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Folds, fields, and fauna:

**A Deleuzo-Guattarian approach to the socialising power of religious
experiences in Ancient Near Eastern Landscapes**

Neil D. A. Erskine MA (Hons) MPhil

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Humanities

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

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Abstract

Archaeological approaches to socialisation are underdeveloped. As interpretative models are most often borrowed from other disciplines, rather than developed with a material-focus at their centre, archaeologists are left without effective object-centred frameworks with which to examine how individuals interacted with and learnt about their world. This thesis addresses these issues with a new approach, drawing upon Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who offer many analytical tools that can directly connect highly theoretical interpretations of ancient societies to archaeological data. By stressing how humans understand the world through their accumulated previous experiences, Deleuze and Guattari direct the archaeologist to consider how identifiable human interactions with objects and places informed their subsequent experiences, and therefore their developing perceptions of their surroundings. This approach is tested against three case studies, in the 3rd Millennium Jazira, 2nd Millennium Anatolia, and 1st Millennium Southern Levant, that stress the intersection of landscapes and religious practice, both of which are frequently highlighted as powerful agents of socialisation. The varying forms and resolutions available for these case studies allow for a comprehensive exploration of a Deleuzo-Guattarian framework's effectiveness in reconstructing and understanding ancient experiences of the world, and new interpretations of how ancient individuals both shaped and were shaped by their experiences of religiously-loaded landscapes.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Neil Erskine MA(Hons) MPhil

May 2020

Chapter 1: The socialising power of landscape and religion

1.1 Socialisation absent an approach

Socialisation matters. Yet, developing archaeological approaches to socialisation has not appeared to. This is surprising in a discipline frequently concerned with the development, stasis, and transformation of society that would seem to necessitate exploration of the mechanisms via which social motifs are learnt, codified, and disrupted. Indeed, many archaeological narratives consider how individuals or groups acquire social roles, pass down knowledge, or otherwise internalise their social conditions. Despite this, specifically archaeological approaches to how these processes take place are remarkably underdeveloped. Developing one is the goal of this thesis.

Defined most broadly, socialisation is the learning and reproduction of social conditions (Chapin et al. 2016). However, such a definition may represent a wide range of relatively disparate phenomena, and different fields, and different scholars within them, stress different aspects of socialisation. Amongst social psychologists, frequent distinctions are made between the forms of socialisation that takes place at different ages. Childhood and adolescent socialisation is generally understood as a process through which young persons develop identities by exploring varied social roles and social contexts (e.g. Perez-Felkner 2013). Later in life, during adult socialisation, research frequently addresses how persons learn to better perform identities and roles they already inhabit (Lutfey and Mortimer 2006: 186). Across these themes, individual studies tend to stress specific contexts of socialisation, such as the family (e.g. Grusec 2011), school (e.g. Eccles and Roeser 2011), or work environments (e.g. Mortimer and Lorence 1995). Most of these studies target the learning of individual roles and the creation of individual identities, processes that have found their way into archaeology as archaeologies of personhood (e.g. Fowler

2004) or identity (e.g. Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005), as well as in archaeological analyses of childhood learning (see **2.3.3. Socialisation**).

Other socialisation research seeks out those processes through which communities retain cohesion and maintain intergenerational continuity (Lutfey and Mortimer 2006: 184). This exhibits considerable crossover with studies foregrounding social roles, which must be enacted as part of that continuity, but stresses the transmission of, for instance, ideologies, values, and attitudes, through the 'direct, personal experience with an object or from indirect experience through other people and organizations' (Maio et al. 2006: 294). How receptive to these ideologies, values, and attitudes a given individual is, and the degree to which they are adopted, rests upon their subjective understandings that inform how they affect that individual (Maio et al. 2006: 292). The most basic level of socialisation, then, upon which all others are built, is the development of those subjective understandings.

How these understandings are developed has been most famously explored by the social theorists Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens. Bourdieu's (1977) habitus and Giddens's (1984) structures both describe, broadly, the social order internalised by individuals that frames their behaviours and perceptions and the process by which it is developed (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**). Within habitus, Bourdieu sets out doxa, basic assumptions about what is and what can be that seem obvious and undeniable. Meanwhile, Giddens' (1984: 6-7) practical consciousness holds tacit understandings that cannot necessarily be expressed but provide the basis for day-to-day perception and action, distinguished from the discursive consciousness which can be fully articulated. It is the development of these understandings that I am focussed on here.

Therefore, when I discuss socialisation or social learning it is the internalisation of these subjective understandings, to the structures of the practical consciousness or to doxa, that I am referring. Whilst the approach I develop in **Chapter 4** can be

applied to any form of socialisation, in this study I am less concerned with the internalisation of behaviours or roles than with the learning and reproduction of their underlying ontologies: those 'fundamental set[s] of understandings about how the world is: what kinds of beings, processes, and qualities could potentially exist and how these relate to each other' (Harris and Robb 2012: 668).

Giddens and Bourdieu are regular touchstones in archaeological investigations of socialisation, whichever precise form is being tackled (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**). However, both theorists had direct access to the societies they studied and were never forced to navigate ancient evidence. Consequently, their utilisation in archaeological contexts leads to a range of problems. Habitus and structuration stress the role of experience of the world in developing perceptions of it, but interpreting, or even identifying, experience has proven problematic for archaeologists. They presuppose stable social conditions (Bourdieu 1990: 61; Giddens 1984: 2), and so they struggle to explain rapid or substantial change. They were devised for analysis of modern capitalist societies (Giddens 1982: 59) or during fieldwork with specific communities (Bourdieu 1958; Bourdieu et al. 1963; Bourdieu and Sayad 1964) and risk importing anachronistic interpretation into the deep past. Fundamentally, in being constructed to study extant societies, they are difficult to anchor against material evidence, and their archaeological application frequently leads to vague, or even imperceptible, connections between the data analysed and theoretical framework applied. Given these problems, the work of Bourdieu and Giddens provide some steering in the right direction, in foregrounding experiential interactions with the world, but they provide no functional approach for the archaeologist.

I address this problem by developing a new theoretical approach to ancient socialisation processes by drawing on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Their concepts of the *arrangement*, *fold*, *plateau*, and *rhizome*, respectively representing the complex amalgams of material and metaphysical properties, the

internalisation of experiences of those amalgams, collections of those experiences, and the society-wide lattice of all things, explored at length in **Chapter 4**, lie at the heart of this work. I will incorporate these ideas into an interpretative framework that foregrounds how the experiences that emerge from specific contexts are internalised and cumulatively form and reform perceptions of the world. This allows for an approach that is thoroughly archaeological and material-focussed whilst still allowing for nuanced and contextual reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes.

It is this new approach that I believe to be the fundamental contribution of this thesis. It was not always intended to be, however. The study itself demanded the development of a new framework as my initial task: drawing out the religious meaning embedded in place(s) could not be achieved without a robust approach to how landscape meaning was created, internalised, and developed. Religious meaning in landscape remains a core component of the thesis and now represents the theme against which my new approach to socialisation is tested. It serves this purpose well due to the way in which socialisation, landscape, and religion, are tightly interwoven.

1.2. Landscape and religion as socialisation mechanisms

Everything happens somewhere. The spatial location in which any experience occurs underpins, contextualises, and actively contributes to it. Social understandings of the world are rooted in social actors' experiences of that world (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984). As the places in which experiences occur are vital components of the perception of those experiences (Casey 2008: 46) the active inhabitation of a landscape plays a key role in how it is perceived and understood (Ingold 1993). It follows, then, that place represents a key socialisation mechanism.

Meanwhile, belief systems, be they religious or nonreligious, are also fundamental to human understandings of and attitudes towards the world and our place in it, and help orient and direct our attention, thought processes, and decision-making (Brock and Balloun 1967; Colzato et al. 2008; Fry and Debats 2011; Klauer et al. 2000). Exposure to objects and symbols with religious connotations has significant impacts on social psychological processes (e.g. Barthes 1957; Bilewicz and Klebaniuk 2013; Geertz 1973; Jung 1964; Ysseldyk et al. 2016) and cultural and religious symbols immediately and emotively reinforce complex concepts (Butz 2009; Freud 2000 [1938]; Jung 1964; Ortner 1973). Significantly, conscious engagement with religious motifs is not a requirement of this (Baldwin et al. 1990; Jung 1964) and religious motifs retain considerable influence when exposure is peripheral or brief (Weisbuch-Remington et al. 2005). Like landscape, then, religion and religious motifs plays an important role in socialisation, framing and focussing experience and perception.

These two powerful socialisation tools, landscape and religion, are often thoroughly interconnected. Place(s) can be fundamental to religion and, reflexively, religion represents a key component in the development of place attachment (Mazumdar and Mazumdar 2004: 387). Landscapes' transcendental and divine significance is often recorded (e.g. Gates et al. 2009; Käppel and Pothou 2015; Nordeide and Brink 2013) and even those with no religious belief of their own frequently present their landscape experiences in religious terms (Peelen and Jansen 2007: 76). This reflexive relationship between religion and place reflects a deep interaction through which each is shaped by and shapes the other (Bourdieu 1977; Munn 1986; Pandya 1990). The deep intertwining of these two formidable socialisation mechanisms therefore present an inviting opportunity for the analysis of ancient socialisation processes, and an interesting dataset against which I can test the effectiveness of a new approach to how individuals experience and internalise perceptions of their world.

1.3. Research questions and case studies

After highlighting gaps in research into ancient Near Eastern landscape, religion and socialisation in **Chapter 2** and drawing out the problems inherent in present theoretical frameworks in **Chapter 3**, the approach that I hope will represent the fundamental contribution of this thesis is set out in **Chapter 4**. I will then test its effectiveness by attempting to present detailed and contextually specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and seeking to explain how some key socialisation 'stages', the creation, reinforcement, and transformation, of religious place-meaning, occur. Finally, I will seek to establish that my new approach is not only effective, but that it is more effective than alternative frameworks. These goals can be boiled down to five questions.

- 1) Can a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach allow nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and can these be tied explicitly to archaeological data?
- 2) How is meaning first embedded in landscape?
- 3) How is landscape meaning maintained and reinforced?
- 4) How are preestablished landscape meanings transformed or developed?
- 5) How does a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach compare with competing theoretical frameworks?

The specific case studies presented in **Chapters 5-7** tackle three distinct regions and periods. Somewhat unusually, they are not in a chronological sequence, but are instead arranged to tackle research themes in a logical order – addressing how landscape meaning emerges (**Chapter 5**), is maintained (**Chapter 6**), and then transformed (**Chapter 7**). These diverse studies allow for the same approach to be tested against diverse cultural contexts and variable quantities and qualities of archaeological and textual evidence and address two research questions each. In

that each presents a specific reconstruction of socialisation processes in a highly specific context, the first question recurs throughout them.

Additionally, **Chapter 5-7** provide answers to questions 2-4 respectively. **Chapter 5** sees an exploration of the cultic animal experiences of Middle Bronze Age Assyrian traders, who were resident in Anatolia, whilst their caravans travelled through the South-Eastern Anatolian landscape. It shows how Assyrian merchants carried their domestic cult experiences with them on the road, colouring new places with new meaning. Then, **Chapter 6** considers the impacts of the landscape-oriented ritual practices witnessed by Edomite traders visiting a wayside shrine in the Iron Age Negev and demonstrates how they saw their religious landscape preoccupations reinforced. Finally, **Chapter 7** moves back to the Early Bronze Age, and analyses how farmers in Upper Mesopotamia interacted with the agricultural hinterlands accompanied by animals that straddled the mundane and cultic spheres. It reveals how an elite co-option of ancestral cult was made acceptable through agricultural landscape experience in the North Mesopotamian hinterlands. The fifth question is then explored in **Chapter 8** when I directly compare my approach with habitus and structuration, as well as with other approaches that have been utilised to analyse ancient experience or to tackle specific categories of data pertaining to experiential phenomena or socialisation processes.

My final chapter, **Chapter 9**, sets out the contributions of the thesis, by which time I hope the reader will be convinced of the efficacy of a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach and will have already internalised its ability to bind data to theory, draw out experience, and provide finely grained, context-specific reconstructions of complex social processes.

Chapter 2: Surveys, systems, and texts

My first step in developing a new approach with which to draw out the religious meanings ancient persons encountered in landscapes, and their creation, reproduction, and development through time, is to survey the relevant extant literature and draw out those ideas upon which I can build and those issues that must be addressed. Frustratingly, there are few of the former and many of the latter but addressing this work does highlight traps to avoid in my own investigation. This survey takes place across this chapter and the next. Here my concern is with the textual and archaeological literature specifically tackling ancient Near Eastern (hereafter ANE) landscapes, religion, or socialisation. The theoretical literature that posits interpretative frameworks with which these themes can be investigated is considered in **Chapter 3**. As I will outline below, the overwhelmingly positivist character of ANE research means there is disappointingly little crossover between the two, presenting exciting opportunities for research based on extant data.

This previous research is addressed in three stages: first, a brief overview of how textual scholarship has dominated research and the degree to which archaeology has not only been granted too little attention, but has frequently been dismissed almost entirely; second, a discussion of the dominant habits in literary scholarship; and third, a synopsis of the similar issues that recur in archaeological investigations. Covering textual work before archaeological research is somewhat ironic given the thrust of my argument frequently revolves around the problems generated by others treating them in the same order! However, given many lacunae in the archaeological corpus result from following literary and philological scholarship's lead, it makes sense first to set out the preoccupations of textual research that have directed, and skewed, archaeological research.

These surveys of the literature reveal some fundamental problems for the archaeologist (or interdisciplinarian) wishing to investigate ancient individuals' understandings of religious meaning in the landscape. The work of historians, philologists, and theologians has provided us with indispensable material that informs reconstructions of ancient landscapes and their religiously-loaded meanings and I draw heavily upon this body of literature in my case studies (**Chapters 5-7**). However, it is politically, theologically, and demographically biased, and archaeology's subservience to this text-based work in reconstruction of the ancient past has been a significant and lasting problem.

Until relatively recently ANE archaeological research in historic periods has been led by texts, one way or another. In the southern Levant, biblical research questions were unassailable as the focus of archaeological study whilst the hunt for epigraphic tablets preoccupied excavation strategies in Anatolia and Syro-Mesopotamia. Consequently, archaeology has often been employed solely to confirm or dismiss textual narratives, investigate research questions inspired by texts, or gather more texts that can then be confirmed, dismissed, or serve to dictate new research questions. More recently, verifying and discovering texts has been less prevalent, but research questions still often revolve around themes that originate in historical questions or literary reconstructions and have perdured despite developments in methodological and epistemological sophistication.

Text-based analyses of landscapes, which rarely appear in the ancient sources, tend to be limited to technological or logistic concerns, or establishing the locations of toponyms. Those of religion generally prioritise the urban elite, or more recently the domestic cult, and most often treat the two as homogenous, and competing, oppositional, units. Socialisation processes, meanwhile, are all but absent,

appearing either as passing remarks or exclusively focussed on children, usually with little to no solid theoretical underpinnings.

Archaeologists' landscape analyses have pushed beyond their textual colleagues, but in analyses of religion and socialisation across the case study regions, and the ANE as a whole, they have very much followed their lead. Landscapes have been addressed as describable objects, rather downplaying their active and changing role in society; as systems, which addresses their ability to act and their changeability but removing the human agent; as dynamic cultural constructs, which seeks to redress the absence of human agency but tends towards maintaining systemic understandings, simply adding a new, human, system; and as experienced phenomena, which provides a lucrative approach but has been underutilised in ANE contexts (but which is built upon in detail in **Chapter 4** and forms the basis of my interpretations in **Chapter 5-7**).

Meanwhile, archaeological research into ANE religion has been particularly impacted both by the abundance of texts, the interdisciplinary leadership of textual scholarship, and the positivism of ANE interpretation. Most often, it has functioned largely as a test of text-based accounts, providing material confirmation or rebuttal of the ancient sources' narratives. The enormous diversity of cult material from Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant has generally been negotiated either by dealing with small assemblages, types, or even individual artefacts, in piecemeal studies alluding to texts or iconography, losing much in the way of context; by attempting to address it *en masse*, resulting in the overall *feel* of a cult tradition or traditions, but with something of a gaussian blur about it; or by subdividing it along text-based, dichotomistic lines, and developing interesting narratives about specific social demographics, though never individuals, but robbing them, and their cult practices, of their overlapping interconnectivity.

Lastly, again like their textual comrades, analyses of socialisation in the archaeological literature usually mention it in very general terms and only in connection to another theme, noting that it took place during the practice being focussed upon, or in the spatial location being studied, but with little more attention than that. Where it receives more focus it is again usually centred on children, though it remains general and with scarce theoretical nuance.

As a result, this survey of work pertaining to my study does not present many avenues down which I might hunt for my new theoretical approach to the emergence, maintenance, and development of religiously loaded landscape meaning, but it reveals a number of problems which that approach must be designed to avoid. It cannot allow the interpreter to default to description or simplistic systemic thinking; it must be capable of drawing on the abundance of literary evidence but be capable of interpreting the social world via material culture; it should be able to deal with cult activity with attention to both its diverse idiosyncrasies and its wide-reaching context; it must build on experiential frameworks; it should recognise and seek out the agent; and it must explicitly, and directly, tackle socialisation.

2.1. ANE research paradigms

2.1.1. The Southern Levant and biblical primacy

In the Levant, research into biblical periods (generally the Bronze and Iron Ages) has been unsurprisingly dominated by biblical scholars. Consequently, research questions frequently encircled confessional and theological concerns. Though the purposes of their investigations varied, the biblically-motivated scholars that carried out early projects largely produced material only to inform or support their

readings of the Bible. As a result, research was overwhelmingly devoted to text-based issues.

Reflecting European and American theological paradigms, the goals of early British and American archaeological research in the Holy Land were starkly different, though both confessional. Broadly speaking, European scholars and institutions, who were indebted to Wellhausen (1878) and higher criticism and therefore comfortable with questioning biblical literalism, sought to enhance understandings of the world in which biblical writers lived (Gove 1869: 9). 'There was nothing to alarm the exegetical critic', *Society of Biblical Archaeology* believed, 'if slight discrepancies that always present themselves in the world's history' contradicted biblical events (Birch 1872: 2). By contrast, in the USA, where American Protestantism largely rested upon the veracity of biblical events, archaeologists essentially sought material confirmations of biblical historicity (Davis 2004: viii). The American *Palestine Exploration Society* (PES), for example, explicitly sought not to illuminate but to present a defence against 'modern scepticism [which] assails the Bible at the point of reality' (quoted in King 1983: 8).

Even as archaeological investigation in Palestine became more nuanced and scientific, it remained overtly biblical. Late 19th and early 20th century excavators brought strategies developed in Egypt (e.g. Bliss 1894; Bliss and MacAlister 1902; Petrie 1891) to initiate genuine research, rather than treasure hunting, but they were no less confessional. MacAlister, for instance, made bold efforts to link recovered evidence explicitly with biblical events such as the near-sacrifice of Isaac, which he linked to standing stones at Gezer (MacAlister 1906: 62), and present others in line with anti-non-Yahwist biblical perspectives, including 'shining a light on the lurid iniquity of the Amorite' (MacAlister 1906: 76). W. F. Albright, the shining light of biblical archaeology's 'golden age' (Wright 1970) in the 1920s and 1930s, dismissed

the 'unimportant discoveries' of non-biblical periods and praised Bible-verifying Dead Sea surveys (Albright 1932: 40), whilst continuously reworking his studies (e.g. Albright 1924, 1949, 1961, 1966) to demonstrate that 'Wellhausen [and his rejection of the Torah's historicity] will not bear the test of archaeological examination' (Albright 1932: 129). The dominance of the Bible in Southern Levantine archaeology remained strong.

Resistance arose to confessional interpretations in the mid-20th century but critiques focussed on the veracity of biblical narratives rather than any concern with texts leading archaeological research questions. Elliger (1959), Finkelstein (1959) and Noth (1960) all challenged the passionately literalist works of Glueck (1959: 30-1) and Wright (e.g. 1944, 1952), and the next generation also expressed discomfort with biblically-led interpretations (e.g. de Vaux 1970: 67; Lapp 1969, 1970), but these critiques were largely made on the basis of scriptural disagreements and rarely took issue with a biblical focus itself. Even in the mid-1970s, William G. Dever, (1974: 31-3) was largely alone in attacking the very concept of biblical archaeology and stressing that archaeology must ask broader questions than those presented by the text. Even as critiques of biblically-led archaeology arose, then, it remained principally biblical in focus.

Despite calls for the abandonment of the term 'biblical archaeology', it remains an active paradigm in some circles, evidenced by the success of journals such as *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Davis 2004: vii). Even with the rapid secularisation of archaeological investigation conducted in the southern Levant over the last few decades, it frequently revolves around debates over the veracity of biblical history. The maximalist-minimalist debate, between those who largely accept the historical biblical books and those who reject them as Hellenistic or later fiction, as well as those in between, remains a hot topic (the literature is vast, but comprehensive

discussions of the debate can be found in Dever 2001; Finkelstein et al. 2007; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001), as does the debate over Iron II chronology, and the sequencing of Israelite and Judahite state formation processes (e.g. Faust 2014; Herzog 2007; Sharon et al. 2007), both of which revolve in large part around biblical narratives. Whilst archaeology has therefore largely moved past interpretations being drawn directly from the Bible, biblical texts still plays a major role in dictating research questions in the archaeology of the Southern Levant.

2.1.2. Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and text recovery

Where early scholars working in the Southern Levant were ready equipped with a substantial textual corpus in the Hebrew Bible, those working in Anatolia and Mesopotamia were significantly less well armed, though the historical biblical texts, along with the Torah and prophetic books, present some material pertaining to surrounding regions. Similarly, the Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman scholars preserved some memory of the ancient Near East. In both cases, however, the texts are untrustworthy. Writers were concerned with their own culture's primacy and presented their neighbours oppositionally, characterised by despotic rulers, magical and occult wisdom, and technological stagnation (Liverani 2014: 3-4). Archaeology not only operated as the verifier of texts where they were available, but as the discoverer of texts.

Archaeology's role as both the follower of textual priorities and the recovery mechanism for those texts created a vicious circle. Often, sites have been targeted specifically to maximise text recovery, and when this has been successful, subsequently become the focus of investigation both in terms of historical scholarship and of excavation to recover further texts (Adams 1981: 131). As a result, certain sites completely dominate the literature. Kültepe, ancient Kaneš, provides an illustrative example. Early excavations of Kültepe sought to retrieve examples of

cuneiform tablets that had been appearing at markets in Istanbul and Kayseri in the late 19thc century and, once Bedrich Hrozný had been directed to the area now known as the lower town or *kārum* (see **5.1. Early Second Millennium Anatolia** for notes on the nature of Kaneš' lower town and definitions of *kārum*) by a local villager, were successful (Sagona and Zimansky 2009: 227-8). Given the absence of archives or substantial texts from Aššur (Barjamovic 2011: 5), and the vast number of tablets being unearthed at Kültepe, the lower town archives became, and continue to be, the basis for reconstructions of MBA society not only in Central Anatolia, but for all Anatolia and Mesopotamia (Veenhof 2008b: 41). With Kaneš established as the period's evidentiary superstar, it was further investigated to recover more texts, which further increased its draw on research, and so on.

This habit produces an additional problem, in that our reconstructions of MBA Anatolia, and even Assyria, may be incredibly skewed. The literature is replete with extensive studies of Kanešian society, religion, demographics, agriculture, and economics (the literature is vast, but, for example, see Atici et al. 2014; Barjamovic 2014; Barjamovic et al. 2012; Dercksen 2008; Fairbairn 2014; Heffron 2016; Hertel 2014; Larsen 2015; Makowski 2014; Michel 2014a), and alarmingly little dealing with other parts of MBA Anatolia, and we cannot know at this stage whether it is at all representative. Additionally, the vast majority of texts are from the lower town rather than the main tel, possibly a highly idiosyncratic cultural mixing pot.

Kültepe, which has produced c.20,000 tablets of the Anatolian total of c.22,600 in the MBA (Michel 2011a: 319), is the archetypal example. However, the archaeology-as-text-retriever pattern is common in the ANE. Syrian archaeology has also largely functioned as a discoverer of texts and architecture (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 11) and again certain sites tend to dominate areas of research. The c.17,000 cuneiform tablets from Ebla provide the basis for mid-3rd Millennium politics, trade

relations, and religious practice, and see reconstructions of the entirety of northern Mesopotamia either revolving around or contrasted with the site (e.g. Archi 1982; Archi 1988, 1998; Archi and Biga 2003; Dolce 1998; Fronzaroli 1992; Sollberger 1980). The Ugaritic cult texts provide the foundation for much of the literature on Semitic religion beyond the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Cooley 2011, 2012; Dever 1987; Lewis 2014; Smith 2002a; Smith 2002b). Archaeology's assigned role of both follower and discoverer of texts has therefore allowed extreme biases in scholarship to arise, where individual sites are given long-term, and increasing, priority to the detriment of broader investigations.

2.1.3 Archaeological ignorance

A corollary to the dominance of texts in setting research questions and the reduction of archaeology to a mere test or tool is the frequency with which historians reveal either an ignorance of the ability of archaeology to provide interpretations, or even data. Historiographies of ANE scholarship often ignore archaeology or relegate it to a text-retrieval technique. For example, Veenhof's (2008b: 62-121) 59-page history of Anatolian research deals entirely with texts even when considering subjects on which archaeology has vast potential, including houses (105), shrines and sacred areas (103-105), goods traded (82-90), and trade routes used (79-82). Meanwhile, summarising 150 years of Ancient Near Eastern scholarship, Bryce (1998: 1) notes the 'substantial contributions' of archaeologists and anthropologists, but singles out tablets 'and other written sources' as the fundamental basis for the study of the socio-political organisation of the ancient Near East. Even in alluding to the importance of the archaeological discovery of Hattusa and its abundance of temples to Hittite research, it is the tablet archives upon which Bryce (1998: 2) places most emphasis, and the archaeological remains of the city itself is seemingly relegated to simply the location of textual information. This general lack of familiarity with the

archaeological record or the ability of archaeology to contribute to nuanced understandings of the ancient world is also abundantly clear in those studies that have sought to reconstruct landscape, religion, and socialisation in the ANE.

2.2. Textual reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation

2.2.1. Landscape

Exploring the text-based analyses of landscape in Anatolia, Israel, and Mesopotamia is a disappointing exercise. Quite simply, few studies that place a focus upon the landscape itself, rather than activity conducted across it, exist. This is understandable: given the lack of enthusiasm with which ancient writers felt compelled to describe the landscapes with which they continuously interacted, landscapes are not regular features of the texts in their own right, and so have not been regular subjects of study. Aspects of life that *involve* the landscape do make frequent appearances and so texts considering, for instance, trade and other journeys have seen considerable research. These studies of trade that overwhelmingly favour texts have a tendency to place great focus on financial and terminological details (e.g. Dercksen 2004; Larsen 1967; Michel 1992; Veenhof 1972) or in reconstructing historical geography.

With a great many placenames recorded in many different genres of ancient writing, considerable scholarly focus has been placed upon situating them geographically so that they might allow the development of maps and the reconstruction of trade routes, military campaigns, and other journeys recounted by ancient texts. Early historical geographies, often confessionally-led and biblically derived, were produced by western tourists, antiquarians, and colonial employees (e.g. Bell 1907, 1910; Layard 1882; Peters 1899; Rich 1818; Robinson 1841, 1852; Stark

1937). This tradition of attempting to associate modern points in the landscape with ancient toponyms has remained a popular field, particularly in Bronze Age Anatolia where trade and ritual itineraries are plentiful (e.g. Barjamovic 2008, 2011; Bilgiç 1945-51; di Nocera and Forlanini 1992; Forlanini 2008; Garelli 1963; Garstang and Gurney 1959; Goetze 1957; Kryszeń 2016; Landsberger 1925; Lewy 1963; Lewy 1922, 1950, 1962, 1965; Nashef 1987, 1991; Orlin 1970). There is therefore a wealth of scholarship on which to draw in a study of ANE landscape, but it has rarely been addressed with landscape meaning in mind, and instead is almost wholly dedicated to logistics, economics, and route-finding.

Whilst text-based studies dealing with the Ancient Near Eastern landscape in some regard are therefore plentiful, they are not without problems. Firstly, ancient texts often assume considerable levels of knowledge and are therefore vague regarding geographical details, and their terminology can be opaque: the Assyrian *mātum* ('land') can refer to a city-states territory but also simply to the countryside (Michel 2011a: 321), for example. Consequently, great disagreement lies at the heart of the placement of some major settlements or areas that are very prominent in the texts and such studies must be used tentatively if we are to reconstruct trustworthy routes. Secondly, being text-based, they focus on locating toponyms and largely ignore archaeologically-attested settlements or sites unless they can be confidently associated with an ancient placename. Thirdly, studies have lacked a clear methodology with which the textual sources can be managed and approached, resulting in selective rather than comprehensive analyses (Kryszeń 2016: 1). Finally, for the most part, even recent contributions still tend towards being fundamentally cartographical exercises which seek to develop ancient maps rather than interpret ancient landscapes or their inhabitants (e.g. Palmisano 2017).

Although some more detailed work has taken place to shed light on everyday life in relation to the landscape it remains predominantly functional and logistical in nature. For example, the late 20th century's burst in Mesopotamian scholarship from the 'Rome school' (e.g. Liverani, Fales, Milano, Zaccagnini) focussed on society, economy, and a range of farming issues such as seeding rates and yields, management of animals and labour, and land tenure (Adams 2004: 1), but left meaning unaddressed. Even where archaeology could clearly contribute to these text-driven concerns it is rarely engaged with. Barjamovic (2011: 34), for instance, considers the occupational capacity of inns found along Anatolian routes, but does not even allude to archaeology's potential to answer this question.

Text-based studies of ANE landscapes therefore provide us with some basic material which we can utilise to analyse how ancient Near Eastern individuals moved through the world (though see **2.4. Reconstructing ancient routes**), but considerable work is needed to consider how they experienced this movement, how they understood the landscapes it took them through, or what motivated it beyond the most functional of requirements.

2.2.2. Religion

Given the abundance of textual material shedding light on cult behaviour in the ANE, it is unsurprising that studies of religion are also overwhelmingly focussed on historical documents. Again, this is frequently indicative of a researcher's unfamiliarity with archaeological data and theory rather than the inability of archaeology to contribute to the discussion. Despite the considerable moves that have been made to develop archaeological approaches to religion (e.g. Aldenderfer 2011; Edwards 2005; Insoll 2001a, 2004; Kyriakidis 2007; Renfrew 1994a; Rowan 2011; Shaw 2013; Steadman 2009), most analyses of ANE religion in literate periods

still prioritise texts and restrict archaeology to providing corroboration of textually-attested practice.

Studies of ANE religion regularly state flatly that most of what is known about cult, sacrifice, cosmology, and pantheons has been gleaned from texts (e.g. Barjamovic and Larsen 2009: 151; Taracha 2009: 25). This is partly understandable. The wealth of textual data has allowed detailed explorations of ANE divine realms and theologies (the literature is vast, but see, for example, Black and Green 1992b; Block 2013; Bottéro 2001; Brisch 2008; Day 2002; Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Porter 2005; Schwemer 2008; Smith 2002a; Snell 2011). The practical aspects of religion, well served by cultic itineraries, inventories, and specific descriptions of rituals, have also seen comprehensive exploration (e.g. Cammarosano 2013; Collins 1990, 2006; Hazenbos 2003; Mirecki and Meyer 2002, 2015; Scurlock 2002). So plentiful are the primary sources, it seems, that little more is needed to produce comprehensive analyses of the religions of ancient Anatolia, the Levant, and Mesopotamia.

This text-bias is not simply the result of the textual information being so rich that it dominates research, however, and sometimes appears to be the result of an ignorance of archaeological data or its usefulness. For example, despite acknowledging archaeological evidence of temples, palaces, tombs, burials, iconography and cultic material, Pongratz-Leisten (2013: 41) observes that evidence of ritual 'can be gleaned not only from ritual prescriptions but also from prayers, hymns, letters, and royal inscriptions'. Similarly, Schneider (2011: 9) states that 'texts are the only serious tool for the study of belief'. Archaeology, apparently, has nothing to offer. Hazenbos' (2003) discussion of Anatolian cult inventories declines to acknowledge the potential of archaeology to contribute to understandings of the places, objects, and practices that texts record. Particularly bizarre is his dedicating half a chapter to divine representations described in the cult inventories, including

standing stones, statues, vessels, and other objects without mentioning a single archaeological artefact (Hazenbos 2003: 173-90). Elsewhere, Averbeck (2010: 4) remarks that 'it is hard to imagine' more useful evidence of 3rd millennium Mesopotamian temple building than the Gudea Cylinder texts. It seems that these texts, which he considers problematic, (2010: 3), have more to offer the study of delineation of sacred precincts, temple construction, and temple decoration and furnishing (Averbeck 2010: 22-8) than actual excavated temples. Jacobsen's (1976: 145-64) detailed chapter on personal religion in second millennium Mesopotamia opens with an image of a model worshipper from Tel Asmar, but then draws all analysis from texts, including much later biblical examples. Artefacts are useful illustrations, but, apparently, they are not useful sources. This dismissal of archaeology when dealing with material culture of which there are extant remains is a fundamental problem that undermines studies that hope to illumine ancient cult.

The devotion to textual sources in studies of religion is particularly problematic given their inherent biases. The authors and audiences of most religious, cosmological, and mythological texts were the upper strata of society and they tend to treat themselves as the default and exhibit little interest in, or present only negative portrayals of, the religious traditions of the rest of the populace. Archaeology, which should be well placed to offset these biases, as well as being fully capable of asking new research questions, such as those concerning the specific experiences of persons at the household level, provides a clear opportunity to address this problem. Thus far, unfortunately, the underrepresentation of archaeological evidence has meant that the sources' biases have tended to be reflected in the secondary literature. The result of foregrounding texts in reconstructing ANE religions is therefore the unfair prioritising of an urban elite, the minimising of non-official practice, the dichotomising of 'state' or 'elite' and

'popular' religious traditions, and the frequent homogenising of the practices used by either demographic into standardised ideals or caricatures. These problems reveal themselves across the ANE.

Elite and urban traditions dominate the literature. Pongratz-Leisten's (2013) overview of Mesopotamian religious traditions is from an exclusively elite perspective. Even her discussion of their social context gets no closer to the non-elite population than noting that royal religious paraphernalia associated the king with gods to secure popular support (Pongratz-Leisten 2013: 44-5). Barjamovic and Larsen (2009: 151) summarily dismiss the private and day-to-day religious practices of Assyrian residents of MBA Anatolia as 'not well attested' despite the wealth of archaeological cultic material excavated in and around early second millennium dwellings (see **5.2. Creatures, cult, and creating meaning**). Meanwhile, Van De Mierop (1997: 215) implies that cult activity was simply absent in non-urban contexts, despite himself acknowledging that a range of natural features were deified, that nomads had their own god (Martu in Sumerian and Amurru in Akkadian), that mountains were considered to be homes of gods, and that vast swathes of Mesopotamian literature related to observing the signs of the gods in natural phenomenon (Van De Mierop 1997: 216-8). Even with clear evidence of non-urban practice to draw upon, the preoccupation with elite urban practice survives into modern scholarship.

By preserving the elite focus of ancient texts, the literature also often preserves their perspectives. A prominent result of this is in dichotomising the traditions that star in the texts, and those that are restricted to supporting roles or antagonists. A separation of elite and popular traditions has been drawn from the evidence across the ANE (e.g. Wasilewska 1993: 473-4) but is most explicit, and often strictest, in Iron Age Israel and Judah, where the more extensive integration of archaeological

evidence that elsewhere in the ANE (see Hess 2007: 43-80 for a comprehensive historiography of ancient Levantine religions) means that diverse structures, figurines, altars, ceramic stands, model shrines, scarabs, and seals (Zevit 2001: 123-266, 7-74, 76-314, -46) demand an explanation. Predictably, the explanation has generally been drawn directly from the texts, and so this variety is grouped into 'state', 'elite', or 'official' religion, defined in line with practices endorsed by biblical authors and 'popular' religion that includes more or less anything else (Bright 1981: 218, 320; McNutt 1999: 176; Miller 2000: 47-51). The dichotomous model of Israelite and Judahite cult has predominantly been presented by theologians and bible scholars but explicitly archaeological reconstructions have presented the same narrative and distinguished sharply between official and popular activity (Alpert Nakhai 2001: 191; Dever 2005; Holladay 1987: 266, 81). Even when including archaeological evidence, rather than developing a new interpretation rooted in material evidence, there is a tendency to simply map it onto the text-based *a priori* official/popular dichotomy.

Not only does the literature often reproduce the urban elite focus of the ancient textual sources, or preserve their dichotomising presentation of religious traditions, it frequently preserves their hostility or derision for 'popular' traditions. In Israel and Judah, confessional perspectives have seen 'popular' religion maligned as a group of base practices to be contrasted with the morally superior monotheistic Yahwism (e.g. Albright 1968: 199; Segal 1976: 1; Weber 1967: 223). The specific relevance of biblical religious narratives to some modern scholars perhaps makes this perspective unsurprising, but it is also present in reconstructions of other ANE religious traditions. Lamb (1956: 93) notes that 'the faiths of the primitive people' of the 3rd millennium survived into the 'the organized and elaborate religion of [Hattusa]' in the 'comparatively civilized' 2nd millennium. Meanwhile, Gurney (1976: 1), believed that the Hittite Empire saw a 'significant advance in theology'

from the 'primitive religion' practiced by the local cults since prehistoric times and Landsberger and Jacobsen (1955: 14) express surprise that 'simple little spells' of Old Babylonia survive in superior Akkadian literature.

The condescension expressed to popular traditions has generally waned in more recent research, but an evolutionary movement from folk cult to book religion survives (e.g. Barjamovic and Larsen 2009: 150; Farber 1990: 300) and the antagonism between state and popular practice in Israel and Judah is often preserved (e.g. Cook 2004: 143). In a particularly egregious archaeological example, Bill Dever retains not only the perceived competition between official and popular traditions in Judah, but the vilification of the latter, describing the 'pervasive influence' of Canaanite religion and contrasting a literate and theological 'state' cult with an illiterate and magical 'folk' religion (2005: 5-7) practiced by 'inbred' communities similar to the 'primitive Arab villages' of the twentieth century (2005: 18-9). It seems it is not only Canaanite religion that might be pervasive, but text-based reconstructions of ancient cult, too.

Connected to the dichotomistic reconstruction of elite and popular practice is the tendency to treat these two spheres of religious activity, or the traditions of different geographical units as homogenous blocks. The official-versus-everything-else reconstruction discussed above is a clear demonstration of this. So is Van De Mieroop's (1997) discussion of cult activity in Mesopotamian cities that makes no geographical or chronological distinctions. Whilst he does refer specifically to 'the institutionalized cult' being an urban phenomenon (Van De Mieroop 1997: 217), no contrast is drawn even between the starkly different city layouts of northern and southern Mesopotamia, of which temples play a key role, or even the regions' distinct temple architecture. These differences are acknowledged by Hundley (2013:

50-1), but he opts not to discuss their suggestion of variable traditions and instead places a focus on their similarities and unifying features.

Homogenised and dichotomised state and popular traditions are not without challenge, but these are not without problems themselves. In a southern Levantine context, for instance, some work has sought to further nuance cultic variety by further dividing traditions into personal, family, local community, non-elite, and state practices (e.g. Albertz 2008; Hess 2007; Lang 2002; Olyan 2008; van der Toorn 2003), abandoning the terms 'popular' and 'official' entirely (Stavrakopoulou 2010: 50), or by stressing the interconnective fluidity of the various social contexts in which cultic traditions are engaged with (e.g. Carroll R 2000: 156-7; Zevit 2001: 663). Problematically, the first approach acknowledges variety in 'popular' religion but maintains the official/popular dichotomy and the second swings the pendulum too far in erasing explicitly state religion given the wealth of religiopolitical institutions in the Near East (Bottéro 2001: 117; Dolansky 2013: 68; Porter 2005; Selz 2008; Snell 2011: 35-6). The third option, however, chimes with the stress placed on the ancient Eastern Mediterranean's fuzzy religious identities in some recent literature and presents a usefully interactional, rather than oppositional, relationship between religious practices and practitioners that is worth pursuing. Frustratingly, where questions concerning the overlapping of cultic spheres and the specific practices of subgroups have been considered they tend to be addressed via textual sources, focussing on women's religion described in the Hebrew Bible, for instance (e.g. Bird 1997; Exum 1993; Tribble 1992), or deriving the social subgroups used to re-examine dichotomies from the same texts that present the problem (e.g. Zevit 2003: 230). Challenges to dichotomistic reconstructions of ANE religion therefore present an avenue into the overlap of religious traditions but so far have not been sufficiently explored, and would benefit from an analysis that foregrounds the specific experiences of individuals interactions with religious life.

2.2.3. Socialisation

Ancient texts tackling socialisation are even less well represented than those dealing with landscape. Consequently, text-based studies of ANE socialisation are rare and can be summarised rather briefly. As usual, despite the potential of archaeology to contribute to these issues, archaeology is rarely consulted even to support texts. In a particularly illustrative example, and a rare work explicitly addressing the inculcation of social perspectives, SooHoo's (2019) recent PhD thesis sets out to explore the socialising processes through which Mesopotamian war rituals made violence palatable. In 833 pages, 'archaeology' never appears outside of the title of a cited work. Aside from the dedication to textual sources, the most common issue that reveals itself is a lack of engagement with the *processes* of socialisation.

References to persons being socialised are not infrequent, especially in discussions of gender (e.g. Asher-Greve 2002 ; De-Whyte 2018: 24, 58, 150; Pryke 2017: 61; van Binsbergen and Wiggerman 1999: 17), but nuanced considerations of exactly what this entailed and how it took place, are far more unusual. Parker (2006: 566) considers how young women learnt social roles by mythic narratives from Ugarit, whilst the papers collected by (Ryholt and Barjamovic 2016) explore identify formation in Egypt and Mesopotamia, though these revolve around the roles and identities presented in literature, rather than how they were internalised by their audience. Such studies note that socialisation happened, and that cultural narratives played a role, but given the analyses' textual-focus, it is the narratives themselves that receive the bulk of the attention.

Sometimes attention is shifted from the textual narratives to scribal communities that transmitted them but we do not get much closer to the social learning surrounding the texts. Carr (2005) explores how Mesopotamian and Egyptian interactions texts served as socialising mechanisms for scribal communities and

facilitated entrance into elite culture. Meanwhile, Michalowski (1991: 52) describes scribal schools as the 'ideological mold of minds, the place where future members of the bureaucracy were socialized'. Neither set out explicitly what this means beyond becoming familiar with the texts and their symbolism. Scribal schools have also been a topic of interest to scholars of Israel and Judah, but their focus has largely been to determine their functional nature, or even simply to demonstrate their existence, rather than to explore how they contributed to social learning (e.g. Davies 1995; Jamieson-Drake 1991). Despite a clear role in the curation of social motifs, then, analyses of formal learning institutions have not placed a focus on how the reproduced narratives were internalised meaningfully.

Recently, the lives of children in Israel and Judah have become a hot topic (see Parker 2019: for an overview) but explicit explorations of how they were socialised remain rare. Flynn (2018), for example, uses Mesopotamian accounts of childhood to help interpret the Hebrew Bible, but his priority is the role of the child, and the symbolic child, in religious life rather than how they themselves learned to embody that role, and Koepf-Taylor (2013) is concerned with childrens' economic value. Garroway (2017, 2018a, 2018b) has explicitly sought out children's learning, but has drawn upon archaeological material and is considered below (see 3.3. **Learning and reproducing social conditions**). In child-centric studies then, where we might expect to see learning as a focus, we get no further towards the processes of socialisation.

We can see then that text-based analyses of socialisation are both rare and vague. We are often informed that socialisation took place, and the results of it are considered, but the *how* is left as a black box process beyond the remit of the studies concerning its impact.

This overview of textual studies of landscape, religion, and socialisation in the case study regions has not sought to be exhaustive but rather to highlight some key issues that have pervaded these research themes. Landscape has primarily been explored in purely logistic terms, stressing terminological minutiae, considering transport technologies, or searching for toponyms to provide roadmaps of the ancient world. Analyses of religion lean heavily towards elite and urban traditions, tend to dichotomising these with non-elite practice which is sometimes treated with derision, and also has a habit of homogenising the two spheres. Socialisation, meanwhile, ancient accounts of which are especially sparse, simply hasn't received much attention and when discussed is generally alluded briefly and with little detail. Clearly, we are presented with a number of problems in need of redress. I will now consider the success with which archaeology has dealt with the same themes.

2.3. Archaeological reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation

Having considered the problems of texts dominating ANE research, and the particular issues it raises in analyses of landscape, religion, and socialisation, we might now explore how archaeologists have addressed the same topics and the degree to which they account for these issues. As above, it is not my intention to present a comprehensive history of archaeologies of landscape, religion, or socialisation. Such an endeavour, especially for the former two, would be lengthy and has been dealt with elsewhere (e.g. David and Thomas 2008; Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Knapp and Ashmore 1999; Kyriakidis 2007; Steadman 2009). Instead, I present a synthesis of relevant research in Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, and highlight lacunae in need of redress.

2.3.1. Landscape

ANE landscape work can be delineated into four broad research paradigms that have emerged over the past century and a half: those that understand the landscape as a describable object, those that analyse it as a system; those that perceive it as a dynamic cultural construct; and those that tackle it as an experiential phenomenon (after Hritz 2014; Preucel and Hodder 1996). All have problems. The first disregards interpretation entirely, whilst the second denies human agency in favour of harsh rationalism. The latter two seek to correct for these failings, but fail to do so. Dynamic cultural construct approaches in fact frequently preserve systemic approaches positivist sterility. Experiential frameworks, meanwhile, present considerable opportunities for the archaeological interpreter, potentially providing for the investigation of landscape meaning, but their frequently unclear connections between data and theory has seen them underutilised in Near Eastern contexts.

The first landscape studies conducted in the Near East can be essentially grouped as those which approached the landscape as a static, *describable object*. Aside from the text-based examples, the earliest efforts arrived with the early aerial photography pioneers. Generally exploiting military connections, they demonstrated elevated images' site-identification potential in Mesopotamia, North Africa, and the Levant (e.g. Beazley 1919, 1920; Breasted 1933; Crawford 1923). As aerial photography grew into a specific reconnaissance technique utilised to investigate specific questions rather than opportunistic endeavours, more systematic coverage was achieved of regions including in Iran (Schmidt 1940; Stein 1938), Iraq and the Transjordan (Stein 1940), and the Syrian Jezirah (Poidebard 1927, 1929, 1931, 1934). Additionally, progressively improving cameras allowed specific features to be identified, and considerable use was made of the ability to examine linear features to investigate Roman frontiers, for example (e.g. Poidebard 1931;

Poidebard 1934; Stein 1940). These landscape investigations had begun to shift scholars towards considering activities on a larger scale but studies continued to focus on the identification and description of the landscape as encountered in modernity. As such, these endeavours essentially generated lists of points of interest upon, rather than interpretations of, the landscape.

The next phase of archaeological ANE landscape studies, arising in the first decades after the Second World War, took a turn towards *systemic* understandings of landscape and the societies inhabiting them. Archaeologists began to recognise that, rather than canvasses upon which places to be interpreted and contextualised lay, landscapes themselves could be interpreted and contextualised (Hritz 2014: 137-8). Studies such as those of Van Liere and Lauffray (1954-55: 132) continued to record and describe the landscape, but also examined it with a view to answering specific research questions regarding land use and settlement patterns. With archaeologists beginning to analyse landscapes to address questions of spatial relationships and socioeconomic systems, alongside a wealth of survey projects seeking to record landscapes threatened by development across the Near East, the 1960s-1980s saw voluminous regional studies drawing on a broad range of archaeological, geomorphological, and historical data (e.g. Adams 1965, 1981; Haiman 1989; Mathers 1981; METU Faculty of Architecture 1967; Özdoğan 1977a; Rosen 1987; Serdaroğlu 1977; TAVO 1977; Whallon 1979). However, whilst generating data vital to our purposes, including the earliest recording of the hollow way network drawn upon in **Chapter 7** (Van Liere and Lauffray 1954-55), and presenting a significant interpretative leap from purely descriptive studies, systemic scholarship has also resulted in the overlooking of human action in the ancient Near East.

Often, placing the investigative focus on systems forced the ancient individuals who lived within them to take a back seat. With many surveys generating considerable

data regarding geomorphological processes, settlement patterns, and major anthropological landscape features such as irrigation and communications networks (e.g. Brookes et al. 1982; Hole 1980; Meijer 1986; METU Faculty of Architecture 1967; Oates 1966; Özdoğan 1977b; Röllig and Kuhne 1983; Serdaroğlu 1977; Van Loon 1967), and many explicitly systemic studies seeking to integrate diverse data sets (Hritz 2014: 237-41), emphasis was frequently placed on the interplay of settlement patterns, water sources, irrigation channels, and communications networks (e.g. Adams 1965; Adams 1981; Wilkinson 2003; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995). Notably absent is the individual human centre lying between geological affordances and regional anthropological adaptations. Whilst resulting in publications presenting impressively nuanced analysis over considerable time depth, systemic studies frequently reduce human components of social systems to mere reactive mechanisms. If we are searching for meaning in landscape, we must also search out the individuals who perceived it.

Approaching landscape as a *dynamic cultural construct* was largely the result of frustrations with the *absent human* problem in systemic understandings of society. Towards the end of the 20th century, a shift took place in anthropological scholarship towards analysing the ways in which humans use practice to socialise nature and actively situate themselves within it rather than simply react to its constraining properties (Biersack 1999; Descola 1996). Consequently, systemic archaeological analyses of landscapes were frequently accused of environmental determinism (Gaffney and van Leusen 1995; Kvamme 1997; Llobera 1996) and taking excessively positivistic approaches that slid towards empirical 'sterility' (Gaffney and van Leusen 1995: 368). A problem that many associated with the popularisation of GIS technologies (see **2.4.2. Landscape morphology**). In response, archaeologists have explicitly set out to integrate human action with environmental and spatial data to produce more balanced interpretations of human-environment interactions (e.g.

Kouchoukos 2001). Frustratingly, in attempting to avert environmental determinism, these approaches frequently retain systemic foundations.

Ironically, in practice, the acknowledgement of the importance of human agency and the wariness of excessive empiricism is often manifested by attempting to empiricise that agency. A number of studies utilise Agent Based Models, for example (e.g. Altaweel 2008; Altaweel and Watanabe 2012; Wilkinson et al. 2007; Wilkinson et al. 2013), drawing on a 'set of computational models that simulate the actions of autonomous agents, with a given set of parameters, and the effects of these actions on a system as a whole' (Banks 2002: 7199-200). These modelling studies are technologically impressive and yield valuable information regarding how human action impacted the landscape and vice versa, but the conclusions produced can be rather basic. For example, Hritz (2014: 242) observes that

'the modeling demonstrated that societies in the region likely faced dynamic conditions and that there were coping mechanisms that enabled settlements to persevere in many cases. Yet thresholds did emerge in which a settlement was forced to fundamentally change, including the emigration of its inhabitants'.

Whilst endeavouring to address the complexity of human-environment relationships, then, approaches tackling landscape as a dynamic social construct often maintain systemic understandings of a society that can be predictively modelled and do little in bringing the interpreter much closer to the agent.

Experiential approaches can be dealt with rather briefly. Such approaches have long been popular in archaeological studies of other parts of the world, especially Northwestern European prehistory (e.g. Tilley 1994, 2004) and lively debate continues about their application with improving technologies (e.g. Brück 2005a;

Gillings 2009; Llobera 2012; Thomas 2004, 2006, 2008; Tilley 2004, 2008a, 2008b; Wickstead 2009). However, despite some scholars highlighting its potential (e.g. Wilkinson 2003: 6), this literature has failed to find much traction in Near Eastern scholarship. This seems disappointing as, in principal, they can address the absence of agents in systemic and dynamic cultural construct approaches by attempting to interpret ancient individuals' meaningful personal experiences of the world around them. Unfortunately, despite the massive potential of such an approach if applied successfully, they have found little ANE application. This may in large part be due to the frequently vague connection between data and interpretation (see **3.3.2. The data-theory divide**) and assumptions about the similarity of ancient and modern perception (see **3.4. Experiencing place**) exhibited by such approaches, and the common scepticism expressed towards theory-laden archaeological analysis by Near Eastern archaeology as a discipline (see **2.3. Archaeological reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation**). Consequently, meaningful encounters with landscapes have barely been addressed in Near Eastern contexts (though see Harmanşah 2015; McCorrison 2011; Ullman 2010). However, as we will see in **Chapter 4**, developing new approaches to ancient experience that more securely connect data and theory allows us to tackle experiential approaches' problems and utilise them to provide a wealth of analytical and interpretative possibilities.

Several significant problems are therefore clear in these broad approaches to landscapes which together have prevented analyses of its meaningfulness: the lack of interpretation offered by descriptive approaches; the exclusion of agency in systemic approaches; dynamic cultural construct approaches lack of success in resolving the problem of the absent agent; and the failure of scholars to convince others of the validity of experiential approaches. We have therefore outlined some fundamental issues that must be addressed in approaches to landscape archaeology

in the Near East. The solution presented in the **Chapter 4** revolves around developing experiential approaches to more explicitly incorporate data.

2.3.2. Religion

Embarking on experiential approaches to religious meaning in landscape is not made easy by the current archaeological literature on ANE religion. As discussed above, it has been led by the texts, if not discarded in favour of them, and consequently exhibits many of the same problems. Providing an overview of specifically archaeological work on ANE religion reveals new problematic habits¹. It has been comprised in large part of isolated and disjointed artefact or typological studies that often seek simply to connect them to texts or view them as canvasses on which important iconographic information might be displayed. It is also characterised by an enthusiastically positivist bent which is wary of interpretative or theoretical approaches. Furthermore, it has been susceptible to presenting varied regions and periods as having consistent theologies and cult behaviours and has elsewhere upheld and reproduced and dichotomistic motifs inherited from textual scholarship where that variety is acknowledged.

Of course, to suggest these issues equally characterise all ANE archaeologies of religion would be ironically homogenising. The three case study regions and periods do not exhibit them in equal measure. Isolated artefact studies are most prominent in Anatolia, Mesopotamian reconstructions most often present long

¹ 'Religion' as a term and the difficulties of seeking it out in the archaeological record is considered in 3.1. Interpreting the religious. Here I deal with archaeological research which asserts that it is investigating religion or cult, however defined.

temporal stretches and broad geographic regions as homogenous blocks, and the southern Levant sees dichotomised religious communities most frequently.

Nor have the three regions seen equal levels of research. Reconstructions of southern Levantine cults drawing heavily on archaeology are, perhaps unsurprisingly given the long history and enormous scale of excavation there, fairly common (e.g. Alpert Nakhai 2001; Dever 1987, 2005; Hess 2007; Holladay 1987; Zevit 2001). Equally unsurprising, is that these synthetic studies principally focus on Israel and Judah. Though the coastal polities also see attention, with only a few exceptions (e.g. Tyson 2019), work on the Transjordanian tribes is less holistic, principally being found in contextual discussions in excavation reports (e.g. Beit-Arieh 1987; Beit-Arieh 1995b; Daviau 2017; Petit and Kafafi 2016). Reconstructions of Mesopotamian religion also often utilise archaeological data (e.g. Barrett 2007; Schneider 2011), albeit sometimes primarily for iconographic material (e.g. Bottéro 2001). Problematic for this study, however, is that Mesopotamian reconstructions tend to address the entirety of the region over long periods at once, and treat the southern major cities, such as Babylon, Ur, and Nippur, as normative. This means detailed excursions on the EBA north, where, for example, an enthusiasm for extramural ancestral monuments (see **7.2.2. Ancestral placescape**) provide a stark contrast with southern cultic sensibilities, are unusual. Archaeological studies of Anatolian religion are the most sparse, sometimes strikingly so. Bodel and Olyan's (2008) volume on domestic cult in antiquity simply skips the region, for example, whilst Hundley's (2013) ANE temple study conspicuously leaps straight to Hittite examples. A few overviews of Hittite religion, sometimes featuring observations about the traditions that preceded it, are available, but archaeology, as usual, plays second fiddle to the texts' lead (Beckman 2000; Haas 1994; Popko 1995). To my knowledge, synthetic archaeological reconstructions of MBA Anatolian religion simply do not exist. Between Lamb's summary of a few shrines (1956) and Heffron's

(2016) investigation of religious spaces at Kültepe, only artefact and iconographic studies (Marchetti 2000; Marchetti and Nigro 1971; Pruss and Novák 2000; White 1993), discussions of cult paraphernalia in excavation reports, and a very brief synopsis in Van Loon's (1985) broader regional history, deal with the cult practice of MBA Anatolia. Across these variably analysed regions, however, the same basic problems recur.

Despite the inconsistency in levels of research, and the different degrees to which these problems reveals themselves in the three regions on which I am focussed, fundamentally, all of these issues derive from the same hurdle. The enormous variety of religious evidence that is shared across ANE societies defies straightforward synthesis and naturally leads research either towards the smaller scale studies, highly idiosyncratic work on individual or small collections of material, or larger scale reconstructions, seeking to integrate massive datasets and forcing diverse and overlapping traditions to be homogenised or sharply distinguished.

Frequently, archaeology is simply drawn upon in discussions of ANE religion to confirm or dispute textually attested practice (Alpert Nakhai 2001; Kohlmeyer 2009; Lauinger 2008; Vivante 1994). Interpretations of archaeological material is often filtered entirely through texts (e.g. Braun-Holzinger 1999) or serves only to provide material manifestations, or iconographic representations, of practices and paraphernalia described in ancient literature (e.g. Beckman 2000). Detailed integrations of archaeology and textual material is largely restricted to studies of Israelite and Judahite cult (e.g. Hess 2007; Zevit 2001), largely owing to the vast history of secondary literature to draw on.

Elsewhere in the ANE, despite calls for sophisticated and contextual syntheses with an awareness of both text and archaeology (e.g. Barrett 2007: 9-10; Postgate 1994),

research remains decidedly piecemeal. In Anatolia, isolated artefact studies are common (Marchetti 2000; Marchetti and Nigro 1971; Pruss and Novák 2000), often centred on items identified as cult without clear reasoning (Özgüç 1991, 1994a; Özgüç 1994b; Özgüç 1998, 1999), rarely exhibit careful consideration of archaeological context (e.g. Assante 2002), and frequently place all of their focus on iconographic concerns (Popko 1978).

The reluctance of archaeologists to provide holistic reconstructions of cult, and of literary scholarship to draw heavily on archaeology in doing the same, may be in large part due to the scepticism exhibited towards interpretative archaeologies. In 1977, Oppenheim's famous chapter *Nah ist—und schwer zu fassen der Gott* argued that any statement about Mesopotamian religion beyond the purely descriptive was essentially irrelevant supposition. A history of Mesopotamian religion cannot and *should not* be written, he claimed, because gleaning sufficient information is simply too difficult. Whilst acknowledging the vastness of the archaeological evidence, he dismisses it all as 'their mechanics and functioning, and the meanings which motivated the enactments of the cult, remain removed from us as if pertaining to another dimension' (Oppenheim 1977: 173). More recently, calls for theoretically imbued frameworks in the southern Levant (e.g. Bunimovitz 1995a; Dever 1993, 1997, 2003; Levy 2010) have also largely fallen on deaf ears and the discipline remains vehemently positivist (Alpert Nakhai 2001: 14; Faust 2010b: 55). Zevit (2001: 64), in one of the most comprehensive works on Ancient Israelite religion published, expresses the regional scepticism expressed towards theoretical approaches in particularly strong terms, scathingly rejecting them as 'not conducive to framing any sort of research involved in conceptualising the reconstruction of past circumstances'. These attitudes have barely softened, and interpretative investigations remain infrequent, and positivist catalogues and gazetteers popular (Alberty 2008; Alberty and Schmitt 2012; Ellis 1968). This positivist history of

religious research in the ANE provides an abundance of data upon which to draw, but it remains in need of sophisticated interpretation.

Perhaps related to this positivistic habit is a tendency to homogenise cult systems across regions or periods. Extreme cases see the religious traditions of large regions over millennia treated in a single synthesis. Bottéro (2001), for instance, presents *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* with scarce remark on regional or chronological variety (Chavalas 2001), condensing the religious practitioners of multiple millennia and tens of thousands of square miles into a single unit. Elsewhere, some of the more traditional artefact and typological studies make bold interregional connections that can also downplay the potentially enormous variability of context and function (e.g. Diamant and Rutter 1969; Graesser 1972; Takaoğlu 2000). More common, however, and potentially more problematic in that they seek to address this very issue, are those that delineate between traditions, and then homogenise the subdivisions.

The dichotomising and homogenising of religious communities in textual reconstructions was considered above (see **2.2.2. Religion**) but is also present in archaeological work (e.g. Dever 2005; Stern 2001). Whilst simply breaking a homogenised whole into homogenised parts is problematic for all the same reasons addressed above, it has a silver lining. Part and parcel of distinguishing between state and popular cult spheres has been the recognition of household religion as an aspect of social life deserving of study in its own right (Alberty 2008; Alberty and Schmitt 2012; Bodel and Olyan 2008; Matsushima 1993; Olyan 2008). Within this, women's religion has emerged as an area of a particular interest, especially in the southern Levant (e.g. Ackerman 2003; Meyers 2002a, 2002b; Meyers 2003) where particular enthusiasm has been devoted to the worship of the goddess Asherah and her (debated) association with Judean Pillar Figurines (Briffa 2019; Byrne 2004;

Darby 2014, 2018; Dever 2005, 2014; Hadley 2000; Kletter 1996; Paz 2007). Though treating any religious demographic as a unit remains problematic, approaching smaller communities of cult practitioners does bring us somewhat closer to the experiences of individuals that this dissertation seeks out.

This brief overview of archaeological reconstructions of the religious life of EBA Mesopotamia, MBA Anatolia, and the IA southern Levant are characterised to varying degrees by a tendency to try and simplistically tie material evidence to texts and a preponderance of isolated studies of specific objects or assemblages, and a habit of dichotomising and homogenising highly diverse and overlapping traditions. Much of this may lie at the feet of the positivistic perspectives that dominate the discipline. All of these problems are largely rooted in the heterogeneity of ANE religious traditions.

Perhaps Oppenheim was correct, and attempting to write a synthesis of Mesopotamian religion, or any given ANE society's cult traditions is an insurmountable challenge. The variety of practice and experience demands that work be targeted at small assemblages or individual artefacts and efforts made towards more holistic studies will always force the author either to homogenise practitioners or to artificially impose divisions between traditions that enjoyed at least some overlap.

It would seem that to effectively tackle religious behaviour in the ANE, then, it would be profitable to develop an approach that acknowledges this variety and allows for it, or we can simply cast aside any effort to reconstruct 'religious life' and seeks out the idiosyncratic practices and experiences of small groups or individuals. I believe we can aim for both. It would, in fact, be most profitable to seek out the broad brushstrokes of religious preoccupations, the connections between deities and weather, or between rituals and artefacts, for instance, and target specific

analyses not on the detail of their theological construction or the ritual liturgy, but on how these ideas informed day-to-day life at all scales from the individual to the society. By tying religious meaning to everyday landscape experience, this is what **Chapters 5-7** will set out to investigate.

2.3.3. Socialisation

Like those text-based investigations discussed above, archaeological explorations of socialisation in the ANE are a rare thing and there is disappointingly little to cover here. Again reminiscent of literary scholarship, many of these works concern the social learning of children, a motif that also pervades the literature in other regions and periods (e.g. Bickle and Fibiger 2014; Crawford et al. 2018; Lillehammer 2010; Lucy 2005), with discussions of adult identity largely sticking to how identity is manifested and projected rather than developed (e.g. Gansell 2007). A very brief overview of the ANE archaeological literature concerning socialisation is all that is needed (or possible!) to illustrate the point.

Explicit considerations of socialisation are all but non-existent and mostly of little help. Gesner's (2010) exploration of Mesopotamian socialisation, albeit in the Neolithic, acknowledges the importance of the communal contexts of practice and their impact on identity and enculturation is focussed entirely on technical skill transmission. Albertz and Schmitt's (2012: 21, 44, 5, 475, 6) extensive discussions of the role of the family repeatedly, if inconsistently, refers to socialisation as one of the two (alongside reproduction) or four (alongside reproduction, production, and consumption) 'basic functions' of the family. Despite this, the closest they ever get to describing what this means or how this was accomplished is observing that it was the responsibility of the immediate family but could also be supported by other close relatives (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 44, 476). We remain underequipped to

study how individuals learnt social roles and perspectives within those communal contexts.

Many works addressing gender relations and women's social networks deal with the roles learnt by women in the ancient world. Less numerous are those that consider how these women learnt them, and so take me no closer to my goal. Meyers (2009: 32) discusses how the groups in which women learnt professional skills were places of mentorship that 'foster[ed] important social ties' but beyond situating them in networks that made available information exclusively to women and encouraging social solidarity (Meyers 2009: 34) these learning processes and experiences are not investigated. Elsewhere, (Meyers 2002b) has argued that women's domestic skills, specifically breadmaking, encouraged feelings of self-worth and social value as well as permitting inclusion within women's networks which takes us somewhat closer to a socialising practice, that of learning to produce and thereafter producing bread, but the focus is again on the outcome rather than the process.

The most outwardly useful previous research is that surrounding children and that frequently explicitly sets out to tackle how they learnt their social roles. They are marred by unclear archaeological analyses and generally a defaulting to the texts. Closely aligned with the rapidly growing literature on children in Ancient Israel discussed above, Kristine Garroway has written several archaeologically-aware works on children's social learning in Israel and Judah (Garroway 2017, 2018a, 2018b). However, her theoretical position on socialising processes is generally limited to adults imposing roles on children, or children imitating adult behaviour (2017: 119-20; 2018b: 138). Her work's value as inspiration for archaeological approaches to socialisation is in any case hampered by its enthusiasm for using archaeology to illustrate the Hebrew Bible. Praising Meyers' use of archaeological,

sociological, and anthropological work to 'inform her interpretation of the biblical text', for example, Garroway (2017: 121) explicitly states that her intention is to use archaeology to 'fill in the gaps' left by the Hebrew Bible. Elsewhere Garroway (2018b: 137-72) dedicates a chapter to *Gendering, engendering, and educating the growing child*, but despite the enormous archaeological record of some of the behaviours learnt by children, such as textile production, archaeological material is restricted to confirming biblical descriptions. In a Mesopotamian context, Schmidhuber (2019) specifically sets out to address the disconnect between textual and archaeological studies of children in the Old Babylonian period, and dedicates a case study to exploring socialisation. However, his discussion of 'the role of material culture in socialisation' only argues for understanding some objects as being interacted with by children. It gives no thought to *how* that interaction contributed to socialisation (Schmidhuber 2019: 175-8). Despite the best of intentions, these efforts to integrate archaeological analyses into the socialisation of children largely fall back on texts anyway, and exhibit little in the way of an archaeological approach.

In summary, archaeological explorations of ANE socialisation processes are incredibly scarce and provide little inspiration for a study that wishes to foreground it. They almost always skip the socialisation step, instead simply observing only that it took place or suggesting contexts in which it took place. The more ambitious efforts present perspectives or activities that socialisation allowed, or narrow the contexts in which it took place to specific actions, such as women's bread production or children's play, but precisely how these practices played a role is left largely unaddressed. Frustratingly, the *how* is the key issue for any study that hopes to place socialisation at its heart.

2.4. Reconstructing ancient routes

A final issue that must be addressed in this chapter represents more of a methodological problem going forward than a disciplinary problem looking back. One of my case studies has a known contemporary route network, that of the hollow way system in use in the Early Bronze Age Jazira (**Chapter 7**). The other two of my case studies (**Chapters 5 and 6**) are not furnished with any archaeologically identifiable paths, yet deal with the experiences of merchants on trade journeys. In both instances, I situate the individuals in broad route corridors rather than on precise roads, and I conduct no computational analysis of the landscape to seek out further accuracy. The specific approaches used in my case studies are addressed within their respective chapters, but given a key concern of this thesis is to address vague data-theory connections (see **3.3.2. The data-theory divide**) by connecting reconstructions of social phenomena explicitly to robust datasets, it is pertinent to justify why I have not sought to establish more specific locations for my case study travellers' experiences. Put simply, it is because attempting to do so risks making matters worse, not better. Most efforts to identify route networks in periods for which no archaeological road systems are known tend to be dominated by either the extrapolation of known later routes into earlier periods or examinations of the affordances of the physical landscape. Both approaches present considerable methodological issues. A survey of approaches to routes employed by scholars of the ancient world will show that attempting to reconstruct them with precision takes us little closer to the data, and in fact adds an interpretative step that is virtually guaranteed to be overconfident.

2.4.1. Later networks

A variety of later road networks have been drawn upon to help archaeologists and historians hypothesise ancient pathways. Some, including Roman networks, the

Silk Road(s), strings of caravanserais, and modern or recent systems, are detectable in full or in part and so provide definite routes but can rarely, if ever, be projected (further) into the past with sufficient confidence to build highly interpretative reconstructions of experience upon them. Others derived from textual accounts present the same problem with the additional complications of interpreting their accuracy.

2.5.2. Archaeological roads

Roman roads are perhaps the most well-investigated ancient route network and classical scholars have successfully drawn upon these physical and textual sources to present expansive and reliable atlases of the Roman and Greek worlds (e.g. French 1998; French 1981; French 1988, 2012-2016, 2016; Talbert 2000) including significant parts of the Near East. Despite their being comprehensively studied, well-understood, and displaying at least some overlap with earlier networks, the Roman road system has two severe limitations in studies of Near Eastern roads. The network is far better understood in some areas than others with some regions, for instance eastern Anatolia, being far more reliant on texts (Talbert 2000), and of those that are known, many were built for uniquely Roman, or uniquely Roman Period functions. Roads connecting forts lining *limes*, for example, would have no reason to respect earlier routes. Additionally, as imperial impositions designed to facilitate imperial traffic, the main networks may not even have been relevant to contemporary indigenous movement.

Other traceable networks are similarly difficult to project into the past. *The Silk Road*, connecting China to western Asia between the late-1st millennium BC and mid-2nd millennium AD is arguably more literary trope than historical reality, representing a complex, varying, and rarely agreed-upon set of paths that are frequently presented as a singular evocative trail by modern authors with little archaeological

or historical support (Ball 1998). Consequently, it is a challenging network to investigate in and of itself, let alone to draw upon in studies of routes millennia older. Meanwhile, the Islamic-era caravanserais that served travellers moving across Asia, though not as extensively tackled as Roman or Silk Roads, have been subject to several wide-ranging and ambitious documenting projects (e.g. Ciolek 1999-2012; UNESCO and Ecole d'Architecture Paris Val de Seine EVCAU Research Team 2004). Aside from the issue of their significant chronological separation from the case studies in this project, caravanserais are of limited use as indicators of roads unless they are arranged in a linear fashion over a considerable distance. These networks too, then, are of little help in a study of Bronze and Iron Age landscape.

Even more recent networks amplify the dangers of anachronism with transport technologies that permit routes impossible in the past. Cars and trains can draw straight lines through landscapes that ancient travellers were obliged to navigate in accordance with water sources, for instance.

2.5.3. Textual roads

Many roads are described or alluded to in pre-modern texts, particularly in historiographies and military records². Frequently, however, all of these present problems of accuracy, function, and translation, and the majority are at least several centuries removed from my case studies. For example, the trans-Anatolian Royal Road lauded by Herodotus (5.52), facilitated military and royal movement between, at least, Sardis to Susa in the mid-1st millennium Persian Empire. Literature exploring the road is vast, and many attempts have been made to delineate its mid-

² Merchant archives also present a lucrative source in the early second millennium in Anatolia, but are dealt with in **Chapter 5**.

1st millennium route (e.g. Calder 1925; Dillemann 1962; French 1998; Levick 1967; Müller 1994). However, disputed translations, variable confidence in Herodotus' accuracy, and efforts to supplement his account with other, yet-later sources, including Xenophon and Strabo (French 1998: 19-22), mean that these reconstructions are striking in their disagreement. Furthermore, as a military and state-business route, the degree to which other itinerants utilised it is unknown. Using later, textually attested routes like the Royal Road to identify earlier networks therefore requires several interpretative steps, reliant on textual data that may be unclear, inaccurate, and disputed; and the opaque nature of their usage and placement in a network hierarchy where certain routes may have favoured certain types, or volumes, of traffic that are not acknowledged in-text.

Whilst not necessarily facilitating the trade movement I seek out in **Chapters 5 and 6**, military roads must accommodate similar travel in logistic terms and so could be useful. The military itineraries of the Hittite state, for example, which are extensive and have contributed to several detailed Hittite geographies (Garstang 1943; Garstang and Gurney 1959; Kryszeń 2016; Ullman 2010; Weeden and Ullmann 2017), facilitated the movement of sizeable groups of people, equipment, and animals. However, tactical considerations may dictate that rarely used routes are taken precisely because they are not regularly travelled upon, or because they allow access to places that prove strategically important in an unfolding war, and so may still diverge significantly from trade routes, especially those of earlier periods.

2.5.4. The problem of route inertia

Besides these source-specific problems, another fundamental problem is common to any attempt to project route networks backwards in time. Extrapolating any earlier route from a later one assumes what Wilkinson (2014: 65) labels *route inertia*: an assumed tendency of route networks to remain consistent over considerable

periods of time. Whilst the long-term survival or much later reuse of *some* routes is in no doubt, such as in the Roman network (Bekker-Nielsen and Czichon 2015; de Gruchy 2015; Massa 2011), and across the 4th and 3rd millennia in the Jazira (de Gruchy 2015: 438-9), for instance, it is ill-judged to assume continuity of a given route in the absence of corroborating evidence, as is frequently a motif of the literature.

Even where critiques are made of the usage of later roads to identify earlier examples, this is often done so without comment on the problematic nature of the fundamental principle their long-term tenacity. For example, several scholars (e.g. Carroll 1992; Glueck 1940: 15; Van Zyl 1960: 60) connect the biblical דרך המלך (*derech hamelech* – ‘King’s Road’) (Num. 20:17 21:22) with the Emperor Trajan’s far more recent Transjordan Via Nova Traiana, for example. Many others dispute this association (e.g. Dearman 1997; Mattingly 1996: 95; Miller 1989: 594; Olivier 1989: 174), but do so by presenting other possible routes for the King’s Road rather than challenging the veracity of assuming the Roman road should follow a centuries older Iron Age route. The presumption that later routes will overly earlier ones remains even when the routes themselves are being heavily critiqued. Drawing upon later networks to identify the specific routes used is therefore risky even where the later network is well-documented.

2.4.2. Landscape morphology

In some instances, route inertia will be a product of the natural affordances of the landscape: where transport technologies remain stable for considerable durations and political and cultural changes don’t introduce restrictions, the same routes may remain the primary choice of travellers moving between certain places through multiple periods. The ‘natural routes’ presented by topography may therefore represent an inviting analytical avenue down which we might identify ancient

routes. This approach has enjoyed some popularity in archaeological attempts to reconstruct ancient routes in the Near East (e.g. Palmisano 2017), and indeed are drawn upon in **Chapter 5**. However, without considerable supporting evidence, such approaches do not get us much closer to the specific paths taken by ancient individuals than other sources discussed above.

The fundamental issue in using GIS applications to identify routes is the risk of falling into, or the tendency to embrace, positivism and environmental determinism and disregard social variables (e.g. Brück 2005b; Gaffney and van Leusen 1995; Schuurman and Pratt 2002; Thomas 2004; Thomas 2012). This tendency may be a self-fulfilling prophecy rooted in archaeologists' assumptions about GIS technologies' innate scientism and their lack of familiarity with theory-laden GIS approaches in other disciplines (Hacıgüzeller 2012: 246). Whatever the cause, however, it is a common motif. A brief overview of the most common techniques highlights why these approaches do not service the identification of precise routes.

Least Cost Path Analysis (LCPA) has become a frequent, arguably 'routine' (Howey 2011: 2523), method employed by archaeologists to predict or reconstruct ancient routes between points of interest. It holds that movement between two places requires the navigation of morphological features that impede progress and that the optimal route accrues the least impediment. LCPA seeks to identify that route by giving slope, elevation, and other impeding features numerical values (costs) that reflect the effort needed to cross them and thereafter allows the identification of the least costly path through them.

LCPA has both common methodological issues and an underlying fundamental problem. Many LCPA studies are problematically simplistic and deal only with slope (e.g. Chapman 2003; Whitley and Hicks 2003) and occasionally water features (e.g. Fiz and Orengo 2008; Whitley et al. 2010). Only rarely are other environmental

(though see de Gruchy et al. 2017; Pandolf et al. 1977; Pandolf et al. 1976; Soule and Goldman 1972) or social (e.g. Rademaker et al. 2012) factors included. Given the enormous impact that, for instance, rain, snow, or flooding, or travellers' ableness, speed, or group size have on route choice, this is a serious concern. Even more critical is the potential contrast between mathematically optimal routes and those chosen by humans (De Silva and Pizziolo 2001: 282). Those drawing upon LCPA to determine precise routes assume that a traveller is fully aware of the possible routes through a landscape and is capable and inclined to select from the possibilities the most efficient option (Howey 2011: 2524; McRae et al. 2008: 2715). In reality, travellers may find themselves in an unfamiliar landscape; they may be incapable of selecting the mathematically optimal route, either due to a lack of familiarity with the landscape or the inability to assess a non-intuitive landscape without modern computational tools; they may desire to take or avoid a particular route for any number of personal, cultural, or safety reasons, be it the scenic satisfaction of one, the rockfall dangers of another, or the political borders of a third.

Even if an individual or community did seek the most efficient route between two points, and could accurately gauge which it would be, modelling this may remain problematic. Some debate exists over basic costs employed in LCPA, the degree to which slope impacts human walking, for instance (Herzog 2013a; Kantner 2012; Llobera and Sluckin 2007) and the routes calculated can be highly variable depending on the specific algorithms and surface cost schemas employed (Herzog 2013b). Additionally, water features may present serious computational issues for the analyst who needs to determine appropriate costs for terrain. For example, substantial rivers limit movement and suitable crossing-points may dictate entire routes. Yet these rivers often lie on gentle slopes that are otherwise the least costly to traverse and may therefore be understood as ideal for travel by software attempting to determine an LCP (Güimil-Fariña and Parcero-Oubiña 2015: 34). As a

result, this likely forces a researcher to select a highly generalised cost to apply to rivers that allows an LCP to cross any river at any point but balances their surroundings somewhat with more difficult terrain, or otherwise undertake a process of manually adjusting routes that may require considerable local knowledge or rely upon known, though possibly anachronistic, crossing points.

Consequently, whilst in some archaeological contexts, a highly formalised route network with considerable material remains like that of the Roman empire, for example, LCPA may be a very functional tool that can be utilised to fill in the blanks: joining the dots between known settlements or roads and producing results that can be compared to extant remains and assessed for their likely reliability (Güimil-Fariña and Parceró-Oubiña 2015: 31). In most circumstances, however, no such network is available for comparison and LCPA is unlikely to consistently reveal ancient paths with accuracy over most distances. For most investigations, then, whilst LCPA may be useful as part of an explanatory toolkit (Newhard et al. 2008: 101) that can help tackle issues such as the decision making processes involved in choosing a given route when that route is known (e.g. Fulminante et al. 2017) by providing more efficient routes for comparison, it is not especially useful as an identifier of routes in isolation. Like later networks and textual sources, LCPA can be utilised to create well-delineated paths through a landscape, but they rely on many assumptions and imply accuracy with little basis in known realities.

Other techniques seek to address the problems and overconfidence of LCPA but provide little help in situating travellers on specific routes. *Route corridors* acknowledge that linear paths are variable over multiple journeys and draw on analyses of wildlife movement (e.g. Cushman et al. 2009) and incorporate circuit theory (e.g. Howey 2011; Howey and Brouwer Burg 2017) or line density analyses (e.g. Murrieta-Flores 2012) to create more nuanced and realistic movement channels. In doing so they specifically reduce their precision, however. Other approaches to path choice such as

movement potential (e.g. Mlekuž 2014), and *mobility basins*, (e.g. Llobera et al. 2011) provide interesting analyses of the movement affordances of a given landscape but do not seek to identify specific paths and are in any case extremely computationally demanding and wholly impractical at the scales of my case studies.

Moving closer to the goals of this study, some recent studies attempt to bring GIS-based spatial analysis and experiential methodologies together and the recent literature is often characterised by a shift towards path models as heuristic tools employed to interpret known or hypothesised routes or to theorise ancient movement (see, for example, the papers in Polla and Verhagen 2014) and some partake in 'Cognitive predictive modelling' (Verhagen and Whitley 2012; Whitley 2005) to model the intricate and multifaceted decision-making processes of ancient individuals. However, effectively integrating environmental data with cultural motivators and human agency demands the development of project-specific tools (e.g. Agugiaro et al. 2011; Llobera 2012; Richards-Rissetto 2017; von Schwerin et al. 2013) which is both beyond the scale of the project and ability of the author.

It is for these reasons that my case studies dealing with trade movement do not attempt to identify specific roads. The data available, and the techniques with which I might interrogate them, do not allow for the confident identification of paths through the ancient world, and producing those data or developing new techniques are enormous tasks deserving dedicated projects. In the interests of preserving robust datasets, and retaining the strongest data theory connection, it is preferable to be realistic in attempting to set out the routes upon which my case study traders moved. Rather than trying to interpret their experiences of specific points other than in known archaeological sites, then, I instead work only with forms of landscape lying in broad corridors of movement in which they found themselves.

2.5. Building a new approach

This overview of habits in archaeological research concerning ANE landscapes, religions, and socialisation reveals a series of problems that I must address in trying to build a new approach. Landscapes have seen four main research paradigms, foregrounding pure description, systemic processes, the dynamism of cultural landscape constructions, or the experience of landscapes. However, the first three all suffer from a lack of interpretation, the absence of human intentionality, or the inadvertent reproduction of systemic thinking, whilst the last is extremely promising but has failed to find a foothold despite its potential in taking us far closer to how landscapes were understood and what they meant. Investigations of religion, heavily influenced by ANE archaeology's positivistic habits, have most frequently sought to demonstrate or challenge textual accounts and either treated the diverse material in isolation and with little context or attempted to deal with its enormous variety in synthetic accounts that inevitably result in artificial categorisation or homogenisation. Meanwhile, investigations concerning socialisation tend to be addressing it as a by-product of another topic, and as such give it little focus. The tendency is to acknowledge it happened, or note the contexts that allowed it, but the processes through which it took place are not the object of interest.

Casting our minds back to my review of text-based literature on the same themes reinforces the degree to which text-derived concerns have dominated research. Textual studies of religion have set the parameters of archaeological studies, foregrounding the urban elite and dichotomising them with the rural and household practices that archaeology has sought to investigate, thereby filling in the blanks but failing to provide redress to the overall narrative. Socialisation investigations are similarly absent, but have foregrounded the same groups, women

and children, and are similarly vague in referring to socialisation processes. Only in landscape studies has archaeology really forged its own path and left textual studies, still locked in a descriptive phase, behind it.

This survey of the ANE literature has therefore generated little in the way of inspiration for a new approach to how religiously loaded landscape meanings emerge, are internalised, and thereafter transferred through society. It does, however, present a series of issues that I must avoid. A new approach must not fall into description, it must be conscious of and able to interpret the place of the agent, and it should build on the potential of experiential approaches that allow us to consider meaning. It should be archaeology-driven, avoiding the pitfalls of following textual habits, and both provide for holistic and contextual interpretations whilst allow for the overlapping complexity of cultic traditions. Most importantly, it must explicitly, and specifically, deal with how socialisation takes place. By turning to more explicitly theoretical literature beyond the ANE, and drawing upon the interdisciplinary theoretical material that inspires it, I will seek to build a research framework that meets these demands in **Chapter 4**.

Chapter 3: Pursuing Experience

The overview of studies of socialisation, landscape, and religion in ANE above (see **Chapter 2**) presented little in the way of inspiration for this investigation of how individuals perceived, and learnt to perceive, religious landscape meaning. The individual agent is largely absent from research concerning all three themes, which have tended to consider, at the most nuanced, demographic units such as women or children, and their socialisation processes simply do not appear to have presented an exciting avenue for ancient Near Eastern researchers. Meanwhile, landscape analyses tend towards systemic or descriptive approaches and investigations of religion are most often text-based reconstructions or devoted to linking textually-attested practices and archaeological data, with neither placing a stress on meaningful interaction with either the physical or metaphysical world. If we are to reconstruct how ancient individuals perceived the religiously-loaded character of the world around them and how these perceptions helped form and reform their understandings of the world, however, it is precisely the meaningfulness of religious and landscape interactions of individuals that we must pursue.

It is not all negative, however. The survey of the literature also provided some key issues both to avoid and to pursue, in finding a new approach that fulfils my first research question: *can a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach allow nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and can these be tied explicitly to archaeological data?* (see **1.3. Research questions**). An effective approach to the intersection of socialisation, landscape, and religious meaning should not fall into description and it should be fundamentally archaeological, avoiding reproducing textual narratives. By its very nature in seeking to present nuanced archaeological reconstructions these should be relatively easy pitfalls to dodge. It must also seek

out the individual agent and allow for detailed contextual interpretations, whilst also permitting holistic analyses of larger scale processes, and it must deal explicitly with socialisation. It is now my intention to survey the theoretical literature that might help us address these objectives.

Unfortunately, archaeological theory is not well equipped to address the meaning that humans perceive in their experience. That our experiences of religion and landscape are fundamental to socialisation is well accepted in social theory (e.g. Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979; Ingold 1993; Munn 1986, 1990; Pandya 1990) and has consequently seen consideration in interpretative archaeology approaches on which we might draw (e.g. Casey 1996; Casey 2008; Cummings and Johnston 2007; Gibson 2007, 2015; Snead et al. 2010). However, a series of issues hamper the potential of these efforts.

Firstly, we are not well furnished with frameworks with which to investigate the complexity of religious meaning across society (see **3.1. Interpreting the religious**). Analyses of religion that seek to consider religious meanings, as opposed to religious systems, generally exist in isolation, with specific approaches and research questions tending to proliferate in certain regions and periods with little crossover amongst them. They also exhibit a nervousness about dealing with 'religion' and prefer 'symbolism' or 'ritual', which religion includes but is not reducible to. This frequently leads to detailed and nuanced exegeses of the meaningfulness of a given symbol or practice but rarely expands to a discussion of the larger religious context. Meaning is readily investigated, but how it stretches beyond the specific symbol or behaviour less so.

Secondly, whilst scholars across disciplines have sought to foreground human engagement with, and perceptions of, place, as meaningful locales distinct from neutral space, (e.g. Casey 2008; Gibson 2015; Mazumdar and Mazumdar 1993;

Nordeide and Brink 2013; Thomas 2012; Tilley 1994; Whyte 2015), methodologies with which to draw out how specific parts of a landscape are initially embedded with meaning are thus far lacking³.

Third, the interpretative tools employed to examine socialisation processes are usually borrowed from disciplines with direct access to the societies they study, and consequently struggle to deal with societies in the deep past where the investigator is reliant on incomplete material evidence (see **3.3.2. The data-theory divide**). As such, we are left with a disconnection between data and theory, and no clear archaeological methodology. These opaque data-theory relationships may be responsible for the scepticism (e.g. Bahn 2000: x; Carver 2010: 28; Clark 2010: 41; Flannery 2006: 9; Fleming 2006), and outright condemnation (e.g. Zevit 2001: 64), sometimes exhibited towards theoretical archaeological approaches and their ability to make useful inferences from data, and the general preference for the presentation of data rather than interpretation common to the 'area/period' journals, in which studies remain largely empirical in practice if not stated philosophy (Johnson 2011: 767).

Lastly, though some seek to address this interpretative gap by utilising experiential approaches (e.g. Maschner and Marler 2008; Tilley 1994) that hope to access the ancient individual's cognition objectively through our shared physical characteristics, these risk either projecting modern sensibilities into the past or are unhelpfully vague (see **3.4. Experiencing place**). Other approaches seek to engage

³ The papers in (Rockman and Steele 2003) consider how humans interact with newly encountered environments, but their focus is on how communities learn to inhabit, move through, and utilise a previously uninhabited landscape's topography and resources rather than how they perceive or attach meaning to it, though Hardesty (2003: 91) Hardesty: 91 does consider the importation of cultural landscape meanings to new locations by modern Chinese miners.

in detail with how certain things contribute to experience, such as materials, animals, or social memory, but they frequently retain opaque data-theory connections, and the methodological advantages of pursuing any of them as specific approaches are unclear (see **3.5. Experiencing materials, animals, and memories**).

These problems are severe. How can the archaeologist hope to form robust reconstructions of the role engagements with religious meanings in landscape played in socialisation without solid and data-led approaches to religious meaning, how that meaning is embedded in place, and to socialisation processes? However, by highlighting some recurrent themes in previous research, including emergent experience and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, this chapter will set out the key components that a new theoretical approach should be utilise.

3.1. Interpreting the religious

My first stop in hunting for theoretical work that might lead to a new approach are the archaeological studies of religion that have been more enthusiastic about overt theoretical and interpretative frameworks than those of the ANE. Alas, they do not reveal much in the way of an approach that can be lifted and applied to religious meaning in the landscape. Holistic theoretical approaches are simply absent in the literature. Despite the calls made for a comprehensive approach for some three decades (e.g. Edwards 2005; Garwood et al. 1991; Insoll 2001b; Kristiansen 2014), the discipline has been reluctant to produce anything of the sort. Notably, Steadman's (2009) *Archaeology of Religion* textbook devotes fewer than three entire pages (45-7) to method and theory, covering cave painting, recommending cognitive approaches, and including a single-paragraph summary of research. This lack of engagement in forming a theoretical approach to religion is not the result of laziness or disinterest, but rather in two fundamental issues that are reminiscent of

studies of ANE religion discussed in **Chapter 2**. The first is an isolationist habit that has prevented the development of an integrated framework with which to investigate religion via material culture. The second is a reticence to analyse religion at all, instead foregrounding individual components such as symbols or rituals. These are clearly significant problems, but by considering why the second arises, we can move some way along the road towards investigating religious meaning.

3.1.1. Theoretical isolation

The archaeology of religion's isolationism is well-demonstrated by the frequent associations that can be made between theoretical positions, research questions, and regions and periods (Edwards 2005: 112). Most broadly, Studies tend to focus either on 'primitive' religions, focussed on 'magic', 'witchcraft', and 'shamans', or on 'world' religions and their 'priests', 'temples', and 'gods', suggesting a contrast made between primitive superstitions and developed religions (Rowan 2011: 3). More specifically, certain periods or places are subjected to particular frameworks. For example, Upper Palaeolithic ritual usually sees itself scrutinised with cognitive processualism (e.g. Pearson 2002; Winkelman 2002) whilst phenomenology is the clear favourite for analyses of the religious preoccupations of the Western European Neolithic (e.g. Tilley 1994). Common research themes are not as aligned with regions and periods, but can also be associated with particular society 'types'. Religious manifestations of power and control are most often found in the investigatory sights of early state scholarship (e.g. Brisch 2008; Renfrew 1994b: 50) whilst identifying cult behaviours and exploring experience is commonplace in studies of tribal societies (e.g. Garwood et al. 1991). This isolationist habit has seriously hampered the development of a holistic archaeology of religion. The approach I present in **Chapter 4** specifically seeks to stand up to cross-cultural application.

3.1.2. Avoiding religion

Perhaps an even more fundamental hurdle to building a holistic theoretical archaeology of religion is the apparent fearfulness of attempting to tackle religion at all. I suggest that this is largely rooted in two intertwined issues, both of which are entirely reasonable. Firstly, the difficulty of defining the term in a cross culturally meaningful way. This means that using the term opens the author up to a plethora of semantic challenges. However, an accidental correlary of this is that the obvious replacements slide rather easily into isolated analysis. A study of symbolism or ritual easily becomes one of *a* symbol or *a* ritual, for instance. Secondly, this progressive reluctance to use the term too freely mirrors a slide in archaeological approaches to religion from the simplistic, to the functional, and then to the contextual. This has demanded more sophisticated considerations of cultic phenomena that have made tackling religion, rather than its motifs, a potentially overwhelming task. However, by withdrawing from religion and shifting towards symbolism, the more recent literature has given significantly more consideration to meaning, and as such presents a basis upon which we can build an effective definition of religion.

Defining religion is not a straightforward exercise, and the temptation to avoid it is understandable. Shying away from it in favour of ritual or symbolism, however, risks abandoning holistic analyses of religious phenomena and drifting towards isolated analyses of particular expressions of religion.

The cross-disciplinary literature presents a wealth of frequently incompatible definitions of religion (Harrison 2006). These can generally be separated into two considerable groups: those that are too exclusive to be methodologically useful, and those that are too vague to be methodologically useful. Earlier examples, frequently being clearly rooted in the Christianity of those suggesting them, tend towards the

former. Martineu's 'belief in an ever-living God, that is, a Divine mind and Will ruling the universe and holding moral relations with mankind' (cited in Howerth 1903) provides a typical example. Meanwhile, more recent proposals lean towards the vague end of the spectrum. Spiro (1973: 96), for example, offers 'culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings'. Whilst presenting more cross-cultural awareness and potential, this broadens things so wide as to also cover many social phenomena such as folklore, art, and song, which may, but also may not, be religious in nature.

That the vast literature seeking to define religion has been unable to settle on any interculturally functional definition perhaps suggests that it is a fruitless task. Indeed, even conceiving of religion as a distinct and bounded social phenomenon is erroneous (Shaw 2013: 8) and seeking to contrast the sacred with the profane or the practical and functional with the ritual is frequently meaningless (Rowan 2011: 2). Such tendencies are largely rooted in post-enlightenment western-rationalism, tightly interwoven with secularism in Christian countries (Schilbrack 2010: 1113), and is a wholly inappropriate way to reconstruct ancient relations with cult activity, belief, and supernatural actors. The nervousness of archaeologists to analyse religion, rather than its motifs, is not surprising.

3.1.3. Functional, contextual, and cognitive approaches to religion

The other thread which I believe has driven interpretative archaeologies away from holistic analyses of religion is the progressively more sophisticated analyses of human ideation that characterise the discipline over the past half-century. The earliest archaeologies of religion tended towards projecting modern sensibilities into the religious minds of the past, or worse, sought to force cult traditions into simplistic, and regularly racist, evolutionary stages (Insoll 2004: 42-6). With the 1960s, however, came more interpretative efforts. New Archaeologists recognised

religion as a contextual phenomenon, but saw that context as dictating, rather than framing, cult practice and thought. Binford (1962: 218-20), for example, reduced it to byproduct of 'ideological sub-systems' and 'ideotechnic artefacts', rather dismissing the active thought of human agents. Marxist archaeologies also dismissed most practitioners' agency but granted significant active energy to upper strata of society, presenting religion as part of a cynically-conceived and elite-controlled, ideological 'false consciousness' that was interisically intertwined with economic issues (e.g. Kristiansen 1984: 76; Miller and Tilley 1984; Parker Pearson 1984: 60, 4). These largely functional interpretations of religion give insufficient attention to the diversity of religious phenomenon and risk reducing the individual to either a reactive cog in the social machine or a sponge that uncritically absorbs the curated cult-structures of the elite.

Post-processualism forced a more contextual lens onto visions of the past. Seeking the idiosyncratic meanings and stressing the culturally-constituted nature of particular social practices and preoccupations, it innately rejected simplistic functional interpretations of religion. It is this rejection, I believe, that encouraged the reluctance to deal with 'religion' with which I am concerned. Instead, of religion, post-processualist archaeologies pursuing the symbolic meaning or ritual delve through and away from religion and into its constituent parts (Insoll 2004: 78). Hodder's (1992: 208-18) famous essay *The Domestication of Europe*, for example, discusses at length the 'domestic symbolism' (1992: 210, 1, 3), 'wild and death symbolism' (1992: 213), and 'domus symbolism' (1992: 214) of Çatalhöyük but never uses the term 'religion'. Russell and McGowan (2003), also addressing animal symbolism at Çatalhöyük but never address religion despite drawing upon ethnographic examples of funerals and harvest rituals (2003: 451), and suggesting that the 'crane dances' they reconstruct were re-enactments of origin myths (2003: 453). Neither symbolism nor ritual practice should be uncritically labelled religious

but it seems odd not even to give it cursory consideration. These investigations of meaningful symbols and rituals have paved the way for interpreting the experience of religious motifs. However, without a functional definition of religion itself, it is tricky to move from those symbols and rituals to the religious meaning embedded in landscape unless the that landscape itself is the symbol or the ritual venue.

Together then, the realisation of the issues of simplistic definitions of religion, and a desire to treat the societies of the past with an appropriately contextual mindset, have discouraged holistic analyses of religion. Certainly, if intellectually satisfying definitions of religion are beyond grasp and religion in its entirety is too complex to deal with sufficiently then an archaeological reluctance to tackle 'religion' seems wholly understandable. However, if we look to evolutionary science we are presented with a conceptualisation of religion that helps us in three ways: allowing us to move between the meaningful symbol or ritual experience and the religious tradition in which they are situated; permitting analyses with attention to contextual specificity; and functioning in cross-cultural applications.

3.1.4 The everyday transcendental

Maurice Bloch (2008) is concerned with the evolutionary origins of the ideas, beliefs, and practices that we label 'religion'. Bloch rejects theories that explain religion or 'religious-like beliefs' as the results of homo sapiens' evolved neurological capacities for intuition seeking to interpret phenomena with limited data (e.g. Sperber 1985). This explanation, Bloch (2008: 2) asserts, relegates a central aspect of human society to minor cognitive errors, ignores the diversity of what we describe as religion, and is fundamentally flawed as the modular neurological capacities for intuition are not exclusive to humans, but no other species presents any behaviour for anything that we label 'religion' in humans. Bloch's solution is to seek out evolved social capacities unique to humans in which religious behaviour is rooted.

He argues that society is composed of two modes, the transactional, which is shared by other social species, and the transcendental, which is unique to humans.

The transactional mode is derived from relations situated in individuals' present material qualities and abilities, such as age, skills, or physical size and capabilities. Meanwhile, the transcendental mode is derived from the relations situated in assumed or granted roles. For instance, Bloch (2008: 3) describes a Malagasy elder suffering from dementia. As a frequently confused and physically weak old man unable to actively participate in everyday life his transactional position was poor and little attention was paid to him. However, his transcendental position as a village elder remained as it was in his prime, commanding respect and conferring important ritual status. As the transcendental mode is not restricted by material or utilitarian qualities, it allows for the active social participation of non-corporeal actors such as the deceased or divine (Bloch 2008: 5). In this way, Bloch encourages us to understand the religious as being emergent from transcendental relations, and the archaeological student of ancient religious meaning might find it most readily in ancient individuals' transcendental interactions with non-material actors. To address religiously-loaded meaning in landscapes, then, we would be well served to consider the intersection of everyday experiences of supernature and everyday experience of landscape.

This short journey through theoretical archaeologies of religion, or of components of religion, has highlighted a tendency to deal with particular regions and periods with their own methods, and to ask similar questions about similar societies, with little theoretical cross pollination between the archaeologists investigating each. It also showed a disinclination to investigate religion holistically, a hesitation stemming from the difficulties of defining the term and the desire to deal with cult material with sufficiently nuanced and contextually-specific framework. However,

by turning to evolutionary science, we are encouraged to see the religious as the transcendental interaction with supernature. This opens the door for an archaeologically viable approach, where we can seek out, for instance, the interaction of individuals with cult artefacts, ritual practices, or sacred places, and consider them as components of the religious milieu in which they exist. This will allow me to give due consideration to the meanings found in specific religious behaviours without reducing 'religion' to symbolism or ritual whilst also being transferable between cultures.

Whilst Bloch's evolutionary rendering of religion is satisfying and useful, it does not help us offer succinct definitions of the terms we have available, at least in English, with which to discuss cultic material. This is important, especially in a study that focusses on the socialising power of these social phenomena, as the impact of different manifestations of transcendental supernature may have strikingly different consequences for social learning. As such, though the terms exhibit some overlap, throughout my case studies I use the following terms with these broad definitions: 'Religious' denotes ideas, beliefs, and practices associated with formal theologies. Those etiologies, myths, and narratives concerning deities and human interactions with deities that are written down and standardised, at least to a degree, by elite society and temple practitioners, and are often intertwined with royal or political power. 'Cultic' concerns practices and less formally structured patterns of belief that are engaged in without their practitioners necessarily giving considered thought to their theological bases or divine actors. It represents more the fundamental beliefs found in doxa or the practical consciousness (see **1.1. Socialisation absent an approach**) that have their root in an underlying religious system but that are frequently engaged in without specific reference to it. 'Ritual' concerns specific practices themselves, whichever of the two former categories they reside within. Lastly, for want of a more holistic term, I use

'religious experience' to allude to all forms of interactions with transcendental supernature.

These definitions are not presented with any desire to set a precedent for how the terms should be used, only to avoid my inadvertently blurring the lines between different forms of interaction with supernatural beliefs by using terminology interchangeably. However, there are, unsurprisingly, many instances when all of these terms apply to the same phenomenon, and discussions are included in each case study exploring the ways in which the practitioners considered were interacting with different forms of religious experience (see **5.2.3. Learning religion and internalising cult**, **6.5.1. Religious preoccupations and cultic manifestations**, and **7.2.5. Connecting religious and cultic concerns**). With an approach to religious experience, then, we might set about addressing an approach to landscape.

3.2. Landscape, place, and meaning

Ironically, *landscape* has become a somewhat unfashionable term in 'philosophical' landscape archaeology. The term is difficult to remove from its centuries-old western art usage and consequently evokes delineated and static terrestrial units to be documented and appreciated rather than fluid and active entities to be lived amongst (Thomas 1993: 22). Consequently, it reinforces empirical Cartesian understandings of landscape and is more suited to studies foregrounding quantitative data and functional human-environment analyses: the settlement distributions, least-cost-path analyses, and raw material sources, for instance, that represent our raw evidentiary bases for the investigation of ancient interactions with the environment.

More prominent in interpretative investigations is *place*. Describing a meaningful locale distinct from neutral space (Mazumdar and Mazumdar 1993; Tilley 1994),

places are not simply locations where human activity takes place, but social actors in their own right that enjoy reflexive relationships with their occupants, both creating and being created by them (e.g. Bender 1999; Bender et al. 2007; Casey 2008; Crumley 1999; Ingold 1992, 1995; Maschner and Marler 2008; Thomas 2008, 2012). Places are not bounded entities that can be boxed off and considered in isolation, but are multi-scalar overlapping agents, existing from the microscopic to the infinite and inseparable from the whole (Casey 2008: 44; Ingold 1993: 155). In interpretative contexts, then, what might traditionally be labelled a landscape is perhaps better described as a *placescape*, both a place and comprised of places, residing in a *placeworld* (Casey 2008: 49), a global lattice of active and affective points and polygons with which humans (and non-humans) meaningfully interact.

If we are to consider the understandings of the world held by ancient individuals, we must then seek to illumine where the meaning held by these meaningful locales comes from and how it is established. Some understand places as being inherently empty before they are socialised and inscribed with meaning through human practice (e.g. Langley 2013: 615). However, such an anthropocentric view of the material world has been convincingly dismissed as a modern Western rationalist rendering that assumes the physical world is in the first instance an objective reality upon which abstract, arbitrary cultural meanings are constructed (Ingold 1992: 39; 1995: 66; Olsen 2007: 586; Thomas 2012: 174). Such a conception of place is itself therefore fundamentally Cartesian, even as it seeks to escape positivist empiricism and highlight meaningful human-environment praxis.

More appropriate, and more useful in an analysis of individuals' relations with their world, is Casey's (2008: 44) understanding of place as the fundamental 'unit of lived experience'. Places are not socialised and granted meaning, but experienced. Rather than simply being painted with human ideas, places participate in a two-directional

process wherein their character is the result of experiences encountered by their human inhabitants to which the places themselves contribute (Ingold 1993: 155). Places are therefore affective environments where meaning emerges from experience.

Therefore, there is agreement that place-meaning, like all meaning, is brought forth from the relations between the physical and metaphysical qualities of the place and of the persons experiencing them. To the human experiencer, that meaning is highly personal and therefore massively diverse, depending on a range of factors including social position, gender and previous experience (Bender 1993). As such, the most satisfying analyses of place meaning must seek to illumine the relations from which they emerge: that is, the experiential and affective qualities of the place and the sociocultural context and life history of the individual that guides their perception. That experience of sociocultural context is situated so firmly at the heart of experience of place is important, as most reconstructions of the learning and reproduction of social conditions also foreground experience.

3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions

Most often, the archaeological frameworks utilised for investigating socialisation foreground individuals' experience of those same conditions in the construction of ontologies. However, they also tend to borrow heavily, and somewhat uncritically, from disciplines without material evidence as their fundamental evidentiary source and with direct access to the communities studied (e.g. Bourdieu 1977; Foucault 1977; Giddens 1984). A brief overview of the dominant approaches to social learning will demonstrate that, as a result of this disciplinary mismatch, they struggle to analyse significant social upheaval, may lead to anachronistic projection, and leave

the archaeologist floundering in a hunt for a clear methodology that moves from archaeological data to social interpretation.

Our perception of the world and our learning of the social norms that order it are rooted in our day-to-day experience (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984). Giddens' structuration (1984) presents socialisation as being produced through the agent's reflexive interaction with the structures that shape social behaviour and ideation. The norms of social conventions, behaviours, and concepts are reproduced through time by agents' continual reflection upon themselves and their contexts to maintain a secure understanding of the conditions of their behaviour (Giddens 1984: 2, 5). The result of this is a structured world in which those ideas and behaviours that are reflected upon are appropriate: essentially, actions and thought maintain the conditions which encourage those same actions and thought (Giddens 1984: 2). Bourdieu also presented socialisation as the result of agents' engagement with social norms. Bourdieu's habitus (1977) describes those culturally-constituted dispositions formed through practice that serve to encourage, validate, and maintain both individual and collective ontology, behaviour, and values. Like Giddens' structure-maintaining behaviours, habitus is simultaneously *structured*, being built through social behaviour, and *structuring*, organising and constraining that same behaviour (Morrison 2005: 313-4).

Despite their popularity in archaeology (e.g. Atalay and Hastorf 2006; Chapman 2002; Frankel 2000; Gardner 2011 ; Hastorf 2012; Joyce and Lopiparo 2005; Lawrence and Davies 2015; Riley and Award 2001; Taylor 2003; Zvelebil 2005), habitus and structuration are problematic in analyses of the ancient past for three primary reasons. The first, presenting a problem for analyses across substantial time frames, or during periods of upheaval, concerns their methodological usefulness in changing societies. As both theories state that socialisation is the product of the

practices within the conditions being reproduced, those conditions are a prerequisite of their reproduction. Bourdieu (1990: 61) makes this explicit, stating that reproductive practice requires that the 'structures within which they function are identical to or homologous with the objective structures of which they are the product'. As such, it is wholly dependent on a consistent social context (Calhoun 1993: 82) and its applicability is undermined by rapid developments and marked diversity (Archer 2007: 38-9). Quite simply, habitus and structuration function only in stable social contexts and struggle to deal with the developments of *new* conditions.

The second fundamental issue is whether either theory is ever appropriate in an investigation of the ancient past. Giddens (1982: 59) believed sociology's goal was 'to create a theory of the modern state' and placed his focus on modern capitalist society (Bertilsson 1984: 345-6) whilst Bourdieu's work is grounded firmly in his fieldwork and whether he intended his approaches to be transferable is opaque (Calhoun 1993: 66). The archaeologist utilising structuration and/or habitus is therefore applying approaches designed to explain the reproduction of specific socioeconomic contexts in societies that are directly accessible to investigate societies that are no longer extant and may be very far removed both chronologically and culturally. In either case, the interpreter is forcing a square case study through a round framework.

Lastly, they provide no workable methodology for the archaeologist. Though they may well consider, or even stress, human engagement with the material world (e.g. Bourdieu 1970; Bourdieu 1979: 133-53), given the direct access to cultures studied enjoyed by their developing theorists they are not compelled to develop methodologies specifically suited to interpreting human-thing experience *exclusively* from those materials. The result is a theoretical corpus that can struggle

to build a clear bridge from material data to reconstructions of societies (Johnson 2006: 119-20; Lucas 2012: 1-2).

As in considerations of place meaning, then, approaches to the learning and reproduction of social conditions agree that societal perceptions of the world are fundamentally rooted in experience. However, the frameworks themselves are most, or even only, appropriate for analyses of stable and observable social contexts, run a danger of anachronistic interpretation, and fail to provide a clear progression from data to interpretation in analyses utilising archaeological material as the fundamental evidentiary source.

3.3.2. The data-theory divide

Key to the difficulties in investigating the learning, maintenance, and development of social conditions via archaeological evidence is the methodological gap that frequently lies between evidence and interpretation. This data-theory divide presents a problem far beyond approaches to experience and place and reveals itself widely in the theory-laden archaeological literature. Heavily theoretical frameworks frequently exhibit opaque links between the data examined and the approach utilised and in some cases, the approach stated simply does not appear to be applied. Johnson (2006: 119) notes, for example, that Binford's (1983) anti-'mentalist' analyses implicitly assume mentalities anyway and that Shanks and Tilley's (1987) post-processual analysis of beer cans and Neolithic tombs is grounded in overtly processual techniques. That a few French philosophers and British sociologists provide the foundation of much archaeological theory is perhaps the fundamental problem, with the applicability of the former given little attention in archaeological uses (Lucas 2012: 1) and the latter being itself characterised by a disinterest in directly connecting empirical and theoretical concerns (Fuller 2000: 508-9). As a result of this undertheorisation of data-theory

links, frequently archaeological theory is either specifically unsuited to the data, or is so vague as to be useable but capable only of producing vague results (Lucas 2012: 2). If philosophy, sociology, and anthropology are to provide theoretical inspiration for archaeologists, then a solution is needed for this fuzzy relationship between data and theory.

Seeking to address traditionally anthropocentric analyses of the material world, the 'material turn' experienced by the humanities at the turn of the millennium (e.g. Brown 2001; Preda 1999; Trentman 2009) would seem to have presented an opportunity to resolve this problem. However, despite granting archaeologists a rare opportunity to be theoretical leaders rather than consumers (Olsen 2012: 20) it has had limited impact in terms of methodologies.

Whilst failing to deliver more transparent theoretical methodologies, progress can be seen in those approaches that have sought to examine materials as agential or as enjoying interactive relationships with humans due to our dependence upon them. Unfortunately, whilst foregrounding the reflexive nature of human-thing relations they provide little aid in developing a step-by-step methodology that moves from data to theory or allows access to the meaning perceived in the world. Those variants that foreground materials as intrinsically agential are dealt with in detail below (see **3.5.1. Materiality and new materialism**), but it is worth drawing attention here to those that see objects as things created by humans, but that in turn make demands of those humans leading to ever-closer reliances. This phenomenon is labelled 'entanglement' by Hodder (2011, 2012).

Hodder's entanglement represents that dense interdependence of humans and things across society. Its core principle is that humans rely upon things that in turn rely upon humans for their creation and maintenance, leading to an inescapable bind in which fulfilling one's own needs is reliant on fulfilling the needs of the other

(Hodder 2012: 88). For Hodder, this rebalances the anthropocentric human-thing relationship that traditionally sees objects as active only through human manipulation.

Unfortunately, stressing the interdependence of, and reflexive relations between, humans and things, represents descriptive devices and epistemological principles rather than actionable methodologies or interpretative frameworks, something conceded by Hodder himself (2011: 173). They provide insight into how and why individuals interact with a given object, may help infer basic meanings such as personal status or practical usefulness, and encourage us to consider the object's own role in this process, but do not help navigate a clear path from data to interpretation nor illumine the meaning experienced through these interactions.

3.4. Experiencing place

Some approaches have specifically sought out ancient experience and attempted to provide a clear link between their theoretical frameworks and the data utilised. Some, helpfully for our purposes, also foreground place. However, they exhibit critical problems to be addressed when applied cross-culturally or in the deep past. The most prominent of these approaches have generally utilised phenomenological or embodied frameworks, or evolutionary psychology.

The former draw heavily on Merleau-Ponty and seek out embodied perceptions of place. For Merleau-Ponty (1964, 2014 [1945]), human bodies are perceiving bodies and are fundamentally similar. Merleau-Ponty (1964: 120) describes the overlapping similarities experienced by individuals' interacting with a given thing whilst allowing for their differences. Consequently, different bodies' perceptions of similar phenomena will also share many similarities in experience, whilst also experiencing some differences, a phenomenon he labels *lateral universals* (Merleau-Ponty 1964:

120). This body-centred perception was key to Tilley's (1994) introduction of phenomenology to archaeology, positing that bodily interaction with places would reveal similar experiences to those encountered in the past, and so a modern interpreter might gain insight into the experience of ancient individuals by situating themselves in the same places.

Tilley's initial phenomenological exploration of the British Neolithic was decidedly sight-focussed (Fleming 1999; Fleming 2005), but he and others in both archaeology and anthropology have also drawn attention to the potential of, for example, smell-, sound-, touch-, and tastesapes in expanding the role of the body as an analytical tool (e.g. Classen et al. 1994; Criado Boado and Villoch V'azquez 2000; Cummings and Whittle 2003; Feld 1996; Hamilakis 2002; Mills 2000; Sutton 2001; Tilley 1999). Embodiment therefore potentially opens a window to the experiences of persons in the past, utilising an explicit sensory connection between the landscape data and the theoretical framework employed, and consequently propose to allow a nuanced reconstruction of ancient engagement with their world.

The validity of embodied approaches in investigations of cultures other than the interpreter's are problematic, however, and these approaches have seen pointed, sometimes scathing (e.g. Bintliff 2009), rebuke. There are fundamental issues in the assertion that ancient and modern bodies, or even two contemporary bodies, are sufficiently similar to securely underpin body-centred approaches to place experience. Firstly, bodies are not universal and vary substantially across demographics, and making assumptions about the bodily similarities of a modern interpreter and ancient individual is extremely problematic (Brück 1998; Fowler 2002: 59; Hamilakis et al. 2002: 9; Meskell 1996). Second, as the body mediates social relations, it is the site of identity-construction and 'of contested meanings' (Brück 2005a: 55), meaning they, and our perceptions of them, are socioculturally

constituted (e.g. Douglas 1996; Featherstone et al. 1991; Feher et al. 1989; Shilling 1993). Third, bodily-engagement with the world itself is culturally contingent and maintains culturally-constituted perceptions (Tarlow 2000: 719, 28-29) with bodily actions and practices being learnt and highly variable both between individuals and societies (Bourdieu 1977: 93-4).

Finally, and especially crucial for the methodological foundations of embodied approaches, is that the number and nature of our senses themselves are culturally dependent (Coote 1992; Ingold 2000b: chapter 14). Even seemingly objective experiences, such as the human ear and brain's sensing and processing of sound, are both culturally- and environmentally-produced (Rodaway 1994). Gosden (2001: 166) provides an illustrative example: modern western humans largely exist in a world of continuous low bass noise generated by mechanised transport and household appliances and, consequently, our experience of sound is coloured by this background hum, making us more sensitive to certain frequencies and less so to others. If I listen to pre-modern music, or music composed and enjoyed by individuals from other social contexts, I cannot experience it like them. My ears are attuned to particular frequencies that will result in a different experience. Consequently, Ingold (2000b), dismisses 'anthropolog[ies] of the senses' as distinctly modern western framings of experience reliant on a limited five senses and disconnected from most natural environments. Most modern western interpreters, he argues, experience a 'groundlessness' created by footwear, transport technologies, and modern architecture (Ingold 2004) and are not well equipped to perceive places through the eyes (or feet) of individuals whom they may wish to study.

The embodied experiences of the modern researcher are therefore highly unlikely to mirror those of people in the past. This leads to yet another issue. The innate

subjectivity and reliance on contemporary experience exhibited by phenomenological approaches presents a problem for the fieldwork upon which these approaches generally rest. Conducting traditional landscape archaeology techniques, such as attempting to retrace the steps of ancient populations, risk inevitably biasing interpretations with the experience of the modern day observer. This is a serious problem. How can an archaeologist seeking nuanced reconstructions of ancient place-experience hope to find them if visiting the places in question threatens to derail their objectivity? I believe my approach in **Chapter 4** provide a possible answer, and I reflect on whether my own analyses in **Chapters 5-7** would have benefitted from field work in **8.5.5. Not experiencing placescapes.**

The range of fundamental problems stemming from the subjectivity of contemporary experience represents a severe hindrance from the archaeologist. Such approaches to place experience perhaps seem most appropriate to anthropologists and ethnographers with access to living societies where the specific sensual experiences of individuals can be described by their experiencers and therefore studied directly (e.g. Bradley and MacKinley 2000; Feld 1996; Gell 1995). For the individual working in the deep past, far removed from both the individuals we wish to understand and places they inhabited, seeking to interpret their sensory interaction with their world other than in the most general terms seems hubristic.

Evolutionary psychology has also been presented as a potential route into navigating how individuals perceive the natural environment. Maschner and Marler (2008: 110-1) argue that human cognitive adaptations to landscapes place restrictions of our interpretations of them, and that these environmental adaptations do not develop over short evolutionary scales and so have remained largely unchanged since the Plio-Pleistocene or earlier. Consequently, some degree of human perception of landscape is innate, and responses to certain landscape forms

in the past can be predicted by testing modern individuals, an assertion supported by cross-cultural psychological studies (Maschner and Marler 2008: 114). This being the case, an interpreter should be able to posit how ancient individuals were most likely to perceive certain landscapes and consider how this informed their interaction with them.

However, the predictable responses to landscape determined via such approaches are extremely basic. They include, for instance: a general preference for images of landscapes including fresh water or fauna than those without (Maschner and Marler 2008), or, where those are removed, open landscape and savannahs are preferred to other landscapes (Orians and Heerwagen 1992). Though this does allow us to reasonably posit general associations with certain landscapes and feelings of safety or happiness, it does not seem to take us much closer to how societies interacted with their surroundings, nor address how these evolved reactions informed socially-constructed understandings of the world.

Embodied and psychological approaches to place experience therefore prove insufficient for a nuanced reconstruction of experiences of place. Whilst directly linking data and theory, the former is anachronistic, the latter are vague, and the data available for both is modern.

3.5. Experiencing materials, animals, and memories

If experiential approaches to place do not get us all the way there, we might turn to approaches that address perceptions and experiences of *components* of places. After all, for an experiential framework to provide nuanced reconstructions of individuals' experiences of religious meaning in place, it must be able to clearly draw specific observations about ancient persons' place experiences directly from ancient data and that data will always represent components of place, rather than

the placescape writ large. However, this takes us into a highly theoretical world, and such worlds are dangerous. It is all too easy to fall into obfuscating semiotics that obscure interpretations, rendering them in need of as much excavation as the data underlying them, if indeed data has had much to do with it. Tim Ingold (pers. comm quoted in Hicks 2010: 51) provides a salient, not to mention characteristically unobscure, warning:

[material culture studies is a] contest [in which] words like structuralism, semiotics, practice theory and agency get batted around. The game is punctuated by 'Turns', after each of which the words get reshuffled (sometimes with prefixes such as 'neo' and 'post' attached) and play starts all over again. From time to time, the players refer to a mysterious planet called 'the material world', which all claim to have visited at one time or another. But if they have any knowledge of this world they take care not to reveal it to uninitiated spectators, lest by doing so they would expose the game as the charade it really is.

My intention in this section is to survey the prominent theoretical literature pertaining to components of place that will recur through my case studies in **Chapters 5-7** and sort their positive features from the more opaque concepts. Addressing materiality, new materialism, animal agency, and memory will reveal how the materialist research struggles to provide an actionable methodology and is characterised by the same deductive opacity that hampers social learning work, that animal-centric approaches are better described as research themes rather than theoretical frameworks, and that memory is too frequently used as a synonym for culture or commemoration and investigations struggle to navigate between the personal and collective memory. However, this survey also reveals some important motifs. These include a similar stress on emergent experience that we saw above in

analyses of place and an enthusiasm for recognising the importance of relations between persons and things as the locus of meaningful interaction. Most notable will be the debt owed to the philosophical work of Deleuze and Guattari, who will lie at the core of my new approach.

3.5.1. Materiality and new materialism

It seems sensible to begin with that which dominates all archaeological discourse. Materials, things, objects, matter, substance, or however we wish to label it or them, are the heart of 'the discipline of things *par excellence*' (Olsen 2003: 89). The material turn of the early 2000s (see **3.3.2. The data-theory divide**) saw fundamental reconsiderations of how exactly students of the humanities should conceptualise and deal with the material world. Two key interrelated approaches rooted in this movement are of particular concern here: materiality and new materialism. They have helped refocus perceptions of materials as subjects of study, but the former can be overzealous in its effort to ascribe agency to objects, and the latter's strides towards a more nuanced understanding of the active relationships between humans and things is enticing but fails to present an approach that can readily be applied to archaeological data with much clarity.

Like most theoretical paradigms, materiality is difficult to pin down. Fundamentally, it is preoccupied with breaking down subject-object dualities that see objects as manifestations of human actions or containers for human-determined meanings and the attribution of agency to non-humans. It is perhaps most straightforward to set out by turning to Bruno Latour and Alfred Gell (Miller 2005: 11), both frequently cited by proponents of materiality, and both advocates of redistributing agency to non-humans. For Latour (2004, 2005), where non-human entities cause events independently of humans that have consequences for other

persons or things, such as mass power failure⁴, then they are acting with agency. Meanwhile, Gell (1998) believes that objects made by persons become their 'distributed mind', project their agency, and affect others, thereby granting objects not only the ability to act, but a sort of inherited intentionality. Latour therefore seeks an agency completely distinct from persons, whilst Gell is concerned with agency embedded into things by their makers (Miller 2005: 12), but in either case objects are awarded the ability to act and influence by an agency that is beyond their pure material components. Essentially, it shifts interpretation from an 'anthropocentric to an omniscient perspective' (Lindstrøm 2015: 211).

Awarding objects agency presents an interesting and provocative approach with which to revitalise material culture studies and upend anthropocentric perspectives on the material world, but it can get rather out of hand. It highlights the crucial active role of materials and demands that we acknowledge their capacity to act upon each other and humans independent of human perception, but those materials do not themselves perceive. This is fundamental because, I would argue, perception lies at the heart of most archaeological efforts to reconstruct the lived-in world of the past since the arrival of post-processualism. In most circumstances, we seek to understand how persons behaved, thought, experienced, survived, or otherwise existed in and with their world. We are not studying mere nodes in a Latourian flat ontology (Latour 2005). We are studying societies.

My rejection of matter as equally potent agents is not novel. Meskell (2004: 3) has been critical of scholars who have been 'seduced' by materiality's potential to portray objects as 'actors *in the same way* as individual persons' (my emphasis).

⁴See Bennett (2005) for a Latourian discussion of exactly this.

Similarly, Lindstrøm (2015: 222), dismisses non-living agents, suggesting instead they *may* be 'effectants', and also differentiates between the *reactive agency* of, for example, a tree, which moves over time and so '*does*' and the *active agency* of animals in which a central nervous system and some capacity to make decisions and learn. Ingold (2007: 11) is more scathing. He dismisses the agency of objects as a sprinkling of 'magical mind dust' dreamt up by theorists. Non-sentient things do not influence because they have agency, he argues, they do so because of their innate qualities.

Peter Pels (1998) has described the active energy of materials' innate qualities as *fetishist*. Rather than materials being animated by some spark of life and acting back against the sentients that engage with them, they impact those sentients' lives by way of their physicality. Materials' power is rooted in their concrete presence, not in some ability of materials to act themselves, granted somewhat patronisingly in an effort to deprioritise sentients' place in reconstructions of social action, but in their 'sheer material presence' which affects events. Following Ingold and Pels, then, I suggest that material agency is an artificial, external glamour attributed to objects to redress anthropocentric readings of human-thing interaction. It is not required to do so, however, and we can grant materials their active power without granting them agency.

At first glance, new materialism has much in common with materiality. Like Materiality, new materialism is a vaguely-defined catch-all term for a variety of approaches that seek to foreground the active nature of the material world in which humans are an integrated part rather than an external or discrete observer. Also like materiality, it fundamentally rejects the Newtonian-Cartesian perception that prioritises the human as thinking master over objects which are reduced to unthinking subjects to be measured, described, and acted upon (Coole and Frost 2010: 8). Furthermore, and again like materiality, it dismisses the ontological

dichotomisation between the mental and material made by anthropologists such as Godelier (1986) where objects and materials are understood as empty vessels into which society pours meanings, with those meanings themselves being wholly distinct from material realities (Godelier 1986: 3). Instead, matter should not be understood as objects with adjoining signs, but as fully integrated materials and representations (van der Tuin and Dolphijn 2010: 155). Where new materialism distinguishes itself is in placing the active component of human-material engagements in their fluid relations. Humans and things play equal parts, but unlike materiality, new materialism does not see non-sentient entities as agents, but as contributors to emergence because they have relations with other things (Bennett 2010: 20-38; Braidotti 2002: 72-7). Foregrounding the way in which individuals' experiences lie in the relations they enjoy with that world and the things in it seems satisfyingly intuitive. Applying this line of thought in archaeological research, however, presents problems.

If what we seek is an actionable approach that allows us to interpret how societies and societal perceptions emerged, reproduced, and developed, then we must be wary of obscuring the distinction between theoretical matter or substance and 'the concrete objective entities' we employ them to analyse (DeLanda 2016: 137). Debating how we conceptualise the material world and its interactions and relations is mere semiotic meandering if it does not lead to usable approaches. Bennett (2005: 448) puts her finger on the key issue, asserting that '[she] believes that [the world] is continually *doing things*, things, that bear upon us' (emphasis in original). Fundamentally, things *do* things *to* things. Semiotic debates about exactly where the ability *to do* comes from is less important, I believe, than the *bearing upon*, and what the consequences are. The question to test, then, is does a new materialist approach help us analyse the affect of things on other things and the repercussions these have?

Various archaeological studies embrace new materialist thinking (e.g. Meskell 2005; Weismantel and Meskell 2014), though it is challenging to identify a new materialist *approach*, as such. Like most recent theoretical paradigms in archaeology, materialist archaeologies represent a wide range that select useful components from a suite of theoretical movements. Similarly, like prominent socialisation approaches (see **3.3.2. The data-theory divide**), the relationship between theory and data is frequently opaque and published works explicitly applying new materialist approaches, rather than simply discussing their benefits in conceptualising our data, are predictably rare. However, summarising two recent contributions that do demonstrates how modern materialist approaches can struggle provide much help in analysing either the bearing or the consequences.

The first sees Cipolla (2018) explore Native American and European colonists' rock piling practices in New England. He provides a possible approach to presenting the material culture in a way that creates room for different stakeholders to interact with their past and each other amidst modern political tensions generated by the similarity, and possible confusion, of their rock piles, but it does nothing for understanding the practices engaged in by the pile-builders of either tradition.

Cipolla (2018: 61) observes that the properties of stone vary in different contexts, that these qualities are independent of human cognition, that the materials that have come to make up the stony landscapes of New England are assemblages that predate humans, and that the stones were created over thousands of years beneath the earth which later pushed them into the human world. As such, Cipolla (2018: 61) claims, '...it is the earth and its stones that call humans into their service...'. This is largely the limit of the information pulled from the material at the core of his materialist analysis.

Cipolla (2018: 62) then describes indigenous perceptions of ceremonial stone piles rooted in ideas of a maternal earth, alludes to accounts of 'place-based prayer', and notes social memories of known but unwitnessed ancestral acts. Thereafter, he contrasts these Native American understandings with European and Euro-American farmers' hierarchical nature-culture cartesian perspectives and stone-piles created by throwing field stones away (Cipolla 2018: 62). These conceptualisations seem entirely unrelated to the active earth drawing humans towards the stones it has generated, and have been constructed from information that the stones themselves do not provide.

Indeed, Cipolla (2018: 65) goes on to ask 'In the end, what difference does it make that I framed stone landscape struggles in terms of lively stones instead of opposed cultural conventions and beliefs?'. His answer is that it demonstrates a shared relationship with 'earth flows and lively stones' that might help collapse ethnic dualities of experience and underscore the shared components of all colonial encounters (Cipolla 2018: 65). This may be a worthy endeavour, but there seems to be little drawn from the material to demonstrate it other than the ancient chemical processes that formed the stones. This use of materialist theory, then, both relies entirely on information other than the material, and somewhat patronisingly seeks to suggest that communities experiencing tensions over contested places might recognised their shared experiences because both have been drawn to interact with agential stones.

The second is a more practical application that makes interesting conclusions about ancient experiences of material. However, rather than interpreting data strictly via a new materialist framework, it employs a strikingly holistic one. In her contributions to a joint paper with Weismantel, (Weismantel and Meskell 2014: 245) Meskell's analyses clay figurines at Çatalhöyük and concludes that the figurines

manifested preoccupations with re-fleshing animals and ancestors. She then goes on to assert that this conclusion has been reached 'by following the material', a process which has 'directed [her] to the very concerns of the makers themselves'. Certainly, following the material has led to these conclusions, but it rather downplays the diversity of the components of her analysis. This conclusion does not spring forth from clay itself but instead is rooted in evidence beyond the clay. Fundamental to Meskell's interpretation is the working and firing process, the region/period context, the treatment of human and other species' bodies in death at the site, the decoration of dwellings, and the bodies depicted in miniature form (Weismantel and Meskell 2014: 237, 44). Far from being innate in the clay, Meskell's interpretation emerges from the relations between a range of categories of evidence. Unusually, rather than a somewhat vague data-theory relationship obfuscating what is in fact fairly simple analysis, Meskell's insistence that the material is the key obscures a far more nuanced synthesis and reconstruction.

New materialism presents a thought-provoking take on how we should understand the affective qualities of matter and our experiences of it. It rightfully encourages us to reject Cartesian dualities and foreground the fluid relations of persons and things. However, it provides little in the way of a methodology that archaeologists can apply to our data, and archaeological applications of new materialism are vague and tend not to quite do what they say on the tin.

3.5.2. Animals

Another prominent motif of the case studies will be the animals encountered in Anatolia (**Chapter 5**) and North Mesopotamia (**Chapter 7**). As with materials, recent theoretical responses to anthropocentrism in the humanities have sought to overhaul approaches to animals. Animal agency and human-animal relations seek to redress dualities between human and non-human and place a stress on human-

animal relationships and interactiveness rather than one-sided domination. These encourage devoting proper attention to the role of animals in society as agential contributors, but most fall short of truly treating animals as agents, and the methodological and interpretative productivity of seeking to do so is in any case unclear. These approaches do, however, offer more to my specific case studies than materialist examples. Equid burials, for instance, which I address in **7.2.3. Equid mediators**, are specifically dealt with in some investigations (e.g. Argent 2010; Hill 2013: 123; Lindstrøm 2015) and Recht (2019) specifically explores equine agents in the 3rd Millennium Jazira, as do I. However, an overview of the main concerns of animal-focussed archaeological research will show that, though the concern for relations is, like new materialism, provocative and loaded with potential, it better represents a convincing case for asking animal-related research questions than a clear and actionable approach.

Traditionally, across disciplines, animals are treated somewhat dismissively as a homogenous other to humans, and 'animality' as the antithetical opposite to human uniqueness (Birke et al. 2004: 168). Archaeological considerations of animals generally treat them in the same fashion, addressing them only as consumables or technological aides (Recht 2019: 2). Following this perspective, animals are usually described in human-use terms: 'game animal', 'food animal', 'beast of burden', 'draught animal' etc (Knight 2018: 1). Advocates of animal agency reject this duality.

As a fundamentally posthumanist paradigm, they exhibit many similar concerns to the proponents of materiality and new materialism considered above. They

acknowledge the two-directional relationships that humans enjoy with animals⁵ and their ability to 'act back' and influence human action and society. Terms like 'cohabitation' (Boyd 2017: 300), 'co-creation' (Armstrong Oma 2010: 179; Birke et al. 2004: 174) and 'intra-action' (Birke et al. 2004: 168) frequently underscore the intertwined and inseparable existences of humans and animals. Like materials, animals have fundamental and affective roles in relation to humans, animals, and things. Also shared with some materialist approaches is the understanding of animals as agents, though on much stronger ground.

That animals are agents seems more immediately intuitive ontological position than ascribing agency to non-sentient things. After all, few people today would see animals as the unthinking *animal machines* of Descartes and it is hardly revolutionary to note that many, if not all, animal species make choices, act with purpose, and have the ability to affect humans. Steward (2009: 229) puts it succinctly when she observes that 'watching a bird pecking around for food or a cat stalking a mouse is just utterly unlike watching, say, trees blow in the wind'. Not only does it *feel* reasonable, however, it is scientifically demonstrated.

A wide range of studies acknowledge animals' ability to participate in complex learning, solve problems, and demonstrate forethought, self-reflection, self-reactiveness, and consequent behavioural flexibility and decision-making (Birke et al. 2004: 174; Lindstrøm 2015: 223 and references there). Špinka (2019: 12, table 1), for instance, sets out four levels of agency, with the final one largely restricted to humans, but the others widely occurring in other species:

⁵With apologies to some animal agency advocates who rightfully remind us that humans are animals and problematise dichotomising human and non-human animals, I will use 'animal' as shorthand for 'non-human animal' here, purely for brevity

- 1) *passive/reactive agency* – reactive behaviour to external stimuli
- 2) *action-driven agency* – active behaviour in pursuit of current outcomes
- 3) *competence-building agency* – active behaviour to acquire skills or knowledge for future applications
- 4) *aspirational agency* – active behaviour in pursuit of long-term, reflected-upon goals.

For all intents and purposes, unless we specifically wish to construct ‘the agent’ to exclude non-human animals – by demanding the ability to express complex concepts linguistically, as Davidson (1982: 322) does, for instance – then that animals are agents is simply beyond doubt.

Also shared with the materialist frameworks above are animal-centred approaches’ enthusiasm for interactive relations. Birke et al. (2004) explore the ‘co-creation’ of emergent relationships whilst Hill (2013: 120) is concerned with ‘relational ontologies’ that situate animals as ‘independent, sentient agents [...] constituted socially, through performative interaction’. Ogden et al. (2013: 7) are interested in the dynamic coexistence of humans, animals, and things, whilst Gittins (2013) deals in detail with the fluid relations of humans and reindeers that allow for the emergence of merged identities. However, this is difficult to pin down as something we could describe as a methodology.

Again, I will briefly survey two archaeological applications of animal-centred frameworks to consider how their methodologies might be applied. Usefully archaeological studies which incorporate animal agency tend to do so rather more explicitly than those of many other theoretical paradigms, and so provide material to draw upon rather more readily.

Arguing for the recognition of 'non-human animal agents' as social actors in their own right, Recht (2019: 4) considers instances of animal resistance in the Ancient Near East. This is an especially evocative and easily grasped form of animal agency. Most people are familiar with the postman-biting dog trope or other animals refusing to obey the directions of humans, for instance. However, of her (2019: 5-10) three examples of archaeological identifiers of animal resistance, two are perhaps better described as identifiers of human efforts to control uncooperative animals, and the third requires attributing a desire for considerable realism to the ancient artist. Recht deals firstly with the penile straps that appear on some equid figurines in 3rd millennium Syria (see Figure 1). These, she argues, represent a device used to control the breeding efforts of equid species. The second example, also from late 3rd millennium North Mesopotamia, are equine harness components seen in the iconographic record that she interprets as muzzles used to prevent biting. Finally, she argues that a range of depictions of equid species being pulled by humans are shown with their necks and/or heads held positioned in ways that imply they are resisting the pull of their masters.

[copyright image removed]

Figure 1 Equid figurines featuring penile straps (Recht 2019: figs. 2 and 3)

Whether or not Recht's final example, which she concedes requires placing much faith in ancient artists, is valid, the first two certainly show animal harness equipment designed to control their behaviours. Furthermore, though we might engage in semantics over whether human efforts to control animal behaviour is synonymous with efforts to subdue animal *resistance*, these examples do demonstrate human innovations designed to alter the behaviours that animals wished to engage in. As such, they depict animal agency and that agency clearly impacted the lives of humans and other animals enough for humans to develop devices to combat it.

Like Recht, Armstrong Oma (2010: 180) regards animals as agents. She places her focus on mutual animal-human 'intra-actions' rather than simply on animals' ability to affect persons, however. Rejecting Tim Ingold's (2000a) classic essay, *From Trust To Domination*, which posits that hunter-gatherers see animals as close relatives but agriculturalists see them as slaves, Armstrong Oma (2010: 176) seeks to reconstruct the social contracts, trust, and reciprocity between humans and animals in agricultural communities. Following Knight (2005), Armstrong Oma (2010: 177) asserts that, in fact, hunter-gatherers, whose engagements with (real world) prey

animals are periodic and almost never repeated with the same individual animal, see them as interchangeable members of various creature classes. By contrast, she continues, pastoralists live and work intimately with animals over sustained periods and so necessarily develop relationships with them. Unlike wild animals, tame animals' positive disposition towards humans allows them to become 'serial interactants' and therefore form personal relationships with individual humans (Knight 2012: 343-4).

To make this case, Armstrong Oma (2010: 182) sets out the evidence for trusting and cooperative relationships between humans and animals in Bronze Age Scandinavia. She surveys the archaeological evidence for shared living spaces and practices, such as milking and sheepdog handling, that require intimate human-animal relationships to function efficiently, and others, such as shearing and rutting, that require society to be structured, at least in part, in accordance with the annual rhythms of animals. She is convincing in her thesis that social interaction between humans and animals created social contracts built on trust, and that these social contracts were structuring mechanisms in society.

Recht's study provides interesting archaeological attestations of agential animals. There is little doubt that the animal gear of Early Bronze Age North Mesopotamia attests to human efforts to restrict the agencies of animals. Similarly reasonable is Armstrong Oma's depiction of interactive relations between humans and animals. Clearly, the intimate relations enjoyed between humans and the animals that shared their lives and living spaces required bonds of trust and reciprocity. The former's social actors, and latter's social contracts, are both convincing.

Less convincing, however is whether either study truly tackles animals *as agents*, rather than as exhibiting *agential capacities* or whether an animal-centred approach was necessary for their analyses.

Firstly, whilst, as discussed above, the animal species considered by Recht and Armstrong are no doubt agents, their discussions of them are focussed on *human perceptions* of animals as agents. This, as Hribal (2007: 102) notes, is not unusual. Though 'agency' is often explored as a theory, he says, 'the agents (i.e. the animals themselves) dissipate into a vacant, theoretical category.' Rarely, he continues, does the interpreter explain how the animal '[shaped] their own destiny'. If seeking to explore animal agents, rather than exploring instances of animals behaving in ways that are not engineered by humans or addressing the relationships shared between persons and animals, analysis must foreground that animal agent and the ways in which it creates the circumstances in which it finds itself. This is the difference between theorising animal agents, and proving them to be agents (Hribal 2007: 102).

This may be a harsh critique. Can we really expect humans to be able to fully flesh out the animal agent? Could we ever get closer to the animal agent than in the abstract? We can observe the behaviours of animals (or, indeed, plant species or anything else) but we have, after all, 'no choice but to think as humans' (Ferré 1994: 72), and cannot divine their motives, intentions, or decision-making processes of other species. To seek to do so would inevitably require our anthropomorphising them, thereby inserting our human perspectives and undermining any effort to de-anthropocentrise analysis (Hayward 1997: 56). As such, pursuing the animal agent seems not only extraordinarily difficult, but counter-productive. Animal behaviours as perceived by persons is as close to the animal agent as the interpreter is liable to get.

Secondly, the conclusions reached regarding human efforts to modify or restrict animal behaviours, or the close bonds between humans and animals, do not seem to require a specific animal-centred approach. They are well-executed and incisive

applications of normal archaeological analysis. They examine a range of material evidence, draw upon comparanda, and make logical conclusions. Their foregrounding of animals seems more of a research topic rather than a methodology.

These criticisms may be unfair. Neither Recht nor Armstrong Oma explicitly state that they are utilising fundamentally new techniques of analysis nor groundbreaking theoretical frameworks. However, that these interesting analyses of human-animal relations work without the development of a distinct animal-centric, posthumanist framework should give us pause for thought as to whether one is required. If fully accessing the animal agent is unachievable and the conclusions brought about by animal-centred analysis do not require a specific approach beyond asking animal-focussed research questions, then what methodological or interpretative function does an animal-centric framework grant the archaeologist? It seems all that is left is the avoidance of anthropocentrism.

Avoiding anthropocentrism is not necessarily a worthy objective for its own sake, however. Anthropocentrism should not automatically be equated with 'speciesism' and focussing on humans because they are most relevant to an analysis should not be conflated to focussing on 'human interests to the exclusion, or at the expense, of interests of other species' (Hayward 1997: 52). Whilst it is methodologically and ethically dubious to privilege humans as objectively more important than non-humans, foregrounding the human experience in an archaeological study that seeks to understand human socialisation, for example, does not seem problematic, provided the role of animals is not dismissed arbitrarily.

3.5.3. Memory

The third theoretical paradigm upon which I wish to place a focus is *memory*. Memory will not be dealt with explicitly in my case studies, but social or collective memory permeates all of them. In anthropological usage, memory essentially refers to the reconstruction of the past in the present, or inherited narratives and perceptions. As my case studies draw heavily on such narratives and meanings, and my goal is to seek out explanations of how the latter are created, reinforced, and developed, they are a constant feature of all three analyses. By seeking out the ways in which the past, and its manifestations, are understood by later societies, memory presents a potentially interesting route into the reproduction of ideas through time. However, an overview of memory studies, and memory's use in archaeological contexts, will reveal two things: firstly, that, like material- and animal-focussed approaches, its strengths are replicated in a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach, and; secondly, that it suffers from a lack of attention to the relationship between personal and collective memory and that it tends to do a disservice to non-elite narratives, both of which are problems that the framework applied in my case studies helps resolve.

Anglophone group memory studies originate with the 1980 publication of Halbwachs' seminal work *The Collective Memory*, originally appearing in French in 1950, and boomed from the 1990s. Halbwachs' principle contributions were twofold. Firstly, he distinguished between three types of memory: the autobiographical (individual and personal reconstructions of past experience), the collective (shared perceptions of the past), and the historical (official narratives) (DeGroma 2015: 157). Secondly, he promoted *presentism*: the notion that perceptions of the past are mediated by the present day contexts of the perceiver, and so memory is always a reconstruction 'in the light of the present' (Cosser 1992: 372).

Halbwachs' foundational role and influence is still frequently stated in memory studies, but few modern works engage directly with his writing (Gensburger 2016: 398-9), and definitions and applications of 'memory' as an interdisciplinary research topic have diverged considerably.

The second most frequently cited theorist in memory work is another French theorist, Pierre Nora (Gensburger 2016: tables 1 and 2), whose vaunted 1989 *Les lieux de memoire* strictly separates memory and history and awards contrasting cultural and social values to each. Nora (1989: 9) insists that they are not simply distinct, but enemies, and that history's 'true mission is to suppress and destroy' memory. He characterises history as the inane record keeping of 'hopelessly forgetful modern societies' (Nora 1989: 8) obsessed with documenting 'not only the most minor historical actor but also his witnesses, his spouse, and his doctor. The less extraordinary the testimony', Nora (1989: 14) believes, 'the more aptly it seems to illustrate the average mentality'. What Nora (1989: 8, 13) calls 'true memory', by contrast, is the unself-conscious interactions with things that are at once 'material, symbolic, and functional' (1989: 19) enjoyed by 'peasant culture' and 'so-called primitive or archaic societies' (1989: 7, 13). Despite his antagonistic tone, the separation of history and memory is a keystone theme in memory studies, and his 'places of memory', both literal and conceptual locales that encourage the present experience of the past, has found comprehensive traction.

The 'memory boom' of the 1990s saw the nuancing of Halbwachs and Nora's positions. Fabian (1999: 50), for instance, embraces Halbwachs past in the present and urges us to stress the *re-* in recognition whilst Yelvington (2002: 235) presents 're-membering, re-calling, re-collecting and re-presenting/re-present-ing' (emphases in original) as alternatives to memory. In both cases we are prompted to consider the present day return to and utilisation of the past rather than simply the survival

of phenomena. Assmann (1995: 126-7) , also distinguishing between forms of memory, holds that 'cultural memory' is distinct both from individual recall and 'everyday communicative memory'. Communicative memory broadly encapsulates oral histories and living memories that are actualised through communication with others, and so are disorganised and have a moving chronological limit of c.80-100 years before present. Cultural memory, on the other hand, is transcendental, distanced from the everyday, locked in time by specific events, and preserved through ritual behaviours, monuments, and formalised institutional communications (Assmann 1995: 128-9). These cultural phenomena that maintain memory become 'islands of time' that are entirely distinct from everyday chronology and communication, though are constantly interacted with, reflected upon, and reinterpreted in the present to concretise group identity (Assmann 1995: 129-32).

Though the memory boom drew considerable scholarly attention, it also led to a lack of consistency and by the turn of the millennium the breadth with which 'memory' was used allowed such a broad range of approaches to exist within it that 'the only fixed point at this moment is the near ubiquity of the term' (Winter 2001: 66). Many of these uses were also unhelpfully vague. For Crumley (2002: 40) social memory represents both conscious and subconscious sociocultural messages concerning ideas, practices, ontologies, abilities, and history that are structured by class, gender, ethnicity and other social conditions and mediated by personal experience. It is the mechanism that transmits sociocultural data intergenerationally though the individuals and groups may be entirely unaware of the process (Crumley 2002: 39). Meanwhile, (Kansteiner 2002: 179) describes social memory a 'complex process of cultural production and consumption' allowing for the tenacity of tradition, the creativity of 'memory makers', and the rebellious potential of 'memory consumers', and which actualises and interacts with chronologically and

sometimes culturally distant episodes but foregrounds present-day interests (Kansteiner 2002: 180).

An especially wide-ranging definition is presented by Michael Schudson. Schudson (1997) believes memory is manifested not only in dedicated, memorialising artefacts such as books and monuments, but in all cultural artefacts that are the product of knowledge and we do not need to be familiar with the memories preserved in a given artefact, place, or practice to be impacted by them. He notes that he is the beneficiary of 'a cultural storehouse of knowledge, very little of which [he is] obliged to have in [his] own head', and gives the example of a jet engine, which can propel him across the sky whether or not he understands how: his understanding is irrelevant to the cultural memory encased by the device (Schudson 1997: 347). The above, broad definitions make it fairly easy to identify things that *could be* 'memory', but it does not seem particularly easy to put a finger on what memory *is not*.

This openness has received considerable critique. Berliner (2005: 577) notes such imprecision prevents any straightforward distinction between memory and other anthropological terms for the preservation and re-experiencing of cultural phenomena such as habitus or structure. Fundamentally, Berliner (2005: 577) asks, 'is not memory just another term for the transmission of culture and the reproduction of society?' Likewise, Yelvington (2002: 236), Fabian (1999: 51) and Stewart (2004: 561-2) express concerns that fuzzy definitions of memory can find themselves stretched to the point of being synonymous with identity or culture or a gloss for practices that may otherwise be described as ritual. Additionally, a variety of terms were, and continue to be, used more or less interchangeably, including collective memory (Assmann 1995; Halbwachs 1980 [1950]; Schwartz 1997), social memory (Fentress and Wickham 1992), collective remembrance (Winter and Sivan 1999), public memory (Shackel 2010).

A possible resolution to identifying precisely what memory is might lie in clarifying what it does or how it is formed. Stewart (2004: 562) has suggested that anthropologists turn back to psychological analyses of memory to help delineate more strongly exactly what memory entails, and some cognitive and neurological research has explored *distributed memory*. Distributed memory can be understood in several ways, from the notion that human memory is reliant on external phenomena that are utilised in aiding and applying memory, to the development of literal shared memory functions amongst close-knit groups (Michaelian and Sutton 2013: 7-8). These studies remain relatively niche, but more mainstream work has also recognised that small groups of humans' conversational remembering promotes *mnemonic convergence* and, therefore, the creation of shared memories (Fagin et al. 2013). Whilst providing solid scientific grounding for shared perceptions of the past, this work is focussed on small groups and their recollections of their own experiences rather than shared reconstructions of the past shared by large groups, many of whom never interact directly, and so does little for our purposes here.

Meanwhile, in anthropological enquiries, the transformation of past events into stories is a key theme in the development of collective or cultural memories. Fabian (1999: 53) argues that shared memory is best understood as a process of *recognition*, which he feels well-represents a combination of the German terms *Erkennen*, *Wiederkennen*, and *Anerkennen*. Schudson (1997) takes a similar position on the identification of key motifs, their remembrance, and the present-day acknowledgement of their importance in a process of narrativization. In Zerubavel's (1996) model, these motifs are then reproduced via 'mnemonic traditions' in a process of 'mnemonic socialisation' within 'mnemonic communities' of various scales. Others also encourage us to foreground the role of forgetting, as well as remembering, in the process by which collective narratives are formed (e.g. Anne

and Peltonen 2003; Papadakis 1993). Often, these processes are presented, explicitly or implicitly, as a contrived curation of past events.

Frequently, it is argued that sociocultural structures and motifs such as folklore, national narratives, cosmologies, rituals, legal systems, and commemorative monuments serve not only to recall the past, but to manifest, reinforce, and transmit specific interpretations of it (Assmann 1995; Schudson 1997; Schwartz 1996). Formal examples of these that are purposefully created to prevent forgetting or ensure active remembrance, such as monuments and commemorative holidays (Zerubavel 1996: 294; 2003: 332), require an individual or group capable of influencing others must identify an event or its participants as worthy of commemoration (Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz 1991: 382). These same groups can also be involved in compelling others to forget particular events or interpretations, and demand their remembrance of others in particular ways (Anne and Peltonen 2003). Consequently, cultural or collective memory is often tied closely to the narratives ordained by the elite.

By contrast, Zerubavel (1996: 283-5) believes that memories are 'inevitably distorted' as a result of their being filtered through social contexts, and so independent of elite machinations. However, he (1996: 286-7) also stresses artificially imposed time-limits of social memory narratives as a key example of the social filtering of memories of the past. His observation that by settling upon a beginning we relegate everything prior to irrelevance is reasonable, but his examples, such as the Israeli broadcasting policy of the early 1990s that excluded Arab-period toponyms, legal statutes of limitations, the Islamic epoch date defined by Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Medina, and the European 'discovery' of various already-populated locations, are all distinctly elite-driven impositions.

This reconstruction of a curated and narrativized past is not satisfying. If we accept that memory is the past experienced in the present, which virtually all anthropological definitions do, however widely they cast the 'memory' net, then it is a perpetually actualised phenomenon (Nora 1989: 8). Whether or not specific narratives have been constructed, the experience of the past is constantly reinterpreted as it is engaged with. As such, it is emergent.

Kidron (2016) provides an alternative and distinguishes between two interpretations of 'political memory': one that understands most conceptions of the past to be rooted in elite ideologies and engineered to provide a buttress for authority; and one that sees memory as a diffuse phenomenon arising from the interacting societal networks. Meanwhile, (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991) shows how contested, or 'dissensual', interpretations of the Vietnam war memorial' emerge through the negotiation of, and interaction with, versions of the past whilst Seremetakis (1994) and Stoller (1997) both explore the role of the senses in embodied memory. These investigations help reassert the individual in collective memory and encourage deeper consideration of how the past is constantly *re*-constructed in the present.

Reasserting the individual in memory studies has been marred by the lack of explicit attention devoted to the link between individual and collective memory. Despite memory studies' debt to Halbwachs, for whom collective memory did not simply represent collective memories of agreed upon narratives but individuals' remembering *as part of* a group (Gensburger 2016: 401), most analyses simply focus on the latter and do not attempt to explicitly link the two (DeGloma 2015: 157). However, some studies do seek to connect them, considering how individuals connect their personal experiences to group narratives through understanding them as parallel journeys, such as growing up during periods of national independence

movements (Rodgers 1995: 4) or mapping class struggles onto personal experiences, with each level of narrative helping to 'fill in details' missing from the other (Steinmetz 1992: 503). Similar explorations of the relationships between individual and familial memories and collective narratives have also been conducted by Gable and Handler (2000) and White (2000). DeGloma (2015: 160) also takes a similar position, describing autobiographical and collective memory as being interdependent 'modes of engaging' the 'mnemonic landscape' that reinforce each other. In his discussion of personal and collective memories of traumatic events, DeGloma demonstrates this interdependence and reinforcement by showing how individuals integrate the two modes of memory and use collective memories to make claims about autobiographical events vice versa (DeGloma 2015: 164). For example, DeGloma (2015: 170-5) explores how veteran groups campaigned against the Vietnam War by presenting narratives that situated collective regrets over the war amidst personal recollections of atrocities. This integrated the two modes of memory and subverted more positive official reconstructions of US activity in Vietnam.

This autobiographical-collective memory connection outlined by DeGloma seems rather simplistic, however. Firstly, the collective narratives' development are not tackled and we are presumably to understand that they are directly formed by the dissemination of veterans' personal accounts, or the state's official information. Secondly, both the personal and collective memories are treated as stable narratives that can be used to anchor, buttress, and contextualise one another. If the object is to understand how personal and collective memory are linked, it would seem fundamental to understand their relationship as they develop and continue to develop. Archaeology, which is so well practiced at investigating meaning and understanding at both micro and macro levels, would seem well-disposed to provide this link.

Memory, and its reproduction, is closely tied to material culture, with many artefacts, such as medals, gravestones, and statues, being mnemonic devices by design (Zerubavel 1996: 292). It is unsurprising, then, that archaeologists have embraced memory as a topic of research. Disappointingly, however, whilst definitions of memory in the archaeological literature are usually narrower and therefore more actionable than those of anthropology, they suffer from two recurrent issues: they are frequently focussed on deliberate commemoration, and therefore implicitly on the elite who with the ability to cement narratives in the public consciousness, or on the group's memory rather than the individual's engagement with that memory, and therefore, in both cases, fail to acknowledge memory's emergent, experiential aspects.

A focus on purposeful commemoration is commonplace. Joyce (2003: 104) states explicitly that 'memory' is synonymous with 'commemoration'. Van Dyke and Alcock (2003: 2) do not associate memory exclusively with commemoration, but do stress its built nature, defining 'social memory' as 'the *construction* of a collective notion (not an individual belief) about the way things were in the past' (my emphasis), a definition also adopted by Glen Schwartz (2007: 40). Elsewhere, Van Dyke (2004: 414) has defined social memory as the result of drawing 'stories and beliefs that serve the needs of the present' from the past, which does not so clearly imply fabrication, but by foregrounding its *service* of the present certainly suggests purposeful reconstructions.

Surprisingly, Ömür Harmanşah's (2015) *Cities and the shaping of memory in the Ancient Near East* does not include a discussion of approaches to memory, or even a definition of the term. Where 'memory' appears in the text, however, it is almost always in relation to commemorative monuments and therefore to elite-curated narratives (Harmanşah 2015: 47, 50, 6, 101, 8, 19, 34, 35, 85), though it is once used

in a discussion of the negotiation between intended meanings and popular reception of commemorative structures (Harmanşah 2015: 152). Similarly, Schwartz (2007: 40, 53) addresses only the curated memories of the elite and manifested in monumental constructions. There is a corpus of archaeological analysis that seeks out non-elite social memory, but usually this foregrounds resistance to elite stories (e.g. Mixter 2017; Seetah 2015; Van Dyke 2004: 414) rather than as distinct emergent narratives in their own right⁶. It seems rather a shame to primarily address non-elite social memory as an oppositional phenomenon and not as a separate sphere of collective narrative.

My intention is not to suggest that elite-curated cultural memory does not exist or is unimportant. It certainly does, and is, and examples of it are myriad both in modernity and in the ancient world – including in my discussion of elite efforts to realign perceptions of equids in **Chapter 7**. However, if memory is experienced in the present, and is constantly in flux, then it is a shame that a focus on elite intentions *to the exclusion of* experiential reception so dominates the literature, as it rather underserves memory as a topic of archaeological research. Perhaps key to this issue is the difficulty in linking individual and collective memory.

Berliner has drawn attention to the problems of making this connection. He (2005: 586-7) distinguishes between the ‘reflexive theory of transmission’, the way the transmitting and receiving groups perceive that process, and the ‘social processes of transmission’, which comprise the actual mechanisms for preserving memory through generations. By focussing leaning further towards the on the processes than

⁶ Rydén (2018) does explicitly explore the material manifestations of personal memories, but these specifically deal with displaced persons in traumatic circumstances seeking to remember their past and hope for their future rather than memory as a shared phenomenon.

the reflexion, he believes, scholarship has failed to consider how social memory is actually understood by the relevant society. Processes let us develop models, but they may present stark discrepancies with the social phenomena they seek to explain. Once again, it is essential to get back to experience.

Key to this individual-collective memory link, then, must be how memory is actualised in everyday life, but achieving this in the ancient world is not straightforward within current frameworks. Some material culture research seeks to do this, but the approaches can be ineffective or impossible for the archaeologist. In the introduction to their edited volume *Archaeologies of Memory*, Van Dyke and Alcock (2003: 5-6) stress the importance of experience of places in the creation of memory and point to phenomenology as the approach with which to explore this, a methodology that is hardly robust (see **3.4. Experiencing place**). Phenomenology also makes its way into other contributions to their book. Meskell (2003: 39), for example, intertwines remembering with Heideggerian *dwelling* in her study of Egyptian New Kingdom ancestor veneration. In the modern world, key to the investigation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial conducted by Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991: 383) is considering the structures and discourse that form and surround it. For them, the memorial's symbolic meaning emerges from the values and memory of the events and persons it commemorates, so drawing out the worldviews and praxis that develop and frame a memorial are essential to interpretation. However, problematically for scholars of the ancient world, crucial to their carrying this out was developing a detailed ethnography of persons and groups interacting with the memorial, a feat rarely possible beyond living memory.

The accessing of memory as an active, lived phenomenon in the ancient world is therefore difficult to grasp via the frameworks used to deal with memory by archaeologists. Additionally, few seek it out, preferring to use 'memory' simply as

a synonym for commemoration or cultural narrative. An effective approach to the experience of social memory, and by extension the relationship between personal and collective memory, is therefore underdeveloped.

3.5.4. Deleuzian debts

Notable amongst the above approaches is the recurrence of relations and emergence. These are largely rooted in the philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (hereafter D+G), who form the core of the approach developed in **Chapter 4**. In some cases this is explicit whilst in others it is the result of drawing upon theorists who themselves have borrowed from D+G. Key Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts that I will draw upon from **Chapter 4** onwards, including *assemblages*, the combination of a material object or objects and their non-material components, and *folds*, the internalisation of external experiences and the consequent altering of understanding (these are discussed at length in **4.1. Folded arrangements**, albeit using 'arrangement' rather than 'assemblage' as a preferred translation of D+G's French, see footnote 7), permeate much of new materialism and animal agency. Meanwhile, whilst not explicitly linked, some memory studies sit comfortably within a Deleuzo-Guattarian framework.

Assemblages and *becoming* (a process of change that Deleuze would later attribute to the *fold*) are frequently cited as a significant influence on new materialism (e.g. Bennett 2005: 445; 2010: viii, x; Coole and Frost 2010: 9; van der Tuin and Dolphijn 2010: 159; Witmore 2014: 206-7) and a considerable strand of new materialist work is so immersed in Deleuze's obsession with becoming over being that Sencindiver (2017) labels it *Deleuzian New Materialism*. Bennett (2010), DeLanda (2002; 2004), and Conneller (2011) explicitly draw upon D+G's (2013 [1980]: Chapter 12) *Treatise on Nomadology's* 'material vitalism', from which they draw the 'continuous development of form' that permits change and difference to emerge from

apparently inert matter (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 [1980]: 479). This material vitalism is the transformational becoming that leads to the emergence of new entities, a focus shared by Colebrook (2008). Meanwhile, DeLanda's (2016) *Assemblage Theory's* reliance on D+G is obvious, and Braidotti (2002: 72-7) and Bennett (2010: 20-38) also place a heavy focus on the relations of *assemblages*. Together, it is these themes that encourage new materialists to foreground relations as the locus of energy in human-thing and thing-thing interactions.

The animal-focussed researchers also often owe much to D+G. They are occasionally cited as an influence on an interdisciplinary 'animal-turn' (Boyd 2017: 302) but frequently, their presence is a general repercussion of their posthumanist context rather than direct application of Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts. Birke et al. (2004: 174) describe their human-animal 'co-creation' as 'mutual becoming' which sits comfortably in a Deleuzo-Guattarian understanding of social relations. Even more familiar is the socialisation of horses described by Birke et al. (2004: 175). When they reconstruct, for instance, the repeated shared actions through which 'both horse and human bodies are changed' (emphasis in original) it is decidedly reminiscent of Deleuzian *folding*. Elsewhere, the Deleuzian connection is explicit. Ogden et al. (2013: 7) draw upon their work to call for ethnographies to leap beyond animal-human relationships and towards 'multispecies ethnographies' in which 'assemblages of humans, other species, and things [coexist as] a complex and dynamic process whereupon the collective's properties exceed their constitutive elements'. Meanwhile, Deleuzo-Guattarian fluidity and *becoming* is key to the emergent human/reindeer identities explored by Gittins (2013). Animal-centred approaches, though less overtly grounded in D+G, owe them some of their key concepts.

Lastly, a range of ruminations on the nature of shared memory lends itself very naturally to a Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology. Schwartz (1997: 471) conceives of memory as an active component of a social world in which 'collective memory and social actions appear as constituents, not causes and effects, of one another'. He further argues that commemorative objects, physical or conceptual, exist in commemorative networks and their place in those networks defines their 'positional meaning' at a given time. To 'activate' the memory of a commemorative object, 'through a newspaper article, statue, painting, cartoon, or ceremonial observation is to activate memories than include but extend beyond [it]' (Schwartz 1997: 489). Meanwhile, the *re-* focus of Fabian (1999) and Yelvington (2002) discussed above aims to foreground the delving into the past, but it also hints at the repetitive nature of this. Finally, Nora (1989: 14) observes that 'memory comes to us from the outside... we interiorize it as an individual constraint'. Together, these understandings present memory as a fluid and active phenomenon situated amidst a web of relations with which individuals constantly reengage. These reengagements represent a process of individual internalisations of constantly recontextualised events, ideas, and persons. Clearly, this description easily fits *folded* experiences within *assemblages*.

Applications of memory in archaeology too sit comfortably within a Deleuzian framework. Meskell (2003: 39) explores *dwelling* and remembering, but in practice her analysis is very similar to the *assemblage* approach of, for example, Hamilakis (2013), and indeed the *folding* I will utilise in my case studies. Meskell (2003: 40-1) describes, for instance, the 'constellation of associated features' that lent meaning to domestic spaces and observes how 'every cupboard and niche has a history, and a mute tumult of memories returns throughout temporal interactions with those features'. Such interpretations are well-situated within a Deleuzian ontology that recognises the emergence of meaning from *assemblages* and foregrounds the

cumulative internalisation of *folded* experiences in determining the parameters of future experiences.

If approaches such as new materialism, animal agency, and memory, drawn from theorists who themselves owe a debt to D+G, or utilise concepts that sit comfortably within theirs, are so popular in archaeological quests for ancient perception, then why not return to the source? Doing so will allow me to build the framework I am searching for.

Chapter 4: Building a framework

Our search for a framework that allows us to reconstruct the intersection of socialisation, religious experience, and place, has thus far been unsuccessful. However, the recurrence of the D+G's philosophy in nuanced interpretations of human engagements with the world, and the stress these place on experience, emergence, and relations, which dominates their literature, encourages us to mine their corpus for useful approaches to human interaction with, and understanding of, their religiously-loaded worlds. Here, drawing upon a suite of Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts, I argue that we can best analyse how individuals experienced meaning in the world by reconstructing the social conditions in which they lived and thereafter hypothesising how the relations between those conditions encouraged particular meanings to emerge from a given experience. Put simply, if we can reconstruct how an individual's sociocultural context shaped their understanding of the world, then we can posit how they perceived new experiences of that world, and therefore the meaning generated by that experience. It is my intention here to provide an approach that allows us to utilise specific archaeological data to reconstruct those contexts to understand the relations that frame understanding, and then use that framework as a lens through which to examine the same individuals' experience of other archaeological data. This will provide a material-centred approach to socialisation, a solution to the first research question, *can a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach allow nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and can these be tied explicitly to archaeological data?* (see **1.3. Research questions**), but also a contextual interpretative device that allows us to interpret ancient persons' experience from their own perspective.

Despite the widespread archaeological use of theories such as those covered above (see **3.5.4. Deleuzian debts**) that are themselves derived from D+G (e.g. Hamilakis 2017; Hamilakis and Jones 2017; Harris 2017, 2018; Pauketat and Alt 2018; Wright

2016), extensive, explicit applications of D+G themselves in archaeological investigations are a relatively recent addition (e.g. Hamilakis 2017; Hamilakis and Jones 2017; Harris 2017, 2018; Wright 2016). A number of Deleuzo-Guattarian ideas have much potential to aid the archaeologist in studies of socialisation. However, given the inherent risks of borrowing non-archaeological approaches for archaeological applications, it is necessary to justify adding yet another to archaeologists' repertoires. The contextual and relational nature of their philosophy ameliorates much of the danger.

Deleuze was a philosopher primarily concerned with the production of the subject through the constraining structures of thought and practice (Duff 2014: 28; May 2005: 9). For Deleuze, this was best tackled via the construction of an 'ontology of the sensible': a collection of concepts that could be deployed to address 'the conditions of real experience' which lie in the emergence of novel identities from the continually-changing relations of social entities, ideas, and agencies (Alliez 2004: 103-12). Meanwhile, Guattari was a psychotherapist, semiologist, and perhaps above all a political activist. His oeuvre, rooted in the relations between the many fronts on which he stood as an activist, focussed on rethinking the relations between disciplines and between scholarship and society to fashion an interdisciplinary metamethodology capable of analysing society's hypercomplex relations (Genosko 2002: 23-4). Together, they understood philosophy as the development of concepts that expressed and addressed the complex milieu in which experience lies (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 2; May 2005: 19). With such stress placed on interactivity, relations, and novel emergence, their philosophical project is innately interdisciplinary, changeable, adaptable, and focussed on individual human experience. Consequently, it is well suited to the highly contextual and idiosyncratic nature of many archaeological analyses, as well as to the societies that those analyses seek to illumine. As such, utilising Deleuzo-Guattarian ideas in an archaeological framework would not be the uncritical application of another

discipline's approach to archaeology. Instead, it contributes to interdisciplinary research paradigms that foreground reflexive social relations by utilising concepts designed to articulate those relations in an archaeological context. Rather than forcing an archaeological dataset through another discipline's theoretical framework, it is seeking to make an archaeological contribution to a transdisciplinary metamethodology.

4.1. Folded arrangements

Several Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts can help archaeologists reconstruct social conditions and thereafter hypothesise how they shaped emergent meaning from archaeological data. The first of these, the *arrangement* (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 1991)⁷, is the combination of a material object or objects and their non-material components. Importantly, the fundamental components of the *arrangement* is neither its material or non-material parts, but what Deleuze calls the *and*: the condition of inbetweenness of the assemblage's components (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 34). There is no more crucial part of an *arrangement* than its continually changing relations, and it is from these relations that experiences of *arrangements* emerge. Fundamentally, an *arrangement* is not a collection of things that have relations, an *arrangement* is its relations.

⁷ The French term *agencement* used by D+G has been consistently rendered in English as 'assemblage', including in archaeological contexts (see, for example, the papers in Cambridge Archaeological Journal 27:1), usually drawing upon DeLanda's (2006) D+G-influenced *assemblage theory*. However, following Hamilakis and Jones (2017: 80), *arrangement* is preferred here as *agencement* implies a group or layout of distinct elements encountered together whereas *assemblage* suggests the coming together of components into a single form (Nail 2017: 22), in addition to preventing any confusion between the philosophical concept and the more traditional archaeological use of *assemblage* to denote a collection of artefacts.

The *arrangement* is by far the most popular Deleuzo-Guattarian idea in the archaeological literature (see Hamilakis 2017; Harris 2017 for especially detailed explorations of the concept), most often filtered via new materialist thought (see **3.5. Experiencing materials, animals, and memories**). Where D+G are cited directly, the focus is generally placed only on the momentary emergent experience that the *arrangement* allows, however, which is something of a missed opportunity. For example, Hamilakis (2017: 179), discussing a feast *arrangement*, notes that they ‘imbue the specific locale with the intense, experiential effect of the occasion’, that the memory imbued in the locale can be ‘cited and re-enacted in the future’, and that the ‘actualization and re-enactment [produces] new affective experience[s] in the present’ but does not take the opportunity to explore what this would actually mean for the *arrangements* or the humans experiencing (and being part of) them. Harris (2017), meanwhile, takes the reader on a journey through a series of *arrangements* of which a clay pot was part. He refers repeatedly to the appearance of the pot in distinct *arrangements*. At one point a tool was ‘temporarily part of the [arrangement]’, then the pot was ‘temporarily part of another [arrangement]’ in the firing oven, then another when it functioned as a storage or cooking vessel, then another when it lay deposited in a ditch (Harris 2017: 130-1). Like Hamilakis, Harris is acknowledging the development through time of *arrangements*, but addresses each as a discrete entity for analysis, missing the chance to consider how this biography contributes to the relations comprising the pot *arrangement*, and therefore the other *arrangements* of which it is a part. This is a shame as the very premise of the *arrangement*, which transforms as its relations develop, provides a superb theoretical starting point for how things, and places and concepts, gather in meaning over time, and therefore how social conditions develop. The second Deleuzo-Guattarian concept I wish to borrow helps us discern how this takes place.

The *fold* (Deleuze 1988), popular in other disciplines (e.g. Brott 1998; Buchanan and Lambert 2005; Prominski and Koutroufinis 2009) but very rarely employed in

archaeological adoptions of D+G (though see Wright 2016) is the mechanism through which these relations continually develop. It describes the internalisation of external experiences and the consequent altering of understanding. It is, therefore, perhaps the most important concept presented here: it is the process through which we learn the conditions of our experience. Interactions with *arrangements* are *folded* in and all participants, be they persons, objects, ideas or anything else are changed⁸. By stressing how interactions with things develop perceptions, *folds* and *arrangements* allow us to make nuanced observations about human-thing interactions and the consequences they have for the social conditions understood by the participants. For instance, a watch is an *arrangement* of hundreds of material components, sensory properties, and sociocultural concepts and interactions with them are shaped by individuals' perceptions of the relations between these components. As such, depending on the specific watch in question, *folded* interactions with it may also be *folded* interactions with cultural concepts such as prestige, value, the importance of reliability and functionality, tradition, gendered body decorations, and of standardised time and the impulse to control and manage its fleeting passage. Consequently, every *folded* experience of the watch serves to reinforce these, incrementally building social conditions, and the meaning held by the watch emerges from the relations between those concepts and experiences. If we can draw out the components of an archaeologically identifiable *arrangement*, such as a watch, we are identifying conditions of experience of persons that interact with it, and we can consider the relations of those conditions to make nuanced inferences about how the watch was perceived by a given individual.

⁸ Olsen et al. (2012: 195) suggest archaeologists use the term *Res* to describe 'the thing as gathering, assemblage, folding' but in the interests of clarity I believe '*arrangement*' sufficiently expresses that things are processes in constant change.

Furthermore, and even more usefully, we can consider those conditions to interpret how that same individual understood their experience of *other arrangements*.

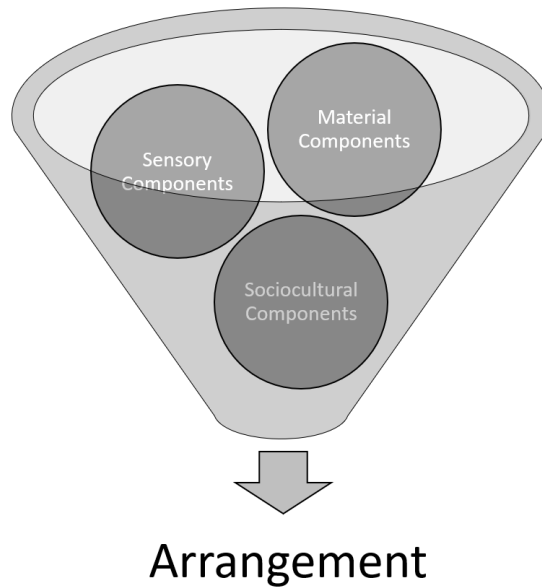


Figure 2 The grouping of material and non-material elements into arrangements



Figure 3 Author's watch: an arrangement of material, sensory, and sociocultural components

Deleuzo-Guattarian *folding* allows us to go much further than, for instance, Hodder's *entanglement*, by stressing how use and interaction with things develops

our perceptions rather than simply fostering mutual reliance. Consider a watch that my parents bought me on my 30th birthday, for instance (see Figure 3). It is an *arrangement* of hundreds of material components, sensory properties such as weight, sound, colour, and reflectiveness, and ideational factors, both personal ones, such as memories of my parents and of specific interactions with my watch, and culturally shared examples, such as understandings of time and value. My experiences of the watch are *folded* in experiences of an *arrangement* of these components and their relations. Every time I put my watch on, take it off, check the time, catch it in the corner of my eye, or notice it resting against my wrist, I *fold* in this experience and the conditions of experience from which my understanding of the watch emerges develop. Most *folded* experiences will barely be noticeable: the uncountable number of times my watch is apparent in my peripheral vision, for instance. Other *folds* are strikingly memorable, including when I found it after spending two months convinced I had lost it whilst excavating overseas. Others still have clear material identifiers, such as when I swapped a leather strap for a metal bracelet. Additionally, each *folded* experience with my watch represents a new component in the watch-*arrangement* and a new condition of later experiences. As such, my next experience with it is a with a new *arrangement* and new conditions. Again, these may be very minor changes, perhaps it seems marginally heavier at the end of day or a slightly tighter after a flight, but they may also be significant, such as when I checked the time to let my parents know when my son was born. By allowing us to consider how specific interactions between persons and things accumulate to develop the conditions framing how that person understands that thing, *arrangements* and *folding* permit the extrapolation of developments in understanding and perception directly from objects.

These highly idiosyncratic personal components are incredibly difficult to access archaeologically, however. Furthermore, pursuing such incomprehensibly vast levels of detail would provide little use in terms of explaining society-level

phenomena. It is therefore more profitable to focus on those components of *arrangements* shared across a community or society. My watch again provides an illustrative example. The watch is a Swiss-made automatic and so my interactions with it are also interactions with perceptions of Swiss horology and its longstanding prestige. It is far from the most elite of Swiss watchmaking, however, so carries connotations of quality functionality rather than ostentatious display. Similar suggestions of functionality are suggested by its stainless-steel case, relatively simple face, minute and second markers, and date aperture. A degree of tradition is inherent in an analogue watch, especially in an era where progressively more people eschew watches altogether in favour of phones, though the use of Arabic rather than Roman numerals, the second markers, and the date window separates it from the most traditional examples. It is, at least insofar as it is marketed and in terms of its size and aesthetics amongst watchmaking and jewellery-advertising's usual categorising, a man's watch, and so reinforces perceptions of gendered fashion and style. Additionally, all watches are inseparable from concepts of time, its passage, and its artificial subdivision into the 24-hour clock, and the rapid ticking of my watch's automatic movement, which I can both feel and hear, highlights the commoditised preciousness of time frequently stressed by modern society.

My interactions with my watch are therefore informed by many learned conditions. My *folded* experiences of the watch are also *folded* experiences of prestige, of value, of the importance of reliability and functionality, of history and tradition, of gender, and of the importance of the passage of time, the understanding of time as a fleeting commodity, and the human impulse to control our use of it. Consequently, every *folded* experience of my watch serves to reinforce these concepts.

The *arrangement* is fluid, however. It is always in a state of change. When these concepts are developed the watch communicates different ideas and my cumulative experiences with it are in turn altered. The conditions of my experience transform.

Most will be incredibly subtle, but extreme changes would have extreme results. Were there to be a near-universal abandonment of wristwatches leading to a collapse of the Swiss watchmaking industry, for example, then my watch might begin to carry connotations of failure, of nostalgia and sadness for a lost industry, or reinforce concerns about the disappearance of traditional industry and employment in a world of growing automation and international conglomerates, the vast scale of some Swiss watchmakers notwithstanding. Similarly, were the brand to become embroiled in a major ethical scandal, I might be embarrassed to own it, cease to wear it, or even throw it away. Suddenly, the *arrangement* includes shame, disappointment, or trash, and it might reinforce societal concerns about the ethics of big business. This level of nuance requires considerable quantities of sociocultural data. However, even in the less data-rich contexts of the ancient world, this reactive potential makes understanding human-thing interactions as *folded arrangements* a flexible framework allowing the archaeologist to draw specific conclusions about social learning and their impacts on experiential meaning explicitly from archaeological material, as will be shown below.

4.2. Plateaus in a rhizome

Developing *arrangements* is aided by two more Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts. The *rhizome* (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) stresses relational interpretations of social phenomena by presenting those phenomena as being in continual interaction with one another and therefore in perpetual development: they have no beginning, end, or defined directionality, and instead lie in a web of constantly accumulating *folded* interactions. The *rhizome* therefore highlights both the reflexive interconnectedness of experiences, and the constantly transitional nature of perception, where all experiences inform all others, in the past, present and future. In archaeological applications, this means that every identifiable experience we can assign to individuals allows us to further develop how they understood other interactions:

the more we know about *folded* experiences of prestige, the more we can say about *folded* experiences of Swiss watches, for example.

Superficially, a *rhizomatic* study appears to share much with one drawing upon Latourian actor-network theory (ANT). This is not surprising. Latour's collaborator Hennion (2013: 29) recounts Deleuzo-Guattarian thought's formational impact on ANT and, whilst abandoning 'network' on account of its modern computational implications, Latour (1999: 15-6, 9) conceded that 'actant-rhizome ontology' would be preferable were it not 'such a horrible mouthful'. There are important distinctions, however. ANT devotes little attention to the 'flux and flow' foregrounded in Deleuzo-Guattarian thought (Harman 2009: 30), is ill-suited to accounting for rapid change or specific events, and does not seek to deal with those components of social experience that are not reducible to the material world (Thrift 2000: 214-5): cognitive phenomena including imagination, perception, and abduction that are crucial to social experience as they permit the attribution of meaning to signs (Gell 1998: 14-5) and the recognition in an object of those components which are not physically present (Castoriadis 1997: 151). A Deleuzo-Guattarian analysis places its stress on precisely these aspects of human interaction by foregrounding how specific new experiences develop humans' perceptions of the world around them.

The *rhizome*, containing all interactions between all things in an ever-expanding lattice, is too massive to deal with fully. It is made more manageable, however, by *plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1980). These are groups of distinguishable, though fluid and intertwining, experiential planes that can be experienced repeatedly and in any order and inform how we perceive other *plateaus*. Within these *plateaus* lie every *folded* interaction, both physical and non-physical, that the individual has ever had with these concepts. In practice, in this investigation, they are best understood as the social conditions built up by the millions of *folded* experiences lying within

them. In the case of a watch, these *plateaus*, and therefore the conditions of experience that inform my engagement with the watch, include tradition, gender, jewellery, and so forth. Over the course of their life, individuals encounter more and more *folds* and these *plateaus* grow and develop.

Importantly, specific experiences are not confined to a single *plateau*. *Plateaus* are innately emergent and like shapes moving in and out of focus in a kaleidoscope, they appear, fade, separate, and coalesce, depending on the gaze of the individual⁹. Watches lie in their own *plateau*, but they also lie in many others, including *plateaus* of jewellery, prestige items, tools, and clothing, for example, and so are thoroughly interconnected. *Plateaus* therefore present flexible analytical tools rather than fixed categories, allowing the interpreter to group experiences in ways that are useful for the investigatory task at hand, whilst also reflecting the fluidity, changeability, and ambiguity of human efforts to categorise the world (see, for example, Estes 2003; Hampton 2007; Koriat and Hila 2017; Murphy 2002).

Analysing *plateaus* of *folded* experiences highlights accrued experiences as the mechanism by which individuals develop their understandings of those same experiences, and of the world around them: they are the social conditions that we wish to utilise in interpreting ancient experience. The *arrangement* that is my watch is a node in the vast *rhizome* of social interaction and experience, and my engagements with it are reliant on the conditions of my experience, *plateaus* of *folded* experiences, with each of those *folds* themselves being nodes in the *rhizome*. The watch's material components are inseparable from *plateaus* of value experiences, prestige experiences, time experiences, and so on. Consequently, by developing

⁹ With apologies to Dene Wright, whom, unbeknownst to me at the time of writing, has used precisely the same metaphor.

relevant *plateaus* of experiences, the archaeologist can build the social conditions of an ancient person and then interpret how those conditions informed an individual's interaction with an object or place and how that interaction then informed others.

Attempting to depict *plateaus* of *folded* experiences within a *rhizome* is problematic, especially in a two-dimensional medium. Most efforts present absurdly dense webs of nodes and lines that go some way to communicating the complexity of their interaction, but ultimately do little to aid any kind of interpretation (see, for example, Figure 4). Given that *rhizome* images are already entirely abstract attempts to portray experiential connections across a society, it seems more straightforward, and more functional, to accept that fully rendering their density is impossible, at least in this format. Instead, I present a more simplistic variant, in which individual *folded* experiences are not visualised at all, and only *plateaus* of experiences and the *rhizomatic* links most relevant to the discussion are shown (see Figure 5). This presents a simple, abstract image of social conditions and their relations from which meaning emerges.

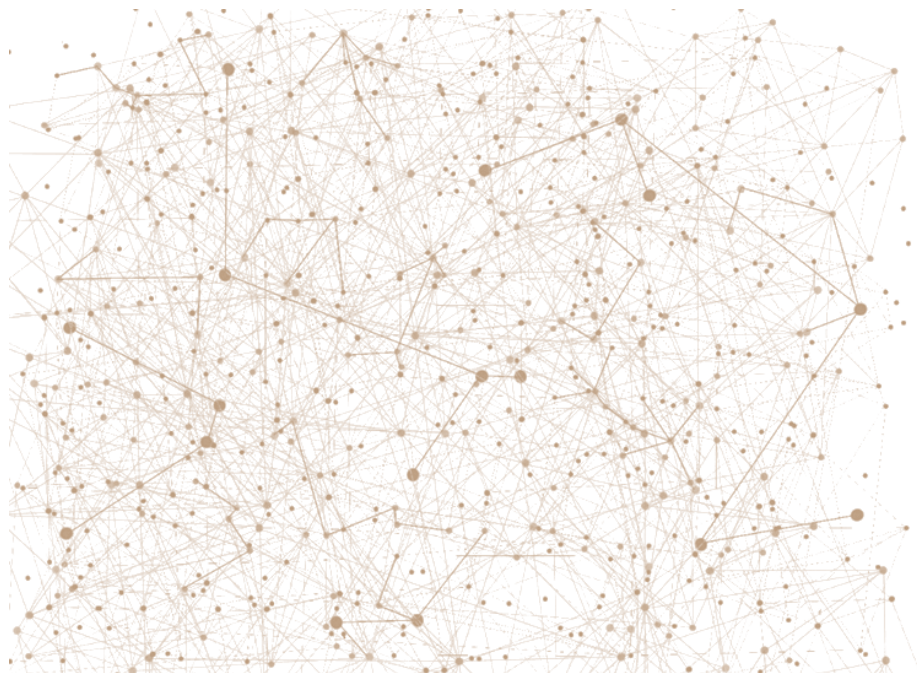


Figure 4 An abstract illustration of a rhizome.

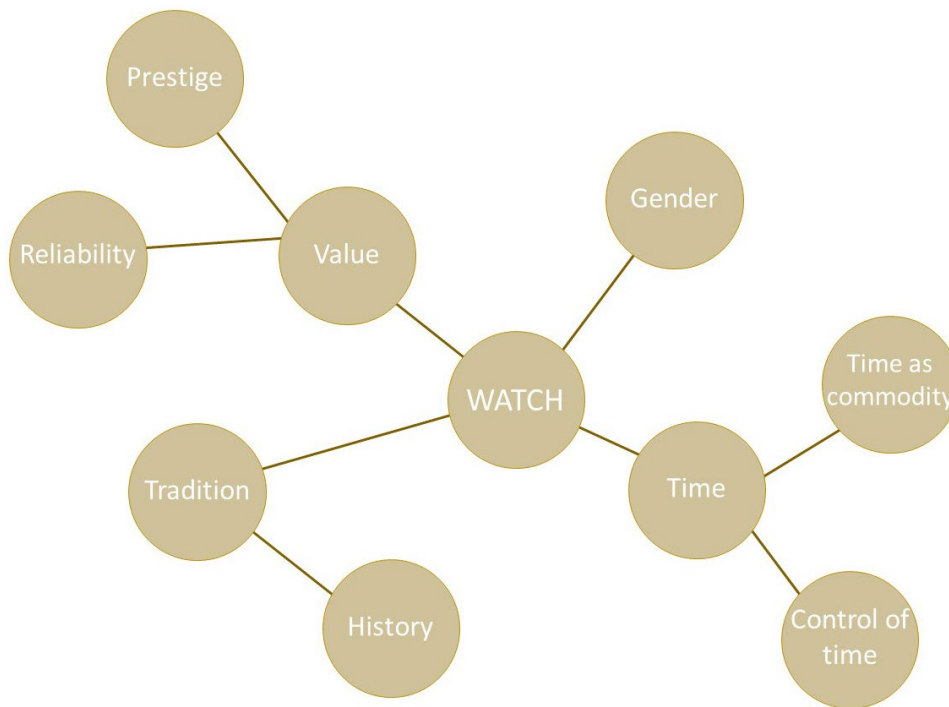


Figure 5 Watch Rhizome. Plateaus of folded experiences are situated within the dense interconnected lattice of relations, and the meaning that my watch holds for me lies in the relations of these plateaus.

4.3. Applying the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach

The approach outlined here does not seek to present a paradigm-shifting understanding of human-thing interactions. Understanding those interactions as informing others is not revolutionary and the analysis employs traditional archaeological techniques. Meanwhile, the progression from archaeological evidence to societal interpretation, and the types of conclusions reached, are entirely familiar. Instead, its contribution is a step-by-step, reflexive process that allows archaeologists to move more fluidly from material evidence to interpretation by tackling interactions with specific archaeological data and stressing the interconnectedness of experience.

Whilst it is effective in studies of specific objects in isolation, such as a watch, the focus on emergent meaning produced through the relations of experience makes it particularly useful for holistic analysis of complex social phenomena.

Methodologically, it can be applied across five stages (see Figure 6). These five stages allow the interpreter to

- (1) select an archaeological datum or dataset as the initial *arrangement* for analysis. This may be obvious, such as an individual artefact or a particular space that is itself the entire case study, such as a watch or cult space, but it may be fairly arbitrary and selected simply as a starting point or one that represents a concept: for instance a particular object within a large assemblage, or a single temple in a study of religious spaces.
- (2) consider an individual's *folded* interactions with the initial *arrangement* to identify *plateaus* of experience that framed their experience of that *arrangement*. These might be metals, jewellery, or time in a study of a watch, for instance, or cosmology and divine motifs in a study of a cult space.
- (3) Reconstruct the conditions of experience that framed their interaction with the *arrangement* by fleshing out those *plateaus*. This is achieved by seeking out other related *arrangements*. For example, other forms of jewellery in a watch analysis, or ritual artefacts and texts in a cult space investigation.
- (4) Consider the individual's experiences of the initial artefact mediated by those social conditions. Querying how their previous ritual experience informed new experiences of the cult space, for instance.
- (5) Draw conclusions about the meaning that emerged from the relations between the social conditions.

At the end of this process, the interpreter has made robust observations about the meaning that emerged when an ancient individual experienced a given archaeologically identifiable object or place. This meaning is reliant not on

hypothesising ancient experience by projecting modern ideas backwards, or seeking to place ourselves in their shoes, but by reconstructing their social conditions from archaeological material with which we know they interacted. In this way it provides a material-centred approach to socialisation, and helps draw a more consistent line from data to theory.

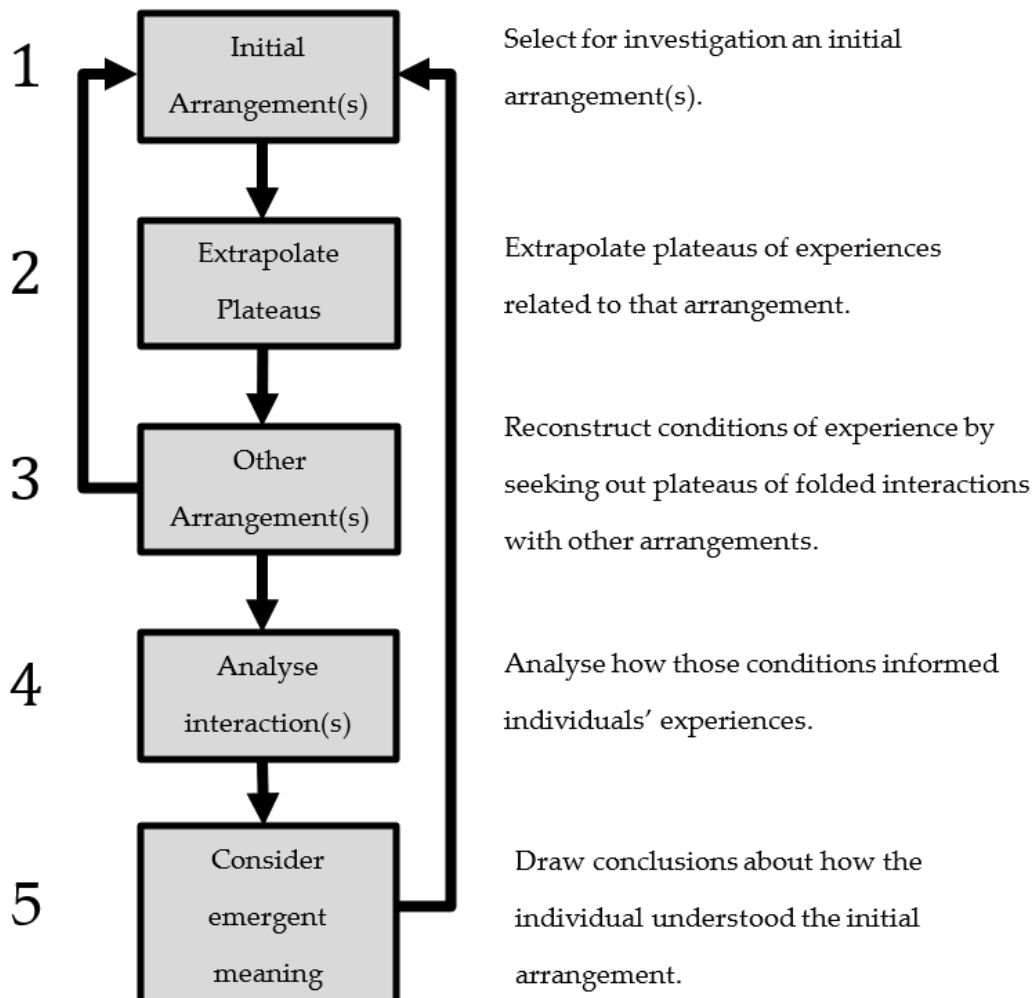


Figure 6 Step by step Deleuzo-Guattarian methodology using the example of a study of religion

4.4. The worthiness of the endeavour and trusting the interpreter

Two potential issues should be addressed here. Firstly, observations with this level of nuance require considerable social context and discerning how ancient persons perceived their specific interactions with the world is rather more difficult than doing so in modern cases. However, the difficulty of investigating the ancient mind is no reason not to attempt to develop new approaches to the study of perception in the deep past via material evidence and indeed recent decades have seen much scholarship dedicated to this pursuit (Hodder 1993; Knappett 2005; Malafouris 2013; Renfrew et al. 2009; Renfrew and Zubrow 1994). Understanding human-thing interactions as *folded arrangements* provides another potential approach to this issue and will allow specific and nuanced conclusions about the learning of social conditions and the experiential meaning to be drawn explicitly from archaeological material.

Secondly, the potentially arbitrary nature of *arrangements* and *plateaus*, particularly in steps 1 and 2, also presents a problem. The most appropriate initial *arrangement* will be led by the goals of the investigation and the data available. In a study foregrounding religious phenomena, this might be a space or assemblage that is known, or can convincingly be interpreted, to be explicitly cultic in nature. Meanwhile, in a study centred on domestic craft processes, a production space indicated by craft tools or debitage may represent the most fitting starting point. In either case, the specific example(s) which different archaeologists feel are most appropriate even whilst studying the same social practices may vary. A similar issue lies in deciding which experiences should be grouped together in *plateaus*. In isolation, this variability seems to present a fundamental problem in developing a methodology. However, whilst it does not prescribe the specific categories of

evidence that the investigator should consider, the framework presented here does offer some help in directing attention towards potential omissions.

Each *plateau* investigated will lead to other interactions with other *arrangements* and necessitate their examination alongside yet more *plateaus*. Similarly, the conclusions drawn will flesh out *plateaus* that can be utilised in analyses of other *arrangements*. The analysis of a watch invites analysis of interactions with other watches which invites analyses of interactions with brands which invites analyses of interactions with marketing and so on. As such, in addition to an interpretative device, this approach also represents a self-assessing data collection aid that forces the investigator to consider a wide range of evidence, draws attention to omissions, and resists any isolated or non-contextual analyses. Two individuals studying the religious practice of a society may start with different *arrangements*, and may highlight different experiences within their associated *plateaus*, but the nature of the Deleuzo-Guattarian method, given enough time, would drive both towards a comprehensive analysis.

The problem, then, is not that the *arrangements* studied are arbitrary, but that the time available will almost certainly prevent absolute comprehensiveness and force the omission of data that another researcher might argue is essential. However, this problem is ubiquitous in archaeological research. The availability and quality of data, and the areas of expertise of the analyst, inevitably constrain the case studies chosen by any archaeologist. Consequently, it does not seem unreasonable to place our trust in the ability of the investigator to select suitable strands of evidence as they would in any other study.

4.5. A new analytical toolbox

Social theory, and specifically archaeological theory, exhibit general agreement that individuals learn social conventions and attribute meaning to the world through experiences of that world. However, previous approaches to socialisation have been unsuited to archaeological data and experience-centred approaches have produced either potentially anachronistic or vague results. By borrowing from D+G, I have posited a new approach, grounded in material evidence and able to make nuanced interpretations about the idiosyncratic experiences of ancient persons. By examining specific archaeological evidence, we can rebuild the social relations in which those persons were situated and thereafter develop the meaning that emerged from their experiences of those relations. With a new analytical toolbox, we might now set about testing its fit.

Chapter 5: Embedding Ideas

The first case study with which I will test the material-centred approach to social learning and emergent meaning explores the cultic and place experiences of early second millennium BC Assyrian traders moving between Kültepe, the centre of Assyrian merchant activity in Anatolia, and their home city of Aššur in Mesopotamia. The abundance of both archaeological and textual evidence concerning religious experience and, especially, place interaction provides a useful corpus upon which to draw, whilst the lack of interest in the social experience of the trade movement that dominates the literature invites investigation (see **2.2. Textual reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation** and **2.3. Archaeological reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation**).

By considering how individuals' *folded-in* their engagements with domestic cult *arrangements*, specifically animal-motif vessels, I seek to reconstruct some of the *plateaus* of experience that formed the social conditions that framed their world. Thereafter, I situate the same individuals along ancient trade routes to interpret the meaning that emerged from the relations between those *plateaus* and *place(s)* in which they found themselves interacting with real world versions of the same species represented in cult vessel form. The result is a *rhizome* of *folded* experiential *plateaus* of animals and their divine associations that encouraged later engagements with the same animals on the road to be read with their divine associations in mind, colouring the locales in which they were seen with those same associations. This does two things. First, it provides a possible solution to the second of my research questions, *how is meaning first embedded in landscape?* (see **1.3. Research questions**), by setting out a narrative process through which individuals learnt culturally-constituted cult associations that framed their later landscape experience and privileged certain interpretations of place. Secondly, it presents a new reconstruction of the Old Assyrian traders' worldview: one in which they saw the

landscape as a patchwork of places that embodied the religiously-loaded essence of animals who dwelt in them.

5.1. Early Second Millennium Anatolia

In the Middle Bronze Age (see Table 1), Anatolia was characterised by a series of kingdoms centred on chief cities governed by palace-centred bureaucracies (Michel 2011a: 321-3; Yakar 2000: 22), nested amidst smaller towns over which the central authorities exerted authority (Bryce 1998: 24-5). Through most of the period, Assyrian traders maintained extensive business operations in the region, bringing tin and textiles in, participating in redistributive trade around the kingdoms, and sending gold and silver back to their capital, Aššur, on the Tigris (Michel 2011a). It is these traders whose experiences I am interested in here.

Heads of Assyrian mercantile families generally remained in Aššur and sent representatives to administer their Anatolian operations in a *kārum*¹⁰ adjoining an Anatolian city (Bryce 1998: 30). At least 20 Anatolian cities featured a *kārum* in MBA I, whilst 10 are known in MBA IIa (Michel 2011a: 329-30). In these cities, everyday interactions between Anatolians and Assyrians were casual and, at least at Kültepe (ancient Kaneš), the two groups lived close together and traded food, oil, wood, and slaves with each other (Michel 2011a: 327). Many Assyrians sent to Anatolian *kāru* married local women, raised families, and incorporated Anatolian linguistic and religious traditions (see 5.2.1. **Folding animals in ritual**) into their lives, creating hybridised communities and long-lasting inter-regional familial and trade links (Michel 2008; 2010: 9-10; 2014a: 77-8). *Kāru* were relatively autonomous on a local

¹⁰ See Highcock (2018) for the difficulties of defining ‘*kārum*’. For this study, however, understanding the *kārum* as both an Assyrian merchant community and a political, legal, and economic institution is sufficient.

level, but Aššur retained supreme authority and administered expatriate economic and foreign policy via the *kārum* in Kültepe's Lower Town¹¹, the hub of Assyrian mercantile operations (Barjamovic 2011: 5-6; Bryce 1998: 25-6). It is this centre of Assyrian operations that provides the bulk of the material allowing the analysis of the emergent experiences of Assyrian traders in Anatolian placescapes.

Middle Chronology	Low Chronology	Ultra-Low Chronology	Archaeological Period	Historical Period	Kültepe Lower Town Levels
c.1970-1840	c.1920-1790	c.1870-1740	MBA I	Old Assyrian	II
c.1840-1700	c.1790-1650	c.1740-1610	MBA IIa	Old Assyrian	Ib
		Ahistorical	MBA IIb	Post Old Assyrian	Ia

Table 1 Anatolian Middle Bronze Age Chronology (after Barjamovic et al. 2012: 34; Gates 2017: 189). For the comparative merits of different chronologies see Barjamovic et al. (2012: 3-40)

Kültepe, a mounded settlement and adjoining lower city on the Kayseri plain in southern central Anatolia with access to major trade routes (Barjamovic 2011), has been under continuous excavation since 1948 and provides considerable textual and archaeological data that allow the comprehensive investigation of the placescape experiences of the Assyrian traders who made it their home. Over 23,000 cuneiform tablets have been discovered in the private archives of Assyrian and Anatolian businesspersons, primarily from Lower Town LvII (Michel 2011a: 319; Veenhof 2008a: 41-2). Supplemented by smaller collections from LvIb, Boğazköy (ancient Hattuš), and Alişar Höyük (Veenhof 2008a: 41), these texts provide great detail on economic matters, including trade journeys, and, alongside the considerable survey work undertaken in central and southeastern Turkey and northern Mesopotamia, have allowed many attempts at reconstructing the trade routes taken by the Assyro-Kanešean population (see **2.4. Reconstructing ancient routes** and **5.3.1. Folding animals on the road**). They also include named deities, named celebrants,

¹¹ Michel (2014b: 70) for the problems associated with designating the entire lower town '*kārum*'.

theophoric elements, and allusions to family deities that, alongside MBA cult spaces (e.g. Heffron 2016), cultic paraphernalia (e.g. Özgüç 1986a: 58-67; 1986b: 176, 8; Özgüç and Özgüç 1953: 131-3, Plates 265-77), and glyptics (e.g. Lassen 2014; Özgüç 1965; Topçuoğlu 2016; White 1993), grant access to *folded* experiences of cult.

Kültepe's evidentiary corpus also highlights the ubiquity of place interaction and religious experience in the lives of its Assyrian mercantile community. Trade journeys were their source of income and reason for living in Anatolia. Many merchants were related to named priests and priestesses (e.g. Dercksen 2015a: 53-4; 2015b: 37). Their supreme god, Aššur, was a dominant presence in business contracts, and Šamaš, another common Assyrian divinity in the Kültepe archives (Taracha 2009: 27), was a judge of traders, protector of transactions, rescuer of travellers and merchants, and guard of routes (Lambert 1960: 121-38). A caravan-protecting donkey-god appears in Lower City LvII-Ib contexts (e.g. Gunter 2002; Özgüç 1965: No. 1, No. 77; White 1993: 115) and potentially-cultic model wagons (Gökçek 2006; Kulakoğlu 2003; Özgen 1986; Özgüç 1977: 358) may represent another tradition of those whose livelihoods relied on transporting goods. Moreover, the community had its own rituals, including the sacrifice of sheep prior to Kaneš-Aššur journeys, and religiously-loaded ethical codes (Dercksen 2011: 60-1; Nakata 1971: 95). There is ample evidence, then, for a nuanced study of the role of religious experience in forming the emergent placescape meaning experienced by traders moving between Kaneš and Aššur in the early second millennium.

5.2. Creatures, cult, and creating meaning

Given the interactive socialising power of landscape and religious experience, it is profitable to address place-meaning by considering how religious *plateaus* informed Assyrian traders' perceptions of place. The placescape therefore represents our *initial arrangement*, and we must select appropriate religious *plateaus* that allow us

to reconstruct the relations from which meaning emerged when Assyrian traders experienced place and ritual motifs together. The data available makes this a relatively straightforward exercise. Explicit archaeological manifestations of the religious life of second millennium Anatolia are surprisingly rare, and those that can be confidently connected to the landscape extremely so. However, one common element of the placescape, the fauna that lived amongst it, were also an important cultic motif and so *plateaus* of animal experiences provide a potential source of evidence that links religious and place experiences.

Animals were abundant in the placescape, and their prominent role in cultic activity is well-attested both archaeologically and textually, presenting a lucrative dataset. Additionally, animal interactions carry significant social power (Kockelman 2011; Stone-Miller 2004); ethnographic work has placed particular stress on encounters in rural places (e.g. Neihardt 1932: Chapter 4)¹²; and dangerous animals and their territories can be met with complex sociocultural responses (e.g. Ghosal et al. 2015). Furthermore, species can be associated with their preferred habitats and so situated in specific places, allowing the reconstruction of traders' experiences on the road. The focus of this study therefore lies in *plateaus* of animal experience, and the *initial arrangement* upon which the analyses will begin is a group of enigmatic animal representations from Kültepe. By developing the experiences of Assyrian traders with these artefacts, it will then be possible to consider how they informed later engagements with animals on the road, and therefore with the places in which they resided.

¹² Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* has been criticised for the editing and potential misrepresentation of its Lakota narrator, Black Elk, but the bison hunt narrative remains a striking example of the potentially deep social meaning of human-animal interactions.

5.2.1. Folding animals in ritual

Animal motif vessels are amongst the most numerous cultic items discovered at Kültepe (see Figure 7). Amongst the Kültepe vessels, lion- and antelope-shaped examples are particularly common (e.g. Özgüç and Özgüç 1953: Plates 265-77), but dogs, boars, eagles, partridges, bulls, rabbits, water buffalos, rams and fish are also represented (e.g. Özgüç 1986a: 63-7). Such vessels are rare in Mesopotamia but near-ubiquitous for several millennia in Anatolia (Yener 2007: 218-20), and so it seems likely that they were not a feature in Assyrian traders' religious experiences before they left home. Their presence in houses associated with Assyrians as well as Anatolians (Özgüç and Özgüç 1953: 131-3, 218-21)¹³ is best explained as part of the hybridisation process that took place as Assyrians settled into Anatolian contexts and began to incorporate Anatolian deities and locally-produced ritual paraphernalia into their cultic lives (Michel 2011b: 104; 2014a: 78). Alternatively, it is possible that distinct Anatolian and Assyrian traditions were practised in the same households without crossover, but in either case, Assyrian traders would still be exposed to, and therefore *fold-in*, animal-shaped vessels in explicitly cultic contexts, even if as an outsider.

¹³ Or, at least, houses usually associated with one or the other on the basis of the names of the owners of archives found within them; a problematic assumption given the high rates of intermarriage and the cultural variability of the names passed to children (Larsen 2015: 252)

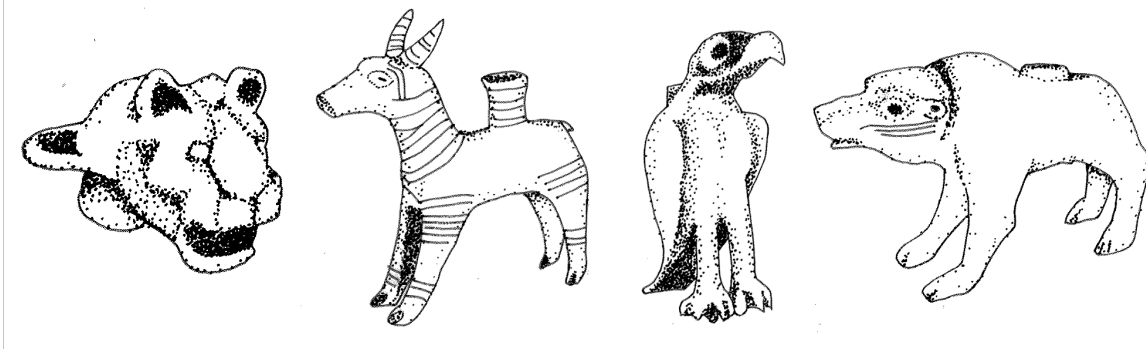


Figure 7 Animal-shaped vessels from Kültepe. L-R: Kt.00/k. 025 (12 x 9.5cm); Kt.86/k. 147 (19 x 17.6cm); Kt.92/k. 784 (20.7 x 12cm); Kt.92/k. 724 (14.8 x 23.3cm) (redrawn from Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010: figs. 195, 206, 211, 201 by the author)

Though we cannot identify the precise practices in which these vessels were employed, that they served explicitly cultic functions, most likely in drinking and/or pouring rituals, is strongly supported by multiple strands of evidence. Some are found in domestic spaces with cultic installations and paraphernalia and in assemblages associated with libations (Heffron 2016: 30; Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010: Fig. 232; Özgüç 1994b). Meanwhile, a later tradition of ‘god-drinking’, known from Hittite texts, has been convincingly linked to the animal-shaped vessels of Kültepe (Heffron 2014). Though the specifics of god-drinking are disputed (e.g. Güterbock 1998; Heffron 2014; Kammenhuber 1971; Melchert 1981; Puhvel 1957; Soysal 2008), it was a cultic drinking or libation practice performed in a broad variety of contexts and closely associated with animal-shaped vessels (see Kahya 2017 for a survey). Old Assyrian texts also refer to drinking vessels belonging to gods and several seals depict divinities holding drinking vessels (Kahya 2017: 48). Whilst specific forms are not detailed in the Old Assyrian texts, lion, deer, antelope, boar, ram, and bird-shaped vessels noted in Hittite texts are all paralleled by vessels excavated at Kültepe (White 1993: 279-82). It is reasonable therefore to conclude that the animal-shaped vessels of early second millennium Kültepe were employed in

ritual interactions with divine actors, either as representatives of deities, containers of their essence and power, or as utensils for pouring libations to them.

Further to be utilised in cultic contexts, the glyptic repertoire tells us that the species represented on vessels were most often understood as deities or their associates and not as mundane fauna. In art, rather than appearing in real-world contexts, animals most often stand in for or accompany divinities (Gunter 2002: 80) and are therefore restricted to species with prominent divine associations. Faunal assemblages reveal regular exploitation of cattle, dogs, goats, pigs, sheep, horses, and donkeys in the MBA (Allentuck and Greenfield 2010; Arbuckle et al. 2009; Berthon and Mashkour 2008; Boessneck and von den Driesch 1975: 218; Burney 1980: 164; Kussinger 1988; Laneri 2008: 371; Laneri et al. 2015: 552; Volger 1997; von den Driesch and Pöllath 2004) but artistic representations largely ignore these familiar animals in favour of bulls and wild fauna such as lions, antelope, boar, and birds. Not only were the animal-form vessels utilised in cultic practice, the animals represented were innately intertwined with specific deities or categories of deities.

When these vessels were employed in cultic activities, participants were engaging not only with an object, but with an *arrangement* of object and its related ideas. Consequently, users or onlookers *folded* in a wealth of physical and cognitive meanings that emerged from these relations, forming *rhizomatic* links with other experiences. When an individual was exposed to ritual pouring or drinking from a bull-shaped vessel, for instance, this was not an abstract act that happened to employ a vessel coincidentally shaped like a bull, but a direct interaction with a supernatural actor embodied by and embedded in an object along with their associated attributes and responsibilities. The textual corpus and glyptic repertoire allow us to make relatively confident inferences about the associations carried by these animals in cultic contexts, and therefore imbued in these vessels. By illustrating some of these associations, we can then consider their relations to

outline how ritualistic engagements with the animal world informed later engagements with animals in the wild and, consequently, the role this played in the emergence of meaning in the places in which these were experienced.

5.2.2. Bulls, boars, birds

Bulls represented the chief deities of both the Anatolian and Assyrian pantheons. The largest native species in Anatolia, they were a prominent feature of Anatolian symbolism from the Neolithic onwards (Cauvin 1994; Russell 2012; Twiss and Russell 2009). By the early second millennium, they were the dominant species in Anatolian art where they were associated with the Storm God(s) (Kryszat 2006: 121; Schwemer 2008: 19). Of these artistic depictions, a bull glyptic present in both Anatolian and Assyrian styles has been convincingly interpreted as originating as a representation of the god Aššur (Lassen 2017). The glyptic motif, variably called 'bull-altar' (Alexander 1979; Larsen and Møller 1991; Lassen 2017; Ward 1910), 'bull with cone' (Özgüç 2006), and 'bullgod' (Casabonne 2007; Green 2003; Leinwand 1992), includes a rectangular body frequently draped in fabric denoting royal or divine status, more naturalistic limbs, and in all but two cases, a cone or triangle upon its back, possibly representing Aššur as a mountain (Lassen 2017)(see Figure 8). The divine drapery, and the contrast with other bull depictions, which are more naturalistic, has led to the symbol being understood as representing a real-world cult image (Gunter 2002: 90; Lassen 2017: 178-9), though no artefactual confirmation of this hypothesis has ever been presented¹⁴. Consequently, bulls and bull-shaped vessels (see Figure 9) were associated with the heads of divine pantheons in both

¹⁴ Özgüç (2009: 68) does report the discovery of a bull figurine with a cone on its back at 19th-18th century Samsat Level XIV, albeit without photographs, which may represent such an object

Anatolian and Assyrian traditions, associations that were frequently reinforced by art and possibly other ritual objects.

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Figure 8 Bull-altar glyptics in the Anatolian (Left - CS 1265 impressed on AKT 6, 337A) and Old Assyrian (Right - CS 1269) styles (Lassen 2017: 178, 80)

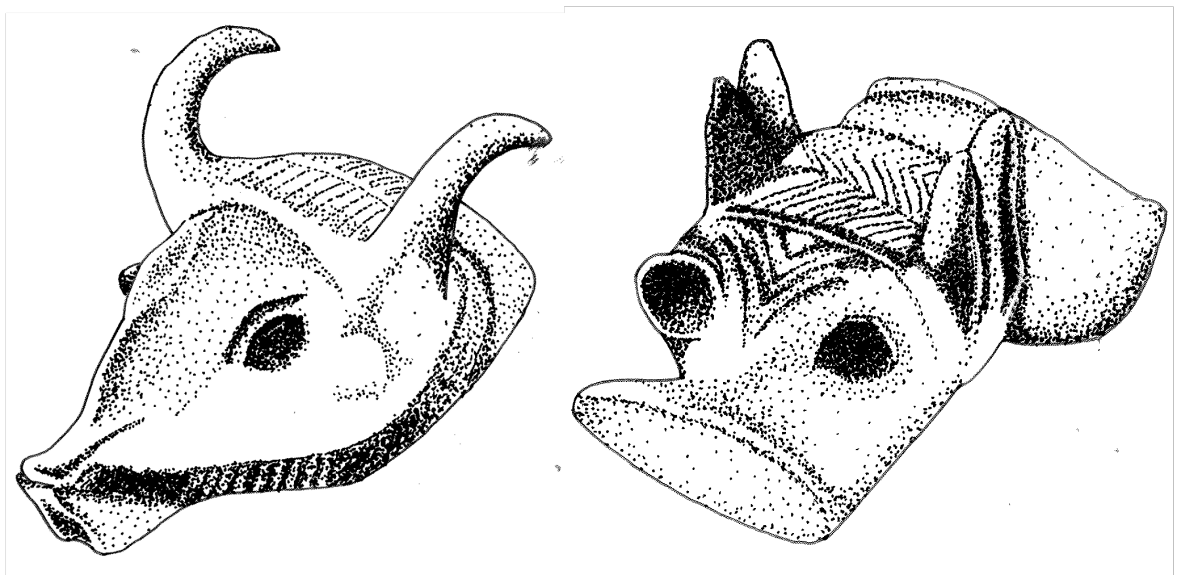


Figure 9 Bull- (Kt. f/k. 299) and Boar-vessels (Kt.01/k. 167) from Kültepe (redrawn from Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010: figs. 196 and 200 by the author)

Boar-shaped vessels (see Figure 9) have been linked the cult of Usmû (Özgüç 1998: 256), servant of Ea (Black and Green 1992a: 75; Özgüç 1988: 25), and piglets were associated with Pannunta (Ertem 1965: 77), vizier to Šamaš (Krebernik 2003-2005): in both cases connecting porcine animals to divine intercessors. Fertility was a prominent porcine association and, given their use in healing rituals and exorcisms, as offerings to chthonic divinities, and their ability to taint humans through contact

even in dreams, they were strongly linked to the netherworld, impurity, and liminality (Collins 2002b; 2006: 165, 8, 73-76; Ünal 1996). Meanwhile, eagles, and therefore eagle-shaped vessels (see Figure 10), were associated with the Protective Deity (Ertem 1965: 124). In Hittite cult, eagles functioned both as interlocutors, opening channels to communicate with the gods or carrying messages to them directly, and purifying forces, cleansing both places and people (Collins 2002a: 326).

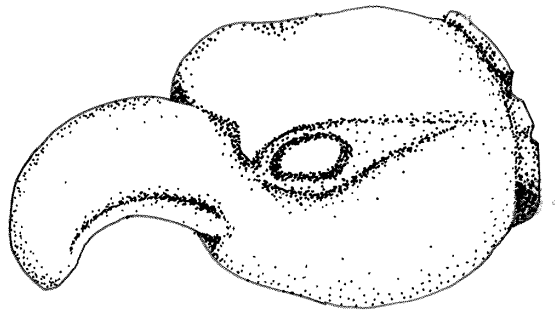


Figure 10 Eagle-shaped vessel (Kt. j/k. 058) from Kültepe (redrawn from Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010: fig. 213 by the author)

Individuals' interactions with cultic representations of bulls, boars, and eagles were therefore experiences of *arrangements* of practice, object, animal, deity, and a range of associated concepts. Engagements with bull vessels were engagements with the Storm God and therefore drew on experiences of weather and issues of land affordance and fears of environmental threats and may have been performed in association with an altar of sufficient importance to be pervasive in the artistic repertoire. Interactions with boar-vessels involved the *folding* in of the ritual mediation of dangerous liminality and impurity in association with servile deities working on behalf of Ea or Šamaš, who themselves have been associated with cleansing and destroying evil (Black and Green 1992a: 184; Læssøe 1956: 66). They were also *folded* in with experiences of a foodstuff, with both boar and their domesticated cousins featuring in urban faunal assemblages, comprising 26.8% of all faunal remains at Lidar Höyük (Kussinger 1988: 11-2), and being the fourth most

frequent species attested by bone fragments at Kültepe (Atici 2014: 203). Finally, eagle-vessels *arrangements* carried with them experiences of communication, of appeals to the gods, and of the purification of both place and person.

Furthermore, these vessels may have served to reinforce their own *arrangements* through self-referential messaging. A spouted bowl found at Kültepe in a house in grid-square LXI/130 (Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010: fig. 232) depicts a human pouring a libation from a spout emerging from a bull protome, mirroring the vessel's own bull spout for use in cult practice (Heffron 2016: 30). Similar self-reinforcing may have been present in the practices using the vessels. It is possible, for instance, that ritual prayers or appeals to the divine utilising boar-vessels or eagle-vessels represented multiple layers of channels to the gods: through the ritual itself, through supernatural interlocuters, and through the animal depicted. The domestic cultic experiences of individuals utilising bull, boar, and eagle-shaped vessels therefore embedded the vessels, practices, and the animals represented with overlapping and interconnected understandings of ritual objects; fauna; specific deities; fertility; danger, impurity, and protection against both; and communication with gods either directly or via another divinity (see Figure 11).

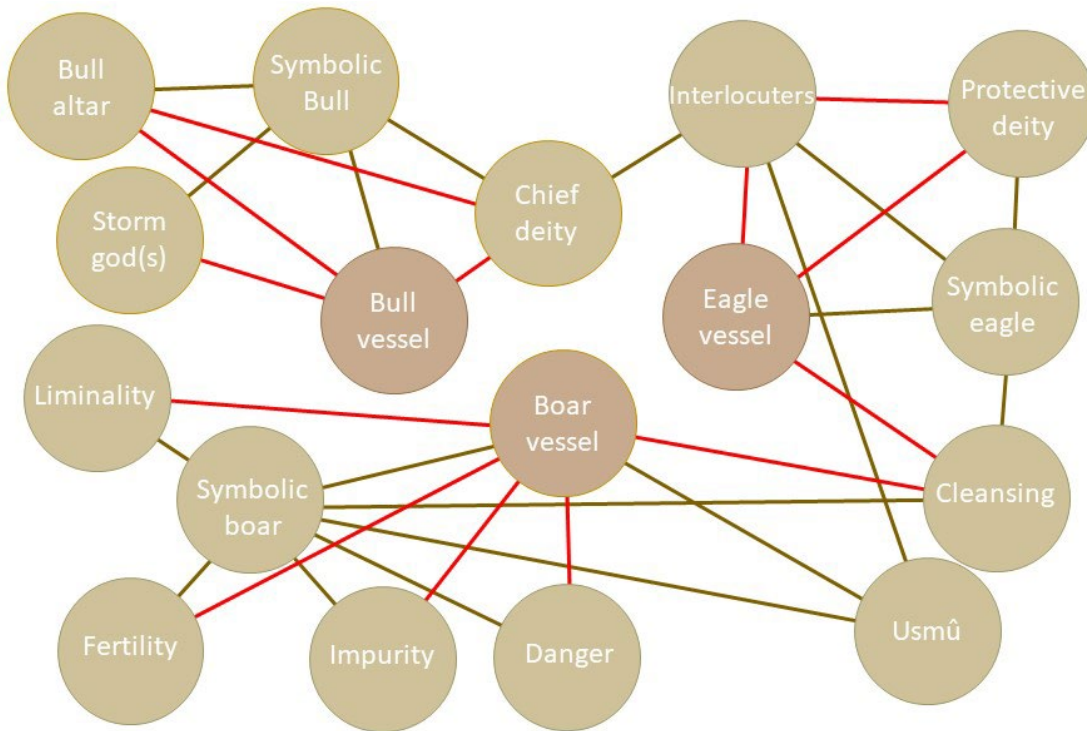


Figure 11 Animal Vessels Rhizome. Tan lines depict those connections that are attested in texts or suggested by the iconographic corpus. Red lines illustrate further extrapolated experiential connections.

5.2.3. Learning religion and internalising cult

Before considering how Assyrian merchants' interactions with animals were informed by their folded experiences of animal representations, it seems pertinent to address the degree to which these previously-folded experiences were likely to be consciously drawn upon. Fundamentally, it is unlikely that a trader on the road presented suddenly with a boar in the wild, or catching an eagle in the corner of their eye, consciously ruminated on their theological attributes. It is here that we see a slide between my definitions of religious and cultic (see 3.1.4 **The everyday transcendental**). Religious associations between animals, divine actors, and their meanings, with which these literate and religiously-active individuals were familiar, were transformed into everyday perspectives through domestic ritual, and filtered into the cultic consciousness, becoming the social conditions that informed experience. As such, exposure to elements of cult, even fleetingly (see 1.2.

Landscape and religion as socialisation mechanisms), sparked the essence of the religious belief without any requirement for active consideration of theology.

5.3. Assyrian traders and cultic animals: Conditions of experience

5.3.1. Folding animals on the road

I have illustrated some of the *plateaus* of experience associated with animal-shaped vessel *arrangements* in cultic contexts that represent social conditions that framed later experiences of animals. It is now possible to use the interconnectivity of the *rhizome* to explore how meaning emerged from the relations of these conditions when the same individuals experienced living animals in the wild, resulting in the emergence of new meaning in the place(s) in which these experiences took place. This provides an avenue down which archaeologists can begin to tackle the creation of *place*, addressing the second of the research questions identified in **Chapter 1** (see **1.3. Research questions**), *how is meaning first embedded in landscape?* By considering the places in which these species were most frequently encountered, it is possible to draw out how *folded* interactions with them contributed to the sacralisation of those landscape forms and played a role in the creation and/or maintenance of socioculturally meaningful placescapes. The first step then, is to situate both Assyrian travellers and animals in places between Kaneš and Aššur.

Reconstructions of the Assyrian trading sphere's historical geography and the trade routes themselves (e.g. Barjamovic 2008, 2011; Beitzel 1992a; Bilgiç 1945-51; Forlanini 2006, 2008; Garelli 1963; Hallo 1964; Michel 2002; Orlin 1970; Özgüç and Özgüç 1949; Yakar 2000) are yet to find consensus, though considerable overlap is apparent in certain regions, most strongly from Kültepe, through the Elbistan plain, and on to a cluster of sites around Titriş Höyük on the banks of the Euphrates, a

potential thoroughfare also highlighted by Palmisano's (2013, 2017) Kaneš-Aššur cumulative cost path modelling studies (see Figure 12).

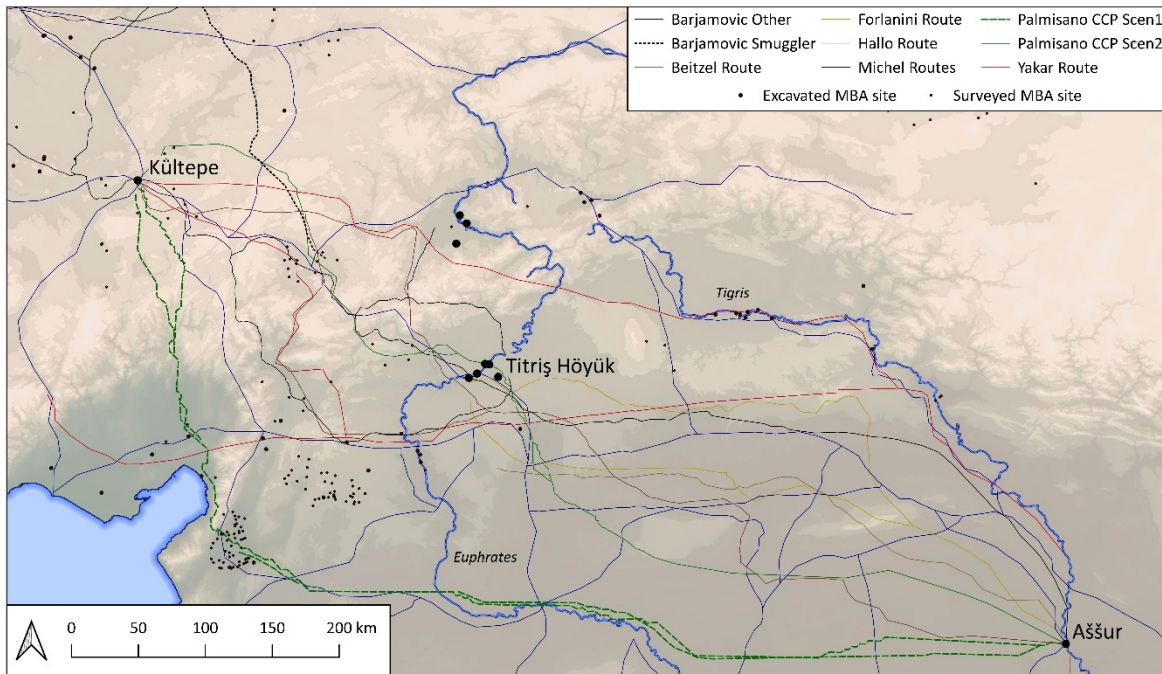


Figure 12 Hypothesised early 2nd millennium Assyrian trade networks

Space does not allow a comprehensive survey of these hypothesised routes here, and so I take no position on the most likely route(s). However, for the purposes of this study, the focus will be placed on that NW-SE trunk of south-central Anatolia between Kültepe and the Lower Euphrates region where proposed routes exhibit the most consistency, and where all proposed routes cross similar landscape forms (see Figure 13). These routes begin at Kültepe, situated c.1050m above sea level in the Sarımsak river valley amidst rich alluvial soils encompassed by barren rocky hills (Fairbairn 2014: 180-1). Whilst the alluvial soils were likely absent in the MBA, the bare hills probably retained reasonable woodland coverage (Fairbairn 2014: 180-1; Roberts et al. 2011; Zohary 1973: chpts 6 and 17). Moving south of Kültepe, the jagged and irregular Tahtalı Mountains rise to a peak of 2366m ASL (Atalay and Efe 2014: 114), and descend to the flat, elevated plain (1000-1200m ASL) of Elbistan (Konyar 2008: 131) before rising into the Southeastern Taurus (Anti-Taurus).

These mountains reach elevations of 2560m ASL (Wilkinson 1990: 8) and are composed primarily of high, treeless limestone, with oak woodland and scrub on lower slopes and access is largely limited to high valleys and passes above 1500m (Wilkinson 1990: 9) descending onto 900-1500m ASL of sparse woodland with patches of exposed rock on the foothills (Wilkinson 1990: 9). Finally, the Lower Euphrates basin lies in a largely flat plain immediately south of the Anti-Taurus foothills. This c.250km long tract passing through the mountains and plains of south-central Anatolia represents the initial *arrangement* for analysis.

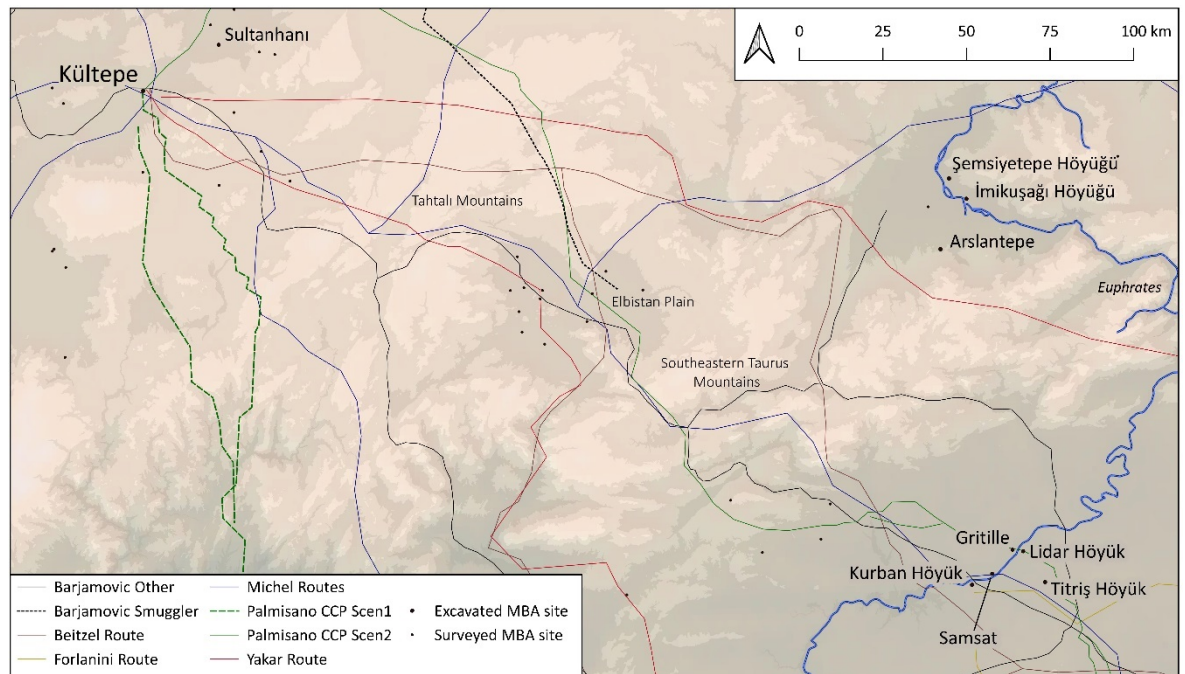


Figure 13 Hypothesised early 2nd millennium routes between Kültepe and Tiriş Höyük

5.3.2. Human-Animal interactions

Having selected a conduit for Assyrian trade movement, it is now possible to consider the locations of animal species within that trunk of the Kültepe-Aššur route. Though animals are not confined to their natural habitats, and the precise locations of these habitats four millennia ago are in any case difficult to identify,

these animals can be broadly associated with particular environments (see Figure 14).

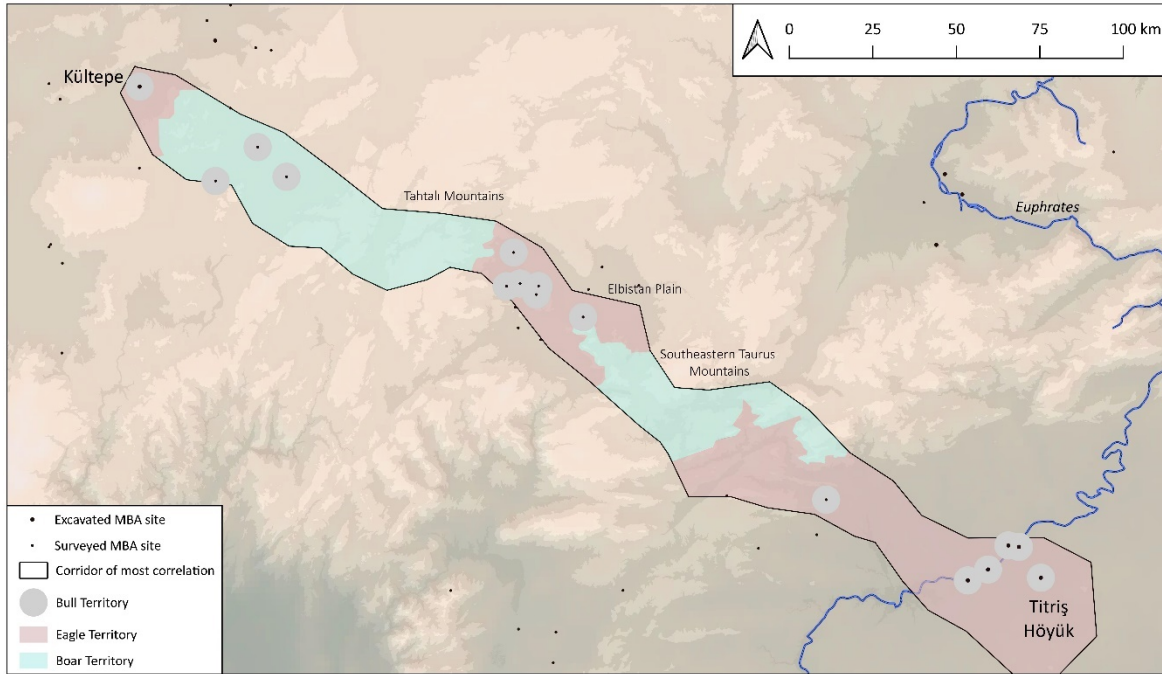


Figure 14 Likely animal presence within the corridor of hypothesised routes' most consistency

Travellers would be most likely to encounter bulls in the agricultural hinterlands of Kültepe and of the settlement clusters in the Elbistan plain and Lower Euphrates. Cattle were a source and symbol of the wealth of Bronze Age Anatolian elites (Arbuckle 2014: 288) that frequently appeared in Mesopotamian dowries (Archi 1987) and were a popular food stuff in MBA Anatolian cities (Arbuckle 2014: 285). Consequently, they would have been most appropriately pastured near the centres of elite power for both accessibility and security reasons.

Bulls, embedded with perceptions of the chief deity, centres of the divine sphere, were therefore experienced close to the hubs of human civilisation, both in sociopolitical terms and in Anatolian and Assyrian ontology (Barjamovic 2011: 5-6; Michel 2011a: 321-3; Yakar 2000: 22). The real-world bull-arrangements served to reinforce the primacy of the city as the cosmological centre of life by embedding its

surrounding placescape with associations of the head of the pantheon. The sense of security provided by the city and its hinterland as the nexus of political control was echoed by the power of the chief deity, itself explicitly mirrored in the real-world physical power of the animal. From the relations of these *plateaus* emerged the coalescence of sacral security and safety, making the *place(s)* of the urban hinterland welcoming on the approach, and rendering departures worrying and intimidating.

In contrast to bulls at pasture, boars were more likely encountered further from the cities, in the rocky woodlands of the Tahtalı Mountains between Kültepe and the Elbistan plain, and the Southeastern Taurus Mountains between Elbistan and the Lower Euphrates. Though distribution patterns of large wild mammals is not comprehensively understood even in modern day Turkey (Can and Togan 2004: 48), wild boar favour rocky and wooded areas on both rocky and grassy terrain in most circumstances throughout the year (Fernández et al. 2006; Massei et al. 1998; Singer et al. 1981).

With cultic boar-*arrangements* being situated amidst particularly complex and often contradictory *plateaus*, their resultant experiential *folds* readied travellers for difficult, suspicious interactions with real-life boars. Real-world boar encounters brought forth a sense of the impure and liminal associations learnt through their use in the cultic sphere, but also represented positive concepts. The relations between the religiously-loaded *plateaus* that conditioned traders' experience of boars and their *arrangements* presented potential avenues for interaction with deities through their association with divine assistants; a source of cleansing tools; and powerful symbols of fertility. Consequently, the presence of boars simultaneously tainted the *place* with their presence and presented a purification device. The rocky woodlands of the south-central Anatolian uplands, already places of potential dangers, at risk of freezing and snow-blockage in the early and late trade season and exposure to extreme heat in the mid-season, providing cover for bandits, and

taking travellers far from the security of the cities, were therefore painted with the dangers of ritual interaction with porcine species through encounters with boars during routine travel.

Eagles would most frequently be seen over the plains immediately around Kültepe, the Elbistan plain between the two mountain ranges interrupting the journey to the Euphrates, and on the final approach to the Lower Euphrates settlements. The eagles of Anatolia, which include golden eagles, lesser spotted eagles, steppe eagles, eastern imperial eagles, Bonelli's eagles, and booted eagles, all have habitats favouring varying combinations of mountains, steppes, and woodland, and can most often be seen above the plains and river valleys interspersing mountains (Forsman 1999: 390, 16, 48, 74, 404, 16), such as those through which the mercantile travellers of MBA Anatolia passed.

The places in which eagles were most often encountered therefore presented inviting spaces, close to or leading towards the safety of settlements, in wide flat areas with good visibility, albeit perhaps interspersed with tree cover, feelings that were duplicated by the *folded* experiences of divine protection associated with eagle motifs. The potential to send messages to the gods via eagles in the sky perhaps invited prayers and rituals to be conducted by the roadside¹⁵, further embedding sacred significance to a place already inflected with religious significance by the eagles above it. The relations between *folded* experiences of eagles in cultic contexts,

¹⁵ Explicit evidence for roadside ritual is not forthcoming, but riverside ones took place on trade journeys (Barjamovic 2011: 196), and the small, simple, and highly-portable and cheap lead figurines that rise and fall in popularity in south-central Anatolia in tandem with Assyrian traders' prominence would be ideally suited to *ad hoc* ritual setups (Heffron 2017: 296) and so to travellers in need of roadside cult paraphernalia.

those in the real world, and the place in which this occurred, allowed sacred places embedded with divinely-rooted safety and relief to emerge.

Considered together, the *plateaus* developed through individuals' interactions with animal-vessel *arrangements* has allowed the interpreter to consider the meaning that emerged from the relations of previously internalised conditions of experience and consequently embedded that meaning in the placescape *arrangements* (see Figure 15). The trip from Kültepe took travellers through a series of emotive and engaging *places*, including city hinterlands that meant safety and drew together cosmological and mundane hierarchies, rocky upland passes communicating complex and intimidating liminal tensions, and inviting open plains where they escaped the discomfort of the hills and supernatural actors could be contacted. The cultic experiences of the city made animals inseparable from their divine relations, those animals in turn made their religious associations an intrinsic part of their natural habitats, and those habitats became reinforcing devices for the cosmological ideas learnt in cult practices.

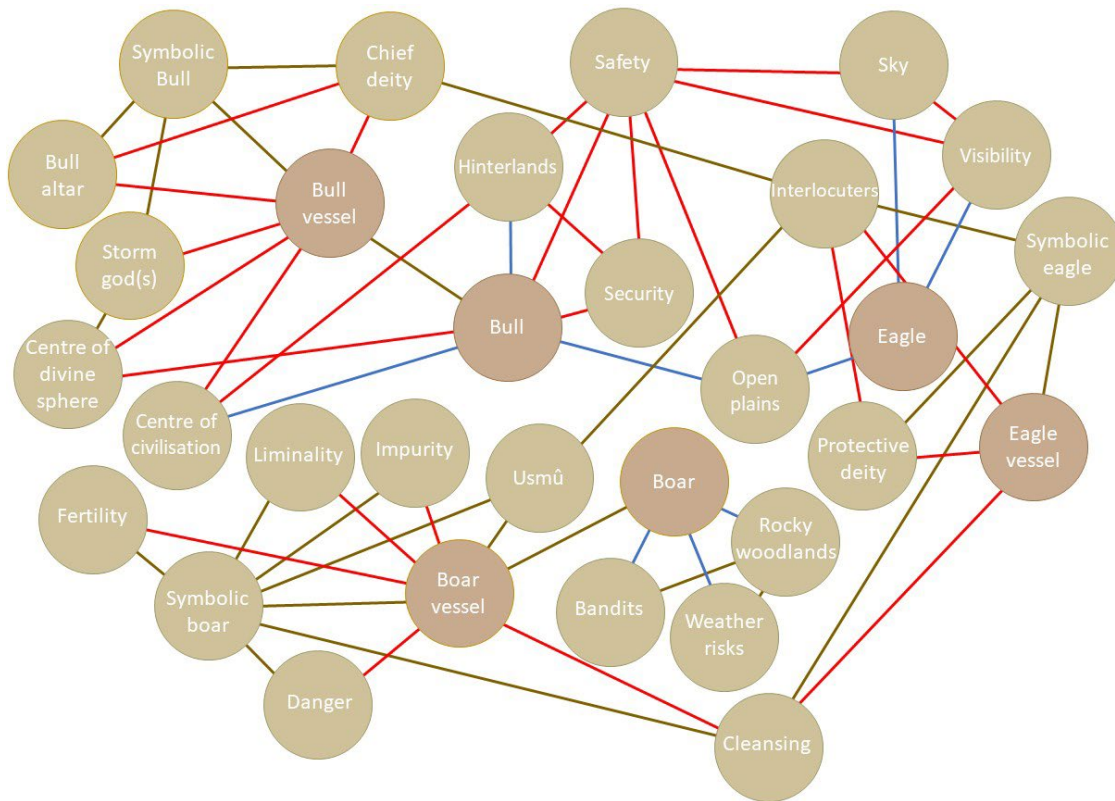


Figure 15 Anatolian placescape rhizome. Tan lines depict connections that are attested in texts or evidenced by the iconographic corpus. Blue lines depict connections that can be made on account of the likely proximity of the plateaus that they connect in the placescape. Red lines illustrate further extrapolated experiential connections.

5.4. New narratives on old roads

The Deleuzo-Guattarian analysis of the experiences of second millennium Assyrian traders in Anatolia has permitted the interpretation of the initial embedding of meaning in *place*, usually neglected in favour of analysing human interactions with already-meaningful locations (see 3.2. **Landscape, place, and meaning**). Social conditions internalised in one context framed later experiences and privileged certain understandings of those later interactions. Consequently, it has been possible to build a narrative taking individuals from the home to the long distance trade route and reconstruct the meanings that emerged in the places through which

they passed: presenting an avenue into the creation of new meaning in place and answering the second of my research questions, *how is meaning first embedded in landscape?*(see **1.3. Research questions**).

This has permitted an interpretation of Assyrian mercantile placescape interaction in the second millennium that could not be confidently posited using current theoretical frameworks, and in any case has not proven of interest to either textual or archaeological scholarship which has focussed on logistical and technological analyses of trade in MBA Anatolia (see **2.2. Textual reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation** and **2.3. Archaeological reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation**). In an effort to better understand the emergent *place*-meaning experienced by Assyrian traders, animal-shaped vessels were investigated to develop *plateaus* of experience concerning cultic practices, ideas, and connotations. Animals were important glyptic motifs, connoted particular meanings, and carried emotive religious and cultic weight through their association with specific deities. When traders later encountered the same species on the road, the meaning they saw in them, and the *place* in which this occurred, emerged from the relations between place, real animal, and cult animal and its associated ideas. Consequently, the Anatolian placescape encountered by those travelling through it became safe, inviting, intimidating, or frightening, depending on the species that inhabited it. Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy has helped illustrate how interaction with cultic representations of animals transformed real animals in the placescape into reflexive socialisation tools that reinforced cosmology and made places meaningful and affective environments.

Chapter 6: Maintaining Meaning

In **Chapter 5**, a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach was used to explore the creation and embedding of new meaning in place through *folded* experiences of religious conceptions of animals. Here, I utilise the same approach to outline how the *folded* religious experiences of Edomite traders at the elevated, open-air cult waystation of Horvat Qitmit maintained and reinforced perceptions of the placescape once they were already in place.

The paltry cultic remains of Edom itself do not lend themselves to the same form of analysis as **Chapter 5's** Assyrian traders whose domestic cult experiences can be identified. However, their experiences at Qitmit are still a useful case study. Open hilltop shrine sites in the Late Iron Age Southern Levant provide an excellent opportunity for an analysis of the socialising power of religious place experiences. The Iron Age Levant is one of the most comprehensively excavated regions and periods on earth and the literature investigating its religious texts is vast, providing considerable data to work with. Amongst the textual corpus, biblical material explicitly stresses religious experience and the emotional and psychological power of being exposed to the divine in the expression *Lpny Yhwh* ('in the presence of Yahweh') (Levine 1993). The nature of outdoor worship also allows us to consider the place interaction not only of humans, but of the gods themselves. Hebrew literature tells us that for outdoor cult practices to take place, the deity had to be invoked so that celebrants could be in their presence: bringing the deity down physically from the heavens (Levine 1993: 199). The descent of Yahweh, or his messengers, appears many times in biblical narratives (e.g. Gen 11:5, 18:21, 28:12; Micah 1:3). Similarly, Yahweh travels to where his name is invoked (Ex. 20:24). Deities were not omnipresent. They had to *move*.

Turning to the archaeological evidence, a group of hilltop shrines punctuated the trade routes of the Southern Levant in the 7th and 6th centuries, providing specific locations where the religious place experiences of the itinerant community can be accessed. The excavations of the cult sites at Horvat Qitmit (Beit-Arieh 1995b), Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Meshel 2012), 'En Hazeva (Cohen and Yisrael 1995a), and Mudayna Thamad (Daviau 2017) have shed light on cultic practices of the Iron Age Southern Levant not documented in biblical or other contemporary texts, including on the polities around Israel and Judah whose cultic repertoires are not so well understood, or little excavated, and permit an analysis of open air worship independent of the biblical narratives. It is the socialising power of these open-air worship experiences that I examine here.

Taking a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach here not only helps demonstrate its ability to explain socialisation, it presents an avenue out of some tenacious problems in interpretations of southern Levantine cult. By reconstructing the specific emergent experiences that the location, built environment, and cultic repertoire of Qitmit offered to Edomite traders, we can overcome the homogenising tendencies frequently seen in the literature (see **2.2. Textual reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation** and **2.3. Archaeological reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation**). By placing the focus on Edomite traders we reject elite perspectives. Finally, by observing a degree of cultic continuity across the region that has hitherto gone unnoticed, and then building the cultic *plateaus* of my traders upon this, the stark contrasts frequently drawn between different religious communities are avoided.

Avoiding these pitfalls and embracing Deleuzo-Guattarian thought, this chapter will answer the third of my research questions, *how is landscape meaning maintained and reinforced?* (see **1.3. Research questions**) by describing how Qitmit's architecture foregrounding the placescape around it whilst practitioners engaged in ritual acts

that themselves stressed aspects of that placescape. This encouraged the emergence of experiences of fertility, land, and ancestors and reinforced the relations between them.

6.1. The Late Iron Age Southern Levant

6.1.1. Chronology

Like much of the Ancient Near East, the archaeological periodisation of the Southern Levant is a subject of some debate (see Mazar 2005 for an overview). Typical of the region, this debate frequently revolves around the synchronisation of historical texts and archaeological data, and typical of the archaeology of ancient Israel, many of the issues have their origin in aligning biblical events with excavated material. Here, the political machinations of the elite are not directly studied, and the focus is placed on a few roadside cult locations that, whatever the precise absolute dates of their destruction horizons, generally overlap in use between the 8th and 6th centuries. In any case, the period foregrounded here is secure: the peak Iron Age trading period in the Southern Levant lies during the period of Assyrian hegemony in the 7th and early 6th centuries.

6.1.2. Political context

The precise political structures and developmental histories of early Israel and Judah are heavily debated (see Finkelstein et al. 2007 for an overview of the key disputes) and those of the Transjordan states of Ammon, Edom and Moab, whose historiographic traditions are less well-preserved or non-existent, are poorly understood (Weippert 1987). However, it is possible to outline their general boundaries (see Figure 16), and by the time we reach the period that concerns this investigation, we are on relatively stable ground.

	Aharoni and Amiran 1958	Wright 1961	Aharoni 1982; Herr 1997; Herzog 1997; Mazar 1990	Barkay 1992	Mazar 2005
1200 BCE		Iron IA	Iron IA		Iron IA
1100 BCE	Israelite I	Iron IB	Iron IB	Iron I	Iron IB
1000 BCE		Iron IC	Iron IIA		
900 BCE	Israelite II	Iron IIA	Iron IIB	Iron IIA	Iron IIA
800 BCE				Iron IIB	Iron IIB
700 BCE	Israelite III	Iron IIB	Iron IIC	Iron IIIA/B	Iron IIIA
600 BCE				Iron IIIC	Iron IIIB
500 BCE					

Table 2 Southern Levant Iron Age periodisations (Aharoni 1982; Aharoni and Amiran 1958; Barkay 1992; Herr 1997; Herzog 1997; Mazar 2005, 2009; Wright 1961)

In the 9th-earlier 8thC the coastal cities of Philistia, key trade hubs, were already Assyrian vassals (Gitin 2018: 100), but the states lining either side of the Jordan and Dead Sea remained independent entities. All fundamentally tribal and kinship-based communities (Bienkowski 2009; Faust 2012a; Knauf-Belleri 1995; Knauf 1992; LaBianca 1999; LaBianca and Younker 1995; Schloen 2016; Younker 1997), they varied in terms of organisation and infrastructural development prior to the Assyrian subjugation of the region. Israel was large, populous, and ethnically diverse (Broshi and Finkelstein 1992: 54; Itach 2018: 58, 64) with many significant settlements (Mazar 2009: 406-16), a developed economy, and administrative complexity. Judah was smaller, largely ethnically homogenous (Finkelstein 2013: 112), and only saw economic development, increasing urbanisation, and the emergence of industrial production of various wares by the end of the 8th century (Faust 2018: 199).



Figure 16 Iron II political geography in the Southern Levant (after Dever 2017: 396; Itach 2018: 59; Mazar 2009: 5)



Figure 17 8th-6th Century sites in the Southern Levant. White dots are sites with purpose-built cult structures.

The biblical and extra-biblical accounts generally present Moab, Ammon, and Edom as similarly established states ruled by kings prior to Assyria's domination of the Southern Levant (Dearman 1989a, 1989b; MacDonald 1994; Weippert 1987), but the archaeological evidence points to more loosely organised confederacies of interconnected tribes that existed in cooperation with 'supra-tribal' monarchies (LaBianca and Younker 1995). In fact, in Edom's case, Assyrian records, architecture, and the ceramic repertoire indicate a late 8th century date for even that level of state consolidation, *after* Tiglath-pileser's campaigns (Bartlett 1989; Bienkowski 1992a; 1992b: 104; Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz 2008: 16; Oakeshott 1983: 181; Pratico 1993: 194-5).

Whatever the precise state of the Levantine Kingdoms when Assyria focuses its attention on them, they were vassals or tributary states soon enough. Over the last three decades of the 8th century most of the remaining land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean was dominated by Sargon II of Assyria, with his successor Sennacherib completing the Assyrian annexation of the region in 701 (Dever 2017: 564; Gitin 1996; 2010: 335-47; Mazar 2009: 404-5; Stager 1995: 345). Moab, Ammon, and Edom, from which the traders I wish to focus on came, suffered less extreme aggression. Though many sites in the Transjordan also show some destruction that has been attributed to Assyrian aggression (Herr and Najjar 2008: 321), there is no considerable evidence at any one site (Dever 2017: 566). Similarly, the major deportations, Assyrian-style constructions, Assyrian palace wares and ceramics, and Assyrian personal names that appear elsewhere further west are absent in the Transjordan, leading Bienkowski (2000: 52-3) and Bienkowski and van der Steen (2001: 39) to argue that the tribal confederacies of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, remained independent, though subjugated and tributary, entities during the period of Assyrian Levantine domination. The Levant now lay under Assyrian hegemony. It is in this period that I wish to explore the cultic placescape experiences of Edomite traders.

6.1.3. The Pax Assyriaca

Despite their violent subjugation of the region, the Assyrian domination of the Levantine kingdoms brought a period of rare peace and stability and allowed for a trade boom in which the Transjordanian traders upon whom I am focussed here found lucrative business opportunities. Until the end of the 8th century, biblical (e.g. 2 Sam 12; 1 Kgs 14; 2 Chron 13; 2 Chron 20) and extra-biblical (Biran and Naveh 1995; Dearman 1989b; Lemche 1998: 75; Yamada 2000: 310) texts, as well as prevalence of border forts and towers (Dever 2017: 443-57), highlight near-constant warfare in the southern Levant. In the 7th century, Assyrian rule and economic policy brought unprecedented trade activity and settlement expansion into new areas that facilitated it. Arab and Edomite traders moved goods through the Negev on the southern edge of Judah to the Mediterranean coast (see **6.2. Trade in and through the Negev**), and the entire region saw economic expansion, new settlements, and industrial productivity (Bienkowski 1990; Faust and Weiss 2005: 72-3; Finkelstein 1992: 161; Gitin 1998: 276; Gophna 1970; Hart 1986: 54; 1987: 290; Stager 1996).

This period of stability and extensive trade provides an ideal case study for an examination of movement in the Southern Levant, and so the focus here is placed on the 80 or so years between the beginnings of the Assyrian hegemony, and its dissolution at the end of the 7thC, when deteriorating Assyrian-Egyptian relations and Babylonian revolts saw Assyria lose control, Judah seek to expand, Egypt briefly dominate, and then, finally, with the accession of Nebuchadnezzar (604-562), Babylon subjugate the region, destroying almost every city west of the Jordan, and reducing considerable tracts of the region to, at most, small subsistence communities (Faust 2012b; Mazar 2009: 458-60).

6.2. Trade in and through the Negev

The period of the Pax Assyriaca in the southern Levant, with its burst in trade movement and group of roadside shrine sites servicing travellers, presents an excellent case study for an analysis of religiously-loaded place experiences. Before we can draw out the specific experiences of travellers through the region, however, we must delineate the routes upon which they moved.

The best attested major route corridor through the Southern Levant in our period is that which moved goods between Arabia and the Mediterranean coast. However, whilst textual and artefactual evidence demonstrate the active trade relationship between Arabia and the southern Levantine coast through the Transjordan and Negev well before the period of Assyrian hegemony (Singer-Avitz 1999), identifying the precise routes of this trade is not simple.

Some investigators have sought to derive the roads of the ancient Southern Levant primarily from textual accounts (e.g. Aharoni 1979; Aharoni et al. 2002; Beitzel 1992b; Dorsey 1991; Meshel 1979; Rainey and Notley 2006), much like the Anatolian historical geographies discussed in **Chapter 5**. The biblical texts describe many routes, including the Way of the Mountains of the Amorites from Kadesh Barnea to the Southern Arabah (Deut. 1:19); the Way of Edom from Arad to the Mountains of Sodom (2 Kgs. 3:20); the Way of Shur from Beersheba to Sinai (Gen. 16:7; 20:1); the Way of the Spies from Kadesh Barnea to Arad (Num. 21:1); the long King's Highway (Num 20:17, 21:22), running from Egypt to the Gulf of Aqaba, then north the length of the Transjordan and finally north-east to Mesopotamia; and a number without clearly identified terminals such as the Way of Mount Seyir (Deut. 1:1-2); and the Way of the Red Sea (Ex. 113:18; Num. 21:4; 14:25; Deut. 1:40; 2:1). Unfortunately, none of these roads are detailed with much precision and the reliability and chronological specificity of their descriptions is debateable. As a result, whilst

various attempts have been made to delineate some of these routes, they escape consensus. For example, some argue that the King's Highway was a precursor to the archaeologically identifiable Roman Via Nova Traiana and passed through the Wadi Mujib south of Diban (Carroll 1992; Glueck 1940: 15; Van Zyl 1960: 60), whilst others push for a route further east (Dearman 1989a: 192; 1997: 206; Homès-Fredericq 1992: 200; Mattingly 1996: 9; Miller 1989: 594; Olivier 1989: 174). Consequently, the textual routes are not a sufficiently robust foundation for us to base a factual route map of the ancient Southern Levant. It transpires, however, that the routes revealed independently by the archaeological data do bear a reasonable resemblance to that suggested by the texts (see below).

Several archaeological reconstructions have also been attempted. These are most common east of the Jordan (e.g. Ben-David 2009; Kloner and Ben-David 2003), and especially east of the Dead Sea around the Wadi Mujib, where Nelson Glueck (1937-1939: fig. 43) famously observed the remains of a road in an Air Force reconnaissance photograph. This road, which runs for around 2km east to west some 12km southeast of Jordanian Aroer, has been revisited by Kloner and Ben-David (2003), who assign an Iron Age date but its short-distance, and its remoteness from any 8th-6thC sites, provides little to work with for this investigation (see **2.4. Reconstructing ancient routes**).

On the coastal side of the Arabah and Jordan, archaeological investigations of specific trade routes are rare. Dorsey's (1991) *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* does draw upon archaeological material, but draws extremely heavily from biblical texts and expresses no doubts about their veracity. In any case, Dorsey restricts himself to routes between Dan and Beersheba, and so does not deal with the trade conduit across the southern limit of Judah. There is, therefore, little in the way of explicit analyses of trade routes between Arabia and the Mediterranean coast to utilise here.

Negev communications routes are frequently referenced, however, despite the lack of explicit discussion of the exact paths used. Most often, they are understood to have largely followed either a direct line from Petra to Gaza, mirroring the Roman and Nabatean incense road, though this road has been thoroughly investigated and is yet to provide much pre-1st century AD material (Ben-David 2012: 21); the Dharb el-Ghaza, which crossed the Sinai (Eph'al 1982: 15; Finkelstein 1992: 163); or the Dharb el-Hajj, following a north-south line through the Wadi Arabah and then an east-west path through the Beersheba Valley (Na'aman 1992: 87-8). For the period under scrutiny under here, at least, the evidence indicates that the latter was the busiest, if not exclusive, route.

6.2.1. The Arabah-Beersheba-Mediterranean Coast trade highway

The frequent movement of people and goods between the Transjordan and Negev via the Beersheba Valley is already well underway by the 10th century and extends to the Mediterranean to the east, and Arabia to the south from at least the 8thC, before reaching new heights under Assyrian domination.

A network of Negev 'fortresses', whose dating and purpose is disputed (Faust 2006; Finkelstein 1984; Halpern 2001: 353-5; Meshel 1994) but which the broad consensus situates in the 10thC (Faust 2006: 140-1), mirroring the distribution pattern of Iron II sherd scatters in the Negev revealed by the Archaeological Survey of Israel, suggests that an active route ran from the Beersheba Valley southwest towards Kadesh Barnea (see Figure 18). At the same time, pottery from the Wadi Arabah was finding its way to the Negev highlands. Petrographic analysis of a large number of tempered Iron IIA vessels from 15 Negev highlands sites could be traced to Timna or Faynan (Martin et al. 2013: 3787), indicating the movement of goods from the Wadi Arabah to the Negev highlands, presumably via the route indicated by the fortress phenomenon.

In the 8th century, this route becomes a long-distance trade highway running from Arabia to the Mediterranean coast. A group of 8th-7thC pottery styles are present at several sites along the Wadi Arabah, Beersheba Valley, and the Mediterranean coastal plain, but are not seen in the Shephelah, central or southern Negev, nor the Judean highlands (Freud 1999: 195-203) (see Figure 18 and Table 3), suggesting an interactive relationship between these sites and movement of products that was not seen, even in a down-the-line fashion, at surrounding sites.

This trade route not only remained active through the Pax Assyriaca, but boomed. In this period, whilst Beersheba itself is abandoned, the Beersheba Valley reaches its peak of prosperity (Faust and Weiss 2005: 72, 4-80). The fortified Tel Malhata replaces Beersheba as the hub of the region (Beit-Arieh 1995a) and new sites appear at Tel Masos (Kempinski 1993), which included a waystation (Fritz and Kempinski 1983: 123-37), Tel Ira (Beit-Arieh 1993a, 1999), Aroer (Biran 1993), and the fortresses of Horvat Uza (Beit-Arieh 1993b) and Horvat Radum (Beit-Arieh 1991), more than doubling the built up area of the region (Finkelstein 1994: 176). This burst of activity is generally understood as an effort to support Arabian trade (e.g. Na'aman 1987), increase grain production (e.g. Faust and Weiss 2005: 74), or both (e.g. Finkelstein 1994: 175-81). Whichever was the primary motivator, the considerable security and administrative apparatus reflected by fortresses at Arad, Uza, and Radum, and Arad ostraca detailing trade or redistribution activities (Aharoni 1966, 1981), attest to organised movement of goods or produce through the region of sufficient value for military oversight.

The coastal plain too experiences a trade boom. In 7thC layers at Tell Jemmeh, on the eastern end of the Beersheba Valley where an Assyrian fort is established (Van Beek 1983), camel presence increases significantly, probably being utilised in the caravan trade (Wapnish 1981, 1984). Other Assyrian forts or administrative centres appear at Tel Sera (Oren 1978), Tel Haror (Oren et al. 1991), Tell er-Ruqeish (Oren 1993;

Oren et al. 1986). Gaza is described as an Assyrian 'custom-house' by Tiglath-pileser III (Borger 1984: 382), whilst Ashkelon becomes a vast port city with a successful viticulture industry (Stager 1996) and Tel Mique expands drastically and becomes a massive olive oil producer (Faust and Weiss 2005: 73; Gitin 1998: 276). Beyond the archaeological evidence, literary sources (Elat 1990), and inscriptions from Tell Jemmeh (Van Beek 1983: 19) and Tell el-Kheleifeh (Sass 1991: 35-6) also attest to the extensive interaction of the Negev, Arabia, and the Philistine coast (Finkelstein 1994: 179). There is little doubt that the Beersheba Valley and Coastal plain retain their prominence as trade conduits.

By the time of the Pax Assyriaca, then, the archaeological data points to a centuries old trade route finding renewed prominence. The Beersheba valley gained a new, well-defended central site, new or rebuilt fortress sites, and a burst of other settlements whilst the coastal plain saw its cities grow rapidly in size and wealth. This provides independent support for some textually-derived routes. For instance, those hypothesised by Levy et al. (2014), depicting the Way of the Arabah, Way of the Red Sea, Road to Edom, Way to Moab, Kings Highway, and some smaller adjoining paths, seem fairly satisfying (see Figure 18). For the purposes of this investigation, then, it is safe to conclude that a significant number of traders moved north through the Arabah, before turning west through the Beersheba Valley, and on to the coastal plain. This presents us with a conduit through the placescape that I can place my focus on to draw out the place-experiences of merchants on the move. The next task is to identify who these traders were.

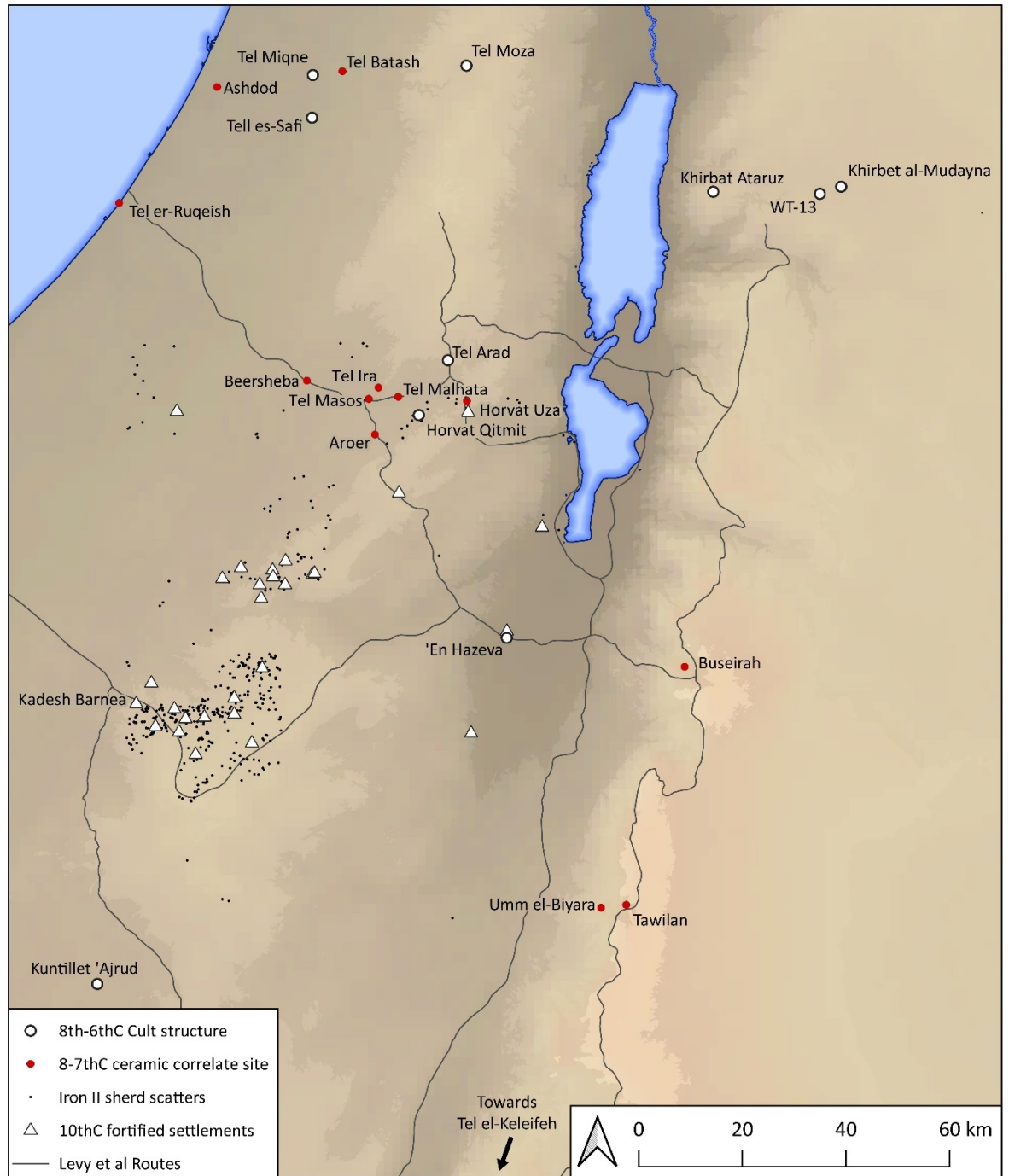


Figure 18 Evidence for route corridors and hypothesised routes in the 10th-6th century Negev (routes after Levy et al. 2014)

Type	Beersheba Valley							Wadi Arabah				Coastal Plain			
	Aroer	Beersheba	Tel Ira	Horvat Qitmit	Tel Malhata	Horvat Uza	Tel Masos	Buseirah	Tawilan	Tel el-Kheleifeh	Umm el-Biyara	Ashdod	Tel Batash	Tel er-Ruqeish	Tel Mikne
Flat rimmed carinated bowls	X	X	X	X	X			X	x	X					
Painted ledge rim bowls	X		X		X		X			X	X				
Denticulated rim bowls	X		X	X	X			X							
Carinated bowls with handles			X	X	X			X		X					
'Edomite' jugs			X					X							
Deep carinated bowls		X	X		X							X			
Small holemouth jars			X									X			
Kraters			X									X			
Globular jugs			X										X		X
Small jars			X			X						X		X	
Handled holemouth jars			X										X		X

Table 3: Ceramic correlates from the Beersheba Valley, Wadi Arabah, and Mediterranean Coastal Plain (Freud 1999: 195-203)

6.2.2. Populating the highway

The population of the southern Levant was diverse. Akkadian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabian, and Phoenician texts discovered in 7thC contexts west of the Jordan attest to the varied community settled in, or at least passing through, the region (Dever 2017: 601-2). (Avigad 1975: 71; Dever 2017: 601-2; Finkelstein 1994: 179; Shiloh 1987). The *Kittim* mentioned in the Arad texts have been interpreted as Cypriots from Kition (Dever 2017: 601-2), possibly a group of Phoenician-speaking caravaneers (Herzog et al. 1984: 29, 31), though others argue they were mercenaries serving in Egyptian (Na'aman 1987: 14) or Judahite (Aharoni 1981: 12-3) armies. Amongst this varied community, however, it is likely that the trade through the northern Negev was primarily an Arab affair in the initial years of Assyrian control (Elat 1990: 78; Rainey 1987: 20).

Through the Assyrian period, the major trade specialists shifted from nomadic Arabs to Edomites. Assyrian records make many references to itinerant Arab communities on the southern Levantine coast and the Sinai (Eph'al 1982), possibly the same nomadic pastoralists on the southwest of Judah who appear in biblical accounts (Eph'al 1982: 60-72). Early Assyrian trade policy regulated trade through the Negev and along the Egyptian border via agreements with these groups (Elat 1977: 132-5; Eph'al 1982: 93-4; Tadmor 1966: 89-90). Once the Pax Assyriaca was established, however, Assyria began to oversee trade directly through its administrative centres, side-lining the Arab population.

This provided space for Edomite nomadic pastoralists to enter the fray. Capitalising on their access to the substantial copper sources of Faynan and the continuing demand for Arabian luxuries (Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 23-4), and protected by the Assyrians with whom they had a long tributary relationship (Bienkowski 2000; Millard 1992) and the fortresses at Tell el-Kheleifeh and 'En

Hazeva (Levy and Najjar 2007: 20)¹⁶, they gained a foothold in the trade network and became prominent participants (Bienkowski and Sedmen 2001: 322). It is the cult-loaded experiences of these individuals, and the consequences for their understandings of the world, that I will seek to draw out.

6.3. Cult continuity across the Iron II Southern Levant

The specific religious themes that were important to those individuals moving through the Negev that I wish to interpret are dealt with below when they are most relevant. However, as, like others (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 307; Levine 1993: 198), I utilise textual evidence that does not explicitly refer to Edomite practice to interpret the experiences of Edomites, it is necessary to tackle why they are relevant to non-Judahite individuals in advance. Put simply, this is because of the continuity in cultic practice and cosmological preoccupations across the Transjordan and non-coastal Levant¹⁷ that is indicated by the literary, onomastic, and archaeological evidence. Whilst the texts present the 'official' cult of Judah as a monotheistic system that worshipped the deity Yahweh, closer examination reveals considerable overlap with the wider region. A variety of epithets in addition to Yahweh are used to refer to the Judahite state god: *Elohim* ('god' in the plural), El, Shadday, and Adonai. Of these, El is the chief deity of the West Semitic pantheon and Adonai ('my master') is equivalent to Baal ('the master'), commonly used to refer to the West Semitic storm god Adad (Farber 2018: 431). The biblical material suggests these

¹⁶ Levy and Najjar (2007), citing C14 dates from the fortress at Tell en-Nahas which is superficially similar to that at Tell el-Kheliefeh, date all of these sites, and therefore this activity, to the 10th-9th century, but given the comprehensively understood ceramic chronology of the Edomite plateau and Southern Judah it is far more likely that Tell en-Nahas was not an Edomite site and that the well-accepted 8th-6th century dates for the others is correct (Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz 2008).

¹⁷ The Philistine coast shares many cultic motifs, but most are more stylistically distinct and so do not indicate a similar level of continuity as to the east (Ben-Shlomo 2014)

names all refer to the same supernatural actor, though this is unlikely. At the very least, Yahweh was worshipped in regional flavours (McCarter 1987; Sommer 2009). ‘Yahweh of Teman’ and ‘Yahweh of Samaria’ are both attested at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, for example (Strawn and LeMon 2018: 386-7). Like many Near Eastern deities, then, Yahweh had geographically distinct manifestations and could exist concurrently in multiple places.

It seems most plausible that El, well-recorded around the Southern Levant, was the original patron of the Israelites, and Yahweh, a minor local deity who is essentially unknown outside of Israel and Judah, was gradually conflated with him through the Iron Age and elevated to the head of their religious system (Farber 2018: 433; Smith 2002a: 32-43). The name ‘Israel’ (יִשְׂרָאֵל lit. ‘El strives’) itself refers to El, he was married to Asherah, likely also the consort of Yahweh¹⁸, their son Hadad eventually usurped his father and took on the epithet Baal (Farber 2018: 433), and they shared a range of epithets, dispositions, behaviours, and relationships (for a comprehensive history of Yahweh's place in Iron Age cult, see Smith 2002a). The ascension of minor tribal deities to the top of the pantheon through the Iron Age is a phenomenon shared across much of the Southern Levant. Whilst Canaanite cult retained El and Hadad at the head of their pantheons, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites replaced them with their own respective patron deities, Kemoš, Mikom, and Qos (Farber 2018: 433-4). The Hebrew Bible’s presentation of a uniquely

¹⁸ Inscriptions at Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom feature variations on the expression ‘Yahweh and his Asherah’, for example. Though the meaning of the phrase is disputed (Strawn and LeMon 2018: 388-93), as אֲשֶׁרָה (*asherah*) denotes both the name of a deity and a tree or ritual pole and Hebrew grammar does not permit the explicit indication of proper nouns, but the goddess Asherah is presented as a recipient of worship in Judah in the biblical texts, including in the Jerusalem Temple, the centre of official cult (e.g. Judg 3:7; 1 Kgs 15:13; 1 Kgs 18:19; 2 Kgs 23:6-7). See Dever (2005) for a comprehensive study of the relationship between Yahweh and Asherah.

monotheistic cult is unlikely and the evidence urges us to conclude that Judah shared a pantheon with the wider region.

Extra-biblical religious Iron Age Levantine writing, though rare, may also attest to the continuity of cultic tradition across the region, and therefore permit us to draw upon non-Edomite sources in analysis of Edomite religious experience. Comparative study of Hebrew and Moabite texts suggests a fair level of consistency (Mattingly 1989; Stern 2003). For example, the 'Balaam Text' from Deir 'Alla in the Transjordan, written in ink on a plaster wall in a domestic structure, describes a premonition of divine disaster given to a seer named Balaam on behalf of El. Another Balaam, this time a seer in service of Yahweh, appears in Num 22-24 and may represent the same figure (Hoftijzer and van der Kooij 1991; van Kooten and van Ruiten 2008). If so, then we have evidence of theologically and mythologically complex religious narratives in the Transjordan, that exhibit overlap with those West of the river (Routledge 2018: 150).

Studies of personal names in the Iron II southern Levant are also indicative of continuity of cultic habits throughout the area. Whilst theophoric elements in personal names seen in a given territory are largely restricted to the patron deities of that territory, Yahweh in Judah, Qos in Edom, El in Ammon, and so on (Golub 2014), other components in religious personal names are consistent across the region. Names referring to state religion's traditions and narratives, for instance exodus, kingship, Zion, or Bethel traditions in Israelite contexts, are virtually non-existent (Alberty 1978: 49-77), but familial cultic preoccupations, such as safety in birth, are commonplace and consistent throughout the southern Levant (Alberty and Schmitt 2012: 482).

Turning to the archaeological material, the evidence for ritual activity on either side of the Jordan is primarily located in domestic contexts, alongside 'cult corners' and

some material at roadside cult sites (see **6.3.3. Roadside shrines as multi-ethnic travellers' hubs**), including at Qitmit, where I explore Edomite trader's cultic place experiences (Albertz 2008; Albertz and Schmitt 2012; Faust 2019: 7; Olyan 2008; Routledge 2018: 150). Many of these locations, and the cultic wares found in them, are consistent throughout the region.

The famous 'four-room house' or 'pillared house', often seen as the typical dwelling of Iron Age Israel and Judah, and associated with the ideological character and cosmological perspectives of the populace (Faust and Bunimovitz 2003: 28-30), are also the most prominent houses in the ancient Transjordan (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 176). These dwellings, the idealised version of which is comprised of three longitudinal rooms abutted by a wide room at the rear (see Figure 19), are where the bulk of cultic assemblages are to be found (see Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 74-219 for a comprehensive survey of domestic cult assemblages in Israel, Judah, and their neighbours).



Figure 19 Plan of the northwestern quarter of Tell Beit Mirsim showing many archaeological examples of four-room house variants (adapted from Faust and Bunimovitz 2003: 27) and a schematic depiction of their idealised plan.

The ritual objects in pillared houses in Israel, Judah, and the Transjordan are frequently similar and again, give us reason to believe that the Hebrew Bible can shed some light on the cultic concerns of Edomites that informed their religious place experiences. In addition to a range of ceramics at all locations, female and animal figurines were consistent components of domestic cult assemblages (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 192) and coroplastic repertoires are broadly consistent (Dorneman 1983: 129-42; Mansour 2005). In Judah, pillared buildings at Beersheba held miniature furniture, many female and animal figurines, lamps, limestone altars, spouted bowls, (Aharoni 1973: pls. 22-5, 7-8, 52, 70-1, 5); at Tel Masos, Pillared House 314 held chalices, strainers, and lamps (Fritz and Kempinski 1983: 41-2, 150-2); whilst at Tel Halif, a figurine, fenestrated stand and two *matsebot* lay in a pillared dwelling labelled Dwelling 7 (Hardin 2004: 76-7). In Israel, model shrines and figurines were popular in pillared houses at Tell el-Farah (North) (Chambon 1984: 118, 36, pl. 63.2). Meanwhile, on the other side of the Jordan, a pillared house at Tel Abu al-Kharaz contained a tripod cup, astragali, an incense burner, and a seven-spouted lamp (Fischer 1995: figs. 5, 7); another pillared house at Tell Jawa held libation vessels, figurines, miniature shrine, and *matsebah* (Daviau 2003: 132-333); and at Tell el-'Umayri, a further pillared house held a bronze figurine (Herr and Clark 2001: 47) and an adjoining building held chalices, cymbals, and a stones that the excavators identify as *matsebot* (Herr 2006: 63), though Albertz and Schmitt (2012: 190) argue for an architectural function. Across the region, then, the cult assemblages reveal many of the same components, and were employed in the same form of dwelling.

Common artefact types also range across the region. The famous Judean Pillar Figurines, characteristic of late Iron Age Judah (Darby 2018), are occasionally present in the major Philistine centres (Ben-Shlomo 2014: 85-6). Meanwhile, a group of feminine figurines holding discs against their breasts, which are the most common figurines in the Transjordan (Routledge 2018: 151) (see Figure 20 and

Figure 21), also stretch across the region. Though concentrated in the Transjordan between Tell Damiyah to the north (Petit and Kafafi 2016: fig. 17, 20) and Khirbet al-Balu'a to the south (Worschech 1995), they are present in Phoenician contexts (Paz 2007: 13-38, fig 2.1-2.3; Vriezen 2001: fig. 15), are popular in Israel in the 10th-9th century, as at Ta'anach (Schroer 1987: fig. 101) and Tell el-Farah (North) (Chambon 1984: pl. 63.2), and some are present in late-7th century Judah, as at Jerusalem Cave I (Holland 1977). These are most often interpreted as women playing frame drums (Kletter and Saarelainen 2011: 12; Paz 2007; Sugimoto 2008), possibly associated with the biblical musician-prophets, cultic drummers, and singers (1 Sam 10; 1 Sam 18:6; Ex 15:20; Psalm 68: 25). However, Dever (2005: 178-9), noting the women who 'make cakes for the Queen of Heaven', usually understood as Astarte (Smith 2002a: 127), in Jeremiah 7:18, has hypothesised that some may represent women holding cake moulds. Another option may be that they hold the cakes they have made, ready to be offered to the deity. Whichever explanation, if any, is correct, they are generally understood as cultic artefacts, representing a ritual item utilised throughout the region, and consequently implying at least some shared cultic practices or proclivities. These shared cultic proclivities exhibited in the domestic sphere across the region gives us good ground to suggest that the religious and cultic preoccupations of the southern Levant were fairly consistent in the later Iron Age. Moving beyond the home to public cult spaces presents similarly compelling evidence.

[copyright image removed]

Figure 20 Large disc-holding figurines (Kletter and Saarelainen 2011: fig. 1, 2)

[copyright image removed]

Figure 21 Small disc-holding figurines (Schroer 1987: fig. 101, 2)

6.3.1. The loci of worship

Beyond the domestic sphere that contained most ritual activity, worship also took place in a small group of purpose-built cult buildings. Temples were uncommon across the region, and temple practice was probably restricted to the monarchy and urban elite (Alpert Nakhai 2015: 93), but there was a special group of cult centres situated on trade routes established for the use of itinerant populations that likely saw considerable use from the busy interregional highway travellers. This general lack of temples, and a regional enthusiasm for roadside shrine sites, both present

further evidence of cultic continuity, but also provide focal points for an analysis of religious experience on the highways of the Southern Levant.

Traditionally, the cults of ancient Israel and Judah have been understood as temple or sanctuary-centred affairs. References to a variety of purpose-built religious structures are frequent in the literature and are often associated with different religious forms or traditions. Holladay (1987: 270-5), for example, contrasts 'establishment' and 'nonconformist' ritual places and believes that central cult sites existed at national, town, and neighbourhood scales. Hess (2007: 312-4) also distinguishes between 'official' and 'nonconformist' sites, and, following Alpert Nakhai (2001), associates the former with major centres' *bamot* (במת Singular *Bamah* במה usually translated as 'high place') and the latter with cult places in villages and along trade routes. Zevit (2001: 265) argues that different cult traditions were performed 'at home, village, sanctuary, urban temple, and extra-urban sanctuary' (2001, p. 265). Meanwhile, Schmitt's (2014) typology includes 'neighbourhood shrine', 'village shrine', 'city temple', 'regional sanctuary', and 'supra-regional sanctuary'; Dever describes the Arad temple as an example of a 'widespread phenomenon' of local temples (Dever 2005: 175); and Borowski (2003: 54) believes it 'safe to assume that every city and town had a cult center or a shrine'. Passing references to the local cult places destroyed or demoted during the reforms of Josiah (Albertz 1994: 128, 206; Hagedorn 2005: 204; Vogt 2006: 44, 6), and the common and geographically widespread nature of such venues (McNutt 1999: 176-8; Smith 2002a: 161) are also recurrent suggestions. The consensus, then, presents Ancient Israel as a society of temple builders who built cultic centres at state, region, town, village, and neighbourhood levels.

6.3.2. The absence of temples

Although household shrines and 'cult-corners', ritual installations in buildings with other purposes, were commonplace (Albertz and Schmitt 2012; Hitchcock 2011) it seems unlikely that purpose-built cult structures of the type frequently alluded to in the literature played a major part in the religious experiences of most of the populace in Israel, Judah, or their neighbours. Faust (2010a, 2019) has been critical of the frequency with which investigators extrapolate a widespread phenomenon of religious buildings from a mere two archaeological examples: the temple at Arad, in use in the second half of the 8thC (Aharoni 1968; Herzog 2002; Herzog et al. 1984) and the 9th – mid-8thC high place at Dan (Biran 1994; Davis 2013), the interpretation of which is at least partially biblically-derived. Though a probable second temple has been identified recently at Moza (Kisilevitz 2015), and we should include in any list the Jerusalem Temple recorded in many historical documents, this does not seem to represent a sufficient sample for Dever to claim that 'There is no reason to suppose that the Arad temple is unique or even exceptional. Rather it appears to be an example of what was probably a widespread phenomenon – local temples.' (Dever 2005: 175). That these sites are representative of the everyday, commonplace cultic life of Ancient Israel is even less convincing when we consider the considerable archaeological exploration of Iron Age Israel, the long-running Archaeological Survey of Israel (Israel Antiquities Authority 2019) recording almost 700 sites with Iron Age activity in the Negev alone as of 2019, and the stark contrast between the near-absence of Iron Age Israelite temple-life and its high visibility in the preceding period.

Due to a demographic decline in the period (Bunimovitz 1995b: 321-4; Gonen 1992: 216-7) and the frequent depth of the deposits and the resultant excavation strategies employed, exposure of LBA strata in the southern Levant is limited (Faust 2019: 5). Despite this, temples, sometimes several, have been revealed in settlements at

Shechem, Hazor, Megiddo, Lachish, Tel Mevorakh, Beth Shean, Timnah, Tel Kitan, Pella, Tel Nami, Tell Abu Al-Kharaz, Tell Deir 'Alla, Tell Safut, Khirbet Umm ad-Dananir, Shiloh, and possibly at Nahariya, Tel Mor, Gezer, Mt. Gerizim, and Tell Abu Hawam (Faust 2019: 5; Halpern 2000; Ottosson 1980; Sandhaus 2013; Stager 1999). No LBA villages have been excavated, but all six known MBA examples, Tell el-Hayyat (Falconer 1994, 1995), Tel Kitan (Eisenberg 1993a), Givat Sharet (Bahat 1993), Nahal Rephaim (Eisenberg 1993b), Manahat (Edelstein 1993), and Kfar Rupin (Gophna 1979), feature temples, and a rural LBA temple is present at Amman airport (Faust 2019: 5). Faust (2010a, 2019) argues convincingly that this abundance of LBA cult structures, and the paucity of evidence in the much more heavily excavated IA, implies that the temples of Arad and Moza and the sanctuary at Dan were exceptional and certainly not representative of a widespread phenomenon.

Less convincing is Faust's (2019: 13) suggestion that 'the lack of built temples is a *unique* characteristic of Israelite religion' (my emphasis) (see also Meyers 2017: 11). In fact, temples and other purpose-built cult structures are uncommon throughout the Iron II Southern Levant, and the majority of them actually lie within Israel and Judah or along their borders.

In Philistia, IA I temples are present on the coastal plain at Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980) and Nahal Patish (Nahshoni 2009), but only two IA II temples have been revealed, both close to the Judahite border, at Ekron/Miqne (Dothan 2003; Gitin 2003) and Tell es-Safi/Gath (Dagan et al. 2018). An early Iron II cult structure is present on the other side of the Jordan at Pella (Bourke 2004, 2012) but is out of use by the end of the 9th century. Later Iron II cultic structures east of the Jordan include those at Khirbet al-Mudayna (Daviau and Steiner 2000), Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13 (Daviau 2017), and Tell Damiyah (Petit and Kafafi 2016). West of the Jordan, examples lie at Horvat Qitmit (Beit-Arieh 1995b) and 'En Hazeva (Cohen and Yisrael 1995a). Faust also points to a very-recently excavated structure at Rujm al Kursi in Ammon, though

its interpretation as an IA temple ranges from tentative to sceptical even in the citations he provides (Steiner 2019: 2; Tyson 2019) and so it is discounted here. Similarly, a complex including storerooms and a plastered room with steps framed by pedestals at Buseirah (ancient Borzah, the principal Edomite city of the 7th and 6th centuries) has been interpreted as a temple (Bennet 1983: 15; Bienkowski 2002: 95; Reich 1992: 219), but the absence of any cult objects whatsoever casts doubt on this interpretation (Steiner 2019: 9-10) and again it is dismissed here. Neither Kuntillet Ajrud in the northern Sinai, and Khirbat 'Atarūz, in the Transjordan, are included in Faust's list of cultic structures, but the former is frequently highlighted as a rural shrine site, and the latter maintains a stepped sanctuary and altar, though its temple is decommissioned during the 9th Century (Ji 2011: 570-3), and both seem like reasonable additions to this list.

Taking these alongside Dan, Arad, and Moza, we therefore have a list of a mere 12 sites across the southern Levant where 8th–6thC cult structures can be confidently identified, six of which lie in Israel or Judah (see Table 4 and Figure 22). This hardly supports Faust's (2019) stark contrast between the cult structure-averse kingdoms of Israel and Judah and their temple-enthusiast neighbours, even allowing for the divergent levels of excavation in the Levantine states. A closer examination of these purpose-built sites reveals another cultic motif shared by the kingdoms lining either side of the Jordan: the cultic waystation.

6.3.3. Roadside shrines as multi-ethnic travellers' hubs

Of the 12 cult sites discussed so far, seven are located on major trade routes, including those routes highlighted above (see **6.2.1. The Arabah-Beersheba-Mediterranean Coast trade highway**), and/or in border zones, and have been interpreted as either rural shrine sites or serving the cult needs of traders. These are:

Khirbet al-Mudayna, a well-fortified town with a single-room sanctuary (Building 149) situated to control a north-south trade route (Dearman 1989b: 192), has been interpreted as a military outpost that functioned as a regional administration centre with a market and shrine that served passing traders (Boertien 2014: 154; Popkin 2001: 119).

Tel Arad, a fortress overlooking the Beersheba Valley and home to a temple in the later 8thC, contained ostraca identifying it too as a military station and provisions hub exerting control over nearby settlements (Aharoni 1968: 9; Herzog 2002: 79; Na'aman 2011: 84).

'En Hazeva, another fortress, this time with an elongated external shrine in the 7thC. It was situated on a major Arabian trade route and at the intersection of regional roads between Jerusalem in the north and Elath in the south, and Edom in the east and the Central Negev to the west (Cohen 1994: 212; Cohen and Yisrael 1995a: 230; Eph'al 1982: 12-7, 232-3).

Site	Region	Reference
'En Hazeva	Judah	Cohen 1994; Cohen and Yisrael 1995
Horvat Qitmit	Judah	Beit-Arieh 1995
Khirbet al-Mudayna	Moab	Daviau et al. 2006; Daviau and Steiner 2000
Kuntilet Ajrud	Judah	Meshel 2012
Khirbat Atarūz	Moab	Ji 2011; 2012
Tel Arad	Judah	Herzog 2002
Tel Dan	Israel (until late 8 th C)	Davis 2013
Tel Miqne/Ekron	Philistia	Dothan 2003; Gitin 2003
Tel Moza	Judah	Kisilevitz 2015
Tell Damiyah	Ammon	Petit and Kafafi 2016
Tell es-Safi/Gath	Philistia	Dagan et al. 2018
Wadi ath-Thamad 13	Moab	Daviau 2017

Table 4 Sites with purpose built cultic structures in the 8th-6thC southern Levant. Greyed rows are isolated rural sites.



Figure 22 Sites with purpose built cultic structures in the 8th-6thC southern Levant

Tel Damiyah, a small mound only large enough for a few houses in addition to the shrine that was operation from the 9th to 7th centuries, but at its peak c.700BCE (Petit and Kafafi 2016: 18, 21). It was nestled in the meanders of the rivers Jordan and Zerqa at their confluence near one of the Jordan's few fordable points. The absence of significant residential possibilities, the shrine, and the abundance of equid, or equid and rider, figurines found at the site lead the excavators to interpret it as an

interregional cult site important to traders and other travellers (Petit and Kafafi 2016: 25).

Kuntilet Ajrud, famed for its cultic installations and, especially, inscriptions and lying on the route of the ancient Dharb Ghazza (Meshel 2012) is a problematic site to categorise. It has a fortress-esque structure (Building A), and is sometimes labelled a fort (e.g. Dever 2017: 394), but it is not especially robust and does not sport casemate walls like contemporary defensive structures (Strawn and LeMon 2018: 381). The site is generally interpreted as a caravanserai with cult facilities (Beck 2012: 198; Dijkstra 2001; Hadley 1993, 2000; Hutton 2010; Ji 1995; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 247; Lemaire 1984, 2013; Singer-Avitz 2009), but also as an exclusively cultic site, either established by the monarchy and where Levitical priests and scribes trained (Meshel 2012: 68-9), or set up by and for traders (Na'aman 2011: 318). In any case there is broad agreement that it was visited by travellers that engaged in cultic activity there, and at least one of whom left a blessing invoking the deity Yahweh of Teman (Na'aman and Lissovsky 2008: 187).

The final two roadside shrines do not appear to have any military or administrative purpose, and exist entirely, or almost entirely, as cultic waystations. These are **Horvat Qitmit**, which lay on the Negev part of the great Arabia-Mediterranean coast caravan route in the 7th-6th centuries (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 303; Finkelstein 1992: 159); and the 8th-7thC (Stratum II) shrine at **Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13** (hereafter **WT-13**), overlooking the Wadi Wala (Daviau 2017: 3, 72),

Associating these sites with specific cultural or ethnic groups is problematic, and instead most should be understood as servicing multi-ethnic groups. 'En Hazeva was interpreted by the excavators as Edomite on account of some ceramic correlates at Tell el-Kheleifeh and Buseirah (Cohen and Yisrael 1995b: 27), but typical Edomite pottery is absent and the cultic wares, paralleled in Judah, have no Edomite parallels

(Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 28). Similarly, at Horvat Qitmit, Edomite pottery, apparently Edomite inscriptions, and the orientation of worshippers to the south led Beit-Arieh (1995b: 255, 67, 307) to label it an Edomite Shrine. On the other hand, the cultic repertoire exhibits similarities with the coast, Judah, and the Transjordan (Beck 2002: 189-93), whilst all pottery types found appear across the Negev and Transjordan, all clays used were local and similar inscriptions appear in 7thC strata across the region (Finkelstein 1995: 139-53). The ceramic repertoire of WT-13 comprises Moabite, Ammonite, and Cypro-Phoenician styles, alongside some Assyrian influences, (Daviau 2017: 72) and the cultic repertoires at 'En Hazeva, Horvat Qitmit, WT-13, and Tell Damiyah are consistent, and all include anthropomorphic statuettes that are rare at settlement sites (Daviau 2017: 275). The consistent admixture of artefactual cultural markers has led to these sites being described as a 'network' (Routledge 2018: 151) of cultic waystations (Daviau 2017: 278; Finkelstein 1995: 139-53) utilised by diverse pastoral groups as well as 'tribal league sanctuaries' where communities could participate in shared worship and negotiations or other intertribal gathering, similar to Nabataean examples in Arabia (Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 38).

That seven of the twelve cult structures identified above lie upon major roads, and that of those, all bar Khirbet al-Mudayna are isolated, rural shrine sites that appear to primarily or exclusively service itinerant populations is significant. Clearly, traders, diplomats, and other travellers placed importance on their ability to practice their cultic obligations, or seek divine aid, on the road, and that sites designed to facilitate these needs, even if interacted with by a minority of the population, were a major part of the religious praxis of the region. For the purposes of this investigation, it is especially notable that such a proportion of the purpose-built ritual structures in the southern Levant were isolated sites that could only be interacted with as part of relatively long journeys through the placescape. More

interesting still, as I will now explore, is that ritual acts practiced at some of these sites may have focussed attention on the placescape itself.

There is little in the way of notable architectural similarities amongst these roadside shrines (see Figure 23). WT-13 and Damiyah are similarly sized near-rectangular structures with NE platforms. Most have benches, platforms, or altars in common, and the artefactual collections include figurines, cult stands, and other cultic items, but these are what has allowed their identification as cultic structures in the first place. The cult buildings at Arad and 'En Hazeva are associated with fortresses and one of the Kuntillet 'Ajrud buildings resembles a fortress, albeit in miniature and somewhat fragile form. Additionally, the Arad temple and Kuntillet 'Ajrud Building A both exhibit progressively more private spaces as you move west towards their most holy spaces, these being the niche in the western wall at Arad (Aharoni 1968: 19; Hundley 2013: 9-10) and the long room against the western wall at Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Meshel 2012: 12), but here their architectural similarities end. What does tie several of these roadside cult sites together, however, is their relationships with the places in which they are situated (see Figure 24). Most are elevated, all are located relatively close to, if not providing extensive views of, water features, and at least WT-13, Horvat Qitmit, and Kuntillet 'Ajrud include open air worship areas that direct attention to the placescape. It is this focus on place that is of fundamental interest here, and why utilising one of these roadside shrines to explore religious place experience will be effective.

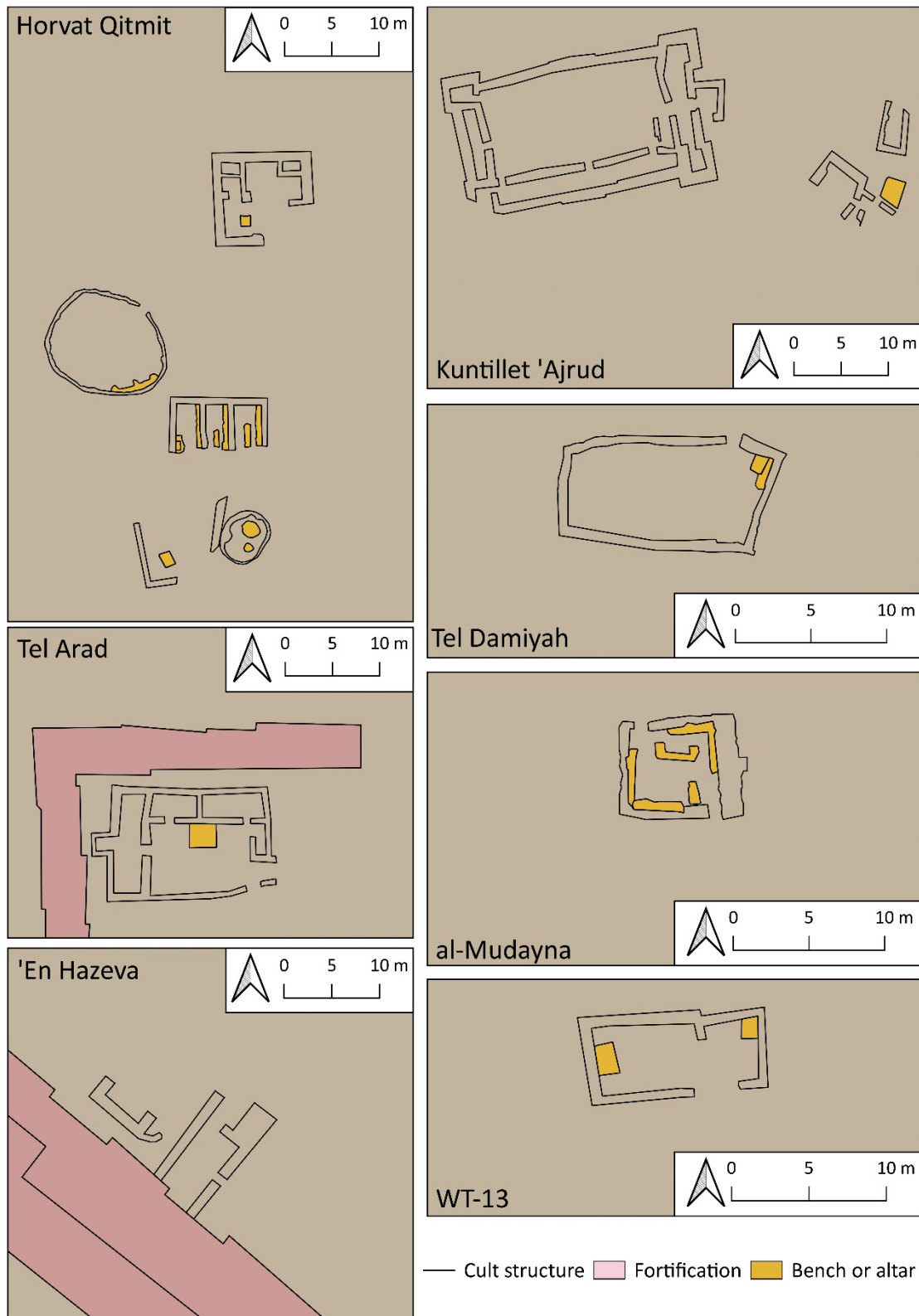


Figure 23 Schematic plans of roadside cult sites in the 8th-6th centuries (adapted from Cohen and Yisrael 1990; Daviau 2017: 54; Daviau and Steiner 2000; Herzog 2002: 36; Meshel 2012: 11; Petit and Kafafi 2016: 20)

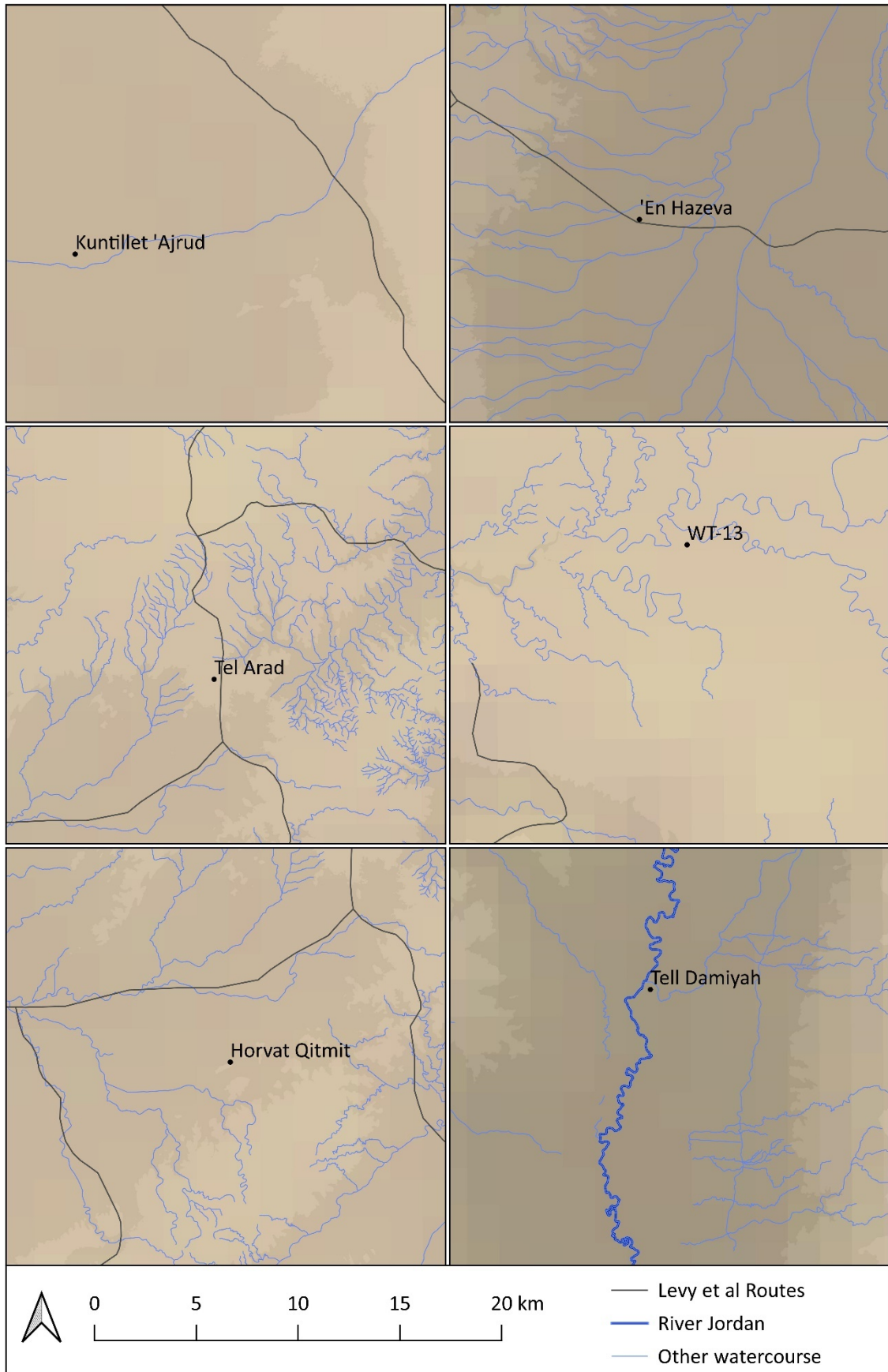


Figure 24 Roadside cult sites in their local placescape

6.4. Horvat Qitmit

To examine how cult-loaded experiences at roadside shrines informed the worldviews of their visitors, I will consider the interactions of Edomite travellers with the placescape mediated through a roadside shrine. The centre of Edomite administration was Buseirah (Levy et al. 2014: 543), where large buildings exhibiting Assyrian influence (Bennett 1978: 169; 1982 187) attest to its possible role as the hub of Assyrian operations in the Transjordan, and so it makes sense to begin our journey there. From Buseirah, these Edomite traders took goods to the Mediterranean coastal plain and the major Assyrian ports via the Arabah and Beersheba valley, taking them past 'En Hazeva and/or Horvat Qitmit. The focus is placed on the single-period, hilltop shrine site of Horvat Qitmit here for both practical and theoretical reasons. Firstly the remains of the shrine at 'En Hazeva are poorly preserved and reconstructing how worshippers interacted with it and, consequently, with place, is difficult or impossible to discern; and secondly, the open, outdoor, elevated spaces of Horvat Qitmit both stress the experience of space and place and mark it out as a location where deities did not reside permanently, but had to be invoked (Levine 1993; Zevit 2001: 146-7). Consequently, it makes an excellent case study for this investigation of the intersection of place and religious experience, placing an emphasis as it does on the place-centred ritual practice and the movement of both people *and* gods.

6.4.1. The site and its cultic repertoire¹⁹

Horvat Qitmit is separated by the excavators into two complexes, A and B, and two enclosures. Area A includes multiple worship areas, but they are not all labelled

¹⁹ I am conscious that this section suffers from the paucity of good quality landscape photographs, especially facing the Beersheba Valley or south towards Edom, taken from Horvat Qitmit itself.

independently in the report. For ease of reference, I have given labels to each distinct unit (see Figure 25). These are: **A.I**, a 10.5m x 5m three-room building containing offering tables in each room; **A.II**, an artificially flattened and plastered 1m x 1.25 m subrectangular ritual platform bounded by two walls containing a 90cm x 70cm x 50cm altar; **A.III**, a platform comprised of a slab upon stone foundations containing an altar, pit, and plastered basin; **A.IV**, a subcircular enclosure measuring 6.5m across at its longest and built directly onto the bedrock, included a possible *matsebah* to the southeast; **A.V**, a subcircular enclosure measuring 13m at its widest, comprised of closely set fieldstones. The stones average 30 x 25 x 60cm however one particularly large 1.15m long and 70cm high stone, likely representing a *matsebah*, lay behind a 5m long bench; **B.I** a multiroom building with a courtyard, a paved area, and a *matsebah* in line with a wall (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 9-25).

Unfortunately, the excavator's interim and final reports (Beit-Arieh 1987, 1995b) primarily include close-up photographs of architecture or finds, with the landscape generally appearing accidentally in small images. Liora Freud, who holds all of Itzhaq Beit-Arieh's unpublished material, was only able to find a single digital image, which she very kindly gave me (see Figure 26). Compounding these problems, I had to cancel my 2019 excavation season in Israel, during which I intended to drive to Horvat Qitmit, due to the birth of my son. I had hoped this series of hurdles had finally been cleared when an Israeli colleague had agreed to go and take some photographs for me, but he is now unable to travel due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

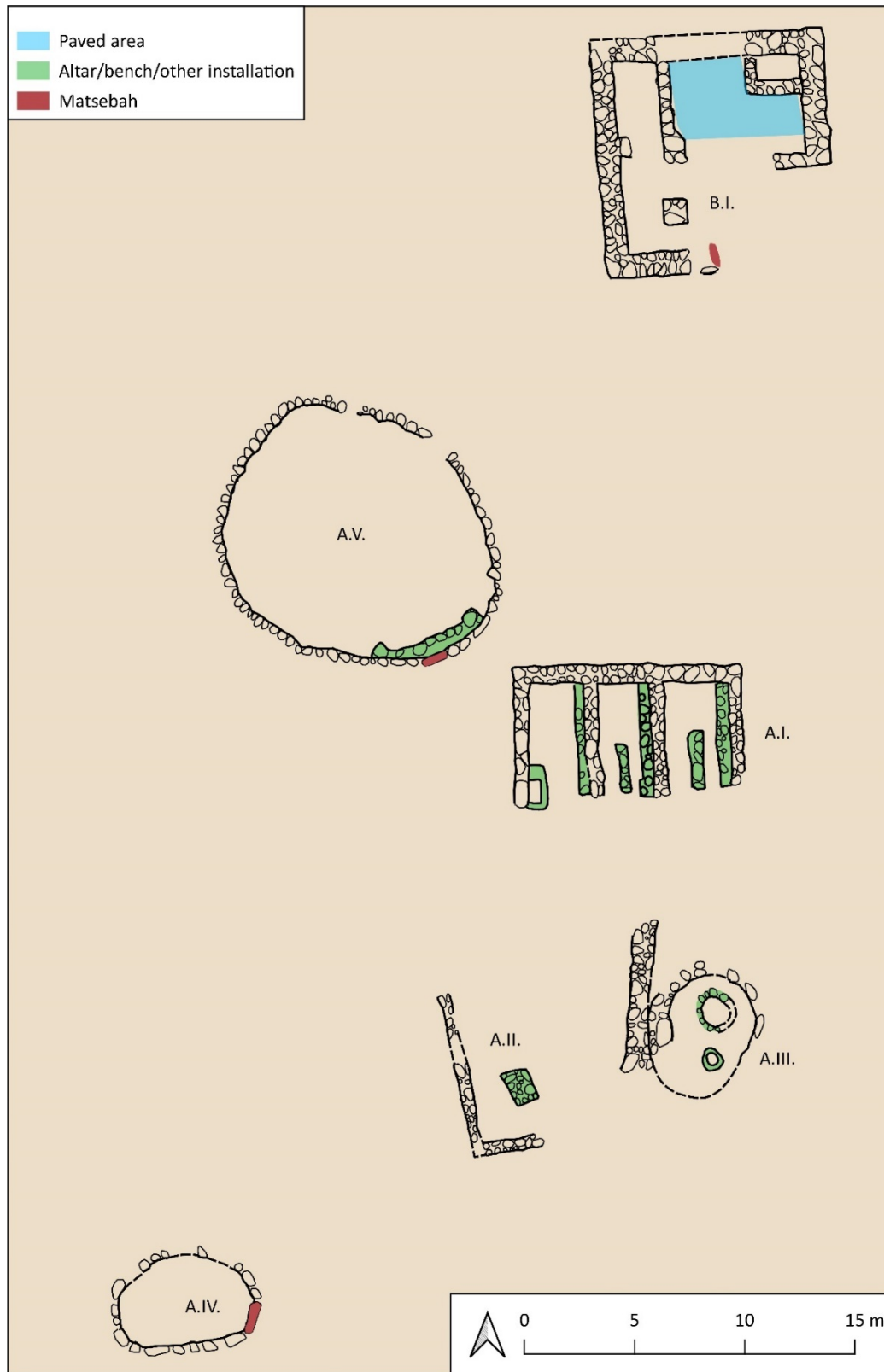


Figure 25 Plan of Horvat Qitmit (adapted from Beit-Arieh 1995b: 6). Unfortunately, the labelling and cross referencing in the original publication is quite poor and the pit in A.III is not clearly marked, so is missing here.

[copyright image removed]

Figure 26 North-facing view of the three-room building A.I at Horvat Qitmit (courtesy of Liora Freud).

A variety of cultic paraphernalia were discovered in these spaces. In A.I, finds encompassed many wheel-made vessels and cooking pots, handmade bowls and basins, figurines, and animal bones (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 12-3). In A.II, the altar was surrounded by votives and cultic artefacts, and another cluster, found washed downhill slightly to the south, were also initially situated in A.II (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 16). These included several daggers; figurines, including a three-horned female deity and a pregnant female; more than two-dozen cylindrical stands bearing animal or human features; clay pomegranates, likely broken off of cultic bowls (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 14-6); a pomegranate-decorated chalice and models of disfigured body parts, mostly arms, feet, and ears (Beck 1995: 60-9, 92-9, 158). Most of the animals depicted are bulls, though birds, ibexes, dogs, and perhaps a lion and horse also appear (Beck 2002: 171). Finds in A.III included 7 statue fragments, 10 figurines, cult vessel sherds, and a few utilitarian or unidentified sherds (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 20) and a few more disfigured model body parts (Beck 1995: 60-9, 92-9). A.IV contained two figurine fragments (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 25). A.V was investigated only with two

probes in the centre of the enclosure and these revealed a few sherds only, but many sherds and a relief fragment lay between the bench and matsebah (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 24). Finally, B.I includes an incense altar, animal bones, and sherds, four of which feature fragmentary inscriptions (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 24). Three of these inscriptions from B.I include 'qws' (Qos, the Edomite deity). Whether they represent personal names including the deity as a theophoric element, or were inscriptions dedicating offerings to Qos is unclear (Beit-Arieh 1995b: 259-62), however.

Identifying the recipients of worship at Horvat Qitmit is not straightforward as no clearly identifiable deity is depicted. Beck (2002: 196-7) convincingly argues that a masculine weather god and a feminine fertility goddess were the main recipients of worship. She tentatively suggests that these were Qos, whose name appears, and a fusion of Astarte, Ishtar, and Kubaba, all known in the region and associated with weapons, pomegranates, and birds, and whom Beck argues were represented in the three-horned female deity figurine found in A.II. (see Figure 27).

Similarly, unclear are the precise ritual acts carried out at the site. However, with consideration of the major cultic preoccupations of the site's visitors, which included the intertwining themes of the land, ancestors, the fertility of both the land and the family, and perhaps divination and purity, we can set out how the site was suited to facilitate them, and the resulting *folded* experiences of places that were engendered.

[copyright image removed]

Figure 27 Horvat Qitmit Horned Deity (Centre for Online Judaic Studies N. D.)

6.4.2. The land

The stress placed on the land in the Hebrew Bible is well-established (Brichto 1973; Brueggemann 1978; Kaiser 1981; Whitelam 1989). Yahweh's promise of a land for Abraham's descendants (Gen. 15:18, 26:3), and their long journey to it, is a major narrative arc of the Pentateuch. Whilst this may have been an etiological tale exclusive to Judahites and Israelites, the close association of land and supernatural actor is commonplace in ancient Near Eastern cosmologies, and the primary

concern of deities appears to be their land, rather than their worshippers (Block 2013: 21-5). In a study of the socialising power of religious place experiences, this is of primary concern to us here. Through the site's elevation above the surrounding placescape at a point of environmental transition, its roadside position coupled with the need for an invoked deity itself to move towards the place of worship, and the orientation of worshippers, *folded* experiences at Qitmit reinforced regional preoccupations with the land's productivity, created a mirrored deity/worshipper experience of travel to, and cultic action at, the site, and tied rural, placescape-focussed ritual to familiar practices at home.

The spatial *arrangement* of Horvat Qitmit stressed the surrounding natural environment, and the *folded* experiences of the Edomite traders were also experiences of the land. Due to the need to invoke a deity at an outdoor cult site, Levine (1993: 204), believes Horvat Qitmit's open hilltop location granted worshippers an experience of the dramatic arrival of the deity. This experience was, of course, also an experience of the place and of movement. Cult activities that took place anywhere on the site except the enclosed A.I and B.I exposed the participants to the open countryside (see Figure 28), and the focal points in each of these areas, the matsebot, altars, and benches upon which cult images could be placed, all drew the gaze towards the land beyond them (see Figure 29). Consequently, the experience of the divine arrival, and the following ritual acts, were immersed in the place that contextualised that experience, and were *folded* in together as a single *arrangement*, embedded the place with the intensity of the religious experience.

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Figure 28 South west-facing view of A.III at Horvat Qitmit showing the plastered basin in the foreground and the Negev desert in the background (Beit-Arieh 1988: 37)

At the outdoor altars, this places particular stress on the journey of the deity during their awe-inspiring descent to the point of worship. The divine actor descended through space, through the placescape, and into the worship space, observed by the participants (Levine 1993: 199). Not only was the deity arriving, an overwhelming experience in and of itself, but it was moving through the same space that the worshippers moved through, albeit vertically from the heavens, both mirroring their difficult and time consuming journeying experiences and granting impressive agency to those worshippers for whom the god was *making an effort* to travel. The arrival of the deity at the elevated outdoor shrine, then, represents the nexus of especially commanding variants of religious and place experiences, already powerful socialisation mechanisms. Not only were the traders engaging with the divine, they were participating in activities that encouraged a deity to accede to their requests to attend the ritual: to make a journey to attend the space of worship that they were present in, rather than the traders journeying to a temple or shrine where the deity dwelt. This occurred not only in an open space, but one far above the surrounding placescape with views for many miles around, providing a substantial topographic canvas that was *folded* alongside the affective engagement

with the divine. Consequently, the commonality of journeying experience of both trader and deity and the agency granted to the trader by making demands of a divine power, intertwined with the placescape through the *folding-in* of this experience marked the locale with the essence of the encounter, creating a place that manifested and reinforced this special relationship.

Fundamental to the experience of place is, of course, the orientation of the worshipper, and therefore the places in their eyeline. The open spaces and focal points of A.II, III, IV, and IV, which dictated where worshippers could congregate and where their view was directed, all sent their gaze to the south and south-east. For the Edomite visitors we are considering, that was towards home. The southernly and south-easterly orientation towards Edom has been raised by Beit-Arieh (1987: 20; 1995b: 307) as evidence of the site being a specifically Edomite one, and whilst Finkelstein (1992: 157) is correct to argue that orientation towards a place does not indicate an origin, staring towards one's home whilst participating in a ritual on a journey, perhaps even invoking a local manifestation of the deity worshipped at home, was hardly inconsequential. Not only were the traders' experiences of cult behaviour *folded* in alongside the experience of the land surrounding it, then, but also alongside experiences of their *own* land. For a moment, home and waystation existed together, a new transgeographical and transcendental locale emerging from the experiential linking of home, route, and the divine, and providing welcome touch of familiarity, safety and comfort on their journey.

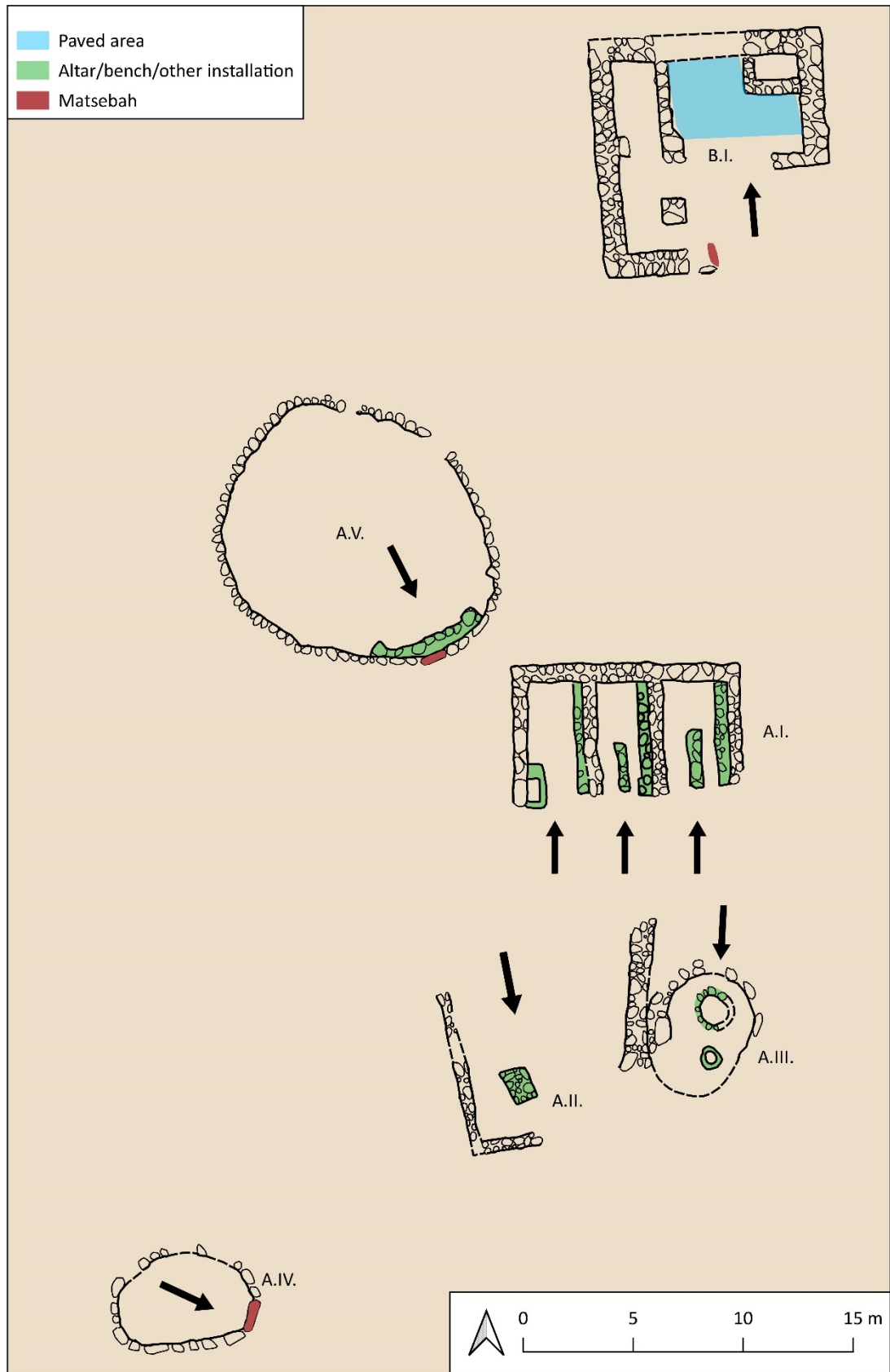


Figure 29 Suggested worshipper orientation at Horvat Qitmit (adapted from Beit-Arieh 1995b: 6)

6.4.3. Ancestors

Worship acts conducted whilst facing home also brought family, and therefore ancestors, to mind, and bring us to another major theme of cult in the Iron II Levant. Ancestor veneration is repeatedly implied in the biblical texts (see Schmidt 1995 for a comprehensive treatment). Food was offered in tombs, possibly to sustain the deceased in the quasi-living netherworld, called *sheol*, where they resided after death. This, alongside the frequency with which biblical figures are described as being 'gathered to [their] people' (Gen 35:29; Gen 49:29, 33; Numbers 20:24, 26; Deut 32:50,), or 'gathered to [their] fathers' (Jdgs. 2:10; 2 Kgs 22:20) after death, and protective benedictions written on amulets in a 7th century burial cave near Jerusalem (Farber 2018: 446), suggest that ancestors played a continuing role in community life, and were to some degree worshipped or venerated. Other Jerusalem burial caves held food remains and food and liquid storage and consumption vessels in tombs (Bloch-Smith 1992), indicative of concerns about ancestors, and Jerusalem Cave 1, which contains a variety of cult artefacts and utilitarian ceramics but no burials, has been interpreted as space where the dead were memorialised (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 462)

Horvat Qitmit again provides us with *folded* experiences embedded with this cultic motif. In addition to orienting our travellers towards their home, the likely origin of the site, like the other roadside shrines of the region, as tribal sanctuaries where kinship bonds were reinforced through collective worship and other meetings (see **6.3.3. Roadside shrines as multi-ethnic travellers' hubs**), stressed the presence of ancestors. Any interaction, cultic or otherwise, with such a place was imbued with ancestral meaning that was therefore *folded-in*. Additionally, a pit containing fragments of vessels was discovered on the eastern slope of the site which Beit-Arieh (1995b: 26) suggests represents a favissa for disused cult objects cleared out of A.I. If so, this may represent the continued cultic power of the vessels: broken vessels

could no longer see active use, but as holders of sacred offerings, and cult utensils of previous worshippers, they could not simply be thrown away, and instead were retained on the site so that the offerings of those who went before, and the pacts with the divine that they cemented, were not lost. If our traders were present during the clearing out of old or damaged cult wares, this represented a direct interaction with the material memories of previous worship acts (Hamilakis 2017: 179). Again, the experience was *folded* with the memory and power of the ancestors, as well as the preceding practitioners who offered used or offered them.

6.4.4. Environmental fertility

Perhaps most prominent at Horvat Qitmit were the themes of harvest success and fertility, issues which were major concerns in cult generally. Through the Iron Age, gods responsible for floral and faunal fertility perhaps received more devotion than 'chief' deities (van der Toorn 2003: 395) and many biblical texts are preoccupied with threats to the land's productivity (e.g. Joel 1:10-12; Deut. 29: 23; Job 14:19; Isaiah 34:9; Ezek. 26:4). Furthermore, spring and autumn harvest celebrations (Exod. 23:16, 34:22; Deut 16:17; Lev 23:17, 34) and an apotropaic ritual to prepare for wheat harvest (Exod. 23:15, 34:18, Lev 23:6) indicate the sacred importance of natural abundance and successful harvests manifested explicitly in ritual practice.

The cultic experiences of the Edomite traders that were *folded* in with associations of the environments derive from both the location of Horvat Qitmit itself as well as its material remains. Transitional movement across environmental boundaries and through agriculturally diverse places holds substantial socioreligious power. The intersection of environment, agriculture, ritual, and religion has seen considerable anthropological investigation (e.g. Iyam 1996; Jossie and Sudhir 2012; Rappaport 1979; Robin 2006; Zaro and Lohse 2005) and landscape studies highlight the cultural and psychological weight of natural boundaries and the connections between

natural and metaphysical limits (McCarthy 2008: 202). For the traders at Horvat Qitmit, the cultic concerns with land affordance and the universal power of moving through transitioning places represented an experience heavily loaded with cultic dimensions.

Horvat Qitmit's position marked just such a transition. As the traders turned west from the Wadi Arabah to the Beersheba Valley, they moved from an extremely arid environment to significantly more productive agricultural land (Bruins 2012). Though Negev precipitation is variable, the meeting point of the Arabah and Beersheba Valley always marks the point of transition between the hyper arid desert placescape and that which became the Levantine breadbasket during the Assyrian hegemony (see 6.1.3. **The Pax Assyriaca**) (see Figure 30). The shrine site of Horvat Qitmit punctuated the traders' movement from the frighteningly unproductive desert to the fields of the valley, and the *folded* experience of one was inseparable from the other.

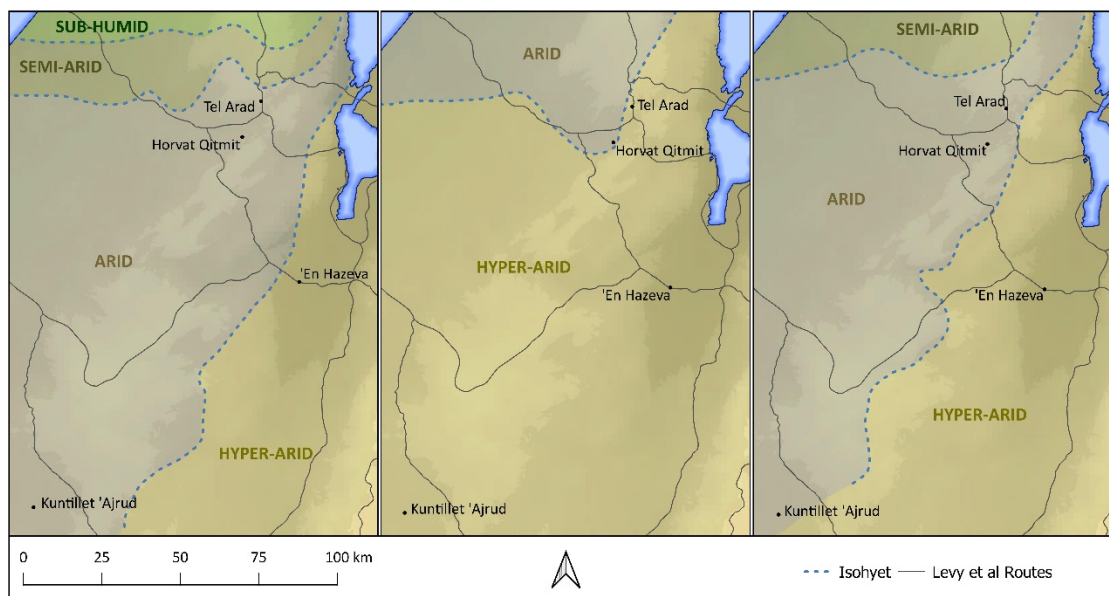


Figure 30: Dryland zones in the very wet 1991-2 (left), extreme drought 1998-9 (middle), and averaged 1990-2000 (right) (after Bruins 2012: 33-5)

These cult-loaded *folded* experiences of environmental fertility were reinforced by the traders' engagement with ritual behaviour at the site of Qitmit itself, which may have included harvest festivals. The wealth of bull representations suggests that the weather or storm god was a primary recipient of worship (Beck 2002: 196) whilst the pomegranate models, and especially pomegranate chalices, are fertility attributes associated with goddesses including Kubaba (Beck 2002: 194; Bittel 1980-1983; Hawkins 1980-1983; Singer 1992: 447), one of the goddesses possibly conflated into a single deity at Qitmit (see **6.4.1. The site and its cultic repertoire**). Of the other goddesses possibly combined into the weather gods' consort at Qitmit, Astarte's association with fertility is so fundamental that her name is used to refer to young livestock in Deut 7:13 and 28:4, 18, 51 (Albright 1968: 185; Smith 2002a: 78). Several of the musical instrument holding figurines from Qitmit are tambourine holders, and if Dever is correct to read some of these as the bakers of cakes from Jeremiah rather than musicians (see **6.3. Cult continuity across the Iron II Southern Levant**), then this may provide additional support for Astarte's place at Qitmit. In any case, deities associated with both faunal and floral productivity, and with the weather that allowed them to flourish, were central figures worshipped here and the *folded* experiences of their invocation, presence, and worship were inseparable from the place, and the environmental transition it represented. Presumably, these experiences were not as striking as they might be for a farmer or shepherd, but they were resonant *plateaus* nevertheless for anyone in a society with such an intimate relationship with the land.

6.4.5. Human fertility and protection of the family

It was not only agricultural fertility that was embedded in the *folded* experiences of cult and place, however. Human fertility, and the apotropaic protection of familial health were also themes that preoccupied the worshippers of the Iron II Levant. Though most traders were men, and these concerns are frequently considered

specifically female issues (e.g. Byrne 2004: 141-2; Hess 2007: 310; Tigay 1987: 193) with infertility being seen as a particular responsibility of women in most Ancient Near Eastern contexts (for a useful survey, see De-Whyte 2018: 24-52), men did participate in human fertility rituals, including in the Southern Levant (Darby 2018: 408-9).

The commonplace female figurines of both humans and deities, including Astarte, many of which feature exaggerated sexual characteristics, are frequently associated with fertility, lactation, and the apotropaic protection of mother and child (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 269; Ben-Shlomo 2014: 85; Byrne 2004; Darby 2011; Dever 2014; Kletter 1996; Moorey 2003: 35-46) Whilst we should not uncritically associate sexual characteristics and fertility (Briffa 2019: 183), the wider Eastern Mediterranean figurines corpus includes examples apparently nursing infants (see Figure 31) and ethnographic data supports domestic cult, the assemblages of which are dominated by figurines in the Southern Levant, placing a heavy stress on fertility and perinatal wellbeing (Meyers 2002a: 283). Additionally, Astarte's name appears as an element in personal names thanking the deity for successful childbirth (e.g. עשתרתחות *Ashtartewiti* – 'O Astarte, you have brought [my child] to life') (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 285). The springtime Pesach festival, a domestic ritual until it was transformed into a temple offering in the 7th century (Farber 2018: 444), may well have begun as a protective ritual for infants (Garroway 2015), explaining its close association with circumcision (Ex 12:43-49; Josh 5:2-11).

The numbers of female figurines, including a pregnant female clutching her breasts (Beck 1995: No. 107, figs. 3.66-8), arranged around the altar in A.II clearly indicate that human fertility was a concern of worship activities at Qitmit and was *folded* in by those present during rituals at the site. Other apotropaic rites are indicated by the abundance of model body parts in the same area. Clearly many cultic practitioners visited to request cures or protection from the divine, not unlike the

peak sanctuaries of Crete (Morris and Peatfield 2014), and the traders, even if health was not their own motivation, could not help but find themselves associating the protective power of the deity with their own religious experience, and consequently the place that was its stage.

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Figure 31 Cypro-Archaic figurine with child on breast (Karageorghis 1998: Plate XVI)

6.4.6. Divination, necromancy, and purity

Finally, necromancy or divination may have been practised at the site, and so also *folded* in by our travellers in association with the placescape. Communing with the dead, augury, soothsaying, divining, and spellcasting are all forbidden in biblical texts and can carry extreme penalties (Lev. 19:26, 20:27; Deut. 18:10–11; Exod. 22:17). That these practices are repeatedly proscribed in detail suggests that they were commonplace amongst the populace and specific narratives record the use of divination in the royal cult (Num 27:21; 1 Sam 10:20-1, 14:41, 28:6; Josh 7:14–18), and major biblical figures, including Saul (1 Sam 28) and David (1 Sam 23:9), calling upon the skills of a necromancers and diviners. The proper respect for the dead, and their ability to play a continuing role in society, were therefore important facets of cult. The commonplace astragali present in cult assemblages (e.g. Fischer 1995: figs. 5, 7; Loud 1948: 161-2) provide material indications of divination practices whilst two mask fragments from Hazor likely represent devices utilised in ritual engagements with the deceased (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 106).

Connected to the danger and darkness of chthonic divinities and necromantic practice is a concern with purity, an issue of prime religious importance in the biblical texts. Animals were divided into pure and impure categories (Lev 11:1-47) and purity concerns and procedures regarding body fluids (Lev 15:16-30), childbirth (Lev 12:1-5), and illnesses (Lev 13:1-46) are addressed. Though these are often connected to the Levitical priesthood, Bathsheba observes purity rites (2 Sam 11:4) and was not married to a priest, nor even an Israelite, and consequently Farber (2018: 444-5) believes purity laws were likely a preoccupation of the community at all levels. Meanwhile, the spatial organisation of four-room houses (see **6.3. Cult continuity across the Iron II Southern Levant**), which allows an individual to between most spaces via multiple routes, thereby making it easy to avoid a

particular space, has been argued to have allowed persons to be isolated from the rest of the household during periods of impurity (Faust and Bunimovitz 2003: 29).

At Qitmit, the pit in A.III may have allowed participants to interact with the deceased or dangerous, chthonic divinities. Zevit (2001: 147) suggests that a chthonic deity resided there, and that libations were poured in their honour in the nearby basin. The use of pits to contact chthonic deities and conduct divination and necromancy is known in the region (Collins 2002b, 2004; Kelly-Buccellati 2002: 136-7; Recht 2014) and this does not seem an unreasonable hypothesis. Were this the case, there was a striking contrast between the protective healing deity to the west and dangerous chthonic one to the east (Zevit 2001: 147). One dramatically descended from the heavens to awe its worshippers with its protective power and vitality, whilst the other lay waiting beneath the earth, inviting worshippers to nervously seek its guidance, but both embedding the surroundings with divine essence.

The distinct worship spaces across the site allowed a degree of separation between these supernatural actors and experiences, helping to retain the purity of practice and experience where needed. The three matching rooms of A.I allowed for distinct practices and offerings, perhaps offered to different recipients (Zevit 2001: 147). Meanwhile, B.I also provided distinct spaces allowing for separation and purity. Though Beit-Arieh (1995b: 307) believes that worshippers stood inside and faced south, it seems more likely that, like other Ancient Near Eastern religious structures (Hundley 2013), the sacredness of a structure increased as a person moved further inside it and that access to some of these areas would be restricted to specific persons. Bearing this in mind, I suggest that unlike the south/southeast orientation of the sites' open spaces, B.I, and A.I, saw participants standing outside facing northwards and looking inside. In B.I, the spaces at the northern side of the building would be restricted, clean spaces, perhaps retained for special cult objects and

accessible only to religious specialists. Here, stood outside, high above the surrounding *plateau*, the traders might watch celebrants engaging in special practices, utilising ritual implements kept pure by their separation, again surrounded by the placescape, even whilst their attention was directed indoors. Glancing over the right shoulder they saw their higher mountains to the east, over which lay the Dead Sea, and glancing left, the descent towards the Beersheba Valley, and the destination, perhaps where they were hoping to arrive safely in exchange for offerings they were making.

6.5. Folding and refolding land and fertility

If we situate these *plateaus* in the *rhizome* we see an interesting phenomenon. Components of the built environment, spatial location, and artefactual assemblage encourage a broad range of *folded* experiences. These include Qitmit's raised location affording views over the Beersheba Valley and towards the coast, and therefore to financial success. Meanwhile, model body parts, segregated worship spaces, and the site's tribal origins and the buried offering paraphernalia encouraged emergent interactions with protective deities, purity, and ancestors. However, the site's locational and artefactual qualities cluster most strongly around those that stress cultic preoccupations with the land and fertility (see Figure 32). The Edomite traders' interactive experiences of the physical and conceptual manifestations of these themes, and their consequences for socialisation, are therefore the most interesting, and productive, area to place our focus upon.

Experiencing the artefactual, architectural, and environmental components of Qitmit recalled preestablished perceptions and concerns, reinforcing the traders' previously-*folded* experiences of land, fertility, and place. The *rhizome* stresses the interactive and overlapping nature of experiences at Qitmit that made this reinforcement all the more powerful. For example, all practice exposed the traders

to the placescape. It was the stage for all practice and mediated the traders' engagement with other *plateaus*. Even when visitors participated in rituals or placed offerings at those structures that directed attention indoors, the site's elevated position and lack of fully enclosed buildings meant that any activity was accompanied by sensory experiences of the placescape: the breeze, bird noise, and the cooler atmosphere than was felt on the road below. Place was unescapable and cultic preoccupations with the land were constantly *folded-in*, irrespective of how explicitly it was referenced in the actual practices performed.

The specific position of Horvat Qitmit in the placescape, marking the transition between arid and more fertile environments, highlighted the precarity of agricultural production and brought to mind the power of the environment, and perhaps the need to properly placate the divine actors with power over it. That specific location also tied these concerns with home, by orientating Edomite traders towards it during ritual, reducing their physical distance to a metaphysical singularity, and so intertwining the ritual engagements experienced at either. This reinforced again the ritual lessons of home, as already internalised cultic practice and perspective emerged and were *refolded*.

Similarly, *plateaus* of fertility experiences were being constantly stressed via their *rhizomatic* links. The transition between environmental zones, experienced on the road below as traders moved towards more fertile climates and that became more visible as they ascended to the cult site, represented environmental fertility also inherent in the deities worshipped and the artefacts utilised. For their part, *folded* experiences of cult practices related to fertility, in harvest celebrations or in worship acts dedicated to bringers of storms and protectors of mother and child, themselves were inseparable from the land, both the physical landscape in which they took place and conceptual land with which the Southern Levantine cultic milieu was so preoccupied.

Situating the archaeologically identifiable experiences of Edomite traders visiting Horvat Qitmit therefore highlights the circular reinforcing of ideas that help maintain culturally-constituted cult-charged understandings of the world. Preconceived *folded* experiences have already embedded the placescape, ritual motifs, and cult practices and spaces with meaning, and engagement with that placescape and those motifs and practices in turn represent the *refolding* of those associations. Experiences of the land stressed fertility, and experiences of fertility stressed the land, and ritual acts intended to invoke one inevitably invoked the other, and their reciprocal interaction served to maintain the power of both.

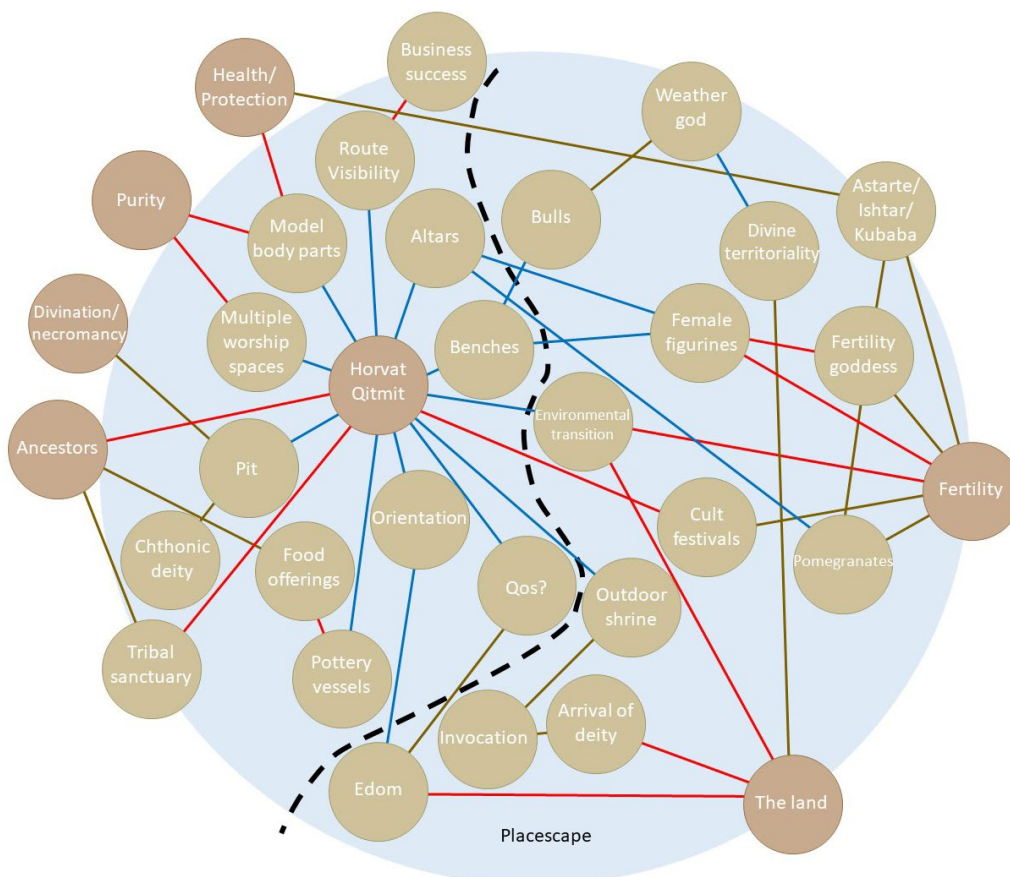


Figure 32 Horvat Qitmit rhizome. The folded experiences are all interlinked, but those folds most frequently reinforced cluster around the land and fertility (to right of dashed line). Tan lines are textually attested. Blue are archaeologically attested. Red are inferred. The placescape plateau is depicted so as to lie behind all those physical features that cannot be interacted with at Qitmit without also viewing the landscape.

6.5.1. Religious preoccupations and cultic manifestations

In contrast to the previous chapter (see **5.2.3. Learning religion and internalising cult**), where some familiarity with specific theological perspectives on the landscape were required for the animal-related place-experiences of Assyrian merchants to emerge, those discussed here almost entirely reside within the cultic sphere (see **3.1.4 The everyday transcendental**). Whilst named deities that existed within established pantheons may have been invoked, and cult leaders may have recited formal expressions, the majority of religious experiences that emerged at Horvat Qitmit drew upon folded experiences of doxic understandings of the world (see **1.1. Socialisation absent an approach**). Whilst the land's productivity, human fertility, and health, for example, are strong features of the Iron Age Levant's religious systems, concern for them is not reliant on a nuanced grasp of written theology. They invoke basic preoccupations filtered through cultic lenses. As such, the site represented an ideal stopover for traders, irrespective of their depth of familiarity with formal religion and its positions on the land.

6.6. Stability amidst flux

Considering the *folded* experiences of Edomite traders visiting Horvat Qitmit whilst traversing the trade routes of the Southern Levant allows us to draw together place and cult-loaded conceptualisations of the role of ancestors, divination and necromancy, purity, health, and especially the land and its floral and faunal (and human) fertility. The ritual site of Horvat Qitmit, situated high above the surrounding placescape, forced participants to engage with both the immediate and distant places during their ritual acts, which themselves frequently invoked the land and its productivity.

In illustrating this process, this case study has answered my third research question, *how is landscape meaning maintained and reinforced?* (see **1.3. Research questions**). Two other things here are important to address, however. Firstly, unlike **Chapters 5 and 7**, which deal with the emergence and transformation of social conditions, processes that competing approaches do not address, the preservation of social conditions is well-investigated and is relatively well explained (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**). Consequently, my strongest competition lies here and it is important to set out what the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach does here that frameworks owing their bases to Bourdieu and Giddens do not. Secondly, given D+G foreground the fluidity and constant transformation of *arrangements*, *plateaus*, and *rhizomes* (see **Chapter 4**), how can an approach built upon these concepts ever conclude that anything stayed the same?

Both issues can be tackled together. Aside from permitting the interpretation of these processes directly from archaeological data, a serious issue in theories drawn from Giddens and Bourdieu (see **3.3.2. The data-theory divide**), where the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach presents an improvement, is in explaining, in detail, how this process takes place. Rather than asserting that it is the exposure to and experience and mastery of the conditions of experience that reproduce those conditions, D+G provide a way to reconstruct how the internalisation of specific experiences form the relations from which meaning emerges, and the consequences that has for socialisation.

This same process answers the question of positing stability in an ontology that stresses flux. When the experiences internalised consistently reinforce pre-established conditions, then those conditions remain stable and meaning is maintained. In contrast to **Chapter 5**, where new experiences with ritually-charged animals embedded new meaning in place, the self-referential nature of ritual behaviour at Horvat Qitmit maintained and reinforced preestablished cosmological

understandings. For the Edomite traders, visiting Horvat Qitmit introduced new experiences, as all experiences are unique emergences resulting from the relations encountered in a moment in time, but the meanings that emerged rested comfortably within pre-existing social conditions. It is in drawing attention to, and navigating, these repetitive, incremental experiences that develop and maintain personally- and culturally-constituted understandings of the world that a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach helps us.

When the new emergent experiences *folded* by individuals no longer reinforce the pre-established perceptions, then those perceptions begin to change. The next chapter will examine exactly this, exploring how cultural perceptions that have been maintained over long periods can then be shifted through *folding*.

Chapter 7: Moving Meaning

In the previous two chapters, the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach has been drawn upon to consider the initial embedding of ritually-charged meaning in place (**Chapter 5**), and the maintenance of that meaning once it found a foothold (**Chapter 6**). Now, by considering individuals' interactions with agricultural animals with cultic associations, I will again utilise *folds*, *plateaus*, and the *rhizome* to answer the fourth of my research questions by addressing *how preestablished landscape meanings transformed or developed?* (see **1.3. Research questions**), a phenomenon that other approaches to socialisation struggle to explain (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**).

The late 3rd millennium Jazira (here defined as roughly synonymous with Upper Mesopotamia and incorporating parts of modern Turkey, Syria, and Iraq) (see Figure 33) presents an ideal case study to investigate *folded* experiences of place and cult. It has amongst the best-preserved route network in the ancient world that allows for the situating of persons in the placescape with considerable confidence, provides the investigator with considerable textual evidence, and presents a period during which religious attitudes and priorities were being deliberately refocused. It is this context that allows me to address how cultic place-meaning is developed.

My analysis will show how socialisation processes made palatable the deliberate shifting of cultic preoccupations by setting out both long established social conditions and their transformation when a sufficient disruption to the *rhizome* occurs (see **7.2.4. Socialisation and the ancestral paradigm shift**). By illustrating the *plateaus* of experience that were continually *folded* by agricultural workers in the fields of Tell Brak (ancient Nagar), I will reconstruct how they farmed a communal ancestral land with the aid of cult-immersed working animals, therefore *refolding*,

and reinforcing, that land's meaningfulness. Thereafter, I will show how, when the elite realigned ancestor-focussed traditions on their own specific lines of descent, the continued *folding* of the same places and animals came to include new *plateaus* of cultic preoccupations with royal ancestors. Consequently, this resulted in a transformation of social conditions and helped ease the transition between two forms of ancestor veneration.

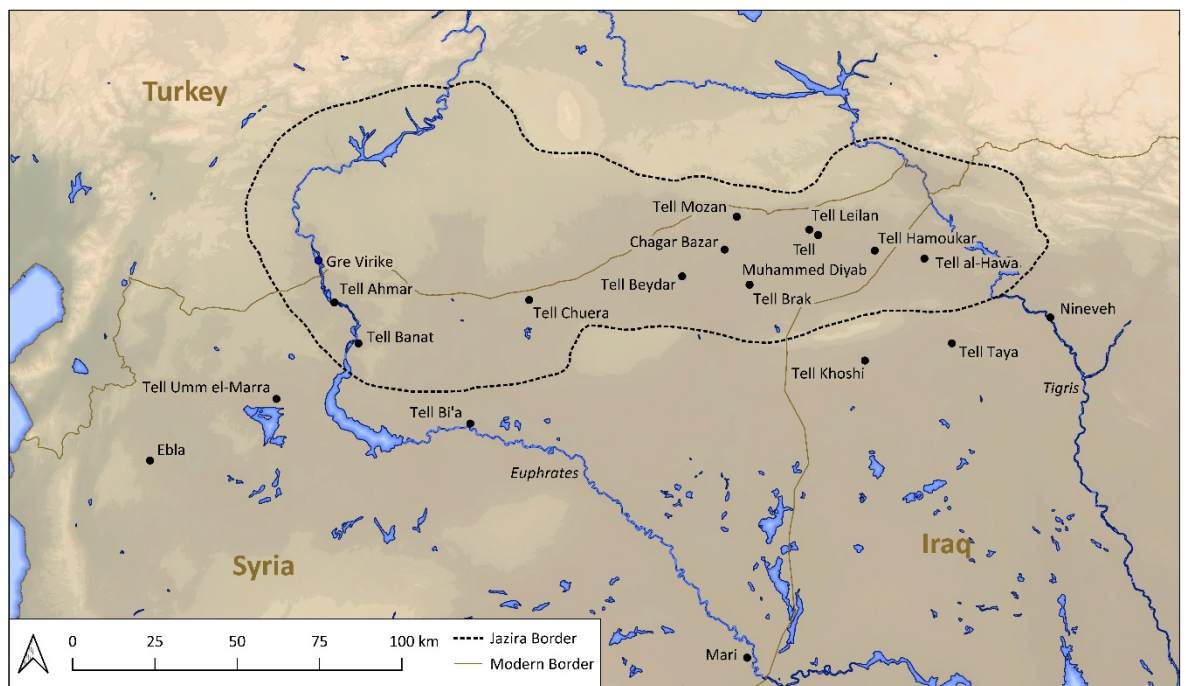


Figure 33 Location Map of Jazira, major sites, and others mentioned in this chapter

7.1. Tell Brak in an Upper Mesopotamian Context

In this analysis, the specific focus is placed on agricultural workers at Tell Brak. This major centre is an illustrative case study for an examination concerning routinised interactions with place and their consequences for religiosity in the Jazira for several reasons. Firstly, it provides considerable evidence for routine movement, sometimes with religious associations. It lies in a particularly dense area of the interregional hollow way route network (see 7.1.3. **The agricultural hinterland**). Brak was the last 3rd millennium settlement on a southward journey until the arable

soils south of the Jebel Sinjar (Oates et al. 2001: xxvii-xxviii, 4), making it a major long-distance milestone. Data concerning movement and the placescape extends into the ritual sphere. Brak's most common glyptic motif, seen on around a quarter of seals, depicts chariots, which are frequently connected to ritual (Steele et al. 2003: 212, table 6.2). The ruler of Nagar (*en*) was involved in cultic movement concerned with the landscape and travelled to Beydar to celebrate the festival of Šamagan (Ismail et al. 1996: No. 101), the deity of steppe animals (Oates et al. 2001: 387). Brak's relationship with cult and movement continued into the 2nd millennium, when a statue of Belet-Nagar, a deity associated with Tell Brak, was paraded around her territories (Oates et al. 2001: 381) and perhaps as far as Mari (Guichard 1994: 270).

Secondly, it was a major hub of the BAR.AN market (see 7.2.3. **Equid mediators**). These elite hybrid equids held important cultic functions and some were potentially treated with comparable reverence as the human ancestral dead (Recht 2018). Only a few BAR.AN appear to have been interacted with directly by farming communities, but their prominence in ritual and importance to the local economy and ideology filtered down to the lower ranking equid draft-animals that mediated the experiences of farmers as they worked the land.

Meanwhile, interpreting the experiences of arable farmers is appropriate both on account of the nature of their interactions with place and the evidence for farming practice and location in the Jazira. Farmers have intense, repetitive interactions with the land they work over long periods and anthropological work stresses the socialising power this holds and its consequences for embedding meaning in the world (Forbes 2007; Vergunst 2012). The quantity of textual evidence providing details on EBA Mesopotamian agriculture's organisation is sufficient to have sustained a dedicated journal, *Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture* and archaeobotanical study sheds light on its agricultural produce (e.g. Hald 2001; Hald and Charles 2008). Lastly, the radial hollow way system, which is more extensive around Tell Brak than any other site (Ur 2003: 110), marks out the roads that led from the urban

mound, between arable fields, and out to its hinterland pasture and allow us to situate farmers in specific locations around the city.

Finally, strata covering the period of Akkadian rule of Nagar are reasonably-well excavated, published, securely dated, and politically well-understood, and represent a period during which long-standing tribal and kinship-based social links were being realigned to place a focus on royal lineage (Schwartz 2007: 46). The North Mesopotamian elite, including the Akkadian authorities of Nagar, were attempting to shift religious attention away from the region's major ancestral monuments, which were tightly tied to the placescape. As such, analysis of farmers' experiences of place during Akkadian domination permits an analysis of how the *folding* in of human-place interaction plays a role in socialising individuals in a changing ideological climate.

7.1.1. Chronology

The precise chronology of the second half of the 3rd millennium remains uncertain where various problems reside in the association of archaeological data, historical sources, and celestial events (see summaries in Sallaberger 2004a; Sallaberger 2007). However, as this investigation seeks to interpret the experiences of non-elite individuals in the Jazira during the period of Akkadian control with reference to socioreligious motifs that endure throughout the period, absolute dates are not especially pertinent, and a broad chronological outline is sufficient. Consequently, for convenience, I follow the 3rd Millennium periodisations of Nicolle (2006) and Pfälzner and Wissing (2004), which largely align with centuries (see Table 5).

7.1.2. Political and built environment

Until the late 3rd millennium, Upper Mesopotamian urban centres enjoyed cultural ties with the south but retained their own political independence (Sallaberger 2007: 422; Stein 2004: 65). Initially dominated by Mari, over time Ebla emerged as a

competing power in the region and a power-struggle between the two saw a coalition between Ebla, Nagar, and Kish briefly subdue Mari before the latter rose again and destroyed Ebla (Archi and Biga 2003). Contemporary destruction layers in several parts of Tell Brak (Oates et al. 2001: 382) may suggest that Nagar also suffered repercussions (Sallaberger 2007: 422). In the mid-25th century, perhaps in part due to the weakening of the northern power centres over decades of competition and warfare, the campaigns of the first two kings of Akkad, Sargon and Naram Sin, extended the tendrils of southern political power into Upper Mesopotamia (Sallaberger 2007: 423; Stein 2004: 65) until the mid-22nd century.

Date BC	Jezira Period	Mesopotamian Period	Tell Brak Phase
3000-2900	Early Jazira 0	Jemdet Nasr	H
2900-2700	Early Jazira I	Early Dynastic I	J
2700-2600	Early Jazira II	Early Dynastic II	K
2600-2500	Early Jazira IIIa	Early Dynastic IIIa	L
2500-2340	Early Jazira IIIb	Early Dynastic IIIb/Post Ninevite 5/Pre-Akkad	L
2340-2100	Early Jazira IV	Akkad	M
2100-2000	Early Jazira V	Ur III	N

Table 5 Date ranges and corresponding historic periodisations and Brak phases in the 3rd Millennium.

Box represents the period of interest in this study (after Nicolle 2006; Oates et al. 2001; Pfälzner and Wissing 2004)

Though the existence of an Akkadian empire, in the sense of an organised political unit over an expansive area far beyond the 'home' state or city, is challenged (e.g. the papers in Liverani 1993), that they imposed more centralisation than preceding powers does seem the case, and Nagar appears to have served as the centre of Akkadian administration in the north (Oates et al. 2001: 383). Naram-Sin built an impressive ca.111m x 93m palace with massive (10m) outer walls, a tablet from which includes lists of workers from other major cities and other texts record livestock sent to or accepted from other settlements (Oates et al. 2001: 19-21, 383-4). Nagar remained a politically important centre well into the 2nd millennium when the goddess Belet-Nagar continued to authorise sovereignty in the Khabur region even after the city itself had reduced in size and status (Oates et al. 2001: xxvii).

That Nagar served as an Akkadian administrative hub likely lies, at least in part, in its location. The imposing, 40m high, 800m x 600m mound of Tell Brak, lies on a clay-loam, gently-rolling plain 4km from the confluence of the west bank of the Jaghjagh river and the wadi Radd (see Figure 34 and Figure 35) (Oates et al. 2001: xxix, 381). Situated on a major trade route between the Tigris valley and southeastern Anatolia and western Syria, close enough to control the Jaghjagh-Radd confluence, and with considerable visibility, Brak represented as a gateway granting access to the Khabur's fertile lands and important communications routes (Oates et al. 2001: xxv).

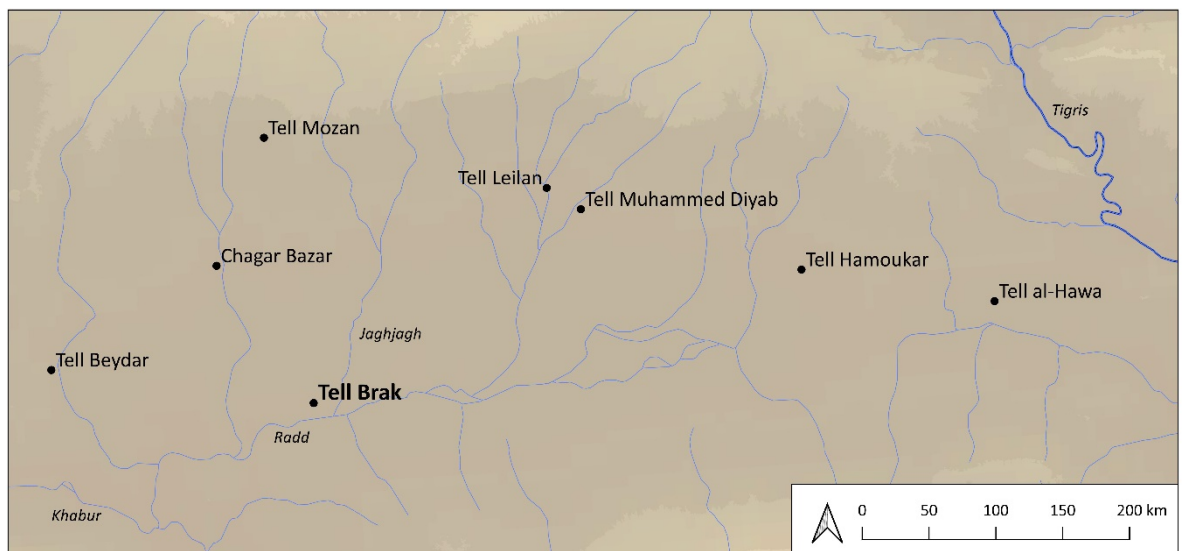


Figure 34 Tell Brak and in its north Mesopotamian context

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Figure 35 South-facing view of Tell Brak today (McMahon 2014)

7.1.3. The agricultural hinterland

The placescape that contextualised 3rd millennium farming experiences in the Jazira was one of precarity. Though the region lies above the 200mm isohyet and permits agriculture without irrigation (see Figure 36), its rainfall was highly variable and it likely experienced several serious droughts per century (Stein 2004: 62; Wilkinson 1994: 499). Interactions with the fields of the Jazira therefore represented nervous, knife-edge experiences of agriculturally untrustworthy places.

Despite the unreliable agricultural potential afforded by the Jazira, however, fields seem to have remained static, or were at least frequently revisited in a rotational scheme, for long periods of time. Consequently, agricultural workers can be situated in the landscape with some confidence. The position of these field systems, and therefore their workers, is permitted by the Hollow Ways system.

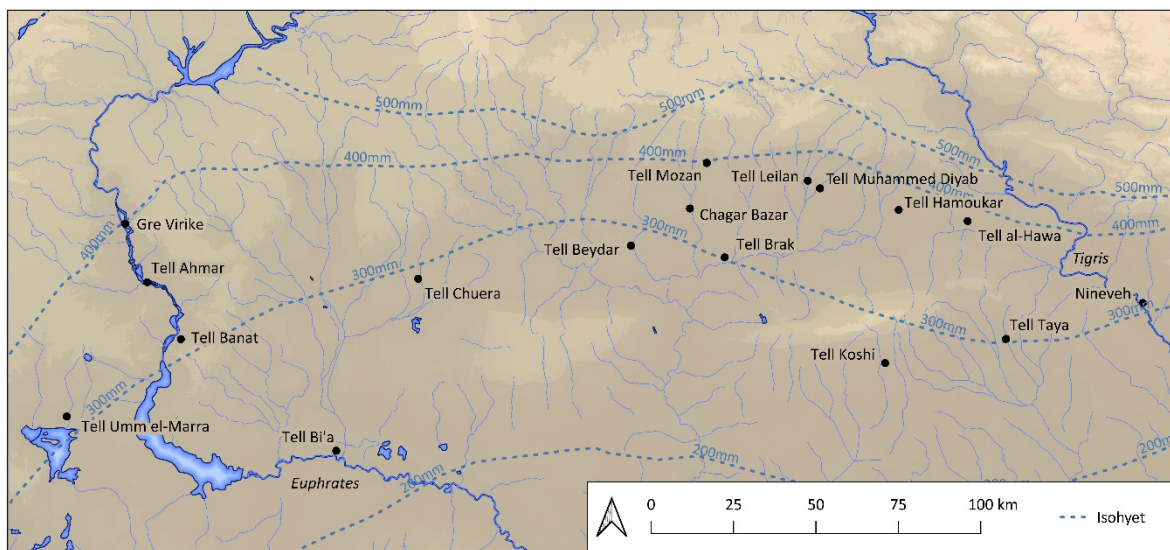


Figure 36 Rainfall isohyets in the Jazira (after Stein 2004: 63)

The Jazira hollow way network is a group of long, straight, shallow depressions radiating from sites or crossing the landscape. First mapped from aerial photographs of the Khabur basin by Van Liere and Lauffray (1954-55), they have been frequently investigated since, albeit almost entirely as data collection exercises

or studies of morphological processes rather than as part of interpretative investigations (e.g. Casana 2013; Ur 2003, 2012; Wilkinson 1993; Wilkinson et al. 2010; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995). They are widely accepted to be the result of the continual passage of people and animals that compresses the ground surface, increasing and concentrating runoff, and depending on topography, eroding valleys (Casana 2013; de Gruchy 2015; Wilkinson 1993; 2003: 111-7; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 24). An alternative interpretation, that they represent irrigation features (McClellan et al. 2000; McClellan and Porter 1995), no longer holds sway (Deckers and Riehl 2008: 181). The overwhelming majority of hollow ways peaked in use during the third millennium BCE (Ur 2012: 527; 2013: 24; Ur and Wilkinson 2008: 311; Wilkinson et al. 2010: 755-66) and, consequently, they provide a ready-made atlas of well-trodden paths around and between the settlements of the EBA Jazira.

Hollow ways can be grouped into two categories: those radiating like spokes from settlements; and longer, linear examples, or chains of them, that cross the landscape, often linking settlements (see Figure 37). Generally, linear hollow ways are taken to represent intercity and interregional networks. Meanwhile, radial systems were formed by the movement of farmers and pastoralists, and their animals, from the settlement, between the fields through which they could not trample, and then out to pasture, at which point the animals dispersed and the hollow ways fade away, usually about 2-3km from the settlement, indicating the limits of the arable zone (Deckers and Riehl 2008: 181; Ur 2012: 527; Ur and Wilkinson 2008: 310; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 25). The sub-circular zones indicated by radial hollow ways frequently marry well with estimates for the cultivated land required to sustain EBA settlements in the Jazira (Deckers and Riehl 2008: 182-5). Consequently, and usefully for an analysis of experiences of place, radial hollow ways provide a simple land-use map in which we can situate the agricultural workers, the paths of herders, and

the beginnings of pasture to which they travelled in the late 3rd millennium (see Figure 38 and Figure 39).

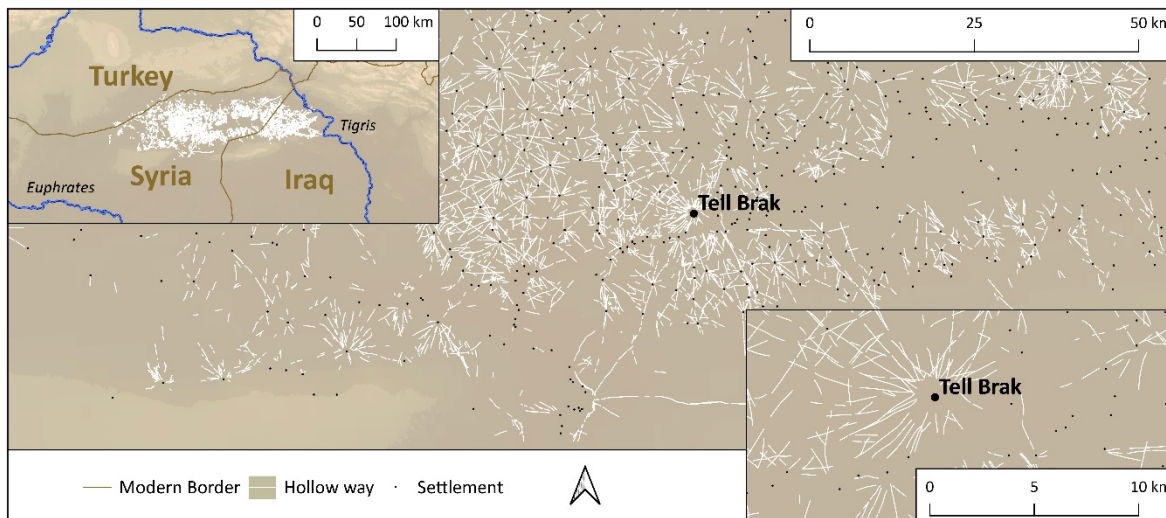


Figure 37 Radial hollows and settlements in the central Jazira (data courtesy of Jason Ur and Dan Lawrence)

[copyright image removed]

Figure 38 Radial hollows emanating from Tel Brak (Casana et al. 2012: fig. 39)

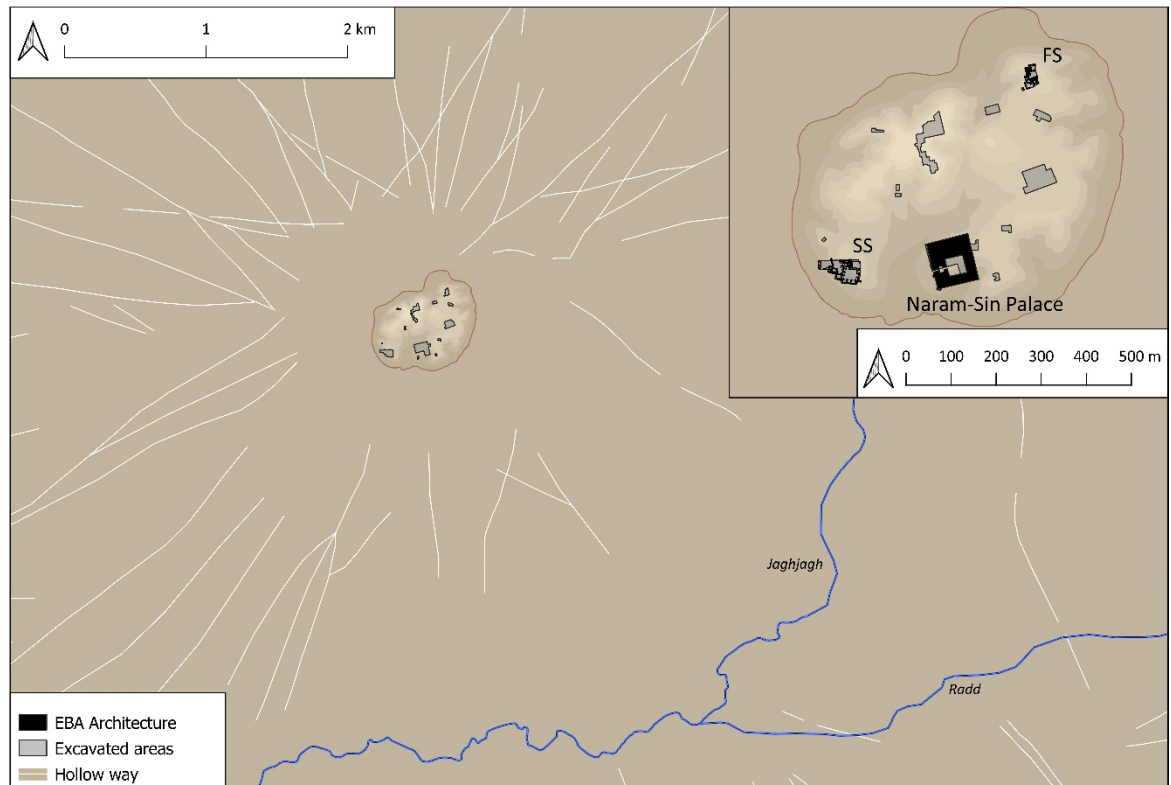


Figure 39 Radial ways and EBA architecture at Tel Brak. Relief at 5m intervals (adapted from Oates et al. 2001: figs. 2, 13, 42, 91; Ur et al. 2011: figs. 6 and 7)²⁰

Brak's pastoralists drove sheep and goat along these paths, reared both as meat and for wool, as well as pigs (Clutton-Brock et al. 2001: 346; Oates et al. 2001: 394-5; van Lerberghe 1996: 111), whilst, in the fields between them, mixed gender teams (Sallaberger 2004b: 45) tended wheat and barley (Deckers and Riehl 2008: 180) on land that most often belonged to the central authority (Sallaberger 2007: 418).

²⁰ Many of the published plans that have been adapted or redrawn in this chapter depict contour lines but do not state elevations or contour intervals. I have endeavoured to use 5m intervals where no values are given, but some have been achieved via a combination of redrawn plans and SRTM 1 Arc-Second rasters downloaded from the U. S. Geological Survey Earth Explorer service (<https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/>) but their resolution is insufficient for precise topographic illustrations. As such, they should be taken as guides rather than hard data.

If we are to imagine, then, the common agricultural workers of the late 3rd millennium Tell Brak, with a view to interpreting their place experiences, we can imagine men and women working cereal fields in a 2-3km radius of a settlement, often on behalf of its palatial authority, in view of the herders driving animals to pasture along defined, long-lasting routes. I will now consider how they *folded-in* their interactions with the land, their work, their companions, and the animals that helped them, and the role this *folding* played in creating, reinforcing, and developing their perceptions of the world.

7.2. Folding farming, field, and fauna

7.2.1. Divine work

There is good reason to believe that tilling the land was innately religious in ancient Mesopotamia, and therefore that performing agricultural tasks carried cultic essence. The tight intertwining of cultivating land and perceptions of the divine is highlighted by the pantheon and in the mythical corpus. Beyond the farmer god, Enkimdu (Black and Green 1992b: 76), and the goddess of grain and cereals, Nidaba (Tudeau 2016), a range of agricultural motifs appear in Sumerian literature. *Enki and the World Order* (c.1.1.3) stresses divinities' role in nurturing fields, *Rulers of Lagash* (c.2.1.2: 17-31) paints the bleak position of humanity before Ningirsu taught them to farm, and *The Building of Ningirsu's Temple* (c.2.1.7: 286-293) describes the agricultural abundance granted by proper devotion. Elsewhere, in *A Praise Poem of Šulgi* (2.4.2.03: 244-258), which records Šulgi's greatness as king of Ur, his attention to agriculture is lauded specifically in relation to feeding the gods (Black et al. 1998-2006), an act which is recorded in several texts with reference to Belet-Nagar (Oates et al. 2001: 381). Meanwhile, the final lines of *Enlil and Ninlil* (c.1.2.1: 143-154) are entirely comprised of repeated exclamations that '[Enlil] is lord' or '[Enlil is] king' with the exception of drawing attention to a single attribute – his role in producing crops (Black et al. 1998-2006). Seemingly, here, agricultural fertility is ranked above

Enlil's other roles, such as the creator/destroyer and the legitimiser of kings (Stone 2016). Farming, and, by extension performing agricultural tasks, was inescapably cultic. Brak's farmers' routine interactions with the land were therefore interactions with divine work. Their long hot days in the fields were performances of Emkidu's role in the pantheon, using skills gifted to humans by Ningirsu, to raise the crops of Nibada, and farming experiences were *folded* in alongside experiences of these deities (see Figure 40).

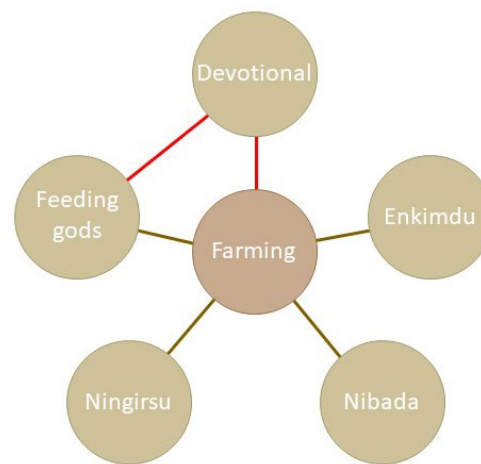


Figure 40 Farming Rhizome. Tan lines are textually attested connections. Red are inferred connections.

7.2.2. Ancestral placescape

Whilst agricultural activity was generally associated with the divine, the *specific* land these farmers toiled in was also of deeply symbolic importance, bound up in cult-loaded concerns with lineage and tribal identities, and working that land represented constant *folded* interactions with ancestors and lineage.

That communal ancestors were longstanding and powerful actors in Upper Mesopotamia's social milieu is illustrated by texts, temples, and extra-mural burial places (e.g. Fleming 2004; Peltenburg 2007-2008; Porter 2002a, 2002b; Schwartz 2007; Stein 2004; Steinkeller 1999). It is frequently seen as a motif of the inclusionary nature of northern society rooted in the role of pastoral tribes that preceded,

coexisted with, and overlapped with, the urban communities. Mobility, kin-based lineage, and ancestors were crucial aspects of life for these groups, and played a fundamental part in shaping the character of the north (e.g. Fleming 2004; Porter 2002a, 2002b; Stein 2004; Steinkeller 1999). As northern urbanism reached a crescendo towards the end of the 3rd millennium, new socio-political institutions arose from tribal structures to invest power in the king and his dependants, retaining an ancestral role but shifting attention from the communal group to the royal line (Steinkeller 1999), and supplanting communal worship spaces with exclusionary elite sites. It is this snatching away of the ancestors from the wider population that must be explained, as it would seem to be a controversial intervention in the cultic tradition likely to meet resistance. *Folding* will help us explain how agricultural experiences of the ancestral placescape allowed this new ritual regime to be internalised and reproduced (see **7.2.4. Socialisation and the ancestral paradigm shift**).

That the north leant towards communal ancestor-centred beliefs, and that these appealed to the range of society, not simply to the elite responsible for the monuments that are preserved for us, can be seen in texts. Texts from late-third millennium Ebla and early-second millennium Mari record ritual offerings to the dead and at least one pilgrimage to an ancestral place (Porter 2002b: 5) and point to particular preoccupations with the role of ancestors in the lives of the living. Funerary rituals including communal meals attended by the deceased are known across society (Katz 2007: 167-9), and the *kispum* feast of Mari saw the deceased, as a collective drawn from all strata of society, dine with the living (Porter 2002a: 168; Schmidt 1995: 42-3). Meanwhile, 2nd millennium Emar inheritance texts connect the gods and the dead, using terminology more commonly seen in reference to ancestors than deities, and imply the existence of ancestor cults (van der Toorn 1994). The textual corpus also illustrates a degree of collectively held power in political structures, and so points to the maintenance of communal social identities

even in the stratified social hierarchies of the urban centres. The Eblaite court, for example, granted considerable power to elders, understood by Archi (1982: 207) as a council representing major families that operated as a balancing force that offset kingly power in the north. The texts, then, tell us not only of the importance of ancestral cult in Northern Mesopotamia, but of its communal character.

Upper Mesopotamia's temples, especially when contrasted with those of the south, are also indicative of a focus on communal cult with tribal origins. Temples were at the heart of southern Mesopotamia where cities generally developed around temple-centred Ubaid towns (Adams 1981). The temples themselves, frequently rebuilt on the same spot for millennia from prehistory, were most often grand complexes incorporating storage, craft, and residential spaces raised high above their surroundings upon the collapsed remains of earlier versions (Stein 2004: 75; Van De Mieroop 1997: 73) (see Figure 41). With the great antiquity of the temples, and their literally and figuratively central position in the city, southern Mesopotamians understood their cities to have been founded by deities and so city, temple, and pantheon were ideologically inseparable (Van De Mieroop 1997: 46-7). In the north, temples were usually distributed throughout the different quarters of settlements (see Figure 42), and were generally smaller, simpler structures without the networks of associated storerooms, workshops, dwellings, and abundancies of economic evidence seen in their southern contemporaries and so 'more consistent with temples functioning as a focus for a lineage or other intermediate-scale, kin-based' community (Stein 2004: 75-6). When major temple constructions appear in the north, they appropriate earlier communal spaces as part of the realignment of ancestor worship on the royal lineages discussed below (see **7.2.4. Socialisation and the ancestral paradigm shift**).

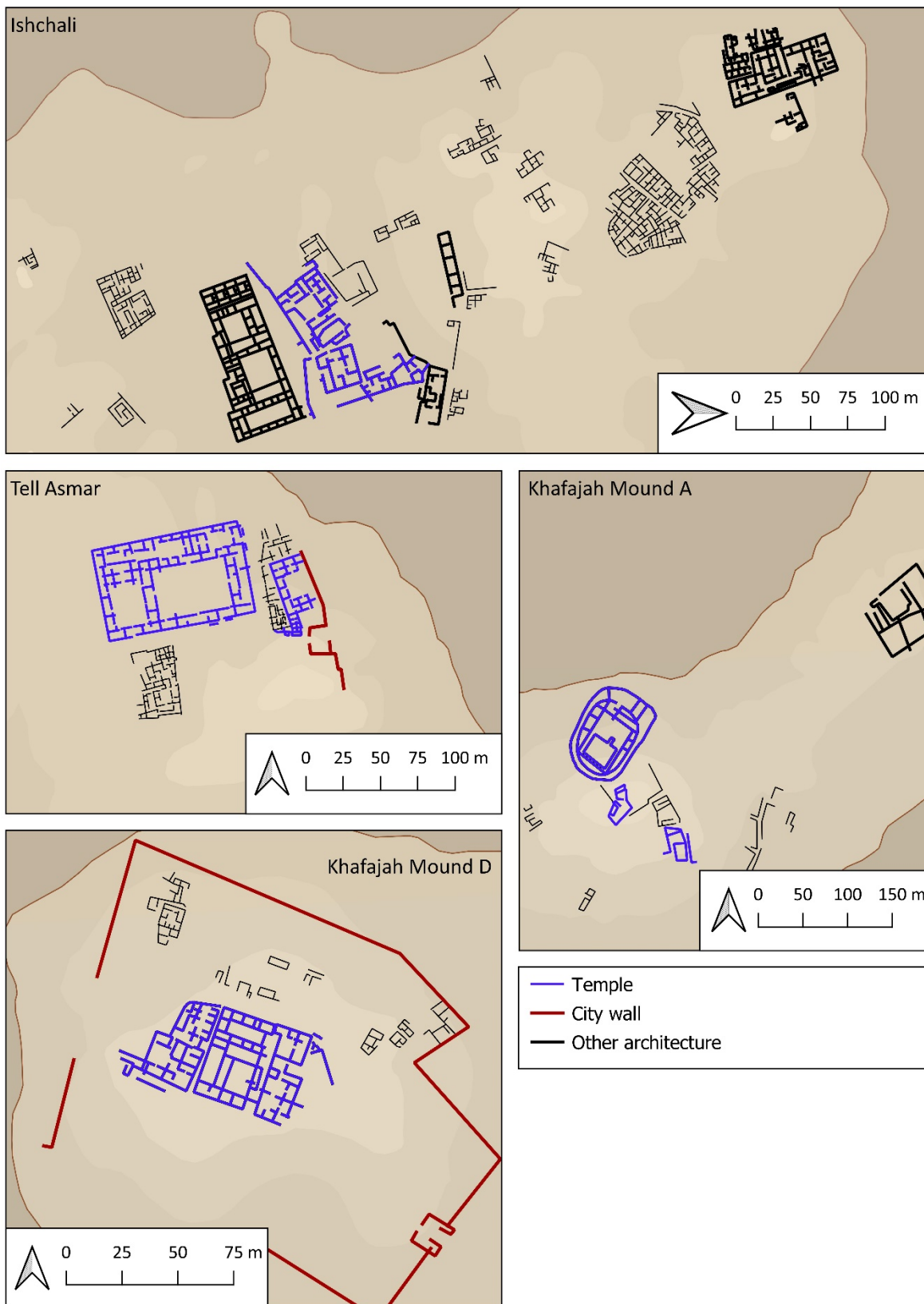


Figure 41 Temples at Ischali, Tell Asmar, and Khafajah (adapted from Delougaz et al. 1967: Pls. 1 and 23; Hill et al. 1990: figs. 2 and 31)

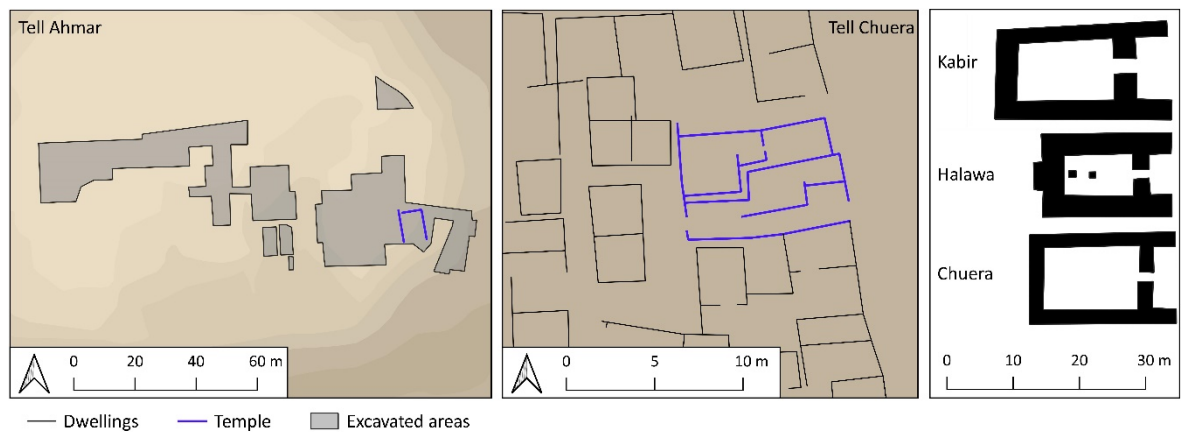


Figure 42 Schematic small and neighbourhood temples in Upper Mesopotamia (adapted from Bunnens 2016: figs. 1 and 3; Stein 2004: figs. 5.8 and 5.9)

That these ancestors had a specific presence in the placescape is implied by the nature of their monuments. Repeatedly, we see ritual centres or tombs develop and expand to become prominent markers in the land. The prominent extra-mural tombs and burial monuments in and around the EBA Jazira, such as those of Gre Virike, Tell Banat, Umm el-Marra, Tell Ahmar, and Tel Bi'a, in contrast to below-ground internments, allow, or even invite, continued interaction with the deceased, and so have been widely interpreted as cult sites connected to ancestral cults (Peltenburg 2007-2008; Porter 2002b; Schwartz 2007; Stein 2004).

At Gre Virike (see Figure 43), where no domestic or other buildings are present, a 1750m² mudbrick terrace with ritual structures represents a possible early 3rd millennium sanctuary connected to spring and harvest feasts (Ökse 2006b: 1). Over the 3rd millennium the site came to house chambered tomb complexes (Ökse 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Peltenburg 2007-2008). Meanwhile the Tell Banat White Monument (see Figure 44) comprises three overlying structures (McClellan 1998; Peltenburg 2007-2008; Porter 2002b, 2007-2008, 2015). Its initial phase (Monument C) was a plastered pyramidal mound built in the mid-3rd millennium. Later, small earth and stone tumuli (labelled Monument B2) containing human bones were cut into the pyramidal structure before the entire structure was covered with white terra pisé to form Monument B. Finally, between 2450-2300 Monument B is enlarged

to create Monument A, during which many discrete human burials, often mixed with quantities of animal bones, were added.

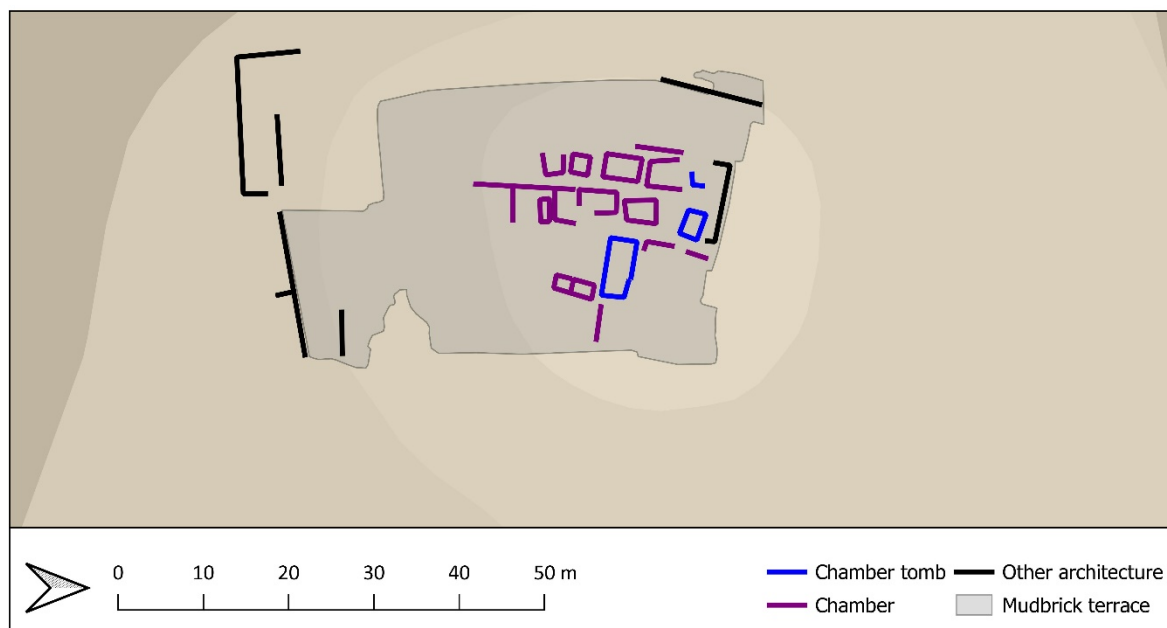


Figure 43 Gre Virike plan (Ökse 2005: fig. 3)

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Figure 44 Tell Banat White Monument (Ökse 2007: fig. 4)

A similar process can also be seen in an urban context at Tell Umm el-Marra, in NW Syria just to the west of the Jazira (see Figure 45). The substantial mortuary complex there expanded horizontally over its three centuries of use between ca.2500-2200 to cover some 150m² of the highest point on the acropolis (Schwartz 2007; Schwartz et al. 2006; Schwartz et al. 2012) (see Figure 45 and further discussion of the mortuary complex in 7.2.3. **Equid mediators**). Stein (2004: 72) has argued that these highly conspicuous and accessible monuments reflect ‘the relationship of rulers to the social landscape’. This is of course true, but perhaps more importantly, they also reflect the relationship of the deceased elite to the *physical* landscape, a relationship that was also actualised by pilgrimage.

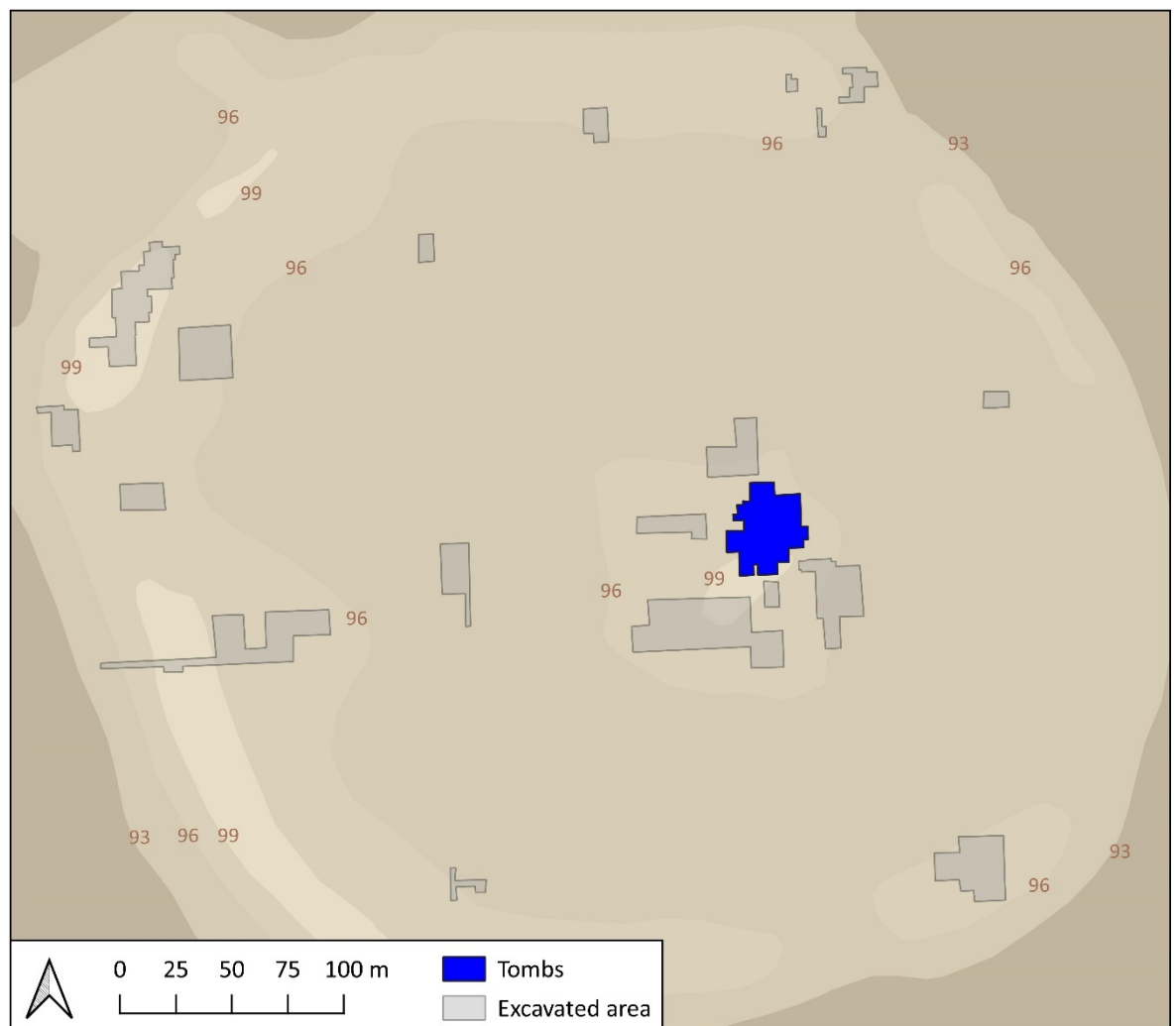


Figure 45 Plan of Umm el-Marra showing excavation areas (adapted from Schwartz et al. 2012: fig. 1)

The nature of these sites was well-suited to pilgrimages, a phenomenon also recorded textually and implied in the glyptic repertoire. The White Monument was a 20m high and 100m wide conical mound positioned c.200m from Tell Banat itself, making for a highly visible structure for some distance, especially on approach from the north or west (Ristvet 2015: 87). Meanwhile, the complex at Umm el-Marra dominated the city's highest area and represented a major focal point (Schwartz 2007: 40-1). That Gre Virike served a pilgrimage function, or was at least visited for cult practice, seems highly likely as, when the site was converted from a water-cult ritual space to a mortuary platform, space for ritual activity was preserved and kitchens were added, perhaps allowing for the provisioning of celebrants and worshippers (Ökse 2005, 2006a, 2006b). That pilgrimage took place to the ancestral monuments of northern Mesopotamia is explicitly recorded at Ebla. Kings frequently made offerings in different cities (Archi 1986, 1988) and their cultic itineraries record annual pilgrimages to honour 'Adabal began at Luban and visited Ebla and another 35 towns (Archi 1979), whilst another, less frequent pilgrimage took worshippers to 'Adabal's second cult centre at Arugadu (Archi 2002b: 29). Furthermore, the 'Syrian Ritual' glyptic motif appearing across Upper Mesopotamia, including at Brak, has been widely interpreted as depicting cult processions suggests that Ebla's enthusiasm for cultic parades was a region proclivity (Beyer 2007: fig. 3b; Beyer and Lecompte 2014: fig. 18; Jans and Bretschneider 1998: 76-82; Ristvet 2011: 13-5; 2015: 71-4) (see Figure 46). These pilgrimages tied places together by highlighting their cultic commonalities (Ristvet 2015: 69), transforming a placescape punctuated with individual ancestral markers into a contiguous, communal place inscribed with meaning through ritualised movement across routes with great time-depth.

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Figure 46 'Syrian Ritual' seal impressions from Tell Beydar (top) and Mari (middle and bottom) (Ristvet 2011: fig. 7)

The agricultural workers of Brak cannot be tied explicitly to elite pilgrimage, but the hollow ways, locked into place by long-lasting field boundaries and trodden back and forth across relentlessly, represented antique, routinely-traversed paths through a cult-loaded placescape for their users. The farmers whose experiences we wish to investigate therefore spent their days immersed in their ancestral land, intimately engaged in its substance, ploughing and planting and harvesting places that their community had for generations, and where those that had gone before still resided, *folding* in practice, place, and meaning (see Figure 47).

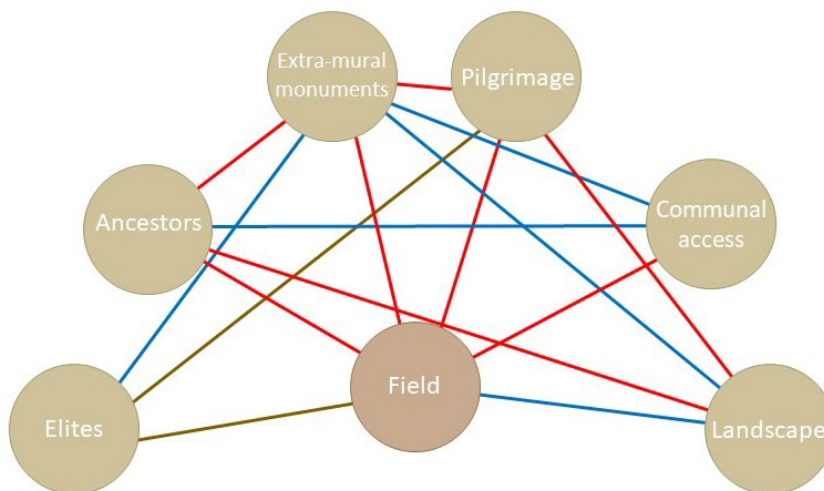


Figure 47 Field Rhizome. Tan lines are textually attested connections. Blue are archaeologically attested connections or those demonstrated by proximity. Red are inferred connections.

7.2.3. Equid mediators

Key to mediating the experiences of this ancestral land encountered by the agricultural workers of Early Bronze Age Tell Brak were the religiously-loaded (both literally and metaphorically) draft animals that ploughed their fields. Various bovids and equids performed draft duties (Clutton-Brock et al. 2001: 336; Recht 2018: 68), but most notable for my purposes here, due to their cultic connotations, were the equids.

When interacting with equids, Brak's agricultural workers were not only *folding* in experiences of animals, but of animals with clear cultic roles. Equids are important sacred beasts throughout the Bronze Age Near East (Clutton-Brock 1989; Clutton-Brock and Davies 1993; Greenfield et al. 2012; Mitchell 2018; Way 2010) and they are a particularly common component of the cultic world of the Early Bronze Age. They appear on seals from Beydar pulling chariots in association with deities (e.g. Rova 2012: No. 55, 61) (see Figure 48) whilst others are shown drawing wagons and box-shaped carts, interpreted as mobile altars or offering stands and associated with altar/cult monuments, enthroned figures, and temples (Jans and Bretschneider 1998: figs. 11-3, cat. 20-1; Rova 2012: No. 55). Another seal from Tell Mozan (see Figure 49) shows a prancing equid before a seated deity (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2000: 139) and Hauser (2007: 52), or king (Recht 2018: 82). This seated figure is being presented with a small equid, where usually a sheep or goat would be expected by an interceding deity (Recht 2018: 82), reinforcing equids' cultic role.

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Figure 48 Chariot-pulling equids on Tell Beydar seals (Rova 2012: No. 55 [left] and No. 61)

Equids are also a popular focus of coroplastic art where again their cultic power is clear. 37% of identifiable zoomorphic figurines in 3rd millennium levels at Tell Brak are equids, with the next most popular species being sheep at a much more scarce 7.2%. Given the rarity of anthropomorphic figurines at Brak, this means that 34% of all identifiable figurines depict equids (McDonald 2001: 271). Equids are also the most popular species depicted in miniature at Selenkahiye, where equid and equid

and rider figurines comprise 60% of identifiable animals (Liebowitz 1988; Van Loon 2001). Equid riders at Selenkahiye all sit side-saddle, generally associated with royal or divine personages in art, and at least one rider has a perforated hand, perhaps to hold a staff or weapon, leading Liebowitz (1988: 30) to interpret the riders as gods. Additionally, 32 chariot and wagon figurines, along with many loose wheels, were also uncovered at Tell Selenkahiye (Liebowitz 1988: 19-21), and it is conceivable many may have been paired with equid figurines in use. Other examples of wagon and chariot models from Aššur, Tepe Gawra, and Tell Cheura have frequently been retrieved from temple contexts leading Klengel-Brandt (1978: 118) to hypothesise that they are representations of carts used in ritual processions.

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Figure 49 Seal from Tell Mozan showing 'dancing' equid (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2000: Fig. 5)

In addition to their cultic depictions, equids' religious significance is also revealed by the burial record. Equid burials are common in EBA Iraq and Syria (see Table 7) and, in contrast to other animals which tend to appear as joints of meat, equids usually appear as entire animals (Recht 2018: 67). Texts from Ur and Adab record teams of equids in burials (Cohen 2005: 165; Foxvog 1980: 67). In some mythological contexts, too, equids are associated with burial and as gifts for deities. The poetic lament, *The Death of Ur-Nammu* (Black et al. 1998-2006), the founder of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur, appears to have been injured in battle, leading to his death (lines 31-

51). He is later buried with donkeys and no other grave goods are mentioned (line 71). During his descent he offers gifts of chariots and donkeys to the deity Ningišzida (lines 114-117). A connection between equids and the netherworld is also apparent at Tel Mozan where a substantial pit dated to 2300-2100 revealed the remains of over 20 donkeys alongside 60 sheep/goats, and a great many puppies and piglets (Kelly-Bucellati 2002: 136). This pit has been interpreted as an *abi* or *āpi*, a category of sacrificial pits described in LBA texts that allowed contact with or protection from the underworld and chthonic divinities (Collins 2004; Kelly-Bucellati 2002: 136-7; Recht 2014). All interactions with equids therefore represented *folded* experiences of cultic animals embedded with sacred power

Site/Feature	Date	No. Equids	Species	Human	Dog
Lagash/Al Hiba Burial	EDIIB	1	O	M	
Kish Chariot Burial I	EDII	1	?		
Kish Chariot Burial II	EDII	4	D or O		
Kish Chariot Burial III	EDII	?	?		
Tell Madhur Grave 7D	EDII/III	2	D?		
Tell Madhur Tomb 5G	Ca2300	2	1x Or. 1x O or H	M	
Tell Madhur Grave 6G	Ca2200	2	?		
Tell Razuk Burial 12	Early Akk.	2	D		
Tell Abu Qasim Tomb	EDIII/Early Old Akk.	0	?		
Al-'Usiyah Tomb	EDIII	3-4	?		
Abu Salabikh Grave 162	EDIII ca2450	5	D?		
Abu Salabikh Grave 48	EDIIIA	0	?		
Abu Salabikh Grave 38	EDIII	0	?		
Abu Salabikh Grave 27	EDIII	0	?		
Abu Salabikh Grave 73	EDIII	0	?		
Nippur Burial 14	ED-Late Akk.	1	?		
Tall Ahmad al-Hattu Burial 54/19:II	ED	0	?		
Abu Tbeirah Animal Grave 1	Ca2500-2000	1	D?		
Abu Tbeirah Grave 5	Sumerian	0	?	C	
Abu Tbeirah Grave 15	Ca2500-2000	0	?	M	
Tell Razuk Burial 12	Early Akk	2	?	?	
Halawa Grave H-70	Ca2200-2100	3	D	F,M,?	
Tell Umm el-Marra Tomb 1	2500-2200	1	H	F,M,C	
Tell Umm el-Marra Tomb 3	EBIVA. Early 25thC	0			Y
Tell Umm el-Marra Tomb 4	EBIVA ca2400-2350	0		F,M,C	Y
Tell Umm el-Marra Tomb 8	EBIII	1	H	C,?	
Tell Umm el-Marra Installation A	EB. 2500-2200	4	H	C	
Tell Umm el-Marra Installation B	EB. 2500-2200	2	H	2xC	6
Tell Umm el-Marra Installation C	EB. 2500-2200	2	H	3xC	Y
Tell Umm el-Marra Installation D	EB. 2500-2200	2	H	C	
Tell Umm el-Marra Installation E	EB. 2500-2200	4	H		
Tell Umm el-Marra Installation F	EB. 2500-2200	4	H		
Tell Umm el-Marra Installation G	EB. 2500-2200	6	H		
Tell Brak TC Oval Burial	EDIIB ca2400-2250	2+		C,?	
Tell Brak Area FS	Closed ca2300	7	D	3+	
Tell Banat North Monument A	2600-2300	Burial mound containing considerable faunal remains. Ca. 40% equid			
Tall Bi'a/Tuttul Burial U:22	2500-2400	1	D	F	
Abu Hamad Tomb A5	EBIV	3	D or O		
Tell Mozan abi	2300-2100	20+	D		20+

Table 6 Early Bronze Age Equid burials in Syria. 0 in no. equids column indicates fewer than one complete individual. In Species columns, D/O/H = donkey/onager/donkey-onager hybrid. In Human column,

F/M/C= female/male/child. (compiled from catalogues in Oates et al. 2001; Oates et al. 2008; Recht 2018: 69, 86-8; Weber 2012: 167)

Amongst all equids, a hybrid species associated especially with Nagar, and so familiar to its farming community, was accorded particular significance. BAR.AN, likely pronounced *Kunga* (Weber 2012: 168), were high status equids produced in a handful of locations, but especially associated with Nagar, where they were a powerful symbol and major export sold in large numbers even at their exorbitant cost (Archi 1998: 9-10; Oates et al. 2001: 395). They are generally interpreted to be a donkey-onager hybrid species on the basis of texts (Archi 1998: 9; Heimpel 1994; 1995: 89-91; Postgate 1986). A number of donkey-onager crosses buried with great care and attention in the mortuary complex at Tell Umm el-Marra appear to represent archaeological confirmation of this interpretation (Weber 2008: 514-6; 2012: 165; Weber 2017).

Though the textual record attests to some BAR.AN presence in agricultural contexts (Heimpel 1994: 21-2) and the bone and muscular development of those interred at Umm el-Marra indicates that they spent their lives as pulling animals (Weber 2008: 514-6; 2012: 165; Weber 2017), the clearly elevated status enjoyed by these animals, not to mention their worth, presumably prevented their regular use in the fields. Despite this, as the pinnacle elite of equids, both as commodities and as cultic functionaries, their status lent additional weight to the cultic energy already held by those species with which agricultural workers spent their days. In addition to textual accounts of their ritual duties, BAR.ANs' cultic roles are shown, like other equid species, in the artistic and burial records.

Whilst identifying specific subspecies in the artistic repertoire is difficult, BAR.AN may well be the intended species in some depictions. BAR.AN are recorded pulling cultic vehicles and royal chariots (Archi 1998: 5; 2002a; Heimpel 1994: 11; van Lerberghe 1996), for instance, as seen on Beydar seals. At Tell Mozan, where equids again represent the most popular animals represented in the figurine corpus

(Hauser 1998: 64), Hauser (2007) attempts to discern between different equid species (see Table 6), categorising them as: Type I, donkeys, are characterised by narrow forequarters, blunt or short muzzles, erect manes and tufted tails. Type II, onagers, are identified by pronounced breast ridges that do not reach the belly. Finally, Type III, horses, are characterised by narrow muzzles, widely-spaced and deeply-recessed eyes, short ears, and long manes which reach the head between the ears, and tails that are wide at the base. Hauser adds a fourth category, I/II, for equid figurines that reflect a particular concern with animal reproduction. Some male equids are depicted with straps between their hindquarters and/or across their penises, a motif that Hauser (2007: 374) connects to castration and, by extension, to the process of domestication. Interestingly, those figurines exhibiting caudal and penile straps sport relatively lean torsos, which also characterises a group of female equids sporting swollen vulvae (Hauser 2007: 373), interpreted by Kimbrough (unpublished excavation data cited in Hauser 2007: 373) as being in heat. In an era where production of an elite, symbolically charged hybrid species was big business, a particular concern with breeding represented in art is interesting, and these may well depict BAR.AN.

Type	Confidently Identified	Tentatively Identified	Percentage of Total
I	10	6	30.8
I/II	6	0	11.5
II	16	8	46.2
III	4	2	11.5

Table 7 Horse figurines and their Types from Tel Mozan (Hauser 2007: 605-21)

Like other equids, the BAR.AN did not only play religious roles as transporters of cult persons, but as sacred foci in their own right. BAR.AN are interred with great prestige in the mortuary complex of Umm el-Marra, and possibly at Tell Madhur (see Table 7). The Umm el-Marra complex contained at least 35 equids, almost all of which are complete, articulated skeletons (Weber 2012: 165)(see Figure 50 and Figure 51). All of the equids are interred in their own installations (Schwartz et al.

2006). Most were killed at young or prime ages, whilst a few older animals had died of natural causes and were buried accompanied by dogs or infant humans (Weber 2012: 160). Some were also granted their own ceramic grave goods, including a decorated ceramic stand in Installation A, albeit mixed in amongst debris, a spouted jar in installation B, a spouted jar and another jar containing an infant in Installation D (Schwartz et al. 2006: 624-7). The appearance of animals as the focus of a burial, rather than an accessory in a human burial, is unusual and indicative of special attention. For Weber (2012: 161), this is on account of their high status as BAR.AN. Recht (2018: 71) goes further, arguing that the animals were accorded 'special honour, corresponding to that of the humans' also interred in the complex. She goes on to suggest that the equids were a fundamental component of the lives and identities of the neighbouring human deceased and played a key part in sacralising the space, and became so fundamental to funerary ritual that they could be interred as a replacement for human burials to permit rituals in times of social tension or upheaval if no human deceased was available. This explicit connection to ancestors, alongside the cultic prominence of BAR.AN more generally, reinforced the link between equids, the divine, and the deceased.

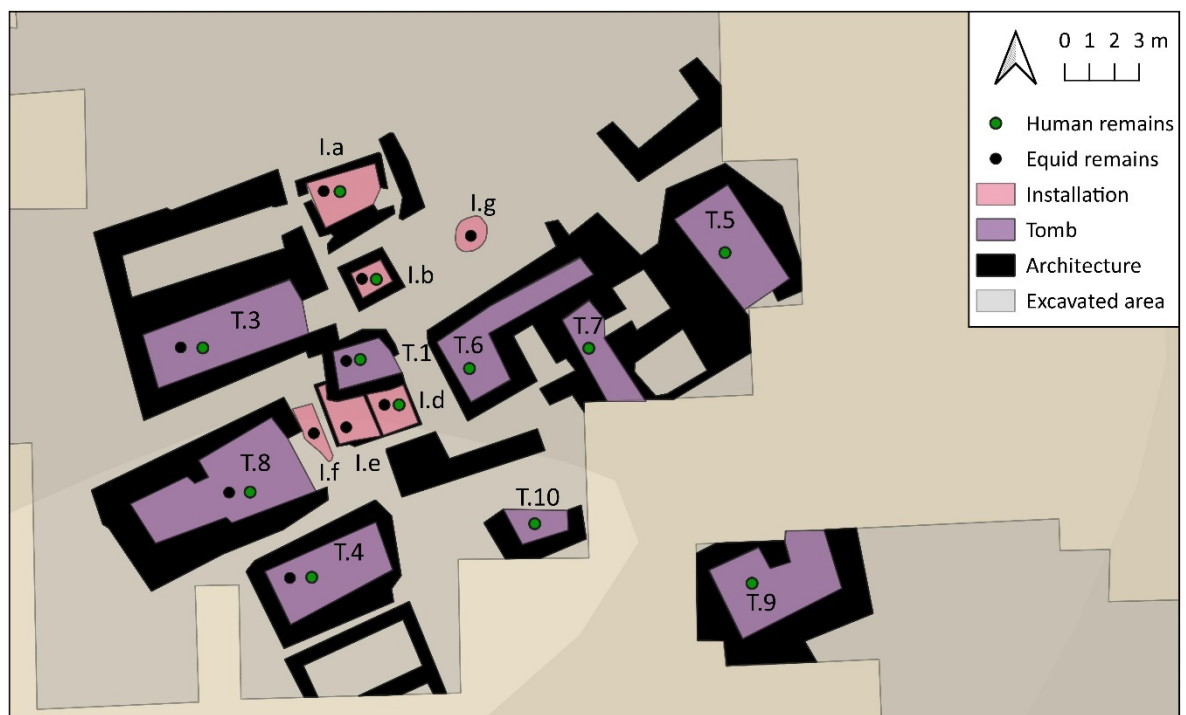


Figure 50 Schematic plan of the EBA mortuary complex at Umm el-Marra (adapted from Schwartz et al. 2012: Fig. 2). Points show presence of human or equid remains in the space, not precise location.

[copyright image removed]

Figure 51 West-facing image of equid burial in Umm el-Marra Installation A (Schwartz et al. 2006: fig. 26)

Working the fields, with equid draft animals, Nagar's agricultural workers were tirelessly *folding* in experiences of sacred beasts. They represented ritual operators, embodied ancestral connections, and were linked to deities. Through their prestigious cousins, the BAR.AN, they were associated with elite funerary ritual, human control over natural reproduction, and represented their city, binding these together as they were *folded* in through working the land. They mediated farmers' engagement with the field, and so *folded* experiences of them coalesced the divine, the ancestors, the past, and the present (see Figure 52).

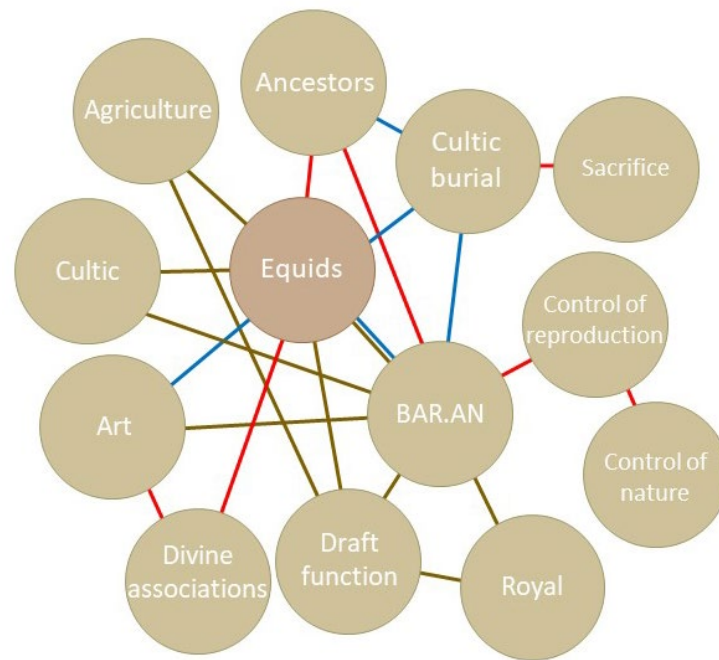


Figure 52 Equid Rhizome. Tan lines are textually attested connections. Blue are archaeologically attested connections or those demonstrated by proximity. Red are inferred connections.

7.2.4. Socialisation and the ancestral paradigm shift

Folded experiences of equids did not only maintain the power of the ancestors, however. When the elite began to realign the focus of cult from the collective ancestral community to the specific, named ancestors of elite society, experiences of equids also played a role making this ritual paradigm shift acceptable to the populace. It is in illuminating this process that *folding* helps us explain changes in longstanding socially reproduced perceptions. Essentially, when the connotations of certain cultic motifs develop, in this case the ancestral associations of equids, particularly BAR.AN, these ripple through the *rhizome* and the already fluid *plateaus* that frame experience are subjected to more substantive change, meaning the socialising relational experiences they encourage to emerge also change.

Whilst the importance of ancestors remained strong throughout the 3rd millennium, evidence implies that traditions placing a focus on communal ancestors were co-opted to foreground specific lineages to legitimise and reinforce the position of elite

or royal persons (Schwartz 2007: 46). Named ancestors begin to appear in ritual contexts. In Ebla kingship was, if not explicitly divine, certainly closely associated with ancestors and deities, and stressed the descent of royal figures in connection with ancestor-worship (Archi 1988; Fronzaroli 1992). There, ancestral rituals involve interactions between specific individuals, such as the recently married royal couple, named ancestors, and the gods, whilst at Mari, albeit later, prominent named ancestors including Naram-Sin and Sargon appear (Porter 2002b: 5). Meanwhile, private underground elite tombs, such as Hypogeum G4 below Royal Palace G at Ebla, probably dating to the 24th century (Archi 2005), or the crypt below Palace A at Tel Bi'a, dated to the early 2nd millennium (Einwag 1993), have been associated with exclusionary ancestor veneration and directly contrasted with the extra-mural tombs of the Jazira (Peltenburg 2007-2008; Porter 2002a). A new ancestral paradigm had arrived.

By ca.2200 monumental extra-mural mortuary complexes had fallen out of favour and subterranean tombs, often beneath palaces, are the preferred home for the elite dead (Peltenburg 2007-2008: 235-6), denying communal ancestral access and explicitly connecting the revered deceased and current rulers. The days of ancestral cult at the highly accessible, extra-mural monuments such as those at Gre Virike, Banat, Umm el-Marra, Tell Ahmar, and Tell Bi'a was ending. The processions of the texts and glyptic record that actualised connections to the land and deep past faded and the highly-visible markers of that ancestral link through the placescape lost their active power, becoming a thing of the untethered, rather than vibrant and relevant, past.

This denial of ancestral connections, and confiscation of ancestral access, was particularly stark for the non-elite residents of Nagar. Naram-Sin built his palace over an Early Dynastic shrine that itself marked the spot of the Jemdet Nasr 'Eye Temple' (Mallowan 1947: 31, 8) (see Figure 53), preserving ancient cult but restricting access to the upper strata of society. Two other temples, in Areas FS and

SS (see Figure 54) were built simultaneously either in the Akkadian Period or shortly before, were in use through the Akkadian Period (Oates et al. 2001: 388). Unusually for northern Mesopotamian temples, and more in keeping with their southern contemporaries, they are substantial complexes, perhaps reflecting the preferences of an Akkadian administration. Part of the temple complex was probably utilised for stabling and watering within the BAR.AN industry (Matthews et al. 2001: 366; Oates et al. 2008: 391) and when these temples were ritually abandoned and sealed, later in the Akkadian period, several equids were deposited just above the floors and on top of the fill in the FS temple complex (Oates et al. 2001: 389-90) (see Table 7). FS Temple may have been dedicated to Šamagan, patron of the steppe animals. Gazelle horns placed in the antecella, the equid closure burials, and a seal depicting a seated deity plausibly identified as Šamagan (see Figure 55) all point to such a conclusion (Oates et al. 2001: 387-8). The deity was also important at Tell Beydar, to which the ruler of Nagar travelled for festivals celebrating Šamagan (Ismail et al. 1996: text 101). It seems that in Akkadian Nagar, traditional shrines were subsumed by modern elite structures, and new, monumental temples were constructed that refocussed cult on royalty. At least one of these new temples retained a place-connection and tied it to royal power, however, through its association with equids, animals connected to the arable hinterland, and possibly a deity of the steppe animals.

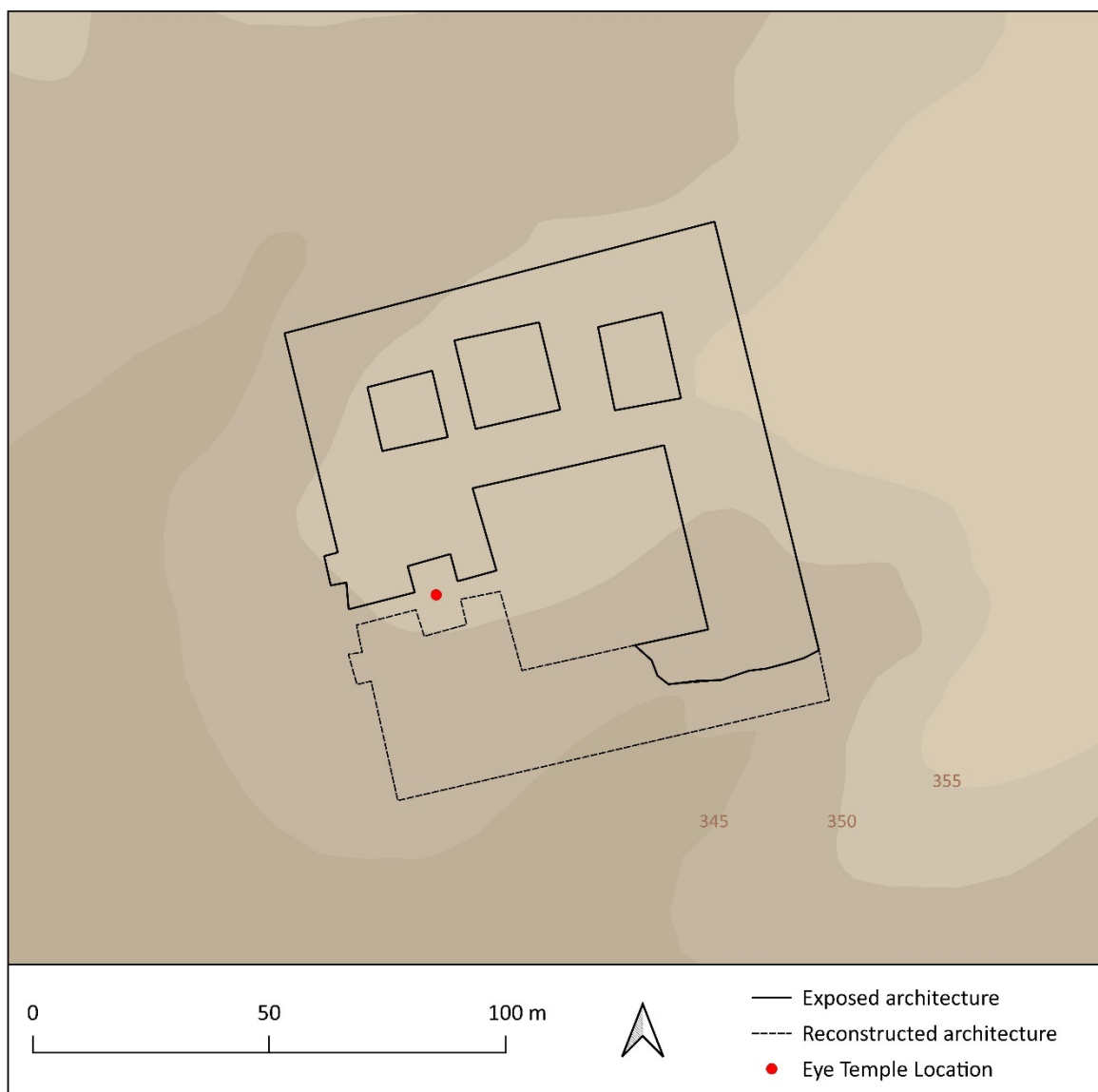


Figure 53 Tell Brak Naram Sin palace and location of Eye Temple, and later shrine, within it (Oates et al. 2001: 16)



Figure 54 Tell Brak Area FS and SS temple complexes (adapted from Oates et al. 2001: figs. 42, 91)

[copyright image removed]

Figure 55 'Scribe's Seal' from Tell Brak depicting a deity on the far right (Oates et al. 2001: fig. 171)

The contrived communal-elite ancestor transformation of the socioreligious structures of Upper Mesopotamia, which we see in the abandonment of extra-mural tombs in favour of exclusionary ancestral places and manifested explicitly in the temples at Brak, seems extreme and sure to meet resistance. However, by retaining a key socialising mechanism, equid experiences, one set of social conditions learnt through interaction with them became another.

For the farmers of Nagar, who spent their days with equids in the hinterland, their *folded* experiences of these animals, which were embedded with the ancestral cult, in a place also tied to ancestors, now incorporated royal power and served to continually reinforce this new association, shifting their cultic attention from communal ancestors to elite lineage.

Whilst the movement towards specific, named-ancestor cult that positioned the royal family as mediators connecting the corporeal world to divine actors represented a stark paradigm shift, it was accomplished by stressing specific *plateaus* of *folds* rather than shutting down others, therefore allowing the agricultural workforce to continue to engage with earlier traditions (see Figure 56). The socialising power of the *folded* experiences of these workers allowed for a fluid transition, over time, to a new form of ancestor-focused worship in the Jazira.

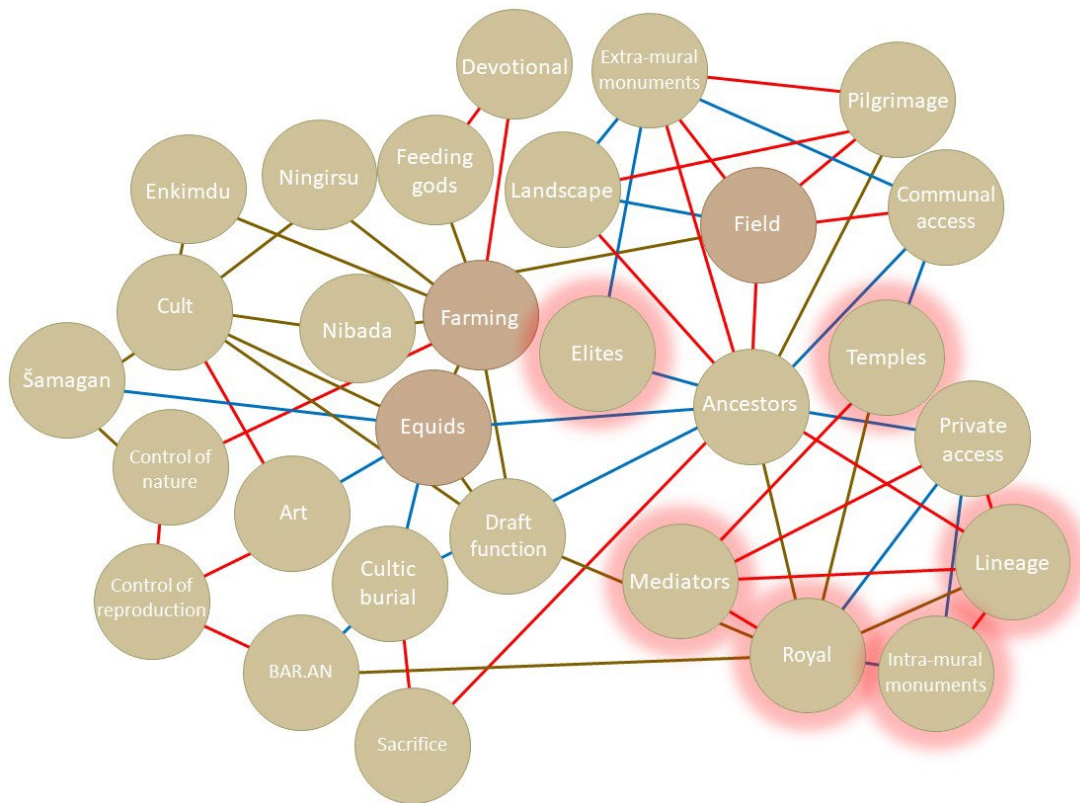


Figure 56 Farming, field, and fauna Rhizome. Tan lines are textually attested connections. Blue are archaeologically attested connections. Red are inferred connections. Red glow marks those plateaus stressed by the elite as ancestral cult is refocussed from communal predecessors to exclusive lineage

7.2.5. Connecting religious and cultic concerns

The interaction of religious and cultic systems (see 3.1.4 **The everyday transcendental**) is more explicit at Brak than in the previous two case studies (see 5.2.3. **Learning religion and internalising cult** and 6.5.1. **Religious preoccupations and cultic manifestations**). At Brak, and in Northern Mesopotamia more widely, ancestor worship and the cult-charged landscape was a primarily cultic affair. Farmers tilling the hinterlands' experiences of the ancestral land did not emerge from a detailed theological construction of the landscape, nor were their understandings of farming itself as a laudable activity with religious connotations explicitly rooted in conscious ruminations on the divine. The agricultural workers' experiences of ritual-related animals, however, was more religious. Finally, the new royal-lineage ancestor scheme was explicitly religious: fully integrated with the

elite, political power, and the formal temples. Consequently, the farmers going about their daily lives working the fields, predominantly experienced a cultic world, but into which religion gradually ebbed in a trickle-down religious system. Rather than directly interacting with the formal religious world of the elite, they continued to operate in their cultic world, into which new religious ideas pooled. As a result, what could have represented a stark theological rewrite became a comfortable and subtle realignment of everyday perspectives on the world.

7.3. Socialisation under changing social conditions

My Deleuzo-Guattarian approach has permitted two things, here. Firstly, it has allowed an explanation of how the shift from communal ancestors to royal lineages as recipients of worship in the Upper Mesopotamian EBA took place as a social phenomenon, a process that has been ignored in favour of how it was manifested. Secondly, it has provided the nuanced reconstruction of developments in place-meaning and how they take hold and are then reproduced, a process that previous approaches to socialising processes struggle to deal with (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**). The latter also presents a response to the fourth of my research questions, *how are preestablished landscape meanings transformed or developed?* (see **1.3. Research questions**).

Approaching the agricultural workers of Akkadian Nagar's experiences of routine interactions amongst the arable hinterland as *folds* within a *rhizome* has allowed us to connect everyday farm work to ancestral cult, a meaningful placescape, changing religio-political structures, and animals embedded with cultic significance. Farming as a concept was connected to named deities who taught farming to humans, were farmers' patrons, or represented the cereals that supported the city, and was also given back to deities in sacrifice. The fields that farming was practised in were situated in a placescape that was bound up in collective ancestral power, marked by their accessible monumental tombs, and passed through on pilgrimages that

visited them. Meanwhile, the equids that worked alongside farmers were themselves associated with a deity of the placescape's fauna, played cultic roles in art and life, were interred alongside ancestors, and specific species represented human control of nature and were a prestigious motif of their city. The *folded* experiences of life in the field were therefore experiences of all of these things and were inseparable from them. As they turned the soil, so they embedded it with the cultic power of the ancestors and the pantheon.

Thus far, the farmers worked in relatively stable social conditions that were continually reinforced by the farmers' experiences of those same conditions. Where the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach provides a fundamental contribution is in explaining how the elite successfully revised the cultic milieu at such a fundamental level.

When the elite sought to shift the focus of the ancestral cult from the community's shared lineage to the royal line of descent, the *folded* experiences of farmers helped establish, and then reinforce, the *new* ideological status quo. As the state authorities shifted focus towards temple worship, co-opted old shrines, and made private the ancestral dead, the equids with whom farmers interacted still drew upon ancestral *plateaus*, but the *plateaus* now held new *folds*. Now, they also included experiences of specifically elite ancestors and the royal mediators who now interceded with the dead and the divine. Consequently, farmers' *folded* experiences of the place *arrangement*, mediated by the same beasts that reinforced the previous paradigm, emerged from different relations. The *folding* of agricultural work both elevated new associations whilst preserving older traditions, allowing for the natural and fluid transition from one cultic preoccupation to another.

Chapter 8: Deleuze and Guattari versus competing approaches

In the last three chapters I have utilised a suite of Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts to explore how individuals in ancient Anatolia, the Southern Levant, and Northern Mesopotamia's perceptions of the environment were learnt, maintained, and developed through their engagements with that environment. By understanding people's perceptions of the world as being emergent from relations between *arrangements* in an interconnected *rhizome*, I identify their *folded* experiences to reconstruct *plateaus* that represent the conditions of experience in which those people lived. This allowed me to build custom frameworks with which I could interpret other experiences in the same society – essentially viewing one ancient experience through a lens built by identifying other ancient experiences. By doing this, I have been able to identify how Assyrian traders' domestic cult experiences of animal motifs informed their later experiences with real animals on trade routes and embedded meaning in place; how the roadside shrine experiences of traders in the Negev foreground the land, fertility, health, and ancestors, maintain the pre-established understandings of place; and how the ancestral associations of working animals in the Jazira mediated farmers' experiences of place through a period of religious change, helping to smooth the transition between different ancestral cult paradigms.

These case studies have therefore provided answers to the first four of the research questions set out in **Chapter 1** (see **1.3. Research questions**) 1) *can a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach allow nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and can these be tied explicitly to archaeological data?*; 2) *how is meaning first embedded in landscape?*; 3) *how is landscape meaning maintained and reinforced?*; and 4) *how are preestablished landscape meanings transformed or developed?*

At this point, I am conscious that most discussion chapters of theses turn towards drawing out commonalities in interpretation across the case studies, or to integrate them to provide a holistic interpretation. Rather than highlighting *commonalities in interpretation* across the case studies, however, I wish to consider *commonalities of evidence* and explore alternative theoretical approaches to those types of data. The primary goal of this thesis is to develop and demonstrate a theoretical approach and the purpose of theory 'is not to codify abstract regularities... [or] generalize across case studies but to generalize within them' (Geertz 1973: 26). As such, I do not believe highlighting similarities in interpretation is appropriate. Given the diverse chronological and geographical data, and the highly-contextual nature of the analyses, drawing out case-study similarities would not be especially helpful in any case. There is little to be gained in highlighting how EBA farmers in the Jazira and MBA traders in Anatolia were both socialised through interactions with animals. Given that my fundamental theoretical premise is that individuals internalise all experiences in a lifelong cumulative socialisation process, this is hardly revelatory. Similarly, there is scarce interest in drawing out how religious experience and place played important roles in shaping the ontologies of people in the ANE. This is the starting point for this investigation (see **1.2. Landscape and religion as socialisation mechanisms**), not an interesting outcome. Comparison between the case studies restricts me to surface-level observations about the outwardly similar components involved in socialisation in varied periods and regions, or the outwardly similar ideas that they led to. My target, however, is in discerning the contextual processes by which we get from one to the other.

Consequently, in this chapter I turn to my final research question, 5) *how does a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach compare with competing theoretical frameworks?*, and return to those approaches to socialisation and experiences of and interactions with materials, animals, and memory critiqued in **Chapter 3**. I do not return to phenomenological approaches to place experience because, as I argue in **3.4**.

Experiencing place, these are severely problematic and do not present a functional alternative. This return will allow me to show how my framework not only permits highly contextual and fine-grained interpretations of socialisation in the deep past, shedding light on rarely tackled processes like the creation of and development of social conditions (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**), but does so far more effectively than competing approaches.

8.1. Socialisation in the archaeological record

8.1.1. Building a data-theory bridge

Unlike habitus and structuration, and archaeological renderings of socialisation drawn from them, my approach builds a clear bridge between data and complex social processes. In **Chapter 3**, these frameworks were shown to be entirely valid as windows into how individuals come to understand their world and their place in it by way of their experiential relations with it. They stress the experience of the individual in building social conditions that thereafter form understanding and shape interaction with the world. Fundamentally, however, they are targeted at extant communities and rooted in direct observation and so unsuited to archaeological contexts, resulting in a data-theory divide. As the Deleuzo-Guattarian framework utilised here was formulated specifically to address this, and represents an effective lens through which to view archaeological data and repair those vague and problematic data-theory connections.

The approach advocated in this study is highly interpretative but also thoroughly grounded in data. As such, it builds the bridge between data and theory that is so often missing in theoretically aware archaeological research. The framework set out in **Chapter 4** reconstructs relations between humans and *arrangements* of material and metaphysical components, reconstructs the internalised emergent experiences that those humans had with them, situates them in groups of similar experiences

that exist within the hypercomplex relations of society, and uses these to hypothesise how those grouped experiences thereafter shaped future experiences, transferring themselves through time. Clearly, this is a highly theoretical process, but every step in this process is grounded in either archaeological or textual data, making for what we might think of as a robust evidentiary *chain of custody*, or rather a chain of interpretation.

The case studies have demonstrate this chain. The interpretations are all rooted in specific archaeological artefacts and places that comprised the placescapes of Anatolia, the Negev, and the Jazira, and the conditions framing ancient persons' experiences of them are drawn directly from a combination of those data and supplementary textual information.

For example, in **Chapter 5**, cult vessels depicting bulls, boars, and eagles, animals with divine associations and ritual meaning, were used to shed light on the meaning embedded in the placescape of MBA Anatolia inhabited by the same species through the emergent experiences of Assyrian traders who moved through them. The cult purpose of the vessels is strongly supported by their spatial relationships with cultic installations and paraphernalia, by the iconographic record, and by both contemporary and later texts. The cultic meanings and divine associations of the animal species are all derived from well-understood texts or iconographic sources. Meanwhile, their familiarity to Assyrian traders is demonstrated by their presence in dwellings in the Lower Town of Kültepe that also features archives belonging to named Assyrian merchants. The routes of the Assyrian trade network between Anatolia and Mesopotamia feature in large numbers of texts, and their reconstruction has been a long-term pursuit of philologists and historians. Though the interpretation of ancient routes presents many difficulties (see **2.4. Reconstructing ancient routes**), these text-based reconstructions coalesce over some stretches that are both topographical opportune and feature alignments of contemporary settlements. The real animals' habitat preferences are known in the

case of eagles and boars, or are dictated by arable and security concerns of settlements, and all lie on the identified route corridors. Consequently, whilst the thought processes of Assyrian traders must be interpreted, the evidence from which those interpretations are drawn is robust.

Similarly firm evidence forms the basis of the interpretations in **Chapter 6** and **7**. To understand how IA II Levantine roadside shrine experiences maintained perceptions of the placescape in **Chapter 6**, I drew upon the built environment of Horvat Qitmit, and the views that environment directed worshippers towards. Cult-loaded place ontologies, the ritual functions of the site, and forms of deities worshipped, are all drawn directly from the assemblage at Qitmit and from the wealth of textual material concerning Iron Age ritual in the Levant. Meanwhile, **Chapter 7** described how Tel Brak's EBA agricultural workers' relationships with their cult-infused hybrid-equid work animals mediated their understanding of their placescape. It showed how, through the shifting of the associations that the animals had with ancestors, that these agricultural workers' experiences of a communal placescape became experiences of a royal one. Again, this final interpretative step is highly theoretical, but it is rooted data. The agricultural workers can be situated in specific places by the identified route networks, their hybrid-equids agricultural functions and roles in ritual are also textually attested, and their association with ancestors is demonstrated by their interment in the ancestral monument at Umm el-Marra. That ancestral associations were shifted from communal to royal lineages is apparent from the co-opting of public temples and communal monuments by the elite. How agricultural workers experienced these animals on a day-to-day basis is once again interpreted, but it is thoroughly grounded in the evidence.

As such, through all my case studies, the interpretations can be followed clearly from data to reconstruction, addressing the fundamental failing of other models of socialisation applied to the deep past. Beginning with one *arrangement*, such as an animal-shaped vessel, my Deleuzo-Guattarian approach allowed me to identify its

relations, all of which are drawn from archaeological or textual data, consider how these were experienced by an individual who shared a dwelling with them, and then interpret how those experienced informed later ones with the same species which we can confidently suggest took place because that person's occupation dictated that they moved through those animals habitats. The specific experiences are hypothetical, and the emergent meanings are interpreted, but the vessels are attested in dwellings at Kültepe that were inhabited by Assyrians, the perceptions of the animals and cult practices are rooted in texts and iconography, the trade routes are delineated by a combination of texts and archaeological material, and the animals in the wild are situated in either natural habitats or pasture. This interpretative chain of custody constructs a clear and direct route that the interpret can follow from firm evidence to highly theoretical interpretation.

Consequently, the interpretations rest on robust data and the linear progression from archaeological material to reconstruction of social experience cuts through the fuzzy barrier that usually obscures archaeological explorations of socialisation. Other approaches may well come to the same conclusions as I have, by acknowledging that the structures that framed interaction with animals in MBA Anatolia or the habitus that contextualised place perceptions in the Iron II Negev were key to experience, but they would not provide clear mechanisms to reconstruct what those structures or habitus actually were, or how they were formed.

In addition to providing a bridge between data and interpretation, the Deleuzian approach has also allowed for nuanced and contextual explorations of how ancient individuals experienced the world, and how this experience contributed to their socialisation. Unlike habitus and structuration, which seek to interpret individuals' experiences, and therefore learning, of the world via models developed against other societies, the one used here seeks out experiences by considering them in the

light of those same people's other experiences²¹. By addressing how *folded* experiences are grouped in *plateaus* to form the conditions of experience, my Deleuzo-Guattarian approach represents a contextual framework that is built by the same data it is used to interpret. This allows for both intercultural variability of understandings of the world and its components and the intracultural fluidity and changeability of experience.

Furthermore, in reconstructing experience and allowing for, and explaining, its innate fluidity, this Deleuzo-Guattarian approach also permits the interpreter to extrapolate how individuals' experiences develop those same social conditions. This addresses the fundamental failing of other models of socialisation that assume, or require, stable social conditions and do not provide sufficient mechanisms for considering how they change (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**).

Contrasted with habitus or structuration, then, the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach developed in **Chapter 4** allows the interpreter to clearly link data and theory, interpret ancient experiences indicated by the material and textual evidence via their immediate personal and cultural conditions, and explain the emergence, maintenance, and development of those same conditions.

8.1.2. Experience in context

Key to developing nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes is situating experience in context. My approach's ability to interpret individuals' experiences through a framework that is not only capable of cross-cultural adaptation, but that is constructed directly from the context in which that

²¹ This may sound potentially circular but is better understood as a constantly reflective simultaneous development of framework and interpretation (see **8.5.1. Circularity**)

individual existed, presents a considerable aid in this regard. The fundamentally reflexive nature of my approach, which forces the interpreter to continually expand the *rhizome* by seeking out new *arrangements* and their components to build *plateaus*, demands that reconstructions of experience are rooted in reconstructions of social conditions. Consequently, those experiences are interpreted based on culturally contingent perceptions. This does not allow us to jump directly into the mind of the ancient individual, but it does help us see their world relative to its own parameters. It takes us much closer to the Assyrian merchant or Edomite trader than those phenomenological and cognitive approaches that dominate archaeological investigations of experience and make assumptions about the universality of human perception (see **3.4. Experiencing place**).

For example, in **Chapter 5**, when I set out how Assyrian traders' boar encounters created liminal and contradictory tensions between danger, impurity, and cleansing, my interpretations are rooted in the reconstruction of *contextual* experience. Setting out to understand the placescape *arrangement*, D+G compel me to consider components that informed individuals' experiences of it (animals), which in turn leads me to expand on other *arrangements* that informed animal experiences (animal vessels), and then to expand on components of animal vessels *arrangements* (ritual, deities), and so on. This chain of research, which is both demanded and facilitated by the theory, allows the reconstruction of experience to be developed directly from the hypothesised, but highly likely (see **8.1.1. Building a data-theory bridge**), previous experience and knowledge of the ancient experiencer. Building *plateaus* in this way means that previous experiences provide the interpretative framework for the analysis of new experiences. Consequently, all interpretations made are innately contextual.

Utilising a framework developed within the context of a specific society to interpret that same society presents an important opportunity in archaeological theory. It escapes the methodological hurdles of trying to project modern observations about

experience backwards or applying models of social behaviour and processes developed against extant communities. Rather than a model that can be lifted and shifted across regions and periods, my approach presents a set of principles that facilitates the analysis of ancient social experience, and therefore behaviour, in light of their framing social conditions that are themselves derived from that world.

8.1.3. The creation, maintenance, and development of social conditions

As a consequence of my Deleuzo-Guattarian approach's ability to extrapolate how individuals' experiences develop the same social conditions that lead to those experiences, it is highly effective in addressing how those conditions change. This addresses the fundamental failing of other models of socialisation that assume, or require, stable social conditions and do not provide sufficient mechanisms for considering how they change (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**).

The work of D+G, where it has been utilised in archaeology, revolves around emergent experience (see **4.1. Folded arrangements**): the relations between things and their meaning in that single point in space time. Where my approach goes further is in drawing upon other Deleuzo-Guattarian ideas, *folds* and *plateaus*, to provide a road into long term stasis and change in social conditions. Research questions 2-4 represented a three-pronged test of the effectiveness of my approach in addressing this and can be dealt with together. They asked: 2) *how is meaning first embedded in landscape?*; 3) *how is landscape meaning maintained and reinforced?*, and; 4) *how preestablished landscape meanings transformed or developed?* Fundamentally, the answer to all of these questions is the same: through individuals' experiences of relations. No specific cross-culturally applicable answer is presentable here as the answers are necessarily contextual and idiosyncratic. However, answers can be given to these questions in the context of the case studies, and generalised observations about how these processes take place can be outlined.

Approaches to place meaning tend to focus on identifying or interpreting places where meaning is already assumed (see 3.2. **Landscape, place, and meaning**). My analysis of Assyrian traders' experiences in **Chapter 5**, by contrast, shows how ideas internalised in one context could emerge in another, creating new meanings in the locales that encouraged them to resurface. *Plateaus* of *folds* built through individuals' experiences of animal-shaped cult vessels in their Kültepe homes provided the framing social conditions for later experiences with the represented species in the wild. The divine and ritual components of these animal-vessel *arrangements* were internalised as social conditions that informed later experience. Later, on the road, the traders found themselves in new contexts but presented with familiar motifs, and the experiences that emerged from the relations between the individual, the animal, and their previously learnt associations with that species in vessel form coloured the place in which they were encountered. This presents an explanation of how meaning can emerge seemingly *ex nihilo* in a new place: essentially, there are no new places or new meanings but instead individuals will understand the relations of a given new place in the context of their previous experiences.

The maintenance of social conditions has been a well-investigated phenomenon. It is the core of most investigations of socialisation, and so my contribution to socialisation processes is perhaps less significant here than in explaining social conditions' creation and development. However, this is where habitus and structuration are most functional, and the very idea of stasis seems anathema to an approach that stresses continuous and inescapable fluidity and transition, so it is important to stress the effectiveness of a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach in explaining the preservation of social ideas through time.

Essentially, social conditions persevere when the relations that encourage them to emerge and be *refolded* are most consistent and other relations and *arrangements* in the *rhizome* are insufficient to offset them. In **Chapter 6**, we saw how the

arrangements experienced by Edomite traders at the roadside shrine site of Horvat Qitmit reinforced preestablished perceptions of the surrounding placescape. The site, which sat high above the surrounding topography, oriented worshippers towards those surroundings and to their home in Edom to the south, whilst the ritual practices and apparatus drew attention to the land's cosmological importance, to its productivity, and to its ancestral properties. This repetitive messaging presented a stream of *folded* experiences that buttressed meaning, and that the traders then held with them as they continued travelling through the land. The social conditions that framed these experiences were the same ones that were invoked by them, presenting an emergent feedback loop that maintained perception.

Explaining how and why change in societies takes place is at the very heart of our discipline. It is also underserved by current approaches to socialising processes (see **3.3. Learning and reproducing social conditions**). An approach that explains transformations in how persons perceive their world is, therefore, an exciting opportunity. Put simply, this occurs when relations change significantly enough to identifiably alter emergent experiences.

This was demonstrated in **Chapter 7**. Agricultural workers in the hinterlands of Tel Brak spent their days with animals that were associated with ancestors, in an ancestral placescape. Initially associated with the communal ancestors that characterised EBA Northern Mesopotamian ontology, their work animals were later realigned with the specific ancestral lineages of the ruling elite. This had the effect of shifting the relations that held together the *arrangements* of the animals, work practices, and the placescape in which they resided. Instead of encouraging connotations of communal land and collective history to emerge from the *arrangements* with which the agricultural workers interacted, they began to foreground elite ownership and named predecessors. Initially, like the Edomite traders at Horvat Qitmit, Brak's farmers were exposed to a placescape whilst interacting with *arrangements* that stressed the meaning of that placescape and

therefore spent their days within an emergent feedback loop of experience. When the relations of those *arrangements* changed significantly, however, the emergent experiences changed in turn, and the placescape meaning transformed.

8.2. Experiencing materials, animals, and memory

My Deleuzo-Guattarian provides an improvement over other those frameworks derived from Giddens and Bourdieu in the archaeological record. It also works more effectively than other frameworks with which archaeologists have investigated recurrent components of the *arrangements* in my case studies. I will demonstrate this by returning to the approaches to materials, animals, and memory discussed in **3.5. Experiencing materials, animals, and memories**, and considering how they might have encouraged me to look at some of the evidence, and how this could have led to different interpretations. It will be clear that taking, for instance, a new materialist approach to the Kültepe vessels of **Chapter 5**, applying animal agency to the animals of **Chapter 5's** Anatolian rural places or the **Chapter 7's** Jaziran agricultural hinterlands, or the foregrounding memory in the places of Anatolia, the Jazira, and the Negev (**Chapter 5-7**) would provide little that my approach cannot do anyway, but present drawbacks that mine escapes.

8.2.1. New materialism and Kültepe vessels

If I was to embrace a new materialist perspective as reviewed in **3.5.1. Materiality and new materialism** then I might considering the Kültepe vessels of **Chapter 5** by following Weismantel and Meskell (2014) in foregrounding the innate properties of the clays used to form these objects. Employing such a method would have encouraged me, like Conneller (2011), to embrace the fluid vitality of substance to consider how the ability to transform clay from one state to another mimicked the conceptual transformation of the animals, which flitted between mundane species, divine representations, and functional vessels depending on their context. Whilst

the composition of clay tablets from Kültepe has seen investigation (e.g. Uchida et al. 2015), to my knowledge no similar work has been carried out on any animal vessels, but this data might allow the materialist investigator to make further observations about the specific qualities of the clays used, and contrast them with other options and their properties. I would also have been driven to address other uses of clay around the site. I might ask how other practices that involved the transformation of clay, such as the pressing of cuneiform characters into the tablets that comprise the archives of the lower town, informed understandings of the vessels. Clay was vital to the lives of the traders of Kültepe, and so centring the clays that formed the vessels may present an exciting interpretative avenue for the new materialist interpreter.

Fundamentally, however, with limitless space, a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach would demand consideration of these possibilities alongside other themes. A strictly new materialist one, by contrast, would prioritise them at the expense of other analyses. D+G's insistence on the contribution of all previous *folds* on all later ones, demands the exploration of the *plateaus* in which the ancient individual's *folded* experiences of clay lies. For the new materialists, on the other hand, the clay is an end unto itself, at least in theory²², even where it may not necessarily reveal much to the interpreter. The new materialist motif that is most apparent in the Kültepe vessels, for instance, the *transformative becoming* of clay, one that is in any case rooted in Deleuzo-Guattarian thought, does not seem to represent anything particularly important in a reconstruction of the ancient world. Clay, like metal, in that it can be transformed, is an excellent, illustrative example of *becoming* made manifest, but what does it really tell us about how an individual several millennia ago understood the world? Clay is fluid, and its fluidity is key to peoples' interactions with it, but

²² In practice, as I discuss in 3.5.1. **Materiality and new materialism**, effective analyses that are ostensibly new materialist go rather further than the materials themselves.

unless we draw upon myriad other threads of evidence it does not seem like that observation can get us very far.

The new materialists offer interesting perspectives on how we conceptualise matter and its affective power, and encourage us to redress human-thing balances, or indeed destroy human-thing dualities entirely, so that we might better focus on the relational flows and flux of the material world. However, this is conceptualisation for which the new materialists are indebted to D+G, and is assumed in a Deleuzo-Guattarian framework which necessarily places *rhizomatic* relations and constant change at its core. Furthermore, a new materialist perspective dictates a focus. Though it engages with the complexity of assemblages, by its nature it privileges the thing in the moment rather than the experience of the *folded* thing and its repercussions. A new materialist approach would offer my case studies nothing that a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach does not, but would risk tying my interpretive hands behind my back.

8.2.2. Animal agency in the Jazira and Anatolia

The discussion of animal agency and animal-centred analyses in 3.5.2. **Animals** demonstrates that a specialised framework is not necessary to comprehensively explore animals. However, the enthusiasm for foregrounding animals presented by its advocates does provide important redress to many archaeological studies' tendency to treat them as consumables, tools, or symbols. My case studies seek to treat the *presence* of animals, and importantly, their relations, as crucial active components of the placescape *arrangements* they reside in, but the stress does lie more on the meanings that emerge from human perceptions of those animals than on the animals themselves. It is interesting, then, to explore how leaning more towards the role of the animal's specific actions and characteristics might have developed my interpretations, and whether or not this would be more useful than my Deleuzo-Guattarian approach.

In doing so, however, I must still analyse animals from the perspective of the humans with whom they interacted. As argued above, I cannot deal with the animals as agents themselves, as I cannot see the world from the eyes of a non-human, whereas I have a wealth of textual and artefactual data that helps me at least reconstruct the glasses of the trader or farmer who worked with them. Were I to seek out the experience of one of **Chapter 5's** Assyrian trader's donkeys, I could not avoid anthropomorphising it, and would inevitably be closer to Winnie the Pooh's friend Eeyore than any real animal in ancient Anatolia. This said, the agential actions and behaviours of the animals may be discernible and so, with this caveat, I can consider how the place experiences of my Assyrian traders and Mesopotamian farmers would have been further illuminated by shifting my lens closer to the animals situated in the places they spent their lives in.

The wild animals encountered by traders passing through Anatolia would never be examples of Knight's serial interactants. However, the merchants enjoyed long-term relationships with their donkeys, even if their day-to-day handling was carried out by employees. The behaviour of specific animals would have had notable everyday impacts on the lives of the humans that worked with them. Perhaps an especially grumpy one needed to be given space, or muzzled like one of Recht's Mesopotamian examples, to prevent its biting people or other animals. In either case, the animals would have disrupted efficient progress, either by altering the formation of the caravan or needing special attention whenever donkeys were to be fed or watered. Perhaps some traders spent a lot of time with specific animals, or even had a favourite, and so built close, trusting, and reciprocal relationships like those described by Armstrong Oma. A pursuit of these animal actions or characteristics would certainly have added further colour to the reconstructions I presented in **Chapter 5**, though would be entirely hypothetical without specific textual accounts or archaeological evidence of muzzles or other animal control gear from 2nd millennium Anatolia, of which I am not aware.

In **Chapter 7**, again I could have taken the opportunity to further explore the relationships of farmers and specific equids or even BAR.AN, rather than these species as animal classes. Even more so than traders and their caravan animals, which could number in the hundreds, the close interaction of agricultural workers and small teams of draught animals created close relationships. The push and pull of the daily rhythms of the animals and the pressures of completing work must have also created tensions and stresses, perhaps resulting in harsh treatment and complex interactions with their essential fieldworking aides. Also like the Anatolian case, however, these would be extremely difficult to demonstrate archaeologically, and remain hypothetical.

Additionally, the acts of animals other than those encountered on the road or in the field might also be relevant, but only if I consider their *folded* consequences. For example, one Old Assyrian text records a trader being attacked by a pig and being left with a broken leg, thereby rendering him unable to travel (Barjamovic 2011: 27). It is easy to imagine how the fear, discomfort, and lost income associated with this pig informed the trader's experiences of later pigs. Obviously, an explicitly Deleuzian framework is not necessary to make the observation that someone would remember a frightening encounter with an animal and might be apprehensive about later interactions with the same species. However, a Deleuzian approach, given enough time, would *demand* that I considered it.

Whilst placing more focus on animals in my case studies would therefore have encouraged me to consider different aspects of my traders' and workers' place experiences, I am unconvinced that those interpretative threads would have revealed sufficient evidence to pull upon. Furthermore, once again, these are issues that a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach forces the interpreter to pursue should they have the time, or be targeting research questions concerning animals. The relations between humans and animals are, after all, *relations*, and are therefore fundamental to Deleuzian analysis. The repeated *folded* experiences of tending to animals or of

driving them with the plough would necessarily be the core of my case studies had my research questions revolved around socialisation and animals rather than socialisation and place experiences. Animal-centred studies, therefore, do not provide a methodological alternative, and certainly not a competitor, to the approach I set out in **Chapter 4**. They do represent a different, and interesting, topic, but it is not mine.

8.2.3. Memory in Anatolia, the Jazira, and the Negev

Unlike the discussions of material- and animal-centred approaches above, it is not necessary to return to the case studies to consider how a memory-focussed framework (see **3.5.3. Memory**) would illicit different conclusions to those I presented. Memory, as it is generally defined in anthropological or archaeological work, tends to represent culturally-constituted narratives experienced in the present, which all of my case studies deal with at length. At its vaguest, it is little different to 'social structure', and so is simply the internalised information grouped into *plateaus* that dominate all of my analyses. In more specific reconstructions, where it denotes particular reconstructions of the past associated with specific places or things, it is a component of an *arrangement*, which again, all of my case studies deal with extensively. Memory as a research topic therefore offers nothing that a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach does not, whilst a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach provides an answer to the difficulties of connecting individual and the collective memory, by addressing how persons internalise their experience of social memories through *folding*.

8.2.4. The metamethodology

In the discussion above I have contrasted my Deleuzo-Guattarian framework with those drawing on new materialism, animal agency, or memory, to components of the places that are recurrent in my case studies. This has shown that their strengths fit well within, or are in fact demanded by, my approach whilst their weaknesses

are resolved or reduced. Consequently, the framework I advocate presents a adaptable chassis upon which distinct methods can be integrated to form an adaptable and constantly-self-adjusting metamethodology.

For example, new materialism encourages interpreters to reduce anthropocentrism, return to the substances that comprise our datasets, foreground person and non-person relations, and stress the experience of those relations as key to the production of meaning. However, new materialist applications tend not to actually derive their interpretations from the materials themselves. Instead, they rely on context and supplementary information to shed light on how persons perceived the materials, or simply make assumptions about those perceptions without clear evidentiary links. Consequently, they are simply performing traditional archaeological analysis, and fuzzily connecting it to posthumanist ontologies. They do not provide anything resembling a method or theoretical approach that might be succinctly described and followed. Additionally, whilst their attention to flux and emergence is important, it does not help explain social learning nor allow us to follow how those relations themselves are formed and developed over time. My Deleuzo-Guattarian approach also stresses emergent experience, that theme in new materialism being drawn from D+G, but, by contrast, also provides a linear data-interpretation progression and uses the *fold* and *plateaus* to reconstruct the creation and transformation of relations.

Meanwhile, animal agency similarly asks us to flatten our ontologies and redress anthropocentric interpretations. By seeking out the animal agent, advocates hope to build more holistic and meaningful reconstructions of the past that are less prone to treating non-humans merely as calories, tools, or symbols. Unfortunately, fully addressing the animal agent is impossible as we are unable to perceive the world as anything but humans, and, whilst animals clearly inform human behaviours, arbitrarily fighting against anthropocentrism in a discipline that is fundamentally concerned with explaining human behaviours seems ill-advised. Consequently, a

Deleuzian approach foregrounding *rhizomatic* relations, which necessitates the exploration of all components of an *arrangement*, is in fact better suited to the analysis of animals in the past, as it drives us towards their relations with, and therefore their agential affect upon, persons and things without encouraging us to anthropomorphise them in an attempt to meet them as agents.

Lastly, memory represents a vague umbrella term for anything from 'culture' to 'commemoration' or even 'monument'. As such, it is most often a topic rather than an approach. My approach, which treats everything that might fall under the term as independent components of *arrangements*, innately deals with it as a matter of course. Most importantly, the area where memory is most in need of theoretical and methodological support, the link between the memory of the person and the group, is the very foundation of what I have developed my approach to address: the social learning process that results from *folded* engagements with the world through time.

Viewed together as methodological contributions, and whilst wearing Deleuzian spectacles, these approaches all look more like research themes than interpretative frameworks or theoretical ontologies. A Deleuzo-Guattarian approach is well-suited to investigating all of them, and indeed patches over their failings. In such an analysis, all that is needed to fit my approach to materials, and then animals and then memory, is to pick initial *arrangements* pertaining to them. If we wish to explore the role of donkeys in Second Millennium Anatolian trade, we simply start with donkeys and consider their relations, developing associated *arrangements* and the *plateaus* in which *folded* experiences of them are situated. If we are instead looking at the collective memory of ancestors in Early Bronze Age Northern Mesopotamia, then we can begin with the concept of ancestors, and move to their manifestations in communal monuments and so forth. In this way, a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach can encompass analyses of all things, depending on the perspective of the interpreter. It dispenses with data- or research-theme-specific approaches, instead

presenting an overarching framework that adapts itself to the task, and subject, at hand.

8.4. Everything is (and isn't) Deleuzian

The above discussion should not be taken to imply that all other approaches, or even those indebted to D+G (see 3.5.4. **Deleuzian debts**), are simply Deleuzian approaches under other names. This is not the case, but the forcibly holistic nature of such an approach does demand that the interpreter considers the full breadth of social relations and therefore will always stretch beyond those frameworks designed to address specific phenomena.

Reflecting on these themes through a Deleuzo-Guattarian lens, it seems that separating archaeological data or interpretative approaches in such a way is itself inappropriate. There is no need to consider specifically materials, animals, memory, or anything else, via dedicated interpretative frameworks. To do so is to needlessly separate components of the world that were experienced holistically by people in the past; to prise aspects of human experience from the whole. This tendency is perhaps difficult to shake in a discipline like archaeology which is so used to categorising results by material, be it lithic, bone, metal, or something else, or by usage, such as crafts, cooking, or cult, in excavation reports (Bradley 2012: 138). Material categories are so fundamental to archaeology, in fact, that we continue to describe long and richly-varied periods of the past by the characteristic materials: stone, bronze, and iron, and many of us have professional specialisations in particular material categories (Conneller 2011: 1-2). Doing so does not aid holistic analysis. This is not to say that it is inappropriate to be a ceramicist, archaeobotanist, or any other subdiscipline. Proper analysis and interpretation of specific datasets require specialist skills and knowledge. However, it is important not to allow ourselves to assume our perceptions of divisions between forms of matter map onto

those of people in the past (Conneller 2011: 2). Integrating these arbitrary evidentiary boxes is a particular strength of a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach.

By stressing the infinitely interconnective nature of the *rhizome* and acknowledging that emergent experience is rooted in the relations between all components of *arrangements*, a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach insists that the interpreter grants due attention to the affective power of all participants in meaning. As such, it glides over datasets we might instinctively separate and pulls them into a relations of experience. This approach does not simply allow for integration of diverse data, it *forces* it. I was not interested, for example, in animals at the beginning of this investigation, and yet they are key to two case studies because *rhizomatic* thinking drove me towards their important role in place experience.

This discussion has therefore served to drive home the effectiveness of the approach set out in **Chapter 4**. Not only has it proven effective in allowing nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and in addressing how place meaning is created, maintained, and developed, but it has proven more effective than other approaches designed to address specific components of those places. By providing an explanation for the processes by which we learn about the world and our place in it by reconstructing the specific social conditions of the individual experiencer and allowing for their fluidity, and thereby providing a hyper-contextual lens through which to consider their experience, it provides a avenue down which we can consider both fine-grain individual perception and society wide ideas. Furthermore, by necessitating the holistic analysis of the full complexity of the material and metaphysical worlds, and providing theoretical concepts that permit such analysis, it allows for the integration of diverse data to maximise interpretational potential. It is, at once, a bridge between data and theory, a ladder between the individual and the society, and door between disciplines.

8.5. Critiques and responses

My last task in this chapter is to consider a final few potential critiques that emerge from reflecting upon my approach's application to the three case studies. These revolve around a risk of circular reasoning; its potentially fuzzy conclusions; its need, depending on the evidence, for some interpretative jumps; and the *rhizome's* inherent unwieldiness that defies comprehensive analysis. A brief discussion of these concerns does reveal, however, that: the first is in fact simply realistic; the second is a universal component in all interpretative archaeologies; and the last is, for all intents and purposes, archaeology's nature. Finally, I also reflect on whether my interpretations might have been substantively changed, or improved, by conducting fieldwork in the placescapes analysed. The answer is that they almost certainly would, but probably not for the better.

8.5.1. Circularity

I have frequently highlighted that my approach reconstructs the social conditions in which ancient persons lived in order to interpret how those persons learnt, internalised, and experienced their world in light of those social conditions. Clearly, using the same data that I wish to interpret to construct the framework with which to interpret it leaves the approach open to accusations of circularity. However, as I set out in **8.1.2. Experience in context**, by exploring both social conditions and the experiences that they frame, my approach in fact presents a self-correcting and self-expanding methodology. As the exploration of *arrangements* leads the interpreter to other *arrangements*, and then to more, it shoves them down unexpected evidentiary avenues that must then be considered as social conditions that inform their experience.

For example, when I initially considered the placescape of the EBA Jazira I began with the hollow ways as an overt indicator of human-place interaction. That hollow

ways mark out routes into settlements that delineate fields drove me to analyse agriculture, then to animals used in agricultural work, then to their associations with ancestors, and then to the changes in ancestral cults across the period. Seeking to interpret human-animal relationships amidst an ancestral land that is intimately interconnected with ancestral perceptions with a framework chosen to address relict roads and movement would seem less than ideal.

Analysing the evidence using a model selected or developed before crucial evidence is revealed is at best recalcitrant. We have an obligation therefore to constantly adapt frameworks in light of evidence that makes them more finely grained, and because my approach prompts the collection of further data, it is essential that its framework reformulates itself in response. It is precisely this that is permitted by my approach that is constantly reflexive and adaptive. Rather than being circular, it is better understood as a corkscrew, winding back upon itself to reconsider the evidence as new data appears and pushing through it towards the next interpretation.

8.5.2. Fuzziness

An approach that stresses the fluidity and flux of emergent experience and meaning hardly lends itself to precise reconstructions of the ancient world, even whilst it hunts for specificity and nuance. Though my approach is rooted in specific data and archaeologically identifiable experiences, sensible and reasonable interpretations will never offer exact answers to questions about how individuals understood their world. My observations about the meanings experienced when Assyrian traders encountered animals in the city hinterlands, mountains, and plains of Middle Bronze Age Anatolia, for instance, are necessarily restricted to the emotions and connotations that their relations with the animal *arrangements* bring forth, rather than to hyperspecific allusions to individuals' specific memories and recall. I do not believe this to be a failing, however. Archaeologists should be wary of approaches

that permit 'idealized and artificially complete images of the past' (Weismantel and Meskell 2014: 234). Instead, frameworks like my own, which reflect social praxis' fuzzy edges and messy interactions seem significantly more valid. This approach jettisons static, idealized and artificially complete images of the past in favour of a more realistic picture: a necessarily fragmentary but inherently dynamic reconstruction of the complex, imperfect mosaic of social and material interactions that constitute a human society.

8.5.3. Interpretative jumps

To produce that imperfect mosaic, my approach reconstructs the social conditions from which experience emerges. Though this reconstruction is built with hard data, the interaction of those conditions is interpreted, and the core data may require more or less interpretative gap-filling depending on its quality and quantity. For instance, the Assyrian trade routes through Anatolia discussed in **Chapter 5** are unconfirmed, and the divine beings represented at Horvat Qitmit in **Chapter 6** are disputed. I am conscious that this adds an interpretative layer before the final analysis takes place, potentially reducing the rigidity of my data-theory bridge, and I concede that this represents a hurdle. I would suggest, however, firstly, that this is a feature of all interpretative archaeologies; and secondly that the robustness of my data-theory progression brings us much closer to the evidence than competing approaches. Provided we select the best evidentiary options we can, as I do by drawing upon the most agreed upon route corridor in Anatolia, and allow for these imprecision of data when we are obliged to, as I do by interpreting Horvat Qitmit's divine personages in both named and generalised forms, it is possible to minimise these lacunae. Consequently, the gaps to be filled require interpretative hops, rather than jumps, and we find ourselves on far stronger ground, for instance, than those seeking to understand ancient society by reconstructing its habitus, where the entire journey from data to theory is generally shrouded in mystery (see **3.3.2. The data-theory divide**).

8.5.4. The unwieldy rhizome

Another criticism that might be levelled at a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach is that it demands we situate experience in the *rhizome* and that the *rhizome* is so large and complicated that it can never be dealt with fully. Quite simply, this is true. It is incomprehensibly vast and impossibly complex and seeking to deal with the full scope of the relations that comprise society is not possible. However, that an approach acknowledges, and foregrounds, society's immense complexity does not seem like a problem. It is merely stating fact. All archaeology innately recognises this. Analysis must always stop somewhere. All studies have parameters and few investigations can fully analyse all the potentially relevant data. There will always be further to go, new data to consider, and more interpretation to integrate (see **9.3. Limitations and recommendations**). That there are too many possible avenues to assess is not a criticism of a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach, it is an observation of what archaeology *is*.

8.5.5. Not experiencing placescapes

A final challenge that seems reasonable to level at this dissertation concerns my methodology more than my theoretical approach. Would fieldwork in the Levant, the Jazira, or Anatolia, not have advanced the arguments presented in **Chapters 5-7**? Putting aside the logistic problems encountered during 2019 (see **Chapter 6** Footnote 19) and the military situation in Syria throughout this project which limited my ability to visit key sites and take illustrative photographs, I do not believe this to be the case. Visiting the placescapes I analyse would certainly have furnished me with different perspectives on their landscape position, the weather, the difficulty of the mountain ascents or the relief of the breeze, but these would be the subjective perspectives of a modern north-western European and barely relevant to the experiences of anyone in the ancient Near East (see **3.4. Experiencing place**). Even more problematically, it seems likely that these experiences would be

largely impossible to ignore in my later interpretations. I can hardly shut out my own folded experiences! Consequently, whilst visiting the case study placescapes would have been useful in gathering illustrative evidence, visiting them with a view to gathering evidence for analyses and interpretation would have inevitably biased my conclusions.

8.6. The efficacy of a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach

My case studies demonstrated that my Deleuzo-Guattarian theoretical framework can provide data-driven, nuanced reconstructions of the socialisation processes through which ancient place-meaning was created, maintained, and developed. In doing so, it demonstrates its ability to deal with issues that have either been ignored, like how place-meaning originates (**Chapter 5**), dealt with only vaguely, like the specific mechanisms of social learning and reproduction (**Chapter 6**), or impossible to explain with current approaches, like substantial development (**Chapter 7**). As such, I have already gone some way towards addressing my fifth research question, *how does a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach compare with competing theoretical frameworks?*

In this chapter, we have seen how my approach does several things better than alternative approaches to reconstructing socialisation processes in the ancient world. It provides a clear bridge between data and theory. It situates experience in context. It provides detailed reconstructions of how meaning is created, reproduced, and transformed. Finally, it holistically and effectively interrogates the data upon which these reconstructions are built.

This discussion has therefore served to drive home the effectiveness of the approach set out in **Chapter 4**. Not only has it proven effective in allowing nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and in addressing how place meaning is created, maintained, and developed, but it has proven more effective than other approaches designed to address specific components of those

places. By providing an explanation for the processes by which we learn about the world and our place in it by reconstructing the specific social conditions of the individual experiencer and allowing for their fluidity, and thereby providing a hyper-contextual lens through which to consider their experience, it provides a avenue down which we can consider both fine-grain individual perception and society wide ideas. Furthermore, by necessitating the holistic analysis of the full complexity of the material and metaphysical worlds, and providing theoretical concepts that permit such analysis, it allows for the integration of diverse data to maximise interpretational potential. It is, at once, a bridge between data and theory, a ladder between the individual and the society, and door between disciplines.

Chapter 9: Contributions and reflections

The goal of this dissertation was to draw out the religiously-loaded place perceptions of people in the ANE and identify how they were formed, reproduced through time, and developed. **Chapter 2 and 3's** review of studies conducted into the landscapes, religion, and socialisation of the ANE demonstrated a range of problems in need of redress. Landscape's meaningfulness usually finds itself relegated to passing comment in favour of descriptive presentations of data or systemic analyses of logistical and infrastructural processes. ANE religion, generally dominated by positivistic analyses, has generally revolved around textually attested practice, seen highly varied evidence over considerable geographical or chronological ranges dealt with vaguely *en masse* or in detailed isolation, or tended towards the homogenising of traditions and their dichotomisation with 'competing' ones. Socialisation processes are all but absent, and those few studies that acknowledge them either deal entirely with children, or catch the topic only as a by-product of another. Consequently, how religious place meaning might be created, maintained, and developed has not seen serious enquiry.

Unfortunately, **Chapter 4** showed that effective approaches to experience and socialisation with which we might investigate how persons learnt and understood religious place-meaning are sorely lacking. **Chapter 4** also demonstrated why the extant approaches to experience and socialisation were insufficient. Fundamentally, they either make problematic assumptions about the ubiquity of human experience, project modern ideas onto the past, or have been designed with communities that can be studied directly in mind and so fall apart when forced to interpret material evidence from the deep past. Consequently, the primary goal of this dissertation became the development of an approach to social learning that would not only address these problems and allow me to analyse the meaningfulness of ANE places,

but also permit broader analyses of the creation, perdurance, and transformation of all social phenomena.

This goal was addressed by harvesting Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy to build a framework that explicitly connects data and theory, allows nuanced interpretation of ancient experiences in their specific contexts, can address how those experiences contribute to the reproduction of social phenomena, and creates a methodology that both subsumes and improves upon on diverse archaeological approaches.

Having tested this approach against three case studies situated in the 3rd millennium Jazira, 2nd millennium Anatolia, and 1st millennium Negev, reflected upon its successes, and considered its advantages over other approaches, it has proven to be an effective and, importantly, easily applied approach. I will now set out the fundamental contributions of this work to both the archaeology of the regions and periods and to archaeological theory more generally.

9.1. Experiencing Ancient Near Eastern Placescapes

The primary goal of this thesis is the development of a theoretical approach that permits nuanced reconstructions of social learning processes to be drawn directly from archaeological data, but it has also presented new interpretations of how ancient individuals in Anatolia, the Negev, and the Jazira interacted with and perceived their world. Before reflecting on my theoretical and methodological contributions, then, it is worth highlighting this study's contributions to the archaeology of the 3rd millennium Jazira, 2nd millennium Anatolia, and 1st millennium Negev. The key new feature of all three analyses is explaining the socialisation processes through which place perception emerged and was reproduced or developed, but the perceptions themselves, and the contexts from which they emerged, are also new additions to the literature.

9.1.1. Anatolia

My reconstruction of Assyrians' trade experiences in Anatolia (**Chapter 5**) presents a new interpretation of Assyrian place perceptions and a more nuanced analysis of the cultic meaning embedded in both places and ritual *arrangements*. Work on ancient Anatolian landscape is dominated by terminology, logistics, and historical geography whilst investigations of MBA Anatolian religion are infrequent and lacking in context (see **2.2. Textual reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation** and **2.3. Archaeological reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation**). By showing that domestic cult experiences of Assyrian traders residing in Kültepe led to the emergence of cult-loaded, emotive meaning in the rural places with which they interacted on trade journeys, my investigation specifically addressed how merchants' meaningful ritual interaction informed their experiences of the trade routes that so many studies seek to delineate but rarely consider in more than functional terms. This represents an original interpretation of ritual meaning in MBA Anatolia, and a unique reconstruction of the experience of the Assyrian merchant.

9.1.2. Negev

Chapter 6 breaks new ground by reconstructing Edomite place-experience and illustrating a greater level of cultic continuity across the Southern Levant than previously recognised. Previous considerations of place experience in the Iron Age Southern Levant are essentially non-existent whilst explorations of cult practice and religious ideation tend towards identifying or challenging biblical accounts, presenting homogenising and dichotomistic reconstructions, and starkly contrasting Israel, Judah, and their neighbours (see **2.2. Textual reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation** and **2.3. Archaeological reconstructions of landscape, religion, and socialisation**). By seeking out the lived experience of cult-in-the-landscape, my reconstruction provides a new interpretative account and

addresses the paucity of non-textual interpretative accounts and rejects rigid delineations of national and traditions.

9.1.3. Jazira

My final case study contributes both a rare interpretative analysis of the hollow way network and an explanation of how the transition from communal to royal ancestors as the focus of ancestral cult in EBA Upper Mesopotamia was made possible. Human-place interactions manifested in hollow ways has been a popular topic in archaeological studies of the Jazira, but these have generally been data-collection exercises or occasional explorations of the network's repercussions for field systems (see 7.1.3. **The agricultural hinterland**). Meanwhile, explorations of cult often flag the ancestral focus of Northern Mesopotamian populations (see 7.2.4. **Socialisation and the ancestral paradigm shift**) but the mechanisms via which this shift was fitted into the public consciousness has, to my knowledge, never been tackled. **Chapter 7** both provides an experiential analysis of the agricultural places marked out by the hollow ways and an explanation of how the people of Tell Brak were encouraged to accept a new ancestral paradigm through their experiential interactions with place.

All three case studies have provided novel, nuanced, and specific interpretations of the intersection of place and religious experience, and their relationship with social learning processes. They describe how individuals' internalised experiences informed how they read, understood, and experienced the relations they encountered later. My main contribution does not lie in these reconstructions, however, but in the approach that permits the analysis of these experiences.

9.2. Interpreting ancient socialisation

Whilst my initial goal in this study was to address the interpretational poverty of research into perceptions of Near Eastern landscapes, it quickly became apparent

that such a project was largely impossible without the development of a suitable approach to how individuals experienced, internalised, and understood those landscapes. Established models of socialisation in archaeology are borrowed from anthropology and sociology, subjects with direct access to the societies they investigate, and therefore present several problems: they are ill-suited to studies reliant on material evidence, and present opaque data-theory connections when forcibly applied in such investigations; they assume comprehensive knowledge of social context; and they assume stable social conditions and so struggle to deal with large-scale change. Consequently, my primary task became the development of an archaeology-specific approach to ancient social learning processes that could also reconstruct the social conditions that framed them and allow for and explain their development over time.

The Deleuzo-Guattarian framework I set out in **Chapter 4** makes several significant contributions in this regard. These are detailed at length in **Chapter 8** but are comprised of four key achievements.

- 1) by seeking out the archaeologically identifiable experiences of individuals with specific places and objects, the framework allows the interpreter to extrapolate the meanings that emerged from other experiences, thereby building a bridge between data and interpretation;
- 2) by seeking out individuals' internalised experiences of *arrangements* it permits the reconstruction of the social conditions that cumulative experiences formed, and allows us to interpret persons within their idiosyncratic social contexts;
- 3) by allowing for the accumulation of experience, and the consequences this has for relations, it continues to function in light of, and explain, large-scale social change.

Finally, as a by-product of developing an approach focussed on the meaning that emerges from the experience of relations between all things in the hypercomplex *rhizome* of society, my approach is also innately holistic and adaptable. As such:

- 4) by treating all relations as key to the emergence of meaning, and providing a mechanism to examine those, it provides a holistic methodology for the analysis of diverse data and varied research questions.

Together, these key contributions make my approach more robust, effective, satisfying, and, perhaps most importantly, more easily actioned in archaeology, than its main socialisation competitors, habitus and structuration, or those approaches designed to address the human-thing interaction that provides the basis for socialisation processes.

9.3. Limitations and recommendations

Testing my Deleuzo-Guattarian approach against the case studies in **Chapters 5-7**, and contrasting it against competing options in **Chapter 8**, has shown that it can offer nuanced and specific reconstructions of complex social processes, and do so better than other approaches that have thus far found traction in archaeology. It is not flawless, however, and it is important to raise those issues we must be aware of in utilising this framework and draw attention to the limitations of this specific study. These are primarily rooted in my initial goal of exploring the cult-loaded meaning of Ancient Near Eastern landscapes: testing my approach by investigating the same theme means they have not tested the approach against social phenomena beyond landscape and cult meaning, nor against prehistory. Additionally, I believe the difficulty in depicting the *rhizome* remains a hindrance. However, these can hopefully be addressed with further testing and experimentation in the future.

9.3.1. Beyond place, beyond cult

The intersection of place, religious experience, and socialisation (see **1.2. Landscape and religion as socialisation mechanisms**) makes for an apt test of an approach that seeks to address social learning processes. That place and religious experience were ubiquitous components of ANE lives also makes them suitable. Additionally, though interpretative analyses of ANE landscape and religious experience are few, the data is considerable, and its collation and positivist discussion is commonplace. As such, cult-loaded perceptions of the landscape fitted this study well even after my primary purpose moved from them to developing an approach to social learning. However, despite religious meaning being a ubiquitous component of social experience in ancient Anatolia, North Mesopotamia, and the southern Levant, it is only one and the approach must be applied on other datasets. Other ubiquitous, time-intensive processes such as textile production or food processing seem good candidates for this. The nature of a Deleuzo-Guattarian analysis that is continually driven toward new and unexpected data that are connected in the *rhizome* would address this naturally if given time, but the nature of most studies do not provide such scope as to allow this to address itself. As such, further testing of my approach against different aspects of society is required to more comprehensively demonstrate its effectiveness. Fundamentally, like most archaeological analyses, it simply needs *more*.

9.3.2. Prehistory

More significant than the specific data utilised may be the region and period addressed. The availability of evidence of place interaction and religious experience in the Bronze and Iron Age Near East makes for an evidentiary goldilocks zone. In particular, the availability of, and enormous secondary literature dealing with, texts has been key to several of my arguments. Even more important than testing against social phenomena beyond place and cult, then, is testing prehistoric contexts. I

believe I have set out an approach that will function against all archaeological evidence, however sparse, but am also aware that the interpretative hops (see 8.5.3. **Interpretative jumps**) may edge back towards jumps as the evidence reduces.

One possible solution to the interpretative scaffolds that might need to be added to our data-theory bridges in such circumstances, and perhaps to the implication of confidence in many archaeological narratives, might come to us from the legal profession²³. The addition of a fuzzy-to-hard scale of archaeological narrative, not unlike the legal burden of proof that slides, in the UK, from ‘more likely than not’ to ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ may make for an honest and open way of reconstructing the experiences and perceptions of persons situated in societies for which our evidence is paltry. Simply recognising that some of our interpretations are built on stronger data than others, and accepting, and making explicit, that certain conclusions or reconstructions are fuzzy or reliant on less refined data would go some way to avoiding the pitfalls of implying more certainly than is warranted.

9.3.3. **Wielding the rhizome**

Finally, a problem I have wrestled with for some time, is the difficulty of depicting the *rhizome*. Quite frankly, depicting a web of all relations between all things on a societal scale in two dimensions is very difficult. Doing so whilst seeking to present its fluidity, let alone also make it discursively useful, has proven entirely beyond me. Consequently, I opted for detailed explanation and incredibly simplified schematic illustrations for convenience’s sake (see 4.2. **Plateaus in a rhizome**) but feel the approach would be rendered more easily and intuitively with more effective

²³ I am wholly indebted for this idea to ex-solicitor and archaeology student Paul Burns, whose presentation on *Lessons for archaeologists from the world of law* at the University of Glasgow on 30.01.2020 led to a very interesting discussion around this topic.

illustrations. This is a key hurdle I hope to work on in future publications. Probably for some time.

9.4. Research questions (reprise)

Before concluding, then, it is worth returning to those research questions I posed as tests of my approach in **1.3. Research questions**. All five are addressed in detail through the thesis, so this brief section provides extremely concise responses but functions more as a convenient 'where to find the answers' than a restatement of the them.

Those research questions were:

- 1) Can a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach allow nuanced and specific reconstructions of ancient socialisation processes, and can these be tied explicitly to archaeological data?
- 2) How is meaning first embedded in landscape?
- 3) How is landscape meaning maintained and reinforced?
- 4) How are preestablished landscape meanings transformed or developed?
- 5) How does a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach compare with competing theoretical frameworks?

The first can simply be answered in the affirmative. My approach has allowed for the nuanced and specific reconstructions presented in **Chapters 5-7**, and all are thoroughly grounded in material evidence. The effectiveness of my approach in binding data to interpretation is drawn out in **8.1.1. Building a data-theory bridge** whilst its ability to interpret the deeply idiosyncratic nature of socialisation process with careful attention to their specific contexts is explored most comprehensively in **8.1.2. Experience in context**. The second, third, and fourth questions require highly contextual answers, which are provided in **Chapter 5**, **6**, and **7** respectively and

ruminated upon in **8.1.3. The creation, maintenance, and development of social conditions** but, fundamentally, the *how* in all three cases is 'via *folding*'. Lastly, question 5 is in part answered simply by my being able to present the nuanced, specific, and data-led interpretations of Chapters 5-7, but is directly dealt with when I explore what using other approaches would have meant for my case studies in **8.1. Socialisation in the archaeological record** and **8.2. Experiencing materials, animals, and memory**.

9.5. Archaeological rhizomes

Having begun this investigation hoping to explore the intersection of religious experience and place meaning in the Ancient Near East, this study came to develop an entirely new approach to how individuals experience, internalise, and learn the world around them. Utilising Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy, I constructed a theoretical framework that allows the finely-grained, contextual analysis of individuals' experiences and their consequences for social learning processes and, by extension, their cumulative effects on societal motifs and perceptions.

This new approach has allowed me to present new, nuanced interpretations of how individuals in Middle Bronze Age Anatolia (**Chapter 5**), the Iron Age Southern Levant (**Chapter 6**), and Early Bronze Age North Mesopotamia (**Chapter 7**) saw their world and how these perceptions were formed, maintained, and developed. These contributions expand our knowledge of the three regions and their populations' understandings of their world, but more important is the contribution of Deleuzo-Guattarian ideas to archaeological theory.

The Deleuzo-Guattarian preoccupation with the emergence of experience from relations, and their concepts of the *arrangement*, *fold*, *plateau*, and *rhizome*, form the core of my approach offer substantial benefits for archaeological analysis. They allow the archaeologist to build a robust and transparent connection between

evidence and interpretation; situate ancient experience in its specific social context; and trace how these experiences accumulate to form and reform perception and link personal interactions to society-wide phenomena. Perhaps most importantly, they also represent an all-encompassing methodology that can both incorporate other forms of analysis whilst filling in their own interpretative failings. Their stress on fluidity and flux pushes the interpreter to keep returning to the data, circling back to reassess their material as new evidence appears, forming a self-correcting and innately adaptive framework that also pushes us towards holistic data collection. By permitting disparate approaches to coexist, and forcing the continual revisiting of our evidence and analyses, they bring to light archaeology's own *rhizomatic* nature. It is a tangled web of interpreters, institutions, publications, approaches, crafts, narratives, politics, legal codes, and so on, all interacting with millions of data, from which meanings emerge. The application of their oeuvre to archaeological investigation has, I believe, genuinely transformative potential, which I hope has been sufficiently demonstrated here. Michel Foucault (1998 [1970]: 343) once remarked that 'perhaps one day, [the 20th] century will be known as Deleuzian'. It isn't, but, at least amongst archaeologists, the 21st should be.

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