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ORIENTALIZING ARCHITECTURE: PRINIAS, 'AIN DĀRĀ AND HITTITE ECHOES IN GREEK ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE

Serdar Yalçın

Summary

Recent research on Aegean-Near Eastern relations during the so-called Orientalizing period has substantially improved our understanding of the dynamics governing cultural interactions in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean. A number of studies explore the exchange of artistic forms, motifs, and technologies that are particularly apparent in small portable objects. This paper addresses possible Near Eastern influences on the emergence of sculpted orthostats in the Aegean as a form of architectural decoration in the seventh century BC, an underexplored aspect of the 'Orientalizing' phenomenon. It will suggest that certain Neo-Hittite monumental buildings in North Syria, particularly the temple of 'Ain Dārā, likely inspired the builders in the Aegean not only with their ante-style design but also with their extensive sculptural decorations on building façades. This Neo-Hittite impact on the design and decoration of early cult buildings in Greece is most visible in Temple A at Prinias in Crete, but also discernable in the Orientalizing period temples at Gortyn, Khania and Kalapodi. In this context, a re-evaluation of the archaeological, art historical, and textual material from the Aegean, Anatolia, and Syria shows how the Neo-Hittite buildings of the Iron Age functioned as an intermediary connecting certain cultic structures in the Aegean with the Hittite world of the Late Bronze Age.

INTRODUCTION

Scholarly studies that consider the arts and cultures of the Aegean world as integral elements of the Eastern Mediterranean during the Orientalizing period (ca. 750-600 BC) have recently formed a growing field (Kopcke, Tokumaru 1992; Gunter 2009; 2014b; Aruz *et al.* 2014; Aruz, Seymour 2016). These studies generally put their emphasis on the arts employed in small portable objects and provide invaluable insights into the artistic exchanges between the Aegean and the Near East during the Iron Age (1200-600 BC). Architecture, however, has remained uncharted territory. Although the Near Eastern and Egyptian impact on small-scale arts in Greece, including sculpture and metalwork, is by now a widely accepted phenomenon, the course of temple architecture – together with its design and ornamental elements from the Orientalizing period to the Archaic Era (600-480 BC) – is still portrayed in the scholarship as a predominantly indigenous development subject to minimal influence, especially from the Near East. A close analysis of the material evidence, however, draws a different picture. This paper, while acknowledging the multi-dimensional and multi-directional cultural interactions in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Orientalizing period, will present evidence for Neo-Hittite influence on the emergence of architectural sculpture in the Aegean by analyzing and comparing the sculptural programs of Iron Age Neo-Hittite structures with those of early temples and other cult places across the Aegean.¹ This influence should be considered as a corollary of the unparalleled economic expansion in the Mediterranean during the early first millennium BC through the intensification of international trade (and thus circulation of people and ideas) that was led, first by the Phoenicians in the Levant, and later joined by other communities including those from the Aegean.²

1 The term Neo-Hittite refers, without any ethnic connotations, to the Iron Age polities that emerged in Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia after the collapse of the Hittite kingdom around 1180 BC. The populations of these states were ethnically and linguistically mixed, and contained Luwian, Aramean, Hurrian and perhaps Phoenician elements (Bryce 2012). Because some of the cultural and artistic, as well as demographic, elements of the former Hittite kingdom lasted in these polities, 'Neo-Hittite' is an apt term to use in this study. It is used interchangeably in scholarship with the labels 'Late Hittite', 'Syro-Anatolian' or 'Syro-Hittite.' For a discussion of this issue, see Giliert 2011, 2; Bryce 2012, 47-63.

2 This trade mainly included the exchange of slaves, raw materials, and worked products (textiles, ceramics, metal and ivory objects, and so on). For a discussion on the economic expansion of the Iron Age Mediterranean and its transformative impact on the Aegean and other

From *ca.* 600 BC onwards, Greek gods, heroes, monsters, and mortal figures appeared high above temple architraves, in brightly painted sculptures of Doric metopes and Ionic friezes, performing mythological scenes that provoked various emotions and reactions in ancient viewers (Holloway 1988; Marconi 2009). The scholarly literature on Greek temples and their adornments has devoted considerable space to the origin of these ornaments (Akurgal 1968; Barletta 2001; Marconi 2007, 1-11; Wilson Jones 2002; 2014). Yet while the debate incorporates a number of opinions, indigenous initiation is widely given preference over explanations based on foreign influence and continues to be the dominant view among historians of Greek art (Barletta 2001; Emerson 2007; Palagia 2012). It is true that the mature temples of the Archaic and Classical periods were fundamentally different from the temple forms in Egypt, Syria, the Levant and Mesopotamia due to their unique combination of structural, ornamental and functional elements. However, a close examination of Neo-Hittite monumental architecture of the Iron Age reveals that some of the major features of early cult buildings in the Aegean, including the ante-style, or temple *in antis*, design and sculptural ornaments, were inspired by their counterparts in North Syria. This relationship is best illuminated through examination of the so-called Temple A in Prinias, Crete (*ca.* 630-620 BC), and the 'Ain Dārā temple in northwestern Syria (*ca.* 1200-740 BC). The carved images on other contemporary Neo-Hittite structures, such as the official buildings and gates in Zincirli, Carchemish, and Karatepe, were also probable sources of inspiration for the builders in Crete and other parts of the Aegean during the Orientalizing period.

Although North Syria has been proposed as a likely source of inspiration for the emergence of monumental sculpture across the Aegean, specifically at Temple A in Prinias (Ridgway 1966; Beyer 1976; Morris 1992, 155-156; Wilson Jones 2014, 43-44; Neer 2018, 118-119), the exact nature of this influence has remained elusive, unexplained, or even mischaracterized. According to Richard Neer, the builders of this Cretan structure probably found inspiration in the orthostats that generally decorated the interiors of North Syrian palaces (Neer 2018, 118-119). Similarly, Olga Palagia confirms the possibility of Near Eastern input in Prinias but views the case – together with the roughly contemporary temple in Gortyn, Crete – as “a failed dawn” in the history of Greek art, superseded by the Doric and Ionic orders that emerged shortly after (Palagia 2012, 153). Therefore, she rejects the idea of a continuity between the cult buildings of the Orientalizing period and those of the Archaic period. Such views come with fundamental limitations, either in their developmental approach to the question or in a lack of evaluation of the art historical and archaeological material, especially from the Near East. The interpretations, which envision a temple form that emerged architecturally and artistically thanks to Greek ingenuity, are a continuation of the centuries-old scholarly tradition that draws clear boundaries between the arts of ‘east’ and ‘west’, and portrays Near Eastern influences on Greek art as ephemeral, ineffective or even decadent, a historiographic critique that has already been made in both Near Eastern and Classical scholarship (Gunter 2009; 2014a; 2014b; Tanner 2003, 116-118; Whitley 2013a, 411). Neer emphasizes the Greeks’ innovativeness in transforming an art form characteristic of Near Eastern palaces, and thus, in his view, specific to monarchy, into a publicly visible, and hence communal adornment that was used exclusively for divine contexts. This dichotomy is not borne out by the archaeological evidence, however. There are Neo-Hittite temples in Northern Syria, such as the one in 'Ain Dārā, that predate Temple A in Prinias by centuries and yet bear resemblance to this structure – either in terms of their form or in the location of the sculptural decoration in the lower courses of their exterior walls, or both. It should also be noted that Near Eastern palace interiors decorated with sculpted orthostats are more distinctive of Assyria in the first millennium BC.³ The sculpted blocks from North Syria, in addition to temple interiors and exteriors, often appeared on the façades of other

Mediterranean communities, see Sherratt, Sherratt 1993. The channels of interaction that led to the exchange of ideas regarding art and architecture between the Aegean and Neo-Hittite polities will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

3 The only known example of a palace interior in the Neo-Hittite realm decorated with sculpted orthostats was recently discovered in Carchemish during the 2014 season of the Turco-Italian expedition (Marchetti 2015). The excavations revealed a large rectangular room in the palace of Katuwa decorated with a group of orthostats portraying a procession of gazelle-bearers. Dated to the second half of the 10th century BC, these sculptures may have inspired the better-known Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs of the ninth, eighth and seventh centuries BC. However, Richard Neer, in both editions of his publication (2012; 2018), probably refers to this later Assyrian group, not to the recently discovered reliefs in Carchemish.

building types such as the palaces and city gates in Zincirli (ancient Sam'al), Carchemish, and Karatepe (ancient Azatiwataya) (Wartke 2005, 63, fig. 58; Gilibert 2011, 19-54; Çambel, Özyar 2003). Thus, the use of architectural sculptures for communal experience was practiced in Northern Syria and Anatolia at least from the Late Bronze Age (*ca.* 1600-1200 BC) onwards. From there, it must have been transferred to Crete and the rest of the Aegean world during the Orientalizing period, which was characterized by porous borders among Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures that allowed the exchange of objects, technologies, and ideas on an unprecedented scale (Gunter 2009; Aruz *et al.* 2014; Aruz, Seymour 2016).

This Neo-Hittite connection has further implications in terms of artistic interconnections, which were a major characteristic of the premodern Mediterranean world. Relief orthostat decoration was not a phenomenon indigenous to Syria, but rather gave its earliest examples in Hittite Anatolia, and appeared in Syrian temples, palaces and other forms of monumental architecture from the end of the Late Bronze Age onwards, the 'Ain Dārā temple being one of the earliest known examples. I will therefore argue that this Neo-Hittite temple and contemporary structures with similar relief ornaments provide the crucial archaeological and art historical data to demonstrate that the sculptural decorations of the temples in the Orientalizing Aegean were distant relatives of the Hittite monumental art of the Late Bronze Age.

ARTISTIC EXCHANGES BETWEEN GREECE AND THE NEAR EAST DURING THE IRON AGE

Any discussion of the earliest examples of Greek architectural sculpture should consider the historical and art historical conditions of the eighth and seventh centuries BC. The Orientalizing period (so defined by scholars to denote these centuries) is characterized by the importation of new motifs, ideas, technologies, and, quite often, actual objects from the Near East and Egypt to Greece (and Etruscan Italy). It brought about pivotal developments in the Aegean world, such as the emergence of the alphabet and monumental statuary, and the use of the lost-wax method that set the course for the formation of Classical art and culture. However, it should be noted that 'orientalization' as a process of adaptation of Near Eastern and Egyptian artistic and cultural elements by the Aegean communities was not limited to this specific time, but started as early as in the late third millennium BC, and continued into the Classical period (Whitley 2001, 102-133; 2013a, 410). Moreover, the 'orientalization' of the eighth and seventh centuries BC was not a homogenous process that took place across all of the Aegean synchronously and with the same intensity. From Crete to Ionia, different communities reacted differently to the input from the Near East, and the products of these interactions display substantial variation between regions (Whitley 2001, 115-124; 2013a, 411-412).

The most abundant archaeological evidence for the Near Eastern impact on the Iron Age communities of the Aegean comes from various necropolises and the Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries, especially those of Olympia, Delphi, and Samos, where numerous small- and medium-sized objects of Near Eastern origin or connections were deposited from the 10th century BC onwards (Fig. 1) (Strøm 1992; Stampolidis 2014, 282-292; 2016; Niemeier 2016). The precious dedications included mostly bronze, but also gold and silver bowls, bronze horse frontlets, arms engraved with both Aegean and Near Eastern motifs, small statuettes of ivory or metal in the shape of divinities, animals or sphinxes, and bronze tripod cauldrons with Near Eastern-style griffin head attachments (Strøm 1992; Gunter 2014a; 2014b) (Fig. 2). Some of these objects were imports from the East, while others were made by artisans based in Greece but heavily influenced by Near Eastern styles and techniques. Ceramics was also a material genre in which local geometric forms were decorated with Near Eastern imagery, such as rampant goats and tree of life or animal hunts (Boardman 2001, 28-40; Gadoulou 2014, 258-259, figs 4.6 and 4.8). The origins of these imports and motifs are attested in Anatolia (Lydia, Phrygia, and Urartu), North Syria, the Levant, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and Italy, implying a Mediterranean-wide movement of people, and, together with them, the transfer of art objects, ideas, and technologies (Niemeier 2016).

In contrast to the case of sculptural decoration on Greek temples, outlined above, the Orientalizing phenomenon within the arena of transportable arts has generally been treated in the scholarship as a vibrant and crea-



Fig. 1. Map of the Eastern Mediterranean (prepared by Serdar Yalçın)

tive age that set the course for the formation of Archaic and Classical imagery and styles (Boardman 1996, 48-75; Osborne 1998, 43-51). However, the dominant scholarly discourse explain this as a primarily local initiative, elevating the actions of Greek artisans, and attributing little agency to the communities in the Near East and Egypt.⁴ Anastasia Gadoulou (2014, 260), for instance, views the Orientalizing period, in the field of ceramics, as “nothing more than a short phase during which certain pottery workshops adopted particular motifs or artistic expressions to suit their own needs.” As Ann Gunter (2009, 70-79) previously pointed out, this tendency finds its modern equivalent, and perhaps inspiration, in the scholarly approaches that view the interactions of Europeans and Americans with Chinese and Japanese arts in the 19th century – Chinoiserie and Japonisme – through the same lens. In this view, echoing the Western artists’ use of the East Asian artworks that flooded the European and American markets at the time, Greek workshops must have used ‘oriental’ features that were suited to their needs, but rapidly moved on to developing their own unique forms, themes, and styles. This interpretation and approach neglect the realities of the Iron Age Eastern Mediterranean, first of all, in its assumption that artistic markets similar to the ones of late 19th-century Europe and the US existed in ancient times (Gunter 2009, 79). One might also add that the communities in the Aegean during the Orientalizing period, unlike the European colonial powers of the 19th century, were not economically and politically dominant compared to their “much larger and better organized” Near Eastern and Egyptian counterparts (Luraghi 2006, 22-23).

⁴ In this view, Al Mina on the Orontes and Naukratis in the Nile Delta functioned as a gateway into Syria and Egypt used and run by the Greeks. For Al Mina, see Boardman 1999; 2002. For the Greek presence in Naukratis, see Boardman 1980, 118-132; Colburn 2018. While Naukratis was probably a true Greek colony, the status of the former as a Greek emporium has been questioned recently in different studies. See the following discussion.

The current scholarship also draws a picture that often overlooks the most important political and economic entity of the time in Western Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean: the Assyrian empire (Gunter 2009; 2016). In point of fact, the Orientalizing period of the eighth and seventh centuries BC corresponds to the apex of Assyrian domination in the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean. Even though the Aegean world was not in close proximity to the imperial core at this time, it was within the empire's sphere of influence and thus must have been affected by the movement of people across and beyond Assyria's borders (as a result of mass deportations, military campaigns, the search for raw materials – especially metal – demanded by the imperial administration, and so on), and together with them, art objects, ideas, and technologies (Lanfranchi 2000; Gunter 2009; 2014a; 2016). We know from Assyrian texts, for example, that Cypriots lived in Nineveh in the seventh century BC (Bahrani 2016, 325). Archaeological evidence from Misis (ancient Mopsouestia) demonstrates that Cypriote potters (and their local trainees) produced ceramics incorporating Cypriote and Greek traditions in a new idiom for the communities in Cilicia throughout the ninth and eighth centuries BC (D'Agata 2019). The Assyrian influence on the island of Cyprus, the nature of which is still a question, was materially shown in the famous Sargon Stele, which was originally erected nearby the coast of Larnaka (Aruz *et al.* 2014, 187, cat. no 74). Kition, the major urban center of the island, came under Phoenician control in the eighth century BC and served its overlords as a political and mercantile hub in the upcoming centuries (Smith 2009, 10–13). Thus, as evidenced in the case of Cyprus, the boundaries between communities of the Iron Age Mediterranean were much more porous in the ancient experience than they are generally portrayed in the scholarship.

We should also remember that “cultures are not unitary monoliths, but dynamic, interrelated systems that are continually recreated by daily or generational human practice” (Canepa 2010, 9). As Rebecca Martin (2017, 16) has argued, they are constantly formed by changing historical conditions and their elements such as individual behaviors, arts and other aspects of material and visual cultures. In this regard, exposure to the demographic, political, economic and artistic influences from the Near East and elsewhere kept the Aegean cultures in a constant state of remaking during the Orientalizing period. Furthermore, many of the ‘foreign’ motifs (*e.g.* the gorgon), forms (*e.g.* monumental public sculpture), or technologies (*e.g.* lost-wax method) did not disappear from Greek art but survived into the Archaic and Classical periods (Morris 1992; Guralnick 1997; Tanner 2003; Graff 2014), albeit with significant modifications and elaborations in their making, meaning and function in the society. These changes point to active engagement of the Aegean communities during the adaptation of Near Eastern elements into their artistic cultures. On the other hand, direct and indirect interactions with people originating from the Near East at the communal or individual level seem to have been a key aspect of the Orientalizing phenomenon of the eighth and seventh centuries BC.

While the discussion of the specific social and cognitive processes that took place during these interactions and led to the formation of the Orientalizing period material and visual cultures in the Aegean are beyond the scope of this study, it should still be noted that multiple operations may have been at work. James Whitley (2013a) uses “acculturation” – selective adaptation of ideas, motifs, and technologies from one culture by the members of another culture – to explain the ‘orientalization’ in the Aegean. The Middle Ground theory, which scholars have been using to understand the Iron Age interactions between immigrant and local communities across the Mediterranean (*e.g.* Italy, Southern Levant, Cilicia) (Malkin 2002; 2015; D'Agata 2019, 106), may offer another perspective. The Middle Ground is a social space where diverse groups of people adjust their differences through creative misunder-



Fig. 2. Bronze horse frontlet from the Heraion in Samos, *ca.* ninth century BC, the Archaeological Museum of Samos (photo by Helmut Kyrieleis, D-DAI-ATH-1988-1022, courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute).

standings. Each side often distorts and misunderstands each other's cultural habits and practices, but from these sets of misinterpretations emerge new meanings and practices of the Middle Ground (Malkin 2002, 152; White 2010, XXVI). The interactions on this new social space take place between large or small groups of people on rather equal and peaceful terms.⁵ Overall, the process of 'orientalization' in the Aegean and the nature of the relations with Near Eastern communities are still poorly understood in the scholarship, and are in need of more theory-based methodologies for their analysis. In this context, looking at the artistic interconnections of the eighth and seventh centuries BC through a rigid Greek-Near Eastern (Phoenician/Neo-Hittite/Egyptian/Assyrian) dichotomy, without a deeper analysis incorporating interdisciplinary approaches, is a process that does not resonate with the political and social realities of the age, but rather the application of the modern intellectual division of East-West to the ancient world (Held 1997; Tanner 2003, 122; Gunter 2009).

As an extension of the general disregard of the political, cultural, and artistic realities of Iron Age societies, the Near Eastern impact on the design and decorations of temples and other cult places in the Aegean, although vaguely acknowledged, has not been subjected to extensive analysis in the scholarship on the Orientalizing period.⁶ Thus, the Greek temple, which is generally considered as a potent symbol of Greek creativity and a hallmark of Western architecture, is usually understood to be a uniquely indigenous phenomenon that emerged and matured thanks to the initiatives of Greek builders (Gruben 2001, 25-32, first published in 1966; Barletta 2001; Emerson 2007).⁷ However, a review of the archaeological, art historical, and historical data, as Walter Burkert and others have recognized, reveals that the mature Greek temple of the Archaic and Classical periods owes a great deal to the sanctuaries of the Near East and Egypt in terms of its design, decoration, and function (Burkert 1992; Tanner 2003, 127-143; Wilson Jones 2014, 99-100).

It is widely known in the field that prior to the eighth century BC, Iron Age settlements in the Aegean, as archaeological record shows, had no temples, in other words no 'houses' erected specifically to hold cult statues (Mazarakis Ainian 1988, 105; Vink 1995, 105; Gruben 2001, 29). Instead, in earlier periods, sanctuaries – which generally developed around natural features that were deemed divine, such as springs, trees, or stones – were the main locations of worship (Burkert 1996, 23).⁸ From the eighth century BC onwards, special buildings were created for the cults of different divinities in settlements such as Kommos and Dreros on Crete, and Eretria on Euboea with remarkable variation in their designs and decorations. Archaic and Classical resources suggest that these early structures were built primarily to demonstrate the power of the elite and assuage the wrath of gods, and financed by war booty and communal donations (Burkert 1996, 24-25; Fehr 1996). Some of these special buildings, such

5 The story of the Corinthian aristocrat Demaratos the Bakchiad, who, after his exile from his city, went to Etruscan Tarquinia, is quite illuminating. He seems to have been accompanied by three artisans, and, may have fathered one of the early kings of Rome. Malkin (2002, 161) argues that a Middle Ground may have formed between the Greek aristocrat, his company of artisans and the Etruscan elite of Tarquinia. Similarly, the migration of such small groups of people from the Near East to the Aegean may have resulted in multiple Middle Ground formations in different locations.

6 The recent work of Mark Wilson Jones (2014) is one of the few studies that openly acknowledges this connection, without, however, providing an extensive analysis. The earlier typological and iconographic analysis of Ekrem Akurgal (1968) acknowledges the Near Eastern, especially Neo-Hittite, influences on the formation of the Aeolic and Ionic capitals in western Anatolia, but does not extend the discussion to the rest of the Aegean world.

7 Ian Jenkins (2006, 14-20), while acknowledging a possible Egyptian and Near Eastern impact on the emergence of the Ionic order, views the revival of Mycenaean traditions in mainland Greece as pivotal for the development of the Doric order. George R.H. Wright (2003) puts more emphasis on the developments in Greece during the Archaic Period (mainly sixth century BC). Although Wright acknowledges some (limited) Egyptian impact on the construction and masonry techniques used in Greek temples, he does not mention any Near Eastern connection. Overall, the designation of the Mycenaean and other 'local' developments in recent scholarship as the main root of Classical temples seems to be a continuation of the Greco-centric scholarly narratives of the early and mid-20th century, as exemplified in the study of Donald S. Robertson (1969, first published in 1929).

8 Bernard Dietrich (1991) suggests that the origin of Greek temples went back to the Mycenaean Age though the early cult centers then and the cult itself were still indebted to the Levantine models that were prevalent in centers like Ugarit. According to this view, the settlements on Cyprus such as Kition and Enkomi played a crucial role in the transmission of this knowledge to the Aegean at the end of the Late Bronze Age.

as Temple A in Prinias or the Temple House in Lato, did not function as temples *per se*, but may have served local aristocracies as communal gathering places (*andreion*) or as funerary chapels (Carter 1997; Gaignerot-Driessen 2012). Yet, they seem to have fulfilled important cultic functions such as the offerings of prayers and libations, and ritual sacrifices and banquets, and thus acted as liminal spaces used to communicate with the divine as well as the ancestors (Prent 2005, 454-455).

As for the dynamics that stimulated the development of these temples and other cult-oriented buildings of the Orientalizing period, local initiatives with their roots in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age political and religious institutions in the Aegean may have played a significant role (Mazarakis Ainian 1988; 1997; 2006; Vink 1995, 104-105; Prent 2005). On the other hand, we should also remember that the Aegean world was strongly under the influence of the Near East and Egypt during the eighth and seventh centuries BC, and this influence is clearly visible in some of the aforementioned buildings, especially in Temple A at Prinias. A closer analysis of this structure shows that certain design and decorative elements, including a preference for the ante-style and the use of sculpted orthostats, came into being in dialog with the Neo-Hittite monumental architectural contexts in North Syria and Southern Anatolia.

TEMPLE A IN PRINIAS AND SCULPTURAL DECORATION IN EARLY GREEK TEMPLES

The seventh-century settlement in Prinias, which encompassed multiple cult-related buildings including the so-called Temples A and B, rises on a rocky plateau in the center of the island of Crete with a view of Mount Ida to the west. The site was excavated by different Italian teams between 1906-1908, 1969-2000, and 2000-2009, and the results were published in a series of articles and monographs (Pernier 1910/1914; 1914; 1934; Rizza *et al.* 1992; Rizza 2008; Palermo *et al.* 2007; 2008; Pappalardo 2018). Temples A and B had east-west orientation, with the main entrances opening to a plaza in the east, which was closely surrounded by private and some other cult buildings (Carter 1997, 89; Pappalardo 2018, 153, fig. 1).

Temple A (*ca.* 630-620 BC) is one of the earliest of its kind in the Aegean with its extant sculptural decoration (the earlier Temple B and two other cult-oriented buildings to the east and south of A and B have not provided any sculptural remains, and will not be discussed here). As previously stated, though early scholarship labelled this building as a temple, recent re-evaluations of the archaeological remains, in conjunction with art historical and ancient textual sources, have demonstrated that it was likely used as an *andreion*, a communal gathering place of the men from the community's aristocratic warrior class (Carter 1997; Prent 2005, 441-476).⁹ This social institution finds a close Near Eastern parallel, and perhaps its inspiration, in the so-called *marzeah* (or the biblical *thiasos*), an association of elite men (sometimes including the local ruler himself) that came together in special buildings under the aegis of different divinities as part of an ancestral cult (Carter 1997). From Late Bronze Age Ugarit to Roman Palmyra, the tradition of *marzeah* had a long history in the Levant and Syria, and was used by the elites to mark their status through rituals in extravagantly decorated spaces. According to Jane Carter (1997, 79-80), the aristocracy of Prinias may have imitated their counterparts in the Levant by appropriating the visual symbols of the *marzeah* and using them in the decoration of their *andreion*. She suggests that the exquisite ivory furniture attachments taken by the Assyrians from the Syrian and Levantine polities as loot or tribute during the ninth and eighth centuries BC could have been originally used in the *marzeah*. Sphinxes, voluptuous naked female figures and the processions of animals are the common themes represented in both the Phoenician and Syrian style ivories, and in the sculptural decoration of Temple A in Prinias. However, as the following discussion will show, the elites of Prinias may have been more eclectic while decorating their *andreion*. Religious and public architecture of the

9 Although this structure was not a temple in the traditional sense, its well-known title, *i.e.* Temple A, will be used in the following for the sake of consistency with the scholarship.

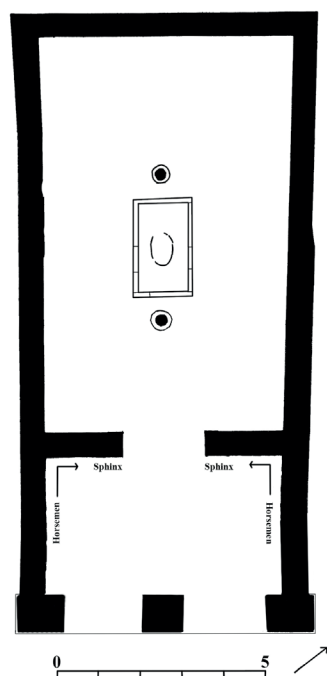


Fig. 3. The ground plan of Temple A at Prinias, ca. 630-620 BC (adapted from Pernier 1934, 173, fig. 2).

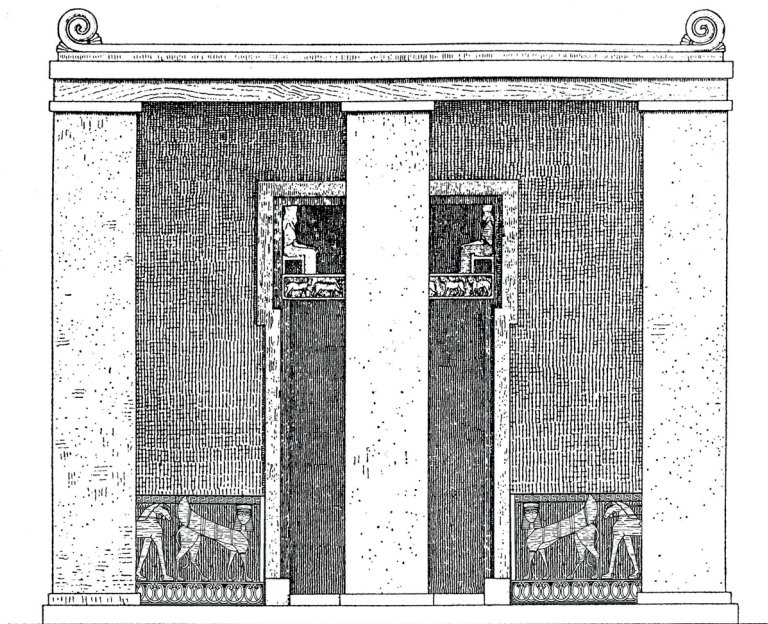


Fig. 4. The eastern façade of Temple A at Prinias (adapted from Pernier 1934, pl. XIX B).

Levant and broader Syria, as well as small portable objects, were other likely sources for the design and decoration of this specific Cretan cult building.

Despite the poor state of preservation, enough remained to identify Temple A as a rectangular ante-style structure (7.5x15 m) with a larger room that was entered from a pronaos (Fig. 3). The structure was raised on a stone foundation, with walls (ca. 0.6 m thick) built mainly of mudbrick, and covered with a flat top.¹⁰ The main room originally contained a rectangular hearth and two posts on the eastern and western sides, making it an example of the 'hearth temples' of Iron Age Crete (Prent 2005; 2007). A stone platform to the south of this hearth may have been used to hold sacred objects. The ample amount of animal bones and the good quality of eating and drinking vessels that were found in this room and around the building testify to the use of Temple A as a space for ritual banquets (Carter 1997, 89). The building's east end survived in a fragmentary condition only in foundations. However, based on the thickness of the foundation here, a colonnaded in-antis style entrance seems to be likely, resulting in an open porch (Fig. 4) (Pernier 1934; Watrous 1998; Wilson Jones 2014, 45, fig. 2.16). Thus, a pilared façade, two pillars at the corners and one at the center, led into a rectangular porch decorated with exquisitely carved sculptures.¹¹

Temple A would have been a very modest structure without the limestone sculptures that covered the walls of its porch and the doorway to the main room. The doorway was originally decorated at the top with statues of two seated female figures looking at each other (Figs 5-6). Both figures were of the same size (each 25 cm in width, 45

10 Immo Beyer (1976, 30 and pl. 23) envisioned a gabled roof for this structure on the basis of volute-like fragments uncovered among the building remains, which, he thought, were parts of an acroterion. The traditional roof type in Cretan architecture, however, had been flat during the Bronze and Iron Ages (Shaw 2004; Mook 1998, 51-55).

11 In an alternative interpretation, Beyer (1976) and D'Acunto (1995) propose a pronaos closed with a parapet-like half wall decorated with sculptures in the eastern façade. This is a rather atypical feature for the temples in Crete and the broader Aegean.

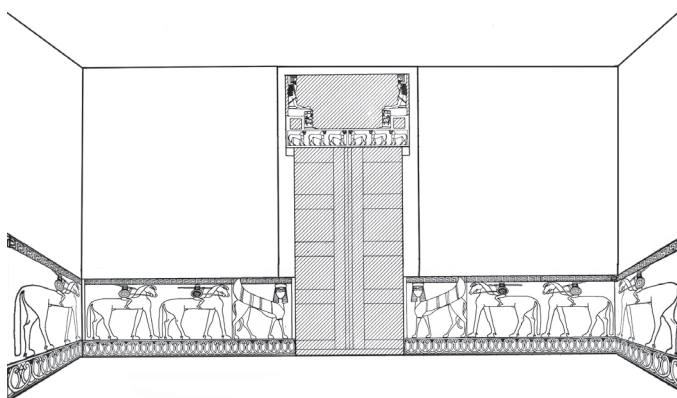


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of the eastern porch of Temple A at Prinias (figure drawings adapted from Beyer 1976; courtesy of Immo Beyer).

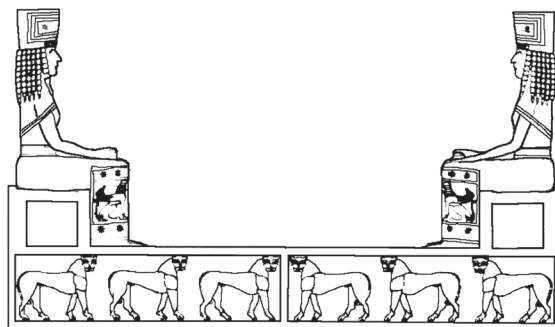


Fig. 6. The statue group above the doorway of Temple A at Prinias (after Beyer 1976, pl. 21.1; courtesy of Immo Beyer).

cm in length, and 75 cm in height) and had well-modeled heads and upper bodies, blocky lower parts, and hands on knees with one lying flat and the other in a fist (Beyer 1976, pls 19-21). They both portray the patron goddess of the building wearing a long ornamented mantel, a flat top headdress, and shawls covering her shoulders and partially her chest. The face-to-face configuration and rigid seated frontal pose allude to Egyptian forms, and makes these statues a direct counterpart of the colossal images of Ramses II (1290-1224 BC) in front of the Luxor temple, which was in use until the Roman era (Fig. 7).¹² In both Egyptian and Cretan contexts the images met visitors to the temples in the same guises, albeit in different places and sizes: in Prinias rather smaller than life-size goddesses above the door and in Luxor the colossal figures of the pharaoh in front of the pylon gate.¹³ With this configuration, the Cretan builders seem to have compensated for the size with the elevated location.

The horizontal lintel carrying the goddess statues at Prinias was carved on each side with two groups of marching lions (east, exterior) and grazing deer (west, interior), converging at the center. The beasts' elegant bodies are slender and modeled in profile. The lions' heads turn toward the viewer, giving them an apotropaic and aggressive quality. The images of such lions and grazing herbivores (deer, goat, etc.) in procession were amply utilized in decorations of the Orientalizing period vases and metal work, and among the most popular Near Eastern motifs adopted by the artisans in the Aegean (Osborne 1998, 38-39, fig. 1; Boardman 2001, 28-40; Gadolou 2014, 258, fig. 4.6). The bottom side of the same lintel was carved with two fully frontal images of the goddess above the doorway, this time standing. The door jambs on each side of the building entrance also seem to have been carved, but with images of naked standing female figures, each pointing at their right breasts with one hand and their pubic area with the other (Beyer 1976, pl. 22), a posture similar to some North Syrian ivories from the ninth century BC that were discovered in the Neo-Assyrian palace in Nimrud (Aruz 2014, 143, fig. 3.27). This posture is an ancient one, displayed not just in ivories but also in terracottas and large-scale stone sculpture across the Near East (Baharani 1996). Based on the imagery at its doorway – of the powerful and sexualized female divinity accompanied by

¹² The seated images of Ramses II were accompanied by four standing statues and two obelisks in front of the entrance to the Luxor temple (Bell 1997).

¹³ L. Vance Watrous (1998, 78, fig. 8.2) also suggests an Egyptian influence in Temple A in Prinias mainly on the basis of the similarity of the façade to an Egyptian mastaba tomb that belonged to Tjetu, an official from the Old Kingdom (2686-2160 BC). I disagree with this view, because Egyptian mastabas were generally closed structures with offering niches on the main façades for votives and rituals, as in the tomb of Tjetu. Occasionally these niches could be carved into the superstructure forming small cruciform chapels (Arnold 2003, 138-140, 'mastaba'; Robins 2008, 51-52). The rest of the structure was totally closed to the living by thick walls. Therefore, other than its three-pillared façade, the Prinias temple was fundamentally different from the tomb of Tjetu in terms of design, use, and the nature of the sculptural program.

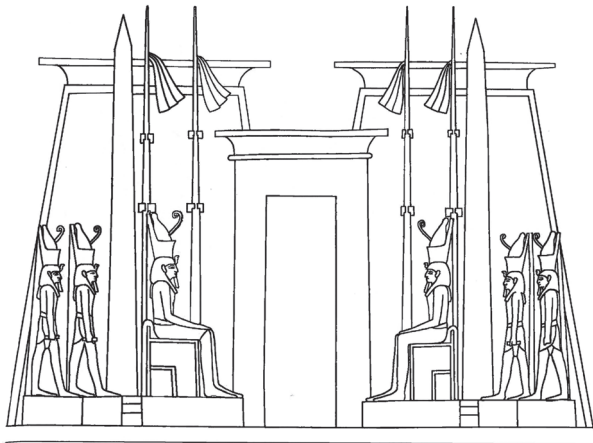


Fig. 7. Reconstruction of the Luxor temple's entrance in Egypt, *ca.* 1290-1224 BC (after Bell 1997, 153, fig. 62; courtesy of Carol Meyer and Cornell University Press).



Fig. 8. Ivory sphinx from Fort Shalmaneser in Nimrud, *ca.* ninth-eighth centuries BC (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, open access).

wild animals – Temple A was under the protection of a powerful goddess (or goddesses) such as *Potnia Theron*, the Mistress of Animals, who had been venerated in the Aegean since the Bronze Age. The Prinias aristocracy possibly honored her during their gatherings due to her nurturing and regenerating powers (Carter 1997, 91-95; see also Beyer 1976, 37-38).

In addition to the door itself, a group of relief orthostats potentially decorated the porch's northern and southern walls, and each side of the doorway (Figs 3 and 5).¹⁴ The entrances to the temples, palaces and city gates across the Neo-Hittite realm used such decorations during the Iron Age, and may have been models for the Prinias building (see below). These blocks, which were placed on the lower courses of the walls (Carter 1997, 91; Wilson Jones 2014, 45), were in general around 5-10 cm thick, thus appearing to be more ornamental than structurally functional elements. Despite its fragmentary state, the central section of the frieze, *ca.* 80 cm in height, can be identified as depicting a procession of horsemen in attack mode armed with spears and round shields. This subject matter is completely compatible with the function of the building as an *andreion* used by the warrior elite of the community (Carter 1997, 91). The march starts in the northern and southern walls of the porch and converges at the doorway, led by a sphinx on each side. The two *Mischwesen*, with their upward stretched wings, wait at the gate, presumably their heads turned toward the visitor in an intimidating, protective gesture similar to the lions on the door lintel, the *lamassu* from the Palace of Sargon in Khorsabad (*ca.* 710 BC) or the ivory furniture attachment in the form of a sphinx found in Fort Shalmaneser in Nimrud (*ca.* ninth-eighth centuries BC) (Fig. 8).¹⁵ Similarly

14 The previous reconstructions of the sculptural decoration of Temple A pose some difficulties. Luigi Pernier (1934) places the procession of the horsemen on the top of the eastern façade as a frieze (see also Watrous 1998). However, the size of the reliefs is rather small to be seen from that height. Immo Beyer's reconstruction places the horsemen only on the northern and southern façades of the building. On each side of the eastern entrance, he envisions lions/panthers and deer following the sphinxes (Beyer 1976, pl. 24). Matteo D'Acunzio (1995, 25), however, states that the fragments of the horsemen were found on the eastern side of the structure as well as on the north. He argues that while for the sake of symmetry, they should be expected to be on the southern façade as well, the orthostat fragments on the eastern side depicted horsemen and sphinxes, not lions/panthers or deer. The main problem with these suggestions is that when it was in use, only the eastern façade of Temple A which looked at the plaza seems to have been fully visible to an audience. The archaeological evidence shows that the other three were either entirely blocked or had limited visibility due to narrow open spaces (Pappalardo 2018, 153, fig. 1). In this context, it is highly unlikely that exquisitely made sculptures, which were rather new to Crete (and the Aegean) in the seventh century BC, would be used in places with low to no visibility.

15 The finds from the eastern side of the temple included fragments of the wings of the sphinxes and the lower sections of blocks depicting animal legs, hoofs, and paws. Although the sphinx heads did not survive, it is likely that they were not in profile but turned outward toward

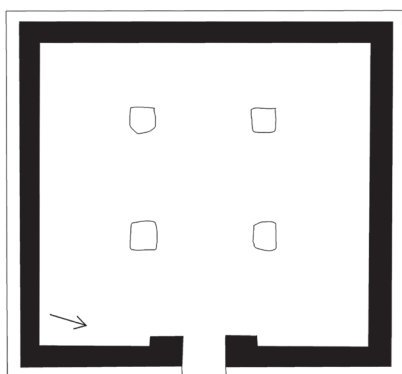


Fig. 9. The ground plan of the temple at Gortyn, *ca.* 640 BC (after Wilson Jones 2014, 40, fig. 2.8; courtesy of Mark Wilson Jones).

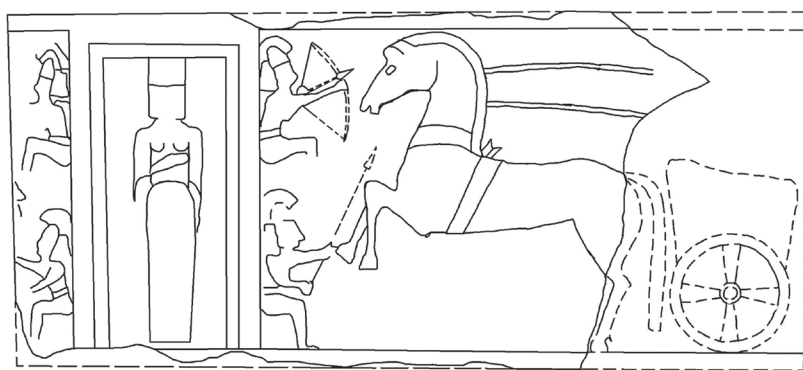


Fig. 10. The relief fragment from Khania, *ca.* 650 BC (after Beyer 1976, pl. 44.2; courtesy of Immo Beyer).

to the lions, the bodies of all figures were delineated in profile and the heads frontally, except those of the horses, which were carved entirely in profile (Fig. 5). The legs of the horses are unrealistically long for their bodies. Similarly, the riders, who are wearing flat top caps/helmets, are displayed disproportionately small, giving the equids a more majestic appearance. The procession scene culminating at the building doorway is bordered at the bottom with a strip of exquisite guilloche-like intertwined volutes, and at the top with lozenges.

Overall, Temple A in Prinias testifies to the presence of talented craftsmen in Crete during the second half of the seventh century BC who were proficient in architectural design as well as overseeing and implementing sophisticated sculptural programs. However, this building, though better preserved, was not the only cultic structure in the Orientalizing Aegean with such adornments. Gortyn, in the south of the island, was another location that produced fragmentary sculpted orthostat pieces covering lower courses of the exterior walls of a temple dated to *ca.* 640 BC (Marconi 2007, 5). The temple itself has a roughly square single room plan entered from the east through a pillared doorway, with no pronaos (Fig. 9). The eastern façade of this structure was likely decorated with limestone reliefs portraying a divine triad that framed the entrance (Floren 1987, 132, no. 53; Marconi 2004, 220; Marconi 2007, 5). A male divinity at the center is flanked by two frontally naked 'goddesses', just as the divinity carved in the door jambs at Prinias, albeit with both hands of the Gortyn figures placed on the sides of the body. In Khania, on the northwestern coast of Crete, a single carved limestone block, the original context of which is unknown, is the only major find from a temple that is also dated to the later seventh century BC (Wilson Jones 2014, 44-45) (Fig. 10). The relief fragment (39 cm in height) portrays a siege in which a chariot attacks the house/temple of a goddess whose image is framed by the building. Warriors with Greek-type helmets defend the sanctuary using various weapons, including spears and a bow.

A seventh-century temple in Mycenae proves that the use of relief adornments on temple exteriors was not limited to Crete in the Orientalizing period, but was also employed in mainland Greece as well. The remains of this temple were used at the foundations of a Hellenistic temple, and therefore found in a heavily disturbed state (Klein 1997). The structure seems to have been covered with a sophisticated sculptural program that included images of an unveiling goddess, a creature grasping a body, a helmeted warrior, and more fragmentary pieces probably delineating soldiers in combat and other situations (Harl-Schaller 1972-1973; Klein 1997, 285-288; Kaltsas 2002, 37-38, no. 11). Although it is not possible to clearly identify the building's architectural design, the carved details of the blocks and their unfinished backsides indicate that they were not metopes or frieze placed high on the walls, but, similarly to the Prinias orthostats, more likely used in the bottom course (Marconi 2007, 5-6).

the viewers just as the heads of most of the other protagonists (lions and mounted soldiers in particular) in the relief program. Pernier (1934, pl. XIX.B) envisioned two sphinxes at the roof, but they were more likely located on each side of the doorway (Beyer 1976; D'Acunto 1995; see also Watrous 1998, fig. 8.1; Prent 2005, Ill. 23).

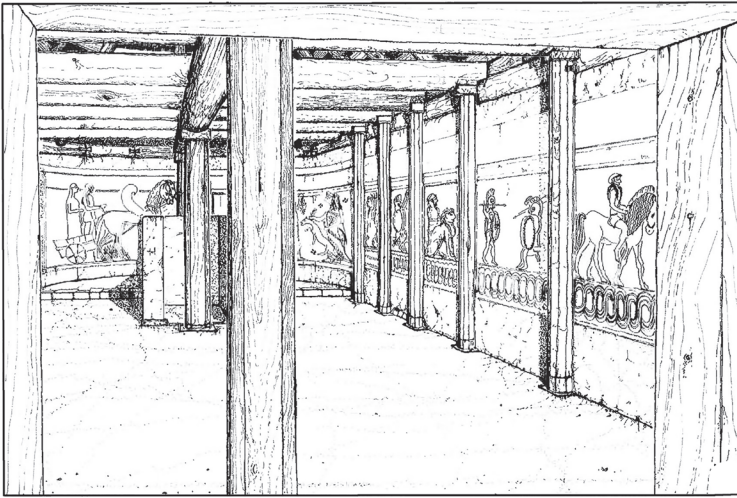


Fig. 11. Reconstruction of the interior of the apsidal temple in Kalapodi, ca. 700-650 BC (after Hellner 2014, 297, fig. 8; courtesy of Nills Hellner and the German Archaeological Institute).

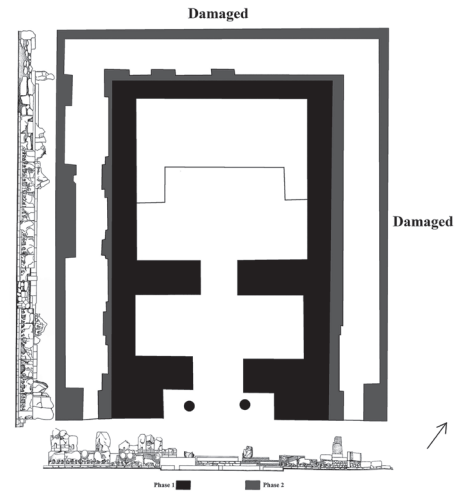


Fig. 12. The ground plan of the 'Ain Dārā temple with the locations of the sculptural decorations (after Abu Assaf 1990, figs. 12, 13, 16 and 17; drawings by Renate Barcsay-Regner; courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute).

The embellishments of the Orientalizing-period temples and other cultic buildings in Greece were far from uniform. Although decorating doorways and façades with sculpture seems to have gained momentum toward the end of the seventh century BC, craftsmen also used painted stucco and incision in both the interiors and exteriors. For instance, the exterior of the temple of Poseidon in Isthmia (ca. 690-650 BC) was likely decorated with painted stucco friezes (194 cm in length and 64 cm in width) between the piers protruding from the walls (Gebhard, Hermans 1992, 30; Gebhard 1993, 160; Marconi 2007, 4). The exact content of the painting is not certain, though the fragments reveal the use of geometric patterns and human figures. Such painted panels between piers were also seen in the apsidal shaped south temple at Kalapodi to the northwest (ca. 650-630 BC), albeit in the interior and possibly placed at the center of the walls rather than at the bottom (Hellner 2014) (Fig. 11). Here the polychrome murals depict a complex imagery, including Greek divinities and various armed and unarmed figures, together with animals and mythological creatures on the long walls performing different actions. A guilloche frieze borders the bottom of each panel on the long walls. On the other side of the Aegean, the roughly contemporary second temple of Hera on Samos, the so-called *Hekatompedon* I (ca. 675-650 BC), seems to have had incised wall decorations showing warriors carrying spears (Floren 1987, 356; Marconi 2007, 4).

This brief overview shows that various alternatives for architectural adornments (high reliefs, statuary, painted stucco, incision, etc.) as well as building forms (ante-style, apsidal, and so on) were available to the builders of the Orientalizing Aegean during the eighth and seventh centuries BC. In this picture, the application of stone sculptural elements seems to have gained predominance, especially in the exteriors, from the later seventh century BC onwards, climaxing with the emergence of the Doric metopes, Ionic friezes, and pedimental sculpture in the mature architectural orders of the Archaic period. One major difference of the cult buildings of the Orientalizing period seems to be the placement of the decorations, more often in the bottom courses and sometimes at the center rather than high above the temple walls. At the end of the seventh century BC, they were decisively moved up, which Clemente Marconi (2007, 8) marks as a revolution. The following section will introduce the characteristics of certain Neo-Hittite structures of the Iron Age with emphasis on the 'Ain Dārā temple in northwestern Syria, which exhibited remarkable similarities to Temple A in Prinias and some other cult buildings in the Aegean in terms of both design and/or the nature of the sculptural decoration.

THE TEMPLE OF 'AIN DARA AND THE NEO-HITTITE ORTHOSTAT TRADITION IN ANATOLIA AND NORTHERN SYRIA

Built roughly around 1200 BC, the monumental temple on the acropolis of Tell 'Ain Dārā belonged to the temples *in antis* or ante-style group, and is remarkably similar to the design of Temple A (Fig. 12).¹⁶ Similar to the Cretan temple, it had a rectangular plan in its initial phase, incorporating a cella and pronaos measuring 21 x 33 m, into which a colonnaded porch with two columns gave way from the southeast. In the second phase (*ca.* 900-740 BC), the temple was expanded through the addition of an aisle encircling the core on three sides, measuring 34 x 40 m in overall size (Abu Assaf 1993, 171). The structure rises on a stone platform that was made of basalt and limestone blocks. A mudbrick superstructure, probably closed with a flat roof, was originally built over the lower basalt courses of the walls and supported by wooden beams (Fig. 13) (Abu Assaf 1990, 22). The temple was in use until the Assyrian invasion of Western Syria under Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BC) (Abu Assaf 1990, 10; Bryce 2012, 258-262).¹⁷ While the ruins of the building, due to its massive foundations and ample sculptural decorations made of basalt and limestone, may have remained visible into the seventh century BC, archaeological evidence from Tell 'Ain Dārā demonstrates that the settlement was abandoned by the end of the eighth century BC (Stone, Zimansky 1999, 11).

The ante-style plan of the 'Ain Dārā temple was in use in Syria from at least the third millennium BC onwards. The temples in Tell Chuera (Small and North Temples) (Early Bronze Age, EB III/IV), Ebla (Temple D, C and P2) (Middle Bronze Age, MBA), Emar (North and South Temples) (Late Bronze Age, LBA) and Tell Munbaqa (LBA) were the Bronze Age precursors with their single-room cella plan, which was entered through a closed or open pronaos (Werner 1994, 94-110) (Fig. 14a-e). This design survived in the Iron Age temples at Tell Tayinat (*ca.* 850-650 BC) and 'Ain Dārā (*ca.* 1200-740 BC) (Fig. 14f-h). In this symmetrical rectangular plan, a cult statue stood in the cella close to the middle of the back wall, sometimes in a niche carved into the wall, thus having direct sight of the temple entrance, provided the doors were open. This configuration, though not relevant in Temple A of Prinias due to its distinct function, was a feature of the mature temples of the Archaic and Classical periods in Greece,¹⁸ and is quite different from Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Anatolian (Hittite) temples of the Bronze and Iron Ages. Mesopotamian temples, some of which were built on the top of massive brick towers (ziggurats), tended to have multiple support rooms in addition to a cella, and the cult statue could stand at the center of this special room or close to a side wall, which may have required visitors to make a 90-degree turn to view it (Moortgat 1967, 93-96, 116-117; Bottéro 2001, 115-119).¹⁹ Many of these temples also had courtyards. Hittite temples in Anatolia, in addition to their multi-unit plans, typically had off-axis cult rooms and open courtyards, which controlled the internal circulation (Naumann 1955, 389-399; Neve 2001; Müller-Karpe 2017, 89, fig. 76). Egyptian temples, though similar to Syrian and later Greek temples, with their rectangular plans and the axial placement of the cella

16 It should also be noted that when it was discovered, the 'Ain Dārā temple became a sensation due to its purported similarity to the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem, alleged solely on the descriptions in the Old Testament (Monson 2000; Novak 2012, 41-42). Due to the lack of adequate small finds with good stratigraphy, the dating of the building is generally made on the basis of the stylistic qualities of its sculptures. The consensus is that the building was likely erected sometime between 1250 and 1100 BC (Orthmann 1971; 1993; 2013a; 2013b; Abu Assaf 1990; 1993; Kohlmeyer 2008; Novak 2012).

17 The name of the ancient settlement based at Tell 'Ain Dārā is still not clearly known. Abu Assaf (1990; 1993) argues that it could belong to the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Arpad. Lipinski (2000, 202), on the other hand, equates 'Ain Dārā with ancient Mu-ú-ru (or Muudru).

18 In Temple A of Prinias, a square form stone platform was uncovered in the middle of the south wall opposite the hearth (Beyer 1976, 21 and pl. 12.2). In the earlier Apollo temple at Dreros on Crete, the focal point of the cella was a bench located at the southwest corner opposite the entrance, but it is a possibility that the statues of Apollo, Artemis, and Leto may have been placed on a wooden cover directly facing the entrance of the temple (Klein, Glowacki 2009, 165). The axial placement of the cult statue is seen most clearly in the eighth-century peripteral temple of Ephesos, which had an area toward the back of the cella directly facing the entrance and framed by six columns that possibly formed a baldachin (Bammer, Muss 1996, 34-36).

19 As an interesting exception in Mesopotamian temple architecture, the Inanna Temple at Uruk commissioned by the Babylonian king Karaindash (*ca.* 15th century BC) had a symmetrical, rectangular plan where the cult room and platform were on the same axis with the cella and main building doors. However, this structure had a multi-room plan with an antechamber and a corridor going around the cella, massive brick-bastions on all four corners and niched façades (Moortgat 1969, 93-94, figs 62-63; Bahrani 2017, 206-207, figs 9.5-9.6).

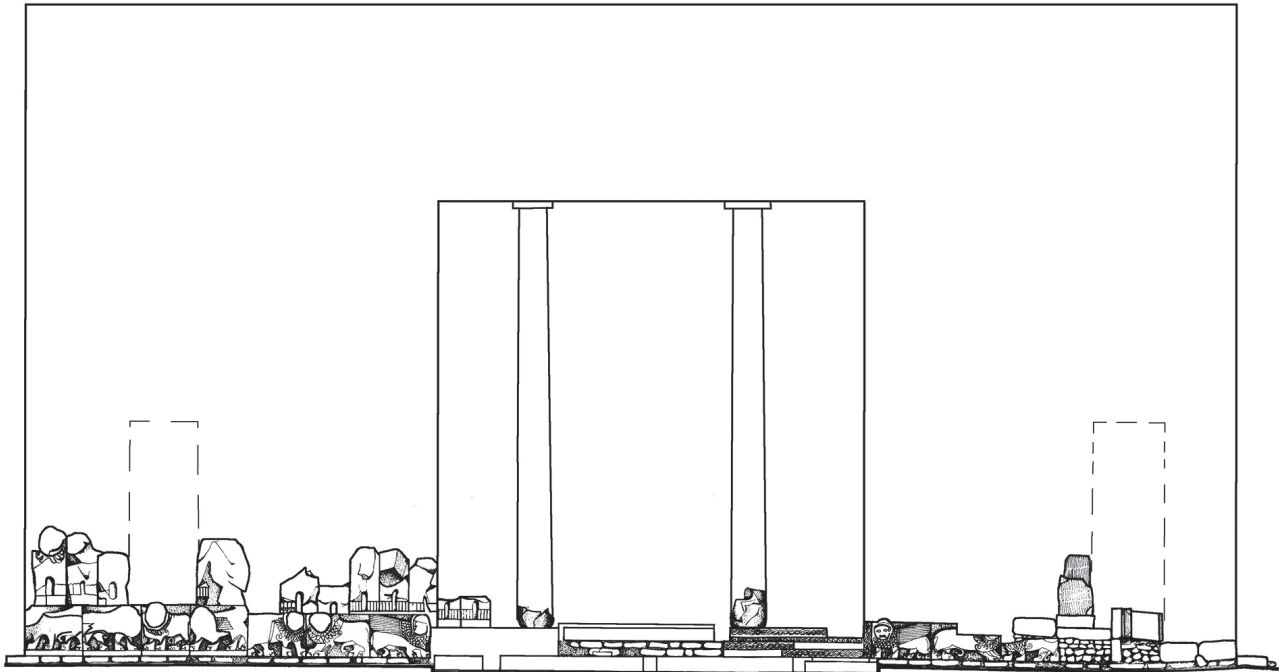


Fig. 13. Reconstruction of the southeast façade of the 'Ain Dārā temple (elevation is tentative) (the orthostat group in the lower façade after Abu Assaf 1990, figs. 16-17; drawings by Renate Barsay-Regner; courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute).



Fig. 14a-i. Bronze and Iron Age temple plans from northern and western Syria (14a-f and i, courtesy of Peter Werner and Profil Verlag; 14g, courtesy of the Tayinat Archaeological Project and Steve Batiuk; 14h, drawing by Renate Barsay-Regner, courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute). a. Tell Chuera, Temple North (after Werner 1994, 95); b. Ebla, Temple D (after Werner 1994, 98); c. Ebla, Temple P2 (after Werner 1994, pl. 19.1); d. Emar, Temple North (after Werner 1994, pl. 24.1); e. Tell Munbaqa, Steinbau I (after Werner 1994, 103); f. Tell Ta'yinat, Building 2 (after Werner 1994, 114); g. Tell Ta'yinat, Temple Building (after Harrison 2009, 185); h. Tell 'Ain Dārā, Temple (after Abu Assaf 1990, fig. 13); i. Carchemish, Temple of Storm God (after Werner 1994, 113).

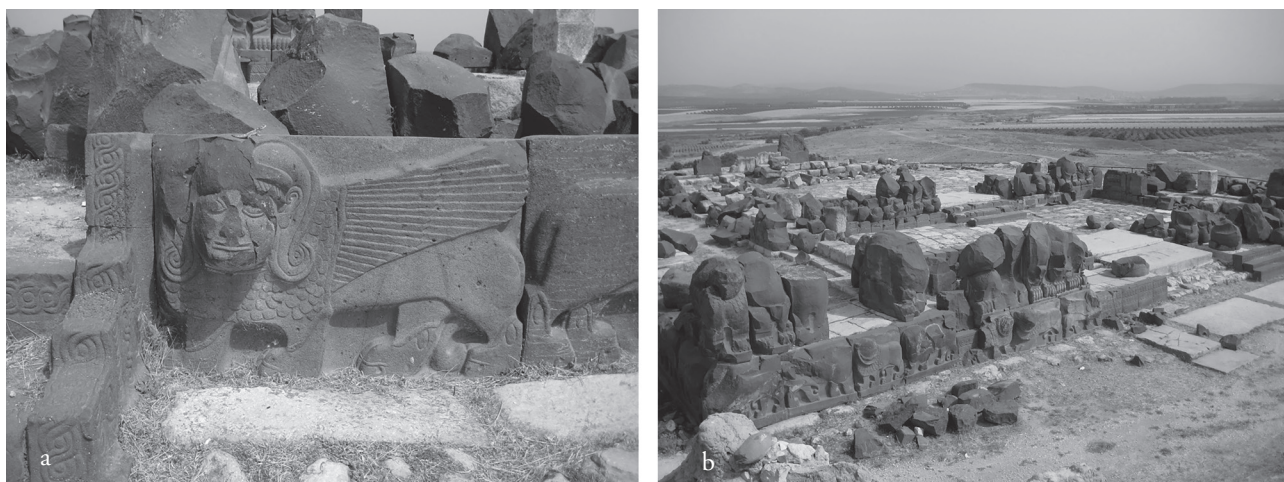


Fig. 15a-b. The remains of the 'Ain Dārā temple (courtesy of Elizabeth A. Knott): a. Close-up view of the sphinx in the east side of the main entrance; b. View of the sphinx and lion orthostats in the west side of the main entrance.

and cult statue, had open courtyards and numerous support rooms around the cella as integral elements of the overall design (Shafer 1997, 1-9; Robins 2008, 131-136, figs 147 and 152).

From horseshoe forms to the elongated apsidal plans, the cult buildings of the Orientalizing Aegean display great variation in their designs (Wilson Jones 2014, 38, 40, fig. 2.8). Within this diversity, Temple A in Prinias, together with some others (*e.g.* the cult building at Emporion on Chios) clearly fits into the ante-style group, and thus was connected to the 'Ain Dārā temple and other aforementioned North Syrian structures of the Iron Age. As a related but distinct form, the square, single-room plan of the Gortyn temple resembles the temple of the Storm God in Carchemish (cf. Figs 9 and 14i). In addition, some of the small, non-peripteral Archaic Greek temples, such as the temple of Apollo in Aegina (Wilson Jones 2014, 40, fig. 2.8, and 51, fig. 2.25), are remarkably similar to the Iron Age Temples in Tell Ta'yinat and 'Ain Dārā in terms of their spatial design (Fig. 14f-g). These uncanny resemblances are not accidental, but indicative of the legacy of the ante-style plans of the Iron Age Neo-Hittite temples on the aristocratic and communal cult places in the Aegean.

The sculptural program of the 'Ain Dārā temple, with its connection to the Hittite tradition of the Late Bronze Age, is among the best examples of Neo-Hittite monumental art and provides significant parallels with the relief decorations of Temple A in Prinias. The images of sphinxes, lions, gods, and other divine figures covered the lower courses on all four façades, with the walls in the pronaos facing the entrance, the cult platform in the cella, and sections of the ceremonial side aisle. Sphinxes and lions were the chief motifs used in the exterior (Figs 12, 13 and 15). The temple was entered from the southeast through a porch after a stairway made of basalt blocks and decorated with guilloché patterns. On both sides of the gate, marching winged sphinxes meet visitors with their outwardly turned heads just like the ones guarding the *andreion* at Prinias and the north Syrian-style ivory sphinx from Nimrud (Figs 5, 8, 15a and 15b). Behind them are pairs of opposing lions and other sphinxes encircling the entire exterior façade of the temple, all heads turned toward the viewer.²⁰ On the top of these reliefs in the southeastern façade and in the entrance porch stand sphinx and roaring lion protomes meeting anyone approaching the temple.²¹ The pronaos after the porch is also decorated with similar protomes placed on each side of the cella door, against the building entrance (Fig. 15b). There

20 Although the preservation in the eastern and northwestern façades is low, enough remained to hypothesize similar lions and sphinxes on the lower courses.

21 Although most of the lion (and sphinx) heads are heavily damaged, few preserved fragments portray lions in an aggressive, roaring gesture (Abu Assaf 1990, pls 60-61).

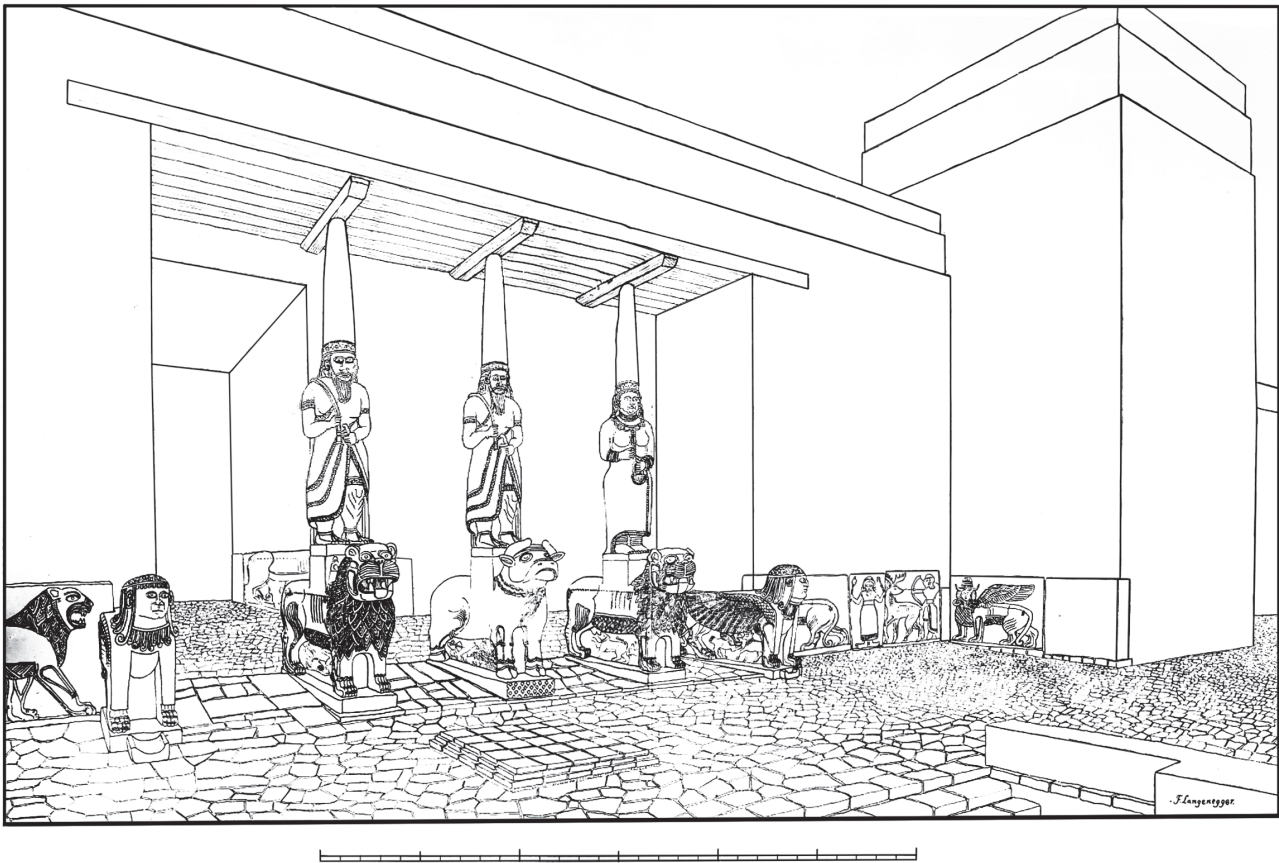


Fig. 16. Reconstruction of the entrance of the Western Palace in Tell Halaf, *ca.* tenth-eighth centuries BC (copyright by Max von Oppenheim-Stiftung, Cologne).

were probably further blocks in the southeastern and southwestern façades carved with frontal images of male and female divinities (Abu Assaf 1990, pls 52-56). The surface leading into the pronaos and cella was carved with more than one-meter-long footprints, perhaps signifying the superhuman presence in the temple (Abu Assaf 1990, pl.11). This is a unique feature that to date is not attested in any other Near Eastern temple. After passing through these intimidating images and the cella door, one would come across the cult platform, carved with the images of Hittite (Anatolian) style mountain gods and mixed creatures, hands raised upward as if carrying an object – in this case perhaps the cult statue of the divinity to whom the temple was dedicated (Abu Assaf 1993, 168, figs 22-24). Finally, the aisle built around the core structure had stone blocks with the images of gods, mythic creatures, and also perhaps mortal figures (kings?) (Abu Assaf 1990, 58-60, F1-29).

A basalt orthostat found in the wall connecting cella and pronaos of the 'Ain Dārā temple depicts Ištar/Šawuška, the goddess of war and sexual love with emphasized pubic area and wings. Another sculptural fragment from the southwestern side possibly depicts the face of a female divinity with a horned headdress carrying Ištar's rosettes (Abu Assaf 1990, 62, G 5, pls 55-56). The temple, based on these reliefs and abundant lion imagery – the emblematic animal of Ištar – may have been dedicated to this divinity (Abu Assaf 1993, 170).²² This characteristic

22 Mirko Novak (2012, 49), on the other hand, argues that the Ištar/Šawuška relief was not centrally located in the temple, and the mountain gods depicted in the platform base in the cella more often supported the Storm God in Hittite iconography. Thus, the Storm God was more likely the divinity worshipped at 'Ain Dārā.

intrinsically connects the structure to Temple A in Prinias since both spaces seem to have been devoted to female divinities that combined sexuality and wild animals (particularly lions): Ištar/Šawušga at 'Ain Dārā and *Potnia Theron* at Prinias.

Temple A in Prinias in Crete had clear connections with 'Ain Dārā going beyond the worship of divinities with similar qualities, though it was certainly not a copy. With its massive stone lower body and mudbrick walls, larger cella and pronaos, the Syrian temple was four times larger than the Cretan building. Furthermore, the hearth at the center of the main room at Prinias formed a distinctively local feature in its Aegean context (Prent 2005, 441; 2007, 141). The most obvious feature that linked the two buildings is their basic ante-style plan. The closed spaces of both structures were entered through smaller colonnaded porches, the combination of which formed clear rectangular plans. Both buildings were raised on stone platforms, on which carved orthostats stood. Such low placement of carved blocks in temple façades, according to the current state of archaeological findings, was most clearly practiced in the Near East only in 'Ain Dārā. Other Neo-Hittite temples, such as the temples of the Storm God in Carchemish (construction early 10th century BC) and Aleppo (destruction *ca.* 900 BC) had relief decorations in the interior of the sanctuary, though the former may still have been in use in the eighth century BC.²³ The gate sphinxes displaying the same gesture and position are not found in any other Iron Age temples in the Aegean or Near East. Despite the size and locational differences, the opposing lion groups of the door lintel at Prinias find their counterparts in the lower course orthostats on the exterior of the 'Ain Dārā temple.

This temple was in all likelihood a well-known edifice in the Eastern Mediterranean because of its size and extraordinary sculptural program, but it may not be the only Neo-Hittite structure that inspired the patrons and the builders of the Orientalizing-period cult places in the Aegean. In the Neo-Hittite realm, relief orthostat ornamentation was not limited to temples, but also covered the façades of monumental gates and palaces in sites such as Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), Carchemish, Sakçagözü, Zincirli (ancient Sam'al), Karatepe (ancient Azatiwataya), and Malatya (ancient Melid).²⁴ Raised on a massive mudbrick platform, the Western Palace in Tell Halaf (*ca.* tenth to eighth centuries BC) had a monumental entrance with statues of three divinities and standing on column bases in the shape of a lion, a lioness and a bull (Fig. 16). Behind these statues was the main doorway of the palace protected by two standing griffins on each side (Orthmann 2002, 34 and 36, figs 15 and 18). The relief orthostats on the façade present the movement of various figures (gods, sphinxes, animals, and hunters) from each side toward the entrance. The back façade of the palace platform, looking at the lower part of the ancient town, was also covered with carved slabs depicting mythological figures, everyday scenes, and different animals including lions (Orthmann 2002, 55-85; Cholidis 2014, 94-95). The so-called *Hilani* III in Zincirli, which was used as an official building possibly for royal banquets from *ca.* 720 BC until its destruction sometime after 676 BC, was entered through a similarly constructed porch with two columns each standing on double-sphinx form bases (Fig. 17) (Orthmann 1971, 64-65; Gilibert 2011, 88-90). Two lion figures attached to door jambs behind the colonnade guard the entrance together with the *Mischwesen*. Relief orthostats covered each side of this monumental entrance at the visitor's eye level, and portrayed a solemn procession of court officials toward the doorway. At Carchemish, the so-called Long Wall of Sculpture in the Lower Palace Area between the Water and King's Gates presents an extensive inscription and a procession of soldiers with spears, deities, a queen, and charioteers advancing toward a third monumental passageway (Fig. 18). A guilloche pattern borders the entire parade at the bottom. The main composition and content of this large-scale relief group exhibits a remarkable resemblance to the wall paintings in the apsidal temple in

23 For the sculptural program of the Temple of the Storm God at Aleppo, see Kohlmeyer 2009. At Carchemish, the exterior wall of the sacred precinct of the Storm God, known in scholarship as the Long Wall of Sculpture, was decorated with carved orthostats (Fig. 18), but unlike the 'Ain Dārā temple, the façades of the temple building within the precinct did not have carved imagery.

24 Winfried Orthmann's study (1971) still provides the most comprehensive survey of Neo-Hittite art and architectural sculpture, and includes detailed discussions of the sculptural programs in these sites.

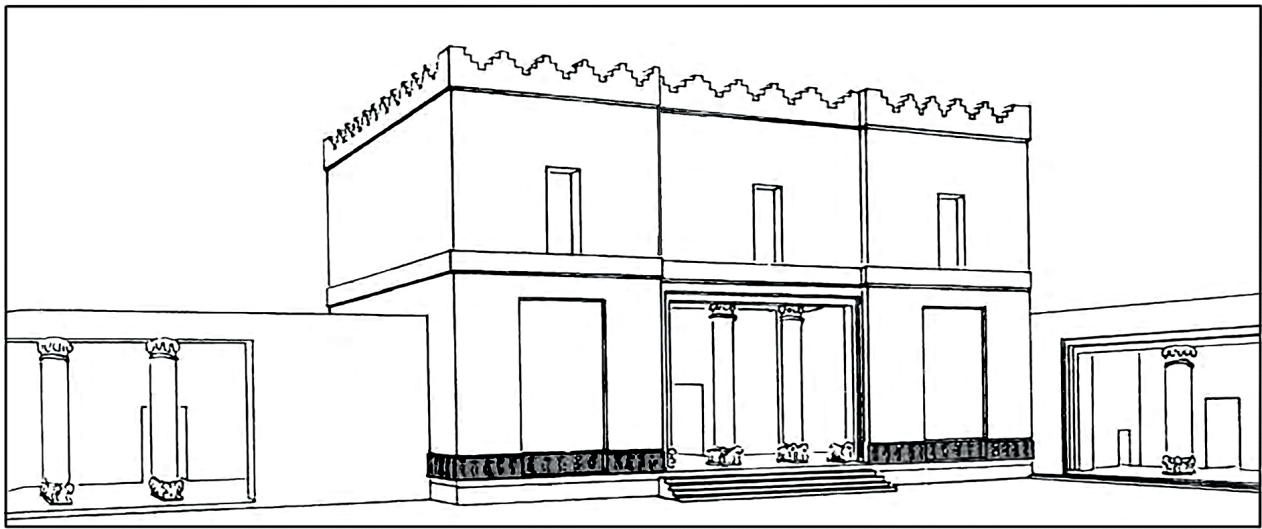


Fig. 17. Reconstruction of *Hilani* III in Zincirli, ca. 720-670 BC (after Orthmann 1975, 418, pl. 134; courtesy of Winfried Orthmann).

Kalapodi, Greece (cf. Figs 11 and 18). Though the production of this relief group took place in the 10th century BC, it probably survived into the seventh century BC even after the Assyrian conquest of the city in 717 BC.²⁵

These examples can be multiplied using other structures from the same sites or other Neo-Hittite settlements such as Malatya-Arslantepe. They all shared certain characteristics involving the use of relief orthostats and other forms of sculptural decoration. Aside from the cases in temple interiors (e.g. 'Ain Dārā, Carchemish, Aleppo), carved basalt or limestone blocks generally enclosed exteriors of monumental buildings with emphasis on main entrances (a pattern that is also observed in Prinias and Gortyn). Thus, they were highly visible and part of the urban fabric from the twelfth to the seventh century BC, providing the backdrop to royal ceremonies and spectacles such as military triumphs and royal entries that were attended by a sizable audience (Gilibert 2011, 133). Moreover, as with the decoration at Temple A in Prinias, the movement of figures toward the gateway of, for instance, a temple, palace, or city gate was a major feature of most relief compositions. Even at the 'Ain Dārā temple, a sense of movement toward the colonnaded entrance was achieved through the sphinxes and lions.

Although the Neo-Hittite city-states provide the amplest and earliest evidence for the application of relief orthostats and processional scenes in public spaces during the Iron Age, their origin should be sought in Hittite Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age. The earliest examples come from the major settlements of the Hittite kingdom located in the Halys basin. For instance, sphinx and lion protomes decorated two city gates and a temple in the Upper City of Hattuša, the kingdom's capital.²⁶ In a gate tower of Hattuša, the image of a god – perhaps a deified king – with an elaborate axe and wearing a short tunic, was cut in high relief on a large stone block walking toward an entrance named as the 'King's Gate' (Neve 2001). The doorway of a monumental building in Šapinuwa to the northeast of the capital was decorated with an orthostat block carved with the image of a similar god with an axe (Süel 2015, 102, fig. 3). Compared to these cases, the Hittite settlement in Alacahöyük presents a more comprehensive orthostat program applied to the entire city gate whereby two greater than life-sized sphinxes were carved into the door jambs of the gate tower (Mellink 1970). The lower façade on each side was decorated with reliefs in

25 It seems that the Assyrian administration was responsible for the destruction of some lion and ruler representations across the Carchemish citadel after its conquest in 717 BC by Sargon II, but a substantial portion of the city's public art created during the Neo-Hittite rule seems to have remained intact until its destruction by the Babylonians in 605 BC (Gilibert 2011, 19–54).

26 Sixty-three fragments of carved stone that originally belonged to life-size and above life-size lion-shaped orthostats were found in and around Temple 2 of the Upper City (Neve 2001, 55–58).

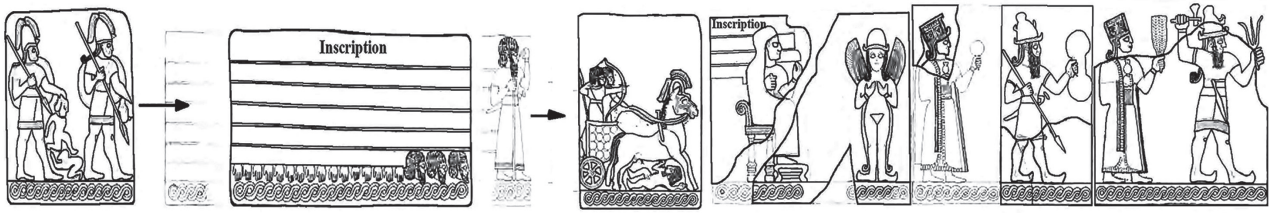


Fig. 18. The Long Wall of Sculpture in Carchemish, ca. ninth century BC (after Hawkins 1972, fig. 4a) (courtesy of Cambridge University Press).

registers: on one side of the gate, the top register portrays a hunting scene, with bowmen aiming at a boar and deer, while the bottom register shows the royal couple leading a religious festival that culminated before the cult statue of the Storm God. On the other side of the gate, the preserved lower course depicts the procession of a group of male attendants toward a seated goddess. The orientation of both processions is toward the sphinx gate.²⁷

At this point, it should be noted that the use of orthostats as a form of architectural revetment technique was practiced in Syrian cities such as Ebla, Mari, Aleppo and Alalakh from the early second millennium BC onwards. However, only uncarved basalt or limestone slabs were used in this early phase (Sams 1989, 449; Harmanşah 2013, 169-174). In the second half of the second millennium BC, on Hittite initiative, images of gods, kings, and other figures appeared on those stone surfaces involved in various actions. Thus, dated to the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC, the aforementioned Hittite monuments with carved lower façades were the earliest structures displaying a distinctive architectural ornamentation (Harmanşah 2013, 178-180; Novak 2012, 50). After the collapse of the Hittite kingdom around 1180 BC, this architectural technique survived in Southern Anatolia and North Syria by being exploited in public as well as in more restricted spaces across the Neo-Hittite territories (gates vs. temple interiors). From there it seems to have found its way to Crete during the Orientalizing period. If Marconi's identification of the relief fragments from Mycenae as orthostat remains is correct (Marconi 2007, 5-6), then there was at least one contemporary temple or a cult-related building in mainland Greece decorated with such sculptures.

Land as well as sea routes were probably employed in this transmission. The archaeological excavations across the former territories of the Phrygian kingdom in Central Anatolia show that this Iron Age polity may have played an important role in the process. The carved orthostat fragments that were found in its capital city, Gordion, probably decorated a gate structure in the eighth century BC or even earlier (Sams 1988; 1989). Similar orthostat fragments were also found in Ankara embellishing some other Phrygian structures dated to the eighth or seventh centuries BC (Buluç 1988). The remains from Gordion, with their carving techniques and the variety of themes engraved on them (*e.g.* lion-slaying or mastering by gods), display remarkable similarity to their counterparts in the Neo-Hittite centers, especially the ones in Carchemish (Sams 1989, 448-450). Although these remains are fragmentary, they indicate that the polities on the Anatolian plateau may have been one of the intermediaries, through which the idea of using relief sculpture with ideological content in public architecture was filtered to the Aegean world during the Orientalizing period. In this context, the local elites in various Aegean communities, especially the ones in Crete, may have emulated the Phrygian, as well as Neo-Hittite, exploitation of images in publicly visible contexts to boost their privileged status in the society.

In addition to their main design elements (*i.e.* ante-style plan and the use of sculptural orthostats), individual motifs used in the decorations of Temple A in Prinias and some other Orientalizing-period cult places in the Aegean also had parallels with the imagery from Neo-Hittite architectural contexts. For instance, armed soldiers on horses

27 Although it does not qualify as architectural sculpture, the Rockcut Sanctuary of Yazılıkaya near Hattuša also presents an interesting early case for the use of processional compositions. In this open-air sacred space, Hittite artisans carved on living rock a parade of female and male divinities as two groups approaching the center at the end of Room A where the Storm God and the Sun Goddess of Arinna, the chief couple of the pantheon, meet standing on mountain gods and a lion/panther (Bittel 1975).

with round shields and spears similar to the ones in Prinias were depicted in reliefs from Tell Halaf, Zincirli, and Karatepe (Orthmann 1971, pls 17c, 18f, 55b and 60c; Orthmann 2002, 74, fig. 49). Unlike the Prinias procession, however, these were single horse riders and part of multi-themed compositions. The formal procession of foot soldiers at Carchemish, with their helmets, spears and round shields in different building façades, represents another comparison to the Cretan composition (Orthmann 1971, pls 25d, 28e-f, 29a-b, and 34c; Gilibert 2011, 30-32, figs 8-9). The grazing deer motif carved on the lintel of Temple A was a typical Near eastern motif that was used both in small objects (in parade) and architectural decoration (single) (Aruz *et al.* 2014, 160-161, cat. no. 53; Orthmann 1971, pls 56c-d and g). The intertwined volute frieze at the bottom of the Prinias procession scene is a more rounded and ornate version of a volute band that separated two registers of armed men carved at a gate of the Karatepe citadel in Cilicia (Çambel, Özyar 2003, 71-72, NVI 2). This pattern probably originated in Phoenicia (Winter 1979, 122), and its derivatives were used, for instance, in an Orientalizing-period ivory pyxis from Chiuse in Italy and a North Syrian style bronze bowl from Kalapodi (Sannibale 2014, 314, fig. 4.25; Niemeier 2016, 235, fig. 1b). Just as in the Neo-Hittite realm (*e.g.* the 'Ain Dārā temple, the Long Wall of Sculpture in Carchemish, and the Karatepe Gate), it seems to have been used interchangeably with guilloche pattern as the bottom marker or register divider of wall decorations in the Aegean architectural contexts (*e.g.* Temple A in Prinias and the apsidal temple in Kalapodi).

The chariot imagery similar to the one in the Khania relief (Fig. 10) is attested in numerous examples, especially in small portable objects, across the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near east from the Late Bronze Age onwards, so it may have had multiple roots.²⁸ However, it appears in large-scale architectural contexts only in Egypt, Assyria, and the Neo-Hittite world. The Neo-Hittite group provides the amplest and most publicly visible corpus, with examples from the city gates and official buildings of Carchemish (Orthmann 1971, pls 24a, c-f, 37a-b), Zincirli (Orthmann 1971, pl. 57a), Tell Halaf (Orthmann 1971, pls 9a, 11b-c), Malatya (Orthmann 1971, pl. 42a), Sakçagözü (Orthmann 1971, pl. 51c), and Tell Ta'yinat (Orthmann 1971, pl. 52f). In the Khania relief, the archer and other soldiers protecting the temple are portrayed kneeling in a similar way to the Iron Age hunters depicted in reliefs from Karatepe and Zincirli, and in Alacahöyük in the preceding Late Bronze Age (Çambel, Özyar 2003, 78-79, NVI 10; Orthmann 1971, pls 56b and 57f; Mellink 1970).²⁹ However, the siege composition of the same work with an architectural edifice and soldiers attacking and protecting it, finds its closest parallels not in the Neo-Hittite realm but in the Kadesh reliefs of Ramses II (1279-1213 BC) (Kitchen 1982, 53-60, fig. 18-19) and Assyrian palace reliefs depicting sieges of citadels (Curtis, Reade 1995, 46-49, cat. no. 3-4).

Briefly, Temple A in Prinias, Crete and some other cult places across the Aegean exhibit noteworthy commonalities with the monumental Neo-Hittite structures of the Iron Age not just in terms of their spatial designs and main decorations, but also regarding the individual motifs that filled in their walls. This was not a random occurrence but a result of direct or indirect interactions between different Aegean communities and the Neo-Hittite polities in Anatolia and Northern Syria. In this process, small portable objects could serve as one of the vehicles transporting the aforementioned figural and non-figural motifs to the Aegean. On the other hand, the transfer of the major concepts used in architectural design (*i.e.* ante-style form, sculpted orthostats, the use of certain iconographic elements in ways similar to the Near Eastern contexts, etc.) must have required direct or indirect knowledge of the artistic and architectural environments of the Near East, which almost certainly happened through long-term human contact. This aspect of the transfer of ideas and technologies will be discussed in the following section.

28 For instance, the images of rulers or soldiers hunting, attacking enemies or in solemn processions appear on an ivory game box from Enkomi (12th century BC) (Aruz *et al.* 2008, 412-413, no. 265), a Middle-Assyrian cylinder seal from Aššur (*ca.* 1133 BC) (Donbaz 1976, 15-16, A 113, pls 23-25), and on an Attic funerary krater (*ca.* 750-735 BC) (Picón 2007, 48, no. 29).

29 The ultimate origin of chariot imagery was the pharaonic battle and hunting scenes on small objects and, more famously, on the walls of the Egyptian temples from the New Kingdom (*ca.* 1550-1069 BC). The chest found in the tomb of Tutankhamun is one of the earliest cases portraying the king hunting and slaying enemies on his chariot (Robins 2008, 160, fig. 189). In most of Egyptian history, temples were closed to the vast majority of the population except for royalty, clergy and elite officials, though remained more accessible than an entirely sealed tomb. The temenos walls, which originally encircled the major temples with the famous battle reliefs, further limited their visibility from outside.

TRAVELING MERCENARIES, MERCHANTS, ARTISANS: CHANNELS OF ARTISTIC INTERACTIONS IN THE IRON AGE MEDITERRANEAN

Through which channels were the artistic and architectural features, patterns, and ideas that originated in the Near East, specifically in Anatolia and Northern Syria, transferred to the Aegean during the Orientalizing period? And under which specific social, economic, and political conditions? A few main arteries may have played major roles. A great deal of the Near Eastern and Egyptian objects dedicated in Aegean sanctuaries, especially the ones related to war – such as shields, mace heads or horse frontlets (Fig. 2) – were probably brought by Greek mercenaries (Burkert 1992; Niemeier 2001; Luraghi 2006; Kyrieleis 2009).

Egypt provides the most unequivocal evidence on this topic. Starting with the reign of Psammetichus I (664-610 BC), large numbers of Ionians and Carians from southwestern Anatolia served in the Egyptian army (Herodotus 2.152-153; Niemeier 2001; 2002). In this context, the Greek-type greave and shield with a Gorgon at the center unearthed in Carchemish likely belonged to a soldier with Aegean origins who fought in Egyptian ranks against the Babylonian army in 605 BC (Niemeier 2001, 19-20). The polities on the Levantine coast such as Tyre and Ashdod also hired these soldiers to fight against each other (over border conflicts) or invading Assyrian armies (Niemeier 2001, 18-19; Luraghi 2006, 25).

The evidence for inland Near Eastern polities is also present, albeit less clear. The outer register engraved on a silver bowl from Amathus in Cyprus (*ca.* 710-675 BC) depicts four Greek hoplites in a phalanx accompanying a Near Eastern (Assyrian?) army during a siege (Luraghi 2006, pl. 1). The entire scene, with its representation of the siege and the citadel, destruction of the hinterland, and the register composition, has strong links with the Assyrian palace reliefs of the ninth century BC. It seems to be the earliest representation of a hoplite phalanx that was possibly in the service of the Assyrian king (Luraghi 2006, 37-38). The poet Alcaeus of Mytilene later celebrated his brother's return home after serving in the Babylonian army during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BC) in a poem: "You have come from the ends of the earth dear Antimenidas, with the gold-bound ivory heft of the sword with which fighting for Babylonians who dwell in houses of brick four hands long, you performed a mighty deed and saved them all from grievous troubles by slaying a warrior who wanted but one palm's breadth of five royal cubits of stature" (cited in Niemeier 2001, 18). These cases show that a substantial number of Greeks, mostly from Ionia and the Cyclades, seem to have traveled across the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean as mercenaries from at least the late eighth century BC onwards.³⁰ Their tenure may have lasted decades, thus resulting in exposure to Near Eastern and Egyptian objects and practices for extended periods of time. Some of these men returned home with foreign objects (*e.g.* Antimenidas' sword with a gold-bound ivory heft) and with memories and ideas about the locales they had been to in the Near East and Egypt, such as the image of Babylonian "houses of brick four hands long."

According to Marian Feldman (2014, 161-170), the mercenary theory proposed by various scholars, including the author of this study, does not provide a reliable explanation for the arrival of the objects such as the famous Heraion bronze frontlet to the Aegean sanctuaries (Fig. 2). This specific object is inscribed with the name of Haza'el, the king of Damascus (*ca.* 843-803 BC), and potentially taken by the Assyrian army as booty during or after the reign of this monarch. It was, however, found in the layers of the Aegean sanctuary dated to the late seventh - early sixth centuries BC (Feldman 2014, 161; see also Whitley 2019, 600). Instead of mercenaries, Feldman (2014, 169) favors a diplomatic route for the arrival of such objects to the Aegean that involved Assyrian and Phrygian courts and the officials of the sanctuaries. These objects, in her view, could be the dedications of the courts such as

30 According to Niemeier (2001, 23-24), with the exception of Egypt, rather independent and smaller groups of Greek soldiers served in Near Eastern armies. This number, however, could be actually much higher since the reason for hiring Greek mercenaries in the Near Eastern and Egyptian armies was the effectiveness of their hoplite weapons and phalanx system, which required the presence of large soldier units (Luraghi 2006, 23-24). Piracy should also be considered as a venue of interaction between the Aegean and the Near East. The pirates from Ionia seem to have ravaged the Levantine and Cilician coasts during the eighth century BC as evidenced by the text inscribed on the Sargon Cylinder (Fuchs 1993, 290, 9a). Nino Luraghi (2006) argues that many of these pirates may have become mercenaries once they came to terms with the Near Eastern polities including Assyria.

the one of Phrygia based in Gordion, which received them from the Assyrians as diplomatic gifts in the first place. As discussed earlier, the Iron Age kingdoms of Anatolia may have played an important role in the transmission of artistic ideas and objects from the Near East to the Aegean. In this context, Feldman's proposal, inspired from Ann Gunter's earlier work (2009), is certainly plausible, but the diplomatic gift-giving was probably not the only possibility for the transfer of elite Near Eastern objects. The case of Antimenidas shows that the mercenaries that came from elite families in the Aegean returned home with exquisite objects, gifted to them by Near Eastern monarchs for their service. In this context, the Heraion frontlet might be one such object acquired by a mercenary, who presented it to the sanctuary after his safe return home. Its late deposition date in the sixth century BC does not necessarily mean that it arrived at the sanctuary around that time. Due to their antiquity, such objects of Near Eastern origin had great value among the Aegean communities, and thus were kept in the sanctuaries for a long time until their final deposition (Whitley 2013b; 2019). Therefore, it is more likely that the prized frontlet inscribed with the name of the Damascene ruler came to the Heraion long before its deposition date of sixth century BC.

Trade was perhaps the most important instrument for the circulation of people in the Iron-Age Mediterranean (Sherratt, Sherratt 1993). The rise of the Assyrian empire at its eastern end caused an increase in the demand for raw materials – especially for metals such as iron, silver, and copper – from the ninth century BC onwards. These metals, especially silver, were pivotal for the tribute and tax payments to the Assyrian imperial administration by the Neo-Hittite polities in Anatolia and North Syria, and the Phoenician cities on the Levantine coast (Frankenstein 1979; Postgate 1992).³¹ Assyrian records show that the imperial administration asserted its firm control especially over Phoenician trade through military power and treaties such as the one of Esarhaddon (680-669 BC) with Tyre, Byblos, and other port cities in the region (Parpola, Watanabe 1988). Under the strict taxation system of Assyria, the Phoenician city of Tyre made payments amounting at times to 150 talents of gold (Oded 1974, 49). The Neo-Hittite kingdoms of Unqi, Sam'al, and Carchemish, on the other hand, in addition to gold and silver, sent iron to the imperial administration (Maxwell-Hyslop 1974, 148-149; Luke 2003, 21-22). Especially in the case of Unqi, based in Kunulua (Tell Ta'yinat), Greek merchants from Euboea may have been among the providers of the metal throughout the eighth century BC, via the port city of Al Mina at the mouth of the Orontes River, where a substantial portion of the ceramic assemblage was composed of Geometric pottery especially from this part of Greece (Luke 2003).³² Contrary to earlier scholarly views, the settlement was probably not a colony established and run by Greeks, but controlled by the kingdom of Unqi.³³ However, as a trade hub, it probably had a mixed population, including people from the Aegean as well as, for example, Phoenicians and Arameans (Luke 2003, 23-28; Niemeier 2001, 14).

Unsurprisingly, expansion of the search for raw materials, especially metals, across the Mediterranean – together with the emergence of Near Eastern-style art objects (imports or locally produced versions) – corresponds to the Assyrian expansion from the ninth to seventh centuries BC (Gunter 2009; Aruz 2014). For instance, Phoenicians were likely present, among many other locations, in Etruria, in Italy and in Cilicia in southern Anatolia during the eighth and seventh centuries BC for the rich resources of these regions (Markoe 1992; 1996; Özyar 2016). Phoenician-style silver and gold bowls decorated with Egyptian, North Syrian, and Assyrian motifs were unearthed in different Etruscan sites such as Cerveteri (Markoe 1992, pls VIII-XVIII). These luxury objects were likely local products made by Phoenician craftsmen (or Etruscan novices) for Etruscan elites, who gave the Levantine merchants access to the silver deposits of the region (Markoe 1992, 74-75; Sherratt, Sherratt 1993, 368-369). Various metal ores in Iberia, Southern

31 Silver remained as the main exchange standard in the Mediterranean from the Iron Age to the Byzantine times when gold gained importance (Sherratt, Sherratt 1993, 374).

32 The large amounts of iron sent to Assyria imply that the iron resources around the Amanus mountains were likely exploited as well by the local polities to meet the tribute demand (Maxwell-Hyslop 1974, 148-149).

33 Although Al Mina is portrayed by some scholars as a Greek emporium similar to Naukratis in the Nile Delta (Boardman 1980; 1999; Fantalkin 2006, 200-201), this view is based solely on the high concentration of Greek pottery found at the site dated to the eighth and seventh centuries BC (Niemeier 2001; Luke 2003).

France, Sardinia, and Sicily were also exploited by the Phoenician and, to a lesser extent, Greek communities, and similar exchange patterns may have been formed with local elites when necessary.

Archaeological evidence shows that Crete in particular was crucial as a main hub in this long-distance trade network, resulting in the temporary or permanent settlement of people from the Near East. This was largely due to the advantageous geographic location of the island providing safe passage for sailors between the eastern and western halves of the Mediterranean (Negbi 1992, 612, fig. 3; Sherratt, Sherratt 1993, 364). Reflecting this strategic position, the island produced large amounts of artistic and architectural features imbued with Near Eastern qualities. For instance, Kommos, on its southern coast, which probably served as a transitional harbor to a mixed group of merchants (Csapo 1991; Shaw 1989; Sherratt, Sherratt 1993; Hoffmann 1997), produced a temple with benches and tripillar structure similar to some Levantine sanctuaries (Shaw 1989; 2000; Morris 1992, 154-155). The recently excavated cult building in Prinias to the south of Temples A and B also has a room with such a tripillar structure, implying a ritual function similar to that of the building at Kommos (Pappalardo 2018). Many Orientalizing-period jewelry and other metal objects such as the bronze bowls and shields from the Idaean Cave and the Eleutherna necropolis carried strong Near Eastern elements both in terms of iconography and production techniques (Stampolides 2014). Some of these objects are considered as a testament to the foreign presence at this time, including craftsmen from Northern Syria and the Levant in Crete (Hoffmann 1997, 188). Thus, people originated from the Aegean visiting the Near East or the Phoenicians using the Aegean islands (Crete, Rhodes, Samos, etc.) for mercantile activities were likely among the intermediaries carrying Near Eastern objects and know-how to the Aegean world.

Recent studies especially on the archaeological, art historical and textual material from Cilicia in southern Anatolia, demonstrate that the true extent of the Aegean-Near Eastern relations during the Orientalizing period and after goes beyond the mercantile or mercenary incentives of the time. The contents of the Phoenician-Luwian bilingual inscription and sculpted orthostats that decorated the gates of the Karatepe citadel (ancient Azatiwataya) show that a part of the Cilician population around 700 BC may have been the descendants of the communities who had migrated to the region from the Aegean around the beginning of the Iron Age in the twelfth century BC (Özyar 2016).³⁴ According to the inscription, Azatiwatas, the local lord who commissioned the fortress and its sculptures, was the servant of a dynasty based in Adanawa (modern Adana) whose members introduced themselves in different inscriptions as the descendants of the House of Mopsos, the legendary Greek seer and warrior (Hawkins 2000, 51-56, nos. XXI, XLII and LVIII). Warikas, a member of this dynasty, named the Cilician plain in an inscription he erected in Çineköy as the land of *Hiyawa*, which probably derived from the word *Abhiyawa*, the name given to the Mycenaean world in Hittite sources of the Late Bronze Age (Hawkins 2009). Thus, these Aegean settlers may have given their new home, Cilicia, the name of their former homeland (Özyar 2016, 143-144). Interestingly, the Babylonian historian Berossos of the early Hellenistic period mentions a campaign by Sennacherib (705-681 BC) against the Greeks in Cilicia that could be a reference to the Cilician campaign of this Assyrian king in 696 BC (Burstein 1978, 24, 2a; Luraghi 2006, 33). The archaeological record of Tarsus-Gözlükule at the western end of the Cilician plain testifies to this record with the traces of widespread destruction across the settlement in the early seventh century BC (Goldman 1963, 7-8). Sennacherib himself also mentions capturing Ionian pirates in his own inscriptions (Frahm 1997, 117; Lanfranchi 2000, 28, no. 92). Whether Berossos refers to the contemporary pirates from the Aegean, the inhabitants of Cilicia descended from earlier immigrants or a coalition of the two is, unfortunately, not clear.

Aslı Özyar's iconographic analysis of the Karatepe reliefs shows further links between Cilicia and the Aegean world, though stylistically they belonged to the Syro-Anatolian visual idiom, and motifs from different parts of the Near East such as North Syria, Phoenicia, and Mesopotamia were included in the composition (Özyar 2013). The

34 Many settlements in Cilicia and the broader eastern Mediterranean suffered violent destruction around 1200 BC, which resulted in the collapse of the so-called Late Bronze Age international system. Locally produced versions of Late Helladic III C (LHIIIC) pottery, which originated in the Aegean, emerged in many towns including Tarsus-Gözlükule and Kinet Höyük in Cilicia, Tell Ta'inat in the Amuq and Tel Miqne and Ashdod in Palestine in the aftermath of these destructions (Goldman 1956; Dotham and Zukerman 2004; Mountjoy 2005; Gates 2006; Janeway 2008; 2011).

scenes of Greek hoplites in one-to-one combat, or Marsyas challenging Apollo to musical competition, clearly originated in the Aegean with no Near Eastern antecedents (Çambel, Özyar 2003; Özyar 2013). The reliefs also show a Greek ship with a long, shallow galley with a ram after a victory in a sea battle (Çambel, Özyar 2003, 84-89). The captain raises a cup while dead bodies are floating under the ship. The ruler of the fortress must have carved this on his edifice because he associated himself with the victors from the Aegean (Özyar 2016, 142-143 and fig. 6). Overall, although the Aegean communities who came to Cilicia around the twelfth century BC had mixed with the locals within a few generations, as indicated by the change in material culture, the Karatepe corpus, together with other Cilician monuments around 700 BC, shows that a memory of their ancestors may have survived into the Orientalizing period and led to closer relations with the Aegean world (Özyar 2016).

In summary, the world with which the Aegean communities interacted during the Orientalizing period was an international one whereby people, together with them, worked objects and raw materials were in circulation on an unprecedented scale across the Near East and Mediterranean. The main engine of this cosmos was the Assyrian empire based in northern Mesopotamia. Through warfare, mass deportations of the conquered populations, and high demand for raw materials and luxury objects, the empire changed the demographic, economic, and artistic landscape of the Near East and Mediterranean (Gunter 2009, 178-183).³⁵ For instance, many of the North Syrian ivory, metal and also sculptural workshops based in Neo-Hittite polities dissolved after the annexation of the region by Assyria in the eighth century BC (Gunter 2009, 178-179). In this period of turmoil, while many North Syrian artisans were likely to have been deported to the Assyrian heartland, some may have gone to the west, away from the empire's reach.

The Aegean communities were connected to this world through multiple bonds. They were constantly subject to influences brought by their own kin (mercenaries and merchants), foreign artisans, merchants, and other people moving across the Mediterranean for different reasons. Although we do not have written documents from that period, intermarriages between the locals and eastern immigrants must have been among the factors leading to intense cultural interactions in the Aegean during the Orientalizing age (Morris 1997, 67). The Aegean communities were also interacting with their Phrygian and other Anatolian neighbors, who already adopted Neo-Hittite style architectural decorations. In this context, the concept of 'embodied knowledge' presents another useful theoretical framework to understand the transfer of ideas to the Aegean during the Orientalizing period. 'Embodied knowledge' is the shared meaning and value, as well as physical and intellectual efforts, invested in objects and practices that are products of long-term internalized habits (Pollock 2013). It includes anything from specific ways of producing, using, and valuing artifacts, to the common meaning and function attributed to religious rituals in a given culture. The transfer of such cultural, material, and technological practices across geographies is possible only through the permanent or long-term travel of (or interaction with) the people who were originally born into donor societies (Pollock 2013, 85-86).

In the case of the Orientalizing period, the artisans and other people who migrated to the Aegean from North Syria or other parts of the Near East were certainly among the carriers of the embodied knowledge of making art and architecture in specific ways (Hoffman 1997, 16-18). Many Greek mercenaries were exposed, among other things, to the religious and cultic built environments and practices of the Near East for long periods of time. Since some of these mercenaries were members of the elite in their home polities in the Aegean, they may have been leading figures in the adaptation of the new architectural and artistic paraphernalia imported from the East. For instance, Alcaeus and Antimenidas were members of an elite political faction in Mytilene, the leading city on Lesbos, and took part in a struggle for control of the city and the island in the early sixth century BC, which at times involved violence among rival groups (Podlecki 1969, 76-78). The Cilician communities with possible Aegean descent complicate this picture even more in that they were culturally connected to both the Aegean and

35 A part of the population in Carchemish, the most important Neo-Hittite kingdom of the Iron Age, was deported to Assyria after its conquest in 717 BC, and new settlers from elsewhere in the empire were sent to the city (Bryce 2012, 280-281). This was not unique, but rather a pattern implemented throughout the Assyrian domination of the Near East.

Syro-Anatolian worlds, further testimony of the porous borders existing between being a Greek, Luwian, Aramean, or Phoenician during the Orientalizing period. This aggressive but rather open cultural landscape was the biggest facilitator of the transfer of the ideas and technologies related to art and architecture from the Neo-Hittite realm in particular, and the Near East in general, to the Aegean.

CONCLUSION

The basic premise of this study is that it was not just small-scale portable arts that traveled and brought about fundamental changes in the visual culture of Greece during the Orientalizing period. A study of architecture and architectural sculpture – an area of research that has not received its due attention – also reveals the intense interactions between the Near East and communities in the Aegean during this time of transformation. This process of interaction can be seen most clearly in Temple A in Prinias, which combined local (a hearth temple), Egyptian (the seated statues of the patron goddess) and most notably Neo-Hittite/North Syrian elements on its body. The use of ante-style design and relief orthostats, the integration of sphinx and lion imagery, and the processional composition toward a gate connect this structure directly with the Neo-Hittite monuments of the Iron Age, particularly with the 'Ain Dārā temple in northwestern Syria. This connection was not limited to Prinias and 'Ain Dārā, but included other sites such as Karatepe, Tell Ta'yinat, Zincirli, and Carchemish in the east and Gortyn, Khania, Mycenae, and Kalapodi in the west, implying widespread cultural interaction between the Neo-Hittite realm and the Aegean during the eighth and seventh centuries BC. The small portable objects that were found across the Aegean during this time certainly acted as effective vehicles for transmitting Near Eastern, specifically North Syrian, motifs and compositions to the Aegean, but their use in similar architectural contexts in both regions indicates direct or indirect knowledge of the Neo-Hittite built environments where those motifs and compositions were originally used. This knowledge was taken to the Aegean via different channels including, but not limited to, traveling artisans, mercenaries returning home, and 'distant relatives' in the Near East.

The lasting influence of Neo-Hittite architectural models in the mature Greek temples of the Archaic period can be observed especially in the persistence of the ante-style plan and the relief decoration on the temple façade, albeit with modifications. Even after the establishment of the Doric and Ionic orders as the main temple templates, and the relocation of the reliefs above the architrave, the Neo-Hittite way was still practiced in certain temples especially in Western Anatolia (Akurgal 1968, 222). The Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic period temples of Artemis in Ephesos also had reliefs carved on their cubic form column bases, presenting sophisticated imagery to the audience at eye level (Bammer, Muss 1996, 45-61). This dialogue between Greece and the Near East did not end in the Orientalizing and Archaic periods; rather, forms and themes from the East continued to inspire the patrons and artisans in Greece during the Classical period.

Overall, explaining the course of Greek art and architecture, especially during the Orientalizing period, only through Greek ingenuity and selectivity toward 'foreign' elements presumes the presence of a rather monolithic Greek community across the Aegean with a common identity based on ethnic connections, and finds its intellectual source in the Western-centric scholarly discourse that portrays an almost universal division between East and West since Greek antiquity (Held 1997; Gunter 2009). Such approaches neglect the cultural and demographic, as well as artistic and architectural, realities of the Orientalizing Mediterranean. The present study, in contrast, contributes to a wave of recent academic work emphasizing the embeddedness of ancient Greek art and architecture in the political, economic, demographic, and cultural trends that took place across the Mediterranean and the Near East.

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