

## PERSONAL ADORNMENT IN THE EPI-PALEOLITHIC OF THE LEVANT <sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

The last Pleistocene culture complex in the Levant, known as the Natufian, which spanned 12,500-9,500 cal BC (Aurenche et al. 2001, Bar-Yosef and Belfer-Cohen 2002), has long been regarded as at least incipiently agricultural and perhaps an early example of emerging social complexity (Belfer-Cohen 1995, Henry 1989). Both issues are still in question despite a number of extensive and excellent excavations. The Early Natufian (12,500-11,000 cal BC) is regarded as the most successful late Pleistocene culture in terms of the number and geographic range of sites, sedentism, architecture and burial goods, all of which stand in contrast to older cultures of the region (Belfer-Cohen 1991). This paper considers one aspect of the Early Natufian, personal adornment, an attribute that serves to define social identities.

This short paper was stimulated by the presence at the Yale University Peabody Museum of small collections of artifacts from one of the key Early Natufian sites, el-Wad. The excavation of el-Wad in Palestine in the 1930s, recovered five skulls with dentalia shell and bead coverings, as well as bead necklaces and beaded arm and leg bands (Garrod 1940). While the skulls are known from the field photographs, there is no modern reconstruction of the appearance of the distinctively different headdress styles evidenced on the skulls. Further, there has been no study of how the different types of beads may have been worn. Through the use of artistic renderings we offer an interpretation of the styles of headdresses, necklaces and limb bands. These images, more than published statistical tables, give insight into how some Natufians chose to display their individuality and their rare occurrence reinforces suggestions of social signalling.

There have been three significant publications attempting to assess the social significance of these decorated burials. In 1978, Gary Wright, using both Garrod's reports and unpublished data in Theodore McCown's dissertation (McCown 1939), tabulated artifacts associated with skeletons and revised Garrod's assessment of the sex of some. Wright concluded that the decorated skulls in group burials were evidence of family clusters in which there was one significant person whose status was inherited. By contrast, in Late Natufian (after 11,000 cal BC), with a predominance of single interments and little or no individual decoration, he saw a shift to community-oriented status (Wright 1978)

A critical evaluation of Wright's paper by Anna Belfer-Cohen takes exception to the idea that the decorated burials are evidence of social stratification. She corrected some of his data and introduced information from the contemporary sites of Ain Mallaha and Hayonim that was not available to Wright. "Tempting as it is, evidence for social stratification in the Natufian, inferred from the decorated burials, is actually non-existent" (Belfer-Cohen 1995). Brian Byrd and Christopher Monahan also did a careful re-analysis of Wright's data and incorporated the new material from Ain Mallaha and Hayonim Cave (Byrd and Monahan 1995). These authors also refute Wright's contention of hereditary social inequality in the Early Natufian and they see the group burials and personal adornment as "a result of adopting new markers for social relations during a period of considerable change and stress when larger populations rapidly coalesced and resided together for longer periods each year" (Byrd and Monahan 1995:252). They see the shift to single interments lacking much ornamentation in the Late Natufian as a result of "greater emphasis on individuals and increased settlement mobility" (Byrd and Monahan 1995:252). While these studies and Garrod's reports provide the basic statistical information, they do not attempt to show how the Natufians wore their decorations. A descriptive and classificatory approach to burial adornment partly satisfies this need but it lacks the reconstruction drawings that are essential to convey the information (Noy and Brimer 1980) Ultimately, the roles that the decorated individuals played in life may be indeterminable, but it is helpful to consider how they looked as we conceive alternatives.

#### THE BASIC FACTS

Before we attempt reconstructions, it is helpful to recapitulate the occurrence of decorative elements with the burials. More than 450 burials have been recovered from Natufian sites, making this, the first period with clear evidence of deliberate, repeated in-site burials, one of the best known for any prehistoric period. Most of these come from three sites: el-Wad, Mallaha and Hayonim, each of which has been published in sufficient detail to permit a measure of statistical analysis. Byrd and Monahan did this, looking comprehensively at a number of dimensions of variability, such as type and construction of grave, age and sex, and grave goods (Byrd and Monahan 1995).

El-Wad, in Mount Carmel, the first such site described in detail, has just short of 100 burials, depending on whose counts you use (Belfer-Cohen 1995), but only 45 were described in Garrod's report and, of these, only the best preserved were given attention. Hayonim has some 48 burials and Ain Mallaha 105. Byrd and Monahan reckon that from these three sites there are 186 burials "that are reported in sufficient detail to be analyzed" (Byrd and Monahan 1995:257). Of these 87 pertain to the Early Natufian and are relevant to the present discussion.

#### El-Wad

Garrod described group graves in which there were six clusters of skeletons among which were individuals whose skulls and other body parts were decorated. Each skeleton was given a number, e.g., H.41. The number of skeletons in each cluster ranged from 2-10, and five clusters featured an individual who had significant decoration. Garrod described the skeletons or groups of skeletons and the bead patterns found on the skulls, as well as beads usually found in the neck area but also possibly on the arm and leg (Garrod 1940). Three of the skulls (H23, H25, H57a) have particularly well preserved sets of dentalium shell beads; one (H41) has an unpatterned scatter of shells across its surface; and a child's skull (H28) was covered with 32 gazelle phalange beads rather than with shells. Garrod speculated that the shells on all the skulls had been attached to a cap that was not preserved.

The basic information that follows is taken from Byrd and Monahan Table 4 and other sources as cited. Byrd and Monahan (B&M) have counts of beads that other authors do not, but where they compress or omit information that is relevant to reconstruction we have added it.

- H. 23 Male adult with "At least 100 dentalium beads and 1 bone pendant as headdress, necklace of 25 dentalium beads and 50 twin bone pendants, legband of 8 rows of dentalium shells" (B&M). "A number of dentalium shells were sticking to the occiput, and when the skull was removed, remains of an elaborate head-dress were found on the forehead (Pl. VII, fig. 2). This consisted of two fan-shaped *motifs* made of dentalium shells, spreading from the temples to the middle of the forehead (Garrod and Bate 1937:18). "Each fan was made up of three groups of dentalium shells, carefully matched so as to be approximately equal in length, the number of rows increasing from back to front. The fans must have been fastened to a cap of some kind, made perhaps of skin or netted hair-string" (Garrod 1940: 124). "On the right side of the skull was found an elliptical bone pendant which had probably been suspended from the head-dress. Inside the lower jaw and thorax was a mass of bone pendants of the 'twin' type and of dentalium shells, evidently the remains of a necklace (Garrod and Bate 1937" 18, Pl XIV, fig. 2. Several of the pendants were lying in pairs, as they had been strung. "The pairs are graduated in size, and the largest, which must have hung in front, have the shanks decorated with notches on the side which was meant to show" {Garrod, 1940 #8636:125). On one femur was a band or garter of eight rows of shells....the shells and pendants were firmly cemented to the bones by a calcareous concretion" (Garrod and Bate 1937:18).
- H. 25 Male? adult with "Unspecified number of dentalium beads in seven row headband (at least 100)" (B&M). A photograph showing the entire skeleton is in (Bienert 1995: fig. 2). "It is impossible to say whether the shells were originally strung on cords or form a simple circlet, or were fastened to the edge of some kind of cap" (Garrod 1940:124)
- H. 41 Adult? with "Indeterminate number of dentalium beads and tibia-tarsus bird bone pendants as headdress, dentalium beads in fans as right armband (18) and right legband" (B&M). The skull "had sticking to it little groups of dentalium shells, and bone pendants cut from the tibio-tarsus of a bird identical with those found on the head-dress of H. 57. It is not possible to reconstruct the form of this head-dress from these scanty remains, but it is worth nothing that it is the only

case in which shells were found on the crown of the head. Rather better preserved was a strip on the shaft of the right humerus made up of eighteen dentalium shells spreading fan-wise, which may be a remnant of a cloak or some other garment" (Garrod 1940:126).

H. 57a Adult with "At least 75 dentalium beads and at least 6 tibia-tarus bone pendants in headdress, 37 twin bone pendants and 6 phalange beads as necklace" (B&M).

"The remains of a cap of dentalium shells, in which two rows fell in a fringe form a circlet of which four rows remain (Garrod and Bate 1937: Pl VII, fig. 1). A number of pendants made from the tibio-tarsal bones of birds were also found adhering to the skull. Under the lower jaw of the same skull was a mass of bone 'twin' pendants, remains of a necklace, several of which lay in pairs (Garrod and Bate 1937: Pl XIV, fig. 1, Pl XV, figs. 1,2). In a few cases the 'twins' were not separate, but formed a single pendant carved in one piece" (Garrod and Bate 1937:19). A fuller description of this was published in Garrod's later paper (1940).

"This cap was again quite different from either of those already described. A narrow fillet, made up of three rows of shells, encircled the head, and from this was hung a fringe, four shells deep, which must nearly have reached the shoulders. Only two rows of the fringe remained on the skull when it was removed, but the remaining two lay on the ground, practically undisturbed...Mixed with the shells were a few pendants cut from the distal end of the tibio-tarsus of a bird. These are not in any way artificially shaped or modified, and they must have been strung through a tiny foramen in the articulation which opens into the shaft of the bone. The necklace is of the same type as that found with H. 25, but in this case some of the pairs are carved in a single piece of bone. Twenty-three complete pairs were found at the time of excavation, and eight more were recovered later from the inside of the skull when it was cleaned in London" (Garrod 1940:125).

H. 28 A young child with "Headdress of 32 gazelle phalanges" (B&M). "The spacing of the beads suggested that they had been attached to a cap or net of perishable material" (Garrod and Bate 1937:18). Concerning the pendants, "The articulation [of gazelle phalanges] is usually rubbed down slightly and in some cases

decorated with notches, and for the purpose of threading, a hole, corresponding in position with the natural foramen in the bird bone pendant, is bored from the ventral face into the hollow of the shaft" (Garrod 1940:126-7).

Four other skulls and some long bones from el-Wad, in the Harvard University Peabody Museum have beads adhering to them (Belfer-Cohen 1995).

#### Ain Mallaha

The basic site report and publication of the burials are {Perrot, 1966 #5890; {Perrot, 1988 #5897}. Dates for this site are 11,300+/-880, 11,740+/-570 and 11,590+/-540 ca BC (Byrd and Monahan 1995). Byrd and Monahan list ten Early Natufian burials that have bead decoration. Of these only two (#19 and #91) are described as having a headband. Additional comments on the decoration, useful for reconstruction, are taken from Perrot and Ladiray.

#6A, adult, has "At least 25 dentalium beads along with perforated gazelle phalanges [on the thoracic cage] as a probable necklace" (B&M), [or pectoral] (Perrot and Ladiray 1988a:18).

#6B, young adult, has "At least 10 dentalium beads, some perforated, as a bracelet." (B&M).

#19, adult female, with "At least 25 dentalium beads as headbands and in chest area" (B&M). H.19, with its crown of dentalia "fits perfectly one of the burials at the Mugharet el-Wad" (Garrod 1958:223). Some of the dentalia were still attached to the skull, indicating either a frontal band or an ornate bonnet (Perrot and Ladiray 1988:22).

#23, adult male with "At least 8 dentalium beads along with perforated gazelle phalanges and other perforated shells as a necklace" (B&M). Found in the neck region (Perrot and Ladiray 1988:22).

#43, infant with "At least 70 dentalium beads in a waist band and necklace" (B&M). An excellent photograph of this waist band on the skeleton is in (Bienert 1995: Fig. 3).

#87, adult male with, "At least 35 dentalium beads in necklace and 2 bracelets" (B&M). A bracelet on the lower part of each humerus (Perrot and Ladiray 1988: Fig. 14).

#88, child ~6 with "At least 75 long and short dentalium beads in a necklace"

(B&M). Dentalia and shells dispersed in the scapular region indicate a necklace (Perrot and Ladiray 1988, Fig. 15).

#89, male ~25 with "At least 25 dentalium beads in a necklace" (B&M). Found in the stomach area (Perrot and Ladiray 1988: 25, Fig. 16).

#90, adult female with "6 dentalium beads loose" (B&M). In thoracic area (Perrot and Ladiray 1988: 29, Fig. 17).

#91, female ~25 with "At least 45 long and short dentalium beads as a headband, belt, necklace, and 2 bracelets; other, round beads" (B&M). The decoration is complex, comprising dentalia adhering to the right temporal, probably a headband; a probable necklace; a band on the right arm; shells in the lumbar region suggest a belt. Tiny sections of dentalia (0.002m) encircle the upper third of the left tibia, as well as mid-femur (Perrot and Ladiray 1988: 29, Fig. 18).

#### Hayonim Cave I-II

A number of publications concern the site (Henry, Leroi-Gourhan, and Davis 1981, Valla, Le Mort, and Plisson 1991). AMS dates on seeds for the lower Natufian are 12,360 $\pm$ 160 and 12,010 $\pm$ 180 (Hopf and Bar-Yosef 1987). The burials are published by (Belfer-Cohen 1988). Beads, definitely associated with four burials in Early Natufian context, are notable both for their quantity and for the ways they may have been worn. Unlike the adornment at El-Wad, at Hayonim there seems to have been more wearing of beads on garments.

#9, a female 16-19, had "182 dentalium beads and 1 perforated hyena tooth as a necklace, along with 52 bone pendants as a belt and bracelet (or 2)" (B&M).

#17, Male 20-25, with "155/164 dentalium beads, decorated garment?" (B&M).

#25, Male 25, with "20 partridge tibia-tarsus beads as bracelet" (B&M).

#33, Male <25, with "365 dentalium beads as chest garment/necklace, a belt and armband of 28 perforated fox teeth, and a bone spatula under right humerus" (B&M).

#### THE RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS

The facts related above are bare, statistical data lacking much interpretation other than that given by the numbers themselves, as Wright and others have presented. In our view, noting that one individual has more beads than another should be a point of departure for further investigation rather than the final basis for social interpretation, so we approached

the problem differently. We asked what did the adornment look like on living people? This required that we consider how the decorations were constructed and worn, and immediately alternatives came to mind. This led then to investigation of comparative material, including contemporary beadwork, and trial runs of reconstructions. Eventually we settled on the illustrations included here, recognizing, of course, that others may find different alternatives. The drawings attempt to faithfully represent the verbal descriptions, although some of the figures are composites based on more than one skeleton. Finally, we wondered in what contexts the decorative elements may have been worn. Our suggestions here are purely speculative in the absence of any solid information other than the burial contexts themselves.

In the following paragraphs we discuss how we made decisions that are reflected in the drawings. In order to show that men, women and children were adorned we show a putative “family” wearing the different styles of adornment found at el-Wad and Mallaha (Fig. 1). This group picture will be followed by discussion and illustration of individual features of adornment, as found on particular skeletons. The skeleton numbers follow the previous listing.

H23 (Fig. 2)

Garrod and Bate {Garrod, 1937 #2750: Pl. VII2} describe a headdress encircling the skull, composed of delicate, tubular beads forming a series of horizontal, overlapping rows, becoming progressively wider. We can imagine them forming a peak or small flattened plane just above and between the eyes. We *do* know that the headdress fit the head snugly since, as Garrod notes “a number of dentalium shells were sticking to the occiput, and when the skull was removed remains of an elaborate headdress were found on the forehead.” The wearer’s head, then, likely supported the headdress, which slid further down the face after interment. The photograph {Garrod, 1937 #2750:P. VII2} indicates that the front of the headdress would have been quite high, obscuring the wearer’s hair at the front. Garrod imagined that a skin cap or netted string, supported what she refers to as “fan-shaped motifs” {Garrod, 1940 #2746:124}. According to this reconstruction we can imagine a cap with dentalium bead ornamentation, rather than a dentalium bead headdress. If her interpretation is correct this would not be the earliest example of bead “embroidery” affixed to skin or cordage. At the Aurignacian period site of Sungir (c.



28,000 BP) in Russia, archaeologists discovered ornate beaded jewelry on six skeletons. The beads were strung with sinew, then attached to clothing {Bahn, 1998 #395:92}, and included a beaded cap {Lewis-Williams, 2002 #4570:80} {White, 1993 #8636} **get ref Bader 1978. Did you make a second headdress to explore this idea?** Yet another possibility is that skin or corded panels joined the two side panels to hold the headband together. A cord might also have supported the elliptical bone pendant found on the right side of the skull, which could have been suspended from the headdress or served as a hair ornament of some kind—either woven or braided into the hair.

H23 also wore a shell bead leg band, and a stunning necklace composed of bilobate pendants hanging like stamen or conjoined droplets (Fig. 2) {Garrod, 1937 #2750:Pl. XIV2 } {Garrod, 1940 #2746: Pl. 11}. The so-called twin type ornaments dangle from a collar of threaded dentalium shells, executed with utmost artistic skill. Like bead embroidery the precursor to this bilobate bead form lies earlier in the Upper Paleolithic—in this case reminiscent of carved ivory bead pendants from Dolni Vestonice I {Soffer, 1997 #8635:243, fig. 2}. Our reproduction gives some indication of the stately effect produced by H23's ensemble.

H25 (Fig. 3)

The male referred to as El Wad H 25 wears a seven-row beaded headdress, adhering to the skull {Garrod, 1937 #2750:Pl. VI,1,2}. Garrod (1940:124) wonders whether the beads may have been sewn on “to the edge of some kind of cap” (as discussed above) although we prefer the simpler explanation that it consisted of circular rows of dentalium shells forming a beaded headband—an interpretation explored in our reconstruction drawing. This form would have conformed to the head, requiring no other material to secure it, and appears to comprise the basic design elaborated upon in other, more ornate, headdresses at El-Wad.

H41 (Fig. 4)

The headdress worn by H41 has the most complex funerary costume worn by those interred at el-Wad. The weave of dentalium shells covered most, if not all, of the individual's hair. Bits of dentalium shells and tibio-tarsus bird bone pendants (similar to those associated with H57 discussed below) as Garrod observes, were found sticking to

the skull. Shells were also found adhering to the crown of the head. Based upon this information we drew a headdress similar to that for H57, but one that expands from a skullcap of shells into rows of beads, like later Egyptian faience bead headdresses. Overall this individual possessed the greatest number of intricate costume elements, including an armband, a leg band, and what was possibly a shell cloak. In each item of adornment El Wad artisans appeared to be experimenting with the potential of not merely stringing tubular shell beads, but forming and connecting what Garrod call fan-fold motifs, assembling these forms into headdresses, detailed costumes and accessories.

### H57 (Fig. 5)

Figure 5 portrays an adult wearing another of these elaborate shell and bone bead headdresses, like the one Garrod describes for H41 (above) (Garrod 1940:125). Garrod's photograph reveals how the remaining dentalium shells are still affixed to the skull, and suggested the arrangement used in our reconstruction drawing {Garrod, 1937 #2750:Pl. VII,1}. The "three rows of shells" encircling the head, as the excavation photo confirms, are horizontal rows, and form a narrow headband easily supported by the natural contours of the wearer's head {Garrod, 1940 #2746:125}. This headband creates the armature supporting the weight of attached ornamentation, including the layers of hollow, reed-like fringe, like that shown pressed against the skull. A similar group of dentalium beads had become detached from the headdress. Garrod, as noted above, describes these as two layers of "fringe" (dentalium beads strung vertically rather than horizontally) lying on the ground alongside the skeleton. By Garrod's reckoning the intact headdress—"four shells deep...must nearly have reached the shoulders" {Garrod, 1940 #2746:125}

On the bases of the photograph and data it is doubtful that the headdress would have hung as far down as Garrod suggests. Our drawing provides an extra layer of vertical beads ("fringe") to illustrate this point. Either length evokes surprising visions of something slightly later in time; regal and majestic. The design of the headdress would have been ideal in a ritual or performance contexts, especially dance where the horizontal headband would have stayed firmly in place while the fringe spanned out in various directions while the performer moved and spun. In our reconstruction the six tibia-tarsus bird bone pendants dangle from the front edges of the headdress, framing the face on

either side. Several of these “were also found adhering to the skull,” although it is not certain precisely how they conformed to the design of the headdress {Garrod, 1937 #2750:19}. Ours is but one possibility.

The necklace resembles the one accompanying H25, apart from the fact that a few of the twin pendants on the H57 piece were carved from a single piece of bone. In our drawing the necklace is made up of fewer twin bone pendants. The original H57 necklace was made up of “37 twin bone pendants and 6 phalange beads” (B&M).

H28 Young Child (elements taken from El Wad 28, Ain Mallaha 43, and figurines from Nevali Çori) (Figs. 2 and 6)

In Figures 2 and 6 we explore children’s decorative attire using descriptions from El Wad H28 and Ain Mallaha 43. Based on Garrod and Bate’s description for the young child (H28) from El Wad, our reconstructed little boy wears a netted cap. Gazelle phalanges dangle from a band forming the rim of the headpiece. We also dress him in a dentalium bead waistband referred to in Byrd and Monahan’s description of a similar belt interred with an infant (#43) from Ain Mallaha. Several ways of wearing this beaded sash occurred to us; two based on Biernert’s photograph (1995: Fig. 3). In the reconstructed group (Fig. 2) a child wears such a “belt” as a sling circling his small body diagonally from his shoulder to his hip. The beaded belt in Biernert’s photograph appears to be angled over the infant’s profiled skeleton, so that it is not clear whether it is a waistband or a beaded sling.

Figurines from Nevali Çori (Morsch 2002) wear a variety of folded sashes, possibly the very type buried with the Ain Mallaha infant. The figurines inspired the reconstruction of the belt on Figure 6. Because of the fragility of the shell beads the sash would have been cinched and overlapped loosely, or possibly affixed to a backing of some kind.

One third of Natufian burials were those of children (Bar-Yosef 1997: 165). Thousands of years earlier at Sungir we see youths buried in beaded clothing and jewelry (Bader 1978; {Lewis-Williams, 2002 #4570: 80-81; White, 1993 #8636: 277-300} {Mithen, 1996 #8634: 173-174}). In the Sungir case one boy wore attire similar to that in our reconstruction (Figs. 2, 6). This includes a beaded cap ornamented with fox

Natufian

teeth and a decorated waist belt made from 250 canine teeth (Lewis-White 2002; White 1993).<sup>4</sup>

[yet to do: 1. write a little about the reconstructed group, 2. find out about techniques that may have been used in the fanfold beading technique, 3. say a few things about Paleolithic jewelry and personal decoration] {ohyeah..and...another drawing or two or three]

{questions to ponder: were there different ritual or social functions associated by different costume rather than say "individual expression."}

Were artisans, having discovered a new technique (fan form beading) exploring the possibilities and limitations of a new design vocabulary)

#### SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ADORNMENT

The only certainties are that neither age nor sex correlate with adornment, and that most people were not buried with beads. This does not preclude that all people wore beads in life, a possibility that is difficult to verify despite the fact that loose beads were commonly encountered during excavations. Whether or not people generally used beads, it may also be that there were other equivalent forms of decoration that are archaeologically invisible, such as body paint, tattoos, feathers and the like.

It is hard to argue that beads were a significant form of wealth when they could be picked up on the beach and strung by whoever had the patience to do it. That they could make a strong social statement, however, is certain, as the drawings show. Given their essential fragility, it is likely that they were worn only on special occasions, such as during dances, initiations, rituals of passage, and so on. If there were sumptuary rules among the Early Natufians, perhaps only selected individuals were entitled to wear beads, but the range of age and sex would tend to refute that. Similarly, if the group burials were those of families, one might expect status to have been shared among the individuals rather than confined to one person. At the least family status would seem more likely to have been conferred on the elders. While there was similar use of adornment among the

Early Natufians, there were also subtle differences between individuals and among the sites, suggesting that while the practice was general, it was carried out locally and individually.

Although our reconstruction drawings give new life to what had been a largely statistical discussion, they have not answered the question of why certain individuals were adorned. They do, however, underscore that when Natufians ceased to wear beads, they gave up a mode of individual expression that has subsequently emerged repeatedly in cultures throughout the world.

## DISCUSSION

The presence of dentalium shells is common in the Early Natufian, and all three sites discussed here have individuals with necklaces, arm bands and bracelets. El-Wad is unique in having headdress beads still attached to the skulls so as to allow reconstruction. The use of large numbers of beads as possible chest garments or pectorals is unique to Hayonim where headdresses are not attested. While dentalium shells are used in all sites, the various kinds of bone beads display site-to-site differences<sup>3</sup>. Bar-Yosef and Belfer-Cohen (1999:403) suggest that such differences among sites relate to different territorial groups yet, as noted above, differences exist within sites as well. It is interesting that both men and women, all seemingly relatively young, and including children, are decorated. That all of the decorated Natufians died at a relatively early age seems remarkable. The facts do not provide us with clear answers as to why certain individuals wore beads and most people did not.

One way to consider this is to see the Early Natufian as the apogee of a successful hunting and collecting adaptation where relative richness of the environment and a sedentary life provided opportunities for individuals to express themselves. This idea is reinforced by the fact that all of the sites with decorated individuals lie in the Mediterranean zone {Belfer-Cohen, 1995 #657:10}. Relative affluence, attributed to the rich diet available at the site, is further suggested by the robusticity of the Ain Mallaha skeletons {Ferembach, 1976 #2414}.

The Early Natufian was a relative time of plenty, but during the subsequent Younger Dryas there was retraction of settlement, increased mobility, and no doubt

considerable reduction of the overall human population. During the Younger Dryas Dryas, basic survival rather than personal display may have assumed greater importance. Seen in this context, the ornaments of the Early Natufian may have signaled individual social expression, that could not be sustained when its economic basis failed during the Younger Dryas {Kuijt, 1996 #4313:332.} The Late Natufian is followed by the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A, at the interface with the beginnings of agriculture. Continuity across this economic shift is indicated by customs, such as individual burial and skull removal, which emerged in the Late Natufian and became fully expressed in the subsequent Pre-Pottery Neolithic (after 10,500 cal BC). It is generally thought that some cultivation may have occurred during the Natufian and that this may have intensified during the Younger Dryas in order to sustain yields {Bar-Yosef, 2002 #559} {Belfer-Cohen, 2000 #659} {McCorriston, 1991 #4984}. Byrd and Monahan argue that if this were the case, the change in Natufian burial practices may "reflect a growing concern for the individual rather than the group in communities faced with novel social problems associated with ideological expressions of ownership, inheritance, and related concerns" {Byrd, 1995 #1233:279}. We would argue instead that the decorated burials suggest that there was more, not less, concern for the individual in the Early Natufian, despite the group burials. Whether the shift in burial practices relates to stability of the settlements, changing conceptions of the individual versus the group, or some other social or ideological factor, can be imagined but not determined. Our reconstruction drawings may aid in the imagining.

#### NOTES

1. We are grateful to Dr. Iman Saca who brought to our attention the collections of beads, worked and carved bones and other objects from the Epi-Paleolithic sites of el-Wad and Kebara that are in the Anthropology collections of the Yale University Peabody Museum. These artifacts were acquired in the 1930s by George Grant McCurdy, then at Yale and Director of the American School of Prehistoric Research, which participated in the excavations of the caves.
2. This is not to imply that all members of any particular family would be adorned. Indeed, not only is adornment rare, but it seems that only one person in each burial group wore beads.

3. These will be the subject of a separate study that will also consider mode of manufacture and use-wear indications.
4. Curiously three of the Upper Paleolithic burials at Sungir display similar age distribution and adornment, while others at the site have none. Despite the parallelism in these two cases widely separated in time and space, there is no obvious way to infer specific sociological meaning; rather they show how similar solutions arose independently.

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Fig 1

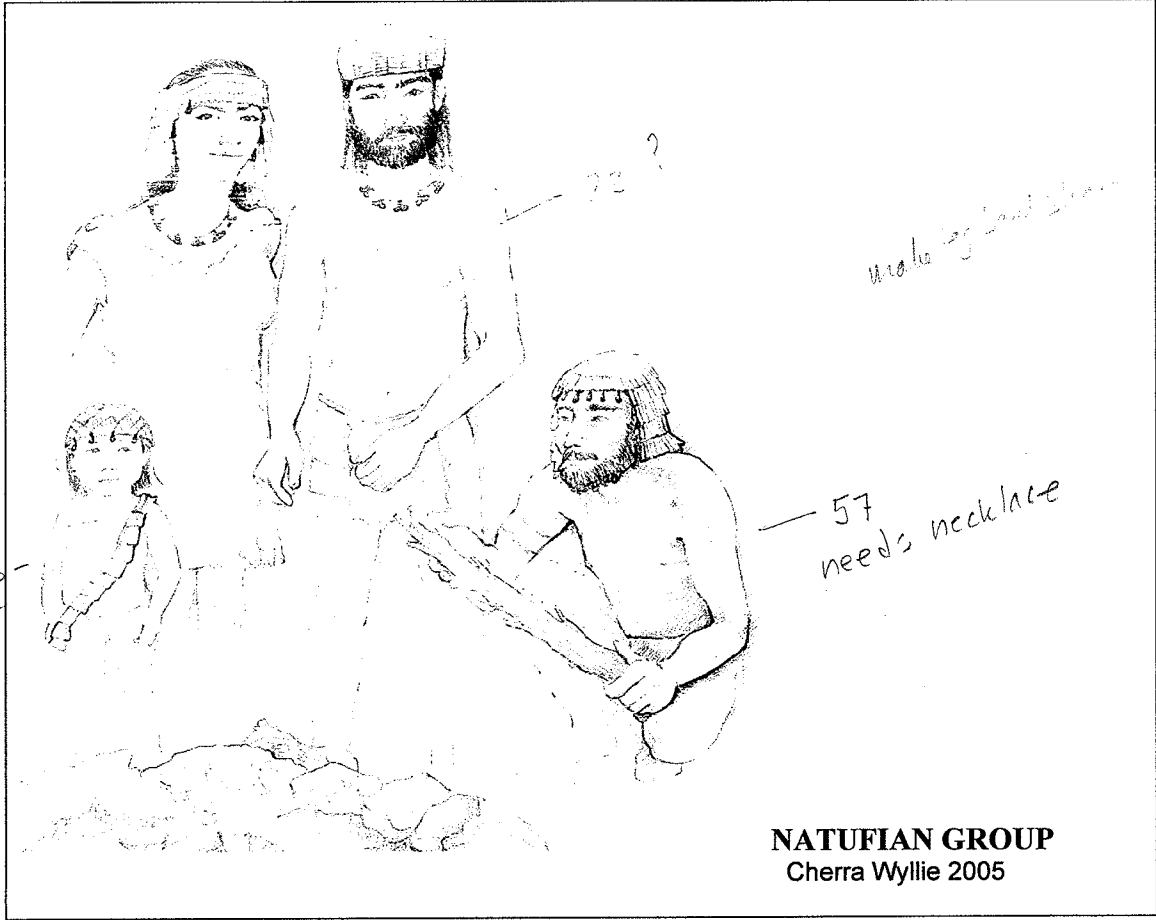


Fig 2 (H23 of H25, 4, 57)



Fig 3



25

Fig 4



57 headband

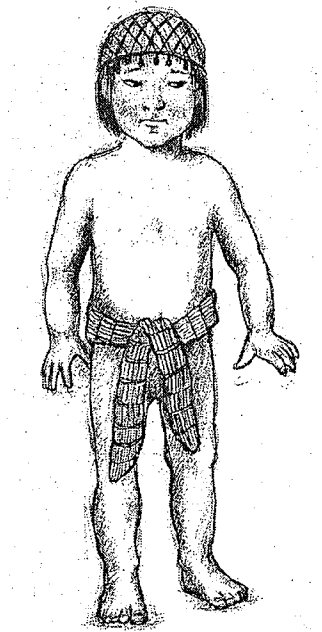
Fig 5



57



Fig 6



Mallaha 43

H28