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Revisiting the Child Burials of Old Babylonian Ur: the Funerary Rite and its Spatial Aspects

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Abstract: The archaeology of children is a new perspective steadily gaining popularity in research and in recent years, it has begun to be implemented in Mesopotamian archaeology as well. The material evidence of children's lives in ancient communities, such as Old Babylonian Ur, is the most tangible through their burials. The aim of this study is to compile data on child burials in the private houses of Ur's Old Babylonian levels from multiple published and unpublished sources, to explore connections between different aspects of the funerary rite, such as spatiality, grave form and grave goods, illustrated through three short case studies. Though there are challenges faced in reconstructing the normative burial rite of children, due to the often lacking or imprecise recording and publication of information on the graves, general trends are apparent, such as the concentration of child burials in the inner parts of the houses, the preference for enclosed clay containers as burial vessels and a small number of grave goods. Individual burial rites displaying a difference from this pattern may be interpreted as markers of a different social age category and indicate that at a certain point in the life stage, elements of the adult mortuary rite started to be employed.

Keywords: burials, funerary rites, archaeology of childhood, Old Babylonian period, Ur

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1. Introduction

The archaeology of childhood has been a growing field of study in the past decades, starting with gender archaeology calling attention to the study of women in past societies, which led to the incorporation of other previously neglected, “muted” groups, such as children, into the archaeological narrative.¹ As archaeology of the Near East has, historically, focused little on burials – which make up the bulk of evidence for ancient children's lives, since other forms of their material culture are challenging to detect and to distinguish from that of adults – early research on this topic was primarily the work of Assyriology, based on textual sources and focusing on the legal status of children.² Only in recent years, due to the increased focus on funerary archaeology and new perspectives introduced by neighbouring fields, did children's material culture and social role start gaining traction, resulting in the new, holistically viewed archaeology of children and childhood finding its way into Mesopotamian archaeology. The aim of this study, as part of this

¹ Lillehammer 2018. About the development of gender archaeology and the archaeology of childhood see Pawleta 2009.

² For an overview of research history see Garroway 2014, 1–2.

process, is to revisit the child burials of Old Babylonian Ur and to introduce a new perspective into working with this set of legacy data.

Ur (Tell el-Muqayyar) was excavated between 1922–1934 by a British team led by Sir Leonard Woolley.³ Earlier, in 1853–1854, J. E. Taylor,⁴ and in 1919, H. R. Hall⁵ excavated a number of graves as well. These included children in pot, double pot and larnax burials, in domestic contexts, though little else is known about their locations, contents, or even their exact numbers.

Since their first publication in 1976, the only analysis of the Old Babylonian graves of Ur was provided in E. M. Luby's 1990 unpublished dissertation, in which he successfully reconstructed a high number of unpublished graves based on Woolley's excavation notes and outlined a number of socio-economic classes or "wealth groups" based on cluster analysis, one of which consisted of children buried with no grave goods.⁶ In addition to the perspectives employed in Luby's analysis, I would like to highlight the diversity of grave forms, as well as a less-frequently studied aspect of the funerary rite, the placement of the graves in the physical space of the house and its connection to the original function of the rooms they were buried in.

In this article, the term "child" is used to describe all individuals identified as non-adults by the excavators. As there was no physical anthropologist present during the excavations, this term must be understood to not accurately reflect the biological or social reality of these individuals' ages. Similarly, the term "infant" is also used, in accordance with the excavators, to describe younger children, though the basis of distinction between the two has unfortunately not been recorded and may be assumed to be arbitrary. It must also be noted that these categories are most likely not analogous to the social age categories recognized by ancient Mesopotamians. They are not intended here to describe cultural age categories and are merely used as analytical tools.

2. Framework: The graves and the methods of analysis

In addition to the first publication of the graves – which listed only 198 of them, deemed worthy of mentioning by Woolley⁷ – Luby's dissertation and the original excavation notes made available through the UrOnline Project⁸ provided the basis of collecting the data on child graves excavated inside houses of the Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian periods of Ur, as part of a broader study of Old Babylonian burial customs.⁹

The occupation of the so-called "Larsa" layer¹⁰ of the town lasted approximately 1926–1738 BCE (Middle Chronology).¹¹ Most of the excavated private houses are located in the AH and EM domestic residential quarters. The administrative documents of the archives indicate that the houses

³ Woolley – Mallowan 1976.

⁴ Taylor 1855.

⁵ Hall 1930.

⁶ Luby 1990.

⁷ Thus, leaving out many of the non-furnished graves, or the ones containing only non-diagnostic ceramic finds unfit for typochronological dating (Woolley – Mallowan 1976, xvi).

⁸ UrOnline.

⁹ Kersánszki 2024.

¹⁰ The more appropriate term may be "Old Babylonian", because it refers not only to the rule of the Larsa Dynasty, but also to the brief period of Babylonian occupation.

¹¹ Van De Mieroop 1992, 46–71. Luby dated several graves after the destruction of the city and followed Woolley's theory that occupation might have been continuous until about 1500 BCE (see Luby 1990, 137, fig. 3.1.). This is supported by recent excavations at the nearby site of Tell Khaiber and re-evaluation of the Babylon material, which have demonstrated the need for nuanced ceramic typologies in order to recognize a distinct ceramic assemblage of the period of the Sealand Dynasty, which shows many similarities to the Late Old Babylonian assemblage, so much so that previously this period appeared as a gap in the ceramic sequence (as in Gasche 1989, 130–131), leading to the assumption of a discontinuity in occupation. Further see Calderbank 2020; 2021; as well as Clayden 2020 and Sternitzke 2020.



Fig. 1. Map of the AH site, child (left) and adult burials (right) (after Woolley – Mallowan 1976, pl. 124).

in the EM site belonged to members of the clergy of Nanna, and those of the AH site to a more secular population of merchants and businessmen.¹² Burials have also been found outside of these areas, in the badly-preserved EH site, in the layer above the former Royal Cemetery, as well as in the vicinity of the City Wall – it is possible that these graves were also once associated with houses that had disappeared by the time of the excavation due to erosion. Except for the so-called Mausoleum Site, which includes five houses built in the layer above Šulgi's mausoleum, their contexts were impossible to observe in detail.¹³ Therefore, these burials had to be excluded from the sample. Only graves with proper context, which can provide an opportunity to examine the choices related to spatiality, were included: the burials found at the AH and EM sites and in the houses of the Mausoleum Site.

Woolley excavated 51 houses in AH site, 29 of which contained at least one burial (Fig. 1). Of the 15 houses in EM site, 12 contained burials (Fig. 2). The 5 houses of the Mausoleum Site all contained graves (Fig. 3), and this is the only area where the earliest floors of the houses had certainly been reached by the excavation.¹⁴ Altogether, graves were found in 65% of the identified houses, though not all were fully excavated. Recent excavations revealed previously unknown graves at the AH site that Woolley did not reach.¹⁵ However, excavations in Nippur, which extended to the earlier occupational periods in areas TA and TB, found graves in less than half of Old Babylonian

¹² Charpin 1986; Van De Mieroop 1992. For a collection of recent studies of Ur society, see Charpin *et al.* 2020.

¹³ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 194.

¹⁴ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 95–168, 194–213; Luby 1990; UrOnline.

¹⁵ Stone – Zimansky 2016, 251–254.



Fig. 2. Map of the EM site, child (left) and adult burials (right) (after Woolley – Mallowan 1976, pl. 122).

houses.¹⁶ Based on this, as well as the small number of buried individuals compared to the excavated areas across Old Babylonian sites,¹⁷ the existence of extramural cemeteries or the use of other types of mortuary rites that leave no archaeological traces cannot be ruled out.¹⁸ In any case, a selection of the dead who received an intramural burial is likely, though the factors that contributed to this selection are yet to be determined.

It is important to note at this point that the excavation, the documentation and the subsequent publication all have their shortcomings. No information is available on the stratigraphical and chronological relations between each house's floors, and consequently, between the graves dug into them;¹⁹ no drawings or photographs were made of the graves during the excavation and many unfurnished graves, considered to be of no interest by the excavators, were not eventually published. Additionally, since most of the human remains were not examined by an anthropologist, no sex or age-at-death estimation has been made on the dead, and what little information is available about their ages is limited to the broad and rather subjective categories of “adult”, “child” and “infant”. Only the remains of one child from the Old Babylonian period, from Hall's excavation in 1919, were examined as part of the collection in the British Museum by Molleson and Hodgson. They were estimated to be at least five months old, though bone length indicated a

¹⁶ McCown – Haines 1967. For the identification of the houses and re-evaluation of the material, see Stone 1987.

¹⁷ Kersánszki 2024, 8–9.

¹⁸ Recalling, for example, the association in a number of texts between rivers and the journey to the Netherworld.

¹⁹ For a discussion of this problem, see Luby 1990, 35–36, 78, 89–90.



Fig. 3. Map of the Mausoleum Site, child (left) and adult burials (right) (after Woolley – Mallowan 1976, pl. 128).

much younger age of 1–3 months, suggesting developmental problems, further supported by the evidence of rickets, a nutritional developmental disease.²⁰

These gaps in the available information are in large part due to the fact that the excavation took place almost a century ago, when excavation and documentation techniques were in their early stages of development. Additionally, the amount of data created by the sheer size of the uncovered area resulted in a selection of the documented and later published information. All of this, together with the half a century that passed between the excavation and the eventual publication, led to a significant loss of information on the burials.

Out of 295 burials, 116 were identified as belonging to children or infants, containing the remains of 123 individuals altogether. The discrepancy between the number of burials and the number of individuals is caused by graves with multiple interments. Though they are more common in the case of adult graves, especially tombs, two child burials can also be described as multiple burials: both LG/14 and LG/46.6 contained the remains of four infants.²¹ The children buried in these graves probably died within a short period of time, which is why a shared grave was chosen for them. Additionally, in one grave, an infant was buried together with an adult, most likely the mother who died in childbirth, as will be discussed later.

These 123 children account for 37.5% of all individuals buried in the excavated Old Babylonian graves of Ur. In an individual household the Late Old Babylonian period, the house of Ur-Utu in

²⁰ Seven additional individuals from Old Babylonian burials, transported to London at the time of Woolley's excavation, were also examined in 2003. Five of them can be identified with graves in the published material: two women and three men. They were all adults, and three of them showed signs of heavy physical activity (Molleson – Hodgson 2003).

²¹ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 118–120, 196; Luby 1990, 463.

Sippar-Amnānum (Tell ed-Dēr), where a detailed physical anthropological study of the human remains was conducted, 33 individuals were found, almost third of whom were children. The infant mortality rate was 48.5%.²² This corresponds to the 30–48% infant mortality rate estimated for Classical Antiquity,²³ and is probably similar to what we could expect in Old Babylonian Ur as well.

The data available about individual graves are: the house and the room where it was found, the original function of the room, or at least its location within the house, the grave's form, its grave goods and the age of the deceased (adult, child or infant). In some of the graves, the position and orientation of the body were also noted, but unfortunately, not in enough cases to allow for a detailed analysis. The aim was to find possible relations between the spatiality of the graves (i.e. the function and location of the rooms in which they were found), the grave form and the quality and quantity of grave goods, to discover if certain factors, such as the role of each child within the household, their ages, the parents' status, etc. manifested in these elements of the mortuary rite. These statuses and roles were quite diverse according to textual sources, since one household could be composed of multiple generations of a family, as well as the married and adopted family members, the servants and slaves; and in all cases, it was the status of the parents that determined the status of the children.

The households themselves were also diverse, indicated not only by the architectural remains but by textual sources such as contracts and inheritance division texts, based on which four different types of households can be differentiated in the Old Babylonian period: small (type 1), medium (type 2), medium-large (type 3) and large or complex households (type 4).²⁴ The households of Ur range from type 1 to type 3, with only one house, 11 Paternoster Row, representing type 4.

3. Spatiality

3.1. *The house of the dead and the living*

The burying of the dead within domestic structures had been a recurring tradition in Mesopotamia since the earliest settlements and it was a popular practice in the 2nd millennium BCE as well. The dead were considered to be part of the family and the household, existing in symbiosis with their living relatives, as they were believed to be able to positively influence the lives of their families, who, in exchange, kept them supplied with regular offerings – called *kispum* – to ensure their well-being in the Netherworld. Alternatively, the dead also possessed the ability to negatively impact the lives of the members of the household if not cared for properly.²⁵ Because of this, the dead were buried in close proximity to the everyday activities of the living, which both served as a reminder of the family's shared identity through its ancestors²⁶ and helped relatives cope with grief through memory-keeping.²⁷

Though there is no written evidence for this, as children rarely appear in the texts, it may be assumed that at least some of these above outlined concepts of the afterlife applied for them as well. AbB 13, 21, a letter from the reign of Hammurapi talks about a father who performed *kispum* for

²² Burger-Heinrich *apud* Gasche 1989, 68.

²³ Frank 2008, 248.

²⁴ Type 1 households: an average of 35 m² inhabited area and 2-6 rooms; type 2 households: an average of 76 m² inhabited area and 6-10 rooms; type 3 households: an average of 142 m² inhabited area and 10-20 rooms; type 4 households: an average of 293 m² inhabited area and more than 20 rooms (following Kalla 2009).

²⁵ For detailed explorations of the funerary rites and ancestral cult, see Tsukimoto 1985; Mofidi Nasrabadi 1999; Katz 2003; Hauser 2012.

²⁶ Laneri 2010; 2014.

²⁷ MacDougal 2014.

his missing and presumed dead son.²⁸ Though in this case the son in question is an adult, this letter illustrates that it was not only the responsibility of descendants to care for their ancestors, but that one's own children could be the recipients of mortuary offerings as well. In the archaeological record it is clear that burials of children are also found under houses, meaning that the intertwined physical space of the living with the place of remembrance and interaction with the dead was no different in the case of children and adults. In fact, in earlier time periods like the Ubaid²⁹ and in certain sites later, such as Tell Brak in the Uruk period³⁰ and Ḫarādum in the Old Babylonian,³¹ it is only infants who are buried within architectural features, becoming the objects of the passive, every-day formation of the household members' collective social memory.

In the Old Babylonian period, sub-adults were buried with great care and kept close to their living family. From their funerary rites, it is apparent that a set of traditions determined both the place and the method of laying a child to rest and that those who conducted and attended the funeral chose elements from a culturally defined ritual kit which was more or less specific to children. A comparison with the adult burials also reveals that this was more restricted than the ritual kit of adults, with less room for personalization within the normative funerary practice.

Since not all houses contained graves, and the number of excavated human remains falls short of the expected population of a city such as Ur, there is a possibility that other funerary spaces, such as external cemeteries, were also in use along with the rite of intramural burials or that other ways of burial were employed that left no trace in the archaeological record. There is certainly evidence for the use of a burial ground separate from architectural features in Ur, though the use of the Royal Cemetery³² has concluded by the time period under study. A large part of the city area is still unknown, so it should not be ruled out that a burial ground was in use elsewhere in Ur during the Old Babylonian period. Additionally, Woolley's excavations did not reach the earliest levels of every house, which means further burials could still be found in the earth. The recent excavations in Ur confirmed this assumption: new burials were discovered in the trench reopened at 1 Baker's Square.³³

Because the factors determining access to burial space within the houses or within cemeteries are still poorly understood in the absence of excavated contemporary settlements and cemeteries, this paper focuses on intramural burials and the choices related to their spatiality within the houses.

3.2. Spatial division of Old Babylonian houses

The original functions of the rooms can, in most cases, be reconstructed based on their location within the house and the structures found in them. Evidence of the distinction of rooms based on function can also be found in Old Babylonian legal documents, for example, in the different designations of doors.³⁴ The most significant rooms identifiable in the archaeological record are the entrance, the courtyard, the rooms located around the courtyard such as the kitchen, the staircase leading to the roof or second storey, the toilet, the storage and the reception room, which had both a representative function and served to separate the innermost family room from the outer parts of the house related to infrastructure and household-level economic production. The family

²⁸ Van Soldt 1994, 23; also discussed in MacDougal 2014, 152–153.

²⁹ Brereton 2011, 219–221, fig. 5.11, 5.14, 5.15.

³⁰ Brereton 2011, 387; 2013, 236–237.

³¹ Kepinski-Lecomte 1992, 14; 1996, 194.

³² Which contains fewer than 50 children among its 2000 recorded burials, which has been suggested to indicate that the majority of non-adults was buried under the currently unexplored houses of contemporary levels (See Pollock 1991, 175).

³³ Stone – Zimansky 2016.

³⁴ Kalla 1996; Jahn 2005.

room was at the back of the house, where family members most likely spent the majority of their time. Additionally, the family rooms often had an adjacent smaller room. Its function is unclear: it might be interpreted as the sealed store-room where the valuables were kept, or as the bedroom; both are attested in texts but difficult to confidently identify on the basis of the floor plan alone.³⁵ Woolley interpreted the family rooms as chapels, where the cult of the household gods took place.³⁶ The modern interpretation, however, views these structures as accessories to ancestor cult and mortuary rituals.³⁷ Whether this correlates with the inheritance division of rooms between the eldest son, responsible for the maintenance of the cult and caring for the dead, and other branches of the family, is currently impossible to determine through archaeological methods. However, it is clear that these rooms were often constructed with niches and built-in altars. Graves and mudbrick tombs are also most often found under the floors of the family rooms. Some houses contain multifunctional rooms,³⁸ or further rooms whose original function has been lost to time. In such cases, the location of the room and its relations were considered when evaluating the graves found within it.

3.3. *Spatial distribution of child burials*

59 of the children were buried in the family rooms. A substantial number, 30 individuals, were also found in the store-rooms adjacent to the family rooms. 11 more children were found in the reception rooms and 23 in other rooms of unknown function located in the inner part of the houses. There is a clearly observable concentration of child graves in the innermost parts of the houses, while they are much less common in and around the courtyards, and entirely absent, for example, from the kitchens (Fig. 4).

In contrast, the graves of adults display more variety in their locations and a more even distribution between the distinct parts of the houses. Though most of them have also been found in the family rooms, especially in the tombs located there, many adults were buried in and around the courtyards, in the more open spaces primarily associated with the household infrastructure – places where child burials can rarely be observed. Adults appear in each of the distinct types of rooms, except for the small store-room adjacent to the family room, which contained only children's graves.

A remarkable concentration of child and infant graves appears in house 7 Quiet Street of the EM site (Fig. 5), which belonged to a family of *abriqqum* priests, Ku-Ningal and his sons, Ešuluḫuru and Enamtisud.³⁹ This type 2 household contained the site's highest number of burials, 41 graves: in addition to an emptied tomb in the reception room and a single adult grave by the entrance, 39 infant graves were found in the house, in the family room and the store-room.⁴⁰

4. Grave forms

4.1. *Typology*

Another integral part of the funerary rite's process was the choice of grave form. In his publication, Woolley differentiated between the following types of graves (Fig. 6): earth graves, covered

³⁵ Kalla 1996; Miglus 1999, 64–67; Gábor Kalla (pers. comm.).

³⁶ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 29–30.

³⁷ Kalla 2009, 23; Gruber – Roaf 2016, 39–41.

³⁸ Kalla 1996.

³⁹ Charpin 1986, 90; Van De Mieroop 1992, 124–126.

⁴⁰ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 110–112; Miglus 1999, 275–276, Fig 27; Battini-Villard 1999, 489.

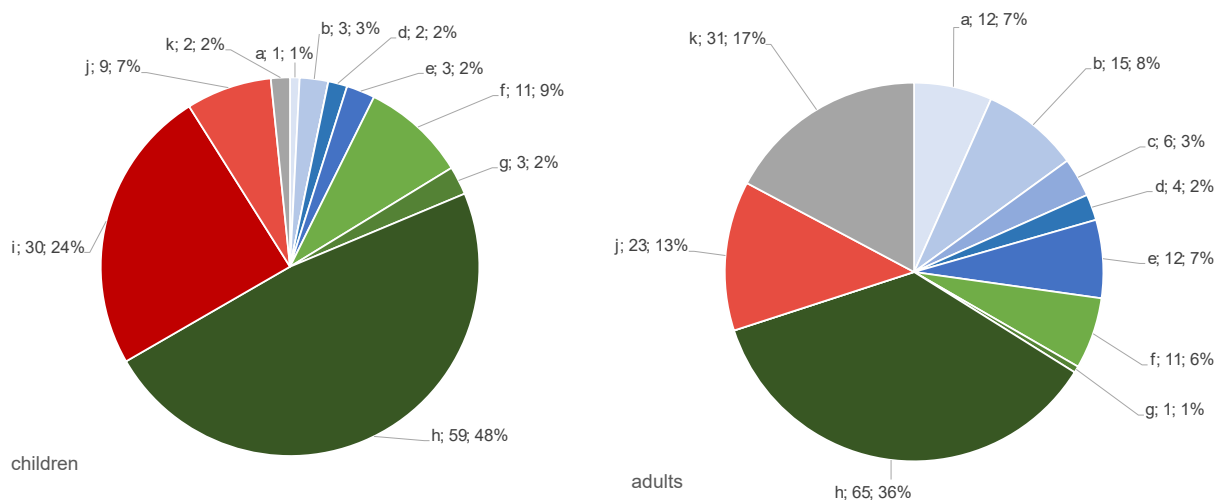


Fig. 4. The spatial distribution of child and adult burials. a: entrance; b: courtyard; c: kitchen; d: storage/staircase/toilet; e: other room opening from courtyard; f: reception room; g: other room opening from reception room; h: family room/archive; i: store-room/bedroom opening from family room; j: other room in inner area; k: other room of unknown function.



Fig. 5. Burials in 7 Quiet Street (after Woolley – Mallowan 1976, pl. 122).

graves,⁴¹ pot graves, larnax graves⁴² and built tombs. In addition to these, double pot graves and hutch-shaped clay containers are mentioned to be specific to the burying of infants.⁴³ Vessels used for covered, pot and double pot graves were usually deep, open vessels or simple bowls.⁴⁴ A unique feature of double pot burials was that they were not buried under the floors but rather

⁴¹ He designated these as “urns” (Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 195–213; plate 114), which in this case does not indicate cremation, a rite that was rarely ever performed in ancient Mesopotamia, but an upturned vessel placed above the dead. For this reason, I propose the use of the term “covered grave”.

⁴² Tub-shaped clay sarcophagi, designated as “larnax” by Woolley.

⁴³ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 33–34.

⁴⁴ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, pl. 103, 114. These correspond to the pottery groups 260, 265, 270 and 275, and in the case of small infant burials, 15 and 35 in Armstrong – Gasche 2014.

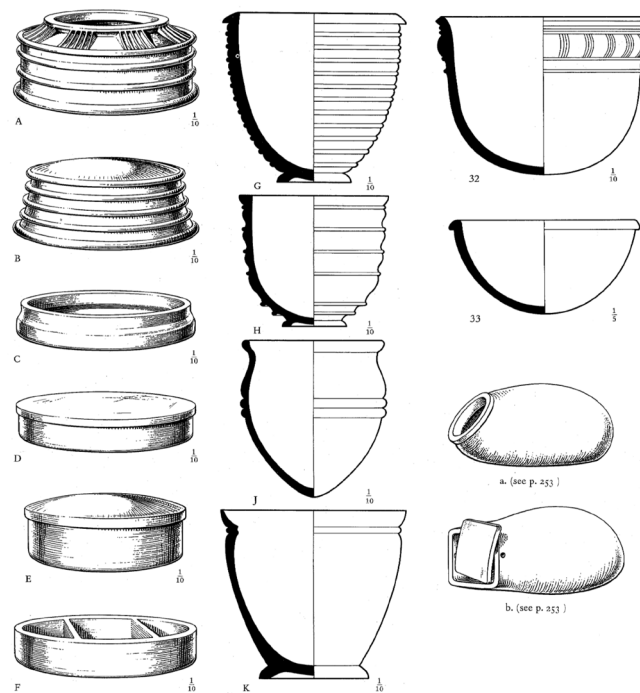


Fig. 6. The types of grave containers used in child burials. A–F: larnax forms; G–H: vessels used for covered graves; J–K: vessels used for pot graves; 32–33: vessels used for double pot graves; a–b: hutch forms (after Woolley – Mallowan 1976, pl. 97, 103, 114).

dug into them, so that part of the upper bowl was visible in the room, probably serving to preserve the memory of the dead.⁴⁵

4.2. Distribution of grave forms among child burials

The most common forms of child burials are double pot and pot graves (Fig. 7). There are several cases of hutch and larnax graves as well. Earth graves and covered graves are uncommon; only two examples of each are known. No children were found in tombs.⁴⁶

The high frequency of pot graves could be associated with a number of reasons, both practical and symbolic. The vessels necessary for these burial rites were already present in the households, so preparing the grave did not require much time, energy or finances. They were also the right size for this particular purpose. On the symbolic side, the burying of the child in a contracted, foetal position inside a vessel served to connect death with returning to the womb, in the hope that this way the child will be reborn in the same family.⁴⁷ This symbolic return to the womb was also a return to the Netherworld, from which newborn children were believed to have come.⁴⁸

Overall, the burials of children are among the simpler grave constructions, while the complex forms that require higher effort and energy-expenditure but are also more easily used for

⁴⁵ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 30.

⁴⁶ However, in the recent excavations of Ur, infant remains were found in tombs in excavation areas 3 and 5 (Göhring 2024 and pers. comm.). Because of the tendency for tombs to contain disarticulated remains pushed aside (reduced) to make room for new burials, as well as the small size of infant bones, it is possible that Woolley's excavation may have missed such infant burials within tombs or misidentified them as animal bones.

⁴⁷ Kuleman-Ossen – Novák 2000; Garroway 2014, 240–241; Valk 2016, 714–715.

⁴⁸ Stol 2000, 9.

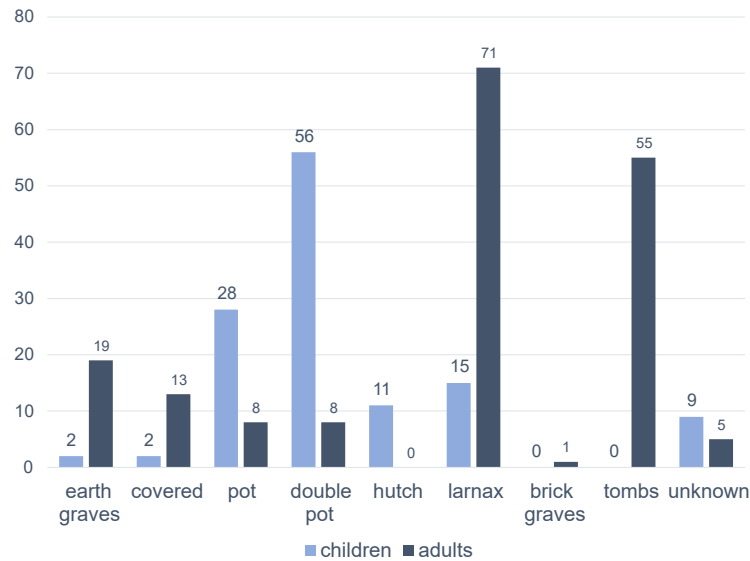


Fig. 7. Distribution of grave forms among child and adult burials.

multiple successive internments – larnax graves and mudbrick tombs⁴⁹ – more often contain adult individuals. Adult burials show a different distribution of grave forms as well: only a small number of them are pot graves, while the most common forms are the tombs and the sarcophagi, with simple earth graves and covered graves often occurring as well.

An example of this clear distinction between the grave forms of children and adults can be found in house 1 Gay Street. This two-room house of the EM site is the smallest household found in the city, yet it contained a tomb with the remains of 10 adults⁵⁰ and the earth grave of a child, LG/132, close to its entrance but separate from the tomb itself.⁵¹ This child was buried in the same room as the rest of the family, where the tomb was built and where the rituals connected to ancestor cult were conducted, and yet they had no access to funerary space in the tomb. At the same time, their closeness to the tomb and placement in the inner room show their importance to the family and their cherished role within the household.

Admittedly, the chronological relationship between the two graves is unknown. If long enough time elapsed for the floor level to be raised significantly or if the ownership of the house changed, a different generation or a different family might have had no knowledge of the existing grave in the room and the close proximity of the later burial – whichever of the two it is – is simply coincidental.

The child's burial described here is also peculiar when it comes to another aspect of the funerary rite: the grave goods. LG/132 contained, in addition to three vessels – a commonly found set of grave goods – a zoomorphic terracotta figurine. This is the only animal figurine discovered in context during Woolley's excavations; the others were found discarded, so their possible function

⁴⁹ Because of its complexity, value and the amount of time, energy and finances required for their construction, tombs can be regarded as the most prestigious form of graves in the period. More than half of the houses of Ur contained at least one tomb, while type 2–4 houses often had multiple of them. Though they are the most often disturbed, robbed or entirely emptied, the excavated tombs contained the remains of up to 10 adults. However, this number could be much higher: one tomb found during the recent excavations contained 24 individuals (see Stone *et al.* 2021, 186).

⁵⁰ Interestingly, LG/125 was one of the few tombs at the site that Woolley did not report to be plundered or emptied and where the last internment still lay in its – presumably – original position, with the remaining 9 individuals were in a secondary deposit or in a reduced position at the back of the chamber. However, despite its apparently intact status, the tomb contained only a few ceramic vessels, a clay disk, a stone loom weight and a lead plaque (Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 206).

⁵¹ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 95–96; Miglus 1999, 274, fig. 46.

is unclear.⁵² Terracotta figurines are usually interpreted as having served a magico-ritual function; however, because this one was found in a child's grave, the possibility that it was a toy cannot be ruled out. The distinction between ritual objects and children's toys or playthings is a complex topic that often arises in archaeological discourse, and in this case, it would be particularly difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion on the possible interpretation of this object. We can certainly keep in mind that a figurine like this could have served multiple functions: at the same time for different groups of people, such as adults and children, or at separate stages of its "life cycle".⁵³

5. Grave goods

5.1. "Those poor children"

Woolley described the Old Babylonian graves as rather poor, which he attributed to the practice of burying the dead in the houses, who then continued to take part in the shared meals of the households via the mortuary offerings and thus had no need for large amounts of food or furnishing in their graves. Of child graves specifically, he noted that "as a rule no offerings were placed with [them]".⁵⁴

Indeed, most child burials in the sample have no grave goods – at least none that remained detectable in the archaeological record, since we must account for the possibility of the existence of perishable grave goods such as foodstuffs, textiles, leather goods and bags, baskets, or wooden bowls.⁵⁵ However, there is a significant number of child graves with some form of pottery, usually eating or drinking vessels. In a few cases, they were even noted to contain plant remains, fruit stones or animal bones. These children, therefore, were given some kind of food or drink offering, which may have served as provisions for their journey to the afterlife or some form of the *kispum*.

5.2. Child and adult grave goods

89 children, more than 70%, were buried without grave goods, as opposed to only 16% of the adults. In the remaining child burials, the most frequently appearing objects are ceramics: cups, goblets, or other drinking vessels, as well as jars, plates and bowls (Fig. 8). The same is true for adult graves; however, certain types, such as miniature vessels, perhaps containing cosmetics, and especially large storage vessels, only show up in adult graves. Metal vessels are also more often associated with adults, only one was in a child's burial,⁵⁶ while of the three examples of stone vessels, one was found in an adult, one in a child grave and one further in a plundered tomb.⁵⁷

Personal ornaments made of metal are more frequently found in adults' burials than in children's, and there is a difference in the material available for the two age groups as well: gold or silver only appears with adults, though only in rare cases. Children are adorned only with copper bracelets or rings. An exception is the grave LG/69, which contained traces of a silver headband or

⁵² Woolley – Mallowan 1976, Table 90–91.

⁵³ For more about toys and their identification in the archaeological material, see Crawford 2009; with special regard to figurines and ritual objects, see Garroway 2018, 202–211 and Schmidhuber 2019. Recently, Judean pillar figurines were proposed to have served both a symbolic and a ludic function, see Parker 2019.

⁵⁴ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 34–39.

⁵⁵ Such items are listed in a description of funerary *kispum*, available in an Old Babylonian text which was identified as belonging to an exorcistic ritual in which a funeral is imitated in order to placate a ghost. These items included food, leather goods, ceramic vessels and personal ornaments. For a full translation, see Tsukimoto 1980, 130–131.

⁵⁶ LG/157 (Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 209).

⁵⁷ LG/51, LG/98.6A and LG/113 (Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 188, 199, 204; Luby 1990, 475, 485).

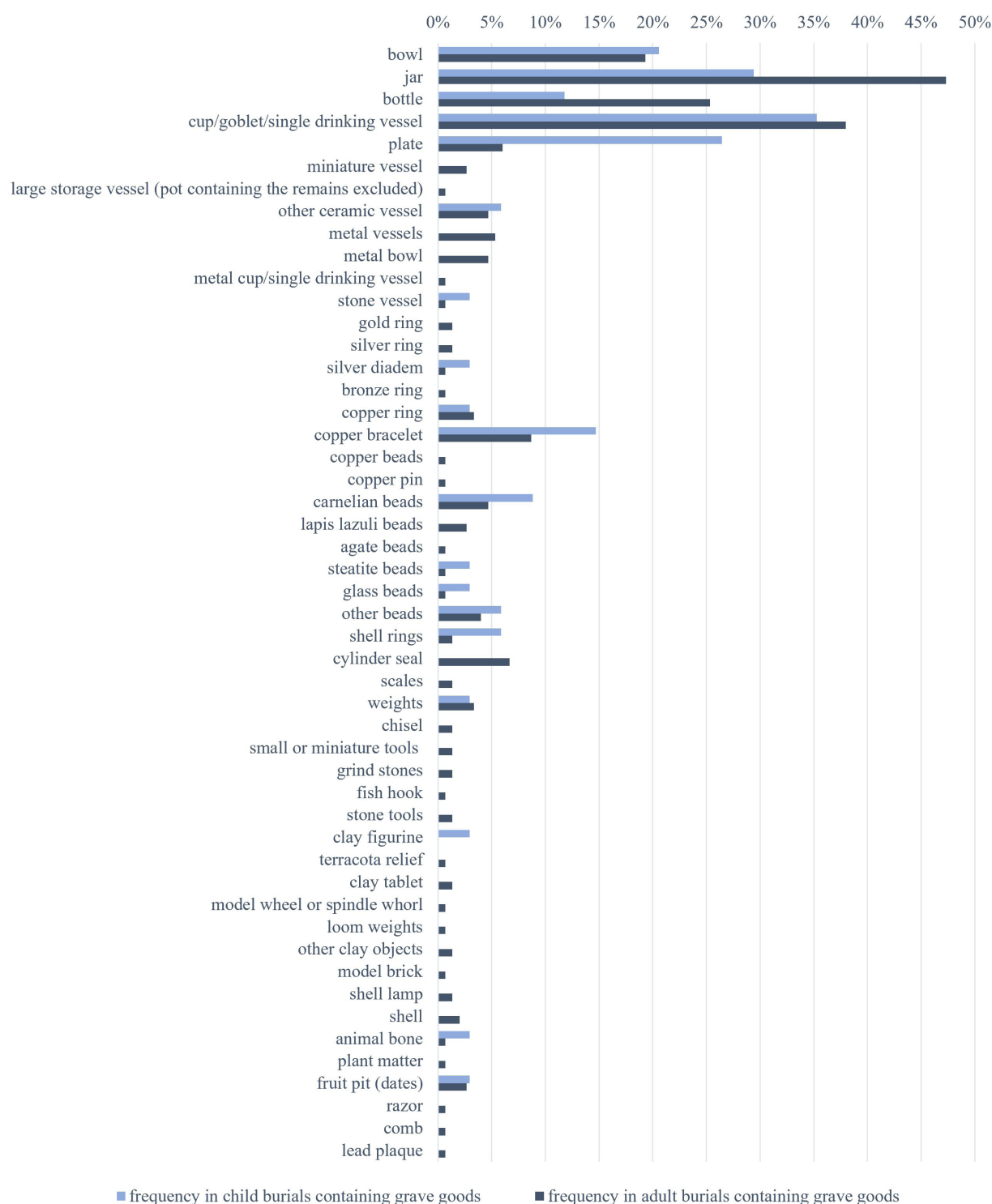


Fig. 8. Occurrence of grave good types in furnished child and adult burials.

diadem.⁵⁸ Additionally, shell rings and beads of carnelian, steatite and other unspecified stones can appear among the costume of both children and adults, but agate and lapis lazuli beads are specific to adults.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 201.

⁵⁹ In Woolley's catalogue of graves, an unfinished lapis lazuli cylinder seal is mentioned near the LG/71 sarcophagus of a child, but a more precise context is not given. Without it, it is impossible to decide

Only one set of stone weights appears in a child's grave;⁶⁰ the rest are found in adults' graves. The interpretation of the presence of these weights in association with a child burial is challenging. Perhaps parallels could be drawn with the previously discussed terracotta figurine; they might have been used by the child as toys in addition to serving a practical function for adults, but they could just as well have been educational tools, preparing the child for a future of taking over the family trade.

Other grave goods that are exclusively associated with adults and appear overall very rarely in the assemblage: cylinder seals, scales, tools, grindstones, shells, shell lamps and clay tablets. Individually occurring grave goods are: a fishhook, a razor, a comb, a lead plaque, a loom weight, a model wheel or spindle whorl, a model brick and a terracotta relief, all associated with adult burials. The terracotta figurine in LG/132 described above is also a unique grave good in the site; however, it appears in association with a child.

In summary, the furnishing of child graves was not only less common but also less diverse than that of adults. The grave goods were usually made up of ceramic vessels and simple personal ornaments – copper bracelets and rings, as well as beads of various stones which could serve as amulets – and only in the rarest cases do other, personalized objects appear. It is worth noting that of the graves containing these atypical grave goods, the first was a pot burial, while the other children were buried in sarcophagi, the typical “adult” grave form.

In contrast to the simple furnishing of child burials, the grave goods of adults are more varied in number and more diverse: in addition to pottery containing food offerings, metal vessels were also common, as well as personal ornaments, tools, weight sets and scale pans, cylinder seals and even objects made of prestige materials like gold or lapis lazuli, materials that could not be found in children's graves.

5.3. Relations between graves, relations between grave goods

The context of the aforementioned LG/69 burial illustrates the relationship between grave goods and spatiality. It was found in house 15 Church Lane, a type 2 household in the AH site, which, according to the contracts found there, once belonged to a man named Annû.⁶¹ Under the family room, there was a tomb containing the remains of three adults, with two further adult graves, and the grave LG/69, a child's sarcophagus located outside the tomb. The child wore a silver diadem on their head. In the rooms around the family room, there were several additional burials, both of adults and children, their grave goods ranging from none to a small number of ceramic vessels and personal ornaments of copper and stone.⁶²

The child with the silver diadem stands out among the other children of the house, and their special role in the household is underlined by the fact that they were the only non-adult to be buried close to the tomb, in the family room – just as the child in LG/132 in 1 Gay Street. It is likely that the child buried in LG/69 with the silver diadem was the child of the head of the family, while the other children were born to parents from other branches of the family or other adults working in or connected to the household.

Another burial, LG/126, constitutes a special case, as it is the shared grave of an adult and an infant. It contained not only food offerings, but also “two very thin silver frontlets placed on a round brick in front of the body” as described by Woolley.⁶³ “The brick of birth” is mentioned in

whether the seal should be considered as belonging to this grave or to the floor level of the room where the archive of the house was also kept (see Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 201).

⁶⁰ LG/124 (Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 205).

⁶¹ Van de Mieroop 1992, 147–148.

⁶² Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 135–136; Miglus 1999, 279, fig. 48; Battini-Villard 1999, 438.

⁶³ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 206.

no grave goods	earth grave	covered	pot burial		double pot burial		hutch	larnax				tomb	grave form unknown
1-3 vessels													
4-9 vessels, ornaments													
high number of vessels, personal grave goods, precious materials													
entrance								1					
courtyard	1		1	1									
kitchen													
staircase/vestibule								1					1
other room opening from courtyard			1	1				1					
reception room			5	2	1	1	1	1					
small room opening from reception room			3										
family room		1	4	1	36	1	5	1	2	3	1		1
small room opening from family room		1	2	1	14		1	1					7
other inner room	1		6					1		1			
other room of unknown function								2					

Fig. 9. Distribution of child burials by location, grave form, and occurrence of grave goods.

textual sources, associated with midwifery, childbirth, and birth rituals, and is also mentioned in the myth of Atrahasis, where a symbolic brick is placed in the house during the birth of a child.⁶⁴ The brick in grave LG/126 could be a symbolic representation of the same ritual, suggesting that the deceased might be mother and child who both died at the time of birth. However, without further bioarchaeological examinations, such as aDNA analysis, it is necessary to treat this assumption with a degree of caution.

6. The relationship between three aspects of the funerary rite: grave form, grave goods, and spatiality

If the three discussed aspects of the funerary rite – the location, form and furnishing of the grave – are examined interdependently (Fig. 9), it becomes apparent that the most common form of a child's burial is the unfurnished double pot grave located in the house's family room. There are 36 such graves, almost one third of all child burials, though it is important to emphasize that 28 of these come from one single house, 7 Quiet Street. The second most common grave is the similarly unfurnished double pot grave in the small room adjacent to the family room, which, as discussed previously, is the only type of room associated exclusively with child burials, as it never contained adult remains.

It is also apparent that it is double pot, pot, hutch, and covered graves that tend to be focused in the inner, more intimate and protected parts of the houses. On the other hand, some of the pot graves, the earth graves and the sarcophagi can be found, though not as frequently as adults, in other locations too. These children buried in the outer parts of houses, with such typically “adult” rites or with grave goods more frequently occurring in adult graves, received a markedly different funerary treatment than would be normative for their age group. This suggests that they belonged a different social age category; one we might perhaps designate as “older children” or even “adolescents” who were closer to – or even included in – the contemporary definition of adulthood.

⁶⁴ Stol 2000, 118–119.

At Old Babylonian sites where physical anthropological results make it possible to identify the biological ages of the human remains, such as Isin or Sippar-Amnānum,⁶⁵ it seems that the change from funerary rites used for children to those used for adults, which mark this transition into a new social age category, begins around 5–6 years. Re-analysing the graves of Neo-Assyrian Aššur, Stefan Hauser found that children under the height of 1 m were usually buried in pots, while taller children were buried in earth graves and small sarcophagi imitating the grave forms of adults.⁶⁶ Kristine Garroway, in her study of the archaeology of children in Bronze Age Canaan, arrived at similar conclusions. Infants and small children were buried in pot graves, while children older than 2–4 years were more and more commonly found in grave forms usually associated with adults: pit graves and cist graves in the case of this region. While the time of this transition varied for each child, this age can be regarded as the time when a child starts to be able to perform simple tasks on their own and, with that, begins their journey towards becoming a fully integrated member of society.⁶⁷ In many cultures, social age is based exactly on observations like this, on the person's abilities and responsibilities, instead of being chronologically or biologically defined.⁶⁸ The ethnographic work of Hilma Granqvist in early 20th century Arab villages in Palestine, for example, describes that the ages of children are not given in years but in the kind of chores they perform.⁶⁹

Though a study of age groups in such detail is unfortunately not possible in Ur because of the lack of physical anthropological data and drawings or photographs documenting the graves, the burials described above with unusual, more “adult” features point to a similar distinction between younger and older children and could support the interpretation of a different treatment of age groups in the funerary rite. Hopefully, more recent excavations will help provide more direct evidence of this possible practice and place these considerations in a new light.

7. Discussion

Based on the presented findings, there are three main features of child burials in the private houses of Old Babylonian Ur, reflecting the tendencies of choices made during the process of the funerary rite:

- 1) Placement in the inner, more private and protected part of the house, most commonly in the family rooms and their adjacent store-rooms, which likely served the purpose of allowing parents to keep their child close even after death, to continue caring for them, and to preserve their memory, since the family room and its area was not only the central place of ancestor cult but also the place of the family's everyday life. The time spent in this room helped keep the child's memory alive, especially during the regular rituals that took place here. Though these did not necessarily focus on the lost children, the rituals and the very presence of the graves transferred the rooms where the family spent their time into spaces of remembrance.
- 2) Burial in closed containers made of clay, most commonly pots, but also hutches and sarcophagi, for both practical – availability and size – and symbolic reasons – return to the womb of the mother and to the Netherworld, and the possibility of rebirth after death.
- 3) Little to no grave goods, usually ceramic vessels containing food and drink offerings, while personal objects are almost always missing. This perhaps reflects the idea that children were not

⁶⁵ Isin: Hrouda 1987, 30–39; Sippar-Amnānum: Burger-Heinrich *apud* Gasche 1989, 67.

⁶⁶ Hauser 2012, 260–262, 284–285.

⁶⁷ Garroway 2014, 243–244.

⁶⁸ Kamp 2001, 3.

⁶⁹ Young boys go from “he (who) chases the animals” to “goatherd” and “shepherd” to “ploughman” and finally to “he (who) can bear arms”, while girls at different ages are called “she (who) chases animals”, “goatherd”, “guardian of the fig trees”, “woodgatherer” and finally, “drawer of water” (See Granqvist 1947, 130–131, 137–138).

regarded as full members of society, whose status could have been reflected in their grave goods. They had also not developed such wide social circles as adults, whose expressions of grief could have manifested in the funerary rite.

The few exceptions, the outliers of this pattern, can be attributed to a different stage in childhood, a distinct social age category. No differences beyond these age groups – not even ones apparent in the written record, such as differences between children of slaves and free parents – could be ascertained based on the burials. Among the variety of social groups within the city, it is the group of children, especially the youngest children and infants, who clearly stand out in light of their separation from adults in the burial practice.

A separation of infants in the mortuary rite has been attested since at least the Late Chalcolithic period. This different treatment manifested in the use of vessels for child burials, as well as in a spatial separation, as graves of infants and young children were often found in domestic areas while those of adults were in designated cemeteries.⁷⁰ Both of these aspects of the rite can still be observed several millennia later, in the Old Babylonian period (and even continuing to the 1st millennium BCE). Young children and infants in Ur were buried in variations of pot graves, with little to no grave goods, and their graves were almost always located in the inner parts of the house.

Hauser interpreted this different treatment of children as a sign of a different social role assigned to them in both life and death, since, lacking any descendants of their own, they could not be counted among the family's ancestors and thus could not take part in the ancestor cult or receive offerings.⁷¹ However, as we have seen from the example of AbB 13, 21, not only ancestors, but descendants could have received *kispum* as well and that the relationship between the living and the dead maintained through the regular offerings was not as straightforward as the current, younger generation presenting offerings to previous generations.

Another way of interpreting the separation, especially of the youngest age-category of children, concerns the liminal role of newborns. As they were believed to have come from the Netherworld, they occupied a liminal space between the worlds of the dead and the living, and dying in this liminal state meant that the children, “who never knew their names”,⁷² could not join the other spirits of the dead in the Netherworld, the *eṭemmu*. Instead, we may consider the demons called *NIĜIN* or *kūbu*, which can be translated as “stillborn child”, but has been proposed to also describe infants who died at the time of birth or shortly thereafter. Because of their in-between state as dead who never lived, these infants are treated differently and are often strictly separated from older children and adults in the mortuary rite.⁷³ These stillborn children or young infants were also conceptualized as having a different status in the Netherworld from the other dead, whose well-being in the afterlife depended on the heirs they left behind and on the amount of offerings they received. Instead, they are described as “playing at a table of gold and silver, laden with honey and ghee” in the literary composition *Gilgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld*.⁷⁴ This picture, in stark contrast to the unpleasant fate of other inhabitants of the Netherworld, reveals an emotional dimension in beliefs about the afterlife. Even though we do not know how widespread these notions were, it is not difficult to imagine parents wishing this kind of

⁷⁰ Brereton 2013, 236, 240–241.

⁷¹ Hauser 2012, 397–398.

⁷² *Gilgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld*, ll. 298–299 (ETCSL 1.8.1.4.; accessed: 1 May, 2023). For a note on the translation of *mu ní-ba nu-zu* as “who never knew their names” instead of “who never knew existence”, see Attinger 2019, 24, n. 200.

⁷³ Lambert 1981; Kulemann-Ossen – Novák 2000, 126–127.

⁷⁴ *Gilgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld*, ll. 298–299 (ETCSL 1.8.1.4.; accessed: 1 May, 2023).

happiness and well-being to the children they lost, something that had not been possible for them during their short lives.⁷⁵

A possible explanation for the concentration of 39 infant graves in the family room and its store-room in 7 Quiet Street could be that most, if not all, *kūbus* who died in the EM site were buried here,⁷⁶ in a house of *abriqqum*-priests, specifically because they had to be physically separated from other graves. However, this pattern of separation is not observable elsewhere in the site. In fact, already two doors down from 7 Quiet Street, in 3 Quiet Street, a small concentration of 6 infant burials is located in the same room as the family tomb and an adult's sarcophagus. In other houses of Ur, similar infant pot burials with no grave goods can appear both by themselves or in the same room as other age groups. If it is not the *kūbu* who are buried in 7 Quiet Street, this large number of burials could have instead included not only foetuses and neonates, but also placentas that could similarly be buried in jars. A hymn to the goddess Ninisina mentions the jar in which the placenta is placed and deposited at a place referred to in the sources as the NIĜAR.⁷⁷ Though there is no available documentation on each individual grave in 7 Quiet Street to confirm this,⁷⁸ this room might be tentatively identified with a NIĜAR.

The differences in the burial treatment of infants – inclusion or physical separation from other age groups, the presence or absence of grave goods, the use of single or double pot graves – highlight that not even such a clearly definable subgroup of children had completely homogenous burial rites and that the attitudes of the agents, the adults who conducted these rites and the choices made during the funeral were diverse, even if not to such extremes as in cases of the loss of an older child or an adult member of the family.

Additionally, there is a slight difference between the child burials of the two distinct residential quarters: in the EM site, the set of grave forms used for child burials is more limited, mostly pot and double pot graves are employed, with only a few examples of hutch and larnax graves; the graves less often contain grave goods; and the spatial distribution is also almost completely restricted to the inner parts of the houses. The funerary rite at the EM site can be interpreted as more strictly following the normative patterns of child burials, while in the AH site, more locations and more grave forms are employed, and the distinguishing characteristics of typically adult and child burials more often blur together. This different attitude towards the funerary rite, which appears not just in the case of children, but adults too, can be attributed to the different residents of the two neighbourhoods, the temple personnel living at the EM site and the more secular, diverse population occupying the AH site.⁷⁹

8. Conclusions and possibilities of future research

The archaeology of children centers the child, but the archaeology of child burials necessarily centers the adults as well: parents, grandparents, and others, the active agents of the funerary process. They are the ones making the decisions on where and how the child is buried, decisions that reflect the burial practices of the community as a whole, whether they follow these established patterns or go against them. The archaeological remains of the ancient child's world are the result of child–child, child–environment and child–adult interactions;⁸⁰ in this sense, a

⁷⁵ For an exploration of parental grief and emotional connection to infants in Mesopotamia, see Valk 2016.

⁷⁶ The connection had already been drawn, though implicitly, in Esztári 2018, 5–6.

⁷⁷ Ninisina A, 75 (ETCSL 4.22.1.; accessed: 1 May, 2023). For the reading of ^{du}gsilà-gar-ra, see Cuoto-Ferreira 2013, 107, n. 42–44.

⁷⁸ It is even a possibility, because of their large number, that the graves were only identified, but not opened.

⁷⁹ As Luby also suggested in connection to the contrast between AH and EM in the usage of courtyards as burial space (Luby 1990, 326–327, 344–345).

⁸⁰ Lillehammer 1989, 90.

child's funeral and the subsequent mortuary offerings are the continued child–adult interactions even after death. They reflect not only the child's role within the household and the community, but their unique dynamic with the adults around them.

In the case of Old Babylonian Ur, this dynamic could only in individual cases be partially reconstructed. Still, general tendencies can be identified. For most children, the same practices applied to choices about the grave's location, form, and grave goods, and within these practices, there was much less room for variety than for adults. This indicates that children represented a much more homogenous subgroup of society than adults. Almost all of them were buried in some kind of closed clay container, with little to no grave goods, in the inner parts of the houses, and no differences beyond the distinction of the various stages of childhood are apparent.

This is partly due to the loss of information on the graves, but we must be reminded that today there is a greater potential in studying children's social roles and cultural age categories, thanks to the methods of bioarchaeology, than it was possible a hundred or even fifty years ago, at the time of the excavation or the publication of Ur's Old Babylonian levels. The human remains unearthed at that time are no longer available for study, but those found in new excavations may be examined by a physical anthropologist. This could provide information on the child's age-at-death, while aDNA or dental peptide tests could reveal their biological sex, helping to determine how these factors influenced the child's social status and the role they played in their funerary rites. Anthropology could also inform us about illnesses, developmental disorders or the physical activities performed during their lifetime, which, together with stable isotope analyses about nutrition, could answer several questions regarding the child's everyday life, their role within society and within the household. One of the most promising avenues of research is the aforementioned aDNA analysis, which could help identify families within households, shed light on the role of adopted children and show how kinship associations determined the spatial aspects of the graves,⁸¹ whether at a nuclear family level in a single household or group of households or even at the level of extended families of neighbourhoods or entire towns.

The growing number of interdisciplinary excavation projects in the region of Southern Mesopotamia in the past decades opens up hope for the conduction and publication of the first such scientific analyses. For example, in recent years, a new excavation at Ur was carried out by Elizabeth Stone and Paul Zimansky. In two locations within the AH site, as well as in previously undisturbed areas, they discovered additional houses and, within them, further graves, many of them subadults. Adelheid Otto's excavations on the southern mound yielded similarly promising results.⁸² These modern excavations and methodologies may provide opportunities for sampling for isotopic or archaeogenetic analyses and, through new studies, offer a fresh perspective on both life and death in the Old Babylonian period.

Catalogue of child burials

⁸¹ An illustrious example of this phenomenon and the possibilities of research opened by archaeogenetics can be found in Fowler *et al.* 2022.

⁸² Stone – Zimansky 2016; Stone *et al.* 2021.

6 Paternoster Row, AH⁸³

type 1 household

3 rooms, 17 m²

LG/1.6A-LG/1.6E (6 graves)

room: inner room, perhaps family room (room 3)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

8/10 Paternoster Row, AH⁸⁴

type 1 household

4 rooms, 33 m²

LG/2.5

room: courtyard (room 2)

grave form: earth grave

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: 1 vessel (goblet)

11 Paternoster Row, AH⁸⁵

type 4 household

20 rooms, 298 m²

LG/8

room: family room (room 11)

grave form: covered

state of disturbance: disturbed

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: 1 vessel (plate)

LG/12

room: family room (room 11)

grave form: larnax

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: 2 copper bracelets, 3 carnelian beads

LG/13

room: family room (room 11)

grave form: larnax

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

⁸³ Woolley – Mallowan [1976](#), 148; Miglus [1999](#), 280, fig. 47; Battini-Villard [1999](#), 462.

⁸⁴ Woolley – Mallowan [1976](#), 149; Van De Mieroop [1992](#), 153–155; Miglus [1999](#), 280, fig. 11; Battini-Villard [1999](#), 464–465.

⁸⁵ Woolley – Mallowan [1976](#), 195; Miglus [1999](#), 280, fig. 31; Battini-Villard [1999](#), 466.

age: child
grave goods: 1 vessel (bowl)

LG/14.5-LG/14.9 (5 graves)

room: small room adjacent to family room (room 12)
grave form: double pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: -

LG/14

room: in the doorway between the family room and the small room adjacent to it (rooms 11-12)
grave form: hutch
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 4
age: infant
grave goods: 3 vessels (plate, bowl, jar)

LG/15

room: small room adjacent to family room (room 12)
grave form: covered
state of disturbance: disturbed
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 2 vessels (cup), copper bracelets, traces of cloth

12 Paternoster Row, AH⁸⁶

type 1 household
3 rooms, 30 m²

LG/16.5A

room: family room (room 3)
grave form: double pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant
grave goods: -

LG/16.5B-LG/16.5C (2 graves)

room: family room (room 3)
grave form: pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant
grave goods: -

3 Straight Street, AH⁸⁷

type 3 household

⁸⁶ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 153; UrOnline (<http://www.ur-online.org/location/443/>; accessed: 28 January, 2021); Van De Mierop 1992, 153–155; Miglus 1999, 281, fig. 10; Battini-Villard 1999, 468.

⁸⁷ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 196; UrOnline (<http://www.ur-online.org/location/478/>; accessed: 28 January, 2021); Molleson – Hodgson 2003, 118; Miglus 1999, 280, fig. 30; Battini-Villard 1999, 449.

15 rooms, 167 m²

LG/22.7

room: family room (room 10)
grave form: hutch
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant
grave goods: -

4 Straight Street, AH⁸⁸

type 3 household
10 rooms, 111 m²

LG/24

room: room of unknown function opening from courtyard (room 3)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 1 vessel (goblet), copper bowl (U.16305)

12 Straight Street, AH⁸⁹

type 1 household
6 rooms, 47 m²
LG/39 or AHG/191
room: family room (room 5)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 2 vessels (goblet, plate), knucklebones of sheep, remains of linen and of wool cloth with a thin strip of silver

LG/39.6 or AHG/190

room: family room (room 5)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 6 vessels (bottles, cup, goblet, plate and jar)

LG/38.7A-LG/38.7I (9 graves)

room: small room adjacent to family room (room 6)
grave form: double pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant
grave goods: -

⁸⁸ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 196; UrOnline (<http://www.ur-online.org/location/705/>; accessed: 3 February, 2021); Miglus 1999, 282, fig. 33; Battini-Villard 1999, 451.

⁸⁹ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 165, 198; UrOnline (<http://www.ur-online.org/location/1170/>; accessed: 3 February, 2021); Miglus 1999, 283, fig. 15; Battini-Villard 1999, 456.

unnumbered grave, possibly LG/39.5

room: small room adjacent to family room (room 6)

grave form: hutch

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

1 Baker's Square, AH⁹⁰

type 2 household

9 rooms, 90 m²

LG/42

room: courtyard (room 1)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: 1 vessel (plate)

1B Baker's Square, AH⁹¹

type 2 household

7 rooms, 69 m²

LG/45.5

room: family room (room 5) or small room adjacent to guest room (room 6)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

LG/44.5-LG/44.7 or AHG/171-AHG/173 (3 graves)

room: small room adjacent to guest room (room 6)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

LG/45.7

room: guest room (room 2)

grave form: double pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: 1 vessel (bowl)

2-4 Niche Lane, AH⁹²

type 3 household

⁹⁰ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 157, 198; Miglus 1999, 282, fig. 26; Battini-Villard 1999, 477.

⁹¹ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 158, 187, 199; Luby 1990, 474; UrOnline (<http://www.ur-online.org/location/801/>; accessed: 7 January, 2024); Miglus 1999, 282, fig. 22; Battini-Villard 1999, 477.

⁹² Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 12, 199–200; Miglus 1999, 277, fig. 50; Battini-Villard 1999, 442, 444.

12 rooms, 106 m²

The house 2 Niche Lane is uncertain; it was either a part of 4 Niche Lane or its own type 1 household with just 2 rooms and 21 m². Or perhaps both, at different times.

LG/52A-LG/52B (2 graves)

room: room of unknown function adjacent to family room (room 7 of house 4 Niche Lane)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

LG/52C

room: room of unknown function adjacent to family room (room 7 of house 4 Niche Lane)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: 1 vessel (bowl)

3 Niche Lane, AH⁹³

type 1 household

5 rooms, 31 m²

LG/50

room: room of unknown function, adjacent to family room (room 5)

grave form: larnax

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: 1 vessel (pot), copper bracelet, shell ring

1 Old Street, AH⁹⁴

type 3 household

7 rooms, 127 m²

LG/57.5

room: guest room (room 5)

grave form: double pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

LG/57.8

room: family room (room 6)

grave form: hutch or pot burial

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

⁹³ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 121, 199; Luby 1990, 475; Van De Mierop 1992, 132; Miglus 1999, 282, fig. 26; Battini-Villard 1999, 477.

⁹⁴ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 124, 200; Van De Mierop 1992, 136–137; Miglus 1999, 277, fig. 21; Battini-Villard 1999, 439.

grave goods: -

5 Church Lane, AH⁹⁵

type 3 household

12 rooms, 138 m²

LG/58.5

room: family room (room 10)

grave form: double pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

9 Church Lane, AH⁹⁶

type 2 household

9 rooms, 84 m²

LG/58.1-LG/58.4 (4 graves)

room: family room (room 8)

grave form: double pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

LG/58.7

room: family room (room 8)

grave form: larnax

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

13 Church Lane, AH⁹⁷

type 3 household

14 rooms, 159 m²

LG/62.6

room: below the door connecting the second family room and the small room adjacent to it (room 13-14)

grave form: unknown

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: 2 vessels (bowl and jar)

15 Church Lane, AH⁹⁸

type 2 household

⁹⁵ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 130; Miglus 1999, 278, fig. 35; Battini-Villard 1999, 432.

⁹⁶ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 157, 198; Luby 1990, 477; UrOnline (<http://www.ur-online.org/location/313/>; accessed: 4 February, 2021); Miglus 1999, 278, fig. 49; Battini-Villard 1999, 434.

⁹⁷ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 134; Miglus 1999, 278, fig. 48; Battini-Villard 1999, 437.

⁹⁸ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 200–201; Van De Mieroop 1992, 147–148; Miglus 1999, 279, fig. 48; Battini-Villard 1999, 438.

9 rooms, 76 m²

LG/69

room: family room (room 6)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 1 vessel (goblet), traces of silver diadem

LG/70

room: small room adjacent to guest room (room 4)
grave form: unknown
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 1 vessel (jar)

LG/71

room: room of unknown function (room 9)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 7 vessels (bottles, cup, goblet, plate and jar), copper bracelet and bangle, date-shaped beads of carnelian and granite around the neck, remains of dates in a vessel

LG/73

room: guest room (room 5)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 4 vessels (goblets, jar)

LG/74

room: guest room (room 5)
grave form: pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant
grave goods: 3 vessels (bowl, cup and goblet), date-shaped bead of steatite

1 Broad Street, AH⁹⁹

type 2 household
10 rooms, 91 m²

LG/80.5

room: family room (room 8)
grave form: hutch
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant

⁹⁹ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 136, 202; Miglus 1999, 279, fig. 51; Battini-Villard 1999, 478.

grave goods: -

unnumbered grave

room: vestibule (room 9)

grave form: earth grave

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

1 Boundary Street, AH¹⁰⁰

type 3 household

12 rooms, 158 m²

LG/46.6

room: family room (room 11)

grave form: double pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: 1 vessel (bowl)

3 Quiet Street, EM¹⁰¹

type 2 household

8 rooms, 60 m²

LG/98.6A

room: guest room (room 4)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: stone pot (U.7635)

LG/98.6B-LG/98.6F (5 graves)

room: guest room (room 4)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

LG/98.7

room: guest room (room 4)

grave form: hutch

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: -

¹⁰⁰ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 118–120; Van De Mierop 1992, 131; Miglus 1999, 276, fig. 29; Battini-Villard 1999, 440.

¹⁰¹ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 107; Luby 1990, 485; Miglus 1999, 275, fig. 23; Battini-Villard 1999, 485.

5 Quiet Street, EM¹⁰²

type 2 household

7 rooms, 64 m²

LG/100

room: staircase (room 4)

grave form: larnax

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: infant

grave goods: 1 vessel (jar), 2 beads of carnelian, 2 shells, remains of shroud/cloth

7 Quiet Street, EM¹⁰³

type 2 household

9 rooms, 87 m²

LG/101.9A-LG/101.9B (2 graves)

room: family room (room 5)

grave form: hutch

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

LG/101.8A

room: family room (room 5)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: 1 vessel (type 91a)

LG/101.8B

room: family room (room 5)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

LG/101.7A-LG/101.7BB (28 graves)

room: family room (room 5)

grave form: double pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

LG/100.6A-LG/100.6G (7 graves)

room: smaller room adjacent to family room (room 6)

¹⁰² Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 203; Van De Mieroop 1992, 127; Miglus 1999, 275, fig. 40; Battini-Villard 1999, 489.

¹⁰³ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 112, 203; Charpin 1986, 90; Van De Mieroop 1992, 124–126; Miglus 1999, 275, fig. 27; Battini-Villard 1999, 489.

grave form: unknown
 state of disturbance: -
 number of dead: 1
 age: infant
 grave goods: -

Quality Lane, EM¹⁰⁴

An incompletely excavated area, composed of several rooms, north of 3-5 Quiet Street. The rooms were possibly contemporaneous with these buildings, but their plan shows no obvious access or opening. The locations of the graves are badly documented.

LG/124

room: unknown, area I
 grave form: larnax
 state of disturbance: -
 number of dead: 1
 age: child
 grave goods: 2 vessels (goblets), 3 weights of haematite, remains of a reed box

LG/126

room: unknown, area II
 grave form: larnax
 state of disturbance: -
 number of dead: 2
 age: adult with infant
 sex: female
 grave goods: 4 vessels (bowl and jars), one of them containing vegetable matter, 2 thin silver frontlets on a round brick placed in front of the body

1 Gay Street, EM¹⁰⁵

type 1 household
 2 rooms, 11 m²

LG/132

room: inner room, most likely family room (room 2)
 grave form: earth grave
 state of disturbance: disturbed
 number of dead: 1
 age: child
 grave goods: 3 vessels (vases and jar), in one of them, vegetable matter, zoomorphic terracotta figurine (U.7095)

House 30/A, Mausoleum Site¹⁰⁶

type 2 household
 7 rooms, 65 m²

LG/155.5A- LG/155.5B (2 graves)

room: family room (room 7)
 grave form: double pot
 state of disturbance: -
 number of dead: 1

¹⁰⁴ Woolley – Mallowan [1976](#), 102, 205.

¹⁰⁵ Woolley – Mallowan [1976](#), 206; Miglus [1999](#), 274, fig. 46; Battini-Villard [1999](#), 493.

¹⁰⁶ Woolley – Mallowan [1976](#), 166, 209; Miglus [1999](#), 283, fig. 19; Battini-Villard [1999](#), 498.

age: infant
grave goods: -

House 30/B, Mausoleum Site¹⁰⁷

type 2 household
10 rooms, 95 m²

LG/157.6

room: room of unknown function (room 3)
grave form: pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: -

LG/157.8A

room: room of unknown function, opening from courtyard, most likely guest room (room 8)
grave form: pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant
grave goods: -

LG/157.8B

room: room of unknown function, opening from courtyard, most likely guest room (room 8)
grave form: pot
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: infant
grave goods: 2 vessels (jars)

LG/157

room: room of unknown function, opening from courtyard (room 7)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child
grave goods: 7 vessels (cups, bottles and jar), copper bowl, remains of a copper bracelet, 3 beads in the neck area

House 30/C, Mausoleum Site¹⁰⁸

type 2 household
8 rooms

LG/162

room: entrance, perhaps shop (room 8)
grave form: larnax
state of disturbance: -
number of dead: 1
age: child

¹⁰⁷ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 167, 209; Luby 1990, 457; Miglus 1999, 283, fig. 52; Battini-Villard 1999, 499.

¹⁰⁸ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 209; Luby 1990, 497; Miglus 1999, 283; Battini-Villard 1999, 500.

grave goods: 10 vessels (plate, goblets, jars and bottles), copper rings

House 30/E, Mausoleum Site¹⁰⁹

partially excavated house with at least 5 rooms

LG/163.8

room: room of unknown function (room 2)

grave form: pot

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: -

LG/163.9

room: room of unknown function (room 3)

grave form: larnax

state of disturbance: -

number of dead: 1

age: child

grave goods: shell rings

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¹⁰⁹ Woolley – Mallowan 1976, 168; Luby 1990, 498; Miglus 1999, 284; Battini-Villard 1999, 503.

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