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Chapter

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7 CORRIDORS AND COLONIES: COMPARING FOURTH–THIRD MILLENNIA BC INTERACTIONS IN SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA AND THE LEVANT

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Abstract

This study addresses what appear to be similar modes of external interaction experienced by societies of the Anatolian Euphrates valley and the northwestern Levant on the one hand, and on the other the southern Levant during the fourth and third millennia BC. During the fourth millennium BC, both regions were the target of expansion by neighboring literate cultures, Uruk in the north and Egypt in the south. Both regions were significantly affected by the withdrawal of colonizers associated with these expansions, and both saw the arrival of a vastly different third-millennium BC spread of people and ideas derived from the Kura-Araks cultures of eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus. In our discussion, we introduce cultural and sociopolitical developments in each region, and then compare them. To what extent are the Uruk and Egyptian ventures colonial in intent and in impact? What occurs in their aftermath? What brought 'Kura-Araks people' southward, and what cultural markers did they preserve in the farthest reaches of their expansion? What links together the various regions that they inhabited? This cross-regional consideration summarizes the present state of inquiry and initiates a dialogue on the significance of long-range interaction at the periphery of the core civilizations at the dawn of the Bronze Age.

Introduction

This chapter concerns the interactions of several east Mediterranean regions with their southern and northern neighbors during the formative period of literate civilization in the Near East, between the mid-fourth and mid-third millennia BC. These regions – the Anatolian Euphrates valley, the northwest Levant, and the southern Levant – reside at the edges of the core regions of political and cultural innovation during this period of time. During the late fourth millennium BC, all of them came into early contact with one of the core cultures, Mesopotamia or Egypt, and all were affected, during the early third millennium BC, by the spread of the Kura-Araks cultural tradition, generally thought to have originated in the southern Caucasus and eastern Anatolia during the second half of the fourth millennium BC. Traditionally separated by divergent scholarly specializations, the consideration of these regions side-by-side offers an opportunity to examine the impact of contemporaneous cores on their peripheries, as well as the significance of the barrier-transgressing Kura-Araks phenomenon in the farthest reaches of its expansion.

Consideration of these issues proceeds in two stages. In the first, we respond to questions relating to the primary instance of contact between local cultures – those of the Anatolian Euphrates and the northwest Levant on the one hand, and the southern Levant on the other – and the neighboring expanding civilizations, Uruk and Egypt. The questions address the nature of local society at contact, the understanding of that contact, and the impact of contact on local social development and change. We then compare and contrast the two perspectives.

The second part of the discussion is devoted to the Kura-Araks phenomenon: the sudden appearance of large cultural assemblages clearly derived from the traditions of a widely spread, segmented village society originating in the vicinity of the Kura and Araks river valleys. The questions we address in this section, for each region, include the chronology and extent of the Kura-Araks 'intrusion' in each area, the preferred means of material expression of this cultural (and social) phenomenon, the relation between the Kura-Araks and local material cultures and its implications for the nature of interaction between newcomers and indigenes, and the demise of the phenomenon.

In many senses, the issues addressed here impinge on central concerns of Mediterranean archaeology, such as sociocultural identities, interaction, transformation, and, most pointedly, the nature of colonial contact and of postcolonial restructuration. In studying these phenomena in late prehistory, we are dependent for our interpretations on the constitutive functions of material culture. Houses, artifacts, daily routines, and rituals are the medium for producing and reproducing the social world. They, and the technologies by which they are created, form clusters of implicate relations (cultural 'packages') that were embodied through practice. This does not necessarily mean that

TABLE 7.1. Comparative Chronological Chart.

Anatolian Euphrates Valley	Northwestern Levant	Southern Levant	Years Cal BC
Late Ubaid	ʿAmuq E	Late Chalcolithic	4500
Late Chalcolithic 1			
Late Chalcolithic 2–4	ʿAmuq F	Early Bronze IA	3500
Late Chalcolithic 5	ʿAmuq Early G	Early Bronze IB	3000
Early Bronze I	Late G–Early H	Early Bronze II	2500
Early Bronze II	Middle–Late H	Early Bronze III	
Early Bronze III	ʿAmuq I	Early Bronze IV / Intermediate Bronze	2000
	ʿAmuq J (Early Bronze IV)		

material culture is coextensive with ethnicity or political boundaries; it does, however, require that the translocation of significant clusters of technologies, artifact types, household organization, or mortuary customs be associated with a recognizable form of social agency: migration, emulation, reinterpretation, or the like.

Because of the divergent archaeologies of these two regions, there are significant terminological differences between them. Table 7.1 correlates the terminological designations in relation to the conventional absolute chronology based on radiocarbon determinations and some historical synchronisms.

Part I. Between Uruk and Egypt: Contact between Formative Civilizations and Their Margins in the Late Fourth Millennium BC

The Euphrates Valley, the Northern Levant, and Uruk Mesopotamia

The Nature of Local Society at the Time of Contact

During the first half of the fourth millennium BC, in Phases 3 and 4 of the Late Chalcolithic (Rothman 2001), the Late Ubaid village-based societies of the Euphrates valley and the northern Levant shared a set of important transformations that led to the emergence of more complex forms of social and productive organization. The Late Chalcolithic chaff-faced pottery, characterized by increased technological and morphological standardization (particularly noticeable in the case of mass-produced bowls), is symptomatic of these changes. It may be seen as evidence for the emergence of local workshops, contextualized in a wide-ranging process of craft specialization (Palmieri 1985: 193–98; Trufelli 1994).

These changes took place in regional centers that grew substantially in size. Large-scale or monumental public architecture, such as the imposing terraced building at Hacinebi (Stein 2001: 271–72), suggest the emergence of political institutions that were able not only to coordinate collective labor, but also, as in the case of the Arslantepe phase VII tripartite temple (where clay sealings and large amounts of mass-produced bowls have been found), to control access to foodstuffs and primary resources by means of ritualized redistributive activities (Frangipane 2001a: 327–29). In connection with this phenomenon, the stable emergence of local elites can also be inferred from the construction of large and prominent residential units in the settlements (Frangipane 1993) and of richly furnished elite tombs (e.g., at Korucutepe and Hacinebi: Palmieri 1985: 196; Stein 2001: 273–74).

Late Chalcolithic society underwent further development once the communities of northwest Syria and the Euphrates valley started to interact with a new, expanding entity originating outside these regions. This is the so-called Uruk phenomenon (Figure 7.1), recorded from the second half of the fourth millennium BC (Late Chalcolithic 5) and generally considered a product of the economic, cultural, and political expansion of early urban entities in the Mesopotamian alluvium. The evidence for contact consists of a wide range of southern Mesopotamian elements, such as new ceramic repertoires and technologies, house and temple plans, iconographic styles and narratives, and new forms of bureaucratic control and accountancy (cylinder seals and the 'invention' of writing).

The dynamics of the spread of these elements from the Mesopotamian 'core' to the surrounding 'periphery' appears to be associated with the physical translocation of communities of southern origin. This intrusive Mesopotamian presence in Syria and in the Anatolian Euphrates valley took on different forms: from the foundation of new colonial settlements (such as Habuba Kabira and Jebel Aruda in the Syrian Euphrates valley), to the implantation of outposts (e.g., Hassek Höyük and Hacinebi in the Lower Anatolian Euphrates) both in

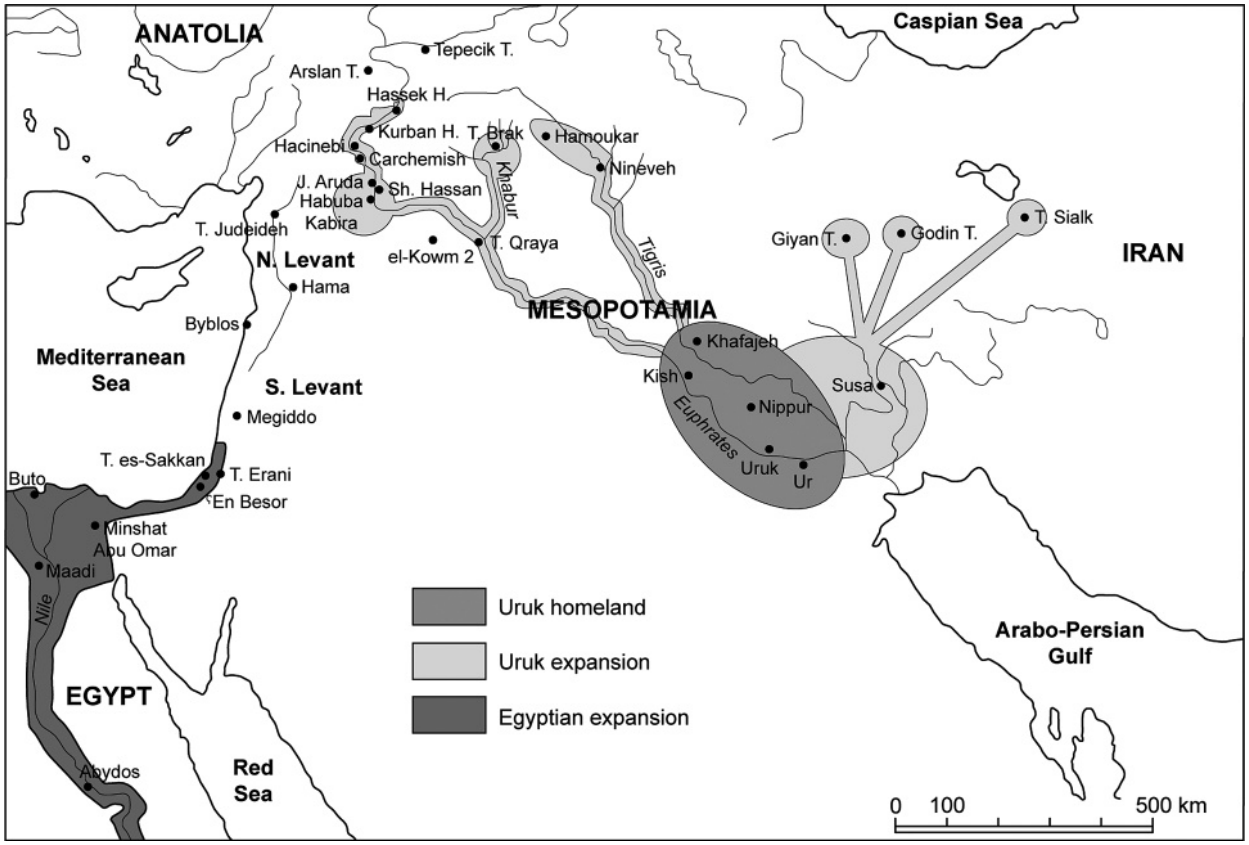

FIGURE 7.1. Map of Uruk and Egyptian expansions (courtesy of P. de Miroschedji).

isolation and in coexistence with the indigenous communities, and finally to the adoption of Uruk traits in communities that never experienced an alien Mesopotamian presence (e.g., Arslantepe in the Upper Euphrates region: Frangipane 1996: 212–53).

Explanations for Uruk Contact

Several explanations for the Uruk expansion have been put forward in an attempt to account for the multifaceted aspects of the southern Mesopotamian impact on the surrounding regions (Butterlin 2003). Trade and a commercial logic were among the first hypotheses advanced. According to Algaze (1989; 1993: 75–84), the need for precious raw materials (copper, silver, timber, and semiprecious stones) not available in the Mesopotamian alluvium prompted the founding of colonies and outposts. Another feature of Algaze's reading (partly reconsidered in recent works, e.g., Algaze 2001) is that economic exploitation would have implied asymmetrical forms of political interaction between the centers of the Mesopotamian core at the expense of the peripheral communities. While long-distance exchange relations were certainly one of the most characteristic traits of this expansion, Algaze's perspective on the asymmetrical and 'imperialistic' nature of these relationships has been criticized on two main counts.

The first is the re-evaluation of the sociopolitical developments of the Late Chalcolithic communities, emphasizing that at the time of the Uruk expansion a large part of the northern periphery had already witnessed the establishment of complex societies characterized by specialized craft production, the emergence of local elites, control over labor, and long-distance contacts (Frangipane 2001a; Schwartz 2001; Stein 2001). According to these authors, the local Late Chalcolithic communities were already organized enough to interact at a peer-polity level with the southern Mesopotamian centers. The second criticism is that trade was not the main and sole focus of Uruk expansion. In fact, clear evidence of systematic exploitation of raw-material resources located in faraway regions is scant (Schwartz 2001; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 202–206). According to this negative evidence, it has been suggested that the movement of the southern Mesopotamian communities to the north could be explained by other factors, grounded in the dynamics and social contradictions inherent in urbanization (e.g., lack of land, escape from oppressive economic regimes of the south: Butterlin 2003: 97–158).

The Impact of Uruk on Local Society

In spite of these criticisms, it is clear that Late Uruk contact with the Anatolian Euphrates valley was not without its profound and long-lasting consequences. From the political and economic point of view, the Uruk expansion seems to have accelerated the formation of centralized early-state institutions capable of controlling redistributive activities and of an expanding apparatus of functionaries, economic transactions, and specialized labor.

From the cultural point of view, the Late Uruk system, encouraging mutual interaction between different regions, greatly contributed to an extensive process of cultural homogenization of northern Syria, the northern Levant, and the Upper Euphrates region. This was definitely the result of relations with the alluvium, but also of a more profound action undertaken at the level of the political ideologies of the peripheral power institutions (Collins 2000). On the margins of the Late Uruk system, however, the southern Mesopotamian impact seems to have acted on a more selective level (in the spheres of economic and political control) because distance and possibly a shorter temporal scope of interaction did not permit the southern models to be assimilated completely.

The significant difference between Late Uruk impact in the Upper Euphrates region and in more southerly regions is clearly illustrated at Arslantepe in the Malatya plain, where phase VIA saw the construction of a monumental public building that hosted political, economic, and cultic activities (Frangipane and Palmieri 1983a: 297–325; Frangipane 1997). Here, a local power group was controlling, by means of redistributive activities administered by a complex bureaucratic system (evidenced by thousands of clay sealings), economic transactions, primary production, and specialized craft activities (Frangipane 2007). Many features of the material culture from Arslantepe VIA, especially those related to specialized and artistic production (wheelmade pottery, glyptic, and wall paintings), reproduced styles and models adopted from the Uruk world.

Where this process differed from Syria and the lower parts of the Euphrates valley was that the participation of the Upper Euphrates region in the Uruk network probably activated another system of interactions with the central and eastern regions of Anatolia. The increasing presence of Red-Black Burnished Ware (RBBW) throughout the entire Upper Euphrates, a ceramic tradition formerly extraneous to the region and characterized by the typical contrasting chromatic patterns between the internal and the external surfaces of the same container, is a sign that new cultural frontiers had opened up at this time (Frangipane and Palumbi 2007). Even if the debate over the origins of this ceramic tradition is still open, the data from central and northeastern Anatolia show that RBBW was in fact a widely shared tradition in these regions as early as the middle of the fourth millennium BC (Palumbi 2003; Palumbi 2008: 100–104).

Among the consequences of these multiple northern and southern interactions was the formation of a mixed ceramic background clearly expressed in the coexistence of heterogeneous pottery traditions with different geographical and cultural origins and resulting from different *chaînes opératoires*. At Arslantepe, wheelmade, mass-produced Late Uruk pottery and handmade carefully burnished red-black ware were integrated in the same spatial, functional, and symbolic contexts (Frangipane and Palmieri 1983a: 354–61). The amount of RBBW (10–11%) (Frangipane and Palmieri 1983a: 354; Palumbi 2008: 79–93) suggests that this was a local production distinguishable by a fixed morphological repertoire (large bowls, cups, globular jars, jugs, and fruitstands). This repertoire of shapes, coupled with the fact that at this stage RBBW from the Upper Euphrates was characterized by the red-black alternate pattern (black on the internal surface of the open shapes and on the external surface of the closed vessels), shows strong similarities with the central Anatolian RBBW tradition (Todd 1973), and differs from northeast Anatolia where RBBW followed a fixed pattern (black always on the outside); this tradition would characterize red-black Kura-Araks ceramics for centuries.

The exploitation of and trade in metal ores (with which the regions of central and eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus were richly endowed), conveyed through the Upper Euphrates toward Syria and Mesopotamia, may have provided a strategic reason for the consolidation of these Anatolian relations. In fact, there are a number of significant matches between the composition of the arsenical-copper spearheads from Arslantepe phase VIA and the copper deposits in the central Anatolian and Pontic regions (Hauptmann *et al.* 2002).

In the second half of the fourth millennium BC, the synchronic involvement of the Upper Euphrates in two radically different systems of interaction (one southern and one northern) may have triggered different but mutually related processes. On the one hand, the elitist acquisition of Mesopotamian cultural models and the formation of centralized early state polities may possibly have entailed a temporary transformation of the local social structure with the establishment of a vertical (two-tiered) hierarchy of dominants and dominated (Frangipane 2001a: 338–39). On the other hand, the construction of stable relationships with the neighboring central and eastern Anatolian regions may have initiated the progressive involvement of eastern and central Anatolian networks in the dynamics of the Euphrates valley.

The destruction of the Arslantepe public building around 3100 BC (in evident connection with the collapse of the Uruk system) underlines how local elites were in fact strongly linked to the Uruk expansion, thus indicating how the developments of a local early-state centralized institution could not work without a larger infrastructure of southern-oriented relationships. This collapse enabled the northern network of interactions (and more specifically the one connected to eastern Anatolia and to the Kura-Araks communities) to play a determining role in subsequent developments within the Upper Euphrates, and in a more dilated and possibly diluted way, in those of the Lower Anatolian Euphrates valley and the ʿAmuq region.

The Southern Levant and Egypt

The Nature of Levantine Society at the Time of Egyptian Contact

Early Bronze (EB) IA settlement in the southern Levant (ca. 3600–3300 BC) may be characterized as extensive rather than intensive in its use of land. Social formations were small and segmented; craft specialization and long-distance contacts were limited. Discarding the ideological superstructure of the Ghassulian Chalcolithic, its long-distance trade contacts (particularly its access to arsenical copper from the north), and the prestige-oriented and highly specialized elite material culture that went along with them, Early Bronze people in the Levant focused on the fundamental building blocks of sedentary and semi-sedentary life: cereal-based agriculture, vine and olive horticulture, and herding. These were labor-intensive tasks at a time when labor in the widely dispersed villages may well have been scarce: the ability to command labor was to become a standard of power during the Early Bronze Age.

Limited evidence for mutual contact between Egypt and the southern Levant can be attributed to EB IA (equivalent to Naqada IIC–D: Levy and van den Brink 2002: 20). Wengrow (2006: 39) has attributed the large-scale integration of cereals into the Egyptian diet to the adoption of southwest Asian agricultural technologies, through contact with the east Mediterranean littoral and the southern Levant during late Naqada II. But the impact of Egypt in the southern Levant was to be felt only at a later point, in the Naqada III period, equivalent to the EB IB.

During EB IB (ca. 3300–3000 BCE), village society began to coalesce into larger and more permanent settlements. Large cemeteries appeared, characterized by multiple-burial tomb-caves. Two important sub-phases have been discerned in the EB IB, each associated with a different mode of interaction with Egypt. The earlier phase has been clearly characterized in the southern part of the south Levantine expanse as the 'Erani C' phase (Yekutieli 2006). According to Yekutieli, the architecture associated with 'Phase C' at Tel 'Erani (a large mound in the southern coastal plain) included substantial pillared mud-brick buildings built in dense *insulae* separated by streets. Contemporaneous sites have yielded substantial stone buildings and a possible cultic structure (Mazar and de Miroschedji 1996).

The nature of EB I settlement does not change drastically as the period wears on. There was a marked increase in the density of settlement, and many villages grew to a substantial size. Houses often appear to form extended family compounds, and occasionally evidence turns up for the accumulation of wealth. The pillared building in Erani has been mentioned; a similar, recently published late EB I compound at Beth Shean reveals large-scale grain storage and processing facilities (Mazar and Rotem 2009). There are several instances of large-scale monumental construction in the villages; these would have been the product of a collective effort, presumably organized by elders or 'big men.' The most striking of these is the succession of three cult structures at Megiddo, the largest of which achieved a truly monumental scale (Adams *et al.* 2014), and was accompanied by clear evidence for ritual feasting (Wapnish and Hesse 2002). But such monuments, which would have served an integrating function within the largest villages, are still to be considered as the exception rather than the rule. In one case at least, that of Megiddo, the influence of foreign contact (see below) needs to be considered as a possible factor in the sheer scale of public architecture. Moreover, the mortuary evidence is entirely in line with the perseverance of a collective ethos (Baxevani 1995; Ilan 2002); status differentiation at death is virtually unknown.

The EB IB society with which Naqada II–III Egypt interacted was thus a vibrant and heterogeneous village society with few regional centers and incipient, undeveloped forms of hierarchy, staple finance, and status differentiation. In terms of agricultural technology, it had perfected the 'Mediterranean package': plowing and cereal agriculture, vine and olive horticulture, and a wide exploitation of secondary animal products. Local mineral resources utilized in this period included copper from the 'Arabah region and bitumen from the Dead Sea.

Understanding the Egyptian Presence

The interpretation of predynastic Egyptian contact with the Levant has taken a fascinating route from the textual to the archaeological. Its starting point is marked by Yadin's (1955) interpretation of the Narmer palette as a narrative of Egyptian conquest in Asia. Without doubt, this colored

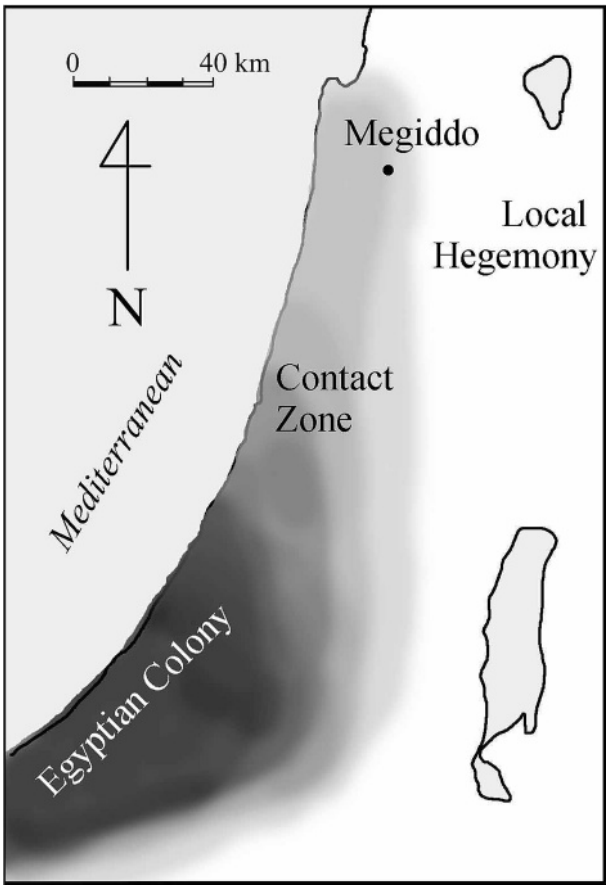

FIGURE 7.2. The Egyptian colony in the southwest Levant and its environs (courtesy of Y. Yekutieli).

the interpretations of finds, subsequently made in Israel, of Egyptian artifacts – particularly of sherds bearing the incised name of Narmer – in EB I contexts; they were assumed to represent a record of incursions from a nascent Egyptian state into the Canaanite periphery. It was only after the discovery of a series of sites that yielded evidence for the long-term presence of Egyptians carrying out mundane tasks of subsistence and food-preparation, alongside some administrative activity, that the literal reading of the palette was replaced by archaeological constructs. In a parallel development, the narrative explication of the Narmer palette evolved into an interpretation of it as a symbolic-ideological composition (Köhler 2002; Wengrow 2006: 207), while renewed research in predynastic cemeteries and sites refined the chronology of Levantine impact (Hendrickx and Bavay 2002). In this manner, archaeology served as a corrective to assumptions based on preconceived ideas of 'civilization' and 'periphery.'

Two principle phases can now be distinguished. In the first, the bulk of evidence for Levantine–Egyptian interaction comes from Egypt itself and from a scatter of short-lived sites established along the north Sinai littoral. For the most part, it consists of large quantities of 'Erani C' or contemporary pottery found in elite tombs throughout the Nile Valley (Hendrickx and Bavay 2002), including the extraordinary collection of imported pots and their imitations discovered in the predynastic royal tomb Uj in Abydos (Hartung 2002). In the Levant itself, however, evidence for contact is slight. Wengrow (2006: 135–50) and Yekutieli (2006), among others, have suggested that Egypt sought to acquire advanced agricultural technologies in the southern Levantine coastal plains. If this was indeed the case, a rapidly evolving but agriculturally challenged Egyptian 'core' was exploiting a technologically secure but politically undeveloped 'periphery,' to the great advantage of the former but to no obvious detriment of the latter. This situation, however, was about to change.

In the second phase, the theater of interaction moved decisively to the southwestern Levantine coast, where excavations undertaken since the late 1970s have uncovered the components of what is often termed an Egyptian colony (Brandl 1992; Porat 1992). The presumed colony (Figures 7.1 and 7.2) consists of a core area apparently centered around a fortified town at Tell es-Sakkan near Gaza, a number of small sites with a heavily Egyptianized material culture assemblage, and outlying sites that show clear Egyptian traits in coexistence with the local southern Levantine culture (de Miroschedji *et al.* 2001; Yekutieli 2008). The evidence for the actual presence of Egyptians consists of large quantities of locally made quotidian artifacts of obvious Egyptian derivation: bread-molds, beer basins, lotus bowls, flint artifacts, and more (see, e.g., Gophna 1995). In the core area, these finds – along with actual imports from Egypt – comprise the bulk of the recovered assemblages, whereas other sites show a clear admixture of Egyptian and local elements, including purported 'hybrid' pottery (i.e., ceramics revealing a mixture of Egyptian technique and local form, or vice versa). At the latter sites, evidence has been presented for cultural segregation, indicating that Egyptians and local people occupied different parts of the site and probably held different statuses. In addition to finds of a domestic nature, there was clear evidence for Egyptian administrative activity (mainly stamped mud sealings) both in the core areas and at their edges, as well as for importation of Egyptian products, some bearing royal insignia, principally of King Narmer (van den Brink and Braun 2002).

Beyond the core zone and its immediate periphery lay the 'contact zone' (Yekutieli 2008), an area east and north of the core where Egyptian presence is visible, but at a far lower intensity. In this contact zone, interaction with the Egyptians seems to have been confined to gift exchange and occasional forays from the core. A case in point is Megiddo. According to the results presented by the Tel Aviv University expedition at the site, a series of three temples was built in quick succession during EB IB, the last being a

structure of astounding size, 30×50 m, including a pillared hall (internal dimensions 9×30 m) furnished with eight pillar bases and eight basalt offering-tables (Adams 2013; Adams *et al*. 2014). The earlier temples were approached by a paved causeway, part of which was given over to a carefully arranged collection of incised floor-slabs (the causeway might have still been used in the later phase). Recent considerations of this 'picture pavement' have established with reasonable certainty that the main recurrent theme is one of charismatic leadership, expressed in a vernacular style that draws inspiration from Egyptian models (Keinan 2007; Yekutieli 2008). Egyptian finds associated with all three temples are comprised mainly of prestige items, such as a large ceremonial spearhead or stone and faience amulets. We might therefore conclude that local leaders were using the Egyptian connection as leverage in their bid for legitimacy, whereas the Egyptians employed them as agents for the procuring of certain goods from the northern reaches of the southern Levant.

What, in fact, was being sent down south? The rarity of Levantine pottery in Egypt indicates that olive oil and wine were no longer the main imports. Resins could have been transported in small containers, and some wood may have been sent via the coast. The preoccupation of the colonial outposts with beer and bread production suggests that mouths were being fed – perhaps laborers bound for Egypt. This could be part of the explanation for the ultimate rejection by the locals of all things Egyptian, following the post-Narmer withdrawal.

In sum, a long trajectory of Egyptian involvement can be traced in the EB I southern Levant, culminating in the establishment of Egyptian occupation along the southern coast. In each stage, the impact of contact can be observed on both the Egyptian and Levantine sides. The Egyptian settlements in the Levant are not uniform; each seems to specialize in an aspect of administration: Tell es-Sakkan (de Miroschedji *et al.* 2001) as a political center, 'En Besor (Gophna 1995) as an administrative outpost or way-station, Halif terrace (Levy *et al*. 1997) as a point of contact with local populations, and so on. The 'colonial' interpretation is not, therefore, a product of etiological thinking, but a valid assessment based on evidence for physical presence, administration, raw material and technological exploitation, and ideology. By all accounts, the end of massive Egyptian involvement at the cusp of EB II was sudden and complete, also attesting to an act of political will.

The Impact of the Egyptian Presence on Local Society

There are some grounds to suggest that important factions in local society resented the Egyptian presence. The absence of cemeteries in the Egyptian core zone is striking, intimating not only that Egyptians abhorred the notion of burial abroad, but that local people were dispossessed and had to use burial grounds situated outside the zone. It also suggests that, individually, Egyptians saw themselves as temporary residents on a mission, rather than as a truly dislocated diaspora. Yekutieli (2008) has noted the colonizers' need to fortify Tell es-Sakkan, and has identified other expressions of resistance. If part of the activity of Egyptians in the Levant was the exploitation of human labor, this could have been a significant factor in the negative perception of their presence.

There can be little doubt that interaction with Egyptians motivated self-organization in the Levantine villages. It is equally clear, however, that despite prolonged and direct exposure of southern Levantine society to Egyptian social and political practice, the values of the Egyptian 'core' found little purchase in the Early Bronze Age Levant (cf. Joffe 1993: 58). Egyptian presence contributed little or nothing to the specific materialization of EB II urbanism in the southern Levant.

The withdrawal of Egypt from southwest Canaan surely had serious repercussions in those regions that interacted with the Egyptian colony. Megiddo, whose status may have been maintained by virtue of its Egyptian connections, appears to have fissioned at the end of EB I. In areas nearer to the colony, many villages were abandoned. The establishment of the EB II system involved a redistribution of authority and significant political realignment (Greenberg 2003). In the millennia prior to the Egyptian expansion, the near and more distant north had been a source of cultural stimulus for inhabitants of the southern Levant, as was certainly the case in the later part of the Bronze Age. In fact, the north was a source of inspiration for early Egypt itself, and contact with the north could have been, to some extent, a motivation for Egyptian ventures into Asia. The impetus for the limited urbanization of the southern Levant, albeit indirect and enacted through a series of creative reinterpretations, should also be sought in the north or northeast extension of Mesopotamian ('Urukian') urbanism (Greenberg 2011).

Discussion: The Uruk and Egyptian 'Colonizations' in Mutual Perspective

Our brief presentation of two putative colonial encounters at the northern and southern extremities of the east Mediterranean littoral reveals two quite different phenomena. In terms of sheer geographical extent, the Uruk expansion outstrips the Egyptian one. But this comes at a cost:

the impact of Uruk becomes increasingly diffuse and more difficult to define at the edges of its expansion. The motivations and mechanisms of the two phenomena are likely to have been quite different: in the case of Mesopotamia, the Uruk phenomenon is strongly connected to processes of progressive urbanization, in the course of which new outposts that incorporated central elements of Uruk urban culture served both as bases for further expansion as well as crucibles of independent development. At its northern periphery, the involvement of the local elites was likely a crucial component in the Uruk expansion, leading to more 'collaborative' participation and affiliation with the economic and ideological logic of the long-distance contacts and exchanges. In Egypt, the central process was the emergence of royal power and economic centralization. Consequently, the Egyptian colonization of its nearest Asian neighbor was less constitutive in nature – imposing its priorities on the Levantine countryside and wielding its leverage at pivotal locations outside its immediate control (e.g., Megiddo) rather than adapting to its new surroundings and attempting to engage local institutions on middle ground.

In spite of these differences, our comparison does reveal some similarities that may be ascribed to a strong interest evinced by the two growing civilizations in the expansion of their horizons. In both cases the opening of local 'peripheral' societies to the 'colonizing' world takes on its own dynamic, allowing them to look north as well as south. Also, in both cases, the departure of the intrusive element leads to a significant restructuring. In the north, the collapse of the former centralized institutions and a consequent void of power was followed by the reorganization of the local communities along more traditional village or clan-based political and economic lines (as a consequence of the rejection of the Mesopotamian early-state urbanized model). In the south, we witness the crystallization of early walled, town-like polities of limited scale in the areas of former contact that surrounded the Egyptian colony.

This, then, may be the most significant outcome of the comparison: in both cases of contact between expanding entities and their periphery, the latter exhibits an active engagement or reaction. It is changed in ways that are not always clearly evident (especially regarding daily life and the nonelite spheres) but are nonetheless fundamental, such that the withdrawal of the expanding entity entailed crisis and realignment. Neither region returned to its former trajectory, and in both the return to a colonized status remained as a latent possibility, occasionally realized over the coming millennia. They were, in the most primary sense, postcolonial. And it is this status that no doubt contributed to the manner in which further foreign contacts were perceived and received, as we shall see below.

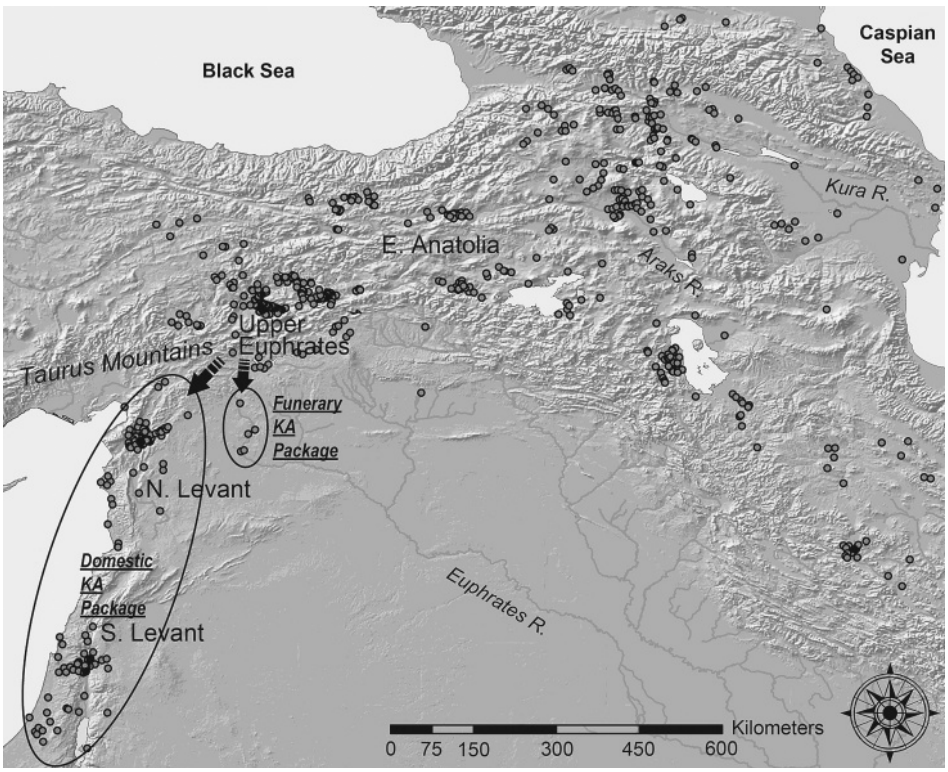

FIGURE 7.3. Map of Kura-Araks and related settlement (base map courtesy of S. Batiuk).

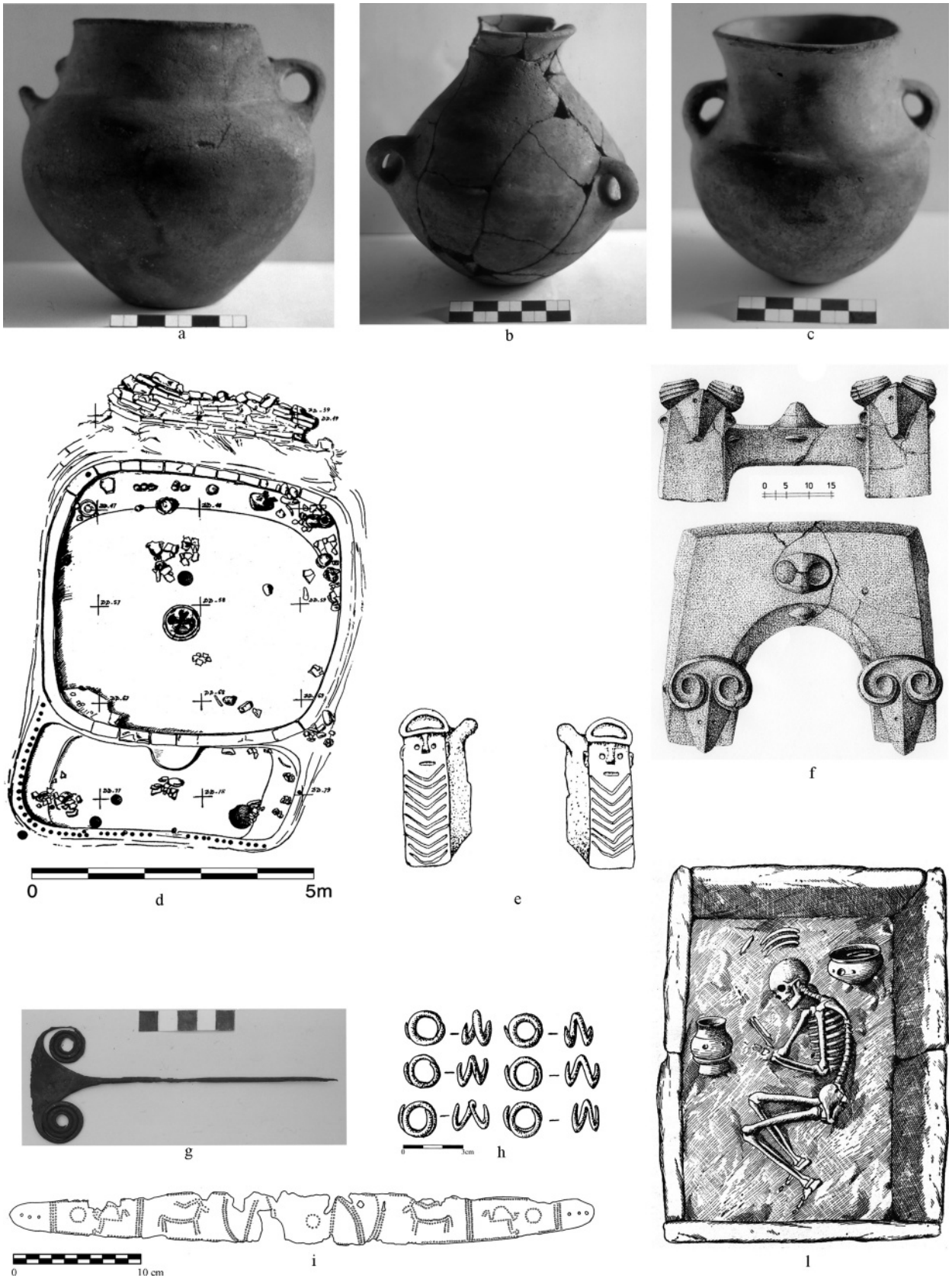

FIGURE 7.4. Markers of the Kura-Araks cultural 'package' (ceramics, wattle and daub architecture, stone cists, metallurgy, and andirons) (*a,b,c,g,i* from Palumbi 2008; *d* from Džavakhishvili and Glonti 1962; *e* from Takaoğlu 2000; *f* from Badalyan 1985; *h* from Khoridze and Palumbi 2008; *l* from Khanzadian 1979).

Part II: The Kura-Araks Phenomenon and Its Derivatives

In all areas of its dispersal (Figure 7.3), the Kura-Araks cultural package crosscuts the modes and vectors of cultural interaction that characterize the 'core-periphery' formats of the late fourth millennium BC, as well as those of the second millennium BC. It is perhaps this 'outsider' role that has attracted so much attention to the phenomenon, especially on the part of those who have tried to map the large-scale ebbs and flows of Eurasian cultural (and ethnic?) transmission (for overviews, see Sagona 1984; Kohl 2007).

It has been suggested recently that the Kura-Araks cultural package (Figure 7.4) originated in multiple interactions and synergies among mid-fourth millennium BC communities of the Anatolian, Iranian, and Caucasian highlands (Kohl 2007: 88–89, 96; Palumbi 2008; Sagona and Zimansky 2009: 166, 168). Pottery traditions show a very specific set of traits: the red-black contrast based on oxidation and reduction during firing, high burnish, the constant use of handles on both open and closed shapes, a core morphological repertoire, and a stable iconography of surface decorations.

Small wooden or wattle and daub houses are another hallmark of this culture, although other materials (stones and mud-brick) were employed. They generally contain fixed hearths or portable andirons, often embellished with anthropomorphic or zoomorphic decorations. Whether connected to ancestral or totemic cults, the spatial and symbolic centrality of these installations stresses how ritual and domestic activities may have been strongly entwined in the daily practices performed in and around the Kura-Araks dwellings (Kushnareva 1997: 76; Sagona 1998: 22; Takaoğlu 2000; Smogorzewska 2004).

Kura-Araks burial practices show a rather wide range of funerary structures, types of inhumations, and body treatments (Sagona 2004; Palumbi 2008). Horseshoe-shaped tombs, and more frequently stone-lined cists, represent the most distinguishing mortuary structures, hosting both single and collective burials. Metallurgical know-how is also often associated with the Kura-Araks culture, yet large concentrations of metal artifacts are in fact rare, and their use and production is rather dispersed. Metal artifacts – all of arsenical copper – include body ornaments (hair spirals, spiral bracelets, double spiral-headed pins, different shapes of beads) and, more rarely, tools and weapons.

While these elements rarely all appear together outside the 'homelands' of the southern Caucasus and eastern Anatolia, enough are preserved to permit this culture to be recognized at the most distant extremities of its dispersal.

The Anatolian Euphrates Valley and the Northern Levant

Chronology and Extent

In the Upper Euphrates region, it is possible to distinguish two distinct moments of the Kura-Araks intrusion. The first can be dated to the beginning of the third millennium BC (in EB I) and seems to be a direct consequence of the collapse of the power structures after the Late Uruk expansion.

The final destruction of the Arslantepe VIA public building around 3100 BC is followed by phase VIB1 (3100–2900 BC), which records temporary occupations by groups of mobile pastoralists (ovicaprines comprise more than 70% of the reared species) (Bartosiewicz 1998) with a strong Kura-Araks cultural orientation. Wattle and daub architecture represents a sharp break in the occupational sequence both in terms of building traditions (in opposition to the mud-brick architecture) and in the way the settlement was used (Frangipane and Palmieri 1983b: 523–29). Strong cultural breaks are attested in pottery traditions, where red-black burnished ceramics reproduce typical Kura-Araks repertoires (handled jars, lids, and large S-shaped bowls: Frangipane and Palmieri 1983b: 536–42; Palumbi 2008: 223–35).

Clear Kura-Araks-like traits are also recorded in the Arslantepe 'Royal Tomb,' built at the end of phase VIB1. This elite funerary structure (dated to 3081–2897 Cal BC) (Frangipane *et al.* 2001) indicates that after the Uruk collapse, new elites were reorientating themselves toward Caucasian political and cultural referents (Frangipane 2001b; Rothman 2003; Palumbi 2008: 148–55). The strong Caucasian influence is visible in many aspects of the funerary ritual: the stone-lined cist and a large part of the grave goods (diadems, hair spirals, chisels, axes, gauges, and knives). These were mixed with other elements recalling the Uruk-derived traditions (metal spearheads and wheel-made pottery).

The mixture of local and Kura-Araks traits recorded both in phase VIB1 and in the Royal Tomb does not enable us to say whether we are dealing with migrants – perhaps transhumant pastoralists from eastern Anatolia or the southern Caucasus camping at Arslantepe – or with a process of reorientation by part of the indigenous population toward the Kura-Araks world. While significant new elements indicate the arrival of alien groups, other elements of their material culture, such as circular fireplaces, certain pottery forms, and the exclusive production of RBBW with alternate pattern (the same as in the fourth millennium BC), may suggest that indigenous communities were mingling local and Kura-Araks traditions (Frangipane *et al.* 2005). Certainly, during this period, mutual interactions between these

regions must have been intense and the respective territorial/cultural borders rather permeable, factors that could also have encouraged the movement of eastern Anatolian and Caucasian people into the Upper Euphrates.

The second 'intrusive' moment can be dated between 2750–2500 BC (corresponding to EB II). This phase sees Kura-Araks elements peak throughout the whole region, in connection with a large-scale restructuring of the social and political organization of local communities. In some respects, in this period, it is almost impossible to distinguish between the pace of cultural development in the Upper Euphrates and those in eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus.

The extent of this intrusion (or the adoption of intrusive elements) in the Upper Euphrates was extremely wide and was combined with radical changes in the lifestyle of these communities. Settlement patterns and territorial organization show a growth in the number of small, and short-lived occupations (such as Gelinciktepe in the Malatya plain: Palmieri 1967), and possibly also higher territorial mobility (Conti and Persiani 1993; Di Nocera 2005). Changes are also visible in architectural traditions (from the internal spatial organization of houses to the widespread use of wattle and daub architecture), in the appearance of new domestic furniture (anthropomorphic andirons and trefoil fireplaces), and in pottery traditions.

Regarding the last, red-black burnished ceramics reproduced morphological and decorative repertoires that were highly similar to those of eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus. During EB II, handles became a typical feature of pottery vessels and new shapes (large S-shaped bowls, three-handled bottles, and lids) were commonly decorated with relief, grooved, and incised decorations reproducing Kura-Araks motifs. Indeed, in EB II, the ceramic traditions of the Upper Euphrates formed part of the broader Kura-Araks world, something also shown by the fact that during EB II, RBBW pottery abandoned the traditional alternate chromatic pattern by adopting the fixed pattern (black always on the outside) of the Kura-Araks tradition.

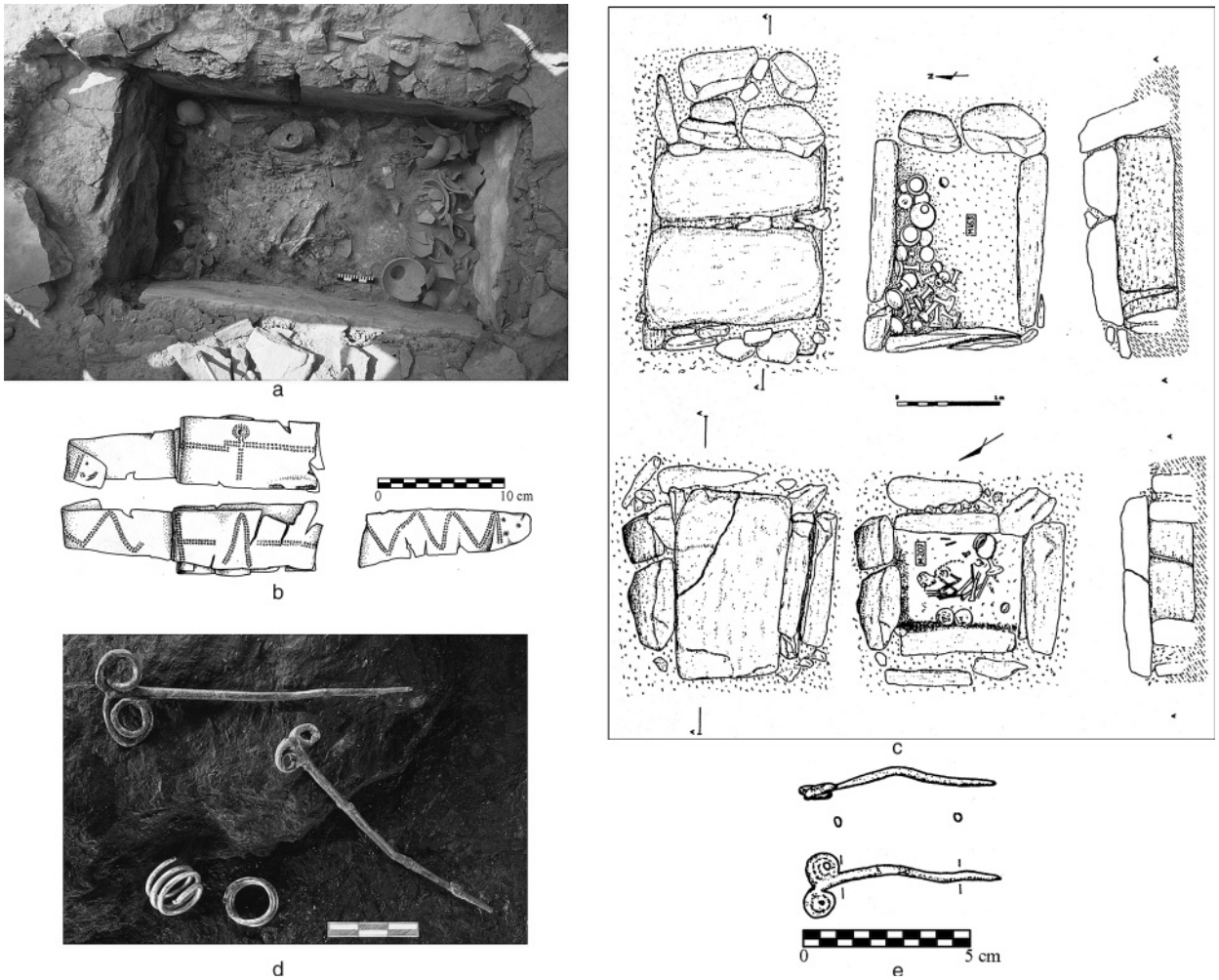

FIGURE 7.5. Kura-Araks cultural influence in the Euphrates valley: the 'metallurgy+burial' package (*a*,*b*,*d* with the permission of Archivio Missione Archeologica Italiana ad Arslantepe; *c*,*e* from Sertok and Ergeç 1999).

In the Lower (Anatolian) Euphrates valley, post-Uruk developments were not so dramatic as those in the Upper Euphrates region. There is a basic continuity between the fourth and early third millennia BC territorial and occupational patterns, suggesting the stability of the population in the region (Lupton 1996: 84–86). This same sense of continuity is confirmed by the cultural data: RBBW is only sporadically attested, and EB I Plain Simple and Late Reserved Slip pottery styles were the direct development (both in technological, morphological, and decorative terms) of the wheelmade grit-tempered Uruk pottery (Palmieri 1985; Jamieson 1993).

In spite of this strong continuity, some non-local cultural traits trickled down from the north, following the Euphrates River valley. These involve primarily the growing importance that cemeteries – completely absent during the Uruk period – and new burial customs (stone-lined cists) acquired at the beginning of the third millennium BC (Carter and Parker 1995). It has been stressed that stone-lined cists were part of the Kura-Araks burial tradition and that their first appearance in the Upper Euphrates valley must be dated to the very beginning of EB I (the Arslantepe Royal Tomb: Palumbi 2007; 2008). South of the Taurus Mountains, stone-lined cists (Figure 7.5) existed in the middle and late phases of EB I (Hassek Höyük, Nevalı Çori, Hacinebi Birecik, and Carchemish: Behm-Blancke 1984: 50–53; Becker 2007: 101–18; Stein *et al.* 1997; Sertok and Ergeç 1999; Woolley and Barnett 1952: 218–22) and continued into EB II (Lidar Höyük, Titriş: Hauptmann 1993; Algaze *et al.* 1995). The ceramic inventory from these cists included no RBBW and was exclusively made up of the same Plain Simple wares common in contemporary EB I settlements of the region. But there were other objects in these cists: metal tools and body ornaments (flat axes, chisels, double spiral-headed pins: Squadrone 2007) that, apart from the Arslantepe Royal Tomb, are comparable only to the metal repertoires from the Caucasus (Palumbi 2008: 146–48).

A Hurrian ethnic identity has been tentatively associated with this new funerary custom (Carter and Parker 1995: 113; Cooper 2006: 247–50; Cooper 2007). But the absence of any further cultural elements suggests that the introduction of new burial customs (together with some specific metal items) were the result of a selected (and contingent) transmission of Kura-Araks elements, when the Euphrates River valley still acted (during EB I) as a channel of these highland–lowland connections. The introduction of these elements is unconnected to any long-term process of change because in EB II (when the Taurus Mountains became a true geographical and cultural boundary between the highlands and lowlands of eastern Anatolia), these Kura-Araks funerary and metallurgical traditions were readapted to local political and cultural dynamics, and gradually abandoned.

In the northern Levant, the presence of elements of the Kura-Araks cultural package is confined to a limited stretch of the northeast Mediterranean coast and to the ʿAmuq basin, with some evidence for an extension along the Orontes Valley. The appearance of considerable quantities of RBBW at Ras Shamra during phase III A1–2 (and to a lesser extent at a number of nearby coastal sites, such as Rousset al-Amir, Qal'at Siriani, and Tell Sukas) indicates that this tradition did not specifically avoid the Mediterranean seaboard. The 'Khirbet Kerak' ceramic repertoire (i.e., the RBBW tradition) from Ras Shamra closely resembles that which typifies the nearby ʿAmuq region in the first half of the third millennium BC (de Contenson 1989; 1992: 183–86), but little can be said of the detailed chronology of its appearance or of its quantity relative to coexisting pottery traditions.

In the ʿAmuq, late phase G ceramic developments can be basically likened to those of southeastern Anatolia in EB I (wheelmade Plain Simple and Late Reserved Slip ceramics), except for the presence of the completely alien Red-Black Burnished pottery tradition that appears in its uppermost levels (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 294). RBBW is found only sporadically in phase G, whereas in phases H and I, it is quite common, accounting for 52–55% and 35–40% of the ceramic bulk respectively (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 358, 398). Corresponding to these important cultural changes is a marked growth in the number of new (and small) settlements occupied during phase H (Yener *et al.* 2000: 184; Batiuk *et al.* 2005: 171).

Unfortunately, the modalities of the appearance and internal developments of RBBW in this region remain unclear. According to Braidwood and Braidwood (1960), RBBW in ʿAmuq phase H appeared together with Plain Simple and Late-Reserved Slip ceramics (EB I), but also coexisted with other pottery productions, such as Metallic Ware (dated to EB II). The association of RBBW with Plain Simple and Late Reserved Slip is not surprising, as the same pattern is found in the Upper Euphrates valley in EB I. This means that RBBW could have appeared as early as EB I (the end of phase G and early phase H) reaching its quantitative peak in EB II (that is to say, in late phase H, see Table 7.1 above).

Andirons were a further feature introduced in ʿAmuq phase H (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 371–72). This horseshoe-shaped clay object, whose function was clearly related to fire and cooking activities, was very often characterized by plastic decorations depicting human faces. It clearly recalls similar fire structures from the Upper Euphrates valley dating from EB II (see below, on Pulur-Sakyol), but its origins must be sought in eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus where it was one of the most

typical expressions of the Kura-Araks domestic and ritual culture.

The appearance of these intrusive Anatolian-Caucasian elements in the ʿAmuq region marked a second and later moment in the transmission of Kura-Araks culture from the eastern Anatolian highlands toward the southern lowlands at the beginning of EB II (ca. 2750 BC). It is also interesting to notice that this second 'movement' of Kura-Araks elements took a different path from the metallurgical and funerary traditions of the Lower Euphrates valley. RBBW and andirons seem to have followed a southwestern route, bordering on the internal slopes of the Taurus Mountains, passing by the Elbistan region (where RBBW was still present: Brown 1967), and crossing the Taurus range at the point where it merges with the Amanus Mountain range, thus flowing into the ʿAmuq plain.

The similarities between EB II RBBW in the Upper Euphrates and the RBBW in the ʿAmuq of phase H are close enough to suggest a basic synchronicity between these periods as well as close interactions between these regions (we cannot exclude migratory events). At the same time, the introduction of these foreign cultural elements was also accompanied by a local re-elaboration of these same elements, among them the fact that RBBW in the ʿAmuq is accompanied by a completely original production of red-orange slipped vessels (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 361, 398). Some shapes, such as the long cylindrical pot-stands and concave lids, still belong to the Anatolian and Caucasian (cooking?) traditions, but they show a very original capacity for elaborating these foreign elements in a local key.

Materials, Technologies, and Symbolic Function

The presence of Kura-Araks elements in the Upper Euphrates during the first half of the third millennium BC shows a wide variability of material combinations, with respect to historical contingencies, to the diversity of the symbolic contexts of expression, and to the growing level of involvement of local communities in interactions with the Kura-Araks world.

During EB I (beginning of the third millennium BC), while the RBBW technological tradition on its own cannot be considered as a marker of Kura-Araks intrusiveness in the region (because it was still being produced according to the traditional, local alternate chromatic pattern), the expression of Kura-Araks elements is attested in two different contexts:

(1) In the Arslantepe VIB1 pastoralist campsite, new pottery shapes are associated with new building techniques (wattle and daub architecture).

(2) In the stone-lined cist of the Arslantepe 'Royal' tomb, there is a rich array of metal objects, most of which belonged to Caucasian metal repertoires. This ritualized representation expresses a mortuary package used to stress and legitimize the status and political position of the buried man.

These two episodes express two different material packages (architecture+ceramic in the case of the campsite, and funerary customs+metallurgy in the case of the Royal Tomb) that would develop differently and be transmitted separately beyond the Upper Euphrates region (see Figure 7.3).

The first and more 'domestic' package, that is to say, wattle and daub building techniques and pottery traditions, continued to characterize the settlements during EB II and, as is shown by the sequence of Norşuntepe levels XXIV–XVI (Hauptmann 1982), was enriched by the appearance of very specific fire structures (trefoil fireplaces and horseshoe-shaped andirons) of the Kura-Araks domestic tradition (Figure 7.6). In this period, then, while metal production and funerary traditions did not express such a strong Kura-Araks connotation, the marked appearance of Kura-Araks elements was especially tangible in the domestic sphere and in its related activities, as if they signalled materially the changes in the new social, symbolic, and productive role of the household.

From this point of view, the site of Pulur-Sakyol is enlightening (Koşay 1976). In levels XI–IX there, anthropomorphic hearths built at the center of the houses seem to have become domestic shrines and central elements for new ritual practices (ancestor cults?) attached to the domestic sphere.

In the Lower Anatolian Euphrates, the presence of Kura-Araks traits is restricted to a rather short historical moment (EB I), to specific materials, and to a very selective realm of social and ritual expression. This is the 'funerary package' (Figure 7.5), already observed in the case of the Arslantepe Royal Tomb (stone-lined cists+metallurgy). It has been suggested that the appearance of these stone-lined cists (and cemeteries) at the beginning of the EBA could be related to the post-Uruk territorial reorganization of local societies, in connection with the growing economic importance of specialized pastoralism among the lowlands communities, and possibly also to the emergence of new roles and images of leadership (Palumbi 2007). This small package of selected Kura-Araks elements, associated exclusively with a specific ritual and symbolic sphere, would thus have been employed in the context of territorial and power negotiation strategies.

At both Ras Shamra and the ʿAmuq in the northern Levant, RBBW and related cultural elements seem to be strictly connected (in terms of use and production) to the domestic and household spheres. While architectural/

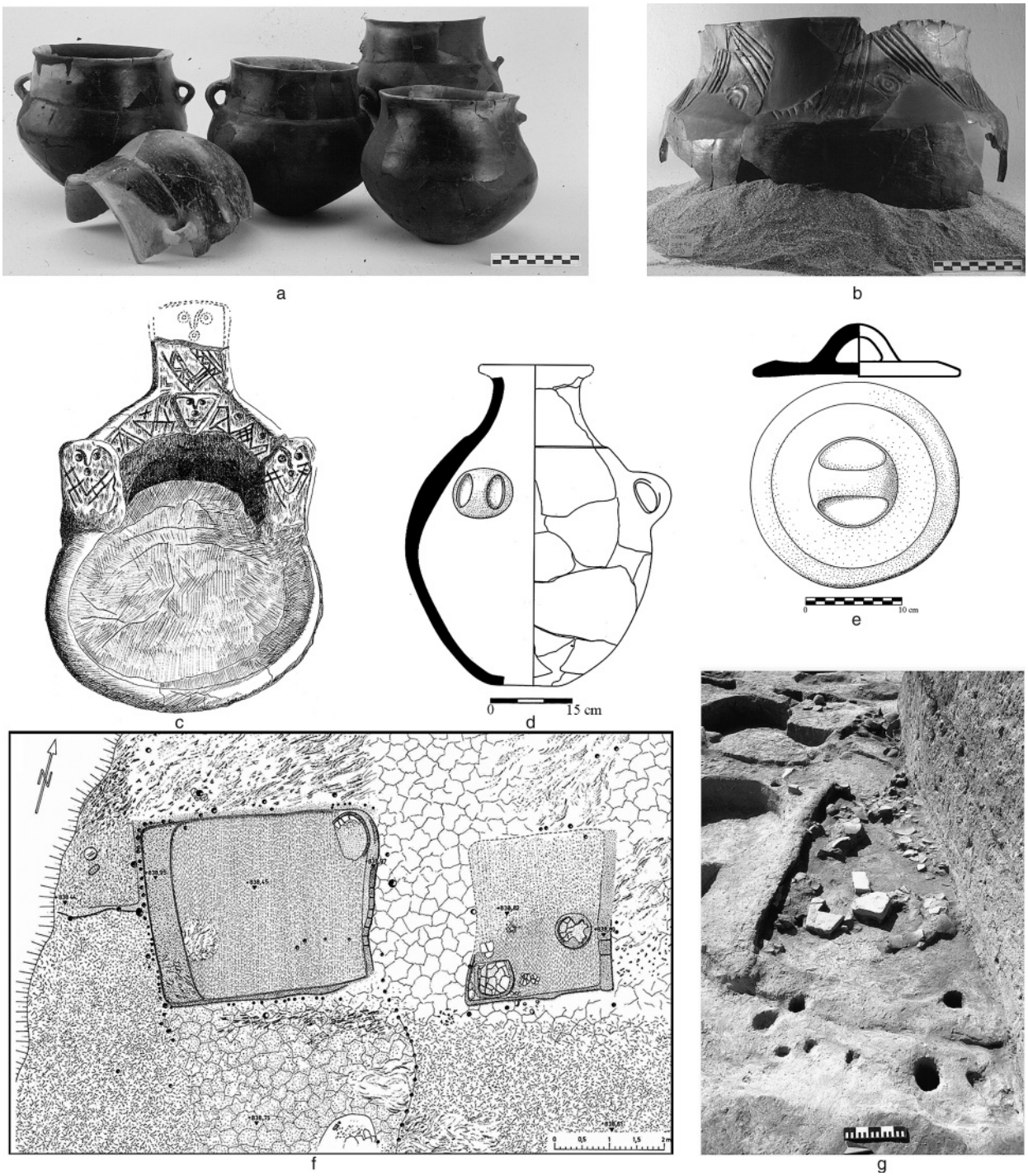

FIGURE 7.6. Kura-Araks cultural influence in the Euphrates valley: the 'ceramic+andirons' domestic package (*a*,*b*,*g* with the permission of Archivio Missione Archeologica Italiana ad Arslantepe; *c* from Košay 1976; *d*,*e*,*f* from Hauptmann 1982).

building traditions do not show any significant changes in comparison to earlier periods, RBBW from Ras Shamra IIA1–2 and ʿAmuq phases H and I comprises vessels connected to consumption, storage, and cooking activities. Anthropomorphic andirons, which were definitely domestic furniture, appeared at the same time as the quantitative peak of RBBW, and it may be significant that some of the geometric decorations characterizing these fire-related structures bear the same motifs characterizing the contemporary red-black vessels (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: figs 290 and 307; de Contenson 1989: fig. 9).

It is possible that RBBW, with its new functional range of pottery containers, points to different food preparation and consumption practices. RBBW and andirons certainly

played an active role in the construction of a new cultural identity in the ʿAmuq, one that was more closely related to those in the Upper Euphrates and Anatolian highlands. Do these new elements also signal a change in the role that household and family organization played in the social, symbolic (and possibly also productive) life of the ʿAmuq communities in the first half of the third millennium BC?

Interaction and Spatial Relations between Kura-Araks-Derived and Local Cultural Practice

At the beginning of the third millennium BC, the sociocultural picture in the Upper Euphrates region was quite composite and showed the coexistence of separate cultural identities and radically different communities. On the one hand, there were small, sedentary, mud-brick villages (Arslantepe VIB2, Norşuntepe XXVI–XXV, Tepecik and Taşkun Mevkii: Frangipane and Palmieri 1983b; Hauptmann 1982; Sagona 1994) that developed the Late-Uruk cultural heritage (wheelmade Plain Simple and Late-Reserved Slip ceramics). On the other hand, the region was also populated by other, possibly more mobile groups (as is the case with the pastoralists from Arslantepe phase VIB1) showing a strong cultural affiliation with the Kura-Araks world.

Even if these separate sociocultural entities do not seem to have physically 'lived' together (apart from the single case of Taşkun Mevkii level 3, which records the coexistence of mud-brick and wattle and daub architecture: Sagona 1994: 5–6), the sporadic presence of Kura-Araks-like pottery vessels in the sedentary villages, and of wheelmade Plain Simple pottery in the Arslantepe VIB1 campsite, suggest a constant interaction between these different communities (Palumbi 2008: 222–33). The Arslantepe Royal Tomb is another case that highlights the presence of an intense dialectic between local and foreign traditions. In the funerary arena, the different spatial positions of the ceramic and metal objects belonging to Kura-Araks and Uruk-derived traditions may have embodied symbolically the constant interaction between these coexisting sociocultural identities (Palumbi 2008: 148–55).

This sense of coexistence disappeared at the end of EB I, and the radical changes taking place in the Upper Euphrates valley after 2750 BC are accompanied by a process of diffuse cultural homogenization oriented toward the Kura-Araks world. Even though the dichotomy between mobile and sedentary communities possibly continued at that time, this structural dialectic took place in a basically homogenous Kura-Araks cultural environment. This process was so profound that it is very hard to distinguish between 'Kura-Araks authentic/original' newcomers and local 'Kura-Araks imitating/derived' communities.

As for the Lower Anatolian Euphrates, the stone-lined cists provided a physical and symbolic space for a 'material dialogue' between some Caucasian and local traditions (the latter represented by other metal items and pottery). But this was the only specific context where the coexistence between local and Kura-Araks-derived traits has so far been shown in the region. Considering the importance that metal objects acquire in the funerary contexts of this period, it seems more likely that trade in metal ores and finished artifacts between the Upper and the Lower Euphrates valley may account for this selective Kura-Araks intrusion in the region.

At Ras Shamra, RBBW co-occurs with other pottery traditions related to both the southern Levant (in phase IIIA1) and with inland Syria and the ʿAmuq region (in the later phases IIIA2 and IIIA3: Philip 1999: 49). The architectural structures excavated in phase IIIA consisted of dwellings, domestic infrastructures, and work areas (de Contenson 1992: 50). Apparently, there is no spatial or functional separation between RBBW and other pottery types, which seem to have been indifferently employed and discarded by the same people in the same contexts of activity.

It is very difficult at the moment to ascertain whether the spatial and functional coexistence of red-black and the rest of the pottery traditions attested in ʿAmuq phases H and I might also indicate some physical coexistence between indigenous communities and newcomers. It has been noted that, beginning in phase H, there is a massive presence of RBBW at the same time the region records a change in settlement patterns (Yener *et al.* 2000: 184; Batiuk *et al.* 2005: 171). According to these data, it has been suggested that the ʿAmuq plain at this time (beginning in phase H) was gradually populated by new communities of exclusively RBBW users/producers (as is the case of Tabara el-Akrad: Hood 1951). Moreover, these data have been interpreted as the sign of Kura-Araks people arriving in the region (Batiuk 2005). Even if this migratory interpretation still relies almost exclusively on the evidence of surface material, it should also be considered that this territorial reorganization, accompanied by new cultural forms and practices, may have been an aspect of a larger regional restructuring involving both local social organization (the household role) and the change in the direction of the trade networks within the region. Was this assumed reorganization of trade networks the main factor favoring the introduction of new northeastern cultural elements, or was it the arrival of RBBW producers that triggered the cultural, social, and territorial restructuring of the ʿAmuq during phase H (Batiuk *et al.* 2005: 171, 177)?

The End of the Kura-Araks Phenomenon

The end of the Kura-Araks phenomenon in the southern Caucasus (ca. 2500–2400 BC) was linked to a new social process of change, marked by the appearance of new funerary traditions (the Early Kurgans of Martqopi, Bedeni, and Early Trialeti), the emergence of elite groups, and the gradual abandonment of earlier Kura-Araks traditions (Edens 1995).

In this same period, at the beginning of EB III, more stable political entities and large regional centers were reconstituted in the Upper Euphrates region. Large-scale architecture and specialized activity areas (such as workshops, ritual structures, monumental residences, and defense walls) became a distinctive feature of the main EB III settlements (Arslantepe, Norşuntepe, and Korucutepe: Conti and Persiani 1993). At the same time, new hierarchical territorial patterns became visible as a possible consequence of the re-sedentarization of local populations (Di Nocera 2005), which was also reflected in a decrease in evidence for mobile social components.

Throughout the second half of the third millennium BC, RBBW continued to be produced and to play a daily role in the realm of activities associated with storage and food consumption, even though black burnished and brown burnished wares increased considerably in terms of quantity. In EB III, RBBW is characterized by the same fixed pattern as in EB II, but the former Kura-Araks influences disappeared or were limited to some specific shapes (the decorated lids). At the same time, it is possible to observe growing technical and morphological standardization of the RBBW, including its decorative repertoires, now completely different from the old Kura-Araks ones. It seems that in EB III, as relations with the southern Caucasus weakened and connections with the Kura-Araks culture were lost, RBBW changed its social and cultural meanings and its former role of 'identity marker.' At the same time, this loss of meaning may also possibly be connected to the fact that this ware became the product of specialized pottery workshops, no longer connected with the domestic spheres of production nor embedded in the cultural and social dynamics of local households.

Horseshoe-shaped andirons seem to follow a similar trajectory to that of RBBW in the Upper Euphrates. During EB III, these andirons became a standard and ubiquitous type of domestic furniture, but this ubiquity and standardization implied a loss of their former iconographic and personifying characterization (with the disappearance of anthropomorphic decorations, andirons literally lost their 'faces'). It is possible, then, that the loss of the symbolic role formerly played by andirons in EB II, when they were central to activities connected with domestic rituals (which may themselves have strengthened the construction of household identities), could be associated with the transformation (and weakening) of the role of the household when new and stronger political institutions emerged in the late third millennium BC Upper Euphrates.

Along the Lower Euphrates valley, the stone-lined cist burial tradition was progressively abandoned, and tended to disappear when new funerary customs (the stone chambers) became expressions of more stable social inequalities (Cooper 2006).

In the ʿAmuq, the RBBW tradition continued into the early Phase I (corresponding to EB III, i.e., the early second half of the third millennium BC) with the same basic features of the former phase H (even though an increase in the red-orange slipped variant has been observed to the disadvantage of the red-black effect). The final disappearance of this ware came in phase J (EB IVA; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: n. 11), and may be associated with the peak of the 'caliciform' horizon in western Syria (Mazzoni 1982).This widespread and highly standardized production of goblets was certainly a sign of new and semi-industrial modes of pottery manufacture. The latter were possibly the result of reorganizing production connected with the second urban revolution in the main centers of western Syria (Ebla) in the second half of the third millennium BC (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 242–43; Cooper 2006: 200). The connection between the disappearance of the RBBW tradition and the takeover of highly specialized forms of pottery production may have been a causal relation. Here, it is important to stress that andirons also disappeared, suggesting once again their strong symbolic and functional associations with RBBW, and the fact that the formation of powerful state institutions may have altered (and depleted) the former social function and productive role of the household, where RBBW and andirons were most likely made and used.

Nonetheless, the disappearance of Kura-Araks-related material expressions in the northern Levant (RBBW and andirons) may have resulted from other factors. On the one hand, the formation of the new city-states of Syria in the second half of the third millennium BC may have encouraged (and possibly obliged) the construction of completely new cultural identities. On the other hand, the growing territorial and commercial competition between the different city-states of Syria may have caused or favored radical changes in the interregional networks of trade and exchange, and in construction of new ones. (From the middle of the third millennium BC, for example, Cilicia starts to be more closely and regularly connected with the eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus, and western Anatolia: Mellink 1991; 1993; Knapp 2008: 110–30.) These

transformations may have weakened or gravely interrupted the former Anatolian-Levantine corridor of communication, which had fueled – through movements of people, and flows of goods and information – developments in those Kura-Araks-related cultural elements that linked eastern Anatolia with the northern and southern Levant during the first half of the third millennium BC.

The Southern Levant

Representing the southwestern extremity of the Kura-Araks cultural province, the southern Levant exhibits a chronologically truncated and culturally distant expression of the features described in more northerly regions.

Chronology and Extent

Khirbet Kerak Ware (KKW), generally acknowledged to be the south Levantine expression of the Kura-Araks ceramic tradition, appears as a major component in a number of excavated sites in and adjacent to the Jordan river valley: Hazor, Tel Bet Yerah (Khirbet Kerak), Affula, Tel Qishyon, Tell esh-Shuna, Tel Yaqush, and Tel Beth Shean.[1] At all these sites, KKW (and a small number of associated artifacts – see below) is introduced as a complete, locally produced, ceramic package, all at once (in archaeological terms), i.e., within a single stratigraphic phase (Figure 7.7). The introduction of KKW coincides at each site either with noticeable (although not revolutionary) changes in the local ceramic repertoire, or with the renewal of settlement after a gap in occupation. This change is considered to mark the beginning of the EB III in the southern Levant, and is an expression of a broad shift in the quality of Early Bronze urbanism that comes in the wake of a crisis that affected virtually all EB II towns and villages. While the precise nature of this crisis eludes us, its principal effect was the partial or complete abandonment of numerous settlements. The people who made and used KKW thus arrived at EB III sites in the context of a regeneration of urbanism on a somewhat altered footing (Greenberg 2002).

The sites noted above fall into two categories: sites in which KKW was added to and existed alongside a local pottery repertoire (Bet Yerah, Hazor, Qishyon), and sites in which the KKW largely replaces the local component, either immediately (Shuna) or following a brief phase of coexistence (Yaqush, Bet Shean). At the latter sites, which are never more than unfortified villages, KKW so dominates the assemblage that local traditional industries appear to have been put out of business. In contrast to the Egyptian case, therefore, the largest sites with a prominent tradition of KKW production are extant EB III towns (Bet Yerah, Hazor) with a strong local component, rather than 'pure' KKW settlements.

While it is not imperative that the arrival of KKW producers/consumers at the above-mentioned sites was entirely contemporaneous, there is no compelling reason to suggest otherwise. That does not, however, apply to its arrival as a minor component at neighboring sites, or to the longevity of the phenomenon at each site. At some sites, there are five or six phases associated with the ware (Bet Shean, Bet Yerah); at others, one or two (Hazor, Yaqush). It may thus be assumed that following the initial introduction of the ware – and of the people who produced and consumed it – KKW communities followed a variety of trajectories, until production ceased. There is nothing to suggest the incremental addition of Kura-Araks-type wares following the initial arrival of KKW producers.

In terms of absolute chronology, the most recent attempts to provide a radiocarbon framework for south Levantine EBA chronology suggest a relatively early date for the onset of EB III, probably before 2800 Cal BC (Philip and Millard 2000; Regev *et al.* 2012). This considerably shortens the timeline for the arrival of the Kura-Araks tradition in the south Levant, making it virtually coeval with the introduction of RBBW in the ʿAmuq region of the northern Levant. Such a shortened timeline is germane to the interpretation of the entire phenomenon, as we shall see below.

Materials, Technologies, and Symbolic Function

In the case of the Upper Euphrates region, as in that of EB I Egyptian establishments in the southern Levant, contact with the source culture was immediate and mutual, allowing the precise recreation of the homeland cultural media in the new setting. In the case of KKW and its relation to the Kura-Araks sources, a much longer chain of transmission must be assumed. The articulation of social difference by migrant societies is an ongoing negotiation involving the re-inscription of tradition and authorized hybridization (Bhabha 1994). The association of a site or house with migrants or indigenes might therefore be based on a sliding scale or continuum; we are not seeking a complete 'package' but evidence of certain recurrent dispositions that might set apart the newcomer from the local. Over time, these dispositions will be attenuated, until the distinction is lost and the former marker of cultural identity either disappears or takes on a new meaning.

In the southern Levant, the Kura-Araks tradition is expressed solely in the domestic sphere. Within that sphere, the tradition is represented primarily by a rich

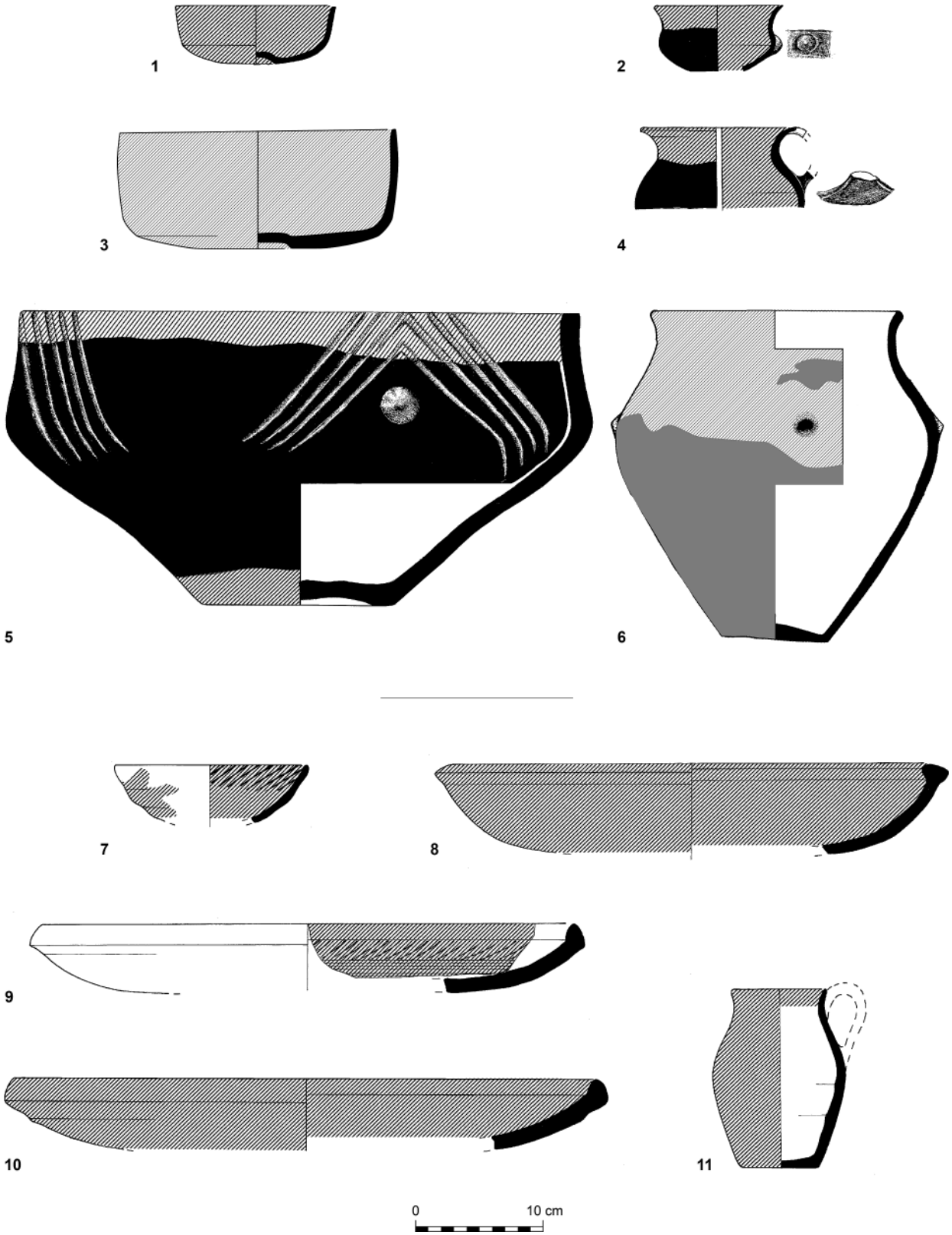

FIGURE 7.7. KKW vessels (1–6) contrasted with serving vessels in the local tradition (7–11), from Tel Bet Yerah.

and varied pottery repertoire and by the use of portable hearths as part of a unique cooking ensemble (see below). A possible correlation between KKW domestic assemblages and certain architectural details has been observed at one site at least (Paz 2009), but it requires corroboration. No metallurgy has yet been associated with KKW, but this may well be a function of the absence of graves (no cemeteries at all have been found at KKW sites or in the northern part of the southern Levant in general, and this seems to have been part of the local urban attitude to the dead).[2]

The identification of a community of producers and consumers of KKW is based on a broad range of individual, household, and communal practices encompassing both production and consumption of its typical products. *Chaîne opératoire* analysis of KKW and traditional local production (Iserlis 2009; Iserlis *et al*. 2010) has established that, at all sites, KKW differs fundamentally from local practice in the following parameters: choice of raw materials (usually local soils) and inclusions (often including grog and organics); formation techniques (especially the resistance to wheel manufacture); surface treatment (thick slip and burnish) and decoration (incised or embossed); and firing (red and black coloration achieved through oxidation/reduction). When the prescribed sequence of actions was rigorously followed, which was the norm, it led to a consistently high-quality finish, clearly set off from local production. Despite the high degree of know-how invested in their production, KKW vessels show no standardization; the potters may even be said to have resisted standardization (or simplification) in their consistent rejection of wheel-coiling and their adherence to labor-intensive formation techniques. KKW appears to follow the 'learning network' (Gosselain 1998) model of knowledge transmission, that is, variation within a recognizable tradition created by daily reproduction in contexts of informal instruction. In this model, information moves both vertically in society, from old to young, and horizontally, through social contact of age peers.

The color of the vessels offers some interesting contrasts. As already noted for the northern Levant, the use of red-only burnished vessels is introduced south of the Taurus, in conjunction with either new forms or significant variations on old ones (e.g., vertical-walled bowls and biconical stands). Red-black vessels are generally those that have clear antecedents in eastern Anatolia or the southern Caucasus. Since red slip was a very common feature of local pottery in the Levant, its use on KKW may be seen as an adaptation to local preference. In this manner, an element of negotiation with local culture is introduced into Kura-Araks-derived practice, and with it a recognition of the distance traveled from its place of origin (Greenberg 2007).

Typologically, KKW bowls and kraters comprise a functional replacement to local mixing and serving vessels (for liquids and solids), whereas the KKW cooking ensemble – comprised of a local-style cooking pot placed on a KKW andiron and covered with a distinctive KKW lid – co-opts a local cooking vessel into KKW practice, presumably in the service of a distinctive cuisine (Figure 7.8). Many of the fine cups and large mixing vessels are both asymmetrical and provided with a remarkably narrow base; this might explain the large numbers of biconical stands of all sizes that form a distinctive component in the assemblage.

The shape and asymmetry of the KKW vessels require a *technique du corps* for the daily routines of food consumption that differs markedly from those prescribed by local tradition. A prime example is the contrast between the ubiquitous large serving platter and coarse bowls used locally as the main serving vessels and the deep KKW kraters and fine-ware bowls and goblets (see Figure 7.7). The former, which grow to a remarkable size in EB III, seem to have played a role in communal meals and labor recruitment, whereas the latter seem to cater to a different palate, accustomed perhaps to stews and the consumption of beer or wine.

The color, luster, and tactile qualities of KKW are additional, and very obvious, attributes that communicated difference, establishing sensory boundaries between KKW-rich and KKW-poor settings. Such boundaries existed between houses (see below), and even within them: the absence of a KKW storage vessel implies that local-style jars and *pithoi* fulfilled storage functions, even at sites where KKW was overwhelmingly dominant. In its formal and technological priorities, KKW thus embodies values related to the internal workings of the household and perhaps to the relations between houses; it does not concern interaction with the outside world such as storage and exchange, or large-scale labor recruitment (platters). It may thus be characterized as a mode of resistance to the collective values of EB III southern Levant urbanism.

Interaction and Spatial Relations between Kura-Araks-Derived and Local Cultural Practice

Ever since the initial recognition of the KKW phenomenon, it has been clear that its distribution was limited to a small number of sites in the Jordan valley (where it was very abundant), and that only small quantities of the ware appeared outside its main distribution area, as the pottery does not travel well. The introduction of KKW into an extant EB settlement system during a time of crisis

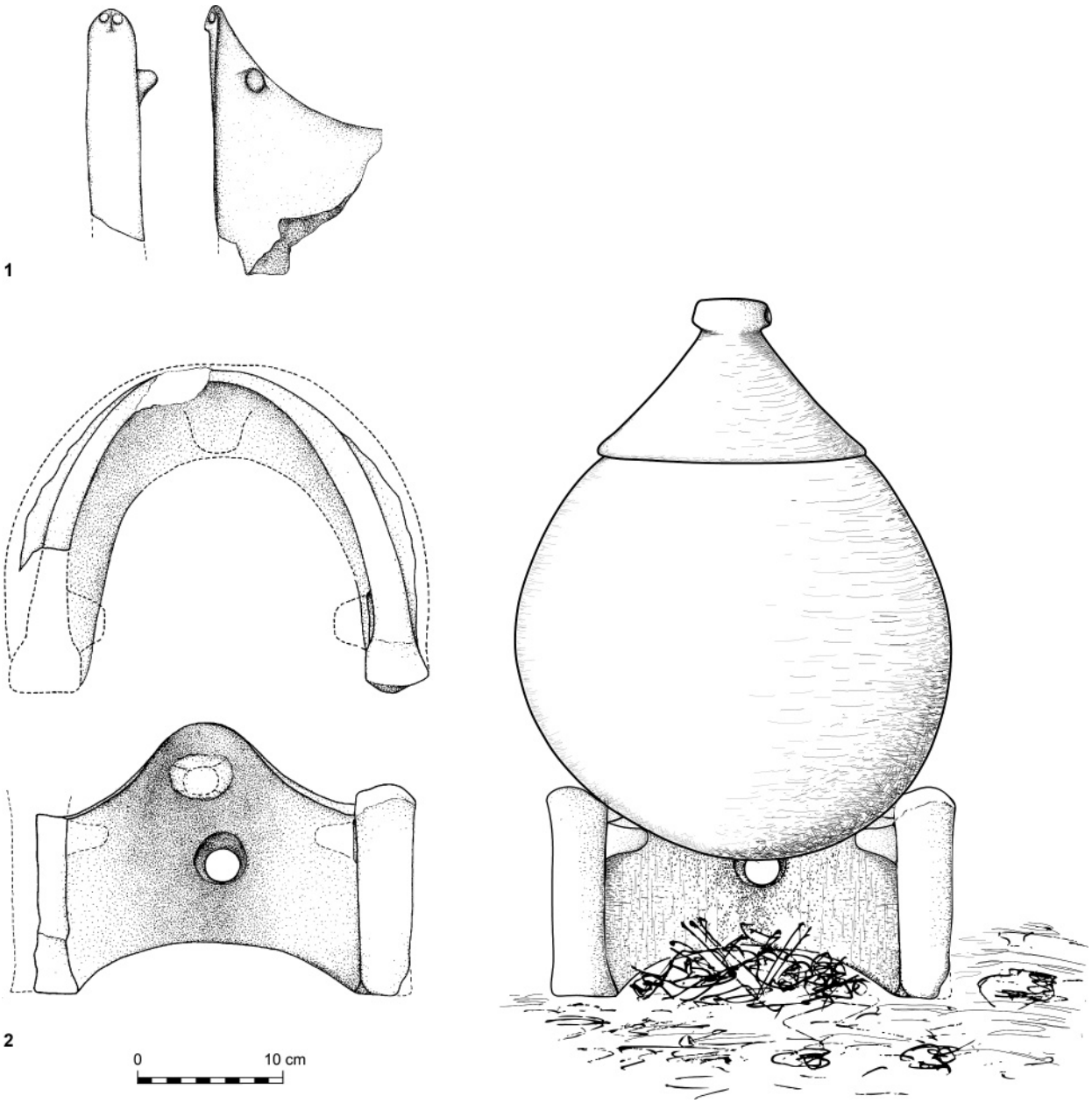

FIGURE 7.8. KKW andirons and the reconstructed cooking ensemble.

created three configurations: occupied urban sites with a newly introduced KKW component, abandoned sites newly occupied by KKW producers/consumers, and sites at which there was only an ephemeral KKW component.

Several recent studies provide additional and highly relevant details:

(a) Where KKW is introduced into an extant site, there tends to be segregation between KKW-rich and KKW-poor contexts (Greenberg 2007; Paz 2009). At first, previously open or abandoned lots, as well as disused public structures, are covered with KKW-rich deposits that suggest temporary construction within a partly abandoned settlement. This is particularly noticeable in the so-called Granary ('Circles Building') at Tel Bet Yerah – a 1000 sq m public building of the early EB III that was completely given over to a KKW 'squat' within a short time of its construction. Contemporary houses that show continuity with EB II have little or no KKW in them. Following this phase, new houses are built; these maintain the segregation between KKW-rich and KKW-poor contexts shown in the early phase.

(b) When KKW producers/consumers arrived at smaller sites in the Jordan valley, a first phase of coexistence of KKW and the local tradition, similar to that of the larger sites, was followed by a second phase in which the quantity and diversity of local EBA wares was severely diminished (Mazar *et al.* 2000; Novacek 2007; Iserlis *et al.* 2012).

(c) Often, even individual instances of KKW pots at sites removed from the core area of production were made locally; i.e., the presence even of a single pot could indicate the presence of a KKW potter at the distant site (Zuckerman *et al.* 2009).

As noted above, by combining a full KKW repertoire with the hybridized cooking ensemble, a household could provide for nearly all its needs without recourse to traditional, local industries. The principal exception would have been that of storage. Paz (2009) has suggested that storage was associated with permanence, and hence was deliberately left out of the migrant's 'package,' along with other attributes of fixed settlement such as the central hearth. As a result, where local, traditional wares were available (i.e., at mixed settlements), the KKW-rich households always contained a local component (and vice versa: the KKW-poor households had a KKW component). Nonetheless, the different households were clearly defined in terms of cuisine, cooking, and table manners. Such differences surely affected modes of interaction between different communities in the same settlement.

This mode of coexistence, however, was too volatile to last any great length of time. Thus, at the large sites, a process of assimilation gradually changed the role of KKW. It lost its strong identity-preserving function and took on other meanings while retaining its technical integrity. At smaller sites, KKW practice became exclusive, leaving no room for local wares and traditional habits.

The production of isolated examples of KKW at sites distant from the main KKW communities has been explained as the work of itinerant potters (Zuckerman *et al.* 2009). This seems unlikely, as the products – usually fine-ware bowls – had local functional equivalents, and one can hardly imagine that a potter would have traveled for days only for such a purpose. It is more likely that the very act of creation was a culturally significant activity, a statement of identity through technology. Thus, KKW should not be viewed as an industry at all in the sense that applies to local EBA production. Both the production and the use of the pot required a set of prescribed actions and movements that served as a mode of performative commemoration, linking the owner of even a single vessel to the community of origin.

The End of Khirbet Kerak Ware

Unlike the Egyptian episode of EB I, which ended abruptly and completely, and clearly as the result of a deliberate, politically motivated withdrawal, the KKW communities appear to have taken different paths toward a gradual dissolution or absorption in local society. At Tel Bet Yerah, where – at some locations – KKW seems to maintain itself as a separate entity through five or six stratigraphic phases, there are clear signs of the attenuation of the original role of the assemblage in setting apart a community of producers and users. In the latter phases, the segregation between KKW-rich and KKW-poor households is no longer evident; the ware is spread more evenly – and hence thinly – in the site as a whole. Although the technological values are maintained (with some loss of diversity: Iserlis 2009), the values attached to the pots themselves were almost certainly altered. Eventually, KKW became one of a variety of ways in which EB III persons could communicate status, diversity, or mere individual preference. This can be seen as a natural process, especially in view of the absence of any communication between 'KKW people' and the other parts of the Kura-Araks diaspora. At other sites with a strong KKW affiliation – whether large and fortified, such as Hazor, or rural, such as Yaqush – as well as at sites with meager finds introduced into a local repertoire, all that can be said is that KKW does not survive the dissolution of urban life at the end of EB III. It is not in evidence at any of the southern Levant sites associated with the post-urban Intermediate Bronze Age (IBA), nor is there any residue of the values associated with KKW in the material culture of the IBA.

Interestingly, there is a certain similarity between the trajectories of the southern Levant and those of the distant north in terms of the shift in burial customs and strategies of status differentiation. As urbanism, with its limited concern with mortuary expression, declined, it was replaced by rural and semi-nomadic societies in which mortuary ritual and display became far more prominent. Mirroring the changes in the southern Caucasus and the northern Levant, KKW was entirely supplanted by the local equivalent of those northern Kurgan cultures.

To sum up this point, although the KKW phenomenon is not in itself strongly correlated with urban living – in its aversion to commoditization, in the absence of an architectural tradition, and in its focus on the domestic unit – it is nonetheless a feature of the urban EBA southern Levant. This could point, perhaps counterintuitively, to a specialized function for KKW producers/consumers in an integrated urban setting; such a function could not be maintained as towns were abandoned in the latter part of the third millennium BC.

Discussion: The Nature of the Kura-Araks 'Expansion' in Anatolia and the Levant

In contrast to Egyptian and Mesopotamian expansions, it is difficult to identify a specific core region from which the Kura-Araks phenomenon emerged and that served as the

crucible of its ongoing cultural development. From its very inception, it seems to be a reproducible set of principles, codified in various aspects of material culture but only loosely tied to a specific landscape. As a set of principles, it seems to have allowed those who identified with it enough flexibility to adapt to a wide variety of ecological, social, and political circumstances. Kura-Araks identity was thus dispersed over a broad area, in discreet habitats. Some of these were contiguous, and their continued interaction can be documented; others were detached and had a brief independent development. In contrast to the earlier colonizers, 'Kura-Araks people' did not exploit local resources for the sake of outside interests, did not promote asymmetric contact or status differentiation, and do not seem to be a central factor in third millennium BC social and political change – although they do appear to have filled in the gaps left by the dissolution of the Uruk network.

In the Upper Euphrates, the greater part of the third millennium BC witnesses the interplay between internal local developments and the growing involvement of the Kura-Araks world. In EB I, Arslantepe phase VIB1 and the Royal Tomb can be considered as short-term events against a local cultural background that maintained elements of the Uruk heritage. We cannot exclude *a priori* that Kura-Araks people moved or migrated into the Upper Euphrates from the east, but an alternate hypothesis should not be ruled out: that the Kura-Araks elements represent a slow but progressive reorientation of the local communities toward the expanding cultural and political spheres of eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus, and an attempt to construct new sociocultural identities. The large-scale transformations that took place at the beginning of EB II were the results of a radical process of change, inspired and influenced by models of the contemporary Kura-Araks communities. Migratory events may have caused some of these radical changes, but the total involvement of the region's entire population in this transformative process requires us to take account of the active role played by the local, extant communities in this 'desire' (and need) for change.

As we move from north to south, we become increasingly preoccupied with the definition of the culture as Kura-Araks-derived and as a bounded social unit – an identity or possibly an ethnicity. This reflects not only the distance of the terminal variants of the culture ('Amuq RBB and southern Levantine KKW) from the 'source,' but also the function of the Taurus as a boundary: to its north, we can talk about cultural expansion, diffusion, reorientation, etc., i.e., cultural transformations within a greater region that had always been characterized by mutual interaction and mobility. Moreover, this was a region implicated in the very process of the formation of a Kura-Araks 'identity.' To its south, we are looking at a movement by carriers of the tradition into regions that were probably perceived by them as alien, i.e., a movement of people, its materialization filtered by the contingencies of the migration: who moved, why they moved, what they left behind, what they absorbed or reinvented en route. As they move, they interact with local societies, objectifying their cultural difference (Jones 1996: 69) by persevering in certain forms of material practice, time space routines, and ritual while adapting to local lifeways. In this context, the burial/settlement divergence visible in the contrast between the Levantine littoral and the Lower Anatolian Euphrates seems to be of particular significance. If, as we have already suggested, the adoption of cist tombs and south Caucasian-style metal ornaments in Arslantepe VIB1 and the Lower Euphrates was a strategy employed in local power negotiation, then the absence of this element in enclaves of Kura-Araks-derived settlement in the Levant could indicate that the territorial element was not in play. In other words, these communities were not in the business of establishing a claim over territory in the Levant, but were entering it as foreign migrants, with the consent – or collusion? – of local populations.

What could have motivated the movement of the Kura-Araks communities – or parts of them – into such vast new areas? A possible answer brings us back to the discussion in the first part of the chapter. The fourth millennium BC Urukian and Egyptian northward thrust – both interpreted as responses to a swiftly growing thirst for technologies, raw materials, and interaction with other societies (Wengrow 2010) – created unprecedented opportunities in every area affected by their expansion while disrupting earlier lines of communication. For example, a vigorous late fifth/early fourth millennium BC movement of arsenical copper from the south Caucasus to the Ghassulian Levant was entirely blocked and rerouted toward Mesopotamia from the mid-fourth millennium BC onward. The demise of both expansions at the cusp of the third millennium BC created a vacuum, particularly with regard to the extraction, processing, and trade of metals, especially copper. With tin-bronze still rare and confined to prestige objects produced at the outer edges of the eastern fertile crescent, with Cypriot copper perhaps still to be discovered by mainland consumers (but see Philip *et al.* 2003; Webb *et al.* 2006; Knapp 2013: 261, 271–72), and with the advent of the silver standard still in the future (when it is associated with late third/early second millennium BC economies of scale), mobile Kura-Araks communities may have been positioned to provide a vital technological and commercial lubricant for the dissemination of copper and copper technology in the postcolonial Levant (see also Wilkinson 2009).

The performance of a specific role within local societies of the Levant can account for some of the peculiar features of the migrant community: their stubborn conservatism – as expressed in pottery, in their symbolism, and in their resistance to assimilation – and the linkage between their demise and that of local social structures (best exemplified in the southern Levant). Their continued link to metallurgy may be reflected in the obvious pyrotechnical skills and possible metal skeuomorphism (Wilkinson 2009) of their pottery, while the absence of large quantities of metals south of the Taurus can be explained as a correlate of the absence of tombs in general – a feature that they would have had adopted from local practice – and of the low social status of the migrants. The Arslantepe tomb is a rare case where the power of the elite permitted a metal hoard to survive, and it shows that metals were an important part of the Kura-Araks way of life.

Concluding Thoughts

Whether the Kura-Araks-derived 'package' remained the domain of migrants alone or was emulated or adopted by local groups who might have already been at the social margins of the local urban centers (Philip 1999) remains a point of contention, with one of us (R.G.) tending to the former position, and the other (G.P.) to the latter. In either case, the trans-regional and long-range perspective taken in this chapter allows us to view the Kura-Araks expansion of the third millennium BC as a postcolonial phenomenon.

In the former areas of Uruk influence, it can be seen as postcolonial in terms of the disruption of former colonial structures and of the reaction and rejection of the resulting empowerment of local elites. This empowerment was founded on political and economic centralization, ideas of urbanization, redistribution, control over labor, specialized production, and a pronounced social hierarchy, while the Kura-Araks model was founded on household production and on a kin-based horizontal social structure. It can also be seen as subversive to the colonial order in the manner that it employed (in a reverse direction) some of the same routes and networks of communication used during the colonial period. The extension of these networks beyond the Taurus, however, would have implied different forms of negotiation, contact, and communication, rhizomatic rather than dendritic in their growth, possibly more personalized and community-centered than before.

The rhizomatic analogy can also help us to characterize the extension of Kura-Araks-derived communities southward along the Levantine corridor and, to a limited extent, along the Levantine coast. While each of the zones of settlement flourished on their own, contact between them must have been limited. For the present, the existence of 'flows' of raw materials or finished products cannot be substantiated. Migration or cultural transmission must have been conditioned by the identification of opportunities in new places.

In the context of the third millennium BC Near Eastern world, this model was in many ways anachronistic and would soon be swept aside by the resurgence of Syrian and Anatolian urbanism and the eventual reestablishment of long-distance trade underwritten by centralized polities. Nonetheless, the option of resisting state-based identities through the establishment of family- and community-based cultural and technological networks was one that remained embedded in east Mediterranean society as a powerful, if often submerged, structuring principle.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1 For overviews of the Khirbet Kerak issue, see: Hennessy 1967; Amiran 1969; Esse 1991; de Miroschedji 2000; Greenberg and Goren 2009. Additional information on specific assemblages can be found in Leonard 1992; Mazar *et al.* 2000; Greenberg *et al.* 2006; Novacek 2007; and in the references cited above. In the following discussion, references are provided for specific details only.

2 The 2010–13 excavations at Tel Bet Yerah (Khirbet Kerak) have yielded copper prills and artifacts, as well as wattle and daub fragments and burnished plaster that might be compared to Kura-Araks installations. These await further study at the time of writing.

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