a temporary disturbance. The propensity for disequilibrium is a sort of sociocultural rigidity or brittleness. Other aspects of sociocultural systems are more resilient and reflect a primary concern with long-term survival. Behavioral qualities that can be associated with resilient sociocultural systems are an abilities to deal effectively with contingencies of many sorts. Some of this resilience comes from the alliances and relationships that these peoples have with those who surround them, especially peoples with significantly different forms of adaptation from their own. Such sociocultural systems survive because they are able to successfully negotiate within a dynamic historical setting, in a world that is constantly in flux.

The sociocultural system I have described for prehistoric Gujarat includes those on the "farming-pastoralist" continuum as well as the hunter-gatherers. This was a system with great resilience, or survivability, since it is still in evidence today.

A TALE OF TWO *OIKUMENAI*: VARIATION IN THE EXPANSIONARY DYNAMICS OF ʿUBAID AND URUK MESOPOTAMIA*

GIL J. STEIN AND RANA ÖZBAL

ABSTRACT

The last few decades of research have documented two major periods of expansion by the earliest complex societies of Mesopotamia—the ʿUbaid ranked polities of the sixth and fifth millennia and the Uruk states of the fourth millennium BC. In both periods, Mesopotamian material culture styles were broadly distributed in neighboring regions of Syria, southeast Anatolia, and Iran. In each case, architectural, ceramic, and artifactual commonalities of the ʿUbaid and Uruk horizon styles help define an oikumene or interaction sphere. Although some researchers argue that both periods can be explained as eras of Mesopotamian colonial expansion, we argue here that each oikumene had a fundamentally different expansionary dynamic and mode(s) of socioeconomic organization. A contextual analysis comparing different regions shows that the ʿUbaid expansion took place largely through the peaceful spread of an ideology, leading to the formation of numerous new indigenous identities that appropriated and transformed superficial elements of ʿUbaid material culture into locally distinct expressions. Volumes of interregional trade were low, and population movements

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were minimal. By contrast, the Uruk expansion was an actual colonial phenomenon, involving the founding of Mesopotamian trading enclaves among preexisting local polities and emulation by local groups in the so-called peripheral areas. Relations between Uruk colonists and local polities varied from coercive to cooperative, depending on the distance from Mesopotamia and the degree of preexisting indigenous social complexity. Once the basic differences between the ʿUbaid and Uruk oikumenai are recognized, we can develop more accurate models of variation in the political economies of early Mesopotamian complex societies.

INTRODUCTION

Among Bob Adams's greatest contributions to the anthropological-archaeological understanding of ancient Mesopotamia have been his emphasis on broad regional syntheses (Adams 1966; 1972b) and his clear focus on the need to explicitly examine the development of complexity in this area as a series of historically grounded social transformations (Adams 1981; 1989; 2004). In that spirit, we offer the following essay as a tribute to a scholar who has inspired us and strongly influenced the orientation of our research.

EARLY MESOPOTAMIAN HORIZON STYLES/ INTERACTION SPHERES/OIKUMENAI

The last few decades of research have documented two distinct major periods of expansion by the earliest complex societies of Mesopotamia: the ʿUbaid ranked polities of the sixth and fifth millennia and the Uruk urbanized states of the fourth millennium BC. In both periods, southern Mesopotamian material culture styles spread far beyond their region of origin in the southern alluvium and were broadly distributed in neighboring regions of north Syria, southeast Anatolia, and western Iran. In both cases, architectural, ceramic, and artifactual commonalities of the ʿUbaid and Uruk horizon styles have been used to identify geographically extensive and long-lived interaction spheres or oikumenai, covering more or less the same territory. Although some researchers argue that both periods can be explained as eras of Mesopotamian colonial expansion (for example, Oates 1993; J. Oates and Oates 2004b), we argue here that each interaction sphere had a fundamentally different expansionary dynamic marked by strikingly different effects on the social identities of the indigenous groups who participated in these networks. In this paper, we show the contrasts between the ʿUbaid and Uruk oikumenai by examining the social contexts in which these two Mesopotamian styles of material culture were selectively used and translated into local cultural schemes.

THE ʿUBAID (CA. 5800–4200 BC)

In the arid alluvial zone of southern Mesopotamia, the ʿUbaid assemblage first developed in the early sixth millennium BC and lasted until about 4200 BC. Best known from the sites of Eridu (Safar, Mustafa, and Lloyd 1981) and more recently Oueili (Huot 1983; 1987; 1996b), the ʿUbaid material cultural assemblage (Figure 92) includes brown-painted and reduction-fired (often greenish) ware ceramics made on a slow wheel, large baked clay "nails" or "mullers," clay sickles, and highly distinctive cone-head clay figurines (Perkins 1949: 73–90; Redman 1978: 247–250). ʿUbaid houses have a characteristic tripartite form with a T-shaped or cruciform central room (Aurenche 1981: 201; Forest 1983). The ʿUbaid period sees the earliest appearance in southern Mesopotamia of clearly ritual public architecture in the form of standardized rectangular temples oriented to the cardinal points and constructed with niched facades, buttresses, altars, and offering tables (Roaf 1984; Safar, Mustafa, and Lloyd 1981: 86–114; but compare Forest 1987 for an alternative interpretation of temples).

In sociopolitical terms, several lines of evidence suggest that ʿUbaid Mesopotamia was organized as a series of small-scale ranked societies that we can characterize as chiefdoms, grounded in corporate (Blanton et al. 1996) or communal modes of leadership (Akkermans 1989; G. Stein 1994b). Broad horizontal clearances at the central Mesopotamian ʿUbaid site of Abada suggest a pattern of community organization with freestanding houses showing a great deal of variation in economic status, as inferred from both house sizes and artifact inventories (Jasim 1985: 202–203; 1989).

In the early to mid-fifth millennium BC, the distributions of southern ʿUbaid pottery, architectural styles, and other artifact classes spread widely beyond the southern alluvium, forming a horizon style that extended across an astonishing distance of 1800 kilometers, from Cilicia on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, across southeast and south-central Anatolia, north Syria, and the Iraqi Jazira, into southwest Iran, and down the western shore of the Persian Gulf into what is now Saudi Arabia (Oates 1983; J. Oates and Oates 2004b; Yoffee 1993b) (see Figure 93). ʿUbaid styles can be found together across this broad area at sites along the Persian Gulf (Frifelt 1989; Oates 1983: 255–256, e.g., H3; Carter et al. 1999; Carter and Crawford 2001; 2002; Masry 1974; Roaf 1976), as well as at numerous northern sites in Iraq, Syria, and southeast Anatolia including Tepe Gawra (Tobler 1950), Hama (Fugman 1958: 14–22; Thuesen 1988: 90–93;), and Değirmentepe (Esin 1989; 1998; Esin and Harmankaya 1986; 1987; 1988).

The stylistic similarities in ʿUbaid pottery as well as the floor plans of public and private buildings excavated at ʿUbaid sites in the southern Mesopotamian heartland, and in the northern sites led early researchers to view the ʿUbaid as two slightly varied renditions of a homogeneous culture complex

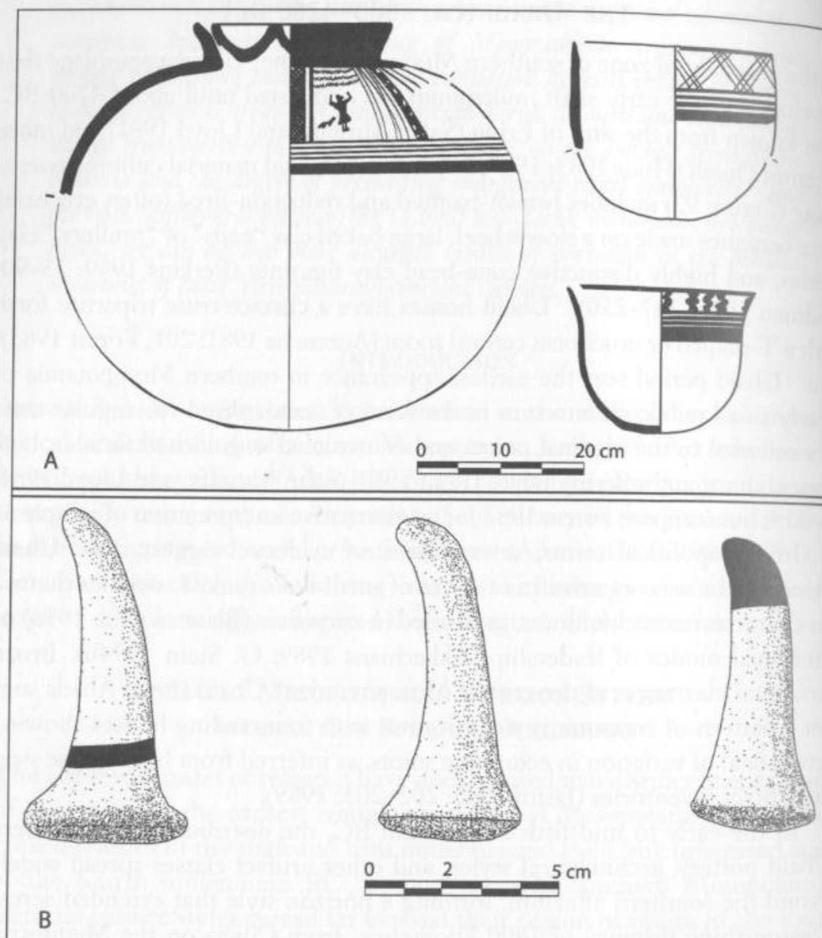

Figure 92. Examples of ʿUbaid material culture. (A): After Roaf 1989: figs. 4, 10; (B): after Jasim 1985: fig. 58b, f, g.

(Oates 1960; J. Oates and Oates 2004b: 180; Perkins 1949; Roaf 1990: 51–56). In addition, the spread of ʿUbaid assemblages was perceived as originating from a single identifiable south Mesopotamian source to the northern peripheries and replacing the preceding local Halaf culture (Mallowan and Rose 1935: 14; Mellaart 1982: 7; Redman 1978: 251–253). This perception led some researchers to suggest that northern ʿUbaid sites were in fact southern Mesopotamian colonies, established for the asymmetrical exchange of raw materials and most probably inhabited by an immigrant southern population who maintained close ties with the parent societies of lowland Mesopotamia (Esin 1985b: 257; 1989; Oates 1993: 409–410; J. Oates and Oates 2004a: 184; 2004b: 95–99; Yakar 1985: 336; but compare Thuesen 2000).

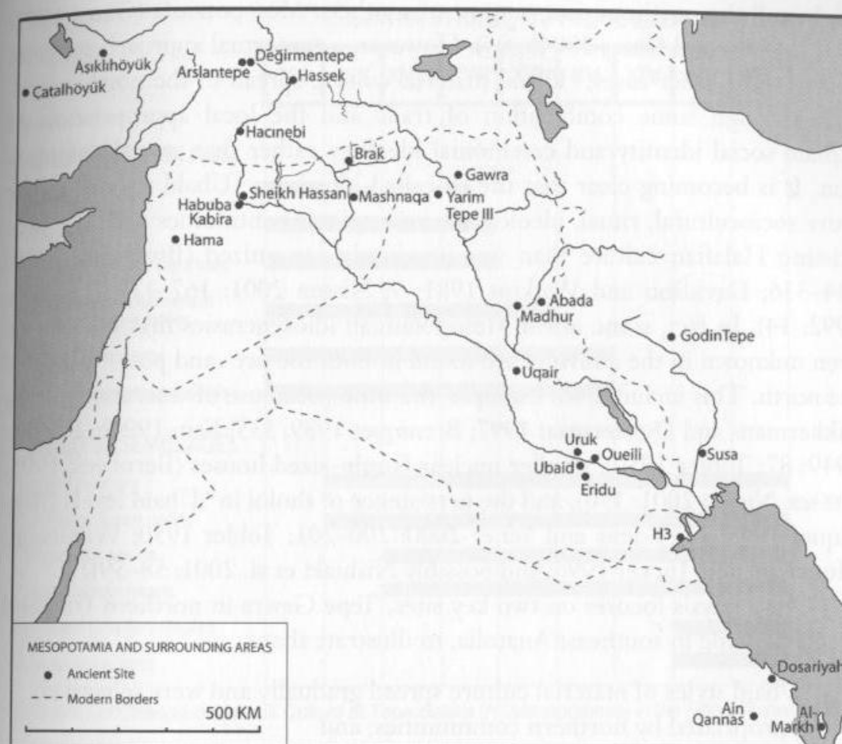

Figure 93. Map showing the location of sites mentioned in the text.

Traditional archaeological models of colonization assume that artifacts or architectural types define a cultural entity that is more or less identical wherever it occurs (for example, Mellaart 1975). The "colonial" material assemblage has been viewed as a series of discrete items without regard for variability in the interrelationships or the social context of their form, practice, and meaning.

However, more recent developments in the comparative archaeology of culture contact processes (Cusick 1998; Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff 1998; Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002; G. Stein, ed. 2005) suggest that the appropriation and use of material culture is complex, selective, and contextually dependent. In the case of the spread of ʿUbaid material culture, when one examines the social contexts of artifact use, the resultant picture shows great regional variation in the forms of contact and their material correlates. At the actual boundary between lower and upper Mesopotamia in the Syrian steppe, we may well have limited evidence suggestive of migration at the site of Mashnaqa (Thuesen 2000) and possibly other sites in the Khabur (Hole 1997: 43). It is also possible that southern migrants were present at Brak as well, since this site functioned in later periods as a "gateway community"—what we

might call the northernmost outpost of southern Mesopotamia (Oates 1987: 193; J. Oates and Oates 2004b: 95). However, a contextual approach suggests that in most other cases, ʿUbaid material culture spread to the north peacefully through some combination of trade and the local appropriation of ʿUbaid social identity and ceremonial ideology rather than actual colonization. It is becoming clear that the so-called Northern ʿUbaid sites show far more sociocultural, ritual, ideological, and stylistic continuities with the preexisting Halafian culture than was previously recognized (Breniquet 1989: 334–336; Davidson and Watkins 1981: 9; Nissen 2001: 167–170; Thuesen 1992: 14). In fact, some north Mesopotamian idiosyncrasies that are rare or even unknown in the alluvium are found in both the pre- and post-ʿUbaid of the north. This includes, for example, the widespread use of seals and sealings (Akkermans and Duistermaat 1997; Breniquet 1989: 335; Esin 1994b; Perkins 1949: 87; Tobler 1950), smaller nuclear family–sized houses (Bernbeck 1995; but see Nissen 2001: 170), and the persistence of tholoi in ʿUbaid levels (Breniquet 1991: 25; Edens and Yener 2000: 200–201; Tobler 1950; Wilkinson, Monahan, and Tucker 1996; and possibly Nishiaki et al. 2001: 58–59).

Our analysis focuses on two key sites, Tepe Gawra in northern Iraq and Değirmentepe in southeast Anatolia, to illustrate that:

- ʿUbaid styles of material culture spread gradually and were selectively appropriated by northern communities; and
- those elements of ʿUbaid architecture and other classes of material culture that spread to the north were transformed and used in everyday practice in ways that were fundamentally different from superficially similar sites with ʿUbaid material culture in southern Mesopotamia.

The site of Tepe Gawra in northern Iraq provides one of the best data-sets with which to understand the nature of the ʿUbaid *oikumene* (G. Stein 1991). Gawra is a small, 2.5-hectare mound whose long stratigraphic sequence documents the transition from Halaf to ʿUbaid (Tobler 1950). Stratum XX is the Halaf occupation. In the succeeding Strata XIX to XII, ʿUbaid material increases in frequency, while Halaf artifacts become progressively scarcer, and eventually disappear.

To understand the significance of both the selection of elements of the southern Mesopotamian ʿUbaid assemblage and the rate of their acceptance, it is useful to separate the *public* from the *personal* components of cultural identity (Bentley 1987; see, for example, Wiessner 1983 for a comparable discussion of archaeological style). The perception of self in relation to the larger community can be viewed as a form of *public* identity, conveyed through highly visible social domains (Wiessner 1985: 161–162; Wobst 1977) as reflected in ceramics, architecture, ritual paraphernalia, or badges of rank and accessible to many people at an intermediate social distance. *Personal* identity, on the other hand,

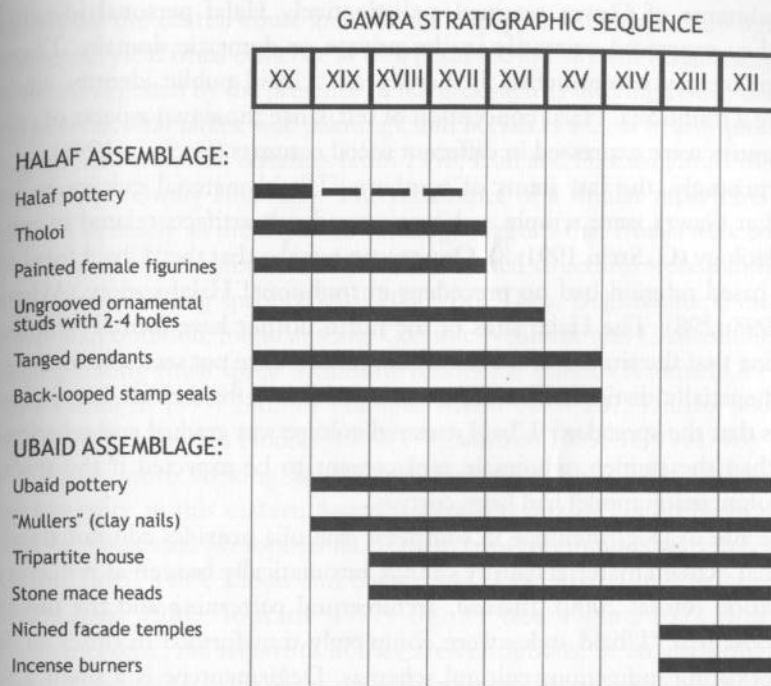

Figure 94. Patterns of change from Halaf to ʿUbaid material culture at Tepe Gawra (northern Iraq) from Stratum XX to XII.

refers to the definition of the self in the more circumscribed or domestic domain and is conveyed through small items of personal adornment often found in contexts involving minimal social distance.

Interestingly, the first markers of Halaf identity to disappear at Tepe Gawra and become replaced by their ʿUbaid counterparts are Halaf ceramics and house form, both reflecting community affiliation as an aspect of *public* identity (G. Stein 1991). Similarly, larger, highly visible stone mace heads—badges of rank indicative of ʿUbaid *public* identity (G. Stein 1994b)—also appear at a relatively early date in Level XVIII. However, it is significant that the most persistent and longest lived Halaf artifacts are smaller-sized markers of *personal* identity—seals, sew-on ornamental studs, and tanged pendants, items that were most visible in face-to-face interaction (G. Stein 1991:7, Figure 94).

In short, the public and domestic aspects of cultural identity at Gawra seem to have changed at different rates. People quickly took on markers of ʿUbaid identity in the public domain, especially in contexts relating to community affiliation and hierarchical social status. However, at the same time,

the inhabitants of Gawra retained a distinctively Halaf personal identity, which they expressed primarily in the private or domestic domain. There need not be any contradiction in having an 'Ubaid public identity while retaining a traditional Halaf conception of self, since these two aspects of cultural identity were expressed in different social contexts (G. Stein 1991).

Surprisingly, the last items of southern 'Ubaid material culture to be adopted at Gawra were temple architecture and cult artifacts related to religious ideology (G. Stein 1991: 8). One reason may be that the 'Ubaid form of temple-based religion had no precedent in traditional Halaf society (Akkermans 1993: 298). The Halaf sites of the north do not have formal temples, suggesting that the ritual and the domestic spheres were not seen as conceptually and spatially distinct. The alien nature of this 'Ubaid ritual innovation suggests that the spread of 'Ubaid material culture was gradual and selective, rather than the sudden, wholesale replacement to be expected if the traditional colonization model had been correct.

The site of Değirmentepe in southeast Anatolia provides additional evidence that 'Ubaid material culture cannot automatically be seen as reflecting colonization (Özbal 2000). Instead, architectural patterning and the use of space show that 'Ubaid styles were completely transformed in order to fit into preexisting indigenous cultural schemas. Değirmentepe is a small 2.5-hectare mound near Malatya in the upper Euphrates of eastern Turkey. Excavations between 1979 and 1986 exposed a broad area of the site dating to the end of the second half of the fifth millennium BC (Esin 1981a; 1981b; 1983a; 1983b; 1984; 1985; Esin and Harmankaya 1986; 1987; 1988). Değirmentepe Level 7 yielded 'Ubaid pottery and fourteen mud-brick buildings, of which at least eight are typical 'Ubaid-style tripartite houses. While the actual house plans closely resemble their 'Ubaid counterparts in southern Mesopotamia, the use of space in the Değirmentepe houses, and their relationship to one another, show fundamental differences in both community organization and in the meanings and uses of domestic space (Özbal 2000).

In southern Mesopotamia, 'Ubaid domestic and ritual spaces were clearly distinct, so that we can easily differentiate temples (Safar, Mustafa, and Lloyd 1981) and domestic residences (Jasim 1985: 1989; Mallowan and Rose 1935: 11–12; Roaf 1989). Although they conform to the same floor plans, temples are more symmetrically planned and have elaborately decorated niches and buttresses, offering tables and altars (Perkins 1949: 87–88; Roaf 1984: 88; Safar, Mustafa, and Lloyd 1981). As stated by Roaf (1984: 88), the similarity in floor plans between 'Ubaid temples and houses is probably no coincidence, as "the temple was the house of God" and 'Ubaid ritual architecture exhibits the earliest beginnings of the historic-period temples.

However, Değirmentepe lacks the clear functional differentiation between the sacred and the residential of the southern 'Ubaid (Özbal 2000: 12). Instead, nearly all the central court areas of the tripartite structures, although clearly domestic, yield ritual evidence as well (Esin 1998; Esin and Harmankaya 1988). This is suggested by the presence of features such as offering podia, monumental hearths, altar tables, wall paintings, and burials as well as nearby pits containing ash and sacrificial offerings (Esin 1998; Esin and Harmankaya 1988: 92–93, 104–105; Helwing 2003: 68). The recurrence of a similar repertoire of ritual objects in nearly all the tripartite buildings suggests that rituals were conducted at the level of the household and that the sacred structures were jointly used as residential dwelling spaces (Özbal 2000: 18). Thus, Değirmentepe uses a local Anatolian tradition, found at some Ceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites, of incorporating ritual space within the residential sphere (Naumann 1971: 433–434; Özdoğan 1999: 230; for example, Alkım 1979: 201; Düring 2001: 9–11; Duru 1999: 176–179; Hodder 1999: 179; Silistreli 1989: 62; 1991: 96).

Even more striking is the transformation of 'Ubaid style tripartite architecture in this eastern Anatolian context (Özbal 2000:19). In southern and south-central Mesopotamia, 'Ubaid tripartite houses were freestanding (Jasim 1985; 1989; Lloyd and Safar 1943: 149; Roaf 1989; Safar, Mustafa, and Lloyd 1981; Youkana 1997: fig. 9) (see Figure 95). However, at Değirmentepe, the tripartite houses are contiguous, in an agglutinative pattern of community organization with adjacent houses sharing walls (Figure 96). This reflects a fundamental difference in the cultural construction and meanings of public and private space. Agglutinated settlements are typical of

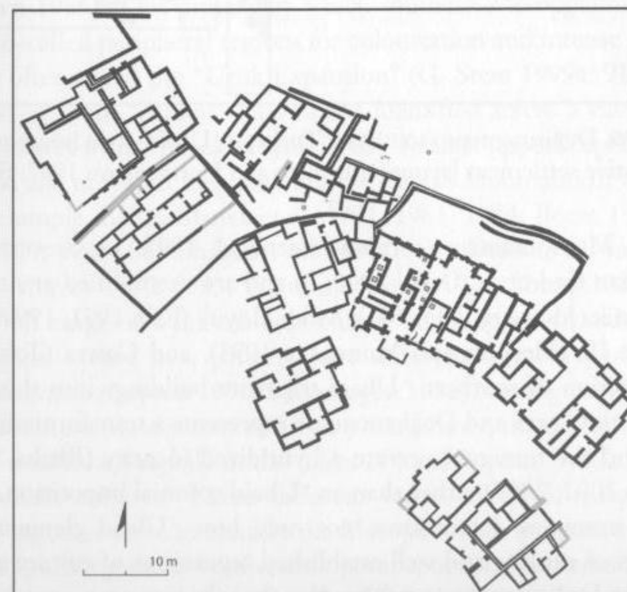

Figure 95. Tell Abada (central Iraq): 'Ubaid house plans in freestanding settlement layout (after Jasim 1985: fig. 2).

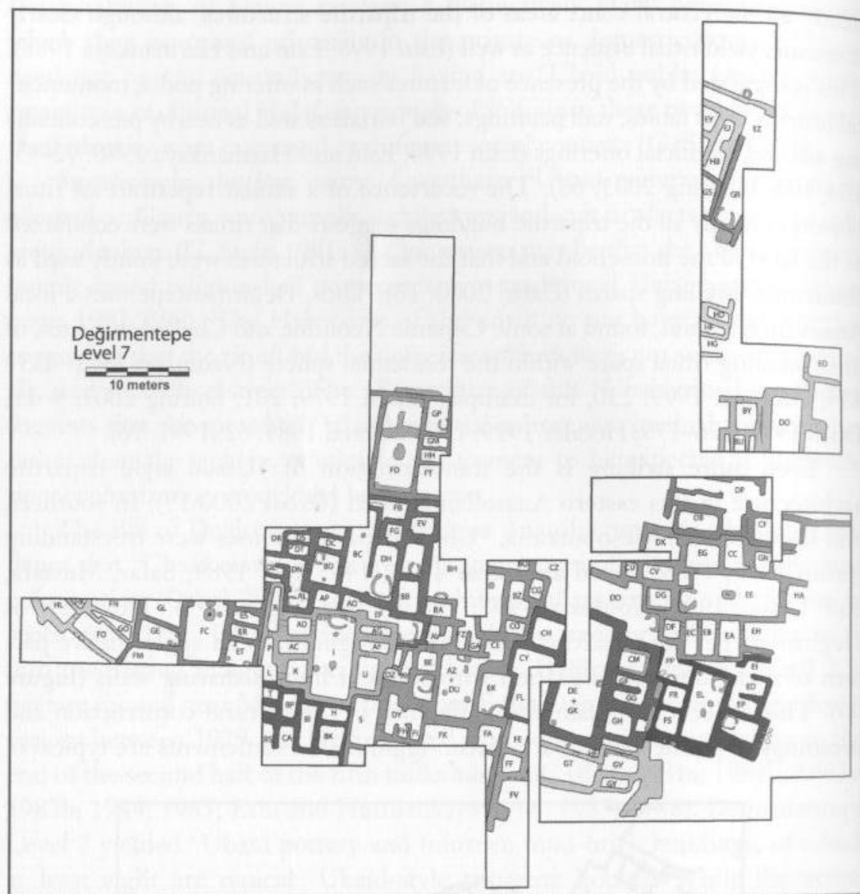

Figure 96. Değirmentepe (southeast Turkey): ʿUbaid-style house plans in agglutinative settlement layout (after Esin and Harmankaya 1987: fig. 2).

both north Mesopotamian (compare Bernbeck 1995: 14; Sievertsen 2002) and Anatolian traditions (Özbal 2000: 9) and are exemplified at sites such as Chatal Höyük (Mellaart 1975: 101), Aşıklı Höyük (Esin 1991; 1999: fig. 104), Yarim Tepe III (Merpert and Munchaev 1993), and Gawra (Tobler 1950). The redefinition of southern ʿUbaid tripartite buildings into this northern syntax at both Gawra and Değirmentepe represents a transformation of both the local and the foreign to create a hybridized identity (Bhaba 1992; Van Dommelen 2002; 2005) rather than an ʿUbaid colonial imposition.

These examples demonstrate not only how ʿUbaid elements actively became part of existing and well established repertoires of culture and meaning (as in the Değirmentepe case) but also show how various aspects of southern elements are selectively adopted at different rates (as in the Gawra case). Overall, this highlights the importance of recognizing the site-specific nature

and the differential appropriation of ʿUbaid characteristics and the unique ways in which they are transformed into local and cultural repertoires.

Uruk (ca. 4200–3000 BC)

The fourth-millennium Uruk assemblage represents a second, distinct Mesopotamian horizon style, almost as widely distributed as the ʿUbaid in roughly the same areas of the Near East. During the early to mid-fourth millennium BC, urbanized state societies had emerged over much of the alluvium in southern Mesopotamia and southwestern Iran (Adams 1981; Nissen 2000; Pollock 1992; H. T. Wright and Rupley 2001). The elites of these highly stratified polities had developed centralized institutions to mobilize surplus labor and goods from their hinterlands in a meticulously administered political economy (Algaze 2001b; H. T. Wright 2001a).

The economic sphere of Uruk Mesopotamian state societies quickly expanded to form an extensive interaction network connecting the southern alluvium with the less urbanized polities in the neighboring highlands to the north and east (Algaze 1993a; 1993b; 2001b; Rothman 2001; H. T. Wright 2001a). Several sites in the latter areas have been identified as Uruk trading colonies, apparently established to gain access to trade/communication routes while extracting metals, semiprecious stones, lumber, or other commodities from the resource-rich highland zones, in what many researchers consider the world's earliest known colonial system (Algaze 1993a; Lupton 1996; Sürenhagen 1986). This process by which southern Mesopotamian societies travel to so-called peripheral regions for colonization and intense commercial contact is often called the "Uruk Expansion" (G. Stein 1999a: 91-101). Sites recognized as Uruk "colonies" have been identified across a vast area along key trade routes from Hassek Höyük in the Turkish upper Euphrates, across north Syria and northern Iraq, and into the Zagros Mountains of western Iran (see, for example, Behm-Blanke et al. 1981; 1983; 1984; Boese 1995; Strommenger 1979; 1980; Sürenhagen 1986: 10–12; van Driel 1977; van Driel and van Driel-Murray 1979; 1983; Weiss and Young 1975; Young 1986). At these sites, the full range of Uruk material culture styles appeared suddenly in the archaeological record in a pattern quite different from that of the earlier ʿUbaid oikumene (Lupton 1996; Sürenhagen 1986) (see Figure 93).

The southern Mesopotamian Uruk colonies are quite distinctive as intrusive sites, established rapidly in the midst of local Iranian, Syrian, and southeast Anatolian cultures. Three different forms of Uruk material culture occurring together serve to identify the Mesopotamian implanted settlements while distinguishing them from contemporaneous local settlements (G. Stein 1999b). This can be seen best at the site of Habuba Kabira on the Syrian middle Euphrates (Strommenger 1979; 1980). Sites identified as colonies have the

full repertoire of Uruk ceramics (Sürenhagen 1986: 26–27). These same sites also have distinctive south Mesopotamian Uruk domestic or public/ritual architecture such as the "middle-hall" house and niched facade temples, often decorated with baked clay wall cones (Heinrich 1982; Özten 1984; Sürenhagen 1986: 10). Culturally specific aspects of technological style such as brick dimensions and bricklaying patterns exactly match the practices in the southern homeland (Schwartz 2001: 252). A third distinctive feature of the Uruk colonies is the presence of the full range of south Mesopotamian administrative technology such as cylinder seals, bullae, tokens, and clay tablets with numerical inscriptions used to monitor the circulation of goods (Ferioli and Fiandra 1983; Pittman 1993; 2001; van Driel 1983) (see Figure 97).

In some cases, the colonies were founded from scratch on uninhabited land (Strommenger 1980; van Driel and van Driel-Murray 1983). However, at the outer reaches of the exchange network in the highland resource zones, Uruk colonies took the form of small trading enclaves within preexisting indigenous settlements such as Godin (Weiss and Young 1975; Young 1986) and Hacınebi (G. Stein 1999a; 2001; 2002). In these latter settlements, not just the *forms* of material culture, but also behavioral patterning, food preferences, and technological styles are all aspects of daily practice that identify south Mesopotamians as an ethnically distinct alien minority. At Godin, the Mesopotamians lived within a clearly defined residential quarter (Weiss and Young 1975; Young 1986). At Hacınebi, for example, comparisons of fauna between the Uruk and Anatolian parts of the site show differences between the two groups in food preferences, so that sheep and goats were 49 percent of the local meat consumption, but provided 80 to 90 percent of the Uruk diet. This matches exactly the known food preferences in the south Mesopotamian heartland (G. Stein 1999a: 145–146; Stein and Nicola 1996). At the same time, butchery practices show clear differences between Uruk and local contexts, in both the locations and the widths of cut marks, suggesting that the two groups used different butchering tools (G. Stein 1997; 1999a: fig. 7.14). Chipped stone tools show similar differences in technological style, so that even when Uruk and local specialists made the same tool forms, the proportions of the tools differed significantly. Blade tools from Uruk areas at Hacınebi are significantly narrower than their local counterparts and match closely the dimensions of blades from south Mesopotamian Uruk sites (Edens 1996; 1997; 1998a; 1998b).

These differences within and between sites remind us that we must view fourth-millennium Greater Mesopotamia as a complex mosaic composed of an Uruk heartland, Uruk colonies in the outlying regions, indigenous settlements such as Arslantepe that traded with these colonies while remaining politically and culturally autonomous (Frangipane 2001b; Frangipane and Palmieri 1989), and indigenous settlements such as Gawra that remained outside the system, having only minimal interaction with Uruk southern Mesopotamia

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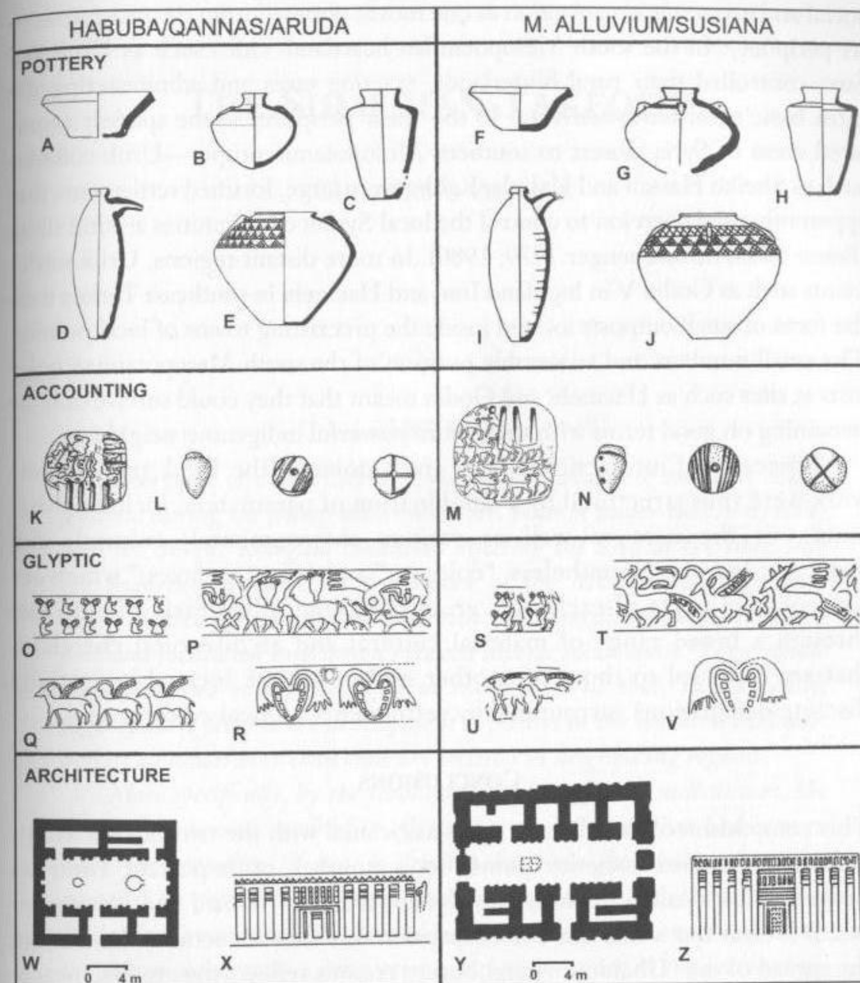

Figure 97. Examples of classic Uruk material culture from southern Mesopotamia and from Uruk expansion sites (reproduced with permission from Guillermo Algaze, after Algaze 1993b: fig. 17).

(Rothman 2002a). The colonies themselves differed significantly from one another, depending on such factors as distance from the homeland, the size of the neighboring local population, and the degree of social complexity in the neighboring indigenous polities (G. Stein 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2002).

The power of the Uruk states over other parts of the interaction network appears to have declined with increasing distance from the alluvium (G. Stein 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2002). Thus, for example, a comparison of (a) the city of Uruk itself; (b) large colonies such as Habuba Kabira; and (c) small, distant colonies such as Hacınebi or Godin shows a tremendous degree of variation in

social and economic organization as one moves outward from the urban core to its periphery. In the south Mesopotamian heartland, cities such as Uruk and Susa controlled their rural hinterlands, exacting taxes and administering the most basic subsistence activities. In the "near periphery"—the sparsely populated areas of Syria closest to southern Mesopotamia proper—Uruk colonies such as Sheikh Hassan and Habuba Kabira were large, fortified settlements that apparently used coercion to control the local Syrian communities around them (Boese 1995; Strommenger 1979; 1980). In more distant regions, Uruk settlements such as Godin V in highland Iran and Hacınebi in southeast Turkey took the form of small outposts located inside the preexisting towns of local polities. The small numbers and vulnerable position of the south Mesopotamian colonists at sites such as Hacınebi and Godin meant that they could survive only by remaining on good terms with their more powerful indigenous neighbors.

Processes of interaction at any given point in the Uruk trading network were thus structured by a combination of parameters, including distances to the core as well as various environmental, cultural, and economic factors. Nonetheless, "colonies" and even "enclaves," which are less coercive ports of exchange, are archaeologically clearly identifiable through a broad range of material cultural and architectural correlates that are identical to those of another region but are located in spatially discrete occupations surrounded by settlements of local culture.

CONCLUSIONS

This comparison of the horizon styles associated with the two earliest Mesopotamian complex societies points to a number of important contrasts between the so-called expansionary dynamics of the ʿUbaid and Uruk periods. It is clear that while the Uruk expansion was a case of actual colonization, the spread of the ʿUbaid into neighboring regions reflects the gradual, peaceful spread of an ideological system that was translated into a variety of different local cultural schemes, forming what are, in effect, new, hybrid social identities in these outlying areas. The ʿUbaid case shows convincingly that even though the external forms of ʿUbaid houses and pottery styles were more or less identical in both the heartland and the highlands, the ways that these items were used and conceptualized in daily local practice reveal profound cultural differences within this oikumene.

At a broader level, this comparison reminds us that a widely distributed horizon style cannot be assumed to reflect an underlying uniformity of cultural, social, or political systems. Significantly, this is true in both the ideological expansion of the ʿUbaid period, and in the elaborate commercial-colonial network of the Uruk urbanized states. It is precisely this variation in Near Eastern complex societies that we need to recognize, model, and explore in the second century of anthropological archaeology between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

THE SUMERIAN TAKEOFF*

GUILLERMO ALGAZE

ABSTRACT

The emergence of early cities in the alluvial lowlands of southern Mesopotamia during the fourth millennium BC must be understood in terms of both the unique ecological conditions affecting the area at the time, and the enduring geographical framework of the Mesopotamian lowlands which allowed for the efficient movement of commodities via water transport and facilitated interaction between diverse social units. These conditions promoted evolving long-term trade patterns that, inadvertently, differentially favored the development of polities in the southern Mesopotamian alluvium over contemporary societies in neighboring regions.

More specifically, by the final quarter of the fourth millennium, the social and economic multiplier effects of trade patterns that had been in place for centuries (if not millennia) had brought about substantial increases in population agglomeration throughout the southern alluvial lowlands. Concurrent with these increases, and partly as a result of them, important socioeconomic innovations started to appear in the increasingly urbanized polities of southern Mesopotamia. These were unachievable in

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