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THE TWIN SHRINES OF BEYCESULTAN

By JAK YAKAR

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In the last two decades, extensive excavations and new discoveries have thrown more light on the little known early religions of Anatolia. Certain religious concepts and symbols of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, which are best illustrated in the religious architecture and art of Çatal Hüyük¹ and Hacilar,² may now be considered ancestral to some of the traditions and beliefs in the later Anatolian religions.

Sites like Troy,³ Kusura,⁴ Beycesultan,⁵ Karahüyük (Konya),⁶ Alishar,⁷ Kültepe,⁸ Alaca Hüyük,⁹ Horoztepe,¹⁰ Pulur (Keban)¹¹ and Tarsus¹² have provided us with material on the religious architecture and art of Bronze Age

¹ James Mellaart, *Çatal Hüyük, A Neolithic Town in Anatolia*, London and Southampton 1967.

² James Mellaart, *Hacilar*, Vols. I, II, Edinburgh 1970.

³ Room 402 in Level IV a, and House 501 in Level V b housed altar-like structures. They may have been domestic shrines. See Carl Blegen, John Caskey and Marion Rowson, *Troy*, Vol. II, Part I (Princeton, 1951), pp. 144, 258. The Anta House in Level VI h, and the Tower VI i with the four large monolithic pillars set in a row in front of it, seem to have been used as sanctuaries. See, Blegen, Caskey and Rowson, *Troy*, Vol. III, Part I (Princeton, 1953), 95–8 and 251–2.

⁴ Room 8 in Kusura Period B, stages 4–6, seems to have been a shrine. See Winifred Lamb, “Excavations at Kusura near Afyon Karahisar”, *Archaeologia*, Vol. LXXXVII (1937), 225. The Shrine of Period C at Kusura has a complex altar comparable to the “horn”-shaped altars of the L.B. Beycesultan twin shrines (W. Lamb, “Some Early Anatolian Shrines”, *AS VI* (1956), 87, pl.V).

⁵ For the E.B. shrines see Seton Lloyd and James Mellaart, *Beycesultan* Vol. I (London, 1962), 29–55. For the M.B. and L.B. religious architecture of Beycesultan see Seton Lloyd and James Mellaart, *Beycesultan*, Vol. II (London, 1965), 39–59; *Beycesultan*, Vol. III, Part I (London, 1972), pp. 24 ff.; *AS VI* (1956), pl.116, pl.Xb, and *AS VIII* (1958), 108–11.

⁶ For the M.B. sanctuaries see U. Bahadır Alkım, *Anatolie I* (Genève, 1968), 121.

⁷ The Level M. 9 Shrine at Alishar (E.B.II) is furnished with a “fire-altar” comparable to that of Kusura B. See Erich Schmidt, *The Alishar Hüyük Seasons of 1928–29*, Vol. IV, Part I (Chicago, 1932), 33–7. At Alishar Period II, Building B in Complex 1 seems to have been a large sanctuary (*ibid.*, 90).

⁸ Nimet Özgüç, “Marble Idols and Statuettes from the Excavations at Kültepe”, *Bellesten*, Vol. XXI (1957), 71 ff. Karum Level I b, Shrines I b, B (P 19/20) and I b, A (E–F). See Tahsin Özgüç and Nimet Özgüç, *Kültepe Kazısı Raporu, 1949* (Ankara, 1953), 4–6. Also, Tahsin Özgüç, *Kültepe-Kanış*, (Ankara, 1959), p. 107.

⁹ For the statuettes, disc and animal standards see, Ekrem Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites* (London, 1962), 24–9., also, F. Hançar, “Die Kult der Grossen Mutter im kupferzeitlichen Kleinasien. Zur Deutung der Kultstandarten des Alaca Hüyüks”, *Archiv für Orientforschung*, XIII (1939–41), 289–307.

¹⁰ For the religious art of Horoztepe see Tahsin Özgüç and Mahmut Akok, *Horoztepe: An Early Bronze Age Settlement and Cemetery* (Ankara, 1958), 46–7.

¹¹ In Area A2, building level XI, in two rooms separated by a mudbrick wall, two altars were discovered by Hamit Koşay. Five more shrines were discovered in levels VIII, IX and X. These shrines were probably dedicated to the goddess of fertility and her consort (Koşay, “Pulur (Sakyol) Excavations”, *Keban Project 1968 Summer Work* (Ankara, 1970), 143–6, pls.3–6, also, *Keban Project 1969 Activities* (Ankara, 1971), 103–6, pls.74–7).

¹² At Tarsus, the “Street” in level 21·15 m. (E.B.I) was bordered on its west and east sides by altar-like structures. This “street” may have been used as an open sanctuary. See Hetty Goldman, *Tarsus*, Vol. II (Princeton, 1956), 10–11.

Anatolia, but, with the exception of Beycesultan, their contribution to the understanding of the early Anatolian pantheons and religions has so far been fragmentary. At Beycesultan, the various changes observed in the altar assemblages of the twin shrines, through the cultural periods of the Bronze Age, may reflect the alterations, additions and conservatism in the religions practised in South-Western Anatolia, and possibly in the other regions of Anatolia as well.

The earliest twin shrines at Beycesultan date to the E.B.II period (Levels XVI–XIV). The shrines are arranged in pairs, side by side (e.g. Shrines XVI–XV), or are separated by a number of rooms lined along a long axis (e.g. Shrine XIV, Fig. 1). This arrangement of shrines is observed also in the M.B. and L.B. periods (Fig. 2).

The Twin Shrines of the E.B.II Period (Fig. 1)

Each shrine consists of a rectangular altar room entered through a portico. The altar room is followed by a small “priest’s room”. In the case of Shrine XIV A, the functions of the “priest’s room”, which should have been at the east end of the altar room, seem to have been transferred to the three subsidiary chambers separating the shrines A and B (Left-hand and Right-hand shrines). Among the usual assemblages of the altar room itself, the central feature is a complex altar placed on the main axis at the east end of the room. This complex altar consists of twin stelae made of plastered clay. The twin stelae, usually supported by low clay pedestals, stand apart from each other (e.g., in Shrine XV A, 42 cm. apart, and in Shrine XIV B, 58 cm. apart). The stelae are not well preserved; their upper parts are destroyed. They also vary in dimension: 65–88 cm. in width, 15–16 cm. in thickness, and in the case of the stelae in Shrine XIV B their heights are 45 and 50 cm. The complete three stone stelae of the M.B. Open Sanctuary in Level V (all nearly 3.50 m. in height), suggest that the twin stelae of the E.B.II shrines may have been of considerable height. The stelae are supported by built-in pottery vessels used for liquid offerings. In Shrine XIV B the built-in vessels are replaced by clay basins (Fig. 1). The stelae are generally enclosed by a concentric kerb, with a diameter of more than 2 m., (2.25 m. in Shrine XV B.) In almost every instance, a “horn”-shaped clay structure no higher than 40 cm., (in Shrine XIV B, 80 × 35 × 40 cm.), stands approximately 20 cm. in front of the twin stelae. These “horns” themselves are surrounded by low clay kerbs of about 50–60 cm. in diameter. In certain shrines, (shrines XVI B, XV B, XIV B), a wooden post or pillar, which is inserted in sockets, is set in front of the twin stelae and “horns” complex, always within the large kerb. In Shrine XIV B this wooden post has a thickness of 20 cm. In Shrine XIV B a considerable length of the upper part of the wooden post was found lying beside its stump. Obviously, these wooden posts could not have been used as roof supports because of their position in the altar room. They must have had a cultic significance, associated with a tree cult, as already suggested by S. Lloyd.¹³ Another important feature of cultic significance is the “blood altars”, found in shrines XV A, XIV A. They are built of clay against the northern wall of the altar room. In Shrine XV A, the “blood altar” measures 75 × 40 cm., standing to a height of 20 cm. Its upper

¹³ Seton Lloyd and James Mellaart, *Beycesultan*, Vol. I, 32.

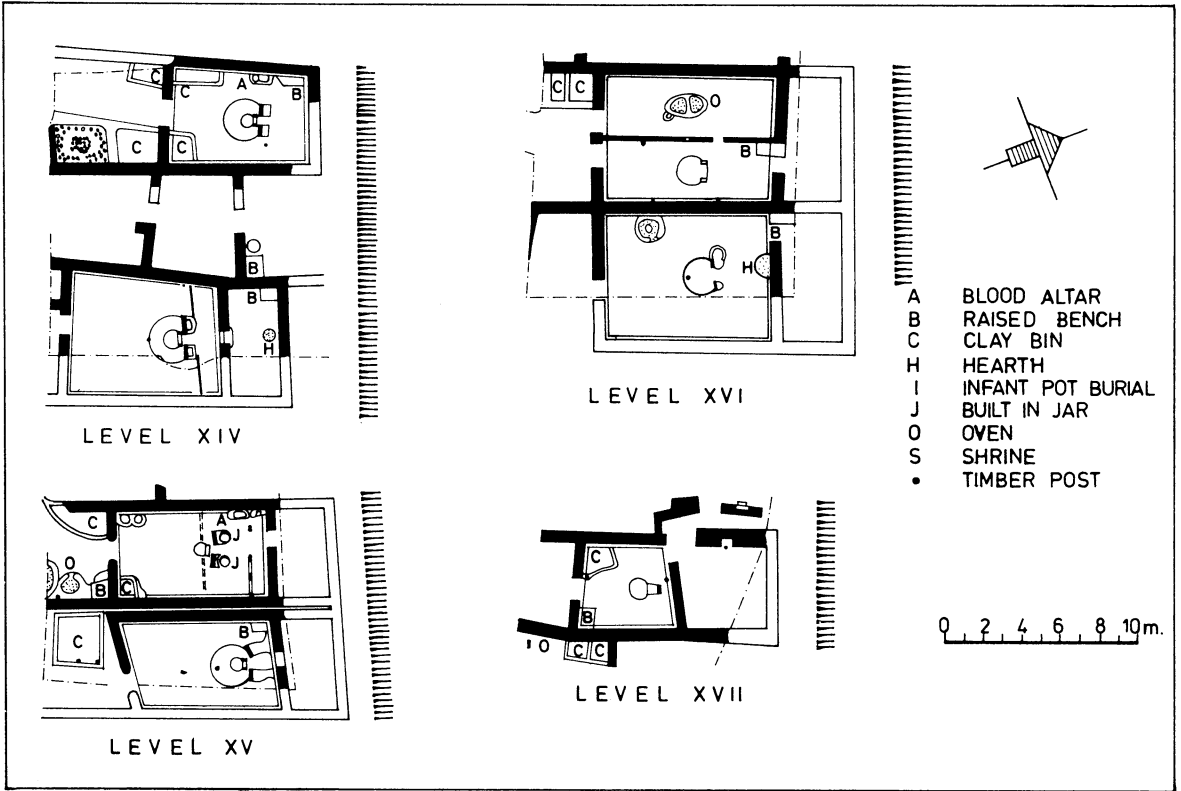


FIG. 1. Key-plans of shrines in Early Bronze Age levels.

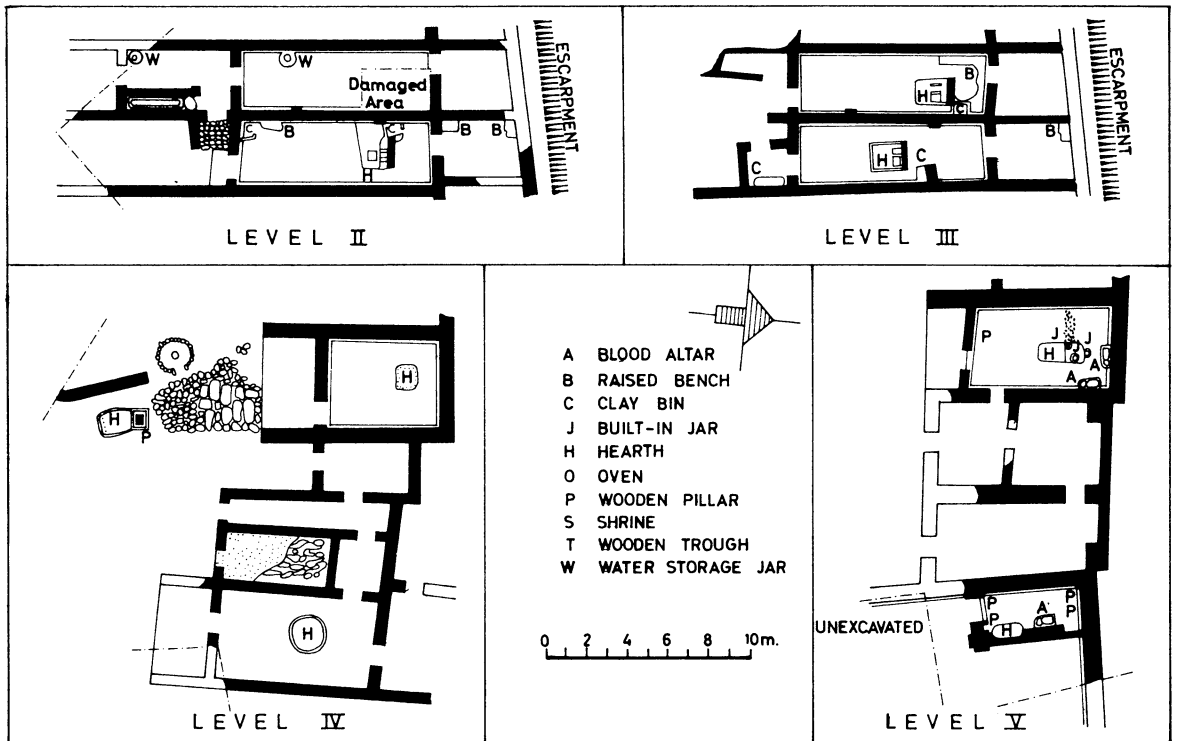


FIG. 2. Key-plans of shrines in Middle and Late Bronze Age levels.

surface has a flat oval in the centre surrounded by a sunk channel sloping west towards a deep circular hole in the pavement. Other features of the shrine assemblages include clay bins in the portico, or/and altar room, used for the storage of grain which was used for rituals, ovens and hearths in the “priest’s rooms”, probably used to prepare the ceremonial foods.

The Twin Shrines of the M.B. Period (Fig. 2)

The shrines demonstrate the continuation of the E.B. tradition in the architectural plan. Some modifications in the plans may be observed, especially, in Shrines V and IV A (Fig. 2). The “priest’s room” at the back of the altar room is eliminated, and its function taken over by a number of subsidiary rooms separating the two shrines. The twin stelae and the “horns” of the E.B.II shrines are replaced by “ceremonial hearths”, or “fire altars”.¹⁴ In Shrine V A, the altar room contains three altars of various types. The altar in the centre of the room consists of a raised platform with two built-in jars. The jars are reminiscent of the pottery vessels placed behind the twin stelae of the E.B.II shrines. The north and the east walls of the altar room each have a blood altar. The only addition of any significance, in this and other M.B. shrines at Beycesultan, is the “ceremonial hearth”. In Shrine V A, the “ceremonial hearth” is connected to the raised central platform, forming a complex altar, whereas in Shrines IV A and B, they are the only and central feature of the altar room. The wooden posts, usually associated with a “Tree of Life” cult in the E.B.II shrines, are not found in Level V. But, in Shrine IV A, an isolated wooden pillar, rectangular in section and measuring 48 × 38 cm. (its stump was preserved standing upright in the ground), stands in an open courtyard in front of the shrine. Around its base is a rectangular border constructed of clay slabs. To the south of this structure is an open hearth surrounded by a plastered wooden kerb.

The Twin Shrines of the L.B. Period (Fig. 2)

The shrines are like the E.B. shrines in plan with rectangular buildings divided lengthwise by partition walls. The only surviving elements of the altar assemblages of the earlier periods are “horn”-structures, now more elaborate, and “ceremonial hearths”. In Shrine III A, in the altar room, is a “horn” structure projecting from a screen-wall. The horn structure stands upon a platform and is surrounded by a horse-shoe-shaped low wall.¹⁵ Behind the low wall and “horns” is a thick wall higher than the “horn” structure. The purpose of this wall is not clear, but it seems to be part of the altar structure. The horse-shoe-shaped wall which surrounds the “horn” structure forms two recesses on each side of the “horns”. The recess on the right hand side contains a large cooking pot standing upon a fixed column of baked clay. Beneath it are fire ashes containing remains of animal bones. This large pot is reminiscent of the vessels standing behind the stelae of the E.B. shrines. A new addition to the shrines assemblages in the L.B. period is seen in Shrine II A (Fig. 2). The portico of the shrine is as long as the

¹⁴ Seton Lloyd and James Mellaart, *Beycesultan*, Vol.II.

¹⁵ Seton Lloyd, *AS*, IX, pl.2.

altar room itself. Built against the partition wall of the portico is a hollowed out tree-trunk. A logical interpretation of the water-trough structure with the drinking goblets found *in situ*, would be that it was used by the worshippers for purification before entering the altar room, or that it was connected with rituals involving the use of "holy" water.

Among the contents of the altar rooms in the Beycesultan shrines, the twin stelae, the "horns", the free-standing wooden post and the "blood altars" are the most important elements which are closely connected with the patron deities of the twin shrines. S. Lloyd suggested the dedication of the twin sanctuaries to a male and a female deity respectively. The occurrence of the free-standing wooden pillar only in one shrine in each pair, and the fact that many "mother goddess" figurines were found in the shrines in which the symbolical wooden pillar was missing, led both S. Lloyd and J. Mellaart to suggest that the shrines with the "blood altars" are the female shrines and that those with the wooden posts are the male shrines.¹⁶ This theory does not solve the problem of the twin stelae. Assuming that each stele represented a deity, and that each shrine housed a pair of deities, the number of the deities in the twin shrines would number four. In my opinion, each pair of stelae in the twin shrines represented a "divine couple", a female deity and her consort, and thus either the twin shrines housed two pairs of deities, or two different aspects of the same "divine couple" are represented. The problem of the true identities of these deities may be solved only after the uses of certain cult objects such as the free-standing wooden posts, the "horns" and "blood altars" are clarified.

The Stelae

The stelae at Beycesultan seem to be abstract representations of deities. Steven Diamant and Jeremy Rutter maintain that the stelae in the twin shrines are actually large pairs of "horns" and that they derived from usage as a hearth.¹⁷ The fact that the stelae are only partly preserved, their upper parts being destroyed, seems to have misled the authors to compare them with the E.B.II hearths of Tarsus. Schematized deity representations are known in the religious art of early Anatolia since Neolithic times. At Hacilar Neolithic level VI, stone slabs and clay plaques incised with human figures may be the earliest attempts to schematize deity representations at a time when most impressive anthropomorphic clay statuettes were produced.¹⁸ At Hacilar Chalcolithic level II, in Shrine II A, a stone slab found inside a niche probably belongs to this form of deity representation.

During the Early Bronze Age in Anatolia, anthropomorphic statuettes were replaced by the so-called disc or fiddle-shaped figurines. Some of them are incised with human features such as faces, sex organs, etc. The statuettes of the Kültepe E.B.III period sometimes illustrate divine pairs and families. These

¹⁶Seton Lloyd, *Beycesultan*, Vol.I, 32. James Mellaart, "Anatolia c.4000–2300 B.C.", *CAH* Vol.I, Chapter XVIII (Cambridge, 1965), 29.

¹⁷"Horned Objects in Anatolia and the Near East and Possible Connections with the Minoan 'Horns of Consecration'", *AS*, XIX (1969), 147–77.

¹⁸James Mellaart, *loc. cit.*, Figs. 235–7.

schematized representations of deities started to disappear towards the end of the E.B. period. The statuettes of the Colony period at Kültepe-Karum show naturalistic representations of the early Cappadocian deities.

Another form of schematized deity representation, other than the statuettes, is the stelae mentioned above. At Troy I fragments of two stone stelae incised with human faces, and one of which is also illustrated with a sceptre, may have been part of complex altars.¹⁹ The use of stelae in shrines and open sanctuaries continued in Anatolia into the second millennium B.C. At Beycesultan, in level V, is an open sanctuary composed of three large stone stelae, and a large offering table placed in front of them. At Karum-Kaneş, in Shrines I b, B and I b, A, are two stone stelae, one in each shrine. It seems that, unlike the schematized statuettes, the stelae were not completely abolished in the second millennium B.C. At Troy VI, the monoliths standing in front of Tower VI i, and at Tell El Far'ah the stone stele and the basin found next to it were interpreted by the excavators as cult assemblages.²⁰ Other examples of the use of stelae in shrines are found in the ancient Near East and in Mesopotamia. In the Israelite Temple of Arad, three stone stelae were found in the altar room. Also, two fire-altars were probably standing at the entrance of the altar room.²¹ A bronze model of a sanctuary from Susa (1200 B.C.) illustrates a pair of stelae standing on each side of a tree. Clay basins are placed behind the stelae.²²

In the M.B. and L.B. periods, there is no evidence of twin stelae in the twin shrines of Beycesultan. It may be that, due to a new religious concept, deities were represented by their attributes and divine symbols. Thus these symbols were considered cult objects and were treated in the same manner as the deities.

The "Horns"

The use of horns in association with deity representations is common in early Anatolian religions. In the Neolithic Çatal Hüyük shrines, "bull-pillars", free-standing or incorporated in low clay benches, sometimes accompany the deity representations in the form of wall-reliefs, animal heads, etc. There is little doubt that they symbolized fertility and divinity.

The "horns" in the E.B.II shrines at Beycesultan resemble in shape the portable altar which Hamit Koşay found in Shrine XI, A-2, at Pular, and the M.M.II "horns of consecration".²³ At Beycesultan, the "horns" disappear in the M.B. period and reappear in the L.B. twin shrines, this time in more elaborate and complex forms. They can be compared to the "horn"-shaped structure in Shrine C, VI, 1 at Kusura.²⁴

¹⁹Blegen, loc. cit., 155-7, pl.190.

²⁰Blegen, loc. cit., 252, pls. 47, 55b., Roland De Vaux, Tell El Far'ah, *Revue Biblique*, Vol.LX (1953), 222, 428-9.

²¹In the first phase of the temple the altar assemblage in the holy of holies consisted of two stone stelae (*maşseboth*), and two fire altars. The third stele (*maşsebah*) belongs to the later phase of the sanctuary. See Y. Aharoni, "Excavations at Tel Arad", *IEJ*, Vol.XVII, No.4 (1967), 247-9 pl.47.

²²James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures* (Princeton, 1954), pl. 619.

²³Koşay: "Pular Excavations, 1968", pls. 8-9.

²⁴Lamb: *AS* VI, pl.5.

In Minoan religious architecture and art the “horns of consecration” are sometimes used to decorate the roof of the sanctuaries, thus stressing their sanctity. Sometimes a cult implement like a libation jug, or the objects of the cult themselves (e.g., the double-axe, the sacred tree or bough) are depicted standing between the horns.²⁵ This indicates, that in certain instances, the horns were used as places of consecration where the tools of the cult were laid, and also, as suggested by Nilsson, as a sign of sanctity of the cult objects.²⁶ The place between the horns is sometimes taken by a deity as depicted in the Kynodian gem; a nude male god stands between the horns. At the right, there is a genius with a libation jug, and at the left, is a winged goat.²⁷ It is clear that in this case the horns are the god’s divine symbol. Mesopotamian and Hittite deities wore horned caps which were symbols of divinity. It is thus possible to assume that the “horns” in the E.B.II shrines at Beycesultan were divine symbols of the deities represented by the twin stelae. On the other hand, the “horn” structures of the L.B. twin shrines may have been used as divine symbols stressing the sanctity of the altar and other cult objects.

The Free-Standing Wooden Posts (Figs. 1–2)

These posts, as already suggested by S. Lloyd, did not have an architectural function. Their presence in the E.B.II shrines (only in the right-hand shrines), and in the M.B. shrine (outside the shrine) in connection with divine representations, altars and other objects of religious significance suggest their possible associations with a cult. This cult could have been a tree-cult (tree of life), or a pillar cult, as is the case in the Minoan Religion. I agree with Nilsson’s idea that the pillars or the pillar rooms of the Minoan Palaces cannot be considered as embodiments of a deity or a cult object, but that they may be sacred in the sense that they either belong to a sanctuary, or that they were endued with sacred power to strengthen their structural functions.²⁸ But they are not, as A. Evans stated, aniconic images of gods.²⁹ The so-called pillar cult in Minoan Religion may have been a necessary element in order to secure the well-being of the palaces and other monumental buildings in an earthquake region. It was not a widespread cult in the ancient Near East. In view of the fact that tree cults were very popular in the East Mediterranean, it may be more appropriate to associate the free-standing wooden posts of Beycesultan shrines with a tree cult, and not with a pillar cult.

It can be said that, in certain parts of the world, tree cults were, and still are religious systems in which trees function as manifestations or symbols of supernatural power. Vertical growth, periodic regeneration, and the flow of sap in trees may have suggested sacred and divine forces to many peoples. In certain religions the deities and spirits live in the trees. Among Arabs sacred trees are believed to be haunted by angels or jinns, and precautions are taken not to offend them by breaking a bough.

²⁵ Martin P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion* (Lund, 1968), 184.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

²⁷ Sir A. J. Evans, *Palace of Minos*, Vol. I, (New York, 1964), 632, 708, Fig. 470.

²⁸ Nilsson: *loc. cit.*, 248.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 182.

In ancient religions, certain nature and vegetation deities were represented as trees, and sometimes, the trees accompanied the deity representations acting as an attribute. Sometimes, not only trees, but also branches broken from trees were considered cult objects.

Ancient Near Eastern art illustrates the various uses of the sacred trees and boughs in connection with the fertility and life giving aspects of certain deities.

The stele from Arad, dated to the E.B.II period, depicts a god wholly anthropomorphic except for his head and hands which are in the form of a plant.³⁰ Ruth Amiran identified this deity with Tammuz.

The stele of Urnammu of Ur (2022–2002 B.C.) depicts him watering the Trees of Life, one before Shamash, the sun-god, and the other before a goddess.³¹

Sometimes the Tree of Life is associated with kings. The conception of the king as guardian of the life breath and as medium of fertility (through the fertility goddess) is best expressed by Shulgi of the Third Dynasty of Ur (2026–1979) describing himself as “a date palm planted beside a water course”,³² and by Ishme-Dagan of Isin (1884–1865 B.C.) who claims that he has been divinely appointed to guard the life breath of all lands.³³ Ishme-Dagan also alludes to a sacred marriage (with a priestess representing the Mother Goddess) in a new year festival, and in another text he states “I am he whom Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth, has chosen for her beloved husband”.³⁴ The fertility aspect of Ishtar, who was potent in both war and love, is often indicated by a tree. On a seal from Warka, the king feeds two goats with the branches of a tree.³⁵ The scene is flanked by symbols of Ishtar, her fertility aspect is probably symbolized by the tree. A similar scene is also found on an ivory cosmetics casket from Minet al-Beida near Ras Shamra (14th century B.C.), where the mother goddess occupies the central place feeding the two flanking goats with branches.³⁶ One of the wall paintings from the Amorite palace of Mari depicts the investiture of a king by Ishtar.³⁷ In the lower register of the painting is the duplicate representation of a palm-tree placed in a jar, with water pouring in or out of the jar.

In the Egyptian religion, the tree cults in early historical periods began with purely local cults which at an early time became connected with non-local deities as their forms or attributes.³⁸ Most plants other than trees played an important part only in magic, medicine and folklore. In the Old Kingdom, Hathor was also identified with the tree-goddess; for instance, in the Hathor cults at Memphis she was called “The Mistress of the Southern Sycamore”. It seems that Hathor was originally taken not for a cow, but for a tree-goddess. This belief is best attested in an execration text in connection with the god Seth and Saosis, the

³⁰Ruth Amiran, “A Cult Stele from Arad”, *IEJ*, Vol.XXII, Nos. 2–3 (1972), 86–8, pls. 14–15.

³¹Pritchard: loc. cit., pl. 306.

³²John Gray, *Near Eastern Mythology* (London, 1969), 59.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Pritchard: loc. cit., pl.672.

³⁶Ibid., pl.464.

³⁷John Gray: loc. cit., 62

³⁸Marie-Louise Buhl, “The Goddess of the Egyptian Tree Cult”, *JNES*, VI (1947), 84–97.

counterpart of Atum:³⁹ “He (Seth) has approached the wonderful hall (shrine) of Saosis with the acacia tree in which life and death are contained.”

In the Egyptian religion it was not the gods, but the goddesses who played the greatest part in the tree cult, and numerous descriptions of them occur in the religious literature. In Egyptian pictorial art, Tree Goddesses were (e.g. Nut) depicted standing on sacred trees, with the legs and lower part of their bodies hidden in the trunk of the tree. The goddess Nut, shown in a tomb painting from Sennedjem at Deir el-Medina (Nineteenth Dynasty) is offering a water jug and a tray of bread to a deceased couple.⁴⁰ The lower part of her body is hidden by a sycamore tree. On a stele dating from the Nineteenth Dynasty, the goddess Nut is represented as a tree, from which only two arms are extended.⁴¹ One arm grasps a libation vase, the other a tray filled with dishes both of which she is offering to a deceased pair. Isis, who is often called “Isis the Great, the God’s Mother”, is also associated with the tree cult and mortuary offerings.⁴²

It seems that only three goddesses played a major role in the tree cult; Nut, Hathor and Isis, all of them old sky-goddesses. On the other hand, Saosis and various male deities were connected with certain sacred trees, but they were never identified with the trees themselves. Both Nut and Hathor also functioned as goddesses of the dead. It seems that the main idea behind the Tree Cult was to provide the dead in the hereafter with life-giving sources.

In the Minoan-Mycenaean religion, a Tree-Cult existed and was in most cases associated with a female deity. The famous gold ring from the Acropolis of Mycenae depicts a female deity sitting beneath a tree in her sacred grove, the sanctity of which is emphasized by a double-axe and the skulls of sacrificed animals.⁴³ Among four votaries approaching her, one is shown touching the branches of the tree. Nilsson suggested that the tree here may have been the embodiment of the goddess herself. Sacred trees and boughs are sometimes depicted standing between the “horns of consecration”, or behind constructions such as shrines or gateways.

In the Greek religion, the tree-gods (e.g., Dionysos) were believed to embody the life of the vegetation. They are in turn child and consort of the Earth, for she bears them and brings them forth from her bosom, and they in turn as they grow to maturity produce their seed which she receives into her womb again.⁴⁴

“Blood Altars” (Figs. 1–2)

In the E.B.II shrines of Beycesultan they occur in the left-hand shrines, in the shrines in which the free-standing wooden posts are lacking. Since the southern walls of the right-hand shrines were not completely cleared, it would be too hasty to assume that no such “blood altars” existed in the right-hand shrines. So far no “blood altars” of any recognizable sort are known in the religious

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴³ Nilsson: *loc. cit.*, 264, Fig. 158.

⁴⁴ W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London, 1968), 62–3, 67 No.2.

architecture and art of Anatolia, but this does not mean that animals were not sacrificed to deities in the early Anatolian religions.

The use of the "blood altars" is best illustrated in the Minoan art. A painted sarcophagus from Crete illustrates the use of blood altars in sacred places.⁴⁵ One gets the feeling that the animal on the "blood altar" is being sacrificed to the chthonic deity, or deities. Without concrete evidence, it is difficult to theorize on the use of the "blood altars" in connection with a particular cult and deity.

Ceremonial Hearths or "Fire Altars" (Fig. 2)

At Beycesultan they appear in the M.B. and L.B. shrines. In the E.B. period, the hearths in the twin shrines seem to have been used primarily to prepare the ceremonial food, etc. They are not located in the altar room, but in the "priest's room", or in one of the subsidiary rooms. In the later shrines, they appear as part of complex altars, placed next to horn structures, or next to a free-standing wooden post.

"Ceremonial Hearths" are a common cult assemblage of the early Anatolian shrines. They are found at Tarsus E.B.I (in the "Street"), at Troy Vb (House 501), at Alishar M.9, at Kusura B 4-6 (Room 8), and at Pulus XI (Shrine A-2). Only in certain cases they may be associated with any specific form of ritual, or a deity. In Shrine IV A, the "ceremonial hearth" placed next to the wooden post may have been used for fertility rituals (see below).

Conclusion

The study of ancient Near Eastern pantheons reveals that the supreme deities had, in addition to their universally recognized major aspects, other aspects of secondary, and sometimes, of local importance. These aspects are usually emphasized by symbols, and sometimes, by cult objects, and it may be assumed that different forms of rituals were practised for each aspect of the deity or deities.

We have already seen that the main concept behind the tree cult, which was symbolized by a free-standing wooden post,⁴⁶ or by a tree, was associated with a female, and only in a few cases, with a male deity. At Beycesultan, in the twin shrines of the E.B.II period, the free-standing wooden post of the right-hand shrines, may have been the attribute of the fertility and life aspects of the "Divine Couple", the female deity and her consort. The "blood altars" of the left-hand shrines, may suggest that in these shrines another form of ritual was conducted, probably in connection with the chthonic aspect of the "Divine Couple". The "mother goddess" figurines found in the left-hand shrines remind one of Western-Anatolian burial traditions in which the "mother goddess"

⁴⁵ S. Marinatos and M. Hirmer, *Crete and Mycenae* (London, 1960), 151-2.

⁴⁶ The type of ritual in connection with sacred trees is best illustrated on a shell plaque from Ur. A priest is depicted standing in front of a wooden post. In his right hand he holds a libation jug, and he gets ready to pour the contents over the post. See Pritchard: loc. cit., pl. 605.

figurines were placed inside the tombs, to accompany the dead to their final destination.⁴⁷

The M.B. and L.B. shrines of Beycesultan show a gradual change in the altar assemblages. The deities previously represented by the stelae are now represented by their cult objects only.

⁴⁷Machteld J. Mellink, "Excavations at Karataş-Semayük 1966", *AJA* Vol.LXXI, No.3, 254, Fig. 77. Kurt Bittel, "Ein Gräberfeld der Yortan Kultur bei Babäköy", *AfO* XIII (1939–41), 1–28.