work feasts, often called corvée labor, require an institutional apparatus with the moral authority to extract tribute labor from local populations. The difference between work exchanges and work feasts is "one between an exchange of labor for labor versus an exchange of labor for hospitality."[28]

The key point here is the central role of voluntary forms of the recruitment of labor to counter temporary labor shortages in agrarian communities. Dietler and Herbich note that, "communal work events are fundamental to the operation of the agrarian economy because they mobilize the essential inter-household communal labor flows that, in fact, sustain domestic units."[29] Given the importance of communal work events, an analysis of the ways in which agriculturalists interact within a community to manage periods of labor shortage through cooperative labor becomes a crucial point of archaeological inquiry.

24 Dietler and Herbich 2001.
25 Dietler and Herbich 2001, 241.
26 Dietler and Herbich 2001.
27 Dietler and Herbich 2001.
28 Dietler and Herbich 2001, 256.
29 Dietler and Herbich 2001, 246.

3 Labor and Commensality in Late Chalcolithic 1 Northern Mesopotamia

Studies of the beginning of the Late Chalcolithic period (4400–3800 BCE)[30] in northern Mesopotamia have traditionally taken incipient socio-political complexity as the starting point of their investigations.[31] The interest in the emergence of socio-political complexity during this time period has been framed in reference to a narrative in which Late Chalcolithic societies are viewed as the developmental lynchpin in the emergence of the state in greater Mesopotamia.[32] This increase in complexity is generally attributed to a model of staple-finance-based chiefdoms, in which villagers produce an agricultural surplus for an elite class or chief.[33]

For Ubaid period sites in southern Iraq and southwestern Iran this model of staple-finance-based chiefdoms can be easily supported by archaeological evidence such as the niched and buttressed temple complexes at Eridu, Warka, and Tell Uqair, the platform complex from Susa, the Level II village at Tell Abada, and the multi-tiered settlement pattern in the Ur/Eridu survey regions.[34] While Stein's staple-finance model was created to explain socio-economic changes in southern Mesopotamia, Stein implicitly suggests that expansion of Ubaid material and ideological traditions into northern Mesopotamia and Anatolia during the latter half of the 5th millennium BCE represents the "*replication* of existing small systems, rather than the *absorbtion* of neighboring areas into a few large, expansionistic chiefdoms."[35] In this vein, the peaceful expansion of Ubaid materials and ideas into northern Mesopotamia was accompanied by the "replication" of the socio-political system of staple-finance-based chiefdoms in northern Mesopotamia.[36] Likewise, Hans Nissen has suggested the existence of an "Ubaid interaction sphere" based on an extensive system of regional communication and exchange.[37] According to Nissen, interaction occurred between groups with similar socio-political complexity and was based on mutual and equal exchange practices. In other words, models of Ubaid period interaction in northern Mesopotamia have implicitly[38] conceived of Ubaid societies as stratified, corporate groups in which lower class villagers produced agricultural surplus as a result of ideological manipulation by an elite substrate or chief in order to neatly fill the teleological void between small-scale village societies of the Neolithic and the state-level apparatuses of the Late Chalcolithic 3–5 periods.

30 Rothman 2001.
31 Stein 1994; Frangipane 2001; Helwing 2003.
32 Henrickson and Thuesen 1989; Carter and Philip 2010.
33 Stein 1994.
34 Adams 1981; Wright 1981; Stein 1994; Pollock 1999a.
35 Stein 1994, 43; italics in original.
36 Stein 1994; Stein and Özbal 2007.
37 Nissen 2001.
38 Sometimes explicitly, cf. J. Oates 2004.

The argument for the presence of elites in northern Mesopotamia at this time is based on five lines of archaeological evidence: the appearance of public architecture;[39] the intensified use of administrative tools such as stamp seals;[40] multi-tiered settlement patterns;[41] the mass production of crude bowls, interpreted as ration containers that were used to distribute meals to dependent laborers;[42] and the use of painted pottery as a prestige item to signify elite status.[43]

However, during the Late Chalcolithic 1 or Terminal Ubaid Period of northern Mesopotamia, these criteria are difficult to locate in the archaeological record. The general similarity of domestic tripartite architecture to temple structures suggests a similarity in domestic and public architecture.[44] Temples are distinct from domestic architecture only by their niched decoration but not necessarily by internal function. Excavations of Terminal Ubaid cemeteries have provided little evidence for social differentiation in the burial remains.[45] Also, the majority of known sites in northern Mesopotamia are relatively small, approximately 1 hectare, with an estimated population between 50–100 inhabitants and evenly dispersed on the landscape.[46] Households are also remarkably similar in terms of their artifact distributions both on the site and regional levels.[47] Additionally, Hans Nissen has argued that stamp seals are actually indicative of a low-level, kin-based storage system, rather than an institutional one.[48]

The only criterion of complexity that can be firmly placed in the Terminal Ubaid-period is that of mass-produced, scraped "Coba" bowls. The expedient production of these Coba or "flint-scraped" bowls is indicated by the trimming of the lower walls with a ceramic or flint scraper without subsequently smoothing the surface of the vessel. Several scholars[49] have suggested that Terminal Ubaid period scraped bowls were used as ration containers in a system of labor mobilization similar to that posited for the Uruk period beveled-rim bowl.[50]

Marcella Frangipane writes that "the appearance of social and economic inequalities is suggested by the development of the mass production of bowls, which must have already been related to the distribution of meals to persons not belonging to the family, and possibly working for it" in a "Dispersed Corvée" labor system.[51] Cathy Lynne Costin[52] defines a "Dispersed Corvée" system as one where goods are produced by part-

39 J. Oates and D. Oates 1997; Stein 1999; Rothman 2002.
40 Rothman 2002.
41 van Loon 1988; Ball 1990; Ur 2002; Ur 2010; J. Oates, McMahon, et al. 2007.
42 Frangipane 2001; Wright 2001.
43 Helwing 2003.
44 Akkermans and Schwartz 2003.
45 Woolley 1955; Kamada and Ohtsu 1991; Koizumi 1996.
46 Algaze, Breuninger, Lightfoot, et al. 1991; Algaze, Breuninger, and Knustad 1994; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003.
47 Rothman 2002; Gurdil 2005; Gurdil 2010.
48 Nissen 2000.
49 Frangipane 2001; Wright 2001; Balossi Restelli 2008.
50 Nissen 1970; Johnson 1973; Wright and Johnson 1975 Nissen 1988.
51 Frangipane 2001, 322.
52 Costin 1991, 9.

Fig. 2 Selected Terminal Ubaid Sites in greater Mesopotamia. Middle East topographic blank map: © Sémhur / Wikimedia Commons; ETOP1, and World Data Bank I.

time labor within a household or local community for an elite or governmental institution. In this scheme the elite class would be responsible for the mobilization of labor, with the Coba bowl serving as a ration container for the payment or sustenance of dependent labor. Frangipane's interpretation grounds the practice of food distribution to dependent laborers using mass-produced bowls in levels VII and VIA at Arslantepe during the Late Chalcolithic 3 through Late Chalcolithic 5 periods as a uniquely northern Mesopotamian phenomenon.[53] By projecting such a system back into the Terminal Ubaid and Late Chalcolithic 2 periods (contemporaneous with Arslantepe level VIII), Frangipane is able to argue for political development at Arslantepe uninfluenced by the southern Mesopotamian Uruk expansion in the mid-fourth millennium BCE.

In this sense, the presence of social and economic divisions between laborers and elites occurs prior to a time when those elites are visible in the archaeological record of northern Mesopotamia. Researchers such as Frangipane[54] and Wright[55] have posed the question, who made Coba bowls, and for what purpose? However, they have also narrowed the realm of possible answers by associating the bowls with emergent political complexity.

53 Frangipane 2001.
54 Frangipane 2001.
55 Wright 2001.

In my Master's thesis,[56] I reviewed the evidence for a "Dispersed Corvée" labor organization during the Terminal Ubaid period. I suggested that Terminal Ubaid-period expediently produced bowls were not used by emerging public institutions but by households to provide small collective meals or feasts. These feasts would have worked to attract extra-household labor during temporary labor shortages. I propose that households often pooled labor to handle increased workload in instances such as harvests, field preparations, and house construction or repair. Households called upon the help of others and would sponsor a feast in which the participants consumed similar kinds of foods from similar vessels that had been expediently produced for the occasion. Additionally, painted ceramics were used in contexts of daily consumption within the household, rather than functioning as prestige goods for local elites. In this model, public commensality occurs within the sphere of collective work events, which are organized ad hoc within a largely non-hierarchical society.[57]

In order to test the above hypothesis, one of the major questions that must be asked is where the preparation of and participation in such events occurred. This problem is not easily answered given the limited knowledge of Terminal Ubaid commensality and the dearth of spatial evidence from Terminal Ubaid sites. Addressing the depositional location of Coba bowls involves two postulates. First, where were these items utilized? It is possible that Coba bowls served as containers that would be taken to the work site and used to serve meals away from the household. Second, were Coba bowls discarded after their use or used again, possibly for different purposes? Given the nature of the production of Coba bowls it is possible that they held very little value outside of their initial function, in which case they might have been discarded or stored until the next collective work event. To address these questions I will briefly outline the spatial reconstructions for two primary activities associated with labor feasting events, the

56 Kennedy 2008.

57 It is entirely plausible to envision a scenario in which the utilization of Coba bowls and the collective labor feasts they may have represented were manipulated by larger or more affluent households to consolidate economic or political power. The archaeological manifestations of such manipulation, however, elude archaeologists at sites dating to the Terminal Ubaid period. It is my opinion, that during the succeeding Late Chalcolithic 2 period in northern Mesopotamia, the manipulation of this labor system may have led to the proliferation of public architecture and increase in site size and settlement organization witnessed at numerous sites such as Tell Brak (J. Oates and D. Oates 1997), Tepe Gawra (Rothman 2002), and Hammam et-Turkman (van Loon 1988). To place it in a teleological framework, the step in development between small-scale village society and the rise of indigenous socio-political complexity may have occurred rather rapidly during the Late Chalcolithic 2 period in northern Mesopotamia. This is not to argue that this change was unilineal or universal, however. The development of larger, stationary consumption vessels such as "hammerhead" bowls and "casseroles" in indigenous Late Chalcolithic 3 ceramic assemblages could represent an increased emphasis on communal consumption that developed out of eating food during labor feasts as well as a resistance to the expansion of socio-political authority represented in the promotion of individual portions through the provisioning of rations in mass-produced ceramics (Kennedy 2008; Bernbeck and Costello 2011).

preparation and consumption of foodstuffs, as evidenced in the Terminal Ubaid levels at the sites of Değirmentepe, Tepe Gawra, and Kenan Tepe (Fig. 2).

3.1 Değirmentepe

Değirmentepe is a small settlement mound in the Malatya Plain in the Upper Euphrates valley in what is today central Turkey. Excavations of Değirmentepe Layer 7 have uncovered remains of 14 building complexes including ten tripartite buildings and four multiroom complexes dating to the Ubaid period.[58] Bekir Gurdil's dissertation[59] provides a thorough analysis of the spatial relationships of artifacts from within the 14 buildings unearthed by the broad horizontal excavations at Değirmentepe. This analysis provides a good glimpse into the spatial organization of Ubaid houses and storage structures, but fails to provide any data on the associated artifacts uncovered outside of these building complexes. In addition the ceramics analyzed by Gurdil consist of only the partially reconstructed and whole vessels unearthed in the excavations at Değirmentepe. Nonetheless, his analysis suggests that the extended family household was the locus of food and craft production as well as ritual activities which made the house "the center of daily life … developed by the co-existent relationships of domestic, social, economic and religious activities."[60]

The analysis that follows is based on the work conducted by Gurdil.[61] However, Gurdil categorized Coba bowls as one of many forms of unpainted bowls which he labeled "Plain bowls." In Gurdil's spatial reconstructions (Figs. 3–4) Coba bowls cannot be distinguished from other forms of Plain bowls. However the presence of Coba bowls in specific locations within buildings was reconstructed from the finds catalogue provided in Appendix I.3.[62]

In Building BC, shown in Figure 3, only one painted bowl was discovered, which was found in the central hall (Room BC). Multiple Coba bowls, a total of 15, were found in four rooms in the complex, including six Coba bowls from Room BD which opens into the central hall (Room BC). The presence of Coba bowls in multiple locations in Building BC suggests that these items were not discarded following their use at the worksite but rather may have been used to feed guests at the house following the collective work event.

In Building I (Fig. 4), a total of nine Coba bowls were discovered. Four of these bowls were found in Room R in the northwest corner of the building, and another in Room AD which connects Room R to the central room (Room I). Building I is one of the two buildings at Değirmentepe which possessed Coba bowls in the central room (Room

58 Esin and Harmankaya 1986; Esin and Harmankaya 1987.

59 Gurdil 2005.

60 Gurdil 2005, 279.

61 Gurdil 2005; Gurdil 2010.

62 Gurdil 2005.

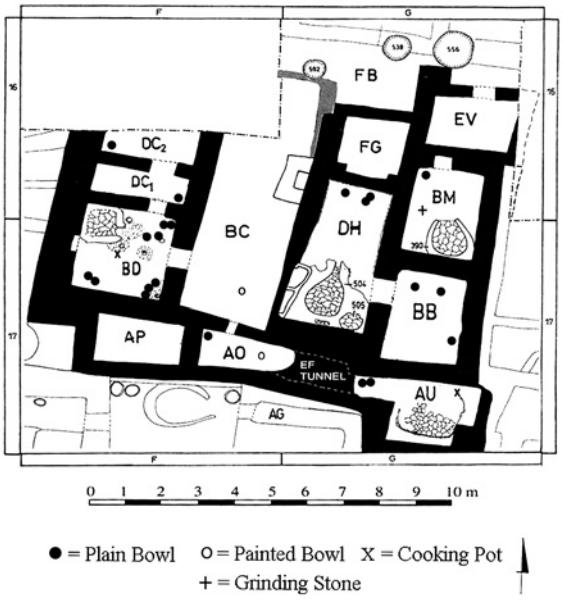

Fig. 3 Location of selected artifacts in Building BC at Değirmentepe.

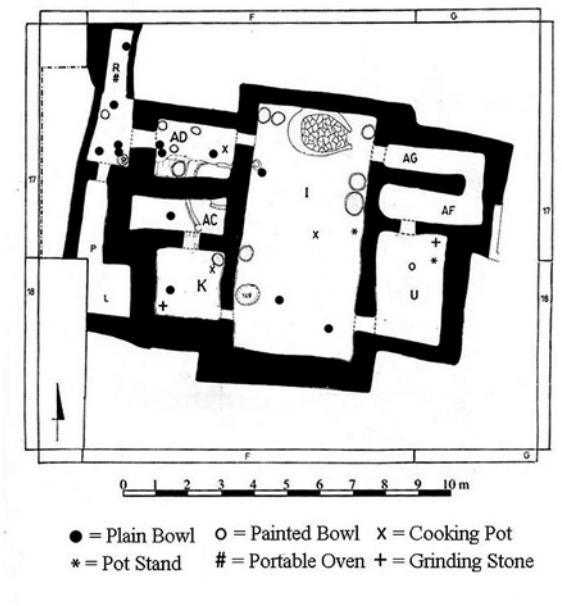

Fig. 4 Location of selected artifacts in Building I at Değirmentepe.

I). Curiously no painted serving vessels were found in Room I, however remnants of one cooking pot and a pot stand were recovered in the eastern portion of the room. Two more Coba bowls were found in Rooms AC and K which are only accessed via the central hall. It is important to note that the floor plan presented in Figure 4 depicts only the first floor of Building I. The presence of the second story is suggested by beam holes found in Rooms K and U, as well as the presence of a hearth in the north wall roughly 3 meters above the floor level in Room I.[63]

In Building FC, a total of two Coba bowls were discovered, whereas no painted ceramics were recovered from the building. One Coba bowl was found in the central hall (Room FC) near the entrance to Room GE, which contained the entrance into the complex. The other Coba bowl was found in Room ER of the complex. In Building GK, no painted ceramics were recovered, however a large number of unpainted serving vessels were uncovered in the central hall (Room GK). In addition to the plain ware serving vessels, two Coba bowls were found in Room GK; however, Gurdil's analysis does not provide the exact location of their discovery.

One Coba bowl was found in the central hall (Room DU) of building DU, however no painted ceramics were uncovered. Another Coba bowl was found in Room BE of Building DU, which provided access to the central hall from the storage facilities labeled Rooms DZ and VF. Coba bowls were also discovered in Room BY1 of building BY1, however, the majority of building was not excavated and it is not clear that BY1 was a residential structure.[64]

Hearths were found in nearly every residential structure at Değirmentepe. In addition to the 14 hearths recorded in the residential buildings, five large two-chambered ovens were excavated. Three of these two-chambered installations were associated with metal production tools and slag, suggesting their use as metal-working furnaces. However, one furnace in room DH of Building BC was associated with cooking pots, suggesting the potential for multiple functions of these facilities. In Building BC, excavators also recovered a large fire installation in room AU. The fifth chambered oven was identified outside of Building I. This oven at the south wall of Building I was surrounded by an exterior surface on which two ground stone artifacts were recovered.

3.2 Tepe Gawra

Tepe Gawra is located on the eastern flank of the piedmont of northern Mesopotamia, to the east of the Tigris River and north of the Greater Zab River, northwest of modern Mosul. Excavations have revealed successive occupations dating from the Early Northern

63 Gurdil 2005, 76.

64 Gurdil 2005, 166.

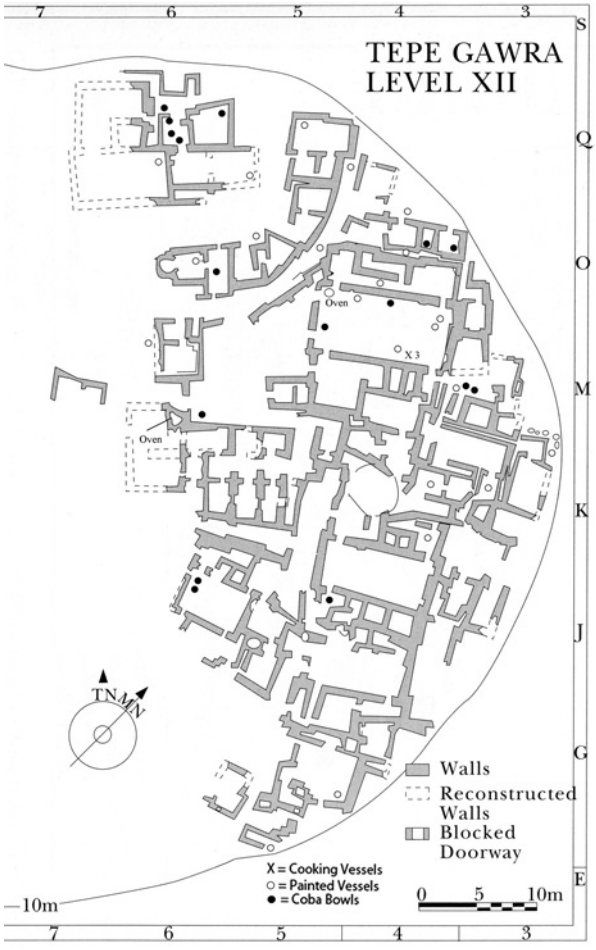

Fig. 5 Map of Level XII at Tepe Gawra detailing the location of selected vessel forms. Courtesy of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

Ubaid to the Early to Middle Uruk period.[65] On the basis of the ceramic finds, level XII dates to the Terminal Ubaid period.[66]

An analysis of the spatial relationship of ceramics in the Terminal Ubaid buildings from Level XII at Tepe Gawra can provide further insight into the use of Coba bowls. Rothman included Coba bowls in his analysis, and marked them on his maps of the Late Chalcolithic 1 and Late Chalcolithic 2 buildings at Tepe Gawra as "wide flower pots."[67] Only the buildings of the Terminal Ubaid level XII at Tepe Gawra will be examined due to their contemporaneity to the buildings analyzed by Gurdil from Değirmentepe. However, it should be noted that Rothman's spatial reconstruction only includes whole

65 Tobler 1950; Rothman 2002.
66 Rothman 2002.
67 Rothman 2002.

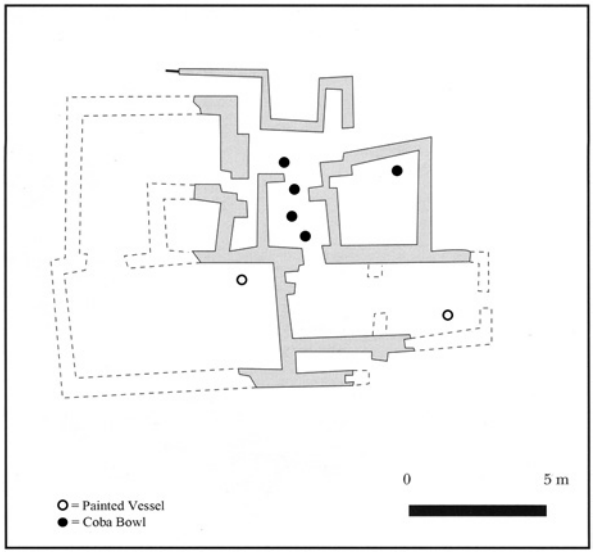

Fig. 6 Location of selected artifacts in the tripartite structure in squares 6Q and 6S in Tepe Gawra level XII. Courtesy of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

and reconstructed vessels. Figure 5 portrays the layout of the entire exposure of Tepe Gawra level XII with the locations of Coba bowls, painted serving vessels, and cooking vessels.

In a series of small storage bins located along what Rothman interprets as the entry road into the site,[68] one Coba bowl was found in a small room along with an associated storage jar, and numerous other artifacts. A minimum of five painted serving vessels were also found throughout the complex, however none in association with the Coba bowls. In the building to the west of the storage facility, shown in Figure 6, at least five Coba bowls were found. Most of these bowls were found near the entrance to the complex, with one located outside the immediate entrance and three in the room that connects the central hall to the exterior courtyard. Additionally, painted serving vessels were found in both of the central halls of the two excavated complexes in squares 6Q/S.

Rothman's reinterpretation[69] focuses on the largest structure on the site, the "White Room," which received its name because of its white plastered walls. It should be noted that the locations of artifacts in this structure are difficult to ascertain because the structure was destroyed by a fire which ended the occupation of Level XII.[70] Rothman suggests that some of the artifacts uncovered in the "White Room" building may have been originally situated in the second storey or on the roof of the building when it was destroyed.[71] Figure 7 shows the positions of numerous artifacts both in and around the "White Room;" however only one painted serving vessel and one plain ware bowl can

68 Rothman 2002.
69 Rothman 2002.
70 Rothman 2002, 75.
71 Rothman 2002.

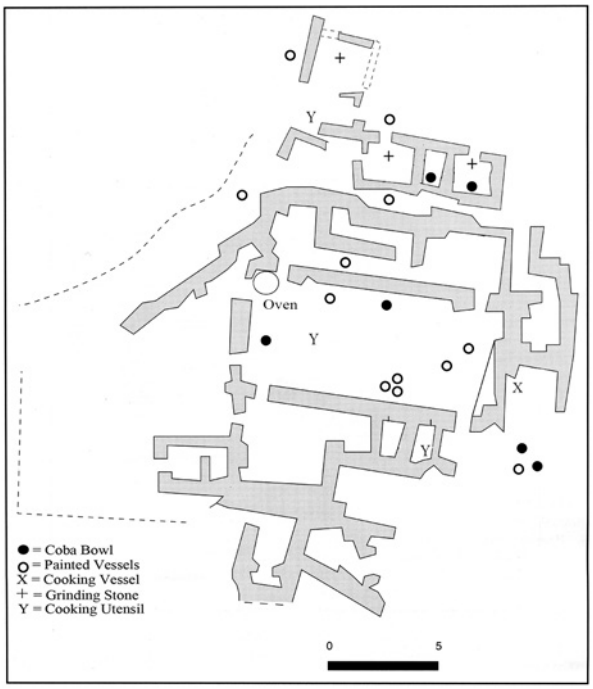

Fig. 7 Location of selected artifacts in the "White Room" complex of Tepe Gawra Level XII. Courtesy of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

be definitively deemed to have been discovered in situ in the "White Room" structure. No Coba bowls can be attributed to in situ finds in the "White Room" itself, however, two were found in mixed contexts in the "White Room," and two more were found just outside the southeast entrance to the complex. Two more Coba bowls were discovered in the storage facilities immediately north of the "White Room" complex. From the mixed contexts in the "White Room" itself, a total of five more painted serving vessels were uncovered, as well as one large storage jar, one small jar, and another plain bowl.

In the tripartite structure in Square 4K, one Coba bowl was uncovered in the room connecting the central hall of the building to the exterior courtyard. No whole painted vessels were uncovered from the central hall of this structure. In the multi-room structure found in Square 5/6K, 26 spindle whorls were recovered in the eastern portion of the largest room in the complex, leading Rothman to interpret the structure as a possible workshop.[72] In addition to the spindle whorls, two Coba bowls were uncovered near the western entrance to this room. In the multi-roomed structure in Square 5M, which Rothman describes as a storage facility,[73] one Coba bowl was uncovered from within the complex and one was discovered in the courtyard to the north of the complex which is shared with the "White Room" complex.

72 Rothman 2002.

73 Rothman 2002, 79.

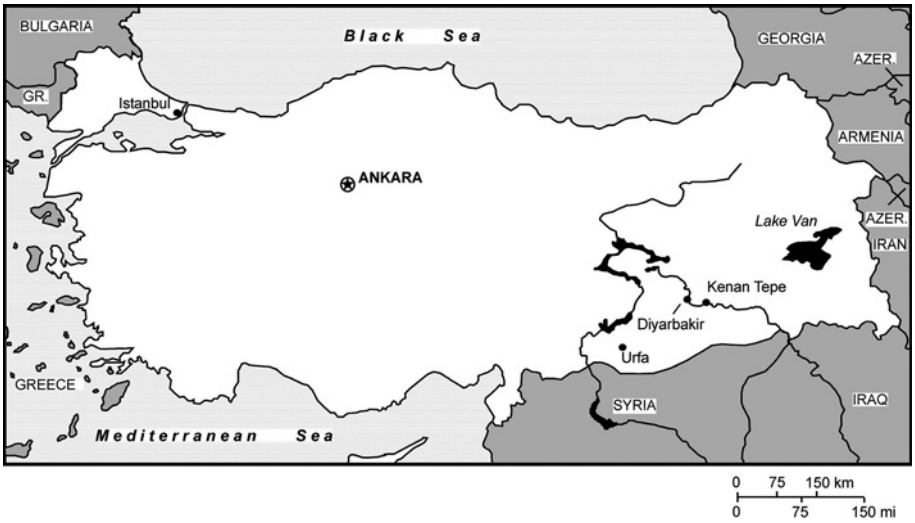

Fig. 8 Location of Kenan Tepe in the Upper Tigris region of southeastern Turkey. Image courtesy of Dr. Bradley Parker.

3.3 Kenan Tepe

Kenan Tepe (Fig. 8) is a multi-period mound located on the north bank of the Tigris River, approximately 15 km east of the modern town of Bismil in Diyarbakir Province, southeastern Turkey.[74] Excavations have revealed four phases of Ubaid occupation, with *Ubaid Phase 4* representing the Late Chalcolithic 1 occupation at the site. *Ubaid Phase 4* remains, including two hearths, parts of several walls, and three infant burials, were excavated in trench D6.[75] Although these remains were relatively ephemeral, sealed work surfaces and hearth constructions yielded large ceramic samples. Additionally, *Ubaid Phase 4* material remains were found associated with a large mud brick wall belonging to another structure, *Ubaid Structure 3*. *Ubaid Structure 3* dissects trench E2 approximately east to west, leaving one half of the trench in excellent outdoor contexts and the other half in indoor contexts.[76]

3.3.1 Spatial Analysis of Kenan Tepe Ubaid-Period Ceramics

An analysis of the Terminal Ubaid ceramic assemblages recovered from the interior rooms of the complex labeled, *Ubaid Structure 3* in Trench E2 (Fig. 9), its associated exterior work surfaces, and the Terminal Ubaid hearth constructions excavated in Trench D6 provide us a glimpse of the activities that occurred in and around the household during

74 Parker, Dodd, et al. 2006.
75 Parker, Foster, Nicoll, et al. 2009.
76 Parker, Foster, Nicoll, et al. 2009.

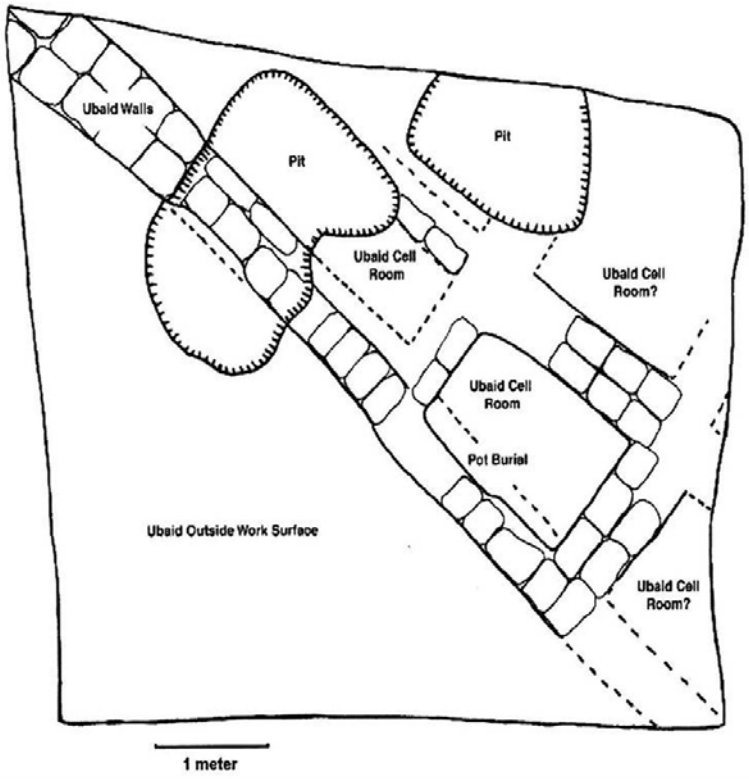

Fig. 9 Plan of Terminal *Ubaid Structure 3* at Kenan Tepe. Image courtesy of Dr. Bradley Parker.

the Terminal Ubaid period. In order to make meaningful comparisons of artifact categories across varying spatial contexts the density of various categories of ceramics was calculated by dividing the number of sherds by the volume of excavated soil to estimate the total number of sherds per cubic meter of archaeological deposit.[77]

Previous studies have been able to identify several functional classes of artifacts with strong correlations to particular surface treatments.[78] The analysis of the density of particular surface treatments on ceramics is shown in Table 1. Burnishing is largely restricted to cooking vessels, which occur in two distinct forms, open bowls and squat globular jars. Scraping is predominantly found on shallow, open bowls, and all scraped sherds in the assemblage are assumed to have come from Coba bowls. Additionally, painted ceramics are primarily open bowls, although this surface treatment is not uncommon on storage vessels.

77 Wright, N. Miller, and Redding 1980; Pollock 1999b.

78 Parker, Foster, Nicoll, et al. 2009; Parker and Kennedy 2010.

Surface Treatment	Interior Sherd Count	Interior Density (sherds/m^3)	Fire Installations Sherd Count	Fire Installations Density (sherds/m^3)	Exterior Work Surface Sherd Count	Exterior Work Surface Density (sherds/m^3)
Untreated	134	47.35	188	257.33	594	393.88
Burnished	31	10.95	45	61.64	112	74.17
Scraped	64	22.61	18	24.66	119	78.81
Slipped	125	44.17	62	84.93	404	267.55
Smoothed	59	20.85	25	34.25	276	182.78
Painted	74	26.15	38	52.05	277	183.44

Tab. 1 Spatial distribution of surface treatments at Terminal Ubaid Kenan Tepe.

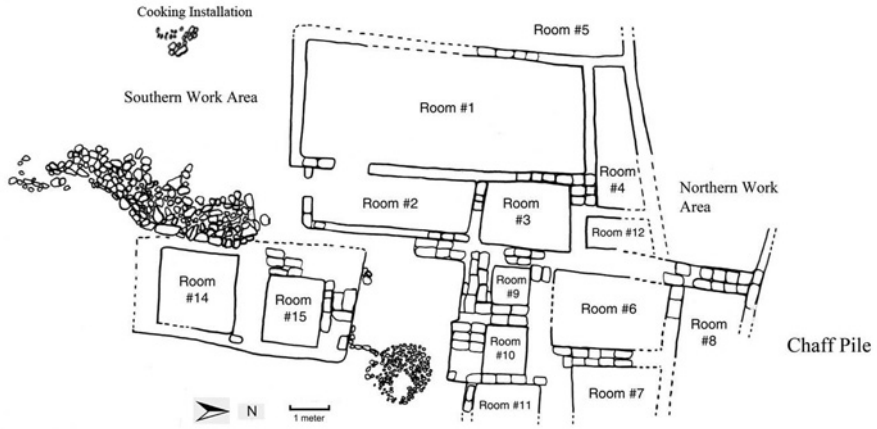

Fig. 10 Plan of Late Northern *Ubaid Structure 4* and associated cell-plan storage facilities at Kenan Tepe. Image courtesy of Dr. Bradley Parker.

Scraped Coba bowls were recovered most frequently from the exterior work surfaces associated with *Ubaid Structure 3* in trench E2, however scraped sherds are still present in significant quantities on both the interior and fire installation surfaces. Burnished sherds were recovered very frequently from both the hearth surfaces in trench D6 and the exterior work surfaces in E2. Painted sherds are found more frequently on the exterior work surfaces of E2. The higher proportion of cooking vessels from the exterior surfaces of the house is paralleled in earlier Ubaid occupations at the site. During the Late Northern Ubaid period, the floors of *Ubaid Structure 4*, shown in Figure 10, contained relatively few sherds of cooking vessels, while the exterior surfaces associated with the collapsed house showed higher densities of cooking vessels. The fact that much higher proportions of coarse-fabric cooking vessels were discovered on exterior surfaces suggests that the final stages of food preparation likely occurred there. The lack of hearths or ovens inside Terminal *Ubaid Structure 3* or Late Northern *Ubaid Structure 4* supports this conclusion.

To provide more detail, this classification has been narrowed down solely to rim sherds. Previous studies have outlined three discrete functional classes of vessels based on a series of attributes including fabric composition, surface treatment, rim type, rim diameter, and the presence of sooting.[79] Using these attributes the corpus of rim sherds at Kenan Tepe was divided into Serving Vessels, Cooking Vessels and Storage Vessels. Serving Vessels include all open bowl and incurved rim bowl forms with a rim diameter under 45 cm. Cooking vessels are defined as all squat restricted neck jars and shallow open bowls that are composed of a coarse to medium fabric with a heavy grit temper and

79 Parker and Kennedy 2010; see Rice 1987.

a heavily smoothed or burnished exterior. These vessels also frequently display evidence of having been used over a fire in the form of exterior sooting or interior carbonization of food remains. Storage vessels were defined as any restricted orifice vessels, vertical bowls with a rim diameter of greater than 45 cm, and the distinct Straight Ledge Rim Jar, which refers to large open jars with a wide ledge rim around the open orifice of the vessel.

When analyzing these vessel classes across spatial contexts in Kenan Tepe's *Ubaid Phase 4* (Early Terminal Ubaid) and *Ubaid Phase 3* (Late Northern Ubaid), distinct trends in ceramic use emerge (Tab. 2). On the interior surfaces of Terminal *Ubaid Structure 3* and Late Northern *Ubaid Structure 4* serving vessels are more common than cooking or storage vessels. Additionally, cooking vessels are found in higher densities in the Terminal Ubaid fire installations from Trench D6 and the Late Northern Ubaid exterior surfaces, which included two separate exterior hearths. Storage vessels are found much more frequently in exterior contexts than inside Ubaid houses, meaning that the storage of food items most likely occurred in large vessel and granaries outside of the house. Additionally, the relatively high ceramic artifact densities from the exterior surfaces associated with Terminal *Ubaid Structure 3* suggest that this area functioned as a domestic production area. The preliminary microartifact analysis of these surfaces supports this hypothesis. High concentrations of lithic debris, particularly obsidian, and faunal bones were recovered from these surfaces and support their use as primary activity areas for the inhabitants of Terminal Ubaid Kenan Tepe.[80] Therefore, the external activities areas analyzed most likely represent an area of multi-functionality in which a wide array of domestic tasks was conducted. In terms of the ceramic composition of the external surfaces, it may be that these are areas in which all functional vessel classes were used in storing, processing, producing, and consuming foodstuffs, or that these areas served as places for discard of broken vessels and other material debris.

80 Parker, Foster, Nicoll, et al. 2009.

Surface	Serving Vessels Sherd Count	Sherd Density (sherds/m^3)	Cooking Vessels Sherd Count	Sherd Density (sherds/m^3)	Storage Vessels Sherd Count	Sherd Density (sherds/m^3)
Terminal Ubaid *Structure 3* Interior Surface	74	26.15	7	2.47	5	1.77
Terminal Ubaid *Structure 3* Exterior Surface	200	132.45	17	11.26	37	24.50
Terminal Ubaid Fire Installations	34	46.58	12	16.44	23	24.50
Late Northern Ubaid *Structure 4* Interior Surface	61	29.51	9	4.35	13	6.29
Late Northern Ubaid *Structure 4* Exterior Surface	17	31.07	8	14.62	14	25.59

Tab. 2 Spatial distribution of functional vessel classes at Ubaid Kenan Tepe.

Surface Treatment	Sherds with Use Traces	Total Sherd Count	Percentage
Untreated	96	155	61.94
Burnished	221	340	65.00
Incised	18	37	48.65
Scraped	118	219	53.88
Slipped	149	239	62.34
Smoothed	276	384	71.88
Painted	508	779	65.21
Impressed	11	11	100.00
Total	**1397**	**2164**	**64.56**

Tab. 3 Use traces on Kenan Tepe Ubaid ceramics divided by surface treatment.

3.3.2 Preliminary Use-Alteration Analysis of Kenan Tepe Ubaid-Period Ceramics

In order to offer more detail on the use of ceramic vessels than that provided by ceramic densities and the spatial location of vessels, a preliminary study of ceramic use-alteration was conducted on sherds collected from the surfaces associated with *Ubaid Structure 3* and *Ubaid Structure 4*, following the methodology outlined by James Skibo.[81] It is important to note, however, that the following results represent a preliminary examination of the data, including only the presence of use-alteration traces on a particular sherd rather than the intensity of use-alteration. Additionally, the variety of use traces outlined by Skibo are lumped together in this analysis rather than taken individually to be able to identify particular patterns of use. Finally, these results do not include a temporal analysis, but instead take the ceramic assemblage as a whole.

In total 2,156 sherds were analyzed for ceramic use with 1,394 (64.66 per cent) showing some evidence of use traces in antiquity. Table 3 provides the breakdown of ceramic use by vessel surface treatment.[82] Nearly all of the surface treatments show proportions with use traces near the overall average except for three classes of surface treatment. Use traces are present on all 11 impressed sherds recorded. Incised and scraped sherds produced significantly less evidence of use traces with only 48.65 per cent of incised sherds and 53.88 per cent of scraped sherds showing some evidence of use alteration. Finally, 65.21 per cent of painted sherds showed some signs of use alteration, suggesting that these vessels were used as frequently as other vessel classes during the Ubaid period.

81 Skibo 1992.

82 The discrepancy between the total number of sur-

Vessel Function	Sherds with Use Traces	Total Sherd Count	Percentage
Serving Vessels	394	564	69.86
Cooking Vessels	43	76	56.58
Storage Vessels	174	231	75.32
Total	**611**	**871**	**70.15**

Tab. 4 Use traces on functional vessel categories at Ubaid Kenan Tepe.

To provide more information concerning vessel use the sample was limited to rim sherds and divided into previously established use categories (Tab. 4). The results suggest that cooking vessels showed lower amounts of use traces than either storage or serving vessels. This result is somewhat surprising given their function and in light of the fact that 62.38 % of cooking vessel rim sherds bear evidence of sooting or carbonization.[83] However, it may be that cooking vessels often broke before physical use traces could manifest themselves on the vessel's surface or that Ubaid households used methods of cooking that required little mechanical abrasion, such as boiling with heated rocks.

The higher percentage of use traces on serving and storage vessels suggests that these vessels were used quite frequently in the past. However, Mills has effectively argued that this may be for different reasons.[84] She suggests that larger stationary vessels such as the vast majority of Ubaid storage vessels are more limited in the archaeological record at short-lived sites due to the vessels' long use-lives. At the same time serving vessels are more abundant in the archaeological record because they are broken frequently due to their use in daily commensal events. This may suggest that use-traces on storage vessels could be less representative of intensity of use and more related to their longevity, while the high percentage of use on serving vessels could be representative of their frequent use.

3.3.3 Zooarchaeological Analysis of Ubaid-Period Kenan Tepe

Beyond the ceramic data other lines of evidence provide important clues concerning Ubaid food preparation and consumption. Unlike the sites of Değirmentepe and Tepe Gawra, extensive zooarchaeological and archaeobotanical analyses are currently being

face treatments and the total number of sherds is a result of eight sherds which displayed multiple surface treatments, most commonly a combination of incision or impression and painting.

83 Parker and Kennedy 2010.

84 Mills 1989.

Genus/Species	Total Count	Percentage	Weight (g)	Percentage
Bos taurus	46	7.29	558	25.32
Capra hircus	2	032	11	0.50
Capra species	2	0.32	21	0.95
Cervus elaphus	3	0.48	235	10.66
Ovis aries	3	0.48	23	1.04
Ovis/Capra	140	22.19	522	23.68
Sus species	17	2.69	72	3.27
Testudo species	1	0.16	12	0.54
Fish	4	0.63	3	0.14
Small mammal*	108	17.12	229	10.39
Medium mammal*	15	2.38	91	4.13
Large mammal*	51	8.08	336	15.25
Indeterminate	239	37.88	91	4.13
Total	631	100.00	2204	100.00

* indicates material that was not identifiable to Genus or Species but clearly belonged to the Class Mammalia. These fragments were grouped into three categories: small mammal (i. e. sheep or goat), medium mammal (i. e. pig) and large Mammal (i.e. cattle); Parker, Foster, Henecke, et al. 2008, 115.

Tab. 5 Total list of species identified in the Ubaid faunal assemblage from Kenan Tepe. After Parker, Foster, Henecke, et al. 2008, 116, Tab. 2.

conducted on the remains from Kenan Tepe. Preliminary faunal analysis (Tab. 5) suggests a predominance of domesticated caprines (sheep/goat) with a lesser emphasis on domesticated cattle and pigs.[85] However, the meat yield per animal is estimated at roughly 15 kg per sheep or goat, 20 kg for domesticated pigs, and 250 kg for cattle[86]

85 Parker, Foster, Henecke, et al. 2008.

86 Dahl and Hjort 1976; Barker 1981; Redding 1981; Gregg 1988.

meaning that the meat provided by cattle may have provided a much more substantial percentage of the total consumed at Kenan Tepe despite the predominance of caprines in the assemblage. It is also possible these ratios are reflective of conscious choices in herd composition related to the utilization of secondary products such as cheese, butter, yogurt, or wool. At the Chalcolithic site of Yarıkkaya in central Anatolia, Sauter, Puchinger and Schoop recovered animal-based milk fats from ceramic jars using gas chromatography, which they suggest supports the production of butter and other secondary milk products at this time.[87] However, without a completed analysis of the faunal remains or organic residue analysis on ceramic sherds, the use of secondary animal products at Terminal Ubaid period Kenan Tepe is purely speculative.

Also present in the assemblage are wild taxa such as red deer, turtle, fish, and freshwater mollusks, which point to the exploitation of fluvial resources and wild game. Although fish and other riverine resources were relatively limited in the preliminary study, future studies of microfauna extracted from samples of floors and from flotation samples will be aimed at clarifying the role of fishing in the community's subsistence practices. The importance of riverine resources is indirectly suggested by the presence of numerous ground stone fishing-net weights recovered from multiple contexts at Kenan Tepe and the presence of a large freshwater mollusk shell midden located slightly down slope from *Ubaid Structure 4*.[88]

3.3.4 Archaeobotanical Analysis of Ubaid-Period Kenan Tepe

Archaeobotanical remains from Kenan Tepe have been recovered using a systematic selective flotation sampling method from a variety of contexts including hearths, exterior surfaces, floors, burials, ovens, and pits. The overall picture of the botanical remains is one in which *Triticum dicoccum* (emmer wheat) is the primary cereal staple for both the Terminal and Late Northern Ubaid periods. Other cereals found in significant quantities include *Triticum monococcum* (einkorn wheat) and barley. In addition to the cereals significant amounts of legumes were recovered, dominated by lentils but also including peas and bitter vetch.[89]

Botanical samples from Terminal Ubaid strata were largely sterile, with the exception of a large hearth excavated in trench D6, which yielded large amounts of cereals.[90] Late Northern *Ubaid Structure 4,* however, yielded large botanical samples owing to the good preservation caused by the conflagration that destroyed the structure and the subsequent collapse of the building. On the exterior work surface to the south, cereal grains were recovered. Additionally small amounts of processing debris and 157 partially germinated cereal embryos were recovered, pointing to the possibility that this area was

87 Sauter, Puchinger, and Schoop 2003.

88 Parker and Dodd 2005; Parker, Foster, Henecke, et al. 2008; Bradley J. Parker, personal communication.

89 Graham 2010.

90 Graham 2010.

utilized to process grains, a suggestion supported by the presence of grinding stones located on the surface. The presence of germinated cereal embryos could point to the preparation of malted grains for brewing. A small hearth along the western edge of the work surface contained moderate amounts of burnt wood, a few barley grains, and small amounts of processing debris and weed seeds.[91]

The exterior work surface to the north of *Structure 4* contained several grinding stones, processing debris of both wheat and barley, and highly fragmented unidentifiable cereal grains.[92] Further to the east, abutting the northern wall of the storage cells, excavators unearthed a surface covered by large amounts of compacted plant pseudomorphs, most likely wheat and/or barley chaff, as well as a finely made grass mat.[93] Botanical samples from the surface contained only processing debris, suggesting that this may have been an area of grain winnowing and fodder storage. This area also contained several small hearths which contained processing debris, charred wood, and dung fuel remains.[94]

Inside the structure itself botanical remains were recovered from two distinct layers, the roof collapse and the house floors. From the roof collapse large amounts of cereal grains and processing debris were recovered. From within the collapse several decomposed reed baskets and large ceramic storage jars were discovered, containing large amounts of cereal grains and flax seeds.[95] The floors of *Ubaid Structure 4* are virtually sterile containing only small amounts of unidentifiable cereal bits and the stray wheat or barley grain. A hearth located on the floor of the central hall (Room 1) was sterile except for a small amount of charred wood and glume bases. Since *Structure 4* was actively inhabited when it burned down, it is not surprising that the floors and hearths are sterile, as these surfaces would have likely been cleaned regularly. Based on the finds of charred dung combined with the mixture of chaff, field weeds, and relatively small amounts of wood charcoal, Graham suggests that Room 3 was used for the storage of dung fuel. In Room 4, a large amount barley grains was recovered as well as a smaller amount of wheat seeds, which supports the interpretation of the room as a storage area due to the presence of a large storage jar buried in the floor of the room.[96]

The cell structures associated with *Structure 4* (Rooms 6, 7, 10 and 12) have been interpreted as storage facilities based on the presence of grain pseudomorphs in several rooms and their small size. The botanical samples from these cells are all nearly sterile, containing only very small amounts of cereal processing debris. A small bin feature found in the northern part of cell room 12 includes substantial amounts of barley grains and no processing debris or weed seeds.[97]

91 Graham 2010.
92 Graham 2010.
93 Parker and Dodd 2005.
94 Graham 2010.
95 Graham 2010.
96 Graham 2010.
97 Graham 2010.

In conclusion, the archaeobotanical remains at Kenan Tepe point to the predominance of emmer wheat as the primary cereal crop for human consumption with barley comprising a major component of animal feed.[98] The majority of cereal processing appears to have occurred outside the domestic structure with the presence of a winnowing floor and several grinding stones to the north and east of *Ubaid Structure 4*. Cereals were also being processed or stored for immediate consumption in baskets and ceramic vessels on the roof of *Ubaid Structure 4*, including partially germinated seeds which may represent the first stage of malting grains for brewing beer. Long-term storage of processed cereals most likely occurred in the associated storage facilities.

4 Discussion

Based on the material from Değirmentepe and Tepe Gawra, Coba bowls are found most commonly in the room that connects the central hall to the associated exterior courtyards and directly outside of this entrance into the complex. Their storage in the areas of entrance and exit to the residential structure, as well as in associated storage facilities, supports the use of these vessels outside of the household, rather than being serving vessels used in the central hall. Painted wares most commonly occur in the central hall of the tripartite structure, which supports the assumption that these vessels are serving vessels utilized for food consumption inside the household. Finally, cooking vessels are more common on the associated exterior surfaces of Ubaid households, suggesting the utilization of cooking installations outside of the house for the production of household consumables.

The archaeobotanical data from Kenan Tepe supports the assumption that the vast majority of food processing occurred outside the house. The presence of a winnowing floor and grinding stones to the north of the house suggests that a large portion of initial grain processing occurred here. The presence of cleaned grain in reed baskets and large ceramic storage jars on the roof of the *Ubaid Structure 4* suggest that this area also functioned as a locus of food preparation. Graham has proposed two hypotheses to explain the presence of cleaned grain in storage containers on the roof of the house.[99] The first suggests that cereals were removed from long-term storage in the cells and placed in baskets on the roof for immediate consumption after completing the final stages of processing. The second hypothesis is that grain storage on the roof represents

98 Graham 2010. Graham points to the high concentration of domesticated barley seeds in the dung fuel stored in *Ubaid Structure 4* to suggest that barley was primarily used for animal feed. The dung contained a mix of common field weeds, domesticated cereal chaff and barley seeds which point to the intentional foddering of animal domesticates.

99 Graham 2010.

a stage in cereal processing in which grains are allowed to dry before being placed into long-term storage.

Cooking vessels at Kenan Tepe also show variation in their form and possibly function. By correlating sooting with vessel shape, previous studies have isolated two types of cooking vessels.[100] The first is a squat cooking pot with a low flaring collar. Patterns of sooting on these vessels suggest that this vessel was likely supported by andirons, or balanced by stones, over wood or dung fires. The size and shape of these vessels suggest that they were primarily used for heating or slow-cooking well-saturated foods such as soups, stews, or porridge.[101] The second shape identified as part of the Ubaid cooking assemblage is an open, coarse fabric, shallow bowl, which Parker and Kennedy suggest was possibly used for frying or baking foods that were not heavily saturated and/or that functioned as bread molds.[102]

In order to better understand the ways in which Coba bowls were utilized, it is important to return to an examination of labor shortages and alliance-based labor strategies to overcome these shortages. In the ration-container scenario, painted ceramics were used by elites for the consumption of foodstuffs during feasts, whereas the dependent laborers were fed using expediently produced Coba bowls. The alternative alliance-labor hypothesis proposes households used painted ceramics for their daily consumption of foodstuffs, whereas the same households utilized Coba bowls during collective work feasts organized to offset temporary labor shortages.

The preliminary use-alteration study suggests that painted vessels were used just as frequently as vessels with less elaborate surface treatments, indicating that these vessels were used in daily contexts of social life in Ubaid households. Scraped vessels, predominately the Coba bowl, showed use traces on a lower percentage of vessels than vessels with other categories of surface treatment, implying that they were used less often than other vessel classes. These preliminary findings support the alliance-labor hypothesis in that scraped vessels were used infrequently. If Coba bowls were being used by a centralized authority to distribute rations to dependent laborers one would expect that these vessels would show signs of frequent use and subsequent storage. In addition to the general lack of evidence for social institutions capable of the maintenance of a dependent labor force from Terminal Ubaid sites in northern Mesopotamia, the data presented here suggest that Coba bowls and painted vessels were used by all members of Ubaid society, based on their recovery from all archaeological contexts represented at Kenan Tepe, as well as their presence across households at Değirmentepe and Tepe Gawra. If scraped bowls were used as part of a system to control labor by elite households, one would expect to find large concentrations of Coba bowls at the largest households at each site and the access to painted ceramics to be limited to or at least more common in elite

100 Parker and Kennedy 2010.

101 Bottero 2004, 52–53.

102 Parker and Kennedy 2010.

households. This is not the case at any of the three sites discussed; instead painted ceramics and Coba bowls are found in relatively equal distributions in nearly all domestic structures.

Moreover, recent studies have shown that the use of painted ceramics as prestige items is accompanied by an elaboration and visual enlargement of decorative motifs as a result of their social prominence.[103] If Ubaid painted vessels were being used as prestige items during competitive feasting events as suggested by Helwing,[104] then we would expect to see an elaboration of decorative motifs to match the increased social importance of painted vessels. However, archaeologists have long acknowledged that decorative motifs become simpler during the Ubaid period and are gradually replaced with unpainted ceramic assemblages throughout greater Mesopotamia.[105]

5 Conclusion

Perhaps the most common theme of the papers and discussions of the workshop was the dialectical unity of the ritual and the mundane. Elaborate feasts are set apart from daily consumption by numerous markers, but these markers are only coherent in relationship to the daily practices of food consumption. John Robb has argued that feasts in the Italian Neolithic should be seen as a ritual sharing of communal labor meant to create inter-household or inter-settlement solidarity.[106] Through this lens, I suggest that it is possible to view daily meals as a symbolic sharing of labor in a ritualized act of household solidarity. In this sense the labor required to provide the materials for both the mundane acts of daily subsistence and the elaborate ritual feast should not fall out of view in our analyses. For example the steps required in a *chaîne opératoire* analysis for producing bread include plowing the fields, seeding, weeding, harvesting, winnowing, threshing, storage, grinding, making dough, kneading, firing the oven, and baking. These steps cannot be inextricably removed from the productive totality when discussing the consumption of bread, and multiple steps of this process potentially require more labor than may have been available to individual Ubaid households.

A more complete understanding of the ways in which labor flowed between households during the Terminal Ubaid period would provide researchers with a greater knowledge of the community dynamic and sociopolitical organization. The appearance of mass-produced ceramics could indicate that the importance of food exchange in within-group cooperation was expanding to the point that new social relations of production

103 Mills 2007.

104 Helwing 2003.

105 Akkermans 1988; Nissen 1988; Hammade and Yamazaki 1995.

106 Robb 2007.

were required to facilitate that exchange. In this sense, Coba bowls are objects of consumption in a dual way. First, by providing for cooperative labor they are consumed in the process of production as a means of labor in what Marx would call productive consumption.[107] Second, they are objects of consumption in a commensal sense, in that foods would have been directly consumed from these vessels during or after the work event in what Marx would call individual consumption.[108]

I hope to have shown in this paper the ways in which an understanding of the organization of labor and the overlapping social relations of production combined with the analysis of food consumption and commensality can be applied to understand small-scale changes in the organization of labor during the Late Chalcolithic 1 period in northern Mesopotamia. By addressing the role of labor and its organization in pre-capitalist societies, archaeologists should be able to provide, in the long run, a much more nuanced view of the social reproduction of these societies.

107 Marx 1990.

108 Marx 1990.

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FIGURES: **1** After Marx 1993, 88–100. **2** Middle East topographic blank map: © Sémhur / Wikimedia Commons; ETOP1, and World Data Bank I. **3** After Gurdil 2005, 416 plate 55, by permission. **4** After Gurdil 2005, 416 plate 54, by permission. **5** After Rothman 2002, 87 fig. 5.13; © Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, by permission. **6** After Rothman 2002, 78 fig. 5.3; © Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, by permission. **7** After Rothman 2002, 79 fig. 5.4; © Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, by permission. **8** © Dr. Bradley Parker, by permission. **9** © Dr. Bradley Parker, by permission. **10** © Dr. Bradley Parker, by permission. **TABLES:** **1** Jason R. Kennedy. **2** Jason R. Kennedy. **3** Jason R. Kennedy. **4** Jason R. Kennedy. **5** After Parker, Foster, Henecke, et al. 2008, 116 table 2; for the categories, see Parker, Foster, Henecke, et al. 2008, 115.

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Walther Sallaberger

Home-made Bread, Municipal Mutton, Royal Wine. Establishing Social Relations during the Preparation and Consumption of Food in Religious Festivals at Late Bronze Age Emar

Summary

In the urban culture of the ancient Near East religious festivals offer a major occasion to present and to re-establish the social networks of a city. An analysis of the ritual texts from the Late Bronze Age city of Emar (13th century BC) reveals how various groups in the urban society were involved in the preparation and consumption of food. Feasting meant the participation of persons from different households at urban localities such as a temple. Most interestingly the meaning of the foodstuffs consumed in urban festivals was already established during their preparation, in which various organizations were involved.

Keywords: Ancient Near Eastern studies; city of Emar; religious rituals; temple; sacrifice; food preparation; meaning of food; festival; urban space.

In der urbanen Kultur Altvorderasiens bieten religiöse Feste einen bedeutenden Anlass, soziale Netzwerke in einer Stadt sichtbar zu machen und zu produzieren. Die Analyse der Ritualtexte aus der spätbronzezeitlichen Stadt Emar (13. Jh. v. Chr.) lässt erkennen, in welcher Weise verschiedene Gruppen der urbanen Gesellschaft in die Zubereitung und den Verzehr von Lebensmitteln eingebunden waren. Das Feiern von Festen bedeutete, dass Personen aus verschiedenen Haushalten in städtischen Institutionen wie dem Tempel partizipierten. Besonders interessant ist, dass der Bedeutungsgehalt von Lebensmitteln, die im Laufe von Festen in urbanen Zentren konsumiert wurden, bereits während der Zubereitung festgelegt war. Hieran wiederum waren unterschiedliche Organisationen beteiligt.

Keywords: Altorientalistik; Emar; Religiöse Rituale; Tempel; Opfer; Nahrungszubereitung; Bedeutung von Nahrung; Fest; Urbaner Raum.

This contribution was originally designed as a philological counterpiece to the paper of Adelheid Otto, focusing on the archaeological evidence for food consumption in private

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houses and the main temple at Tell Bazi/Baṣīru. I am grateful both to her and to Susan Pollock for the invitation to join the discussion on commensality and their input of stimulating ideas.

1 Representation of Cultural Essentials at Festivals

Religious festivals were key events in the ancient Near East: their dates marked the calendar and the accounting of time; their deities, representing the main symbols of a community's identity, stood in the focus of the ritual, and the participation of the population with its leaders involved a presentation of the socio-political organization at work. Furthermore, considering aesthetic aspects, for example the festivals' staging at the most prominent buildings and places of a city, the view of works of art and artisanry or the performance of poetry, music, and dance, the short period of a festival meant a condensed presentation of the essentials of a given culture.

Food played an important role in these public events, and the example of Late Bronze Age Emar investigated in this paper is no exception. A close reading of the ritual texts concerning the preparation, presentation and consumption of food reveals that at Emar's festivals more was at play than simply the abundance and exceptional quality of food that mark festival events in contrast to everyday routine. The specific semantics attributed to various edibles was an expression of different economic values: the preparation of bread involved labor, sheep were bred by communal organizations, and delicacies belonged to the ruler's court. In a subtle way the handling of food marked various social relations within the urban setting and thus indicates socio-economic stratification as well as the distinction of specific groups or the cooperation of the city's population. In addition, no occasions or institutions are known other than the religious festivals that displayed these urban social relations in a similar way.

2 The City of Emar in the Late Bronze Age

This investigation is based on data from the ritual texts found at the ancient Syrian city of Emar from the Late Bronze Age. Emar, situated on the Middle Euphrates in Syria, was an important hub in the Bronze Age networks. The French rescue excavations in the early 1970s uncovered the last pre-classical inhabitation level of the city, the Late Bronze Age city. At this period, the 13th century BC, Emar had become part of the Hittite empire, and Hittite officials controlled the relationship of the city with the Hittites' Syrian capital Karkemiš. Besides this political dependence, city life seems to have been little affected

by the Hittite occupation, and the urban inhabitants, most of whom spoke a Semitic tongue, performed their daily business as ever, observed legal traditions similar to those existing prior to the Hittite occupation and venerated the gods of their city.[1]

The nuclear family that inhabited the private houses, sometimes with a few more dependents, was the basic unit of society.[2] The "brothers" (*ahhū*), probably composed of representatives of neighborhoods, met for legal decisions. The local affairs of the city were managed by an assembly of city elders (*šībūtu*) that decided legal cases in the name of the god of the city, Ninurta. The institution of a city assembly was a basic and widespread feature of Mesopotamian cities, and at Emar and elsewhere this body also represented the city in dealings with a royal overlord or a foreign king. The internal organization of the city Emar was based on a long urban tradition; former claims for a strong nomadic component and a clan structure have proven to be unfounded.[3] The prominent role of urban institutions is, however, well comparable to the situation in Mesopotamian towns.

The local king of Emar appears as subordinate to the local institution of the elders,[4] but under Hittite rule the king became more relevant in the city's internal legal matters.[5] Politically, Emar's king always depended on mighty sovereigns such as the kings of Mittani or Hatti. A part of the male population was obliged to fulfil duties for the Hittite state and earned the respective benefits.[6] A "palace" appears in early texts from Emar, but during the 13th century to which most tablets belong a royal court with its courtiers and officials does not seem to be attested at Emar.[7] Finally, nothing like a scholarly elite or guilds emerge from the sources.

This sketch of social stratification and grouping has been mainly drawn according to the testimony of the legal texts that were found in many private houses. The absence of more varied features of social stratification has led to an impression of a "relatively egalitarian society of traders and small producers", especially if seen in contrast to the palace economy at Ugarit or Alalakh.[8] And concerning the highest offices of king and diviner it seems that "at Emar, collective institutions stand above various private persons endowed with civic responsibilities".[9]

1 On Emar in general see e.g. Adamthwaite 2001 or the contributions in d'Alfonso, Cohen, and Sürenhagen 2008. A useful bibliography is provided by Faist, Justel, and Vita 2007.
2 Otto 2006 combines archaeological and philological evidence for a Late Bronze Age city in the region.
3 Fleming 2004, 212–214; Viano 2010.
4 Pruzsinszky 2008.
5 Démare-Lafont 2008.
6 Yamada 2006.
7 Pruzsinszky 2008.
8 Beckman 1997, 107.
9 Démare-Lafont 2008, 217.

3 Emar Ritual Texts as Source for the Transaction of Foodstuffs

The bulk of cuneiform texts from Emar, perhaps more than a thousand tablets, stems from the house of the "diviner" (*bārû*) of the city.[10] As in any other family archive, the diviner's family also stored their most relevant legal documents for generations, including documents on immovable property or on specific rights granted by the Hittite king. Moreover, the diviner disposed of an impressive library comprising manuscripts of Mesopotamian scholarship of all genres, lexical lists, omen texts, and literary works. And finally he kept those documents that were relevant for his duties as a "diviner of the gods of Emar." Divination, the observation of portentous signs, left hardly any traces in his written record. But he was apparently the person in charge of the cultic affairs of the whole city. Since the cult had to be kept in accordance with the will of the gods, the title "diviner of the gods of Emar" goes well together with his documented duties.[11]

The ritual texts[12] note the most important actions at special religious festivals, indicating the gods that were venerated, the persons present, or the sequence of events. The ritual texts were clearly intended as a guideline for the diviner himself, who was well aware of the basic facts, and therefore little effort was spent for a more nuanced description of the cultic ceremonies. There is one aspect, however, which is noted in a very detailed way, namely the goods that were transfered during the ritual. In these cases the texts indicate qualifications, for example the breed of sheep or various kinds of bread, they give exact quantities, and they note quite often what is done with the goods, and which persons are involved. This preoccupation of the ritual texts with the transaction of goods becomes more apparent if compared to other aspects; thus, for example, the ritual texts do not offer exact time indications, neither in absolute nor in relative terms, or more precise descriptions of places and ritual itineraries.

What is largely a disappointment for the historian of religion becomes most interesting in the context of a study on the practice of food consumption: the ritual texts note the exact quantities and kinds of foodstuffs consumed during a religious ritual. Despite this generally favorable source situation, the modern researcher often faces enormous difficulties in grasping the exact sense of a concise prescription in the ritual text that allowed the diviner to act correctly and to manage the acquisition, preparation, presentation, consumption, or distribution of foodstuffs. Furthermore, whereas clay tablets have the great advantage that such mundane matters as documents on the distribution of bread and beer are preserved at all, they nevertheless tend to break in tiny pieces, and this leaves us with broken tablets and many tiny fragments with little relevant information.

10 Fleming 2000, 13–47; Cohen 2009.

11 Sallaberger 1996, 142; Démare-Lafont 2008.

12 For editions see primarily Arnaud 1986; Fleming 1992; Fleming 2000; Cohen, d'Alfonso, and Sürenhagen 2008.

The understanding of the ritual texts as manuals mainly destined for the correct distribution of goods fits well into the general picture of the cuneiform documentation on cultic rituals. There the distribution of goods in sacrifices often features prominently, and thus the *offering* demands a central place in the *practice* of ancient Mesopotamian cult.[13] Whereas at a conceptual level the sacrifice meant the feeding of the gods, on the level of practice – and in fact this is the main concern for the historian of religion – the meal as a literally vital act was considered the appropriate moment to remember the cultural and cosmic order represented by the gods. The practice of offerings did not elaborate on the aspect of feeding the gods, but it regularly presented a symbolic pattern determined by variables such as time, place, occasion, or the agent of the sacrifice. The amount and quality of goods presented to a deity depended on occasion and calendar, thus monthly festivals required larger offerings than daily meals or at the main festival of a deity his or her share was increased; the main god of the city was presented more sheep, bread and beer than his spouse or his son or minor deities, but a woman might offer more to a female deity than to the male main god.

Offering practices can thus be understood as sophisticated patterns that regularly *represent* the complex orders intrinsically linked to the pantheon. Correspondingly, the central act of the sacrifice in Mesopotamia was the *presentation* of the offerings, and not, for example, their transformation (such as slaughter, burning) or consumption. It is in a transferred meaning only that offerings keep gods alive: as long as people were involved day by day in constructing the highly complex pattern of sacrifices, their practice testified to the relevance of their religion. Seen in this context, the focus of the Emar ritual texts on the correct distribution of offerings is not only a reflection of the duties of the diviner to care for the materials used in rituals, but it also highlights the role of offerings as central acts of religious practice. Any study of the persons involved in the regime of offerings has to keep in mind these basic principles.

4 Food and Beverages at Emar

The goods presented to the gods in offerings apparently correspond largely to the meals of the mortals. One did not offer unprocessed grain, but bread and beer, and mostly specific parts of meat were selected for the presentation to the gods. Since cultic offerings resembled human food in so many respects, it is worth considering briefly the main dishes that were available at Emar, especially since this local cuisine did not differ too much from other areas of Syro-Mesopotamia. In the following, I concentrate on infor-

13 Cf. e. g., Oppenheim 1977, 183–193; Mayer and Sallaberger 2003; Maul 2009; Sallaberger 2011a.

mation drawn from cuneiform texts, whereas the archaeological evidence has been aptly presented by Adelheid Otto for the contemporary settlement of Tell Bazi.[14]

4.1 Grain Products

As everywhere in Mesopotamia, grain products constituted by far the most important part of the offerings, and we can be sure that this also held true for the meals of the inhabitants.

The dominant crop at Emar was barley, emmer played an absolutely minor role only, bread wheat is not attested.[15] Barley is extremely robust and resistant, and its very short vegetation period made it the preferred crop in a region with scarce rain. This cereal was used both for bread and for beer; there is no unequivocal evidence that other dishes, for example a kind of porridge, were prepared from barley.

Bread was baked in various different forms which were given local names.[16] Dough made of barley flour was not suited for very thin layers, so even the "flat bread" (*ruqqānu*) cannot be conceived of as thin as modern *hubz* made of wheat. In the rituals one meets often a combination of bread "for meals" (*naptanu*) plus a similar amount of "dry bread" (NINDA UD.DU) and a smaller addition of "dry" bread with an addition of fruits (*inbu*), probably a sweet dessert.[17]

Almost always the final product, bread, was presented to the gods; a dedication of flour remains a rare exception.[18] When flour appears in the ritual texts, it was usually provided when intended for later use, for example as provision for trips.[19] The preparation of bread is mentioned only once in ritual context, namely in the festival for the city gods (*Emar* 388) to which I will return later (in section 7).

The standard beverage of ancient Syro-Mesopotamia was beer, which was equally made from barley. At contemporary Tell Bazi every single household produced beer, and a similar situation has to be envisaged for Emar.[20] Beer served as a daily, healthy and valuable component of the meal and as the main source for vitamins and micronutrients. "Beer concentrate" (*billatu*), a pre-product of beer, basically dried draff of the mash, was

14 Otto 2006.

15 Emmer appears only once in a ritual text, namely the *kissu* for Ninkura (*Emar* 388: 7); it is also listed as a provision for the high priestess (*ettu*, *Emar* 369: 87, line count according to Fleming 1992). Attestations of words are checked in Cohen, d'Alfonso, and Sürenhagen 2008.

16 Cf. Tropper 2001, 560–563.

17 Frequent combinations are 7 "meal breads" + 7 "dry breads" + 2 "dry breads with fruit" in installation of the high priestess (*Emar* 369) or 4 "meal breads" + 3 or 4 "dry breads" + 1 "dry bread with fruit" in the *kissu* festivals (*Emar* 384–388 etc.).

18 *Emar* 463: 9: "grain groats[?] for the drinking vessels" (*pappasu ana tašâti*).

19 E. g., *Emar* 463: for bread for offerings; *Emar* 452 flour and beer extract as materials intended for the ritual.

20 Otto 2006, 86–93.

given as a provision in the same way as flour, so that the recipient might easily prepare his or her meal.[21] Brewers are never mentioned as participants in the ritual texts.

4.2 Wine, Fruit and Other Foodstuffs

Wine is known at Emar as well, although it occurs much more rarely than beer. In the ritual texts it is only offered to the gods, but not given out to humans. Beer and wine, which were delivered in voluminous jars, were poured into drinking cups (*kasātu*, *tašâtu*) standing in front of the deities, a situation archaeologically attested at Tell Bazi's main temple.[22]

The appearance of fruit in ritual texts could suggest that fruit was a normal component of ancient Near Eastern meals. However, the general cuneiform evidence indicates that fruit and vegetables hardly belonged to the daily meal, but were met regularly only at the royal court. At Emar, fruit was largely confined to two festival occasions,[23] which were probably related to each other and where for some reason fruit may have served a specific purpose. The texts mention figs, pomegranates, raisins, a species of nuts, pistachio, and spices (? ŠIM). Fruit without any specification appears as an ingredient of bread, which was regularly served in small quantities (see 4.1 above). Even figs, the most common fruit, never appear in everyday contexts at Emar; but this can hardly be taken as evidence for the distribution of fruit at private meals given the erratic nature of the textual documentation.

At Emar, vegetables, onions and garlic seem to be missing from the ritual offerings. This fact may be related to the specific connotations linked to cress and onions in Mesopotamian culture: these vegetables were considered impure and were therefore not permitted as food for a person going to the temple.[24] The strong smell may have been a reason to ban onions or garlic from the sacred precincts; but they were considered a delicacy at the courts and were presented to high dignitaries.

Thus edibles were evaluated differently according to the respective contexts. This heavily affects our interpretation of the foodstuffs dedicated at offerings: they cannot simply be taken as a direct reflection of ordinary meals or even of valuable feasts, since we do not deal with a uniform hierarchy of foodstuffs, but various sets of norms were active at the same time and place, such as economic value and cultic purity.

Oil, usually made from sesame, was generally used for anointing, but hardly for food. It occurs rarely, as do aromatic substances, which were added to oil for anointing or as an incense.

21 E. g., *Emar* 369: 53–54: The cultic personnel gives flour and beer concentrate to the high priestess as a provision.

22 See Otto 2013.

23 *Emar* 388, the *kissu* festival of Ninkur; *Emar* 452, the *abû* festival (see Fleming 2000, 280–289); cf. also frgts. 462, 464, 465, 466.

24 Sallaberger 2011b.

4.3 Meat

Offerings of meat were confined to special occasions, the main days of the main festivals. The ritual texts deal exactly with these rare moments in the year, thus suggesting that animals were slaughtered in great numbers for the cult. Mostly sheep and lambs were sacrificed, the more valuable oxen only rarely, hardly ever goats and kids. The presence of meat constituted perhaps the most important difference between daily meals and ritual food offerings.

The ritual itself underlined the high value of animals for slaughter. Some texts mention that they were brought to the temple in a procession that could include singers or musicians. The throne festival (*kissu*) for the god Ea may serve as an example:

> 1 ox, 6 sheep and 1 lamb, the sacrificial [animals], go from the house of the 'master of the temple' [*bēl bīti*] to the temple of Ea together with the singers.[25]

Also the divine weapon could join the procession leading to the temple (*Emar* 369: 29–30). Since a greater part of the ceremony was conducted in the interior of the temple, processions were the main occasions for public demonstration. The regular presence of the singers or musicians leading the processions underlines this aspect and, even more to the point, musicians are not mentioned in the context of rituals conducted in the interior of the temple.[26] The procession comprised as human actors the ritualists and the musicians, a divine symbol, and the sacrificial animals as representatives of the offering that would include bread and beverages as well. So in the ritual setting grain products were treated differently than animals. The former were delivered as finished products and consumed in the interior of the temple, but the animals were conducted to the temple in an ostentative procession and prepared there. Although the offerings seemingly resemble the daily food of the Emarites (perhaps with some delicacies added), the presentation distinguished clearly between religious festivals and private use. This implies different forms of participation at daily meals and ritual festivals. Upon their arrival at the temple the animals were "sacrificed" (verb *naqû*). So the text on the throne ritual of Ea cited above continues as follows:

> One offers [*inaqqû*] [1] ox and [10] sheep to Ea. (*Emar* 386 // *ASJ* 14 49: 27–28)

Other examples include:

> In the temple of Išhara, one offers [*inaqqû*] these two sheep to Išhara and Ninurta. (*Emar* 387: 11–12; see below)

25 *Emar* 386 // *ASJ* 14 49: 24–27.

26 On singers/musicians in rituals see Fleming 1992, 93, there occuring at the central rites of the installation of the high priestess: *Emar* 369, 73.

> One offers 1 ox and 6 sheep in front of the Stormgod. (*ana pani Adad inaqqû*, *Emar* 369: 11[27])

More rarely animals were slaughtered before they were brought to the temple, and this seems to have been one of the duties of the "master of the house [i. e. the temple]" (*bēl bīti*), apparently a priest responsible for the upkeep of the temple:[28]

> 1 ox and 4 sheep: one slaughters [literally "cuts down", *inakkisū*] them in the house of the 'master of the house' [*bēl bīti*]. (*kissu* festival *Emar* 385b // *ASJ* 14 49: 5)

> 1 sheep: the 'master of the house' slaughters and cooks it at his house [*bēl bīti ana bītīšu inakkis ušabšal*, and its parts are distributed on the tables of the honorables: high priestesses, kings]. (*Emar* 369:14–15[29])

The animals could be prepared even without (mentioning) a presentation to the gods:

> An ox and 2 sheep: one slaughters [*iṭabbahū*] them and the men of the holy matters (*qidāši*) eat and drink. (*Emar* 446:119[30])

A part of the meat, called "ritual [portion of] meat" (UZU GARZA), was offered to the gods and placed in front of them.

> They place the ritual portion of beef, the ritual portion of mutton, the head of the ox, the head of the ram before the gods. (e. g. *Emar* 369: 28[31])

5 Social Aspects of Food Preparation

5.1 The Institutions and Persons Delivering the Offerings

In the preceding paragraphs I pointed to some subtle variations in the presentation of foodstuffs to the deities. Considering the relevance of festivals in the ancient Orient (as

27 Fleming 1992.

28 This interpretation of the *bēl bīti* office that appears in Emar ritual texts is due to Otto 2013; the office can thus be compared to the Mesopotamian *šangû* "master of the temple" (German "Tempelherr," see Sallaberger and Huber Vulliet 2005, 628–629). Fleming 1992, 97–98 interpretes the *bēl bīti* as the representative of a household or clan who supplied the offerings.

29 Cf. Fleming 1992.

30 Cf. Fleming 2000, 268ff.

31 Cf. Fleming 1992, similarly *Emar* 369: 49 with heads, but more often the heads are not mentioned. In *Emar* 388: 62 the animal head serves as share of the king, in *Emar* 369: 77ff. as share of the diviner. The specific treatment of the heads becomes more interesting in the light of the evidence of the Tell Bazi temple (Otto 2013).

outlined in section 1 above), the notation of various persons and institutions as suppliers of the offerings deserves our full attention. They appear in some ritual texts,[32] prominently several times in the prescription for the most elaborated and most richly equipped festival of the city of Emar, the *zukru* festival that took place every seven years.[33] The offerings were provided by the king (*šarru*, LUGAL), the palace (*ekallu*), the temple (*bīt ili* "house of the deity"), and the city (*ālu*). The following example is taken from one of the many processions that took place in the course of the large *zukru* ritual, when the city god's parhedra, Šaššabētu, left her temple for the betyles situated at the gate:

> Šaššabētu of Ninurta's temple goes out to the gate of the betyles.
>
> One calf, six sheep: from the king; 1 sheep: from the city; 11 liters of bread of groats, 1 liter of barley bread, 1 *jug*(? KIR$_6$) and 1 pot of wine: from the king; 11 liters of bread of groats, 1 liter of barley bread, 1 *jug*(?): from the house of the god – one offers this to Šaššabētu. (*Emar* 373: 25–29[34])

In order to evaluate the combination of suppliers and the various kinds of foodstuffs, it is useful to present them in a table:

king	city	temple
1 calf, 6 sheep,	1 sheep	
11+1 liters of bread,		11 + 1 liters of bread,
1 vessel (of beer),		1 vessel (of beer)
1 vessel of wine		

This distribution basically agrees with all similar entries. At first sight the deliveries correspond to the economic capacities. The king alone presented cattle and wine, and he contributed the largest share of sheep, thus the most expensive meat. In a comparable ritual context the palace provided fruit.[35] The city sent one sheep. In similar texts mem-

32 *Emar* 373 and related texts (*zukru* festival), mensual texts *Emar* 452 (month *abû*), *Emar* 446 (six months) and related texts; all these texts were treated as urban calendar festivals by Fleming 2000.

33 Fleming 2000.

34 See Fleming 2000, 236–237.

35 In *Emar* 452, ritual for the month *abû*, see Fleming 2000, 280–289; e. g. ll. 3–5, third day, offerings for Ištar of the *abû*: flour and vessels (of beer) from the temple, 1 she-goat from the herdsmen (*nupūhānū*), i. e. from the city; sesame oil scented with cedar, ghee, spices, one vessel (of wine), a string of figs, ten pomegranates, and an unknown amount of raisins "from the palace" (*ša ekalli*). On fruit at Emar festivals see above, note 23. In *Emar* 373: (*zukru* festival) the palace provides 50 liters of bread and 4 vessels (*pīhu*, of beer concentrate *billatu*) stem from the palace, but they are destined "for the people" (*ana nišī*). This constitutes another example for the cooperation of social groups expressed in the provision of food for offerings.

bers of a specific profession, called *nupūhānū*,[36] contributed sheep; so it is reasonable to assume that these were the city's shepherds. The temple itself provided only cereal products, namely bread and beer.

But the distribution of the ritual foodstuffs offers more insights than a simple mirror of economic wealth. The temple provided the daily meal made of grain as every household would have done. This implied first of all an effort of human labor, but less an expenditure of valuable goods. The community of the city presented one of those sacrificial animals that were presented in the public procession that led to the temple (see section 4.3 above). And the king made the meal an exception by adding wine and more meat, thus fulfilling the duties of vertical solidarity, the care by the powerful for the poor, by the patron for his clients. In this way all social groups active in the ritual, the temple personnel, the community, and the political leader, cooperated to provide the religious rite with food. The common people, represented by the temple, contributed their labor, to which the king added from his wealth, and so the religious rite formed the setting for a powerful demonstration of the unity of the community. Already from the start the food handled, presented, and consumed in a religious ritual thus symbolized the *cooperation* of different social groups.

6 The Preparation of Food

As already mentioned, in ancient Mesopotamia food had to be prepared for presentation as an offering, and in this regard Emar participates in the large Mesopotamian cultural tradition. So each sacrifice has to be viewed not only as a gift and delivery of goods, but it included the investment of human labor as well. In this regard the rituals' long lists of diverse varieties of bread become more meaningful, since their preparation involved more care and effort than a mass production of the same kind of bread.

At Emar, the grain products were not prepared within the central sanctuary of the temple precinct.[37] This differs from the situation in Babylonia and Assyria, where the temple complexes were equipped with kitchens and other installations to allow the preparation of food. This service was already considered a part of the religious service, since the participants had to care for ritual purity. In Babylonia, the duty to provide

36 See on this group Fleming 2000, 146 fn. 23. Compare especially *Emar* 452, ritual for the month *abû*, Fleming 2000, 280–289, cited in the preceding note. In *Emar* 446, ritual for six months, cf. Fleming 2000, 268ff., and in *Emar* 463, ritual for an unknown month, Fleming 2000, 290ff., both *nupūhānū* and the "city" appear as suppliers of offerings. On the probable noun formation *purūs-* see Pentiuc 2001, 136, the suffix is taken here as *-ānū*, although a non-Semitic *-ann* is equally possible (thus Pentiuc); a convincing etymology is missing.

37 Otto 2013 argues that a temple complex in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia encompasses the main sanctuary, the actual temple, and a temenos including various secondary buildings.

bread, beer, and meat was met by prebend holders. These were inhabitants of the respective city, often coming from wealthy families, who held an office of baker, brewer, or butcher. The time-table was extremely well organized and detailed, and as a consequence, not only the personal time planning of these prebend holders was dictated by their periods of office in the temple, but also their time of duty was split in tiny portions so that the presence in the temple was more evenly distributed. The prebend holders could participate in the distribution of food from the offerings, but apparently it was also an honor to hold more prebends.[38]

At Emar the situation is in a way comparable since also there people were involved in the preparation of bread and beer. We do not know who actually handled the food supplied by the "temple" in the *zukru* and related festivals treated in the preceding paragraph, and where this work took place, whether at their homes or in one of the secondary buildings of the temple precinct. In other contexts citizens apparently prepared the food destined for offerings at home. Those delivering the bread and beer for offerings are designated as "the lords, the donors of the holy matters" (*šarrū nādinū qidāši*),[39] so often mentioned in Emar ritual texts (see below). In one "throne festival" (*kissu*) both the "donors" and the "temple" appear side by side as suppliers (*Emar* 388). A further indication in this regard is offered by the administrative texts from the diviner's archive. Lists of personal names kept in the house of the diviner, the superintendent of the city's religious matters, at least to some extent reflect the correlation of persons with religious duties.[40] So it appears that the preparation of food for the temple took place both in the

38 For the important topic of temple prebends, documented from the late third to the first millennium with an especially good documentation for the Old Babylonian and the Late Babylonian periods, see the survey of Driel 2005; the recent monumental work of Waerzeggers 2010 treats all aspects of prebends in the 7th to 5th centuries BC.

39 Often abbreviated forms like *nādinū(t) qidāši* or even *ša qidāši* are used; they appear especially frequently in the main festivals of the sanctuaries of the city, the so-called *kissu* festivals (*Emar* 385–388, *ASJ* 14 49, plus various fragments). Schwemer 2008 (236 Anm. 15) assumes that these people only contribute financially: "Wahrscheinlich … diejenigen, die die Materialien für die Riten der Heiligung (*qaddušu*) finanzieren." The distribution of the suppliers treated in the preceding paragraph and the comparison with the prebends in Babylonia indicate that the responsibility of the "donors" involves more than financing. On the contrary, the actual involvement of the people, in this case that bread and beer are to be prepared at their homes, contributes to the social effect of the religious rituals. On the term *qidāšu*, related to *qaddušu* "to sanctify" (which is a standard preparatory rite before a deity regularly appearing in the ritual texts, see below the *kissu* ritual for Ea), see Pentiuc 2001, 142–143.

40 The various administrative lists are published as *Emar* 305 to 360, a general survey is given by Faist 2008, who summarizes the evidence as follows: the "archive mainly contains records concerning cult supervision and festival organization" (Faist 2008, 202). Here, a few notes on the relationship between rituals and the lists may suffice. In *Emar* 306, a list of *ku'u* vessels with personal names, the superscript calls them lú.meš *ta-ha-zi*, lit. "persons of battle," but these persons appear in the installation of the *maš'artu* priestess *Emar* 370: 62' etc. *Emar* 366 lists 50 "bronze vessels" with seven personal names, described as the "men of veneration" (lú.meš *ku-ba-di*); the same seal, seal A.62 after Beyer 2001, is rolled on the small documents *Emar* 363 and 364 on the delivery of beer and wine to the deities; seal A62 bears an inscription of "Dagan-ahu" (reading thus correct?), but it was used by the diviner Ba'al-qarrād.

secondary buildings of the temple and in private houses all over the city. In this subtle way the religious rite was more deeply rooted in the society and it acquired a publicity beyond the ritual procession of the sheep and cattle destined as victims.

One exception to the rule confirms this understanding of the practice of food supply. At the "throne festival" (*kissu*) of Ninkur, one of the rare occasions when fruit was offered, which identifies this festival as an occasion for a different treatment of food, the bread was formed by the bakers, who baked it at the "door of the master of the house", that is the person in charge of the temple.[41] Also in this case the preparation of food became a public event, though by conspicuous preparation and not by participation in the production.

7 Food Consumption in Rituals

7.1 The Presentation of the Offerings

Mesopotamian religious practice was focused on the sacrifice, and above I have pointed to some aspects of this basically simple act of feeding the gods that offered so many options for embedded meanings at various levels. After the grain products had been delivered to the temple and the animals slaughtered, the presentation of the food to the deity followed as the main act of the offering ceremony. The Emar ritual texts concentrate on this aspect and in this way implicitly underline its relevance. The pieces of bread were arranged in front of the deity, the cups were filled with beer and wine and placed before the deity, the "ritual portion" of the meat was placed there as well. The Emar ritual texts, however, do not address additional actions such as the burning of incense, which in Mesopotamia served as a signal to start the offering, with the intended meaning of inviting the deity to accept the food offered. As an example for a standard ritual sequence, I cite again the throne festival (*kissu*) for the god Ea (see already above, *Emar* 386 // *ASJ* 14 49: 24–27):

First day:

Purification rite — [20–23]On the sanctification day of the throne festival of Ea: With ritual *hukku* bread, (a) vessel of barley beer and one 'dried' bread one sanctifies Ea.

Second day: — [24]On the second day:

41 *Emar* 388: 10: "and the bakers [lit. cooks, forming bread] bake at the door of the master of the house [*ù* LÚ.MEŠ MUHALDIM NINDA DÙ.DÙ *ana bāb bēl bīti ušabšalū*]." According to lines 10–13 the bakers later offer to the deity Assila and eat and drink in the temple; on the meal of the suppliers of the food, see below.

Procession	24–27 1 ox, 6 sheep and 1 lamb, the sacrificial (animals), go from the house of the 'master of the house' (*bēl bīti*) to the temple of Ea together with the singers.
Sacrifice	27–28 One offers (*inaqqû*) (1) ox and (10) sheep to Ea.
Presentation of offerings to Ea	28–29 One places the ritual parts (GARZA.MEŠ)[42] in front of Ea. 30–32 One offers to [Ea] 4 pieces of bread for meals, 4 pieces of dry bread, including one dry bread <with fruit> and one fills (the beakers with) wine and barley beer.
Presentation of food in the gate of Ea	33–34 One fills 70 *jugs*(?) in the gate of Ea's temple. 34–35 One places 4 pieces of ritual *hukku* bread, meat of oxen and of sheep in front of them.
Offering to Ea at the gate	36–34 One gives 4 *jugs*(?) [to] Ea.
Gift by the cultic personnel to Ea	36–34 The [lords], the donors of the holy matters give [a gift of silver] to Ea in the house of the master of the temple.

The offerings included sometimes impressive numbers of dozens of different kinds of bread that had to be distributed according to the prescriptions. The seventy drinking cups for Ea in the cited ritual passage had to be filled,[43] but usually the number of cups was not indicated. The care to arrange and to present the divine meal is significant, since the investment in rituals depends not only on the value of the goods offered, but on the diligence and time devoted. Such an arrangement of tiny beakers in the central room of the sanctuary was excavated in the temple of Tell Bazi.[44] Considering the material value alone it would not matter if ten liters of wine were offered in a large vessel or in dozens of cups, but it matters in terms of time and number of persons involved, and therefore this handling contributed essentially to distinguish a ritual sacrificial meal from everyday food consumption.

42 GARZA.MEŠ, the ritual portion (of the meat), is misread by Tsukimoto 1992, 300ff. as *pa-<an>*DINGIR^{meš}. The proposed reading and translation is certain because of variants with UZU "meat" or with the addition of GUD "oxen", UDU "sheep", and the syntax of this sentence in the ritual texts.

43 70 beakers appear also in the *kissu* ritual for Ereškigal, of which again four are given to the deity, *Emar* 385 // *ASJ* 14 49: 11.

44 Otto 2013.

Usually it is not indicated in the ritual texts who placed the food in front of the deities, but without doubt this was taken over by the groups of cultic personnel mentioned in the context of offerings. In one exceptional case, however, the human agent is identified, namely the high priestess of the weather god, a most prestigious religious office of the city. At her inauguration she finally entered the temple of her future master, the Storm god:

> She (i. e. the future high priestess) goes to the temple of the Storm god, she offers a lamb; seven breads for meals she places before the god. She fills the drinking cups with wine. (*Emar* 369: 66–67[45])

The human priestess, conceptualized as an earthly wife of the god, honored the god by filling the cups for him. The installation of the priestess was organized as a marriage rite, and so it may indicate that this ritual act resembled the role of a woman who served her husband at meals. The presentation of food as an act of honorification occurred also in various festivals, when on a preparatory day the gods were "sanctified, honored" (*qaddušu*) by the presentation of bread and beer (see above the *kissu* festival for Ea).

7.2 Eating and Drinking after the Offering

After the presentation of the food, the ritual texts usually do not continue their narrative in the same way. There is absolutely no indication if the deity's "eating" was somehow performed. Emar rituals include rare instances when the meat was completely burnt, a ritual known from Syria and southern Anatolia.[46]

Of course the foodstuffs presented had eventually to be removed to make space for the next offering. The texts, however, are never very explicit about this step, and it seems that the strange transition in the ritual texts also expresses the change of perspective. Before the presentation, the food and beverages were meant to be sacrificed to the gods and thus served a specific purpose, but after the sacralization the offerings became food and beverages again that had to be removed later. Interestingly there is no specific term, no ritual act to de-sacralize the offered foodstuffs. Consequentially this implies that there existed no such rite of transformation and that the food presented in the offerings kept the special spiritual quality it had absorbed by its destination for the deity.

The passage cited in 6.1. on the offering of the high priestess is one of the most explicit ones about the later use of the offerings. After the priestess has filled the beakers, the text continues as follows:

45 Fleming 1992; Schwemer 2008.

46 On foreign elements in the so-called "Anatolian rituals," see Prechel 2008 with earlier literature.

[67–68]Afterwards the 'men of the holy matters [*qidāši*]' [and] the elders [of the city] go to the temple of the Storm god. They eat and drink. [68–69]That ox and the 7 sheep that have gone in front of the high priestess are returned to the house of the 'master of the house'. [69–70]While the elders of the city eat and drink, they give a good textile to her as garment. ... [Further presents follow].

[76—77]On the seventh day, the 'men of the holy matters' slaughter the ox that has gone in front of the high priestess [– and which has meanwhile been stationed at the 'master of the temple's' house –] at her father's house.

[77]The 'men of the holy matters' divide it among themselves.

[77]The kidney of the ox and his share: the king of the land takes it;

[78]the *haītu*-meat and his share, the head, the intestines, the fat, and the skin: the diviner takes it;

[79]the lung and its share: the singers take it;

[79–80]the half of the intestines: the 'men of the holy matters' eat it.

[80–81]The four tables that have been set up for the deities [sc. filled with offerings] ...: the diviner and the singer divide it among themselves.

In the Emar ritual texts, after the sacrifice was conducted the following short note appears regularly: "they eat and drink" (see lines 68 and 69 of the example above). Characteristically this phrase "they eat and drink" never contains a direct object, as if there existed a certain fear of naming the sacrificial food explicitly. Rarely it is noted that the act of eating and drinking took place in the sanctuary itself, for example: "they eat and drink in the temple of Dagan" (*Emar* 394: 37).

So a small group of persons was entitled to consume the sacred goods. Who were these persons? In the most prominent religious festivals such as in the installation of the high priestess of Emar, the king, the high priestess, and the diviner are named, thus the most important persons in the city's religious life. In such a case the ox was divided according to fixed rules and the cuts of meat thus adopted further symbolic meanings. It is surely no coincidence that the singer received the lungs or the diviner the intestines.

Most often those eating and drinking are named the "lords, the donors of the holy matters" (*šarrū nādinū qidāši*). Consequently those who donated the food for the sacrifices were entitled to consume it after the offering. As we have seen before, this includes a re-distribution of the goods stemming from various sources. Other instances confirm this understanding. The bakers who had prepared the bread loaves for Ninkur participated in the consumption of meat and beer (*Emar* 388: 10–13, *kissu* of Ninkur) as did

the singers and the potter who contributed to the rite but did not donate food (*Emar* 388: 64ff.; *Emar* 460). Furthermore, in this context the distinction by profession appears as a characteristic feature of Emar society, a perspective that emerged less clearly from the private legal texts.

On a more general level this re-distribution corresponds to the Babylonian prebendary system where likewise the holders of prebends were entitled to usufruct of the food from offerings.

The presentation of the pieces of bread and the filling of cups implies that the sacrifice ended in a common meal. In a few instances the ritual texts noted explicitly that only a small part was definitely disposed of, e. g. four cups out of seventy were offered to the deity (see above).

The cited passage from the installation of the high priestess indicates that food could also be divided and was thus brought to the private houses. The large *zukru* festival of the deities of the town is more explicit in this regard. As the main event of the rites, the deities left the city, and an offering took place at the betyles in front of the city, where the participants ate and drank as well. After the rite one returned the remaining bread, beer, and meat to the city.[47]

So all the people who had contributed to an offering received their share of the meal, and those who had given only bread also received now beer and meat, donated mainly by the king. The sumptuous meal the citizens consumed came from the deity, a symbol of identification shared by the city's inhabitants.

8 The Temple, the City and Its Inhabitants

The common meal in the temple brought life to the sacred temenos, the donors received their appropriate share. As we have seen above this included more people than the few persons present, and it has become clear how closely the actions in the temple were linked to the city, instead of being a secluded place separated from the public. Compared to the more general practice, the "throne" (*kissu*) festival for the city's protective deities, Išhara and Ninurta,[48] differs fundamentally in the way how the whole population is included in the handling of food.

After the sacralization (*qaddušu*) of the temples and the divine statues, a public preparation of bread took place. Usually, as we have seen, bread was prepared at home and delivered to the temple later.

47 E. g., *Emar* 373: 37 (Fleming 2000, 239–240): "The bread, beer, meat go back up into the town."

48 *Emar* 387, edited by Prechel 1996, 245–248.

> 3–4One bakes[49] 17 *parīsu* of *simmadu*-flour for ritual *hukku*-bread.
>
> 5–6One bakes 15 *parīsu* of *zarhu*-flour for bread loaves.
>
> 6–7In total: 32 *parīsu* of flour. They hit everything with their fists.
>
> 8–9A container of bitter, a container of sweet, one container of beer, 2 sheep they offer (*Emar* 387: 3–9)

The standard offering procedure followed. Two sheep were sacrificed to Išhara and Ninurta and the ritual portion of the meat (GARZA UDU) was offered to the deities. Pieces of bread including dried bread with fruit were placed in front of the two deities. After a dividing line the text resumes the further treatment of the large amount of bread prepared before:

> 17–19And the bread (made) from these 30 *parīsu* of flour and from the containers – the women and men of the city, each one, take it in front of them (i. e. the deities).[50]
>
> 20–21And one takes a female slave and they bake for themselves from the sweet (dough). They take ritual *hukku*-bread and barley beer.
>
> 22–23And the lords, the donors of the holy matters, eat and drink in h[er (i. e. Išhara's) house]. (Emar 387: 17-23)

In this festival everybody contributed and everybody participated. One *parīsu* equals 50 liters, so the 30 *parīsu* correspond to 1500 liters of (flour for) bread. Pieces of bread could be made of ca. half a liter of flour,[51] and so perhaps 3000 portions of bread were prepared and distributed to the inhabitants of Emar. The smaller the portions, the more people could be served. This was, without doubt, an event for the whole urban population, and the main festival of Emar's tutelary deities thus became truly a popular festival. While the people were feasting in the streets, the "lords, the donors of the holy matters" (*šarrū nādinū qidāši*) ate and drank in the temple, as was standard in the Emar rituals.

This exceptional occasion when the whole population participated was linked to the town's city goddess Išhara and her male companion Ninurta, whose festival was perhaps

49 The correct reading of the verb "to bake," Akkadian *ippû* (written *ip-pu-ú*, from *epû*) was not recognized in previous editions. Arnaud 1986, 385–386; Fleming 1992, 242; Prechel 1996, 245–248 all read *eb-bu-ú* and take it as a form of *ebbu* "pure", which is orthographically and grammatically impossible (the expected plural is *ebbūtu*).

50 Fleming 2000, 79 fn. 122, assumes that each person received 30 *parīsu*; there is, however, no philological justification for such an interpretation.

51 For a general survey of the amount of flour used for bread see the study of Brunke 2011. He bases his investigation mainly on the late third millennium, where one piece of bread is most often made from one liter or a half liter of flour.

celebrated once a year.

Usually those persons who had prepared the offerings also received goods. But who were these people? At Emar, there is impressive textual evidence that families were closely related to temples. A family could actually own a temple, which could even be inherited. One such case concerns the private donation of a temple to Nergal (*TBR* 87), in another instance a temple of Ereškigal is handed over as compensation for help in times of hardship (*ASJ* 10 C). Furthermore the office of serving as the responsible *šangû*-priest of a temple was a matter of public consent.[52] Inventories and accounts of various temples, which were directed by their respective *šangû*-priests, were stored in the archive of the diviner,[53] who controlled the religious life of the city of Emar. And finally, as already noted, there exist numerous lists of persons in the diviner's archive that may well have been correlated to ritual duties.

Seen against the general textual background, one recognizes the role of the persons who appeared in the rituals, first of all the "lords, the donors of holy matters" (*šarrū nādinū qidāši*). Without doubt these persons represented the families who were related to a given temple. Thus at each festival occasion a specific group of people was involved in the preparation of foodstuffs for the respective temple and they enjoyed a communal meal at their sanctuary. So the relationship to a temple served as an invisible bond of community among the citizens of Emar.

The temples fulfilled a comparable social role in Babylonia, where prebend holders performed regular services at one or various temples (see already section 5.2. above). Such an internal structure of the urban society had hitherto remained undetected for Late Bronze Age Emar, but a close reading of the ritual texts has revealed this important aspect.

9 Conclusions

The Late Bronze Age city of Emar has served as an example to investigate the interaction within an urban society at religious festivals. This paper has demonstrated that not only the commensality after the religious sacrifice served to establish social bounds but that the preceding preparation and presentation of food was at least as relevant for social

52 The letter *Emar* 268 contains the request for an installment as *šangû*-priest, which involves the decision of a committee. In *Memorial Kutscher* 6 the *šangû* priest of the Nergal temple is held responsible for taxes to the king of Mittani (see on this text Pruzsinszky 2008, 75–76). The *šangû* priest had to control the goods of a temple; this becomes clear from accounts of temples such as *BLMJ* 28, *TBR* 97, *ASJ* 14 48, *Emar* 287; cf. also the inventory of jewelery *Emar* 282. A similar situation that families care for "their" temples is known elsewhere from Mesopotamia; an instructive Old Babylonian example is discussed by Stol 2003.

53 *Emar* 282ff. are inventories from the diviner's archive, *Emar* 287, 289 indicate the name of the responsible person.

integration. The cooperation of various groups at religious festivals, namely the citizens related to a temple, the temple personnel, the palace and the ruler, testifies to the social role of the city's deities as symbols of social, cultural, and local identification. The temples situated at various places within the city eventually served as focal points for collective feasts; they marked the shared space within the city. Apparently only at the urban religious festivals was the strong division of the private houses, the place of everyday meals, overcome. It has to be stressed that religious festivals were not a secluded ritual for a few initiated priests, but that in all practices related to food social interaction features prominently. The stress on the preparation, presentation, and consumption of food concurs with the central importance of the sacrifice in Mesopotamian religious practice. So it is no coincidence that the handling of foodstuffs involved the participation of citizens much more than the passive observation of ritual processions or an undetermined "holiday feeling".

The analysis has revealed aspects of a strongly diversified semantics of the various foodstuffs used in the rituals. Although their economic value certainly counted as a relevant factor, more differentiation is detectable at various steps in the process. A first selection of foodstuffs is dictated by the category of purity, thus excluding valuable, but impure foodstuffs such as garlic, onions, cress, or leek. In the supply and handling of food, labor and thus time have to be considered an important factor. And the commensality practiced in the temple eventually led to an exchange of the goods provided by various groups in the city.

Meat was clearly the most valuable food which marked the festivals. It was donated by the king or the city, thus serving as a sign of vertical solidarity. The animals were led in a procession with musicians to the temple, where they were slaughtered. Special ritual parts were presented to the deity. The meat was then divided among the highest religious officials according to fixed rules or consumed by the feast's participants.

Bread made of barley flour was donated by the king and prepared by the temple, which meant an investment of labor by the citizens related to a temple. Various kinds of bread were prepared, which implied more time spent in the preparation. Beer came from the same sources, the king and the temple, and as an everyday beverage it is often treated in a similar way as bread. Wine, however, as a luxury beverage was donated by the king. The beverages were filled in large numbers of drinking cups placed in front of the deity, and by repetition and expansion an everyday practice of filling cups was eventually transformed into a ritual practice fitting for a religious urban festival. The foodstuffs presented to the deity were not desacralized after the sacrifice, so they may still have carried a special meaning when they were consumed by the donors in a common meal within the temple.

Whereas usually specific groups of citizens linked to a temple celebrated a festival, the main festival of the tutelary deities of the city of Emar, Išhara and her companion

Ninurta, meant a feast for the whole population: at this occasion two or three thousand people received bread, which was prepared beforehand in a collective effort. The baking of bread for all citizens was considered such a relevant element that it was carefully noted in the ritual texts that were once kept by the city's highest religious official, the diviner, and that serve as an invaluable source for us modern researchers.

10 References of Emar Texts

ASJ 10 = Text numbers in Tsukimoto 1988
ASJ 14 = Text numbers in Tsukimoto 1992
BLMJ = Text numbers in Goodnick Westenholz 2000
Emar = Text numbers in Arnaud 1986, Arnaud 1987
Memorial Kutscher = Text numbers in Sigrist 1993
TBR = Text numbers in Arnaud 1991

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Defining and Transgressing the Boundaries between Ritual Commensality and Daily Commensal Practices. The Case of Late Bronze Age Tall Bazi

Summary

Ritual commensality is a well documented social practice in texts and visual arts of the Ancient Near East. However, no information about daily commensality can be derived from these sources. The mere fact that a daily procedure as simple as eating and drinking was depicted hints at the meaning of this scene as a social event with a high symbolic value, while ordinary daily meals never seem to be represented. This paper argues that in everyday life, the boundaries between ritual and daily commensality were often floating. In order to acquire information on daily commensal practice and on the differences to ritual commensality, the architectonic and the more unspectacular archaeological remains at the Mesopotamian site of Tall Bazi are investigated.

Keywords: Near Eastern archaeology; commensality; temple; house; Tall Bazi; Syria; ritual; beer.

Rituelle Kommensalität ist eine soziale Praxis, die in den Texten sowie in der Kunst Altvorderasiens gut dokumentiert ist. Jedoch bieten diese Quellen keine Information zu alltäglicher Kommensalität. Allein die Tatsache, dass ein so alltäglicher Vorgang wie Essen und Trinken dargestellt wurde, weist darauf hin, dass der dargestellten Szene die Bedeutung eines sozialen Anlasses mit hohem Symbolwert zukam, wohingegen gewöhnliche Alltagsmahlzeiten scheinbar nie abgebildet werden. Dieser Beitrag will zeigen, dass die Grenzen von ritueller und alltäglicher Kommensalität im Alltag häufig fließend waren. Um Aufschluss über tägliche kommensale Praxis und deren Unterschiede zu ritueller Kommensalität zu erhalten, werden architektonische und andere – unspektakuläre – Befunde des mesopotamischen Fundortes Tall Bazi untersucht.

Keywords: Vorderasiatische Archäologie; Kommensalität; Tempel; Häuser; Tall Bazi; Syrien; Ritual; Bier.

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1 Daily and Ritual Commensality at Tall Bazi

It goes without saying that the interpretation of excavated domestic contexts is only fruitful, if we deal with houses the inventory of which was well preserved and well documented in order to be able to reconstruct the former activities within the houses. One of the rare settlements which has delivered a large amount of primary inventory in a series of contemporary houses,[1] is the site Tall Bazi, situated on the eastern bank of the Euphrates valley in modern-day Northern Syria.[2] It is a multi-period site, but in this context we are only concerned with the Late Bronze Age settlement, dating to the 14th/13th centuries BC. It consisted of a citadel and a lower town, which was destroyed and burned so suddenly that the inhabitans had to leave most of the inventory behind. Due to heavy burning of the houses and the temple, a part of the material was quite well preserved. However, the archaeological inventory is but a small part of the systemic inventory of these buildings. In order to fill these blanks, we are in the lucky position that additional help in the process of interpretation is offered by complementary, contemporaneous texts. Relevant texts of the same period were found at several nearby sites, but for the questions of commensality mainly texts from Meskene/Emar, a city about 60km downstream from Tall Bazi, are of interest.[3]

The western lower town (the so-called *Weststadt*) consisted of approximately 80 houses, 50 of which have been at least partially excavated. Not all of them contained significant material, because some houses were already abandoned before they collapsed, and others were too heavily eroded to deduce the ways they were utilized. In only about 30 houses was enough material connected to preparation and consumption of food preserved in order to investigate commensal practices in the houses. The Citadel, the core

1 For the definition of inventory and refuse in general, see Schiffer 1987; Sommer and Mattheußer 1991; in the case of Tall Bazi, see Otto 2006a, 25–29.

2 Excavations have been conducted there since 1993, until 1997 in the name of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) Damascus, from 2000–2009 by the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, financed by the DFG and directed by B. Einwag and myself. For preliminary reports see Sallaberger, Einwag, and Otto 2006; Otto 2008; Einwag 2010.

3 I am grateful that Walther Sallaberger agreed to discuss with me the relevant texts (see Sallaberger this volume).

of which consisted of a 60m high natural hill, was dominated by a big temple. Various other buildings surrounding the temple, seem to have had economic or other connections to it. The Late Bronze Age structures on top of the Citadel collapsed in the same major event and were likewise burned. Both the houses and the temple offer – with certain reservations[4] – a snap-shot of intensively used rooms, the features of which are revealing for the activities which took place shortly before the final catastrophe.

2 Commensality in Private Houses at Tall Bazi

2.1 Evidence for Preparation of Food in the Houses

The houses of the *Weststadt* have been investigated at in an activity zone analysis.[5] The highly standardized form (one main room with a row of secondary rooms on one side, above these a room in the second storey) and equipment of most houses allow comparisons, with the help of which it was possible to determine the ideal-typical form, installations, and equipment of a house. With additional help of the contemporary cuneiform texts from nearby Emar and Ekalte as well as ethnographic analogies, it was possible to define the ideal-typical functions of the rooms. If we then compare the inventory of each house with the ideal-typical one, the individual variations become evident.

The functions of the rooms range from social gathering to various domestic, cultic, economic, and handicraft activities. In the frame of this paper, only the domestic activities connected to preparation and consumption of food are of interest. They can be summarized as follows: the main room served for various purposes, including processing and production of food, such as cooking on a hearth and in an oven. The oven was of oval shape, approximately 50cm high and 70cm long, consisted of the same clay as the tannour, and had a narrow opening in the front. Frequently associated with it was a shallow mud platform, roughly oval, round or rectangular and often lined with stones, the so-called hearth. Its surface shows traces of fire, and in several instances there were three supports still found on top or close to it. It is widely assumed that cooking pots were supported by them.[6] In several instances cooking pots lay close to the hearth, sometimes still containing food. In other instances remains of the food were found scattered around the hearth.

A bread oven or tannour, an installation which has not much changed for thousands of years, was present in nearly every main room. It was frequently placed close to the outer house wall, presumably due to the heavy smoke it produced, and points to the

4 For various forms of disturbances and bioturbations, see Schiffer 1987, 206–208.

5 Otto 2006a.

6 Skibo 1992. The way of cooking on three supports is very much the same as in the nearby village today.

existence of a chimney. In analogy to the function of today's tannours, one may suppose that they served mainly for baking bread, although an additional function for grilling meat and fish cannot be excluded. The tannour has a small opening at the bottom, just large enough to remove the ashes, but it would be impossible to put a loaf of bread into it from below. Therefore it is quite certain that the technology of bread-making in a tannour is similar to the one used today, where the flat bread is stuck onto the hot inner side of the tannour from the opening above.

Indeed every house had his own tannour which indicates that every household produced its own bread.[7] Some houses even had a second tannour outside the house that may be interpreted as a summer tannour in contrast to the winter one inside. A further domestic activity, which regularly took place inside every house, was brewing beer in large vats – presumably one of the tasks of the female members of the household.[8]

Other activities connected to food preparation such as grinding of barley or malt took place mainly in the upper storey, either on the open roof or in the room of the second storey, presumabely because these locations were better ventilated. Only exceptionally was the grinding installation placed in a secondary room (House 17, House 44). Usually, the smaller side rooms on the ground floor level, most without windows and therefore with little light and air, served only for passive use, i. e. storage. Knowledge about the preparation of food is important in order to deduce commensal practices, which are more difficult to recognize.

2.2 How to Trace Commensality in the Archaeological Record

The pivotal question is how commensality can be perceived in archaeological remains.

- Pottery vessels are usually subdivided into use classes on the basis of their form, size, quality, use traces, and contents (if preserved), in order to define at least for some of them the main use, e. g., storage, transport, food preparation, serving, eating and drinking, etc.[9] Yet the find spot of functionally identifiable vessels is not necessarily identical with the locations of their use, because they might no longer be in use, or be stored or otherwise used.

- Animal bones or botanical remains do not necessarily point to active commensal practices at their find spots, because they might not be the remains of a recent meal,

7 Contrary to what P. Pfälzner suggested for the 3rd mill. houses at Tell Bderi, where he supposed that a tannour was not present in every household but was used commonly by the kin (Pfälzner 2001, 146–147).

8 For brewing as a female activity in many societies, see Beek 1978; Egli 1999. For brewing in the Bazi houses, experimental brewing of the Bazi beer, the cold mashing procedure, and residue analyses, see Otto 2006a, 86–93; Zarnkow et al. 2006b; Zarnkow et al. 2006a.

9 Rice 1987; Skibo 1992.

but could have been stored or thrown away there or be there because of the preparation of a meal.

– Even easily identifiable instruments such as the drinking tube, which served for drinking beer, may be found far away from where they might have been originally used.

– As we have seen above, the pictorial representations of commensality are not very revealing, because they do not illustrate daily commensal practices. But even the few Neo-Assyrian reliefs that show people sitting on the ground, eating all together with their fingers from a large plate, must not necessaily depict the ordinary daily form of commensality, but this way of eating could be due to the special situation (deportees on their way to a new place).

Yet, there are certain basic conditions which can be postulated for an area where commensality could have taken place:

– the area must have been sufficiently well lit and ventilated,

– the area must have been devoid of immobile installations (such as ovens, containers set firmly in the ground, etc.) and large enough so that several people could assemble. This is valid whether people sat on the floor or used chairs.

However, negative evidence in an excavation – an area without any archaeological inventory – can also result from other factors: that the objects were temporarily cleared away, or that they had competely perished, e. g., textiles, objects from leather and reed, and even wooden furniture, if it was not carbonized. Yet, to judge from the contemporary inheritance documents from Emar, there is little probability that the houses contained more than one bed, one table, one chair and one stool.[10] This, in my opinion, speaks very much in favor of the possibility that the usual habit was to sit on the ground or on the benches.

2.3 Commensality Derived from the Archaeological Evidence of the Tall Bazi Houses

Following the above defined criteria, all the houses of the *Weststadt* at Tall Bazi were investigated. The small rooms on the ground floor level were certainly not sufficiently well

10 Only 1/6 of the inheritance documents from Emar mention furniture at all. A few texts seem to indicate a gender-specific distribution of furniture, i. e. a table and a chair for the man and a bed and a stool for the woman of the house; *Emar* 6: 176, 186; RE 56. For a hypothetical reconstruction of possible perishable objects in the houses of Tall Bazi, see Otto 2006a, 142–147.

ventilated to serve as locations for commensal activities, because they were frequently built against another house and cannot have had any window. Only the main room is a possible location for commensal purposes on the ground floor level. Yet the room in the upper storey could have had windows facing every direction und thus may have been a second, agreeable area for assembling.

Inside the main room the area in front of the benches was often the only free space that was not filled with installations, large jars, or tools. The bench along one side of the main room, made from mudbrick, mud, and stones and covered with plaster, indeed may have served for sitting. This is supported by the remains of furs, which were found in the area of the benches and either covered the benches or the floor close to them.[11]

In sum, it may be concluded that daily commensality in the lower town houses of Tall Bazi generally took place in the main room of the house, that the participants sat on the benches or on the floor near the benches, and that at least a certain amount of tableware was used during commensal practices.

But even then it is a difficult task to answer even the simplest questions concerning commensality, such as what was consumed, in which way it was consumed, where commensal practices took place, and who were the actors:

1. The diet: Prepared foods would not have been preserved in the archaeological record, thus we have to rely on the refuse (mainly animal bones) and carbonized remains of vegetables. The botanical remains consisted nearly exclusively of barley; peas, lentils, and fruits were rarely found. Some of the pottery vessels still contained various foodstuffs, especially carbonized grain. From residue analyses that examined evidence for oxalate or tartaric acid we know that some of the other vessels contained wine and beer, i. e. that people drank and stored these liquids in the houses. Yet, what other liquids and solid materials were stored in the other bottles and pots remains unclear, because no other analyses (e. g., of fat) have been so far conducted.

In a few houses the remaining animal bones testify to the consumption of a single animal (sheep or goat), others show a small selection of meat from different animals, not only of sheep/goat (from which stems by far the largest amount of meat), but also of cattle, donkey and dog, turtle and fish, mussels and gazelle. For example, in the small House 22-S the animals bones that were lying next to the hearth may be interpreted as the remains of the daily diet. They show an astonishingly mixed diet of goat/sheep, donkey, cattle, pig and dog. The evidence from the houses is too slender to be representative, but it may be that the less prosperous households (e. g., House 22-S) were given a share of meat from other households, while the more prosperous ones consumed the meat of one whole animal (e. g., House 18, see below). In sum, only few houses contained remains of meat meals at all, which corresponds quite well to the image derived from

11 Otto 2006a, 75.

the Emar texts that the normal daily diet consisted mainly of barley products, essentially bread and beer (see Sallaberger this volume).

2. The presumed area of commensality: In many houses, the area of the benches was the only free space within the main room, devoid of installations, large jars or tools. If any objects were found in front of the benches, these consisted mainly of small or medium-sized ceramics of fine and plain ware, most commonly plates, bowls, bottles, and small beakers. Because some of them were even painted – exceptional in the ceramic inventory and indicating a special valorization of the object (Houses 7, 17, 18, 19, 29, 41) – it seems as if this pottery served as fine tableware. Bottles with trilobe spout, sometimes found together with their stands, may have been used to serve wine or beer (e. g., House 23-SW).

There is some evidence that commensality also took place in the room on the second storey. In the houses, which were preserved up to the height of the debris of the collapsed upper storey, fine tableware speaks in favor of this possibility (e. g., Houses 17, 32). Certainly this room was much better ventilated and thus more agreeable in summer times, because it could have had openings on every side.

3. The actors: If we accept that fine tableware, when found elsewhere than in storage rooms, indicates the place of commensality, this area seems to have been in many houses close to the location of food processing, cooking, baking, and brewing. That these were mainly female activities may be further supported by the fact that textile working took place in the same area, as is indicated by spindle whorls near the hearth. Therefore it may be assumed that the female and male members of the family were generally eating together. What has been describing so far may be labelled private daily commensality.

2.4 Ritual Commensality of the Household Members in Private Contexts

There is often found a variety of exceptional pots, jewellery, and bones at the small end of the main room. Among these unusual vessels there may be, for example, two *kernoi* (hollow ring vessels with attached beakers and a spout in animal form) in House 5; a mobile vessel depicting the storm god on a wagon who is torn by his bulls in House 9; two mobile vessels in animal form in House 14; and other unusual vessels in seven more houses.[12] All may be interpreted as cultic vessels, probably serving for libation. Most were found close to a table-like protrusion or a real stone table at the end of the main room. If we look more closely at the area around this installation, we note other unusual features that enable us to name it an "altar": in two houses (H. 28, 29) small pits in the floor were found near the altar, and beside the altar of House 43-S there was a small jar set into the ground and covered by a bowl, certainly intended for libation purposes.

12 Otto 2002; Otto 2006a, 99–102.

This altar may be interpreted with the help of the Emar texts: they mention that the head of the household was obliged to invoke, honor and feed the "gods and ancestors" of the house regularly.[13] With high probability this was the area where ritual veneration of the deceased kin and the gods took place.

The remains of bulls' heads were found near the altar in five houses. Because this part of the bull can only be partially eaten, the question arises whether they had been hung on the wall and collapsed, or if they had been placed there. Several texts from Emar mention: "They place the ritual portion of beef, the ritual portion of mutton, the head of the ox, the head of the ram before the gods."[14] Concerning the special care which is given to the animals' heads in ritual commensal practices, see below Section 4 as well as the contribution of Sallaberger, this volume.

A cooking pot (the normal device for cooking food) lay near the altar in 13 houses, animal bones in six houses, and at least one beaker lay close to the altar in most of the houses.

Apparently drinks were offered at this altar in ritual vessels or plain beakers, and meals containing meat in common cooking pots. Offering means sharing, which is why this action may be understood as commensality with the gods and ancestors.

House 18 illustrates how a share may have been divided: a sheep/goat seems to have been slaughtered shortly before the collapse of the city.[15] One part of the animal had been eaten (or processed?) near the hearth, another part was contained in a cooking pot in a secondary room, and a third part lay close to the altar. In contrast, in House 31 the mixed remains of fish, sheep/goat, and cattle bones lay close to the altar.

Although the evidence from the houses is slender, it seems as if it was not necessarily a certain animal or part of it that was offered, but rather a share of every meal. This varied, and consisted either of a mixed diet or the exceptional consumption of a complete animal. In a way, the gods of the house and the deceased ancestors in the male line were additional household members who were also served food and drinks and got their appropriate share. This may be considered ritual commensality in a private context.

2.5 Ritual Commensality of Non-kin Members in Private Contexts

Presumably still another form of ritual commensality can be traced in the private houses. If we compare the installations of the houses, we see in nearly every main room a table or altar and along the long side a bench, which may have served for seating. However, there are distinct differences in the other installations and the equipment of some houses.

Let us have a look at House 7: it is one of the largest (213 sqm at ground-floor level) and one of the earliest houses of the *Weststadt*. In the main room, there is an extraordi-

13 Toorn 1996.

14 *Emar* 369: 28; Fleming 1992.

15 Otto 2006a, 242.

narily long bench, 13m in length, running along one long side. If we accept that these benches served for seating, this main room was prepared to allow many people to be seated. However, it is questionable if the long bench was designed for the members of a large household. Although the main room is larger than in most other houses, all the activities linked to food processing (cooking, baking, brewing) took place in the attached room to the north.[16] Apparently, the main room was deliberately separated from these activities. However, in front of the bench was found some tableware for eating and drinking, and near the altar lay a bull's head. If we interpret these as remains of commensal practices, who, then, assembled here, and who may have offered the bull's head on the altar?

One peculiarity of the society of the Middle Euphrates region is an extended body of kin, which was designated "the brothers."[17] They are distinguished from real brothers, i. e. sons of the same parents, by a different writing ("$^{\text{lú.meš}}$ ah$^{\text{hi.a}}$" instead of "šeš"). They assemble on the occasion of private-law transactions. Apparently, this assembly took place in the house of one of the brothers involved in the affair, as can be deduced from the formula: "PN let enter the brothers" and "PN let the brothers take a place." On the occasion of some of the property sales, a ceremony took place that is decribed as "the hukku-bread has been broken and the table anointed with oil."[18]

If we combine this evidence, it is tempting to suggest that the main room of House 7 was indeed where the brothers assembled and performed their ritual commensal practices, while the daily meals of the family took place in the annex-room. Apparently there existed a gender-specific splitting of commensality on special occasions when non-kin members were present in the house.

3 Communal Ovens for Enhanced Demands for Bread?

As we have seen above, every household was able to bake bread in its own tannour. What is then strange is the existence of an additional large oven in the *Weststadt*. It measures 3.4m in diameter, is built from mudbricks with a floor of bricks, was probably domed, and served most probably as a bread oven.[19] It was situated in a plot along the main road, but not belonging to any specific house.[20] But why did the domestic quarters of the *Weststadt* need a large bread oven, if every house produced its own bread?

16 Two spindle whorls and a bracelet are additional arguments for a strong female presence in this room.

17 Beckman 1996; Démare-Lafont 2012.

18 Beckman 1996, 59.

19 Otto 2006a, 223. No other remains except ashes were found there. This is in contrast to other ovens of the *Weststadt*, which served for melting of metal or firing of pottery, inside and beside which slag, metal, and ceramic wasters were found.

20 Otto 2006a, 223.

There is a similar oven in the contemporary and in many respects closely comparable site of Tall Munbaqa/ancient Ekalte, approximately 30km downstream from Bazi. The oven is situated in very much the same context in a domestic quarter between many houses.[21]

Other similar ovens are attested in a Middle Bronze age settlement context in Tall Brak[22] and in at least two contemporary palaces, the "Grand Palais" at Mari[23] and Samsi-Addu's palace at Tuttul.[24] Concerning the question of what sort of bread was produced in these large ovens, the Mari palace offers some hints for loaves, on the basis of a number of baking moulds. Even more revealing, however, is the evidence at Tuttul: in this phase the palace disposed not only of the large oven, but also of several tannours nearby. In my opinion this should be interpreted to mean that the large oven either was intended to make it possible to respond to an enhanced demand for bread or for a different kind of bread.

As the Emar texts show clearly, different kinds of bread were offered during rituals: "flat bread," bread "for meals," "dry bread," and the same with fruits (a cake?).[25] Quite certainly not all kinds could have baked in a tannour, especially the bread loaves and the sweet cake with fruits.[26] Furthermore, the quantity of bread demanded was considerable, e. g., at the yearly festival for the city goddess Išhara, 1500 liters of flour was made into bread, and these 1500–3000 portions of bread were distributed to the inhabitants (see Sallaberger this volume). If we combine this information, the large ovens could indeed be explained by the fact that they served to prepare a special kind of bread on certain occasions or to meet an increased demand for bread, as was the case during festivals.

But even if we interpret these large ovens as communal ovens for the preparation of bread on ritual occasions, and if we suggest that this was the duty of professional bakers (see Sallaberger this volume), everybody must have contributed in the preparation of bread by delivering the flour. At least this may be concluded from the fact that every house disposed of one or two mills for grinding, but none were found in the area of the large oven.

If we follow this idea a bit further, we remark that there is another building situated among the domestic houses of the *Weststadt* that may have served for communal purposes. This one-room building (House 2, unfortunately quite eroded) contained several mills, several large stone basins, and several large vats, which we interpret as containers used in brewing. This concentration of tools and containers used in the process of malting and brewing is found in no other building, and it made me propose that this could

21 Machule et al. 1993, 91–92 Abb. 12–13.

22 Area HH level 10, accordingly the period of Samsi-Addu: D. Oates, J. Oates, and McDonald 1997, 22.

23 Margueron 2004, 492.

24 Miglus and Strommenger 2007, 62–63 Taf. 22, 4–5.

25 See Sallaberger, this volume, section 4.1.

26 If at least a certain kind of bread was indeed made of 1 liter or ½ liter of barley (Brunke 2011), this would yield not a thin bread that could be baked in a tannour, but a loaf.

have been a communal place for brewing beer in cases of enhanced demand.[27] The new analysis of the Emar rituals, from which one can conclude that the city contributed bread and beer, may be a further argument in favor of this hypothesis.

4 Commensality in the Temple?

The temple of the city is situated in the center of the citadel, which rises 60m above the Euphrates valley. The temple, 38m long and 16m wide, consisted of two rooms, was built in the Middle Bronze Age (19th century BC), and underwent several changes in groundplan and use, until it was violently destroyed at the same time as the lower town (during the Late Bronze Age). During the last phase, only room A was used for ritual purposes. Its floor was found covered with pottery that had been buried under the collapsed roof when the temple was burned. A part of the inventory was lost due to intentional plundering and destruction at the time of the hostile attack as well as to Roman-period pits, but still hundreds of vessels remained. Their amount increases considerably from the entrance towards the altar, in front of which several layers of broken vessels were found one above the other.

4.1 Quantity and Quality of the Remains in the Temple

Due to the visibly intentional destruction of the inventory and its scattering all over the room, it was a difficult and only partly successful task to restore the vessels. B. Einwag, who is presently preparing the final publication of the temple, estimates the total number to amount to several hundred vessels.[28] This is amazing, if we take into account that Room A is not larger than the main room of some houses in the *Weststadt*, where seldom more than about 20 vessels were found. Especially striking is the high number of medium-size jars and small beakers. In a single house generally between two and six beakers were found, in the temple at least 40.

The same is true for the considerable quantities of meat, the remains of which were found in the temple, while in many houses no animal bones were present at all. In Room A, among the sherds and with a high concentration in front of the altar, there was an enormous amount of animal bones.[29] On top of the altar were found the remains of a bull's head and some barley. Furthermore, a considerable amount of barley and smaller quantities of sesame, olives, peas, grapes, and pomegranate, some of them still in

27 Otto 2006a, 151.

28 The exact number of vessels is hard to tell at the moment. In our 2009 study season, Berthold Einwag and his team succeeded in restoring several hundred vessels from thousands of sherds.

29 The palaeozoological and palaeobotanical investigations have not yet been fully conducted.

containers, were found in Room A. This variety of botanical remains was not recovered from any of the houses.

Not only the quantity, but also the quality of the remains differs. Indeed, many vessel types found in the temple show no differences to those in the houses: there were a few large storage jars, numerous medium-size pots, jars and plates, and many small bowls and beakers. But the vessels in the temple are a bit more frequently decorated, especially large potstands. Also, vessels of foreign origin, clearly not produced at the site, are more numerous. A rectangular basin decorated with figurative applications lay scattered in front of the altar; comparable containers were never found in the houses. On the other hand, vessels associated with food processing or brewing were not found in the temple, except a few cooking pots which could have contained prepared dishes.

4.2 Offering and Commensal Practices in the Temple

The most striking difference between the vessels in the temple and those in the houses is shown by the beakers. Several miniature beakers, only about 6cm high, were found in the temple. On the other hand, the variability in the beakers is astonishing: they differ considerably in size (from 6cm to about 15cm in height), ware, and form (tall, globular or squat, high or short-necked, etc). In my opinion this individual variation of the shapes and sizes of each beaker points to the fact that they were originally not part of a single pottery set. In principle, such a set could have existed, if we suppose commensality in the temple.[30] But one gets the impression that the beakers' variety derived from the number of individuals who brought them here. If we interpret the vessels as simple containers for offerings, this would be a strong argument against commensality in the temple. Because there is a high concentration of beakers close to the altar, one could interpret this as offerings of a substance to the god. But what was offered in the beakers?

The results of the first residue analyses of the vessels from the temple indicate that many of the analyzed beakers contained beer.[31] But especially the miniature beakers' capacity is quite low, at about 0.08–0.16 liter. This equals a small glass of schnaps, but it does not seem to be a reasonable amount of beer for consumption. However, there were several large jars and small bowls, which, according to the residue analysis, also contained beer. Additionally, between the sherds were found several bronze filter tips, the remains of drinking tubes, which point strongly to the consumption of beer in the temple. A hypothetical interpretation of these facts shall be offered here: at least some

30 E. g., in Palace B at Tuttul/Tall Bi'a (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000, 26–28 Taf. 39, 3.4.6) there were found approximately a hundred bowls of nearly identical shape and size stored on shelves along a wall of courtyard 5, evidently a set, centrally produced and designed for large-scale commensal occasions.

31 We thank Dr. Dipl.-Ing. Martin Zarnkow of the Technische Universität München-Weihenstephan for the analyses.

people inside the temple consumed beer, either from bowls or through tubes out of medium-size jars that were placed on potstands. A tiny share of the beer, the capacity of the beakers, was offered to the gods. This interpretation of little beakers as offering devices is further corroborated by the so-called *kernoi*: these sophisticated vessels consist of a hollow ring to which a spout in ram's form and several miniature beakers, similar to those in the temple, were attached.[32]

Another argument in favor of commensal practices in the temple is the similarity between the temples and the main rooms of the houses: they have a similar layout, similar installations such as benches, podia, and altar, and even similar size, which in turn could result from similar function of the rooms.[33]

It is difficult to push the results from the archaeological material alone much further. Luckily we have contemporary texts at our disposal, mainly from Emar, which refer to the actions in the temple area. They tell us that at the occasion of religious ceremonies, e. g., the installation of Baal's high priestess, numerous people, including the inhabitants of the city assembled in the temple area and received food, wine, and beer. Meat, bread, and beer for other people, e. g., the deceased priestess, were laid out on several tables set up in the temple area. As Sallaberger points out (this volume, section 6), during the *kissu* festival 70 beakers were filled with beer "in the gate of Ea's temple," four beakers were given to Ea. And while only a certain group of people consumed their share inside the temple room proper, others enjoyed it in the open-air part of the temple compound. In this way, ritual commensality involving a considerable number of the inhabitants took place in the temple.[34]

The use of the courtyard in front of the holy abode as a place for slaughtering the offered animals and consuming them is also mentioned in the 'Text for six months' from Emar, concerning the city's rituals for a period of half a year. It is said[35] that "in the temple" of Išhara (or Ninurta) a bull is slaughtered, the leaders (*lú.meš.gal*) and all the people (*lú.meš.gamari*) eat the breast in front of Išhara, and the temple of X (or the house of the gods?) an the diviner receive the bull's head.

Quite certainly the animals were not slaughtered in the main room, but in the open-air areas of the temple compound, as "in the temple" also designates the temenos area. Indeed, in front of the temple of Tall Bazi, south of the entrance to room A, heaps of animal bones and sherds were found, clearly not intact vessels, but refuse which accumulated there over time. A small wall separated the area from the entrance, which

32 Two of those *kernoi*, widely distributed ritual vessels for libation (Bignasca 2000), were found in the main room of House 5 (Otto 2006a, 100).

33 Otto 2006b.

34 As I have shown elsewhere (Otto 2013), a temple in late IIIrd and IInd millennium Syria consisted not only of a small shrine, but of an additional open space in front of it – an area large enough to allow the assembly of a considerable part of the community.

35 *Emar* 446, Msk 74280a+74291a, Col. I 30–38; Fleming 2000, 268–280

was covered with slabs and kept fairly clean. Several bulls' heads and the antlers of the Mesopotamian stag remind one very much of the bones inside and point to slaughtering nearby with the ritual discard of the offerings outside the main temple building or *Allerheiligstes*, but still in the temenos area.

We cannot be sure if the meal "in front of the god" took place in the cella or elsewhere in the temple compound. But the restricted space inside the cella speaks in favor of the second. The same should be postulated for the events during the Installation of Baal's High Priestess, when a crowd slaughters, offers, eats, and drinks "in front of the gods:"

> They will offer the one ox and the six sheep before Ba'al ["ana pani ^{d}IM"]. They will place before the gods a beef ritual portion[?] and a mutton ritual portion[?]. They will place before the gods seven dinner-loaves, seven dried cakes, [and] two cakes [with] fruit. They will fill goblets with wine. The officials, who give the *qidašu*, the *hussu*-men, [and] seven [and seven *hamša´u*-men(?)] will eat and drink at the temple of Ba'al ["ana É ^{d}IM"], and the men of the *qidašu* will get one dinner-loaf each [and] one *hizzibu* of barley-beer each. (*Emar* VI/3, 369: 11.[36])

Bread, meat, wine and beer were consumed nearly exclusively during this important ritual event. How, then, to explain the variety of rare food and fruits such as sesame, olives, or pomegranate which was found in the temple? This mixed diet recalls more closely the texts of the daily offerings to the gods, which are mentioned in two texts from Emar: on the 27th day of the month, the god Dagan gets barley mash, one vessel of beer, one vessel of wine, a sheep, a dove, honey, oil, butter, meat of cattle and gazelle, fish, apricots, sour milk, figs and other fruits, and some birds.[37]

5 Comparisons of Commensal Habits in the Temple and the Houses

One further difference between commensal practices in the houses and in the temple is the way in which people consumed food and drink. The texts mentioned above concerning the installation of Baal's High Priestess from Emar, which are treated by Sallaberger in this volume, mention tables set up in the temple area. The depictions from banquet scenes show all the participants seated on elaborate chairs. However, the houses seem not to have contained much wooden furniture. First, some of the main rooms have little empty space where chairs and tables could have stood. Second, the inheritance documents from Emar mention little to no furniture (see above, 2.2).

36 After Fleming 1992, 50.

37 Fleming 2000.

The way in which the beer was drunk may also have differed. In several houses at Bazi, bronze filter tips were found to which formerly long straw tubes must had been attached – typical devices for drinking beer over the millennia. However, only rarely was more than one filter found in a house, which is strange, because we know from the written evidence that every member of the household, including women and children, regularly consumed beer. Additionally, in most houses they were found stored in the secondary rooms between tools and vessels. Only in House 25 were two filters found in the main room, but not in the area east of the small wall, where a goatskin covering the bench, cooking pots, animal bones, and tableware indicate an area of food processing and consumption, but rather at the western edge near the altar. Additionally, the remains of two bucrania, one cooking pot, and some beads were found there. This may indicate that drinking tubes were either kept or used at this place of private cultic rituals, but were not used during daily drinking by the household members. It may as well suggest that only certain persons possessed and used these drinking tubes, perhaps (due to the small number) the father of the family? In many African populations, collective beer parties are a most important social event during which men drink beer through drinking tubes, while the women, who brewed the beer, and the children would drink the beer from bowls, as do the men during daily consumption.[38] In the temple, however, five filter tips were found among the vessels. This is not many, but it is more than in any house. It seems to indicate that at least some people drank beer with the help of tubes inside the temple room.[39]

6 Conclusions

Differences between everyday commensal practices and ritual commensality on special occasions are evident at the site of Tall Bazi. However, the boundaries between ritual and daily commensality are often floating. One could have supposed that daily practices were bound to houses and ritual practices to temples. But daily commensality as well as ritualized commensality among household members, who regularly shared food with the "gods and ancestors," took place in the houses. The gods' and ancestors' daily ration seems to have been similar to the daily diet consumed by the humans, probably because it was a share of it. Distinct from this was the ritual commensality of a small group of non-kin members on the occasion of legal transactions in the houses.

Ritual commensality of a large part of the community during the major religious festivals played a considerable role in the establishment of group identities. We know

38 Karp 1980.

39 The low number of filters in the temple can perhaps be due to the thorough plundering of precious materials in the temple.

that it took place in the temple area, and we can deduce that the open space surrounding the temple was amply used for this purpose. The main differences between commensal practices during these events and commensality in the houses seem to consist in what was consumed, how it was prepared, how it was consumed, and who participated.

The daily diet consisting of grain products (bread, groats, and beer), small amounts of meat of various animals (including donkey, pig, and dog), mussels, and vegetables stands in contrast to the fairly homogenous food consumed during the large festivals, which consisted exclusively of meat from cattle and sheep/goat, bread and beer. These animals were visibly and ritually slaughtered in front of the community in the temple compounds. The bread and beer were produced in the lower town, either in every single household, or in additional communal large ovens and brewers' workshops. The participants (at least part of them) in the large festivals probably sat on chairs, the food was placed on tables, and the beer was drunk from large vessels with the help of tubes, or the beer was filled in small beakers ("they fill the cups"). In the houses the floor and the benches may have served for sitting, while the beer was drunk from bowls or pots.

Male and female family members participated in daily commensality, but gender-specific ritual commensality can even be observed in the houses on special events such as the assembly of "the brothers." In the public commensal events a large part of the community was involved, but apparently mainly male persons. High-ranking female persons such as priestesses were certainly present, but it cannot be excluded that a few more female persons, who were male in juridical terms,[40] attended the big commensal events.

The events and rituals accompanying commensality in the temple, such as music and dance, the smell of the meals and the perfumed participants, the notion of neatly dressed people wearing special attributes and weapons – all this was evidently a considerable factor, if we trust the texts, but is unfortunately beyond the scope of archaeology.

40 "Women are the principal parties in a significant number of documents from Emar in the LBA … In particular, wives and daughters are often the primary heirs named in testaments. In those instances where they are thus placed at the head of a household, however, they must be formally endowed with male gender. Thus the testator may declare his wife to be 'the father and mother,' or his daughter to be both 'male and female'" (Beckman 1996, 60). Furthermore, daughters are often adopted as sons at Emar and Nuzi (Beckman 1996, 60).

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Ritual Commensality between Human and Non-Human Persons. Investigating Native Ontologies in the Late Pre-Columbian Andean World

Summary

In anthropology, it has become axiomatic that social relationships are constructed through food practices and embodied in food. This paper suggests that both ritual and quotidian commensality have as either a goal or a consequence the construction of specific relations of sociality, and in this regard are not so different. What may distinguish these spheres of commensality, however, are the types of persons engaged in the act of shared consumption. The paper considers ritual commensality as a means of exploring the social universe and indigenous ontology of native Andean peoples, using both archaeological and ethnohistoric data. The role such commensal activities may have played in the construction of, and engagement with, other-than-human persons in the late pre-Columbian Andes is considered.

Keywords: Andean archaeology; commensality; feasting; *huaca*; Pre-Columbian Andes; ontology; relationality.

In der Kulturanthropologie gilt es mittlerweile als selbstverständlich, dass soziale Beziehungen zum einen durch Praktiken konstruiert werden, die im Zusammenhang mit Nahrungsmitteln und Ernährung stehen, und zum anderen in Lebensmitteln verkörpert sind. In diesem Beitrag wird vorgeschlagen, dass sowohl rituelle als auch alltägliche Kommensalität, die Gestaltung spezifischer sozialer Beziehungen als Ziel oder Konsequenz haben. In dieser Hinsicht unterscheiden sie sich nicht sehr voneinander. Dagegen ergeben sich Differenzen im Bereich der Kommensalität aufgrund der in den Akt des gemeinsamen Essens eingebundenen Personen. Rituelle Kommensalität wird als Möglichkeit gesehen, das soziale Universum und die Ontologie indigener Gruppen in den Anden zu untersuchen, dabei werden archäologische und ethnohistorische Daten herangezogen. Ebenso wird die Rolle untersucht, die diese kommensalen Aktivitäten in der Konstruktion und Auseinandersetzung mit nicht-menschlichen Personen in der späten präkolumbianischen Zeit in den Anden spielten.

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Keywords: Archäologie der Anden; Kommensalität; Feste; *huaca*; präkolumbianische Anden; Ontologie; Gestaltung von sozialen Beziehungen.

1 Introduction

Social theorists of different stripes have long recognized the rich webs of meaning associated with food preferences and practices.[1] From early functionalist concerns with physiology and nutrition,[2] to structuralist interests in the semiotics and symbolism of food,[3] to more recent explorations of the power of food to shape identities, behaviors, and bonds,[4] anthropologists have amply demonstrated that a focus on food offers insights into human social relations on many different levels. The old adage "you are what you eat" is a biological fact. But there are also social dimensions to this slogan that can be captured in the notion of "you are *how* you eat," as well as in relation to "with *whom* you eat." What, how, and with whom we eat are among the most fundamental ways that humans define themselves as social beings and as members of a specific group.

In this paper I explore the analytical utility of commensality – the question of with whom one eats – for garnering insights into the social universes of non-western peoples. Specifically, I am interested in approaching ritual commensality as a method for ascertaining the kinds of persons with whom it is or was possible to establish social relations via shared consumption. My thesis is that both ritual and quotidian commensality have as either a goal or a consequence the construction of specific relations of sociality, and in this regard are not so different. What may distinguish these two spheres, however, are the types of persons engaged in the act of shared consumption.

If, for instance, everyday commensality is understood to produce and re-produce social relations among kin,[5] we might posit that ritual commensality serves as a means of constituting social relations with extra-familial others – a process which (not coincidentally) constitutes such others as social beings. Along these lines, I suggest that an investigation of ritual commensality may offer a window onto ontological systems distinct from our own in which other-than-human persons might conceivably exist who would be identifiable via the activities or remains of ritual commensality. In other words, if evidence of commensal activity (to be discussed below) was found in association with non-human entities or phenomena in such a way as to suggest intentional inclusion in

1 E. g., Lévi-Strauss 1966; Lévi-Strauss 1968; Rubel and Rosman 1978; Goody 1982; Mintz 1985; Kahn 1986; Harris and Ross 1987; Adams 1990.

2 Richards 1932; Richards 1939; M. Fortes and S. Fortes 1936.

3 Douglas 1966; Douglas 1975; Douglas 1984; Lévi-Strauss 1969.

4 Appadurai 1988; Weismantel 1988; Morales 1995; Mennell 1996; Mintz 1996; Counihan and Kaplan 1998; Sutton 2001.

5 E. g., Anigbo 1987; Weismantel 1988.

acts of food-sharing, this may be construed as a sign that such entities were recognized as possessing the ability to participate in the social realm and were purposefully engaged in such. In this capacity such entities might be described as "non-human persons." I will investigate this proposition in the local historical context of the late pre-Columbian Andes using both archaeological and ethnohistoric evidence.

2 Theoretical Concepts

Before proceeding to the Andes and a consideration of alternative ontologies, I want to offer a few general comments and points of clarification with regard to some of the concepts I will be using in this paper. First, with respect to the relationship between commensality, ritual, and feasts versus quotidian meals, I think it is worthwhile to revisit some basic definitions. "Commensal" literally refers to the partaking of food and drink at the same table. The concept of "ritual" involves elements of repetition, formality, and prescriptive behavior. While ritual may imply some degree of ceremony or sacredness, it can just as commonly refer to the enactment of routine behavior in the secular realm. In other words, both regular daily meals and extraordinary commensal events can and typically do have a ritual aspect about them. The notion of "ritual commensality" therefore may not be sufficiently clear to capture the distinction intended.

Dietler explicitly defined feasting as "a form of public ritual activity centered around the communal consumption of food and drink."[6] The broader, public, and communal context of such commensal events was clearly critical to his understanding of feasts as significant arenas of political and social action.[7] But as he also noted, "identifying feasts as ritual activity does not mean that they are necessarily highly elaborate ceremonies" or "sacred" in character. Rather, "the defining criterion of rituals is that they are in some way symbolically differentiated from everyday activities in terms of forms of action or purpose."[8] In the case of ritual commensality, the task of demarcation is often accomplished through the inclusion of dramaturgical elements such as singing, dancing, oratory, and inebriation – features that help to underscore the extraordinary nature of the event.

The purpose of feasts, again according to Dietler,[9] is typically distinct from quotidian meals, as well, insofar they are often intended to "mark, reify, and inculcate diacritical differences between social groups, categories, and statuses while at the same time establish relationships across the boundaries that they define." In this way, feasts, as with other types of rituals, can be understood to provide a critical context for the construction and

6 Dietler 2001, 67.
7 Dietler 2001, 66.
8 Dietler 2001, 67.
9 Dietler 2001, 88.

maintenance of social and political relations. These various aspects of feasting, or ritual commensality – that is, the extraordinary, public, relational, and dramaturgical features of the event, are what I take as the key ingredients in the present study.

I turn now to the other main elements in the title of my paper. These include the notion of personhood, the concept of other-than-human persons, and ideas about alternative (non-western) ontologies. Much of the current theoretical work on personhood that involves a concern with agency and materiality takes as its starting point the influential writings of Alfred Gell.[10] In thinking through how things may be construed as persons, Gell developed a sophisticated conceptual framework outlining the way in which objects, much like people, come to possess social agency. When objects or places participate in human affairs, or when, following Gell,[11] they become "targets for and sources of social agency," they must, he argues, be treated as person-like, or alternatively, as "other-than-human persons" – to use Irving Hallowell's earlier construction.[12] Social agency is thus understood not in terms of biological attributes but rather relationally. Within this framework, it does not matter what a thing or a person "*is*" in itself – what matters is where it stands in a network of social relations.[13] That is, the nature of something is seen to be a function of the social-relational matrix within which it is embedded.[14] Equally important is the conditional and transactional nature of the relationship between human and non-human persons (or "patients" and "agents," to use Gell's terminology), each being necessarily constitutive of the other's agency at different moments in time.[15]

The obvious question here is whether and how we might identify "persons" of the other-than-human variety – which might in turn shed light on alternative ways of understanding the nature of being in the world – archaeologically. In order to explore these ideas in a more grounded fashion, I situate this inquiry in the context of the late pre-Columbian Andes.

3 Ethnohistoric Information

Early ethnohistoric information from the Andes provides ample cause for positing the existence of a native ontology distinct from that of Christendom and sixteenth-century Europe. The earliest Spanish reports of first encounters with native Andean peoples render a sense of the profound strangeness experienced by the European invaders. The alien character of this new world can be detected in comments such as those of Pizarro's secretary, Miguel de Estete regarding the "filthy wooden pole" worshiped as the great oracle

10 Gell 1992; Gell 1996; Gell 1998.
11 Gell 1998, 96.
12 Hallowell 1960.
13 Gell 1998, 123.
14 Gell 1998, 7; Latour 2005.
15 Gell 1998, 22.

of Pachacamac,[16] or the reported wedding of a young girl to a sacred blue stone "no bigger than the size of one's palm,"[17] or the confession that a ceramic pot dressed in female garb was venerated as the ancestor of a particular community.[18] Such observations suggest a radically different understanding of the nature and categories of being on the part of native peoples in the Andes relative to the European invaders.

One of the key words brought forward in the early written sources relevant to an exploration of Andean ontology is "*huaca*." Garcilaso de la Vega – who was the son of an Inca noblewoman and a Spanish soldier writing at the beginning of the 17th century – attempted to convey the meaning of this word by enumerating the kinds of things called "*huaca*" by native peoples.[19] He initiates this discussion by stating that *huaca* referred to a "sacred thing," be it idol, object, or place, through which "the devil spoke."[20] His list included "… rocks, great stones or trees," as well as things made, such as "figures of men, birds, and animals" offered to the Sun, as well as places built, such as "any temple, large or small, … sepulchers set up in the fields, … and corners of houses." It also included things of extraordinary beauty or ugliness, exceptional phenomena – such as twins or a six-fingered hand, and the ancestors. After enumerating the range of things encompassed by the term, Garcilaso went on to state that the Inca called them *huaca* "not because they held them as gods or because they worshiped them but rather for the particular advantage they provided the community."[21] This is an important point to which I return later.

Another 17th century writer, the Jesuit priest Bernabe Cobo, suggested that *huacas*, could be divided into two categories:[22] works of nature unaltered by human intervention, and "idols that did not represent anything other than the material from which they were produced …" He goes on to note that "all of these idols *were worshiped for their own sake*, and [that] these people never thought to search or use their imaginations *in order to find what such idols represented*."[23] Cobo seems to suggest here that native people understood *huacas* as powerful entities in and of themselves – not as the houses or seats of unearthly or supernatural beings, but rather as efficacious agents in their own right with power to affect the world. While *huacas* have traditionally been construed as "sacred," they do not seem to be the kind of "abstract sacred" that characterizes the western meaning of the term.[24] Andean *huacas* were very much concrete, material things, not bodiless, abstract notions. I suggest that it was the physical concreteness of the *huacas* – their materiality – that enabled them to be both powerful and efficacious in the world,

16 Estete 1947 [1534].
17 Ávila 1918 [1645], 69–70, cited in Salomon 1991.
18 Polia 1999 [1662–1664], 505.
19 Garcilaso de la Vega 1943 [1609], 72–73.
20 Garcilaso de la Vega 1943 [1609], 72.
21 Garcilaso de la Vega 1943 [1609], II, cap. 4, I, 72–73.
22 Cobo 1964 [1653], 44.
23 Cobo 1964 [1653], 45; emphasis added.
24 Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 1983; Salomon 1991; Altvaldsson 1995; Altvaldsson 2004.

and, equally importantly, that enabled their participation in the network of relations comprising the social world and lives of Andean peoples.

3.1 Huacas as Non-Human Persons

There are various indications throughout the ethnohistoric record that native Andean peoples understood *huacas* to be persons. For instance, *huacas* often shared kin relations with members of the communities with whom they were associated. There are various reports, for example, of young women being wed to local *huacas* made of stone;[25] elsewhere *huacas* were said to have sons and daughters who were typically identified as the mummified remains of revered community ancestors;[26] in other cases, *huacas* were known to be siblings, as in the example of Guanacauri, a stone pillar on a hill that was the principal *huaca* of Cuzco who was called the brother of Manco Capac, the first Inca king. *Huacas* were also quite often named, had personal biographies, were said to speak and hear, and, in quintessential Andean fashion, were often clothed or dressed in woven garments[27] – all signs indicative of their personhood.

In an in-depth analysis of the Huarochiri manuscript – which is a document written in Quechua circa 1598 containing important insights into native religion – one of its principal interpreters was led to conclude that *huacas* were clearly living beings: "persons in fact."[28] I would suggest, though, that we are not talking here about "persons" in the familiar sense of western individualism but rather in the relational sense discussed above. Within this relational framework, "persons" are seen as multi-authored, plural entities defined on the basis of what they do rather than how they appear, conformed of their various interactions within a kaleidoscopic field of social relations involving humans, animals, things, and places.[29] From this perspective, social relations can be understood to provide the grounds for and the context within which persons take (temporary) shape. Given all this, it seems reasonable to suggest that a key to the recognition of "persons" within a given cultural milieu would be the identification of involvement in relations of sociality. This is where I return to the subject of ritual commensality.

3.2 Ritual Commensality and Huacas

The ethnohistoric (and ethnographic) data from the Andes provide sufficient grounds to hypothesize that the social world of pre-Columbian peoples encompassed powerful, other-than-human persons. How might we go about testing this proposal archae-

25 Arriaga 1968 [1621], 36–37; Ávila 1918 [1645], 69–70.

26 Arriaga 1968 [1621], 89.

27 Albornoz 1967 [1581/1585], 37; Arriaga 1968 [1621], 76.

28 Salomon 1991, 18–19.

29 Strathern 1988; Chapman 2000; Brück 2001; Fowler 2004.

ologically? One way, I would suggest, is to look for evidence of social relationships as traditionally constructed via commensality and the exchange of gifts. Where and with whom were commensal relations established beyond the domestic context? What food stuffs were shared and how were they consumed? Evidence of ritual commensality in the archaeological record could be expected to provide insight into who was or could be included in the social universe of a given community or ethnic group. The identification of such relations would, theoretically, inform upon indigenous notions of personhood; local systems of classification and taxonomy; and, perhaps, offer a window into other ways of understanding being in the world, e. g., alternative ontologies. In the case of the pre-Columbian Andes, it is clear that not every rock, tree, or mountain was considered a *huaca* – that is, superlative in its class, possessed of special power, and as being a non-human person. Recognizing which entities were so construed, however, via, for instance, evidence of ritual commensality would provide deeper insight into our understandings of the archaeological landscape, community boundaries, and the social relational universe of Andean peoples.

As outlined above, the ethnohistoric data provide good reason to suspect that native Andean ontology differed significantly from the western European model at the time of contact, and we might be inclined to take it or leave it at that. But I suggest that the archaeological evidence can also shed light on these very interesting questions independently of the ethnohistoric record. In what follows, I will offer a few examples of how the "archaeology of commensality" might help identify the existence of non-human persons and further our understanding of alternative ontologies in the Andean context.

Recent investigations at several important late prehistoric period sites in different parts of the Andes have either targeted or accidently encountered features that have been interpreted as *huacas*. The archaeological material found in association with these lends itself to an interpretation of ritual commensality. The first example is found at the site of Pueblo Viejo, located in the lower Lurin Valley of the south-central coast of Peru. This site was occupied during the period of Inca expansion from approximately AD 1470–1533.[30] Here Peruvian scholars recorded a large modified rock outcrop on a hilltop near an important residential compound interpreted as being that of a local lord.[31] Excavations in this sector revealed that the outcrop contained a number of carved niches and was surrounded by a low wall (Figs. 1–2). Inside the enclosure, excavators uncovered significant quantities of broken cooking vessels, large-sized serving jars, and individually-sized plates and bowls. They also recorded several concentrations of disarticulated llama bones and ash; numerous worked and broken pieces of spondylus shell; a few small metal items; and a small stone effigy (*conopa*) in the shape of a corncob (*zaramama*).[32] The assemblage readily lends itself to an interpretation of feasting activity con-

30 Makowski et al. 2005.

31 Makowski et al. 2005.

32 Makowski et al. 2005, 307–313.

Fig. 1 Photograph of Summit Temple at the site of Pueblo Viejo consisting of carved rock outcrop surrounded by low stone wall. Courtesy of K. Makowski.

ducted in very close proximity to a significant natural feature that I would not hesitate to identify as a *huaca*. The presence of cooking and serving vessels around the modified outcrop, the evidence for cooking fires, and the finds of camelid bone indicative of meat consumption strongly suggest that this was a site of ritual commensal activities. I would posit that these activities were conducted at this location for the specific purpose of including the *huaca* in the affair, thus recognizing its "personhood" and forging or reaffirming its relationship to the local community.

In another example, archaeologists working at Choquepukio, a late intermediate period site in the Cuzco valley in the south-central highlands of Peru, uncovered a large stone outcrop in a restricted-access structure in one sector of the site.[33] On the south side of this outcrop, which the investigators refer to as a *huaca*,[34] was a small, stone-lined well connected to a covered canal (Fig. 3). The floor of the patio surrounding the outcrop produced large quantities of polychrome pottery that the investigators described as "banquet wares." Large-sized serving containers as well as individual-sized vessels were reportedly found in similar proportions in the structure. The vessel types comprising the assemblage included both Lucre and Killke style face-neck jars, cooking pots, serving plates, and drinking cups and bowls. The investigators also recorded a number of

33 McEwan, Chatfield, and Gibaja 2002; McEwan and Gibaja 2004; McEwan, Gibaja, and Chatfield 2005.

34 McEwan, Gibaja, and Chatfield 2005, 266.

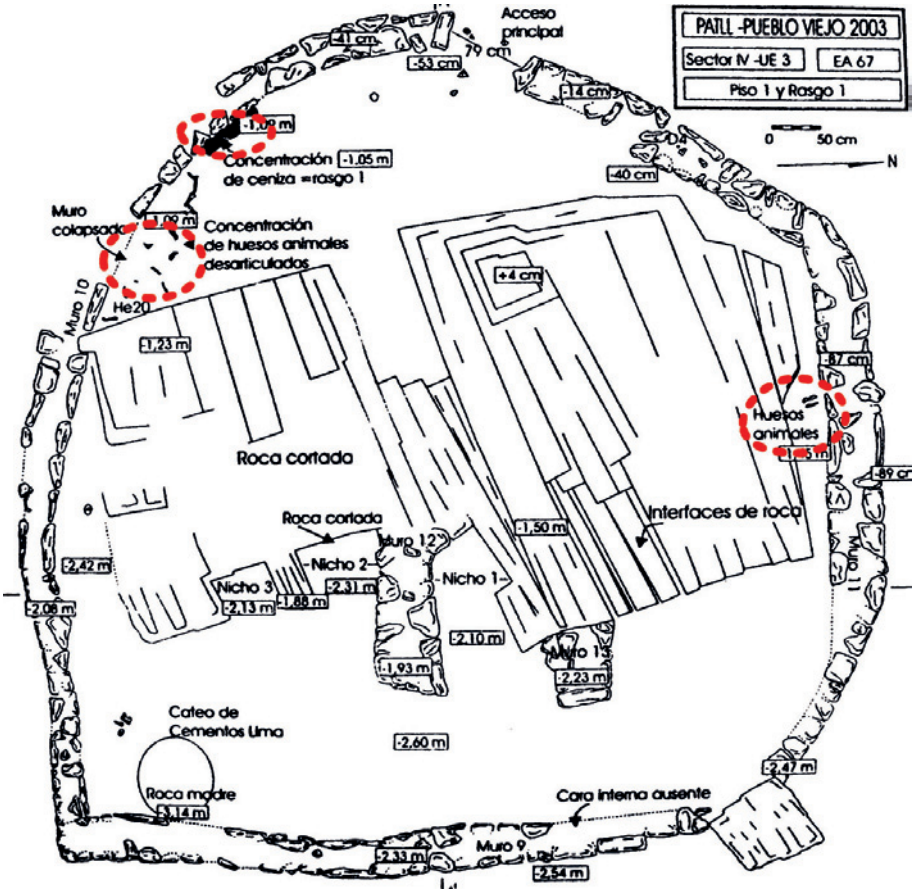

Fig. 2 Sketch map of Summit Temple with areas circled in red indicating concentrations of llama bone and ash. After Makowski et al. 2005, 312; original sketch map drawn by Manuel Lizárraga.

special artifacts including several metal objects; turquoise and shell beads; fragments of gold laminate; six small silver discs; and a carved bone spoon that were found in association with the raised platforms located around the interior perimeter of the room.[35] Again the researchers interpreted the archaeological remains as evidence of ritual activities involving feasting. The fact that such ritual commensal activity was conducted in the presence of a large and specially demarcated lithomorph would again suggest that the intent was to include this *huaca* in the act of food sharing and consumption – arguably as a means of recognizing its status as an other-than-human person whose membership within the community was important enough to denote through commensal acts involving elite members of the society.

35 McEwan, Gibaja, and Chatfield 2005, 266.

Fig. 3 Upright stone monolith surrounded by low stone wall at site of Q'enko located above and outside the city of Cuzco.

Fig. 4 Upright stone monolith surrounded by low stone wall at site of Q'enko located above and outside the city of Cuzco.

In other parts of the Andes, upright monoliths, sometimes demarcated by stone platforms or other enclosures, were also clearly recognized as *huacas* (Fig. 4). Various such monoliths located throughout the Callejon de Huaylas region of the central highlands of Peru are identified still today by local communities as sacred sites. In a recent survey of the region, limited test excavations were conducted adjacent to one of these monoliths.[36] The 1 × 2 meter excavation unit reportedly produced dense quantities of undecorated domestic pottery, together with camelid, deer, and *cuy* (guinea pig) bones. These materials were interpreted as evidence of large-scale feasting carried out in direct association with the *huaca*.[37]

36 Bazán del Campo 2007.

37 Bazán del Campo 2007, 16.

Fig. 5 Temple of the Sacred Stone at the site of Tucume on the north coast of Peru. Photograph courtesy of Dan Sandweiss.

Further to the north, at the important late period site of Tucume on the Peruvian coast, excavators uncovered a small structure with a large, deeply embedded monolith in the center (Fig. 5). The building was subsequently designated the Temple of the Sacred Stone. Numerous offerings were found in pits located directly below and in front of the stone *huaca* consisting principally of spondylus shell and miniature representations of objects such as pottery vessels, corn, plants, birds, fish, jewelry, tools, and musical instruments all produced in sheet metal.[38] The researchers describe in particular a series of miniature metal vessels consisting of a double-spout and bridge bottle, a high neck jar, and two plates. Such items, I would suggest, could all be construed as accoutrements of ritual feasting rendered particularly fit for an extraordinary personage through their miniaturization and their production in precious metal.

I offer one final example from the northern highlands. In late pre-Columbian times, one of the most renowned deities of the Andean realm was the powerful oracle known as Catequil. Archaeological excavations recently undertaken in the vicinity of the mountain traditionally associated with this oracular *huaca* (Cerro Icchal) have produced significant architectural remains.[39] At one of the artificial mounds situated near the base of this mountain, an architectural complex interpreted as the main sanctuary of the oracle Catequil was unearthed with a network of associated canals and drains, and a patio made of river rolled cobbles. On another mound located slightly below this and dating to the earlier Middle Horizon period, investigators recovered quantities of fine Cajamarca cursive style pottery bowls.[40]

Analysis of organic residue adhering to the interior of some of these bowls indicated the presence of corn starch (sometimes accompanied by maize pericarps), an unidenti-

38 Heyerdahl, Sandweiss, and Narvaez 1995, 111–112.
39 J. Topic, T. Topic, and Melly Cava 2002.
40 J. Topic, T. Topic, and Melly Cava 2002, 317–318.

fied tuber starch, and mammal hair. The presence of red ochre was also detected in several examples. In addition to the pottery, numerous fragments of poorly preserved camelid and deer bone were also recovered, as well as various groundstone tools, including concave metates used for the grinding of maize, manos, and a single stone pestle.[41] On the basis of these materials and the context of the finds, the researchers concluded that significant food preparation and consumption activities had taken place at the site and that these feasting activities were likely associated with the cult of Catequil. I would suggest that the commensal events that occurred here were held specifically to include the mountain itself, which was the material manifestation of the *huaca* Catequil.

4 Concluding Thoughts

A century of anthropological research provides clear indication that commensality is an arena in which social relationships are produced and re-produced.[42] One way we might consider approaching commensality, then, is as a practice aimed at the construction of social bonds and networks, with all the attendant benefits and obligations implied in such. If everyday commensality solidifies social relationships internally within the domestic or consanguinal sphere, then we might understand ritual commensality as a strategy aimed at establishing social relationships in the external or affinal realm. In other words, we might approach ritual commensality as a mechanism for bringing others into one's own social order, in this way and through this process, making them into social beings and true persons.

In this paper, I focused on ritual commensality as a way of considering what kinds of beings might be included within the social universe of non-western, pre-Columbian peoples in the Andes. A number of examples were presented in which archaeological evidence for commensality was found in association with significant rocks and rock outcrops interpreted as *huacas*. The food-related evidence was construed as pertaining to the ritual sphere due to the non-domestic context of the finds, the special kinds and quantities of foodstuffs involved, and the seemingly large-scale and public nature of the activities. Foodstuffs, including meat (e. g., camelid, deer, and *cuy*), corn, cornmeal (*sanku*), and corn beer (*chicha*), as well as the containers and vessels in which these items were prepared and served, were among the most significant components of the archaeological assemblage at several recently identified *huaca* sites. The data suggest that ritual commensality may have been an important way of recognizing and interacting with significant non-human entities as members of the humanly constructed social universe. While in some instances the archaeological remains might be construed as one-way offerings, in

41 J. Topic, T. Topic, and Melly Cava 2002, 317–318.

42 Mintz and Du Bois 2002.

many other cases, there was clear evidence of shared ritual consumption among large numbers of participants at these sites. The archaeological evidence for ritual commensality found in association with *huacas* provides support for the conjecture that such entities were understood as non-human persons.

Various ethnographic studies in the Andes have shown that for indigenous peoples, "all material things (including things we normally call inanimate) are potentially active agents in human affairs."[43] This would suggest that native Andean people operated with a radically different set of ontological premises than those that dominate western thinking. The archaeological data presented in this study offers further insight into and support for this proposition.

43 Allen 1998, 20; see also Bastien 1978; Allen 1982, Allen 1988, Allen 1997; Gose 1994; Salomon 1998.

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Steamed or Boiled. Identity and Value in Food Preparation

Summary

How do daily meals resemble larger feast gatherings? In many cultures every act associated with food is filled with meaning and sanctity. Feasts usually feed more people than daily household meals, and by their scale, gain centrifugal meanings. These ritual foods for the deities, ancestors, and large groups do not often look like daily meals in the Andean region. One of the goals of the Taraco Archaeological Project (TAP) is to study the past foodways in the Lake Titicaca Basin, Bolivia. Evidence of unusual ingredients suggests that experimentation with exotic foods occurred in ritual settings on a community level, reflecting centripetal constructions in these larger meals.

Keywords: Andean archaeology; cooking; meals; Andes; rituals; discursive practice; performance.

In welcher Weise gleichen tägliche Mahlzeiten größeren festlichen Zusammenkünften? In vielen Kulturen ist jede mit Nahrung verbundene Handlung mit Sinn und religiöser Bedeutung aufgeladen. Bei Festen werden meist mehr Menschen verköstigt als bei Mahlzeiten im Haushalt. Durch diesen größeren Rahmen erlangen Feste nach außen wirkende, zentrifugale Bedeutung. In den Anden gleichen solche rituellen Speisen für Götter, Ahnen und größere Gruppen selten alltäglichen Mahlzeiten. Eines der Ziele des Taraco Archaeological Project (TAP) ist es, zu untersuchen, wie in der Vergangenheit in der Region um den Titicaca-See (Bolivien) Nahrung produziert, verarbeitet und konsumiert wurde. Das Vorkommen von ungewöhnlichen Zutaten legt nahe, dass in rituellen Zusammenhängen auf Gemeindeebene mit exotischen Lebensmitteln experimentiert wurde, was integrierende Aspekte dieser größeren Mahlzeiten widerspiegelt.

Keywords: Archäologie der Anden; Kochen; Mahlzeiten; Anden; Rituale; diskursive Praktiken; Performanz.

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1 Introduction

Food participates in the creation of self. Shared consumption of food and drink is at the heart of social relations and identities. Who we are is not just what we eat bio-chemically, but how we feel about our bodies/minds throughout our waking hours. For subsistence farmers, both past and present, food can be like a family member, residing in the home or barn, tended, cared for, and nurtured. Thus when meals are created from these previously living beings, decisions are made as to what shall be selected for consumption. Meals are transformative: both daily and ceremonial meals impact participants at the time of consumption, corporeally through satiation and contentment, but also meaningfully, as they can reaffirm or rupture a sense of self within society, through the usual sharing of food among a group of people.

The difference between the everyday meal and the group feast may be slight or significant, but it is always culturally constructed, and therefore should be inferred from the data rather than assumed *a priori*. How one consumes is related to who one is, as one's identity is embedded within a tradition that is reinvented with every meal. Even in societies with institutionalized structures of authority, political power is constantly challenged and negotiated, and so the role of the commensal politics of feasting is just as complex and multifaceted in forging societal relations. These are the fluid situations we have to deal with in our archaeological examples as we seek to trace how meals reflect and create societies in the past.

In this paper I will address such reflexive issues of personal identity through the material and cognitive practices that are involved in food preparation and consumption. By focusing on a specific region where I have been completing archaeological field work for some years with a team of archaeologists, we have gathered material evidence to help shed light on the actions of preparation, the locations of consumption, the quality of the food ingredients, and the ceremony of presentation. This example is from the high plains of the Andean mountains on the Taraco Peninsula along the shores of Lake Titicaca, Bolivia. In this paper, I will tack back and forth between the Andean data and concepts of gastropolitics.

I see these gastropolitical issues as cultural archaeological issues, activating theories of person – thing relations in practice, rather than broader scales of social interaction,

evidenced in globalism studies.[1] This approach focuses on small-scale activities to better understand the larger, broader activities that include individual decisions, community consensus, and identity formation at several levels. For archaeologists, rituals and daily practices are activities rooted in materiality and time, so there should be many avenues of analysis, but most basic are agency and performance.[2] Optimally we want to be able to identify evidence for daily as well as special, unique ritual meals. I begin with a discussion of ceremonial meals.

There are multiple ways of creating ceremonial feast foods out of daily meals: more food, different foodstuffs, different preparations, different presentations, unusual timing and location of the meal, and who is participating. This allows us to assume that there will have been different materialities associated with feast meals, especially in the size and decoration of serving vessels, different cuts of meat, frequencies of plants, and presence of exotic ingredients or forms of presentation. But there are also different styles in presentation.

2 Feasts

Identification of the material remains of special meals is not always straightforward in the archaeological record. But to begin to ask questions about past feasts we need to think about frames of reference we can use to help us identify and investigate such meals. I want to outline several of these aspects that can be brought to bear on the Andean data I am using to discuss meal preparations in the past. Utensils, ingredients, display, and performance provide axes from which to think about feasts' social position and will be addressed here to clarify how these meals can be uncovered in the past. Food scholars have identified a range of markers that help us notice different meals and their potential impacts. The most common terminology applied in archaeology comes from a book edited by Dietler and Hayden.[3] While these authors discuss political meals, there are many types of social conditions that can be associated with ceremonial meals. At one end of a spectrum of unusual meals we can begin with what in the United States are called potluck meals, similar but not exactly the same as what Dietler and Hayden define as a solidarity feast. These meals are politically non-discursive in that they do not have an overt aggrandizing goal. Potluck meals are feasts among equals, where each participant brings a dish to share, in an ambience of equality, with the purpose of community building.[4] Such meals often have great diversity, as food dishes are prepared and brought by many different people. Today at such occasions we can see a range of

1 Gell 1998.
2 Geertz 1980; Dobres and Robb 2000.
3 Dietler and Hayden 2001.
4 Blinman 1989.

plates and bowls with no order to the display. Archaeologists Eric Blinman,[5] James Potter and Scott Ortman[6] look at this feast type through ceramic analysis across American Southwestern settlement room-blocks as examples of leveling events in these egalitarian, small-scale farming communities. Blinman uses the distributions of cooking jar sizes in several feasting locales to identify communal feasting. Mixed vessel sizes found in feasting deposits suggest to him decentralized planning of such community consumption, like potluck dinners we see today.

A contrasting community meal is the patron-client, patron-role, promotional/alliance commensal feast. These events emphasize the formal hospitality provided between unequals.[7] The patron-client feast defined by Dietler is similar to Hayden's commensal feast.[8] There is an overt political tinge to these gatherings where asymmetrical relations are manifest and even institutionalized. Equal reciprocity is not expected, rather these renew subordination as political, social and/or economic debt occurs at each feast. Largesse and gracious hospitality are important characteristics for the host, with a centripetal force of expansion yet obligation, even at times with a taste of shaming the visitors.[9]

An iconic example of a patron-client feast is the potlatch feast from the Pacific Northwest, where years of planning go into a multi-day feast giveaway.[10] These targeted, large meals gain their status from the elaborate sequence of give-aways, completed in honor of a specific cultural moment, celebrating births, puberty rites, weddings, funerals, or honoring the deceased. Such events become a performance, gaining prestige through the style of presentation and sharing large amounts of food and gifts, supplied and prepared by the organizers' centralized resources. The food ceremonies are orchestrated and elaborately prepared, drawing on resources well beyond a single household. These feasts have an authorship that redefines the host's interpersonal standing among the community and perhaps wider afield. Serving vessels are specifically utilized for these large, potlatch meals, highly decorated and of extra large size. Food ingredients can be unusual; different cuts of meat, larger portions, different flavorings, and so on. These meals are memorialized through the dramatics of presentation as well, the special ingredients and the rarely used serving vessels, in addition to explicit gifting. These ceremonial meals have an overt political goal, to enhance the status of the hosting family who aims to have their distinctive event long remembered. The abundant give-away allows for the political repositioning of families and kin groups, as debt and obligation tilt to the receivers. Such events ripple through the society for many years.

When thinking about the commensality of feasts and daily meals, one can think about what daily meals look like and how larger feast gatherings might be similar or

5 Blinman 1989.
6 Potter and Ortman 2004.
7 Dietler 2001, 82; Hayden 2001, 55.
8 Hayden 1996, 128–129.
9 Young 1971.
10 Codere 1950.

different. Dietler notes that feasts are marked differently from daily meals, providing a base for us to seek the distinct material evidence for different meals.[11] From the two ceremonial meals briefly discussed here, we can propose a trajectory that can be followed from the daily meal to prepare and perform for larger gatherings.

The discursive side of practice includes those performative, commemorative and semantic processes that actively and consciously draw upon and transmute the long-lived social traditions of a community. In contrast, non-discursive practices include habitual, bodily practices that tend to be unconscious, or at least non-verbal, routinized and 'natural.'[12] At such events, sharing a meal with the deities, as Sallaberger (this volume) discusses for Emar on the Middle Euphrates, illustrates how people activated meals to resonate with past ones, as the current meal reaffirms and adjusts social setting and interpersonal relations.

Ceremonial meals such as those described for Emar become discursive in part by their uniqueness. Such consciousness engages the participants to think about actions that usually do not receive their attention in meal preparation (are non-discursive). Ritually charged, named events heighten meaning through discursive planning, preparation, presentation, and consumption. While memories are consciously and specifically engaged to reconstruct previous ceremonial meals, recreating their sequence, makeup, and actions, each new ritual slips from the previous one, both in the memory loss from the previous one and in the physicality of the meal, with ingredients or recipes altered in each new reenactment. Thus meal orchestrators will try to reconstruct the previous meal, yet also might consciously want to change parts of it, to make them more significant/memorable. Thus changes allow for tradition re-enforcement but also creativity within conformity. Such slippage in these reenactments, outlined by Butler,[13] provides the possibilities that social identities are reinforced but also negotiated within each meal.

Feasts can be the *performance* of the contract between people and deities from which believers cannot escape. Reciprocity is central to social and political formation, as communal meals become instrumental in powering relationships of mutual obligation, difference, and inclusion, all within the reestablishment of a social community.

As we have learned from Mauss' discussion of the core role of the gift in most meaningful social contracts,[14] we can safely say that food is the most common gift between people and deities. Such commensal contracts make consumption strategic, whether it is the symbolic eating by the dead and the deities, or the participant's eating of the ritual food. These performative presentations in the form of gifts and offerings are the materializations of social interactions and social contracts.

11 Dietler 2001, 70.
12 Roddick and Hastorf 2010.
13 Butler 1993.
14 Mauss 1967.

Today Andes ceremonial gatherings often include formal entrances of the different self-identifying participants, called the *entrada*. This event provides for the recognition of each group. Ritual food for the deities at such events is not often presented in a daily meal format, but also adds specific ingredients, such as alcohol, herbs, amulets, incense, or, in the case of the Andes, coca leaves (*Erythroxylum coca*).

Therefore it is not surprising that as archaeologists look for ritual commensality they locate and identify some of these activities in the material record. Different materialities and temporalities associated with special meals begin to help us to identify them. Because many small-scale societies see all food and all consumption as sacred acts, much like working on the land, our archaeological charge becomes to more discursively seek the range and variability of meals exhibited in archaeological settings. To do this we should work more discursively ourselves with meal variants and what they might have meant in their settings. From these material exercises we can more clearly discuss the values and social relations of the people we are studying. Feasts not only feed more people than the sum of their daily meals, they often also feed the spirits and hold a place in participants' memories and identities.

Food scholars have established that feasts are temporally discursive, in that they require different amounts of time, different types of stores, and often are prepared in different locations.[15] There is often an unusual and elaborate performance of the food presentation, types of consumption, and discard. Such meals stand in contrast to daily meals temporally as well as materially. This discursivity transmits throughout the host community, as plans, preparations, and contacts are activated. People meet to gather foodstuffs, transport them, and plan the ceremony, rippling out centrifugally amongst the community and beyond. In this way, the anticipation of the event brings many into a discursive relationship with the event, both before and after its occurrence.

3 Daily Meals

While the shape and tempo of daily meals vary around the world today, as in the past, due to their relentless regularity they are usually quite routinized. The timing of food preparation and consumption throughout the day in any one area is habitual. For any group, the first meal of the day often occurs at the same time of day with the same ingredients. Each of our national cultures has official lunch hours. These meals are often non-discursive, in that they are less elaborate or planned, and at times less communal than special commensal events such as feasts. For example, farmers in Mexico often eat

15 Appadurai 1981; Douglas 1997 [1972]; Dietler 2001.

alone during the day, stopping by the kitchen when they have time between tasks.[16] Individuals in urban China catch a quick bite from street vendors.

As Mary Weismantel has pointed out,[17] all groups have a cuisine, whether simple or elaborate. In each community's spectrum of consumption styles, their cuisine has more and less elaborate dishes and meals, whether ingredients, cooking, or presentation. It is during the communal daily meals that family politics are enacted. It is in the feast meals that wider sharing creates a different sense of community. Weismantel's subtle interpretation of the operative consumption rules within Ecuadorian family food culture,[18] much like Mary Douglas' meal structurations, demonstrates how gender politics are active in family meals.[19] The farming families of Zumbagua Ecuador plant a range of Andean and Middle Eastern-origin crops, primarily consuming what they produce. With increasing input from wage labor by family members, they also buy what are considered foreign foods, such as bread, rice, and noodles.[20] Despite the mix of food traditions, all ingredients are usually prepared in the traditional ways, as either a formal meal of hot food around a soup or gruel, or a plate of potatoes and meat, or snacks of grains, beans, or potatoes. While the men oversee the field planting and harvest, it is the women who control the larder and the food distribution.[21] Her power emanates from the cooking and serving of the daily meal.

> Decisions regarding this order [of receipt] belong to the woman doing the serving, normally the senior woman of the house. She herself merely ladles the food into bowls, remaining seated by the fire, while a child or a younger woman does the actual serving. But it is the woman at the hearth, as she hands over the bowl, who indicates to whom it will be served.[22]

While the meal is constructed around soup, there are different portions of meat and potatoes that can be added to the bowl. The contents are carefully constructed with specific quantities of each ingredient, designed for each person.[23] This construction is done with care and thought. Each proffered foodstuff has social meaning, stating the relationship between the server and the served through chunks of meat, potatoes, and beans. An important force within this act of serving the meal is the quality of the gift. It is a grave offence to refuse any food that is offered in these meals, especially second helpings. Thus even the simplest of meals recursively drives the shifting daily family politics. There is an agency to even a daily evening meal, in that each relationship is reassessed and reconfirmed through the act of cooking, serving, and eating.

16 Stanley Brandes, personal communication, 2009.
17 Weismantel 1988.
18 Weismantel 1989; Weismantel 1991.
19 Douglas 1997.
20 Weismantel 1991.
21 Hastorf 1991.
22 Weismantel 1988, 179.
23 Weismantel 1988, 180.

This agency cuts both ways, controlling as well as activating empowerment for the preparers. While there are decisions to be made, meals are so tradition-bound that there are codes of ingredients and processing for most daily and ceremonial meals in any society or family. We must position our work on the meals of a society by answering the question, what are the ranges of meals in any given society? As we see in Halstead's paper in this volume, the core foods in specific meals vary throughout the day in every culture. The difference between the everyday meal and the feast may be significant, but it is culturally constructed and therefore must be studied in the context of the available resources, the production, tastes, and values. Meal types and values should be inferred from the data rather than assumed *a priori*. It is with this individualistic quality of feasts and quotidian meals in mind that I now turn to the Andean region to study the relationship of daily and feast food.

4 Meals in Andean Society

Materially important criteria for studying meals are the ingredients and their preparation. As in many cultures meals of any sort in the Andes are essential in every social contract and especially in connection with the deities. Consumption is truly the glue of society. Ritual ingestion therefore is always strategic both for humans and their spirits.[24] Food and drink are part of the reciprocal exchange with the ancestral powers driven by mutual obligations, completed through the transferring of substances and their accompanying social interactions. Ethnographers have noted that many Andean feasts include an element of feeding the dead.[25] These meals require the living to eat to excess, in order to feed those who are not materially present. Thus some ceremonial meals ideally consist of too much food for the participants. These can leave visible traces in the archaeological record. Symbolic variants of these meals can be much more ephemeral. Some ancestral food sharing is only coca leaves and drink. These gifts to the ancestors are much harder to encounter archaeologically. Daily family foods will be less elaborate and the portions are not in excess. These tend to be more centripetal, in that while they reenact all other meals, they also reconfirm the boundaries of the eating society. After presenting some background I turn to the blurred and fluid contextual information concerning the range of meals that can be identified and discussed in this past.

24 Isbell 1978.

25 Isbell 1978; Bolin 1998.

4.1 Ingredients

In the highland Andean region, the core foods have grown out of a range of indigenous Andean geophytes, starch-bearing tubers. The main tubers are potatoes (*Solanum* spp.), *oca* (*Oxalis tuberosa*), *isañu/mashua* (*Tropaoleum tuberosum*), and *ulluco* (*Ullucus tuberosus*). There are additional storage-bearing plants that people living at various elevations domesticated and continue to eat today. These four crops are the common harvested foods, with potato dominating the planting and diet both now and in the past. These plants can grow in quite cold, high conditions from the coast on up to 4000 meters above sea level (m a.s.l.). The other tubers besides the potato are more like vegetables and are often included in the meal with the potato.

A second major native food is quinoa (*Chenopodium* spp.). This pseudocereal forms a major part of the diet throughout the highlands, cultivated from elevations of 3000m a.s.l. up. It can grow in more saline and drier condition than the tubers, allowing for staple crop production in most parts of the highlands. Amaranth (*Amaranthus* sp.) seeds are also part of the crop repertoire, but have always been a minor contribution, unlike in Mesoamerica. More common in the lower elevations are the two main bean domesticates, the common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) and the lima bean (*Phaseolus lunatus*). But there was also the jack bean (*Canavalia* sp.) along the coast and the lupine (*Lupinus mutabilis*) in the higher arable regions. Beans seem to have been a steady if less common food source across both the coast and the highlands. These beans were clearly domesticated in different locations in South America, the lima bean on the western slopes of Ecuador and the common bean in the southeastern Andean slopes. We do not know where the lupine was domesticated, but given its high altitude adaptation, it seems likely that it would be in the central highland valleys. The chile pepper (*Capsicum* spp.) was more common on the coast and only moved into the highlands regularly as far up as it could be grown, about 3200m a.s.l. Beyond that it had to be traded up, which has been done for at least 3000 years. Peppers were domesticated in multiple locations, making them quite versatile. Today peppers are important in sauces to flavor all meals, but at least in the high plains, they continue to be traded in.

Another native food source is from the Cactaceae family having a range of genera with edible fruits. These taxa are not really domesticated but the plants have been clearly curated and nurtured so that they have been part of the diet throughout the drier Andean region. These plants are often added to flavor meals, much like the many herbaceous plants that also were gathered to spice up soups and sauces. Those plants, too, are wild but nurtured.

The main non-local plant eaten in the pre-Colombian highlands is maize (*sara*, *Zea mays*). This crop expanded out of Mesoamerica around 7000 years ago and was planted and traded throughout the western hemisphere. It became a common crop in the An-

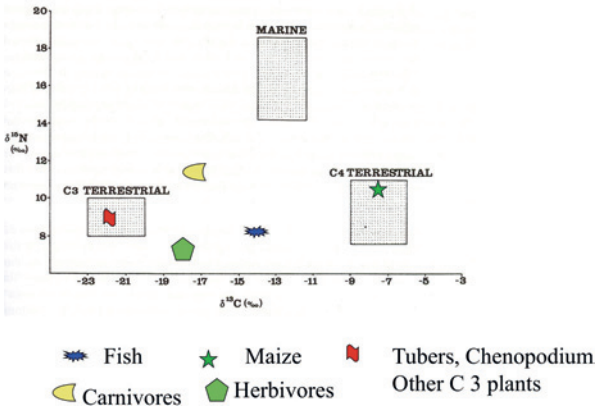

Fig. 1 Average isotope values for modern Andean food ingredients.

dean mountains around 1000 BCE, and thus for the time periods I am studying here, it was present in the region, as it took time to be selected to grow in the many diverse micro-zones of the Andes.

The main meat resources were the camelids (*Llama* spp.), guinea pigs (*cuyes, Cavia* sp.), wild fish, and birds (along with their eggs). The domestic animals, like the majority of the plant foods, were locally domesticated somewhere in the central Andean area. While steady contributions to the diet, there is no morphological evidence that either the fish or the birds were domesticated. Together these foods provided quite a diverse diet, especially on the coast, where there were dense and varied marine resources. In the region of my study, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, there continues to be a focus on the lake fish in the diet, which vied with the camelids in the inhabitants' prehistoric core diet, as we shall see below.

To learn about how these ingredients were used in both daily and ceremonial feasts, staple isotope organic analysis was completed in 2004 at the stable isotope laboratory at the University of California-Berkeley by Melanie Miller. Forty-three interior charred food remains from early, middle, and late Formative cooking vessels have been analyzed. These include ceramics from both domestic and ceremonial contexts. To understand the past values of food remains, we must understand and present the individual plant and animal food sources for comparison. Figure 1 presents the modern taxa values from our extensive modern plant and animal analyses. We use this to compare with the archaeological results. I refer the reader to Ambrose[26] for a thorough description of how to read data on such a figure. Crucial for us here are the carbon isotope values along the X-axis. These carbon values reflect the evidence for C_3 and C_4 ingredients cooked in these pots. Maize is a C_4 plant with a carbon value between -7 and -11 parts per mil, the tubers and quinoa are all C3, with values more around -17 to -25 parts per mil.

26 Ambrose 1993.

Fig. 2 The family meal in Santa Rosa, Bolivia. Photograph by Maria Bruno.

4.2 Processing

In most cuisines, there is a range of processing and cooking possibilities, well beyond Lévi-Strauss' raw and cooked options. Most common in the Andean meals of the past were drying, boiling, steaming, and roasting, based on the utensil evidence as well as the plant and animal treatments recovered in the archaeological record. This is the region where meat is dried on lines, and from where the English language received its term for dried meat, jerky, originating from the Quechua word *charqui*. It seems likely therefore that fish were also often dried for storage.

While we know that the Andean meal has changed over time, especially with Hispanic influences most prominently evident in noodles, rice, and fava beans, many meals still are comprised of indigenous ingredients and created in traditional cooking styles. Now many rural households have gas cooking fires, rather than dung or wood, but boiling still seems to dominate the cooked food. In the Altiplano today, the main meals comprise *boiled soups or gruels*, strongly starch-based with some meat or fish added (Fig. 2). Boiled food is often presented in two meals a day, in the early morning and at midday, with something lighter like a tea in the evening after the sun has set. Solid foods would be served at midday (or feast meals).

In contrast, for local highland feasts, either for multiple families, politically important community members, or several communities coming together, the meal is *steamed and roasted*, requiring communal preparation outside (Fig. 3). These feast earth ovens are called *watias* (in Aymara) or *pachamancas* (in Quechua). They are built in the open air and require heating up cobbles or dirt clods in a make-shift hearth, excavating and lining a pit with the hot stones, layering vegetation and food, then covering the pit with soil or simply placing the food amongst the heated clods and covering them with dirt.

Fig. 3 Steamed feast preparation in Chiripa. Photograph by the author.

This mound then cooks the food items for some hours. These baked foods taste differently from boiled food, retaining more flavor. Multiple tuber species are usually added to the pit, making these feasts not only larger and drier meals than normal but with more diverse ingredients.

While one cannot assume that what occurs in the present occurred in the past, with the many slippages of meaning over so many meals, external and internal political and economic pressures and value, I have discussed these local, rural feasts to show how daily meals can differ from ritual ones in the same region but in a different time.

A third type of meal that must be identified and brought into our discussion, the meals for the dead ancestors. Today, these Andean meals can range from libations and cigarettes to huge piles of tubers and meat, seen at the graves of the recently deceased. In the archaeological record we do have examples of the more ephemeral ritual meals, that is small food offerings or even simply incense burners, like the small ancestral offerings we see today. At La Galgada, a Formative site in northern Peru, there is evidence for spicy food offerings to the deities in ceremonial hearths.[27] Whereas today we libate alcohol, offer burnt coca leaves and special foods to the earth before beginning an excavation, in the past local people placed herbs and spices in small fires as food for the ancestors (evidenced in small burning sites within ceremonial structures on the Chiripa mound). These meals are expressly for the deities and are not consumed by the living. There are many examples of such food offerings to deities around the world, although there are meals that people did eat after the deities were "finished."[28]

27 Grieder et al. 1988.

28 Lev-Tov and McGeough 2007.

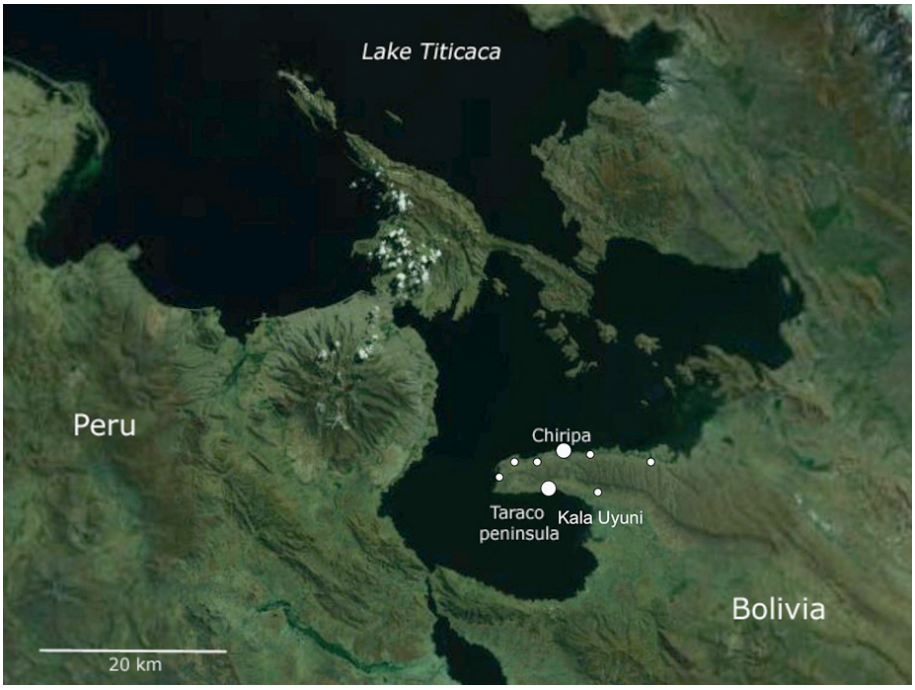

Fig. 4 The southern Titicaca Basin region.

5 The Formative Titicaca Basin

My archaeological study of ceremonial feasts and daily meals comes from a small-scale farming-fishing region in western South America, located in the Bolivian altiplano, along the southern shores of Lake Titicaca. While today the residents live within a modern state, they interact as though they do not, in that the community and families are more important in local, daily decisions than in the province or the state. This is not to say that the state does not have any influence, but that their lives are based quite locally, in the fields, the lake, and the patios of these families. The region I work in is on the Taraco Peninsula, which juts into the smaller, shallower part of Lake Titicaca (Fig. 4). People fish daily in the early morning, catching fish for the day's meals as well as to sell in the city of La Paz, Bolivia. In the past it is likely that fish were eaten fresh, although some could have been dried for future consumption. In the rainy season the farmers plant their seeds and tubers for the austral autumnal harvest. There are often several fallow years within a field's planting cycle. Small herds of cows, pigs, and sheep now graze along the water's edge, where well-watered wild herbaceous plants grow. In the past

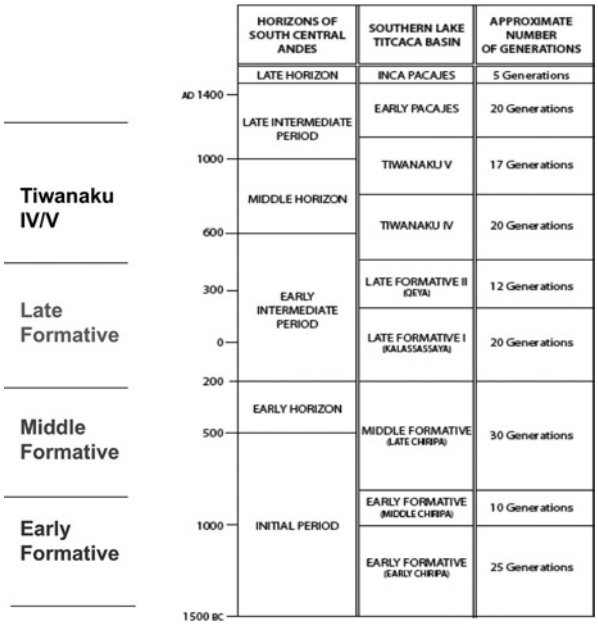

Fig. 5 The Titicaca Basin archaeological phasing.

there would have been camelids grazing on the peninsula.[29] While the political and social dynamics are different, many of the daily agricultural practices have continued, making the core foodways quite similar in the past and present on the Peninsula.

While the Andean altiplano has had human occupants for at least 10,000 years, entering after the glaciers retreated, their settlement history, based on archaeological research to date, displays evidence for mobile populations until about 4,000 years ago, probably moving between the lake shores up into the mountains with the seasons. Beginning in what is termed locally the Formative period, evidence for marking the basin with architectural features began with ceremonial gathering places rather than domestic communities. With more archaeological investigation we can now divide up the Formative period into phases (Fig. 5). Domestic residences could have been present at that time, but their remains were not constructed with permanent material, but more likely with hides, sticks, and mud, making that evidence invisible. Thus the earliest data we have of lasting landscape marking consists of walled spaces and rock cairns.[30]

29 Moore, D. Steadman, and deFrance 1999.

30 Aldenderfer 1990; Aldenderfer 1991; Hastorf 2003.

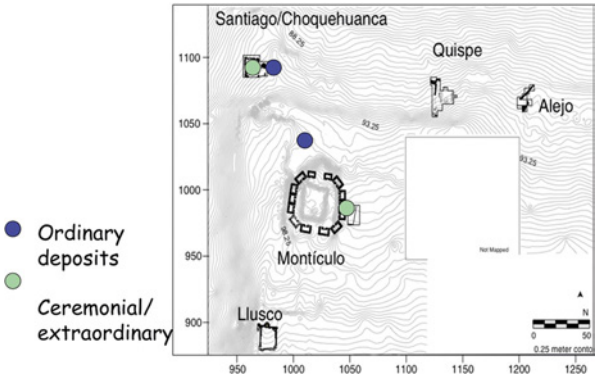

Fig. 6 Early Formative Chiripa site map with locations of excavated deposits. The green dots note the ceremonial/civic deposits, and the blue dots identify where domestic material was encountered.

5.1 Meal Evidence through Time

5.1.1 Early Formative

In the southern basin, archaeologists have uncovered the earliest evidence for lasting architecture in Early Formative (1500–800 BCE) sites.[31] On the Taraco Peninsula, Chiripa sits upon three culturally contoured terraces, rising up from the lake.[32] In Early Formative times, these natural terraces were culturally accentuated to form a place for ceremonial construction. At Chiripa (Fig. 4), the architectural sequence begins with a large plastered surface within an enclosing wall on the lowest and the uppermost terraces (Fig. 6, noted by green dots). Next to the lower surface are midden deposits of domestic trash, but we have no domestic *in situ* deposits for that era. There surely were more domestic deposits in between these two locations, but the historic hacienda dug up that area to make mud-brick walls (represented by the blue dot on the middle terrace of Fig. 6).

At Chiripa in these early settled times, we find that there is no significant difference between domestic and ceremonial ceramic distributions of jars and bowls. Of interest is an especially large cooking pot found in a young person's grave, along with several birds of prey (Fig. 7). The main contextual difference in the ceramics hints at a trend we see increase in later periods, with more burnished and decorated wares in the ceremonial deposits, suggesting an interest in presentation, even if the food was the same in both settings. Both the plant and animal food remains show similar distributions across what we have defined as domestic and ceremonial contexts.[33]

The Early Formative stable isotope data from seven decorated and seven plain ware vessels creates a tight cloud in carbon-thirteen values (Fig. 8). Only the nitrogen values

31 Bennett 1936; Bennett 1948; Kidder 1956; Browman 1978; Browman 1991; Mohr Chávez 1988; Portugal Ortíz 1992; Lémuz Aguire 2001; Cordero n.d.

32 Hastorf 1999.

33 Hastorf 1999.

Fig. 7 Early Formative feast and daily cooking pots.

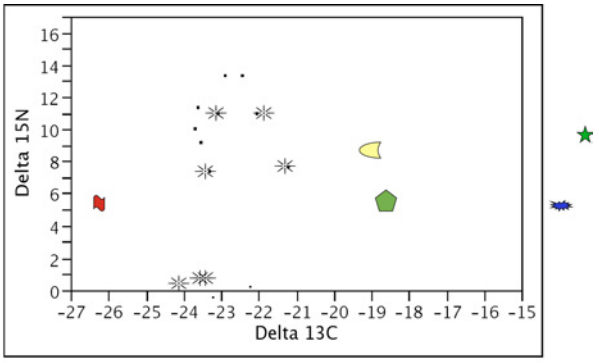

Fig. 8 Early Formative stable isotope values from pottery residues. Analyzed by Melanie Miller.

show a wide distribution (Y axis), suggesting peeled potato cooking at the feasts in three of the vessels (the three stars at 0 value, due to the lack of nitrogen in the potato storage tissue, as in peeled potatoes [34]).

34 Miller personal communication.

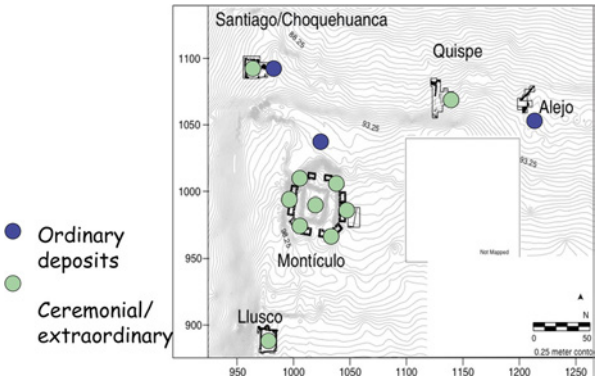

Fig. 9 Middle Formative Chiripa site map with locations of excavated deposits. The green dots note the ceremonial/civic deposits and the blue dots identify where domestic material was encountered.

5.1.2 Middle Formative

It is in the Middle Formative phase (800–200 BCE) that the social world of the region was more materially active. Social and architectural changes are evident at the higher number of settlements on the peninsula. During this time the populace fills in the peninsula, founding settlements every 4km along its shores.[35] At Chiripa, on top of the upper terrace enclosure a series of small structures are built upon a raised platform around an enclosed surface (the green dots around an inner court in Fig. 9). This mound complex has many ramifications for a community's identity as well as world-view. The layout permitted all local residents to gather in front of the complex as well as snugly into the central plaza, a space of approximately 21m by 20m.[36]

The participants within that enclosure were spatially set apart from community (domestic) life for the period of the ceremony, having visual access upward (probably to the night sky). At such a community gathering only a few people could move out from the central enclosure into the small, closed chambers for selected rituals, this architecture suggesting private, hidden activities (being five by eight meters in size). These structures were rebuilt and remodeled a series of times, allowing us to note the specific shifts in the renewals and remodeling of the buildings. For example, this population clearly thought that re-plastering the chamber floors every generation was important. This allows us to 'see' the agency of the Chiripa residents in their beliefs concerning their engagement with the ancestral spirits, as renewal was of great value for them. These rebuilt small rooms materially illustrate how they focused regular attention on the structures' repair and contents and therefore a triangular agency between the living, the material in and of the structures, and the ancestors, suggesting even a Gellian sense of power within the buildings and what they hold. Towards the end of this renovation sequence, these small structures were elaborated with smaller side chambers, bins (Fig. 10), where foodstuff,

35 Bandy 2001; Bandy 2004.

36 Browman n.d.

Fig. 10 Photo of bin on mound at Chiripa. Photograph by the author.

mummy, and ritual paraphernalia storage occurred.[37] In addition, we have encountered small fire installations containing charred herbaceous plants within some of these ritual structures, suggesting that smoke offerings occurred within these roofed structures.

Systematic excavations have uncovered ceremonial storage, ritual presentations, and communal gatherings on the mound. Most importantly, this architecture provides an image of both centrifugal coming together in group performance with the inclusion of the whole community in and around the open areas of the mound and central plaza, as well as centripetal, restricted access to the small encircling chambers. Within the selective, perhaps familial or house-based structures we see the materiality of exclusion performance. In these structures we have found not only burning as renewal, but also burning herbs as likely ceremonial food offerings. The cooked food residues for the living participants are located in the open areas of this mound complex, which was open to many more participants.[38]

Perhaps the most illustrative of the Middle Formative sectors is the Choquehuanca-Santiago sector (Fig. 11). In the right image in Figure 11 (b), I present the overview plan

37 Bruno and Whitehead 2003; Hastorf 2003.

38 Wu and Hastorf (in preparation).

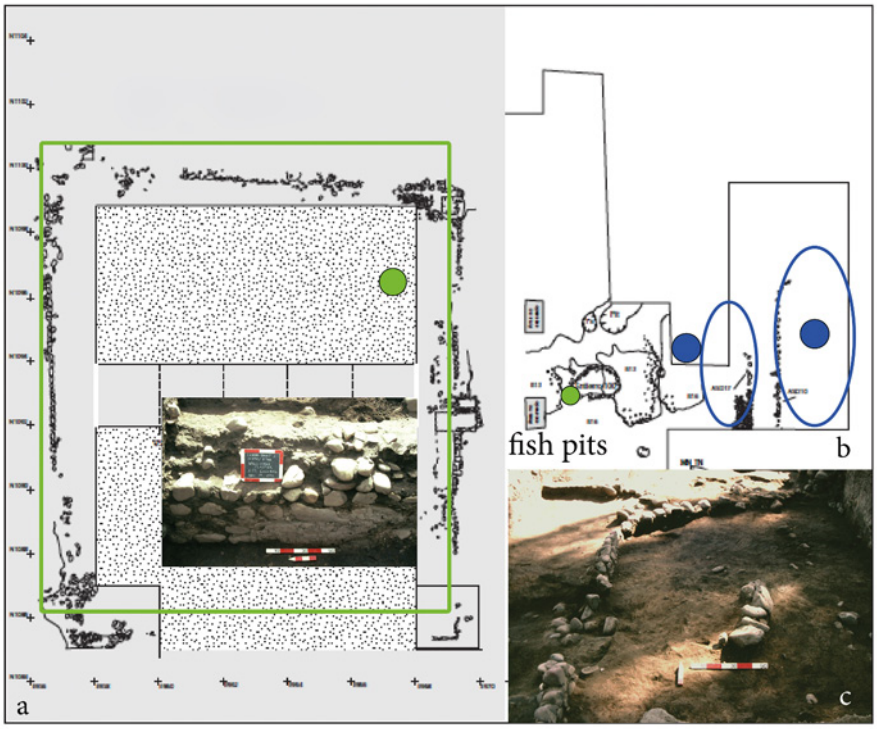

Fig. 11 The Choquehuanca-Santiago sector. (a) Plan of the Choquehuanca sunken early-middle Formative enclosure (outlined in green), (b) plan of the domestic trash and domestic structures to the east of the enclosure (the domestic structures are outlined in blue), and (c) photograph of one of the domestic structure walls.

of the excavations completed by the Taraco Archaeological Project. There we have evidence of domestic structures, roughly oval in shape. From this domestic material we have learned that cooking was accomplished using a complex of pot-bellied boiling vessels, with small roughly finished serving and eating bowls. The neighboring ceremonial evidence from Choquehuanca and the mound complex contains a range of similar cooking vessels, but, like earlier times, there is a greater density of decorated vessels, continuing the trend of an interest in civic feast presentation. Found between this sector and the sunken enclosure are small pits that are filled with charred fish bones interspersed with burial pits, suggesting special cooking locales for fish.[39]

When we turn to a neighboring Middle Formative settlement, Kala Uyuni (KU), where our project also has excavated (Fig. 12),[40] we see that the Middle Formative cere-

39 Moore, D. Steadman, and deFrance 1999; Hastorf 2003.

40 Bandy and Hastorf 2007.

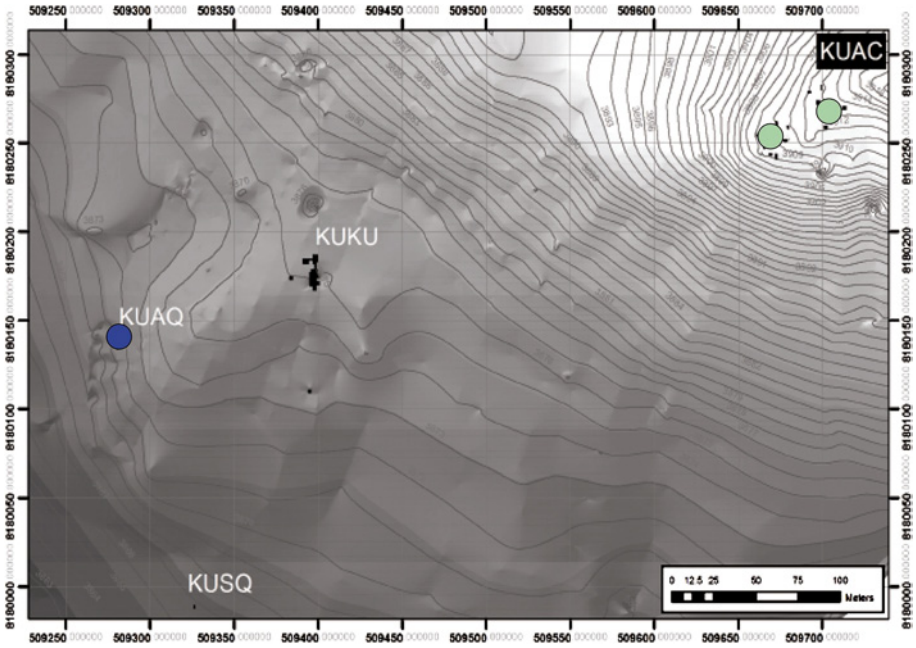

Fig. 12 Kala Uyuni site map (by Eduardo Machicado). The green dots note the ceremonial/civic deposits, and the blue dots identify where domestic material was encountered.

monial enclosures up on the hillside (AC) are distinctly separate from the thick domestic deposits on the lower slopes of the hill (AQ). These data suggest that at this time there was a more discrete difference in distribution of food-related equipment.

On the upper, sloping hillside, two Middle Formative sunken enclosures were built sitting on bedrock in what is called the Achachi Coa Kkollu sector. These two Middle Formative semi-subterranean trapezoidal structures both have quite clean surfaces with small midden dumps outside of their walls and several dense pits filled with *carachi* fish remains (*Orestias* spp.) (Fig. 13). Carachi today is considered a much more flavorful fish than the other taxa. Standing in the center of one of these enclosures is an *in situ* monolith, with clear evidence of offerings of small, carved stones (*conopas*) and food, reflecting chthonic powers.[41] The deposits surrounding these two sunken enclosures contained denser amounts of burnished and slipped wares, including serving jars and bowls, than the domestic deposits. Large bowls/jars for serving and small bowls for consuming are more than twice as common as elsewhere within Middle Formative contexts. Further, the ceramic serving vessels are more decorated, as are the smaller consumption cups, sug-

41 Allen 1988; Allen 2009; Astvaldsson 1994; Bray this volume.

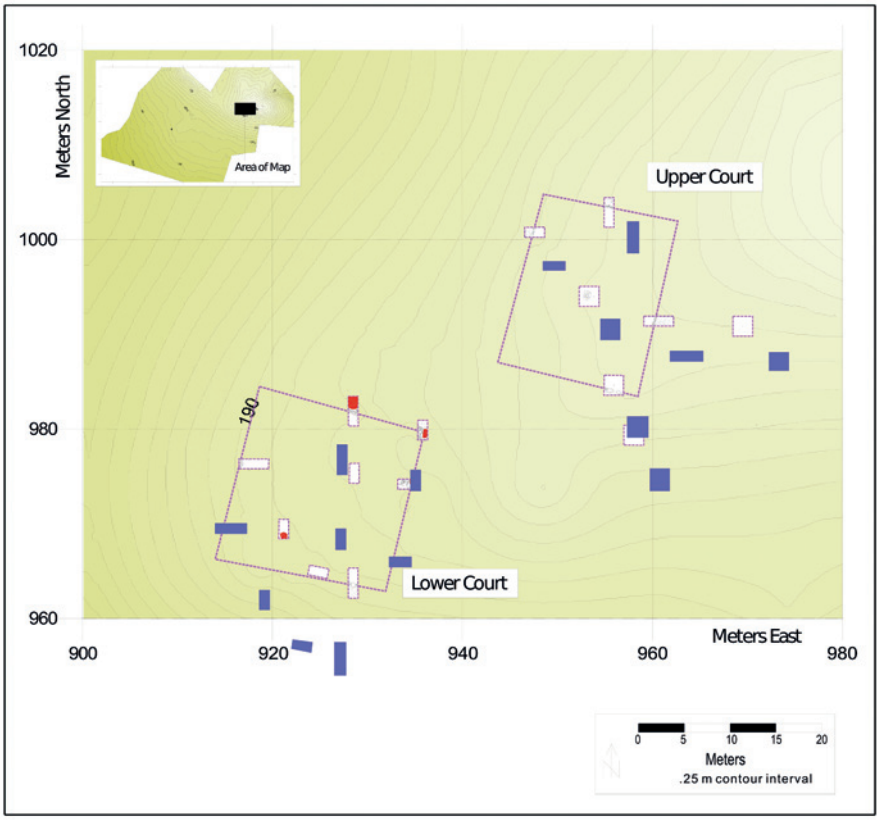

Fig. 13 Plan of the two Achacachi Coa Kkollu semi-subterranean.

gesting these participated in larger and more performative events than in earlier times (Fig. 14).

It is in the domestic sector (KUAQ, Fig. 12) that we encountered significantly more cooking wares.[42] In fact the ceramicist, Lee Steadman, has noted that there are no cooking pots in or around these sunken enclosures, only serving dishes, allowing us to identify a discrete feasting location. Middle Formative ritual sectors show the first evidence of special foods in addition to special dishes. In the hillside ceremonial sector of Kala Uyuni (KUAC, Fig. 12) as well as in the Quispe enclosure at Chiripa, we encountered the first micro-botanical evidence for maize (*Zea mays*) in the form of phytoliths and starch.[43] Two *manos* contained maize starch, and one also had maize cob phytoliths. Maize is an introduced crop, rare in this area until 700 years later, during the height of the regional

42 D. Steadman 1999.

43 Logan 2006; Logan, Hastorf, and Pearsall 2012.

Fig. 14 Middle Formative ceramics: (a) decorated serving bowl, (b)–(c) consumption bowls, (d) liquid serving jug.

Tiwanaku influence.[44] Nevertheless, maize, in the form of starch and phytoliths, begins to turn up in ceremonial contexts here on the peninsula as well as to the northeast, in other ceremonial structures along the southern shore.[45] No maize evidence was found in the Middle Formative domestic deposits, suggesting that when it was present it was prepared expressly for special feasts. These Middle Formative ceremonial sectors seem to have hosted discursive, potlatch-like feasts, with more than quotidian planning and preparation in and around the ceremonial structures.

By the Middle Horizon (AD 500–1000) maize turns up in all households of the regional center, Tiwanaku, but there, too, maize seemed to have been mainly prepared for rituals or feasts.[46] Re-enforcing the performance qualities of the KUAC enclosures, we also encountered the first evidence for tobacco (*Nicotiana* sp.) in these Middle Formative deposits.[47] Interestingly, although not considered a feast food for humans, tobacco is often considered food for the deities, which is supported by the seed evidence in the upper KUAC ceremonial sector.

Other highly charged food preparation and consumption evidence is illustrated in the fish bone distributions. The less tasty, lake fish taxa, *suche* (*Trichomycterus rivulatus*) and *mauri* (*Trichomycterus dispar*), are more common in the Middle Formative domestic midden areas of KUAQ than in the ceremonial deposits KUAC.[48] These two taxa are mud-dwelling fish that are not considered the best fish from the lake.[49] The higher quality fish, the *carachi* (*Orestias agassii*, *carachi negro* and *O. luteus*, *carachi amarillo*), was more commonly encountered in the ceremonial sectors, in the small pits just outside of

44 Wright, Hastorf, and Lennstrom 2003.
45 Lee 1997; Chávez and Thompson 2006.
46 Wright, Hastorf, and Lennstrom 2003.
47 Bruno 2008.
48 Capriles Flores 2006.
49 Tchernavin 1944.

the Choquehuaca enclosure (Fig. 11), suggesting special ingredients were cooked, consumed, and deposited in these ceremonial enclosures.[50] One example studied in detail and noted on Figure 11 is a small pit that was highly stratified, with alternating orange and ash layers. This pit contained an extremely high density of fish bones, plants, and ash. Moore and Hastorf[51] think the pit was an *in situ* earth oven. The dominant contents of the pit are fish bones, many fused *Chenopodium* seeds, along with parenchyma fragments, some vitrified, suggesting a meal of tubers, *Chenopodium*, and *carachi* fish. All fuel types were found in the pit, including grass stalks, dung, and especially wood. The faunal remains were dominated by calcined fish bones and scales, suggesting a hot fire but not directly applied to the fish. The plant remains also suggest high heat with many clinkered, or fused, seeds and fragments. The upper and lower layers of the pit are discrete and seem to have resulted from two different burning episodes. The top of the pit had remarkably low fragmentation of fragile fish bones, suggesting *in situ* cooking. The lower portion of the pit had a higher temperature, supported by the denser calcined bone. This depositional pattern makes sense for an enclosed pit that cooked for hours. The vegetable portion of this steamed meal looks to be similar to the other ceremonial Middle Formative sectors, but without the maize.

Figure 15 presents the twenty-five Middle Formative isotopic results from cooking pots, 15 from decorated jars and 10 from unslipped vessels. Here we also see a hint of maize for the first time in the star to the right along the X axis (with a -17 parts per mil carbon value), corroborating what Logan et al. found in the starch and phytoliths.[52] This maize-enriched vessel was encountered in the Llusco ceremonial court.

Overall, even the cooking pots seem to have higher nitrogen isotope values than in previous centuries, telling us that people ate slightly more meat than they had earlier. This suggests that they herded and ate more camelids as well as farming more intensively, with the lake slowly retreating and opening up the pampa for nearby farming.

While we have little evidence of specific feast menus, we know from the mound structure bins at Chiripa that the Middle Formative communities contributed local food ingredients to their parties. Potatoes and large *Chenopodium* were stored in some of these bins. The maize we see entering in the Middle Formative could have been traded in as well as have been in the early stages of selection for production in the warmer lake-side micro-zones.[53]

The Middle Formative feast evidence suggests potlatch events, drawing on family and extended family stores, with the finest burnished and decorated bowls brought out for food presentation. Evidence for cooking the feast suggests that it was more communal at Chiripa, often being cooked nearby the event, whereas at Kala Uyuni the food was

50 Moore and Hastorf 2000.
51 Moore and Hastorf 2000.
52 Logan, Hastorf, and Pearsall 2012.
53 Browman 1989; Bruno and Whitehead 2003.

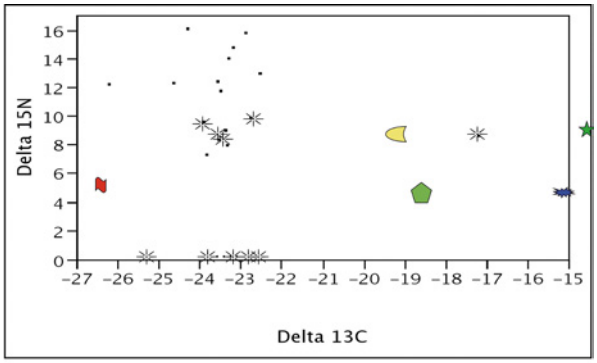

Fig. 15 Middle Formative stable isotope values from pottery residues. Analyzed by Melanie Miller.

brought in from quite a distance to the ceremonial precinct. We do need more Middle Formative domestic sectors excavated to confirm this hypothesis. While people were basically eating more of their usual fare at these feasts, the fish taxa as well as maize were notably special, along with the forms of presentation, suggesting discursive, planned, and organized feasts.

5.1.3 Late Formative

The Late Formative phase is identified by the construction of new types of ceremonialism on the Taraco Peninsula. The Chiripa mound stops being rebuilt and is filled in. We must turn to Kala Uyuni to see ceremonial structures that were built in this phase on the lower slopes of the hillside (KUKU, Fig. 12). There, we have uncovered a sequence of small structures, the first built literally into sterile sediment. These ceremonial structures are more complexly built, lining up along the eastern side of the built platform.[54] We have learned from these deposits that there were more decorated red rimmed and polychrome bowls in the ceremonial areas, whereas the domestic structures and middens were filled with unpainted jars and bowls, mainly cooking pots (*ollas*). In ASD 2, the most explicitly ceremonial structure TAP has excavated, there were many more decorated serving bowls than in ASD 5, the rougher oval, domestic structure with evidence of hearths and cooking pots (Fig. 16).

We can continue to distinguish between domestic and ceremonial material in this phase, as this dichotomy becomes even clearer, suggesting that the residents found this arena to be a specific place to make social points about their place in the world. Presentation and consumption evidence are both present in these Late Formative structures.

54 Hastorf et al. 2010.

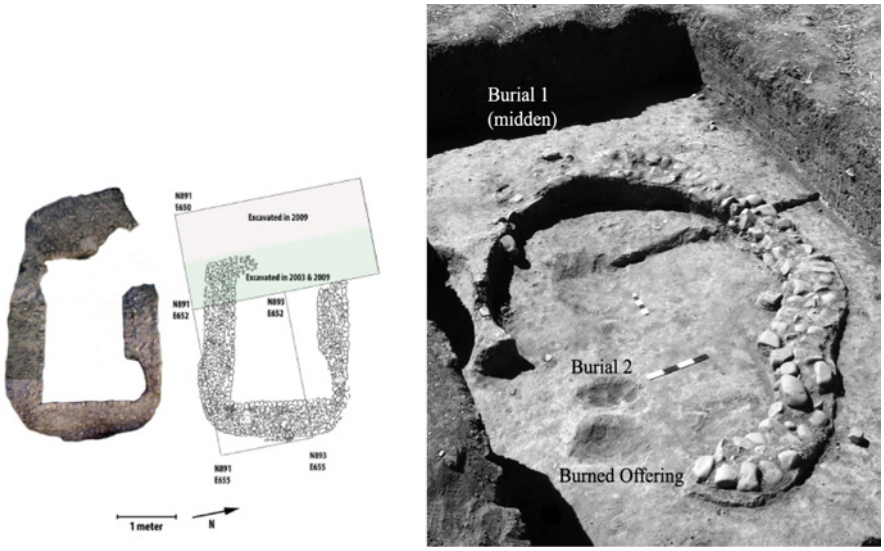

Fig. 16 Photographs and drawings of structures ASD 2 and ASD 5.

The more externally elaborate ceramics illustrate the increasing interest in ceremonial performance, placing feasting at the core of ceremonial life. There is now a fairly distinct range of presentation and consumption ceramics that can be associated with feasting, distinct from the more roughly made cooking vessels. These presentation bowls are not only larger than earlier, but are usually more decorated, now being incised and slipped.[55] While there is evidence of food presentation, incense burning, and noise making within the ceremonial spaces, there was little food processing evidence nearby the structures.[56] In the ceremonial sectors, decorated ceramics are the most common artifact. The domestic areas contain many fewer decorated specimens, highlighting the presence of the slipped and incised wares in the civic sectors. Elaborate, large red/brown slipped, extra-large necked vessels, with diameters from 30 to 34cm become the cooking pots for the large feasts and other gatherings. In comparison, the normal size of daily cooking vessels ranges around 18 to 19cm in diameter. These extra-large jars and large serving bowls make up 20% of the ceremonial ceramic assemblage, suggesting that again these meals were more like a potlatch-like feast form, in that groups of people came together to prepare large quantities of food using special recipes and vessels. Furthermore, this food was served in uniform red-slipped bowls, as if there was a new code of proper presentation for this time.

55 Roddick 2009; D. Steadman 1999; L. Steadman 2007.

56 D. Steadman 1999; D. Steadman 2003.

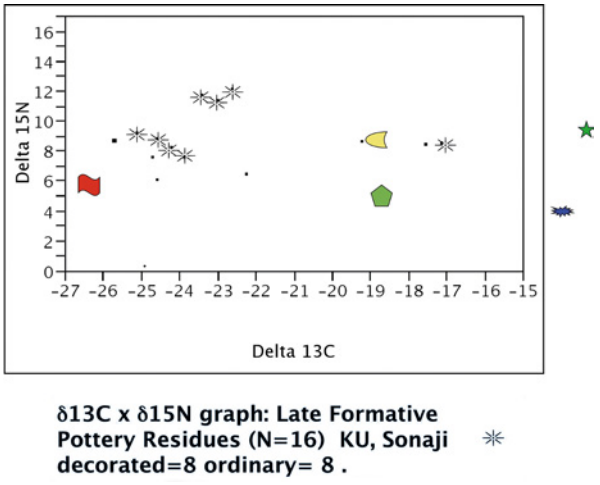

Fig. 17 Late Formative stable isotope values from pottery residues. Analyzed by Melanie Miller.

Further evidence of the shape and components of the Late Formative feasts comes from the carbon and nitrogen stable isotope data analyzed from 16 interior ceramic vessel scrapings (Fig. 17).

Little maize seems to have been included in these cooking pot dishes. Two C_4 enriched pots were located in the Late Formative domestic middens. All of the other cooked food values are solidly C_3, which would mean quinoa and tubers dominated the plant component of the meals. Much more variable are the nitrogen values, along the Y-axis. These values reflect a wide range of plant and meat components in the stews. Surely meat was cooked in some of these pots, in addition to plant foods. From this initial study, we can see that maize, if present, was probably not part of these Late Formative cooked stews, prepared for either home or ritual.

Evidence for exotic food preparation has only recently come to light at Chiripa. In addition to the new, larger ceremonial food presentation ceramic shapes and the teacup-like bowls that are regular in these contexts, Middle Formative ritual sectors also have evidence for ceramic braziers for burning fragrant herbs and wood (with sooted interiors), as well as ceramic 'trumpets' for the ceremonial performance.[57] These trumpets are considered to have been used like the large marine *Strombus* shells portrayed in Moche iconography and found at Chavín de Huantar as well as many other whistles across the Andes.[58] Such trumpets or other noise-makers would have called people, both alive and dead, to the ceremony designating ritual time as well as space, engaging more senses at one time. Stone palettes are occasionally found in these same contexts. We have uncovered nose sniffing bone tubes.[59] To date, we have four bone snuff tubes and one spoon

57 Browman 1989.

58 Rick personal communication; Donnan 1976; Lumbreras 1989.

59 Moore personal communication.

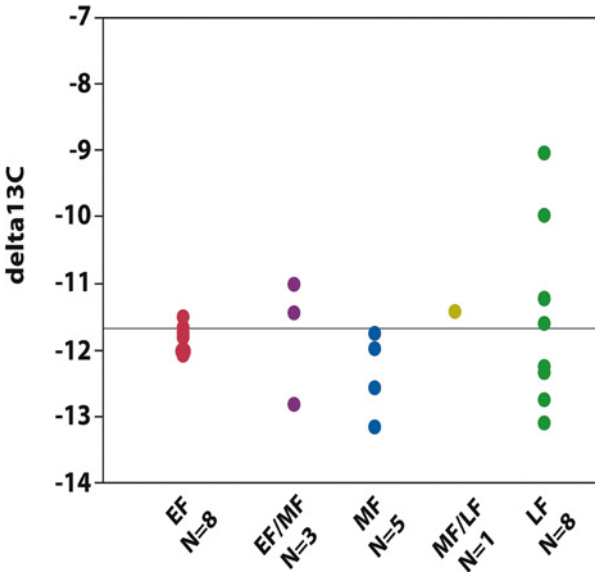

Fig. 18 Human diet evidence through time in carbon tooth enamel isotopes. *EF* is Early Formative phase, *MF* Middle Formative phase, and *LF* Late Formative phase. Analyzed by Melanie Miller.

spatula from the Middle and Late Formative phases. These data begin to suggest the onset of use of hallucinogenic plants, which were also exotic at the time, as part of ritual feasting within these Late Formative ceremonial contexts. Thus food for the body and for the mind had become essential ingredients for rituals, both consumed in group settings.

Several small hearths have been excavated in the Late Formative enclosures. Some have dense concentrations of fish.[60] Similar to the domestic sectors however, quinoa and tubers dominate the plant taxa.[61] Even though there are exotic foods adding zest and rarity to the larger feasts, the most obvious differences from the domestic rubbish are the more ubiquitous large animal bone evidence. Whole camelids were being roasted at these feasts.

5.1.4 In Sum

Through Formative times, we see a spectrum of commensal acts in the Titicaca area, with increasing evidence for more elaborate performative feasts. The Formative food data yield evidence of unusual ingredients in ceremonial locations, such as the first maize on the peninsula, suggesting that experimentation with the display of exotic foods occurred in ritual settings on a community level.

60 Moore and Hastorf 2000.

61 Bruno 2008.

Over time the gathering spaces for the ceremonies remained large enough to accommodate many people, although we also see that there were nested and restrictive locations for ceremonial feasting in the middle phase. We also get a sense that the larger supra-household feasts were more diacritical, more like a potlatch, in that special pots for cooking, serving and eating were worth the effort to make and use. The later ceremonial cooking pots were larger on average than the domestic cooking pots, while the consumption pots became smaller, suggesting a different place for the individual during the event.

Figure 18 provides our initial isotopic evidence from human tooth enamel of the average diets of some of these people. The X axis progresses over time and the Y axis is the carbon stable isotopic value. By the Late Formative (LF) there is maize evidence in some of the diets recorded in the inhabitants' teeth. We also see a much broader dietary spread at this time.

6 Conclusions

Early and Middle Formative commensal evidence presents the first material indications for feasts being different from daily meals in the southern Titicaca Basin. This is most evident in the distribution of special ceramic wares in ceremonial feast locations. In these times the foods consumed are the same, but there are more exotic foods in the ceremonial areas. Later, in the Late Formative years there are more noticeable ceremonial serving sets along with different preparations, suggesting that the individual participant was receiving more attention. This is a perfect example of Butler's slippage, as basically the same food and drink were being served, and yet things had changed throughout society, from the making of the pots and meals to the preparation and serving of the food. The hosts were positioning themselves and their visitors differently than were the Middle Formative folk.

Both ingredients and cooking methods seem to mark the feast meals as different from the domestic meals. Boiled soups and stews seem to have been typical daily meals, with a focus on *mauri* fish soups. Special feasts included pit-steamed fish and mashed tubers in addition to the daily soups. Ground food is rare in this cultural setting. Meat and/or fish were consumed in all settings, but we have suggestions that there was more steamed meat and fish in the ceremonial meals. In the feasts, *carachi* was selectively caught and cooked for these large, signified meals. What little evidence for difference there is increases in Middle Formative ceremonial meals, mainly for quinoa *(kañawa)* and, of course, through the entrance of maize in ceremonial locations.

Moments of discursivity and thus agency with the importation of exotic foods and unusual preparations support this increasing differentiation and marking of the larger

feasts through the Formative times, which were more discretely created and deposited across the settlements. Architecture and ceramics suggest that ceremonial meals were spatially and sensually discursive, suggested by the explicitly constructed spaces for social gatherings reflecting a great deal of work and planning by the hosts.

The most diverse diet seems to have been in the Middle Formative times, at the height of the local, autonomous ceremonial centers, as farming and herding intensified, suggesting there was more meat as well as a range of ingredients moving around. Much like today, the archaeological examples presented in this paper suggest that roasting/steaming were reserved for special meals, while boiling occurred in both venues.

Foreign and expensive foods, new flavors, new preparations, and new materialities in presentation seem to have been introduced in feast meals with the onset of new ceremonial values.

We can see from this brief overview that even in small-scale farming societies, feast meals were strategic, memorializing past meals while harkening to the future and the possible potentials of new relations. These meals became increasingly transformative, having social agency through their performances within the marked and meaningful spaces created by the geography crafted by the people. Meals were offerings, as they met obligations in both directions, gifts by people to deities and gifts from the deities to the people. In the data presented here, we can begin to see in the food choices, the agency and the value of the feast planners in the past, which is a goal of this commensal study of both daily and ceremonial meals.

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Elliott Shore

Modern Restaurants and Ancient Commensality

Summary

Commensality in terms of archaeological investigations seems to revolve around questions of feasting and everyday eating patterns. The nature of the available evidence moves archaeologists and ancient historians to conjecture about these questions in innovative and thoughtful ways. How can a modern historian of food enter into this conversation? The history of restaurants in the West seems to provide one way into this debate and poses the question of what evidence we actually have for what commensality might be.

Keywords: Modern history; restaurants; commensality; dining out; spectacle.

Auseinandersetzungen mit Kommensalität im Rahmen archäologischer Untersuchungen scheinen sich im Wesentlichen um Fragen zu Festen und alltäglichen Essgewohnheiten zu drehen. Die Art der ihnen zur Verfügung stehenden Befunde lässt Archäologen/Archäologinnen und Althistoriker/Althistorikerinnen auf innovative und umsichtige Weise über diese Themen nachdenken. Wie kann sich nun die Historie mit dem Thema Nahrung und Essen in der Neuzeit in diese Diskussion einbringen? Die Geschichte des Restaurants in den Kulturen des Westens scheint eine Möglichkeit zu sein, in diese Debatte einzusteigen und wirft zudem die Frage auf, welche Daten wir eigentlich haben, um zu erforschen, was Kommensalität sein könnte.

Keywords: Neuere und Neueste Geschichte; Restaurants; Kommensalität; Essen außer Haus; Spektakel.

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1 Introduction

Two issues confronted me upon being invited to a commensality workshop as the lone modern historian: I had only a layperson's understanding of ancient archaeology, and I had never heard of commensality. The latter seemed easily remedied: I could and did look up the word. To the Oxford English Dictionary it seemed to mean "the habit of eating at the same table" – "Eating together," as Dr. Johnson would say, "promotes good will, Sir, commensality is benevolent." No quarrels with that – I had written a piece on the history of restaurants in the West,[1] and that seemed to qualify me to some extent to say something about eating together at the same table, at least if the table was in a place that we call a restaurant. But not being an archaeologist could not be remedied by looking up a word.

It got worse at the workshop – not only was I not an archaeologist, but I was not prepared for the work that was needed to try to make sense of often the tiniest bit of data – a pot here, an opening in a wall there, kitchen leavings here, bowls of different shapes and sizes there – what did it mean, how could one conjecture and make an argument about what ancient commensality may have looked like in different places at different times from what appeared to me to be such little evidence? Especially for those archaeologists who were working almost exclusively with objects and without textual sources, I found myself fighting the urge to say: hey, you can't prove that, or, wait a second, how do you know that it was women who were cooking at that fire, you are just speculating! In restaurants, it took more than half of the time in their modern existence for women to start to even work in restaurants, let alone cook in them! It was tough going for me – and who knows how hard it was for the skilled archaeologists? What did they think of this interloper, sitting near the back, wondering what he could say or do while they wondered if he had wandered into the wrong academic building at the Freie Universität in Berlin.

Giving the last talk on the last day and then being part of a larger discussion almost put me over the edge. Why would this learned crowd listen to me anyway? I had never measured the dimensions of any of the dining rooms that I was about to describe, nor could I meticulously describe the china or the cooking implements – I had never unearthed the remains of any restaurant nor had I sifted through the kitchen debris. Not a recipe for success. But something that happens at the table when one eats out in Germany – and indeed took place again at the end of the conference when we all seemed to be engaged in the commensal act of eating together at an Italian restaurant in a Berlin suburb – helped me to try to make sense about why it might not have been such a ter-

1 Some of the sections of this paper are adapted from my "Dining Out: The Development of the Restaurant": Shore 2007.

rible idea to have me over for dinner. I brought it up in discussion – a question about when eating at the same table is commensality and when it just looks like it.

When people in Germany eat in a restaurant, and they are not related to one another, they almost always pay for their food individually, sometimes down to the extra bits like rolls and water and wine that to an outsider look like they are being shared among the group. So the waitperson, when she or he comes by for the reckoning, brings a large purse along and painfully and exactingly figures out precisely how much each person owes. "I will pay for that bottle of water, or half of that bottle of wine," is not heard that uncommonly. Did we all eat together at a common table or not? Did we share a social space together even though we paid individually? What was actually happening at the table that we seemed to be sharing before the time came to pay the bill?[2]

Does it matter that when folks in Germany go out to eat, they often divide the bill up in (what I experience as) excruciating exactness? Does that affect the commensal aspects of eating out? Moreover, what does it mean to eat at the same table, listen to and discuss serious and funny matters as a group and then pay individually at the end? Is the act of eating in public also an individual act? How is eating in public a ritual act, and how is it also an ordinary one? It seems to bear directly on one of the questions that was asked of the participants in the workshop: how ritual commensality could be defined in relation to daily commensal practices in order to become something special? How do ritualized forms of food consumption arise out of ordinary commensal routines? The restaurant seems to be an excellent site to look for answers to these questions. And perhaps, somewhere along the way, to provide another angle to look at the ancient commensal world pieced together by archaeologists.

2 Commensal Defined

Commensal: A person who usually eats at the same table as another or several others. We are very attached to the meaning of the name Commensal, as it broadly defines the essence of our mission. By opening our table to our customers and sharing with them our love of vegetarianism, we endeavor to offer them the best of who we are.

Commensal's Commitments

Beneficial, ethical and organic, the Commensal brand appeals to consumers who choose to live a healthy lifestyle, with the knowledge that their health

2 The American expression "going Dutch" is a term that could refer to this. The corresponding phrase in Turkish is *hesabı Alman usulü ödemek*, which can be translated into English as "to pay the bill the German way." Alman usulü = German style.

> begins with what's on their plate. It upholds values that are in line with maintaining good relations with our planet as well as sustainable development, environmental responsibility and health. Commensal is first and foremost a way of life that values well-being, personal accomplishment and authenticity. It is a humanitarian brand based on the life values of respect, integrity and sharing.
>
> At Commensal, we steadfastly abide by our commitments and also support social integration through an employment program in our central kitchen.[3]

No, this is not the Oxford English Dictionary's updated definition of commensal, but it very well could become it. It certainly takes in an enormous field of endeavor: saving the planet, being the best you can be as an individual, and at the same time, sharing. A good brand indeed. No, it comes from a restaurant chain in Canada, Commensal – it is the statement of their philosophy. A chain that started with one restaurant in 1977 and thirty-four years later opened its seventh, noting:

> The opening of the new Boisbriand restaurant marks an evolution in the dining experience. New colours along with a new ambiance and several thoughtful touches are what make Commensal a restaurant concept in tune with today's population, *who expect and seek out pleasure, adventure and freedom with a focus on taking care of themselves*.[4]

Pleasure, adventure and freedom with a focus on taking care of themselves. The new meaning of commensal.

Or the first meaning of commensal, at least when it comes to the first restaurant as Rebecca L. Spang[5] has helped us to understand: it was an establishment named after a particular type of food, a bouillon 'restoratif.' The restaurant served a healthful hot broth that was supposed to soothe and 'restore' the body. The first restaurant provided both food and a place to eat it that promoted health. Mathurin Roze de Chantoiseau opened his Parisian establishment in 1766 with the claim that he would serve broth made from a nutritious extract of meats and vegetables, a claim that was based on the quasi-scientific ideals of the Enlightenment, the movement that among its many projects purported to apply reason to such problems as curing the ailments of intellectuals and artists.[6] The impetus for such frugal and healthful dining in Paris might have been a reaction against the elaboration of French cuisine in the first half of the eighteenth century. The shift between ostentatious, baroque, and innovative tastes and a reaction in the direction of

3 Quoted from http://www.commensal.com/en/qui/philosophie/resto/default.idigit(accessed June 2011).

4 Emphasis added, quoted from http://www.commensal.com/en/qui/history/resto/default.idigit (accessed June 2011).

5 Spang 2000.

6 The source of and impetus to this movement is the Renaissance humanist Platina 1998.

(supposedly) classical purity was not new. But the diner in a restaurant was usually alone, said to be recovering from the nervous disorders that the commensal eating patterns of the 18th century elites in Paris had brought on.

From sipping chicken broth alone in 1766 into a chain of vegetarian restaurants in Ontario and Quebec called Commensal in 2011? How might we think about the restaurant as an extension of domestic food consumption when it began as the opposite, a way to get away from the increasingly ritualized – at least for the upper classes – form of dining at home? In other words, at least for the privileged classes in 18th century Europe, the feast had become the normal way to eat – and what the restaurant was, at least at its origins, was a place for bowling alone,[7] a place for a healthful broth (the moral equivalent of vegetarianism of the 21st century?) alone, away from family, away from the ritual – often performed in a semi-public way – of powerful people eating their meals. You got to do it whenever you wanted, the broth was brought to you, warm, not sitting on a table as part of an elaborate table-setting and not among people who were seated in a ritually prescribed way at a precise time of the day.

Before we continue, let's think about what a restaurant is and why it seems to be a modern invention. It was chiefly distinguishable at its outset from an inn, the only place one could get a meal while travelling – i. e., while not at home. A restaurant is a destination in itself as a place to eat, rather than (as with an inn) a place of local gathering or traveller's refuge that also offers food. Within the restricted opening hours of the establishment, a restaurant offers a variety of dishes, more so than is the case with an inn. Thus most restaurants do not open for breakfast and those that do, outside of hotels or modern-day inns, specialize to some extent in this meal. The meals restaurants do serve have more options than traditional inns could provide; at a restaurant one eats what one desires from an often extensive menu. During most of its history, the restaurant has offered meals served by a waiter whose job is limited to this (so he is not doubling as an innkeeper, ostler, or bartender).[8] Rather than gathering with the other lodgers at an inn or guesthouse, the clientele of a restaurant come with their friends, sit apart from others, and pay for a specific meal when they are finished.

Certain facets of restaurant dining now seem so natural or automatic that it is worth noting that they are based on culturally and historically specific rules and expectations. Once having chosen not to dine at home, one might plan ahead and decide to go at a particular time to a certain restaurant, but the decision to go out could as easily be

7 This is a reference to a widely read and influential text by Robert D. Putnam 2000, which gathered data on the increasing isolation of Americans in such findings as the drop in family dinners of 43% over the period of the last quarter of the 20th century.

8 As far as we can tell, it is probably in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the first waitresses appear, not at the classic French restaurant, but at something called the Harvey Houses which were set along the American frontier railroad lines at neatly spaced distances beginning in 1870. It is likely that the first woman to run a middle class café did so in the late 19th century in Glasgow – Kate Cranston.

made on the spur of the moment. Even with a reservation, unless the restaurant has certain specialties (Joe's Stone Crabs in Miami Beach or a Brazilian *churassceria*), usually a decision about exactly what to eat has not been made in advance. Even going to a restaurant renowned for a certain food, one's partner might want to eat something else (hence steakhouses offer fish of a sort, and sometimes vegetarian options). Even if arriving a few minutes late, the diners still expect the food to be ready for preparation (or reheating) when ordered and cooked, or at least plated once the guests are seated. A plate with the food ordered is set before each diner, or served from a plate set on the table. The party has a general idea of what this will all cost, depending on the category of the restaurant, the nature of the ingredients, whether or not wine or spirits accompanied the meal, and how many courses were consumed. When it comes time to settle up, a bill arrives listing the dishes ordered, with prices that agree (one expects) with those stated on the menu.

Although these expectations might not explicitly occur to someone routinely dining in a restaurant, they are established characteristics that have defined the institution since it sprung to life fully formed in the 1760s in Paris.[9] No such institution was available in the West before then. Away from home or the court, one might have an array of dining choices, but none would include the attributes of what would be considered a restaurant. One characteristic of early restaurants, offering opportunities for intimate and perhaps illicit meetings, was important in their earliest days but is no longer integral to their meaning or function. It may be tantalizing to think about this possibility of the early meaning of the restaurant as a ritual form of feasting that the restaurant was best suited to perform, one that would work less well in the home or in an acknowledged feasting place. The *cabinets particuliers* provided a programme of which eating formed only a part. Objects of many stories, the private rooms in Parisian restaurants offered a new venue for encounters between men and women not married to one another who could meet in a public place but a private space, more elegant and less stigmatized than a brothel. Private rooms flourished in Parisian restaurants for at least the first half of the nineteenth century, and they fulfilled a number of social functions in addition to serving as places for sexual meetings. Some of the more discreet Parisian restaurants maintained separate entrances, so that the couples did not have to traverse the public space in order to reach their rendezvous, but private rooms also allowed for political groups, for spies, for people who needed a space outside of the home to meet, but for whom public meetings were interdicted by French law. But despite the pleasures of the flesh and the stimulation of political discussion, the private room of a restaurant was essentially a locale for the delectation of food.

9 For further literature on the early history of restaurants, see Grimod de La Reynière and Coste 1803–1812; Jarves 1856; Aron 1975; Trager 1997; Spang 2000; Pitte 2002; Strong 2002.

The ritual form of elite eating that prevailed into mid-18th century Europe led to the first restaurants, but those restaurants, within a span of no more than fifty years, became a ritualized form of their own. The restaurants projected a certain image of familial intimacy and refinement at the same time. So in addition to ritualized possibilities for intrigue, French restaurants continued to recast the notion of the domestic, first by simplifying the food for lone diners, then recodifying it, and then exporting it. The French restaurant became, for at least a century and a half, the embodiment of what it meant to be a restaurant, exported throughout the world. The owners of *Les Trois Frères Provençaux*, founded in 1786, were actually unrelated but married to three sisters. From their native Marseilles they brought to Paris a splendid recipe for the Provençal *brandade de morue* (puréed saltcod). It was the first stop in Paris for many foreigners on the nineteenth-century grand tour, especially for Americans, who admired its furnishings as much as its food and who perhaps felt it easier to experience France in a way that seemed to demand less advance preparation than did visits to historic sites and museums. This one establishment so embodied the notion of the French restaurant that it was imported to the first world's fair in the United States, the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, where the American author William Dean Howells lamented, after dining at the temporary branch:

> When I think of it, I am ready to justify the enormous charges at the restaurant of the Trois Frères Provençaux (so called because each of the Brothers makes out his bill of Three Prices, and you pay the sum total), as a proper reprisal upon us; but I would fain whisper in the ears of those avengers that not all Americans are guilty.[10]

A third aspect in the ritualized codification of what eating in a restaurant was to be was the emergence of a nascent publicity industry that would help enshrine classic examples of the institution. Guidebooks, listings and reviews of restaurants abounded. As was the case with the 'restaurant' itself, we can name the person who set this machinery in motion: the Parisian lawyer and gastronome Alexandre-Balthasar-Laurent Grimod de La Reynière, who published the *Almanach des gourmands* in 1803. In the first decade of the nineteenth century Grimod developed the preconditions for what constituted true gastronomic spectacle, the nexus of cuisine and atmosphere characteristic of the modern restaurant. A great establishment had to satisfy taste but also to fulfill fantasy and desire. Grimod helped to fix in the minds of his readers the restaurant as a place apart, with its own rules, where learning to read the menu and to order the right foods and wines developed into an act of taste that would take an effort to perform correctly. The client as well as the waiter had to obtain a degree of expertise.

10 Howells 1876, 94.

So eating in a restaurant provided at first a way to get out from under ritualized forms of dining at home by eating 'alone' in a space that was semi-public. It developed very quickly, though, into another form of ritualized space that had its own rules that one had to learn – how to order, what wines went with what foods, where to go and which restaurants to avoid. And you could perform certain acts – meetings, trysts – in restaurants that you could not easily do at home. This process was more or less true of western European and US restaurant formation into the 19th century. But the success of the restaurant for the elites led by the middle of the 19th century – due in part to a number of technological and industrial changes – to the development of the restaurant for the growing middle classes and the poor. These restaurants started to take on other forms – less ritualized and looking more like eating at home.

So let's turn back to our German example of eating in public and wondering whether it was commensal or not. And whether and to what extent it retained the nature of a ritual feast or may have turned into something completely other. In Germany, as in Italy, Britain and the United States, the restaurant was first imported from France through the introduction of *grande cuisine* by chefs trained in Paris, and then the middle-class and lower-class versions of the restaurant followed in the latter half of the nineteenth century due to the rise in the urban population and the influence of technology. Germans took the word "restaurant" into their language after 1850. Previous German terms referred to inns or taverns and they were superseded, at least in legal terms, by the words *Gastwirtschaft* or *Gaststätte*, for those restaurants that would develop for the middle class. After 1840, Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt am Main and Munich would all boast well-known restaurants, many of them connected to the rise of the luxury hotel, a phenomenon that helped to make the classic restaurant an internationally familiar institution. One of the most famous developed in Berlin in 1872, when the Kempinski family started to sell sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs in tasting rooms in the cellars from which they conducted what was then their principal business, the sale of Hungarian wines. The enterprise changed direction and grew into a hotel and mass-luxury restaurant that by 1913 would serve luxurious eight-course dinners (or half-portions for half the price) to 10,000 diners a day. The Restaurant Kempinski in the Leipziger Straße had up to 250 chefs employed at once and when it opened in 1889, it became the largest restaurant in Berlin. But it did not remain so, for this was only the first incarnation of the large-scale Kempinski restaurant empire: the second was on the Ku'damm (now rebuilt as the Hotel Bristol), and the most glorious was called the "Haus Vaterland" on Potsdamer Platz (heavily damaged in World War II). Under one roof there were 12 restaurants, a huge cafe (with 2,500 seats) and a movie theater – all told a capacity of 8,000, with a total of more than one million visitors a year. The restaurants were themed: the Löwenbrau here, a Spanish Bodega there, and an American Wild-West-Bar to boot. The entire chain was confiscated from its Jewish owners by the National Socialists in the 1930s.

What was going on at the Haus Vaterland? One million visitors a year, 8,000 seats that could be filled, and you could travel the world's cuisines without leaving the building. A short century and a half after the modern Western restaurant was formed in response to the ritualized feasting at home, this outsized extravaganza emerges. The number and kinds of experiences one could have in this complex destabilize the notion of what eating out might look like, what feasting might be, and, by extension to the 21st century, what eating at home is. At Haus Vaterland, dining became a multi-media experience:

> The Rhine Terrace Restaurant was famous for its weather simulations. The tagline that 'In Haus Vaterland, one eats heartily and the storms rage hourly,' was borne out by the creation of a backdrop portraying the Rhine Valley at St. Goar – (with views of the Rheinfels Castle and the Lorelei Cliffs). Once an hour the lights in the room were dimmed and thunder, lightning and heavy downpours were simulated. In order to protect the guests from the gushing rain water, the tables were protected from the simulation by glass panels. In the recreated Rhine Valley, model trains ran and model ships plied the surface of the water. In cooperation with Lufthansa, model airplanes moved through the landscape pulled along on thin filaments.[11]

Eating out in public at the Rhine Terrace, combined with all of the other opportunities at Haus Vaterland for both dining and watching films, seems to encapsulate the multiple possibilities in a very capacious idea – commensality. Add into this stew the likelihood that when one went there in a group, the bill was almost certainly split down to the last pfennig, eating out can be eating alone, it can be eating with people but not sharing the cost of the meal, it can be a spectacle that one observes and where one is observed by other diners, and where one can choose the level of ritual in the dining "experience" to suit one's mood and one's income. Do we know what people experienced in Haus Vaterland? Do historians today have more evidence for what they thought they were experiencing than the archaeologists at our workshop had for their commensal questions? Maybe in the remains of this precursor of what has now become a universal experience of eating out are the shards of commensality. The inverse of eating out as eating at home

11 The German original "Berühmt waren die Wettersimulationen in der Rheinterrasse. Unter dem Motto 'Im Haus Vaterland ißt man gründlich, hier gewitterts stündlich' wurden in einer nachgebauten Kulisse der Rheintallandschaft bei St. Goar (mit Blick auf die Burg Rheinfels und den Loreleyfelsen) zu jeder Stunde die Saalbeleuchtung gedämpft sowie Donner, Blitz und Wolkenbrüche simuliert. Zum Schutz der Gäste vor den Regengüssen waren die Tischreihen mit Glasscheiben zur Kulisse hin abgetrennt. Im nachgebauten Rheintal fuhren Modelleisenbahnen, außerdem bewegten sich Schiffsmodelle auf dem Wasserlauf. Es wurden sogar in Kooperation mit der Lufthansa Flugzeugmodelle an dünnen Fäden durch die Kulissenlandschaft bewegt."

and the festive meals are often at home, while eating out has become a form of eating at home.

Maybe there are modern ruins that can speak to us in the ways that the archaeological sites do. Here is Haus Vaterland in 1976:[12]

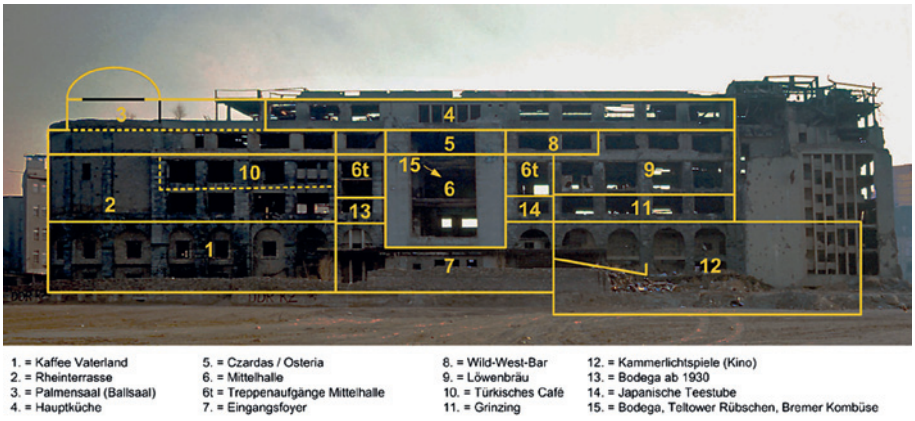

Fig. 1 Cross section of the ruin of Haus Vaterland, showing the location of restaurants. Photo: Hansjürgen Lindow.

This is a twentieth century site, so it should be much easier to analyze than an ancient archaeological one. But is it? Do we know what people experienced in its various commensal spaces, what they felt and thought as they watched the spectacles in the restaurants or in the cinema? How will archaeologists of the future deal with these, our ruins, in thinking about eating together and apart?

12 http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haus_Vaterland_%28Berlin%29#/media/File:Haus_Vaterland_schnitt_1024.jpg (accessed July 2011).

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