

achieved by the group. The volume under review presents the papers delivered at the culmination of the first such gathering of young scholars assembled at the Universität Tübingen (May 2009), whose subject of inquiry was the treatment of the dead in ancient Mesopotamia, the Levant, and adjacent regions.

The twenty contributions (Table of Contents: http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de/dzøartikel/201/001/1969_201.pdf?t=1359101981) are all written in (sometimes rather awkward) English. Three essays focus on Mesopotamia, five on inland Syria, five on coastal Syria, five on the southern Levant, one on Elam, and—providing ethnographic parallels—one on the modern Kyrgyz. Although archaeological research predominates, philology is also well represented.

From this assemblage of textual and artifactual data emerges an ideal type of ancient Near Eastern funerary beliefs and practice, seemingly valid at least for the elite groups whose remains make up the bulk of the available evidence: In addition to its living members, each family—including that of the king—was comprised of two to three generations of deceased forebears who retained their individual identities, plus an undifferentiated body of ancestors. At death, the newly departed was deposited under the floor of the dwelling or elsewhere in the vicinity of the residence occupied by those still among the living. This deposition might necessitate the disturbance of the remains of a predecessor in death, who thereby passed over into the general group of anonymous dead. In turn, the congregation of the dead introduced the newcomer into the afterlife.

The funerary ritual featured a communal meal in which the living and all of the family's dead participated. The remains of such repasts—pottery and food-stuffs—have been recovered by excavators at many gravesites. In addition, further ceremonies centered on food and drink offerings to the dead (Akkadian *kispum*) might follow periodically.

Several essays here deserve special mention: The *rāpi'yima* text from Ugarit (KTU 1.161), perhaps the most illustrative composition treating Levantine royal funerary practice, is analyzed by two contributors (S. Lange and K. Teinz). A. Archi discusses funerals and ancestor worship at third-millennium Ebla; C. Felli and A. Jacquet separately examine the same questions for Mari of the early second millennium; while S. Lundström considers the burials of Assyrian monarchs of the first millennium.

But given the central role of the excavations at Qatna in inspiring the research project, the graduate program, and the series in which the proceedings are herewith published, it is most fitting that the outstanding essay in the collection is that of P. Pfälzner, who discusses the royal burials he uncovered at that Syrian site ("How Did They Bury the Kings of Qatna?"). Interestingly, technical examination of the human remains from the royal crypt under the palace indicates that the

(Re-)Constructing Funerary Rituals in the Ancient Near East. *Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Tübingen Post-Graduate School "Symbols of the Dead" in May 2009*. Edited by PETER PFÄLZNER; HERBERT NIEHR; ERNST PERNICKA; and ANNE WISSING. Qatna Studien Supplementa, vol. 1. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2012. Pp. ix + 312, illus. €92.

In the past decade or so, several German universities have introduced the welcome practice of supporting cohorts of graduate students pursuing research on a common, but broadly defined, topic. These projects not only allow the recipients jointly to develop their research skills and academic writing, thereby improving their chances in a highly competitive job market, but also produce particularly insightful results, due to the synergy of the diverse methodologies and bodies of knowledge contributed by the various participants. Often these undertakings lead up to a conference, to which a few outside experts in the relevant topic might also be invited, a meeting that showcases the progress

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corpses had been heated to approximately 250 degrees centigrade before interment, presumably to delay putrefaction (p. 250).

This fine collection of studies, illustrated with many useful photographs, drawings, and plans, should find a place in every library devoted to archaeological and anthropological literature.

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