Magic Practices and Ritual in the Near Eastern Neolithic

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Walls. Loci of Forces

Hans Georg K. Gebel

Abstract: *By examples from LPPNB Ba'ja and Basta, deposits in walls and floors as well as burials below floors are discussed as part of a universal human ethological disposition, that of hiding materials and meanings. Unconscious behavioural formulae ("ideomotorics") of hiding were conceptionalised and became part of the Early Neolithic magico-religious belief system.*

Key words: *LPPNB, Ba'ja and Basta, wall/ floor deposits, sub-floor burials, human ethology of hiding, ritual*

Introduction

In this contribution, we concentrate on the primary evidence of wall/ floor- related non-utilitarian (i.e., non-practical) findings from two Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B sites: Ba'ja and Basta. Much of similar evidence from other Early Neolithic sites has not yet been published yet, or has even not been classified as representing magic/ ritual/ symbolic traditions. Research on rituals has concentrated on the more obvious death-related, figurine/ token and iconographic findings, while daily life or ethologically based expressions of symbolic behaviour (such as, *e.g.*, Hermansen and Jensen, this volume) are not much in the focus of in-field observation. It is the character of our knowledge about these evidences that they are fragmentary and based on isolated features rather than representing well-attested patterns: when obvious, they are preferably treated in an empirical manner. Here, we try to introduce a new view, and see the wall-related deposits as part of a universal human ethological disposition, that of hiding materials and meanings. Much work has to be invested in these approaches, which deal with human behaviour beyond the emic and etic interpretation[1], and we are aware of the danger of ideological and other misunderstanding due to the sociobiologistic ingredients in the interpretations. The progress made in the research on the ideological and religious systems of the Near Eastern Early Neolithic (which developed from the needs of the rapid Neolithic social developments) contrasts with the limited research and "contextual sensitivity" for sociobiologically rooted magical or ritual expressions of human behaviour. When we see, for example, the iconographical links between the Göbekli images and the Protoliterate seals of Greater Mesopotamia (recent insights by Klaus Schmidt), we are allowed a quick glance into the Early

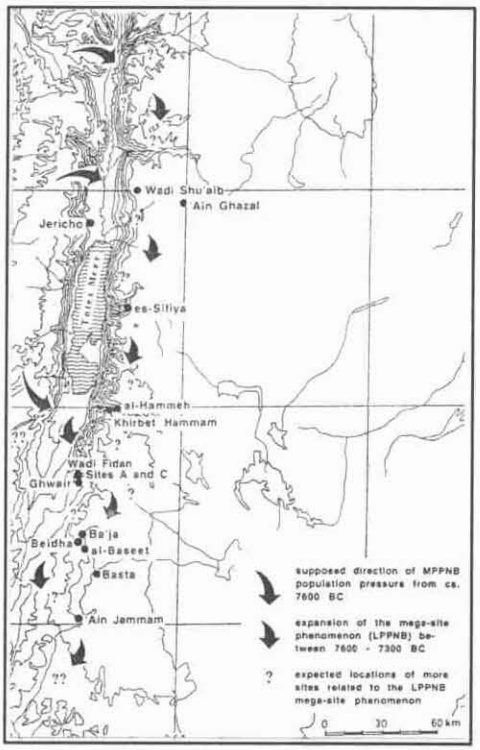

Fig. 1. LPPNB sites mentioned in the text.

[1] Because of this, and for the sake of brevity, no reference could be made in this contribution to the rare elements of ethological arguments in the current discussion on ritual.

Neolithic delivery room of Near Eastern religions. But what about the roots of ritual behaviour, which rest in the human ethological foundations of this chaine of conceptualisation? Will we understand the mechanisms of ideological and religious development without these?

Here we try to approach these roots from the standpoint of the evidence relating to walls: for the archaeologist, walls are understood as elements of structures, to be investigated as ground plans, for their engineering, function, social implications, etc. For the early sedentary dweller, walls were relevant in all these contexts, of course, but they also seem to have had a central role in the division of the (new) cognitive and symbolic worlds, more than the etic interpretation can imagine. Walls gave structure to meanings and compartmentalised the spheres of their world, both in practical and immaterial terms. We may expect that there was not much distinction made between the practical nature of things and their immaterial function, and that this characteristic ruled the Early Neolithic daily life.

Definitions, Interpretative Framework

In this contribution the neutral terms "deposit" and "deposition" are used. The terms: "cache" and "caching" have been avoided in order not to create confusion with the ethological use of our term "hiding". Table 1 lists the terms employed in the literature for various kinds of deposits (for a recent approach on definitions for chipped stone deposits *cf.* Astruc *et al.*, in press).

Table 1. Terminology of deposits.

Neutral/ empirical terms	*Interpretative terms in use*
deposit, "nest", hoard, (burial)	offering[1], foundation deposit, cache, supply, storage

"Hiding" is used here for the act, place, means of concealing or concealment of a meaning. This meaning was either attributed to items (manufactured, recycled or used *ad hoc* for the meaning) or was materialised by the use of remains (*e.g.*, left-overs of a meal, corpses). Meaning could be a common sense product or an *ad hoc* formulated idea; it could be present also in various temporal contexts, even if it can disappear from a personal or shared memory by its deposition. Ethologically, "hiding" means unconscious and/ or practical reactions or behaviour with all sorts of contexts, whether targeted socially, environmentally or otherworldly, whether created by symbolic contexts of the unconscious mind, shared metaphorical or symbolic comprehension/ taboos/ fears etc. "Hiding" means every reaction or behaviour between covering a stool to marking a place with a material/ meaning.

Some axioms and presuppositions used in this contribution ought to be made explicit: All human comprehension of the world is symbolic or metaphorical, and already the unconscious comprehension uses and creates symbolic contexts. Practical or utilitarian behaviour and symbolic behaviour from the unconscious levels generally cannot be separated, and only appear distinguishable to us by their contextual expression (starting from very basic, universal behaviour such as hygiene needs - stool taboos). Symbolic behaviour is (also) expressed in "magical" practices, which are part of a belief system like other ritual behaviour. However, a magical practice could also derive from an isolated and targeted idea, and must not necessarily be a substantial part of a belief system. "Magic" is a ritual activity, performed to influence human, natural or otherworldly conditions and events by forces acting beyond the human sphere. Magical forces are mainly impersonal and external. The famous Émile Durkheim correctly distinguished between *magic* being related to a clientele, and *religion* being related to a "congregation". Of course, this is a seminal separation which is problematic to be used for the supposed Neolithic "magico-religious" reality. "Ritual" here is used in a broad and undefined sense, but must be related to a Neolithic belief

[1] The terms "foundation/ building offering" have to be very critically questioned for the Near Eastern Neolithic, in the same way as it is done by Beilke-Voigt (2002) for the Early to Late European Neolithic. She rather prefers to use the terms "wall deposits" or "posthole deposits" for the increasing number of (especially celt) finds. The term "offering" should remain related to a belief system with deities (or a "personal" otherworldly power), for which no evidence exists.

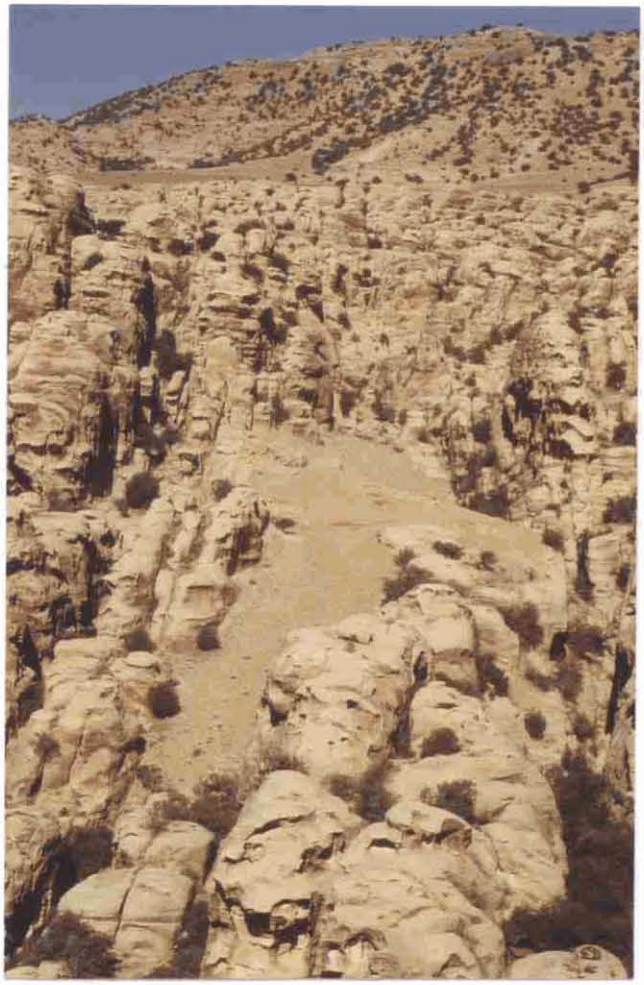

Fig. 2. Intra-montane setting of Ba'ja. View from WSW (photo: K. Traulsen).

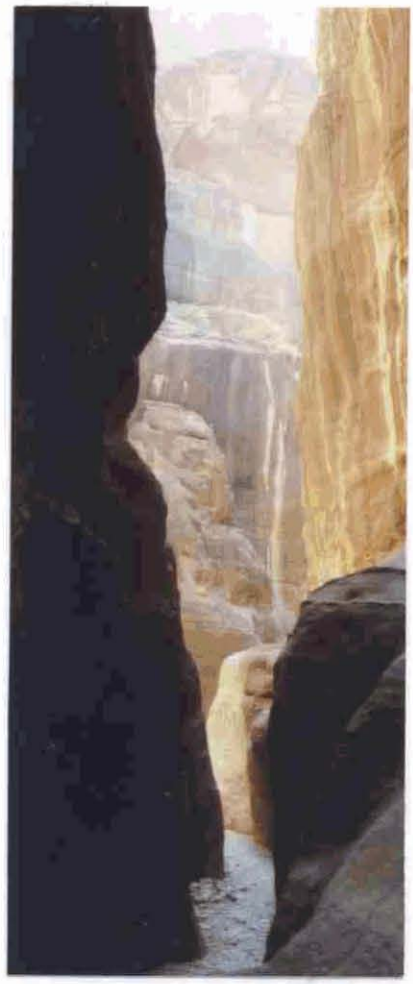

Fig. 3. Access to Ba'ja through the gorge/ *siq* (photo: H.G.K. Gebel)

Fig. 4. Ba'ja site topography with excavation Areas B-D and F View from SSW (photo: K. Traulsen).

Fig. 5. The four celts and one unfinished, found in the wall deposit Locus 3 in Square D2 of Ba'ja (photo: H.K.G. Gebel).

Fig. 6. Location of the wall deposit with the four celts (and one unfinished) *in situ*, found in Ba'ja D2. (photo: H.K.G. Gebel).

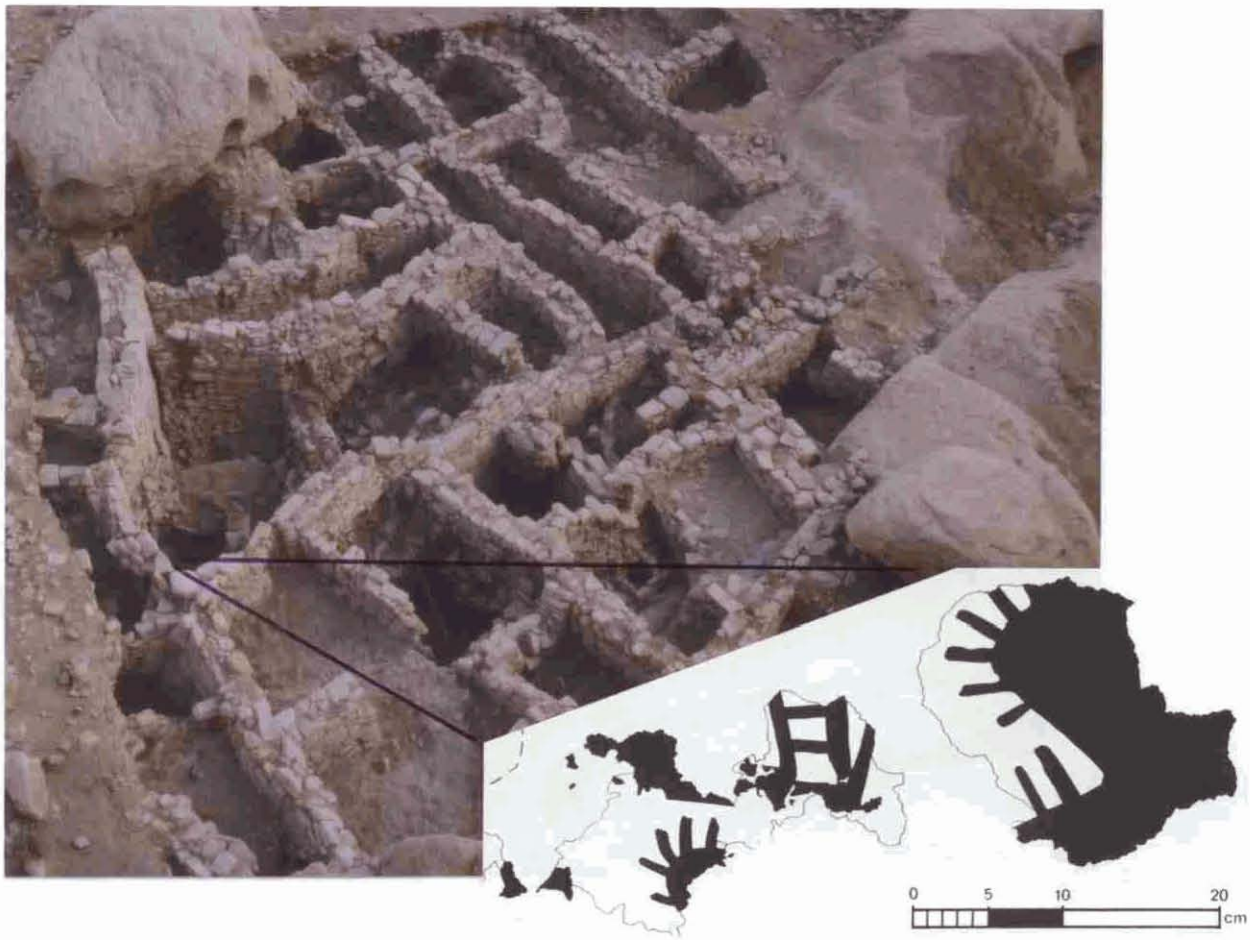

Fig. 7. Ba'ja Area D with room containing a burial chamber and a wall fresco behind its eastern wall: drawing of fresco (photo/ drawg.: H.G.K. Gebel).

Fig. 8. Detail of the *in situ* fresco with abstract motifs (head/ shoulder with rays/ lines?, ladder-like motif?), found behind the eastern wall of the burial chamber in Ba'ja Area D (photo: H.G.K. Gebel).

Fig. 9. Intra-wall deposit of animal bones in Ba'ja B22, Locus 15 (photo: H.G.K. Gebel).

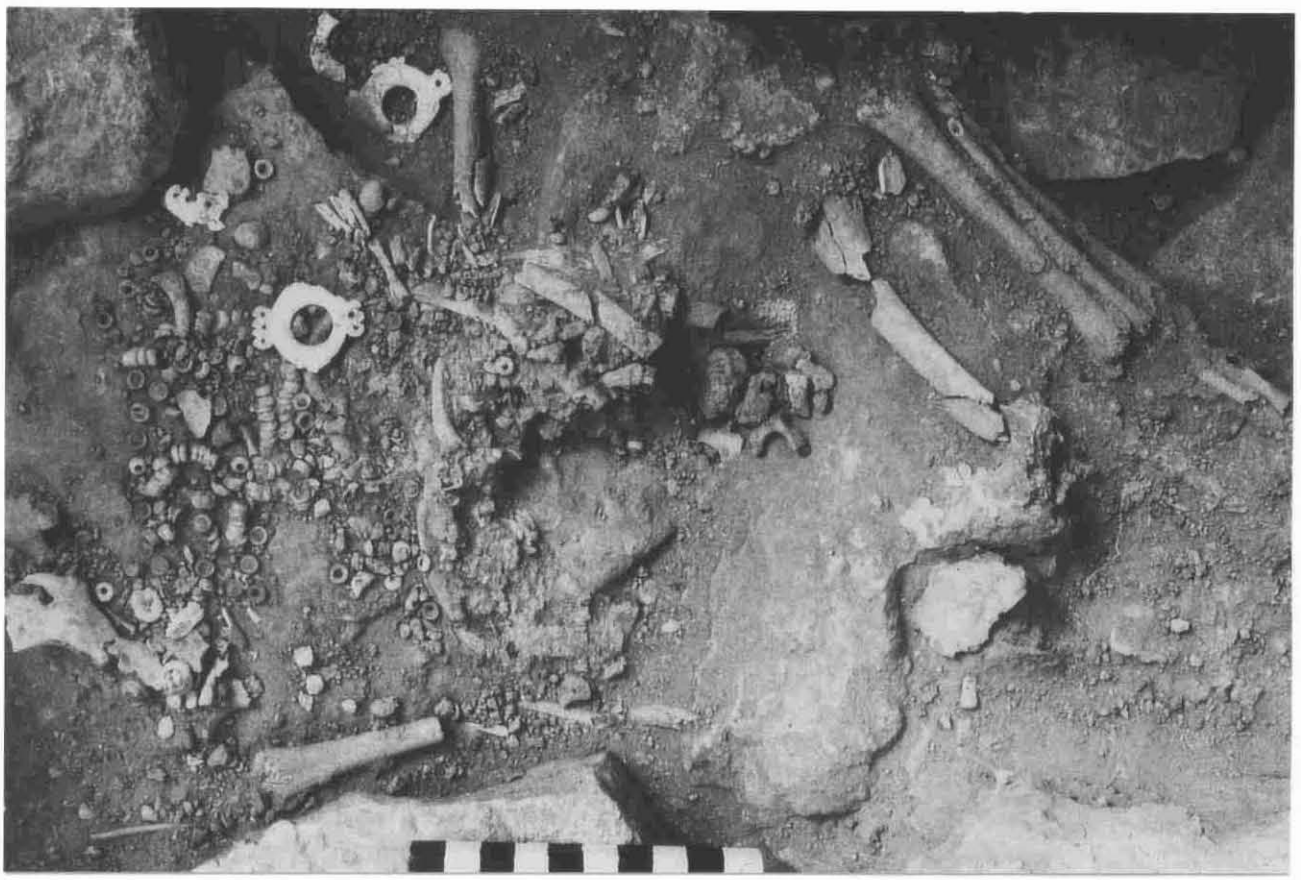

Fig. 10. In-wall burial of a baby in Basta Area A. The burial was placed in the space between the two faces of a double-faced stone wall (photo: G. Sperling).

Fig. 11. In-wall burial of a baby in Basta Area A. (photo: G. Sperling)

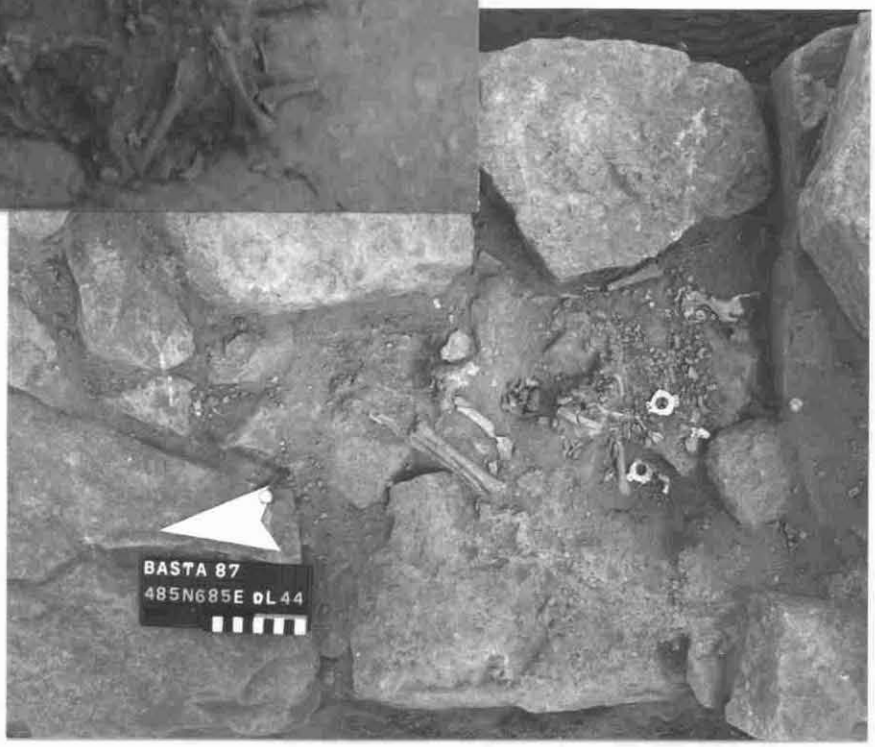

Fig. 12. In-floor bone arrangement in Ba'ja D12. (photo: H.G.K. Gebel)

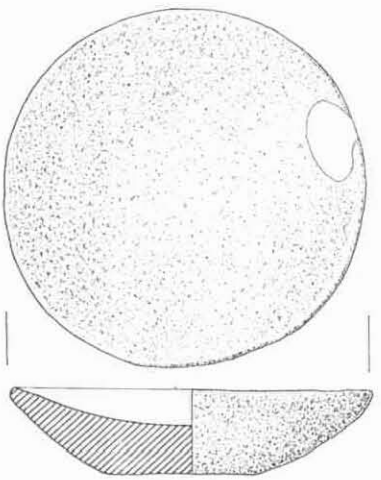

Fig. 13. In-floor deposit of a bowlet (d= 95 mm) in Baja D12, artefact drawing (photo/ drwg.: H.G.K. Gebel).

system. The use of the term in relation to aspects such as the social, economic, political, etc. levels appears justified whenever they are expressions of a belief system. If ritual activity is performed with objects or remains aimed to manipulate otherworldly forces, human or natural influences, these objects (magical instruments/ paraphernalia/ medicine) and remains become part of the magical practice. In terms of aims, a magical practice is instrumental in gaining a particular advantage that is beyond the control of the person who ordered or performed the practice. The evidence discussed in this article most likely represents the impersonal manipulation of architectural and natural forces, and the more personal manipulation of the presence of the ancestors.

Finds and Their Contextual Evidence (Table 2)

Before a summary description of the classes of hidden deposits is presented, it would seem appropriate in the framework of this investigation to raise the question of the location of Ba'ja as a hidden site. In addition, some discussion of burials would also seem pertinent, because their in-wall and intramural phenomenology appears to have much to do with the complexity of hiding (*cf.* also Interpretative Frameworks, Discussion).

The Ba'ja, a Ritual Landscape?

The location of Ba'ja and its one "comfortable" access through a gorge, the *Siq al-Ba'ja*, (Figs. 2-4) has been described in various publications (*e.g.,* Gebel and Bienert *et al.* 1997): its unique isolated and protected -but not defensible- setting has been the subject of many speculations. Aside from the fourth, "unconscious" and non-practical reason, we, the excavators, think that a combination of practical reasons helped in the choice of the al-Mehmad intra-montane basin: protection from raids in a more aggressive local LPPNB neighbourhood, resulting from competition for restricted resources; protection of the site's wealth created by the manufacture of an exported product (sandstone rings); and the water storage capacity of the *siq* in an otherwise difficult hydrological setting (Gebel, in press). The fourth reason may lie - and we introduce this as a palaeopsychological hypothesis - in the attraction of the symbolic character and (palaeo-) psychology of the landscape: the Ba'ja is characterised by the beautiful, narrow and discrete *siq* allowing access onto a basin in which a protected village life could develop. The archetypes of passage and reproduction, of vagina and uterus, may have unconsciously influenced the choice of the place.[1] Protection and shelter from hostile surroundings may well have been the psychological quality of living in the Ba'ja.

In-Wall Deposits

Such deposits are reasonably well attested in the Neolithic, both in the Near East[2] and elsewhere (*e.g.,* Beilke-Voigt 2001, 2002), and until today practices of hiding personal and "public" meanings and messages in walls accompanies human behaviour during building activities. However, not all insertions in walls must necessarily represent primarily a ritual or magical meaningful evi-

[1] I thank Hans Erlenmeyer, Berlin for sharing his ideas on this subject. Those who are critical of this idea as a co-reason for the choice of the locality, are invited to approach Ba'ja through the *siq*. Since similar topographies are to be found in the Petra sandstone area, this question is of a wider importance for the understanding of the Greater Petra Area as a ritual landscape.

[2] *E.g.,* the celts and grinders in some of the walls of PPNA Jerf al-Ahmar (D. Stordeur, pers. comm.), or the three small complete stone vessels placed together in a pisé wall of one of the early Pottery Neolithic houses (c. 6400-6300 BC) in Sabi Abyad (P. Akkermans, pers. comm.). All in-wall evidence in 'Ain Ghazal comes from the MPPNB; walls of the following periods were not dismantled, so almost nothing can be said about similar practices in the LPPNB, PPNC and Yarmoukian (Gary Rollefson, pers. comm.).
For the southern Levantine Chalcolithic also several different wall-related deposit types exist, such as vessel caches under and alongside walls, object caches in or on top of the collapsed/ abandoned subterranean features (Beersheva sites). At Gilat, one very large flint axe/ adze rested directly under the stone foundation of a wall, possibly not part of the structure *per se*. At Shiqmim, chopper tools were found along or related to wall foundations, possibly reflecting an original situation. However, the variety of wall-realted deposits is quite large, and mostly one cannot be positive from the finding that the evidence actually was directly incorporated into the wall construction (Yorke Rowan/ Eliot Braun, pers. comm.).

dence: It cannot be excluded, for example, that grinders (found from Natufian times onwards) were simply recycled as wall stones. But could it not be the case that the many in-wall grinding tools, appearing fractured, still well preserved, or even virtually rather unused in the Basta and Ba'ja walls attest to this inseparable practical or utilitarian and symbolic behaviour?

Normally in-wall contexts are not exposed during an excavation, because walls are rarely dismantled. In- and sub-floor evidence is more frequently discovered, since these loci generally are subject to excavation. Another restriction is the matter of preservation. It is clear that much of the in-wall evidence has eroded with the wall during and after occupation. Thus, the in-wall finds we could observe are in eroded wall tops, which just happened to be preserved until the height of the finds before being buried again beneath cultural debris and sediments. This coincidence and pattern of preservation and exposure is rare to find. However, such loci of heavy-duty tools set in the walls (grinders, celts, hammerstones, etc.) could also be recognized by them protruding out the wall faces, or resting in the rubble of collapsed walls, or in the fills just along and below eroded walls. Careful in-field observation, when it is known what to look for, would increase the evidence of in-wall deposits. For years we have been puzzled by the high frequency of celts in LPPNB settlements, often unused. Could it be that they sometimes derive from in-wall use, as with the extraordinary large unfinished and unused examples of the "nest" in Locus 3 in Ba'ja D2 (Figs. 5-6)?

Between-Wall Deposits

Evidence of between-wall deposits seems to be rare, and is difficult to identify since structural arguments can often be proposed against a symbolic reason for such a feature. One of the most obvious cases we have found is Locus 15 in Ba'ja B22 (Fig. 9), in a corner setting, where a 20-35 cm wide space was created by setting another wall in front of a room wall, and then closing its open narrow side as well. It contained a group of animal bones, giving the impression of resulting from a single event, which was indicated (like a document) there by its protected deposition.

Another type of between-wall deposit is the wall painting from Ba'ja Area D (Figs. 7-8). This fresco showing abstract motifs must have decorated a very small (c. 1,0 m^2) and special room. Its meaning or message was deliberately kept when it became hidden by a small one-faced wall -formed by a large sandstone slab with smaller stones on top-, which make up the eastern wall of a collective burial chamber (0,7 m^2) inserted into this small room.

In-Floor and Sub-Floor Deposits

We cannot be sure whether or not the flint debris, hammerstone or grinder fragments have a meaning when bedded into floors, but certainly some meaning appertains to the almost identical bowlets/ platelets set upside down underneath the final plaster coats of two Ba'ja floors (*e.g.*, Fig. 13). A small animal bone arrangement (c. 60 x 60 cm, with one or two human bones; Fig. 12) laid out horizontally in a not yet understood pattern or design is another type of an in-floor deposit; it rested in a plaster bed and was covered by the floor's "coat".

Aside from the burials, there are not many clear sub-floor deposits in Ba'ja and Basta, though nests of hammerstones occurred in Basta. However, true sub-floor hiding practices do seem to exist for PPNB chipped lithic material (*e.g.*, Rollefson 1984: 9). It should be pointed out in this connection that on-floor supplies of chipped materials (like the flint box of Beidha; Mortensen 1988) have nothing to with our subject. In the literature such supplies are sometimes referred to as "caches", which creates a confusion with our "hiding" practices.

Burials as In-Wall, Sub-Floor, Between-Wall Deposits

This contribution is not aiming to discuss the diversity of intramural burials in the LPPNB: there is a great regional and even local variability of intramural burial practices during this period (*e.g.* the individual graves in Basta and the collective chamber burials of the house units in Ba'ja), and this becomes ever more complicated by death-related activities in secondary and even tertiary de-

position and alteration of primary burials. We treat the topic of burial here because it is seen to be ethologically linked with the hiding, protecting and perhaps banning sphere of human behaviour. The matter has been brought into the discussion by the previously little observed practice of child burials inside walls, especially since our 1987 finding of an Infans I in Basta Area A (Fig. 10-11).[1] This baby (excavated by C. Becker, Berlin) was undoubtedly nested between the two faces of the double-faced wall; with its necklace of more than 100 small *Conidae* beads and a mother-of-pearl paillette (the same type was found below a baby skull in Ba'ja, *cf.* Gebel and Hermansen 2001: Fig. 7A), this primary burial had been accidentally exposed by the erosion of the wall, before it was covered again by cultural debris deposited by a natural or human-related event.

Table 2. Contextual evidence of hidden materials / burials in Ba'ja and Basta.

	in-floor	*sub-floor* *	*in-wall*	*between walls* **
isolated hammerstones (fractured, used)		▮ Basta	● Ba'ja ● Basta	
nests of hammerstones (fractured, used)		▮ Basta	▮ Ba'ja ▮ Basta	
isolated celts (used)			■ Ba'ja ■ Basta	
line of celts eroded from a wall (used, unused)	—	—	▮ Ba'ja ? Basta	—
nests of celts (used, unused, raw forms)		? Basta	▮ Ba'ja ▮ Basta	
isolated handstones, grinding slabs (broken, used, rarely used)	▮ Basta	▮ Basta	● Ba'ja ● Basta	▮ Basta
"platelets"/ bowlets (unused fractured, unused? complete)	▮ Ba'ja			
bone arrangements (laid out in a pattern / design)	▮ Ba'ja		—	—
animal bone huddles (to some degree orderly packed)				▮ Ba'ja ? Basta
primary burials		■ Ba'ja ● Basta	▮ Basta	
skull deposits (pit-/ stone-/ wall- protected)	—	(▮ Basta)		(▮ Basta)
hidden wall painting	—	—	—	▮ Ba'ja
buried figurine deposit (cf. Hermansen 1997)		▮ Basta (in a pit)		

* including channels (Basta) ** walls especially erected in front of another to shelter in the created narrow space a deposit — Frequency of evidence: ● frequently attested, ■ common, ▮ occasionally/ rare/ single, ? possibly attested, blank no information/ not yet attested

The LPPNB practice of concealing (selected?) dead in the domestic environment shows that these remains carried meanings which it was advisable should be kept in the group- or family-controlled sphere. In our terms of hiding, and as one of the burials' aspects, the (personal)

[1] Before, for 'Ain Ghazal in-wall child burials were reported: "... other newborn infants were found beneath and in housewalls, although the number of such cases remains too small for us to be certain if these could be considered as 'foundation offerings' ." (Rollefson and Simmons 1985: 47). Or: "An infant had been placed beneath the doorway connecting this room with the eastern room of the house." (Rollefson and Simmons 1986: 153; Rollefson 1986). Or: "Newborn or late fetal child placed head down, back curved over head. Most bones fallen into and beside skull. 'Partial disarticulation suggests primary interment?' Notes of 5 July 1983 refer to Scott Rolston's notes, not available to me. Summary report describes this as 'head down' in a cavity in Wall 002 (which rests on Surface 027)." (Grindell 1998: 368)

forces of the dead were intramurally stored to protect or secure and to control a meaning, on that level not unlike an in-wall celt, the buried statue caches of 'Ain Ghazal or the figurine hoard of Basta (Hermansen 1997). It is not excluded, however, that behind the same burial phenomenology different hiding concepts could have existed; for example, the supposedly open-ruin burials of Basta Area A may reflect that these members left the magical protection/ control connotation of hiding and were subject of a more practical hiding aspect, such as domestic hygiene. Such "shifts" may result from such as raids, epidemics, social isolation, etc.

We would add here all other wall-protected finds of human remains to the between-wall hiding: the most common type are human skull nests (*e.g.*, Basta, 'Ain Ghazal, es-Sifya, Jericho, and many other sites) protected by small walls, stone-lined pits etc. They possibly are the result of what we consider another basic human ethological disposition: to disregard post-cranial bones when a burial is disturbed and to extract and protect the cranium[1].

Wall-Related Hiding, Forces: a Discussion (Table 3)

In the symbolic systems of Ba'ja and Basta, as well as of other villages of the LPPNB Mega-Site Phenomenon, there occur a number of previously ignored magico-ritual practices, all related to the hiding of objects in walls and floors; burials have also to been included in our discussion, since they appear ethologically to be linked to these hiding practices (Tables 2- 3). These magico-ritual practices cannot be fully explained by traditional Neolithic ritual analysis. Although the Neolithic ritual conceptualisation of this primarily unconscious behaviour is evident, and the practices may even became part of the Neolithic memetic evolution (*cf.* T. Watkins, this volume), the question of their origin calls for a basic consideration: which magical and ritual practices are rooted in the biology of human behaviour, or, rather, in human ethological dispositions, and in what ways? Furthermore, are not such origins and ingredients involved in most acts of religious expression? Moreover, are not some of the basic parts of religious expression only components of human nature (understood as religious universalia), and only "later" subject of selection and modification by the symbolic and socio-economic environments in which they occur, helping to form here the specific belief systems? And yet more provocative, does a human biological substratum of such universalia steer the memetic evolution?

The phenomena described here are seen in the border zones of unconscious (vertebrate) behaviour and their practical and symbolic conceptualisation. The conjectural and preliminary character of such a new and partly original approach is unavoidable, especially since this contribution is written by a prehistorian concentrating solely on walls: the division of Table 3 was made for the sake of an overview and for transparency; it should be kept in mind, however, that this separation of elements has nothing to do with their interrelated dynamics in early Neolithic life. The table more reflects the potential of our discussion; due to its speculative elements it may only be a restricted approach to the Early Neolithic reality. Table 3 presents the arguments and explanations for the ethological, practical and symbolic contexts of the Ba'ja/ Basta finds; they are only subject of the following text if needed in argumentation.

Practices of hiding/ caching belong to the universal grammar of vertebrate behaviour. The variability of the hiding disposition is steered (as is the case for the learning, marking territories, and other dispositions) by sociobiological needs, but also by unconscious behavioural formulae, for which we introduce here the term "ideomotorics". Ideomotoric acts are specific, repeatedly executed, unreflected spontaneous answers to specific stimuli which require a reaction with their meaning. They often are related to the unconscious symbolic landscape. Most of the human depositional behaviour is ruled by ideomotoric acts, *e.g.*, all sorts of human garbage and recycling

[1] The gazelle skull found in a small wall niche in LPPNB 'Ain Jammam (M. Waheeb, Gary O. Rollefson, pers. comm.) should also become a matter of debate. Did the position of the skull in the niche really survive the years in an open ruin, or is it more the evidence of an isolated behavior of a squatter who extracted a gazelle skull from a previous context or a context known to him, and placed it respectfully in a protected position? If it is a primary context, it would mean that the room was intentionally filled, a behaviour, for which we would have much evidence in LPPNB terraced architecture.

behaviour. For an archaeologist it is, for example, most exciting to identify loci created by reactions to surplus building materials in early sedentary contexts. The spontaneous act of a house builder to leave a personal belonging in the foundation ditch, to mark his presence and claim, or that of the squatter respecting belongings of a former owner by not removing them, in order not to become a target of punishment: all this explains ideomotoric behaviour. It also shows how directly ideomotorics are charged with practical and symbolic meaning on the more conscious levels. While the practical and symbolic meanings (and related ritual) behind hiding behaviour can develop in quite diverse and unstable ways, the ideomotorics seem to be a stable behavioural substratum.

Table 3. LPPNB Ba'ja and Basta: preliminary categories of the hidden deposits' ethological, practical and symbolic contexts.

"Levels"	*Ethological Disposition/ Unconscious*	*Practical Function/ Conscious*	*Supposed Exchange with Forces/ Shared Symbolic Meaning*	*Alternative/ Additional Meaning, Other Characteristics*
Behaviour	*reacting biological & sociobiological elements with unconscious symbolic universalia*	*conceptionalizing & conventionalizing, creation of practical meaning*	*related to the belief system & modification of belief*	
Act/ Action	*marking, covering, hiding, protecting, preserving*	*recording, documenting, manifesting, claiming rituals (partly assisted by specialized personnel)*	*seeking of answers/ "tolerance"/ assistance, shifting meaning through dialogue with forces*	*ad hoc behaviour without contact to practical levels*
in-wall hammerstones (isolated or nests)	spontaneous marking of one's presence/ territory, hiding & preserving	intra-site recycling of stone material & marking territory & protection of work	strengthening wall stability by banning unfavourable impersonal forces	re-use: respecting a past meaning (of the tool) by protecting/ hiding
in-wall celts (isolated or nests)	marking of one's presence/ territory, hiding	marking territory by freshly made celts/ celts taken from the use cycle, & protection of work, performed deposition ?	strengthening wall stability by banning unfavourable impersonal forces	re-use: respecting a past meaning (of the tool) by protecting/ hiding unused: deposing a value
in-wall grinders (isolated)	spontaneous marking of one's presence/ territory, hiding & preserving	intra-site recycling of stone material & marking territory & protection of work	strengthening wall stability by banning unfavourable impersonal forces	re-use: respecting/ transferring a past meaning (of the tool) by protecting/ hiding - unused: deposing a value
in-floor "platelets"/ bowlets	marking of one's presence/ territory, hiding & preserving ?	marking territory by freshly made bowlet/ bowlet taken from the use cycle ?, & protection/ attestation of ?, performed deposition?	unknown (special?) meaning, hidden & sealed message/ record	unused item: especially made for deposition?, broken/ intentionally broken ?
in-floor bone arrangements (laid out in a pattern / design)	?	hiding & preserving ?, performed deposition of ?	unknown meaning, hidden & sealed message/ record?	
between-wall animal bone huddles (to some degree orderly packed)	(spontaneous) marking of one's presence/ territory?, hiding & preserving?	event-related record/ manifestation of episodic/ repeated events ?	documentation/ protocol/ witnessing an event, not forces-related ?	
sub-floor primary burials, in-wall primary burials	marking of ancestral territory, hiding & protection	hygiene, attestation of legitimacy (property document), keeping the "social contact", performed deposition	avoiding/ banning impacts from & serving? ancestors, group memory	
pit-/ stone-/ wall- protected skull deposits	preservation & re-hiding, re-marking of a previous ancestral territory	?, performed re-deposition?	respecting ancestral territory, banning impacts from & serving? ancestors/ non-ancestors, group memory	
hidden wall painting	? - hidden: hiding & protection/ preservation	wall decoration & message (special room) - hidden: respect of previous message/ forces: hiding & protection	unknown meaning/ message - hidden: hiding & preservation of a previous meaning/ message	hidden: preserved but "lost" value of message/ meaning
buried figurine deposit (cf. Hermansen 1997)	hiding & protection & preservation	self-protection by exchange & protection of previous meaning, performed deposition?	avoiding/ banning impacts from ancestors/ non-ancestors, exchange of materials, respect of meaning	*ad hoc* hiding after disturbance: re-hiding & protection

Human ethology discusses human tendencies and practices to control and serve forces. These can be *e.g.* taboos, unfavourabilities of nature, ancestral influence, etc.. Items, symbols, dead persons, etc. are deposited, hidden or exhibited, in order to create locations to commemorate, manifest or ban influence, ideas or beliefs. Through sedentarisation, permanent structures became a secure and confined possibility for such deposits, helping also to establish and claim sedentary spatial, social, ritual, and cognitive territories. Built locations started to "host" (elements of) the belief system. These territories provided mutually accepted identity, which created, needed and promoted new modes of an organising power, hierarchy, and aggression.

On the conceptualised levels (basically those of the practical conscious), the hidden objects used in the walls and floors most likely served as a forceful "medicine" against evil influence: hammerstones and celts, but also grinders, all representing heavy-duty tools, could have been understood as practical instruments to strengthen a wall, the house, even in the metaphorical sense (the family). Strength was added to the structure, especially necessary with the terraced architecture of Ba'ja, which suffered from structural instability as a consequence of the site's steep topography. The in-floor bowlets/ platelets and bone patterns seem to be other types of specific "medicines", probably related to different meanings for the room function. It might not have been too much important for the effectiveness of the "medicine", whether objects were freshly made for the deposition, or were used or broken. All these deposition practices seem to have been performed during the erection of walls and floors, and are rooted in a substratum of unconscious ideomotoric reactions. This hiding behaviour seems to be impersonal, implementing protective "technical" media as forces against threatening external forces. These invisible deposits probably had no direct "public" or communicative function, but the neighborhood must have been aware of their permanent presence: they were part of the early Neolithic existence.

Depositional hiding behaviour communicating with otherworldly forces seems to be related to all sorts of intramural (and in-wall) burying. This could take place through burying the dead or by burying a meaning (*e.g.*, Hermansen 1997: burial of figurines; Fig. 9: animal bone "huddle"). These types of depositions have a commemorating character, and are based on personal relationships to individuals or groups, or to events. Their primary meaning is to maintain the kind of spatial relationship when the direct physical relationship terminated. "Offering" in the sense of sacrifice has to be excluded from this interpretative framework, including the in-wall baby from Basta Area A. Hoards of items and hoards of skulls: they could have in this context the same meaning, the restoration of a disturbed integrity and relationship. The aforementioned Basta figurine hoard could also be an example for such a cause of hiding behaviour.

We do not exclude that some of the hiding practices described above were performed by specialised personnel of the community. Partly, however, they may represent everyday or routine practices, possibly executed by any ordinary member of the community who came in touch with an event requiring hiding. Even the hiding of objects could have been the subject of totally informal, unconscious behaviour (*e.g.*, the insertion of used hammerstones in walls). We expect that the categories of hiding described above include the whole range of ritual competence attested in Ba'ja and Basta, from the group member following unconscious behaviour, through the "magician" experienced in obeying ritual precautions, and taboos to the "shaman" who operates a practice in direct contact with the otherworldly forces.

A last consideration is devoted to the "universalia" aspect of this contribution: in the ethological sense, universalia of human behaviour and of an unconscious symbolism seem to exist from our archaeological point of view. But it appears more than doubtful that symbolic "universalia" could survive on levels of the practical conscious. Also the Early Neolithic cosmologies prove the temporary character of their symbolism.

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