

# CITIES AND THE SHAPING OF MEMORY IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Ömür Harmanşah

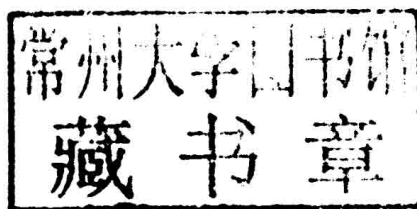
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*Brown University*



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## CITIES AND THE SHAPING OF MEMORY IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

This book investigates the founding and building of cities in the ancient Near East. The creation of new cities was imagined as an ideological project or a divine intervention in the political narratives and mythologies of Near Eastern cultures, often masking the complex processes behind the social production of urban space. During the Early Iron Age (ca. 1200–850 BCE), Assyrian and Syro-Hittite rulers developed a highly performative official discourse that revolved around constructing cities, cultivating landscapes, building watercourses, erecting monuments, and initiating public festivals. This volume combs through archaeological, epigraphic, visual, architectural, and environmental evidence to tell the story of a region from the perspective of its spatial practices, landscape history, and architectural technologies. It argues that the cultural processes of the making of urban spaces shape collective memory and identity as well as sites of political performance and state spectacle.

**Ömür Harmanşah** is Assistant Professor of Archaeology, Egyptology, and Ancient Western Asian Studies at Brown University. He currently directs the Yalburt Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Project, a Brown University–based regional survey in west-central Turkey since 2010. In the past, he has worked on archaeological projects in Turkey and Greece, including Gordion, Ayanis, Kerkenes Dağ, and Isthmia. His articles have been published in journals such as *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, *Archaeological Dialogues*, and the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*.



For my daughter Nar





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## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Archäologischer Anzeiger
AAAS	Les annales achéologiques arabes syriennes
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AnaAraş	Anadolu Araştırmaları
AnSt	Anatolian Studies
AW	Antike Welt
BaM	Baghdader Mitteilungen
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BCSMS	Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies
BiblArch	Biblical Archaeologist
BSMS	Bulletin of the Society for Mesopotamian Studies
CAD	Chicago Assyrian Dictionary
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CAJ	Cambridge Archaeological Journal
DaM	Damaszener Mitteilungen
EpigAnat	Epigraphica Anatolica
IstMitt	Istanbuler Mitteilungen
JAE	Journal of Architectural Education
JANES	Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JFA	Journal of Field Archaeology
JMA	Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSAH	Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
OEANE	Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)
PAPS	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association

## ABBREVIATIONS

RA	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale
RHA	Revue Hittite et Asianique
RIA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAB	State Archives of Assyria Bulletin
SMEA	Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici
TAD	Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi
TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
Tüba-Ar	Tüba-Ar: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi Arkeoloji Dergisi
WA	World Archaeology
WO	Die Welt des Orients
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie



## PREFACE

Ankara, the city where I grew up, was refounded as the modern capital of the newly born Turkish Republic on October 13, 1923. Founders of the state in Turkey were keen on distancing themselves from Istanbul, the aged capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. They intended to open up a new urban sphere, an ideologically and socially fresh ground for enacting their modernist utopias for the generation of an urban culture fully endowed with European modernity. The architecture of this newly constructed capital was characterized as “architecture of revolution,” and adopted the technologies, styles, and visual culture of the Modern Movement in Europe (Bozdoğan 2001: 56f.; Kezer 1998). Constructing Ankara was perhaps the most concrete manifestation of the new political order and the ideology of the new republic that explicitly distanced itself from the contaminated recent past. Ankara’s ceremonial spaces were designed *for* and *as* spectacles of this modernist state.

I also grew up within a nationalist education system in which we were taught that Ankara rose from a tiny and dusty Anatolian town to a modern capital. It would be much later in graduate school that I would learn with astonishment that in the sixteenth century Ankara was probably the largest city in Central Anatolia and the center of a prosperous network of trade. Such significance of Ankara as a central place was also the case most probably during the Phrygian and Early Roman periods. Looking from the long-term perspective then, the choice of Ankara as the new capital of modern Turkey was clearly not a random choice but a historically informed decision. It was partly dictated by the potential of the place and its history of being central in networks of trade and political organization of the Central Anatolian landscape.

When I started to formulate my first ideas about this research project in the beginning of the twenty-first century, Ankara had long diverged from the ideals of its modernist founders. This immense city of 4.5 million or so people had been devoured by squatter neighborhoods in its periphery and fallen victim to unplanned urban development with the massive influx of population from

the countryside. Hermann Jansen's adorable 1927 plan for Ankara, which conceived it as a garden city and placed the airport centrally in its hippodrome, left very little of its traces in the city. Ankara instead created a cultural landscape of its own, keeping the subtle imprint of its fragile everyday history. In very interesting ways, this city embodies a complex mixture of idealist interventions to the urban space and the subtle resistance of everyday practices and collective memory, and the gradual, day-by-day deconstruction of ambitious and rigid schemes. In *Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East*, I explore this very tension, this duality of urban space between the short-term, picturesque, utopian monumentality occasionally imposed upon the city versus its long-term cultural biography. My passion for the study of cities emanates from the experience of Ankara's restless spaces.

I would like to express my gratitude here to those of you who substantially contributed to the making of this book. Those of you whose names I fail to mention, I hope you will forgive me. This book has its roots in my PhD dissertation written at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of the History of Art. My advisor there, Holly Pittman, was an endless source of heartfelt support and encouragement from the very beginning of my graduate studies at Penn to this day. It would also be hard to exaggerate Renata Holod's impact on the formation of my approach to architectural history and the study of landscapes. Professor Irene J. Winter of Harvard University gave me encouragement during our several encounters from symposia to symposia. Apart from the influence of her scholarship on my work, she tirelessly read my work during the process of writing and wrote to me many memorable notes, messages, and letters, all full of insights and constructive criticism. The late Professor Keith DeVries was always an endless and friendly source of inspiration and awareness of the most up-to-date research in Anatolian archaeology. I am grateful to Richard Zettler, who introduced me to Mesopotamian archaeology, and to my Akkadian mentors Barry Eichler and Earle Lichty. I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues at Brown University, Sue Alcock and John F. Cherry, who provided generous support as I struggled to finish this manuscript for Cambridge University Press. Teaching at Reed College and Brown University, my students were exposed to several portions of the book, and their feedback has been instrumental to me while giving the book its final touches. I am also grateful to the two anonymous readers of the manuscript. The book benefited immensely from their careful reading and constructive criticism. Working with Cambridge University Press editor Beatrice Rehl and her assistants Isabella Vitti, Amanda J. Smith, and Anastasia Graf was always delightful. I thank them for their hard work.

Lengthy hours of discussion at the University of Pennsylvania Museum Café with Elif Denel helped me shape several ideas related to Syro-Hittite states and to overcome the difficulties of dealing with archaeological material from

the Iron Age in north Syria and southeast Anatolia. What my friends and colleagues Matthew Rutz, Paul Delnero, WuXin, Gül Kaçmaz, Açılya Kıyak, Heather Grossman, Gabriel Pizzorno, Aslı Tanrıku, Günder Varinlioğlu, Susan Helft, Jeremie Peterson, Alexis Boutin, and Ersan Ocak have shared with me has always been beyond collegiality, and there is always something from each of them between the lines of this book. My family in Turkey – Güler, Fahri, Onur, and Rabia – were a continuous source of encouragement and support over the many years I spent in the United States. Thank you.

Peri Johnson made the greatest of all contributions to this book as she stood by me unfailingly with love and collegiality. Very few of the ideas presented here have not gone through the examination by her very critical eye. Words will fail me if I even attempt to begin thanking her.

During the fieldwork phase of this project, numerous individuals helped me to access various archaeological resources. I would like to thank G. Kenneth Sams and Altan Çilingiroğlu for allowing me to work on the Iron Age architectural techniques at the sites of Gordion and Ayanis, respectively, even though I ended up not using this valuable material in this book. I am grateful to the General Directorate of Monuments and Museums, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, who generously issued permits for working on the Iron Age stone monuments at Van Archaeological Museum (2001), Gaziantep Archaeological Museum (2001), and Ankara Anatolian Civilizations Museum (2002). I am also indebted to the friendly staff members of the three museums for their help and support during the times I spent in each of them. I am grateful to Refik Duru, Kay Kohlmeyer, Reinhard Dittman, David Hawkins, Tony Waltham, Frances Pinnock, and the Ebla Project, for kindly allowing me to use illustrations from their publications. Similarly generous was the British Academy, the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the British Institute for the Study of Iraq with the images they have supplied. The John Hay Library at Brown University kindly digitized a number of the illustrations used in the book.

The revisions of the volume were carried out during my sabbatical year at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (RCAC) at Koç University (Istanbul). I thank Scott Redford and the staff at RCAC for providing a very hospitable environment in which to work. I am also grateful to the staff at the Cogut Center for the Humanities at Brown University, where I held a faculty fellowship in the fall of 2012. I thank Bradley Sekedat for helping with the index.

Finally, some of the ideas presented in this book have been previously published elsewhere. An abbreviated section of Chapter 3 on the Iron Age kingdom of Melid has been published in *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* [vol 24.1 (2011) 55–83], while a shorter version of Chapter 4 appeared in *Bulletin of the Schools of Oriental Research* [vol. 365 (2012) 53–77]. A shorter version of Chapter 5 appeared in the volume *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Students*, edited by Jack Cheng and Marian H. Feldman.



[Ninurta speaking]

Let my beloved city, the sanctuary Nibru, raise its head as high as heaven!  
Let my city be pre-eminent among the cities of my brothers!  
Let my temple rise (?) the highest . . . among the temples of my brothers!  
Let the territory of my city be the freshwater well of Sumer!  
Let the Anuna, my brother gods, bow down there!  
Let their flying birds establish nests in my city!  
Let their refugees refresh themselves in my shade.

"Ninurta's Return to Nibru," lines 168–74

Black et al. 2006: 181–86





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