



ADAM MICKIEWICZ
UNIVERSITY
POZNAŃ



Treasures of Time

Research of the Faculty of Archaeology
of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań



Location of the main research areas.
Numbering, compare the table of Contents.



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Miroslaw, Greater Poland Voivodeship, site 37. Part of the burial equipment.
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ISBN 978-83-946591-9-6

DOI: 10.14746/WA.2021.1.978-83-946591-9-6

The Volume is available online at the Adam Mickiewicz University Repository (AMUR):
<https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/>

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Treasures of Time: Research of the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Introduction

In 2019, archaeology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan celebrated its honourable 100th anniversary! The establishment of archaeology at this university was associated with the strong influence of the authority of Prof. Józef Kostrzewski and a succession of eminent scholars, many of whom we today call Masters.

The year 2019 was a real breakthrough. We started the second century of existence within the Alma Mater Posnaniensis with a new structural independence and quality that the academic archaeology of Poznań had not yet known for its one hundred years of existence. This change, the formation of the first Polish Faculty of Archaeology, has opened new chances and possibilities of which we are now taking advantage.

6



Calibrated date
(calBC/calAD)



Prof. Józef Kostrzewski
(1885-1969)

7

Currently, the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University is formed by a number of teams, each with their own leaders. In the majority of cases, these teams are united by interdisciplinarity, which integrates within selected projects the experience of many so-called 'auxiliary' sciences of archaeology. This trend is paralleled by the development of specialised laboratories armed with the latest equipment in the Faculty of Archaeology.

This publication presents the current scientific interests creatively developed by such teams at the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University. The research of these teams covers vast areas in time and space, summing up at least the last 9,000 years of prehistory. The following articles, arranged in chronological order, allow us to explore the prehistory of various areas.

The adventure begins around 7100 BC, in the Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük located in Turkey. Then, we move on to the loess uplands near Krakow, where the first farmers from the south of Europe had just arrived (5500 BC). A little later (4000-3500 BC), and a little farther north, in the area of Greater Poland, some of the first megalithic constructions in this part of the world were built. Around the same time, about 800 km to the southeast, a settlement

of the Trypillia culture remains in the phase of development (3950 BC). The end of the Stone Age in Poland was described in the history of Late Neolithic communities on a hill in the center of Kujawy region (3700-2400 BC). Farther east, in the forest-steppe area of Ukraine, significant cultural and social changes resulted in the formation of the Yamnaya culture (3350-2250 BC), beginning the Bronze Age.

Intense elements of this era can be traced in the area of southern Europe in the Greek Anthemous Valley (3350-1150 BC), in Attica (3000-500 BC) on the plains of the Hungarian Lowlands (2600-1450 BC) and to the Upper Dniester Valley, where numerous burial mounds were formed (2800-1500 BC). A similar chronological range is presented in the articles devoted to a unique site in Bruszczewo, Greater Poland (2300-1350 BC), which not only accumulates valuable metal artefacts, but is also the subject of interest of an interdisciplinary team focused on reconstructing its environmental context.

The next text take us far to the east, to the area of Iraqi Kurdistan, where we can appreciate the importance of Mesopotamian influences in shaping the picture of the Early Bronze Age (2200-2150 BC).

Subsequent texts describe the discoveries of Poznań scientists in Syria (1906-1787 BC) and in Greater Poland (1900-1600 BC). These two distant points describe various aspects of life in contemporary communities in the Middle and Early Bronze Age.

The characteristic archaeological materials of the later centuries of the Bronze Age (1800-1200 BC) reveal an intensification of military conflicts and migration processes (1700-1200 BC). The turn of the eras is illustrated in this volume by texts on the interpretation of representations on ancient Greek and Roman sculpture (400 BC-100 AD), as well as the cultural situation in the Polish lands (400 BC-100 AD).

We are introduced to the new era by an article on the funerary customs of communities from the Polish lowlands describing discoveries at the site of Mirosław (160-175 AD). Moments of the formation of elements of Polish statehood are referred to in texts describing towns at Grzybowo (919-1050 AD) and Poznań in the early Middle Ages (950-1000 AD).

Later parts of the Middle Ages are described by sacral monuments located also in the area of the contemporary city of Poznań: the Collegiate Church of St Mary Magdalene (1263-1802 AD) and the still extant Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Ostrów Tumski, founded around 1431 AD in the immediate vicinity of the previously described early medieval site of the 'origin' of the city of Poznań.

The final texts of the volume do not refer directly to a particular period of prehistory, but present the history of Polish archaeological research on the Iberian Peninsula, the contemporary perception of prehistoric art by the inhabitants of present-day Canada and Siberia, and the development of methodological thought among Poznań archaeologists.

The volume closes with a text describing one of the many perspectives currently faced by the staff of the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań: the new ArchaeoMicroLab.

We look to the future with great hope that the Staff of the Faculty will provide ideas for many more volumes of Treasures of Time. We trust that this set of articles will present archaeology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in its new structure as a Faculty and show its potential. We would thus like to encourage you to get acquainted with our Poznań perspective on archaeological studies, and to reflect on ways of exploring the past.

Andrzej Michałowski

Danuta Żurkiewicz



Location of the main research areas.
Numbering, compare the table of Contents.



2200-2150 BC

Treasures of Time:

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DOI 10.14746/WA.2021.12.978-83-946591-9-6

From clay you are

Rafał Koliński

Abstract

The people of Mesopotamia believed that they were created by the gods to serve the gods: to work for them in the fields and care for the herds of animals that, through sacrifice, provided the gods' livelihood. Perhaps this is why mythological motifs are almost absent in the art of Assyria and Babylon. Two small fragments of stone decorated with a convex relief, discovered in 2013 by the archeological team of the Institute of Prehistory at the entrance to the Gündk cave in Iraqi Kurdistan, belie this claim. They come from a relief scene originally hewn into the rock-face around 2200 BC, but blown up by vandals in the 1990s. Thanks to this recent discovery by the team carrying out the Upper Greater Zab Archaeological Reconnaissance Project in Iraqi Kurdistan and previous drawings of the relief made in 1850 and 1947, it can be proven that the scene showed the god Enki and the goddess Ninmah in the process of molding people out of clay, as described in Mesopotamian myths. Saved for posterity by archaeologists from Poznań, the fragments of the damaged relief are the only known examples of this unique scene.

Keywords: Mesopotamia, Early Bronze Age, Mesopotamian art, Mesopotamian mythology

PANEL 1

PANEL 3

PANEL 2

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Figure 1. UC 006 cave seen from the south-east.
On the left the place of reliefs is marked (Photo: Dariusz Piasecki).

Introduction

The creation of the world and people by a god or gods is a key moment in any cosmology and is the starting point for further stories of shared history. In Mesopotamia, this task fell to Enki and Ningal, who molded people out of clay mixed with blood of a slain deity-genius to endow man with an immortal soul. The cause of the act of creation was essential: the Mesopotamian pantheon, despite its immortality and omnipotence, had to grow crops and herd animals in order to have something to eat. Faced with a rebellion of gods who found such a life of toil unbearable, Enki promised to create beings – humans – that would relieve them of their daily duties, allowing the immortals to enjoy their lives and sustain themselves through sacrifices made in their temples. This act defined the relationship between gods and people forever; the purpose of human existence was to serve the gods under the supervision of a rule, or “shepherd” appointed for this purpose.

It is astonishing that neither this act of creation, nor the majority of other myths are portrayed in Mesopotamian art. Works of art focus primarily on illustrating the relations of kings and gods (showing sacrifices, prayers, kings receiving the insignia of power from gods, or building and consecrating temples) or the splendor of a ruler (throning, hunting, or gaining military triumphs). Only in the Akkadian period (approx. 2330-2150 BC) were some myths illustrated (e.g. about Etana and his journey to heaven, punishing rebelling geniuses, or about the god Shamash/the Sun rising over the mountains), though not in monumental art, but rather on cylinder seals (Otto, 2019, p. 426).

In the years 2012-2017, archaeologists from the Adam Mickiewicz University conducted the Upper Greater Zab Archaeological Project, an archaeological survey in Iraqi Kurdistan. The aim of the project was to make an inventory of archaeological sites and other cultural heritage monuments in an area of 3,058 km², located north and northwest of Erbil, on both sides of the Greater Zab River. During the survey 313 archaeological sites and 78 other monuments (architectural objects and cemeteries) were documented, increasing the number of known monuments in the study area more than fourfold.

The most interesting and unexpected discovery, however, was the finding of two stone fragments with relief decorations covering one face. We made this discovery in August 2013 near the village of Gündk, situated in a valley approximately 20 km west of the village of Ākrê, in the mountains of the same name (Figure 2). As it turned out, both fragments belonged to one of three relief panels carved into the rocky slope of the mountain at the entrance to a large rock shelter and cave (Figure 1). We later learned that in 1994 (Reade & Anderson, 2013, p. 82) or 1996 (Koliński, 2016, p. 168) “treasure hunters” placed explosives under one of the reliefs in the hope that it marked a place where treasure was hidden. The explosion completely destroyed the depiction and seriously damaged the second relief above it, causing irreparable harm to two of the three oldest rock reliefs known in Mesopotamia. The losses are all the greater because the reliefs themselves had been relatively poorly researched due to their location in a part of Iraq which, since the 1960s, has been shaken by a series of Kurdish uprisings against the government in Baghdad.

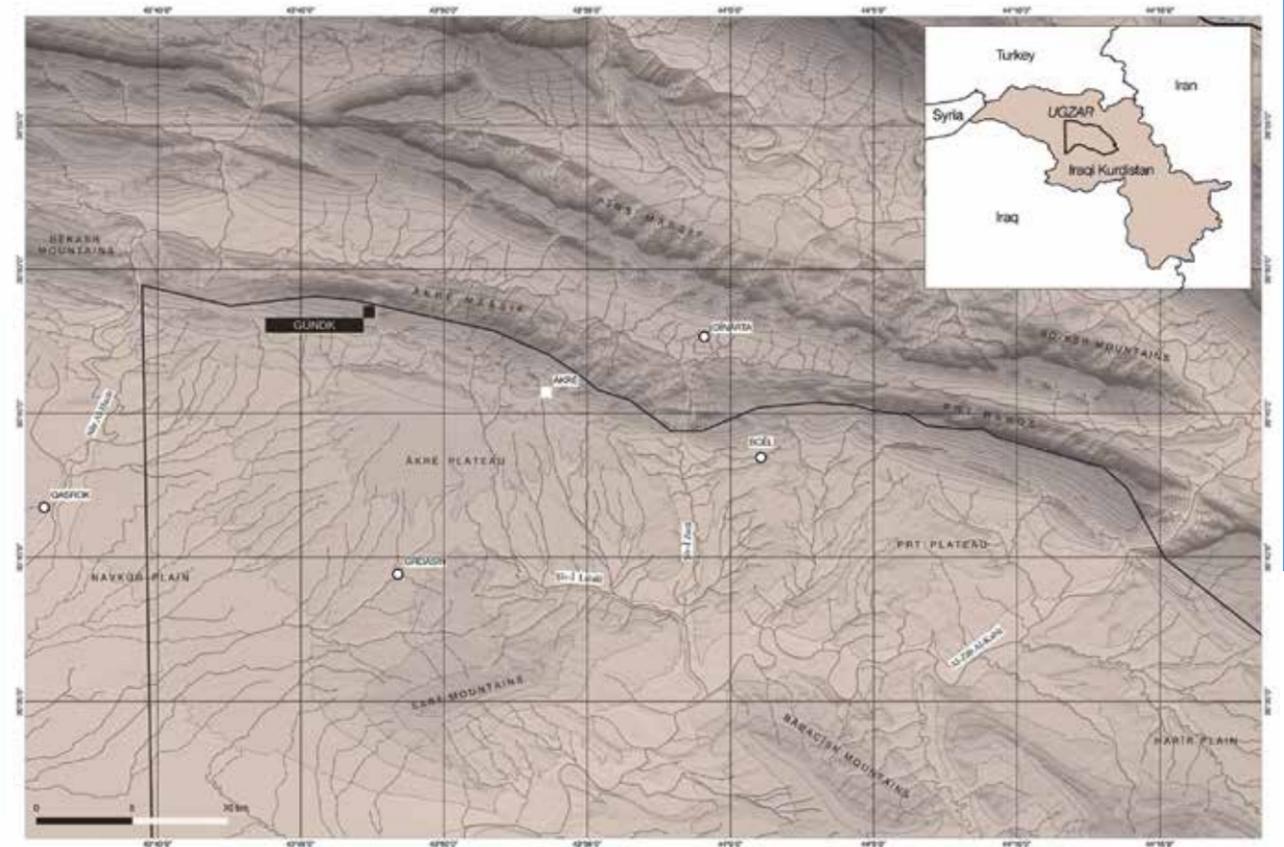


Figure 2. Location of the UGZAR study area and of Gündk Cave (Map by Joanna Mardas).

The earliest mention of the reliefs in Gündk was made by the Reverend George Badger, who in April 1850 went to visit the Nestorian bishop Avraham residing in the Mār Ādi'šō monastery west of the village. After spending the night in the monastery, one of the priests took him to a nearby cave, called “Guppa Mar Yohanān”, and showed him two reliefs carved into the rock (Badger, 1852, vol. I, p. 390). Upon his return to Mosul, Badger mentioned them to the discoverer of the Assyrian palace in Nimrud, Henry Austen Layard, who subsequently visited the site on July 15, 1850. He was accompanied by his draftsman, F. Cooper, who made the sketches and then the drawings of the reliefs that Layard included together with their description in one of his books (Layard, 1853, pp. 368-369). The published drawing is quite schematic, but it seems to be faithful to the character of both scenes. The upper relief (now partially damaged) showed a man hunting a wild goat. The lower one shows two people sitting on opposite sides of a semicircular object, on which two smaller human figures stand, supported by the larger

figures. On the left you can see two standing figures, the first of which holds a child in its hands. On the right you can see a standing man with his arms raised, and at the edge there are two figures killing an animal placed between them (Figure 3). Layard considered both reliefs to be Assyrian monuments (although Badger, while not a professional, noticed the differences between the depictions discussed and the orthostats discovered by Layard in the palace in Nimrud), and he found the lower scene reminiscent of the ritual of baptism (perhaps due to the fact that the cave was dedicated to John the Baptist).

Another researcher who came to Gündk to document the reliefs was Walther Bachmann. His visit in May 1914 took place in dramatic circumstances, because his visit took place just after the Kurdish nomads invaded the village. For this reason, he limited himself to photographing the reliefs and inspecting them with a telescope. He used the photo, unfortunately of poor quality, as the basis for a drawing showing both scenes. Bachmann concluded that the lower relief depicted a feast during which an animal, shown being hunted in the upper relief, was consumed. However, he was unable to recognise either the child held in arms of the second figure from the right, nor the small figures between the seated persons, and considered the right side of the scene to be completely unreadable. Unlike Layard, Bachmann ruled out an Assyrian date for the monuments based on the archaic style of representations: in his opinion this could indicate that they were either clearly older or made by unskilled craftsmen (Bachmann, 1927, pp. 28-31).

The goal of correctly documenting the three reliefs (in the meantime a third relief was discovered inside the cave) was set by an Iraqi team consisting of archaeologists Akram Shukri and Mahmud al-Amin and the photographer Antran Manookian. During their visit in October 1947, new photographs of all the reliefs were taken, on the basis of which another series of drawings was created and published by al-Amin in an article from 1948 (al-Amin, 1948). Unfortunately, the poor print quality made the photos barely legible; only the drawings can be reliably referenced. In the lower relief, the central and right parts very clearly resemble the drawing by Cooper, with three differences: 1) the person standing behind the back of the man sitting on the right holds a basket on his head, 2) the scene at the right end of the depiction is illegible, and 3) all of the figures are less regular, which probably more closely reflects the nature of the monument itself. The author's interpretation, written in Arabic, is difficult to access – only Ahmed Kozad in his doctoral dissertation (2012) published what is clearly a summary of the text of al-Amin, in whose opinion the scene shows the bathing of children. The original dating remained unclear, though al-Amin suggested similarities to the Hittite reliefs at Yazilikaya, Turkey, from the 13th century BC. Curiously, although published in the same volume of the same journal and using the same illustrations as al-Amin, a text by Tawfik Wahbi refers rather to Bachmann's interpretation: the scene is said to represent a feast wherein an animal hunted in the relief above was served as the main course (Wahby, 1948, p. 148). In turn, the author of the entry "Gundük" published in 1971 in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* sees a ruler sitting on his throne in this scene and points to a very distant analogy with the Elamite relief from Malamir in Iran (Calmayer, 1971).

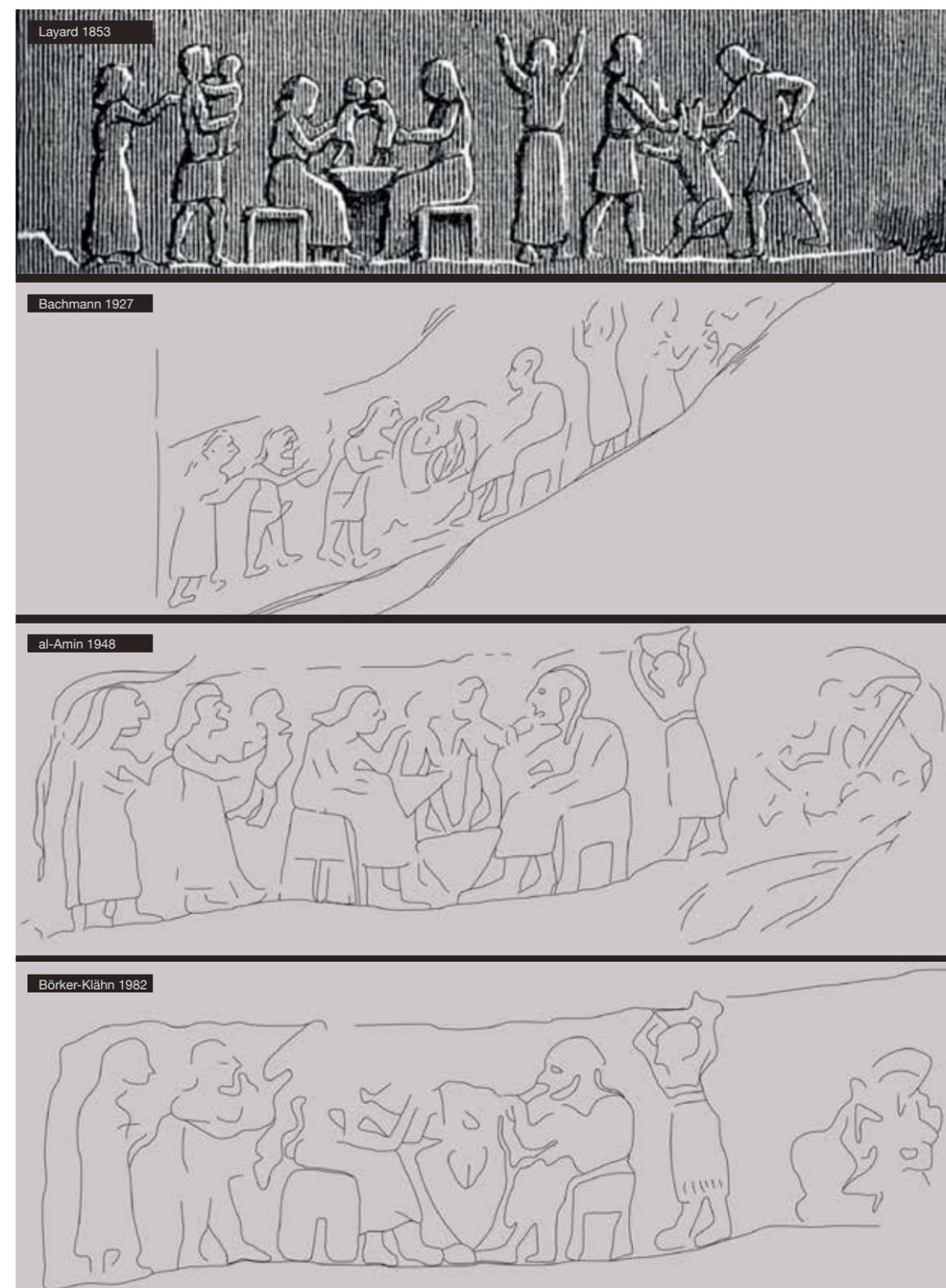


Figure 3. A drawing and copies of drawings showing different interpretations of the scene on the destroyed Panel 2. From the top F. Cooper, W. Bachmann, M. al-Amin, J. Börker-Klähn (Copies by Xenia Kolińska).



Figure 4. View of the western wall of the UC 006 cave. The left photo shows the position of the reliefs, and on the right the preserved fragment of Panel 1. Below is a reconstruction of the discovered Fragment B and a photo of the preserved Panel 3. (Photos by Dariusz Piasecki, drawing by Xenia Kolińska based on the original published by al-Amin).



Colour photos taken by Reiner Boehmer in his visit to the cave in 1978 were, it seems, the basis of a new set of drawings created by Jutta Börker-Klähn and published in her book on Mesopotamian relief steles and rock reliefs. (Börker-Klähn, 1982, pp. 75-76, 174-176, 234). In her opinion, the relief depicted a banquet scene known from other types of Mesopotamian art: in particular votive plaques and scenes on cylinder seals showing two people sitting on chairs and drinking beer from a jug standing between them with the help of straws. Börker-Klähn placed it among undated monuments, but expressed the opinion that it was probably created in the third millennium BC. Julian Reade and Julie Anderson, who visited Gündk on June 27, 2009, concluded that the panel we are interested in no longer exists (Reade & Anderson, 2013, pp. 81-82). In a study of the contents of the panel, they argued for its interpretation as a banquet scene and for a date of creation between 2700 and 2300 BC (Reade & Anderson, 2013, pp. 84, 86-88, 94).

When members of the UGZAR mission first visited Gündk on August 28, 2013 they found two of the three reliefs irrevocably destroyed (Read and Anderson's publication of 2013 was not known to the team members at the time). On the same day, while routinely searching the slope below the cave for ceramics, two relief-decorated rock fragments were found that must have belonged to the damaged panels (Figure 4). Despite subsequent visits to Gündk in 2013, 2015 and 2017, the purpose of which, apart from documenting the surviving reliefs and the cave itself, was to search for more relief fragments, no others were found.

Fragment A (Figure 5), the smaller of the two, shows part of the silhouette of a standing human figure dressed in a robe decorated with a vertical stripe filled with diagonal lines. These lines seem to reflect a hem or fringe decorating the robe's edge. Judging by the curvature of the edge separating the figure from the background, it must be a standing human figure, and more precisely a part of his or her back. There are three standing people known from the previous documentation of the reliefs: two on the left and one on the right of the sitting couple in the center of the presentation. All the drawings of the relief show that the figure on the right with the basket on its head is wearing a skirt that only reaches the waist, an outfit that is never decorated with a fringe or hem. Likewise, the person on the left standing directly behind the seated one in most of the pictures wears a short robe. So by elimination it appears that Fragment A contains part of the last figure standing in the far left part of the scene.

Fragment B (Figure 6) is bigger and more interesting. It shows a semicircular object with its flat part facing up. There are two people standing facing each other on this flattened part. The person on the right is preserved as two legs visible to the knees, while the figure on the left is preserved as one leg. To the right of the semicircular object, an outline of the lower part of the figure of a sitting person in a robe decorated with a stripe adorning its edge is apparent – a foot and a leg to the knee are preserved. To the left of the semicircular object you can see the outline of the leg and foot of the second seated figure. There is no doubt that the fragment comes from the central part of the original scene which shows two people sitting on stools facing each other.

The discovered fragments are of great importance, as they allow investigation of what kind of scene is depicted in the relief, evaluation of previous documentation, and attempts at new interpretations (Figure 7). Fragment B clearly indicates that of the four known drawings, only those



Figure 5. Fragment A of Panel 2
(Photo: Dariusz Piasecki).

of Cooper and al-Amin reflect the true meaning of the scene. Of these two, Cooper's drawing seems to be more artistic and less accurate, though it importantly shows the left part of the scene illegible in later documentation. Thus, al-Amin's drawing seems to be the most faithful and was used to determine the original location of the fragments found by the archaeologists from Poznań. Furthermore, Fragment B clarifies beyond any doubt that the scene shown is not one of a banquet. The theme of bathing children, proposed by Layard and al-Amin, should also be rejected because such a scene neither appears in Mesopotamian art nor has any particular significance in its culture.

What then was presented by the creators of the relief? A significant clue is the presence of a person with a basket on his head. This motif appears in Mesopotamian art in the Early Dynastic III period (c. 2600-2350 BC) and in the period of the Third Dynasty of Ur (2104-2002 BC) in the context of monuments related to the construction of temples (building stelae and foundation figurines). The depiction of a king carrying a basket filled with clay is a symbolic synthesis of the construction process; the clay is used to form bricks which, after drying, will become the walls of the structure. In the case of the Gündk relief, the basket can therefore be argued to depict the transportation of clay. Another important clue is the inclusion of children, something extremely rare in Mesopotamian art. The only known aspect of the culture of Mesopotamia that connects these two elements is the myth of the creation of mankind. As mentioned above, it played a very important role in defining the relationship between humans and gods. However, the actual work of creation is mentioned in the texts only briefly.

While the earliest record of this myth comes from Sumerian and Akkadian texts written in the second millennium BC, they most plausibly reflect an older tradition, namely of the 3rd millennium BC. (Lisman, 2013, pp. 175-181, 183-186, 194-195). In the Sumerian myth of Enki and Ninmah, Enki is inspired the idea of his mother, Namma, how to free the pantheon from frustrating duties by dumping the burden of work on newly created beings. In the act of creation itself, he is accompanied by the goddess Namma and assisted by the goddess Ninmah, who decides the fate of mankind:

Enki (...) said to his mother Namma: My mother, the creature you planned will really come into existence. (...) You should knead clay from the top of the abzu; the birth-goddesses (?) will nip off the clay and you shall bring the form into existence. Let Ninmah act as your assistant; and let Ninimma, Šu-zi-ana, Ninmada, Ninbarag, Ninmug, [...] and Ninguna stand by as you give birth. My mother, after you have decreed his fate, let Ninmah impose on him the work (...).¹

A different version of the creation of mankind, being molded from clay in the form of bricks, we find in The song of the hoe:

He (Enlil) set this very hoe to work; he had it place the first model of mankind in the brick mould.²

¹ Enki and Ninmah Myth (ll. 28-37). Transl. Jeremy Black, <https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.1.1.2#>

² The Song of the Hoe (ll. 19-20). Transl. Jeremy Black, <https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.5.5.4#>



0 30 cm

Figure 6. Fragment B Panel 2
(Photo: Dariusz Piasecki).



Figure 7. Reconstruction of the position of the found relief fragments with the drawing of Panel 2 by al-Amin (Drawing by Xenia Kolińska, interpretation by Rafał Koliński, photos by D. Piasecki).

The Akkadian poem Atra-hasis, whose main thread is the story of the Flood, earlier describes the rebellion of the gods and the creation of people with the following words:

Midwife Bēlet-ilī, wise Mamma, you are the mother goddess, creatress of destiny: create human-kind to carry the yoke (...). Mamma opened her mouth (...): Though the power to do it indeed is mine, the way it is done is the business of Ea (...) let him give me clay that I may do it. Ea opened his mouth (...): (...) Let one god be slaughtered and the gods will be thereby cleansed. With his flesh and his blood let Bēlet-ilī mix some clay, so that god and man are mixed together in the clay, (...) from the flesh of god let the spirit be produced.³

The above text is a Neo-Babylonian copy of the original from the beginning of the second millennium BC and therefore it gives the late forms of the names of the deities making up man: Ea instead of Enki and Bēlet-ilī or Mamma instead of Ninmah.

These texts agree with each other about one important detail: the material from which people were formed was clay. The Sumerian version does not mention any other ingredients, while in the Akkadian myths the element of the blood of a killed god or genius appears. This change is significant as in even later sources like *Enuma elish* or *The Creation of Humanity*,

humanity is created from the blood and flesh of a slain god: specifically Kingu and Alla-gods (Spar, 2009) respectively.

The destroyed relief is undoubtedly a faithful portrayal of the most important episodes related to the act of human creation. The narrative of the events can be followed from right to left, with the climax in the center of the scene. On the right, we see the preparation of the necessary "raw materials". At the very edge, if we are to believe Layard, we see the scene of the killing of an animal. Although according to later versions of the myth it should be a deity or genius, this slaughter can be connected to the idea that blood must be added to the clay so that people would receive an immortal soul. Then we see a man carrying a basket of clay on his head – the main material used to create humanity. The central scene shows a male person seated on the right, a female deity seated on the left, facing the former. On an object placed between them resembling a slow wheel for throwing pottery, we see the silhouettes of two just formed people, much smaller than the other depicted persons. The two people on the left, behind the seated female, are possibly divine nurses, assisting in the process of creation, just like in childbirth. The one closer to the seated pair holds another human being in her hands, the formation of which has just been completed. The depiction of three smaller figures, two

³ Atra-hasis Myth (tablet II, ll. 76-98), George & al-Rawi, 1996, p. 171.

between the creator gods and the third one in the hands of a nurse, emphasises the fact that the scene described is not a single creative act, but the process of creating the entire human species. If my interpretation is right, then the seated persons may be identified as Enki and either Namma or Ningal, the protagonists of the creation myth.

The fragments found allow not only a new interpretation of the monument, but also enable its more precise dating. The previously identified iconographic motif with a man carrying a basket with clay on his head cannot be helpful here because it is used in art in various subperiods of the second half of the third millennium BC. Much more precise dating is possible thanks to the identification of the relief's subject matter as referring to mythology. As mentioned earlier, depictions devoted to mythology appear exclusively in the Akkadian period (c. 2330-2150 BC cf. Otto, 2019, p. 426). Furthermore, garments with hems are also Akkadian innovations. In monumental art, this type of robe first appears on a statue of the Akkadian king Manishtusu found at Susa (SB47, Louvre Museum, c. 2270-2255 BC). We also see similarly dressed dignitaries on some Akkadian seals, such as the Scribe's Seal from Tell Brak (Felli, 2001) and the cylinder seal of the scribe Kalki (BM 89 137, The British Museum). Without exception, on earlier monuments of sculpture and glyptics, the dignitaries wear long skirts of fur (*kaunakes*), typical of the Early Dynastic Period and still present on the monuments of the first Akkadian ruler, Sargon. Consequently, I have no doubts that the relief in question must come from a later part of the Akkadian period. The same date can be argued for the third, undamaged relief (R. Koliński, *Günduk: the oldest rock reliefs in Mesopotamia*. Talk presented at *Past has the future* conference at the University of Warsaw, 24 April 2021). Consequently, it must be considered that the Gündk reliefs were created approximately between 2250 and 2150 BC. Although slightly later than Reade and Börker-Klähn believed, they remain the oldest known examples of rock reliefs from Mesopotamia.

The discovered fragments allow for one important observation: as mentioned above, the garments depicted are hemmed. Neither the photos taken (including those taken by Dariusz Piasecki from our team), nor the most careful examination of the reliefs through a telescope or binoculars allowed all the details of the representations to be appreciated; none of the previous drawings or descriptions mention the presence of hems. This observation highlights the pressing need to fully register the preserved reliefs with detailed photographic documentation, 3D scans and latex impressions to enable their reconstruction should they be damaged. Admittedly, this will not be an easy task as the preserved reliefs are located at a height of 7 and 12 meters above the ground respectively.

If the interpretation of the relief in Gündk proposed here is correct, it is a monument of exceptional importance both for the history of art and the history of Mesopotamian religion. Nowhere else do we find a similar scene of such cardinal importance for the illustration of the worldview of the ancient inhabitants of this land and the values that governed their world. This fact makes it all the greater the pity that the act of vandalism irretrievably destroyed this monument. Two fragments found in 2013 by archaeologists from AMU, currently stored in the archaeological museum in Duhok in Iraqi Kurdistan are the only material evidence of this unique monument. Finding them not only saved the most important fragment of this unique representation, but also allowed a critical review of the existing interpretations of the relief and the proposal of a new explanation of the content of the representation and its meaning.

Acknowledgments

The research in Gündk was carried out as part of the research project: Settlement history of the Iraqi Kurdistan: Bardarash – Aqra plain (No. 2011/03/HS3/B/01472), and Settlement history of the Iraqi Kurdistan 2 (No. 2014/13/B/HS3/04872), awarded by the National Science Center. The author would like to thank the members of the UGZAR field missions in the 2013-2017 seasons, in particular Xenia Kolińska, Joanna Mardas and Dariusz Piasecki for their work on the documentation of the reliefs in Gündk. Special thanks are due to the authorities of the Iraqi Kurdistan, especially the General Director of Antiquities, Abubaker Othman Zinadin (Mala Awat), and his successors, Kak Kaify Mustafa Ali, as well as the archaeologists from the Ākrê antiquities office who worked with us in the field, the Director of the office, Hiwa Ahmad Şimal, and his staff: Omar Hussain Şarif, Sarkaft Amr Tajaldin, Khaled A. Mahmud and Atheel Ibrahim Abdallah. Finally, I would like to express my personal gratitude to Hacı Diyar Saleh, our landlord, and to Masaud Jean.

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ISBN 978-83-946591-9-6