

# BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE HIGHLANDS

*STUDIES IN HONOR OF  
GIORGIO BUCCELLATI & MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI*

Stefano Valentini - Guido Guarducci  
*(editors)*



# SANEM 3

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STUDIES ON THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THE MEDITERRANEAN







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#### INTRODUZIONE ALLA SERIE EDITORIALE

La serie editoriale SANEM, *Studies on the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean*, nasce come sede ufficiale delle pubblicazioni scientifiche monografiche del CAMNES, *Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies*, per iniziativa del centro studi e grazie al supporto della casa editrice Arbor Sapientiae di Roma.

Il logo della serie, una chimera alata, è stato scelto come incarnazione simbolica delle strette connessioni e delle reciproche influenze tra le culture d'Oriente e quelle d'Occidente. Infatti, l'iconografia della chimera nasce in ambito Classico, ma le sue radici sono da ricercare nel Vicino Oriente come dimostrano gli esempi ritrovati a Ebla (XVIII secolo a.C.) e a Karkemish (XI-IX secolo a.C.).

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Secondo i principi ispiratori del CAMNES, i SANEM sono la sede editoriale ideale non solo per studiosi affermati, ma anche per la pubblicazione del lavoro dei giovani ricercatori all'inizio delle loro carriere accademiche e dei loro progetti di ricerca.

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Tutti i volumi della serie, che sono pubblicati senza una cadenza cronologica regolare, hanno un'edizione cartacea e un'edizione digitale.

*Guido Guarducci, Stefano Valentini*  
(Direzione CAMNES)

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Thank you all!

*Stefano Valentini & Guido Guarducci*

## FOREWORD

STEFANO VALENTINI - GUIDO GUARDUCCI

Since the first time I met them at Tell Mozan in Syria, I think it was the Summer 1993, Marilyn and Giorgio have been a constant presence for me, not only in the field of archaeology, but also, and perhaps above all, from a human point of view. When I worked at Tell Barri under the direction of Paolo Emilio Pecorella, until 2005, we always met in Jezirah, every summer, during the excavation campaigns. It was precisely that year, on the tragic death of my Professor, that my relationship with Marilyn and Giorgio became elective. In those dramatic days, I was able to appreciate their affection, their great friendship, their human depth. In the following years, despite the physical distance and the vicissitudes of life, which unfortunately brought us elsewhere from Syria, I always felt them close to me. Whenever I asked them for advice, an opinion, they have always shown me their sincere closeness, with those manners that are so courteous and affable. Of Marilyn and Giorgio, I have always appreciated their empathy and their intellectual honesty, supported by an innate ability to communicate, share and involve the scientific community with the ultimate goal of giving life to an archeology full of humanity: made up of people and of faces, not only of pottery and of dust. Thanks to them, I gained the awareness that the archaeologist, wherever he is working, must also fulfill his task as cultural mediator: between the cultures of the past and those of the present, and between our Western culture and that of the countries that we host.

Long life to both!

*Stefano*

It is for me a great honor to have curated together with Stefano this volume dedicated to Giorgio and Marilyn. I had the pleasure to meet them during the tragic event that took place at Tell Barri in 2005. Not only they were the first to visit us after the loss of our *Müdir*, Pamî, they stood next to us, consoling and cheering us up. Last but not least, we receive a huge crate of ice-cold beer from Tell Mozan. It may not appear as so, but that was a very special gift coming after a month of hard work and the loss of our professor, besides the rarity of such a commodity! Trust me when I say that all of us who were there, still remember that crate, almost as a symbol of solidarity for our grief, and the words of comfort expressed by Giorgio and Marilyn. That same year we went to visit their site and I was amazed by the welcoming atmosphere of the Mission House and greatly fascinated by the site of Urkesh that Giorgio, Federico and Marilyn thoroughly illustrated us. Thank you very much for your kind and fundamental support during those days. Finally, I would also like to deeply thank Giorgio for accepting since the very first day, back in 2010, to become a member of Scientific Committee of the newborn Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, CAMNES, as well as his and Marilyn's constant support in the following events that we organized. Thank you Giorgio, thank you Marilyn, for your remarkable academic and scientific effort and for your precious friendship.

Con affetto e stima,

*Guido*





## GIORGIO BUCCELLATI & MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI

Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati have worked for many years in the Near East, especially in Syria, Iraq and Turkey. They are at present co-directors of the archaeological expedition to Tell Mozan/Urkish in North-Eastern Syria. They work closely together both in the field and on the publication reports from their excavations, of which five volumes, plus audio-visual presentations, have appeared so far. They lead an international staff comprising colleagues and students from the US, Europe, the Near East and Asia and have given joint lectures on the excavations, and workshops on methods used, at major archaeological centers around the world as well as holding positions as visiting professors in various European universities.

### GIORGIO BUCCELLATI

Giorgio Buccellati studied at the Catholic University (Milan, Italy), Fordam University and received his Ph.D. from the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. He is Research Professor in the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and in the Department of History at UCLA. He founded the Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, of which he served as first director from 1973 until 1983 and where he is now Director of the Mesopotamian Lab. He is currently the Co-Director of the Urkish/Mozan Archaeological Project as well as Director of IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies and Director of AVASA – Associazione per la Valorizzazione dell’Archeologia e della Storia Antica.

His research interests include the ancient languages, the literature, the religion, the archaeology and the history of Mesopotamia, as well as the theory of archaeology. His publications include site reports, text editions, linguistic and literary studies as well as on archaeological theory, historical monographs and essays on philosophy and spirituality. He has published a structural grammar of ancient Babylonian, two volumes on Mesopotamian civilization (on religion and politics; two more are forthcoming on literature as well as on art and architecture), a volume on archaeological theory dealing with the structural, digital and philosophical aspects of the archaeological record. He has authored two major scholarly websites on the archaeology of Urkish and on archaeological theory. As a Guggenheim Fellow, he has traveled to Syria to study modern ethnography and geography for a better understanding of the history of the ancient Amorites. In his field work, he has developed new approaches to the preservation and presentation of archaeological sites and to community archaeology. He has spearheaded the Urkish Extended Project, responding to the crisis of the war in Syria by maintaining a very active presence at the site.

### MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI

Professor Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati has been excavating and conducting research on the archaeology and art history of the ancient Near East for over 50 years. Her Ph.D. from the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago was on the third millennium B.C. in the Caucasus. She taught archaeology and art history in California State University, Los Angeles and is now Visiting Professor at the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA.

She is Director of the Urkish/Mozan Archaeological Project, a site spanning the fourth to the second millennia BC which has provided crucial to our understanding of the history, art and architecture of northern Mesopotamia.

Her research interests include Syro-Mesopotamian seal iconography, ceramics, ancient identification markers, pre-history in the southern Caucasus. She has published many site reports based on work in Terqa and especially Mozan/Urkish, and is currently finishing a digital volume on the excavated ceramics from Urkish, to be published within the Urkish Global Record website. One of her important publications was on the function of the necromantic pit excavated in Urkish, unique in its monumentality and significance; her research on the seal impressions of the AP Palace has brought to light the artistic value of these objects as well as the complex royal court to which they give witness.

With the cessation of excavations in Syria due to the war she has returned to the Republic of Georgia to work with the Italian team from the Ca’ Foscari University, Venice. This fieldwork activity lead her to curate an exhibit entitled “Georgia Paese d’oro e di fede. Identità e alterità nella storia di un popolo” on the archaeological and artistic heritage of the Republic of Georgia.

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# BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE HIGHLANDS

*STUDIES IN HONOR OF  
GIORGIO BUCCELLATI & MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI*







# RUWEIHA, A VILLAGE FROM NORTHERN SYRIA DURING BYZANTINE PERIOD: STUDY OF PRESERVATION OF DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

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## *Abstract*

The village of Ruweiha is one of the most important archaeological sites in northern Syria from the Roman and Byzantine periods, which are listed on the World Heritage List since 2011. The archaeological buildings in this site are in a good state of preservation. There are many distinctive residential buildings of large size, in addition to two important churches, a press, and several important tombs. In this research we will describe the general state of architectural preservation of residential buildings that were not previously studied, as well as the decorative elements on its façades in order to reach a deeper common understanding of the nature of the houses in this extraordinary site.

Ruweiha is situated on the north-eastern side of Jebel az-Zawiya (az-Zawiya mountain) in northern Syria, it is located on a high plateau overlooking the neighboring agricultural plains. The village is one of the largest villages in the limestone massif, and one of the villages that has preserved its architectural buildings until recent times, and listed on the World Heritage List since 2011 (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The village consists of a group of buildings, built entirely of limestone in large blocks, mostly dating back to the early Byzantine period. In the southern part of the village there is a church from the fifth century AD, and on the eastern side the tomb is in the shape of the Roman temple. It dates back to the end of the 4th century AD,<sup>2</sup> and at the end of the north-east is the church of Bissos, built in the sixth century AD, it is one of the largest churches in the limestone massif. On the outskirts of this church is another temple-shaped tomb, believed to date back to the fourth century AD, as well as another domed tomb, and many of the magnificent rural buildings can be seen.<sup>3</sup>

The houses of Ruweiha have a special states of conservation, and large houses in comparison with the houses of other villages in the south of the limestone massif. where domestic buildings constitute the largest number in place. This village, like other villages in the region, was hit by earthquakes, which led to the

migration of the population<sup>4</sup>. The most attractive are the huge façades that resisted the destructive time factors, which still rise a few meters in some of them and are often built on two levels, of large limestone blocks that were extracted from quarries such as those at the entrance to the village of Ruweiha (figs. 2, 3).

It seems that the village at the end of the fifth century and during the sixth century AD, was settled by large landowners who built the big houses with high walls. We can see traces of the Roman era, especially in the western side of the village and in the middle. The best example is the house 13 of the pre-Christian period, which was built of a different technique from other buildings dating back to the Byzantine era, but archaeological excavations must be conducted to find out more precisely the nature of these Roman-era monuments. However, the Roman ruins of this site are more evident than other sites, such as Sergilla or al-Bara. Therefore, there are many hypotheses about this site as to how this village developed, as well as the nature of the settlement during the Roman period, and during the transition to the Byzantine period, for all this, it needs to conduct archaeological excavations organized on this site.

Previous studies have been carried out by H. C. Butler and G. Tchalenko have pointed to the existence of the beginnings of urban organization such as the existence of markets in some villages of the limestone massif, as Dahes in Jebal Barisha and Ruweiha in Jebal az-Zawiya. This is evidenced by the presence of an important building in the village of Ruweiha, consisting of two-storey porticos. It has a rectangular outline, which is a central square surrounded by

<sup>1</sup> This research is part of book project about the preservation of cultural heritage in northern Syria (The Distribution of Land in the Limestone Massif of Northern Syria. New data for the protection and preservation of Syrian cultural heritage) under preparation with the support of Gerda Henkel Foundation in Germany.

<sup>2</sup> About studying the Tombs in this region: Griesheimer 1997, 165-211.

<sup>3</sup> About studying the churches in this site: De Vougie 1865-187; Butler 1899-1900; Mattern 1933; Tchalenk 1958; Naccache 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Abdulkarim *et al.* 2002/3, 359-379.

these porticos from the four sides.<sup>5</sup> Later George Tate presented another hypothesis about the function of this building, which was assumed to be residential in the light of the excavations conducted in Dahes, which showed that the agora that G. Tchalenko assumed was only a domestic building. The research and excavation work in the villages of northern Syria continued between 2009 and 2010 at the site of the Ruweiha directed by Maamoun Abdulkarim from the Syrian side and G. Charpentier from the French side in building 22 in order to confirm the validity of the hypotheses presented previously, therefore large parts of the building and around the place occupancy was confirmed during the Byzantine period until the Islamic eras.<sup>6</sup> The excavation work stopped at the start of the crisis in Syria in 2011, but the initial results during two seasons in this building have given us a lot of concepts related to the emergence and development of this building. The preliminary evidence indicates that this building consists of two sections dedicated to housing and commerce, but we need to work in the future to complete the work in all parts of the building to clarify the image accurately and to arrive at a coherent hypothesis about the nature of this building.

The state of architectural conservation of houses in the village of Ruweiha has not been studied previously, and studies on the hypotheses about some buildings were limited only by G. Tchalenko and George Tate.<sup>7</sup> The general state of conservation of domestic buildings was discussed in Afaf Laila's study on the decoration of the lintels in domestic buildings but focused on studying the decorations in its façades. In this research, we describe the state of the architectural preservation based on the data available to us during the surveys we conducted in the years 2009-2010, in addition to the general topographical plan of the village, which was prepared by the Syrian-French archaeological mission. This study helps us to give a preliminary image of the state of preservation of domestic buildings.<sup>8</sup>

The village is rich in domestic buildings, more than 100 houses, where it is scattered over large areas, but there are about 26 different houses in conservation state between medium, good and excellent. According to the old architectural buildings, it is noticeable that the village consist of two groups. The first group is composed of the majority of the domestic buildings with the southern church in the southern and southwestern parts of the village. The other group consists of houses nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, with the church of

Bissos and some tombs built at a distance from the first assembly, on the north and north-east of the village.

The houses were generally built of one row of well-trimmed stone, but in different sizes, and at the level of two floors in the majority of them. As mentioned above, they are generally larger compared with those in neighboring villages. The designs of the Ruweiha houses differ in size and shapes (square or rectangular) and fall within the regular groups of houses planned in general.

According to the village plan established by the Syrian-French archaeological mission, in addition to the existing walls in place or on building foundations, the houses in their present state consist of rooms built either on one axis (Houses nos. 32, 30, 13, etc.), or on two axis (Houses nos. 25, 28, 4, 6, etc.), or on three sides (a few cases, such as Houses nos. 1, 17, 58) (figs. 4, 5). All the rooms of the houses have the porticos consisted of the columns with capitals of various types, overlooking the courtyard where the latter has been surrounded by high walls connected to the rooms, and the double entrances are open in it.

It was assumed that the ground floors were devoted to economic activities, the accommodation of livestock and the upper floors of living and daily activities. However, we believe that the rooms on the ground floor, depending on their decorations, and easy access to what families need, were also used for the living and daily life.

The following pages contain descriptions of the conservation states of 23 houses, besides numerous lintels, niches, and architectural pieces still in place.

- *House no. 1*: This house is situated on the eastern side of the village to the south of the church of Bezos, extends over an area of 1318 m<sup>2</sup>, compared to the rest of the houses in the village. It consists of a rectangular plan. The upper floor collapsed completely. The plan shows two opposing sections on two sides of more than six rooms on the ground floor, four in the northern side and two in the western side with the entrance between it, and a long row of walls extend in the southern side, preserved to a low height, where some foundations of rooms were found.

We can notice the residence portion in the northern side of the house consists of four rooms built on one axis. The facade of its ground floor is preserved to a height of about 6 m above the soil, i.e. three rows of blocks above the lintels of doorways, and have mouldings carved on the lintels above the four doors, one of them surrounded by a framed mouldings in three sides and seems to be decorated with plants but they were almost completely disappeared.

The other three lintels are carved with mouldings, one of them has central medallion (cross was carved with the alpha and omega) and dentil, while the decorations disappeared in the medallions of the other lintel.

<sup>5</sup> Butler 1899/1900; Tchalenko 1953; Tate 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Abdulkarim 2012, 195-212; Abdulkarim 2013, 271-284.

<sup>7</sup> Tchalenko 1953; Tate 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Laila 2014.

The third lintel was decorated with mouldings only. The rest of the house is in poor state of preservation. There are only parts of the foundations of different heights, and the house is currently used as a store for agricultural crops, where the people blocked the openings of some doors and windows with stones.

- *House no. 2:* It is located just a few meters south of the church of Bessos, this house is rectangular in shape (845 m<sup>2</sup>). It has greatly collapsed, especially the rooms of the southern section, which remained only some of foundations that show their divisions of two rooms according of the mission plan, but the facade of the northern portion of the house is better in state, it still up to a height of 3 m or less in some parts, i.e. one row of blocks above the lintel in the interior façade of the house. It consists of two rooms, and one other side room on the ground floor. The upper parts of which were destroyed, but the residents recently built rows of small stones for use as stores for agricultural crops and they blocked the openings of doorways and windows with stones or boards.

Lintels are still in situ, on the windows and doorways. The decorations carved on the door lintels (three lintels) with resemble decorations in two of them, the third one is broken. The dentils and medallions (one in the center and two sides) are carved on both. The niches are carved also on one side of each door. The house is currently used as a store. The colonnades that are supposed to be in this house and the house mentioned above have disappeared.

- *House no. 3:* This house is located south-west of the House no. 1, a rectangular shape of 934 m<sup>2</sup>, it was composed of two floors, but most of the upper floor was collapsed. The rooms were built in the northern part of it, four rooms with five doorways on the ground floor, some parts of the outer walls are still in situ up to the level of the roof of the upper floor, about 10 m above the soil. The windows and the narrow loop-hole windows are opened in the outer walls. The double arched entrance in the eastern side of the court is in a state of complete preservation. The mouldings extend along the arch to the ends of the two sides. The entrance is decorated with frame mouldings surrounded it by three sides, and a lintel carved by a frieze of simple plant motifs of an abstract acanthus, and another frieze of interlaces (entrelacs) bordered it from the bottom.

As for the state of preservation of the façade inside the house, it rises up to the height of a row of blocks above the lintels of doorways and windows on the ground floor, i.e. a height of 3 m and more in some parts. the outer walls of the rooms have windows overlooking the outside. The colonnade was collapsed, but we can see some columns lie on the floor of the courtyard.

- *House no. 4:* It is located next to the House no. 3 on the east side, almost square in shape (787 m<sup>2</sup>). It consisted of two floors, but only the rooms on the ground floor remained. This house has a main entrance with two floors, to a height of 5 m. The ground floor is in a good state of preservation. It opens in the western side of the house overlooking the street, preceded by a hall with an arch carved in mouldings, which is ended on both sides with a moulding in relief.

The residence portions exist in both northern and eastern sides, and the external walls of the house are still in situ but in a different states of preservation. The outer wall of the western part are still well preserved, the maximum height up to 12 m, but less in parts of it. The wall of the rooms adjacent to the entrance on the same side is in good state of conservation up to a height of 8 m, and less or more in some parts (fig. 6).

As well as the walls of the northern, eastern and western sides are rise up at uneven heights, between 11 - 5 m and much less in some parts. It is notable that the corners of the house are still in situ up to the height of the roof

As for interior facades, especially the facades of the rooms on both the northern and eastern sides, the height of the walls does not exceed the roof level of the ground floor, about 3.50 m and much less in some parts, where the residents built recently the sections, at the top of the doors with small stones. The house was apparently used for various functions. The house consists of seven rooms, have seven lintels that are still in place, four of which are carved with ornaments, while the other four are not decorated.

The lintel of the entrance is decorated with a flat moulding ornamented with a frieze of furrows engraved around it, and it seems that it contained decorations that disappeared. At the bottom of the lintel the frame surround the door opening. In the eastern part of the house there is a lintel carved with interlaces, and they contain flowers or hollow rings, and the pearls are decorated with this frieze.

Another lintel of window is located in the western part of the house, in the back wall of the room. The window opening Surrounded by frames from three sides with mouldings and is topped by a prominent flat moulding with three medallions (the central medallion of the cross and two medallions of six petals). And the palm leaf inscriptions separate them.

In the back wall of the room there is a lintel of window, located in the western section of the house on the top floor, it is carved with vase where the branches of vine extends from it, interspersed with grapes and grape leaves. Finally, other decorations are carved at the top of the walls of the main entrance hall, located in the western part of the house, consisting of interlaces decorated with different flowers, alternating with crosses, they are similar in decorations to one of the room lintels.

- *House no. 5*: It is located south of the House no. 4, the plan is almost square (1062 m<sup>2</sup>), but the western section is built on a slant axis corresponds to the path of the old street. The house consists of two floors and six ground floor rooms, two on the western section and four on the northern section. The western section facade as well as large parts of the northern section facade are still in good preservation. The western section of the house has a main entrance that is still in good state of conservation up to the height of the roof of the upper floor, more than 9.50 m, which is the type of double entrances of two floors, such as the entrance of the House 4. Its arch is carved with decorative mouldings. Recently It was completely closed with stones.

As for the interior facade of the northern section, the western side is still standing up to the roof level (9.50 m), while the eastern side is collapsing, remaining only two or three rows of blocks above the ground floor doorways (about 4 m). The elements of the facade are still in good condition, such as doors, windows and niches, as well as the lintels above the doors. The window lintels don't have the same importance as the door lintels because they remained without decorations.

As for the carved ornamental lintels at the doors only, as we have mentioned, there are eight lintels carved with mouldings and some of them are carved by medallions and dentils. It is clear that the house is used by the people in recent times or earlier times, especially the stone part added to the western wall of the house built of smaller stones to the level of the ground floor only.

A large part of the colonnade in this house is characterized by an excellent state of conservation consisting of seven columns with Ionian and Tuscan capitals. The architrave also shows clearly the effects of the old wooden rafters used in roofing the colonnade (fig. 7).

- *House no. 6*: This house is located in the southern side of the village, east of House no. 7, its outline is square, and of large size, divided into two sections: section 6a and 6b (1300 m<sup>2</sup>). Only the facades of section 6b is remained, and just the foundations of section 6a. The entrance has an arch decorated with small arcs that extend as a frieze around it, where it is ended by a crown-like molding, and vertical lines were engraved at the bottom as a columns. This section consists of two northern and southern sections, each one has 3 rooms on ground floor, consisting of two-story rooms. As for the northern section, only the rooms on the ground floor are in good conditions while the facade of the upper rooms has collapsed and a large part of the back walls remained up to the height of the second floor about 10 m above the soil. The height of the facade of the rooms is one row of

blocks above the ground floor lintels, approximately 4 m, but there are also some blocks from the upper rows up to height of 7 m above it. There is a recent use of some rooms for storage.

Regarding the southern section, most of the back walls of the three ground floor rooms are in good condition of preservation as well as their facade. In addition to the walls of a room on the upper floor, rise up to the roof level, so the entire height of the facade of two floors becomes 10 m (fig. 8).

With regard to lintels, whether on doors or windows, some of them have not been engraved with any decorations, but the other lintels (9 lintels) are mostly decorated with only mouldings, beside the medallions, dentils and dovetail, in some of them (7 lintels). The friezes were engraved too in 2 lintels, one in the main entrance, where its decorations represents the acanthus leaves above the framed mouldings extended around the door opening, and another lintel carved with a frieze consist of grape vine above the door in one of the rooms. The central and side medallions were carved in a large number of lintels. The central medallions were distorted, except one lintel engraved with inscriptions of a cross, alpha A and omega w, tugra, leaves. And a dovetails carved on both sides of the eaves.

- *House no. 7*: it is a small house compared to other houses of the village (576 m<sup>2</sup>), its plan is square, and the residence portion is in the northern side of the house, composed of two floors, only the rooms on the ground floor (4 rooms) are in good state of preservation. The western side walls are standing up to the roof level, more than 13 m above the soil, and continues to the north side with a large part, but the rest is collapsing. As the facade of the rooms it is in situ at uneven heights between 7 and 3.5 m, it is preceded by a portico of three columns with three Tuscan capitals carrying an architrave with beveled mouldings (fig. 9).

The house has an arched entrance, carved with mouldings, that seems to be similar to that found in the village (the double entrances), but it was recently filled with stones and changed its shape from the inside.

This house is unique in its decoration, which is in the form of frieze that runs horizontally connected to the lintels of doorways and windows, while in the other houses are located exclusively on doors or windows. These decorations consist of mouldings ornamented of friezes (furrows and interlaces, dentils), and flowers, as well as medallions containing crosses on the lintels. This house is also characterized by a lintel beneath the wall of the recent built part has been reused, contains animal inscriptions of the peacock on both sides of the Central medallion of the Cross. This is rare in the south of the limestone mass, where no animal inscriptions were found on the

lintels except one in another house in the village of Jerada, near the village of Ruwaiha.

The southern section of the house is almost entirely recently constructed, except for the outer walls that extend across all three other sides of the house. They vary in height, from seven rows of blocks up to the roof level, (at least 5 m and more), but the north-eastern corner was completely collapsed.

- *House no. 13*: The house is located in the southeast of the village. It is one of the smallest houses. It has only the facade of two rooms on the ground floor overlooking the east side. It rises up just to the level of the doorway lintels, about 2.50 m. The house has a distinct privacy with regard to the of the two lintels size (more large in width) on the one hand, and the decorations on the other hand. the decorations engraved on one of its lintels. The acanthus leaves are carved in relief and extend downward on one side. The lintel also contains decorations that are not clear, perhaps pagan, but they do not belong to the types of decorations in the village.

- *House no. 17*: Located to the east of House no. 23, opposite of House no. 18 on the north side, extends over the space of 645 m<sup>2</sup>, it is not well preserved as some of the other houses, but its colonnade is all intact, in a unique state of conservation, extend in the north and west of the house, the capitals of the columns are carved by ordinary patterns with the Ionian and Tuscan types. Besides the colonnade, a few foundations with the lintels on the jambs still in situ.

- *House no. 18*: Between the Houses 10 and 22, only its fine arched entrance still in place, distinguished by its decorations. The main entrance is framed in mouldings surrounding it on three sides, its lintel carved with acanthus leaves and dentils, besides the geometric friezes and a central medallion of cross ornamented with a wreath of leaves in high relief. As for the arch, it is carved by geometric friezes of small semi-circular arches, and circles, and a remarkable medallion in the center (fig. 10).

- *House no. 19*: It is situated in the north of the House 18, over an area of 588 m<sup>2</sup>, a large part of it has collapsed, except the western section, it still in good state of preservation, with a colonnade in front of it. It consists of two rooms on each floor, its façade is standing up to the lintel level of the upper floor, about 7.50 m. As for the lintels, they are free of decorations, except one lintel in the ground floor, consisting of mouldings, with a medallion on either side, one of which is a whirlwind medallion and the other one is a flower of hexagonal petals (fig. 11).

Three columns are in place in front of the rooms, two of which are circular, the third is ribbed, this form

of columns is rare in the village. The colonnade with different capitals, one of which is the Tuscan form and the other with the capital with Console, and last one is beveled pillars.

- *House no. 25*: It is located north of Houses nos. 19 and 20, connected to House no. 26, with a rectangular plan extends over the space of 815 m<sup>2</sup>. It consists of two sections, one in the north and the other in the south. This house is one of the best houses with good conservation in most of it. In the southern section exist the double entrance in the middle, flanked by two rooms in each side, where other rooms were built on the upper floor, one above the entrance and another beside it without façade. Its outer walls rise up to the level of the roof above the windows on the upper floor, more than 10 m, unlike the internal façade, it rise up to a height of 5.50 m at least, up to about 10 m in some parts (fig. 12).

The decoration of the entrance consists of acanthus inscription above the frames surrounding the door decorated with mouldings and geometric frieze of the semicircular circles. As usual, preceded by a decorated arch of mouldings, flowers and a geometric frieze of small semicircular arcs, ended with a crown that was carved by the wall, and vertical lines extending below it, look like columns bearing it.

The windows of the upper-floor rooms rise above the arch of five rows of blocks decorated with mouldings surrounded by frames, as well as geometric friezes and interlaces, overlooking the outside of the house. It is unlike the windows of the upper rooms in the opposite northern block, which are also open outward, where they look like loop-hole windows that are not decorated.

The room lintels of this section in the ground floor are free of decoration except one, it seems to have been carved with mouldings but has been severely distorted. And the colonnade was collapsed except one column of the Tuscan type, decorated with crosses and dentils, and it will be noticed that some capitals of the Corinthian and Tuscan types on the ground floor of the house.

As for the northern section it consists of three rooms on the ground floor, but the facades of the upper rooms all but one were collapsed, its western side rises up to a height of about 8 m, but the eastern side is less than 5 m.

The colonnade of this section was almost completely destroyed and only three columns remained, one Ionic and two of the Tuscan form.

The lintels of the four rooms (three on the ground floor and one at the upper floor) were decorated with mouldings, one of them was carved with a central medallion contain a cross and an inscription of alpha and Omega, flanked by cartouche on both sides, where inscriptions were carved into it.

- *House no. 28*: it situated Southwest of Houses nos. 25 and 26, with a large rectangular plan of 767 m<sup>2</sup>, consisted of two floors, and two sections as well as many houses in Ruweiha, but the northern section is more ruined than the southern one to a large extent, remained only foundations, and the facade of one room, at the height of about 3.5 m. The room lintel has decorated with mouldings and side medallions on either side, one for a cross and the other for a special flower, advanced by two columns in place carrying Ionic capitals with a section of architrave and at the end of the same axis there are only two columns without their capitals.

The southern section is in the case of better architectural preservation. The walls of the three ground floor rooms (façades and back walls) are still up to the level of the room lintels or more, about 4 m, where the mouldings are carved on lintels, and on one lintel we can see a central medallion is engraved with a cross inscription, flanked by two medallion, of the whirlwind and flower. The entrance of the house is framed with mouldings and topped with a lintel carved with a frieze for medals of flowers, whirlwind, geometric shapes, and the cross in the center decorated by acanthus on both sides.

- *House no. 30*: This house is located to the east of the South Church. It is a small house consisting of only two rooms on the ground floor to the north of it. The façade is still in good preservation, up to three rows of blocks above the room lintels, less than 5 m, and a part of the portico still in situ, it consists of two columns with Tuscan capitals, carrying a section of architrave with beveled moulding (fig. 13).

- *House no. 32*: This house is located at the extreme south of the village of Ruweiha with other Houses nos. 33 and 34. It is a small house of 421 m<sup>2</sup>, connected to the House no. 33, on the south side. Its main entrance opens on the west side.

This house has three rooms on the ground floor in the northern part of the house. Only the walls of the façade are remained until now and parts of the back walls. The façade is in its eastern side up to the height of 5 m and more, but less than 3 m in the western side.

The niches was engraved in this façade, besides two lintels that are still in place above the doorways, carved by moulding. one lintel has an incised frieze appeared to be floral, and a circular side medallion of cross. The mouldings were carved in the other lintel as well as medallions, one of them for a whirlwind and the other for a flower in two squares. Among the ruins of the house in the courtyard there is a door lintel decorated with mouldings also, and a central medallion for a cross and a dovetails inscription on both ends of the eaves. There are only two columns in situ in front of the room, which carrying a section of

architrave and on the same axis half a column is still standing in place.

- *House no. 33*: This house adjoins the House no. 32 from the north, it is one of the very large houses in the village, extends over the space of 1390 m<sup>2</sup>. It consists of two opposite sections, one on the east and the other on the west. The rooms were built in each section on two floors. According to the plan, each section had seven rooms, and its entrance is located in the northwest corner of the house. Most of the interior façade of the eastern section was destroyed but a part of only one room on the ground floor remained in place, rise up to the height of four blocks above its door lintel, about 4.5 m above the soil, its lintel carved with mouldings. On the same axis there are the jambs of the next doorway with lintel resting upon them and free of decorations. Along this axis at the end there is also a doorway on the height of the lintel door decorated with mouldings. The outer walls of this section are still completely in place to the height of about 7 m.

As for the opposite section (the western one), it has a distinctive facade, although it was exposed to collapse in large parts of it. It was characterized by its different decorations from what is familiar with the decoration of the facades are not seen even in the more richly decorated houses of the village (fig. 14).

This section, has seven rooms but there is only a facade of six rooms, four rooms are on the ground floor, and two are upstairs. The façade of the upstairs rooms rises up to the level of two rows of blocks above three lintels, about 9 m above the soil, where two lintels are carved with decorations on the doors, and one on a window with no decoration.

One of the lintels was carved with a mouldings and a medallion of cross. the other one was carved with a frieze of interlaces, dentils and a square medallion for a cross in the center. the shape of square or rectangular medallions is few in the region.

The remaining part of the ground floor façade is of four rooms. All the lintels (4 on doors and 3 on windows) are carved with friezes, they are in the following order from east to west:

- A door lintel carved with frieze of flowers framed by a small arc, and a central medallion of a cross, decorated with a frame of half circles.
- A window lintel carved with frieze of acanthus leaves beside a decorative element representing an ornament of palm.
- A door lintel carved with two unique friezes of acanthia flanked by two side medallions, one of cross and the other of flowers in addition of dentil around the eaves.
- A window lintel carved with frieze of acanthus and palm.
- A door lintel carved with two friezes, one for interlaces, and other for acanthus with dentils carved around the eaves.

- A window lintel carved with frieze of interlaces and dentils.
- A door lintel carved with frieze of interlaces and mouldings.

It will be notice that the columns are not in situ, they are now complete ruins, as well as the capitals, where two capitals of Tuscan and Corinthian forms can be seen in the courtyard, etc.

- *House no. 34*: Located to the west of the House no. 33, and extends over the space of 987 m<sup>2</sup>, it has two sections, one in the east and the other in the north. Both sections have two different conservation states.

The eastern section has a good conservation state to the level of the roof on the upper floor, where we can see the extension of its eastern back wall completely from the outside, also all the northern part of it (fig. 15).

Half of the façade wall collapsed in the upper floor, but the façade of the three rooms (one big and two small side rooms) on the ground floor is in good state of preservation to a height of about 9 m, in its western part. one lintel is decorated with mouldings and a central medallion framed by a wreath of leaves. A wall extends on the axis of this section in the eastern side, where the entrance of the house, which is still up to the level of the lintel that is carved with the mouldings, and it has been recently closed with stones.

The northern section, consists of four rooms that were divided inside to other rooms. The upper part of the façade was completely collapsed, unlike the ground rooms remained up to three or four rows of blocks at the top of the lintels at varying heights, between 5 and about 2 m. It will be seen the niches beside the windows in the facades of two rooms. In addition to eight doorway and window lintels, which are mostly carved with mouldings, and in which two were carved with dovetail inscription, but the medallions were not carved, as is common in some other houses.

The colonnade of this façade is collapsing except for one column with its Tuscan capital carrying a section of architrave at the end of the façade in the western part, and other column without capital is standing next to it. With regard to the southern section of the house, the southern wall extends up to a height between 5 and 7 rows of blocks above the soil, (from about 3-4.50 m) but the walls of its western side have completely disappeared.

- *House no. 35*: It is located to the west of the House no. 34, only its main entrance, remained in place, with its arched vestibule. the doorway topped by a lintel, engraved with mouldings and a dovetail decoration, as well frieze of interlaces containing various inscriptions of flowers, whirlwinds, and crosses. The arch is also carved with mouldings.

- *House no. 49*: This house has an almost rectangular plan of 630 m<sup>2</sup>, in which the rooms were built on its western side. Its entrance located in southern side,

framed by mouldings, and topped with lintel carved with mouldings, frieze of furrows and medallion for a cross. It is also preceded by an arched vestibule decorated with mouldings, and topped by two rows of blocks. An uncommon portico of pillars in this village was erected beside the entrance and fill up with stones. It has five rooms, of which only a facade of three rooms remained, and its southern wall still almost in situ up to the level of the upper ground roof, with varying heights between one row of blocks above the lintel or several rows up to six, and some blocks extend to the roof level, i.e. from 3 to 6 m and more (fig. 16).

The frames are carved in one of the doorways. All the lintels are decorated with mouldings, as well as the dentils in two lintels, and the central medallion of cross on one lintel. The windows are free of decorations and the niches is carved in the façade as well. Only two columns are standing in place, topped by two capitals, one of which is the Tuscan form and the other Ionic, carrying a section of architrave with beveled mouldings.

- *House no. 55*: It is situated in the far east of the village, joined to House no. 54 on the east side, which is almost completely destroyed. Only a façade of one room in the ground floor still in situ, and only some blocks existing above the room lintel. The lintel of the doorway carved with mouldings, and a decoration of horizontally spread leaves on both sides of a central medallion with a cross, as well as two medallions were carved on both sides of the lintels, one of which is decorated with a whirlwind and the other with a flower.

- *House no. 95*: This house is located in addition to the Houses nos. 93, 94, 96, 97, on the southwest side of the village, which are small houses each one consisting of one or two rooms at most on the ground floor. This house is connected to House 96 from the east and House 97 from the south.

Some foundations of walls can be seen surrounding the house. And a complete façade of the ground floor room still in situ, but the back wall is ruined. The façade of the upper room was totally collapsed except the four corners. The doorway is topped by a lintel carved only with mouldings.

- *House no. 106*: This house is located in the northwest of the village, built in isolation from the other houses in the village. Consists of two floors extends over the space of 125 m<sup>2</sup>, each one has two rooms overlooking the southern side. The facade of the upper floor rooms were collapsed in all its parts, except the eastern side which is still up to the height of the roof, with two rectangular windows above. As for the façade of the ground floor rooms it is in good state of conservation, with varying heights, starting from the level of the lintels up to the upper floor, between 3 and 5 m above the soil. Niches are carved in one side of the



two doorways. The lintels of this house are four, one above a window and three on the doorways, but two of them were engraved with mouldings. In one of them, a rectangular side medallion carved with cross as well as a dovetail inscription carved in the eaves in the other lintel. All the windows and doorways were recently closed with stones by the residents, and were used to store agricultural crops (fig. 17).

## CONCLUSION

### 1. *The entrances:*

Our study of entrances in Ruweiha does not give an accurate information about its nature in all the houses because of the different states of conservation, some of which are still in place and others are destructive, but through the remaining examples in place we will study them.

The entrances in the limestone massif were studied by G. Tate and A. Laila describing them as consisting of two types, one simple opened in the wall of the courtyard and another complex that occupies part of the buildings of the house consisting of an open path to the outside with decorated arch in most cases, as well as the doorway lintel is also decorated with friezes, medallions, and cornice Sometimes. Some of these entrances consist of one or two floors.<sup>9</sup>

Ten out of twelve of the entrances which are still in place, are of double (complex) entrances.<sup>10</sup> There are two different examples that we find, one in House no. 28 where the entrance was built in the form of a room with two doors, one leading out of the house and the other leading to the inside. The other example is the entrance to the House no. 34, it has a simple entrance similar to that in the rooms.

As for the decorations that are carved in the arches, they are either only for mouldings or for mouldings with friezes and other ornaments:

- Only mouldings in Houses nos. 3, 35, 4, 49, 7, 30, 5 (fig. 18).
- Mouldings with friezes and other decorative ornaments, in each of the following House: house no. 25 (flowers and friezes of small semi-circular open arcs), House no. 6 (a frieze of small semi-circular arches open to the outside), House no. 18 (flowers with a frieze of small semi-circular, and frieze of circles and another of the opposite semicircles). The wall was carved into the bottom of the arch (in some entrances), by a vertical lines in the form of columns topped with mouldings as capitals, or others were decorated without lines (fig. 19).

As for its doorways, they were surrounded by frames in seven<sup>11</sup> of the ten entrances and we have

noticed that these entrances do not necessarily resemble the doorways of the rooms in the same house (without frames) (figs. 10, 17, 18).

Tate mentioned in his classification and history of the facades of the houses in the south of the limestone massif that the facades consist of four patterns characterized by decorations and architectural elements, and the façade that have framing around their doors and windows (type 4) is more modern than all other types of the facades (1, 2, 3), with the continuation of types 2 and 3.

If we rely on this hypothesis, we will expect two possibilities that either the entrances have been changed in later stages of the building of the house, or that they are Contemporary for the other buildings in the house. However, these entrances were marked from the entrances of the rooms with decorations in most cases, as confirmed by our study of House no. 25 and no. 28.

There are two sections for the House no. 25: the first one consists of rooms with facade and windows of type 1 (the oldest of all the types according to Tate) and the outer facade of the same rooms of the type 4 (the most recent) because the framing that characterizes this façade, is found in the entrance and on the windows of the rooms above it.

In the opposite section we find type 1 and 2. Therefore, in our opinion this may mean that either the house has been expanded in multiple stages or the construction of type 1 of the facades is still contemporary to type 4 as well, making it difficult to determine a precise date of the facades or confirm type discontinuation of other type.

In the House no. 28, that is located a few meters south-west of the House no. 25, is a unique case of the presence of frames (the type 4 of facades) in one of the doors of this house, and on the other side are two rooms that have two doors that are of type 3, this confirms the contemporary construction of type 3 along with type 4. The frames were also surrounded by the entrance to the house, this indicates that both parts were marked with ornamentation in comparison to the other doors. So the idea of framing in type 4 of façade, at a later stage, compared to other types became even more problematic. The idea of framing the doors and windows of the houses not due to the emergence of a new type of construction, but it seemed to be based on the desire of the owners to show luxury and to add importance to part of it.

As for the lintels of the entrances, they were decorated either with only mouldings or engraved with friezes and decorative ornaments such as dentils, dovetail and medallions, we will mention them later.

### 2. *The porticos:*

The majority of porticos in Ruweiha are completely or partially destroyed in fourteen out of twenty-two houses. There are no more than two or three

<sup>9</sup> Tate 1992, 45; Laila 2014, 282.

<sup>10</sup> Houses nos. 3, 35, 4, 25, 6, 49, 7, 18, 30, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Houses nos. 3, 4, 25, 28, 49, 18, 30.

columns in each house, except two houses: the House no. 5 (seven columns) and the house no. 54 (five columns). The porticos are consisting of columns with distinctive capitals in its forms, evolved from distinguished types in Greek and Roman architecture, the Doric, Ionian, Corinthian, Tuscan and capitals with consoles (*chapiteaux à consoles*), as well beveled pillars (*piliers à échine en biseau*). The latter one is rare.<sup>12</sup> Their architrave, made up of rectangular stone blocks that meet each other at the capital, are carved with flat mouldings.

The most characteristic of these columns is their diversity in one house and one row (ex. in House no. 19, three kinds in one row: Doric, Capitals with consoles, and beveled pillars also in House no. 54, Which are Corinthian, Ionic, and Tuscan). This is what distinguishes all the houses of the villages of Jebel az-Zawiya (fig. 20, fig. 11).

We find a mixture of oriental and classical art, in new forms, especially with decorative inscriptions in some capitals such as medallions (for crosses or flowers), flowers, pearls, leaves, dentils, and sometimes as interlaces (in House no. 30) or medallions (House no. 25), etc.

### 3. *The Niches:*

They are carved in most of the facades of the houses in Ruweiha. It is located either on one side of the doorways, this is the predominant one (ex. Houses nos. 33, 54, 30, 25, etc.) or on two sides in a few cases as (House no. 55), and it does not necessarily exist on each door in the same façade.

The niche is shaped like a rectangular shape, but its upper part is semi-circular and is represented in the form of shell in most cases (Houses nos. 30, 2, 55, 33, etc.) or it has been made without decoration (one in the House no. 32 and one in the House no. 106). One of the most precise and special forms of niches is in the House no. 33, its upper section is carved with an engraving of a shell and surrounded by a framed arch decorated with two small columns (Corinthian capitals) on both ends of the niche<sup>13</sup> (figs. 21, 22).

### 4. *The Lintels:*

Through our study of the façades of houses in Ruweiha, we identified the types of decorations that prevailed in that era, and included all the decorations carved on 78 lintels, studied in 26 houses, where the length of the lintel block is between two and two meters and a quarter (sometimes more or less), as for the width, it is about 65 cm (a little more or less).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> About the study of Porticos and capitals in Jebel az-Zawiya in general: Tate 1992, 159-163; Laila 2014, 56-57.

<sup>13</sup> Laila 2014, 56.

<sup>14</sup> About studying the lintels in Gebel az -Zawiya: Tate 1992, 133-159; Laila 2014.

Relying on our statistics on the lintels whether on the facades or those that could be observed on the ground, we divided them into three groups, which are carved with geometric, plant or mixed inscriptions.

G. Tate had previously studied the patterns of decorations in the villages of the limestone massif, including the villages of Jebel az-Zawiya and Afaf Laila also studied the decorations of the domestic buildings in the villages of Jebel az-Zawiya and classified them into types and groups, and compared them with those in the funerary and religious buildings in the region.

The lintels with geometric inscriptions are consist of two groups: the lintels carved with only mouldings and the lintels carved with geometric friezes. Among the other groups in the village, the lintels which carved with only mouldings is the largest of the total of all the other groups in Ruweiha, 51 out of 78 lintels. It consists of main elements, such as cyma recta, cavetto, beveled band, concave semi-circles, are carved with other secondary elements such as bandeau, bands, and eaves. All lintels of this group are decorated with three kinds of decorative ornaments: medallions, dentils and dovetail, these decorative ornaments are also found in other types of lintel (fig. 23).

As for the lintels carved with geometric friezes, there is one of overlapping circles, interspersed with small inscriptions of pearls (the House no. 33), as well as the furrows friezes in the House 4, 7 and 49. The semi-circle friezes were only engraved on the frames at the bottom of the lintel at the House no. 25.

For lintels which carved with plant friezes, they represent the forms of acanthus, vines, flowers, palmette, and leaves, they were divided into two groups, the first one consisting of friezes composed of decorative elements attached to each other (without framing) of acanthus, palmette, vines, and leaves (10 lintels), and another group consisting of decorative elements carved in a framing, which is for vines, and flowers (3 lintels) (fig. 24).

And finally the lintels which carved with mixed inscriptions (geometric and floral inscriptions together), which consist of 13 lintels in two groups, consisting either of circular medallions (with floral, and geometric floral forms together, whirlwinds in two lintels), or other group consist of interlaces friezes, which carved with plant and geometric elements, besides crosses and hollow rings, etc (in 11 lintels) (fig. 25).

### 5. *A lintel with animal inscriptions:*

A lintel was found with animal decorations, carved with two birds that appear as a peacock engraved on two sides of the central medallion representing a cross in the House no. 7. It is the only lintel that contains animal decorations in Ruweiha. A similar lintel was found in the nearby village of Jerada, in the House no. 50, it is also the only lintel that represents animal motifs among other decorations on the lintels of Jerada (fig. 26).

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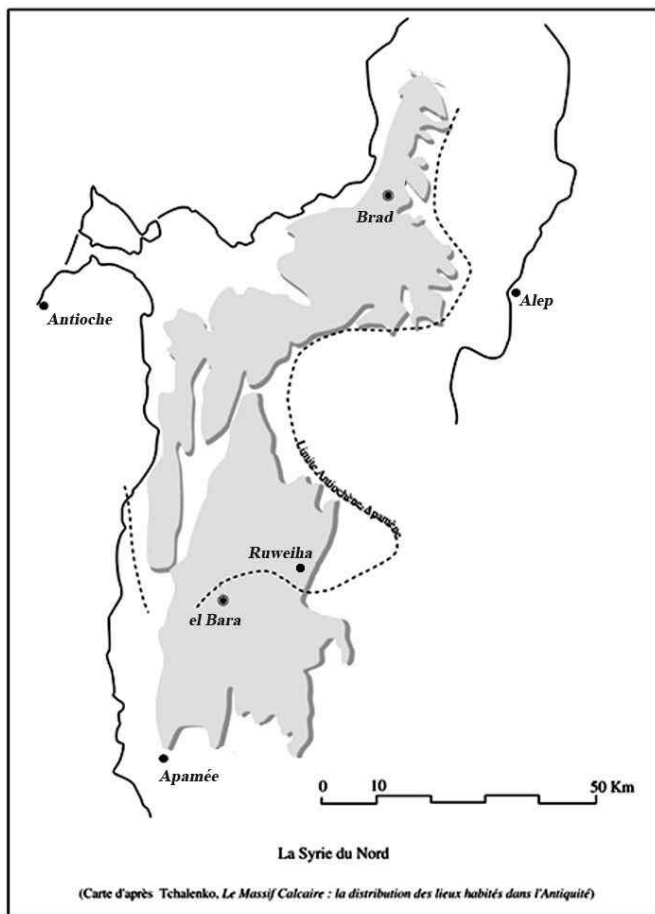


Fig. 1. The Limestones massif



Fig. 2. Ruweiha site



Fig. 3. General view

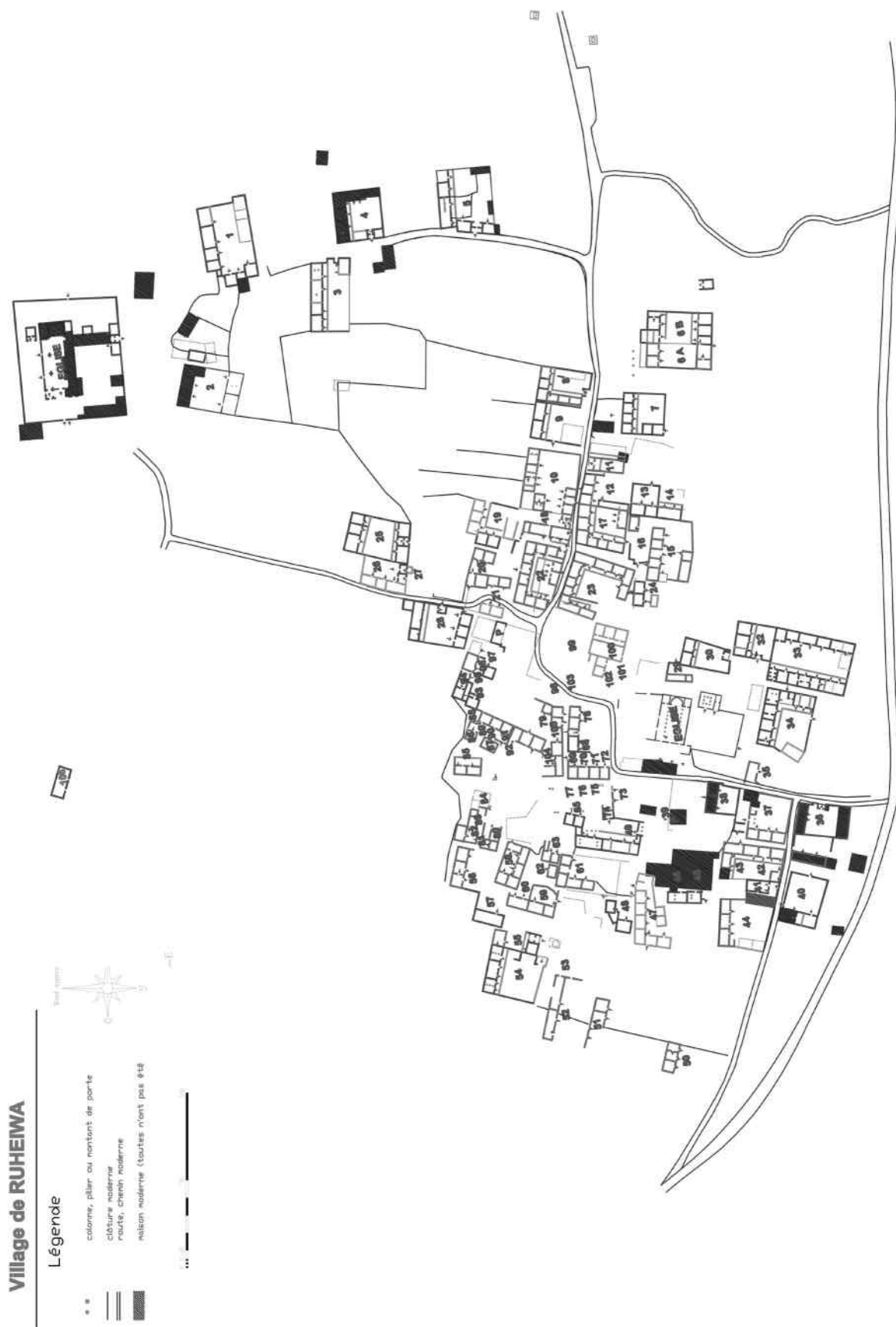


Fig. 4. Plan of Ruweiha



Fig. 5. The church with the house no. 33



Fig. 6. The House no. 4



Fig. 7. The House no. 5



Fig. 8. The House no. 6



Fig. 9. The House no.7



Fig. 10. The entrance of the House no.18



Fig. 11. The facade of the House no. 19



Fig. 12. The House no. 25



Fig. 13. The House no. 30



Fig. 14. The facade of the House no. 33



Fig. 15. The House no. 34



Fig. 16. The House no. 49



Fig. 17. The House no. 106



Fig. 18. The entrance of the House no. 3



Fig. 19. The entrance of the House no. 25



Fig. 20. The portico of the House no. 5





Fig. 21. The niche in the House no. 33



Fig. 22. The niche in the House no. 33



Fig. 23. Lintel with mouldings, medallions, dentil, in the House no. 2



Fig. 24. Lintel with plant frieze in the House no. 6



Fig. 25. The House no. 28



Fig. 26. Lintel of animal decoration the House no. 7

# INTEGRATING CONSERVATION, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND COMMUNITY AT TELL MOZAN (URKESH)

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## *Abstract*

The conservation model for archaeology that emerged in the 1970s as a response to loss of sites was a seminal development in the practice of archaeology. In the present era of challenges, the integration of conservation, archaeology and community at Tell Mozan exemplifies a compelling evolution of the model for excavated sites.

In the 1970s there evolved a philosophy of archaeology referred to as the ‘conservation ethic’ that posited a conservation model to replace what had been the practice of exploitative archaeology, dependent on excavation, since its beginnings. In the face of widespread destruction of sites from uncontrolled development, as well as from post-excavation abandonment and neglect, excavation came to be seen as an unwise use of a finite resource. In response, the conservation ethic promoted survey and non-destructive means of investigation over excavation, giving priority to threatened sites over research excavation, incorporating specialist studies and thereby slowing the excavation process while increasing information extracted, publishing results, and taking responsibility for preserving sites after excavation.<sup>1</sup> In the 1970s this was new thinking. Although never fully realized, and slower to take root in Old World archaeology, many of these ideas are now part of mainstream archaeological thinking. But that was then. We now live in even more destructive times for archaeological sites, threatened by war and its fellow-traveler looting, huge infrastructure and development projects, climate change, as well as attrition and intrusion caused by mass tourism, all of it ultimately fueled by population growth.

Thus, while there is still a need to practice and elaborate on the conservation ethic, we are also challenged with developing new approaches and practices to preserving the past in tandem with excavation. The work of Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati for over 30 years at the site of Tell Mozan (ancient Urkesh) in northern Syria has met this challenge and stands as an exemplar of a new development in the conservation ethic – let us call it ‘Conservation qua Archaeology’ to appropriate the title of Giorgio’s 2006 article in the proceedings of

WAC-5 (5th World Archaeological Congress).<sup>2</sup> At Tell Mozan the Buccellatis have woven a beautiful tapestry, integrating archaeology, conservation and community from their deep attachment for the place and people.

## 1. CHALLENGES OF CONSERVING EARTHEN MATERIALS

The huge site of Tell Mozan, some 150 hectares in size, dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, was an important urban center of the Hurrian civilization. It preserves monumental structures, many constructed with earthen materials. Excavated earthen sites pose one of the greatest conservation challenges in the field of archaeological site conservation, and one that suffers from the absence of effective solutions to long-term preservation. Mudbrick archaeological sites are ubiquitous throughout the world; there are many thousands in the Middle East, Central Asia, North and South America, and Europe. Mudbrick is a wonderful and versatile material, but once excavated or left exposed it is extraordinarily fragile and susceptible to rapid deterioration. Preservation of exposed mudbrick structures in a climate such as Tell Mozan is well-nigh impossible. All the assaults of nature come into play that had been kept at bay in the buried environment - insects, birds, burrowing animals and most destructive, rain, snow, wind, and capillary rise of moisture carrying salts that lead to basal erosion and eventual collapse back to the earth.

Over many decades on archaeological sites throughout the world, a great many methods and materials have been tried to protect exposed ruins, from sheltering – an expensive option not without its own drawbacks<sup>3</sup> - to chemical and various natural

<sup>1</sup>Lipe 1974.

<sup>2</sup>Buccellati 2006a.

<sup>3</sup>Mari is one of the few, and an early (1974) example, of a shelter over a well-preserved mudbrick complex in Syria. Stevens (1984) makes brief mention of its construction – a lightweight, metal-framed roof with plastic, molded modules – as part of a general discussion of conservation and reconstruction practices on Near



consolidants, and depending on the type of site, reburial, which is undoubtedly the most effective, but removes the site from public view.<sup>4</sup> There is no panacea for protecting earthen structures and faced by this challenge, archaeologists have generally opted for partial reconstruction, sacrificial coatings, or encasing original material with new mudbricks (fig. 1). While this has become an increasingly common approach to a difficult problem, it is an inherently unsatisfying one. This method introduces an ambivalence with respect to authenticity and which over time, with repeated cycles of repair, maintenance, and reconstruction, inevitably leads to loss of original fabric. This was not the solution adopted by the Buccellatis in addressing this challenge.

## 2. THE BUCCELLATI APPROACH

In 2003, Giorgio Buccellati was invited to give two presentations in the week-long Conservation Theme at WAC-5 in Washington DC, organized by the Getty Conservation Institute. The purpose of the Getty's theme at a WAC congress was to seek to draw archaeology and conservation into a closer relationship, in fact to endeavor to move the two fields toward better integration. It had long been archaeological field conservators' observation and complaint that conservation at archaeological sites was an after-the-event activity and the same was true for the excavated artefacts. Giorgio's presentations were exactly on target and as we have followed the work at Tell Mozan since that time, they have remained on target as the circumstances have changed in the field. His elegant title for the first presentation, "Conservation qua Archaeology," embodies Giorgio's philosophy that conservation is the precept whereby archaeology is conducted at Tell Mozan.<sup>5</sup>

Our first-hand experience of the work at Tell Mozan, in 2004, resulted from the Buccellatis' invitation to advise on aspects of conservation, particularly condition monitoring and methods of protection of the excavated mudbrick walls that had already been developed and put into place. On site it was apparent there were multiple facets to the work, in technical conservation protection and through involvement of the local community. Community archaeology and conservation mean to

the Buccellatis the participation and involvement of all members of the community, men and women, in the many functions required by excavation, conservation, interpretation, and protection. Giorgio and Marilyn cast their net wide. It was clear from the moment one was on site at Tell Mozan that they have an intuitive grasp of the notion and importance of inclusiveness. This philosophy affords a very practical approach to success, but unfortunately it is one that is put into practice too infrequently in all manner of endeavors that depend upon committed and sustained participation. It was not only because of witnessing the inspirational enthusiasm of the team the Buccellatis had built in those halcyon days before the civil war in Syria, but the spirit of the place somehow provided a solace to us as visitors to reflect on the immense history of the site and the dedicated care being given to it by the present day local community workers and employees.

Our role was to review and advise on the measures that had been created and implemented for protection and interpretation of the excavated mudbrick and stone ruins and on methods of monitoring. Giorgio had developed his now well-known system of protective covers (fig. 2) on a scaffolding of steel piping (iron trellises, as Giorgio called them) that display the form of the mudbrick walls, and yet are low-cost, renewable, constructed by skilled local workmen in local workshops (fig. 3). Monitoring (photographic and visual inspection) of the condition of the walls, which has been carried on throughout the war years by the local community, coupled with meteorological data, have proven the effectiveness of these measures that have protected the site from some very severe winter storms. The covers are easily opened to allow inspection of the condition of the walls (fig. 4).

In addition to the primary purpose of protection, the covers allow the buildings to be more easily understandable and interpreted to the visitor in quite compelling ways; especially in an early iteration using colored materials to reflect building periods (see fig. 2). Although the site was not visited by many tourists, Giorgio's other presentation in the WAC-5 publication - "Presentation and interpretation of archaeological sites: the case of Tell Mozan, Ancient Urkesh" - addresses the importance of presentation at all levels of society, from the local to the professional and political, both within Syria and beyond<sup>6</sup>. With the community they had developed simple means of providing interpretive signage on the site and they have been indefatigable in promoting the site to an external audience, including most recently in China where their work at the site received a research award at the Third Shanghai Archaeology Forum in 2017.

Eastern mudbrick sites. An assessment in the mid-1990s noted problems of rapid drying of the interior walls of the palace causing disintegration, drainage problems, and the passage of children and animals on the roof (Aslan 1997) – all of which pale into insignificance in the face of recent destruction resulting from the civil war.

<sup>4</sup>For a general overview see Correia *et al.* 2015. For the decision-making that went into the use of reburial at large mudbrick sites in Egypt and at Merv in Turkmenistan see Barnard *et al.* 2016 and Cooke 2007, respectively.

<sup>5</sup>Buccellati 2006a.

<sup>6</sup>Buccellati 2006b.

There was little, in truth, that we could offer by way of substantive advice – it had already been thought out and put into practice at as sophisticated a level as commensurate with the resources available, and adapted where needed. Our comments dealt with refinements of the protection system, more durable options for the type of cover material used, if and when imported materials might become available, methods of long-term monitoring of effectiveness, and analysis of mudbrick samples. We also advised on an experimental design for test walls to monitor the effectiveness of different types of materials being used to protect the walls (fig. 5), which were monitored for several years by Samer Abdel Ghafour. The material we recommended to replace the burlap or canvas, both of which are easily available but short-lived in the outdoor environment, is an inexpensive (by American standards), knitted, synthetic fabric commonly used as a shade cloth.<sup>7</sup> This material, with a life of 20-25 years, has been used by the authors effectively in wind-blown sand-control fences in the Gobi Desert of NW China and for a modular temporary shelter prototype in Cyprus.<sup>8</sup> As always, Giorgio was enthusiastic to try it and ordered material from the US to ship to Syria, since it was not available in Europe or the Middle East. Politics, however, intervened and the shipment was stymied by the embargo imposed on the country by the US, although a small quantity was hand-carried and used on the test walls (fig. 6).

Giorgio's creative mind had thus developed new ways of protecting the walls and interpreting them at the same time. His approach stands in contrast to the encasing and partial reconstruction of excavated mudbrick structures, as is commonplace throughout the region as mentioned earlier. The Buccellati innovation, utilizing local, inexpensive materials, like burlap, canvas, galvanized sheet steel, and piping, may not be appropriate for all sites, but it works for Tel Mozan, and that is its brilliance – Giorgio sees the problems, is aware of the solution being used elsewhere, questions whether there might be a better way to achieve protection of these ancient walls, and finds an alternative. And like all good preventive measures, this solution does not preclude a different approach in the future: the intervention is reversible and has not changed the ancient fabric. Giorgio's innovative approach was recognized by the Archaeological Institute of America in 2011 when he was given the award for best practices in site preservation.

<sup>7</sup> This fabric (distributed as Weathashade or Solartex) is a polyethylene knitted aerotextile incorporating three-way lock knit construction, UV stabilization, and reinforced edges that make it quite durable.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Agnew, Coffman 1991.

### 3. COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The emphasis on community relations and utilizing and enhancing community based skills has paid off handsomely with sustained commitment of the community to the site through the turbulence of war that followed. The community connects with the site, identifies with it, values it, protects and sustains it. The Buccellatis have imbued in the people of the village, a few kilometers from Tell Mozan (fig. 7), a connection across three millenia. It would be valuable to undertake a survey today of community attitudes to the site. The voice of the community, we suspect, would reflect a strong, prevailing connection because, in a country ravaged by war and riven by fundamentalist groups, in reduced circumstances, ancient Urkesh acts as an anchor.

The Buccellatis' extraordinary network, a gossamer web of communication, has held for eight years of war though excavation in their absence has not, of course, been possible. Instead, the emphasis has shifted to maintenance, condition monitoring backed by a constant flow of photographs, data processing, publication, and continuing research and analysis on the ceramic collection from past excavations. Being aware of the danger to the site, the Buccellatis took all necessary steps to keep up momentum of work. This included contriving to funnel funds to site custodians acting in absentia. Cycles of weeding and repointing the monumental staircase with mud, and repairing the protective covers. When one ponders the extraordinary resilience of their approach, all conducted by remote control, so to speak, one can only stand in awe. We can learn from this. The project did not collapse, though war came within 60 kilometers, it was not even put "on hold" – it has continued even in their absence, sustained by the earlier investment in community participation. Nor has there been looting, an all-too-common occurrence in the region. Indeed, Tell Mozan the site, and its survival as an ongoing success story is borne out by the commitment to community, which has become another means of the site's survival. As Giorgio wrote about their response to the challenges of war: "We were ready, though we had clearly not been expecting war. And yet it was as if we had."<sup>9</sup> They had already laid the foundation of preparedness and resilience in the community.

Where Tell Mozan sets the standard is in the comprehensive approach to archaeology and conservation as one close-knit activity. It is not possible to put site maintenance and monitoring aside; there is a tipping point in the life of an excavated site where beyond a certain point of delayed protection or treatment a cascade of deterioration becomes

<sup>9</sup> Buccellati 2014, 102.

irreversible leading to utter ruination and, eventually, abandonment. Too often archaeologists on site have been concerned with the excavation and the finds and less with what remains behind and issues like preservation and presentation – they come later, or sometimes not at all. The environment of Tell Mozan is severe: summer heat, rain and wind, winter freeze-thaw cycles and snow affect weak and friable mudbrick and mortar drastically. A site in its setting, the landscape, is inherently an integral component and is worthy of careful thought in the planning for presentation. If not so considered, the excavation is merely a mine for the extraction of resources – the exploitative model of archaeology that Lipe sought to get beyond in his conservation ethic. The Buccellatis' progression to community archaeology has been from practical needs to a theoretical understanding – not the other way round. This has proven to be a triumph of commonsense in the face of the civil war's recent daunting setback to their work.

Always thinking ahead, Giorgio and Marilyn have conceived plans for an eco-archaeological park encompassing the site and some 50 square kilometers of the surrounds. This, of course, must await felicitous times for realization. If this were to transpire and one must remain sanguine in the face of events in Syria, an eco-archaeological park serving the region might conceivably also nucleate a measure of economic and social benefit beyond the confines of the park itself. It would also be another feat of integration with the intent to incorporate the bio-diversity of the region.

There are yet further aspects of the holistic approach pursued at Tell Mozan. The economic aspects and potential for the site have been addressed through the support and encouragement of local women who produce for sale traditional handicrafts.<sup>10</sup> Education of students from the local university through site visits have been addressed and scholarships for local students have been provided. They have sought funding for digital implementation with the primary purpose to complete publication in order to make accessible the total record of excavation for the period 1984 to the present time. Is there anything lacking? From our many decades in the field of archaeological site conservation and management, we think not.

What then has characterized the Buccellatis' approach to Tell Mozan? To sum up, their work reflects an extraordinary blend of scholarly erudition and pragmatic commonsense. They see near and far. Practicing archaeologists who have embraced both site and artefact conservation, innovators and experimentalists, brilliant networkers across multiple disciplines with the ability to engage help effortlessly

from others with different expertise - these are the attributes of Giorgio and Marilyn. Their contribution to the integration of preservation, archaeology, and community comprises a milestone. Their record of accomplishment is stellar. We stand in admiration of their inventive ways of harnessing the benefits of archaeology for a larger purpose and in ways they never would have imagined – as a bulwark against the ravages of war.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Buccellati, Mahmoud 2017, 33-35.

<sup>11</sup> The sites in the Kurdish north have been relatively protected from the type of damage done to sites in other parts of the country (for assessment of war damage see e.g. AAAS and ASOR web sites). The recent bombing of Afrin that resulted in destruction of Ain Dara saw the Kurds defending their record of protecting cultural sites, citing Tel Moza (sic) as one example (van Wilgenburg 2018).

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Fig. 1. An example of encasing ruined mudbrick walls with new mudbrick is seen in the Ramesseum on the West Bank of Luxor, Egypt.



Fig. 2. The protective covers on the palace walls in two colors to indicate different periods of construction are best viewed and interpreted from the high point above the palace.



Fig. 3. The local workshop of the ever-inventive Sabah who creates or adapts whatever is needed for the protective system.



Fig. 4. The protective curtain open for inspection and photography of the walls.



Fig. 5. Test walls, seen here during construction in 2004, were established for comparative evaluation of materials and methods of protection.



Fig. 6. The aerotextile recommended for trial being held up on one of the test walls.



Fig. 7. Although temporally distant, the nearby village is geographically and associatively proximate to Tell Mozan.

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# THE WANDERING LIFE OF THE HITTITE SEAL DRESDEN ZV 1769 AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY: NEW ARCHIVAL LIGHT\*

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## *Abstract*

This article presents four unpublished archival documents that clarify the history of the Hittite seal Dresden ZV 1769 from its first appearance in Kayseri in 1887 until its purchase by the Dresden Museum in 1899. They offer an un hoped-for insight into the dynamic of the dealers in small ancient Near Eastern artefacts and their contacts with cultural institutions in Europe, America and Turkey at the end of the 19th century.

In this article, which I dedicate with profound esteem and affectionate friendship to Giorgio and Marilyn, I present unpublished archival documents that shed new light on the modern history of a well-known Hittite stamp seal kept in Dresden (Staatliche Kunst Sammlungen, Albertinum, N. inv. ZV 1769) (fig. 1).

Published for the first time in 1900 by Leopold Messerschmidt (fig. 2),<sup>1</sup> this intriguing seal has subsequently been described and discussed several times with regard to its figurative depiction, inscription and dating, which ranges from the 14th to the 13th century BC.<sup>2</sup> Made of haematite, it has a roughly cylindrical, disc-shaped form, with slightly concave sides and a diametral perforation. It measures about 1.9 cm in height and approximately 3.1 cm in diameter. The engraved face of the seal includes two outer concentric rings around a central circular field containing an Anatolian hieroglyphic inscription, tentatively read *na-x-x BONUS<sub>2</sub> SCRIBA<sub>2</sub>*.<sup>3</sup> In the

outer ring of the seal there is a multiple libation scene reminiscent of that found on the neck of the silver stag *rhyton* from the Schimmel Collection,<sup>4</sup> while the inner ring shows a sequence of alternating rosettes and VITA signs, which also includes two small triangles. The seal presents damage at the outer circle, as well as at two places in the centre.

Turning to the modern history of the Dresden seal, Messerschmidt briefly noted that it was already known to Albert Limerick Long of Robert College in Istanbul<sup>5</sup> in 1889 or thereabouts, when the seal was in the hands of a Greek from Caesarea (Kayseri), whose heir later sold it to the Dresden Museum.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Annick Payne has clarified that the seal entered the Dresden collection during the spring of 1899, when it was purchased by its director, the classical archaeologist Georg Treu,<sup>7</sup> thanks to the

\*I wish to express my gratitude to Saskia Wetzig, Skulpturensammlung Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, for the kind permission to reproduce the photograph of the seal Dresden ZV 1769 (fig. 1), and to use and publish the two letters kept in Dresden (here published as Documents 3 and 4, figs. 5-6). I am also deeply grateful to the Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for its kind permission to study and reproduce the two letters kept in Oxford (here published as Documents 1 and 2, figs. 3-4). Special thanks are due to Pantelis Kyrkos for his English translation of the letter written in Greek (Document 2). My manuscript has been greatly enhanced by constructive comments from Annick Payne, Clelia Mora and Marco Bonechi. Finally, I thank Adam Thorn for his revision of my English manuscript. I alone am responsible for any errors in this paper.  
<sup>1</sup> Messerschmidt 1900a, 441-443, fig. 1; Messerschmidt 1900b, 44f., pl. XLIII, 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> Bossert 1959, 11f., pl. 3, fig. 8; Boehmer, Güterbock 1987, 57, fig. 43; Mora 1987, 70, 78ff.; Payne 2005. In particular, for the differing opinion on the dating of the seal see Mora 1987, 82f. and Payne 2005, 373 with n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Mora 1987, 70. See also Payne 2005, 373f.

<sup>4</sup> Similarities between the figurative part of the Dresden seal and the frieze on the neck of the silver stag *rhyton* from the Norbert Schimmel Collection, New York, have often been discussed by scholars; see among others Alp 1967, 533, fig. 2; Güterbock 1977, 9f., n. 14; Alp 1983, 99, fig. 11; Mora 1987, 80-82; Güterbock 1989, 1-4, 5, fig. 3; Marazzi 1990, pl. XVII A-B; Payne 2005, 375f. For other seals with similar decoration see Mora 2016.

<sup>5</sup> The Methodist missionary and scholar Albert L. Long (1832-1901) served Robert College from 1872 until 1901 as professor of natural science. Over that time, he also served as secretary, director and vice president. During the 1880s, Long occasionally devoted himself to the study of different kinds of antiquities. He published a short article on ancient Near Eastern weights that came from the antiquities market in the *American Journal of Archaeology* (Long 1889) and was quoted by scholars who received his copies of Greek inscriptions (e.g. E. L. Hinks, "Inscriptions from Iasos", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 9, 1888, 338-342). On Robert College see below, n. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Messerschmidt 1900a, 442f.; 1900b, 45 ("Das Siegel wurde zuerst etwa 1889 von Albert L. Long [Constantinopel] in den Händen eines Griechen aus Caesarea [Cappadocien] bemerkt. Versuche es zu kaufen misslangen. Nach dem Tode des Besitzers kam es an ein Mitglied seiner Familie, von dem es das Dresdener Museum kaufte").

<sup>7</sup> Georg Treu was appointed in 1882 as curator of the sculp-

good offices of Long, who acted as intermediary with the heir of the previous owner from Kayseri.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the exact place of discovery of the seal is unknown.

The interplay of the four unpublished letters presented below (Documents 1-4; figs. 3-6) permits a better reconstruction of the rather adventurous life of the seal from its first appearance at Kayseri in 1887 until its purchase by the Dresden Museum in 1899. The first two letters, completely unknown until today, are kept in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Docs. 1-2; figs. 3-4). The latter two – the contents of which have been summarized in Payne’s article, but which are for the first time displayed in full below – are kept in the Archiv der Skulpturensammlung, Dresden (Docs. 3-4; figs. 5-6).

The letter sent by Long to the English philologist Rev. Archibald Henry Sayce,<sup>9</sup> written on 17 October 1887 (Doc. 1; fig. 3), moves back the appearance of the seal to a date at least two years earlier than known hitherto. The identification of the owner of the seal as a Greek man from Caesarea (Kayseri) can be deduced from one of the later documents (Doc. 3; fig. 5), which confirm Messerschmidt’s statements. Long enclosed with his letter – written on one side of a single large sheet of paper, at the top of which he stamped the ink impression of the engraved face of the seal (fig. 3a) – a second and smaller sheet of a different kind of

paper, showing four impressions of the seal and his notations on aspects of its figurative scene (fig. 3b). The impressions were made by Long himself.

Long recognized this seal as “Hittite” and therefore turned to Sayce, who at that time was professor of comparative philology at Oxford and was acknowledged as the highest authority in matters of Hittite studies.<sup>10</sup> During the 1880s, pre-classical Anatolian studies were emerging from their infancy, and Sayce’s article “A Forgotten Empire in Asia Minor”, published in August 1880 in *Fraser’s Magazine*, can be considered a turning point.<sup>11</sup> This new phase culminated in another work by Sayce, the book titled *The Hittites: The story of a Forgotten Empire*, published in 1888.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the eighties are characterized by an increasing circulation of Hittite objects inscribed in Anatolian Hieroglyphic, mainly stamp seals (often called “gems” by the scholars of the day).<sup>13</sup> Sayce was among the Western scholars involved in this circulation, providing expert appraisals and facilitating the purchase of items by museums and university collections in England. Less than one year before Long’s letter, Sayce lost the “gems” he was studying at Oxford due to a fire on 11 December 1886, which burnt down the western side of the Front Quadrangle of Queen’s College.<sup>14</sup> For Sayce, Long was one of the main contacts for obtaining Anatolian antiquities or information on them, as shown by the whole content of the 1887 letter and by similar missives kept in the Bodleian Library. Sayce’s familiarity with Robert College was not limited to the eighties: it continued into the beginning of the 20th century, as evidenced by both his correspondence and his autobiography.<sup>15</sup>

In 1887 Robert College, established in Istanbul in 1863,<sup>16</sup> was part of a large network of Protestant

ture collection at the Albertinum, replacing Hermann Theodor Hettner, and served in that position until 1915. On Treu see the obituaries by F. Studniczka in *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Phil.-hist. Klasse* 73/2, 1921, 51\*-62\*, and S. Reinach in *Revue Archéologique* 1921, 400f.

<sup>8</sup> Payne 2005, 372 (“dokumentierte Geschichte erst mit dem 28. April 1899 beginnt, als Albert L. Long vom Robert College in Konstantinopel an Prof. Dr. Georg Treu, den Direktor der Dresdener Antiken- und Abgussammlung schrieb. Long berichtete, dass ein Einheimischer aus dem kappadokischen Caesarea [heute Kayseri] ein steinernes Siegel zu ihm brachte, um seine Meinung zu diesem Stück einzuholen. Wie das Siegel in den Besitz dieses Mannes gelangte und woher es stammt, blieb unbekannt. Long bekundete großes Interesse daran und erkundigte sich sofort nach dem Preis, was die Begehrlichkeit des Besitzers dermaßen anheizte, dass lang bald die Hoffnung aufgab, das Siegel zu bekommen. Auch seine Freunde, denen er davon erzählt hatte, und die ebenfalls versuchten, das Stück zu kaufen, scheiterten. Nachdem der Grieche gestorben war, wandte sich einer seiner Erben, der in finanziellen Schwierigkeiten war, an Lang und bat ihn um Hilfe bei der Suche nach einem Käufer. Da Lang sich erinnerte, dass Prof. Treu Interesse bekundet hatte, fragte er nach, ob dieser es für die Dresdener Antikensammlung erwerben wolle. Ein weiterer Brief Longs an Treu vom 12. Mai 1899 hält fest, dass er das Siegel gekauft und per Einschreiben nach Dresden aufgegeben habe”).

<sup>9</sup> On Sayce see the obituaries by J. Garstang in *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 20, 1933, 195f., and S. H. Langdon in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2, Apr. 1933, 499-503.

<sup>10</sup> See Alaura 2017; forthcoming a.

<sup>11</sup> Sayce 1880. In a lecture given at the Athenaeum Club in London on 4 August 1879, then published in the weekly periodical *The Academy*, Sayce had already proposed that all the monuments with associated hieroglyphic inscriptions from Syria and Anatolia (including the famous Karabel Relief) should be attributed to the Hittites. Sayce himself described this as “my Hittite theory of 1879”, see Alaura 2017, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Sayce 1888.

<sup>13</sup> These “gems” are discussed e.g. in Sayce 1888, 118f.

<sup>14</sup> On this episode, reported by Sayce in his autobiography, see Alaura, Bonechi 2018, 20.

<sup>15</sup> See Sayce 1923, 361f.

<sup>16</sup> Robert College was established as a male college by the Americans Christopher Rheinlander Robert, a wealthy New York merchant and philanthropist, and Cyrus Hamlin, a Protestant missionary. The college was an outgrowth of American missionary efforts within the Ottoman Empire, but had no formal connection with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In 1871 a sister college, named the American College for Girls (later renamed Constantinople Woman’s College), was also founded. See Fincancı 1983; Freely 2000; Greenwood 2000;



American colleges scattered from the Bosphorus to the inner regions of Anatolia and beyond, such as Anatolia College in Merzifon, established in 1886, and Armenia College in Harput (renamed Euphrates College in 1888), established in 1878.<sup>17</sup> Archaeology was undoubtedly among the interests of these missionary schools, as for instance indicated by the existence of an Archaeological Club in Anatolia College, seen as particularly fitting “in a country where the historical strata begin with the Hittite sculpture and cuneiform script and represent all the intervening ages to the present”.<sup>18</sup> The Archaeological Club, with a membership of about sixty students, developed correspondence with the British Museum and other scientific bodies, while accumulating a collection of retrieved fragments for the campus museum. Rev. George E. White, who later became Anatolia College’s president, took the lead in organizing excursions to identify Hittite, Greek, Roman and other remains, and stressed the importance of the archaeological items in furthering the educational programme of the museum.<sup>19</sup>

In the intellectual milieu of the American colleges established in the Near East there was a clear awareness of the importance of the ongoing discoveries of pre-classical sites and artefacts. This is for instance shown by two chapters dealing respectively with archaeology and cuneiform writing in a book published in 1881 at Boston under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. It was written by the missionary Thomas Laurie, who based his report of sites in Asia Minor, including Boğazköy and Yazılıkaya, on Rev. Henry Van Lennep’s *Travels*, and his elementary description of how the cuneiform script functions on Rev. Sayce’s *Lectures*, both published a few years earlier.<sup>20</sup> Before the rise of academic specialization and at a time when the movement for publicly funded museums was still developing, this sphere of activity of the American colleges played a crucial role in influencing the value, reception and understanding of Hittite antiquities.

It appears significant that Long and Robert College were points of contact for the Greek milieu of Kayseri. It is worth noting in this regard that in

Anatolia, between the last decades of the 19th century and the First World War, the American colleges were mainly attended by Armenian and Greek students. A Greek translation of the above-mentioned 1880 article by Sayce, “A Forgotten Empire in Asia Minor”, was published one year later at Smyrna.<sup>21</sup> The widespread coverage given to Hittite archaeology in the press (both in English and Greek) by Sayce no doubt encouraged the search for Hittite antiquities and their commercialization throughout this period.

Further details of the sequence of events concerning the Dresden seal around 1887 can be retrospectively extrapolated from the letter Long wrote to Treu on 28 April 1899 (Doc. 3; fig. 5). We learn that Long contacted not only Sayce, but also the German-American Assyriologist and archaeologist Hermann Volrath Hilprecht (who at that time was professor at the University of Pennsylvania and curator for the Semitic department of the university’s museum in Philadelphia)<sup>22</sup> and the British archaeologist and pioneer in the study of Aegean civilization in the Bronze Age Arthur John Evans (at that time keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford),<sup>23</sup> together with others whose names unfortunately are not mentioned. Long also reports that among those who, at the end of the eighties, tried to purchase the seal, there was the British clergyman Greville John Chester, an Oxford alumnus (Balliol College) and collector of antiquities, whose donations helped greatly to enrich the collections of the Ashmolean and British Museums.<sup>24</sup> The “gems” were among Chester’s main interests, and in those years Sayce himself published Hittite seals purchased by Chester in the Eastern Mediterranean antiquities market, including in Smyrna.<sup>25</sup>

Long’s letter to Sayce dated 1887 (Doc. 1) offers a further point of interest concerning the Dresden seal. It appears that the owner of the seal brought it with him to Athens, which was a major hub for the trading and trafficking of Greek and Eastern Mediterranean antiquities in the second half of the 19th century. Long reports that the man from Kayseri affirmed that the Athens Museum offered him 400 francs to purchase the seal. Sceptical of such an evaluation, Long offered 100 francs. The high price requested by the owner of the seal might lead one to suppose that he had bought the seal and had probably paid a substantial sum for it

Akaş 2013.

<sup>17</sup> This college was the successor to the American Harput Missionary College established in 1859, which in turn derived from the Theological Seminary founded in 1852.

<sup>18</sup> Quotation from White 1918, 45.

<sup>19</sup> McGrew 2015, 115. Rev. George E. White acted as treasurer and dean of Anatolia College from 1890 onwards, becoming its president in 1913.

<sup>20</sup> Laurie 1881, 149-173 and 174-183, chapters titled “Archaeology” and “Cabinets and Cuneiform Inscriptions”. Laurie 1881, 161f. (Boğazköy and Yazılıkaya) and 177-183 (cuneiform), depends respectively on Van Lennep 1870, and Sayce 1877. Laurie and Sayce had an epistolary correspondence, as indicated by Laurie 1881, 344, n. 7.

<sup>21</sup> See *Notes & News* in *The Academy* 1881, Jan. 8, 25.

<sup>22</sup> On Hilprecht (1859-1925) see the obituary in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 36 (NF 2), 1925, 309f.

<sup>23</sup> On Evans (1851-1941) see the obituaries in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* 27, 1941, 323-357, and in the *Obituary Notices of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 3 (10) Dec. 1941, published by the Royal Society Stable, 941-968.

<sup>24</sup> On Chester (1830-1892) see Seidmann 2006a; 2006b.

<sup>25</sup> See Sayce 1887; 1890.



although other scenarios can be envisaged.

It is possible that in Athens the Greek man from Kayseri addressed himself to the archaeologist Valerios Stais, who in 1887 had become curator of the vase, figurine and small objects collections at the Central Museum, one year before his appointment as keeper of the newly denominated National Archaeological Museum.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, one cannot exclude the possibility that the owner of the seal also turned to the numerous antiquities dealers and diggers operating in Athens. Some of these were registered and conducted their trade openly, being systematically engaged in the trading of antiquities, while others were unregistered, and knowledge of their activities remains largely elusive.<sup>27</sup>

The correspondence addressed to Sayce kept in the Bodleian Library shows that he received, for expert appraisal, an impression of the seal now in Dresden not only from Long in 1887, but also from Heinrich Schliemann in 1888 (i.e. around one year later) (Doc. 2; fig. 4). When Schliemann wrote to Sayce, he was obviously unaware that the latter already knew of the seal. Schliemann, like Long before him, decided to turn to Sayce because the British scholar was the pre-eminent authority in matters of Hittite antiquities. Schliemann and Sayce held one another in high esteem, and in recent years their contacts and collaboration had become increasingly intense. At the beginning of the 1880s, Sayce wrote the preface both to the third German edition of Schliemann's book *Ilios* and to its English edition. Furthermore, Sayce obtained for Schliemann an honorary fellowship at Queen's College, Oxford,<sup>28</sup> and tried, in vain, to convince him to dig at Boğazköy.<sup>29</sup>

In his short letter dated 19 December 1888, written from Athens in Greek on thin, light blue, textured paper<sup>30</sup> (Doc. 2; fig. 4a), Schliemann reports to his good friend Sayce that one A. Petris from Smyrna has contacted him concerning a seal, which we can with certainty identify as the Dresden seal. Schliemann adds to his letter a sheet of a different kind of paper with an ink impression of the engraved face of this seal (fig. 4b). This sheet with the ink impression must have been that sent by Petris to Schliemann. In its lower part Schliemann added in English a short text written in ink in a very neat hand, in which he mistakenly indicates that the diameter of the object is 4 inches – i.e. 10.16

cm –, whereas this measurement clearly refers to its circumference. Schliemann is possibly also the author of the two pencil notations on this sheet, consisting of two drawings showing the shape and width of the seal. The caption referring to its width is written in German (“Grossen” is probably a misspelling of “Grössen”), and this supports the idea that, before writing in ink in English for Sayce, Schliemann had included in pencil visual information on the seal extrapolated from Petris' letter, given that the German archaeologist had not personally seen the object. Switching between languages, sometimes for no apparent reason, is not unusual in Schliemann's correspondence, notes and diaries. Language-switching of this kind, probably unconscious, would in all likelihood have led Schliemann to make fairly common errors in vocabulary and spelling in his writings.<sup>31</sup>

What seems very probable is that, in any case, Petris was not the author of the ink impression of the seal. Rather, Schliemann may have received from Petris one of the impressions Long had made one year before when the owner of the seal – i.e. the Greek man from Kayseri – brought the object to him in Istanbul. If so, one can conjecture that Petris had been contacted at Smyrna by the owner of the seal after the latter had travelled to Athens in 1887. On this occasion, the man from Kayseri may have left with Petris at least one of the impressions made by Long, adding that the sale price of the seal was 400 francs and charging Petris with selling it using his own channels. Incidentally, one notes that independently both Long in 1887 and Schliemann in 1888 stated explicitly in their letters to Sayce that they did not believe that 400 francs had been offered for the seal.

The family name Petris should indicate that he also was a Greek. This is further supported by the fact that he contacted Schliemann in Athens. Very many traders in Smyrna were Greek, and they kept strong links with both their homeland and the numerous Greek community of Cappadocia.<sup>32</sup> The Greek commercial network, like the Armenian one, was built on ethnic and religious solidarity, and was widespread abroad, from Smyrna to Istanbul, Kayseri and Aleppo. Our case reveals that in Kayseri the trade in Hittite antiquities was conducted by Greeks, either directly or via middlemen, through Smyrna. Furthermore, Petris was probably contacted because at that time Smyrna was a main centre of the trade in small objects, including medals and coins, beads and inscribed gems, among them seals (particularly Hittite ones). Sayce himself was to write a little later that “Smyrna is the centre of the trade in the coins and other antiquities which are found in the interior of Anatolia; I have myself

<sup>26</sup> On Valerios Stais (1857-1923) as curator in 1887 see Gazi 2008, 78, n. 12; in general, see Trimmis 2016.

<sup>27</sup> On this topic see Galanakis 2012a; 2012b.

<sup>28</sup> See *The Times*, Dec. 29, 1890, 6.

<sup>29</sup> See Sayce 1923, 220. For the relationship between Sayce and Schliemann and for Sayce's many projects in Anatolia during this crucial period see Alaura forthcoming b.

<sup>30</sup> This is one of the several Oxford letters Schliemann wrote in Greek to Sayce.

<sup>31</sup> On this topic see Carvalho 2012.

<sup>32</sup> See Frangakis Syrett 1993; 1999; Goffmann 1999; Smyrnelis 2005; 2008.

bought there cylinders which were imported from Kappadokia”.<sup>33</sup> Some antique dealers in Smyrna were renowned throughout the West, and were frequented not only by archaeologists, but also by cultivated visitors, as shown for instance by the American zoologist James Ellsworth De Kay in his 1833 book *Sketches of Turkey*.<sup>34</sup> The role of Smyrna in the network of trade in Hittite seals during the last decades of the 19th century remains unexplored, and the topic has not yet attracted the careful attention it deserves.

Our present supply of information on the seal owned by the man from Kayseri is interrupted for several years after Schliemann’s letter to Sayce of 1888. Indeed, the other two letters concerning it both date to 1899 (Docs. 3-4; figs. 5-6). However, it should be mentioned that probably during the 1880s at least two counterfeits of the Dresden seal were also made. Two examples in silver exist – one of which is in Paris (Louvre AO 3755),<sup>35</sup> the other in Oxford (Ashmolean 1921.874)<sup>36</sup> – each with a representation on the circular base that is almost identical to that of Dresden ZV 1769. Both these seals differ from the Dresden seal in that they do not present damage at the outer circle and in the centre. Louvre AO 3755 was already considered a fake by Messerschmidt in 1900 and deemed an imitation of

Dresden ZV 1769. The Oxford seal is regarded as a modern copy of the Paris one.<sup>37</sup>

The former 1899 letter (Doc. 3; fig. 5) documents that the new owner of the seal (an heir of the previous owner, who had since died) contacted Long in order to sell it. Consequently, Long wrote to Treu on 28 April 1899 to ask him if he was interested in purchasing this Hittite seal, remembering the interest of the director of the Dresden Museum in Hittite antiquities. Long enclosed an impression of the seal, though the present whereabouts of that impression is unknown. As already noted, Long retraces the history of the object known to him since (as we now know) 1887, mentioning his fear that during the long period it has been out of sight it could have been sold in Paris (at this time the heart of the European antiquities trade). However, Long devotes the greater part of his letter to the shifting price of the seal over time, suggesting to Treu that he should offer 15 pounds.

The deal was indeed struck for just 15 pounds, as we learn from the letter Long sent to Treu on 12 May 1899 (Doc. 4; fig. 6). This was far less than the 400 francs that the man from Kayseri had wanted twelve years earlier. As testified by a further letter Long wrote to Treu on 24 May 1899, by that date the price for the Hittite seal had been paid and the negotiation had been successfully concluded.<sup>38</sup>

The seal was soon published by Messerschmidt, who provided an impression of the engraved face and a drawing of the object (fig. 2).<sup>39</sup> The latter was based on the plaster casts made not only by Treu, but also by the German Egyptologist Georg Steindorff, who during these years was building up the small training collection in Leipzig into a true museum.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, the four documents published here offer an un hoped-for insight into practices current in the rising world of Near Eastern studies during the 1880s. More specifically, the events surrounding the Dresden seal – a rather rare case in which we can observe the activities of the dealers in ancient small objects that have often vanished almost without trace – shed light on a dynamic that is probably not limited to this object alone, but may elucidate the fate of many other Hittite antiquities, at least during the 1880s.

#### *Documents*

<sup>33</sup> Sayce 1890, 215.

<sup>34</sup> De Kay 1833, 480 (“The stranger in Smyrna will derive much information and pleasure from an acquaintance with Mr. Borel, who is well known to all the archaeologists of Europe. He has the reputation of being profoundly versed in numismatics and his library relating to this subject is perhaps more extensive and complete than any similar private collection in the world. He has recently disposed of one of his collections for \$30,000, and prosecutes his investigations with untiring zeal. I was indebted to Mr. B. for several hints on the means of detecting a genuine antique from a counterfeit, but the fear of being imposed upon has hitherto prevented me from making any collection beyond Turkish aspers, paras, and piasters. The name of an individual was mentioned who had obtained at Constantinople large sums of money by selling imitations of the rarest and most valuable coins to travellers. He was detected, and obliged to quit the country. Mr. B. has invented a machine, with which he is enabled to copy the impression of a coin or medal, and transfer it with the greatest possible exactness to paper”).

<sup>35</sup> Delaporte 1923, Nr. A.1037, 202, pl. 101, fig. 13 a-b; Boehmer 1975, 450, fig. 376e; Mora 1987, 70ff., vol. 2, pl. 13: 3.2.B; Boysan-Dietrich *et al.* 2009, 99, 158 with n. 85. See also Hogarth 1920, 75 (no. 6), 88, 90.

<sup>36</sup> Hogarth 1922, 214f., n. 15, pl. XXIV, no. 18; Mora 1987, 70ff.; Boysan-Dietrich *et al.* 2009, 94, 157 with n. 76. Because of its dimensions (3.3 cm in diameter) it is probably to be identified with the seal published for the first time in the Armenian journal *Handes Amsorya, Monatschrift für armenische Philologie*, in May 1898, 139, fig. 1; see also K.J. Basmadjian in *PSBA* 20, 7 June 1898, 230-234 (230: “appartenant à un antiquaire de Kaisérie [Césarée] et provenant de Malatia [Mélitène]”). The seal Ashmolean 1921.874 was procured in Cairo by George Davis Hornblower (1864-1951), who developed his interest in Egyptology during his time in the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior and collected many artefacts during this period.

<sup>37</sup> See Mora 1987, 70, 79 with n. 12 and Boysan-Dietrich *et al.* 2009, 157, n. 76, and 158, n. 85 with previous bibliography. According to Alexander 1973/76, 208, n. 102, the authenticity of both the Louvre and the Dresden seals “should be examined carefully”.

<sup>38</sup> Long to Treu, 24 May, 1899: “Dear Prof. Treu, your letter with its enclosed check has been duly received and I send you herewith my receipt for the same” (Archiv der Skulpturensammlung, Zugangsverzeichnis-Akte [ZV 1769]).

<sup>39</sup> Messerschmidt 1900a, 441; 1900b, 45.

<sup>40</sup> For the history of the plaster cast collections in Dresden and Leipzig see Rehm 2018, 156ff., and 200ff.

[Document 1] Albert L. Long to Archibald Henry Sayce, 17 October 1887<sup>41</sup> (fig. 3)

Robert College, Constantinople  
Oct. 17.1887

My Dear Prof. Sayce,

Your kind letter of the 11th inst. is just received. I thank you very much for your trouble in writing out the inscription on the cylinder.

I have written to a friend in Caesarea to be on the look out for the Kappadokian tablets.

The owner of the haematite Hittite seal has kept his promise and brought the object back to me, after taking it with him on a recent trip to Athens. He says that while in Athens the Museum there offered him 400 francs for the seal but as he had given his word to me to give me the refusal of it, he would not part with it. He now waits an offer from me. I have told him that my highest offer so far as I am concerned is 100 francs, but if he will put a definitive price upon it, I will inquire of those who wish to purchase and get an answer yes or no to the offer. As yet he has not committed himself to any price and I can do nothing with him. I have no means of verifying his statement as to the offer of 400 francs. I make it a rule to disbelieve every statement of the kind made to me by natives of this country. I find that to be the safest plan.

I had a curious thing brought me recently which I think is a very clever and it may be ancient forgery but for which it is said that a good price has been offered. It is a heavy piece of copper weighing something over a pound and stamped with solar disk and other emblems but I was not allowed to take a stamp from it.

I shall report to you anything of interest in the Hittite line which may turn up.

In haste but Sincerely Yours  
Albert L. Long

[on the second sheet of paper]

I have made some impressions here in ink of the seal which may perhaps be of service. Note stag's head with branching horns and not the straight retreating horns of the head in Hamath Insc.[riptions]

[Document 2] Heinrich Schliemann to Archibald Henry Sayce, 19 December 1888<sup>42</sup> (fig. 4)

Αθήνησι 19<sup>ο</sup> Δεκεμβρ 1888

Σχλιέμανν Sayce ὡ τῷ πάνυ εὖ πράττειν

Ὁ Α. Πέτρης, ὁ ἐν Σμύρνη ἐπέσταλκέ μοι τὸν ἐγκείμενον τύπον πέτρας σκληροτάτης, σφραγίδος ὡς ἔοικεν, ἅμα δὲ δεῖται ἐμοῦ ὅπως εἶποιμι ἂν αὐτῷ τὸ εἶδος τῆς γραφῆς καὶ τὴν χρηματικὴν ἀξίαν τοῦ λίθου. Τὰ σημεῖα ἰττιτικά εἶναι μοι δοκῶ ἄλλὰ Σὺ τῶν τοιούτων ὁ πρῶτος τῆς οἰκουμένης διαγνωστῆς καὶ κριτῆς ὥστε δέομαι Σου διασαφηνίσει ὅ τι ἐστί. Ὁ Πετρὴς βεβαιοῖ ὅτι προσήνεγκον αὐτῷ ἀντὶ τῆς πέτρας ὡ φράνκα ἄλλὰ τοῦτο ψεῦδος εἶναι ἠγοῦμαι πάντως δὲ οὐκ ὠνήσομαι αὐτήν.

ἔρρωσο

[English translation]

Athens, December 19th, 1888

Schliemann A. H. Sayce, be always well

A. Petris, the one who is in Smyrna, sent me this impression of a hard stone, that looks to me like a seal, and asks me to tell him the type of the writing and the money value of the stone. I think the letters are hettitic. But, it is You, the one who is accurate and first of the world in diagnosing such things. I please you to clarify what it is. Petris ensures that they offer him 400 francs for the stone. But I think this is a lie. However, I am not going to buy it.

Be well

[on the second sheet of paper]

Grossen  
the diameter is 4 inches

[Document 3] Albert L. Long to Georg Treu, 28 April 1899<sup>43</sup> (fig. 5)

Dear Prof. Treu.

I send you enclosed an impression of a Hittite seal with the following explanation:

About ten years ago a native of Cesarea, Cappadocia, brought me the stone asking for my opinion of it. I was so much interested in it that I imprudently at once asked him his price for it. This excited his cupidity and he refused to name any price and I had to give up the hope of gaining possession of it.

I took, however, a number of good impressions which have been distributed among my friends, Prof. Sayce, Prof. Hilprecht, Mr. Arthur Evans and others. Mr. Greville Chester and several others tried to purchase it offering from 20 to 25 pounds for it but the Greek who held it would not come to any definite terms.

I finally lost sight of him altogether and supposed

<sup>41</sup> Bodleian Library, Sayce Papers, MS. Eng. lett. d. 66, f. 143-144.

<sup>42</sup> Bodleian Library, Sayce Papers, MS. Eng. lett. d. 66, f. 197-198.


<sup>43</sup> Archiv der Skulpturensammlung, Zugangsverzeichnis-Akte (ZV 1769).

that the seal had been sent to Paris.

It now appears that the Cesarea man has died some time ago and a member of his family into whose possession the stone has come being in great need has applied to me for help in finding a purchaser.

I remember that you once mentioned to me your interest in Hittite objects and I therefore consented to write to you and ask whether you would like to purchase this.

As to the price, inasmuch as the sum of £s. 20 has been offered several times for it, the man's expectations are somewhat high, but I have prepared him to accept less and I believe that 15 £s. would be a fair price for it.

The stone is hematite of this shape  only one face inscribed and slightly chipped upon one edge. It resembles the seal in the British Museum known as the "Yozghat" seal.

The man offered to leave the seal in my keeping but I declined having any responsibility in the matter. I told him to return to me in 10 or 12 days and I would have your answer for him. I believe it to be a valuable object and I shall be happy to be of any service to you in acquiring it for your collection.

Awaiting your reply I remain

Sincerely Yours  
Albert L. Long

Robert College  
Constantinople  
April 28. 1899.

[*Document 4*] Albert L. Long to Georg Treu, 12 May 1899<sup>44</sup> (fig. 6)

Robert College  
Constantinople  
May 12. 1899

Dear Prof. Treu.

In accordance with your letter I have purchased the Hittite seal and I send it to you by registered post.

You can send me the fifteen Pounds in the form of a cheque payable to order of Dr. Albert L. Long.

I am very glad to be of service to you in the way of gathering up objects of archaeological value. Hittite objects are not so common here as they were ten years [ago], nevertheless occasionally some very good things turn up occasionally in the hands of the dealers from Kappadokia and Kilikia.

I have omitted to thank you for your great kindness in sending me by the hand of my

daughter last summer the cast (Abguss) from the Hercules. It stands upon my shelf and is a great pleasure to me.

With many thanks

Sincerely Yours  
Albert L. Long

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<sup>44</sup> Archiv der Skulpturensammlung, Zugangsverzeichnis-Akte (ZV 1769).

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Fig. 1. The seal Dresden ZV 1769 © Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.



Fig. 2. The seal Dresden ZV 1769 and its impression, from Messerschmidt 1900b, pl. XLIII, 4-5.

Robert College, Constantinople  
Oct 17, 1887

My dear Prof. Sayce

Your kind letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. is just received I thank you very much for your trouble in writing out the inscription on the cylinder. I have written to a friend in Caesarea to be on the look out for the Cappadocian tablets.

The owner of the haematite Hittite seal has kept his promise and brought the object back to me, after taking it with him on a recent trip to Athens. He says that while in Athens the Museum there offered him 400 francs for the seal but as he has given his word to me to give me the refusal of it, he would not part with it. He now mails an offer from me. I have told him that my highest offer so far as I am concerned is 100 francs, but if he will put a definite price upon it, I will inquire of those who wish to purchase and get an answer yes or no to the offer. As yet he has not committed himself to any price and I can do nothing with him. I have no means of verifying his statement as to the offer of 400 francs - I shake it a little to disbelieve, every statement of the kind made to me by natives of this country. I find that to be the safest plan.

I had a curious thing brought me recently which I think is a very clever and it may be ancient forgery but for which it is said that a good price has been offered. It is a heavy piece of copper weighing some thing over a pound and stamped with solar disk and other emblems - but I was not allowed to take a stamp from it. I shall report to you anything of interest in the Hittite line which may turn up.

In haste but sincerely yours  
Albert L. Long

I have made some impressions here in ink of the seal which

my perhaps be of service. Note the head with branching and not the straight branching horns of the head in Hervey's desc.

Fig. 3. A. L. Long to A. H. Sayce, 17 October 1887 © Bodleian Library Oxford.



Hittite text from a letter dated 19 December 1888. The text is written in cuneiform script and discusses the seal's provenance and details.

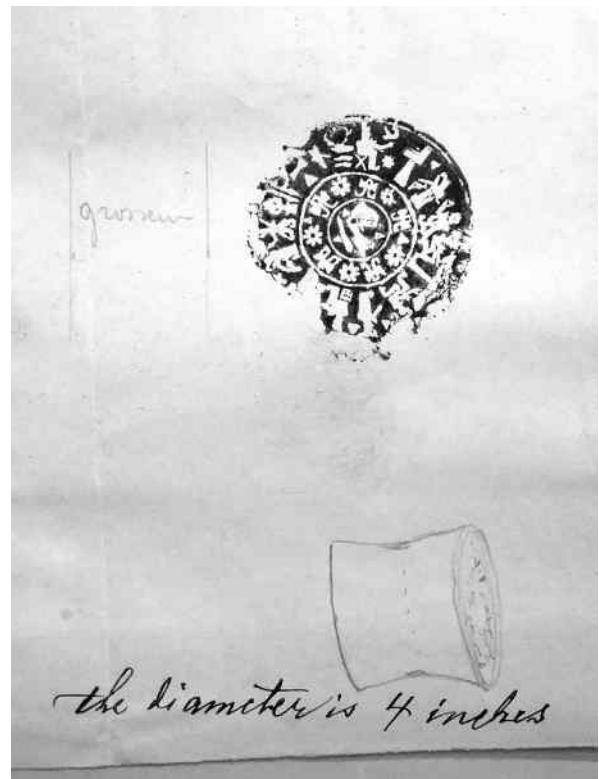


Fig. 4. H. Schliemann to A. H. Sayce, 19 December 1888 © Bodleian Library Oxford.

Hittite Seal  
 Dear Prof. Treu,  
 I send you enclosed an impression of a Hittite seal with the following explanation:  
 About ten years ago a native of Caesarea, Canthabria, brought me the stone asking for my opinion of it. I was so much interested in it that I imprudently at once asked him his price for it. This excited his cupidity and he refused to name any price and I had to give up the hope of gaining possession of it. I took, however, a number of good impressions which have been distributed among my friends Prof. Lane, Prof. Hilprecht, Mr. Brühlmann and others. Mr. Juville, Chester and several others tried to purchase it offering from 20 to 25 pounds for it but the Greek who held it would not come to any definite terms.

I finally lost sight of the seal until I finally got it and supposed that the seal had been sent to Paris.  
 It now appears that the Caesarea man has died some time ago and a member of his family into whose possession the stone has come being in great need has applied to me for help in finding a purchaser. I remember that you once mentioned to me your interest in Hittite objects and I therefore consented to write to you and ask whether you would like to purchase this.  
 As to the price, inasmuch as the sum of £5.20 has been offered several times for it, the man's expectations are somewhat high but I have prepared him to accept less and I believe that 15 £ would be a fair price for it. The stone is hematite of this shape. Only one face inscribed and slightly chipped upon one edge.

It resembles the seal in the British Museum known as the Yozghat seal.  
 The man offered to leave the seal in my keeping but I declined having any responsibility in the matter. I told him to return to me in 10 or 12 days and I would have your answer for him. I believe it to be a valuable object and I shall be happy to be of any service to you in acquiring it for your collection.  
 Awaiting your reply I remain Sincerely Yours  
 Albert L. Long  
 Robert College  
 Constantinople  
 April 28, 1899

Fig. 5. A. L. Long to G. Treu, 28 April 1899 © Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.



Hittifischer Robert College  
 Siegel, z. v. 1769 Constantinople  
 May 12. 1899  
 Dear Prof. Treu.  
 In accordance with  
 your letter I have pur-  
 chased the Hittite seal  
 and I send it to you  
 by registered post.  
 You can send me the  
 fifteen Pounds in the  
 form of a cheque paya-  
 ble to order of Dr. Albert  
 L. Long.  
 I am very glad to be of ser-  
 vice to you in the way of  
 fathering up objects of  
 1915-99 Crea. inv. 15 L. cr-  
 gisard u. gisard. Treu.

Archaeological value.  
 Hittite objects are not  
 so common here as they  
 were ten years, never-  
 theless occasionally  
 some very good things  
 turn up occasionally  
 in the hands of the  
 dealers from Tappa-  
 donia and Kilikia.  
 I have omitted to  
 thank you for your  
 great kindness in  
 sending me by the  
 hand of my daughter

last summer the  
 cast (abguss) from the  
 Hercules. It stands  
 upon my shelf and  
 is a great pleasure to  
 me -  
 With many thanks  
 Sincerely Yours  
 Albert L. Long

Fig. 6 A. L. Long to G. Treu, 12 May 1899 © Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

## TALES FROM THE DESERT NOMADS: FROM TEXTUAL SOURCES TILL GERTRUDE BELL'S LETTERS

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### *Abstract*

The present paper focuses on the mention of the nomadic tribes in Gertrude Bell letters and diaries during three of her journeys in the Middle East. The paper is intended to provide some evidence on the nomadic costumes and the socio-economic organization of the different tribes in the desert. Finally, a reflection about Nomads in the third and second millennium BC textual sources will be provided.

Famous Arabic popular narratives are strongly related to the desert life, tales of love, war, revenge, and victories, they have as protagonists the habitants of the desert, the nomads and semi nomads Bedouin. For instance, the Antara bin Shadad, the heroic story of love and tenacity, the war of revenge of Alzer Salem<sup>1</sup> that has lasted 40 years. Quite obvious is the presence of Bedouins features in modern Arabic urban societies; the inherited traditions of hospitality, generosity and courage are basic features of the modern Arabs life that they are still proud to have, although such traditions are an extract from an era usually referred to by Arabs as an era of "ignorance" (Al-Jahelya). Gertrude Bell during her journeys in the Syrian and Arabian deserts at the beginning of the last century<sup>2</sup> recording in her diaries and letters a testimony on the political, social and economical organization of the Bedouins in the desert. The arrival of Islam to Arabia and the nomads converting to the new religion and how it shaped some aspects of their life, by preserving their costumes, but break off with some habits that belong to the "ignorance" era.

The nomads' perception of the land where they live is quite different from our understanding to that vast territory. Gertrude Bell provides a poetic description of their nature:

"There is no name for it. The Arabs do not speak of desert or wilderness as we do. Why should they? To them it is neither desert nor wilderness, but a land of which they know every feature, a mother country

whose smallest product has a use sufficient for their needs. They know, or at least they knew in the days when their thoughts shaped themselves in deathless verse, how to rejoice in the great spaces and how to honour the rush of the storm. In many a couplet they extolled the beauty of the watered spots; they sang of the fly that hummed there, as a man made glad with wine croons melodies for his sole ears to hear, and of the pools of rain that shone like silver pieces, or gleamed dark as the warrior's mail when the wind ruffled them. They had watched, as they crossed the barren watercourses, the laggard wonders of the night, when the stars seemed chained to the sky as though the dawn would never come."<sup>3</sup>

The territory of the nomad has shaped every thing in their life, they adapted themselves to live with small amount of food and water, they use to be rich in one day and very poor in the day after, this life style could be seen and understood in their behaviour, in their social and economical organization and in their costumes. As many readers of this paper know, the Bedouins tribes in the Middle East are divided in a hierarchical way: the main tribe and the other blood affiliated smaller tribes. Every one of these smaller tribe has a Sheikh that should follow the main Sheikh of his mother tribe. The law of the desert is drowned by the inherited costumes, even at the present time the government does not interfere in the tribe's troubles.

Bell during her three journeys at the beginning of the last century, met many personages, that belong to different tribes and cities; in the following paragraphs I will address some nomads stories and habits and the roles they played in Gertrude Bell's journeys.

During her journey to Palmyra in 1900, Gertrude Bell, had some early experience with the Nomads life. During her trip from Palmyra back to Damascus, she met with Sheikh Muhammad, the chief Sheikh

\* For Marilyn and Giorgio, for the human dimension of their carrier.

<sup>1</sup> Or Abu Laela Al Mohalhel, the pre-islamic poet and the knight that was the protagonist of Albasus war that lasted 40 years for the revenge of his brother Kulaib Bin rabia the chief of Banu Rabia tribes.

<sup>2</sup> the first one the journey from Jerusalem to Damascus in February/March 1905, the second the journey from Damascus to Baghdad in January/February 1911 and the last her journey from Damascus to Hayil in December 1913/February 1914.

<sup>3</sup> Bell 1907, 60.

of Hasineh Arab tribes. He was a wealthy Sheikh, owned over 500 tents and thousands of camels and sheep. He was on the move with his tribe from their winter quarter to another place near Karyateen in the Syrian steppe. He invited her to his own tent for dinner. Since he was an important Sheikh in the desert, the costume says that when a guest receives an invitation from the Sheikh, the guest should bring a gift as a sign of respect, and that was what Bell did. She knew that the best gift for Arab Bedouins were arms, therefore, she brought a gun as her gift to Sheikh Muhammad. She described in her letter<sup>4</sup> the dinner that she had in the tent of the Sheikh with the presence of the elders of the tribe and how they sat in a circle waiting for the food which was a big dish of rice and sheep meat, and how every one has to eat a little amount of food, as it is common during official nomad banquets, to give space for other people to eat.

Bell went back to the Syrian Desert only in 1905 to make her journey from Jerusalem to Aleppo. The beginning of the voyage was with Namrud a Christian man from Mosul, who helped and guided Bell in the first part of her journey. He was a key figure during the travel from Jerusalem to Jebel Druze, since he knows all the Sheikhs of Bedouins for miles in the desert.<sup>5</sup> Before she started her journey, she met Gablan, her guide who is the son of Daja tribe Sheikh, a respectful one in the area. As they arrive to the tents of the Daja, the Bedouins costume requires inviting the guest to lunch or dinner in the Sheikh's tent, if the guest is a foreigner the Sheikh would provide him/her with a Rafiq (a travel companion). After dinner, Sheikh Fallah Al'Isa asked Gablan to be Gertrude's *raqfiq* until she arrives to the Druze mountain in southern Syria.

The Bedouin tent, is usually divided into two sections, one for woman and the other for men, in the middle of the men's section, there is the fire pit for the coffee, while the food is usually repared in the women's side. Typically, a female guest is accommodated in the woman space, but when it comes to western woman with her servants, she should be hosted by the Sheikh, and that was the case with Bell. After she left Daja tents, she passed by Beni Hassan tribes, who had encounter a Gazu<sup>6</sup> the day before with Sakher and Howetat tribes, and they lost almost everything. After the Gazu, members of the tribe usually go to their relatives in other tribes to collect sheep, camels, and some goat hair for the tents, until every man of them is able to maintain his basic needs, then they wait the suitable moment to rally all

their horseman and attack the Sakher and Howetat to get back what they stole from them<sup>7</sup>. The concept of revenge in the desert can be summarized by the law of retaliation that says (*alain bi alain w alsin bi alsin*) An eye for eye, a tooth for tooth, that became a proverb still used in nowadays, it means "you will suffer what you did". In the desert there are famous tribes that survive only with the Gazu, the other tribes carry it as revenge or to get back what they lost, here is a never-ending story of Gazu and revenge.

A Bedouin man never forgets his right of revenge,<sup>8</sup> unless it comes to a solution by the Sheikh of the tribe. As appeared in Gertrude Bell record, when there is a blood feud, the two enemies come to the tent of the one who was offended; they end the feud by making peace.<sup>9</sup> In many tribe's contestations that related to blood revenge or land right, the enemies go to the Sheikh of the tribe who takes the role of a judge, any verdict from him will end up the problem.

During all of Bell's journeys in the desert, the water was the main subject of the Bedouins' tales; Conflicts between tribes also were a result of water contestations. They however, planned their moving based on the presence of water, in order to guarantee enough water for their herds and where they can camp for a long time. Bell sometimes criticized the bad habits of Bedouin who despite they knowledge, the water pools collect under the sloping faced rock, they did not make any efforts to clean the mud below to obtain the clean water.<sup>10</sup> With a little extra efforts, they could obtain cleaner water that last them for more time. Other habit of Bedouins that is related to water is sacrificing an animal after a good rain season. The joy that the Arab Bedouin feels after a rainy day is immense. Bell described that joy during her journey to Hayil, the Sheikh of Shammar tribes in Nejd sacrificed a camel after rain as a sign of gratitude to god. After two days of rain his camels could pasture for three months in the desert.

Another Bedouins interesting habit is that in order to befriend them, all you have to do is simply to ask them for protection. On her way to Hayil, Gertrude bell heard that Sayyah the Sheikh of Wadi Salman tribes was camping a few hours from her, fearing that he would send his men after her caravan to loot, she preferred to go to him and ask for protection and for a Rafiq. This way only she would be safe from any possible gazu.<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that the Sheikhs that Gertrude Bell met in her different journeys were not only the nomads in

<sup>4</sup> Bell's letter to Florence Bell 24th May 1900.

<sup>5</sup> Bell's letter for Florence Bell 7th February 1905; Bell 1907.

<sup>6</sup> The arabic word for invasion. A Bedouins habit that they do to each other particularly in the drought seasons.

<sup>7</sup> Bell's letter for Florence Bell 7th February 1905; Bell 1907.

<sup>8</sup> An Arabic proverb.

<sup>9</sup> Bell 1907, 43.

<sup>10</sup> Bell's letter for Florence Bell 13th February 1911.

<sup>11</sup> Bell's letter to Florence Bell 10th February 1914.

the desert, she had also been a guest in the Sheikh's houses located in different cities. In fact, she met the chief of Dulem tribes in Alramadi city in Iraq, where he, as she mentions, has received her in his palm garden and as the costume of Bedouin Sheikh he gave her a Rafiq.<sup>12</sup> Despite he lives in the city in his residence, some tight of the Dulem tribes are living in the desert, practicing a full nomad life.

The last aspect that I would like to point out is that Bell during her different journeys in the desert had almost exclusively dealt with men, while woman appeared mostly in her narrative about the costumes. The tale told by Namrud could illustrate the power of woman in the Nomad context that after a blood feud the man who initiated to take the responsibility of the murder or take the charge of the problem is looked in a very good eyes from the woman, that he is courage and generous. When a maidens choose and says that she wants a such man as husband, he has to marry her otherwise she will be put to shame, even he has four wife, he must divorce from one and marry the maiden.<sup>13</sup>

Coming back to the third and second millennia BC and read the textual sources from the Ancient Near East cities in Syria and Mesopotamia, we find many mentions of nomads who are usually identified with the Amorites.<sup>14</sup> Here a little space is given to illustrate some features of the nomads mentions in the old Babylonian texts from Mari. However, Textual evidence shed light on the dichotomy of the societies of the Mari state. Zimri-lim was the chief of Sim'alite tribes. After he seized the power on Mari, he had a double royal title, as king of the city of Mari and other towns/helmets, *Ah Purattim* and as king of nomad/tribal territory (Hana).<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the administration of Zimri-Lim included persons from both social components.<sup>16</sup> The *Ah Purattim* governors *sugagum* are settling in towns along the Euphrates River, and the some pastoral chief *merhum* who probably lived in the city of Mari. The dimorphic nature of second millennium BC, habitants in Mari was discussed by Michael B. Rowton,<sup>17</sup> who also asserted the unity between the sedentary and nomadic people within the dimorphic chiefdom. The problem of nomadism and the presence of Amorites in a vast area of the Ancient Near east since the mid-third millennium

BC has been discussed by many authors, as Mario Liverani<sup>18</sup> Following Rowton's work, Introduced the problem of the Amorites of the third millennium BC, and questioned whether all the Amorites were nomads or if some of them may have had an urban sedentary life in their land of origin.<sup>19</sup> Regardless the origins or the affiliation of this social component, what we could be certain of in the archaeological sources is their presence in the area between inner Syria and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, we don't know much about the costumes of the nomads and about their socio-political organization and how they became the dominant political power in the ancient near east on the beginning of the second millennium BC. Furthermore, if the Amorites were only nomads or they had rural life as peasants could be approved with more archaeological excavation and analysis on the settlement pattern in the area. Particularly interesting is the statement of Giorgio Buccellati regarding the origin of the tribes and development of the Amorites from peasant to agro-pastoral groups on the bank of the Euphrates, or the *Ah Purattim*<sup>20</sup>, during the late third millennium BC. Nomadization of peasants<sup>21</sup> was first step in long process that formed the nomadic groups and consequently the tribal state. This step happened because a demographic increasing and limitation of the *zôr*,<sup>22</sup> these agro-pastoral groups start to look around in the steppe, to search for suitable pastoral land for their herds. That probably started in the first half of the third millennium BC. Following that, a military and economical development took place that, later, became the base of military conquest and political independence of the Amorites. Starting from their homeland towns, where they still related with strong familiar and ownership ties.<sup>23</sup>

If we look closer to textual evidence from Mari, the nomads and semi-nomads seem to be important components in the administration and in lifestyle characterization of the city. Nomads and peasants appeared as unique ethnic group belong to same origin, where the phenomena of

<sup>12</sup> Bell's letter to Florence Bell 23th April 1914.

<sup>13</sup> Bell 1907, 43.

<sup>14</sup> Buccellati 1966.

<sup>15</sup> Durand 1998, 485-488; 2010, 109-114. For Comprehensive explanation of the *Zimri-lim* kingdom and his complex political organization, see Fleming 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Fleming 2004, 51-54

<sup>17</sup> Rowton 1967, 115; 1973, 255.

<sup>18</sup> Liverani 1970, 11; 1988, 299.

<sup>19</sup> Liverani 1973, 106.

<sup>20</sup> This term come from Akkadian texts, translated by Buccellati as the bank of the river (Buccellati 1990, 87-117).

<sup>21</sup> Buccellati 1992, 87. See also an updated version on this issue in Buccellati 2008, 143, where the author demonstrates the development of the tribes from the early third millennium and their existence and rule during the second urban revolution till the official rise of the Amorites in the second millennium BC.

<sup>22</sup> The Syrian Middle Euphrates area, from the confluence of Balikh till the confluence of Khabur till the Syria-Iraq border.

<sup>23</sup> Buccellati 2008, 143.

nomadism and the urban concept are not mutually exclusive. That does not mean, at that historical phase, that the nomadism was only a result of the pressure of complex socio-economical system or *vice versa*, rather, the phenomenon of nomadism and the development of the socio-economic system were, together, fundamental factors in the creation of the Ancient Near Eastern tribal states.<sup>24</sup> Even in nowadays nomadism, there are no evidence in the recent history of the Middle East on a full nomadic groups who do not belong to a homeland, even those who live a full nomadic life belong to larger tribes, of which, some of its members live a full urban sedentary life.<sup>25</sup> Many towns in the Syrian steppe and in the other part of the Arabian Desert established and inhabited tribes, Bedouins settled the desert, sometimes in tents and other time in temporary small towns.

In this short paper I have tried to illustrate not only the Bedouins costumes itself but rather the importance of identifying the role of this social component in the formation of the Ancient Near East culture. As nowadays we deal with Bedouins belong to Badya<sup>26</sup> the name of the territory that gave them the name, probably in the third and second millennium BC, we deal with Amorites that belong to “Amorru” that could be understood as the territory that identified the people living there. Those peasants that belong to a rural culture and probably affiliated to different ethnic groups have adopted a new life style that formed their social identity as nomads. From other hand I wanted to draw the attention of the Middle East scholars about the importance and richness of Gertrude Bell’s archive in reconsidering the nomad phenomenon as fundamental actor in the formation of the economic and socio-political systems of ancient and modern Near East. Finally, the nomads in the Near East are suffering many crisis because of the wars and conflicts and because of the climate change and the global warming which will cause their complete disappearance, for that I would like to point out the necessity of documenting and studding this millennial surviving phenomenon and considering it an intangible heritage of the Middle East.

<sup>24</sup> For more explanation about the unity between urban and tribal components see Alkhalid 2019.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, this is the case of the Royal family of Saudi kingdom, Al Saud, they originally belong to the Anezah tribes that some of its members still live as nomads between the Syrian desert and the arabian desert.

<sup>26</sup> The Arabic name of the territory that precedes the desert, where the pastor life is possible, the Syrian Badya is the steppe.

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# ŠAMAGAN AND THE MULES OF EBLA SYRIAN GODS IN SUMERIAN DISGUISE\*

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## *Abstract*

The scene on a seal from Urkiš represents an equid jumping toward a seating god, who may be identified with Šamagan, the deity of the steppe animals also at Ebla, and a major one at Nabada (Tell Beydar). This proves that Šamagan was a god of Northern Mesopotamia. Ebla imported mules from Nagar (Tell Brāk): hybrids obtained in the regions east of the Ḥabur crossing onagers with female asses.

Although Urkiš (Tell Mozan), the extraordinary capital of the 3rd millennium BC brought to light by Giorgio and Marilyn, was cut off from contact with Ebla by the geographical position of the state of Nagar during the 50 years (ca 2380–2335 B.C.) documented by the Ebla's archives, a seal with an unusual scene of an Akkadian official of the time of Naram-Sin of Akkad has established an indirect link between the two cities.

The seal, owned by an high official by the name of Išar-beli (an Akkadian name), was found together with that of the Akkadian princess Tar'am-Agade, daughter of Naram-Sin and quite probably the spouse of one "king", *endan*, of Urkiš. The scene represents a water-buffalo moving forward from the left. Two gods stand in the middle. The second one holds on his left arm a small animal, probably a young equid, as an offering, and is introduced by the first god to a third god seated on the right. In front of the seated god an adult equid jumps towards his extended right arm. In presenting this seal, it has been suggested that the equid "was probably an onager or a hybrid, for the animal is short in stature and has the typical tail and mane of these animals". The texts from Tell Beydar (Nabada, of the kingdom of Nagar), and Ebla provide evidence for the breeding of hybrids. Moreover, a temple in Area FS of Tell Brak (Nagar) has been interpreted by the excavators as being possibly dedicated to Šakkan, the god of steppe animals. "Since the prancing equid shows no evidence of male genitals, we may assume the animal is a mare", so that an attractive hypothesis is that "the Išar-beli seal celebrates a female hybrid that has given birth ... the baby animal being carried by an attendant god to be presented to the main deity."<sup>1</sup>

"Given the high artistic quality of the design and the carving (we may) assume that the seal cutter came from the south. It is even possible that also the seal owner came from Akkad accompanying Tar'am-Agade". The seal, however, "bears what can only be characterised as a northern motif".<sup>2</sup>

The importance of equids in the society of Urkiš is confirmed by a remarkable and unusual number of figurines of equids recovered from the first floors of the Royal Storehouse and from layers immediately atop them.<sup>3</sup>

The data from Ebla suggest that this god placed with every evidence in relation to an equid, and a water-buffalo which closes the scene at the opposite side, may be identified with Šamagan.

## 1. ŠAMAGAN AT EBLA

Twenty-two monthly documents of the two years preceding the destruction of Ebla account for the sheep assigned by the central administration for sacrifices and consumption. They present three sections: sheep sacrificed in the temples of the city, é-é dingir-dingir; sheep consumed at the Palace, SA.ZA<sup>ki</sup>; and sheep sacrificed or consumed outside the city by members of the central administration. Documents of previous months were destroyed; a text (75.1630) gives the total of 36,892 sheep needed in a previous year).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> More probably, perhaps, an onager, that is a male *E. hemionus*, and a newborn hybrid.

<sup>2</sup> Buccellati, Kelly Buccellati 2002, 22-25. For the traits identifying this equid, reference was made to Moorey 1970, 37; the data from Tell Beydar were presented by Van Lerberghe 1996, 112. This dedication of the temple of Tel Brak, first suggested by Oates, Oates 1993, 161-167, has been in part corrected in Oates, Oates 2001, 387-388.

<sup>3</sup> These figurines have been analyzed by Hauser 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Pettinato 1977, 260-262.

\*\*Ibr., I.Z. + numeral: "year x of the minister Ibrum / Ibbi-zikir"

The registration which opens each of these monthly documents concerns 2 sheep for the god Šamagan: <sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan/ga-nu, with a single exception: 75.3858(+) (month II), which starts instead with 2 sheep ([1<sup>7</sup>+]1 udu) for the Moon-god EN.ZU, while 75.2635, of the same month but of a different year, has again Šamagan.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding this peculiar position, many other gods received many more animals, also on different occasions in the same month. The offerings for Šamagan, besides those prescribed for the start of the month, are only those which follow:

75.2635 (month II)	§ 21: 3 sheep from (the crown prince) Ir <sup>a</sup> q-damu, nídba al <sub>6</sub> sur <sub>x</sub> -BAR.AN § 31: 2 sheep from the sons of the king, nídba al <sub>6</sub> sur <sub>x</sub> -BAR.AN-BAR.AN
75.2516(+) (month V)	§ 16: 2 sheep from (the crown prince) Ir <sup>a</sup> q-damu, nídba in sikil <sup>d</sup> Aš-da-bíl
75.2598 (month VII)	§ 15: 12 sheep from the king, nídba in ud nídba § 22: 1 sheep from (the crown prince), nídba in ud nídba
75.2403 (month IX)	§ 59: 2 udu
75.11365(+) (month IX)	§ 13: 2 udu from the king, nídba
75.2075 (month X)	§ 12: 1 udu ninda-u <sub>9</sub> : Šamagan (from) the king, nídba § 40: 2 udu izi-gar: Šamagan
75.2397 (month X)	§ 47: 1 udu izi-gar: Šamagan ugula sur <sub>x</sub> -BAR.AN ugula sur <sub>x</sub> -BAR.AN šu-du <sub>8</sub> § 56: 1 udu ninda-u <sub>9</sub> : Šamagan NI-da-ba-du šu-du <sub>8</sub> § 57: 1 udu ninda-u <sub>9</sub> : Šamagan I-da-NE šu-du <sub>8</sub>

In some of these passages additional information is provided: “offering on the occasion of the (due) offering”. In month V the crown prince offered to Šamagan on the occasion of (his) “purification”, sikil, by the god Aštapil (the relation between these two gods is inexplicable). In month X fell the festival of the “braziers”, izi-gar, when this god also received a second and a third sheep offering, this time with a particular bread, ninda-u<sub>9</sub> (cf. ARET IX, 401); this offering was performed perhaps by overseers of the teams of the mules (NIDA-badu and Ida-NE), who “took in possession” (šu-du<sub>8</sub>) the animals. This bread was given also to <sup>d</sup>NE-la, a deity not otherwise known, together with a sheep from the queen (75.2075 § 53).

Peculiar to Šamagan was his relation to mules. In month II the crown prince and the other sons of the king “sacrificed sheep in relation with (their) teams of

mules”, nídba al<sub>6</sub> sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN-BAR.AN; in month X an offering was performed by the overseers of the teams of the mules, ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN šu-du<sub>8</sub>.

This direct relation of Šamagan with the mules of the chariots of members of the elite finds a peculiar proof in 75.1916 rev. vii 11–16: “4 measures of wool to make 1 chariot of Ibbi-zikir, (a certain) Šamagan has received”, 4 “KIN” siki UNKEN-ak 1 GIŠ-gígir I-bí-zi-kir Ša-ma-ga-an šu-ba<sub>4</sub>-ti. The man to whom was entrusted the task of overseeing the making of a chariot for the minister is called simply Šamagan, surely with the omission of the first element of the name, as is the case of a king of Ibbu in ARET XIX 10 § 21 (here below, § 2).

In all the other genres of texts Šamagan is mentioned very rarely. According to eight documents of different months registering the distribution of clothes, garments were given to members of the šeš-II-ib confraternity present in pairs in an offering ceremony to the god: ARET XX 18 § 18 (month VII); MEE 7, 23 obv. v 19–vi 1 (month [x]); 75.2343 rev. i 10–15 (month I); 75.2504 obv. i 9–ii 4 (month VII); 75.2505(+) obv. vii 5–10 (month IX); 75.2522 rev. v 15–vi 8 (month [x]); 75.10191 obv. vi 14–vii 5 (month [x]); 75.12470 obv. iii’ 3–10 (month [x]).<sup>6</sup>

According to 75.2333 (Ibr. 03) obv. ix 8–13, the king expended 8 g of gold for a sheet to cover the face of the statue of the god, adding a garment; it is not indicated where this statue of Šamagan was placed. According to ARET XIX 11 § 29, instead, a certain Mar-rúm received a garment for “Šamagan of EN.NE”. This Marrum from EN.NE is mentioned also in 75.2465 (Ibr. 16) rev. x 1–4, because he received 78 g of silver. EN.NE, where Šamagan was worshiped, was a town belonging to Nagar,<sup>7</sup> which precedes Kablul and Irritum (two cities east of the Euphrates region) in ARET XIV 60 (Ibr. 07) § 26.

Minister Ibrum delivered (mu-DU; Ibr. 14) a statue of a male ass plated with gold, presumably for the god Šamagan, ARET XIV 67 obv. iii 5–IV 2: 15 gín DILMUN kù-gi nu<sub>11</sub>-za<sub>11</sub> kun 2 ma-na 12 gín DILMUN kù-gi nu<sub>11</sub>-za gaba 1 zag su an-dùl IGI-nita “117 g of gold for plating the tail, 1.034 kg of gold for plating the breast (and) 1 side of the body of a statue of a male ass”.

## 2. <sup>d</sup>ŠA-MA-GAN IN PERSONAL NAMES

Šamagan appears as theophoric element in few personal names. Who provided a chariot to the

<sup>5</sup> Four of these documents have been published by Pettinato (Pettinato 1979); they are: 75.1764; 75.2075; 75.2238; 75.10101(+).

<sup>6</sup> A major duty of the šeš-II-ib confraternity was to accompany the statue of the god <sup>a</sup>Adabal on a journey of 39 days in the north of the country. Other members had to be present at cultic ceremonies for other deities (Archi 2002a, 42-43). The passage in 75.10157(+) obv. iv 8–9 concerns also a PN with the first element omitted: 1 gu-mug-tùg 1 sal-tùg 1 ib+III-tùg gùn <sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan.

<sup>7</sup> Archi 1998, 7.



minister Ibbi-zikir was named *Ša-ma-ga-an* (with the first element omitted: 75.1916 rev. vii 15; above, § 1). This is the only occurrence of the name of the god with the ending *-ga-an*. Another man from Ebla was *I-nu-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-ga-nu* (ARET IV 13 rev. iii 5).

*UR-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan* (ARET VIII 541 xix 18–19) was a man from Urša<sup>um</sup>, north of Ebla.

*I-lam-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan* was a king of Ibbu at the time of the minister Ibrum. The yearly document ARET II 13 § 1 (Ibr. 06) registers that he delivered 3 garments and 3 minas of silver when he went to Ebla to swear the oath of alliance in the temple of Kura (nam-tar é <sup>d</sup>*Ku-ra*). The gift he received on that occasion is probably mentioned in ARET XIX 10 § 21: “2 mantles the mother (of the king has given to) Šamagan, the king of Ibbu and his spouse”, 2 túg-NI. NI ama-gal *Ša-ma-gan* en *I-bu*, <sup>bu</sup>ki wa dam-sù. This time the scribe simplified the unusual name of the king writing only the theophoric element. Some lists of city-states suggest that Ibbu was located east of Ḥarran and the Balih. Another royal name of this city had the Moon as its theophoric element (below, § 3f).

*I-ku-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan* (RIME 1, 2001), that is: Ikū(n)-Šamagan, was a king of Mari.

<*I->kūn-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan* (ARET VIII 526 ix 6–7), and <sup>d</sup>*Ša-ma-gan*-BE (MEE 10, 2 rev. vii 9–10) were two people (the second one a merchant, lú-kar) from Dub (Tuba), a city close to the Euphrates.

*Ir-mi-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan* (ARET IV 3 § 23) was a son of the king of Iritum (Irrite), a city immediately east of the Euphrates.

*Puzur-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan* (ARET VIII 531 xiv 23) was quite probably a chief of Ibal, in the semi-arid region east of Qatna.

*I-ti-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan*, was a “representative of a merchant who travelled by boat”, maškim ga-eš<sub>g</sub>, presumably at the service of the king of Mari, based, therefore, in the region of the Middle Euphrates.<sup>8</sup> It is mentioned in a document which registers tributes to Enna-Dagan king of Mari (75.1559 obv. viii 8, rev. iii 3–6). This name is attested also at Abū Šālābīkh (OIP 99: 34): *I-ti-<sup>d</sup>Ša-<sup>ga</sup>gan*.

### 3. ORIGIN OF THE GOD ŠAMAGAN/ŠAKKAN

Šamagan was considered at Ebla (as in Mesopotamia) the tutelary god of all the quadruped animals of the steppe, as is proven by the fact that the offering lists of sheep open regularly (with one exception) with a modest number of animals given to him. The sheep represented all these animals; direct protection over the mules, the most valuable equids, was however requested in particular cases (in

the months II and X); two members of the šeš-II-ib confraternity would take part in these cultic acts, as was usual also for other deities (above, § 1). Although Šamagan received other offerings very rarely, the king provided a gift for his statue at EN.NE, a town belonging to the kingdom of Nagar (the gift registered in 75.2333 could also concern this cult place; above, § 1). His name was used rather rarely as an element in theophoric personal names, at Ebla, Urša<sup>um</sup> and in the eastern regions (above, § 2).

This evidence suggests that the cult of Šamagan did not belong originally to Western Syria, but was instead spread east of the Euphrates (Mari included), and particularly in the Ḥabur triangle, as the administrative documents from Nabada prove. These texts (concerning mostly the distribution of cereals and deliveries of animals) mention only two gods: the Sun deity, <sup>d</sup>Utu, and Šamagan.<sup>9</sup> Two months took their names from them; the others from the goddess Išhara and several divine “Lords”, *ba<sup>lu</sup>*, lugal.<sup>10</sup> At Nabada the name of the god is written usually <sup>d</sup>*Ša-ma-gan*; the ending *-gán* is found in no. 101 i 3. The personal name Lú-Ša-ma-gan is attested in nos. 1 ii 7, 4 viii 5.

Nagar (with its town Nabada) and Ebla adopted the writing of the god’s name in use at Mari, attested in the royal name *I-ku-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan* (Ikū(n)-Šamagan), and in the list of gods TH07-T9 f. iii 4: <sup>d</sup>*Ša-ma-gan*.<sup>11</sup>

The God List of Abū Šālābīkh has instead the writing <sup>d</sup>*Ša-<sup>ga</sup>gan* (OIP 99, 82 obv. iii 12),<sup>12</sup> found also in the personal name *I-ti-<sup>d</sup>Ša-<sup>ga</sup>gan* (OIP 99: 34).

ED texts have <sup>d</sup>Šakkan(GIR) with various phonetic indicators which explain that the name was \*šam(a)kan/šum(u)qan. Thureau-Dangin had suggested that this god was “préposé à la reproduction de bétail” on the basis of the seal inscription: <sup>d</sup>GIR / ama-gan-ša.<sup>13</sup> He determined correctly the function of the god in giving a mistaken etymology of the second line explained as *ummun (w)ālittum*, which is instead a phonetic indicator of GIR.<sup>14</sup> Pomponio produced several names from Fāra supporting the proposal that, in origin šu-ama-gan was the reading of ANŠE/GIR.<sup>15</sup> This would not exclude, however, the name being pronounced Šam(a)gan at Fāra and also at Ebla.<sup>16</sup> A Sargonic text from Umm el-Jir has SIG<sub>5</sub>-<sup>d</sup>*Ša-am-ga-an*.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Talon 1996, 192; 2004, 128.

<sup>10</sup> Sallaberger 1996a, 85–87.

<sup>11</sup> See respectively Frayne 2008, 317–318, and Cavigneaux 2014, 308.

<sup>12</sup> Alberti 1985, 8 no. 56.

<sup>13</sup> Thureau-Dangin 1914, 103–104.

<sup>14</sup> Lambert 1981.

<sup>15</sup> Pomponio 1984, 1–7.

<sup>16</sup> Lambert 1986. On the logogram AMA<sup>gan</sup>, cf. Steinkeller 1987, 163, n. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Foster 1982, 27, iii 4.

<sup>8</sup> The text is published in Archi 1981, 155–161; it concerns tributes for Mari at the time of king Enna-Dagan. Note the writing with SA-

Although Šam(a)gan > Šakkan is well attested to in Sumer by the texts from Fāra (about 2500 B.C.), the wide diffusion of his cult in the kingdom of Nagar documented by the archives from Nabada and Ebla can be better explained if the god (and his name) originated in the proto-Akkadian regions.<sup>18</sup>

4. SUMEROGRAMS FOR GODNAMES IN THE WRITING OF EBLA

The Bilingual Lexical Lists (LL) include a number of Sumerian gods in the section AN, nos. 780–815.<sup>19</sup>

a) <sup>d</sup>Ašnan = *A-za-na-an* (LL nos. 811–813) is not attested to in the administrative documents

b) <sup>d</sup>En-ki = <sup>ʔ</sup>à-u<sub>9</sub> /*ḥay(y)u(m)*/. The name (from \**hyy* “to live”) indicates that Ea originally symbolized life. This led the Semites settled in Mesopotamia to assimilate this god with Enki, the god of subterranean freshwater, together with all his manifestations.<sup>20</sup> He appears also in the Pre-Sargonic text TH07-T9 from Mari,<sup>21</sup> a list of sheep offerings for about fifteen deities including Hadda (of Ḥalab) and Kura (of Ebla). These are all expressions of Syrian cults, although some names are written in Sumerian, like <sup>d</sup>En-ki, <sup>d</sup>Inanna, <sup>d</sup>TU. <sup>d</sup>AMA.UŠUMGAL should therefore be also a Syrian shepherd god, as <sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan was the god of the steppe animals

c) According to the offering list 75.1764 obv. vi 7–19, the queen “offers”, *nīd*ba, first to <sup>d</sup>Nin-ki and then to <sup>d</sup>Ā-da-“*bal*” of Luban.<sup>22</sup> A parallel passage is in a text concerning deliveries of clothing, 75.2278 rev. viii 1–11, which registers garments received by the queen and Amaga, a priestess of the god <sup>ʔ</sup>Adabal of Luban, respectively for <sup>d</sup>Nin-<ki> and <sup>d</sup>Ā-da-“*bal*” of Luban. It is possible that <sup>d</sup>Nin(-ki) is a peculiar writing for the usual <sup>d</sup>BE-munus / <sup>d</sup>Ba-al<sub>6</sub>-*tum* of <sup>ʔ</sup>Adabal of Luban, the spouse of the god. *nin-ni* was the usual writing for “sister”. “The lady of the country”, *nin-ki kalam-tim<sup>ki</sup>*, in ARET XIII 9 obv. iv 8–9, could refer to a goddess.<sup>23</sup> *Nin-ki*, as an honorific title, is referred to Tilut, one of the “spouses”, of the minister Ibrium, ARET XVI 27 obv. viii 9, x 5–6.

d) Enlil is mentioned both in the literary texts of

Sumerian origin ARET V 6, 7,<sup>24</sup> and in several Sumerian incantations. In the incantation ARET V 1–3, translated into Eblaite, his name is written syllabically: <sup>(d)</sup>*I-li-lu*, which is the equivalence given in the L.L. (no. 802): *i-li-lu*.<sup>25</sup> Enlil receives several epithets, as is usual in Sumerian hymns, not only in ARET V 6, 7, but also in the Eblaite incantation ARET V 1 v 3–4, vi 2–3; 3 iii 1–2, where he is said to be the “father of the gods”, a-mu dingir-dingir-dingir. Enlil does not appear in any other texts from Ebla; moreover, the theological thought that the gods were generated by a divine father was foreign to Ebla insofar as it emerges from the documentation, while this concept was introduced in Ugarit through the reception of Babylonian religious texts. Enlil did not belong to the Syrian pantheon of Ebla.

Steinkeller has noted that “throughout the 3rd millennium Enlil’s name is consistently written with the signs <sup>d</sup>EN.É, and not <sup>d</sup>EN.LÍL, as commonly believed”, which holds true also for the lexical manuscripts from Ebla.<sup>26</sup> The name of Ninlil is written instead <sup>d</sup>NIN.KÍD. Steinkeller has consequently suggested that “the original meaning could have been: master of the household, paterfamilias”.<sup>27</sup>

In order to surmount this discrepancy, Jacobsen has suggested that RÉC 423 was: *e<sub>2</sub>/líl*, and RÉC 425: *kid/líl<sub>x</sub>/suḥ*.<sup>28</sup> During the period of Ur III the two would have been conflated into one sign (É, in the period of Ur-Nammu), which then developed in two different forms: *e<sub>2</sub> – líl/kid/suḥ*. According to Jacobsen, there were two homonymous terms: *líl* “with a basic meaning ‘wind’ slightly differently seen and stressed” (referred to Enlil), and the *líl* which “most likely denoted the young fully grown barley plant” (referred to Ninlil).

Edzard has excluded, however, that <sup>d</sup>EN-É could mean “Lord of the house”, because É “house”, Sum. \**ḥay*, does not have the ending -l, while in Ean. 1 xvi 14–15 one has: *šuš-gal-<sup>d</sup>EN-É-lá(-k)* “the great battle net of Enlil”, which shows that “(É) ein anderes nominales Element [ist], das auf -l endet – einschliesslich des später KID = líl geschriebenen Elements”.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See in general Wiggermann (Wiggermann 2011/13), who mentions the surnames which “circumscribe his functions: dingir-sig “god of wool”, dingir-máš “god of herd-animals”, dingir-ú-gu, “god of pastures”. For the poetic expression in Šulgi: “stallion of Šamagan”, *dūr <sup>d</sup>Šamagan(-na)*, see Wilcke 2012, 8, n. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Pettinato 1982, 287–291. This list has had a first valuation in Lambert 1984.

<sup>20</sup> Archi 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Cavigneaux 2014, 307–308.

<sup>22</sup> Pettinato 1979, 133.

<sup>23</sup> Fronzaroli, ARET XIII, 106, *ad* (7).

<sup>24</sup> Krebernik 1992, 96.

<sup>25</sup> Fronzaroli 1988.

<sup>26</sup> Steinkeller 1999, 114, n. 36. The edition of the Lexical Lists by Pettinato (Pettinato 1982) has to be emended.

<sup>27</sup> While this was for Steinkeller only a possibility, for Lisman (Lisman 2013, 129–135) became a certainty, a thesis criticized by Vacín (Vacín 2016, 399). Lisman maintains, however, that “Enlil is probably of Sumerian origin.”

<sup>28</sup> Jacobsen 1989. This study was in reaction to the presentation given by Steinkeller at the meeting of the American Oriental Society, Chicago 1988.

<sup>29</sup> Edzard 2003.

The syllabic writing *I-li-lu* in the texts from Ebla demonstrates that  $\dot{E}$  has to be read  $lil_x$  in the name of the god, therefore:  ${}^d\text{En-lil}_x$ .<sup>30</sup>

- f) The Moon,  ${}^d\text{EN.ZU}$ , received just the first offering of the month according to the list 75.3858(+), which is anomalous, but on no other occasion in the twenty-two monthly lists of sheep offerings (above, 1.). Only four administrative documents of a different kind mention this deity.  $\text{EN.ZU}$  of  $\text{NĪRAR}$  received an “offering”,  $\text{nĪdba}$  (75.1441 rev. iii 17–2). This was a city on the border of Abarsal and Manuwat, in the area of the Baliḥ river (cf. ARET XIII 5 § 39; 10 § 10; 13 § 16). This location of the cult of the god is confirmed by the fact that a  $\text{šeš-II-ib}$  official was in the service of “ $\text{EN.ZU}$  and the two Baliḥ” (75.1837 obv. ix 10–14).

In the other two passages where the god is mentioned, MEE 10, 27 rev. ii 3(!) and 75.1738 rev. iii 8, the Moon is in the dual: 2  $\text{EN.ZU}$ , probably in relation to the two horns of the crescent (if not with two phases of the moon).<sup>31</sup>

This supposition seems to be confirmed by the presence of  ${}^d\text{Ša-nu-ga-ru}_{12}$ . An incantation in Eblaite, ARET V 4 § 4, mentions “the beams of the Sun and the 2 horns (2 si) of  ${}^d\text{Ša-nu-ga-ru}_{12}$ ”.<sup>32</sup> The parallel passage ARET V 1 § 8 has: “I have bound you on the beams of the Sun, on the two horns of the Moon ( $al_6$  *su-lu-la-a* 1 iti).<sup>33</sup> Edzard (ARET V, 20) has inferred: “ein Name des Mondgottes oder eines seiner Epithete”.  ${}^d\text{Sa-nu-ga-ar/ru}_{12}$  was worshiped at Mane on the Euphrates, immediately upstream from Emar, and could have been the same as the god Šangar(a)/Šaggara of Emar of the 2nd millennium.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> According to Steinkeller, the spelling in the Ebla sources, *I-li-lu*, could suggest a possible Semitic etymology *\*il-ilī* “god of (all) the gods”. Michalowski (Michalowski 1998, 241–247) came independently to the conclusion that *I-li-lu* in the Ebla texts “must have originated as reduplication of the Semitic word for deity: *il*, and that the writing Enlil represent a Sumerization.” In giving a Semitic etymology, he did not mean that a god was ethnic or linguistic in nature, but that it was “the issue of an evolving common culture.” The total absence of Enlil in the cult of Ebla excludes this possibility.

<sup>31</sup> These passages have been given again in Pomponio, Xella 1997, 172–173. Archi 1994, 252–254 = Archi 2015, 596–598.

<sup>32</sup> Fronzaroli 2003, 98.

<sup>33</sup> Fronzaroli 1988, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Archi 1994, 254–256 = Archi 2015, 598–600, with previous literature. Stol (Stol 1979, 75–80) had identified the deity S/Šaggar of the texts from Mari and Tell al-Rimah as the name of the Jebel Sinjār, which could appear on the horizon as a semicircle. The GN *Sag-ga*<sup>ki</sup> (ARES II, 422; not *Sag-gār*<sup>ki</sup>, as is suggested in Bonechi 1993, 327) could be identified with the Sangaratum/Saggaratum of the 2nd millennium BC, which would have been close to the confluence of the Ḥabur and the Euphrates, see Ziegler, Langlois 2017, 295. According to 75.1923 obv. ii 4–9, two men of Saggar received a gift when they “travelled (to join) the military

The identification of “2  ${}^d\text{EN.ZU}$ ” and his “two horns” with Sanugaru is not compelling (his Sumerian equivalence is: *iti*, in ARET V 1 iii 12). One has to consider, however, that the scribes knew perfectly well the reading of  $\text{EN.ZU}$  in Babylonia, which they registered in the L.L. no. 799:  ${}^d\text{EN.ZU/ZI} = \text{su-i-nu}$ . This phonetic writing was used only for the name of two messengers from Kiš: *Du-bi-zu-i-nu* and *Īram<sub>6</sub>-zu-i-nu*.<sup>35</sup> In the case of the name of a king of Ibbu (*I-bu<sub>16</sub>-bu/ib*<sup>ki</sup>) of the time of the minister Arrukum, the scribe(s) wrote instead *Li-im*- ${}^d\text{EN.ZU}$  in two different documents (ARET XV,2: 344). The successor of this king (a few years later, at the time of the minister Ibrium) was Ilam-Šamagan (above, § 1). Ibbu was a city east of Ḥarran and the Baliḥ, on the border to the realm of the god Šamagan.<sup>36</sup> The theophoric elements in personal names were not necessarily those used at Ebla, so that there is no certainty that the logogram  ${}^d\text{EN.ZU}$  was read in such cases  $\text{Su}^{\text{en}}$ .

The God List of Abū Šalābīkh has both  ${}^{[d]N}$ [anna] and  ${}^{[d]EN.ZU}$  (OIP 99, 82 i 6, 16; 86, i 37).<sup>37</sup> It has been argued that “ ${}^d\text{EN.ZU}$  (Kurzform ZU) nicht semitische Entlehnung ist, sondern ein genuin sumerischer Name des Mondgottes, der überregional in ganz Sumer verbreitet war”, so that “die frühen Semiten Mesopotamien haben dann die Schreibweise  ${}^d\text{EN.ZU}$  für ihren Gott  $\text{Su}^{\text{en}}$  adaptiert ...  ${}^d\text{EN.ZU}$  läßt sich also dementsprechend als ‘en ZU’ analysieren”.<sup>38</sup> The name of the Mondgott in western Syria was, however, not  $\text{Su}^{\text{en}}$ .

- g) The L.L. no. 805 gives the well known equivalence:  ${}^d\text{Inanna} = \text{aš-dar}$ .  ${}^d\text{Aš-dar}$  (this is the only writing used at Ebla) was preceded in importance by Iṣhara, but became the goddess of Ebla at the beginning of the 2nd millennium.<sup>39</sup>  ${}^d\text{Inanna}$  is used only in the two literary texts of Sumerian origin, ARET V 6 and 7.<sup>40</sup> At Mari one has:  ${}^d\text{Inanna zar-bad}$ ,<sup>41</sup> and Aštar Šarbatum was a hypostasis well known also at Ebla.<sup>42</sup> However, the offering list TH 07–T9 f. i 3, ii 3 distinguishes only between  ${}^d\text{Inanna}$  and  ${}^d\text{INANNA.ZA.ZA}$ .<sup>43</sup>

- h)  ${}^d\text{mul}$  has the equivalence *Kab-kab* (L.L. no. 791), Akk. *kakkabu* “star”. In the Sumerian incantation translated in Eblaite ARET V 1 v 8–vi 1 // 3 iii 5–8,

expedition (against) Tuttul” (*kaskal nig-kas<sub>4</sub> Du-du-lu<sup>ki</sup>*).

<sup>35</sup> Archi 1987b, 131.

<sup>36</sup> Archi 2019a.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Alberti 1985, 7.

<sup>38</sup> Sommerfeld 2011, 296.

<sup>39</sup> Archi 2019a.

<sup>40</sup> Krebernik 1992, 96.

<sup>41</sup> Charpin 1987, 99.

<sup>42</sup> Archi 2019b.

<sup>43</sup> Cavigneaux 2014, 307. On  ${}^n\text{MÜŠ.UŠ}$  and  ${}^d\text{INANNA.ZA.ZA}$  at Mari, see Lambert 1985, 537.

- Ga-ga:bu-bù* / SUD (for SÙD) is the “messenger”, *maškim-e-gi<sub>4</sub>*, of Enlil (<sup>d</sup>*I-li-lu*). The L.L. no. 1185b has SUD = *ga-ba-ga-bu*<sub>16</sub>.<sup>44</sup>
- i) The L.L., no. 806, gives as equivalence of Nergal the West Semitic god Rašap: <sup>d</sup>NE.LUNUG = *ra-sa-ap*.<sup>45</sup> The Eblaite scribes recognized, therefore, that the two gods had some common traits, but they never used the Sumerian writing. Rašap was one of the more important gods of the pantheon of Ebla, his name occurring in numerous passages. There was a “Rašap of the Palace”, SA.ZA<sup>ki</sup>; his major sanctuaries were, however, at <sup>o</sup>Adani (in the Amuq(?)) and Tunip (Tell <sup>o</sup>Ašarne, west of present Hama), with another six cult places inside the kingdom.<sup>46</sup> His spouse Adamma gave her name to the first month of the local calendar. Rašap was the only god who received a mace and the horns of two bulls once a year like Hadda and Hadabal. His icon was, therefore, that of the “menacing god”: a male figure brandishing a spear, common to both the Storm-god and Rešef of the following periods.<sup>47</sup> He was associated in some cases with Haya/Enki (see above). The typologies of the texts do not enable us to define more precisely the character of this god in the 3rd millennium.
- j) According to the offering lists, the goddess <sup>d</sup>Nin-kar (in the LL no. 798: <sup>d</sup>Nin-kar-rá = *ni-ga-ra/la-du* in the LL no. 798) was object of particular devotion by the queen and other ladies of the royal house.<sup>48</sup> This hardly would be explicable if she was the obscure Mesopotamian goddess of the daylight <sup>d</sup>Nin-kár(-ra). The goddess of Ebla has to be identified with the <sup>d</sup>Nin-kar-ra-ak of the Old Akkadian period, a healing goddess whose veneration was generated in north-western Mesopotamia.<sup>49</sup> <sup>d</sup>Nin-kar is attested in the Pre-Sargonic period also at Mari.<sup>50</sup> The cult of this goddess continued in the Middle Euphrates area until the first half of the second millennium. Her name appears in the form of <sup>d</sup>Nin-ḫar(!)-ra-ak in the later version (Amorite period) of the “pantheon” of Mari, and she was one of the deities who regularly received sacrifices.<sup>51</sup>
- k) To <sup>d</sup>Nisaba (LL no. 780), “the first-born of Enlil”, is

dedicated the Sumerian hymn ARET V 7, adapted in Babylonia in a Semitic-speaking scriptorium.<sup>52</sup> The goddess is mentioned also in the Sumerian incantation ARET V 19 obv. iii 6.<sup>53</sup> The PN in the following obscure passage probably refers to an official from Mari, 75.1218 obv. v 5–8: (silver) UR-<sup>d</sup>Nisaba u<sub>5</sub> dingir en.

- l) Iṣhara was the most important goddess of Ebla, therefore of Syrian origin.<sup>54</sup> The God List of Abū Šālābīkh has Šara, the Sumerian god of Umma, written <sup>d</sup>ŠÁRA (<sup>d</sup>LAGAB×SIG<sub>7</sub>), (OIP 99, 82 II 11). The name of the Syrian goddess Iṣhara presents an archaic writing: <sup>d</sup>SIG<sub>7</sub>.AMA, preserved in the wedding ritual of king Irkab-damu (first year of minister Arrukum): ARET XI 1 obv. iii 2’, rev. xvi 24’, xvii 21; further in the (Eblaite) incantation ARET V 16 i 5,<sup>55</sup> and in the administrative document ARET XV 19 § 91 of about the same period. The LL no. 809 has: <sup>d</sup>ŠARA<sub>8</sub>(GÁ×SIG<sub>7</sub>)<sup>ra</sup> = *iš-ḫa-ra/la*. The usual form in the later administrative documents is <sup>d</sup>šara<sub>8</sub>:Iš(GÁ×SIG<sub>7</sub><sup>is</sup>), sometimes simplified as <sup>d</sup>šára:Iš(LAGAB×SIG<sub>7</sub><sup>is</sup>), and complemented with -RA (GÁ×SIG<sub>7</sub><sup>ra</sup> / LAGAB×SIG<sub>7</sub><sup>ra</sup>). In 75.2078 rev. i 3 both complements are added: <sup>d</sup>ŠARA<sub>8</sub>(GÁ×SIG<sub>7</sub>)<sup>is-ra</sup>. The Eblaite scribe reinterpreted the Sumerian name of a male god as the name of a local goddess. At Nabada Iṣhara gave the name to a month, written: <sup>d</sup>eš<sup>5</sup>GÁ×SIG<sub>7</sub> (also <sup>d</sup>eš<sup>5</sup>LAGAB×IGIGUNŪ). In the second millennium Iṣhara remained an important goddess not only at Ebla but in general in northern Syria, and even in eastern Anatolia.
- m) The Sun-deity, <sup>d</sup>Utu, was female, as in WS. The Eblaite version of a Mesopotamian incantation presents the following variants, with the fem. prefix *ti-* referred to the Sun-deity, ARET V 3 i 1–3: <sup>d</sup>Utu *ti-a-ba-an sig<sub>4</sub>-gar*; 2 i 1–3: *I-li-li* (Enlil) *i-la-ba-nu [sig<sub>4</sub>-gar]*;<sup>56</sup> 1 iv 7–8: *a-bí-nu-un i-a-ba-nu sig<sub>4</sub>-gar* “The Sun-goddess / Enlil / the maker of bricks moulded the bricks”.<sup>57</sup> According to the ritual of the royal wedding, <sup>d</sup>Utu received as offering a “virgin heifer”, *péš-áb nu-giš-gál-“tak<sub>4</sub>”*, ARET XI 2 § 74 (cf. 1 § 71). The Eblaite were aware that in the eastern regions the Sun was male; as a consequence they adopted also a (secondary) male hypostasis and, in a few cases, felt it necessary to state precisely to which of them they referred, ARET III 637 I 6: <sup>d</sup>Utu-munus; 75.2593 rev. IV 4–8: 1 *aktum-TÚG IGI.KID* <sup>d</sup>Utu-nita in <sup>r</sup>x-x<sup>r</sup>-<sup>r</sup>ki<sup>r</sup>, “the female / male Sun”.

<sup>44</sup> Krebernik 1984, 324. The incantation has been studied by Fronzaroli (Fronzaroli 1988).

<sup>45</sup> On the Sumerian writing, see Civil, *apud* Lambert 1984, 399–400; Steinkeller 1987.

<sup>46</sup> Pomponio, Xella 1997, 297–315.

<sup>47</sup> Archi 2013, 223–224 = Archi 2015, 509–510.

<sup>48</sup> Archi 2019a.

<sup>49</sup> Goodnick-Westenholz 2010, 387, 397–398.

<sup>50</sup> Cavigneaux 2014, 308, no. 28 rev. i 1.

<sup>51</sup> Lafont 1984, 243–244. For the “pantheon”, see Dossin 1950, 44, no. 24.

<sup>52</sup> Krebernik 1992, 87–94, 97.

<sup>53</sup> Krebernik 1984, 150–151.

<sup>54</sup> Archi 2019a.

<sup>55</sup> Krebernik 1984, 130.

<sup>56</sup> 75.11748 (ARET V 2)+75.3216+75.18214, see Catagnoti 1988.

<sup>57</sup> Fronzaroli 1988, 18.

Utu was also at Ebla the tutelary deity of truth and oaths. The king, guarantor of a donation by the minister Ibrum to his sons, invoked as witnesses the Sun together with the city-god Kura, the Storm-god Hadda and all the gods, ARET XVI 27 §§ 8, 27. In the ‘international’ Treaty with Abarsal (Tell Chuēra), Utu, Hadda, and all the gods were requested to punish any who violated the agreements (Kura, considered a local god, was not mentioned in this case), ARET XIII 5 low edge § 5.<sup>58</sup>

n) <sup>d</sup>Tu (without Semitic equivalence in LL) is a short form of <sup>d</sup>Nin-tu, the Mother-goddess. At Ebla, she was worshiped in the temple of Kura. She played a major role in the wedding ritual for the royal couple, when she pronounced the crucial words signifying the investiture of king and queen to represent on earth the divine couple at the head of the pantheon, and assuring the continuity of the dynasty: “The goddess Tu announces: ‘(there is) a new Kura, a new Barama; a new king, a new queen’” (ARET XI 1 § 65, 2 § 68). The logogram <sup>d</sup>TU represents in the text of Ebla a local Mother-goddess.<sup>59</sup> <sup>d</sup>Tu is the writing adopted also at Mari, TH07-T9 f. ii 1.

Sumerian logograms were used as the name of a god only according to analogies between two divine entities. Similarly, in Anatolia SUMUQAN(<sup>d</sup>GIR) was read Miyatanzipa, the name of the Hittite genius of Vegetation.<sup>60</sup> All the deities of Ebla have to be considered peculiar of the Syrian regions, with the exception of two Common Semitic astral goddesses: A/Eštar, whose name was always written phonetically, and the Sun: Šamaš (at Ugarit Šapš), written <sup>d</sup>Utu, female in Syria, who became male in Akkadian Mesopotamia under Sumerian influence.

Kura, the god of Ebla, possibly belonged to the substrate, and he disappeared along with the city itself.<sup>61</sup> The name of his spouse Barama was an epithet, roughly meaning “Full of colour”, \**brm*. Hadda, the Storm-god of Ḥalab, was the major god of northern Syria, and survived until the Classical period also with his epithet of Ba<sup>c</sup>l. His wife Ḥa(l)abadu was named according to the place where she was worshipped: “She of Ḥalab”; this epithet became Ḥebat in

later periods. Her cult expanded through the Hurrians as far as Anatolia, together with that of Adamma and Aštapi(l). Kamiš (Chemoš in Moab) and Rašap (Rešef) were, together with Hadda, the major Syrian gods until the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium.

#### 5. THE EQUIDS OF EBLA

The unilingual Animal List B (represented by three manuscripts) offers the most common list of equids in a source from Ebla: ANŠE-kúnga(BAR.AN) / ANŠE-kúnga-munus / dúsu(ANŠE.IGI)-níta / ANŠE.IGI-munus / anše-eden-munus / anše-(<sup>ga</sup>)gan / an[še- ] / anše[- ] / anše-ed[en-níta?].

The ED Practical Vocabulary (ARES IV, nos. 246–251) lists the following names of equids: anše-AN/<sup>x</sup>-níta / anše-munus (eme<sub>6</sub>) / ANŠE.IGI-níta / ANŠE.IGI-munus / anše-eden-munus / ANŠE-BAR.AN-níta

The canonical bilingual lexical lists have only the name of the most common equids at Ebla: IGI-níta<sup>62</sup> / IGI-munus; BAR.AN / BAR.AN-munus (MEE 4, nos. 709, 710; 1062, 1063). The short bilingual list 75.10018+ used a different Sumerian source and is more detailed. It opens with the following names of equids, obv. i 1–6: <sup>r</sup>anše<sup>?</sup>-<sup>r</sup>gur<sub>8</sub> / IGI-níta-tur / ANŠE-níta-kur / *ag-lum* / <sup>r</sup>ANŠE-níta<sup>-</sup>-<sup>r</sup>eden<sup>?</sup> / *gú-da-núm*.

Later Akk. sources have the equivalence: *agālu* = anše<sup>du-su</sup>Ü, a simplification of ANŠE-libir(IGI+ŠÈ). “The references up to the Ur III period designate with ANŠE-libir(IGI+ŠÈ) a domesticated equid which is frequently mentioned and used as a draught animal before plows and wagons.”<sup>63</sup>

The administrative texts of Ebla record two genres of equids, the only ones which had an economic significance: IGI-níta, IGI-munus, (3 mu 2 mu 1 mu, tur), IGI-níta u<sub>5</sub>, and kúnga(BAR.AN)-níta/munus, (5 4 3 2 1 mu, tur). The determinative ANŠE was not written, and IGI(-níta/munus) is an abbreviation of ANŠE.libir. IGI-munus is the Eblaite writing for eme<sub>6</sub>.

Similarly to the Akkadian personal names *I/E-ma-ru-um* “Donkey” and *Ku-da-núm* “Mule”,<sup>64</sup> the onomasticon of Ebla had *Si-ti*-BAR.AN “Drink, Mule!” (75.2491 obv. xvii 9), and the toponyms IGI-níta<sup>ki</sup> and IGI-munus<sup>ki</sup>.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> All the documents of Ebla have NITA (UŠ, as in dumu-níta) and not NÍTA.

<sup>63</sup> CAD A,I, 141. The *kūdanu* “(a type of mule)”, CAD K, 491, was the ANŠE.GIR.NUN.NA of the OB literary texts and in the lexical tradition. Civil (Civil 2008, 112-113) gives the section of equids in the lists from Fāra and Abū Šalābīkh, and comments *ad* no. 250 (*gú-da-núm*): “The normal Akk. translation of anše-eden is otherwise *sirrimu* ‘onager’”. Against the meaning “mule” for *kūdanu*, he notes that “the enigmatic list SLT 58:4 [gud]-ku-da-an-núm (PN?), seems to exclude a hybrid animal”.

<sup>64</sup> See CAD I, 112; K, 491.

<sup>65</sup> 75.10187 obv. iii 2–5: *Ma-sa-nu*<sup>ki</sup> *wa* IGI.NITA<sup>ki</sup> *lú* *Ib-al*<sup>ki</sup> (there-

<sup>58</sup> For the Sun-goddess, see further Archi 2019a.

<sup>59</sup> Archi 2019a.

<sup>60</sup> Klinger 2011/13.

<sup>61</sup> The only possible survival of Kura in a later period seems to be (to the present writer) the god *Ku-ur-ri* of the Ḥišuwa festival from Kizzuwatna (Cilicia). This festival, known from the Hittite archives, presents a strong Hurrian influence from North-Syria (Wilhelm 1992). Other suggestions are examined by Sallaberger 2018, 111-114.

By far the most common equid was the IGI-nita, ARET XIII 5 rev. viii 10: *ù-ma gud ù-ma IGI-nita* “cattle or asses”. A merchant, Gida-na'im, negotiated in one of his trade travels for three and four IGI-nita, three and four oxen, and 1 BAR.AN-munus together with other goods.<sup>66</sup> In an account of deliveries to the Central Administration by some “lords”, lugal-lugal, distinction is made only between large and small quadrupeds, ARET II 25 § 7: “Total: 11,788 cattle and asses (gud-gud ù IGI-nita), 36,100 sheep (udu).” According to ARET II 20 § 10, an official was responsible (lú šu [PN]) for “1030 sheep, 176 oxen, 18 IGI-munus-IGI-munus 4 IGI-nita 6 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN 440 jars of oil.”

An inspection in the village of *ʿA-za-an<sup>ki</sup>*, ARET II 23, gave the result that Badulum, an “overseer of the farmers”, ugula engar, had under his control (lú 2 šu) 80 IGI-munus tu-da (“in the age to give birth”), 10 BAR.AN-nita 5 4 3 mu, 14 BAR.AN-munus 5 4 3 mu, 4 BAR.AN-nita tur, 5 BAR.AN-munus tur 1 mu, 2 IGI-nita 3 mu. Ingar, the “overseer of the mules (BAR.AN-BAR.AN)”, was instead responsible for 72 IGI-munus tu-da, 11 BAR.AN-nita 5 4 3 mu, 5 BAR.AN-munus 5 4 3 mu, 2 BAR.AN-munus tur 1 mu. Given the number of mares and of young animals, this document most probably concerns two breeding farms.<sup>67</sup> As Zarins has remarked, “the text combines two different groupings but defines a six-year foaling record since the terms tur (young) and 5 mu (fifth year) are mentioned”.<sup>68</sup>

It is evident that there were just two kinds of equids: (ANŠE.)IGI, necessarily “ass”, and (ANŠE.)BAR.AN, that is: kúnga, a hybrid.<sup>69</sup> The fact that there was a “riding ass”. IGI-nita u<sub>5</sub> suggests that the *E. asinus* widespread in northern Syria was quite a vigorous animal. 75.2084 obv. ii 4–rev. i 2 register “2 reins, 3 brooches of 1 wagon (and) 3(!) riding asses of the king”, 2 níg-anše-ak 3 kù-sal 1 GIŠ-GÍGIR×É-IV 3 IGI-nita-IGI-nita u<sub>5</sub> en. According to a passage in 75.2333 the price of an IGI-nita u<sub>5</sub> was 30 shekels; such animals were, however, estimated at only 13.5 shekels in 75.2365. We cannot, therefore, deduce that the asses qualified by u<sub>5</sub> had a particular constitution, their value being no greater than the others.<sup>70</sup> The

term u<sub>5</sub> could mean just that these asses were trained for riding or for drawing chariots.<sup>71</sup>

In the period of king Irkab-damu, Enna-il, a “lord”, lugal (a high official), was entrusted with the responsibility of the IGI-nita of the Palace.<sup>71</sup> In the following period there were several “overseers”, ugula, instead of a lugal.

Similarly, the “mules”, BAR.AN (kúnga), of the Palace came first under the control of Titina, a “lord”, and later under several overseers.<sup>72</sup>

While ARET II 23 (above) concerns a farm where equids were bred, the document 75.1826+ is an account concerning the maintenance of draught animals. The first sections (obv. i 1–rev. iv 5) register one after the other one or two teams of BAR.AN entrusted to men residing in villages, each having at their disposal 200 gána-kešda-ki measures of fields in relation to one team. The colophon makes it clear that (a part of?) the production of barley of the 9400 measures of fields had to be used for feeding (kú) these equids, therefore surely not plough animals. The total of the document distinguishes between asses and mules (rev. x 1–9): “54 teams of riding mules, 9 teams of draught mules. Document of the fields (which) maintain the mules (entrusted) to Irne”, šu-nígin 54 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN u<sub>5</sub> 9 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN GIŠ-GÍGIR×É dub ki-ki kú bîr-BAR.AN bîr-BAR.AN áš-da Ir-NE. One passage (rev. vii 8–12) mentions that 375 gú-bar measure of barley were given to maintain 25 asses for one year, that is daily 1 níg-sagšu for each ass: še kú 25 IGI-nita 1 še níg-sagšu in 1 mu. That is: 375 gú-bar = 9000 níg-sagšu (1 gú-bar = 24 níg-sagšu); therefore 360 níg-sagšu for each ass in one year.

This Irne was probably the same who had at his disposal large expanses of fields according to 75.1992 rev. iii 3–6, as well as a certain Ibdulu: 11,000[+x] (gána-kešda-)ki: *Ib-du-lu*; 10,100 (gána-kešda-)ki: *Ir-NE*.

Postgate’s suggestion that ANŠE-kúnga means “mule” has found consensus.<sup>73</sup> The mule is valued for its strength and endurance, while it is doubtful whether the *Equus hemionus* was domesticated. It is uncertain how much larger an onager was in comparison to an ass. Evidence of a rather better performance offered by the offspring of an onager stallion, the BAR.AN, is that it was usually used as the draught animal for the chariots of the king and high officials.

fore in the region east of Qatna). This name proves that the toponym IGI-munus<sup>ki</sup> cannot be read *Ši-sal<sup>ki</sup>* (contrary to ARES II, 442; correctly transcribed in Bonechi 1993, 197); there are also the occurrences 75.10184 obv. iv 3–5: 4 dumu-munus NE-di IGI-munus<sup>ki</sup>; 75.11757 rev. iii 18. IGI-SAL<sup>ki</sup> was a village of Ebla.

<sup>66</sup> ARET II 29, see Milano 2003.

<sup>67</sup> Cf the text from Mari TH 80.101 (Charpin 1987, 83, no. 24), concerning exclusively female asses, eme<sub>6</sub>.

<sup>68</sup> Zarins 2014, 169.

<sup>69</sup> Zarins has discussed in great detail the paleozoological evidence for equidae and the names given to equid species in the Ancient Near East (Zarins 2014).

<sup>70</sup> See table 2.

<sup>71</sup> ARET XIV 8 rev. iii 3; 14 rev. ii 2; 49 obv. vi 12.

<sup>72</sup> For *Ti-ti-na* lugal BAR.AN-BAR.AN, see ARET XIV 8 obv. vi 6; 9 rev. iv 5; 14 obv. v 3; 15 obv. i 4; 32 obv. x 8. At the beginning of the reign of Išar-damu, when Ibrum was minister, *Ri-i-ma-lik* was “overseer” ugula, of the mules.

<sup>73</sup> Postgate 1986; see Heimpel 1987/90 (a synthesis of the data concerning this equid); Heimpel 1995, 89–91; Zarins 2014, 170–177. Maekawa had instead suggested that ANŠE-kúnga refers to the *E. hemionus*, the onager (Maekawa 1979).

The value of a BAR.AN, given the difficulty of obtaining these equids, is made clear by the list of the animals delivered on the occasion of the marriage (mu-DU níg-mu-sá) of princess Kešdut with a prince of Kiš (in the year before the destruction of Ebla), and perhaps sent to Kiš as a gift: “3290 cattle (gud), 1680 sheep (udu), 159 mules (BAR.AN), 1 male ass (IGI-nita), 5 pigs (šaḥ), 19 buffalos (alim), 14 bears (az).<sup>74</sup>

Identification of *E. hemionus* and domestic Equidae based on skeletal evidence provided by archaeological excavation is, in general, rather difficult.<sup>75</sup>

#### 6. MULES FROM THE HIGHLANDS

The mules, kúnga (BAR.AN), were mostly imported from the kingdom of Nagar, the regional state in the Ḥabur triangle, a natural ally of Ebla since both had Mari as their principal adversary.<sup>76</sup> Prices for these animals fluctuated somewhat: if we consider that 15 shekels (117 g) of silver was the average price of an ass and 2 minas (940 g) that of a mule, this hybrid could have been eight times more valuable than an ass. In some cases, a mule could be worth as much as four or even five minas (1.88/2.35 kg).<sup>77</sup> This silver was in some cases just the converted value of oil or wool.

The region which provided these hybrids was therefore the Ḥabur triangle and east of there. Urkiš was excluded because of the geographical location of Nagar. Ebla tried to provide itself with a second source. Ibutu, “the chief steward of the house of the king”, agrig é en, sent a letter to Ḥamazi (in the region of Sulaymaniyah) with the request for “good mules”, BAR.AN sa<sub>6</sub>, in exchange for timber, but this did not obtain a result.<sup>78</sup>

A seal impression from Nagar represents two sitting gods (besides others two): the one on the left sits on a stool which rests on a gazelle, his left hand extended towards a rampant gazelle, while the god on the right sits on a stool which rests on two standing equids, his right hand extended forwards to a rampant equid (perhaps an onager). This second representation is similar to that of the Urkiš seal, and the god may

safely be identified with Šakkan, who played a major role in the region according to the documents from Tell Beydar (above, § 3).<sup>79</sup> This is a good illustration how religion permeated the perception of the environment by the human beings.

Mules were exchanged only exceptionally in international relations. The document 75.1559, to be dated to the very last years of Iblul-il king of Mari (in obv. i 2 Enna-il, the cupbearer of Paba, Pa<sub>4</sub>-ba<sub>4</sub>, spouse of Iblul is mentioned), registers 470 g of silver given to Puzur-Aštar who had to carry a chariot to the grand vizier of Mari, while 39 g of silver were given to another official for delivering a team of mules, obv. x 4-xi 3: 1 ma-na babbar:kù Puzur<sub>4</sub>-Aš-dar ḥi-mu-DU GIŠ-gígir-II Ma-r<sub>4</sub>ki 5 gín DILMUN babbar:kù Bù-da-ni-um sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN gal:sukkal. About 40 years later (I.Z. 13) the cupbearer Šugadu, who had led a delegation from Mari, received 313 g of silver having to bring several mules as a gift, 76.534+ obv. vi 18-23: ša-pi babbar:kù níg-ba Šu-ga-du Ma-r<sub>4</sub>ki éš DU.DU ḥi-mu-DU BAR.AN-BAR.AN. The dowry of princess Kešdut, perhaps to be sent to Kiš (I.Z. 16) included 159 mules!<sup>80</sup>

#### 7. MULES IN AGRICULTURAL DOCUMENTS

Several documents register animals located in villages, given into the charge of individuals controlled by the central administration, e.g.: 76.188 rev. i 1-ii 1: “[x seed-barley], 7 male mules, 22 oxen, 11 cows, 130 sheep for breeding [GN]”, [x še-numun] 7 BAR.AN-nita 22 gud 11 áb 130 udu ti-la [GN]; 76.189 rev. iii 1-6: “1 mule, 1 female mule, 1 male ass, 2 oxen, 2 cows, 2 calves”, 1 BAR.AN 1 BAR.AN-munus 1 IGI-nita 2 gud 2 áb 2 amar (... PN).<sup>81</sup> According to 75.10250 obv. xvi 12-14, there were “64 houses of servants (in charge) of mules”, 64 é ir<sub>11</sub> BAR.AN-<BAR.>AN.

The agricultural units which had mules at their disposal were, however, few. Among the several farms which had to reserve part of their barley production as fodder for animals, there was that of a certain Zabara: “13 breeding bovines, 10 female asses, 4 young mules, 4 teams of mules, 1 riding ass, 1 wild ass”, 13 gud ti-la 10 IGI-munus 4 BAR.AN tur 4 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN 2 IGI-nita u<sub>5</sub> 1 BAR.AN eri-bar (75.1475 rev.ii 4-iv 6). The inventory of precious metals,

<sup>74</sup> Archi 1987a, 122-124.

<sup>75</sup> See Zarins 2014, 41-83.

<sup>76</sup> A first presentation of the relations between Ebla and Nagar and its satellite towns has been given in Archi 1998. EN-NE<sup>ki</sup> and Sag-gár<sup>ki</sup> were the satellite towns which provided mules. The occurrences of the term anše-BAR.AN in the texts of Beydar are listed by Sallaberger 1996b, 176. It is not possible to locate Ir-ku<sup>ki</sup>, at whose “market”, ganba, mules were acquired. For the documentation from Nabada concerning Nagar, see Sallaberger 1999.

<sup>77</sup> See tables 1 and 2.

<sup>78</sup> The letter ARET XIII 3 was written at the time of king Irkabdamu, and the request was for king Zizi of Ḥamazi. I-bù-ka<sup>x</sup>KID agrig é en has probably to be identified with I-bu<sub>16</sub>-bù<sup>?</sup>, the overseer of the house of the king, ugula é en, active in the year Ibr. 03 (75.2362 rev. xvi 19-21).

<sup>79</sup> The description of the seal is given in Felli, 2001, 144-145 with fig. 181; the identification of the god Šakkan was suggested by Oates, Oates 2001, 387-388. According to Oates, Oates 2006, 401-402, “the Area FS complex at Brāk, with its temple and large courtyards, was situated near the north gate of the city, and we believe that it may have been an early form of way-station or caravanserai. Certainly there was an unusually large water supply and evidence of herbivore dung and stake-holes in one of its large courtyards.” The number of figurines reproducing equids and chariot models found at Brāk is remarkable, see Oates 2001.

<sup>80</sup> Above, § 4.

<sup>81</sup> See Milano 1987, 181, 195.

objects, and clothing 75.10263 (without an administrative reference) adds also the following animals: “31 teams of mules, 22 items of cattle, 10 fattened cattle”, 31 sur<sub>x</sub> BAR.AN 22 gud 10 gud niga (rev. iv 3-5).

According to ARET III 106(+)-111, each team of mules received 1 *ba-ri-zú* measure of barley (= 12 níg-sagšu) a day; 106 rev. v 3-5: še kú 11 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN 1 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN 1 *ba-ri-zú* še.<sup>82</sup> Half of this amount would also have been sufficient according to 75.1798 obv. II 5-7: 5 níg-sagšu še 1 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN; rev. ii 4-6: 6 níg-sagšu še 1 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN.

For the maintenance of a team of asses only 100 (instead of 200) measures of land could suffice. 75.4833+ ii 3-4: 100 gána-kešda-ki lú 2 IGI-nita; 76.48 i 3-4: 50 gána-kešda-ki lú 1 IGI-nita.<sup>83</sup>

Further passages make clearer the situation regarding the number of mules held by overseers or farmers in relation to other equids and cattle.

75.1245 obv. iii 1-10: 5 IGI-munus 5 BAR.AN tur wa 2 GIS-gígir{×É}-sum *En-na-il* šeš *Ìr-am<sub>6</sub>-ma-lik si-in A-a-za-du<sup>ki</sup> ħi-mu-DU*; vi 5-10: 6 BAR.AN lú *Úr-lu<sup>ki</sup> wa lú A-ga-ar<sup>ki</sup> Ìr-am<sub>6</sub>-ma-lik ħi-DU*; vii 2-5: 12 gud 3 IGI-munus 1 IGI-nita 1 BAR.AN *mi-nu Ša-dab<sup>ki</sup> A-da-gàr ħi-DU*.<sup>84</sup>

75.1248+ obv. i 1-3: [...] 170 gud-gud 1 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN.

75.1508 obv. i 6-ii 3: 30 gud 9 áb 7 IGI-munus 6 IGI-nita 4 BAR.AN.

75.1547<sup>85</sup> rev. v 1-iv 5: AN.ŠÈ.GÚ 97 gud mu-DU uru<sup>ki</sup>-uru<sup>ki</sup> AN.ŠÈ.GÚ 188 gud è uru<sup>ki</sup>-uru<sup>ki</sup> AN.ŠÈ.GÚ 25 IGI-nita AN.ŠÈ.GÚ 14 BAR.AN “Total: 97 cattle, delivery (by) the villages; total: 188 cattle, expenditures of the villages. Total of the male asses: 25; total of the mules: 14.”

75.2032 rev. i 1-ii 3: (*áš-ti* ugula é ugula é ...) AN.ŠÈ.GÚ 185 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN 80 IGI-nita u<sub>5</sub> 41 IGI-nita 3 mu 2 mu 24 IGI-nita tur 258 IGI-munus 50 IGI-munus IGI-munus tur 4 mu 3 mu 2 mu 82 BAR.AN 3 mu 2 mu 1 mu “(animals by the overseers of the houses.) Total: 185 teams of mules; 80 riding male asses; 41 male asses of 3, 2 years; 24 young male asses; 258 female asses; 50 young female asses, of 4, 3, 2 years; 82 mules of 3, 2, 1 year.”

75.2637 rev. v 10-vi 3: [x] udu-niga 6 IGI-munus 2 BAR.AN 3 mu 17 ir<sub>11</sub> 27 géme *Nu-ba-du<sup>ki</sup>*.

<sup>82</sup> I cannot agree with the analysis of this document given by Bonechi (Bonechi 2016, 42-46). The Irti of Tunip, to whom was entrusted just one team of mules (ARET III 111 obv. viii 1-3), was a farmer, not a son of the minister Ibrum (Irti was a quite common name).

<sup>83</sup> A document of the minister Arrukum registers the silver (18.80 kg) expended for acquiring some mules for the king and that (940 g) for their futter, 75.1872+ obv. i 8-ii 1: 2 ma-na babbar:kù še kú BAR.AN-BAR.AN en.

<sup>84</sup> Enna-il, Iram-malik and Adagar had to deliver several mules and female asses from some villages of Ebla.

<sup>85</sup> Archi 1984, 49.

75.12605+ rev. v 3-8: 40 gud 13 áb 7 IGI-munus 6 IGI-nita 1 BAR.AN 3 BAR.AN-munus.

76.92 obv. i 1-3: 38 gud ti-la 8 IGI-munus 1 IGI-nita 1 BAR.AN-munus.

ARET XX 1 § 15: 31 sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN 22 gud 10 gud-niga (this datum refers to the central administration).

#### 8. MULES AND ASSES AS DRAUGHT ANIMALS OF CHARIOTS, AND THEIR “OVERSEERS”

Text 75.1785 (Ibr.) rev. ix 2-4 attributes to the king eight “overseers of teams of mules”, ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN; five are those of the king and two of the minister Ibbi-zikir according to 75.1829 (I.Z.) rev. x 8-14. In 75.1917 rev. i 15-ii 11 eight “overseers”, ugula, of the king and six of Ibbi-zikir are mentioned by name: *Ìr-ni-ba Ĥu-ba-an Puzur<sub>4</sub>-ra-ma-lik Gur-da-LUM Ba-du-lum A-mi-ni-bar-zú Še-numun<sup>(BAL)</sup><sup>86</sup> Ib-ga-i – En-na-BE Bù-ĥi Ìr-ba<sub>x</sub>-zé* of *Dur-rí<sup>ki</sup> Mi-ga-i Gú-šu Ib-dur-i-šar* respectively. Those listed in ARET III 61 v 3-14 are five for the king and four for Ibbi-zikir: *Ĥu-ba-an Ru<sub>12</sub>-zú-i Ib-ga-i Še-numun<sup>(BAL)</sup>, A-za<sub>x</sub>-bar-zú – En-na-i Da-zi-ma-at Bu-ĥi A-ga-lu* respectively.<sup>87</sup> Those at the service of the crown prince I<sup>3</sup>aq-damu were three according to ARET VII 73 § 1. In ARET IV 14 § 53 a distribution of wool is registered for six teams of mules (sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN) of the king, two of Ingar (an overseer of teams of mules), thirteen of Ibbi-zikir, and four for his son Tubuĥu-Hadda. The number of the teams of mules of the minister and his son was justified by their military tasks.

Like other officials, these overseers received land for the maintenance of these animals. 75.1827+ obv. viii 4-6: 152(?) gána-kešda-ki *Ìr-ni-ba* ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-B.A., rev. vi 1-3: 56 gána-kešda-ki *Ib-dur-i* ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-B.A. 75.3887+ obv. iii 2-7: 400 gána-kešda-ki *Ru<sub>12</sub>-zú-i* ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-B.A. 300 gána-kešda-ki *Zu-ne* ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-B.A. 75.6029 rev. ii 5-7: 200 gána-ki ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-B.A. *A-rí-mu<sup>ki</sup>*. 75.12041 rev. xiv 1-3: 200 gána-kešda-ki sur<sub>x</sub>-B.A.

Text 75.2280+ registers the gifts distributed to the royal family, the court and the representatives of the allied cities probably on the occasion of the victory over Mari, about two years before the fall of Ebla.<sup>88</sup> Preceded by other people employed at the Palace such as 27 dancers and 15 lyre players, 49 “overseers of the teams of mules”, ugula sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN, received one garment (sal-TÚG) and a kilt each, as well as eight plates of 39 g of gold, presumably for their chiefs (rev. xiv 26-27). These charioteers were employed also in

<sup>86</sup> The writing Še-BAL (cf also ARET I 4 rev. ix 21 !) alternate with Še-numun (e.g. ARET I 10 obv. iii 1).

<sup>87</sup> A chariot of the minister Arrukum is mentioned in 75.1406 rev. iv 4-5; another for the minister Ibrum in ARET XIX obv. vi § 21, together of those of Bagama and Ibbi-zikir, his sons, § 36.

<sup>88</sup> Archi 2019b.



war: they appear (in numbers of 60/47) in the list of the yearly distribution of clothing to the personnel of the Palace and to the men organized in gangs (*ir-aním*) who formed the army.<sup>89</sup>

Several members of the elite had their “overseers of teams of mules”, that is charioteers in charge of their chariots. The documents of the last period of the archives mention these sons of the king: Gadum, Ibte-damu, Iḥsub-damu, Ilzi-damu, Sag-damu, and Zib-damu, ARET VIII 525 vii 15–19; 542 ix 20–24. Dusigu, the mother of the king, also had her team of mules, 75.2359 r. xi 4–5.

The cortege of deities who accompanied the king and queen to the mausoleum of the ancestors in NENAŠ on the occasion of their wedding used a GIŠ-gígir-sum carriage drawn by four(?) bulls for the god Kura and a covered wagon, GIŠ-É×GÍGIR drawn by a team of mules, ARET XI 1 §§ 26–29, 2 §§ 26–29.

A courier, whose name denotes his origin in an eastern region, received 470 g of silver in relation to a team of mules for the “god of the king / the deified ancestor”, 75.1218+ obv. v 8–12: 1 ma-na babbar:kù Ur-<sup>d</sup>Nisaba u<sub>5</sub> sur<sub>x</sub>-BAR.AN dingir en.

Chariots and wagons employed by the elite might be drawn also by asses, although more rarely. Decorations for the reins of “the two asses”, 2 IGI-nita, of the king are mentioned in MEE 10, 20 obv. xix 7–11; 29 obv. xvi 35–xvii 11; MEE 12, 35 § 92c; 36 § 17a; 37 § 25b; 75.1730 rev. ii 18–22; 75.1923 obv. iv 5–8, x 5–15; 75.2462 rev. iv 26–36; 75.2644+ obv. vi 12–13; 75.2502 rev. i 5–12; 75.2507 obv. ix 7–24; 75.10144 rev. xiii 5–7. Those for the minister Ibrium are mentioned in 75.2365 obv. vii 7–10; 75.2359 rev. iv 1–4; for the minister Ibbi-zikir in 75.2644+ obv. vi 6–7, 15–16.<sup>90</sup> Also Dusigu, the mother of the king, had two asses for her chariot, 75.1730 obv. vii 11–14.

Mention of teams of oxen are uncommon, ARET XX 1 obv. v 5–vi 1: 1 sur<sub>x</sub>(ERIM)-BAR.AN 15 sur<sub>x</sub>-gud-gud. “Two reins” (usually completed by four decorations)<sup>91</sup> referred to two animals, 75.2365 obv. vii 8–9: 2 níg-anše-ak 4 kù-sal 2 IGI-nita. If, instead, a single animal was employed, one has: 1 níg-anše-ak 1 IGI-nita, MEE 12, 37 obv. xi 14–15.

## 9. CHARIOT AS A GIFT

A chariot was a luxurious gift. When Ibbi-zikir “left for the campaign” (è níg-kaš<sub>4</sub>) against Badanu, he received some garments for his asses. Having

succeeded in occupying this town and conquering Masanu and IGI.NITA<sup>ki</sup> (that is Agālu, all of the confederation of Ibal), the king rewarded him with a dagger and earrings in gold together with a chariot decorated with “mother-of-pearl, carnelian and gold”, 1 giš-gígir-II ra-<sup>a</sup>-tum si<sub>4</sub> kù-gi (75.10187 obv. ii 6).

The victory over Mari was the occasion for further gifts of this kind. According to the extremely fragmentary annual document 75.12450 (I.Z. 15), the chariots of Ibbi-zikir and two other leaders needed “572 g of gold for the decorations of their wheels, 1.54 kg of copper for “hooks”, GIŠ-zú, [...]”. The gold for the decorations of the pectorals and the reins of the chariot of the minister, together with that for the reins of the king of Nagar, had been first registered in 74.102. A similar short text, 74.101, concerns the gold for the reins given to another ally, the king of Haddu.<sup>92</sup>

A chariot belonged to the iconography of the Storm-god Hadda of Ḥalab, a warrior god. The king offered to him for his own “purification”, sikil, “1 chariot, whose 2 wheels (were decorated with) gold, mother-of-pearl and carnelian, together with 2 reins, four bridles (with) an eagle of gold, 4 hooks, a goad, 1 dagger of gold, 1 multicoloured kilt”, 1 GIŠ-gígir-ii ša-ti 2 GIŠ-gam-gam-sù kù-gi wa ra-<sup>a</sup>-tum si<sub>4</sub> 2 níg-anše-ak 4 eškiri<sub>x</sub> á-MUŠEN kù-gi 4 zi-kir-ra-tum wa GIŠ-bar-uš 1 gir mar-tu kù-gi 1 íb+iii-TUG-sa<sub>6</sub>-gùn (75.1542 obv. I 1-ii 6).<sup>93</sup> Another chariot was offered to Hadda in the year I.Z. 06: 75.1918 (MEE 10, 29) obv. i 9–ii 29.

The amounts of gold and silver employed for covered wagons (presumably for the ladies of the court) are given in ARET XIV 2 rev. iv 4–5 // 76.974 rev. iii 2–4: 29 ma-na (13.63 kg) babbar:kù 5 ma-na tar (2.70 kg) kù-gi GIŠ-GÍGIR×É- GIŠ-GÍGIR×É; 75/86.G.3 obv. ii 6–iii 1: 24 ma-na (11.28 kg) babbar:kù kin<sub>5</sub>-ak 1 GIŠ-GÍGIR×É. The gold employed for the harnesses of these chariots follows, ARET XIV 2 rev. iii 3–5 // 76.974 rev. ii 2–3: “10.81 kg of gold for the neckchains of the mules of the king”, 23 ma-na kù-gi KA-dù-gíd BAR.AN-BAR.AN en.

A rein-ring in bronze (TM.06.G.906) has been identified by R. Dolce.<sup>94</sup> It was found in a room together with two statuettes, wooden carvings and tesserae of mother-of-pearl inlays used as decorations for furniture. Rein-rings from Kiš and Ur have a mule or an onager as decorative element, not an ass judging from its short ears.<sup>95</sup> These rings were

<sup>89</sup> ARET XX, 197. A first list of charioteers has been given in Archi 1988.

<sup>90</sup> For the asses of the chariot of the minister Arrukum, see ARET XV, 2, 432, *sub* igi-nita.

<sup>91</sup> See, however, MEE 12, 36 obv. ix 13–14: 1 níg-anše-ak 1 kù-sal 1 IGI-nita!

<sup>92</sup> Archi, Biga 2003, 19 and 25–26 respectively.

<sup>93</sup> Archi 2013, 11 = Archi 2015, 584. The harness of the equids have been studied by Conti 1997, 44–55.

<sup>94</sup> Dolce 2015, 129–130. A list of rein-rings dated to the 3rd millennium B.C. is given in Zarins 2014, 401–402.

<sup>95</sup> Zarins 2014, 132, figs. 2.66, 2.57.

used also for quadrigas: four draught animals were hitched to a two-wheeled chariot, according to some representations of the third millennium B.C. from Sumer and Babylonia.<sup>96</sup> The seal impressions from Mari and Tell Beydar seem to represent a team of two equids; another from Urkiš has instead three equids.<sup>97</sup> The leaders of Ebla went to war with two-wheeled chariots, whereas the war scenes from Mari and Tell Beydar represented on seals and inlays have four-wheeled carts, following the iconography of the standard of Ur.<sup>98</sup>

#### 10. CHARIOTS IN FUNERAL CEREMONIES

The set of funerary gifts for the minister Ibrum (75.1923 obv. xiii 8–xiv 25) included “470 g of gold for two pairs of reins with four brooches and for the decoration of the two wheels of a chariot; 39 g of tin to be melted (with copper for) one hook; 39 g of silver (for) three z.; 117 g of gold (for) 1 pairs of reins and one brooch (for) one male ass”, 1 ma-na kù-gi kin<sub>5</sub>-ak 2 níg-anše-ak 4 kù-sal wa nu<sub>11</sub>-za 2 GIŠ-ašud GIŠ-gígir-ii 5 gín DILMUN an-na šub si-in 1 GIŠ-zú 5 gín DILMUN kù-gi 1 níg-anše-ak 1 kù-sal 1 IGI-nita. This passage makes it clear that the two reins (the usual equipment for two draught equids) were given as funerary sets to be deposited in the grave together with a belt, a dagger and a helmet as the belongings of a valiant warrior. The *single* pair of reins was instead for the ass which had to draw the chariot bearing the corpse.

A chariot is mentioned also in relation to the funeral of two princesses: Tinib-dulum and Tište-damu. It was the minister Ibbi-zikir in both cases who provided the 470 g of gold for the reins and their four decorations (2 níg-anše-ak 4 kù-sal): 75.2334 (= ARET XX 25) obv. iii 4–10, and 75.2276 obv. ii 9–13.<sup>99</sup> Also Dusigu, the mother of king Išar-damu, was taken to her grave in a chariot drawn by two asses, 75.1962+ obv. xii 2–8: “1 pair of reins of 235 g of gold; 8 g of silver (for) covering the side of 1 chariot; 2 brooches of 204 g of gold; {235 g of gold (for) 1 pair of reins} of two asses”, 2 níg-anše-ak tar kù-gi 1 babbar:kù nu<sub>11</sub>-za 1 zag 1 GIŠ-gígir-II 2 kù-sal 26 kù-gi {tar kù-gi [2] níg-anše-ak} 2 IGI-nita.<sup>100</sup>

The fact that a great leader, a major protagonist in the fortunes of Ebla during the eighteen years when he was in office, was borne to his grave by a chariot drawn by a *single* ass, while the reins for a team of animals which symbolized his war chariot were given as a funeral gift (to be placed in his grave), is clear proof that the chiefs of Ebla were not buried with a team of equids. It is even less probable that equids were buried alongside the tomb of deceased ladies, as a mark of their high status. A rich harness was provided in this case for the funeral chariot, and further reins were not added to their personal funerary outfit.<sup>101</sup>

The hypogeum G4, built roughly 6 m below the flooring of a central unit of the Palace,<sup>102</sup> belonged to a phase characterized by a trend towards mortuary exclusiveness, as Peltenburg has theorized: “the material stage for ancestor ceremonies had been transferred from open, inclusive performances to more controlled spaces and finally to highly restricted venues and social participants”.<sup>103</sup> This hypogeum did not permit the burying of equids.

It is quite possible, instead, that it was felt unacceptable that the animals hitched to the funerary chariot could be used again and that they were, consequently, slaughtered. In a previous phase, when the tombs were outside the city, like the mausoleum for the kings (é ma-tim \*bayt-i maw-tim) in NENAŠ,<sup>104</sup> it is possible that these animals (asses, not hybrids according to the written evidence) were buried in the vicinity of the tombs and considered in some way as possessions of the deceased for the afterlife. The leadership of the minister Ibrum would not have been symbolized, however, by the ass used for his funeral, but by the reins similar to those he had used in so many battles for his war chariot draught by mules. The precious decoration of the funerary chariot might however have been deposited in the tombs.

The extraordinary mortuary complex of Umm el-Marra, defined as “an elite landscape of death”,<sup>105</sup> precedes ideologically (although not chronologically) the evidence from Ebla, and reflects a different social group. It was enclosed by a stone wall and, adjacent to the tombs were mudbrick structures containing equids. In particular, installation G consisted of “a

<sup>96</sup> See Zarins 2014, 116–127, figs. 2.40, 2.41, 2.42, 2.46, 59 (Dyala, Nippur, Ur).

<sup>97</sup> For Mari see Beyer 2007. The seals from Tell Beydar/Nabada and Mari are reproduced by Bretschneider *et al.* 2009, 22, 26. The seal from Urkiš is published by Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2000, 227 fig. 29.

<sup>98</sup> See e.g. Zarins 2014, 127 fig. 2.59, 130 fig. 62.

<sup>99</sup> Archi 2002b, 174–177 = Archi 2015, 774–777.

<sup>100</sup> 75.1962+ is a monthly document. A parallel passage concerning the funerary gifts for Dusigu is in the annual document 75.10088+ rev. xvii 24–xviii 23, which does not add the equipment for the chariot, Archi 2002b, 178 = Archi 2015, 778–779.

<sup>101</sup> For the funerary gifts of the ladies of Ebla, see Archi 2002b = Archi 2015, 760–798; Archi 2012, 20–25. The Ebla documentation does not enable us to agree with Dolce 2014, 9, who considers the hybrids (“gifts at the centre of interregional economic dynamics”), a “possession in death” even of women: “a mark of social distinction for elites and sovereigns, *but not of gender*”.

<sup>102</sup> Matthiae 1997.

<sup>103</sup> Peltenburg 2007/8, 232.

<sup>104</sup> ARET XI, 144.

<sup>105</sup> Detailed reports of this mortuary complex are Schwartz 2012; 2016.

lower pit which contained four equids of relatively young age ranged one beside the other, as a team of four animals (fig. 17), while the upper pit included four standing equids of varied ages<sup>106</sup>. These equids, diagnosed as being hybrids of onager and donkey, indicated the high status of the interred individuals. It seems quite probable that these animals had to accompany the deceased in the afterlife. At Ebla this belief seems to have been represented by the reins, and probable by the precious decorations of the chariot.<sup>107</sup>

The burying of sacrificed donkeys, attested in other areas and periods, as in Tell Haror (Negev), cannot be confused with the meaning of burying equids in EB III-IV northern Syria.<sup>108</sup> The rite of the “sacrifice of donkeys”, *ḥayāram*, *ḥayārī qaṭālum*, was common at Amorrite Mari on the occasion of political alliance.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Schwartz 2012, 66.

<sup>107</sup> In some graves at Terqa, about of the period of Ebla, skeletons of equids were also found, see Rouault 2014, 249-250. Donkeys were buried with Umamma of Ur, see Flückiger-Hawker 1999, 108-109, line 70.

<sup>108</sup> Katz 2009.

<sup>109</sup> See Lafont 2001, 262-271.

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Text	Year	Mules: number, price (nig-sa <sub>10</sub> ) in silver (ma-na), place of origin
75.1379 r. iv 4–6	Arrukum	1 B.A.: <u>3 m.</u> <i>Mi-na-i-um</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.1406 o. xi 1–19 o. xi 11–13	”	B.A.-B.A.: 3 m. <i>Īr-ku</i> <sup>ki</sup> ; B.A.-B.A.: 4 m. <i>Da-ti-um</i> <sup>ki</sup> 1 B.A.: <u>1 m.</u>
75.1413 o. iii 11–4 o. iv 5–7 o. v 2–5	”	B.A.-B.A.: 10 m. <i>I-šar šu-mu-tag</i> <sub>4</sub> 2 B.A.: 4 m. [ <u>(2 m.)</u> ] 1 B.A.: <u>52 gín</u> <i>Ti-ti-nu</i>
75.1872(+) o. i 8–ii 1 o. viii 6–9 o. xi 3–6	”	B.A.-B.A.: 40 m.; 2 m. še kù B.A.-B.-A. en B.A.-B.A.: 1 m. <i>áš-ti</i> EN-šar <sup>ki</sup> 3 B.A.: 3;10 m. ganba NI-ab <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>1;03 m.</u> )
75.1928 o. ix 5–10	”	1 B.A.: <u>2 m.</u> <i>áš-ti</i> en <i>Gàr-mu</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.10050 r. xiv 14–18	”	1 B.A.: <u>1 m.</u> <i>áš-ti</i> <i>Ga-ga-ba-an</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.1705(+) o. vi 9–10 r. ix 10–11 r. x 2–6	Ibr. 01	1 B.A.: <u>1;30 m.</u> 1 B.A.: <u>1;10 m.</u> ganba (KILLAM) 1 B.A.: <u>4 m.</u> <i>áš-ti</i> en <i>Ra-à-ak</i> <sup>ki</sup>
76.672(+) o. v 1–5		1 B.A.: 10 gín kù-gi (= <u>50 gín</u> kù-babbar) <i>Ba-ḥa-ni-um</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.10077(+) r. v 6–11 r. v 20–vi 2 r. xv 9–11	Ibr. 02	1 B.A.: <u>1;30 m.</u> <i>áš-ti</i> <i>Ra-à-ak</i> <sup>ki</sup> 1 B.A.: <u>2;25 m.</u> <i>Mi-na-i-um</i> <sup>ki</sup> [x] B.A.: [x] m. <i>A-šu</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.2464 o. xiv 17–19	Ibr. 03	1 B.A.: <u>2 m.</u> EN-NE <sup>ki</sup>
75.2333 o. viii 9–11 r. x 2–7		1 B.A.: <u>1 m.</u> <i>Sag-gar</i> <sup>ki</sup> 1 B.A.: <u>55 g.</u> ganba NI-ab <sup>ki</sup>
75.1771 o. 9–17	Ibr. 04	1 B.A.: <u>2 m.</u> <i>Ba-na-i-um</i> <sup>ki</sup> in nig-kas <sub>4</sub> <i>Ma-r</i> <sup>ki</sup>
74.2365 o. xiii 6–8	Ibr. 13	[1?+]2 B.A.: 6 m. <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>2 m.</u> ?)
75.1730(+) o. ii 15–19 o. iii 22–24	Ibr. 14	2 B.A.: 6 m. <i>Ḥi-ra-ù Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>3 m.</u> ) <x> B.A.: 5 m. <i>A-ša</i> <sup>ki</sup> <i>Wa-na šu-ba</i> <sub>4</sub> -ti
75.2465 r. xix 8–12	Ibr. 16	<x> B.A.: 6 m. <i>Iš<sub>11</sub>-da-mu</i> di-kud šu-mu-tak <sub>4</sub>
75.10210 o. xiv 16–19 r. xvi 3’–6’	Ibr. 17	2 B.A.: 4 m. <i>áš-ti</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>2 m.</u> ) 1 B.A.: <u>1 m.</u> <i>Wa-na šu-ba</i> <sub>4</sub> -ti
75.10088(+) o. xii 3–8 xii 11–16 r. v 15–19	I.Z. 03	4 B.A.: 20 m. <i>à-gàr</i> šu-mu-tak <sub>4</sub> <i>si-in</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>5 m.</u> ) <x> B.A.: 20 m. <i>Gú-sa si-in</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> šu-mu-tak <sub>4</sub> 24 B.A.: 19 m. ( <u>1;16 m.</u> )
75.10201 o. xxv 30–34 r. ix 24–27 r. xiii 17–20	I.Z. 04	1 B.A.: <u>2;30 m.</u> <i>áš-da</i> <i>Na-ba-ti-i-um</i> <sup>ki</sup> en 4 B.A., 1 B.A.: 2;40 m. ganba <i>Īr-ku</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>32 gín</u> ) 4 B.A.: 8 m. <i>A-šum</i> šu-ba <sub>4</sub> -ti ( <u>2 m.</u> )
75.1918 r. I 1–6 r. i 7–12	I.Z. 05	24 B.A.: 10 m. ganba <i>Īr-ku</i> <sup>ki</sup> 4 B.A.: 20 m. in <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> EN-à-da-mu <i>Da-zi-ma-du</i> ( <u>5 m.</u> )
75.10074 r. vii 9–18 r. x 32–36	I.Z. 06	2 B.A. <i>Ib-rí-um</i> 1 B.A. <i>Zú-ba-lum</i> [dumu-nita <i>Ibr.</i> ]: 6 m. [ <i>áš-du</i> ] <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>2 m.</u> ) 1 B.A.: <u>2;02 m.</u> en <i>áš-du</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.2622 r. ii 18–iii 7 r. iii 8–13	I.Z. 07	38 B.A. ganba <i>Īr-ku</i> <sup>ki</sup> 2 B.A. ganba <i>à-da-ni</i> <sup>ki</sup> ; 11;20 m. ( <u>17 gín</u> ) 6 B.A.: 14 m. <i>áš-da</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ganba NI-ab <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>2;20 m.</u> )
75.2428 o. xiii 14–15 o. xxi 13–17 o. xxi 18–22 o. xxi 23–27	I.Z. 08	1 B.A.: <u>53 gín</u> 3 B.A.: 12 m. <i>A-bù-a-du</i> <sup>ki</sup> <i>Zu-um</i> ḥi-mu-DU ( <u>4 m.</u> ) 1 B.A.: <u>3 m.</u> <i>A-bù-a-du</i> <sup>ki</sup> in SA.ZA <sup>ki</sup> 2 B.A.: 6 m. EN-à-da-mu šu-mu-tag <sub>4</sub> ( <u>3 m.</u> )
75.2508 o. i 28–29 o. xix 35–41 r. xiii 31–32	I.Z. 09	4 B.A.: 10 m. ( <u>2;30 m.</u> ) 5 B.A.: 14 m. <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> EN-à-da-mu DU.DU <i>si-in</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>2;48 m.</u> ) 2 B.A.: <u>1;20 m.</u> ( <u>40 gín</u> )
75.2429 o. ii 18–21 r. xvii 7–8 r. xxiii 18–29	I.Z. 10	3 B.A.: 3 m. en <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>1 m.</u> ) 5 B.A.: 10 m. en <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> ( <u>2 m.</u> ) 1 B.A.: <u>2 m.</u> <i>Ma-r</i> <sup>ki</sup> ... EN-à-da-mu DU.DU <i>si-in</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.2507 o. ii 1–4 o. v 39–vi 9 o. vi 12–18	I.Z. 11	2 B.A.-SAL: 1 m. <i>ri-ḥa</i> <sup>ki</sup> en ( <u>30 gín</u> ) <x> B.A.: 12;36 m. <i>si-in</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> EN-à-da-mu šu-bal-ak 3 B.A.: 5 m. lú <i>Zú-ba-lum Ša-la-da-rí-NE</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup> šu-ba <sub>4</sub> -ti ( <u>1;40 m.</u> )
76.534 o. iv 8–9 o. iv 20–21	I.Z. 12	16 B.A.: 60 m. ( <u>3;45 m.</u> ) 2 B.A.: 6 m. ( <u>3 m.</u> )
75.10202 rev. 4–8	I.Z. 13	1 B.A.: <u>3 m.</u> <i>áš-da</i> <i>Sa-ù-mu</i> <i>Na-gàr</i> <sup>ki</sup>
75.2543 o. iii 5–8	I.Z.	4 B.A.: 4 m. <i>GABA-da-mu</i> ( <u>1 m.</u> )
ARET VII 71 § 1 §§ 2–8	?	1 B.A.: <u>1;03 m.</u> 1 B.A.: <u>1 m.</u>
ARET VII 75 § 1		4 B.A.: 6 m. ( <u>1;30 m.</u> )
ARET XII 614 iii 5–7	?	3 B.A. sikil lú lugal <i>Ma-r</i> <sup>ki</sup> : 12 m. ( <u>4 m.</u> )
ARET XII 786 i	?	4 B.A.: 10;05 m. ( <u>2;31 m.</u> )

Table 1. Prices of mules.

Text	Year	Asses (I.N.): price (níg-sa <sub>10</sub> ) in silver, place of origin
75.1872(+) o. xi 6–7	Arr.	4 I.N.: 1;37 m. (24.25 gín)
75.2333 r. x 5–7	Ibr. 03	4 I.N. u <sub>5</sub> : 2;02 m. ganba NI-ab <sup>ki</sup> (30.5 gín)
75.10143+ o. xvii 7–8	Ibr. 10	3 I.N. u <sub>5</sub> : 1;01 m. (20.3 gín)
75.1464 o. xvii 9–r. i 2	Ibr. 12	4 I.N.: 1;25 m. Puzur <sub>4</sub> -ma-lik ganba <sup>d</sup> Ga-mi-iš (21.2 gín)
75.2365 r. iv 18–19	Ibr. 13	6 I.N. u <sub>5</sub> : 1;21 m. [PN] ganba (13.5 gín)
75.1730 o. iii 28–iv 3	Ibr. 14	2 I.N. u <sub>5</sub> : [x m.]
75.10210 r. vii 1–3	Ibr. 17	2 I.N. u <sub>5</sub> : [x m.] Bù-da-ma-lik [...] ganba <sup>d</sup> Ga-mi-iš
75.1860 r. i 19–21	I.Z. 01	6 I.N.: 1;41 m. ganba (17 gín)
r. i 22–24		3 I.N. en: 56 gín Wa-ba-rúm ganba <sup>d</sup> Ga-mi-iš (19 gín)
75.2462 r. iii 12–13	I.Z. 02	6 I.N.: 1;55 m. áš-da Mu-mu Ma-rí <sup>ki</sup> (19 gín)
75.10201 r. ix 20–23	I.Z. 04	3 I.N.: 54 gín ganba NI-ab <sup>ki</sup> (18 gín)
75.1918 r. xvii 21–22	I.Z. 05	12 I.N.: 3;04 m. (15.34 gín)
75.10074 r. xix 18–19	I.Z. 06	3 I.N.: 53 gín Wa-ba-rúm ganba (17.67 gín)
75.2622 r. iii 14–15	I.Z. 07	9 I.N.: 2;08 m. Wa-ba-rúm ganba (14.23 gín)
75.2428 r. vii 3–11	I.Z. 08	10 I.N. en: 2;19.5 m. Wa-ba-rúm ganba (14 gín)
75.2508 o. xxiv 23–27	I.Z. 09	9 I.N. en: 2;10.5 m. ganba NI-ab <sup>ki</sup> (14.5 gín)
75.2507 r. xvii 12–16	I.Z. 11	5 I.N.: 44.5 gín Wa-ba-rúm (8.9 gín)
75.2426 r. xii 9–13	I.Z. 13	8 I.N. en: 2 m. ganba NI-ab <sup>ki</sup> (15 gín)
75.2543 o. ii 11–12	I.Z.	2 I.N.: 1 m. (30 gín)
75.2543 o. v 2–3	I.Z.	2 I.N.: 30 gín [(15 gín)]
ARET X 59 obv. 3–5	I.Z.	2 gú-bar gig gùn níg-sa <sub>10</sub> I.N. (4 níg-sagšu)
ARET XVI 30 § 13	I.Z.	1 I.N.: 10 gín (10 gín)

Table 2. Prices of asses.



## A TALE OF TWO TEMPLES OF THE NINEVITE 5 PERIOD

PIOTR BIELIŃSKI

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### *Abstract*

Excavations of late Ninevite 5 levels on two nearby sites in the Syrian Jezireh, Tell Arbid and Tell Brak, brought to light the remains of two temples that are similar to each other, and at the same time differ from other sanctuaries from this period in the region. The number of common features, from the structures' size to their internal arrangement, cannot be accidental and calls for consideration of the possible reasons behind them, such as the possibility of the existence of a regional "model" of a Ninevite 5 temple, which has not been previously recognized.

The intensive archaeological activities that took place in the Syrian Jezireh by the end of the previous century and in the first decade of the current one have greatly broadened our understanding of the Ninevite 5 culture, especially of its later stages. Still, we know relatively little about the cities of this period, particularly as regards their layout and internal organization. This results partly from the fact that at some of the excavated sites, especially the larger ones, Early Jezireh 2 levels were covered by the remnants of later structures. This was the case, foremost, with the central areas of large townships that were the least afflicted by erosion. For this reason Ninevite 5 layers are usually more accessible for archaeologists at the outskirts of tells than in their centers. Consequently, the architecture in the heart of these cities remains unknown. We can surmise that this was the place where buildings of a public character were erected – probably temples and residences of local rulers – but we have no tangible proof to support such claims only conjecture based on the character of later buildings in these areas.

An exception in this respect is Tell Raqqai – a village at the centre of a rural community, in the middle of which a large sanctuary was unearthed.<sup>1</sup> While at the subject of gaps in our knowledge of Ninevite 5 urbanism, a mention must be made of the regretful lack in the Jezireh archaeological record of layers dating to the very beginnings of Ninevite 5 cities. There are no known Ninevite 5 urban sites established on virgin soil rather than at the site of an earlier settlement. Another deficiency in the study of Ninevite 5 cities is the lack of data from non-invasive research techniques that proved so informative in the case of, for instance, Tell Huera or Tell Rawda.<sup>2</sup>

At these sites they provided invaluable insights into the urban layout over large areas and in surprising detail. Therefore, the main source of information on the organization of Ninevite 5 cities must be sought in residential quarters at the outskirts of city centers, larger or smaller portions of which have been archaeologically investigated.

Beside residential buildings, these districts yielded also small sanctuaries, either sandwiched between dwellings or free-standing. Examples of such buildings are known, among others, from the sites of Tell Barri, Tell Brak, Chagar Bazaar and Tell Arbid.<sup>3</sup> They differ in many respects, beginning with their orientation, through the position of their entrances with regard to cardinal points, to the internal planning and fixtures, such as altars or benches. However, two small but solid temples stand out from this apparent chaos: a temple from Tell Brak Trench HS 4 – level 5 (fig. 1) and the so-called Southern Temple from Tell Arbid (fig. 2). The list of similarities between these two sanctuaries is astounding, a fact to which I have already alluded in the preliminary report from the 2007 excavation season.<sup>4</sup>

A comparison between these two buildings begin with their location. As mentioned above, both were situated outside city centers. At Tell Brak the distance was considerable, as the sanctuary stood at the edge of the preserved archaeological site; the Tell Arbid temple was located closer to the city centre but definitely outside what might be regarded as the "citadel". But it the two buildings' sizes that are the most striking match. The inner measurements of the Tell Brak temple are 8 m by 4.75 m<sup>5</sup> whereas the Tell Arbid sanctuary measures 8 m by 4.5 m, although one

<sup>1</sup> Schwartz 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Castel, Peltenburg 2007; Meyer J-W 2016, 288-289.

<sup>3</sup> Bieliński 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Bieliński 2010, 551.

<sup>5</sup> Matthews 2003, 109.

of the longer walls (the northern one) may have been reinforced by the addition of an inner, lining wall, thus narrowing down the originally somewhat wider space of the room (fig. 3). The walls of both buildings are quite thick. At Tell Brak, they range between 1 m and 1.5 m, a thickness mirrored almost exactly in the Tell Arbid building. Both sanctuaries have a bent-axis plan, with narrow entrances located in one of the buildings' longer walls, and rectangular mud-brick altars situated to the right of the entrance, on the room's longer axis. In both cases the altars do not butt the temple's wall but are somewhat removed from it. Both altars have sub-rectangular fireplaces in front of them (fig. 4). The altars and fireplaces are of similar sizes but the Tell Brak examples are slightly larger. The two altars look similar, both having concave corners rendered in the plaster coating them. There is, however, one difference. At Tell Brak the altar is a mud-brick box, empty on the inside, with an opening on the floor level, while at Tell Arbid the carefully plastered altar with a slight depression in the topmost surface seems to be a solid mud-brick block (fig. 5). Notably, the space inside the Tell Brak altar was filled with various artefacts, among which sealings were the most numerous type. Another common feature of the two sanctuaries are wide, mud-brick benches lining the entrance wall, upon which some kind of containers were presumably placed. In the Tell Brak temple there is also another bench against the far wall, behind the altar.

Both cellae were thoroughly cleaned before having been intentionally filled in upon abandonment. At Tell Brak the only objects discovered on the temple floor were those that "spilled out" from the stash inside the altar. At Tell Arbid there was one massive clay incense burner left near the altar (fig. 5) and a burnt cup that must have been overlooked by one of the walls. Such an – as can be assumed – ritual cleansing of a cultic building prior to its abandonment has been attested also in other Ninevite 5 sanctuaries, therefore it cannot be regarded as a special feature characteristic for the two temples discussed here. This is also true of minor alterations and repairs in the temples' interior. The accumulations of floor and wall plasters bear witness to long periods of use. In the Southern Temple, at some point in its existence a narrow wall was added to separate a narrow space along the wall opposite the altar. The entrance of the temple from Trench HS 4 at Tell Brak opens towards the north-west, that is towards surrounding plains, while the Southern Temple at Tell Arbid opens to the south, to an open space, while on the remaining sides it is abutted by buildings. The restricted size of the Tell Brak trench makes it difficult to pronounce on the temple's closest surroundings. At Tell Arbid, a small, doorless room (locus 8) was built against the far wall of the Southern Temple. It can be interpreted as a granary associated with the sanctuary. A large number of clay sealings was

found nearby. Nonetheless, we can assume that both sanctuaries were originally erected as free-standing structures and the surrounding buildings, attested at Tell Arbid, are later additions.

The number of significant similarities implies that what we have here is not a random collection of common features but rather a consistent concept. It may be some kind of intentionally repeated "model" of a Ninevite 5 temple that differs from all the other sanctuaries discovered so far in layers from this period in the Syrian Jezireh that are more similar to the type represented by the temple from Tell Raqqai. The two temples described above are also larger from the other sanctuaries.

These observations call for formulating several hypotheses. Firstly, that the townsfolk of Tell Arbid planning for a new temple in the southern part of their city may have chosen to copy a sanctuary from the biggest city in the region – Tell Brak which is situated only about 30 km away. They may have even sent for the builders of that temple to do the job, which could account for the striking match in the size and proportions. An opposite direction of the influence would be hard to imagine, as it seems most unlikely that the inhabitants of Tell Brak might want to copy a type of building they knew from Tell Arbid. Moreover, should we presume that the Southern Temple was modeled upon the sanctuary unearthed in Tell Brak's sector HS4, it must also be taken for granted that it was not the only building of its type in the territory of Nagar in that age. Furthermore, it should also be assumed that similar sanctuaries were not restricted to the outskirts of cities, as it seems rather unlikely that a building from a peripheral district of no particular importance would have become the object of such interest. It might be thus proposed that it was a "model" sanctuary typical for the "significant" temples in the cities of this period. This model, perhaps in a larger scale, may have been erected in the centers of Ninivite 5 cities of the Jezireh, possibly as the main sanctuary of the town. This would, however, imply that there was a universally accepted "blueprint" of a sacral building at that time – a concept, which cannot be verified for reasons discussed at the beginning of this text. The temples from the two sites would thus be two examples of a region-wide architectural model of a religious building, a model that was probably conceived at Nagar and copied in smaller towns within its political and cultural orbit.

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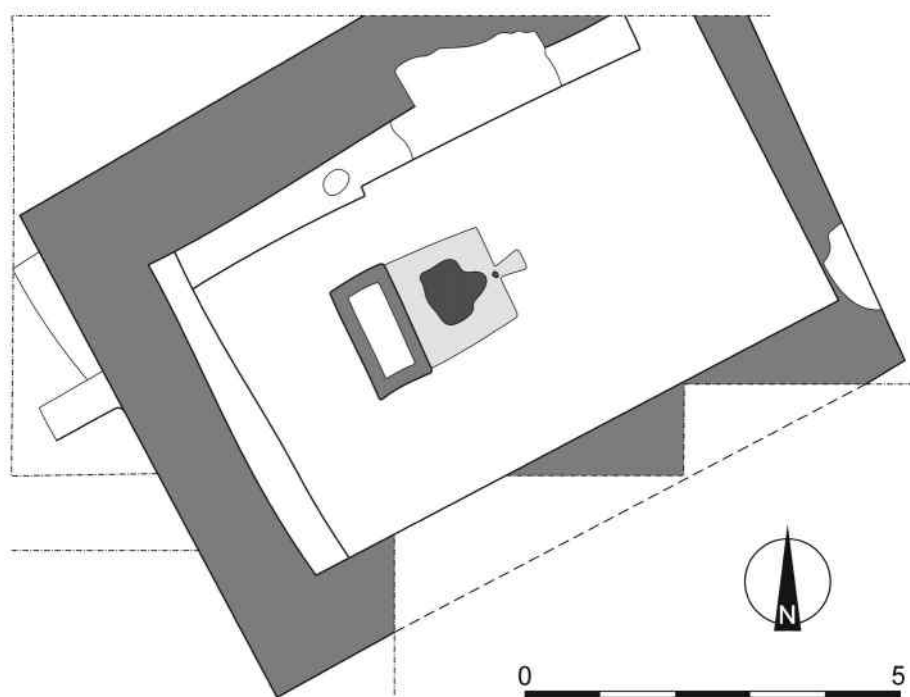


Fig. 1. Plan of the temple unearthed in level 5 of HS4 trench on Tell Brak. Drawing by M. Momot after Matthews 2003.

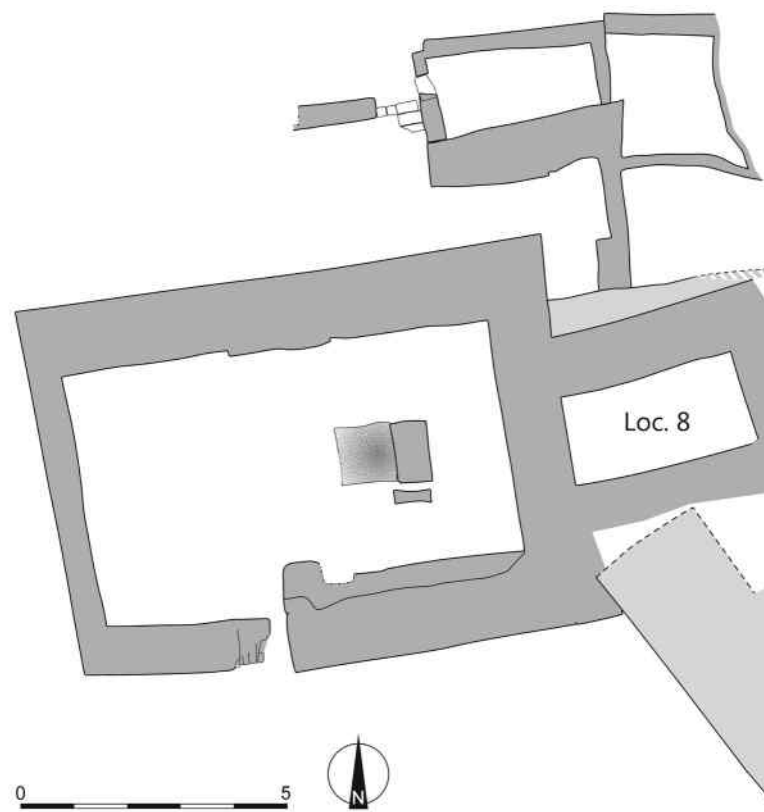


Fig. 2. Plan of "Southern Temple" exposed in sector W-East on Tell Arbid. Drawing M. Momot.



Fig. 3. Cella of the "Southern Temple" seen from the North. On the right side of the cella visible remains of later partition wall. Photo A. Szymczak.



Fig. 4. Altar with adjoining fireplace in cella of “Southern Temple”. Photo A. Reiche.



Fig. 5. Clay incense burner deposited near decorated angle of the altar in “Southern Temple”. Photo A. Reiche.

# GIVE A MAN A FISH OR TEACH HIM HOW TO FISH? SITUATED LEARNING AND THE EMERGENCE OF COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN BRONZE AGE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND THE NEAR EAST

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## *Abstract*

Over the last two decades, results in learning theory have offered new perspectives of great relevance to archaeology. The concept of *community of practice* has been particularly fortunate in approaching the multifaceted concept of early community. In this paper different types of early communities of practice will be analyzed, reflecting various learning patterns and consequent cohesive mechanisms in the formation and transmission of the ‘sense’ of community.

Scholarly debate has generated ample discussion constructing and re-constructing ‘community’ in archaeological terms as a social and cultural concept with diverse facets.

Archaeological discourse traditionally has sought to theorize communities as entities firmly recognized through specific shared spaces, materials and technological *habitus*. Re-definitions of identity and material practice, in turn, have more recently inquired the ways in which people in the past situated themselves within intricate networks, not necessarily attached to or bounded by a single locale (or standard), but undeniably linked to some tangible sense of space and practice.

Giorgio Buccellati’s influential conceptualization of *function* in the early near eastern society still deeply contributing to this critical review of the formation and self-perception of the early community.<sup>1</sup> Buccellati argues that the emergence of social functions in supra-household contexts provides a powerful cohesive tool, serving as an alternative to face-to-face contact, when the group begun to vastly extends beyond the level of acquaintanceship. Thus, the existence of different functions acts as a social glue, that gives to the human group a common sense of belonging (or ‘solidarity’) even when the members of the same group did not know each other personally.

A few correlated questions arise from this analytical framework: to what extent can a function be perceived outside the place where it emerged? How can be negotiated within a community? How can it be maintained and transferred through time?

From this perspective, if communities may be situated in a multi-scalar web of spaces and practices, then we may recognize multiple and complex

boundaries for them. Thus, such an imagined community is a *dynamic* entity with *diatopic* and *diachronic* variations, as it may extend across diverse and distant places and through time. While the large community of producers and consumers of a certain technological product (and its variants) exemplifies the diatopic scale of an imagined community, the trans-generational transmission of a technological *habitus* (and its developments) may help us in describing its diachronic dimension. These co-existing variants in time and space creates an imagined community of practice.

## 1. SITUATED LEARNING: *DOMAIN AND PRACTIS*

Over the last two decades, results in learning theory in anthropology have offered new perspectives of great relevance to archaeology.

Scholars like Lave and Wenger have claimed that, far from being an abstract, culturally invariant process, learning is indeed a situated activity that develops through a strong social interaction and entails an “increasing participation in communities of practice”.<sup>2</sup> The concept of *community of practice* has been particularly fortunate in the socio-anthropological debate,<sup>3</sup> as its various contemporary applications to different disciplinary fields demonstrate. Its theoretical strength consists in considering the dynamics between social skills and technological skills in terms of mutual enhancement.

Specifically, the concept of *situated learning*, first formulated by Lave and Wenger, explored the idea that learning develops through social interaction and that communities are the units of learning. In this description, learning is ‘increasing participation in

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati 2005; 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Lave, Wenger 1991, 98.

<sup>3</sup> Agrifoglio 2015.

communities of practice', organized around some particular area of knowledge and activity.

In Wenger's view<sup>4</sup> (a) the *domain* and (b) the *praxis* are the crucial elements in distinguishing a community of practice from other social groups.

a. As to the domain, a community of practice, far from being a simple network of connections between people, is firmly based upon a shared domain of interest. Being part of a community of practice implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.

b. In pursuing their interest in the domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools and ways of addressing recurring problems that are shared to some significant extent among members, i.e. a shared *praxis* that normally requires time and sustained interaction to be accomplished.

Thus, the proposed theoretical framework depicts the transmission of knowledge within a community of practice as a self-organizing system, with many of the characteristics of associational life, where the transfer of technical practices is continuously enriched by the transmission of ideas.

We may argue that this on-going transmission of ideas creates an intangible collective legacy, broadly corresponding to so-called social and symbolic capital.<sup>5</sup>

Theoretical debates in social anthropology have proposed models to interpret social capital as the combination of expected collective benefits derived from the preferential treatment and cooperation between individuals within a community, while symbolic capital can be generally referred to as the resources available to an individual based on prestige or recognition within the same community.

Objects, as abstract representations, may also possess symbolic capital. Though Bourdieu emphasizes the role of social capital in producing or reproducing inequality, other scholars identify consensus building as a direct positive indicator of social capital, as it implies shared interest and agreement among various actors to induce collective action within the community.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. UN-PUZZLING THE MANIFOLD DIMENSION OF EARLY COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Studies on early communities can benefit from the theoretical underpinnings of these approaches, insofar as they allow them to address two main archaeological

problems. The first one concerns the symbolic role of the transmission of skills and practices among ancient communities and the extent to which social strategies of negotiation are visible in the archaeological record.

To what extent are transfers of knowledge also meaningful in terms of the symbolic values they represent? Objects are of course more visible than ideas; however, objects might also be vectors of abstract knowledge. From this perspective, it can be argued that transmission processes are often not only bearers of a new technological know-how, but they also embody the wider cultural meanings and social value that is attached to the transmission, assimilation and eventual dissemination of such practices.

Although neither of the theoretical paradigms mentioned above is ready-made for archaeological application, the community of practice and social capital models can help us in approaching the multifaceted concept of ancient community.<sup>7</sup>

In a general perspective, knowledge transfer in early societies is structured into two following distinctive and correlated levels of transmission: *transmission of skills* and *transmission of ideas*.

As schematically outlined by fig. 1, we may assume that only a few key elements and outcomes of both the levels of transmission can be archaeologically recorded, while it is evident that certain elements can be transformed from key elements in the transmission of skills to key elements in the transmission of ideas and concepts, after having been collectively re-interpreted (fig. 1). This is the case for actual gestures that might be re-interpreted and symbolized in a ritual context and actual tools that could become symbols and elements playing an active role in collective narratives and shared stories.

Within this theoretical framework, the community of practice model has been beneficially adapted to the apprenticeship processes and – more widely – to the consequent emergence of social identities and functions in diverse contexts of the Bronze Age Mediterranean and Near East.

### 2.1. *Relationally constituted communities of practice.*

Knappett's recent revision of the so-called *Minoanization* process has had recourse to the community of practice model to analyze this complex cultural phenomenon of acculturation characteristic of Aegean prehistory.<sup>8</sup> Moving from the assumption that traditional theories of human interaction only marginally include materiality, he has suggested network thinking as a perspective that succeeds in foregrounding the relations between objects and

<sup>4</sup> Wenger 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu 1972; Portes 1998; Putnam 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu 1972; Arefi 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Sassman, Rudolphi 2001, 407-409; Webb, Frankel 2007, 191-192; Knappett 2010; 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Knappett 2010; 2011.

people more effectively. Knappett underlines the role of artefacts as pivots in such interactions<sup>9</sup> and distinguishes relationally constituted communities of practice from physically constituted communities of practice; the former are characterized by horizontal transmission, as they involve a copying of artefacts or aspects of artefacts that can be achieved without any detailed knowledge,<sup>10</sup> while for physically constituted communities of practice contiguity is essential to the construction and sharing of cognitive space and assimilation and imitation are insufficient. In the same vein, the contrast between objects conveying a message of foreignness and those of local production takes on great importance in Burns' analysis of the formation of identity in Mycenaean Greece.<sup>11</sup> In this view, while some kinds of knowledge can be acquired remotely, allowing a step of the process, through images alone, other kinds of knowledge require effective presence and interaction. Hence, vertical transmission tends not to be prone to rapid cascades of change in quite the same way as horizontal transmission.

Interestingly, the co-existence of different relationally constituted communities of practice have been also evidenced by the ceramic manufacturing of Chalcolithic Southern Levant. The so-called techno-petrographic approach proposed by Roux and Courty consists of classifying ceramic assemblages according to technological, petrographic and morpho-stylistic aspects.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the resulting techno-petrographic groups correspond to distinct *chaînes opératoires* transmitted through apprenticeship mechanisms. In Roux's view the evidence of different technical traditions in a given region, as it is for the area of Abu Hamid in the central Jordan valley, demonstrates that the apprenticeship process take place within different (relationally constituted) communities of practice.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2. Physically constituted communities of practice.

In its emphasis on social identity, community of practice is also consistent with some of the basic tenets of Bourdieu's model of *habitus*,<sup>14</sup> which itself has made significant inroads in Cypriot archaeological inquiry, particularly thanks to Frankel and Webb's application of this concept to relations between indigenous Chalcolithic and incoming Philia communities at the beginning of the Bronze Age.<sup>15</sup> The community of practice model can also

benefit the analysis of the relatively homogeneous cultural system of Early and Middle Bronze Age Cyprus, where "systemic constructions of identity appear to have operated primarily at the emblematic level – i.e. they signal community affiliation and variability within a common system rather than personal identity, ethnicity or status".<sup>16</sup> The apprentice-teacher pattern reflects wider community affiliation phenomena, which are particularly evident in societies transforming from village-based to proto-urban and urban systems.

A long standing scholarly tradition in Cypriot archaeology confirmed that the economic transition from Chalcolithic to Early Bronze Age rural communities provides important evidence of subsistence production and consumption, basically restricted to immediate household members. More recent archaeological evidence seems to suggest that during the Middle Bronze Age, and primarily in its later phases, a new process of increasing in specialized productions emerges at several Cypriot sites, like Ambelikou *Aletri*, Kissonerga *Skalia* and Erimi *Laonin tou Porakou*.<sup>17</sup>

This phenomenon possibly contributed to the creation of a new sense of community with new symbols of identity and cohesion which runs in parallel with a growing functional specialization of workplaces and an increased need for control over work facilities and products.

Archaeological evidence suggests that in some Middle Bronze Age Cypriot communities wearing a comb-shaped pendant may have had more than the aesthetic significance usually implied by the wearing of an article of *parure* or clothing. At MBA Erimi *Laonin tou Porakou*, in the Limassol district, the importance of activities relating to the production and trade of textiles is evident. The workshop complex located on the top of the hill (Area A), dedicated in large part to this function, probably made possible production beyond local needs, providing enough for off-site distribution to short-haul and medium-haul destinations. A picrolite comb-shaped pendant was found on the floor of a roofed unit of this productive atelier (unit SA II), along with a collection of spindle whorls, in a context clearly linked to textile production. At the same time, the community's burial habits bear witness to the decision to place among the funerary objects decorated spindle whorls used in the production of textiles. Two of these funerary objects take on a particular significance: a double spindle whorl and an additional comb-shaped pendant, respectively from Tomb 231 and Tomb 240 of the southern funerary cluster (Area E). Different

<sup>9</sup> Vygotsky 1978.

<sup>10</sup> Gosselain 2000; Bentley, Shennan 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Burns 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Roux, Courty 2005; Roux *et al.* 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Roux 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu 1972; Sapiro 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Frankel, Webb 1998; Webb, Frankel 1999; Frankel 2005; Knapp 2013, 264-268.

<sup>16</sup> Frankel, Webb 1998, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Webb, Frankel 2013; Crewe 2017; Bombardieri 2013; 2017.



interpretations have been proposed to explain the peculiar form of these comb-shaped pendants. Among these, an influential hypothesis was made by Peltenburg,<sup>18</sup> who interpreted their shape as a reproduction of wool combs. More recently, Knox proposed that they were models depicting beaters for tapestry weaving.<sup>19</sup> If we accept either one of these interpretations, the pendants are accepted as textile-related symbols, and likely to assume an even stronger connotation as symbolising community identity and status at Erimi.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the presence of a picrolite ‘comb-shaped’ pendant, along with an elite spinning tools set, from the burial deposit of Tomb 201A at Lapithos, in the Cypriote northern coast, suggest an intense (and islandwide) textile trade network during the Middle Bronze Age.<sup>21</sup>

As anticipated, in the whorl assemblage of tomb 231 an object of a very unusual shape (T231.14) was found. It is a double spindle whorl composed of two spherical whorls of different sizes joined at one terminal. Only a few comparable examples exist for this whorl types: one from Alambra *Mouttes* (E80) and one from Mesoyi (PM3023/4) and four unprovenanced.<sup>22</sup> Thus, while the double whorl can be considered as a functional tool, its rarity and context might also charge it with a special symbolic value, presumably expressed just through the emphasis on its functionality.

The economy of MBA Erimi seems to have been based on textile manufacture, mainly aimed at the production of dyed yarn or textiles, and also for trade. The textile activities performed in the workshop complex were extremely beneficial to this community and seemed to increase its wealth throughout time.<sup>23</sup> In parallel, they contributed to the construction and strengthening of the community bonds and the elaboration of a community mindset, shared values and symbolism. By applying the community of practice model to the interpretation of the Erimi data-set, it becomes evident that this community found its focal centre (and *raison d'être*) not only in performing specialised working activities, but also in their reproduction and transmission.

Defining Erimi as a community of practice means that the construction of the community identity and the ideology through which this is expressed is embedded with the activities performed by the community. It is not infrequent that specific working activities are represented through the related tools (e.g.

spindle-whorls) and symbolized by re-interpreted tools (e.g. the double spindle-whorl, the comb-shaped pendants).

The elaboration of such a complex ideology can be considered as an expression of a community ‘code’ and, at the same time, suggests the will and energy to transmit both technological and ideological aspects of textile practice.

This model has allowed to explore the level of cooperation and interaction between the community members around common activities and aims, the elaboration and perpetuation of a *code* of shared technological and ideological behaviours through a tacit transfer of knowledge.<sup>24</sup> In this perspective, the sense of joint enterprise towards textile production, and the mirrored phenomenon of transformation of local crafts and tools into important symbols in and maintenance of social identity resulted in the creation a powerful ideological legacy.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3. Cross-temporal communities of practice

Cross-temporal forms of apprenticeship can be also observed, especially in the archaeological record of complex (and literate) near eastern societies. In these contexts, a cross-temporal transfer of knowledge may be expressed through the alternative patterns of *learning from the ancestors* or *learning without practice*.

The ‘learning from the ancestors’ pattern may be exemplified by the imitation of certain decorative or technological aspects of much earlier pottery. This phenomenon of ceramics re-creation, sometimes described as *revivalism*, suggests a clear interest of a later potter to closely reproduce the tasks of the earlier potters.<sup>26</sup>

At Early Bronze Age Tell Mozan/*Urkes* both imitations of earlier decorative patterns and wares have been recorded. Specifically, applied and incised decorations imitating early *Ninivite V* styles appear statistically relevant at *Urkes* during a single later period.<sup>27</sup> Rather than being the isolated imitation of a perceptive potter, this wider phenomenon demonstrates 500 years later the original production a larger appreciation of the decorative technique (and technical gesture) of those ancient local potters. Indeed, while it is not physically nor relationally constituted in a congruent way, these aspects generate a nuanced cross-temporal community of practice, with evident affinities with the ones previously described. As observed by Kelly-Buccellati “even if social and cultural values

<sup>18</sup> Peltenburg 1981, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Knox 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Bombardieri 2017, 358; Bombardieri, Muti 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Webb 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Bombardieri 2014; Muti 2017, 235; 232, fig. 6.10.

<sup>23</sup> Bombardieri 2017, 355-358.

<sup>24</sup> Agrifoglio 2015, 6-8.

<sup>25</sup> Bombardieri, Muti 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Rice 1987, 455-456.

<sup>27</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2012, 213.

are not directly transmitted through this type of apprenticeship, it is not just technical knowledge that is rediscovered through experimentation. The very interest in previous traditions as expressed in products made by the ancient community of practice signals an appreciation of values that are in some way shared<sup>28</sup>. In such a learning context, the apprentice preliminary needs to have ready access to vast amount of varying types of ancient ceramics; in this case, the later potter does not simply replicate a model form from the outside, but shares the same basic skills and techniques as the earlier potter, in order to regenerate a production. The intention of learning, even at a temporal remove from the original, allow the apprentice to decode some of the explicit and implicit information given by the earlier master and ideally becoming part of a cross-temporal (*ancestral*) community of practice.

While the 'learning from ancestors' needs to be further explored in its possible application to pre-literate Mediterranean communities, the second pattern above mentioned *learning without practice* is definitively characteristic of ancient near eastern complex societies.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, this is an alternative form of time-gap apprenticeship, that specifically involves the use of a codified medium: writing.

The knowledge transfer in a scribal school is a standard face-to-face learning pattern that generate a physically constituted community of practice. Once the transfer is meant to be completed, the members of this community of practice take on a specific recognized social function: they *are* scribes.

But, if the scribal training provide the evidence of a standard master-apprentice learning experience what about the instruction texts?

Mesopotamian literary evidence provide us with a vast production of these instructional texts, that describe farming methods,<sup>30</sup> or prescription on how to make glass,<sup>31</sup> or process textiles.<sup>32</sup> And – obviously – a Mesopotamian farmer was not going to learn farming methods from cuneiform texts!

Indeed, this knowledge transfer provide an alternative form of cross-temporal apprenticeship performed without practice, which – paradoxically enough – also generate a community. This is the way to transfer not just a specific set of skills and behaviors, but a higher sense of belonging to a community that encompass a larger set of activities and productions, ideas and rituals. The almost ethnographic approach of the scribes in describing the methods and details of a craft reveals that

the original community of practice already become part of a larger society of functions and roles.

Likewise, in the Mesopotamian society, the education of scribes involved the copying of early Sumerian literary texts. While we may presume that the majority of scribes could even hardly read and understand these ancestral texts, the intellectual elites consider this training fundamental to preserve and reinforce their culture.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Through gains in competence, confidence and social acceptance, the learner moves from the periphery towards the center of the community of practice, acquiring in due course not only the necessary technical skills but also the beliefs, standards and behaviors of the community. In fact, transmission of knowledge involves interaction and, while it develops the ability to undertake complex tasks around some particular activity, also binds members of the community of practice together through cooperation and helps to facilitate the sense of a joint enterprise and shared identity. A few of these elements can be archaeologically recorded, as can their transformation, facilitating an analysis of the development of communities of practice in early societies, where local crafts are likely to become themselves important symbols in the maintenance and development of social identity, especially in strategies of community affiliation.<sup>33</sup>

The evidence at our disposal suggests different types of early communities of practice, reflecting various learning patterns and consequent cohesive mechanisms in the formation and transmission of the 'sense' of community.

If we take into consideration the underlying activity (*domain*) as a basis for community identity, it is not surprising that the tools and functions related to the practice of this activity (*praxis*) can be transformed from being key elements in the transmission of technical skills to key elements in the transmission of a cohesive identity, thus forming the social and symbolic capital of a community.

The intricate imitative patterns in the ceramic manufacture suggest the pivotal role of artefacts in relational learning and the synchronic transmission of cultural inputs through the Bronze Age Aegean. Likewise, imitative patterns have a strong impact in the cross-temporal regeneration of ceramic styles learned from the ancestors in Early Bronze Age Mesopotamia.

*Who* is the major responsible for the transmission of this multi-faceted code? And *how* it is transferred?

<sup>28</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2012, 221.

<sup>29</sup> Cohen, Kedar 2011; Gesche 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Jacobsen 1982.

<sup>31</sup> Oppenheim 1970.

<sup>32</sup> Michel, Nosch 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Saitta 1999; Wattenmaker 1998; Burns 2010; Webb 2010.

From a wider perspective, Bourdieu borrows the concept of *skeptron* to identify the authority given to the persons legitimately licensed to transmit the code.<sup>34</sup> Such a person is known and recognized by the community members as being able and enabled to produce this particular transmission process, as a poet, as well as a priest, as a teacher or as a skilful master, etc.

It must be uttered in a legitimate situation, in front of legitimate receivers and, finally, it must be realized according to legitimate forms, including non-verbal forms of communication, such as set of gestures and visual symbols.

The co-existence of different early communities of practice suggests that different codes of communication may also co-exist and contribute to the formation and transfer of identity values. From this perspective, multiple non-verbal forms, like gestures and visual symbolic element may emerge side-by-side with canonical codes, like writing.

In the physically constituted pre-literate communities of practice based on textile production in Middle Bronze Age Cyprus wearing a comb-shaped pendant, which imitates a wool comb, have a strong symbolic significance in the maintenance of the community and its reinforcement; in the literate Mesopotamian society copying an instruction text on textile production has an analogous cohesive value.

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<sup>34</sup> Following Bourdieu 1991, 107-113, as the *skeptron* given to Hesiod by the Muses indicates that the poet will speak with words that emanates from Zeus himself, this authority comes from outside: from the community itself. On the significance of the *skeptron* see *Theogony* 96; *Iliad* I, 238-239; see also Nagy 1990, 53.

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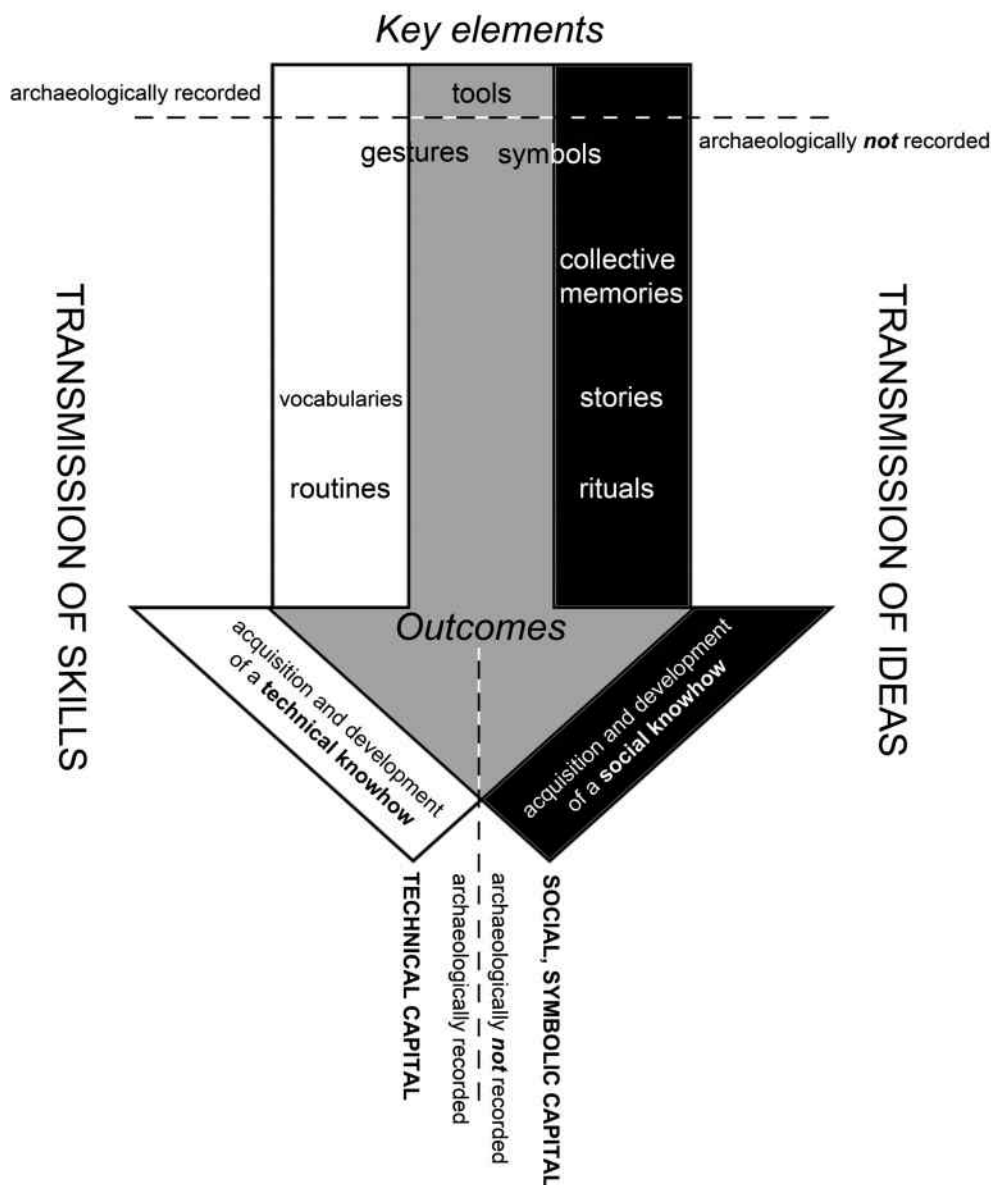


Fig. 1. Knowledge transfer in early societies. Key elements and outcomes of distinctive and correlated levels of transmission (skills and ideas).

# HOW KIRTA'S LOVE FOR BLUE-EYED HURRIYA CLARIFIES EBLA OPHTHALMIC TERMS AND THE 3RD COLUMN OF THE 'BARTON CYLINDER'\*

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## Abstract

Comparison of passages in the Ugaritic Story of Kirta, in Ebla lexical lists and in the 'Barton Cylinder' found at Nippur enables us to clarify the references to parts of the eye, such as the "iris" and the "sclera", in these Semitic and Sumerian texts.

So king Pabil says to king Kirta (*KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.14 iii 22-32 // v 34 - vi 15):<sup>1</sup>

"Take silver and yellow gold, a share in its production, and perpetual slaves, charioteers with chariot-horses, from the stable of a handmaid's son. Take, Kirta, peace-offerings aplenty, and begone, king, from my house, depart, Kirta, from my dwelling. Do not besiege Udum (my city) abounding in rain, or well-watered Udum. Udum is a gift of El, and a present of the Father of Man."

And so king Kirta answers him (*KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.14 iii 33-45 // vi 17-30):

"What would I want with silver or yellow gold, a share in its production or perpetual slaves, or charioteers with chariot-horses from the stable of a handmaid's son? But what is not in my house you shall give: give to me the maiden Hurriya, the most gracious one of your family, your first-born, whose beauty is like the beauty of 'Anat, whose loveliness is like the loveliness of 'Attart, whose irises are (like) gems of lapis lazuli (*d 'qh ib iqni*), (whose) scleras are (like) bowls of alabaster (*'p'ph*

*sp trml*). (Her) breasts ensnare me! I am charmed by the look of her eyes!"

Remarkably, over time, the two Ugaritic terms '*q*' and '*p'p*', in lines iii 43f. // vi 29f. of the *Story of Kirta*, written around 1210 BC by 'Ilī-milku,<sup>2</sup> have been rather variously translated: the meanings "eye", "eyeball", "eye-shadow", "iris", "ocular cavity", "pupil of the eye" have been suggested for '*q*', and "cornea", "eye", "eyeball", "eyelash", "eyelid", "pupil of the eye" for '*p'p*'.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, some scholars

<sup>2</sup> On 'Ilī-milku see Wyatt 1997; 2005, 251f.; 2015; 2017a.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Driver 1956, 33 ("whose eyeballs(?) are gems of sapphire (and) her eyelids bowls of onyx(?"); Gese 1962, 423f. ("ihr '*q*' [i.e. "Augenhöhle"] ist ein Lapislazulijuwel, ihr Wimpernkranz ist ein *trml*-Schälchen"); Caquot *et al.* 1974, 525f. ("dont les prunelles sont des gemmes de lapislazuli, les paupières, des coupes d'*albâtre*"); Müller 1971, 562f. (who thought of eyeballs that are like gems of lapislazuli and eyes which are like "Schälchen von Alabaster (?"); Gibson 1977, 86 ("whose eyeballs are gems of lapis-lazuli (and) her eyelids bowls of onyx"); del Olmo Lete 1981, 296 ("cuyas niñas de los ojos son gemas de lapislazuli, sus pupilas pateras de alabastro"); Xella 1982, 162f. ("le sue pupille sono gemme di lapislazuli, le sue cornee sono coppe di alabastro"); de Moor 1987, 198 ("whose eye-shadow is the purest lapis-lazuli, whose eyelashes form a bowl of frothing milk"); Dietrich, Loretz 1997, 1226 ("Deren Augenhöhlen reinster Lapislazuli, deren Augen Schalen aus Alabaster sind"); Greenstein 1997, 17 and 23 ("whose eyes are lapis lazuli, eyeballs, gleaming alabaster"); Pardee 1997, 335 and 337 ("the pupils (of whose eyes) are of pure lapislazuli, whose eyes are like alabaster bowls", so also in *Context of Scriptures* 2003), followed by Kogan 2015, 284f.; Roche 2000, 214 ("whose pupils are lapis lazuli, whose eyelids are cups of alabaster"); Wyatt 2002, 196f. with n. 99f. ("whose pupils are lapislazuli, (the white of) whose eyes are bowls of alabaster"); Peri 2004, 36 ("le sue pupille sono schegge di lapislazuli, le sue cornee coppe di alabastro"); Ford 2008, 304 ("whose pupils/irises are lustruous (lit. 'pure') lapis lazuli, (whose) eyeballs are bowls of alabaster"); Kim 2011, 227 ("whose eyes are lapislazuli, whose pupils are alabaster bowls"); del Olmo Lete, Sanmartin 2015, 6, 90, 173 ("whose pupils are gems of lapis lazuli"), 170 ("her eyelids (are) alabaster bowls"), 754 and 918 ("her pupils (are) bowls of *l*"); Niehr 2015, 247 ("Thre Pupillen sind Gemmen von Lapislazuli, ihre Augäpfel sind Schalen von Alabaster"); Dietrich 2016,

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<sup>1</sup> The cuneiform text of the these passages of the Ugaritic *Story of Kirta* runs as follows: *qh ksp w yrq hrs yd mqmh w 'bd 'lm il'lt sswm mrkbt b trbš bn amt qh krt šlmm šlmm w ng mlk l bty rhq krt l hzry al tšr udm rbt w udm trrt udm ytna il w ušn ab adm* (Pabil's words); *lm ank ksp w yrq hrs yd mqmh w 'bd 'lm il'lt sswm mrkbt b trbš bn amt p d in b bty tt n ly mtt hry n'mt šph bkrk d k n'm 'nt n'mh km tsm 'trrt tsmh d 'qh ib iqni 'p'ph sp trml thgrn tdm ašlw b šp 'nh* (Kirta's words), see Dietrich *et al.* 1995, 38-40. The last term in iii 44 / vi 29 – [s]dm for Wyatt 2002, 197, "they are surrounded by eye-shadow", thinking to the end of a tricolon – is read *tdm* in Dietrich 2016, 26 and 33f., here followed with some hesitation, who thinks of a sequence of bicola ("wie das erneute Studium der Fotos ergeben hat und in *KTU*<sup>3</sup> berücksichtigt ist, sind die Buchstabenreste nach *thgrn* sicher als *tdm*") and translates "ich bin durch den Blick ihrer Augen verzaubert" (quoting previous translations 24f., including Wyatt's "I shall take my rest in the gaze of her eyes!"). With a few changes, my translation is based on Dietrich, Loretz 1997, 1225f.; Pardee 1997, 335 and 337; Wyatt 2002, 195-198 and 202-204.

have emphasized that Kirta's depiction of the eyes of his future wife implies a reference to the encrusted eyes of real composite statues.<sup>4</sup> Unexpectedly, lines iii 43f. // vi 29f. of the *Story of Kirta* clarify spellings referring to ophthalmic terms that occur in texts written more than one thousand years before *KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.14, i.e. some lexical lists from Ebla Palace G and the 'Barton Cylinder', found at Nippur. My study of these connections is cordially dedicated to Marilyn and Giorgio.

As for the two very precise, though unparalleled, similes used by 'Ilī-milku in reporting Kirta's depiction of Hurriya's eyes (*ib iqni, sp trml*), the interpretation of *ib, iqni* and *sp* as respectively "gem",<sup>5</sup> "lapislazuli" and "bowl" – Akk. *inbu(m), uqnū(m)* and *šappu(m)* – can be considered as certain. As for *trml*, in general its interpretation as "alabaster" or a bright limestone, or even as "shell" or the like, looks contextually reasonable. Instead, as for the suggestion that this very rare noun is also documented by the coeval feminine Ugaritic PNs *Šar-mi-la* and *Ša-ru-me-li*<sup>6</sup> one must admit that for *Ša-*

*ru-me-li* this connection is completely unlikely.<sup>7</sup> The picture is complicated by the suggestion that Ugaritic *Šar-mi-la* is to be compared with the 24th century BC Ebla Palace G masculine PN *Šar-mi-lu*, which is only beared by an outstanding man from *Ar-mi*<sup>ki</sup>, a powerful northern kingdom (in what is now Turkey) typically characterized by its non-Semitic PNs.<sup>8</sup> On this rather fragile basis (not unusual in studies on Bronze Age texts from the northwestern provinces of the cuneiform world) one could assume that – in a large area between the Northern Levant coast

26 ("deren (Pupillen-)Intarsie reinster Lapislazuli (ist), deren Aug(äpfel) Schalen von Munschelkalk (sind)").

<sup>4</sup> See Gese 1962, 423f.; Müller 1971, 563; Dietrich, Loretz 1997, 1226, n. 97; Ford 2008, 304, n. 98; Dietrich 2016, 27ff. My study is only dedicated to literary and lexical contexts in which parts of the eyes occur with pregnant meanings, in reference to the human gaze and to how the eyes of statues were made. It has been perceptively remarked in Winter 2000, 22 that "the enlarged, staring eyes of Mesopotamian votive statues [...] have often been remarked upon as a characteristic stylistic feature, only occasionally with the proposition that their function must have been to denote attentiveness toward the presumed object of their gaze. Yet [...] these statues were placed in shrines either seated within their own chapels or standing in direct visual contact with the resident deity. The effect is frequently enhanced by inlay: shell for the white of the eye, lapis lazuli or bitumen for the pupil. [...] In later periods, inscribed banded agate 'eye-stones' actually bear the name of, and occasionally messages of dedication by, the donor that are literally 'beamed' at the deity. All of this suggests a tradition in which visual attention is stressed, a complement to the verbal attention that is contained in letter-prayers, and even in instructions given to the statues themselves to 'speak' to the deity on behalf of the devotee". The ways in which cuneiform texts refer to the human gaze are not dealt with here, but the 'eye-stones' mentioned (often inscribed, see Lambert 1969) according to Clayden 2009, 55 "did not serve as eye inlays for statues" (on the 'eye-stones' see also Clayden 2011, 13 and n. 22; Müller-Klieser 2016).

<sup>5</sup> See Watson 2015, 326, n. 30; del Olmo Lete, Sanmartín 2015, 173, with literature.

<sup>6</sup> On Ugaritic *trml*, *Šar-mi-la* and *Ša-ru-me-li* see Gordon 1965, 506f. (*trml* as "a semi-precious stone used for making fine bowls & inlaid eyes (for staves) [...] 'alabaster' or alternatively 'limestone'. The word is possibly to be vocalized after the pers. n. 'šar-mi-la' (PRU III, p. 256); a fine white stone used by artists would make an attractive name for a girl"); Caquot *et al.* 1974, 525 (*trml* as "assez vraisemblablement mot étranger [...]. Les commentateurs ont conservé le mot *trml* (Aisleitner, Jirku qui vocalise *šarmila* d'après le nom féminin *šar-mi-la* [...]) ou

bien ont traduit *ad sensum* 'albâtre' (Gordon), 'onyx' (Driver), 'cornaline' (Gray). Ginsberg, qui a traduit [...] 'p'ph par 'ses yeux' propose naturellement une matière foncée, le 'grenat'. Selon Gese (*VT* 12, 1962, 418-24) qui compare accad. *šarāmu*, 'tailler', il s'agirait d'une coupe ciselée"; de Moor, Spronk 1982, 169 ("it might be an unknown Hurrian word which is also attested as a female PN Šarumeli (PRU VI, 143)", i.e. *Ša-ru-me-li* of RS 21.200); Watson 1986, 196 ("alabaster (?)", with the convincing remark that "in favour of 'alabaster' militates the Akk. word-pair *uqnū // gišnugallu*, '(like) lapis lazuli // (like) alabaster' (*TCS* 2, 28, 2-3 and elsewhere)"); Watson 1995, 541; Watson 2007, 125, 135 ("meaning unknown", affiliation uncertain); Dietrich, Loretz 1997, 1226, n. 98 ("wahrscheinlich Alabaster"); Ford 2008, 304, n. 98 (with further evidence for "alabaster", as "za.gin 'lapis lazuli' || nu<sub>11</sub> 'alabaster' in Sumerian, see Gudea Cylinder A xxiv 15-16. [...] Akk. *šappu* (= *sappu*) 'bowl' (= Ug. *sp* 'bowl') is explicitly said to be made of *gišnugallu* in YOS 6, 192, 19"); Richter 2012, 543 ("[Lw/Ug(?)] o.Ü.", not among the definitely Hurrian words); del Olmo Lete, Sanmartín 2015, 170 ("alabaster") and 918 ("noble material", "etym. unc.", with further literature); Dietrich 2016, 31-33 ("Muschelkalk"). On Mesopotamian literary instances of intentional contrast between lapis lazuli and alabaster see e.g. Alaura, Bonechi 2012, 20. As for eyes of statues and the alabaster or shell material see also fig. 1a-f below and the discussion of the 3rd column of the 'Barton Cylinder'. If the Ugaritic *Story of Kirta* shares general motifs with older Mesopotamian literary compositions – e.g. the *Story of Etana* (as noted by Hallo 1996, 256f.) and the *Marriage of Martu* (by Hillers 2015, 223, n. 6 with reference to Klein 1990, 59f.) – then also in its possibly Middle Bronze Hurrian forerunner, translated into Ugaritic by 'Ilī-milku (on his political programme, Wyatt 1997; 2017a; 2017b) or by a previous writer in the Northern Levant, ultimately the specific alabaster or shell simile may have been taken from 3rd millennium literary sources.

<sup>7</sup> *Ša-ru-me-li* must be explained as Šar(r)um-el(l)i, a feminine Hurrian PN attested e.g. at Nuzi, Alalakh and Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta (Gelb *et al.* 1943, 125; von Dassow 2008, 3330, n. 158; Freydanck, Salvini 1984, 39) also with variant spellings. That *Šar-mi-la* is one of these alternative forms (e.g. Šar(r)um-al(l)a) is not self-evident, however.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon 1988, 156 (endorsed in Pagan 1998, 59 and 238) compared Ugaritic *Šar-mi-la* of RS 16.250 (Šarmela in Lackenbacher 2002, 306) with Ebla *Šar-mi-lu* (attestations in Archi 2011, 24). A Semitic explanation of *Šar-mi-lu* (put forward in Krebernik 1988, 285; Pagan 1998, 83, 363) is unlikely because it is confined to the typically non-Semitic personal names of *Ar-mi*<sup>ki</sup>. On the debated localization of this toponym see for the summary of our knowledge at present in Bonechi 2016a, 78, n. 299; my hypothesis of a very important country with the role of an "Early Kizzuwatna" at that time differs from the localization of *Ar-mi*<sup>ki</sup> at Samsat proposed in Archi 2011, but both are structurally better than other alternatives available in the bibliography.

(lady *Šar-mi-la* of Ugarit), its adjacent regions in present day Turkey (mister *Šar-mi-lu* of *Ar-mi<sup>ki</sup>*), and, probably, Northern Mesopotamia (*trml* of Kirta's simile)<sup>9</sup> – between the second half of the 3rd millennium and the second half of the 2nd millennium the noun *\*tarmel-* indicated a kind of prized white stone or, less likely, shell that was suitable for manufacturing inlays of statues and for the personal names of both men and women. It remains unclear if *trml* (difficult to explain by means of Semitic cognates)<sup>10</sup> is a *Kulturwort* that

entered Ugaritic from an unknown language or a Hurrian term.<sup>11</sup> However, the final elements – i.e. “gems of lapis lazuli” and “bowls of alabaster” – of the similes used by 'Ilī-milku in describing Hurriya's eyes require us to understand 'q and 'p

<sup>9</sup> On the location of the Ugaritic *Story of Kirta* in the Habur Triangle see Astour 1973 (with the prudent remarks e.g. in Hallo 1996, 257; Wyatt 2005, 250; and the negative position in Kämmerer 2010, 89). In turn, this location would imply that Ugaritian *Krt* is *Ki-ir-ta*, the father of Šuttarna I of Mittani known by the impressions of his son's cylinder seal on two Alalakh tablets (Stein 1989, 40; Niedorf 2008, 245-247), who ruled during the (second half of the) 16th century BC (identification in Albright 1968, 103, with the reservations in Wilhelm 1989, 28; on the debated dating of the beginning of the Mittanian kingdom see de Martino 2014 and Maidman 2018; on the debated idea that the PN Kirta is Indo-European, proposed by Albright in the framework of his hypothetical Hurrian background – horses included – of the *Story of Kirta*, see Wyatt 2005, 250, “perhaps = Sanskrit *kṛta*”; von Dassow 2008, 86, n. 212, “the name [...] Kirta, is not definitely Indo-Aryan”; Kämmerer 2010, 89, “indoeuropäischer Name”; de Martino 2014, 69, n. 74, “the etymology of the name Kirta [...] is not yet clear”; Wyatt 2017b, 832 n. 46, “Of course in the narrative of Kirta, the hero is king of Khabur on the eponymous river [...], but Ugaritian royal ideology determines its present form at the hand of Ilmilku. If there is a historical background to the now epicised narrative, Kirta (hypocoristic), Sanskrit *kṛta*, may be the king of the same name, the first ruler of Mitanni”; see also the problematic conclusions in Watson 2007, 203-205, with the important remark that in any case *Krt* was not an indigenous personal name at Ugarit). Further sparse, uncertain and as yet undigested pieces of evidence showing political and cultural interactions between Northern Syria and Northern Mesopotamia during the Middle Bronze Age include at least the people qualified as *ši-a-al-PI-ri nu-ḥa-ši-im* in the treaty L.T.-3 and *šāb maryannim* in the letter L.87-887 found at Tell Leilan (Eidem 2011, 32; Eidem 2014, 141f. and n. 15f., with reference to later Nuḥašše; von Dassow 2014, 13 and n. 7), the Levantine mountains Nanni and Ḥazzi in omen texts from Tigūnanum (George 2013, 109; Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 73), Bēlet-Nagar in an offering list from Ugarit (Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 66) and the role of the Hurrians in the fall of Ebla recorded in the *Song of Release* (de Martino 2014, 65f.; Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 71f.; de Martino 2017, 153f.).

<sup>10</sup> Comparisons with Amarna Akk. *šarmu*, “carved”, “lopped, trimmed” (Watson 1986, 149) or Arabic *ʿaṭmala*, “to froth (said of milk)” (de Moor, Spronk 1982, 169, “frothing milk”) look forced to me. Thinking of a shell (“Muschelkalk”) rather than a stone, Dietrich 2016, 32f. compares *trml* with the Sumerian loanwords in Akkadian *turminū* and *turminabandū* (AHw [1974], 1373, “eine Breccia”; CDA<sup>2</sup> [2000], 410, “breccia, mottled stone”, “(a kind of mottled stone)”; CAD T [2006], 486f., “(a breccia or marble)”), whose use is limited to paving slabs, jars and amulets, but not bowls, and whose uncertain specific colours more probably tended towards reddish tonalities (on *turminabandū* see Stol 1979, 97; Postgate 1997, 209; Schuster-Brandis 2011, 124; Dietrich 2016, 32) and certainly not towards the white required by natural and

artistic sclera. Even if the occurrence of a term for “bowl of shell” has been suggested in the *Early Dynastic Practical Vocabulary A* (Civil 2008, 74, “080. bur.ANŠE = BUR ANŠE”), to me “(a kind of alabaster)” remains the best approximation for the meaning of *trml*.

<sup>11</sup> Note that in RS 16.250 the brother of Šarmela bears the Hurrian personal name Ewennina. I do not see many linguistic alternatives to a Hurrian affiliation for a non-Sumerian *Kulturwort* attested at Ebla and Ugarit, whose Semitic etymology is almost unlikely, and whose Indo-European affiliation is ruled out by lack of parallels. However, that *trml* belonged to another as yet unknown language cannot be ruled out, see e.g. the enigmatic onomastic data of the unpublished Sargonic text CBS 8418 discussed in Westenholz 1999, 95f.; Bartash 2018, 267f. Be that as it may, usually it is thought that the Hurrians had not yet settled in Northern Syria and in the Habur Triangle at the chronological eight of Palace G Ebla, and also that, very shortly after, they suddenly and substantially appeared at least at Urkeš. This picture is largely based on Pre-Sargonic texts found outside the northern Piedmont (i.e. Subartu proper, located in what is now Turkey), from where most probably the Hurrians, by armed force, expanded their political influence and control of lands and trade routes southward, at the same time as great changes that included the fall of Palace G Ebla. However, a possibly long-lasting Hurrian participation in the cultural and political life of the Pre-Sargonic cuneiform world – not yet evident because, due to chance, no texts have been found in the Hurrian northern homelands – and a circulation of Hurrians and their vocabulary in Northern Syria and in the Habur Triangle around 2500 BC should be seriously taken into account (on these topics see e.g. Westenholz 1999, 96; Buccellati 2004, 210f.; Maiocchi 2011; Giorgieri 2013, 159-161; Buccellati 2013; Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 67 and n. 121; Foster 2016, 33f. and 79f.; on the early history of the Hurrians see in general Wilhelm 1989, 7-12; Steinkeller 1998; Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 61-74). At least for some PNs in texts from Tell Beydar / ‘Nabada’ (*Sa<sup>2</sup>-/Ša-targu-ni* and *Šu-gu-zi*, borne by local men) and Ebla (*Bū-gū-e* and *UL-TUM-ḥu-ḥu*, borne by men from Nagar) a Hurrian affiliation has been suggested (on these PNs see Catagnoti 1998, 46; Richter 2004, 276-278; Rubio 2006, 112; Sallaberger 2007, 433, n. 94; Biga 2014, 100). Other problematic pieces may be added to the jigsaw concerning pre-Urkeš occurrences of Hurrians and Hurrian terms in cuneiform sources. In the Ebla texts see e.g.: the PNs and GNs considered as non-Semitic in Edzard 1988; the DNs attributed to a non-Semitic substrate in Archi 1992 and Archi 1993a (*contra*, Biga 2014, 100); the term *ʿasaryānum*, “armour”, discussed together with Hurrian *šariyanni* in Conti, Bonechi 1992 (and see Richter 2012, 357f.); the term attested in the genitive *a-ba-i* (discussed in Pasquali, Mangiarotti 2005; Archi 2012, 17 and n. 64; Pasquali 2013, 58-60), perhaps related to Hurrian *api* (on which see Kelly-Buccellati 2002; Richter 2012, 37f.; Bachvarova 2016, 86ff.); the PN of Hamazi's king in *ARET* XIII 3 if to be read *Ši-si*, “Horse”, on which see, independently, Bonechi 2016b, 14; Cohen 2015, 222f. (with Richter 2012, 104 on Hurrian *ešši*); the PN *Šar-mi-lu* from *Ar-mi<sup>ki</sup>* discussed above (note that many PNs of this kingdom are considered ‘Anatolian’ and even Indo-European in Bonechi 1990, 34; Bonechi 1997, 517; Archi 2011, 24, “Anatolian branch of Indo-European”; if *Šar-mi-lu* is Hurrian, then a mixed Early Luwian? / Early Hurrian onomastic set is more likely around the Amanus Range than at Samsat).



as precise references to their main and eye-catching features, and consequently to translate these terms as, respectively, “iris” and “sclera”, garishly blue and white.

Turning now our attention to the Palace G Ebla texts, two of the main manuscripts of the *Ebla Bilingual Lexical List* – ‘source A<sub>2</sub>’ (*MEE* 4 63-64+) and ‘source B’ (*MEE* 4 65+) – include a sequence of entries formed by the following equivalences:<sup>12</sup>

[1-2] sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda = *ù-gu-wu* (*VE* 1203, attested in TM.75.G.10023+11301+ = *MEE* 4 63-64+ obv. VII:14-15 and TM.75.G.4525+ = *MEE* 4 65+ rev. XV:7-8)

[3-4] sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi = *ib-ib-ba-tum* (*VE* 1204, attested in TM.75.G.10023+11301+ = *MEE* 4 63-64+ obv. VII:16-17, and TM.75.G.4525+ = *MEE* 4 65+ rev. XV:9-10)

While in the Ebla texts *ù-gu-wu* and *ib-ib-ba-tum* are to my knowledge attested only here, sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda and sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi (variants: sig<sub>7</sub>-gi:zi, sig<sub>7</sub>-gi<sub>4</sub>-zi) also occur in other lexical lists:

[5-6] sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi / sig<sub>7</sub>-ka\*-kešda = (TM.75.G.1639 = *MEE* 3 68 obv. III:6-7)

[7-8] sig<sub>7</sub><sup>1</sup>-ka-kešda<sup>1</sup> / sig<sub>7</sub><sup>1</sup>-gi<sub>4</sub>-zi<sup>13</sup> = (TM.75.G.1926+ = *MEE* 15 26+ rev. IV:16-17)

[9-10] sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda / sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi = (TM.75.G.5324+ = *MEE* 15 32+ rev. II<sup>2</sup>:6<sup>2</sup>-7<sup>2</sup>)

[11-12] sig<sub>7</sub>-gi:zi / [sig<sub>7</sub>-k]a-kešda = (TM.75.G.5636+ = *MEE* 15 18+ rev.<sup>21</sup> III<sup>2</sup>:5<sup>2</sup>-6<sup>2</sup>)

[13-14] sig<sub>7</sub>-gi:zi / sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda = (TM.75.G.20233+ = *MEE* 15 17+ rev.<sup>1</sup> II<sup>2</sup>:5<sup>2</sup>-6<sup>2</sup>)

Significantly, in all these Ebla lexical lists sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda and sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi only occur sequentially (even if their order can be inverted), so that one must formally infer that for the scribes these two terms formed a hendiadys. Moreover, the attestations [7-14] come from four acrographic lexical lists of the *éš-bar-kin*<sub>5</sub>-kind and thus no a priori semantic indication can be inferred from them, but the attestations [5-6] come from a thematic list such as the *Ebla List with Body Parts*<sup>14</sup> and thus one can definitely infer that sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda and sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi are anatomical terms. More precisely, they refer to parts of the head (the unique topic of the source *MEE* 3 68) and specifically denote parts of the eye, as also indicated by the structure of

this list and by sig<sub>7</sub> = IGI<sub>gunú</sub>. In the three sources of the *Ebla List with Body Parts* (i.e. *MEE* 3 68, 71 and 70), the spellings for the eye and its parts occur as follows:

*MEE* 3 68

obv. iii 4	igi	obv. iv 3	igi-kun
obv. iii 5	SAGxIGI	...	
obv. iii 6	sig <sub>7</sub> -gi-zi	rev. i 6	igi- <sup>r</sup> si <sub>4</sub> * <sup>r</sup>
obv. iii 7	sig <sub>7</sub> -ka*-kešda	rev. i 7	igi-si <sub>4</sub> *-si <sub>4</sub> * <sup>r</sup>
obv. iii 8	sig <sub>7</sub> <-igi>	rev. ii 1	igi-DAR
obv. iv 1	igi*-ub	...	
obv. iv 2	igi-nigin	rev. v 5	igi*-um <sup>1</sup> *(DUB)

*MEE* 3 71

obv. i 4	SAGxIGI	...	
obv. i 5	sig <sub>7</sub> -igi	rev. ii 5	igi-ub
...		rev. ii 6	igi-kun
rev. ii 1	IGI.DUḪ. .NÍG*.NE*	rev. ii 7	igi-um <sup>1</sup> (DUB)

*MEE* 3 70

obv. ii 3	igi	obv. iii 2	sig <sub>7</sub> -igi
...		obv. iii 3	igi-ub

Alphabetically, these terms in the *Ebla List with Body Parts* are:

igi, “eye” = \**aynum*;

igi-DAR, “(a feature of the eye)”, *VE* 715, igi-DAR = *dal-da-bù-um a-na-a, dal-da-bù 2-igi*;

IGI.DUḪ.NÍG.NE, “(a feature of the eye)”, *VE* 22, *EV* 0266, NÍG.NE.IGI.DUḪ = *da-ga-um*;

igi-kun, “lachrymal gland”;

igi-nigin, probably “vertigo”, cf. *zi-da-nul-na* in the incantations *ARET* V 1 and *ARET* V 2+, Akk. *šidānu*;

igi-si<sub>4</sub>, probably “jaundice”;

igi-si<sub>4</sub>-si<sub>4</sub>, probably “jaundiced eyes”;

igi-ub, “corner of the eye”;

igi-um<sup>1</sup>(DUB), “face”, *VE* 708, igi-um = *ba-nu-ù, panwū* (pl. *tantum*), and cf. *ba-na-ù, ba-na-a(-)* and *ba-na-i(-)* in administrative and chancery texts;

SAGxIGI, “eyeball”, *EV* 0344, SAGxIGI = *kak-gú-tum, kakkultum*, and *VE* 267, SAGxIGI = *bù-wu igi, puwu* ‘*aynim* (?)’, “eye socket or pupil (?)”;

sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi, “sclera”, *VE* 1204, sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi = *ib-ib-ba-tum, ip* ‘*ippatum*’;

sig<sub>7</sub>-igi, “eyebrow”;

sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda, “iris”, *VE* 1203;

sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda = *ù-gu-wu, uqwum*.

The interpretation of *ib-ib-ba-tum* as *ip* ‘*ippatum*’ derives from the Sem. cognates “Ug. *p p*, Heb. ‘*ap* ‘*appayim*’” pinpointed by Miguel Civil in his

<sup>12</sup> See Pettinato 1982, 81, 87, and 328. In Bonechi 2016b I suggested that *MEE* 4 63-64+ does not continue ‘source A’ (*MEE* 4 1+) of the *Ebla Bilingual Lexical List*, but rather ‘source C’ (*MEE* 4 13+).

<sup>13</sup> Read gal-ka-kešda<sup>2</sup> / gal-gi<sub>4</sub>-zi in Picchioni 1997, 80; collated on the photograph in Picchioni 1997, table V.

<sup>14</sup> On the structure and lexicon of the *Ebla List with Body Parts* see Bonechi, Catagnoti forthcoming, with previous literature, collations made in 2004 at the Idlib Museum by Catagnoti, and full discussion of its entries including their occurrences in other Ebla unilingual and bilingual lexical lists.

discussions of “incrusted eye stones of [...] statuettes” and “inlaid eyes of statues”,<sup>15</sup> but translations such as “pupil of the eye”,<sup>16</sup> “eyebrow”,<sup>17</sup> “eyelid”,<sup>18</sup> and “eyelids/eyelashes”<sup>19</sup> of, in turn, *ib-ib-ba-tum*, ‘p’p and ‘ap’*appayim* show that a precise understanding of both Ebla ‘ip’*ippatum* (and consequently of its Sumerian equivalent sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi in [3-4]) and of Ug. ‘p’p is not available in literature. However, one can note that in the Mesopotamian sources

- (a) “eyebrow” is the meaning of Sum. sig<sub>7</sub>-igi (also attested in the *Ebla List with Body Parts*) and Akk. *šū’ru(m)*, *šūr īni*,<sup>20</sup>
- (b) “eyelashes” is the meaning of Akk. *pappāt īni*, in some lexical lists the equivalent of <sup>na4</sup>ma-/má-da-lá<sup>za</sup>gin and <sup>(im)</sup>ma-da-lá,<sup>21</sup>
- (c) “eyelid” is the meaning of Sum. pa-igi and Akk. *kappi īni*,<sup>22</sup> and

<sup>15</sup> Quotations from Civil 1987, 151 (who did not translate the terms he discussed), and Civil 2008, 65. In both these works Civil adds to the *comparanda* also Akk *pappāt īni*, which however means “eyelashes” (see below, with n. 21) and must be kept distinct from the term studied here, see Garti, Wasserman 2017, 76 n. 21.

<sup>16</sup> See Militarev, Kogan 2000, 19 s.v. ‘ap(-’ap)-, “pupil of the eye” (“Ebl. *ib-ib-ba-tum* (equated to Sum. SIG<sub>7</sub>.GI.ZI ‘pupil of the eye?’)”, “Ug. ‘p’p, ‘pupila, niña del ojo’”, “Hebr. ‘ap’*appayim* (du.), ‘eye-lashes’ [...]. The meaning ‘pupil’ has been proposed for some Biblical contexts [...], in Hebr. p.B. ‘eye-lids’”, and “Arb. ‘afā’-, ‘tache blanche qui survient à la pupille de l’oeil’”, “scarcely attested and semantically diverse; interpretation in Ebl. and Hbr. problematic”). As for Ug. ‘p’p, for Kogan 2015, 284f. “the meaning ‘pupil’ (or any other part of the eye) can hardly be deduced from this particular context, but cf. ‘ašlw b šp’nh ‘I will repose in the gaze of her eyes’ in the immediately following line [...]. As for Ebla *ib-ib-ba-tum* also cf. Bonechi 2008, 9 (“pupil(s)”; and Catagnoti 2012, 25 and 192 (“pupille”, ‘ip’*ippatum*)

<sup>17</sup> See Stol 1998, 352, “im Vokabular von Ebla, 1204, wird sumerisches sig<sub>7</sub>.gi.zi mit eblaitischem *ib-ib-ba-tum* gleichgesetzt [...]. Unschwer erkennt man im sumerischen Wort das spätere SIG<sub>7</sub>.IGI = *šū’ru* ‘Augenbraue’. Und dann ist es einfach einzusehen, daß eblaitisches *ib-ib-ba-tum* identisch sein muß mit ugar. ‘p’p und hebr. ‘af’*appajim* [sic] ‘Augenwimpern’”; Hajouz 2013, 109, probably “Augenbraue”.

<sup>18</sup> Ug. ‘p’ph means “paupières” for Caquot *et al.* 1974, 525, “‘eyes’(?); ‘eyelids’(?)” for Segert 1984, 196.

<sup>19</sup> He. ‘ap’*appayim* is so interpreted in Garti, Wasserman 2017, 76 and n. 21.

<sup>20</sup> See Kraus 1935, 22f., n. 1; Ehelolf 1936, 192, n. 1; Jacobsen 1940, 192; Civil, Landsberger 1967, 59; Civil 1983, 564 n. 1; CAD Š/3 (1992), 366f.; CDA<sup>2</sup> (2000), 388f.; Fincke 2000, 17; Militarev, Kogan 2000, 231; Couto Ferreira 2009, 135f.; Civil 2010, 155; Garti, Wasserman 2017, 76; ePSD2, accessed January 25, 2019. Cf. AHW (1974), 1287, “Augenlid u -wimpern”.

<sup>21</sup> See AHW (1972), 824; George 1996, 52; CDA<sup>2</sup> (2000), 264; Fincke 2000, 17; CAD P (2005), 114; Civil 2008, 65, also as for the equivalence in obv. III:12f. of the manuscript MS 2888 of Ugu-mu (probably Ur III), i.e. ma-ad-igi-mu = e-pi-pi-a-tu-‘ú-a’, translated “my eyelashes” in Civil 2010, 155; Garti, Wasserman 2017, 76 with the remarks by Michael Streck (“epipi’*ātu*”) in the n. 22; in this list the “iris” and the “sclera” are referred to respectively by means of gi<sub>6</sub>-igi-mu = *šulum īniya* and babbar-igi-mu = *pūšu īniya* (obv. III:22-25).

<sup>22</sup> See AHW (1965), 444; Fincke 2000, 17; Civil 2010, 155; Garti,

(d) “eyeball” is the meaning of Sum. gakkul(-igi) and Akk. *kakkultu*, *kakkulti īni*<sup>23</sup> (also attested as SAGxIGI in the *Ebla List with Body Parts*, = *kakkultum* in the *Ebla Bilingual Lexical List*).

Since the *Ebla List with Body Parts* includes the terms for “eyebrows” and “eyeball”, only “eyelashes” and “eyelid” theoretically could be referred to by sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi = *ib-ib-ba-tum*. However, the Ugarit occurrence of ‘p’p in the clear simile, discussed above, including the terms for “bowl” and “alabster” is decisive for establishing that ‘p’p cannot refer to the eyebrows or to the eyelids or to the eyelashes given the ascertained meaning of *sp* together with the *ad sensum* meaning of *trml*. Consequently, Ebla ‘ip’*ippatum* = sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi must refer to the only white part of the eye and its anatomical region, i.e. the “sclera”. Probably the terminological lability evoked by Civil<sup>24</sup> is represented by the contrast of Akkadian *epipi’*ātu** and Hebrew ‘ap’*appayim*, “eyelashes”, vs Ebla ‘ip’*ippatum* (or ‘ip’*ippatum*) and Ugaritic ‘p’p, “sclera(s)”.

Crucial, of course, is the fact that in the *Story of Kirta* the simile ‘p’ph *sp trml* occurs just after the simile ‘qh *ib iqni*, establishing the hendiadys ‘q and ‘p’p which matches the Ebla hendiadys *ù-gu-wu* (= sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda) and *ib-ib-ba-tum* (= sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi). The Ugaritic text clarifies that ‘q must refer to the only coloured parts of Hurriya’s eyes, i.e. the “iris”. This automatically excludes the meaning “pupil of the eye” for Ug. ‘p’p and Ebla ‘ip’*ippatum*, as in any case this merely an approximation, since the pupils are a priori black, while the colour of the eyes depends on the iris only. In other words, ‘p’p = ‘ip’*ippatum* = sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi cannot indicate the central part of the eye. In the *Story of Kirta* the central part of the eye is instead indicated by ‘q, and it seems evident to me that this Ugaritic noun is precisely a late cognate of Ebla *ù-gu-wu*, in [1-2] the equivalent of sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda. In the Ebla texts *ù* and *gu* are in fact currently used to denote respectively /’/ (besides /’/) and, specifically, /q/,<sup>25</sup> so that an interpretation ‘*uqwu* (alternatively, ‘*uquwu*) of Ebla *ù-gu-wu* can be suggested. However, the etymology of Ebla *ù-gu-wu* has never

Wasserman 2017, 76, n. 21. Cf. CAD K (1971), 145, “the region of the eyebrow, the eyelid and the eyelashes”; CDA<sup>2</sup> (2000), 147, “eyelid, eyelash”.

<sup>23</sup> See CAD K (1971), 59f.; CDA<sup>2</sup> (2000), 141; Civil 2010, 155; Panayotov 2017, 235 and n. 87. Cf. AHW (1965), 444, “Iris”, Fincke 2000, 19 and 231f., “‘Maischbottich der Augen’ [...] für die Iris”, and Garti, Wasserman 2017, 76, “pupil”. On “eyeball” in the Ebla Palace G texts see Bonechi, Catagnoti forthcoming, with literature.

<sup>24</sup> See Civil 2008, 65 (there are “some semantic lability between eye pupils, irises, eyelashes, and even eyebrows”).

<sup>25</sup> See the résumés in Krebernik 1985, 57; Conti 1990, 58; Catagnoti 2012, 17f.

been clarified<sup>26</sup> and that of Ug. *’q* is not transparent. The latter term has been related to \**’qq*, “to cleave, split” in Arabic, but with reservations,<sup>27</sup> and after all unconvincingly, because such an etymology cannot be considered fitting for the denomination of a real anatomical part of the human eye (to me, the intersection of the Ugarit and Ebla data indicates that by his similes Kirta is depicting Hurriya’s own eyes, which are adorable *like* the eyes of a divine statue). If the matching of Ug. *’q* and Ebla *ù-gu-wu* suggested here is correct, as for the resulting etymology \**’qw* a comparison with Eth. *’ānq*<sup>w</sup>, “precious stone; pearl”<sup>28</sup> could be proposed. However, the element ka-kešda of the Ebla Sumerian equivalent sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda of *ù-gu-wu* can be understood as “circle” (Akk. *kippatu(m)*),<sup>29</sup> and a meaning “to draw a circle” has been suggested for later Northwest Semitic \**’wq*, considered the etymology of an Ug. *’q* unlikely interpreted as “eyeball”.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it seems likely to me that, thinking to a metathesis, a *lu23*- noun meaning “circle” can have been derived from \**’qw* of Ebla // \**’wq* of Ugarit as apt description of the circular shape of the “iris”. This Semitic formation differs from the much later Akkadian terms for “iris”, i.e. *burmu*, *šulum īni* and *ekil īnēšu* clearly referring

to the variegated or dark colour and not to the shape of the coloured part.<sup>31</sup>

The main result of this lexical investigation on several terms documented in texts from Ugarit and Ebla is that, for many centuries, in the Semitic idioms of the Northern Levant the “iris” was referred to by *’uqwum* (Ebla *ù-gu-wu* = sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda, Ugaritic *’q*) and the “sclera” by *’ip’ippatum* (Ebla *ib-ib-ba-tum* = sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi, Ugaritic *’p’p*). Furthermore, another result is that all these terms found their material referents in the Bronze Age sculptures representing women – useful for visualizing Hurriya’s beauty – that have been recovered at Ebla, Mari and Ugarit. Some of them are displayed in Figs. 1a-d, together with 3rd millennium isolated inlays of eyes from Ebla and Tell Khuera in fig. 1e-f, showing that in Early Bronze Syria both limestone and shell were used for making the scleras.<sup>32</sup>

An attempt to explain rare peripheral spellings – *’q*, *’p’p*, *ù-gu-wu*, *ib-ib-ba-tum*, sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda, sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi – by comparing semantically related textual information from the Ugarit and Ebla archives is not in itself bizarre. Less obvious is that this north-western comparison in turn sheds light on one of the most outstanding textual monuments of one of the cores of the central cuneiform body, i.e. Nippur.

The euphemistic term “difficult” is the most frequently used adjective in literature for connoting the text of the ‘Barton Cylinder’ (*MBI* 1), a literary Sumerian composition published one century ago and then fully approached in two important studies.<sup>33</sup> Significant progress in understanding one of its many inner structural arrangements has been made recently: the 3rd column of the ‘Barton Cylinder’ describes body parts, eyes included.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, these body parts would belong to a statue, with implicit reference to an anthropomorphic image, probably of Ninurta.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See Hajouz 2013, 139 (untranslated, “als mögliche Wurzeln ergeben sich somit /’-q-w”).

<sup>27</sup> As for Ug. *’q*, see the summary of previous studies in Caquot *et al.* 1974, 525 (“avec Albright, Ginsberg (qui avait d’abord comparé arabe *’un(u)q*, araméen *’unqā* ‘cou’, syriaque *’eqqā* [*sic*] ‘collier’, mais c’est ensuite ralié à l’interprétation d’Albright), Gray et Jirku, nous traduisons *’q* par ‘prunelle’. Traduction hypothétique. S’il s’agit bien de l’œil, *’q* pourrait être rapproché de l’arabe *’qq* ‘fendre’. Même rapprochement chez Gese, *VT* 12, 1962, 418-424, pour qui *’q* désigne la cavité oculaire. Autres interprétations: ‘sourcils’ (Gordon), ‘diadème’ (Pedersen, cf. accad. *agu*); ‘chevelure’ (Aisleitner). Driver hésite entre ‘pupille’ (Albright) et ‘chevelure’ (Aisleitner”). Then, Segert 1984, 196 (“‘eyebrow’ cf. Arab. *’aqīqat* ‘hair of new born child?’”); Renfroe 1992, 88 (from \**’qq*, “to split, sever, cut, rip”, so that “the poets of Ugarit referred to ‘pupils’ as ‘inlays’”), del Olmo Lete, Sanmartín 2015, 170 (“pupil”, “etym. unc. Arab. *’aqq* “a deep excavation” / *’aqīq*, various kinds of precious stones, AEL 2096. Herdner TOu/1 525 n. c; diff. Tsumura UF 6 1974 411 no. 38: ‘eyebrow’); Dietrich 2016, 30f. (“(Pupillen-)Intarsie”).

<sup>28</sup> On this Ethiopian word see Leslau 1987, 65. It has been related to Akk. *unqu(m)* in *AHw* (1974), 1422, (implicitly accepted in Conti 1990, 143), but this is very dubious. Note that the Palace G bilingual equivalence VE 498, šu-dub = *in-gu*, indicates that there was a Semitic term *’inqum*, cognate with Akk. *unqu(m)*, “ring”, at Ebla (see Conti 1990, 143). In my opinion, it has no connection with *ù-gu-wu*.

<sup>29</sup> A term ka-kešda, possibly meaning “circle”, occurs in the unilingual acrographic Ebla lexical list *MEE* 15 1 obv. VI:29, but unfortunately it is untranslated in the bilingual equivalence VE 211 (Pettinato 1982, 222).

<sup>30</sup> So Müller 1971, 562-564 (“einen Kreis ziehen” and “Augapfel”). Wilfred Watson kindly alerted me to Mehri *’wq*, “mountain pool” (Johnstone 1987, 36). OSA *’qw* means “to commit a certain impious act” (Biella 1982, 380f.) and cannot be used here.

<sup>31</sup> On *burmu*, corresponding to Sum. i-bi-bar-ra-mà and igi-gūn, see *AHw* (1965), 140, *CAD* B (1965), 300, *CDA*<sup>2</sup> (2000), 49, and cf. Garti, Wasserman 2017, “pupil”; on *šulum īni* see *CAD* S (1962), 24, *AHw* (1974), 1110, *CDA*<sup>2</sup> (2000), 340, and above the n. 21. In general see Fincke 2000, 19, 86 and 231f., but *kakkulti īni* refers to the “eyeball” and not to the “iris”, see above n. 23.

<sup>32</sup> Further examples of composite eyes of statues from Tell Munbaqa – Ekalte and Tell Bi’a – Tuttul in Fincke 2000, Tafel I, and Dietrich 2016, 29. As for the Ebla Palace G eyes of statues see Pinnock 2018, 73f. (“statues’ eyes were made in three pieces, usually employing limestone and lapis lazuli or steatite”). As for recovered lapis lazuli disks used for irises in the inlaid eyes of Early Dynastic and Kassite statues from Mari, Tell Agrab, Nippur and Kiš see Clayden 2011, 13-16.

<sup>33</sup> Barton 1918, 1-20; Alster, Westenholz 1994; Lisman 2016/17. As for the fragment *IAS* 174 as a “similar text” see Lisman 2016/17, 146f., 148 and 153.

<sup>34</sup> See Lisman 2016/17, 155 and 163-165.

<sup>35</sup> Lisman 2016/17, 146 (“how a huge image of a god, maybe of Ninurta, was made and decorated”), 153 (“the statue [...] may also

Considering the body parts of the 3rd column of the 'Barton Cylinder', here I can add that they are listed *a capite ad calcem*. It is commonly maintained that this arrangement first occurs at the end of the 3rd millennium. However, it has been recently suggested that it was already adopted in the *Ebla List with Body Parts*, whose Palace G manuscripts *MEE* 3 68, 71 and 70 are roughly contemporary with the 'Barton Cylinder'.<sup>36</sup>

In what follows, I present a renewed lexical approach to the terms indicating body parts in lines 2-15 of the 3rd column of the 'Barton Cylinder' (for the cuneiform text see fig. 2):

- (a) the upper head, III:2-3,<sup>37</sup> includes "ears" (geštug) and before them, possibly, also "skull cap" (if KA.U.DIB = ù:gu = \*ugu = \*muḫḫum), which reaches the sky;
- (b) the region of the eyes, III:4-7,<sup>38</sup> includes igi (twice) and sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi (see below);
- (c) the region of the mouth, III:8-9,<sup>39</sup> includes nundum<sub>x</sub>(NU.KA)-maḫ (see below);
- (d) the regions below the face include in III:10-13<sup>40</sup>

be an image of the god Ninurta"), 165, 166. I hope to discuss this specific issue in a future study.

<sup>36</sup> On the *a capite ad calcem* arrangement in the *Ebla List with Body Parts* and elsewhere see Bonechi, Catagnoti forthcoming, with literature. According to Civil 2010, 148 the palaeography of the source MS 2888 of the lexical list Ugu-mu suggests that it "could be Ur III". On the dating of the 'Barton Cylinder' to the late Early Dynastic or to the beginning of the Sargonic period see Alster, Westenholz 1994, 17; Annus 2002, 12; Steinkeller 2005, 303 (Pre-Sargonic); Wilcke 2010, 17, n. 52 (pre-Sargonic); Rubio 2013, 10; Cohen 2015, 222 ("dated to before Šar-kali-šarri?"); Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 84, 232; Lisman 2016/17, 145, 163.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Alster, Westenholz 1994, 19, 27 (KA 'x' (like É) an-né ba-ús / geštu<sup>8</sup>asal an-gur<sub>4</sub>-gur<sub>4</sub>, "... reached Heaven. The "ears" of the poplars swelled."); Lisman 2016/17, 155 (ugu<sub>x</sub>(KA.U.DIB) an-né ba-ús / geštu<sup>8</sup>asal am<sub>6</sub>-nigin, "the crown reached the sky. The ears are (like) poplars surrounding it.").

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Alster, Westenholz 1994, 19, 27 (igi-GEŠTIN-a šà-ba mu-gar-gar / igi-bar<sub>6</sub>-bar<sub>6</sub> nu<sub>11</sub>-gal-'x' / an-da-dub-e / gudu<sub>4</sub>-ge 'zi' an-ŠU+SA-lá, "'Grape-eyes' were placed among them. 'White-eyes', 'great light' were piled up with them. The *gudu*-priest ..."); Lisman 2016/17, 155 (igi gešt<sub>in</sub>-duru<sub>5</sub> šà-ba mu-gar-gar / igi-bar<sub>6</sub>-bar<sub>6</sub> nu<sub>11</sub>-gal-'x' / an-da-dub-e / gudu<sub>4</sub> gi-zi am<sub>6</sub>-húl, "The eyes are (like) fresh grapes that he placed in between. The white of the eyes is alabaster that he applied around them. The *gudu*-priest rejoiced at the reed stalks").

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Alster, Westenholz 1994, 19, 27 (nu-zuḫ-maḫ kù-làl-zu / an-da-ra-ta-bar-e, "Mighty ..., your ... is being taken away."); Lisman 2016/17, 155 (nu-kiri-maḫ làk-kù zu / am<sub>6</sub>-da-ra-ta-bar-e, "the chief gardener, who has knowledge of the pure syrup, let it (= the syrup) there overflow from them (= the reed stalks)").

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Alster, Westenholz 1994, 19, 27 (KA-LI(= tu<sub>6</sub>?) DU<sub>8</sub> nunuz LUL ŠE-a / gú-ḤAR pú-ke<sub>4</sub> / gudu<sub>4</sub> lú aratta(? LAM.KUR.RI)-gim / si an-sá-sá-e, "... the beans ... The *gudu*-priest like a man of Aratta (untranslated)"); Lisman 2016/17, 155 (méli gaba nunuz-lu<sub>5</sub> še-a / gú ḥar-pú-ke<sub>4</sub> / gudu<sub>4</sub> lú-aratta-gin<sub>1</sub> / si am<sub>6</sub>-sá-sá-e, "While the throat and the breast are covered with numerous beads makes (l. 13) the *gudu*-priest, like a man of Aratta (l. 12), the neck (l. 11) as large as (l. 13) the brim of a well (l. 11)"). I find unconvincing the

méli, "throat", gaba, "breast", and gú, "neck", and in III:14-15<sup>41</sup> zag-zag, "sides", and šu-si, "fingers" (see below).<sup>42</sup>

As for the region of the eyes, in III:7 one must read sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi AN-LAK397.<sup>43</sup> For the region of the mouth, in III:8 one must read nundum<sub>x</sub>(NU.KA)-maḫ, a variant spelling of nundum<sub>x</sub>(KA.NU)-maḫ attested in some lexical and literary Palace G Ebla texts and in the later lexical list *Sag-Tablet Recension B*, l. 320;<sup>44</sup> moreover, it is certain than

suggested occurrence of Aratta spelled "LAM.KUR.RI" in III:12; read perhaps lam-ri KUR (cf. the vessel lam-ri<sup>(uruda)</sup> and KUR used for "precious stone" in Civil 2008 52f., 58, n. 104, and 83).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Alster, Westenholz 1994, 19, 27 (zag zag PIRIG an-DU-DU / šu-si giš(?)BAD an-'x', "(untranslated)"); Lisman 2016/17, 155 (zà-zà pirig am<sub>6</sub>-gub-gub / šu-si<sup>8</sup>bad am<sub>6</sub>-gi<sub>4</sub>, "At both sides stood a lion; the fingers, (like) furniture legs, grasp them.").

<sup>42</sup> The meaning "furniture legs" of giš-bad in III:15 (cf. Lisman 2016/17, 165, "'fingers like chair/furniture legs': this gives an indication of the size of the fingers of the statue") is unconvincing. Rather, giš-bad identifies the "threshing sledge", see Steinkeller 1990; Civil 1994, 95, 107; Veldhuis 1997, 185f., who use later evidence. As for the antiquity of its attestations, note the many occurrences of giš-bad in Palace G Ebla lexical lists as *MEE* 15 1 obv. IX:16, *MEE* 15 23 rev. IV:6, *MEE* 15 26 obv. VIII:10, *MEE* 15 33 obv. II:1', *MEE* 15 39 rev. IV:12, and *VE* 342, where giš-bad is left untranslated. Here its meaning is certain, because giš-bad and <sup>8</sup>mar, "threshing sledge" and "shovel" – whose closeness in a later text has been noted by Civil 1994, 95 – form a typical pair already in the Palace G Ebla lexical lists, see e.g. in *MEE* 15 1 obv. IX:16f. and *VE* 342f. This is confirmed by an administrative passage which records wool used for purchasing one or more "threshing sledge(s)" to be used for activities in the "royal Non-Cultivated-Plot" (*ARET* IV 10 rev. IX:16 - X:3, 5 kin siki / níg-sám giš-bad / si-in / Su.\*-ki // en / Û-ti-ma-lik / šu-ba-ti; palaeography in *ARET* IV, p. 332, "= ambar?"; read <sup>8</sup>BE and ambar<sup>ki</sup> in the reedition of *ARET* IV 10 in *Ebla Digital Archives*, <http://ebda.cnr.it/tablet/view/1096>, accessed January 30, 2019; on the peculiar open space place called Su<sub>4</sub>-ki in the Ebla texts see recently Bonechi 2016c, 6f., with literature). An occurrence of the term for "threshing sledge" in the 'Barton Cylinder' – a literary text dealing in general with Ninurta as patron of agriculture – looks suitable. This could not change the contextual understanding of the verbal form an-gi<sub>4</sub> of III:15 as referring in general to the act of touching the two lions, proposed in Lisman 2016/17, 165 ("one of the meanings of gi<sub>4</sub> [...] is 'to go around'; this led to my interpretation that the fingers of the statue 'go around' both lions, in other words: the fingers of the statue hold them tightly").

<sup>43</sup> As for sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi as first term in III:7, a collation by Miguel Civil, of course confirmed by photographs and copies, is buried in Civil 2008, 65, n. 120 ("IGI-gunû-gi-zi an-húl Enlil Cyl. 3:7 [...]. In this passage the sign is clearly IGI-gunû, not gudu<sub>4</sub> as in 3:12 (collated)"), so that it has escaped Lisman 2016/17, 155. As for what follows sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi, certainly the sign after AN is not HÚL, but LAK397, i.e. ŠU+É (and see the remarks in Sallaberger 1996, 57, n. 16); on LAK397 (and LAK358) see Krebernik 1984, 197-207; Krebernik 1998, 283, n. 523, "LAK358 ist selbst wohl als LAK397 mit eingeschrieben AN zu analysieren".

<sup>44</sup> As for Ebla see Fronzaroli 1988, 15; 2017, 92, who quotes the bilingual equivalence (not in Pettinato 1982) nundum<sub>x</sub>(KA.NU)-maḫ = *li-sa-ne-lu-um*, *li-sa-ne-lum*, interpreted as *lišān'ilum*, "langue divine, sublime", "avec nominalisation du syntagme entier", and interprets nundum<sub>x</sub>(KA.NU)-maḫ-A / nundum<sub>x</sub>(KA.

nundum<sub>x</sub>(NU.KA)-maḥ occurs again in ‘Barton Cylinder’ XVI:7f., to be read nundum<sub>x</sub>(NU.KA)-m[ah\*] kù-sig<sub>17</sub> / ne-sub<sub>5</sub>-me (here the golden divine lips and the kiss probably refer to the goddess Ninḥursaga, mentioned in XVI:2).<sup>45</sup>

As for the passage dealing with the eyes, the text in III:4-7 may tentatively be transliterated as follows: igi geštin-a šag<sub>4</sub>-ba mu-gar-gar / igi zalag-zalag<sup>([gi]š<sup>7</sup>:)</sup>NU<sub>11</sub>-gal / an-da-dub-e / sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi AN-LAK397. Unaware of the occurrence of sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi, Jan Lisman convincingly identified a reference to “irises” and “scleras” in III:4-6, noting that “the interpretation of the ‘eyes are (like) fresh grapes [i.e. geštin-duru<sub>5</sub>]’ may be that the eyes of the idol were made of, most likely, some red-coloured stone material [...]. [...] in line 4 the iris of the eyes was meant and [...] <in lines 5-6> the rest of the eyes, i.e. the sclera, was filled up with alabaster or alabaster-like material”.<sup>46</sup>

Developing this, I suggest that the irises described in ‘Barton Cylinder’ III:4 are not merely red, but rather of a dark reddish-yellowish tonality, taking geštin-a as a spelling corresponding to later a-geštin-na, attested from the Old Babylonian period onwards as equivalent to *tābātu*, “vinegar”,<sup>47</sup> on the basis of this likely meaning of

geštin-a in the Ebla Palace G texts.<sup>48</sup> Then, it seems clear to me that the reference to the white and shining parts of the eyes is to be found not in ‘Barton Cylinder’ III:5-6 only, but rather in the entire second part (i.e. III:5-7) of this difficult passage, because sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi occurs in III:7. Regardless of whether the simile the poet used involved “alabaster” ([gi]š<sub>11</sub>-gal) or “great light” (gešnu<sub>x</sub>(NU<sub>11</sub>)-gal), this applies whichever reading one adopts for UD.UD after igi in III:5<sup>49</sup> and whatever meaning one gives to AN-LAK397 after sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi in III:7.

To sum up, the sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi of the ‘Barton Cylinder’ is the same noun that at Palace G Ebla is the equivalent of *ip’ippatum* (*ib-ib-ba-tum*), and, in turn, of *p’p* in the Ugaritic *Story of Kirta*, i.e. the “sclera” of the white colour of the *trml*. And the dark, reddish-yellowish iris mentioned as igi geštin-a in ‘Barton Cylinder’ III:4 corresponds to Ugaritic *q*, which in Hurriya’s eyes of the *Story of Kirta* is the blue of lapis lazuli, and in turn corresponds to Ebla sig<sub>7</sub>-ka-kešda = *uqwum* (*ù-gu-wu*).

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NU)-maḥ / <sup>4</sup>Nin-girima<sub>1</sub>(KAR.MUŠ) of the Semitic incantation *ARET V* 18 obv. III:1-3 as “ma langue sublime (est) la langue sublime de Ningirima.” Also note that nundum<sub>x</sub>(KA.NU) occurs in another Ebla Semitic incantation, *ARET V* 1 obv. II:2-10, *a-za-me-ga* / *al*<sub>6</sub> / *1 na*<sub>4</sub> / *gi*<sub>6</sub> / *dag-ku* / *dal-da-an* / *ma-za-gi-lu* / *1 nundum*<sub>x</sub>(KA.NU) / *ti-à-tim*, perhaps to be interpreted as *’aşmidka* *’al* *’abnim diḥāmim dakku daltayin maskeru šaptim dihamtim* following Fronzaroli 1988, 14f., who translated “io ti ho legato alla pietra scura, oppressione dei due battenti (della porta), sbarramento di un labbro scuro”; the enemy tied up is a mythical beast akin to the seven-headed hydra. As for the passage in the *Sag-Tablet Recension B* see Civil 1986, 34 (ll. 319f.: nundum-kal-kal-la = *šū<sub>11</sub>-qū-ra-tum* / nundum-maḥ = *ŠU-ma*). The reading nundum<sub>x</sub>(NU.KA)-maḥ in ‘Barton Cylinder’ III:8 solves the problems set by the unlikely previous readings and interpretations, i.e. nu-zuḥ (Alster, Westenholz 1994, 33, “nu-KA is here tentatively read as nu-zuh. Yet, it is doubtful whether it is to be understood as nu-zuh, ‘thief’, in this context”) and nù-kiri-maḥ (Lisman 2016/17, 164, “nu-KA was transcribed as nu-kiri<sub>3</sub> and I suppose that this was written for nu-kiri<sub>6</sub> ‘gardener’. [...] The ‘chief gardener’ is in my opinion [...] a cultic person involved in the ritual, responsible for the syrup (lal<sub>3</sub>). The syrup may be drunk with a (long) reed stem”, because of his wrong reading *gudu*<sub>4</sub> of III:7, which actually is the sig<sub>7</sub>- of sig<sub>7</sub>-gi-zi). If *kug lāl zu* has something to do with the syrup, the latter is more easily linkable with the lips than with a thief or a gardener.

<sup>45</sup> This again solves the problems set by the unlikely previous readings and interpretations, i.e. nu-zuh *’gidru* kù-ge / NE sub<sub>6</sub>-me, “the ... gold, our ...” (Alster, Westenholz 1994, 24, 30) and nu-kiri<sub>3</sub> *ḡid[ru]-ku<sub>3</sub>-sig<sub>17</sub> / ne-sub<sub>5</sub>-me*, “our gardener who is kissing the golden sceptre” “(he) may refer to the official mentioned in III 8, who is responsible for the libation or drinking ritual” (Lisman 2016/17, 161 and 172).

<sup>46</sup> So Lisman 2016/17, 164.

<sup>47</sup> *CAD T* (2006), 4f.

<sup>48</sup> On Ebla geštin-a see Archi 1993b, 32f. (“probably ... vinegar”), Fronzaroli 1993, 28 and 147 (“vino bianco”), and Fronzaroli 1994, 123f. and n. 17 (“vino bianco” or “un prodotto come il ‘vinello’ (o ‘acquerello’), ottenuto ripassando le vinacce con acqua”).

<sup>49</sup> Note the two entries *babbar-igi-mu* = *pūšu īniya* and *UD-igi-mu* = *nūr īniya*, respectively “the white of my eye” and “the light of my eye”, in the probably Ur III manuscript of Ugu-mu MS 2888, III:24-27 (Civil 2010, 155).

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Fig. 1. (a-b) Palace G Ebla female head TM.77.G.220, limestone (Matthiae 1995a), and female composite statue TM.07.G.230, detail (Matthiae 2009, 284) – (c) Pre-Sargonic Mari (“Treasure of Ur”) composite statue of goddess, detail, scleras in shell, irises in lapis lazuli (Cholidis 2003) . – (d) Late Bronze (?) Ugarit bronze statue of goddess RS 68.30.248, detail (Matthiae 1985) – (e) Palace G Ebla eye of statue TM.78.G.135, limestone and steatite (Matthiae 1995b) – (f) Late 3rd millennium Tell Khuera eyes, shell, mother of pearl and steatite (Krasnik, Meyer 2001, 389)

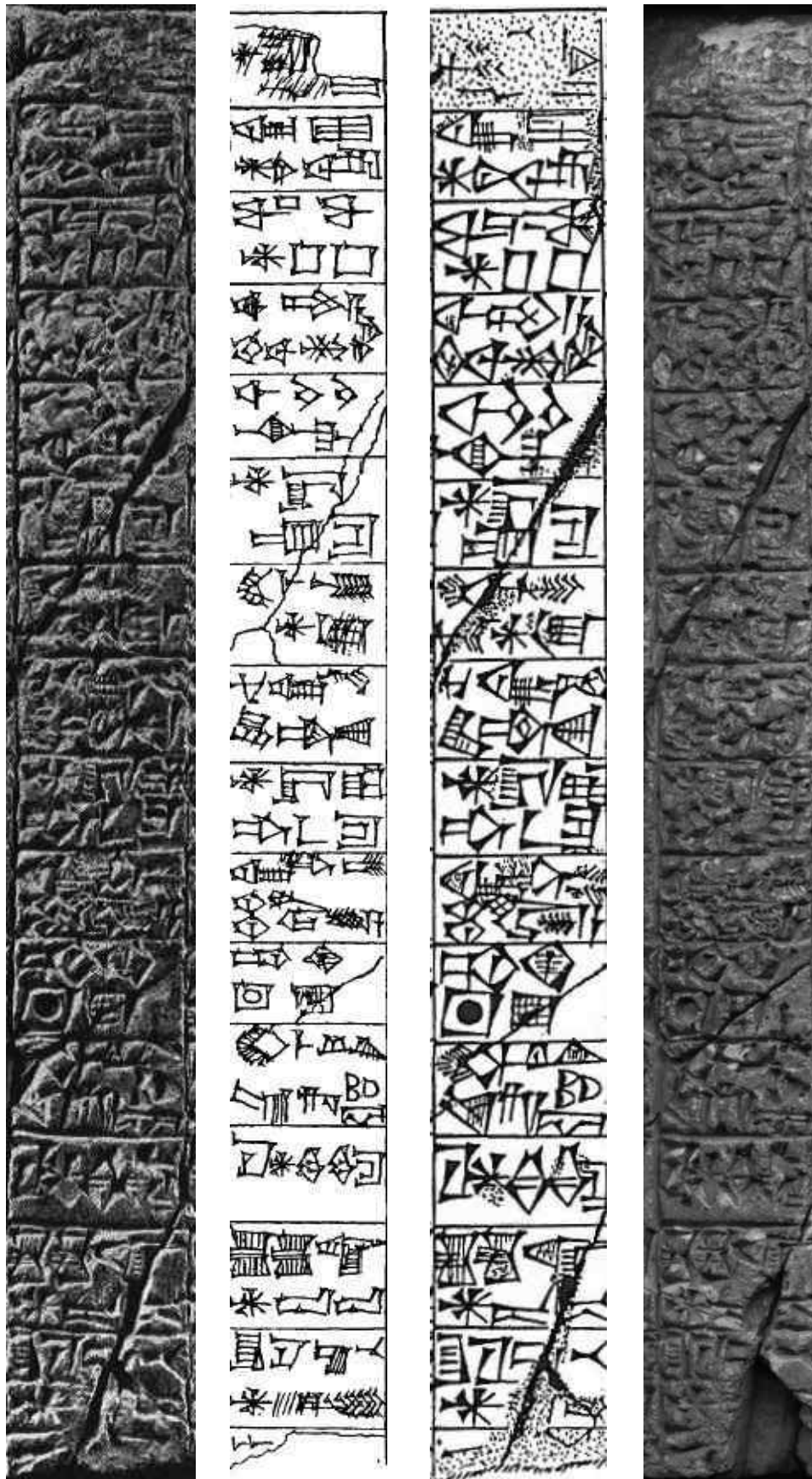


Fig. 2. 'Barton Cylinder', Nippur (Philadelphia, CBS 3838), 3rd column: (a-b) Photograph and handcopy in Barton 1918, pls. XXVI and II; (c) Handcopy in Alster, Westenholz 1994, 43; (d) Photograph in CDLI P22183.

# HOUSES OF NIPPUR: AN ARCHITECTURAL STUDY USING ENCAB

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## *Abstract*

The article presents an examination of the cost of construction, in terms of working hours and manpower, of three contemporary 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium private houses from areas TA and TB at Nippur, calculated using energetic algorithms from the EnCAB digital publication.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to provide a synchronic view of one specific type of domestic architecture found in Nippur, the square type house found in excavation areas TA and TB.<sup>1</sup> By examining precise calculations of perimeter, area and volume of the diverse spaces (as walls, roofed space and courtyards) in a building, a more accurate understanding of the structure can be obtained: specifically, internal analysis relating to function and space, comparative analysis relating to relative ‘costs’ between buildings, as well as an analysis of the choices made when planning a structure. In terms of internal analysis, for example, questions relating to the proportion between roofed and open space within a structure can be answered, or examinations of room size for spaces dedicated to specific functions (such as kitchens or storage).<sup>2</sup> The use of volumetric calculations of the built space, together with algorithms which make it possible to quantify ‘cost’ (in terms of energy), allows scholars to compare structures on a much deeper level than mere size.<sup>3</sup> Such an approach also lends itself to studies examining choices made by ancient architects and builders – for example, what is the added cost in terms of roofing beams if one area was divided into a roofed space and a courtyard as opposed to a single large courtyard (as is the case with House I rooms 152a and 152b, see below)?

On the technical level, this analysis uses CAD software to measure and analyze the floor plans of the structures as well as create 3D models of the walls in order to calculate the volume of the built environment.

On the basis of that data, the Energetic Calculator for Ancient Buildings – EnCAB is used to examine the material and energetic cost of the structures.<sup>4</sup>

Two principles serve as the foundation for the research being proposed here: the use of ‘old data’ and reproducibility. It is unfortunately often the case that projects in digital humanities require new data to be collected, making older studies obsolete (consider laser scanning, photogrammetry, scanning of cuneiform tablets, database or GIS-based field documentation techniques). The methodology followed here gives a series of measurements and calculations which allow not only for a comparison within this paper but also proposes a means of analyzing architecture which can be duplicated in a wide range of other contexts. By publishing not only the results of the study but also the way in which the calculations were derived and making the files used available as downloadable data files online, the results here can be checked, reproduced and emulated.

## 2. HOUSES AT NIPPUR

For the purpose of this study examples of domestic architecture have been chosen from areas TA and TB in Nippur. In her seminal publication on the houses found in these two areas, Stone divides them into two types: linear and square.<sup>5</sup> This study focuses on three of the square type houses, Houses C, D and I. In examining room types and the small finds, she posits that rooms which are larger than 7.25 m<sup>2</sup> (excluding entrances) are to be considered living rooms;<sup>6</sup> with this division, she is able to hypothesize that the linear houses, with one living room, were inhabited by nuclear families, while the square type houses, with two or more living rooms, were inhabited by extended families. Continuing this analysis based on the

<sup>1</sup> It is truly a singular honor for a son to contribute, as colleague, to a Festschrift for his parents. I offer this study with the very greatest esteem, gratitude and affection.

<sup>2</sup> For an example of room size as related to storage see Buccellati 2019.

<sup>3</sup> For an example of this from Uruk see Hageneuer, Levenson 2018, for an examination of the relationship between size and monumentality see Buccellati *et al.* 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Buccellati 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Stone 1981, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Stone 1981, 27-29.

Nippur houses, she shows that a nuclear family has, on average, one living room, two subsidiary rooms and one courtyard, with an average of 23 m<sup>2</sup> of roofed area per nuclear family.<sup>7</sup>

The distinction between roofed area and enclosed open spaces is important, also for the analysis of area and volume which follows: Stone shows how the calculations made in the sale of buildings or parts of buildings is based not on the total square meters of a building's footprint, but rather on only the square meters of roofed space. This distinction is possible because of contracts of sale for Houses I and F (or portions thereof) which give figures for the house (é - d ù - a) in g í n (using l g í n = 0.58806 m<sup>2</sup>) which correspond to the square meters of roofed space (and not the total footprint of the house) as found in the archaeological record.<sup>8</sup> An interesting addendum to Stone's article<sup>9</sup> states: "McGuire Gibson recently told me that modern-day Iraqi officials used roofed floor space, excluding walls and courts, for their assessment of compensation due to those whose houses were to be flooded by the Hamrin dam."<sup>10</sup>

As the houses in area TB were inhabited by persons from the temple administration, Stone suggests that these houses were 'municipal' houses in origin, built by the city or temple administration, while the houses in TA, inhabited primarily by landowners, were built by their inhabitants.<sup>10</sup> Thus the square type houses, present both in TA (House I) and TB (House C and D), were built by both individuals and the administration.<sup>11</sup>

The structures changed to a remarkable degree over time; Stone shows how, over just a few years, single rooms of House I were inherited, traded, and sold.<sup>12</sup> For example, house I gains a room (room 144) as well as access to another adjacent house (House H) in Level XA (approx. 1720 BC). Interestingly, the fact that individual rooms were sold to neighbors in order to enlarge their houses may be one of the reasons that the walls separating one house from another are single and not double walls, and it also leads to the conclusion that while houses could change and mutate within the confines of the block of structures,

it is only very seldom that new rooms are added by taking away space from the street. In another example, House C was divided into two houses in Level I floor 1<sup>13</sup> (the division into two houses already on Plate 31, so floor 2 which lay below floor 1, seems premature, based on the division of rooms and the nature of the entrance), thus creating two separate houses from a single large structure. The square type houses, perhaps because of their larger size, tend to change in function over time as well: in later levels, House C is not only divided, but one portion (C-1) may have become a bakery, while House D seems to have become a scribal school.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.1. Chronology and Stratigraphy of Houses C, D and I

The three examples of domestic architecture (Houses C, D and I) which have been chosen for this study were selected for three main reasons: completeness, chronology and size. Each of the three houses represent a completely excavated example of domestic architecture – structures with a portion unexcavated could not be easily compared with the others. In terms of chronology all three houses were used at approximately the same time; in terms of size all are comparable, thus, in theory, excluding structures which housed other types of functions or belonged to much larger or smaller groups of people.

All three structures were completely excavated; of the three, the most poorly preserved is house C. The schematic diagrams of all three houses given in figure 4 show the number of rooms, the linking doorways and the known functions for the rooms of each house (fig. 4). Such schematic diagrams, derived from Hanson and Hillier's space syntax, are of great use as a graphic aid to determine the presence or absence of certain functions within groups of structures, as well as making room clusters more evident and highlighting access patterns.

Areas TA & TB in Nippur date from approximately 2000BC to 1720BC based on the stratigraphy and the epigraphic finds in the houses.<sup>15</sup> The floor plans for the three buildings come from the more recent periods, approximately 1740BC: the plan of house I is taken from Level XI floor 1 of area TA<sup>16</sup> while the floor plans for C and D come from Level II floor 1 of area TB.<sup>17</sup> The date of House I is, thanks to epigraphic finds, the most accurately dateable, 1742-1734 BC.<sup>18</sup> The plans for houses C and D were taken

<sup>7</sup> Stone 1981, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Stone 1981, 20; see for example Baker (Baker 2014) on house sizes in a wider geographic and chronological range; Haines argues that the courtyard is the principal space of the house (MacCown, Haines 1967, 37-38), but the analysis of Stone seems to convincingly refute that claim.

<sup>9</sup> Stone 1981, 33.

<sup>10</sup> Stone 1981, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Stone notes, however, that the square type house in TB were probably built following a model developed by individual builders rather than the other way around (Stone 1981, 27).

<sup>12</sup> Stone 1981.

<sup>13</sup> Stone 1987, pl. 32.

<sup>14</sup> Stone 1987, 86-90.

<sup>15</sup> MacCown, Haines 1967, 56-65; Stone 1987, 117-121.

<sup>16</sup> Stone 1987, pl. 19.

<sup>17</sup> MacCown, Haines 1967, 56-58; Stone 1987, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Stone 1987, 65-66.

from Level II floor 1 since it is here that the floor plan was most complete – but the archaeological record has both houses present (albeit with changes to C which are difficult to determine due to damage done by 19<sup>th</sup> century excavations)<sup>19</sup> and in use during TB Level I floor 2, the level contemporary with TA Level XI floor 1; thus the three houses were in use during the same period.

## *2.2. Measuring Area and Volumes*

In order to use AutoCAD 2012 to create the right kind of volumes needed to measure cubic meters I went through the following steps. First a raster image of the floor plan is imported into AutoCAD. This image has to come from a scan of the publication or field documentation which is then saved in JPEG format. Once imported that image needs to be scaled and oriented; thus the scanned image needs to include both a scale and a north arrow. Next the outlines of the walls have to be traced with polylines, ideally placed on a new layer; it is important that the polylines (AutoCAD 2012 command: PLINE) tool is used, as other types of lines often cannot be made into 3D solids; additionally the polylines have to be closed. Next these polylines should be copied on to a new layer, as the second set will disappear from the drawing during the extrusion process; in this way the original polylines are preserved. The second set of polygons should then be extruded (EXTRUDE) to the desired wall height. Finally, using the volume measure tool (MASSPROP; note that volumes are given in cm<sup>3</sup> and may need to be converted to m<sup>3</sup>), one can determine the cubic meters of individual walls or the complete structure. In order to calculate the square meters of the entire floor plan of one structure, a closed polyline must be made around the outer perimeter of the building, and measured using the area measure tool (AREA; as with volume, area may be given in cm<sup>2</sup> and thus may need to be converted to m<sup>2</sup>, while a perimeter given in cm may need to be converted to m). The square meters of individual rooms as well as the total roofed area of a building can be calculated in the same way. In order to estimate the number of beams needed, the length (the longer side of the room) and width (the shorter side of the room) of each roofed room is needed: the length determines the number of beams needed (assuming the beams are laid in order to use more beams that are shorter) while the width determines the beam length (here one needs to add at least the width of the walls, as the beams must completely rest on the walls). The three AutoCAD files (one per house) used in this study had 11 layers each: (1) Raster Image, (2) Areas – Courtyards, (3) Areas –

House, (4) Areas – Rooms, (5) Lines – Reconstructed, (6) Lines – Room Length, (7) Lines – Shared Walls, (8) Lines – Walls, (9) Volumes – Reconstructed, (10) Volumes – Shared Walls, (11) Volumes – Walls. I have given this detailed description of the workflow in order to aid others to reproduce the results and/or to better understand the data files (see below) related to this study.

Determining wall height for these structures is difficult, as the walls uncovered in the excavation were less than a meter in height. I have estimated an average of 250 cm for the wall heights. The average wall width is approximately 60 cm (determined both in the plan and also given in Stone's volume on Nippur).<sup>20</sup> Stone excludes the presence of a second story<sup>21</sup> due to the relatively narrow width of the walls, thus the wall height reflects a standard height for a single story domestic structure. The volumes presented here exclude foundations, which, however, were either not present at all or of merely one brick depth.<sup>22</sup>

While Stone excludes a second story, it is very likely that the roof space was also used by the households. The presence of shared walls between some of the houses poses an interesting problem: was roof space also shared between households, or were these shared walls raised higher than other internal walls in order to isolate the roof space between the various houses? Unfortunately we are not able to answer this on the basis of the available evidence, so in the model used in this study all the walls are given the same height.

The following table (table 1) gives specific dimensions for each room, courtyard and the overall structure for all three houses under consideration. In addition to giving the room number and the type or function (if known) of each room,<sup>23</sup> the table gives the area of each room followed by the area of all the roofed space, followed by the courtyards and the calculations of the area of the living space (room areas + courtyard areas) and the complete structure (including walls).<sup>24</sup> The table then gives the perimeter for each of the rooms and courtyards, as well as the perimeter of the complete structure. Finally, the room length (distance of the long side of the room)

<sup>20</sup> Stone 1987, 36.

<sup>21</sup> Stone 1987, 36.

<sup>22</sup> MacCown, Haines 1967, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Stone 1987.

<sup>24</sup> One calculation has always surprised me when considering architecture – due to the thickness of the mudbrick walls (which here are not even particularly thick) the amount of usable space as a percentage of the total footprint is quite low – only 53%-57% of the total area of these buildings is usable living space, the rest (43%-47%) is covered by the walls; this calculation can be reached by dividing the 'House w/o Walls' area by the 'House inc. Walls' area.

<sup>19</sup> Stone 1979, 291-296; 1987, 87-88.



is given as well as the room width (extrapolated from the perimeter). The calculation of the total roofed space is of particular use when considering the discussion of the ancient (which also holds true for the Hamrin Dam repayments, see above) way of calculating house dimensions in a sale contract. One may note that the total roofed area calculated here, 56.9 m<sup>2</sup>, is greater than the 52.21 m<sup>2</sup> from Stone's study.<sup>25</sup> This is due to the fact that the calculations made by Stone were based on the Level VIII structure (this analysis was done on the Level XI plan), which added several walls (179 and 201 were divided, and the entrance was shifted from the north side of 157 to the west side).<sup>26</sup>

Measurements and Calculations of Rooms, Courtyards and Entire House							
House	Room Number	Type / Function	Area (in m <sup>2</sup> )	Perimeter (in m)	Length (in m)	Width (avg.: in m)	
House C	14	Room, Kitchen	6.82	12.34	4.68	1.49	
	18		5.97	10.66	3.80	1.53	
	19		6.99	10.71	3.25	2.11	
	32		6.48	11.63	4.32	1.50	
	104		6.43	10.82	3.73	1.68	
	105		9.68	12.49	3.54	2.71	
	109	Room, Chapel?	12.55	14.76	4.56	2.82	
	111		7.11	10.97	3.35	2.13	
	122	Room, Entrance	6.91	11.21	3.81	1.79	
	123		7.44	11.17	3.44	2.15	
	132		3.88	8.34	2.77	1.40	
	157		2.12	6.61	2.43	0.88	
	158		8.30	13.95	5.51	1.47	
		Total Roofed Space		90.68			
		30	Courty., Tombs	20.06	18.86	6.13	3.30
	159	Courty., Kitchen	10.40	14.91	5.45	2.01	
	House w/o Walls		121.15				
	House inc. Walls		213.88	60.63			
	Total Perimeter			240.05			
House D	57/69		12.29	19.03	8.05	1.47	
	82	Room, Storage?	2.17	5.93	1.64	1.33	
	110		4.98	9.07	2.67	1.87	
	113	Room, Entrance	6.12	10.21	3.12	1.98	
	136	Room, Kitchen?	7.19	10.91	3.22	2.24	
	138		5.13	12.22	5.10	1.00	
	142		5.04	9.01	2.44	2.07	
		Total Roofed Space		42.92			
		137	Courtyard	24.31	19.71	5.14	4.72
		House w/o Walls		67.23			
		House inc. Walls		126.86	45.21		
	Total Perimeter			141.28			
House I	152a		9.08	12.58	4.05	2.24	
	155		6.57	10.79	3.06	2.33	
	157	Room, Entrance	8.22	12.75	4.69	1.68	
	179		7.85	13.11	4.96	1.59	
	185		6.02	10.90	4.02	1.43	
	201		19.15	19.40	6.80	2.90	
		Total Roofed Space		56.90			0.00
		152b	Courtyard	6.06	11.12	3.93	1.63
		House w/o Walls		62.96			
		House inc. Walls		115.69	47.03		
	Total Perimeter			137.69			

Table 1. Measurements and calculations of living and built space by room, courtyard and for entire house.

The following table gives the volumes of the mudbrick walls, divided by the walls which serve only the house under study, walls which the house shares with neighboring houses and finally the reconstructed walls. The total volume of mudbrick walls is given in two forms: the complete volumes including the shared walls in their entirety, and the volumes of the walls but including only 1/2 of the shared walls.

<sup>25</sup> Stone 1981, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Compare Stone 1981, 21 to Stone 1987, pl. 19.

Calculation of Volumes (in cubic meters)			
	House C	House D	House I
House Walls	123.16	70.04	71.01
Shared Walls	71.23	71.04	40.70
Reconstructed Walls	0	0	5.12
Total	194.39	141.08	116.83
Total Assuming 1/2 Shared	158.77	105.56	91.36

Table 2. Calculation of volumes of mudbrick walls, given in cubic meters; volumes assume a wall height of 2.5 meters.

I have not included images of the 3D models for the specific reason that the visual rendering of the models is not the reason for their creation: this is rather unusual for 3D models, as one expects models to be seen. Instead, this study uses a 3D model to produce the measurements (in area and volume) given in this table (table 2). However, in the interest of reproducibility as discussed in the introduction, the CAD files used in this study will be available for download from my website, <http://www.federicobuccellati.net> under Publications.<sup>27</sup>

### 2.3. Using EnCAB to Examine Architecture

Using the volumes generated above one can now examine the cost of construction of the individual houses (table 3). First, the volumes produced above are for complete walls, including mortar. An algorithm from EnCAB gives the formula that mortar comprises about 1/6 of the total volume of a wall.<sup>28</sup> In order to calculate the number of bricks, the brick size is needed; the excavators give 24-26 x 16-18 x 7-8 cm as the range of brick sizes for the houses in question.<sup>29</sup> Taking the middle of the range gives a brick size of 25 x 17 x 7.5 cm, a volume of 3187.5 cm<sup>3</sup> or 0.0031875 m<sup>3</sup>. By combining this figure with the volume of the walls (as some walls are shared, the volume which includes 1/2 of the shared walls is used in all of these calculations), one arrives at the total number of bricks per structure. A further algorithm gives figures for the amount of chaff in bricks;<sup>30</sup> assuming the same percentage of chaff in the mortar, the same algorithm can be used to calculate the required chaff there as well.

<sup>27</sup> To guarantee, for as long as possible, access to this data the website is mirrored on GitHub (<http://fabfab1.github.io>); additionally, the models will be saved in as many formats as are available in the hope that at least one of these file formats will be importable into future CAD software.

<sup>28</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Robson\_1999\_67; I have followed this formula to cite the individual algorithms within the Energetic Calculator for Ancient Buildings digital publication; for more on citing EnCAB, see <http://encab.net/cite/cite.html>.

<sup>29</sup> MacCown, Haines 1967, 35.

<sup>30</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Oates\_1990\_390.

Materials Needed (Based on Total Assuming ½ Shared)			
	House C	House D	House I
Total Volume of Mortar (m <sup>3</sup> )	26.46	17.59	15.23
Total Volume of Bricks (m <sup>3</sup> )	132.31	87.97	76.13
Total Number of Bricks	41509.37	27597.67	23884.70
Chaff for Bricks & Mortar (in kg)	5497.69	3655.16	3163.40
Total Surface to Plaster (m <sup>2</sup> )	600.13	353.21	344.22
Total Plaster needed @ 1.5cm (m <sup>3</sup> )	9.00	5.30	5.16
Chaff needed for Plaster (in kg)	935.11	550.36	536.36
Total matting needed for roof (m <sup>2</sup> )	104.28	49.36	65.44
Total Beams needed	103	56	61
Total Length of Roofing Beams (m)	312.77	157.31	200.88

Table 3. Calculation of quantity of materials needed for construction; figures are based on the ‘Total Assuming ½ Shared’ volumes from Table 2.

The excavators state that the houses were completely covered with mud plaster, 1-2 cm thick.<sup>31</sup> In order to calculate the total plaster, first one needs to calculate the total surface area to be plastered; this can be determined by using the perimeter of the rooms plus the perimeter of the courtyard(s) and finally adding the perimeter of the house.<sup>32</sup> This gives the total linear distance of the walls to be covered, so the figure should be multiplied by the wall height, in this case 2.5 m (see above). Finally, this figure representing the total surface area to be covered needs to be multiplied by the thickness of the plaster (in this case I have used 1.5 cm or 0.015 m). In order to determine the amount of chaff needed for the plaster, one can treble the algorithm determining the chaff needed for the mud plaster.<sup>33</sup>

Moving on to the roof, first the area of the rooms also gives the total surface area of the roof, which can be used to calculate the quantity of reed matting needed. The figure given adds 15% to take necessary overlap between different sections of mats as well as a portion overlapping the top of the walls.<sup>34</sup> In order to determine the meters of roofing beams needed a calculation based on the length and width of the roofed rooms is needed. First, assuming that palm trunks

<sup>31</sup> MacCown, Haines 1967, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Such a calculation assumes that the plaster used inside doorways is equivalent to the amount needed if there was no doorway; this may be slightly off (doorways may require a bit less than a solid wall, considering a wall thickness of 60 cm) but the difference is quite minimal in relation to the total surface.

<sup>33</sup> The calculation for the amount of chaff in mud plaster is difficult, as examples vary widely from region to region Buccellati 2016, 118. In personal experience, plaster from archaeological contexts contain three times the volume of chaff when compared to bricks (volume being directly proportional to weight – one should remember that chaff used for plaster is normally double the length of chaff used for bricks, so the number of pieces of chaff in a certain volume is not an adequate measure).

<sup>34</sup> For more on mats see Aurenche 1977, 155; Buccellati 2016, 121-122.

were used, one needs to determine if any of the rooms exceed the maximum width which can be spanned by a palm trunk, 3.5 m.<sup>35</sup> If this is not the case, one can assume that all roofing beams were made from palm trunks, the most readily available wood.<sup>36</sup> Then one needs to determine the length of beam needed for each room, calculated by adding 1.2 m (the width of the two walls, each 60 cm thick – needed as the beams must rest on the entire thickness of the wall) to the width of the room. One then needs to calculate the number of beams needed per room – beams are placed 40 cm apart<sup>37</sup> so the number of beams can be calculated by dividing the length of the room (minus 40 cm as the first span is held up by the wall itself) by 40 cm and then ignoring any portion of the number after the decimal place (as any distance beyond the last beam is held up by the wall itself). By multiplying the number of beams needed per room by the beam length (room width + both wall widths) one can determine the linear meters of beam needed.

Such calculations can help specific types of analysis, in particular calculations relating to the energetic cost of construction (table 4). As we know the number of bricks needed for a structure, one can determine the number of person-days (p-d) needed to make them,<sup>38</sup> the time it would have taken to excavate the earth required in person-hours,<sup>39</sup> the weight of the bricks,<sup>40</sup> which, if the distance transported was known, would allow one to calculate the p-h required to carry that number and weight of bricks.<sup>41</sup> Further algorithms allow for an analysis of resources used (and thus economic studies) such as the number of hectares planted with barley needed to produce the required amount of chaff.<sup>42</sup>

Further Calculations			
	House C	House D	House I
Hectares needed to produce chaff	13.40	8.76	7.71
Person-days needed to make bricks	172.96	114.99	99.52
Time to excavate earth for bricks (p-h)	254.44	169.17	146.41
Weight of bricks (kg)	198,731.28	132,127.31	114,350.97

Table 4. Further material and energetic calculations based on EnCAB algorithms.

<sup>35</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. MacCownHaines\_1967\_37; this distance is clearly not the total length of the tree, as the 3.5 m is the measure of the room to be spanned, but the beam needs to rest on both walls, so must (in the case of 60 cm wide walls) be at least 4.7 m long.

<sup>36</sup> Buccellati 2016, 121.

<sup>37</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Heimpel\_2009\_135.

<sup>38</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Minke\_1994\_55.

<sup>39</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Abrams\_1994\_47\_1.

<sup>40</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Buccellati\_2016\_108.

<sup>41</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Abrams\_1994\_47\_3.

<sup>42</sup> Buccellati 2018, alg. Oates\_1990\_390.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to compare three very similar structures: square type houses from two very closely related excavation areas dating to the same chronological period. In this study several results have been obtained relating to the methodology for analyzing structures, an internal comparison within the data set, a baseline for future research and a first step in the use of EnCAB in scholarly publications.

In terms of methodology, a set of measurements and calculations (distance, perimeter, area and volume of the living and built space) for an architectural plan taken from an archaeological field publication has been proposed; these measurements and calculations allow for a wide range of analyses, for example calculating the area of roofed space which was used in ancient documents (as é - d ù - a) for house sales or examining the percentage of area occupied by walls in a structure. By combining these data with the algorithms from EnCAB, one can identify specific costs (in terms of energy) for a structure such as the hours needed to make the required mudbricks, the number of roofing beams needed or the quantity of chaff used in the mortar. All of these calculations can be made on the basis of 'old data', breathing new life into old documentation by using them within Digital Humanities projects such as EnCAB.

These calculations of individual buildings allow also for a comparison between structures. The three houses discussed here are of the same period and type, and yet show a certain variability, since House I is at the lower end of the range, House D is in the middle and House C is at the higher end. Thus this study provides a baseline for understanding the construction materials and energetic costs for domestic architecture of this period – a baseline which includes the range of variability within this house type. This baseline defines some 'cost' parameters for the construction of houses in this period, thereby providing an analysis which can be subsequently used as comparative material for other studies of this type in other regions or periods. Thus houses of a different type from this period could be compared to the square type house, or other houses from other periods could be shown to be more or less 'costly' than those found in Nippur. Furthermore, by analyzing a palace from the period one could determine the greater 'cost' of a public, monumental building and compare it to these private houses.

Finally, this study is the first publication which draws on the EnCAB digital publication, demonstrating not only a methodology for its use but also showing how to incorporate a digital publication of this type into a scholarly publication.

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## SYMBOL OF WISDOM, DECORATED WITH EARRINGS: THE EAR IN THE EBLA TEXTS

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### Abstract

For Marilyn and Giorgio I have chosen to present a study showing that a discussion of how the ear is referred to in the Ebla Palace G texts can lead on to topics that over the years have sparked their curiosity, before and after Tell Mozan, such as eye-catching earrings and longed-for wisdom.

1. THE BASIC EBLA TERMINOLOGY CONCERNING “EAR”, “WISDOM” AND “EARRING”

The sense of hearing appears in the Ebla bilingual lexical equivalence *giš-ba-tuku*<sup>1</sup>(*ḪÚB*) = *sa-ma-um* (*VE* 393), unanimously interpreted as “to hear, listen”, with Ebla *šamā’um* corresponding to Akk. *šemū(m)*.<sup>1</sup> If one searches instead for the organ of hearing (i.e. the ear) in the Ebla texts, the resulting picture reveals complexities akin to those observed in the Mesopotamian cuneiform texts.<sup>2</sup>

One initial point seems clear: the Ebla bilingual lexical equivalence *gis-geštug*<sup>3</sup> = *ḫa-zi-zu-um*, *ḫa-zi-zú* (*VE* 389), does not refer to the hearing organ, but rather means “comprehension; wisdom”, with Ebla *ḫasīsum* corresponding to Akk. *ḫasīsu(m)*.<sup>3</sup> However, the term for “ear” occurs in the *Ebla List with Body Parts*, where it is spelled *PI*,<sup>4</sup> again most probably to be read *geštug*, which is the only entry in the section

devoted to the organ of hearing.<sup>5</sup> To my knowledge, in the Palace G texts there is no positive evidence of the occurrence of the local Semitic equivalent of the Akk. *uznu(m)* < \**’udn-*, but one can speculate that *’udnum* was probably the Ebla Semitic term for “ear”.

Occurrences of the terms for “wisdom” in the Ebla texts are very rare, but nonetheless they are interesting. In the manuscript of the Pre-Sargonic Akkadian literary text *Hymn to Šamaš of Sippar* found in the archive L.2769 of Palace G (i.e. *ARET* V 6), the following passage occurs (obv. V:6): *ra-ba-šum kisal en-na-ri munus:peš* (ŠAXGAL<sub>4</sub>) *tál-geštug*<sup>1</sup>. It corresponds to *ḫagal*<sup>x</sup> *kisal nigin* / *ḫu-da gizzal*(NU<sub>11</sub>.AN)<sup>zal</sup> of the older Abu Salabikh manuscript *IAS* 326 (obv. III 12-13). Both these passages should mean “Wide is the courtyard of (Šamaš’) night chamber, (just as wide is the womb of) a wise woman who has just given birth (Abu Salabikh) / pregnant woman (Ebla)!”.<sup>6</sup> The spelling *PI-PI* of the Ebla manuscript may be read *tál-geštug* or *geštug-*

<sup>1</sup> See Hajouz 2013, 702 f., with literature. There are further occurrences of *giš-ba-tuku*<sup>1</sup> in unilingual acrographic (*éš-bar-kin*,) lexical lists (*MEE* 15 23 rev. III 3, *MEE* 15 26 obv. VII 9) and chancery texts (*ARET* XIII 1, *ARET* XIII 5, *ARET* XIII 20, *ARET* XIII 21, *ARET* XVI 1, *ARET* XVI 26, *ARET* XVI 27), see Fronzaroli 2003, 262; Catagnoti, Fronzaroli 2010, 233. Forms of *šamā’um* occur e.g. in the Ebla onomastic elements *Iš-má-* and *Daš-má-* (Pagan 1998, 174f., with literature).

<sup>2</sup> See Civil 2008, 56f.; Goodnick Westenholz 2014.

<sup>3</sup> See Hajouz 2013, 339-341, with literature. Further occurrences of the Sumerogram written *GIŠ.PI.TÚG* (on this spelling see Klein 1979, 155, n. 35; Goodnick Westenholz 2014, 291) or *GIŠ.TÚG.PI* are found in the unilingual acrographic (*éš-bar-kin*,) lexical lists *MEE* 15 25 rev. V 10<sup>3</sup>, *MEE* 15 26 obv. V 30, and *MEE* 15 39 rev. VI 11<sup>3</sup> (*gis-túg-geštug*); furthermore, in the excerpt of bilingual lexical list *MEE* 4 78 obv. V 1-3 there is the sequence *gis-geštug*<sup>3</sup> / *GIŠ-LAK459* / *ḫa-zi-zú* (Krebernik 2003, 176 n. 43, suggests a value *tu(g)*<sub>x</sub> for *LAK459*), having the same meaning as *VE* 389.

<sup>4</sup> See Bonechi, Catagnoti forthcoming on *MEE* 3 68 rev. II 3 and *MEE* 3 71 obv. II 1. An indication that *PI* alone may refer to the “ear” should be found in the sequence *PI* / *ŠIR* in the Fara excerpt of “word list” *SF* 32 obv. I 3-4, which may be interpreted as *geštug* / *šir*, “ear” / “testicle”; alternatively, one can read *PI* / *LAK24*<sup>4</sup>, and see below.

<sup>5</sup> The later Mesopotamian lexical sources provide a much more analytical terminology, including: *an-ta-geštug*, *za-na-geštug* = *elū uzni*, “upper part of the ear”; *ki-ta-geštug* = *šapilti uzni*, “lower part of the ear”; *za-na-geštug-2*, *za-na-geštug*, = *ḫarḫazinnu*, also *kidānu*, “outer part of the ear”; *būr-geštug*, *būr-geštug*, *za-na-geštug* = *piliš uzni*, “hole of the ear”; *ša-geštug*, *ša-geštug* = *libbi uzni*, also *karaš uzni*, *qerbēnu*, “inner part of the ear”; *egir-geštug*, *egir-geštug* = *warqat uzni*, also *kutal uzni*, “back of the ear”, see Goodnick Westenholz 2014, 292-294 and Couto-Ferreira 2009, 189-194.

<sup>6</sup> On this passage see Krebernik 1992, 75, 83 and 117 (who reads *GEŠTUG.GEŠTUG*<sup>1</sup>, translated “full of understanding (?)”, and discusses *gizzal*(NU<sub>11</sub>.AN.ZAL) of Abu Salabikh, thinking of *ḫassu*); Wu 2007, 81f. (who reads *geštug-geštug*<sup>1</sup> and translates “wisdom”, *ḫasīsum*); Bonechi 2016, 148f. (who reads *tál-geštug* and avoids forms of \**ḫss*). A further passage in *ARET* V 6, without Abu Salabikh parallel, reads (rev. III 2f.) *gú-ra-tum*<sup>4</sup> *Utu UD(-)BU dingir-dingir ti-da-ḫu-ru<sub>12</sub>* / *TIM-TIM PI-PI*, interpreted as “Šamaš the hero, ..., the gods met each other <sub>x</sub>, the land listened” in Krebernik 1992, 78f., 85 and 117 (who reads *GEŠTUG.GEŠTUG*), and as “The warrior, the Sun god, radiates rays and the gods kept retreating before him. All countries listened to him” in Wu 2007, 85f. (who reads *geštug-geštug*).

geštug and interpreted as an expression corresponding to later Akkadian *pīt ḥasīsi*, *pīt uzni*, *rapša uzni* etc. or *ḥassu(m)*, “vast in intelligence, wise” or “clever, wise” (grammatically feminine). This adjective is spelled using a Sumerogram also attested in the very short section PI of the Ebla bilingual lexical list (*VE* 1252 and *VE* 1253). Because of the above-mentioned spelling PI in the *Ebla List with Body Parts*, the entry in *VE* 1252, PI, untranslated, is probably to be read geštug, “ear”. The equivalence in *VE* 1253, PI-PI = ḪAL-zu-um 2-PI, is very probably to be read tál-geštug = ḫa<sub>x</sub>-zu-um 2-geštug. The first term in the Semitic translation should be *ḥassum*, “wise”,<sup>7</sup> while 2-geštug may be traced back to a nominative dual \**uḏnān*, “the two ears”.<sup>8</sup> In this case, *VE* 1253 includes two translations: “vast in intelligence (tál-geštug) = wise (*ḥassum*)” and “the two ears (2-PI = geštug-geštug, i.e. \**uḏnān*)”. Comparable to the pair of Sumerian terms in *VE* 1252 and *VE* 1253 (i.e. PI / PI-PI) are the pairs found in the Ebla “word lists” *MEE* 3 53 = *MEE* 15 80 obv. V 8-9, i.e. PI-PI-PI / PI-PI, and *MEE* 15 41 rev. I’ 3’-4’, i.e. PI-PI-PI / PI. If in the latter PI is a scribal mistake for PI<PI>, these spellings may be read geštug-tál-tál / tál-geštug and possibly interpreted respectively as “great intelligence, insight” (cf. Mesopotamian *géštug-dagal* = *uznu rapaštu*)<sup>9</sup> and again “vast in intelligence, wise”.

From all the occurrences so far discussed, the following picture emerges: PI alone can be read geštug, meaning “ear” (probably = \**uḏnum*); 2-PI can indicate the dual “the two ears” (probably = \**uḏnān*); PI-PI can be read tál-geštug, meaning “vast in intelligence, wise” (= *ḥassum*); PI-PI-PI can be read geštug-tál-tál, meaning “great intelligence, insight”; and GIŠ-PI-TÚG can be read <sup>ges</sup>geštug<sup>tug</sup>, meaning “comprehension; wisdom” (= *ḥasīsum*). In other words, PI has the readings geštug and tál,<sup>10</sup> referring to the notions of ear, wisdom and width.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Krebernik 1992, 117.

<sup>8</sup> Peculiar Ebla spellings such as those in which the numeral 2 occurs before an anatomical term (e.g. see 2-gir.(DU), 2-igi, 2-geštug, 2-sag, 2-šu in Pettinato 1982, 427; Fronzaroli 2003, 298; Catagnoti, Fronzaroli 2010, 267f.; *MEE* 12 35 XXIII 29) deserve to be comprehensively studied.

<sup>9</sup> *CAD* R, pp. 161, 166.

<sup>10</sup> The syllabograms *wa*, *wi* and *wu* are of course well attested, e.g. in the Ebla spelling for the local Semitic conjunction *wa*, “and”, variant spelling *wa<sup>a</sup>* (Catagnoti 2012, 99f.).

<sup>11</sup> Further Ebla Sumerian spellings including PI – and thus relevant here – are: (a) GAR-PI, attested in the *Early Dynastic Practical Vocabulary D MEE* 3 44 (on this text see Civil 2008, 3) obv. VIII 4; a reading *nig-tál* and a meaning “width, breadth” could be suggested, but cf. *nig-PI.LAK24tenū* ak in *SF* 30 obv. I:11’, mentioned in Civil 2008, 58 n. 100; (b) PI.PI<sup>sar</sup> and PI-2<sup>sar</sup>, attested respectively in *MEE* 15 54 rev. II’ 4’ and *MEE* 15 26 rev. V 10, both unilingual acrographic (éš-bar-kin<sub>2</sub>) lexical lists;

With regard to the spellings that refer to “earrings”, this meaning is usually attributed to the Sumerogram GIŠ-PI-LÁ, probably to be read <sup>gis</sup>geštug-lá.<sup>12</sup> It occurs in the bilingual lexical list (*VE* 387) – where it is untranslated, so that its Semitic counterpart is unknown – and in administrative texts, where it is attested many times (see below). The meaning “pendants” should be attributed to another entry of the bilingual lexical list (*VE* 388), in which the Semitic spelling *sa-ḫa-wa-tum*, to be interpreted as a plural noun *šaḫ(ḫa)wātum* < \**šḫw*, corresponds to the Sumerogram GIŠ-PI-LÁ-KA, probably to be read <sup>gis</sup>geštug-lá-zú.<sup>13</sup> While these spellings do not occur in the Ebla administrative texts, in these documents we do find a form deriving from \**šḫw* is *sa-ḫa-wa(-2)* (variant *sa-ḫa-2*), attested in connection with “bracelets”, *kulīlum* (*gú-li-lum*).<sup>14</sup>

One can observe that the main difference between the Ebla Sumerian spellings for “ear” and “wisdom” on the one hand and “earring” on the other is that the element -lá only occurs when earrings are meant. This latter meaning is also to be attributed to a Sumerian entry with Semitic counterpart attested in a lexical

a comparison with the plant name written GIŠ.PI.PI<sup>sar</sup> in Fara and Abu Salabikh lexical lists as *SF* 20 rev. IX ‘24’ // *SF* 22 rev. XI ‘12’; *SF* 58 obv. V 14 // *SF* 67 rev. V 10 // *LAS* 23 obv. VIII 9 (and cf. perhaps DUG×PI(LAK567) of *SF* 64 obv. II 9) may be suggested (in turn GIŠ.PI.PI<sup>sar</sup> can be compared with the Fara name of stone GIŠ.PI.PI<sup>za</sup> attested in *SF* 20 obv. I 11 // *SF* 21 obv. I 11, see Civil 1987, 149 and 153); (c) ú-PI-NAGA, attested in the bilingual lexical equivalences *VE* 306, *VE* 1432’ and *EV* 0430, where it is translated as *a-ri-a-tum* and *ḫa-nab(-)šu-ru<sub>12</sub>*, with probable reference to an alkaline plant, and cf. Mesopotamian denominations such as *uzun lalê* = ú-ur-tál-tál, ú-úr-tál-tál, perhaps “plantain”; unfortunately, the Ebla Semitic spellings remain uninterpreted (see Hajouz 2013, 336), but if *ḫa-nab šu-ru<sub>12</sub>* illustrates a construct state, then the *regens* could be compared with Akk. *ḫanābu(m)*, “to sprout, flourish”; (d) GIŠ.PI.LAGAB, perhaps attested in the unilingual acrographic (éš-bar-kin<sub>2</sub>) lexical list *MEE* 15 39 rev. VI’ 10’ (but to be collated; alternatively, to be read GIŠ.PI.TÚG’, and see below). On the other hand, to my knowledge unattested at Ebla is the name of profession or of function *lú-PI* documented in ED Lú D line 8, whose meaning remains unclear (Civil 1969, 15; Taylor 2003, §6).

<sup>12</sup> GIŠ.PI- has been read <sup>gis</sup>geštug- or geštu<sub>x</sub>- in Archi 1985, 282; 1988, 212 (geštu(GIŠ.PI)-lá); Conti 1997, 64 and n. 4; and Waetzoldt 2001, 350 and 631 (<sup>gis</sup>geštug-lá); Fronzaroli 2003, 262 (GIŠ-geštug-lá); Sjöberg 2003, 547 (“perhaps to be read as gištu<sub>x</sub>, ‘ear’”); Lahlouh, Catagnoti 2006, 535; and Archi 2018, 261 (geštu<sub>x</sub>-lá). Cf. Pettinato 1980, 29; D’Agostino 1996, 360; Pettinato 1996, 386 (giš-PI-lá); Edzard 1981, 126; Archi, Biga 1982, 353; Biga, Milano 1984, 298 (GIŠ.PI.LÁ); Sollberger 1986, 56f. (giš-pi-lá).

<sup>13</sup> See Pettinato 1980, 29; Civil 1987, 152; Fronzaroli 1990, 118, n. 27; Sjöberg 2003, 547. Possibly to be considered here is the spelling KA-PI-LÁ of the unilingual acrographic (éš-bar-kin<sub>2</sub>) lexical lists *MEE* 15 27 rev. II’ 4’ and *MEE* 15 41 obv. I 7’, because of the presence of KA.

<sup>14</sup> See Edzard 1981, 137; Fronzaroli 1990, 118 (a dual form “šaḫaw-ā(n)/ ‘two pendants’”); Lahlouh, Catagnoti 2006, 576; and Archi 2018, 272 (“pendant”).

list found at Ebla, but belonging to a Mesopotamian tradition which is different from that documented at Tell Mardikh in the Ebla bilingual lexical list, because in this entry the Sumerian spelling GIŠ-PI-LÁ for “earring” does not occur. I refer here to line 18 of the *Early Dynastic Practical Vocabulary A* (i.e. geštug-lá-lá za:gin), corresponding to KUR-KUR *mu-uš-gal-lu-tum* LAK24 of the syllabic Semitic manuscript.<sup>15</sup> In turn, this entry should be related to the entries in lines 107f. of the *Early Dynastic Metal List* which, despite the fact that -lá does not occur, could indicate (because of the lexicographical context referring to objects) the “earring” and not the “ear”, i.e. LAK24<sub>vert</sub>.PI / an-LAK24<sub>vert</sub>.PI in the early Mesopotamian sources, GIŠ.TÚG.PI in that from Ebla, and giz-zil<sub>x</sub>(MI) in a later Mesopotamian source.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. EARRINGS IN THE EBLA ADMINISTRATIVE TEXTS

In the Ebla administrative texts, “earrings” (gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá) are recorded among the items suitable for gods, animals, men and women.

### 2.1. Earrings for gods

Precious earrings for cult images of deities are rather rarely recorded. Most of them decorated statues of goddesses. I can cite the following occurrences:<sup>17</sup> 2 earrings in gold, qualified by mah, among the gifts from the Ebla queen for Išhara of Zidara (<sup>d</sup>BARA<sup>is</sup> *Zi-da-ra*<sup>ki</sup>; ARET II 8), weighing 17.5 shekels (an enormous amount); 2 earrings in silver for a divine lady (<sup>d</sup>BAD-mí; ARET XV 4), probably the wife of <sup>d</sup>NI-*da-bal* of *Lu-ba-an*<sup>ki</sup>,<sup>18</sup> and 2 earrings in silver for a divine lady (<sup>d</sup>BAD-mí; ARET VII 79), probably the wife of <sup>d</sup>Ra-*sa-ap* of <sup>d</sup>A-*da-NI*<sup>ki</sup>.<sup>19</sup> However, a pair of deities comprising the god <sup>d</sup>Wa-*da-à-an* (possibly a name of Dagan) and his wife <sup>d</sup>Ša-*la-ša*

also receives 4 earrings in gold, weighing 2 shekels in all (TM.75.12505).<sup>20</sup>

### 2.2. Earrings for animals

I am aware of only one mention of earrings for animals – namely “mules” – in a passage in which bronze obtained from 2 shekels of “tin” (nagga) and 14 shekels of “copper” (a-gar<sub>5</sub>-gar<sub>5</sub>) is recorded for gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá-gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá / BAR.AN-BAR.AN (MEE 12 36).<sup>21</sup> Two further – and peculiar – passages in which golden earrings and oxen to be purchased are mentioned together cannot refer to earrings for animals.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.3. Earrings for men

The occurrences of earrings for men, from Ebla as well as other places, are very numerous. They will be discussed in detail elsewhere, and so I will offer only a brief summary here.

Golden earrings are given to men who worked for the Ebla king and were very near to his person, such as his “royal valet” (pa<sub>4</sub>-šeš en) *Ga-à-ti* (ARET XX 5) and “barber” (šu-i) *Su-na-im* (ARET I 15). Furthermore, golden earrings are given to artists of the Ebla court. These include the “dancers” (NE-di) *Gul-/Gú-lu*, *Iš-má-ga-lu*, *Ra-ba* and the four sons of *Ga-ga*,<sup>23</sup> the “flautist” (lú-gi) *Ip-dur-NI*, and the “acrobat” (húb-ki) *Gi-li-tum* (see the relevant passages in ARET XV 30, MEE 2 12, MEE 10 29, and MEE 12 36). Further occurrences of golden earrings for men refer to several other persons, whose precise identification is often prosopographically uncertain.

In the above-mentioned cases, no clear indication as to why the earrings were given to men is reported. When an occasion occurs, it is the arrival of “news” (nig-mul-an) of various kinds at Ebla. Sometimes the news concerns members of the Ebla elite, such as a man acting as šeš-2-ib<sup>24</sup> or a woman who has given birth. In the former case, 2 earrings of gold are

<sup>15</sup> They occur respectively in *IAS* 33+ = Civil 2008 source AA obv. I:18 // *MEE* 3 44-45+ = Civil 2008 source EA, obv. I:18 // TM.75.G.10011+ = Civil 2008 source EC obv. I:18, and in *MEE* 3 61 = Civil 2008 source EB, obv. II:8. These entries are discussed in Civil 1987, 147f.; 2008, 57f. and 61 s.v. 018 and 028.

<sup>16</sup> They occur respectively in *SF* 9 rev. IV 7-8, *IAS* 14 obv. VII 4-5, *IAS* 13 obv. VI 5-6, and in *MEE* 3 26 obv. VII 5-6. See Civil 2008, 58. However, it is unclear to me whether “earring” is meant here (if so, perhaps the Ebla scribe of *MEE* 3 26 mistakenly wrote GIŠ-PI-TÚG twice – in *VE* 389 seen above corresponding to *hasisum*, “comprehension; wisdom” – in place of the current Palace G spelling for “earring”, i.e. GIŠ-PI-LÁ).

<sup>17</sup> The alleged occurrence of 10 gis<sup>is</sup>[geštug-lá] for [<sup>d</sup>BAD-mí] / <sup>d</sup>A-*da* in ARET XV 41 obv. XI:1-6 seems doubtful to me (cf. Pomponio 2013, 8 and 18).

<sup>18</sup> If the passage in *ARET* XV 4 obv. V:9-VI:2 is to be read: 1 sal<sup>10g</sup> 1 [...] / [...] / [<sup>d</sup>NI\*-*da*\*-*bal*\*] / [*Lu*]-*ba-an*<sup>ki</sup> / 1 gu-dùl<sup>10g</sup> 2 *bu-di* kù:babbar 1 kù-sal 1 buru<sup>4</sup> \*<sup>mušen</sup> kù:babbar / 1 *a-ba-ma-tum* kù:babbar / 2 gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá kù:babbar / 4' [...] 'kù':babbar // [nig-b] a / <sup>d</sup>BAD-mí.

<sup>19</sup> Following Pomponio, Xella 1997, 119.

<sup>20</sup> This passage is quoted in Archi 1995, 1. See also Pomponio, Xella 1997, 343f.

<sup>21</sup> See Waetzoldt 2001, 444 (“2 D.-Sekel Zinn, legiert mit 14 D.-Sekel reinem Kupfer (zur Herstellung von Ohranhängern (für die Männer?, zuständig für) die B.-Equiden”). Note that this is the only attestation of bronze earrings in the Palace G texts known to me, so that its use for decorating the ears of animals, rather than those of the men who had charge of them, seems possible.

<sup>22</sup> See ARET VII 40 (8 ma-na kù-gi 2-1/2 / in / 1 NI-*gi-tum* / *zi-ru*<sub>12</sub> // è / gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá-gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá / nig-sa<sub>10</sub> gu<sub>4</sub>-gu<sub>4</sub> / *A-bu* / šu-ba<sub>4</sub>-ti); ARET XII 107 rev. IV:4-9 (1 ma-na kù-gi 2-1/2 / tak<sub>4</sub> / lú gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá-gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá / lú nig-sa<sub>10</sub> gu<sub>4</sub>-gu<sub>4</sub> / al<sub>6</sub> / [x]-bù- [...] // [...]).

<sup>23</sup> In *MEE* 12 36 rev. IV:13 read 8 gín-DILMUN kù-gi / 12 gis<sup>is</sup>geštug-lá / *Ra-ba* / *Ib-dur-NI* / lú-gi / wa / 4\*(3) dumu-nita-dumu-nita / *Ga-ga*. Note that four sons of *Ga-ga* are mentioned in several other texts, see Catagnoti 1989, 193.

<sup>24</sup> On the Ebla šeš-2-ib see Archi 2002a.

given to 'A-NE-šu who brought the news that Ru<sub>12</sub>-zi-ma-lik, son of minister I-bi-zi-kir, acted as šeš-2-ib in Mar-tum<sup>ki</sup> (ARET VIII 527 = MEE 5 7),<sup>25</sup> and 2 golden earrings are given to Ga-du-um lú Ki-ti-ir who brought the news that the same Ru<sub>12</sub>-zi-ma-lik acted as šeš-2-ib in Ba-nu<sup>ki</sup> (ARET XX 17). In the latter case, En-na-ba-al<sub>6</sub>, an ur<sub>4</sub> who brought the news that princess Ti-iš-te-da-mu gave birth to a male child, receives from the Ebla queen 2 earrings of gold (MEE 12 36). However, almost all the news of interest to us here concerns wars, and in such cases earrings are delivered not only to those who bring the news, but also to the other (almost always high-ranking) men who are mentioned. These last occurrences will be fully discussed in a further study.

In all these records concerning earrings for men, the most interesting element in the context of the present discussion is the amount of gold. Indeed, depending on the importance of those who receive earrings and of the occasion referred to, the weight of the objects can vary considerably. Without pretension to exhaustivity, and leaving aside some unexpected occurrences, I can therefore summarize, according to the amount of gold for one pair of earrings, the available attestations as follows:

10 shekels of gold	<i>I-bi-zi-kir</i>
6 shekels of gold	<i>Gi-li-tum</i>
3 and 1/2 shekels of gold	the king (en); <i>I-bi-zi-kir</i>
3 shekels of gold	the king (en); <i>A-ba-ga, Bu-ma-NI, Du-bù-ḥu-d<sup>3</sup> A-da, I-bi-zi-kir, Ib-gi, Ig-su-ub-da-mu, Ra-i-zú</i>
2 and 1/2 shekels of gold	<i>Du-bù-ḥu-d<sup>3</sup> A-da, I-bi-zi-kir, Mu-lu-wa-du, Šu-ga-du</i>
2 shekels of gold	<i>A-ba-ga, 'A-zi, En-na-BAD, En-na-NI, Ga-'à-ti, Gú-lu, Ib-gi, Il-ti, Ír-am<sub>6</sub>-ma-lik, I-ti-d<sup>4</sup>I-lam, I-ti-ki-da-mu, Kùnap-ḥu, Mu-lu-wa-du, Ra-ba, Ra-i-zú</i>
1 and 1/2 shekels of gold	<i>A-šu-ur-ma-lik, Du-bù-ḥu-ma-lik, Du-tum, Ga-du-um, Ib-gi, Ig-bù-ul-ma-lik, Iš-má-ga-lu, Rí-i-ma-lik, Zu-ba</i>

1 shekel of gold	<i>A-mur-da-mu, 'A-gàr, Du-bù-ḥu-d<sup>3</sup> A-da, En-na-il, Íl-e-i-šar, I-na-[x]-N[E<sup>7</sup>-...], Iš-al<sub>6</sub>-da-mu, Iš<sub>11</sub>-ga-um, Na-am<sub>6</sub>-ḥa-lu, Ra-i-zú, Rí-ba-[x]-'x', Rí-i-da-mu, Ru<sub>12</sub>-bí, Sag-da-mu</i>
1/2 shekel of gold	<i>'A-NE-šu, Du-bi-zi-kir, En-na-da-mu, Gul-lu, Íl-e-i-šar, I-ti-a-gú, Na-am<sub>6</sub>-ḥa-lu, Ra-ba, Su-na-im</i>
3 NI of gold	<i>Ra-i-zú</i>
2 NI of gold	<i>dumu-nita Ír-am<sub>6</sub>-da-mu, En-na-ba-al<sub>6</sub>, En-na-bad, En-na-il</i>

Given that at the time of the Palace G Ebla texts 1 shekel was equivalent to 7.83 g,<sup>26</sup> the weights of the pairs of golden earrings recorded in the above-mentioned passages range, disregarding the fraction of a shekel called NI, from 78.30 g (10 shekels) to 3.91 g (1/2 shekel).

#### 2.4. Earrings for women

Almost all the women who receive earrings belonged to the Ebla court. An alphabetical list of their names known to me includes: *Ar-za-du, Bù-kù: babbar, Da-ba-a-du, Dag-rí-iš-da-mu, Dar-ib-da-mu, Daš-má-da-mu, Daš-zi, Du-si-gú, En-na-d<sup>4</sup>Utu, Gi-mi-ni(z)a-du, I-šar-tum, I-ti-mu-ut, Kir-su-ut, Maš-gú-du, Nu-ru<sub>12</sub>-ut, Rí-i-du, Ti-a-bar-zú, Ti-a-i-šar, Ti-bù-da-mu, Tir<sub>5</sub>-kab-du-lum, Ti-iš-te-da-mu, Za-a-šè and Zú-ga-lum*. The recorded occasions are mainly their weddings or funerals. In such cases, the earrings are exclusively made of gold, and their number is higher than the single pair that is usually assigned.

The weddings of these women include those of: *Ar-za-du* (daughter of lady *En-na-d<sup>4</sup>Utu*), who married *Zú-du*, a son of the Ebla king (TM.75.G.1464: 10 earrings in gold);<sup>27</sup> *Dag-rí-iš-da-mu* (daughter of the Ebla king *Iš<sub>11</sub>-ar-da-mu*), who is supposed to have married *Ul-TUM-ḥu-ḥu*, prince of Nagar (TM.75.G.1250+: 8 earrings in gold);<sup>28</sup> *I-ti-mu-ut* (daughter of the Ebla king *Ír-kab-da-mu*), who married either *Ru<sub>12</sub>-zi-ma-lik* (probably a son of the minister *Ar-ru<sub>12</sub>-LUM*) or one of his sons (ARET II 31: 10 earrings in gold);<sup>29</sup> *Rí-i-du* (an Ebla princess, *dumu-mí* en), who married *Ru<sub>12</sub>-zi-malik*, son of *Ib-du-d<sup>4</sup>Aš-dar* (TM.75.G.2507: 8 earrings in gold);<sup>30</sup> *Ti-a-bar-zú* (sister of the important man called *Ip-du-lu*), who

<sup>25</sup> In ARET VIII 527 = MEE 5 7 obv. XIII:16 read <2\*> <sup>gis</sup>geštug-lá.

<sup>26</sup> See Archi 1988, 212.

<sup>27</sup> See Archi 2002b, 163, n. 8.

<sup>28</sup> See Archi 2002b, 172f.

<sup>29</sup> See Archi 2002b, 162.

<sup>30</sup> See Archi 2002b, 163.



probably married a man of the family of the minister *Ib-ri-um* (TM.75.G.1679: 8 earrings in gold);<sup>31</sup> *Ti-a-i-šar* (an Ebla princess, *dumu-mí en*), who married a son of *Ir-bí*, the latter son of *I-ib-ma-lik* and brother of *Du-si-gú* mother of the Ebla king *Iš<sub>11</sub>-ar-da-mu* (TM.75.G.2507: 8 earrings in gold);<sup>32</sup> *Za-a-šè* (daughter of the minister *I-bí-zi-kir*), who married prince *Ir-à-aq-da-mu* (MEE 12 36: 8 earrings in gold; also cf. MEE 12 37: 2 earrings in gold); and *Zú-ga-lum* (probably daughter of the Ebla king *Ir-kab-da-mu*), who married the king of Ḫarran (TM.75.G.1330 // TM.75.G.1860 = MEE 10 20: 8 earrings in gold).<sup>33</sup>

The funerals of these women include those of: *Dar-ib-da-mu* (daughter of the Ebla king *Ir-kab-da-mu* and sister of *Ti-iš-te-da-mu*, see below, who was priestess, *dam-dingir*, of the god <sup>d</sup>NI-*da-bal* of *Lu-ba-an<sup>ki</sup>*), who died a few years before the fall of Ebla (ARET XX 25: 8 earrings in gold);<sup>34</sup> *Gi-mi-ni(z)a-du* (sister of the queen *Da-bur-da-mu*, *nin-ni ma-lik-tum*, who was a priestess, *dam-dingir*, of the god <sup>d</sup>NI-*da-bal* of *Lu-ba-an<sup>ki</sup>*), who died several years before the fall of Ebla (ARET 4.19 = MEE 7 24 // TM.75.G.1860 = MEE 10 20: 10 earrings in gold);<sup>35</sup> and *Ti-iš-te-da-mu* (daughter of the Ebla king *Ir-kab-da-mu* and sister of *Dar-ib-da-mu*, see above), who died a few years before the fall of Ebla (TM.75.G.2276: 8 earrings in gold).<sup>36</sup>

Further ritual occasions mentioning precious earrings for other high-ranking women sometimes occur. Concerning the Ebla “queen” (*ma-lik-tum*), in a passage in the unpublished text TM.75.G.2462<sup>37</sup> 2 golden earrings are among the goods mentioned on the occasion of a purification rite (a:tu<sub>22</sub> *ma-lik-tum in du-ru<sup>ki</sup>*).<sup>38</sup> Concerning *Téš-zi*, probably a priestess, 8 golden earrings are recorded at the beginning of a long passage in another unpublished text, TM.75.G.2372, which ends with the mention of ritual offerings and purifications (*nídba dingir-en-ki maḫ lú a:tu<sub>22</sub>*).<sup>39</sup> Concerning a lady described as “wife” (*dam*) of *I-da-ad-mu*, 2 earrings of gold are recorded on the occasion of his “olive oil offering” (*nídba i-giš*), a political agreement (MEE 10 4).<sup>40</sup> Moreover, further

high-ranking women receive golden earrings, e.g. *Maš-gú-du*, *Kir-su-ut*, *I-šar-tum*, *Da-ba-a-du* and *Nu-ru<sub>12</sub>-ut* (*dam en*; MEE 10 20); a daughter of *Ig-ri-iš* (*dam en*, residing at *’A-za-an<sup>ki</sup>*; MEE 10 20); two princesses (*dumu-mí en*, residing at *’A-za-an<sup>ki</sup>*; MEE 10 29); and *Ti-bù-da-mu* (TM.75.G.10210).<sup>41</sup> Considering how the items are recorded, the rather unusual administrative passage concerning the queen of *DU-lu<sup>ki</sup>* in ARET XV 11 should be interpreted as “1+1 garments (and) 20 shekels of silver (equivalent in value to 2 golden) earrings: for the queen of *DU-lu<sup>ki</sup>*”,<sup>42</sup> probably in reference to a pair of golden earrings possibly weighing the equivalent of 20 shekels of silver, and if so weighing perhaps 4 shekels of gold.<sup>43</sup> In other passages, the “lamination” (*nišumum*, *ni-/ne-zi-mu*)<sup>44</sup> of golden earrings of elite Ebla women is recorded – e.g. see the cases concerning *Bù-kù: babbar* (*dam en*; MEE 12 37); *Dar-ib-da-mu* (daughter of king *Ir-kab-da-mu*; MEE 12 35); *Daš-má-da-mu* (probably *dam en*; ARET III 172); *Du-si-gú* (mother of king *Iš<sub>11</sub>-ar-da-mu*; MEE 2 12); *En-na-<sup>d</sup>Utu* (*dam en*; MEE 2 12); *Tir<sub>5</sub>-kab-du-lum* (*dam en*; MEE 2 49); and two princesses (*dumu-mí en*; MEE 10 29).

Interestingly, earrings for women that are made of silver, rather than gold, are sometimes recorded. This is the case with two young female valets to the queen (*dumu-mí-dumu-mí pa<sub>4</sub>-šeš ma-lik-tum*; MEE 12 36), for instance, and with five young female dancers who act as female valets to the queen (5 *dumu-mí NE-dí pa<sub>4</sub>-šeš ma-lik-tum*; MEE 12 37). Clearly, these women were not members of the Ebla elite, but rather girls working for the most important elite woman (i.e. the queen), and this explains why they received earrings of a less precious metal. However, one should recall the instances, mentioned above, where silver earrings are also given to goddesses, and conversely where golden earrings are received by a male valet and a male barber of the Ebla king, as well as by male dancers of the court.

A clay statuette from Urkeš (fig. 1) can give us an idea of how the Ebla women wore their earrings.

<sup>31</sup> See Biga 2018.

<sup>32</sup> See Archi 2002b, 163 and n. 6.

<sup>33</sup> See Archi 2002b, 166-170. See also Toniatti 2010.

<sup>34</sup> See Archi 2018, 187, with literature.

<sup>35</sup> See Archi 2002b, 165f.

<sup>36</sup> See Archi 2002b, 176f. and n. 17, with literature.

<sup>37</sup> Cited in Archi 1997, 420: TM.75.G.2462 rev. XI 3-8: 2 <gin> bar<sub>6</sub>:kù 2 *ti-gi-na* 2 GIŠ.DU 2 geštug<sub>x</sub>-lá “tu<sub>5</sub>”:a *ma-lik-tum in Du-ru<sup>ki</sup>*.

<sup>38</sup> This and other related passages are most recently discussed in Bonechi 2017, 193f., with previous literature.

<sup>39</sup> This passage, quoted in Archi 2010, 21, has been discussed in Archi 2015, 514; and Pasquali 2016, 49ff.; see also Pasquali 2009.

<sup>40</sup> MEE 10 4 obv. VI:6-13 read 4 gin-DILMUN kù-gi / *ni-zi-mu* /

1 dib / *I-da-ad-mu* / lú nídba i-giš / 18 gin-DILMUN kù-gi / \*2\*<sup>g</sup>geštug-lá / *dam-sù*.

<sup>41</sup> The passage in this unpublished text is quoted in Archi 1998, 17 (“(geštu<sub>1</sub>-lá, šu-dub, GIŠ-DU) *Ti-bu-da-mu maš-ar-tum en* ‘(jewels to) *Tibu-damu* (for/on the occasion of) the stele of the king’”). It is unlikely that *maš-ar-tum* identifies a priestess (cf. Michel 2014, 118-122, with literature). A woman called *Ti-bù-da-mu* is also mentioned in the unpublished text TM.75.G.2438+ quoted in Biga 2006, 30 n. 53 (1 TÚG-NI.NI *Ti-bù-da-mu Û-du-ba-nu<sup>ki</sup> pa<sub>4</sub>:šeš-mí<sup>4</sup> Ra-sa-ap Za-NE-LUM<sup>ki</sup>*).

<sup>42</sup> 1 TÚG-NI.NI 1 gu-dùl<sup>10g</sup> / ŠÚ+ŠA kù: babbar / <sup>g</sup>geštug-lá / *ma-lik-tum* / *DU-lu<sup>ki</sup>* (cf. Pomponio 2008, 103, “Tessili (1; 1), 20 sicli d’argento per gli orecchini della regina di NL”).

<sup>43</sup> As regards 5:1 as the commonest silver-gold exchange rate in the Palace G texts see Archi 1987, 139.

<sup>44</sup> See the literature quoted in Lahlouh, Catagnoti 2006, 568.

Found in a pit together with broken vessels dating from the fourth quarter of the 3rd millennium, it has been described by its discoverers thus: “her ears are elongated and pierced with four holes the lower of which on her right side shows her wearing double lobed earrings”.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000, 159.

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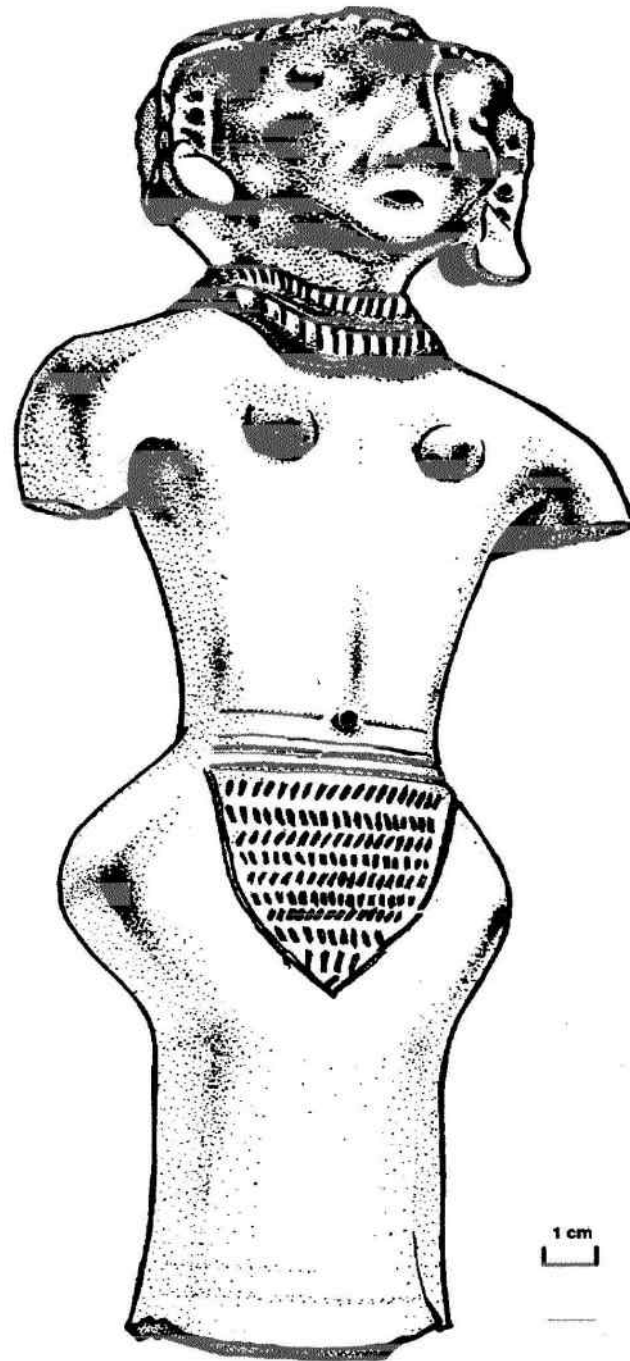


Fig. 1 Clay statuette of female figure, from Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000, 157, fig. 9.

# QUELQUES ASPECTS MÉCONNUS DU STATUT ET DU RÔLE DES QUARTIERS-*BÂBTUM* DANS LES VILLES PALÉO-BABYLONIENNES\*

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## Abstract

After a summary of what is already known about the *bâbtum*-neighborhoods of Old Babylonian cities, we will show their role in times of economic crisis. We will then see how many neighborhoods a city could include and how they were designated. We will finally study the title and the status of the individuals described as “head of the ward” (UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A).

La civilisation mésopotamienne est généralement décrite comme essentiellement urbaine – et il est vrai qu’on considère qu’elle est née en même temps que les premières villes à la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> millénaire. Cela ne signifie toutefois pas que notre connaissance des villes soit aussi détaillée que nous le souhaiterions. Qui plus est, les renseignements le plus souvent épars que nous possédons n’ont que rarement fait l’objet d’études synthétiques.<sup>1</sup> Si l’on s’en tient à l’époque paléo-babylonienne, on pourrait croire que le livre d’A. Seri sur les pouvoirs locaux fournit une mise au point complète des institutions urbaines.<sup>2</sup> Dès la première page de l’introduction, le lecteur est détrompé par l’auteur, qui indique avoir limité son étude aux *maires-rabiānum*, aux Anciens, à l’assemblée-*puhrum* et à la ville-*ālum*. Elle ajoute : « I did not include other similar corporate bodies as for instance the *bābtum*, ‘the cityward’ » et justifie ce choix peu après : « although the ‘city ward’ is probably a relatively independent authority, it very seldom interacts with the *rabiānum*, the elders, and the city ».<sup>3</sup>

Que sait-on jusqu’à présent sur les *bâbtum* ? Il s’agit d’abord d’une réalité urbaine, qu’on peut traduire par « quartier ». Plusieurs textes permettent de constater qu’un *bâbtum* correspondait spatialement

à ce que nous appelons « quartier ».<sup>4</sup> On possède ainsi le compte rendu d’un procès concernant le fait qu’un individu avait bâti une maison sur une surface plus grande que celle qu’il avait achetée : un compromis fut finalement trouvé entre les deux parties dans le temple de Šamaš, la surface en excès correspondant à un mur considéré comme mitoyen. Ce n’est sûrement pas un hasard si le chef du quartier-*bâbtum* est présent parmi les témoins de cet accord : il devait avoir une bonne connaissance des données cadastrales de la partie de la ville dont il était responsable.<sup>5</sup>

Chaque quartier-*bâbtum* formait également une réalité sociologique, comme le montre cette apodose d’un texte divinatoire : « Son quartier-*bâbtum* lui fera une mauvaise réputation ».<sup>6</sup> Ceci pouvait avoir des conséquences très importantes. Un passage du Code de Hammu-rabi statue sur le cas d’un différend entre une épouse et son mari : c’est la réputation de l’épouse telle que son quartier-*bâbtum* l’établit qui décidera de son sort.<sup>7</sup> Dans un texte de la pratique

\* Cette étude a été entreprise dans le cadre du projet « ÉcritUr. La ville d’Ur d’après les textes du premier quart du II<sup>e</sup> millénaire av. J.-C. » (voir <http://digitorient.com/?p=3341>) financé par l’ANR pour 36 mois depuis octobre 2017. Je remercie B. Fiette et A. Jacquet pour leur relecture de mon manuscrit, F. Nebiolo pour le montage des photos de BBVOT (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient Texte) 1 26 et K. Wagensohn pour ses clichés de YOS (Yale Oriental Series) 12 35.

<sup>1</sup> Van De Mierop 1997 ; voir ma recension dans Charpin 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Seri 2005 ; voir mon compte rendu critique dans Charpin 2007, 167-182.

<sup>3</sup> Seri, 2005, 1 (voir aussi 187). De fait, la seule autre allusion au *bâbtum* dans l’ouvrage se trouve p. 64, à propos du titre *rabiān bābtīšu*. Quelques indications bibliographiques ont été données à peu près au même moment dans Stol 2004, 675.

<sup>4</sup> Malgré Gelb 1968, 43b, qui ajouta à sa publication du texte As. 1930-T615 ce commentaire : « Since the five *bâbtum* are named after individuals, the word *bâbtum* cannot denote as large a section as “a quarter of a city” (as interpreted in CAD B [The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago B] 10a and von Soden, *AHW B [Akkadisches Handwörterbuch B]* 94b), but small encampments, each probably restricted to individuals belonging to a certain tribal grouping ». On ne peut s’empêcher de penser que Gelb voulait ici avant tout se démarquer du CAD (The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago), entreprise qu’il avait dirigée avant qu’elle ne soit reprise en main par Oppenheim (cf. Reiner 2002). Je reviendrai plus bas sur l’interprétation du texte As. 1930-T615 (n. 25).

<sup>5</sup> YOS (Yale Oriental Series) 12 557 (Larsa, [...]x/Samsu-iluna 7) : (34) IGI *šil-li-<sup>d</sup>UTU* UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A. Pour la lecture du titre, cf. Charpin 1981b, 544 ; le même individu se retrouve en TCL (Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre) 11 174 : R. 34. Voir l’édition de ce texte dans [www.archibab.fr](http://www.archibab.fr).

<sup>6</sup> YOS (Yale Oriental Series) 10 54 : (17) *ba-ab-ta-šu a-na le-mu-ut-tim iz-za-a[k-kar-šu]*.

<sup>7</sup> Code de Hammu-rabi §§ 142-143 ; cf. Roth 1995, 108.

relatif à une répudiation, on insiste sur le fait que le quartier-*bābtum* connaît le statut d'épouse-*aššatum* de la femme, ce qui revient à dire qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une concubine.<sup>8</sup> Le quartier-*bābtum* avait une véritable « personnalité juridique », comme le montre une autre apodose du texte divinatoire déjà cité : « [Il gagnera] dans un procès contre son quartier-*bābtum* ». <sup>9</sup> On peut aussi citer plusieurs passages du Code de Hammu-rabi, notamment le § 126 :<sup>10</sup>

Si un homme dont les biens n'ont pas été perdus déclare : « Mes biens ont été perdus ! » et accuse son quartier-*bābtum*, son quartier-*bābtum* devra établir contre lui par devant le dieu que ses biens n'ont pas été perdus ; il devra donner à son quartier-*bābtum* le double de ce qu'il a réclamé.

Comment la procédure pouvait-elle se passer « devant le dieu » ? On sait que dans certaines affaires, faute de preuve écrite ou testimoniale, des symboles divins (« armes») servaient à établir la vérité : récemment, S. Richardson a publié un texte montrant que les symboles des dieux Šamaš et Marduk étaient qualifiés comme appartenant au quartier-*bābtum* de deux femmes impliquées dans une affaire de service-*ilkum* ;<sup>11</sup> c'est manifestement sous la forme d'une « arme » détenue par le quartier-*bābtum* que la divinité pouvait être présente.<sup>12</sup> D'autres textes de la pratique confirment l'importance du quartier-*bābtum* en matière judiciaire.<sup>13</sup>

On note enfin que chaque *bābtum* avait à sa tête un « chef » (UGULA), dont le mode de désignation et les responsabilités nous sont largement inconnus ; M. Stol a montré que ces « chefs de quartier » pouvaient jouer un rôle dans la mise à disposition d'individus pour la corvée.<sup>14</sup>

On le voit, les textes montrent l'importance de cette réalité que constituaient les *bābtum*, tant dans la vie institutionnelle que sociale ; mais les données moissonnées jusqu'à présent sont finalement assez maigres. On peut citer le constat quelque peu désabusé qu'avait fait N. Yoffee :<sup>15</sup> « The form and function of Mesopotamian habitation and relational patterns are among the areas most difficult to access to Assyriologists and Near Eastern archaeologists, and consequently are among the most neglected subjects in these fields ». La situation s'est améliorée depuis la publication de ces lignes en 1986, mais il reste encore beaucoup à faire. Or quelques textes jusqu'à présent négligés permettent de faire progresser nos connaissances sur les quartiers-*bābtum*, et c'est à leur édition et commentaire que sera consacrée la présente étude.<sup>16</sup>

Je suis très heureux de l'offrir à Marylin Kelly-Buccellati et Giorgio Buccellati, dont j'ai fait la connaissance de manière plus approfondie au milieu des années 1980, lorsqu'avec Jean-Marie Durand nous avons commencé une aventure archéologique en Syrie du nord-est qui aboutit à la fouille de Tell Mohammed Diyab ; je n'ai en particulier pas oublié l'hospitalité qu'ils ont offerte dans leur maison de fouille d'Umm ar-Rabia (à côté de Tell Mozan) à notre mission en octobre 1986, lorsque nous avons travaillé au Tell Amouda,<sup>17</sup> ni leur accueil lorsque j'ai participé à l'*Annual Meeting* de l'*American Oriental Society* à Los Angeles en mars 1987. Leurs fouilles à Tell Ashara/Terqa et Tell Mozan/Urkeš ont été couronnées d'un succès bien mérité et montrent tout l'intérêt d'une approche pluridisciplinaire, associant en particulier

<sup>8</sup> CT (Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum) 45 86, édité et commenté par Veenhof 1976. Voir depuis Westbrook 1988, 120 [trad.] ; Charpin 2000a, 95 (no. 50) [trad.]. Voir également dans une affaire de répudiation la présence du quartier-*bābtum* et de son chef (VS 18 1 : 5).

<sup>9</sup> YOS (Yale Oriental Series) 10 54 : (18) *e-li ba-ab-ti-šu i-na a-wa-a-tim* x [...]. C'est un aspect qui n'a pas été relevé par E. Dombradi (Dombradi 1996, t. 1, 245 § 320), car sa documentation est limitée aux textes de procès.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Roth 1995, 105.

<sup>11</sup> BM 80989, publié et commenté par Richardson 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Des exemples ont été collectés dans Stol 2012, 566.

<sup>13</sup> Voir les références collectées par Dombradi 1996, t. 1, 245 § 320a et t. 2, 18-19.

<sup>14</sup> Une liste de tous les UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A connus jusqu'alors a été donnée par Stol 1995, 307 (Appendix A) ; on remarquera que les références se concentrent sur quelques décennies, entre Rim-Sin I et Samsu-iluna (pour Larsa / Šilli-Šamaš, corriger la référence TCL [Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre] 1 174 en TCL [Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre] 11 174). M. Stol a fait observer l'absence totale de référence provenant de Sippar (Stol 1995, 297), alors qu'un texte de Mari parle des « chefs des quartiers (UGULA *ba-ba-a-tim*.MEŠ) de vos villes, Babylone et Sippar » (inédit A.3357 : 10-11, cité dans Charpin 1992a).

Un des problèmes d'une enquête sur les *bābtum* vient du fait que le titre de UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A a souvent été confondu avec

celui de UGULA GÁ.GI<sub>4</sub>.A : voir par exemple Dalley 2005, 13 et récemment Goddeeris 2016, 454 (la lecture « ugula gá<sup>1</sup>-gi<sub>4</sub>-a est à corriger grâce à sa copie de TMH (Texte und Materialien der Hilprecht Collection) 10 49 : 22 en ugula dag-gi<sub>4</sub>-a ; il n'y a pas de cloître-*gagûm* à Nippur ! Cette correction est à ajouter à Charpin 2018). Il faudrait donc revoir toutes les attestations du titre UGULA GÁ.GI<sub>4</sub>.A dans les textes de Sippar, pour voir si certaines occurrences ne sont pas en réalité à lire UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A, titre dont l'absence à Sippar avait étonné M. Stol ; un tel travail n'a pu être entrepris dans le cadre de la présente étude.

<sup>15</sup> Yoffee 1986, 67.

<sup>16</sup> Il est symptomatique que deux de ces textes ont été publiés dans des recueils « traditionnels », avec catalogue et copie (au mieux, avec index, mais sans édition des textes), soit BBVOT (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient Texte) 1 (1989) et OECT (Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts) 15 (2005) : le contenu de tels recueils met généralement très longtemps à entrer dans les recherches thématiques comme celle-ci.

La présente étude ne prétend absolument pas à l'exhaustivité. Elle ne s'attache en particulier pas à la question difficile de savoir si les *bābtum* mentionnés dans les archives de Mari sont une réalité différente de celle attestée en Mésopotamie centrale et méridionale ; voir à ce sujet Millet Albà 2006 (avec résumé des opinions antérieures).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Durand 1990, 6 et 8, ainsi que Faivre 1992.

archéologie et épigraphie. Par ailleurs, Giorgio a été un pionnier dans le domaine qui ne s'appelait pas encore les « humanités numériques », ce à quoi je ne suis bien sûr pas insensible.

Je voudrais d'abord montrer qu'en cas de crise économique, les responsables de *bābtum* jouaient un rôle non négligeable pour assurer l'approvisionnement de leur quartier. On essaiera ensuite de chiffrer le nombre de quartiers qui pouvaient exister dans une ville donnée et voir comment ils étaient désignés. On analysera enfin les rapports qui pouvaient exister entre les responsables de quartiers et les Anciens d'une ville.

### 1. LE RÔLE ÉCONOMIQUE DES *BĀBTUM*

Il apparaît qu'en temps de crise, les responsables des *bābtum* cherchaient à procurer des moyens de subsistance aux habitants de leur quartier. Trois textes en témoignent, qui datent de l'époque des révoltes contre le roi de Babylone Samsu-iluna.<sup>18</sup>

#### 1.1. OECT 15 47 [Ash. 1922.322]<sup>19</sup>

Prêt-*hubuttatum* de 2 GUR de grain, reçu par le chef de quartier Šep-Sin.

Date : 15/ix/Rim-Sin II 1.

2,0.0 ŠE.GUR  
 2           <sup>gis</sup>BA.RÍ.GA GI.NA  
     *ši-iq me-še-qí-im bi-ru-ia-u[m]*  
 4      *a-na hu-bu-ta-tum {ŠU.TI.A}*  
     ŠU.TI.A *še-ep*-<sup>d</sup>UTU  
 6           UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A  
     *i-na ba-ab-ti-šu*  
 8      ŠE *i-pa-ar-ma*  
 R.      *a-na É.GAL ú-ta-a-ar*  
     -blanc-  
 10     ITI GAN.GAN.È U<sub>4</sub> 15.KAM  
     MU <sup>d</sup>*ri-im*-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU LUGAL  
 Sceau : [*še*]-*ep*-<sup>d</sup>[UTU] / [DUMU] *a-pil-i-[lí-šu]* /  
 [IR] <sup>d</sup>[...]

«<sup>1-2</sup> *gur* de grain, selon la mesure-*parsiktum* standard, <sup>3</sup>évalué d'après la mesure moyenne, <sup>4</sup>pour un prêt-*hubuttatum* : <sup>5-6</sup>reçu par Šep-Šamaš, chef de quartier. <sup>7-8</sup>Il recherchera le grain dans son quartier-*bābtum* et <sup>9</sup>le rendra au palais. » Date.

4) Pour un point sur les prêts-*hubuttatum*, voir Skaist 1994, 52-56.

6-7) Corriger Dalley 2005, 13, qui a lu le titre *ugula gá-gi<sub>4</sub>-a* et compris « cloister overseer ».

8) Il s'agit sans doute d'une forme de *pārum*

<sup>18</sup> Pour le contexte politique, voir Charpin 2004, 336-342.

<sup>19</sup> Une première édition de ce texte a été donnée par Charpin 2007, 159. Une photographie figure sur le CDLI, Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (<https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P347390.jpg>).

« to look for, search for » (CAD P, 210a), selon une suggestion de M. Gavoret. La clause des l. 7-9 n'a pas de parallèle à ma connaissance.

Ce contrat de prêt a ceci de particulier que l'identité du créancier n'apparaît pas directement: on aurait attendu après la l. 7 l'indication: KI É.GAL « (reçu par le chef de quartier Šep-Šamaš) du palais ». Le scribe a apparemment estimé que la clause de remboursement (l. 7-9) suffisait à identifier le prêteur. La formulation est très elliptique, mais on ne voit guère d'autre interprétation possible que celle-ci: c'est le chef de quartier (UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A), d'abord chargé de la distribution du grain dans son quartier, qui devra ensuite effectuer sa collecte afin de rembourser le palais. On doit noter qu'aucune échéance n'est stipulée dans le texte, qui ne comporte pas non plus de témoins: on constate une fois de plus que la limite entre « texte administratif » et « contrat » est parfois ténue. Le document ne fournit aucun élément permettant de proposer une localisation précise: on sait seulement que la tablette a été rédigée dans une ville qui a reconnu le roi « rebelle » Rim-Sin II.<sup>20</sup>

#### 1.2. UET 5 214 [UM 52-30-110]<sup>21</sup>

Louage d'un terrain inondable et d'un verger appartenant à Ili-ippalsam fils d'Enlil-issu par Eribam-Sin, le chef de quartier.

Date: 20/viii/Rim-Sin II a.

F.      Ú.SAL <sup>gis</sup>KIRI<sub>6</sub>  
 2      *ša i-lí-ip-pa-al-sà*  
     DUMU <sup>d</sup>EN.LÍL-*is-sú*  
 4      *a-na ma-la 'eri-ba*-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU  
     UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A  
 6      *i-ri-šu*  
     KI *i-lí-ip-pa-al-sà*  
 8      DUMU <sup>d</sup>EN.LÍL-*is-sú*  
     '*eri-ba*-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU  
 10     NAM.URU<sub>4</sub>.LÁ.ŠÈ ÍB.TA.È  
 R.      2/3.BI *er-re-šu*  
 12     1/3.BI LUGAL A.ŠÀ.GA  
     ŠU BA.AN.TI  
 14     *é-kál-lam* [MÁŠ] A.ŠÀ.GA  
     BA.NI.IB.GI<sub>4</sub>.GI<sub>4</sub>  
 16     IGI <sup>d</sup>UTU  
     '*i-ba*<sup>7</sup>-*lu-uṭ* DUMU <sup>d</sup>UTU.DINGIR

<sup>20</sup> Une liste des localités où des noms d'années de Rim-Sin II furent employés a été donnée dans Pientka-Hinz 2006/8, 371a: Larsa, Kutalla, Ašdubba, Bad-tibira, Lagaš, Ur et Nippur. Il faut y ajouter Isin.

<sup>21</sup> Une photo de la tablette se trouve sur <https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P415103.jpg> (elle ne permet malheureusement pas de déchiffrer l'empreinte de sceau, qui devrait être celle de Sin-eribam). Pour l'ensemble du lot d'archives auquel ce texte appartient (U.17206), cf. Charpin 1981a, 186b; pour davantage de détails, cf. Charpin 2019a.

18 <sup>1</sup>a-na-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU-e-mi-□id□  
LÚ.INIM.MA.BI.MEŠ  
20 ITI <sup>giš</sup>APIN.DU□.A U□ 20.KAM  
MU <sup>d</sup>ri-im-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU LUGAL□  
T.22 ŠEŠ.UNU<sup>ki</sup>.MA É.MUD(!).□KUR(!).RA(!)□  
Kl.EDIN.ŠÈ BÍ.IN.GAR.RA

Sceau : « Seal (4 ll. illegible) »

« <sup>1-3</sup>Le verger inondable appartenant à Ili-ippalsam, fils de Enlil-issu, <sup>4-6</sup>autant qu'Éribam-Sin, le chef de quartier, pourra en cultiver, <sup>7-8</sup>à Ili-ippalsam, fils de Enlil-issu, <sup>9-10</sup>Éribam-Sin l'a loué pour (le) mettre en culture. <sup>11-13</sup>2/3 (de la récolte reviendra) au cultivateur, 1/3 au propriétaire du champ<sup>sic</sup>. <sup>14-15</sup>Il (= le locataire) sera responsable vis-à-vis du palais de la [taxe] du champ. » Trois témoins et date.

14) Pour la restitution, cf. UET 5 210 : 18-19, 217 : 8 et 219 : 19. Dans ces trois cas, l'argent est versé aux personnes qui louent le champ, pas au palais ; en UET 5 206, il est versé au temple de Nanna. Pour l'idée qu'il s'agisse d'une taxe pour l'irrigation, voir Steinkeller 1981, 125-126.

22) Les autres textes ont É.MUD.KUR.RA (Stol 1976, 54), d'où la lecture un peu forcée de la copie. Je n'ai pas encore eu l'opportunité de collationner l'original, conservé à Philadelphie.

Ce contrat enregistre la mise en culture d'un champ appartenant à Ili-ippalsam fils d'Enlil-issu par un individu nommé Sin-eribam. On remarquera que celui-ci n'est pas identifié par le nom de son père, mais par son titre de « chef de quartier » (UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A) : on peut donc penser qu'il intervient ici *ex officio*. Il est possible que le chef de quartier ait employé des gens de son *bâbtum* pour ce travail.

### 1.3. BBVOT 1 26 [AO 5425]

Prêt d'argent par le dieu Enlil au chef de quartier Warad-Sibitti, à rendre lorsque le palais le réclamera.

Date: 22/iv/Samsu-iluna 12.

Collationné le 7/02/2019.<sup>22</sup>

F. [... KÙ.BABBAR]  
2 KI <sup>d</sup>EN.[LÍL]  
<sup>1</sup>İR.<sup>d</sup>IMIN.B[I]  
4 UGULA DAG.G[I<sub>4</sub>.A]  
ŠU BA.AN.TI  
6 *u<sub>4</sub>-um é-kál-lum*  
KÙ.BABBAR *i-ir-ri-šu-ú-šu*  
8 KÙ.BABBAR *a-na* <sup>d</sup>EN.LÍL  
Ì.LÁ.E

<sup>22</sup> Je remercie A. Thomas pour son accueil au Louvre. L'édition ici donnée diffère de celle que j'avais postée sur [www.archibab.fr](http://www.archibab.fr) le 18/01/2013 et que j'ai depuis corrigée.

R.10 GÌR <sup>d</sup>NIN.URTA-ni\*-{ŠU\*}šu\*  
<sup>1d</sup>NIN.URTA-mu-ba-li-*it* □Á\*□.GÁL\*  
12 *ù* İR.<sup>d</sup>IMIN.BI UGULA DAG.□GI<sub>4</sub>□.A

—blanc—

ITI ŠU.NUMUN.A U<sub>4</sub> 22.[KAM]  
14 MU *sa-am-su-[i-lu-na* LUGAL.E]  
KUR GÚ.SI.A\* [...]  
16 MU.UN.DA.B[AL.E]

« <sup>3</sup>Warad-Sibitti, le chef de quartier, <sup>5</sup>a reçu <sup>1</sup>[... d'argent] <sup>2</sup> du dieu En[lil]. <sup>6-7</sup>Le jour où le palais lui réclamera l'argent, <sup>8-9</sup>il devra rendre l'argent au dieu Enlil. <sup>10</sup>Par l'intermédiaire de Ninurta-nišu, Ninurta-muballit le *mu'errum* et Warad-Sibitti, le chef de quartier. » Date.

D. Arnaud avait indiqué dans la notice accompagnant sa copie de la tablette : « [La surface est par endroits systématiquement et grossièrement effacée] ». <sup>23</sup> L'examen détaillé de l'original me permet de préciser que ces caractéristiques ne sont pas anciennes, mais modernes : manifestement, la tablette avait perdu son coin supérieur droit (soit la fin des lignes 1-4 de la face et 13-16 du revers). Pour donner l'illusion d'une tablette intacte, le vendeur a reconstitué en argile l'angle manquant et a lissé à l'argile les parties abîmées (l. 1 et tranche) : la photo p. 112 montre clairement des traces de doigts laissées par cette opération. <sup>24</sup> Il n'y a pas de raison de considérer qu'il s'agit d'un brouillon, malgré l'absence d'empreinte du sceau du débiteur.

2) Enlil peut être restitué comme nom du dieu créancier grâce à la l. 8. On corrigera donc le résumé de D. Arnaud : « (Brouillon d'un) contrat d'emprunt d'argent *au palais* par Warad-Sibitti ». <sup>25</sup>

10) Corriger la lecture Ninurta-idagal dans Charpin 2005a, 31, n. 79 (soit <sup>d</sup>NIN.URTA.Ì.DA. GÁL), effectuée avant collation : en fait, le signe GÁL appartient à la fin de la l. 11. La collation de la l. 10 montre clairement que le scribe avait écrit <sup>d</sup>NIN.URTA-ni-*šu*, puis qu'il a effacé le signe *-šu* pour le réinscrire plus à droite, dans un souci de « justification » de sa mise en page.

11) Au début de la ligne, le scribe avait d'abord noté *ù*, puis a effacé ce signe pour mettre un clou de nom propre : il s'était rendu compte qu'il y aurait un troisième nom à inscrire (l. 12). À la fin de la ligne, le signe GÁL est clair ; je ne connais pas encore d'attestation du titre de Á.GÁL à Nippur, mais c'est la lecture qui me semble la plus probable.

12) La ligne est suivie par un trait, puis un espace anépigraphique avant la date.

<sup>23</sup> Arnaud 1989, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Noter qu'une photo de cette tablette ne figure pas sur le CDLI, Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (P492352).

<sup>25</sup> Arnaud 1989, 9 [les italiques sont de DC].



13-16) L'indication de la date a été omise dans le catalogue de la publication.<sup>26</sup> On corrigera l'indication de la date de BBVOT 1 26 (an 14 de Samsu-iluna) dans Charpin 2005a, 31 n. 79.<sup>27</sup>

On sait que les prêts par des divinités sont majoritairement le fait du dieu Šamaš, mais d'autres divinités apparaissent dans le rôle de prêteurs.<sup>28</sup> Ici, c'est le dieu Enlil, ce qui conduit à conclure que le texte provient très vraisemblablement de Nippur ; un argument supplémentaire tient au fait que deux personnes impliquées dans la transaction portent un nom théophore de Ninurta, divinité poliade de Nippur.<sup>29</sup> Les contrats les plus proches de celui-ci proviennent d'Uruk :<sup>30</sup> on possède un lot de prêts de grain par la déesse Ištar, le remboursement devant être effectué « le jour où le roi réclamera le grain ». La formule rappelle de près celle de BBVOT 1 26 : elle confirme que c'est avant tout l'absence d'échéance fixe (et rapprochée) qui permet de caractériser de tels prêts par des divinités comme des « *charitable loans* »<sup>31</sup> et elle rappelle le contrôle exercé par les rois sur les temples, aussi bien dans le royaume d'Uruk que dans celui de Babylone.<sup>32</sup>

La date du texte doit être remarquée : le contrat a été conclu au mois iv de l'année 12 de Samsu-iluna, donc postérieurement au moment où cessa pour plusieurs siècles la documentation écrite dans les villes

du sud de Sumer (notamment à Ur, Uruk et Larsa).<sup>33</sup> Nippur et Isin, qui avaient passagèrement reconnu Rim-Sin II, ont alors été reprises en main par Samsu-iluna, mais manifestement la conjoncture économique y restait défavorable.<sup>34</sup> On notera qu'à la même date, on possède des mentions de deux autres chefs de quartier de Nippur, nommés Ibbiya<sup>35</sup> et Taribum.<sup>36</sup> Malheureusement, le montant d'argent emprunté par Warad-Sibitti a disparu dans une cassure, mais il s'agit à peu près sûrement d'une somme qui devait permettre au quartier de surmonter les difficultés économiques liées à la situation politique compliquée du moment.

La formulation du prêt est étonnante, puisque parmi les trois intermédiaires (GĪR) mentionnés figure l'emprunteur lui-même ; je n'en connais pas de parallèle exact, mais deux contrats d'Uruk permettent sans doute de comprendre la situation. Il s'agit de deux prêts par la déesse Ištar à plusieurs personnes :<sup>37</sup> le détail de ce que chacun reçoit est donné, il y a une clause de solidarité collective des débiteurs, puis l'indication « par l'intermédiaire de NP » (GĪR NP) et la date, sans témoins. Cela signifie que la personne nommée comme GĪR s'est chargée de distribuer à chacun des débiteurs le grain prêté par la déesse. Dans BBVOT 1 26, il faut vraisemblablement comprendre que le chef du quartier est seul nommé comme débiteur, mais qu'en fait il était chargé avec deux autres personnes de répartir cet argent entre les chefs de famille de son *bābtum* : il était cependant responsable en personne du remboursement de la somme prêtée par le temple d'Enlil.

## 2. LES NOMS DES BĀBTUM

Dans la mesure où il apparaît clairement qu'une ville était composée de plusieurs quartiers-*bābtum*, une double

<sup>26</sup> Arnaud 1989, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Version anglaise : Charpin 2015a, 169, n. 94.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Charpin 2005a (version anglaise dans Charpin 2015a, 149-172 ch. 6).

<sup>29</sup> Les deux dieux avaient leur temple à Nippur : l'Ekur pour Enlil, l'Ešumeša pour Ninurta. Pour la distinction entre Enlil, dieu de tout Sumer, et Ninurta, dieu de la ville de Nippur, voir Charpin 1990a, 92b ; Sallaberger 1997, 162. Une liste de 10 prêts par une divinité ou un temple originaires de Nippur a été donnée par N. Brisch (Brisch 2017, 48, n. 17), à laquelle le présent texte doit être ajouté (il était déjà indiqué comme provenant de Nippur dans Charpin 2005a, 31, n. 79) ; il confirme que « some [temple] loans were made to relieve economic distress ». Ajouter désormais TMH (Texte und Materialien der Hilprecht Collection) 10 74 (Sin), 80 (Šamaš), 83 (Šamaš), éditions et commentaires dans Goddeeris 2016.

A. Thomas a bien voulu m'informer que AO 5425 « a été achetée auprès du fameux Elias Géjou en 1910, avec un lot conséquent de tablettes assez diverses (hymnes, exercices d'écolier, reçus et contrats, lettres...) ». La plupart des textes de Nippur jusqu'à présent publiés proviennent des fouilles américaines du site (Babylonian Collection de Philadelphie ; Hilprecht Collection de Iéna ; Musée de l'Orient ancien d'Istanbul ; Oriental Institute de Chicago). Il en existe cependant quelques dizaines issues de fouilles clandestines, dans des collections publiques et privées : voir par exemple au musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève (TEBA 37 ; Lieberman 1982 MAH 15888, MAH 15937) ; dans la collection Sisa (Leemans 1966, no. 20) ; dans la Free Library de Philadelphie (Lieberman 1982 FLP 2360) ; dans la collection Kroch à Cornell (CUSAS 15) et même au Vatican (Mayer 2005, IB 211).

<sup>30</sup> Références et commentaire dans Charpin 2005a, 31 (// Charpin 2015a, 169).

<sup>31</sup> Veenhof 1987, 72.

<sup>32</sup> Charpin sous presse (§ 3.1.2).

<sup>33</sup> C'est une des raisons pour lesquelles l'indication géographique suggérée par M. Stol pour BBVOT (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient Texte) 1 26 (sous la référence ARV 26) comme « (Larsa?) » (Stol 1995, 307) ne me semble pas à retenir. Pour UET 5 868 (texte d'Ur exceptionnellement daté de l'année 12 de Samsu-iluna), cf. Charpin 2019b. Récemment, S. Richardson a cru pouvoir remettre en doute la vision d'un abandon des villes du Sud par leur population (Richardson 2018) ; ce n'est pas ici le lieu de lui répondre, ce que je me propose de faire dans mon livre sur *La Mésopotamie sous les successeurs de Hammu-rabi* (en préparation).

<sup>34</sup> Un témoignage supplémentaire a été récemment publié, montrant le niveau très élevé atteint alors par le prix du grain (TMH 10 105) : voir le commentaire dans Goddeeris 2016, 195-196.

<sup>35</sup> ARN 86 rev. 5 : IGI i-□bi□-ia UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.[A] (achat d'un champ ; 1/xi/Samsu-iluna 11) ; Langdon 1914 no. 8 l. 14 : IGI i-bi-ia UGULA DAG.□GI<sub>4</sub>□.A (achat d'une maison ; -/-/Samsu-iluna 12).

<sup>36</sup> BE 6/2 30 : (2) <sup>1</sup>ta-ri-bu-um UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A (-/iv/Samsu-iluna 11) ; voir pour ce texte Leemans 1991, 316 no. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Sanati-Müller 1988 nos. 32 et 33. Ces deux textes peuvent être consultés sur www.archibab.fr. Je persiste à considérer la graphie AN.<sup>4</sup>INANNA comme étant une façon de désigner la déesse Ištar (cf. Charpin sous presse § 3.1.1).

question se pose : combien de quartiers différents existait-il dans une ville donnée, et de quelle manière étaient-ils désignés ? Une tablette conservée au musée des antiquités de Turin donne de précieuses indications à cet égard.

2.1. CMET 9 767 [MAT 767]

Liste de noms de personnes (souvent par paires), suivis par l'indication du quartier (DAG.GI.A = *bâbtum*), au nombre de 9 au total.

Date : (-)/(-)/(Samsu-iluna -)

Edition: CMET 9, 1999, 65-66 (no. 767).

Reproductions: CDLI (<http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/P273699>) [photo]; CMET 9, 1999, pl. 17 [copie].

Collationné à Turin le 25-26/10/2018 (\*).<sup>38</sup>

F.	<sup>1</sup> <i>i-bi</i> - <sup>d</sup> NIN.ŠUBUR
2	ù 30- <i>im-gur</i>
	-----
	DAG.GI.A GIBIL
	-----
4	<sup>1</sup> <i>ú-túl-iš<sub>8</sub>-tár</i>
	ù <i>šum-ma-an-la</i> - <sup>d</sup> UTU
6	DAG.GI.A <i>e-bi-ir-tum</i>
	-----
	<sup>1</sup> <i>a-bu-wa-qar</i>
8	ù <i>i-ra-am<sup>?</sup>-mi</i> -□ x x □
	[D]AG.GI.A <sup>d</sup> *NĒ*.ERI <sub>11</sub> *.[GAL]
	-----
10	<sup>1</sup> 30- <i>i-dí-n</i> [ <i>am</i> ]
	ù <i>a-at</i> *-[ <i>ta-a</i> ]
12	□ DAG □.GI.A <i>tu-ša</i> *-[...]
	-----
T.	<sup>1</sup> <i>u-bar-rum</i>
14	DAG.GI.A <sup>d</sup> MAR*.T[U]
R.	<sup>1</sup> 30- <i>le</i> *- <i>i</i>
16	ù <i>i-bi</i> *- <sup>d</sup> *□ NIN*.ŠUBUR*□
	-----
	DAG.GI.A x x 30 [x]
	-----
18	<sup>1</sup> <i>iš<sub>8</sub>-tár-ki-m</i> [ <i>a</i> ]- <i>ì-lí-ia</i>
	ù □ <i>za</i> *□-[ <i>la-a</i> ]g*- <i>gu</i>
20	DAG.G[I.A] <i>ša</i> *- <i>gi</i> *- <i>iš</i> *-[ <i>ki-n</i> ]u*
	-----
	<sup>1d</sup> x [...] x x
22	DAG.GI.A <sup>d</sup> GU.LA
	-----
	<sup>1</sup> <i>qí-iš-ti</i> - <sup>d</sup> MAR.TU
24	ù <i>a-hi</i> *- <i>ia-a</i>
	-----
	DAG.G[I.A x]- <i>i-dí-nam</i>

<sup>38</sup> S. de Martino et M. Viano m'ont invité à donner une conférence à Turin en octobre 2018 ; par leur intermédiaire, j'ai obtenu l'autorisation d'E. Panero, directrice du *Museo di Antichità di Torino*, de collationner les tablettes de CMET 9 (Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino). Que tous soient ici remerciés.

T.26 <sup>1</sup>DINGIR-*lam-i-šu*

18-19) Cf. Charpin 2014. Noter la séquence : (I)*za-la-gu* / *ù iš<sub>8</sub>-tár-ki-ma-ì-lí-ia* en YOS 12 35 : 12-13 (25/x/Samsu-iluna 1). On lira donc ici □ *za*□-[*la-a*]g-*gu* au lieu de l'édition : a [x x (x)] x *aš gu* (le AŠ peut très bien être la fin du AG, cf. copie et photo [confirmé par collation]). Zalaggum est sans doute à comprendre comme un anthroponyme signifiant « pierre claire » dérivé du sumérien ZALAG (le mot est entré dans le CAD et le AHW s. v. *zālāqu*) ; les noms de pierre donnant des anthroponymes ne sont pas rares (cf. Charpin 1992b). On retrouve *za-la-gu-um* en Santag 9 234 : 12 ; on normalisera donc le NP en Zalaggum.

Grâce à YOS 12 35, notre texte se trouve vraisemblablement daté du début du règne de Samsu-iluna.

24) Préférable à l'édition : *ù a-še*(?)-*ia-a*.

Ce texte est d'une structure très simple : on trouve un ou deux noms, suivi(s) par l'indication d'un quartier-*bâbtum*. Le laconisme du document ne permet pas de savoir quel lien existait entre les individus et le quartier auquel ils sont rattachés. M. Stol a estimé que les noms qui précèdent l'indication du quartier sont ceux des chefs de quartier ; selon lui, puisque certaines villes avaient deux maires-*rabiānum*, certains quartiers auraient aussi pu avoir deux chefs.<sup>39</sup>

Ce qui est très intéressant, c'est le fait que chacun des neuf quartiers est suivi par une indication, qui semble servir à le désigner. Ces désignations relèvent de quatre réalités différentes :<sup>40</sup>

- 1) chronologique : « nouveau » (GIBIL l. 3). On sait qu'il ne faut pas prendre au pied de la lettre de telles indications, car ce qui a été un jour « nouveau » peut finir par devenir ancien, comme les « Villeneuve » dans la toponymie française ; en ce qui concerne le monde mésopotamien, on connaît plusieurs exemples d'*alum eššum* ;<sup>41</sup>
- 2) géographique : « sur l'autre rive » (*ēbirtum* l. 6) ; une telle dénomination renvoie manifestement à l'existence de canaux à l'intérieur des villes mésopotamiennes ;<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> «I due nomi che precedono potrebbero essere quelli dei capi del quartiere» (Stol, dans Archi *et al.* 1999, 66). Il a ajouté : « Nelle liste di testimoni occasionalmente ci si imbatte in due sindaci (*rabiānum*); sono loro i due capi del quartiere? » Pour cette question, voir ci-dessous la section 3.

<sup>40</sup> Il reste deux noms indéterminés en raison de leur mauvais état de conservation (l. 12 et 17).

<sup>41</sup> Pour Babylone, cf. Charpin 1985, 266-268 ; pour Emar, cf. Charpin 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Voir Stone, Zimansky 2004 ; Stone 2005, 152. Pour Ur, on notera dans U.6959 la mention d'une maison située au bord d'un canal (cf. l'édition et le commentaire de ce texte dans Jaquet 2019).

- 3) théologique : des noms de divinités : Nergal (l. 9), Amurrum (l. 14), Gula (l. 22) ; on peut penser qu'il s'agit de quartiers où se trouvent des temples voués à ces divinités ;
- 4) sociologique : des noms de personnes : Šagiškinum (l. 20)[...]iddinam (l. 25). Il s'agit sans doute de gens importants qui ont marqué l'histoire du quartier qui a pris leur nom.<sup>43</sup> Puisqu'on voit qu'un *bābtum* peut être désigné par un nom de personne, cela pourrait remettre en cause la façon dont nous comprenons certains textes. Par exemple, l'indication DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A *in-bi-ili-šu* en OECT 13 78 (un texte de Nippur du 20/ii/Samsu-iluna 26) a été comprise par M. Stol comme indiquant qu'Inbi-ilišu était un « chef de quartier » (UGULA DAG.GI.A) :<sup>44</sup> on pourrait en réalité avoir ici le nom du quartier, pas celui de son chef.

Dans quelle ville le texte CMET 9 767 fut-il rédigé ? Cette tablette ne provenant pas de fouilles régulières, il n'y a pas de certitude à ce sujet, seulement quelques indices. Comme on l'a vu plus haut, la parenté du document avec YOS 12 35 est indéniable et il faut donc étudier cette tablette en détail.

## 2.2. YOS 12 35 [YBC 6333]

Reçu de l'argent des *zabardabbûm* de Girsu, Lagaš et Nina par Sin-imaguranni et Bal'a des mains de Zalaggum et Ištar-kima-iliya.

25/x/Samsu-iluna 1.

Collationné à Yale (mars 1987 et avril 2018)

1 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR  
 2 ŠĀ KÙ.BABBAR ZABAR.DAB<sub>5</sub>  
 ša GÍR.SU<sup>ki</sup> ŠIR.BUR.LA<sup>o</sup> ù UNU×HA<sup>ki</sup>  
 4 GŪ I<sub>7</sub> ŠIR.BUR.LA<sup>ki</sup>  
 NĪ.ŠU *i-dí-ia-tum* ZABAR.DAB<sub>5</sub>  
 6 ša a-na gi-mil-DINGIR UGULA É\*  
*a-na šu-ud-du-nim*  
 T.8 *na-ad-nu*  
 R. <sup>ld</sup>EN.ZU-*im-gur-an-ni*  
 10 ù BAL-a  
*i-na qá-ti*  
 12 <sup>l</sup>za-la-gu  
 ù iš<sub>8</sub>-tár-ki-ma-ì-lí-ia  
 14 mah-ru  
 ITI AB.È U<sub>4</sub> 25.KAM  
 16 MU sa-am-su-i-lu-na LUGAL

<sup>43</sup> On rappellera que certaines rues portent aussi le nom d'une personne : voir Charpin 2009, 132.

<sup>44</sup> Stol 1995, 307. De ce point de vue, CMET (Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino) 9 767 est différent de As. 1930-T615 (Gelb 1968, 40-41), où les indications *ba-ab-tum* NP donnent apparemment le nom du responsable de chaque *bābtum*.

T. NAM.EN.NA KUR.KUR.RA  
 S\*) *é-a-ši-[li]* / DUMU BAL.MU.N[AM.HÉ] / ĪR<sup>(d)</sup>EN.[KI].

«<sup>l-51</sup> mine d'argent, sur l'argent des *zabardabbûm* de Girsu, Lagaš et Nina sur la rive du canal de Lagaš, service du *zabardabbûm* Iddiyatum, <sup>6-8</sup>qui a été donnée pour recouvrement à Gimil-ili, le responsable administratif : <sup>9-14</sup>Sin-imaguranni et Bal'a l'ont reçue des mains de Zalaggum et Ištar-kima-iliya. » Date.

6) Après le nom de *gi-mil-DINGIR* figure un titre, qui a été lu PA.PA (= UGULA GIDRI) dans l'index de YOS 12 (34).<sup>45</sup> Une telle lecture n'est pas vraisemblable, ce Gimil-ili n'étant pas un militaire et occupant manifestement dans l'administration une place hiérarchique très élevée (cf. AbB 14 124, commenté ci-dessous). Grâce à une photo prise par K. Wagenonner, il est possible de lire sans aucun doute le titre de UGULA É. On comparera la situation de YOS 12 35 à celle décrite dans la lettre AbB 13 19 (commentaire dans Fiette 2018, 20, n. 117) : Hammu-rabi y donne l'ordre à Sin-iddinam de faire recouvrer les arriérés de la taxe-*igisûm* de sa province par Sin-mušallim l'UGULA É.<sup>46</sup> Dans ce texte comme dans YOS 12 35, on voit que le titre de UGULA É n'est pas forcément en rapport avec l'administration *des temples*.<sup>47</sup>

6-8) Cf. YOS 12 67 : reçu par Bal'a de l'argent, représentant l'arriéré de Sin-šemi, le *zabardabbûm* d'Ur, du service d'Iddiyatum « qui a été confié pour recouvrement à Gimil-ili » (7) *ša a-na gi-mil-DINGIR a-na šu-ud-du-nim* (8) *na-ad-nu*. Le nom de Gimil-ili n'est pas ici suivi de son titre. Ce reçu appartient aux archives du *zabardabbûm* Sin-šemi, qui ont été retrouvées à Ur lors de fouilles clandestines (Charpin 1986, 158-161, avec édition de YOS 12 67, 159) ; il faut ajouter YOS 12 77, désormais édité sur [www.archibab.fr](http://www.archibab.fr).

S) La copie indiquait simplement : « Indistinct seal impression ». J'avais collationné cette empreinte en mars 1987, en notant que je ne voyais pas à qui elle pouvait correspondre : on attend en effet que ce soit Sin-imaguranni ou Bal'a qui scelle. On sait que Bal'a utilisait le sceau de Balmunamhe (cf. YOS 12 67, dont le sceau a été lu dans Charpin 1987a) : on a ici l'empreinte d'un autre sceau. Or on connaît un Sin-imaguranni fils de Ea-šilli dans Haldar 2 : 26' ;<sup>48</sup> il s'agit du texte définissant

<sup>45</sup> Et hélas repris dans Charpin 1986, 160.

<sup>46</sup> AbB (Altbabylonische Briefe) 13 19 : (18) *ša a-na d*EN.ZU-*mu-ša-lim* UGULA É (19) *a-na šu-ud-du-nim na-ad-nu* « (les arriérés de l'*igisûm* depuis l'année 36 jusqu'à l'année 39) qui ont été donnés pour recouvrement à Sin-mušallim l'UGULA É ».

<sup>47</sup> Voir à ce sujet Fiette 2018, 106.

<sup>48</sup> Andersson 2008, 13-20 [= Relp 23].

la part d'héritage de Lipit-Ea, le petit-fils de Balmunamhe, sous Samsu-iluna. Sin-imaguranni a donc ici utilisé le sceau de son père – et il était parent de Bal'a (sans doute son neveu), ce qui explique l'association des deux personnages dans YOS 12 35 comme dans AbB 14 124.<sup>49</sup>

On retrouve en effet trois des personnes impliquées dans YOS 12 35 dans AbB 14 124,<sup>50</sup> une lettre écrite par Gimil-ilim à Sin-imaguranni et Bal'a qui a trait à la perception de l'argent du *zagsmukkum* de la « Province inférieure » :<sup>51</sup> les comptes sont faits au palais à Babylone et Gimil-ili demande à ses correspondants de le rejoindre sans tarder dans la capitale. On voit donc qu'il y avait une centralisation de la collecte de cet impôt au niveau de la totalité de l'ancien royaume de Larsa.<sup>52</sup> Mais l'argent qui fait l'objet du reçu YOS 12 35 concerne les trois villes qui se succèdent le long du « canal de Lagaš », soit Girsu, Lagaš et Nina.<sup>53</sup> On devrait donc en conclure que Zalaggum et Ištar-kima-iliya vivaient dans une de ces trois localités ;<sup>54</sup> ils ont collecté l'argent dû et l'ont remis à Sin-imaguranni et Bal'a, lesquels ont à leur tour versé l'argent à Gimil-ili. Le reçu YOS 12 35, scellé par Sin-imaguranni, devrait logiquement avoir été conservé par Zalaggum ou Ištar-kima-iliya.

Quelle que soit la localité d'où provient CMET 9 167, les 9 *bâbtum* énumérés dans ce texte représentent-ils la totalité des quartiers de la ville ? Il est hélas impossible de le dire, puisque nous ignorons jusqu'à la raison d'être de ce texte. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que la ville où vivaient les personnes énumérées comptait au minimum 9 quartiers-*bâbtum*.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Il faut compléter en conséquence l'arbre généalogique de la famille de Balmunamhe publié dans Charpin 1987a. Je reviendrai prochainement sur cette question avec d'autres collations.

<sup>50</sup> Voir Fiette 2018, 50, n. 242 : B. Fiette me signale qu'au vu de YOS (Yale Oriental Series) 12 35, il abandonne sa proposition de voir en Gimil-ili le successeur de Sin-iddinam.

<sup>51</sup> Pour la perception de l'argent « du Nouvel An » (*zagsmukkum*) dû par les *zabardabbûm*, cf. Charpin 1986, 238-239 (à Ur sous Samsu-iluna comme à Kiš à l'époque paléo-babylonienne tardive).

<sup>52</sup> Pour les circonscriptions administratives de la « Province inférieure », voir désormais Fiette 2018, 85-89.

<sup>53</sup> Sur la carte de Fiette 2018, 89, non seulement Girsu et Lagaš appartiennent sûrement à la même circonscription, mais il faut y ajouter Nina comme le montre YOS (Yale Oriental Series) 12 35.

<sup>54</sup> On possède des tablettes paléo-babyloniennes provenant de Tello (Girsu) et de Al-Hibba (Lagaš), pas de Surghul (Nina), ce qui limite le choix à l'une des deux premières villes.

<sup>55</sup> Pour la question du nombre de personnes vivant dans un *bâbtum* et la question de savoir si ce terme babylonien correspond au concept moderne de « neighborhood », voir Postgate 1992, 237-238.

### 3. LES CHEFS DE QUARTIERS

Nous nous interrogerons pour finir sur le titre et le statut des individus décrits comme « chef de quartier » dans nos sources.

#### 3.1 Le titre de « chef de quartier »

La plupart du temps, le titre est écrit au moyen du sumérogramme composé UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A (ou simplement UGULA DAG.GI.A).<sup>56</sup> Comment ce titre était-il lu en akkadien ? Une transcription mécanique de UGULA par *waklum* (d'où : *wakil bâbtim*) semble exclue, malgré le témoignage tardif de Hh I 79 (*ugula dag.gi<sub>4</sub>.a = a-kil MIN*, cf. CAD B, 10a). En effet, les deux seules attestations syllabiques à l'époque paléo-babylonienne du titre sont :

– *ra-bi ba-ab-ti-šu* : Collon 1986, 78, no. 76 : 3. Il est très important de signaler qu'il s'agit ici de la légende d'un sceau-cylindre : la dignité de « chef de quartier-*bâbtum* » ne correspondait donc pas à une fonction temporaire, puisqu'un individu pouvait faire graver ce titre sur son sceau.<sup>57</sup>

– *ra-bi-an ba-ab-ti-šu* RIME 4, 659, no. 1.<sup>58</sup> Il s'agit d'une inscription sur brique commémorant la construction d'une muraille d'une localité nommée Mutalu (Išān Dhaḥāk, à ca. 25 km au NE de Kiš).

On retrouve ici la même problématique qu'avec les titres militaires d'UGULA MAR.TU (à lire *rabi Amurrim*)<sup>59</sup> ou UGULA GIDRI (alias « PA.PA », à lire *rabi haṭṭim*) :<sup>60</sup> dans ces titres, le sumérogramme UGULA était, à l'époque paléo-babylonienne, lu *rabûm*.<sup>61</sup>

#### 3.2. La durée de la fonction

La prosopographie permet de confirmer ce que la légende du sceau citée ci-dessus indiquait déjà : la fonction de « chef de quartier » durait plusieurs années. Le meilleur exemple nous vient de Nippur, où un certain Taribum est attesté avec ce titre pendant quinze années :<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Voir la liste dressée par M. Stol (Stol 1995, 307), à laquelle on rajoutera les exemples étudiés dans la présente étude.

<sup>57</sup> Pour cette problématique, voir le cas analogue des « chefs des marchands », qui faisaient régulièrement figurer leur titre d'UGULA DAM.GAR sur leur sceau : cf. Charpin 1982, 61-64 à compléter par Charpin 2015b, 169. Leur dignité n'était nullement annuelle, et même souvent héréditaire (Charpin 1990b).

<sup>58</sup> Corriger la référence à « M. Stol, *Studies in Old Babylonian History* p. 73 » en « p. 80 ».

<sup>59</sup> Charpin 1987b. Le titre de *rabiān Amurrim* est également attesté : cf. Seri 2005, 55-60.

<sup>60</sup> Charpin 1987 ; Charpin 2000b.

<sup>61</sup> Charpin 2007, 170. Noter que le pluriel de ces composés se fait avec le pluriel du deuxième élément : *rabi babâtim* (UGULA *ba-ba-tim*, ARM (Archives Royales de Mari) 6 43 : 18 ; UGULA *ba-ba-a-tim*.MEŠ, inédit A.3357 : 10, cité dans Charpin 1992a).

<sup>62</sup> Curieusement, seule la référence à BE 6/2 30 : 2 figure dans Stol 1995, 307 ; les deux autres références avaient pourtant été

– BE 6/2 16 : (16) [IGI *t*]a-ri-bu-um [UGULA DA]G.GI<sub>4</sub>.A (-/vi/Hammu-rabi 39) ;

– BE 6/2 24 : (32) IGI ta-ri-bu-um UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A (-/xi/Samsu-iluna 4) ;

– BE 6/2 30 : (2) <sup>1</sup>ta-ri-bu-um UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A (-/iv/Samsu-iluna 11).

On notera à cet égard qu'il en allait de même pour la fonction de maire-*rabiânûm* : contrairement à ce qu'avait écrit Landsberger en 1955, cette charge ne tournait nullement annuellement au sein des Anciens d'une ville, mais pouvait être détenue pendant des années par le même individu.<sup>63</sup>

### 3.3. Chefs de quartiers et Anciens d'une ville

Une question se pose alors : quel rapport existait-il entre les « chefs de quartiers » et les Anciens d'une ville ? Comme on l'a vu en introduction, A. Seri a exclu de son étude le *bâbtum* parce qu'elle n'a pratiquement pas trouvé de texte où le « quartier » interagît avec les Anciens. La raison de cette situation pourrait être fort simple : nous devons tout simplement envisager que le groupe des Anciens d'une ville ne soit pas autre chose que l'ensemble des chefs de quartiers. Lorsqu'une affaire concernait seulement un quartier, la personne responsable était désignée comme « chef de quartier » (UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A) ; lorsqu'elle concernait l'ensemble de la ville, le groupe des « chefs de quartiers » aurait été décrit comme « les Anciens ».<sup>64</sup>

Le procès VS 7 56 pourrait s'expliquer de cette manière.<sup>65</sup> La propriété de la maison de Riš-Edub lui fut contestée par les trois fils de Kunniya. Riš-Edub alla trouver deux dignitaires, à savoir le *šandabakkum*

Elmešum ainsi que le *mu'errum* Ili-iqišam, qui écrivirent au responsable du cadastre Šamaš-lamassašu :<sup>66</sup> « Que le *warkûm* (EGIR) de Kiš, les Anciens de Kiš et les gens du quartier (DUMU.MEŠ DAG.GI.A) se tiennent ». Le *warkûm* est ici clairement le responsable de la municipalité,<sup>68</sup> entouré par le groupe des Anciens. Mais ensuite, il n'est pas question, comme on s'y attendrait, du « chef du quartier et des gens du quartier » : on ne mentionne que les « gens du quartier ». Cela pourrait signifier que le « chef du quartier » est inclus dans le groupe des « Anciens ».

Pour confirmer cette hypothèse, il faudra découvrir un exemple où le même individu, au même moment, est désigné comme UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A mais est aussi attesté parmi les Anciens de sa ville. Je ne suis pas sûr qu'un tel cas se trouve facilement, car les textes où les Anciens sont nommés individuellement, et non désignés simplement collectivement, sont rares :<sup>70</sup> du moins, lorsqu'il se présentera, sa portée devrait être claire immédiatement. Pour le moment, l'avantage de cette hypothèse est son caractère logique : autrement, il faudrait imaginer que les anciens Mésopotamiens avaient conçu un système en « millefeuille », où les « chefs de quartier » auraient été distincts des chefs des principales familles formant le corps des « Anciens » de la ville. Nos technocrates modernes sont très forts pour créer ce type d'institutions, mais je doute que tel ait été le cas dans la Mésopotamie paléo-babylonienne.

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N.B. Les abréviations utilisées dans cette étude (notamment les sigles des recueils de textes) peuvent être retrouvées sur [www.archibab.fr](http://www.archibab.fr).

signalées par E. Stone (Stone 1987, 282), qui corrigeait implicitement la lecture de Poebel 1909, 138b (où *PA-é(?)*-*gi-a* doit être lu UGULA DAG.GI<sub>4</sub>.A).

<sup>63</sup> Voir la mise au point dans Charpin 2007, 173-174.

<sup>64</sup> On doit d'ailleurs noter ici qu'il n'existe aucun sceau où un individu aurait fait graver le titre d'« Ancien » de sa ville : le mot « Anciens » désigne toujours un groupe, jamais un individu et il est toujours employé au pluriel. Que le groupe formé par les Anciens d'une ville ne soit pas fixé ni en nombre stable est rendu clair par un texte comme AbB 9 50. Un homme, adopté par une religieuse-*nadîtum*, souhaite contester l'adoption par celle-ci d'un jeune homme et indique : « J'ai assemblé 20 Anciens de la ville à son sujet et j'ai exposé son cas devant eux » (8) 20 *ši-bu-ut a-lim ú-pa-ah-hi-ir-šum-ma* (9) *a-wa-a-ti-šu ma-ah-ri-šu-nu aš-ku-un-ma*. Voir également les énumérations nominatives qui s'achèvent par la mention : « et les autres Anciens de NG » (*ú ši-bu-ut NG ma-du-tim*) ; cf. Charpin 2005b, 134 (VS [Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler] 29 19 : 27'), 136 (VS 18 : 19) et 137, n. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Ce texte de Kiš date du 3/iii/Ammi-ditana 24. Il n'a pas été intégré par E. Dombardi dans son corpus, sans doute à cause de la cassure entre la face et le revers : il s'agit pourtant sûrement d'un « procès ». Voir les indications prosopographiques de Pientka 1998, 337, no. 58. Une édition électronique de ce texte figure sur [www.archibab.fr](http://www.archibab.fr).

<sup>66</sup> Il est clair que le titre de DUB.SAR.ZÀ.GA désigne ici le responsable du cadastre. Il pourrait s'agir d'un changement à l'époque paléo-babylonienne tardive, puisqu'au paravant des villes comme Ešnunna, Ur, etc. connaissaient le titre de *kakikkum* (cf. Charpin 1992a). Pour autant que j'ai pu voir, le titre de *kakikkum* n'est plus attesté après Samsu-iluna.

<sup>67</sup> VS [Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler] 7 56 : (12) *ša EGIR* □KIŠ<sup>ki</sup>□ *ši-bu-ut KIŠ<sup>ki</sup>* (13) *ú DUMU.MEŠ DAG.GI.A li-iz-zi-zu*.

<sup>68</sup> Pour le titre de EGIR à Kiš à l'époque paléo-babylonienne tardive, cf. Pientka 1998, 389.

<sup>69</sup> Pour un autre cas où les « gens du quartier » (LÚ.MEŠ DUMU.MEŠ *ba-ab-tim*) jouent un rôle analogue dans un contexte semblable, voir VS [Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler] 7 16 (Samsu-iluna 20) : après la mort de ses parents, un individu se réfère au témoignage des gens de son quartier pour confirmer ses droits de propriété sur un terrain.

<sup>70</sup> Malheureusement, le livre d'A. Seri (Seri 2005) ne donne aucune liste de ce genre. J'ai signalé quelques cas dans Charpin 2005b : VS [Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler] 29 19 : 7-27' ; VS [Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler] 18 17 : 9-19 (cf. Charpin 2005b, 137, n. 6) et les autres exemples du tableau p. 142 (A, B, E, F, K).

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Fig. 1. BBVOT 1 26



YBC 6333 (YPM BC 020399)

Fig. 2. YOS 12 35

# TELL MOZAN'S OUTER CITY IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BCE\*

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## *Abstract*

During the third millennium B.C.E, Tell Mozan, ancient Urkesh, expanded to include an extensive outer city. A variety of investigations in the outer city reveal a complex urban environment: a mix of planned and unplanned activity with the environment and large municipal works acting as constraining factors on more localized activity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the mid-third millennium, the site of Tell Mozan, ancient Urkesh, saw a period of growth and expanded urbanization and the city added an extensive area, enclosing approximately 100 hectares within a new outer city wall. The outer city encompassed by this area was roughly five times larger than the already extensive high mound. This extended area was critical to the function of the city and provided much more than simply space for additional housing.

Building on Zaccagnini's<sup>1</sup> analysis of the urban landscape of Arraphe, I have proposed using a modular approach to examining the interrelationship of different components of third millennium cities in Northern Mesopotamia.<sup>2</sup> By examining the relationship among the various components it is possible to look at the urban form as a whole. In particular, my work has called attention to the ways in which the lower towns and outer cities of urban centers are organized, and how the overlap or co-occurrence of different urban components is more significant than the appearance or location of a particular component. The main urban components of the third millennium cities identified were city walls, water resources, streets (intramural), roads (extramural), mortuary structures, houses, workshops, temples and shrines, and administrative structures.<sup>3</sup>

This article outlines the case of outer city at Mozan by examining the evidence for the different modular components and their relationship to each other in order to create a schematic view of the third millennium urban environment. A schematic modular

understanding of the city allows comparison with other cities, creating a level view that takes into account evidence from multiple methods including surface survey, geomagnetics, and excavations. At Mozan, most of the urban components of the model can be identified and understood as part of the larger urban environment that brought together individual features to create a functioning, flourishing city during the mid-third millennium. Additionally, this article brings together the various investigations to create an overview of the work the excavation team, led by Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Giorgio Buccellati, has conducted since 1984.

Rather than adhering strictly to a planned/unplanned dichotomy that is often present in discussions of urbanism, the investigations in Mozan's outer city show that there was an aspect of 'possibilism'<sup>4</sup> that created preferred locations for certain activities based on a variety of influences including the natural environment, preexisting structures (including the already high central mound), and cultural and economic preferences. Furthermore, the widespread distribution and co-occurrence of the modular components shows a form of 'distributed urbanism' with the various functions of an urban city 'distributed' across the urban landscape, rather than centered solely on the high mound with undistinguished residential areas spreading out from the central area.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. MOZAN'S OUTER CITY IN CONTEXT

Extensive excavations, directed by Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, have given the overarching outline of the history of Mozan, ancient Urkesh.<sup>6</sup> The excavations on the

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<sup>1</sup> Zaccagnini 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Chaves Yates 2014a.

<sup>3</sup> see Chaves Yates 2014a, fig. 6.1.

<sup>4</sup> The term possibilism is used in geography to define limits set by the natural environment (Vidal de Lan Blache 1952), but in this context it is used to reflect both natural environmental limits and any preexisting built environment.

<sup>5</sup> see Chaves Yates 2014a, figs. 7.1, 7.2.

<sup>6</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1988; 1995; 1998; 2000; 2009; 2014; Buccellati 2005a; 2005b; 2010a; 2010b; Kelly-Buccellati

central mound have revealed a history back into the fourth millennium, demonstrating the centrality and longevity of the site for millennia.<sup>7</sup> During the mid-third millennium, this city experienced a period of rapid expansion, enclosing the outer city and bringing that area more tightly into the control of the urban center. This expansion has been dated to potentially as early as 2600 BCE based on the finds in the outer city and the changes to the inner city wall at that time.<sup>8</sup> Mozan's expansion is linked to a period of general urbanization across the larger region, sometimes called the 'Second Urban Revolution' (table 1).<sup>9</sup> Structures on the high mound dating to the time of the expansion of the outer city include a monumental palace and a large temple complex.<sup>10</sup> Rising more than 20 meters above the level of the outer city, the central high mound remained the center of power and authority in the city,<sup>11</sup> even while the city was rapidly expanding and various small neighborhoods and sectors of the city were developing.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. DEFINING THE OUTER CITY

There are three main areas when thinking about urban Mozan. The high mound, the outer city, and the area surrounding the city necessary for its support. Extensive excavations on the high mound have given a detailed understanding of its function in the third and second millennia (see above). The high mound was surrounded by a city wall initially and excavations in area K1 in the eastern part of the high mound showed that this wall was subsequently somewhat built over.<sup>13</sup> Another city wall, the outer city wall, was constructed later during the EJII period. The Outer City is defined as the area between these two walls. Beyond the outer city wall areas of scattered occupation, important geographic features, water resources and supporting villages constitute the larger supporting hinterland of the city. Various excavations, surveys and other investigations have been conducted in the outer city, giving an incomplete but cohesive view of the outer city (fig. 1, table 2).

### 4. CITY WALL

The outer city wall is one of the defining components of the urban structure at Mozan, setting

the boundary of the contained urban area and representing a significant investment on behalf of the city. The outer city wall is clearly visible in the Corona images and the topographic survey and identified during the earliest investigations at the site.<sup>14</sup> Surveys and geomagnetic studies have confirmed the location of the outer city wall circumvallating the city at a distance ranging from 200-400 meters from the base of the main mound and the inner city wall (fig. 2).<sup>15</sup> A possible city wall was detected in a limited excavation in an area called OH1. Layered pebbles and stones from the sounding were suggested as a possible internal portion of a casemate wall.<sup>16</sup> Casemate walls, filled with similar types of debris, excavated at Tell Chuera support this idea.<sup>17</sup> This imposing structure would have restricted the points of access to the city and directed the flow of people and animals headed to the villages and fields. Several potential gates have been located. Hubner's magnetometry study in the southern outer city suggests that the gates were flanked by two towers.<sup>18</sup> These access points would be the first point of centralized control. The inner city wall (excavated at K1) was probably used as an administrative control point as well since its significance as a fortification wall was diminished after the construction of the outer city wall in the mid-third millennium.<sup>19</sup>

Monumental architecture, possibly relating to the city wall, is suggested by the survey in area OG50, which identified almost 400 large stones (approximately 40-60 cm) and 100 smaller stones.<sup>20</sup> Stone architecture using the same types of stones is known on the high mound as part of the major constructions of the temple complex and the palace.<sup>21</sup> The large stones, brought from the Tur Abdin mountain range to the north, were disturbed during modern agricultural work, yet appear to represent a substantial investment in the outer city architecture.

### 5. STREETS AND URBAN PLANNING

Integral to understanding the layout and organization of any city is an analysis of the transit routes. Without detailed excavation it is often difficult to identify or be certain about street patterns, however, the geophysical surveys at Mozan give a glimpse into the possible arrangement of the inter-

1990; 1998; 2010; 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Bunnens, Roobeart 1988; Buccellati 1998a, 16; Chaves Yates 2014a, 196.

<sup>9</sup> Akkermans, Schwartz 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Buccellati 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Buccellati 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Chaves Yates 2014b.

<sup>13</sup> Bunnens, Roobeart 1988.

<sup>14</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1988.

<sup>15</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1988; Hughey 1988; Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988; Pfalzner *et al.* 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Buccellati 1988a, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Helms *et al.* 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Pfalzner *et al.* 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Bunnens, Roobeart 1988.

<sup>20</sup> Chaves Yates 2014a, 151.

<sup>21</sup> Buccellati 2017.

city transport routes. The roads and streets in the southern outer city appear to radiate out from the gate area.<sup>22</sup> The largest of these radiating streets leads toward the high mound, but at an angle (fig. 3). The other smaller streets appear to lead to destinations in the outer city, possibly suggesting a more circuitous route throughout the outer city was the norm, rather than a direct passage to the high mound and center city. This street patterning would have the additional benefit of alleviating the need to pass through the high mound to reach different parts of the city. A ring road found at Tell Chuera, seems to operate in this way and serves function similar to a modern bypass highway, allowing transit through the city without passing through the dense center.<sup>23</sup> Smaller streets seem to branch off with little organization or planning, giving additional evidence for a mix of planned and unplanned urban development at Mozan.

#### 6. WATER

Although Mozan received enough rainfall for agriculture during the third millennium, access to water was an important aspect of site placement. Sites are known to be located along waterways which provided secondary access to water for people and animals.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, waterways were used as transport and communication routes between cities and their surrounding villages, as demonstrated by Chagar Bazar.<sup>25</sup> At Mozan a wadi appears to have run past, possibly even through, the city to the west in the third millennium.<sup>26</sup> Known from the first topographic surveys<sup>27</sup> the watercourse was confirmed through deep soundings in OR1 that uncovered water laid sediments.<sup>28</sup> This wadi functioned as a restraint on development in the western outer city and may have helped define the western border of the city during the third millennium.

Within the city, wells were also used to provide water to the population. Stone-lined wells were located in the outer city associated with third millennium ceramics at OS3 and OS8.<sup>29</sup> The presence of ancient wells within the city walls indicated diversified strategies for water use – the local wadis providing water needs in addition to these wells. The chance discovery of two wells in the early years of survey and exaction hints at their likely ubiquity in the outer city area. Wells are one example of the ways

in which the urban components could be fit in within the larger constraints of the environment and existing infrastructure to create a functioning urban landscape.

#### 7. HABITATION

Across the Jazireh, the widespread addition of outer cities, or lower towns, appears to have been part of a pattern of urban expansion designed to accommodate growing urban populations as evidenced by expansions at sites like Hamoukar, Tell Beydar, Tell Chuera, Tell al-Hawa, and Tell Leilan.<sup>30</sup> Although outer cities are not exclusively used for habitation<sup>31</sup>, habitation and houses do seem to be a large part of the distribution of activities. For example, large-scale excavations within Tell Chuera's lower town have revealed densely-packed houses and housing complexes,<sup>32</sup> and similar houses and occupation area have been excavated at Leilan and Hamoukar.<sup>33</sup> Like other regional sites, Mozan's outer city was a locus of habitation for a large portion of its population. Evidence from the surface surveys shows a broad distribution of household cooking wares.<sup>34</sup> Small structures arranged along the streets and alleys have also been revealed by the geomagnetic studies, indicating the likelihood of households in the outer city although none have yet been excavated.<sup>35</sup>

#### 8. PRODUCTION

The expansion of habitation, and extension of the living space of the city into the outer city required the necessary support structures for the people. Production seems to have been part of the neighborhood structure of the city, with multiple loci of production in the outer city.<sup>36</sup> In area OG51, in the northern part of the outer city, a concentration of ceramic slag and ceramic wasters was identified during the Pilot Survey. Fragments of kiln waste were identified in all the surface surveys conducted in the outer city at Mozan indicated the workshops were not confined to any particular section of the outer city.<sup>37</sup> At Tell Chuera in Area W of the Lower Town a makeshift kiln and large amount of ceramic wasters were found in neighboring houses, suggesting the manufacture of ceramic within the residential areas.<sup>38</sup> Household workshops are common across Northern

<sup>22</sup> see Chaves Yates 2014a; Pfalzner *et al.* 2004, fig. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Helms *et al.* 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Wright *et al.* 2007; Deckers, Riehl 2008; Deckers, Dreschler 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Eidem, Warburton 1996, 53.

<sup>26</sup> Deckers, Riehl 2007; Deckers 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1988; 1998.

<sup>28</sup> Deckers, Riehl 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Akkermans, Schwartz 2003.

<sup>31</sup> See Chaves Yates 2014a Chapter 1 for an extended discussion of the presumed function of outer cities in site reports and archaeological literature.

<sup>32</sup> Helms *et al.* 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Gibson *et al.* 2002a; 2002b; Colantoni, Ur 2011; Weiss 1990.

<sup>34</sup> Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988; Chaves Yates 2014a.

<sup>35</sup> Pfalzner *et al.* 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Chaves Yates 2014b.

<sup>37</sup> Chaves Yates 2014a, 207-208.

<sup>38</sup> Helms *et al.* 2017.

Mesopotamia,<sup>39</sup> and widespread co-occurrence of wasters and ceramics across Mozan's outer city suggests this pattern can also be found at Mozan.

#### 9. ADMINISTRATION

The systematic excavation of area OH2, on the rise of the eastern city wall, revealed small finds that appeared to be part of a larger third millennium administrative complex associated with the city wall.<sup>40</sup> The excavations were conducted over an area 4 meters by 4 meters, to a depth of 2 meters below surface.<sup>41</sup> Although no architectural features were identified, the 35 sealings recovered in a layer of thin laminations seem to indicate the discard in an outside area exposed to the elements.<sup>42</sup> The sealings indicate a variety of uses for sealing technology with identifiable cord, peg, fiber and fingernail impressions. Combined cord and peg impressions may have been associated with the administration of a storeroom along the city wall while the other sealings seem to be associated with moveable objects, again, possibly hinting at the administration and use of a nearby central administration building. The seal impressions that are preserved include animal and geometric shapes and are dated to the EDIII (or EJII) period.<sup>43</sup> The evidence from the seals, seal impressions and other small finds at OH2, together with its location on a rise in the outer city associated with the city wall, all support the idea that the area of OH2 was part of the administration and control of the outer city.

#### 10. BURIAL

Evidence from across the outer city suggests that during the EJI and EJII, areas of the outer city were being used for burial, predating the addition of the outer city wall.<sup>44</sup> In the NE part of the outer city, a burial dating to the early mid-third millennium, was found intact. OB1 was a simple pit grave with multiple individuals and a minimum of 138 vessels as well as metal objects.<sup>45</sup> The finds from this tomb include Ninevite 5 ware, Metallic ware and painted scarlet ware stands. Kelly-Buccellati has dated the tomb to the late EJI. The remains and the ceramics appear to have been placed or dumped haphazardly possibly indicating reuse and disturbance (fig. 4). Nearby (OA4) a stone lined tomb was also found but it was disturbed in antiquity and could not be dated. In the SE part of the outer city (OD50), plowing

disturbed what appears to have been a grave similar to OB1 with Metallic Ware, and ashy material.<sup>46</sup> Metallic Ware and human remains are often correlated in survey collection units at Mozan and Metallic Ware has also been found associated with burials at other sites around the Jazireh into the mid-third millennium<sup>47</sup> which may suggest some intramural burial during the main period of occupation in the outer city. Additional undetected burials or cemeteries may lie beyond the city walls, but have not yet been discovered.

#### 11. MOZAN'S BROADER CONTEXT

The city relied on the surrounding countryside for more than possibly burial locations. The countryside provided resources, particularly agricultural and pastoral land. A city like Mozan would have required at least an area of 5-6 km around the site to support its populations.<sup>48</sup> Several villages, as of yet uninvestigated, can be seen in Corona images, and some likely existed as support for the larger urban center. Preliminary investigations have suggested that at least 2 of the sites are significant archaeological sites.<sup>49</sup> The limited epigraphic finds from Mozan indicate that the city controlled various villages during the Akkadian Period, sending out workmen under the supervision of different administrators.<sup>50</sup> Although these tablets were found in what is likely a private residence, it still indicates that rural villages were integrated with the urban center, regardless if it was on a household administration level or a broader city-wide administration level. Comparable texts from nearby Beydar indicate that both household and city-wide administration occurred.<sup>51</sup> In the MZ2 tablets at least five villages are identified, but only two village names are completely preserved. The two villages, Dah and Arzakum, are not known from other texts in the region suggesting they were local to Urkesh. The variety of occupations found in just two tablets indicates the strong integration of the urban and rural economies. The inclusion of a fuller in the listed professions, being sent out to the village, suggests that the villages were involved in pastoral activities. Additionally, a fowler indicates the exploitation of resources from the surrounding countryside. The importance of the urban skilled specialists is highlighted by the inclusion of several skilled laborers in the list of workers sent out including a scribe, smith, physician and upholsterer. The texts show the integrated links between the city and the greater countryside, with skilled labor from the city center and resources from the surrounding area.

<sup>39</sup> E.g. Stein, Blackman 1993; Wattenmaker 1998; Mazzoni 2003.

<sup>40</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 1998.

<sup>41</sup> Walker 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Buccellati 1998b.

<sup>43</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 1998.

<sup>44</sup> Chaves Yates 2014a, 212.

<sup>45</sup> Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988; Chaves Yates 2014a.

<sup>46</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2013; Buccellati 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Broekmans *et al.* 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Wilkinson 1994; 2004; Deckers 2010; Deckers, Dreschler 2011.

<sup>49</sup> Barnard forthcoming; Davidson, McKerrel 1976.

<sup>50</sup> Milano 1991.

<sup>51</sup> Milano *et al.* 2004.

## 12. CONCLUSIONS

Putting together all the different investigations in the outer city, a coherent, if patchy picture begins to form (fig. 5). It is helpful to think of cities on a spectrum of planned to unplanned, rather than as a sharp either/or.<sup>52</sup> Mozan seems to be toward the middle of this continuum, exhibiting both the influence of strong centralized forces, as well as more haphazard and localized development. It is clear that the preexisting mound and the geography of the area around Mozan were determining factors in defining the layout of the city. Mozan's high mound remains more or less centered inside its outer city, unlike some other cities that have a more offset high mound (e.g. Hamoukar, Tell Leilan). The city appears to have expanded roughly equally in all directions from the oval high mound into an oval outer city. The only major constraint seems to be the water course in the western part of the outer city that may have either cut, or slightly restrained the growth in that area.

While the small streets and haphazard buildings indicated by the geomagnetic surveys indicate a position toward the less-planned end of the urban continuum, the large city wall and associated administrative buildings show a clear plan for control and regulation of the city. Furthermore, the relatively even shape of the outer city wall supports the idea that the high mound and center city maintained an important and prominent role in the city, visually and spatially.<sup>53</sup> Within these larger confines of the city wall and inner city wall, however, there seems to be a range of types of activities, relatively unplanned and unorganized with streets radiating out into the outer city in different directions, mixed use for production and housing, possibly with burials mixed in throughout, and pressing up against the more planned aspects of the city wall and administrative areas. Open areas, as possibly indicated on the geomagnetic surveys, may have also been used for orchards and gardens, a possibility that is also supported by studies of texts regarding the urban layout of later cities. There appears to be no specific craft areas, or zones, in Mozan's outer city and the neighborhoods do not appear to be organized by production type.<sup>54</sup> Household workshops, distributed throughout the city without regard for type of production is a common format within region at this time, with the exception of Titris Huyok and its large suburban craft workshop areas.<sup>55</sup>

It is clear that Mozan's urban success was reliant on more than just the outer city, and it relied on

its surrounding countryside for agricultural land, additional water resources, building materials, and as links in the larger trade networks. Large stones for buildings on the high mound such as the palace and the temple complex were likely brought from the nearby Tur Abdin mountains,<sup>56</sup> and the concentration of large stones found in the northern outer city (OG50), may indicate large scale construction in that part of the city closest to the mountains, or a staging area for bringing the stones to the high mound.

Compared to other cities around the region, Mozan seems to represent a fairly typical urban structure, with a roughly distributed form of urbanism, with many of the important aspects of urban living located in the outer city, yet still linked to a significant central city on the high mound. In the Euphrates river valley and into modern-day southern Turkey, the cities begin to take a slightly different form, often with irregular expansion of the lower towns and outer cities and occasional dedicated craft production areas.<sup>57</sup> The Euphrates valley may have served as a limiting factor for expansion and growth of these sites.<sup>58</sup> Some sites in the Balikh river valley also show variation from the pattern of expansion seen in the Jazireh plains, with no major additions of outer cities, perhaps reflecting a preferential difference based on the open plains for agricultural activity of the large sites like Mozan, and the comparatively smaller river valley sites constrained by the environment.

As the evidence from Mozan shows, the expansion and enclosure of the outer city was an integral part of maintaining and securing a larger area as part of an integrated city. The widespread distribution of different activities, however, shows that much of the daily activity and life of the local people was unregulated with haphazard construction, localized resources such as water, and a variety of activities without and particular areas of craft concentration. Nevertheless, this all existed within the larger confines and structures created by the city walls, centralized administration and geographical/ecological limits.

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<sup>52</sup> Smith 2007.

<sup>53</sup> G. Buccellati 2010; F. Buccellati 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Chaves Yates 2014b.

<sup>55</sup> Matney, Algaze 1995; Hartenberger 2003.

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<sup>56</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Chaves Yates 2014a, 100.

<sup>58</sup> Wilkinson 2004; Cooper 2006.

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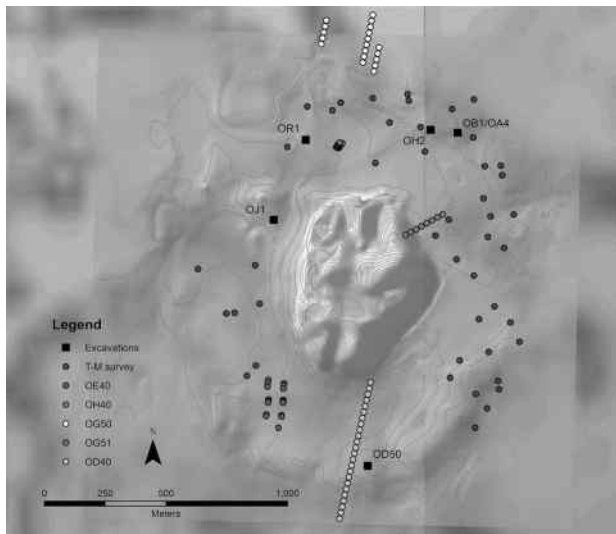


Fig.1. Locations of survey and excavations in Mozan's outer city

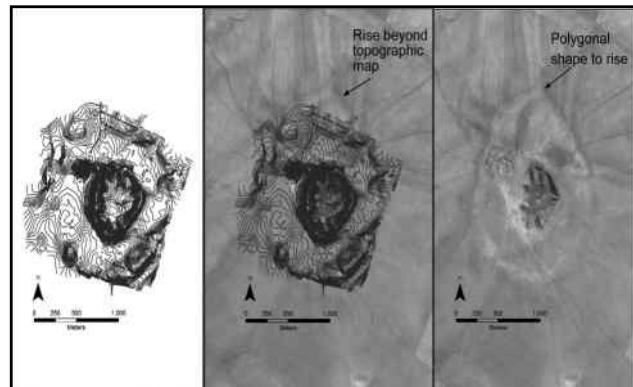


Fig. 2. Views of topography of Mozan's outer city showing rise of city wall. From left to right, Topographic map of Tell Mozan, composite image of topographic map and Corona satellite image, Corona satellite image. Topographic map after Hughey 1988, Corona image 1968 courtesy Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, University of Arkansas/U.S. Geological Survey.

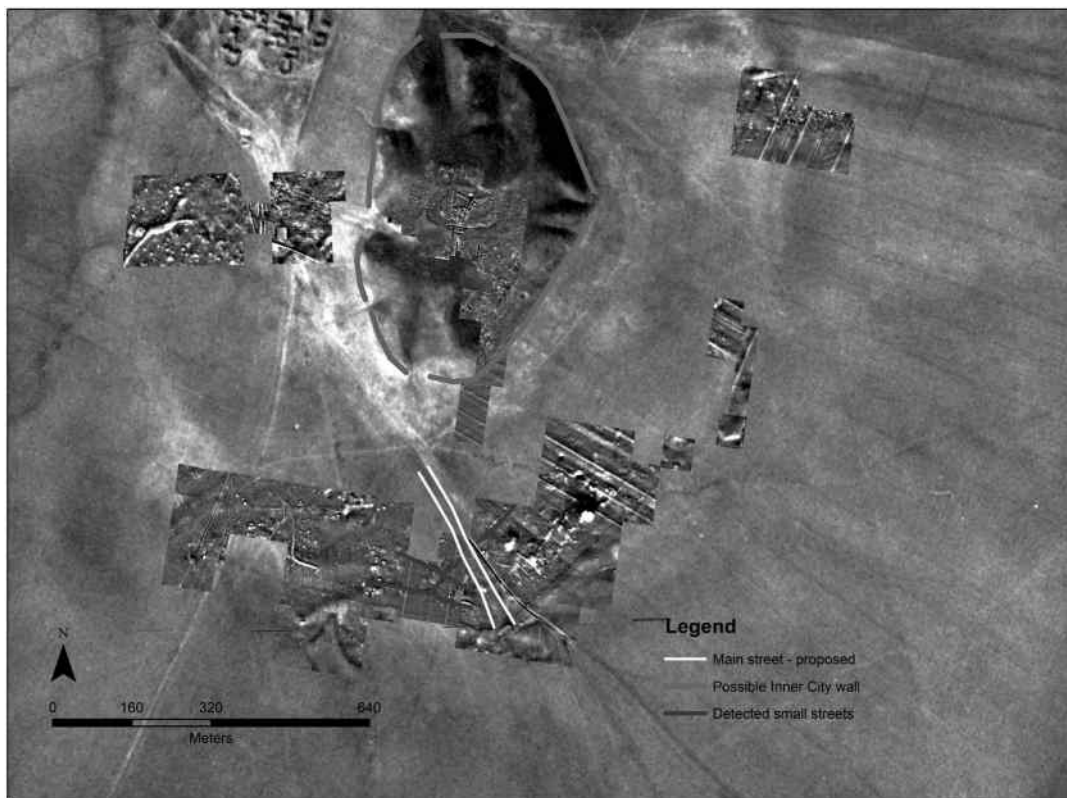


Fig. 3. Streets detected in geophysical survey. Numerous streets were detected during the 2002 geophysical survey. The streets are interpreted as radiating out from the city gate (Pfalzner *et al.* 2004). The main street appears to head directly toward the central mound, but not directly toward a gate location. (See Pfalzner *et al.* 2004, fig. 5 and Pfalzner 2010, fig. 2 for comparison). Corona image courtesy Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, University of Arkansas/U.S. Geological Survey.

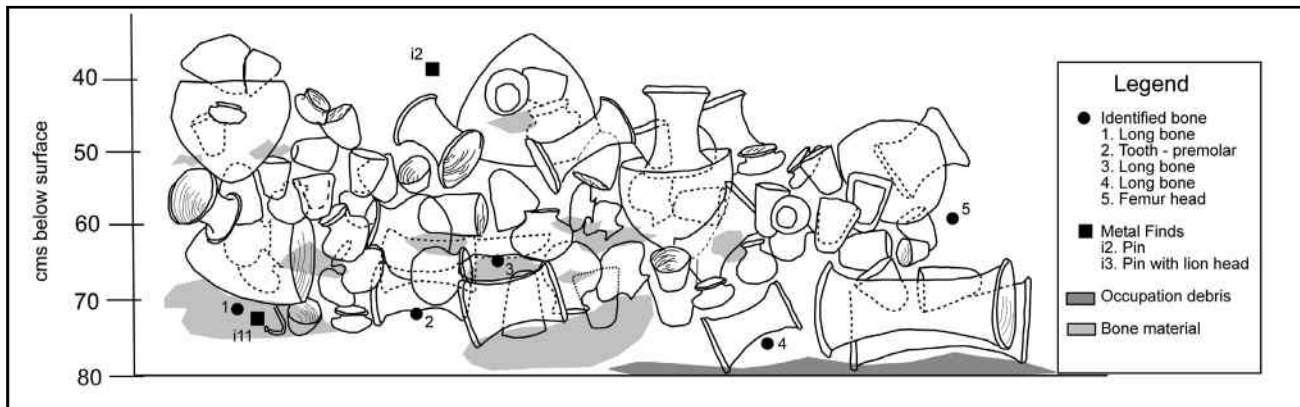


Fig. 4. Drawing of Finds from Tomb OB1. Original drawing by Thompson-Miraguilo (1985), inked by Chaves Yates (2013).

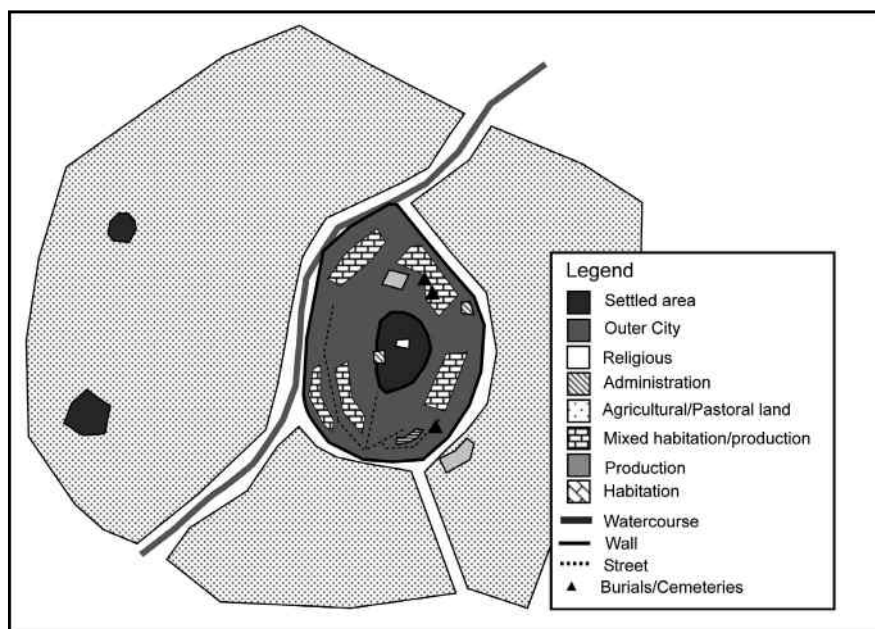


Fig. 5. Schematic of area around Mozan showing the 'distributed urbanism' during the third millennium.

	MZ	Early Jazira	Southern Mesopotamia	Early Bronze Age
2000	Phase 5			
2100				MB
2200		EJIV		
2300	Phase 4		Akkadian	EBIVb
2400	Phase 3l-3u	EJIII	EDIIIb	EBIVa
2500	Phase 3l-3u			EBIII
2600		EJII	EDIIIa	
2700				EBII
2800	Phase 3b-3j	EJ1/N5	EDI-EDII	
2900				
3000		EJO		EBI

Table 1. Comparative Chronology Chart

Area	Location	Brief Description
OR1	NW	Excavation: Ancient watercourse
OB1	NE	Excavation: Grave
OG50	N	Pilot Survey transect
OG51	N	Pilot Survey transect
OH40	E	Pilot Survey transect
OE40	SW	Pilot Survey transect
OD40	S	Pilot Survey transect
ON	S	Geomagnetic and Surface survey
OL	S	Geomagnetic and Surface survey
OS9-12	N	Cuts for power lines
OH1	n/a	Excavation: possible wall
OH2	NE	Excavation: administrative area
OJ1	W	Excavation: Mozan village
OD50	S	Surface collection: disturbed burials
OA4	NE	Excavation: Grave

Table 2. Description and labeling of investigations in Mozan's outer city

# ALIKE BUT DIFFERENT. DRINKING VESSELS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AROUND 2500-2000 BC

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## *Abstract*

This article aims at reconsidering the evidence for the appearance and diffusion of new types of drinking vessels in different areas within the Levant during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC and at discussing their parallels in other regions of the eastern Mediterranean. Re-analysing the spatial distribution of the new drinking paraphernalia, the article explores local variability and shared drinking behaviours around 2500-2000 BC and their connections to socio-cultural transformations taking place at the regional and inter-regional levels.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The archaeological evidence from the Levant, Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean documents the appearance of specialized drinking sets in those regions from around the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, including vessels for serving (pitchers, jugs and the so-called teapots) and drinking liquids (mugs, handled cups, goblets, beakers and cups), most likely alcoholic beverages (beer or wine). The practice of communal consumption of drinks has been widely discussed by several authors, who stressed the importance of drinking to gain social prestige and to maintain social ties and political relationships, as well as to obtain economic advantages by means of the mobilization of labour through work-party feasts.<sup>1</sup> Beside collective, elite-sponsored consumption of liquid beverages (representations of elite banquets are quite common, especially on plaques and seals),<sup>2</sup> the private sphere seems represented too, suggesting that the adoption of similar drinking practices was not restricted to political elites, but, rather, cut across different levels of the society.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it seems that the same drinking vessels were considered as socially valued goods by both elite and non-elite groups and reflected the incorporation of similar

habits into both the public and private spheres in connection with a shared cultural *ethos*.<sup>4</sup>

In this article,<sup>5</sup> expanding previous works of ours,<sup>6</sup> we discuss the appearance of goblets and “drinking sets”, maintaining that this was largely concurrent in the Euphrates Valley,<sup>7</sup> in the Jezirah,<sup>8</sup> in the Northern Levant<sup>9</sup> and in Western Anatolia<sup>10</sup> around the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. Subsequently, the new vessel shapes developed all through the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC in various regions according to locally distinguished styles, or with mutually influenced morpho-stylistic traits. In some cases, the spread of particular drinking vessel types outside the original area of production is also documented, suggesting shifting cultural frontiers or changing balances in socio-economic and socio-political relations,<sup>11</sup> resulting in an increased mobility of people and commodities across preferential maritime

<sup>1</sup> Dietler 1990; Dietler, Hayden 2001; Bunimovitz, Greenberg 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Pinnock 1994; the representation of high-rank women drinking from a cup, such as that depicted on the seals of Uqnitum, the wife of king Tupkish of Tell Mozan/Urkesh (Kelly-Buccellati 2010, figs. 2-3), shows that drinking was not just a male prerogative.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Mazzoni 1994; 2003; Welton, Cooper 2014; D'Andrea, Vacca 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Vacca forthcoming.

<sup>5</sup> Cultural encounter was a topic dear to Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Giorgio Buccellati; we wish to offer to them our thoughts on these phenomena as a token of our appreciation of their work and scholarship. We also wish to thank warmly the editors of this book, Guido Guarducci and Stefano Valentini, for inviting us to contribute with a small piece of our research. The article is the product of a joint work, and the introduction and conclusions were written together; A. Vacca wrote § 2 and M. D'Andrea wrote § 3, that was originally part of a paper delivered in the Archaeology of Lebanon Session at the 2018 ASOR Annual Meeting in Denver (see D'Andrea 2018a), re-elaborated and revised for this article.

<sup>6</sup> Mallegni, Vacca 2013; D'Andrea, Vacca 2015; Vacca 2015; forthcoming; Vacca *et al.* 2018; D'Andrea 2014; 2018a; 2018b.

<sup>7</sup> Sconzo 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Rova 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Welton, Cooper 2014; Vacca 2015; 2018a; forthcoming.

<sup>10</sup> Şahoğlu 2014.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Cooper 2010, 87.

and inland routes. Therefore, besides showing the existence of “ceramic” or “cultural” areas, the geographic occurrence of similar pottery types and styles across regions may also allow us to investigate socio-cultural phenomena and economic interactions lying behind the spatial patterning of material culture during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC.

## 2. THE INLAND REGIONS OF THE LEVANT

The first appearance, during Early Bronze III, of new drinking vessels that will develop in the following Early Bronze IV is a trend that can be noticed, with different regional outcomes, in the Northern Levant and the Middle Euphrates, coinciding with the flourishing phase of Early Bronze Age urbanism.<sup>12</sup> In the northern Levant, cups and goblets appeared roughly at the same time in the Ebla region, in the Orontes Valley, and in the Amuq plain around the EB III/IV transition, ca. 2600/2550 BC.<sup>13</sup> Several regional wares and styles were established and spread from ca. 2550 to ca. 2300 BC, during EB IVA, and innovative traditions with an EB IVA ancestry developed in the following EB IVB, from 2300-2000 BC.<sup>14</sup>

In the northern Levant, EB III (ca. 2700-2550 BC) saw a trend toward homogenization and improved technology in the production of the Simple Ware with finer pastes and higher firing temperatures.<sup>15</sup> In this period, beside a wide range of bowl and cup types – from shallow and large bowls to close-shaped and deep cups – a few proper goblets began to appear. This is demonstrated on a sound stratigraphic basis by the key site of Tell Mardikh/Ebla,<sup>16</sup> where, although in very low percentages, the first goblets appear in the EB III levels.<sup>17</sup> Their shape and the particular surface treatment – i.e., the undulation of the exterior upper part of the goblet with shallow grooves, spaced irregularly (fig. 1: 1) – allow us to consider them as forerunners of the later corrugated goblets that, in the following EB IVA1 (ca. 2550-2450 BC), outnumbered bowls in all pottery assemblages.<sup>18</sup>

It is in particular from the EB IVA1 period (ca. 2550-2450 BC) that the process of homogenization in pottery production reaches its peak, resulting in technological and morphological similarities in the Simple Ware among

the Orontes Valley, the Amuq and inland northern Syria. “Caliciform Ware” is now introduced in the Simple Ware typological repertoire, with several types locally produced in each region showing a wide geographic distribution,<sup>19</sup> although there are also types with more restricted spatial distribution that define micro-regions within the larger area, which are not discussed herein as they go beyond the scope of this article.<sup>20</sup>

At Ebla several types of goblets are documented in EB IVA1 contexts (ca. 2550-2450 BC), all manufactured with calcareous-rich fabrics, greenish or cream-buff in color, and with plain or corrugated outer surfaces (fig. 1: 2-8).<sup>21</sup> A variety of shapes is attested during this initial “experimental” stage, finally resulting in a standardization of the repertoire with a reduction in the range of types in the following EB IVA2 period (ca. 2450-2300 BC).<sup>22</sup> EB IVA1 goblets range from squatter to taller shapes, and either have a truncated cone shape tapering towards the base (fig. 1: 2-4) or a convex body with more pronounced shoulder (fig. 1: 5-8), in both cases with a variety of rim profiles. Outer corrugation is very common during this phase (fig. 1: 3-5, 8), becoming the hallmark of the whole EB IVA period (fig. 1: 9-18).<sup>23</sup> Beside goblets, the tableware repertoire is enriched by other new vessel types for pouring liquids, such as small necked jars and painted trefoil-mouthed jugs.<sup>24</sup>

This repertoire is maintained and further enriched in the following EB IVA2 period. Based on the seriation of stratified contexts at Ebla, it is possible to define an Initial (ca. 2450-2400 BC) and a Final (ca. 2400-2300 BC) EB IVA2 phase, the latter corresponding to the Palace G ceramic horizon.<sup>25</sup> Initial EB IVA2 contexts are characterized by the co-occurrence of long-lasting EB IVA1 types and

<sup>12</sup> Vacca 2015, 14-16, and fig. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Welton and Cooper 2014; Vacca 2018a; forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> Welton and Cooper, Mazzoni 2002; Vacca 2018a; D’Andrea 2018c; 2018d.

<sup>15</sup> Mazzoni 2002.

<sup>16</sup> For EB III-IVA1 see Mazzoni 1991; 2002; Vacca 2015; 2016; 2018a; 2018b.

<sup>17</sup> In EB III contexts (Building G2 and Area CC) cups/bowls amount to ca. 8% of SW open shapes, while during EB IVA1 (Building G5 and other floor materials), they form over 60% of the SW assemblage of open shapes (Vacca 2018a).

<sup>18</sup> Vacca 2018a, 12, fig. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Rather than being a distinct ware category, “Caliciform Ware” has been more properly defined as a functional category within the Simple Ware assemblage, consisting “primarily of cups/goblets and teapots forms” (Welton, Cooper 2014, 293).

<sup>20</sup> Beside goblets, several other pottery types show a marked regional character, occurring at different excavated and surveyed sites within the Idlib, Jazr and Maath Plains, as far south as Tell Qarqur in the northern Ghab Basin. This picture suggests the existence of a “ceramic area” of inland northern Syria that can be defined as the macro-region of Ebla in EB IVA (Vacca 2018a, 2019) as well as in EB IVB (D’Andrea 2014, 150-151; 2018c; 2018d).

<sup>21</sup> Vacca 2018a, 14.

<sup>22</sup> Vacca 2018a, 16-17.

<sup>23</sup> Mazzoni 2002, 76. The corrugation of the outer surface occurs on ca. 1/3 of the SW assemblage from Building G5 (Vacca 2015, 8).

<sup>24</sup> Painted trefoil-mouth jugs, in particular, are introduced during EB IVA1 and continue all through EB IVA (Marchetti, Vacca 2018).

<sup>25</sup> Initial EB IVA2 contexts encompass the recent phase of Building G5 (G5-Phase 2), identified underneath the West Unit of Palace G (Final EB IVA2) on the Acropolis, and Building P6, partially detected immediately below Building P4 (Final EB IVA2) in the Lower Town north-west (Vacca 2015; Marchetti, Vacca 2018, 313-316).

newly introduced types that become very common in the later Palace G assemblage. Conical goblets, either plain or corrugated, with vertical or swollen rim and rounded lip, are quite characteristic and show lingering traits of the previous EB IVA1 tradition (fig. 1: 9-10). Besides these types, a new type of goblet with cylindrical body, thickened beaded rim and flat or ring base (fig. 1: 11-13) is increasingly attested from this period, becoming the hallmark of the whole EB IVA2. In the Final EB IVA2 phase, goblets with a standardized cylindrical shape are produced in different sizes, from large to miniature vessels, and with two main fabrics, a porous greenish-buff fabric and a finer, depurated paste, highly fired with a clinking (metallic) sound (fig. 1: 14-17).<sup>26</sup>

In the Middle and Upper Orontes Valley, a number of goblet types is documented, developing from the local “Caliciform Ware” tradition originated at approximately the same time as the EB IVA1 phase at Ebla. The site of Hama provides an important assemblage of goblet forms for the whole EB IVA period (Phases J8-1).<sup>27</sup> Level J8, can be paralleled to the EB IVA1 horizon (ca. 2550-2450 BC) of Tell Mardikh/Ebla<sup>28</sup> and features the same early EB IVA goblet types described above,<sup>29</sup> locally made of pale-yellow or pinkish mineral-tempered clays, rich in calcareous inclusions (fig. 2: 1-4). The outer surface is generally plain or self-slipped; however, some goblets are decorated with thin beige horizontally painted lines (fig. 2: 1), or with a series of incised, regularly spaced, horizontal lines (fig. 2: 2).<sup>30</sup> In the following level J7, probably matching the Initial EB IVA2 at Ebla,<sup>31</sup> along with the light coloured calcareous fabrics, fine, mineral-tempered calcareous fabrics ranging from orange to red and dark grey are introduced (fig. 2: 6-7).<sup>32</sup> The new fabrics are used all through the EB IVA period for the production of a ware typical of the Middle and Upper Orontes Valley, commonly known as the White-on-Black Ware (recently, called also White-on-Black/Red Ware),<sup>33</sup>

including goblets often decorated with concentric horizontal lines either spiral-painted on painted and “reserved” with a pointed tool.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, cylindrical goblets with convex or incurved walls, simple or bevelled-inside rim and flat or ring base, are introduced from phase J7 (besides conical goblets with flaring or slightly incurving walls; fig. 2: 5-6) and continue all through phases J5-6 (fig. 2: 8), which corresponds to Final EB IVA2 at Ebla.<sup>35</sup> In phase J6 a new variant of this shape appears (fig. 2: 8), and is documented in large numbers in phase J5. It consists of goblets with thickened and beaded rim and corrugated outer surface, largely comparable with EB IVA2 specimens from Ebla.<sup>36</sup> A destruction is documented between level J5 and J4,<sup>37</sup> but this event did not correspond to a break in the development of material culture. In fact, the following Levels J4-1 (EB IVB, ca. 2300-2000 BC), show remarkable continuity with the EB IVA tradition, along with EB IVB innovations, such as the introduction of a painted variety of Simple Ware – the Painted Simple Ware – that becomes very popular across Western Inland Syria during EB IVB.<sup>38</sup>

The data discussed above suggest that, based on stratified assemblages, we can track the first appearance of goblets – i.e., the major typological components of the “Caliciform Ware” of the Northern Levant – in northern and central Syria at approximately the same time, as suggested by the earliest goblets found at sites such as Hama and Ebla. Subsequently, two autonomous traditions develop in parallel in the two regions that are part of the “Caliciform Ware” core area: the Corrugated Ware of inland northern Syria and the White-on-Black/Red Ware of the Orontes Valley.<sup>39</sup> The existence of strong and enduring connections among these areas is testified by similar vessel types and by the preference for cylindrical-shaped goblets, either painted or corrugated, rather than goblets with truncated cone-shaped body to consume beverages. During the late EB IVA2 period, the corrugated goblet becomes one of the most popular drinking vessel, locally produced in the Middle Orontes Valley. By this time, the latter area appears involved in intense interactions with Ebla and its region, as suggested by the wide spatial distribution of similar craft products resulting from the transmission and circulation of ideas, models, and technological knowledge, and by

<sup>26</sup> Mazzoni 2002; 2003; 2013.

<sup>27</sup> For a recent re-evaluation of the Hama sequence see Vacca *et al.* 2018. Beside Hama, Tell Nebi Mend, in the Upper Orontes Valley, is another important site that yielded a substantial corpus of stratified goblets from mid- to late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC contexts, allowing for a preliminary assessment of the chronology and typological developments of goblets in the Upper Orontes Valley (Kennedy 2015; Kennedy *et al.* 2018).

<sup>28</sup> Mazzoni 2002, 76; Vacca 2015, 11-12.

<sup>29</sup> Ingholt 1934, Type GI, pl. VIII, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Mouamar 2017, 74-75.

<sup>31</sup> Vacca 2015, 9; forthcoming; Vacca *et al.* 2018, 25-26.

<sup>32</sup> Mouamar 2017, 78-79, 85, “céramiques à pâte fine”.

<sup>33</sup> D'Andrea 2017; Mouamar 2017, 80-81, 85; 2018; Vacca *et al.* 2018, 28-29. G. Mouamar (Mouamar 2017, 81) has recently introduced the terminology of White-on-Black/Red Ware for this production

<sup>34</sup> Ingholt Type GII; Fugmann 1958, fig. 62: 3K 218, 3K 219, 3G 992 (J7), fig. 64: 3K66, fig. 65: 3G 285 (J6).

<sup>35</sup> Mazzoni 1985; 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Mouamar 2017, 79-82, figs. 9 and 12. These “corrugated goblets” are generally produced with beige or greenish calcareous fabrics and fired in a oxidizing atmosphere.

<sup>37</sup> Fugmann 1958, 62, 82.

<sup>38</sup> Mazzoni 1985; Welton, Cooper 2014.

<sup>39</sup> Vacca forthcoming

the movement of people across the region.<sup>40</sup> While corrugated goblets are locally manufactured at sites in the Middle Orontes Valley as well as the White-on-Black/Red Ware, the latter ware was not produced in northern Syria and the grey vessels with white painted decorations typical of this style found at Ebla (fig. 1: 18), Tell Umm el-Marra and Tell Tayinat,<sup>41</sup> were imported from central Syria. During EB IVB several regional variants of grey ware developing from the EB IVA tradition of the White-on-Black/Red Ware are produced in Central Syria (the Upper and Middle Orontes Valley, the Syrian steppe), the Beqa' and the northern areas of the southern Levant, but not in northern Syria, although they are imported to the Syro-Lebanese coast.<sup>42</sup>

Cylindrical or ovoid-shaped drinking vessels typical of western inland Syria appear also in the ceramic repertoire of the Middle Euphrates Valley from EB IVA (ca. 2400 BC). Interestingly, these goblets were locally produced at different sites in the Middle Euphrates Valley from Lidar Höyük in the Atatürk Dam area down to Selenkahiye in the Tabqa Dam area.<sup>43</sup> Alongside goblets, other typical "western Syrian types" appear, such as trefoil-mouthed painted jars and corrugated storage jars, although in this case the vessels are probably imported from the Ebla region.<sup>44</sup> The introduction of new types of goblets inspired by "western Syrian" prototypes in the highly standardized and homogeneous ceramic repertoire of the Middle Euphrates Valley in the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC (ca. 2430-2290 cal. BC) might suggest a change in the balance of political powers or in preferential economic relations at the time. In fact, in that period Ebla became the leading centre of a powerful kingdom, probably extending its political authority as far as the city of Karkemish.

Moving to the west edge of the Northern Levant, in the Amuq Plain, another local variant of drinking vessels is documented from about the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. Simple Ware, light-coloured conical cups with plain or corrugated surfaces and incised base appear at the beginning of local Phase I (ca. 2600 BC), remaining the prevalent shape through the late Phase I (EB IVA) and the beginning of local

Phase J (EB IVB) (fig. 2: 9-12).<sup>45</sup> Cylindrical or ovoid goblets appear only in the final part of Phase I (EB IVA2),<sup>46</sup> although they are characterized by more flaring shapes and "a tendency toward more raised and pedestal bases" than the inland Syria goblets,<sup>47</sup> that are popular in the eastern Mediterranean coast, as discussed below (§ 4). In general, despite the frequent use of corrugation, which is a techno-stylistic feature shared by the Amuq Plain with inland Western Syria, the "Caliciform Ware" tradition of the Amuq Plain differs remarkably from that of inland Western Syria and shows greater similarities with the coast. In fact, during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC conical cups like those found at Tell Taynat represent "an alternative drinking vessel to the corrugated cups/goblets"<sup>48</sup> of inland Syria diffused at sites along the Syrian coast. They are found at Tell Sianu (fig. 2: 13),<sup>49</sup> Ugarit/Ras Shamra (fig. 2: 14-15),<sup>50</sup> Qal'at ar-Rus, as well as in Cilicia (at Tarsus; fig. 2: 16)<sup>51</sup> and central Anatolia (Gedekli Höyük,<sup>52</sup> and Kültepe; fig. 2: 17).<sup>53</sup> This connection is also highlighted by the circulation of handled drinking vessels, which show a wider distribution involving the eastern Mediterranean basin (§ 4).

When, how and why the transmission of the new drinking practices and drinking vessels spread to the non-urban Southern Levant during the local EB IV period in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC is still subject to a debate. As for the mechanisms behind the transmission, elite emulation still resonate in recent scholarship,<sup>54</sup> but this explanation is contradicted by the distribution of goblets and cups in ordinary, domestic contexts.<sup>55</sup> As for the timing of the diffusion, this is still obscured by the lack of long stratigraphic sequences for several areas within the southern Levant, that obstacles the elaboration of sub-phasing applicable to the whole region.<sup>56</sup> The retrieval of a non-local goblet in an EB III context at Khirbet Iskander, in central Jordan, points to early connections between the north and the south, before EB IV.<sup>57</sup> Goblets and cups are present in the few early EB IV contexts thus far

<sup>40</sup> Mazzoni 2003; Bonechi 2016; Vacca *et al.* 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Ebla (Mazzoni 2002, 77; Maritan *et al.* 2005, 735, fig. 4; D'Andrea 2017); Umm el-Marra (Schwartz *et al.* 2006, 625); Tell Taynat (Phase I, Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 321, pl. 88:2).

<sup>42</sup> See D'Andrea 2017 and Vacca *et al.* 2018 with references.

<sup>43</sup> Marro 2007; Cooper, Welton 2014, 334; Sconzo 2015, 127, types 88, 89. Type 89, in particular, also referred to as the "Hama goblet", is widely attested in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC (Periods EME 4-5 of the Middle Euphrates region according to the new ARCANÉ chronology), occurring in both domestic and ritual contexts.

<sup>44</sup> Sconzo 2015, 105, pl. 20:8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Welton, Cooper 2014, 299-300; Welton 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, 412; Welton, Cooper 2014, 301.

<sup>47</sup> Welton, Cooper 2014, 301.

<sup>48</sup> Welton, Cooper 2014, 296.

<sup>49</sup> Bounni, Al-Maqdissi 1994, fig. 3: 7.

<sup>50</sup> Courtois 1962, 442, fig. 30: B.

<sup>51</sup> Goldman 1956, pl. 348:178.

<sup>52</sup> Alkim 1979, 89, fig. 19.

<sup>53</sup> Özgüç 1986, figs. 3, 19-21.

<sup>54</sup> Bunimovitz, Greenberg 2004; 2006; Wilkinson *et al.* 2014; Kennedy 2015; 2016; Greenberg 2017; Schloen 2017; Kennedy *et al.* 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Welton, Cooper 2014; D'Andrea, Vacca 2015; Vacca, D'Andrea forthcoming.

<sup>56</sup> D'Andrea 2014, vol. 1, 113-140

<sup>57</sup> Richard, D'Andrea 2016.

available (Tell Umm Hammad, Tell es-Sultan/Jericho, Khirbet Iskander),<sup>58</sup> suggesting an early introduction of the shape in the region, despite the non-urban organization, but some aspects have to be underlined. In the first place, the diffusion of cups and beakers during EB IV will never reach all the regional areas within the southern Levant.<sup>59</sup> Differently, goblets, beakers and cups seem to concentrate in given regions and, in each of them, they are represented by very distinctive regional variants. They are found in areas located at important crossroads of communication: the Upper Galilee (Black Wheelmade Ware goblets and plain cups); the northern Jordan Valley (Trickle Painted Ware cups, cups with irregular combings); the Judean Hills/Shephelah/Central Negev complex and the Jericho oasis (corrugated and combed cups); and the Dead Sea plain (red slip and ribbed cups, in limited amounts).<sup>60</sup>

### 3. THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN COAST

The material culture of the Levantine coast during the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC has come into sharper focus during the last decade or so, in particular for the times from ca. 2700-2500 BC and from ca. 2500-2000 BC, corresponding respectively the EB III and IV periods. Data are still lacking for the Syrian coast, which is documented by a few old publications on Ras-Shamra/ancient Ugarit,<sup>61</sup> Tell Simiryan,<sup>62</sup> Tell Sianu,<sup>63</sup> Tell Sukas and Qalaat ar-Rus.<sup>64</sup> Differently, the record from Lebanon has increased thanks to both new excavations (e.g., Tell Fadous-Kfarabida<sup>65</sup>) and the publication of past excavations (e.g., Tell Arqa<sup>66</sup>). New data are available also for the coast of the southern Levant (e.g., Beit Dajan/Bet Dagan<sup>67</sup>) for the local EB IV period, in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC.

The stratified ceramic sequence of Tell Arqa, in the Akkar Plain, allowed J.-P. Thalmann to reconsider also the ceramic record from Byblos,<sup>68</sup> in addition, the exploration of Tell Fadous-Kfarabida, in the Batroun district, revealed another Early Bronze Age sequence in northern Lebanon.<sup>69</sup> The excavations demonstrated that northern Lebanon was part of the process of

urbanization from already the EB II period, in the first centuries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, and particularly from EB III, ca. 2700-2500 BC and in EB IV, ca. 2500-2000 BC.<sup>70</sup> The spatial distribution of vessel types and techno-stylistic traits suggested that the area between Tell Arqa, to the north, and Byblos, to the south (including Tell Fadous-Kfarabida and Mougharet al-Hourriyeh), was part of a homogenous, well-defined ceramic region, distinct from Western Syria to the north and from southern Lebanon to the south.<sup>71</sup>

The evolution of the pottery assemblages of northern coastal Lebanon shows that the repertoire of this region, that had been very similar to that of the Syrian coast and the southern Levant in EB II (during the first centuries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC)<sup>72</sup> began to change in EB III (during the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC). As observed by Thalmann,<sup>73</sup> the first transformation noticeable is the appearance of one-handled goblets in the EB III assemblages of Tell Arqa,<sup>74</sup> paralleled at Tell Fadous-Kfarabida<sup>75</sup> and Byblos<sup>76</sup> (fig. 3: 1-4). One-handled goblets continued to be attested at these sites from EB III to EB IV, developing derivative types all through EB IV<sup>77</sup> (fig. 3: 5-8) and represent a vessel shape alien to the local as well as to the Levantine ceramic traditions of both periods.

As in the northern Levant and the Middle Euphrates Valley (§ 3), also in northern Lebanon transformations in the local ceramic repertoire began during EB III, but the typological and techno-stylistic repertoires changed in the following EB IV period, when a full range of new open-shaped vessels appeared (fig. 4: 1, 6, 12, 18) that have no ancestry in the past local pottery tradition.<sup>78</sup> They include, beside bell-shaped cups (fig. 4: 1),<sup>79</sup> often with handles,<sup>80</sup>

<sup>58</sup> See D'Andrea 2014, vol. 1, 183-187, with references.

<sup>59</sup> See the remarks in D'Andrea forthcoming a.

<sup>60</sup> See D'Andrea 2014, vol. 1, 187-221, with references.

<sup>61</sup> Courtois 1962.

<sup>62</sup> Braidwood 1940.

<sup>63</sup> Bounni, Al-Maqdissi 1994.

<sup>64</sup> Ehnrich 1939.

<sup>65</sup> Genz 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Thalmann 2006; 2008; 2009; Roux, Thalmann 2016.

<sup>67</sup> Yannai, Nagar 2014.

<sup>68</sup> For the correlation between Tell Arqa and Byblos, see Thalmann 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Genz 2014.

<sup>70</sup> Thalmann 2010; Genz *et al.* 2016.

<sup>71</sup> Thalmann 2006; 2008; 2009; Genz 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Badreshany, Genz 2009; Roux, Thalmann 2016 and see the remarks in Vacca, D'Andrea forthcoming.

<sup>73</sup> Roux, Thalmann 2016; see, recently, Jean 2018.

<sup>74</sup> Phase R: Thalmann 2006, 112-113, fig. 40: a-b; 2008, 71-72, fig. 6: 3-4; Roux, Thalmann 2016, 104, fig. 4: 22-23.

<sup>75</sup> Phase III: Genz 2014, fig. 8: 2.

<sup>76</sup> Thalmann 2008, 71-72, fig. 6: 1-2; Roux, Thalmann 2016, fig. 4: 22-23 (Phase R).

<sup>77</sup> Byblos: Dunand 1954, fig. 363: 9431; Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 7-8; Tell Arqa: Thalmann 2006, vol. 1, 113, 119-120, fig. 45: G5a-b, G6, vol. II: pls. 56: 21-35, 57: 10-39; 2008, fig. 6: 25-28; Roux, Thalmann 2016, fig. 4: 33-36 (Phase P).

<sup>78</sup> Thalmann 2008, 70-72, fig. 6; Roux, Thalmann 2016, 103-105, fig. 4: 22-23, 25, 33-38.

<sup>79</sup> Tell Fadous-Kfarabida (Phase V): Genz 2014, fig. 15: 4; Mougharet al-Hourriyeh: Beayno *et al.* 2002, pls. 4: 9-10, 12.

<sup>80</sup> Byblos: Dunand 1954, fig. 482: 11452-11453; 1958, fig. 798: 14187; Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 12-13; Tell Arqa (Phase P, Level 15): Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 31; Roux, Thalmann 2016, fig. 4: 37-38.

cups with splaying rims and high loop handle<sup>81</sup> (fig. 4: 2), two-handled goblets (fig. 4: 6),<sup>82</sup> and a variety of footed cups, including cups with pedestal base,<sup>83</sup> and cups and handled cups with solid foot or with disk or button bases (fig. 4: 12-13, 18).<sup>84</sup> Horizontal combing and white paint are common techno-stylistic traits on the vessels from the northern coast of Lebanon, but the intense use of thick red slips and vertical burnish is remarkable (see below).<sup>85</sup>

Thalmann described the new EB IV pottery repertoire of the northern coast of Lebanon as markedly local and disconnected from the coeval ceramic traditions of neighbouring regions in the Levant.<sup>86</sup> He considered a small number of imported vessels from Inland Syria found at Tell Arqa as evidence for a shift from intense contacts with the southern Levant during EB II-III to limited contacts with Inland Syria in EB IV.<sup>87</sup> In this paragraph, we would like to propose a slightly different interpretation of the evidence from northern Lebanon, and demonstrate that, although different in some respects from the pottery traditions of inland Levantine regional areas, as pointed out by Thalmann, the EB IV ceramic tradition of northern Lebanon was less isolated and independent from prototypes than thought previously. Interestingly, the new shapes appearing in the EB IV pottery of northern coastal Lebanon point to connections to the north and the west, as suggested in particular by handled goblets and footed cups (see below).

Some vessel shapes attested at sites in the northern coast of Lebanon reveal a connection with the Amuq Plain and with Cilicia, Anatolia and

the eastern Aegean. In fact, there are similarities between EB IV footed-cups and pedestalled cups of northern Lebanon (fig. 4: 12-13, 18) and coeval footed vessel shapes of Tell Ta'aynat<sup>88</sup> (fig. 4: 15-17) and Tarsus<sup>89</sup> (fig. 4: 14). In addition, parallels for the handled footed cups found at the sites of the northern Lebanese coast (fig. 4: 18) can be drawn from coeval assemblages at Troy (fig. 4: 18),<sup>90</sup> but also, interestingly, from sites further to the west like Lerna, in Argolis (fig. 4: 20).<sup>91</sup> Similarly, the one-handled EB III-IV goblets found at sites in the northern coast of Lebanon (fig. 3: 5-8) can be paralleled to similar vessels attested in the Phase J assemblages of Tell Taynat (fig. 3: 9-12),<sup>92</sup> in the Amuq Valley, and, for both, echoes of the inspiration from a common prototype can be tracked up to vessels found in the eastern Aegean, at Troy.<sup>93</sup> A connection with the northern coast and the "edge of the Anatolian world" for this shape had been already noticed by Thalmann.<sup>94</sup> Likewise, also for the other handled goblets and cups attested in northern Lebanon (fig. 4: 1-2) similarities with the Anatolian and eastern Aegean world can be found, in connection with the appearance and diffusion of the so-called "West Anatolian drinking set" in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. This set comprises the bell-shaped cup (fig. 4: 2), the cup with splaying rim known as tankard (fig. 4: 4-5), and the tall tubular cup known as *depa amphikypellon* (fig. 4: 9-10), all characterized by the presence of large loop handles, that spread from Tarsus, in Cilicia, to Troy, at the northeast edge of the Aegean (fig. 4: 8-10).<sup>95</sup> Occasionally, imported tankards and *depa* are found to the east, in northern Syria and the Middle Euphrates Valley,<sup>96</sup> but in these regions, there are no vessel shapes derived or inspired by the Anatolian handled vessels, as is the case, differently, for the Levantine coast.

It is believed that similar drinking vessels (and the associated drinking behaviours) spread across Anatolia and the eastern Aegean during the last centuries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, favoured by the opening of the inland route between Cilicia and Troy known as "the

<sup>81</sup> Tell Arqa (Phase P, Level 15): Roux, Thalmann 2016; Byblos: Dunand 1937, pls. CLIX: 3038, CLXII: 3405; 1954, figs. 196: 7913, 8467, 8556; 363: 9767; 1958, fig. 658: 12504, 13044, 13117, 13118, 13246; Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 3-6; tomb groups from Mougharet el-Houriyi: Beayno *et al.* 2002, pls. 3: 10-11, 4: 13, 6: 12-14.

<sup>82</sup> Tell Arqa (Phase P): Thalmann 2006, vol. I, 119-120, fig. 47: G5.d, vol. II, pl. 57: 4-6; 2008, fig. 6: 32-33; Byblos: Durand 1937, CLXVII: 5147; Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 15-16; compare with Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 339: 33, from Tell Taynat (here fig. 4: 7). For a different shape with two handles (a cup, not a goblet) from Byblos, see also Dunand 1950, pl. CLI: 18300-18301; Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 14.

<sup>83</sup> Tell Fadous-Kfarabida (Phase V): Genz 2014, fig. 15: 3; Byblos: Dunand 1939; 1937, 3230, 3884; 1939, figs 275: 5149; 1958.

<sup>84</sup> Tell Arqa (Phase P): Thalmann 2006, vol. II: pl. 57: 2-3; 2008: fig. 6: 29-30; Tell Fadous-Kfarabida (Phase V): Tell Fadous-Kfarabida (Phase V): Genz 2014, fig. 15: 1-2; Byblos: Dunand 1937, pls. CLII: 3882, CLXIII: 3623, CLVI: 5090, 5094; CLXVIII: 5125, 5149, CLXIX: 5333; 1939, figs. 275: 5094, 5690, 5125, 281: 5310, 283: 5333; 1950: CLI: 18298-18299; 1954: figs. 450: 11146, 506: 11758; CXLI: 16201, 16218, 16222-16224, 16298; 1958, figs. 798: 14236, 880: 15120, 935: 16201, 16218, 16199, 16222-16224, 16294, 16297, 16298; Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 9-11.

<sup>85</sup> Roux, Thalmann 2016, 104-105, 109, fig. 16.

<sup>86</sup> Thalmann 2006, 131; 2009, 10.

<sup>87</sup> Thalmann 2009, 10-11.

<sup>88</sup> Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 338: 12-14, 340, nos. 3: 1-4, 4: 1-4.

<sup>89</sup> Goldman 1956, fig. 268: 117-118.

<sup>90</sup> E.g., Blegen *et al.* 1950, fig. 129: type A26; 1951, fig. 43: type A26.

<sup>91</sup> Rutter 1995. III. S.7:2-3.

<sup>92</sup> Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 338: 17-19. See also one vessel interestingly, decorated with the "painted and reserved" style typical of the EB IVB Painted Simple Ware of northern Inner Syria: Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 342: 9 (here fig. 3: 10).

<sup>93</sup> E.g., Blegen *et al.* 1950, fig. 129: types A33, A35, A36.

<sup>94</sup> Thalmann 2006, 120.

<sup>95</sup> Ünlü 2016, 349-352, fig. 2.

<sup>96</sup> Mallegni, Vacca 2013; Sconzo 2015; Ünlü 2016.



Great Caravan Route.<sup>97</sup> It was suggested that small-scale migrations of specialists and traders, prompted by Anatolian interest in silver, might have been the means of cultural transfer from east to west.<sup>98</sup> Differently from the ceramic connections between Anatolia and the Aegean in the last centuries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, which are traditionally recognized, the ceramic connection between western Anatolia and northern Lebanon, although noticeable, has been overlooked. Looking at the EB IV pottery from the sites in the northern coast of Lebanon, similarities can be identified between the Anatolian tankards<sup>99</sup> (fig. 4: 4-5) and the Lebanese goblets with splaying rim and large loop handles (fig. 4: 2), both often coated with red slip and heavily burnished, and between the large bell-shaped goblets with large loop handles from both regions (fig. 4: 1-2). Moreover, although the *depas amphikypellon* (fig. 4: 9-10) is not found in northern Lebanon, local EB IV two-handled goblets (fig. 4: 6) might have been inspired by that vessel shape as well as by the two-handled bell-shaped goblets from Anatolia<sup>100</sup> or might recall the idea of drinking expressed by those Aegean and Anatolian vessels (fig. 4: 3, 8).

Interestingly, the record from Cyprus dating to the local Early Cypriot I-II periods can be added to this picture too, as suggested by Crewe, who recently proposed to consider the so-called “tulip-bowls” produced in decorated and plain versions (fig. 4: 11) as the local equivalents of the Anatolian *depata*.<sup>101</sup> In fact, although “tulip-bowls”, unlike the *depata*, do not have high loop handles, they nonetheless feature a pointed or rounded base and two lug handles, suggesting that they might have been held in the same way as the *depata*.<sup>102</sup> The history of Cyprus from around 2200 BC is still obscure, but the evidence suggests the participation of the island in interregional commercial interactions and in a wider network of social practices that, during the last centuries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, connected regional areas in the eastern Mediterranean basin.<sup>103</sup>

The coast of the southern Levant and its hinterland, such as the Shephelah, were also included in the circulation of practices, behaviours, and models that we isolated above for the coast of northern Lebanon, as proposed in previous works.<sup>104</sup> In fact, although refining the chronological resolution of the assemblages of the local EB IV period (2500-2000 BC) is difficult for the lack of key sites in the coastal and central areas, it is evident that several regions saw the appearance of vessel shapes that echo those found in northern Lebanon, Cilicia, Cyprus, and the Aegean. Moreover, as recalled several times in past literature,<sup>105</sup> in the case of the southern Levant, the existence of a western connection is not only speculative. In fact, a fragment of a southern Levantine EB IV flask found at Tyrins, in Argolis,<sup>106</sup> and *askoi* found at ‘Ain Mallaha<sup>107</sup> and Safed,<sup>108</sup> both located in Upper Galilee, are tenuous but concrete indicators of contacts between the southern Levant and the Aegean.

Handled cups were found at Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo (fig. 3: 13-14), in the Jezreel Valley, located on a hilltop controlling the Carmel Pass, where the *Via Maris*, the ancient inland route running parallel to the coast, turned northeast and connected with the King’s Highway. As we suggested in previous works,<sup>109</sup> the particular wishbone handles on these cups<sup>110</sup> are paralleled in one vessel from Tarsus.<sup>111</sup> The sites of the Shephelah – Tell ed-Duweir/Lachish, Tell Beit Mirsim, and Jebel Qa’aqir – yielded a number of bell-shaped corrugated cups with distinctive miniature horned lugs<sup>112</sup> (fig. 3: 13) placed either horizontally or vertically, and sometimes pierced. Tall mugs with high loop handles are found in the cemeteries of the central coast and are decorated with typically local incised and combed-incised motifs (fig. 3: 17-18).<sup>113</sup> Handled cups and mugs are found at Jericho, far from the coast, but located inside an oasis, at a connecting point between the coast, the central inland region and the Jordan Valley; the corpus of handled cups and mugs from the site includes vessels with both loop and wishbone handles (fig. 3: 16, 19).<sup>114</sup> Clearly, there is a large variability of techno-

<sup>97</sup> Efe 2007.

<sup>98</sup> Rahmstorff 2015.

<sup>99</sup> Tarsus: Goldman 1956, figs. 265: 472, 480, 266:407, 356:470; Özyar 2017, figs. 27.1:e, 27.9-27.10; see also the tankards from Troy: Blegen *et al.* 1950, fig. 129: type A39; Blegen *et al.* 1951, figs. 59a: type A39, 60: 33.44, 68-69 (Troy III), 154a: type A39, 160: 37.885, F 8-9.150, 32.90, 32.91, 33.185 (Troy IV).

<sup>100</sup> Tarsus: Goldman 1956, figs. 266: 494, 507, 356: 484, 495; Özyar 2017, figs. 27-7, 27.12; Troy: Blegen *et al.* 1950, fig. 129: types A43, A44, A45; 1951, figs. 59a: types A43, A45, 60: 33.180, 34.277.67 (Troy III).

<sup>101</sup> Crewe 2015, 144-145; see 136, fig. 4, 142, fig. 11: c for the tulip bowls. We wish to thank Lindy Crewe for her comments and suggestions on this topic, as well as for directing us to relevant bibliographic references.

<sup>102</sup> Crewe 2015, 145.

<sup>103</sup> Crewe 2015, 145.

<sup>104</sup> D’Andrea 2014, vol. 1, 253-256, figs. 6.13-6.14; 2018b, 84-85, fig. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Greenberg 2002; Bunimovitz, Greenberg 2004; see also references at n. 104.

<sup>106</sup> Oren 2003, fig. 1.2-1.3.

<sup>107</sup> Eisenberg 1985, figs. 3.10-3.11.

<sup>108</sup> Amiran 1971, 57, fig. 5.II.

<sup>109</sup> D’Andrea 2014, vol. 1; 2018b, 84.

<sup>110</sup> Loud 1948, pls. 9:13, 16:13.

<sup>111</sup> Goldman 1956, fig. 280: 457.

<sup>112</sup> See, e.g., Tell ed-Duweir/Lachish: Tuffnel *et al.* 1958; pl. 66: 403; Tell Beit Mirsim: Dever 2003, fig. 1.5; Jebel Qa’aqir: Dever 2014, fig. 2.93:3, 9, 2.96:5, fig. 3.30:7.

<sup>113</sup> E.g., at Yazur/Azor: Yannai 2014, fig. 3.7.

<sup>114</sup> Kenyon, Holland 1982, fig. 102: 1-2, 7; 1983, figs. 67: 3, 8, 102: 4, 105: 3.

stylistic traits adopted and adapted in the EB IV ceramic repertoires of southern Levantine sites located on the coast, very close to the coast or linked to the coast by connecting routes. However, beside those differences, it is evident that handles matter in the new vessels shapes, whether the large wishbone handles, or the high loop handles, or the miniature horned lugs. It is worth noting that the connection to metals may recur one more time, as the southern Levantine sites where those vessel shapes appear were located along the route through which copper ingots casted in the Faynan, southern Jordan, were distributed northward.<sup>115</sup>

In sum, it seems possible to identify a general coastal “imprint” shared among northern Lebanon, the Amuq, western Anatolia and the eastern Aegean during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, echoes of which might have expanded further south to the coast of the southern Levant and seem to have reached Cyprus. We have alluded to metal trade twice before, with reference to silver travelling north-west to south-east from the Aegean across the Anatolian inland route and to copper from the southern Levant moving south-north; to this, we may add the presence of tin and copper ores in Anatolia. The way northern Lebanon may be included in this scenario is by considering that this region is believed to be a centre of metallurgical production in EB IV (and, subsequently, in the Middle Bronze Age), as suggested by the finds at Byblos and Tell Arqa.<sup>116</sup> Given that, during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, metal trade and metallurgy became prime large-scale economic activities shaping long-distance inter-regional connections,<sup>117</sup> it is likely that they might have fuelled both direct and down-the-line contacts among the regions listed above.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

From the data discussed above, it appears clearly that the diffusion of drinking vessels and behaviours alien to the local traditions around the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC in several regional areas within the Levant should be reconsidered from a different perspective to take into account a multifaceted, complex scenario. With the formation of early states in several regions in the Near East, concurrent commercial interactions connected with prized commodities (metals and metalwork, timber, textiles, precious and semiprecious stones, salt, bitumen, perfumed oils and pigments) overlapped and blended. It is likely that urbanization would put the Syrian communities in contact with the Mesopotamian world, requiring local adoption and

adaptation of foreign socio-cultural means suitable to fuelling commercial ties in the new inter-regional arena<sup>118</sup> that would subsequently diffuse through all sectors of the society.<sup>119</sup> Prolonged interactions among different communities produced a multiplicity of transformations and changes in the material culture of each area connected with the sharing of social practices. This included a wide range of phenomena that reached also areas that had no urban organization at that time, such as the southern Levant and Cyprus (§§ 2-3), but that were included to some extent in commercial networks, as is gradually coming into sharper focus.

Drawing from the cases we discussed in this article, we may recall among these phenomena the importation of foreign, exotic or luxurious materials in certain areas, such as the Anatolian *deputa* found in the Euphrates Valley and the Syrian bottles distributed in western Anatolia. Another phenomenon observed in the datasets analyzed in this study is the introduction of local production of non-local vessel types, such as the western Syrian “Caliciform” goblets manufactured in the Euphrates Valley. In the third place, we may recall hybridization between different styles, such as the handled goblets from Tell Taynat produced in the “painted and reserved” style typical of the Painted Simple Ware of north-western Inland Syria during the last quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. However, the circulation and transmission of practices, behaviours and models were the factors that influenced more the patterning of material culture in the different regions during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, favouring the inclusion of exotic practices and the adoption and adaptation of the associated material culture correlates into the local assemblages.

As shown by the example of the EB IV corrugated goblets produced in the Euphrates, the formation of early states in Syria triggered further transformations in the material culture correlates of social drinking practices and their transmission to the neighbouring areas. The phase corresponding to the apogee of the Ebla kingdom (late EB IVA2) also coincides with the period of major diffusion of corrugated goblets outside the core area of production, probably in relation with the adoption of a fashion popular in this capital city, which does not replace local styles, but rather appears alongside with them. Thus, the local production and re-elaboration of a similar model of corrugated goblets is reflected in the morphological differences among the different areas.

It is difficult to understand when the goblets were introduced in the southern Levant and following which mechanisms, but the evidence for a single EB III goblet at Khirbet Iskander might suggest an early

<sup>115</sup> D’Andrea 2018b, 86-87.

<sup>116</sup> Thalmann 2008, 72-76, fig. 8; Gernez 2008a; 2008b; El Morr *et al.* 2013; El Morr, Mödingler 2014.

<sup>117</sup> See Wilkinson 2014, figs. 7.3-7.4.

<sup>118</sup> Vacca, D’Andrea forthcoming.

<sup>119</sup> Mazzoni 2003; Welton, Cooper 2014; D’Andrea, Vacca 2015.

introduction of goblets there too, although limited.<sup>120</sup> In EB IV goblets, beakers and cups were numerous but not ubiquitous; they were rather concentrated in given areas located at important crossroads and differentiated in several micro-regional variants.<sup>121</sup> It is likely that, with the exception of the areas located at the border with the northern Levant, the major mechanism of transmission were inter-regional connections,<sup>122</sup> which are documented by chemical characterization of pottery from several sites and areas.<sup>123</sup>

Also the formation of the so-called “West Anatolian drinking set” has been connected with the development of urbanization and the formation of early states in the Near East that shaped a network of long distance connections. Anatolia became part of this larger system of interregional interactions and contacts with the Aegean on the one hand and with the Syro-Mesopotamian world on the other, by combining maritime and overland routes.<sup>124</sup>

Although new drinking practices spread in the Levant and the eastern Mediterranean from around 2500 BC to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, in response to socio-cultural developments associated with socio-political and socio-economic changes, a coastal/inland difference is noticeable in the material culture traits associated to the new drinking behaviours. The fact that handles matter in the repertoire of drinking vessels from the coastal regions – whether high loop handles, wishbone handles, vestigial handles or horned lugs – points to the existence of a way of drinking alternative to the use of goblets.

The spatial distribution of handled mugs and cups along the coast and in the inland region adjacent to it in northern Lebanon, as well as in the southern Levant (though partially overlapping with that of goblets), suggests that the symbolism of drinking in those areas included a performative component different from goblets and cups without handles. In fact, simplifying, we may say that footed and pedestalled cups, and handled cups and mugs seem to be the western, coastal, equivalents to the eastern, inland, tradition represented by cups and goblets. As possible mechanisms behind the transmission and circulation of shared social practices and cultural models in the eastern Mediterranean, parallel to but different from those spreading in the inland regions, we have recalled metallurgy and metal trade as possible drivers of inter-regional contacts. Hopefully, future research will reveal more of the

socio-cultural processes at work during the late Early Bronze Age in the eastern Mediterranean basin that are still opaque though mirrored by the spatial patterning of material culture.

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<sup>120</sup>Richard, D'Andrea 2016.

<sup>121</sup>D'Andrea 2018b.

<sup>122</sup>D'Andrea 2018b, 86-87 and fig. 5.

<sup>123</sup>D'Andrea 2014, vol. 1, 141-152.

<sup>124</sup>Ünlü 2016, 348, with references. See Rahmstorf 2006; 2015.

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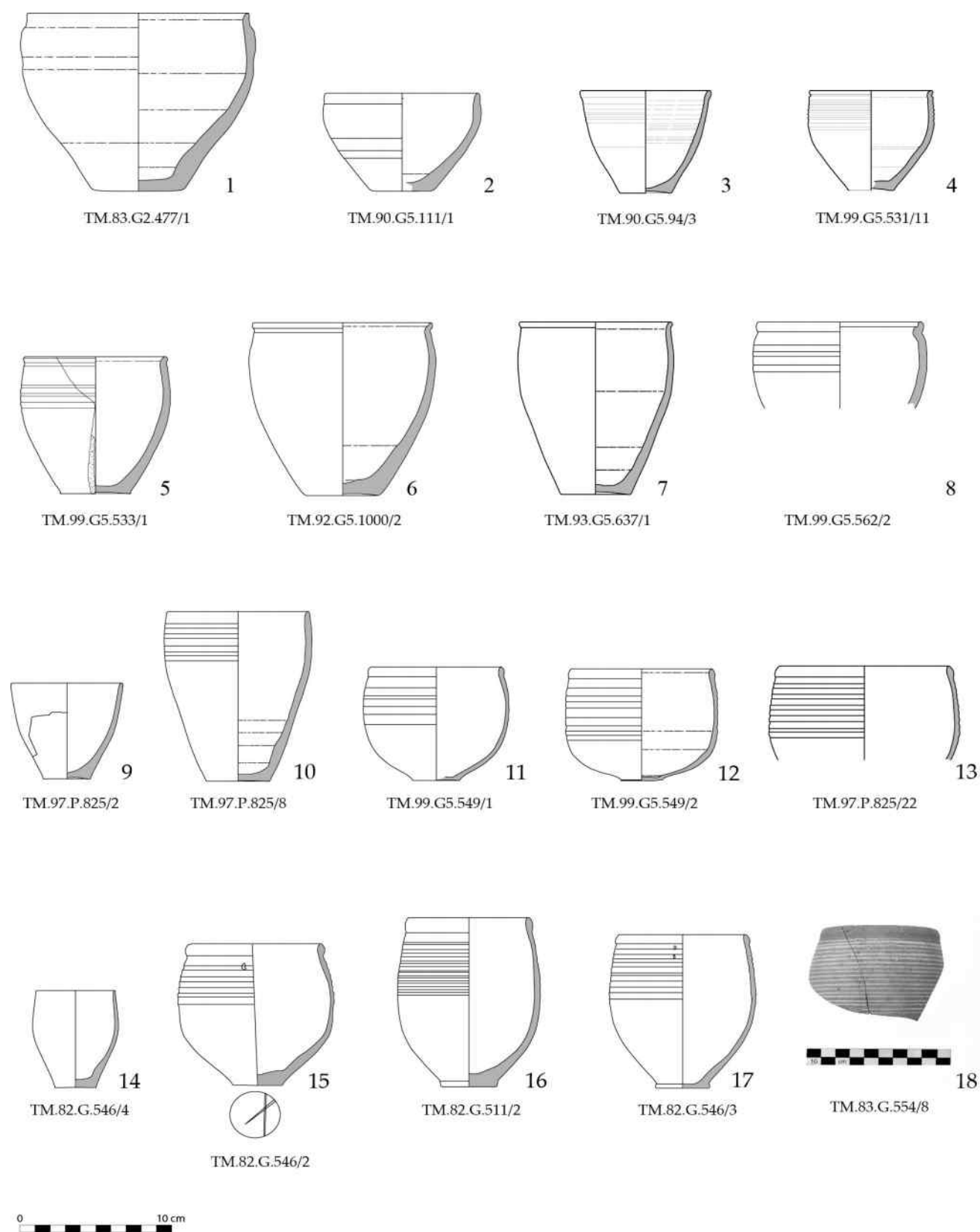


Fig. 1. Goblets from Tell Mardikh/Ebla, ©MAIS. No. 1, Building G2, EB III; nos. 2-8, Building G5, Phase 1, EB IVA1; nos. 9-10, 13, Building P6, Initial EB IVA2; nos. 11-12, Building G5, Phase 2, Initial EB IVA2 (L.7704a); nos. 14-18, Palace G, Final EB IVA2.



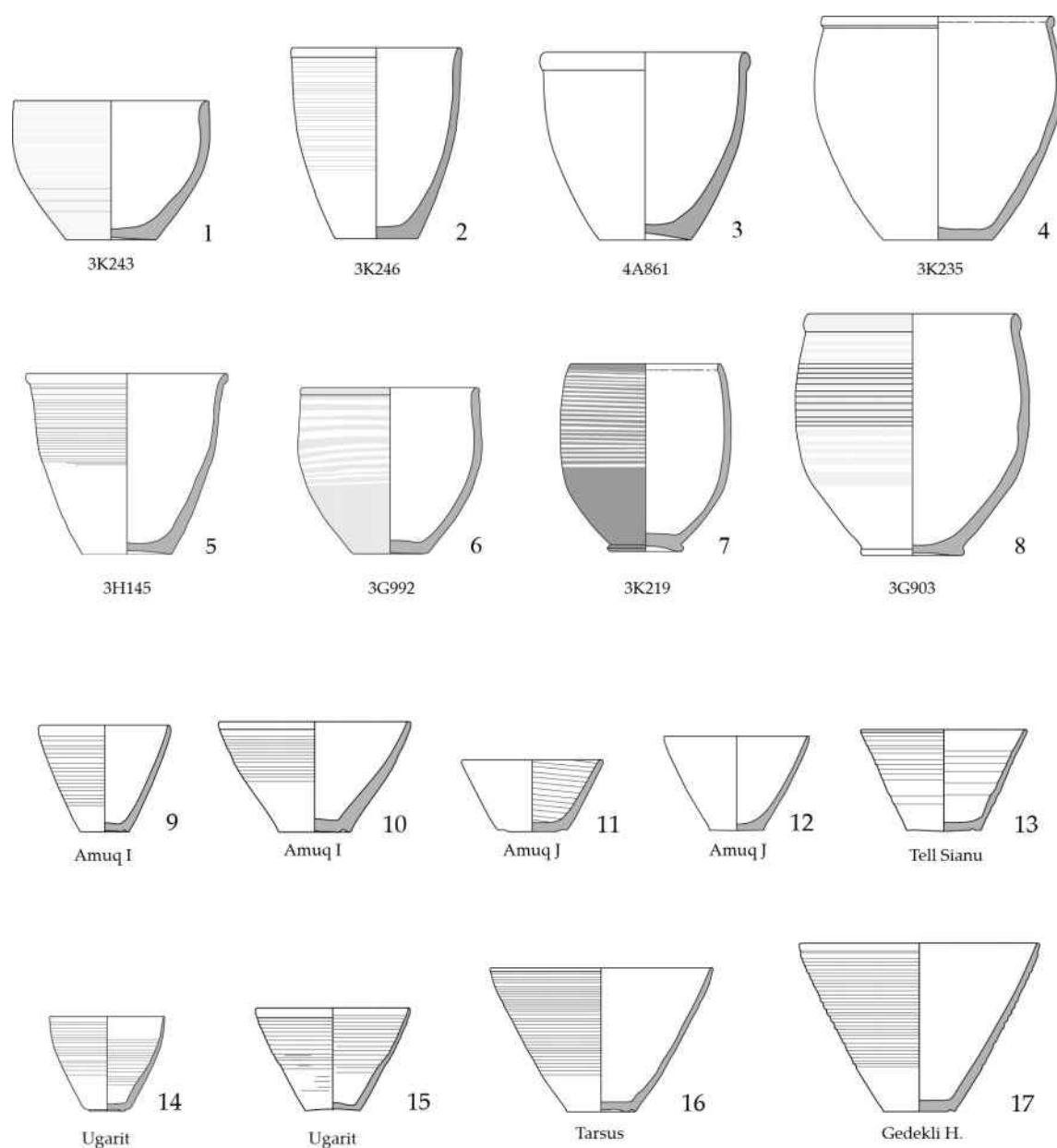


Fig. 2. Goblets and Cups. Nos 1-4, Hama J8 (no. 1: redrawn after Fugmann 1958, fig. 58:3K 243; no. 2: drawing by A. Vacca, ©National Museum of Copenhagen; no. 3: redrawn after Fugmann 1958, fig. 58: 4A 861; no. 4: redrawn after Fugmann 1958, fig. 58: 3K 235); nos. 5-7, Hama J7 (no. 5: redrawn after Mouamar 2017, fig. 6: 1 3H 145; no. 6: redrawn after Fugmann 1958, fig. 62: 3G992; no. 7: Fugmann 1958, fig. 62: 3K219); no. 8, Hama J6 (redrawn after Mouamar 2017, fig. 9: 1); nos 9-10, Amuq I (redrawn after Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 315: 5, 3); nos 11-12, Amuq J (redrawn after Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 338: 3, 1); no. 13, Tell Sianu, Phase XC 1-2 (redrawn after Bounni, Al-Maqdissi 1994, figs. 3, 5); nos 14-15, Ugarit/Ras-Shamra IIIA3 (redrawn after de Contenson 1969, fig. 5: 9-10); no. 16, Tarsus IIB (Goldman 1956, pl. 348: 178); no. 17, Gedekli Höyük level III (redrawn after Alkim 1979, fig. 19, not to scale).

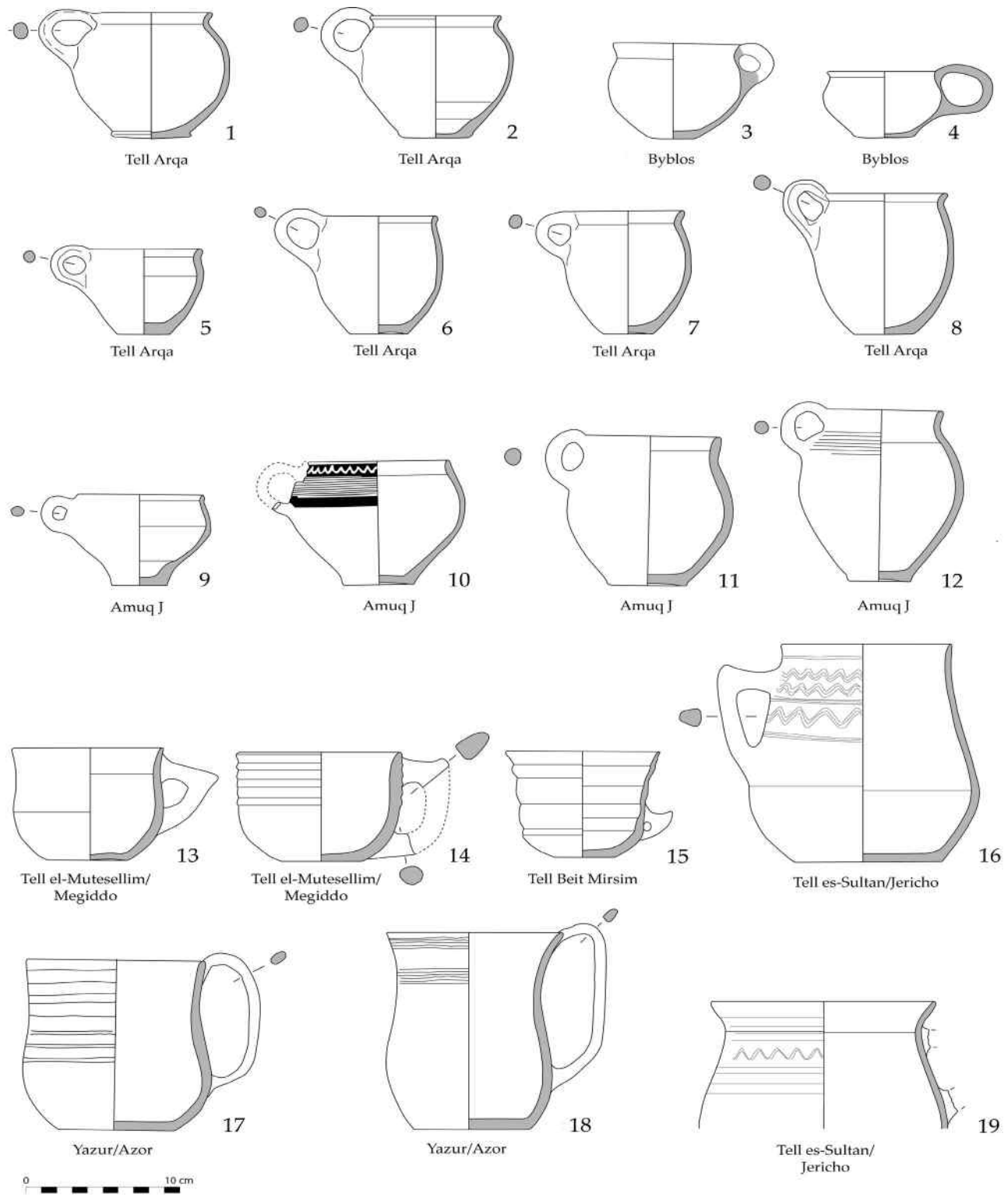


Fig. 3. One-handed goblets, cups and mugs. Nos 1-4, Tell Arqa, Phase R, EB III (redrawn after Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 23-24); nos 3-4, Byblos, EB III (redrawn after Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 1-2); nos. 5-8, Tell Arqa, Phase P, EB IV (redrawn after Thalmann 2006, pl. 56: 27; 2008, fig. 6: 26, 27-28); nos. 9-12, Amuq J (redrawn after Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, figs. 338: 17-19, 342: 9); nos. 13-14, Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo, Stratum XIV, EB IV (redrawn after Loud 1948, pls. 9: 13, 16: 13); no. 15, tomb group from Tell Beit Mirsim, EB IV (redrawn after Dever 2003, fig. 1: 5); nos. 16, 19, Tell es-Sultan, EB IV (redrawn after Kenyon, Holland 1982, fig. 102: 7; 1983, fig. 67: 3); nos. 17-18, Yazur/Azor, tombs 767 and 773, EB IV (redrawn after Yannai 2014, fig. 3.7: 4, 7). Nos 3-4 not to scale.



Fig. 4. Handled and pedestalled/footed vessels from northern Lebanon and the eastern Mediterranean. No. 1, bell-shaped cup from Tell Arqa, final EB IV (redrawn after Thalmann 2008, fig. 6: 31); no. 2: one-handled cup with splaying rim from Byblos (redrawn after Thalmann 2008, fig. 6:3); no. 3: handled bell-shaped cup from Tarsus (redrawn after Özyar 2017, fig. 27.3:a); no. 4: tankard from Tarsus, local EB III (redrawn after Goldman 1956, fig. 356: 470); no. 5, tankard from Troy, Troy III (redrawn after Blegen *et al.* 1951, fig. 60: 33.144); no. 6, two-handled goblet from Tell Arqa, EB IV, Phase P (redrawn after Thalmann 2006, fig. 6: 30); no. 7, handled goblet from Tell Taynat, Amuq J (redrawn and re-elaborated after Braidwood, Braidwood 1960, fig. 339: 33); nos. 8-9, *deyata* from Tarsus, local EB III (redrawn after Goldman 1956, fig. 356: 484, 495); no. 10, *deyas* from Troy, Troy III (redrawn after Blegen *et al.* 1950, fig. 129: A45); no. 11, “tulip bowl” from Kissonerga-Skalia (redrawn after Crewe 2015, fig. 11c); no. 12, footed cup from Byblos, EB IV (redrawn after Dunaan 1939, fig. 283: 5333); no. 13, footed cup from Tell Arqa EB IV, Phase P, Level 16 (redrawn after Thalmann 2006, pl. 57: 2); no. 14, footed cup from Tarsus, local EB III (redrawn from Goldman 1956, fig. 357:519); 15-17, pedestalled cups, Amuq J (redrawn from Braidwood and Briadwood 1960, figs. 338: 14, 340: 4: 3-4); no. 18, footed cup from Tell Fadous-Kfarabida, Phase IV (redrawn after Genz *et al.* 2010, pl. 1: 2); no. 19, footed cup from Troy, Troy III (redrawn after Blegen *et al.* 1950, fig. 129: A26); footed cup from Lerna, Lerna IV (redrawn after Rutter *et al.* 1995, Ill. S-7: 3). Nos. 2, 12, 16-17 not to scale.

# BEASTS AND WINE. ZOOMORPHIC VESSELS AND THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR OF THE NEAR EAST

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## *Abstract*

The recent discovery in Georgia of two Kura-Araxes zoomorphic vessels with possible analogues in Anatolia and in the Aegean opens up the intriguing possibility that the diffusion of these containers for the ritual consumption of alcoholic beverages followed a corridor crossing in EW direction the northern sector of the Near East.

### 1. THE “NORTHERN CORRIDOR”

There is little doubt that Near Eastern archaeology profoundly changed in the course of the last thirty years. Starting from the First Gulf War, in the early 1990s, the traditional core of archaeological research, the Mesopotamian alluvium, has been plagued by a situation of almost continuous political instability and conflict. The persisting crisis that affects Syria and part of Iraq and the difficult – or worsening – conditions of work in neighbouring countries such as Iran and Turkey have forced many international archaeological expeditions to abandon field research in a large part of what we used to identify as the “Near East”.

On the other hand, new possibilities of field research have opened up in regions that, until recently, had been neglected by western researchers, which have, as a consequence, become the focus of intensive investigation. This is the case of the new independent states which occupy the territories of the Central Asian and Caucasian Republics of the former Soviet Union. The Southern Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), in particular, attracted the attention of numerous Near Eastern archaeologists previously working in areas, like Upper Mesopotamia and Anatolia, which in the course of their history had deep and continuous contacts with this region located at the northern limit of the Near East.<sup>1</sup>

Typically, intense field research in new, or relatively unexplored regions causes researchers interest to focus on long-distance relations, “trade” and exchange of raw materials, artefacts, technologies, and ideas, as opposed to the internal development dynamics of each individual area.<sup>2</sup> Within this general framework, we have recently

drawn attention on the existence, within the Near East, of what we may call the “Northern Corridor”, i.e. a network of connections which crosses the northern portion of the Near East in East-West direction, and is largely independent from, even if not completely alien to, the “Levantine Corridor” which connects Iran and the Indus valley with the Mediterranean Sea via Mesopotamia and Syria. As becomes increasingly evident, the Southern Caucasus plays a crucial role in this “Northern Corridor”, which connects Northern Iran and the Southern Caspian area with Anatolia and parts of Northern Mesopotamia and continues, beyond these, towards the shores of the Aegean Sea to the west and towards Central Asia to the east.<sup>3</sup>

The existence of the “Northern Corridor” at least since the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC (Late Chalcolithic period) and its continuation throughout the Bronze Age is suggested not only by the circulation of exotic materials (especially metals), but also by the presence, in the Southern Caucasus, in Anatolia and in the Aegean, of a number of artefacts types and cultural practices, which show a basic similarity with each other, and set these regions apart from the better known traditions of Mesopotamia and the Syro-Levantine region.

A case at issue is the diffusion of a series of characteristic items – weapons but also parade standards and different types of ornaments –,<sup>4</sup> which are apparently connected with a warlike symbolism, and characterise a sort of warrior aristocracy, whose concept apparently originated and developed in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC between the Caucasus and Anatolia,

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of this recent phenomenon and its implications, see Rova, Tonussi 2017; Rova, Gilibert 2018; Rova forthcoming a.

<sup>2</sup> In our case, this is well represented by work by the late Andrew Sherrat (Sherrat 2004) and by Toby Wilkinson (Wilkinson

2014) about the complex network of long-distance connections which crosses Eurasia and the Near East in particular during the Bronze Age.

<sup>3</sup> Rova forthcoming a, especially § 5 and 6.

<sup>4</sup> This phenomenon is the topic of the PhD research of the first author, which will be extensively discussed in her dissertation. See, in the meanwhile, Dall'Armellina 2017; forthcoming.

and spread from here toward mainland Europe and in particular towards the Aegean area.

The appearance in Anatolia and in the Caucasus between the mid-4<sup>th</sup> and the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC of “royal tombs” with a marked “warrior” connotation, which can be considered as one of the first examples of heroisation of the deceased, is also part of the same phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> Later on, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, monumental tombs with an extraordinary funerary equipment, again characterised by a strong presence of weapons, are found in the Southern Caucasus, in particular in southern Georgia and in northern Armenia with the Trialeti culture.<sup>6</sup> Some of the weapons found inside these tombs, for example the so-called “rapiers” (or long swords),<sup>7</sup> are also attested in the shaft graves of the A<sup>8</sup> and B<sup>9</sup> circles at Mycenae, which are also considered the expression of a hierarchical social structure dominated by a military aristocracy.

In this article we would like to present what, in our opinion, may be another element of a long series of commonalities, which travelled along the “Northern Corridor”: zoomorphic vessels for the ritual consumption of liquids. Our reflections are inspired by the recent discovery, at Aradetis Orgora in Georgia, of a couple of zoomorphic vessels of the Kura-Araxes period, which most probably contained wine. It is a pleasure for us to dedicate them to Giorgio and Marilyn, precious friends of the “Georgian-Italian Shida Kartli Archaeological Project”, and in particular to Marilyn, who witnessed the discovery of the Aradetis Orgora vessels and first described them.

## 2. THE TWO VESSELS FROM ARADETIS ORGORA

Two unique zoomorphic vessels of the Kura-Araxes period were found in 2015 during the third excavation season of the “Georgian-Italian Shida Kartli Archaeological Project” at the Main Mound (Dedoplis Gora) of the Aradetis Orgora/Doghlauri complex. This is one of the most important archaeological sites of the Shida Kartli region of Georgia, occupied almost without interruption from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This is the case of the very rich kurgans of the North-Caucasian Maikop culture of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium (Sagona 2017, 152-171), of the “royal tomb” of Arslantepe (Palumbi 2004), of the Alcahöyük cemetery in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium (Arik 1937; Kosay, Hakok 1966), and of the contemporary kurgans of the Early Kurgan (Martqopi, Bedeni) period in Georgia (Makharadze *et al.* 2016). For the heroisation of the deceased, see Hansen 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Kuffin 1941.

<sup>7</sup> Abramishvili 2001; Dall'Armellina 2017; forthcoming.

<sup>8</sup> Karo 1930.

<sup>9</sup> Mylonas 1973.

<sup>10</sup> Gagoshidze, Rova 2018a; 2018b.

The two vessels were lying, close to a Kura-Araxes jar, on the burnt floor of a large rectangular room with rounded corners delimited by a 20-30 cm wide wall of yellowish clay, whose size, supported by soil micromorphological analysis, suggests that it was not a normal domestic unit, but most probably a sort of village shrine (fig. 1: a, b).<sup>11</sup> The room belongs to Phase 4a of the local Kura-Araxes sequence, the absolute date of which falls between the end of the 31<sup>st</sup> and the end of the 30<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>12</sup> In terms of material culture and relative chronology, Phase 4 belongs to the (late) Kura-Araxes II phase.<sup>13</sup>

After reconstruction, the two vessels are quite similar to each other, differing only in few minor details (fig. 2: a, b).<sup>14</sup> The first one (2414-M-2) was nearly complete, missing only the head (fig. 2: a, d), while the second (2434-M-5 + 2414-C-3) was recomposed and integrated from several fragments (fig. 2: b, e).<sup>15</sup> As restored, the second vessel is ca 19.5 cm high, 25 cm long and 18 cm wide. What remains of the first one (i.e., without the head) is 13.2 cm high and 19.6 cm long; its width at the widest part of the body is 13.0 cm. We can thus suppose that both vessels were originally nearly 20 cm high, while their length varied between 20 and 25 and their width between 13 and 18 cm, with the body of the second one being not only slightly larger, but also of flatter proportions.

Both vessels are mineral-tempered<sup>16</sup> and exhibit a reddish-brownish burnished surface.<sup>17</sup> Their body is

<sup>11</sup> Gagoshidze, Rova 2018b, 503. A detailed discussion of the context of discovery of the two vessels is given in Kvavadze *et al.* 2019. For Kura-Araxes village shrines, cf. Sagona 2017, 248-250.

<sup>12</sup> For radiocarbon dates, see Passerini *et al.* 2016; for further discussion, also Kvavadze *et al.* 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Rova 2014, 52-55.

<sup>14</sup> The vessels are presently stored in the Dedoplis Mindori (Queen's field) fund of the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi. Their museum inventory numbers are 27-977:11926 and 27-977:11927. One of them has recently been displayed at the exhibitions: “Georgia, cradle of viticulture” (Bordeaux, La Cité du Vin, 31 July 2017 - 5 November 2017) and “Gold und Wein. Georgiens älteste Schätze” (Archaeologisches Museum Frankfurt, 6 October 2018 - 10 February 2019): cf. Lordkipanidze 2017, 83; Giensch, Hansen 2018, 304 f., no. 142.

<sup>15</sup> One fragment (2414-C-3, corresponding to the figure's feet) was recovered separately from, and at a slightly higher level, than the remaining ones. Its fabric is also slightly different from those of the other fragments: it is lighter in colour and contains some brownish *chamotte*, while the other fragments contain only whitish mineral inclusions. It cannot be totally excluded, therefore, that it originally belonged to a third vessel, similar to the other ones.

<sup>16</sup> The fabric of the second vessel is described in the previous note. As far as it can be seen from the surface and the break on the neck, the fabric of the first vessel contains some *chamotte* and some small pebbles.

<sup>17</sup> The surface of the second vessel is partially abraded and shows traces of heavy burning, possibly due to the fire event which caused the destruction of the building. The smooth red surface of

hollow, with an access hole in the back<sup>18</sup>. It is squat and oval in shape, with a low crest in the middle of the back, and rests on three small feet (two in the front and one in the back). The solid ceramic neck rises vertically on a convex breast; it terminates in a flattened head. Only the head of the second vessel is preserved: it widens from the solid oval-section neck into a somewhat flattened triangle with a slightly curved top.

The head (fig. 2: c) shows stylised animal/human features: the sides suggest schematic ears and the nose is represented by an elongated clay pellet. The eyes are slightly recessed, with pupils represented by small protruding dots in the centre. Faint traces of the original painted decoration are preserved: a thin dark reddish band runs along the top of the head and continues on its back, one (or two?) black band(s) run around the neck, which is surrounded at the base by a wider band of lighter reddish colour. The feet of the first vessel are roughly conical, while those of the second one are formed more accurately and convey the impression that the figure is standing on its tiptoes.

As indicated by the slight ridge that, on the first vessel, extends from the side of the neck along the body to the hole in the back, the body was made in two parts. The legs were attached later. It is not clear when the neck was made but, since it is solid and therefore much heavier than any part of the body, it would have been difficult to attach after the body was constructed. In addition, if, as it seems, it functioned as a handle for the vessel, the presence of a join at its junction with the body would have presumably weakened it.

Palynological analyses conducted on three samples (two from the first, and one from the second vessel) highlighted the presence, in all of them, not only of numerous pollen grains of common grapevine (*Vitis vinifera*), but also of pollen from vineyard weeds and plants – e.g. walnut and hazelnut – which are usually grown close to the vineyards and, among non-pollen palynomorphs, of large amounts of vine starch, *Vitis* epidermis, and hairs of the tiny *Drosophila* flies, which typically fly around grapes and wine during the first stage of its production, and easily fall into the large vessels where wine is usually placed. All these elements characterise the spectra obtained from modern wine and from sediments collected in ancient wine containers of different periods. It can therefore be concluded that both vessels must have contained wine.<sup>19</sup>

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the other vessel is covered by a net of microscopic cracks, which are characteristic of the Kura-Araxes ceramics. A small part of the upper body on the right side is darkened by fire.

<sup>18</sup> The hole on the first vessel, which is the only one which is preserved, is oval-shaped, 2.0 cm wide and has a flange around it on the interior only.

<sup>19</sup> For detailed discussion of the palynological evidence, see Kvaavadze *et al.* 2019.

Although their precise use (for libation, drinking, or pouring the liquid into another drinking vessel) is unclear, their peculiar shape, their context of discovery and their presumed content strongly suggest that the Aradetis Orgora items were connected with ritual practices.

Considering both the overall dimensions of the vessels' hollow body, and the location of the access hole, we may suppose that they may have contained less than half a litre of liquid. The position of the access hole makes it almost impossible to fill them in another way than by immersing the vessel into a larger container; an operation which could be easily accomplished by holding it by the solid animal's neck. The hole is located relatively high on the back side of the animal's body – so that it is theoretically possible that the half-filled vessel could be set down on a flat surface without the liquid flowing out of it – but too low for the vessel to be drained without lifting it by the neck, which would have likely provoked accidental spilling of its content. More probably, therefore, the vessel was drained just after filling it, first by lifting and then by tilting it, thus producing a stream of liquid which could be directed either toward the soil (in the case of a libation) or directly into the drinker's mouth, or into another drinking vessel, such as a cup or a mug.

In the present state of knowledge, the two vessels from Aradetis Orgora are unparalleled within the published Kura-Araxes corpus, in spite of their unquestionably Kura-Araxes fabric, colour and surface treatment, and of the fact that the stylised facial traits represented on the second vessel do not appear out of place in the Kura-Araxes period, as well, as they recall the numerous anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures that decorate contemporary hearths and andirons<sup>20</sup> or pottery vessels.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, their hollow body connects them with six vessels with a globular body and a pedestal in the form of human feet, fragments of which were recently discovered at Arslantepe/Malatya in Level VIB1, which is roughly contemporary with Kura-Araxes Phase 4 at Aradetis Orgora.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the vessels from Aradetis Orgora, these are provided with two access holes, one on the "head" and the other at the end of one of the two "arms", and have therefore been described by the excavators as "*rhyta*". They were found in a hut (A 789) located near the eastern corner of a large public building (Building 36), in an

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<sup>20</sup> Smogorzewska 2004. For the Shida Kartli region see, for instance, a four-legged prop of hearth the form of a turtle shell with a round back from Kvatskhela (Javakhishvili, Glonti 1962, 32, pl. IV, nos. 336, 337).

<sup>21</sup> Sagona 1984, part III, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> Frangipane 2012, 115, fig. 3; 2014, fig. 12; Palumbi *et al.* 2017, 92.

area which was probably used for ceremonial and ritual activities, as demonstrated by the presence, a.o., of a wood-lined basin. Although their contents have unfortunately not been analysed, the excavators supposed that they were used for the consumption or libation of some type of liquid (maybe an alcoholic beverage), in a ritual context.<sup>23</sup>

The general shape of the Aradetis Orgora vessels, their ovoid and slightly flattened body and their long neck were possibly inspired by water birds such as swans and geese. Images of birds are not alien to the Kura-Araxes iconographic repertoire, and in fact occur rather frequently in the decoration of Kura-Araxes vessels,<sup>24</sup> but vessels of this shape are unique in the Southern Caucasus, at least in this period. Interestingly enough, however, as we will argue below, they bear a distinctive resemblance to some Early Bronze Age vessels from two regions of the “Northern Corridor”: Anatolia and the Aegean.

### 3. THE TRADITION OF ZOOMORPHIC VESSELS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Animal-shaped vessels in pottery, metal, stone, and other materials were produced in many ancient cultures all over the world, and continue being occasionally produced to this day. They can be very different from each other both in their shape and in their use, and obviously not all of them can be traced to one and the same origin. However, as the volume accompanying the recent exhibition “Animal-Shaped Vessels from the Ancient World: Feasting with Gods, Heroes, and Kings”<sup>25</sup> well highlights, these fascinating objects, which in many cases are unique pieces, show widespread affinities.

Although they have always attracted scholars' and collectors' curiosity, and are therefore well represented in museums and private collections, they are relatively rare within the relevant assemblages, and often represent isolated finds. Both their elaborate shape and the contexts of discovery indicate that they were not intended for everyday use, but for special, ritual occasions. As already suggested by their same morphology, by iconographic sources and by ethnographic analogies, and most recently also confirmed by scientific analyses (chemical analysis of organic residues, palynological analyses etc.) carried out by “biological archaeologists” on ancient specimens, most of them were intended to contain liquids, in particular alcoholic beverages.

Despite the wide variety of animals represented,<sup>26</sup> there is also, in the Old World at least, a clear preference for certain species, *in primis* lions and bulls,<sup>27</sup> rams, stags and other horned animals, but also, interestingly enough, birds and, more rarely but still significantly, hedgehogs/pigs.

Finally, although a considerable number of zoomorphic vessels of all periods are made of pottery and, as a consequence, cannot be considered elite objects reserved to the wealthiest sectors of the population, one can observe, starting at least from the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, the development of special zoomorphic vessels made of precious materials (most often metals), which clearly play the role of status symbols and, more specifically, appear to belong to the paraphernalia of the ruling elite.

Scholars generally agree that these commonalities can be explained by the fact that zoomorphic vessels combine the social power of their contents (alcoholic beverages) and of the occasions in which they were consumed (feasts as communal events which shape and reinforce social relationships),<sup>28</sup> and the ambivalent fascination of human beings for animals, which are perceived as “other” but not completely alien, as objects of subjugation but, at the same time, as bearers of mysterious and potentially dangerous powers. It was probably believed that the act of filling the vessel with liquid somehow re-activated the animal, and allowed to transfer its vital essence and qualities to those who drank the fluid which flowed out of it.<sup>29</sup>

The tradition of zoomorphic vessels was especially well attested during the Bronze Age in the Near East and in the Eastern Mediterranean,<sup>30</sup> from which it spread, during the Iron Age and the Hellenistic and Roman periods, to large parts of Eurasia.<sup>31</sup>

Items not only show a large morphological variety, but were also clearly used in different ways and, according to their different uses, had a stable or an unstable base, were equipped with one or two openings or with one or no handle, etc. They have accordingly been classified in different, not always

<sup>23</sup> Palumbi *et al.* 2017, 92.

<sup>24</sup> See Sagona 1984, part III, *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> Ebbinghaus 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Along with containers in the shape of entire animals, vessels in the shape of animal parts, most often of animal heads, and sometimes also of animal protomes are also frequently attested. Although they are clearly part of the same widespread phenomenon, we will not discuss these groups of finds in detail in the following, as they cannot be directly related with the Aradetis Orgora vessels.

<sup>27</sup> In fact, their strength and aggressive behaviour made these two animals ubiquitous symbols of power in many civilisations.

<sup>28</sup> Dietler 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Patton 2018.

<sup>30</sup> For a general synthesis, besides Koehl 2018, see also Koehl 2013. General studies on the topic can be found in Tuchelt 1962 and Koehl 2006 (with a focus on Bronze Age Aegean).

<sup>31</sup> Ebbington 2018, chapters III-VII; Tuchelt 1962.

consistent ways by the various researchers, and are known under different names (*rhyta*,<sup>32</sup> *BIBRU*,<sup>33</sup> *askoi*<sup>34</sup>) in the different scholarly traditions. We will not consider these aspects, for which we refer to previous literature,<sup>35</sup> in the following discussion, but will concentrate on the general distribution of the zoomorphic vessels category instead.

In the Near East, containers in the shape of an animal first appear in the Neolithic period,<sup>36</sup> and remain sporadically attested, in its different regions, throughout the Chalcolithic.<sup>37</sup> Evidence from Uruk-period Mesopotamia<sup>38</sup> is especially interesting in this respect, as not only vessels, both in stone and in pottery, in form of different animals are known from sites in various regions of the Late Uruk “*koinē*” (Khafajah Susa, Jebel Aruda), but similar items are also depicted, among other offers and cultic paraphernalia, on the upper register of the famous Warka vase,<sup>39</sup> which confirms that they played a role in the emerging centrally organised religion of the first urban centres.

After the Uruk period, however, the tradition of animal-shaped vessels almost disappears from the south-Mesopotamian alluvium and becomes rather rare in the rest of Mesopotamia as well. From about 3000 BC, the main focus of distribution of this category of objects apparently shifts westwards, toward Anatolia but especially toward the East Mediterranean Aegean area, where their tradition continues down to the end of the Bronze Age. In the Aegean, zoomorphic vessels give rise to the specific class of vessels known as *rhyta*, whose distinctive feature is the presence of two different openings, a larger and a smaller one.<sup>40</sup>

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, however, an equally important focus of the distribution of zoomorphic vessels is the Anatolian mainland. Here, they are present in large numbers already during the Assyrian

colony period,<sup>41</sup> and continue being attested, with examples in precious metals and abundant textual evidence attesting their important ritual function, until the fall of the Hittite Kingdom.<sup>42</sup>

While trying to explain the origin of Hittite zoomorphic vessels, scholars have until now tentatively advocated possible Mesopotamian influences in addition to original creation<sup>43</sup>. Similarly, the origins of the widespread fashion of such vessels in the later Achaemenid period has been connected to Mesopotamian influences coupled with an indigenous tradition dating back to the early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium in North-Western Iran.<sup>44</sup>

Material from the Southern Caucasus has not been included in the Harvard exhibition, although recent literature highlights the presence of an enduring tradition of wine-drinking containers, including a number of animal-shaped ones, in the region.<sup>45</sup> In fact, the Southern Caucasus appears as an empty spot on the distribution maps which illustrate the Harvard exhibition catalogue. The Aradeti Orgora vessels offer us the opportunity to integrate this region and its connections with the neighbouring ones in the discussion of the ancient distribution of zoomorphic vessels.

#### 4. ZOOMORPHIC VESSELS ALONG THE “NORTHERN CORRIDOR” IN THE EARLY BRONZE AGE

Although the two vessels from Aradeti Orgora are approximately contemporary with the Uruk specimens discussed above, they are very different, in all respects, from them. Early Bronze Age Anatolia, the nearest western neighbour of the Southern Caucasus,<sup>46</sup> provides some more convincing parallels. Zoomorphic vessels are in fact present in this region since the Neolithic<sup>47</sup>, but their number significantly increases in the Early Bronze Age.

An item from Demircihüyük-Sariket in the north-western part of the region<sup>48</sup> dates to the very beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium: while it proves the existence in the area of this category of finds, it is admittedly not particularly similar to the Georgian specimens. More

<sup>32</sup> *Strictu senso*, the term *rhyton* (which derives from the Greek verb *ῥέω*, to flow) refers to vessels provided with two different openings, and its use should be limited to them (Koehl 2006), although numerous scholars apply it to other types of animal-shaped – or otherwise complex – vessels as well.

<sup>33</sup> This term is generally used for Hittite zoomorphic vessels, as it often appears on Hittite texts mentioning such items. However, it derives from an Akkadian word (meaning “bird”); it has therefore been proposed to use it as a general term for Near Eastern zoomorphic vessels (Koehl 2013).

<sup>34</sup> *Askos* (literally “wineskin”) is used by classical archaeologists to describe any squat or flattened vessel with an off-centre spout (Koehl 2018, 52). The term is traditionally used to define Bronze Age Aegean and North-West Anatolian zoomorphic vessels of similar proportions (Misch 1992).

<sup>35</sup> See Koehl 2013, 2018 with further literature.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. at Bouqras, in Syria, but also at Hacilar in Anatolia and at Arpaciya in Northern Mesopotamia (Koehl 2018, 47-48).

<sup>37</sup> Koehl 2018, 48-49.

<sup>38</sup> Koehl 2013, 239-240; 2018, 50-52.

<sup>39</sup> See Bahrani 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Koehl 2006; see also Koehl 2013; 2018, 52-54, 64-65, 75-83.

<sup>41</sup> Kulakoğlu, Kanhal 2010, *passim*.

<sup>42</sup> Koehl 2013; 2018, 59-63, 66-71. Zoomorphic vessels in 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium Anatolia are discussed in § 3. below, with further relevant literature.

<sup>43</sup> Koehl 2018, 59-60.

<sup>44</sup> Ebbington 2018, 106 ff., 121-124, 144.

<sup>45</sup> Lordkipanidze 2017; Giemsch, Hansen 2018; see also Kvaavadze *et al.* 2019.

<sup>46</sup> For a recent overview of the relations between the two regions in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, see Rova forthcoming b.

<sup>47</sup> See above, § 2. It may also be interesting to observe, in this respect, that vaguely zoomorphic *askoi* and zoomorphic vessels are also sporadically attested in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures of Greece and the Balkans (Misch 1992, 14-36).

<sup>48</sup> Korfmann 1980, 10, pl. 13, fig. 1-3; cf. Tonussi 2007, 275, 283, pl. 15, cat. CZ20-2.



interesting analogies are offered by the so-called *askoi* of the North-West Anatolian “Yortan culture” (fig. 3a, b).<sup>49</sup> These vessels are not properly in the shape of an animal, but some of them clearly evoke the figure of a bird.<sup>50</sup> They have a posteriorly elongated piriform body and a long neck, open at the top, that reminds one of a bird's beak, and are equipped with a handle on the back. Interestingly enough, they have three small conical feet, which are very similar to those of the vessels from Aradētis Orgora. This particular type of *askos* can be attributed to the first half of the millennium (EBA I-II); it reaches the West-Anatolian coast and partly spreads to the Aegean islands (Lemnos, Chios, Lesbos) as well.<sup>51</sup>

Zoomorphic vessels provided with three small feet are quite common in Western Anatolia in a slightly later period: for instance, several of them come from Troy II and III (fig. 3: c, d, e).<sup>52</sup> The shape of these vessels has evident similarities with the Yortan *askoi* (they have a globular or piriform body, an opening at the top of the neck, and a handle on top of the back). However, in this case we are not simply dealing with vases in the form of birds, as in fact they have a sort of zoomorphic protome on the back side, opposite to the neck, in place of the bird's tail. It is difficult to establish the different animal species which inspired these compositions, although Schliemann tentatively identified pigs, rams, and moles. A similar item was also found at Boz Höyük.<sup>53</sup>

The cemetery at Karataş-Semayük yielded another three-footed zoomorphic vase.<sup>54</sup> It is rather small and perhaps represents a mole; unfortunately, the pouring spout is not preserved, but there is a large handle on the back of the animal. A further tripod vase, originally probably with a zoomorphic protome but now mutilated, was found in the Early Bronze Age levels of Aphrodisias (fig. 3: g).<sup>55</sup> Another example, similar in shape to the previous one, comes from Poliochni on the island of Lemnos (fig. 3: f).<sup>56</sup> It has the shape of a pig with three small feet in the lower part of the body. Its last reconstruction suggests that it was provided with a neck (with a hole on the top) and with a handle on the upper part of the body.

Interestingly, a similar ovoid-shaped vessel was found in a sounding dug into the Early Bronze Age levels at Alacahöyük in Central Anatolia.<sup>57</sup> The vase is not well preserved (it misses the head), but has an ovoid body, four conical legs and a tail. Further north in the same region, another find comes from Karaöğlan.<sup>58</sup> Central Anatolia, a still poorly known region at the crossroads of different communication corridors, may in fact represent the missing link between the West-Anatolian examples and some isolated mid-late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium items from Northern Mesopotamia – Kurban Höyük (fig. 3: h).<sup>59</sup> Tell Brak (fig. 3: i)<sup>60</sup> –, which M. Tonussi already interpreted, some years ago, as possible imitations of Anatolian types.<sup>61</sup> If this were really the case, we should assume that similar zoomorphic vessels were in fact widespread, during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, over the whole of Anatolia.<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, during the Early Bronze Age zoomorphic vessels are also widely attested in the Aegean region. Most specimens come from Crete, where they occur in *tholos* tombs from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> until the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, when this type of burial began to decline.<sup>63</sup> The Cretan vessels have different forms and sizes (most common are those in the shape of the bull, which were particularly appreciated on the island);<sup>64</sup> the oldest specimens, which date to the EM I-II periods,<sup>65</sup> however, are often in the shape of birds and somehow resemble the West-Anatolian *askoi*; they are also characterised by the presence of three or four low conical feet (fig. 3: j-l). The Cretan vessels have been variously classified as *askoi* or *rhyta*,

<sup>49</sup> For a general overview of the culture, see Kiamil 1980.

<sup>50</sup> Orthmann 1996, 21-23; Tuchelt 1962, 22-26; Kiamil 1980, 171-173.

<sup>51</sup> Misch 1992, 72.

<sup>52</sup> Schliemann 1881, 294, no. 160; 375, nos. 333, 334; 376, nos. 335, 337; 377, no. 333. Cf. also Podzuweit 1979.

<sup>53</sup> Tonussi 2007, 274, 284, pl. 16, cat. C/VZ23.

<sup>54</sup> Mellink 1967, 253, table 16, fig. 10; Tonussi 2007, 274, 278, cat. C/VZ3.

<sup>55</sup> Kadish 1969, 57, table 25, fig. 12.

<sup>56</sup> The object was found, in very fragmentary conditions, in space 650 of Megaron 605. For an extensive discussion of its context, parallels and possible use, see Cultraro 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Koşay, Akok 1966, 204-205, table 55, fig. 15; Tonussi 2007, 278, cat. C/VZ1.

<sup>58</sup> Tonussi 2007, 274 f., 283, cat. C/VZ19.

<sup>59</sup> Algaze 1990, 399, pl. 154.

<sup>60</sup> Oates *et al.* 2001, 168-169, 434-435, figs. 202-203, 382-386; cf. Tonussi 2007, 274-275, 278-280, pls. 14-15, cat. C/VZ4-9. The vessels are very fragmentary, one of them had three feet, while the others had four. They apparently represented rams or bulls.

<sup>61</sup> Tonussi 2007, 274-275.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. the distribution map Tonussi 2007, 276-277.

<sup>63</sup> Kohl 2018, 52-53. They generally do not belong to the burial goods, but were probably used during special ceremonies in honour of the deceased that included the ritual consumption of food and beverages. In fact, other suggestive ceramics types (such as cups and pitchers) and animal remains were found associated with them.

<sup>64</sup> For the complete catalogue, see Koehl 2006, 71-72.

<sup>65</sup> Examples come from Lebena (one in the shape of a bird and one in the shape of a bull: Koehl 2018, 53-53, fig. 7.27.3; see also Misch 1992, 83-84, figs. 62, 65), Koumasa (two bird-shaped ones from Tholos A, and one with bird's body and the head of a ram from area AB: Koehl 2006, 75-76, pls. 3-4, figs. 26, 29; see Misch 1992, 83-84, figs. 63, 66) and Platanos (a bird-shaped vessel from Tholos B [MMI B] and one with a bird-shaped body with bovine features and horns from Tholos G: Koehl 2006, 75-76, pls. 3-4, figs. 28, 30).

since many of them are provided with two different openings, one on the animal's snout and the other on the back or close to the tail, an innovation which apparently originated there.<sup>66</sup>

*Askoi/rhyta* in the shape of, or vaguely reminiscent of, different animals, in particular birds, are also found in the Cyclades,<sup>67</sup> in mainland Greece,<sup>68</sup> and even in Cyprus.<sup>69</sup> Most of them are later than the earliest Cretan examples and date in the second half or around the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, but the chronology of many of them is in fact uncertain. In many cases, they show some affinities with, or they occur together with, West-Anatolian types, a fact that at the very least suggests the existence of continuing connections with this region.

#### 5. ZOOMORPHIC VESSELS ALONG THE "NORTHERN CORRIDOR" IN THE MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE AND EARLY IRON AGES: A CONTINUING TRADITION?

The tradition of zoomorphic containers finds a good breeding ground in 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium Anatolia. Most famous for the earlier Middle Bronze Age are the numerous examples from Kültepe-Kanesh, which were apparently used in domestic ritual activities.<sup>70</sup> They have very different shapes and represent many species of animals – lions, birds, horned quadrupeds, hedgehogs or wild boars, etc. –; it is possible to divide them into two categories: vessels in the shape of complete animals (fig. 4: a, b), which continue the older tradition, and animal-head vessels, which represent an innovation.<sup>71</sup>

Zoomorphic vases continue in use, in Anatolia, during the Old Kingdom period (17<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century BC), as proved, e.g., by the two large-size bulls from Buyükkale displayed at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations at Ankara (fig. 4: c).<sup>72</sup> For this time, we have the first evidence that similar containers were also produced in precious metals, namely in the form of a silver stag-shaped vessel from Shaft Grave IV at

Mycenae (fig. 4: e).<sup>73</sup> This has no local parallels, but its shape is very close to that of ceramic items from Kültepe. Metallurgical analysis confirmed that its silver came from the Taurus Mountains and, therefore, it was an import from Anatolia, an exotic object that probably reached Mycenae as a "royal gift".<sup>74</sup>

For the later Hittite Empire period, archaeological evidence is joined for the first time by textual sources. Besides items in pottery, which continue the earlier tradition of vessels in the shape of an entire animal, the former now includes items in precious metals in the shape of an animal head or terminating in the forepart of an animal, such as the famous vessels from the Norbert Schimmel collection now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, in the shape of a stag and respectively of a bull (fig. 4: d).<sup>75</sup>

These items have been identified with the vessels mentioned as *BIBRU* in contemporary Hittite texts, from which we learn that they were special drinking vessels for gods and kings. Indeed, the Hittites used this term for both zoomorphic and non-zoomorphic containers of different shapes and materials (metal, exotic stones, but also wood).<sup>76</sup> They were used for different types of rituals, one of which, "god-drinking", has especially attracted scholars' attention.<sup>77</sup> Various texts report that, during some special ceremonies, the king, or in some cases the royal couple, "drank the god (or the goddess)".<sup>78</sup> According to some Hittitologists, the texts simply refers to a toast in honour of the divinity. Other scholars, however, believe that the expression refers to ingesting some of the deity's power and/or establishing a close and direct contact with him/her through the medium of his/her sacred animal. More specifically, the act of pouring a liquid into the animal-shaped container and draining it from the latter would have been equal to "deifying" it by "passing through the god". "God-drinking" was often performed with alcoholic beverages (wine or beer), and it can be presumed that the intoxicating

<sup>66</sup> Kohl 2018, 52-53.

<sup>67</sup> Kohl 2018, 55-58; Minsch 1992, 74-79. For the origin of the so-called "duck vases" see also Rutter 1985.

<sup>68</sup> Minsch 1992, 57-62.

<sup>69</sup> Minsch 1992, 88-90.

<sup>70</sup> Koehl 2018, 59-63. For a large selection of zoomorphic vases from Kültepe the reader is referred to Kulakoğlu, Kanhal 2010, cat. 191 ff.

<sup>71</sup> Animal-head vessels were not pierced, and were apparently used as drinking cups. Those in the shape of complete animals mostly have two holes: one on the upper part of the animal's body and the other near its mouth or nostrils: they might have been used for pouring libations or for filling other drinking vessels or, according to Koehl, for drinking directly from them through drinking tubes (Kulakoğlu, Kanhal 2010; see also Koehl 2013, 240-241).

<sup>72</sup> Koehl 2018, 60 ff., figs. 2.26-27.

<sup>73</sup> Schliemann 1878, 257-260.

<sup>74</sup> Koehl 1995, 62-64.

<sup>75</sup> Güterbock 1981/83; 1989; cf. also Emre, Çinaroğlu 1993. Three bronze vessels in the shape of a bull's head come from the Kinik-Kastamonu hoard, which according to the excavators possibly originated from a sacked Hittite temple (Emre, Çinaroğlu 1993, 677, nos. 1-5, figs. 1-4, pls. 127-129). Similar vessels are also known in the shape of a human fist. For a complete inventory of Hittite metal items, see Reeves 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Koehl 2013, 241-243; Koehl 2018, 66-71: on *BIBRU* in general, see also the recent contribution by Heffron 2014.

<sup>77</sup> For a history of the question and for the different interpretations of this expression, see, a.o., Güterbock 1998, 121-129; Haas 1994, 520 ff.; Heffron 2014; Veeden, in Ebbinghaus 1918, 68-69.

<sup>78</sup> One or more deities are called into question: "He drinks the Sun-goddess of the Earth" (Kub 30.23 iii 19) or "He drinks thrice: the goddess Kataḫḫa, the Sun-god and the Protective Deity of the king" (IBoT 1.29 obv. 27).

character of these contributed to the effectiveness of the ritual. In fact, these Hittite text may shed light on the meaning of a much older tradition, which may go back even to the Kura-Araxes vessels from Aradetis Orgora.

During the Middle and Late Bronze Age, a parallel tradition of zoomorphic vessels of different types and shapes continues and further develops also in the Aegean region, in Crete (fig. 4: f, g) as well as on the Greek islands and on the mainland,<sup>79</sup> and beyond it. By the Late Bronze Age, the presence of this class of containers is in fact generalised all over the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>80</sup> We will not dwell here on their morphological development and on the complex patterns of interconnections they highlight, which have been already sufficiently analysed by different scholars.<sup>81</sup> We would simply like to call attention to the fact that, although each region developed specific types and variants, similarities with Anatolian vessels remain particularly strong, and point to continuing influences and interchange. Just to make one example, it seems probable that the Minoan bull-head *rhyton* was inspired by the Anatolian bull-head cups of the Karum period.<sup>82</sup> In other words, zoomorphic vessels and, presumably, ideas and rituals connected with them continued to circulate widely through the western part of the “Northern Corridor”.

However, what about the eastern part of this? Although the tradition of wine-drinking and wine-drinking vessels clearly continued uninterrupted in the Southern Caucasus,<sup>83</sup> zoomorphic vessels do not seem to be attested for most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium in this region. For the Middle Bronze Age, this may be due to the fact that very few settlements of this period have been found, and might be easily changed by future discoveries. It is interesting to observe, in this respect, that one of the objects lying on the banqueting table depicted on the second register of the famous silver vessel from Karashamb (Trialeti culture of Armenia) may in fact be a Hittite-type animal-head vessel.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, they appear to be virtually absent during the Late Bronze Age, when both settlements and cemeteries are plentiful, as well.

Be that as it may, zoomorphic vessels reappear in considerable numbers in the region in the early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. Several examples come, for instance, from two rich cremation burials from Treli

Gorebi (fig. 4: h), which should date approximately in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>85</sup> Roughly contemporary examples come from Azerbaijan<sup>86</sup> and still others from the Talysh region on the mountains close to the shore of the Caspian Sea, on both sides of the present border between Azerbaijan and Iran.<sup>87</sup> They represent rings of a chain which connects the examples from Eastern Georgia with those from North-Western Iran, best represented by the finds from the cemetery of Marlik,<sup>88</sup> which date between the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and the early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium. These are peculiar one-opening vessels that represent different types of animals (bulls, horses, leopards, deer, rams, bears etc.) in a rather stylised form (fig. 4: i).

It is admittedly difficult to hypothesise a direct connection between this renewed fashion for zoomorphic vessels at the eastern limit of the “Northern Corridor” and the earlier tradition which, we assumed, spread during the Early Bronze Age from the Southern Caucasus in western direction towards Anatolia and the Aegean; we can limit ourselves to observe that in both cases they seemed to have travelled along an east-west oriented network of interrelations, in which the Southern Caucasus was undoubtedly involved.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Zoomorphic vessels are diffused over a wide range of cultures, and obviously not all of them have the same origin and necessarily belong to the same network of interregional exchanges and communications. However, the discovery of the two Kura-Araxes vessels from Aradetis Orgora opens up the intriguing possibility to trace an hitherto overlooked early route of diffusion of this category of finds from the Southern Caucasus through Northern Anatolia toward the Aegean, i.e. via the “Northern Corridor”, which would date back at least to the late 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.

The use of zoomorphic vessels may have spread together with the tradition of ritual consumption of wine, and their origins may ultimately lie in the Southern Caucasus, a region where viticulture and

<sup>79</sup> Koehl 2018, 63-65; Koehl 2006 for a complete discussion.

<sup>80</sup> Koehl 2018, 71-83.

<sup>81</sup> For *rhyta*, Koehl 2006; for *askoi*, Misch 1992.

<sup>82</sup> Koehl 2018, 63.

<sup>83</sup> For a general review about Georgia, see the vessels recently exhibited at Bordeaux (Lordkipanidze 2017) and Frankfurt (Giemsch, Hansen 2018).

<sup>84</sup> Cf. the photo published in Aruz *et al.* 2008, 91, cat. 55, below.

<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, these graves are still partially unpublished (see Sagona 2017, 418); for images of individual vessels, see Miron, Orthmann 1995, cat. nos. 381, 382; Gambaschidze *et al.* 2001; Lordkipanidze 2017, 86).

<sup>86</sup> A number of them are exhibited at the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan in Baku, where the second author of this article could recently see them.

<sup>87</sup> Some of these vessels, which probably come from graves, are discussed in the recent dissertation by Mathias Haze (Haze 2018, 288-291) who tentatively dates them to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC (1000-800 BC ca).

<sup>88</sup> Neghaban 1996, 117-120, pls. 36-38; see Ebbington 2018, 120-124.

wine-making are first attested in the Neolithic period and have since then played an important role both in the agricultural economy and in the cultural identity of the local population<sup>89</sup>.

The idea of zoomorphic vessels, particularly in the shape of birds, may have travelled through the connections (possibly stimulated by the developing exchange in metal ores and objects) between the Kura-Araxes communities – or their mid/late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium successors – and their still poorly known Central Anatolian neighbours.<sup>90</sup> Via the Yortan culture of North-Western Anatolia and the site of Troy, it may have spread to Western Anatolia and found a sea outlet to the Aegean coast and the islands.

In Anatolia the tradition of zoomorphic vessels probably lingered during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium – as suggested by sparse finds from different areas, but in particular from its northern part – and was then revived at the time of the Assyrian colonies, when Central Anatolia was deeply involved in the Middle Bronze Age network of international relations. In this period, it may have intercepted the contemporary traditions of zoomorphic and other ritual vessels from the Aegean and from Mesopotamia, and intermingled with them, giving rise to the tradition of Hittite *BIBRU* vessels.

This phase probably witnessed the transformation of a ritual, which had originally developed in the contest of egalitarian communities who presumably practiced communal feasting and/or libations within individual households or in simple village shrines, into the Hittite practice of “god-drinking”, which not by chance appears to be restricted almost exclusively to the royal couple. From the point of view of material culture, this change is signalled by the appearance of *BIBRU* containers in precious materials, which also played a role in contemporary diplomatic exchanges.

Finally, although evidence for the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium is hitherto lacking, it is not totally excluded that in the Southern Caucasus, at the opposite end of the “Northern Corridor”, the local tradition of commensality and wine-drinking through animal-shaped containers remained alive, and that it may in the future be possible to relate it with the remarkable revival of zoomorphic vessels that characterises Eastern Georgia, Azerbaijan and North-West Iran during the first centuries of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. The latter, in its turn, may be considered one of the factors (together with the Mesopotamian tradition

of animal-headed cups) which explains the later vogue of zoomorphic drinking vessels throughout the Achaemenid empire.

In conclusion, zoomorphic vessels represent another case where the inclusion of data from the Southern Caucasus may allow, in the future, to re-define the network of interregional connections crossing the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean by focusing on specific wares, objects, ideas and traditions travelling along the “Northern Corridor”, of which this region constitutes a crucial node.

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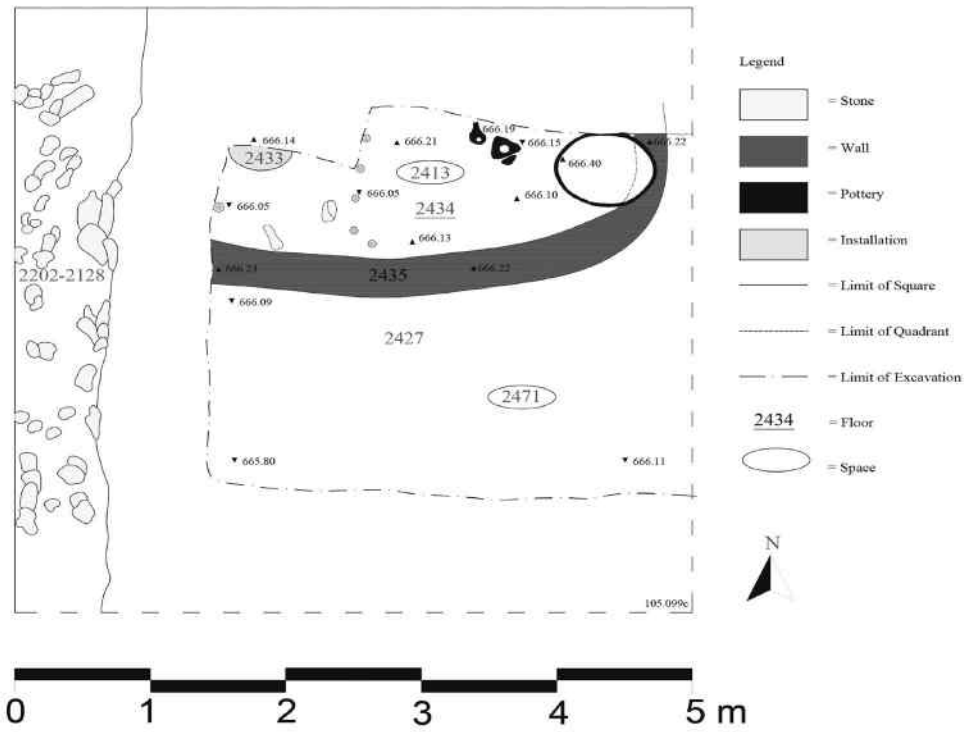
<sup>89</sup> Lordkipanidze 2017; McGovern et al. 2017; Giensch, Hansen 2018; Kvavadze et al. 2019. Even today, in Georgia, the main toast of the festive parties is drunk from a particular type of drinking vessel – the *kantsi*, whose shape is inspired by the horns of domestic or wild animals (oxen, aurochs).

<sup>90</sup> Rova forthcoming b.

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a



b Fig. 1. a) Aradeti Orgora, Field B, plan of the Kura-Araxes sub-phase 4a occupation; b) view of the finding spot of the zoomorphic vessels, from S (Georgian-Italian Shida Kartli Archaeological Project).





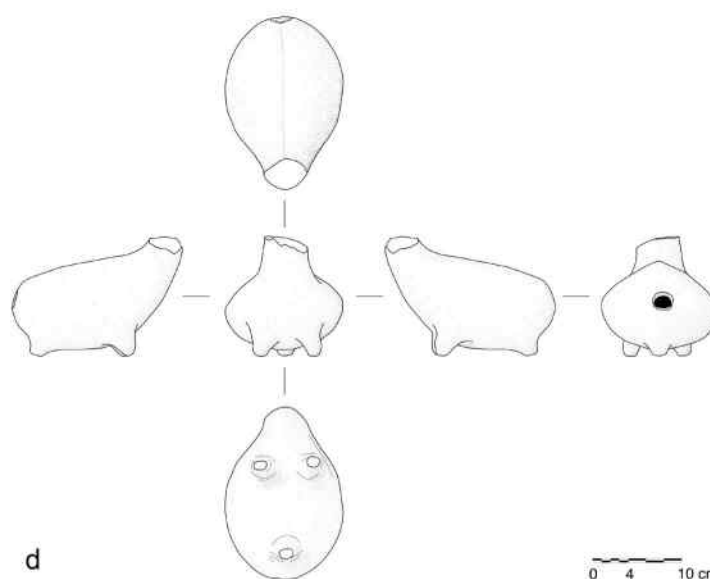
a



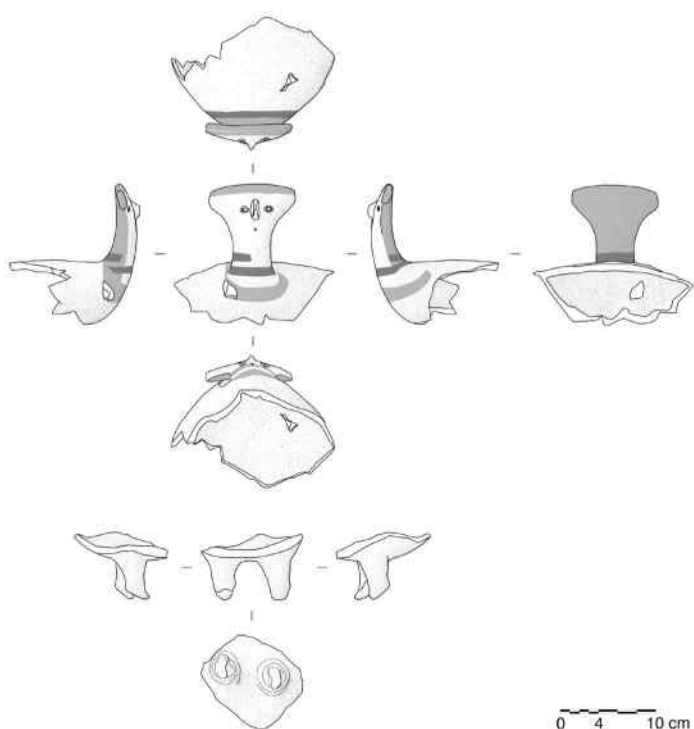
b



c

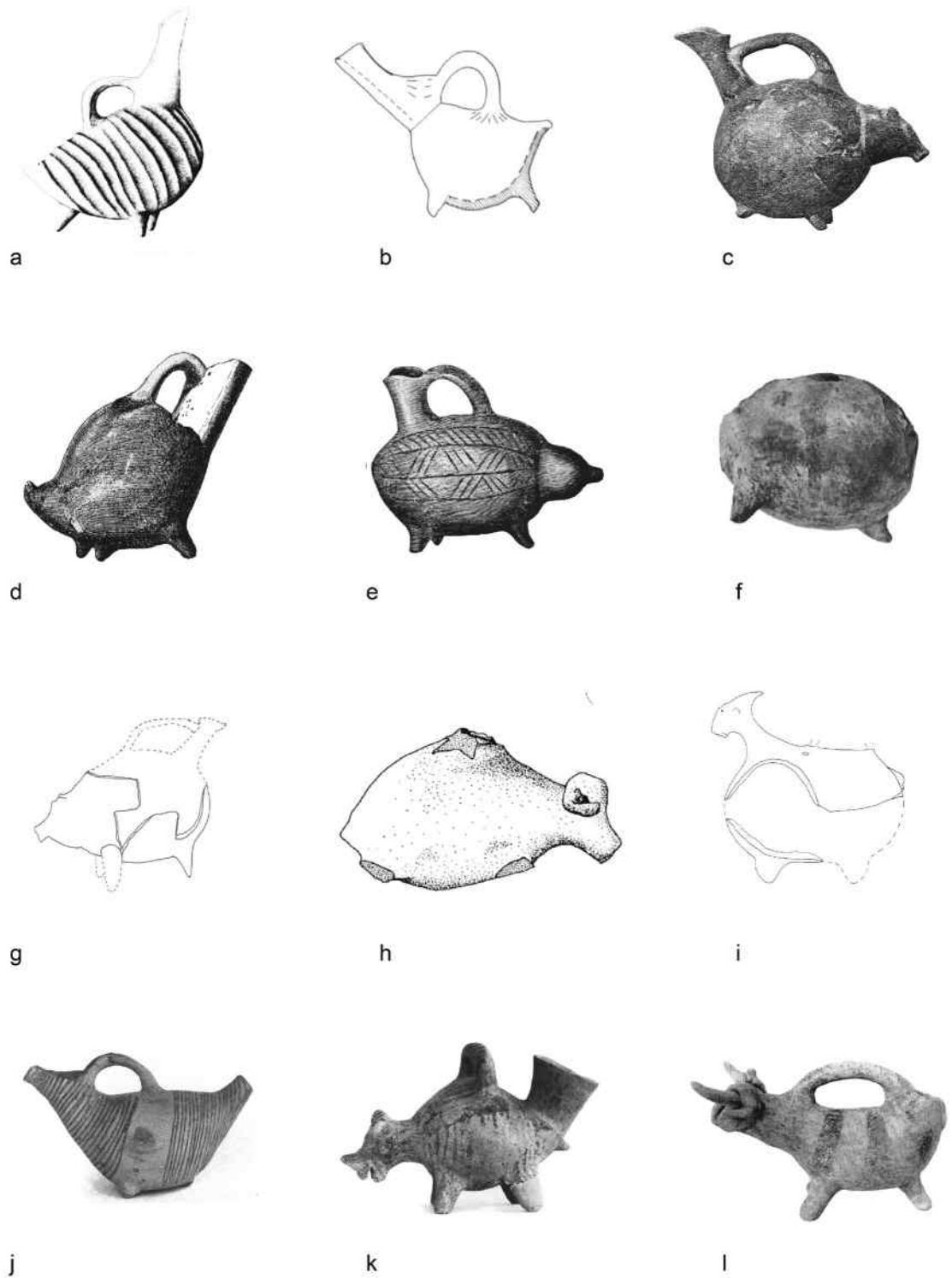


d



e

Fig. 2. a) Photo of the first zoomorphic vessel (2414-M-2) after restoration; b) photo of the second zoomorphic vessel (2434-M-5 + 2414-C-3) after restoration; c) detail of the head of the second zoomorphic vessel (2434-M-5) before restoration; d) drawing of the first zoomorphic vessel (2414-M-2); e) drawing of the fragments of the second zoomorphic vessel: 2434-M-5 (above) and 2414-C-3 (below) before restoration (Georgian-Italian Shida Kartli Archaeological Project).



NOT TO SCALE

Fig. 3. a, b) Yortan type vases (after Kiamil 1980, figs. 72-73); c, d, e) animal-shaped “tripod-vessels” from Troy (after Schliemann 1881, nos. 333, 335, 338); f) fragment of zoomorphic vessel from Aphrodisias (after Kadish 1969, pl. 25, fig. 12); g) reconstruction of the pig-shaped vessel from Poliochni (after Cultraro 2005, fig. 4); h) zoomorphic vessel from Kurban Höyük (after Algaze 1990, pl. 154a); i) fragmentary zoomorphic vessel from Tell Brak (after Oates *et al.* 2001, 435 cat. 383); j, k) zoomorphic *askoi* from Lebena Tomb II (Alexiou, Warren 2004, pl. 107 a, c); l) zoomorphic *rhyton* from Kumasa (Koehl 2006, pls. 1, 2).

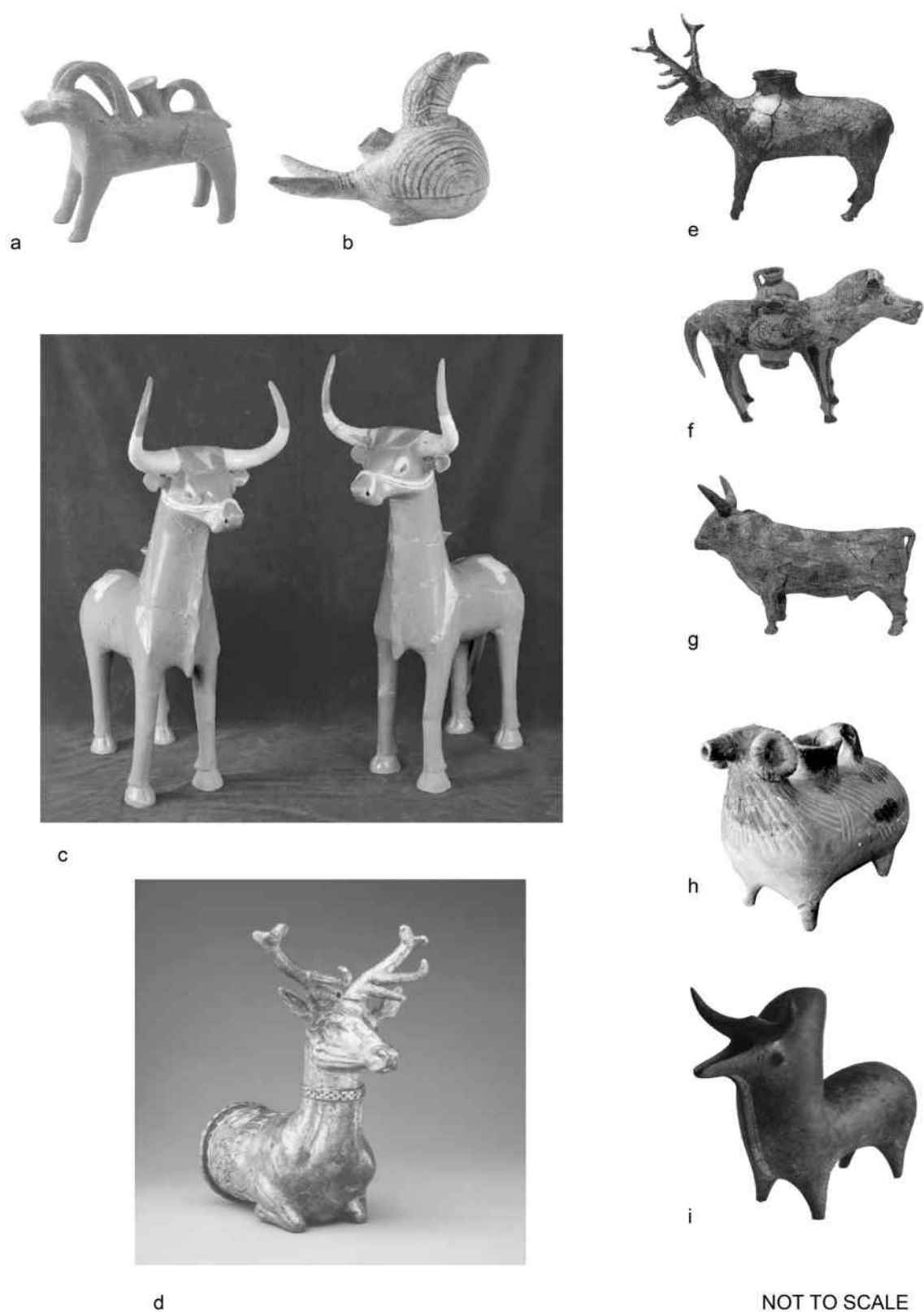


Fig. 4. a, b) Zoomorphic vessels from Kültepe Kanesh (after Kulakoğlu, Kanhal 2010, figs. 207, 209); c) Two bull *BIBRU* from Hattusha (after Koehl 2018, fig. 2.27); d) Hittite vessel in form of a stag (MET museum Public Domine <https://www.metmuseum.org/it/art/collection/search/327399>); e) Silver stag from Mycenae (after Koehl 2018, fig. 2.22); f, g) Late Minoan rhyta (after Koehl 2006, cat. 43, 24); h) Iron Age zoomorphic vessel from Treli, Georgia (after Lordkipanidze 2017, 96); i) Iron Age vessel in the form of a bull from Marlik (Iran) (after Tuchelt 1962, fig. 2).

# ON THE BASALT BASE FROM SUSA (SB5): A REINTERPRETATION\*

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## *Abstract*

This paper considers a locally made work, from Susa, which bears fragments of a coherent figurative representation on the theme of war and victory and is an example of the official visual communication of an event contemporary with the expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Following the recent exhibition of the work and the accompanying study, the essay proposes some further reflections on the images, from the perspective of grasping the relations between the subjects and their actions, and the explicit and implicit meanings of the narrative, alongside some observations on the typology of the monument to which it originally belonged, a key issue for evaluating the link between artefact/support and images that governs every sort of visual communication.

1. In this tribute to Marilyn and Giorgio Buccellati, I will offer some thoughts on a work that has long been little known and perhaps underrated, and that is now rightly being considered in the context of the historical and cultural events gravitating around the policies of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the kingdoms that attempted to challenge its dominion, such as Elam, albeit with alternating fortunes. It is worth noting that what remains of this work bears fragments of a coherent and univocal figurative representation, an example of official visual communication and that should be investigated as such in those iconographical and “narrative” aspects that are among the recurrent concerns of Marilyn’s research. The work pertains to a theme, that of war and victory, which I have been exploring for some time from a perspective aimed at grasping in the images the links and meanings, explicit and implicit, *between* subjects and *in* their actions,<sup>1</sup> following an approach that has found in Giorgio an ideal interlocutor on both the methodology and substance of my analyses.

The work in question was found last century by G. Jéquier at Susa and published by him in 1905,<sup>2</sup> without any information on its original context which he believed to have been lost;<sup>3</sup> he provides images of the three surviving faces of the four of which it was made up, all sculpted in relief, but without illustrations of the

artefact itself as it appeared at the time of discovery. Over sixty years later, the work was subjected to a concise and careful analysis by P. Amiet, who supplied further information on its conditions and attributed it to the Neo-Elamite period, at the height of the golden age of the Neo-Assyrian empire.<sup>4</sup> Over half a century later, it is thus a pleasure to note that this fragmentary monument, accompanied by a study by F. Bridey, was among the works on show in the recent exhibition held in the British Museum in London<sup>5</sup> to celebrate the last great Neo-Assyrian sovereign, Ashurbanipal. The exhibition provided an opportunity for the wider public to become familiar with the work and for specialists to see first-hand the documentary state of the surviving artefact in itself, in that factual unity of support and images that gives visual communication the capacity to transmit, with varying degrees of reception, the information that it contains and its meaning, depending on a given range of dissemination;<sup>6</sup> a documentary fact that raises numerous questions and considerations on various aspects.

2. What remains of the monument, which was certainly official in nature, is the roughly rectangular basalt plinth<sup>7</sup> with surviving parts of the four sides, all of which were originally sculpted<sup>8</sup> and of which three still

\* Photos by author.

<sup>1</sup> Issues already considered in Dolce 2018a and developed in Dolce 2019a; 2019b, forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> Jéquier 1905, 23-24, pl. II (Sb.5); this is followed by the publication of Contenau 1931, 762-763, 1096, fig. 540, who adds no further data on the work.

<sup>3</sup> Jéquier 1905, 9-10, where he notes the impossibility of knowing the original context and the relevant levels of the various works presented here, given the reuse of structures and materials in the later buildings at the site.

<sup>4</sup> Amiet 1966, 470, 535-537, figs. 410A-C.

<sup>5</sup> Bridey 2018, 183-185, fig. 204, in the context of the publication which accompanies the BP exhibition “I am Ashurbanipal king of the world, king of Assyria” at the British Museum from 8 November 2018 to 24 February 2019.

<sup>6</sup> For specific considerations on the issue see Dolce 2018b, forthcoming.

<sup>7</sup> See below for the technical aspects and the divergences of some data on the work.

<sup>8</sup> As deduced clearly from Amiet 1966, 535; Bridey 2018, 183-184.

bear scenes in relief on the theme of war and the display of victory. According to Amiet, what little survives of the fourth side still bears traces of an imbricated decoration,<sup>9</sup> plausibly of the same type that also forms the background to the other ongoing actions depicted on the other three sides of the work. These take place at the foot of a steep slope surmounted by a fortress with remains of the towers and walls, and pertain to the execution of capital punishments (fig. 1), corpses of enemies devoured by birds of prey (fig. 2) and a procession of prisoners escorted by the victors (fig. 3), all actions taking place after the battle.<sup>10</sup> In essence, these are common and recurring themes in the Near Eastern visual documentation from the protohistorical period onwards.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the specific formulations and details of the images under discussion here can be seen to possess distinctive characteristics that must be grasped if we are to decipher and interpret the meaning and purpose of *this* piece of visual communication.

Before providing some considerations on this matter, it should be noted that some of the data on the object, of varying importance, are not in complete agreement or exhaustive in the known studies. These include the apparatus of images documenting the artefact: the first two publications show the three sculpted faces<sup>12</sup> whilst the most recent shows only the side with the scene of birds of prey.<sup>13</sup> None of the publications provide an illustration of the upper part of the limestone block, a key area for clarifying the typology of the monument and thus the functional relationship consisting of that factual unity between artefact/support and images/content mentioned above. It is precisely on this upper part of the plinth that Amiet notes the presence of a circular cavity, probably a mortice into which a tenon was inserted to affix a statue.<sup>14</sup> This theory was accepted by Bridey, who suggests that the statue may have been made of a precious metal.<sup>15</sup> Yet despite this plausible

hypothesis, the studies have continued to categorize the work as a stele, from its discovery and up to its display in the British Museum last year where it was described as a “victory stele”,<sup>16</sup> only to suggest in the commentary on the work that it was a “statue base”.<sup>17</sup> Though the typology of the original work appears to remain an open question, its classification as a celebratory stele or as a royal statue with the deeds/res gestae of the sovereign recalled in the form of an epitome in the images at his feet is not an insignificant alternative in the assessment of the monument in itself, given that fundamental link between support and image that in my opinion supports all forms of visual communication. Finally, the dimensions of the artefact differ in the studies; those reported by Bridey now have to be considered reliable.<sup>18</sup>

3. At the current state of knowledge and with regard to the aforementioned issues, chief among them of course the typology of the monument, it should be noted that the subjects, actions and figurative conventions certainly refer back to the language of visual communication of 3<sup>rd</sup>-millennium BC Mesopotamia.<sup>19</sup> Equally, the urban “scenarios” find an illustrious precedent among the official monuments of the 2nd millennium BC in the Dadusha stele,<sup>20</sup> preceding even the considerable favour of the spatial and urban connotation in the figurative programmes illustrating the deeds in war of the Assyrian sovereigns and culminating at the time of the Neo-Assyrian empire. Rather, it is the natural/environmental context of the work that signals a significant distinction even from salient past examples of victory monuments in which the natural landscape is a co-protagonist of the event, as in the Stele of Naram-Sin of Akkad, or in which the landscape itself is the place in which the monument takes shape, as in the rock reliefs that over the course of three millennia mark the confines temporarily reached by the dominant power of the moment.

In the images of the Elamite monument, alongside the architectural space, impervious “nature” invades the scene with the dense graphic rendering of the imbrication and alludes in a modest creation<sup>21</sup> to

<sup>9</sup> Amiet 1966, 535.

<sup>10</sup> On the latter point there is agreement between Amiet 1966, 535 and Bridey 2018, 183, 185, whilst Jéquier 1905, 23 considers all the images to be scenes from the ongoing battle.

<sup>11</sup> Both in Mesopotamia and elsewhere, like the processions of prisoners in shackles, the capital punishments inflicted on the defeated known in the glyptics from Susa, Uruk, Tepe Gawra and Choga-Mish, and over the course of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC up to Ebla: Dolce 2014, 240-241, fig. 1; and like the birds of prey who attack the decapitated bodies of the defeated in the prehistoric paintings of Çatal Hüyük and in the proto-historical glyptics of Uruk: Dolce 2018a, 35-38, figs. 4.1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Jéquier 1905, pl. II; Amiet 1966, figs. 410A-C.

<sup>13</sup> Bridey 2018, fig. 204; naturally, the display of the work in the exhibition fully made up for the need to select images for the catalogue and allowed for an viewing of the artefact.

<sup>14</sup> Amiet 1966, 535; the measurements of the circular cavity are not reported.

<sup>15</sup> Bridey 2018, 185.

<sup>16</sup> Jéquier 1905, 23 considers the fragment to be part of an “obelisk”; Amiet 1966, 535-537 and Bridey 2018, 183 a stele.

<sup>17</sup> Amiet 1966, 535; Bridey 2018, 183, 185.

<sup>18</sup> Bridey 2018, 183: H. 52 cm, W. 62 cm, L. 56 cm. As concerns these measurements, there are more or less significant differences between those reported by Jéquier 1905, 23: H. 44 cm, W. 58 cm; and by Amiet 1966, 535: H. 50 cm, W. 59 cm.

<sup>19</sup> See on this n. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Charpin 2004; Miglus 2003; Ismail 2003. For a recent historical and documentary analysis, and a different interpretation of the event celebrated see recently Suter 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Amiet 1966, 470, 536, considers the quality and line of the reliefs to be “lourde” and “grossière”.

features and conventions of the innovative artistic language employed to represent space at the time of Sennacherib.<sup>22</sup> Jéquier's mention of the stele of Eannatum of Lagash and more generally of the reliefs of southern Mesopotamia of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC in his evaluation of the Elamite work<sup>23</sup> is thus fitting and reflects the chronological attribution of his time,<sup>24</sup> now unsuitable but that has its basis in some features of the images that still require consideration in the historical and cultural definition of the monument.

The complex of images that I described at the beginning as coherent and univocal recounts events following the conclusion of the battle, as already noted by others;<sup>25</sup> it thus concerns a specific time that is marked by events unfolding contemporaneously or that culminates in the epilogue of the exhibition of the prisoners in the victory procession. In the formulation of this pictorial account, some distinctive features of the subjects, the actions and the relations between them deserve further consideration. The violent actions underway on the reliefs sculpted on two sides of the plinth (figs. 1, 2) pertain respectively to imminent decapitations (fig. 1) and the mangling of the lifeless corpses of the defeated hurled from the walls of the fortress (fig. 2). In the former instance (fig. 1), aside from the explicit relationship between dominant and succumbing individuals, we see that the two types of subjects are clearly distinguished by their iconographical features (the enemies are always naked and have long beards) and are portrayed on different scales, smaller for the defeated, in accordance with figurative conventions known from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC onward. The compositional scheme of the sequence of soldiers and prisoners close to death replicates those known on the Neo-Assyrian palatine reliefs. In the latter instance (fig. 2), the presence of the birds of prey and their actions certainly evoked images of historical memory, as I have already said, though the most appropriate in this context seem to be those visible on the fragmentary stele of Sargon I of Akkad and on the Neo-Assyrian palatine reliefs from Nimrud and Nineveh.<sup>26</sup> These present the same relationship between the passive and still intact subjects, the bodies of the lifeless enemies, and the active subjects, the birds of prey, in contrast to what happens on the stele of Eannatum, where vultures transport the severed heads and limbs of the defeated elsewhere.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst the fortress plays a constant role in the representation on three sides of the monument, with specific communicative intentions, there seems to be a direct relationship between this urban context and the lifeless enemies falling from the walls to the ground, where the birds of prey await them. The scene before the viewer may be that of the final act of a thwarted attempt at conquest on the part of enemies of the central seat of power, here represented by its bulwark *par excellence*, its fortified walls. Further examination of the work and some of its details confirm the official nature of the monument, in whose surviving images we see the complex and detailed representation of the last, peak phase of an important martial event, presumably intended at the time to be much emphasised.

Whether the scale of the victory was regional<sup>28</sup> or otherwise remains an open question, though an observation of the subjects and their relations in the scene carved on the third side of the plinth (fig. 3) suggests to me an interpretative proposal. This is a procession of prisoners parading after the victory, of different genders and ages, escorted by a soldier grasping the last in line (naked and with a long beard like all the enemies portrayed in the work) around the back of the neck; in front of him walks a woman, dressed and with her hair arranged on her head, and a child, also dressed, proceeding towards a destination that is now lost. The gestures of intimacy among the three who advance composedly, with the man resting his hand on the woman's shoulder and the woman in turn holding her son by the hand, suggest that we are dealing with a family, perhaps of high rank, displayed in the triumph; we can ask ourselves if these might be members of the royal family or of the court of the defeated enemy.

A final consideration is the extent to which this monument celebrating a Neo-Elamite king's victory over (unknown) enemies during the period of expansion of the Neo-Assyrian empire was known (directly or indirectly) and its importance. Unfortunately, to this end we lack certain information on its original typology – stele or statue – that are key to grasping that fundamental connection between type of support and images in the language of visual communication; we will more specifically survey the state of the art in regards to this issue. Amiet's aforementioned hypothesis that this is a statue base is shared by Bridey<sup>29</sup> whilst their proposals regarding the identity of the individual depicted differ: Amiet suggests a guardian deity of the capital Susa, whilst Bridey proposes a royal image, perhaps one of those

<sup>22</sup> On the new spatial conception of the landscape introduced by this sovereign in the sculpted orthostats of the Southwest Palace at Nineveh see Matthiae 1996, especially 164ff.

<sup>23</sup> Jéquier 1905, 24.

<sup>24</sup> As opportunely noted by Amiet 1966, 536.

<sup>25</sup> Amiet 1966, 535; Bridey 2018, 183, 185.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Dolce 2018a, 44f., 47ff.

<sup>27</sup> For an interpretation of the role of birds of prey in emulation

of the soldiers see Dolce 2018a, 38-40; Bridey 2018, 185, n. 15.

<sup>28</sup> As Bridey 2018, 184 thinks.

<sup>29</sup> Amiet 1966, 535; Bridey 2018, 185.

removed by Ashurbanipal during the sack of the city.<sup>30</sup> In both cases, the absence of the statue may result from a voluntary act of iconoclastic destruction or an intentional removal as part of the booty of victory:<sup>31</sup> these acts would indicate the highest level of media impact of the monument, erected in honour of a patron deity of Susa or of one of its kings, victorious over illustrious adversaries.

The practice of carving emblematic images showing victory in war on the base of statues is present already in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC in Egypt and in Mesopotamia from the period of Akkad and Ur III, in the form of the defeated, naked and lifeless at the feet of the victor<sup>32</sup> or, during the 21st century BC, in the not explicitly aggressive form of the submission of tributaries kneeling at the feet of the ensi Ur-Ningirsu of Lagash.<sup>33</sup> Above all, it is the written sources that provide sometimes detailed data, on now lost statues, passed down by the scribes in Old Babylonian copies and collected in the analytical study by Suter,<sup>34</sup> which mentions for example the statues of the kings of Ur III that bore, specifically on their bases, commemorative inscriptions on the victorious military campaigns alongside images of prisoners of war. In this context, I note only that the representation unfolding on the three sides of the Susa plinth is coherent in its theme and composition, rich in details of various types and develops in the form of an account through consequential images within a given timeframe, that following the decisive battle. If this is in fact the base of a highly prestigious statue, this would be a fairly peculiar formulation, difficult to define within the field of visual communication only as a

representative overview of events and an icon of victory, removed from the “canons” known from the sources and the works of statuary that have survived until the present.

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- <sup>30</sup> Amiet 1966, 470; Bridey 2018, 183, 185; the very striking media operation constructed by Ashurbanipal around the booty brought from Susa to Assyria is a response to the similar operation undertaken centuries earlier by the Elamite sovereigns who transported a vast number of prestigious works from Mesopotamia to Susa, as we learn from the account by Potts 1999, 235, pl. 7.9.  
<sup>31</sup> On the state of the art as concerns the various forms of iconoclasm in images and inscriptions see May 2012, and the various studies collected by the same author in this volume; the removal of statues from their homes and their transportation as the booty of victory are widely documented in both the Assyrian and Elamite sources, see n. 30.  
<sup>32</sup> See the statues of Kha-sekhem: Quibell, Petrie 1900, 5, 11, pls. XXXIX-XLI; inscriptions on both statues give the name of the pharaoh, a member of the II dynasty, dating to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC; and the anonymous statues of royal type found at Susa, one attributed to a sovereign of Akkad of the second generation, the other plausibly ascribed to an Elamite sovereign of the last quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, contemporary with the III dynasty of Ur, where the bodies of the enemies beneath the feet of the victor are not anonymous, as each bears inscribed their name and rank: Amiet 1976, 20-21, pl. 15; Tallon 1993.  
<sup>33</sup> Moortgat 1969, pls. 175-176.  
<sup>34</sup> Suter 2010, 330, 346.

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Fig. 1. Execution of capital punishments. Sb5-Musée du Louvre.





Fig. 2. Corpses of enemies devoured by birds of prey. Sb5-Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 3. Prisoners escorted by the victors. Sb5-Musée du Louvre.

# THE SCEPTER FROM SITAGROI AND EARLY BRONZE AGE SYMBOLS OF POWER

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## *Abstract*

A polished stone shaft-hole axe, with a carefully sculpted animal head was excavated from an Early Bronze Age 'Long House' at the site of Sitagroi, a prehistoric settlement mound in northeast Greece. Registered as 'Small Find 2409' it has been published as a 'scepter'. Comparanda include carved stone animal headed scepters dated to the late Eneolithic from sites/cultures northeast and east of Sitagroi associated with other grave burials. Discussion reviews space, time, form and the likely link to Proto Indo-European speakers.

## 1. THE SCEPTER

Among the finds from the Long House (LH) was the 'scepter', a unique, polished stone shaft-hole ax, SF 2409, its butt end sculpted to represent the head of an animal with shaped mouth, nose, and neck; its eyes and nostrils delineated with incisions (fig. 1). Marija Gimbutas, co-principle investigator with Colin Renfrew of the site,<sup>1</sup> identified the animal as a 'lion' and, indeed, it does have a feline look. It measures 8.5 cm × 3.5 cm. Manufactured of a black, highly polished diorite, the raw material is most likely from a source east of Sitagroi, close to the modern Turkish border.<sup>2</sup> The carving is expert and smoothly executed; the animal head is curving down and back to an indentation, its neck (?) is engraved with a cluster of short incised lines (collar?). On the 'shoulder-back' of the animal are a framed series of short incisions, perhaps lines with symbolic meaning rather than indicating a mane. No use wear was in evidence. The shaft hole was carefully drilled just behind the bit, but its placement did not provide balance since the sculpted butt end has greater heft and volume. SF 2409 could have been used as a percussion tool, but the absence of wear suggests it was not. How the bit end was fractured is unknown.

Inserting a staff in the shaft-hole, the artifact becomes a scepter to be raised, marking and evoking a symbol of power. In that sense it allows for an unexpected but pleasant link to Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Giorgio Buccellati's excavation of Urkesh where one of the non-Akkadian royal seals pictures a seated king, a lion resting beneath his chair, his right arm holding a scepter raised on high (fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> Sitagroi is a far cry from the Old Akkadian period at Urkesh but if power exists it will be signified whether

ambiguously in an Early Bronze Age (EBA) wattle and daub house in an agricultural village or clearly in a royal EBA palace household.

The scepter elicits an immediate response in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (*an external* response) as a symbol of power and thus, is evaluated in a special social category. *An internal response* to this artifact would have been from the EBA villager thousands of years ago. How these external and internal responses to a social category are evaluated and matched or otherwise is the challenge.<sup>4</sup> SF 2409 was clearly documented: excavated from a square and level on a living floor in the Long House; connection with other artifacts was not indicated. The scepter, removed from the floor on which it was found was thus separated from the 'living' context in which it functioned. Giorgio Buccellati would consider SF 2409 as representing a 'broken tradition' because, as with a dead language, anyone with knowledge of the tradition in which the scepter 'performed' (or spoke the 'dead' language) is no longer alive.<sup>5</sup>

Thus ambiguity frames the meaning of this artifact to the inhabitants of the Long House and raises many questions. Was this house a seat of power? What was the role of SF 2409 in the EBA Long House? Was it raised to signify the start of ritual planting, or harvest, or a celebration of victory, marriage, birth, death, or puberty? Who was and what does the owner represent? Was it a gift from a visitor? Did it represent the lion as ally, protector? The lion depicted in fig. 2, a Mesopotamian context, is an ally to the royal household for there is no threat in its position under the king's chair. Such is not the case in Late Helladic I Mycenaean scenes which Nancy Thomas describes where lions are connected to chiefs, warriors, hunters, or ritual-makers, "Late Helladic I lion art presents

<sup>1</sup> Renfrew *et al.* 1986; Elster, Renfrew 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon 1986, 146.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2018, 59, fig. 2 (my thanks to Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati for permission to reproduce this image).

<sup>4</sup> Lesure 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Buccellati 2017, 1-3.

no awesome figure of state shown peacefully with lion as ally, as was done in Bronze Age Egypt and Mesopotamia".<sup>6</sup> Of note is that lion bone remains were reported from a northwestern Black Sea Eneolithic settlement as well as a lion tooth reported from a middle neolithic settlement in Bulgaria; these regions bring lions closer to north east Greece than does Mesopotamia or Mycenae.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. THE SITE

Sitagroi, established close to a permanent source of water and one of the key sites in the Drama plain of north east Greece (fig. 3), was excavated between 1968 and 1970.<sup>8</sup> The mound was formed over the course of some 3000 years spanning the Middle Neolithic through the EBA (table 1). Excavation reached virgin soil through a depth of occupational debris at 10.5 m, divided into Phases I through V, representing living floors that were not always contiguous. Chalcolithic Phase III occupation was followed with an hiatus of possibly 300 years, after which, close to the summit of the mound, three building horizons of the EBA were excavated: the Burnt House of Phase IV, the Long House, Va and the Bin Complex, Phase Vb.

The architectural footprint of the apsidal shaped Long House was ca 5.5 m × 15.5 m although the southern end was not delineated (fig. 4). It was a wattle and daub structure and a series of parallel post-holes suggest a contemporary, "neighboring" house. Three radiocarbon dates came directly from samples collected in the Long House: 2021±40; 2055±40 BCE and 2015±100 BCE. The first two were established in a laboratory in La Jolla, the third in Berlin.<sup>9</sup>

## 3. THE EBA AT SITAGROI

The background of the scepter is the Long House built virtually above the Phase IV Burnt House, both with apsidal ends, suggesting continuity and a tradition of occupation on the mound. The Bin Complex follows the Long House with some of its bins cut into Long House levels. There seems to have been some cultural connection for the two house occupations (Burnt House and Long House) in terms of pottery, imports, animal and plant domesticates.<sup>10</sup> Sitagroi is close to the Angista River, in a region where agriculture and animal husbandry thrived along with prospects for gathering of honey, wild fruits and berries. Hunting was easily accessible in the hilly flanks and higher mountains which surround the Drama Plain. The material culture of the EBA settlers

differed somewhat from that of the Chalcolithic; after all, there had been an hiatus of possibly 300 years. Trading ties did not continue; for example, Ruth Tringham noted that the honey-brown flint (from Madara in northern Bulgaria), which was preferred and had been imported regularly during Phases I-III and early IV, decreased considerably during Phase V.<sup>11</sup> Tringham observed a strategy of conservation and small-scale use of existing local lithic resources and questioned whether the change in settlement came with socio-economic change. Were the honey-brown flint resources exhausted or was the organization and distribution of this flint disrupted? Another import, *Spondylus* shells, from the Aegean some 25 km to the south, had been highly valued to manufacture ornaments, such as annulets and pendants, and had been regularly traded. However the householders of the EBA Long House exhibited little interest in its acquisition.<sup>12</sup>

The Long House was the same width but almost three times as long as the Burnt House and thus might have accommodated more than a dozen persons, some children, some elders. Another long house was its neighbor and there may have been a small group of households on the summit of the mound. A leader may have arisen from among the villagers and the marble mace recovered from excavation of the Bin Complex or the scepter from the Long House may have signified this.<sup>13</sup> Charles Stanish, researching human co-operation in state-less societies, wrote that "the lowest and most basic unit of production and reciprocal exchange is the household", in which "co-operation is structured with rituals and rules and a leader who coordinated cooperation and participation so that all could enjoy well-being".<sup>14</sup> I can propose, with some evidence, that there were at least two long houses, accommodating at least two dozen inhabitants, and thus, a natural leader might well have emerged. One may question whether s/he used SF 2409 as a scepter to gain the attention of his or her village neighbors.

The Bin Complex of phase Vb features a rich exposure of large clay plastered bins associated with patchy remains of flooring, postholes, hearth, a processing platform, and pits. Although domestic in nature, this area was not clearly associated with a single structure; rather, the various bins possibly belonged to several now-perished houses. The neighborhood and village community is thus in focus and with the extensive recovery from the Bin Complex can provide a rich picture of agency in

<sup>6</sup> Thomas 1998, 300-301.

<sup>7</sup> Elster 2003, 191.

<sup>8</sup> Renfrew 2003, xxvii.

<sup>9</sup> Renfrew 1986, 173, table 7.2.

<sup>10</sup> Sherratt 1986, 429.

<sup>11</sup> Tringham 2003, 124.

<sup>12</sup> Nikolaidou, Elster 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Elster 2003, fig 5.32, 190, pl. 5.41b.

<sup>14</sup> Stanish 2017, 73, 80-81.

action. The bins and hearths suggest practices of food storage, preparation, production and consumption encompassing more than one household; communal meals and feasting are attractive possibilities. This idea seems supported by the large numbers of organic remains, including 175 elements of domestic and wild fauna and more than twenty botanical samples many of which consist of hundreds or thousands of seeds, acorns, and fruit pips.<sup>15</sup> Indicative are also the groupings of artifacts associated with the above activities: bowls, drinking cups, jars or urns with big lids, chipped stone blades, axes, and various ground stone processors. Recorded artifacts number 245 and illuminate multiple aspects of life: farming, food processing, tool-making, crafts (notably weaving and metallurgy), trade (non-local raw materials for polished stone tools and maces), and hospitality (reflected in the cups and a decorated jar). If more than one family participated in the facilities of the Bin Complex, as implied by the structural features, it would be interesting to consider the elements of visibility, collaboration, or competition involved in the performance of activities.

#### 4. COMPARANDA

Research on SF 2409 lead to Blagoje Govedarica and Elke Kaiser and then to Govedarica's seminal work, the result of intensive research during which hundreds of excavation reports,<sup>16</sup> articles, and museum collections from Eastern Europe and the Steppes were examined and organized.<sup>17</sup> Govedarica describes the emergence in five geographical zones, of the stone scepters, the early ocher graves and contacts between southeast Europe and the steppes in the time period he identifies as *das älteren Aneolithikums*. This vast area with both ocher graves and animal headed and abstract headed stone scepters includes: I: the Carpathians; II: Northwest Pontus and West Pontus; III: North Pontus-Azov; IV: Volga-Caspian; and V: North Caucasus (fig. 5).

The link between this huge region is the scepter from Sitagroi SF 2409, the stone animal headed shaft hole axe, comparable *partially* to those *Zepters* which Govedarica describes as zoomorphic (fig. 6-1, 6-2, 6-5 and 6-7). In terms of time frame the EBA and *das älteren Aneolithikums* are comparable. As to form, they share an animal head and are all sculpted in stone. However, none of those which Govedarica publishes are manufactured with a shaft hole; rather, virtually all of them have been carved with one or two horns (or cones) atop the animal head. Govedarica and Kaiser

proposed a solution to allow the *Herrscher* to raise the *Zepter* minus a shaft hole: a wooden staff, carved to circle the horn and firmly grasp the back of the animal head. A slight variation of this staff is also proposed for use with the abstract shaped *Zepters* (fig. 6-3a). There is no agreement as to which animal is depicted on the zoomorphic *Zepters*; they have been reported as heads of dog, pig, and hippopotamus. David Anthony wrote of two horse head scepters from Cucutenyi settlement sites, indicating steppe contact; one in the Carpathians, the other in Dobrugia: Fitionesti and Fedeleseni (Romania); steppes prototypes were considered chronologically earlier.<sup>18</sup>

Context is not comparable; SF 2409 was excavated from a northeastern Greek EBA house whereas the *Zepters* that Govedarica published were excavated from burials with ocher sprinkled on or around the skeleton(s), or were finds without context but close to a cemetery, site, grave, or kurgan in all of the 5 zones indicated above and on the map (fig. 5). The differences in context imply that the *Zepters* found in graves were placed there – as likely was the ocher – to both honor *this* death and to recognize and demonstrate the importance of the dead person in his or her social world; a world in which not all burials were so treated. Nevertheless, as Richard Lesure explains in evaluating the use of comparison, check if the object is used in an iconic sense or used to represent a structural part of the society. In either case, the same questions are elicited. What is depicted here? How and for what was this used?<sup>19</sup> In other words, what was the meaning, purpose, or social impact of these animal headed stone scepters, or the abstract forms? An answer can be proposed: all scepters represent some type of social prestige. They require careful manufacturing and have no *practical* use, not even SF 2409 with its shaft hole. Thus, minus contextual or formal convergence, they nevertheless offer a specific, physical manifestation of *social* complexity especially in the case of the *Zepters* as burial gifts.

#### 5. A LINK WITH PIE

The scepter from Sitagroi is the only animal headed shaft-hole axe that I am aware of from any of the prehistoric sites near the Aegean. However, and because the comparanda link it to the steppes region, I cannot avoid bringing up the fascinating and on-going discussion of the arrival of the proto-Indo European speakers from the Eurasian steppes into Europe, a topic on which Marija Gimbutas has long focused.<sup>20</sup> In the middle of the last century, she

<sup>15</sup> Nikolaidou, Elster 2003, 463; Nikolaidou *et al.* 2013, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Govedarica, Kaiser 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Govedarica 2004 (my thanks to Blagoved Gavedarica for permission to publish these images).

<sup>18</sup> Anthony 2007, 234.

<sup>19</sup> Lesure 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Gimbutas 1965; 1977.

introduced the ‘kurgan’ culture which describes the custom of burying the dead, often in a cist covered by a mound, and the people – pastoralists – originating in the Don-Volga steppes, now referred to as the “Yamnaya”. In the first of many articles, publications and at national and international meetings, Gimbutas used evidence from historical linguistics, archaeology, mythology, and folklore to support her thesis that the speakers of proto-Indo-European were patriarchal, pastoral, and horse breeding whereas the Old Europe agriculturalists were settled, peaceful with a pantheon of gods and goddesses. Gimbutas viewed the proto-Indo-European speakers as aggressive, if not warlike and viewed the meeting of these two groups as catastrophically transforming Old Europe. Its florescent Chalcolithic culture was annihilated, and in its wake were the seeds of the Indo-European patriarchal society and the languages, social structure, and proclivity for war that we observe today. Indeed, the end of the Chalcolithic and the beginning of the EBA in Greece and the Balkans present dramatic changes in the material record (sites burned, abandoned, and so on). David Anthony writes that “it looks like the tell towns of the old Europeans fell to warfare, and somehow, immigrants from the steppes were involved... Exactly what happened to Old Europe is the subject of a long vigorous debate”.<sup>21</sup>

Gimbutas’s explanation for this transformation of culture was not challenged in the West for decades until Colin Renfrew,<sup>22</sup> Gamkrelidze and Ivanov<sup>23</sup> and others published their differing accounts for the arrival of proto-Indo-European speakers in Europe and James Mallory even-handedly evaluated all these various explanations.<sup>24</sup> Most recently with the advent of genetic studies scientists have joined archaeologists to test ancient DNA and compare with modern DNA to discover which cultural group mixed with another, and when and where.<sup>25</sup> Thus the movement of peoples can be evaluated along with the models of language dispersal.

In 2015, the question of how and when the proto-Indo-European language arrived in Europe and who carried it seems to have been answered with publication of the genetic data which infers that a major movement of people with wagons, horses and herds from the steppe into Europe occurred at the end of the Neolithic (between 5000 and 4500 years ago). These migrants, steppes herders, the “Yamnaya”, account for more than three-quarters of the ancestry of the late Neolithic Corded Ware people of Germany and

this ancestry is present today in northern Europeans. Based on historical linguistic studies, the Yamnaya spoke a steppe derived Indo-European language and it is likely the Corded Ware people and those genetically similar who followed them in Central Europe spoke it too. Gimbutas’s thesis had much to respect; she had identified the ‘kurgan’ culture and people beginning with the Yamnaya but they were not warlike invaders of Europe. Instead they were large migrations of pastoralists herding large flocks with strong evidence for chiefly structure. Gimbutas ‘patriarchy’ was supported by the excavation of rich male graves, kurgans, frequently graced with animal headed scepters or mace heads, ocher and other gifts. Renfrew’s thesis that the *first* animal and plant domesticates came from Anatolia has support in the genetic evidence. However, this adoption by the early Neolithic populations of Old Europe took place much earlier than the arrival of the proto Indo European and was not accompanied by a new language. Indeed, it is the success of domestication that played the significant role in the development of Neolithic and Chalcolithic Old Europe.

Invited by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago to deliver the inaugural Marija Gimbutas Memorial Lecture on November 8, 2017, Renfrew summarized all of this important genetic information and gracefully recognized Gimbutas’ theories and his earlier skepticism. I have tried to do justice to both scholars for both have made remarkable contributions to our understanding of European prehistory from Early Neolithic to the Bronze Age.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The invitation to participate in this *Festschrift* honoring the Buccellatis has taken me on a challenging journey. I think the scepter was an object whose use and meaning was worth pursuing, although as in much of archaeology ambiguity is a partner. Genetics has come a long way in answering the question of the origin of Proto Indo-European and a way to model and assess language and human dispersal. Clearly there will be more to learn and evaluate as the geneticists and archaeologists continue to tackle different aspects of these problems.

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<sup>21</sup> Anthony 2007, 228.

<sup>22</sup> Renfrew 1989.

<sup>23</sup> Gamkrelidze, Ivanov 1995.

<sup>24</sup> Mallory 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Haak *et al.* 2015; Lazaridis *et al.* 2015.

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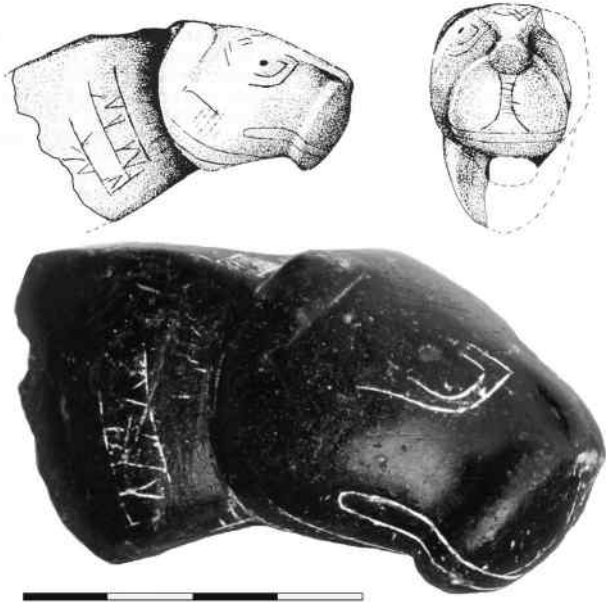


Fig. 1. Sitagroi scepter, SF 2409, stone shaft-hole axe with animal head (after Renfrew *et al.* 1986, 186 fig. 8.4b; pl. XXV).



Fig. 2. The royal household: king seated, his scepter raised; lion below his chair; prince touches king; attendant with offering. (after Kelly-Buccellati 2018, 59, fig. 2).



Fig. 3. Prehistoric sites in northeast Greece (after Nikolaidou *et al.* 2013, 55).



Fig. 4. Exposure of the Early Bronze Age 'Long House', Sitagroi Va (after Renfrew *et al.* 1986, pl. XXII: 1).

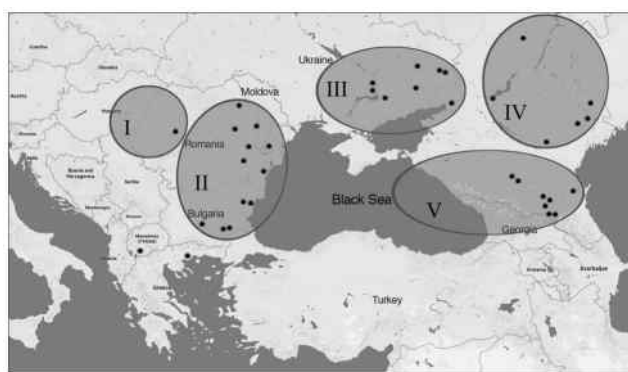


Fig. 5 Distribution map of ochre graves and scepters in five zones: I: Carpathian, II: Northwest Pontic and West Pontic, III: North Pontic and Azov, IV: Volga-Caspian, V: North Caucasus (after Govedarica 2004, 21).

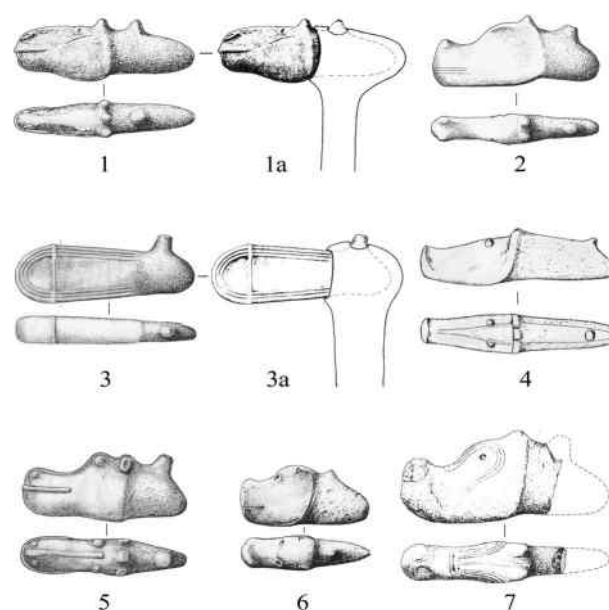


Fig. 6

1. Suvorovo, Odessa, Ukraine – black diorite gabbro with white flecs; ocher marks on cone; 14.6 x 6.5 x 2.9 cm;
  - 1a. Proposed shaft attached to scepter;
  2. Drama, Iambol, Bulgaria – single find, gray-white granite diorite with darker blemishes, 13.7 x 6.5 x 2.9 cm;
  3. Vladikavkaz, Russia; abstract form;
  - 3a. Proposed shaft attached around horn;
  4. Kokberek, Astrakhan, Russia – from a ruined grave;
  5. Terekli-Mekteb, Republic of Dagestan, Russia – single find, black granite with white flecs, 13.2 x 6.2 x 3.2 cm;
  6. Vințu de Jos, Alba County, Romania – dark, gritty solid stone (plutonite?) with lighter and darker patches. 10.5 x 5.7 x 3.4 cm;
  7. Casimcea, Dobruja, Romania –from a ruined tomb; whitish limestone; cone and part of the back missing. 13.2 x 8.2 x 3.6 cm
- (After Govedarica 2004; Govedarica, Kaiser 1996).

Phase	Duration (radiocarbon years BCE)	Duration (calendar years BCE)
Vb	2100–1800	2700–2200
Va	2400–2100	3100–2700
IV	2700–2400	3500–3100
III	3800–2700	4600–3500
II	4300–3800	5200–4600
I	4600–4300	5500–5200

Table 1: Sitagroi chronology (after Renfrew 2003, xxvii, Table 1).



THE REPENTANT GOD IN THE FLOOD STORY:  
A COMPARISON BETWEEN *WHEN GODS WERE MEN* AND *GENESIS* 6-9

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*Abstract*

This paper investigates divine repentance in Near Eastern literary sources, offering a comparative analysis of those stemming from Mesopotamia and Israel. I will discuss the theme of divine anthropathism, its religious implications, and the role of repentance in the story of the Flood, in Mesopotamia and in the Hebrew Bible.

My friendship and collaboration with Marilyn and Giorgio have now lasted for more than 10 years. Over this fairly long period, we have had the opportunity to talk about the very diverse aspects of human culture and society, both ancient and present: their inexhaustible enthusiasm, constant curiosity and – above all – astonishing energy will never cease to amaze me.

For this reason, I hope to please them both by offering them some reflections upon themes that we have often dealt with together: literature, religion and hermeneutics. I look forward to further examining personally the topics that I can only touch upon here, thus continuing our passionate and instructive conversations.

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: SUBJECT, AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

In his volume on Mesopotamian spirituality,<sup>1</sup> G. Buccellati has offered a comprehensive and structural comparison between two types of religious expressions: the Mesopotamian one, inherently polytheistic, and that of the Hebrew Bible, monotheistic *par excellence*. Among the many crucial subjects investigated, the book also analyses the question of the inner nature of Mesopotamian deities in comparison with the Biblical God, and the different relationship that binds gods and men in the two cultures that grew up and flourished in the Near East.

My aim is to offer a contribution on one aspect that was not fully developed in that volume,

but which is linked to those subjects: namely, the theme of divine repentance.<sup>2</sup> In order to develop my discourse, and with the purpose of providing a clear example rooted in an undeniable thematic similarity between these two cultures, I will base my reasoning on the Akkadian poem *When gods were men* and the passage from *Genesis* that describe the same traumatic event in the history of humanity: the Flood.

While the subject of God's repentance in the Hebrew Bible has been discussed several times by scholars in light of its profound theological implications, there are not as many bibliographical references for the ancient Mesopotamian field.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this may be due primarily to the lack of any word that expresses repentance and/or remorse in the Akkadian language.

It is important to precisely define a concept that has many different nuances, so as to fully understand the object of my investigation. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "to repent" means "to review one's actions and feel contrition or regret for something one has done or omitted to do; (esp. in religious contexts) to acknowledge the sinfulness of one's past action or conduct by showing sincere remorse and undertaking to reform in the future; (...) to feel contrition or regret for an action, fault, or sin; (...) to view or think of (any action, occasion, or thing) with dissatisfaction and regret, esp. because of unwelcome consequences for oneself; to be sorry for, regret".

Thus, the prerequisites for repentance are: 1) the past: one repents an event that has already taken place; 2) the active and direct involvement of

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<sup>1</sup> Buccellati 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Buccellati 2012, 94-95, where divine attitudes towards men are discussed, always with a comparative view and with examples from the Mesopotamian and Biblical cultures.

<sup>3</sup> For the most recent references, see the contributions by Anthoiz and Durand in Durand *et al.* 2015.

the subject: one repents a physical act, omission, or decision for which one was personally responsible; 3) an overall negative emotion: the person who repents considers his/her action as bad, sinful or inappropriate; 4) a pledge for the future: by nature, the one who repents commits him/herself to not making the same mistake again.<sup>4</sup>

In the following pages, I will analyse the presence of the subject of repentance in ancient Near Eastern texts, first with the purpose of identifying the ancient perceptions of men in ancient Mesopotamia and in the Hebrew Bible, and then considering the specific story of the Flood, through the two texts selected for a case study.

Before I proceed, a further methodological point is needed. I am very aware that every study on verbal communication of human emotions must be rooted in the cognizance that any expression of sensation is closely linked to the individual societies and human groups from which it stems, and that each culture can perceive and express the same emotions through different words.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, I will adopt a closed or “-emic” approach, analysing the sources in the light of contemporary evidence that stem from the same cultural milieu.<sup>6</sup>

One word of caution is needed with regard to how I will approach the text of the *Genesis*. Although I am mindful of the presence of two traditions, Priestly and Yahwistic, intertwined in the text, I will treat the *Genesis* Flood account as a literary unit: the aim of my paper, in fact, is not to provide a critical analysis of this text, but rather to study its content according to its canonical form.

## 2. DIVINE ANTHROPATHY AND DIVINE “REPENTANCE”

In *Quando in alto i cieli...*, a different and in a way complementary approach to the widely recognized Mesopotamian “divine anthropomorphism” is put forward. According to this interpretation, since the focus from an ancient Mesopotamian perspective was not upon gods being “like humans”, but rather on their being embodiments – “icons” – of human attributes, Buccellati suggests using

the term “iconism” instead of the more common “anthropomorphism”.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, different gods in ancient Mesopotamia personified love, justice, knowledge and even human activities such as scribal art and cuisine – to mention but a few examples.

The case that I intend to investigate does not conflict with this theory, as strictly speaking I will not discuss a case of “anthropomorphism”, but of “anthropopathy”, i.e. (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, once again), “the attribution of human feelings and emotions to God”. Though such attribution of human passions to Mesopotamian gods is openly recognized and uncontroversial in contemporary scholarship, the issue of anthropopathy in relation to Yhwh has understandably caused much discussion among theologians.<sup>8</sup>

Gods could indeed change their minds in ancient Mesopotamia, sometimes with positive outcomes for human believers: Akkadian texts of different kinds mention divine entities who “turn again with favour to” someone,<sup>9</sup> or “resume a favourable attitude” towards men.<sup>10</sup> However, sceptical and even nihilistic approaches towards deities have also been attested ever since the Kassite period: wisdom literary poems such as the *Babylonian Theodicy*, the *Dialogue of Pessimism* and the *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi* show that gods were fallible and changeable beings, who did not love humankind and at times even degraded men’s lives for no obvious reason.<sup>11</sup>

Mesopotamian deities were definitely moved by sentiments very similar to human ones, and in the literary sources a modern reader can find alternations of divine love and wrath, mercy and jealousy, bravery and small-mindedness. Yet, among all these passions, one searches these texts in vain for terms that would fit into the modern semantic sphere of “repentance”, according to the definition mentioned above; similar words do not even appear in either of the major Akkadian Dictionaries.<sup>12</sup> No exact Akkadian translation for the modern concept of “remorse, regret” seems to exist, with the sole exception of CCT 4, 18a, namely an Old Babylonian letter from Kanesh whose addressee is

<sup>4</sup> On the implications of the verb “to repent”, cf. Peels 2016, 191-192.

<sup>5</sup> The anthropology of emotion has been marked by several influential review essays over the past decades. The first and most systematic work on this topic has been offered by Lutz, White 1986, which provides a synthesis with complete bibliography of the recent approaches (on language and emotions, see in particular p. 423). More recently, cf. Wilce 2009, which provides a comprehensive account of the relationship between language and emotion.

<sup>6</sup> On the “-emic” approach, see Buccellati 2006; 2017, 42-45, with bibliographical references.

<sup>7</sup> Buccellati 2012, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Maier 2004, 128-132; Hamori 2008, 26-34.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. CAD s.v. *saḫāru* 16b.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. CAD s.v. *tāru* 2d. Mesopotamian gods were also “merciful” (CAD s.v. *tajāru* A 1) and could show “pity, mercy” (CAD s.v. *tajāru* B, *tajārtu* B 2) to men: see Rahmouni, Levine 2016 (esp p. 237-238), for a comparative study on the theme of gods who “turn back” from anger in the Hebrew Bible, in Akkadian and Aramaic sources and in the Quran.

<sup>11</sup> See Cohen’s and Ziegler’s contributions in Durand *et al.* 2015, with previous bibliography mentioned by both authors.

<sup>12</sup> Durand 2015, 388: “*l’on chercherait en vain comment se dit « remord » (ou « repentir ») dans une des langues qui se sont exprimées en cunéiforme*”.

warned not to give credit “lest you regret it”.<sup>13</sup> The expression used in this case, however, refers more to the semantic sphere of “anger” than to that of a real “regret”:<sup>14</sup> literally, in fact, the expression used (*libbaka ē imraš*) should be translated as “lest you should become angry/be displeased”.

Looking for repentant gods within Mesopotamian literature, there is only one instance within the available corpus in which “remorse” is mentioned with reference to a deity, but it is actually to highlight its absence. It is the case of Erra, who in the poem that bears his name is accused twice of acting against gods and men (ll. I 103 and III C 37). In his anthology, B.R. Foster translated these passages into English as “you have remorselessly plotted evil”.<sup>15</sup> However, the ancient author did not intend to emphasize so much Erra’s lack of remorse, as would appear from this translation. The focus was rather on the god’s stubbornness: the expression used, in fact, would be more aptly rendered with the English words “without drawing back from your purpose”, as the original editor of the text, L. Cagni, suggested.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned above, modern literature on Yhwh’s anthropomorphism is characterized by a very heated debate.<sup>17</sup> A certain discomfort with a depiction of a God that might seem “too human” can be detected already in the Greek translation of the Bible, the Septuagint, and in the first Jewish commentaries. The issue of God’s repentance was hermeneutically difficult, as it risked conveying the idea of Yhwh being less than perfect, changeable, and doing less than the best for his creatures.

Three points in the narrative of the Hebrew Bible significantly associate God with the verb “to repent”, and these occurrences are all crucial for the development of the story in which they appear. There are actually more instances in the Hebrew text in which this verb appears with Yhwh as its subject,<sup>18</sup> yet those that have been recognized as the most significant are: the moment after the creation, within the context of the Flood narrative (Gen. 6:6), the one mentioned in the Golden Calf episode

(Ex. 32:14), and the repentance felt by God at the end of the Saul narrative (1 Sam. 15:10-11, 35).<sup>19</sup> These three instances seem to conflict with other passages, however, in which Yhwh’s unchangeable nature is instead highlighted.<sup>20</sup>

To solve this inconsistency, the translators of the Septuagint chose to avoid any reference to Yhwh’s “repenting” in their rendering of the Hebrew into Greek. Therefore, for example, the verb in Gen. 6:6 was translated with the Greek term corresponding to “to reflect (on), consider, think”, and in Ex. 32:14 they opted for “to propitiate, conciliate” in the passive voice (“to be propitiated, merciful”). Most likely, the translators wanted to avoid conveying any possible image of a God who could change his mind.<sup>21</sup> Later, Philo of Alexandria strongly defended God’s unchangeable nature in his comment on Gen. 6:5-7, stating that “Perhaps some of those who are careless inquirers will suppose that the Lawgiver is hinting that the Creator repented of the creation of men when he beheld their impiety, and that this was the reason why he wished to destroy the whole race. Those who think thus may be sure that they make the sins of these men of old time seem light and trivial through the vastness of their own godlessness. For what greater impiety could there be than to suppose that the Unchangeable changes?”<sup>22</sup>

### 3. THE ROLE OF REPENTANCE IN THE FLOOD

In order to provide a reliable and sound comparison, pertinent to the general issue outlined above, I will now investigate the presence (or absence) of divine repentance in the two texts that have been selected for a case study, due to their undeniable similarity with regard to both content and form. I will therefore take into consideration the descriptions of the Flood contained in the third tablet of

<sup>13</sup> This passage is mentioned twice in the vocabulary, s.v. *qāpu* A 3 a2’ and s.v. *surri* 2 c3’. Cf. also the recent translation by Michel 2001, no. 203: “à craindre que tu le regrettes par la suite”.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. CAD s.v. *marāšu* 4.

<sup>15</sup> Foster 2005, 885, 899.

<sup>16</sup> Cagni 1977, 30, 44. Cf. also the *editio princeps*, where this expression is translated in Italian as “senza tornare su di te” (Cagni 1969, 69, 99).

<sup>17</sup> For a thorough overview of the negative approaches to anthropomorphism in the Hebrew Bible from the earliest Jewish and Greek authors until today, see Hamori 2008, 35-64.

<sup>18</sup> See the detailed entry for the Hebrew *nhm*, in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, written by Simian-Yofre 1998 (esp. 143-145).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Maier 2004 and Flek 2003, at the end of §2.1.3 (on *Genesis* and *Exodus*); Peels 2016, esp. 192 (with n. 5); Sonnet 2010. Cf. also Peels 2018 (this article recalls the argumentations used by Peels already in 2016 but, in the author’s words, in a “more informal” way).

<sup>20</sup> See for example Num. 23:19: “God is not a man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should repent”; 1 Sam. 15:29: “Moreover the Glory of Israel will not recant or change his mind; for he is not a mortal, that he should change his mind”; Jas. 1:17: “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (note that quotations from the Hebrew Bible are always made according to the text of NRSV, unless otherwise indicated). Modern scholars of the Hebrew Bible however have stated that these texts do not really imply that God never repents or changes his mind, rather they aim at making it clear that Yhwh is ultimately reliable; see Peels 2016, 194.

<sup>21</sup> Maier 2004, 134.

<sup>22</sup> Philo, *On the Unchangeableness of God*, V, 20-22; quoted after the translation by Colson, Whitaker 1930.

the Old Babylonian version of *When gods were men*,<sup>23</sup> and in *Genesis* 6:5-9:17.<sup>24</sup>

In both accounts of the Flood under consideration, the human protagonist is an anti-hero, characterized by an unexpectedly humble and at times even irrelevant character. Neither Atrahasis nor Noah acts autonomously, but whatever they do aims to comply with a divine order;<sup>25</sup> they do not speak, except to repeat a divine speech;<sup>26</sup> their character is never clearly delineated, only their obedience is mentioned. Basically, the ultimate purpose of their existence, and the reason for their surviving the destruction brought about by the Flood, lie in their being “ministers” of one specific god (Enki or Yhwh).<sup>27</sup> In contrast, in both accounts much is said about the divine thoughts and deliberations: the authors, in both cases, act as omniscient narrators, able to describe feelings, actions and words which occurred within the divine sphere.

S. Anthonioz has recently offered a study of the idea of “deluge” as the epitome of catastrophic manifestation of divine anger in ancient Mesopotamia, also analysing *When gods were men* in search of the presence of gods’ wrath, and she has aptly identified

in this story an alternation of anger and repentance.<sup>28</sup> Repentance is indeed in a way present in the text, though it is never explicitly mentioned; it is also remarkable that it is not the god who sends the deluge, Enlil, who repents – rather, the mother Goddess Nintu: she bursts into a long lament that clearly expresses her remorse for the evil deed ratified by the entire divine assembly.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, as Anthonioz correctly highlights, in this poem “*le repentir apparaît donc secondairement, il est féminin et, à la limite, il n’est pas nécessaire au déroulement de la crise et de sa résolution. Il est annexe*”.<sup>30</sup>

Two things should be highlighted. Firstly, Nintu’s repentance is inferred from this passage, but no Akkadian word or expression describes such a sentiment: the fact that she feels remorse is evident from her speech, not from the author’s description of her inner feeling. Secondly, divine regret is not motivated by some sort of compassion, but finds its explanation in the realization that with the disappearance of mankind the community of gods will lose its blessed existence.

In *Genesis*, we see a complete reversal of perspectives, rooted in the very motivation for the creation of men: in ancient Mesopotamia, gods decided to generate humankind for utilitarian purposes, but ever since men’s creation deities have become in a way dependent upon their creatures, because of the work that the latter perform on a daily basis. The God of the Hebrew Bible, by contrast, does not need men; he is self-sufficient, almighty and ubiquitous; he does not create humankind because he needs it to gain a better style of life, but to entrust him with the safekeeping of the earth and earthly creatures.<sup>31</sup> Repentance, in *Genesis*, plays a completely different role from what is described in *When gods were men*: it is in fact not the consequence, but the trigger, of the Flood. Yhwh is explicitly described as regretful for having created men, but he is not stated to have felt the same after having seen the destruction caused by the waters of the Flood – or, to put it better, he might well have regretted his decision to send the Flood, but in *Genesis* the narrator chose to describe, instead, the divine ultimate acceptance of human nature and, as a consequence, the receding of the waters.

In fact, in Gen. 8:21, at the end of the Flood, God states: “I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done”. This may strike the

<sup>23</sup> Complete translations of the poem are available in all the main European languages: see Lambert, Millard 1969; Dalley 2000; Foster 2005 (English); Bottéro, Kramer 1989 (French); von Soden 1994; Pientka-Hinz 2013 (German); Ermidoro 2017 (Italian). As is known, the account of the Deluge is not the only focus of the Babylonian poem: the composition is characterized by two climaxes, harmoniously linked to each other within the plot. For an analysis of the internal structure of the poem and the internal cross-references that permeate the text see Kilmer 1996; Moran 1987; Anthonioz 2009, 246-248; Helle 2015.

<sup>24</sup> On the subject of the relationship between Mesopotamian literary tradition and the Hebrew Bible, see Liverani 2003, especially 257-259 (discussing precisely the theme of the Flood). Cf. also Anthonioz 2009, 347-395; Römer 2013; Finkel 2014, 224-260.

<sup>25</sup> The only spontaneous act performed by Atrahasis and Noah seems to be the sacrifice offered immediately after disembarking from the boats that saved their lives: see *When gods were men* III v 30-35 (with the parallel description in *Gilgameš*, XI, 159-161) and Gen. 8:20. Notably, this very act of sacrifice also has a decisive role in reminding the supernal beings of the reason for which they will never again send a similar calamity to the earth in the future.

<sup>26</sup> One exception should be mentioned, namely the speech pronounced by Atrahasis in the third tablet of the Old Babylonian version of *When gods were men*, when he invents an excuse to justify the building of the ark in front of the members of his community (cf. Ermidoro 2017, 36 and 105, n. 1).

<sup>27</sup> Note that Atrahasis’ counterpart in the Flood episode included in the *Gilgameš* poem, Utnapištim, is very different: he plays a much more active role, pronounces long monologues, interacts with many other characters on the scene, gives advice, and is overall well aware of his privileged condition. For the reference edition of *Gilgameš* see George 2003. For a commentary on the peculiar characteristics of the Near Eastern story of the Flood included in the two poems *When gods were men* and *Gilgameš* see Maul 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Anthonioz 2015. Note, however, that Anthonioz’s paper finally focuses on divine wrath more than on aspects of repentance.

<sup>29</sup> *When gods were men* III v 37-vi 4.

<sup>30</sup> Anthonioz 2015, 306.

<sup>31</sup> See Gen. 1:26-28 and Gen. 2:15.

reader, since the human tendency to commit evil is precisely what made Yhwh repent and grieve and, ultimately, made him determined to unleash the deluge.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the evil inclination of the human heart is at the same time the cause of the calamity and, in a way, also the reason for its never being repeated in future.<sup>33</sup> Once again, this should be interpreted in the light of the special connection existing between Creator and creatures: in the Hebrew Bible, Noah himself plays a more relevant role than Atrahasis in *When gods were men*, in the decisive moments that ultimately bring the Flood to an end. The Hebrew Bible in fact says that Yhwh ends the Flood after he “remembers Noah” and the living creatures that are with him on the ark (Gen. 8:1a): although the text does not explicitly link this act of remembrance to the decision to remove the water from the earth the connection is clear, since the end of the Flood starts in the very same verse (Gen. 8:1b, “and God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided”).<sup>34</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSION: THE REPENTANT GOD IN THE FLOOD STORY (OR LACK THEREOF)

One conclusion can be drawn from what has been discussed above: divine repentance is to be found where you would least expect it. Despite being described in all the original sources in unequivocal anthropomorphic and anthropopathic terms, Mesopotamian gods do not (perhaps they cannot?) repent. Conversely, the almighty Yhwh does repent – and does so more than once, according to the Hebrew Bible. So we are left with one question: why do we see such an apparent inconsistency in our primary sources?

Firstly, we should keep in mind that Near Eastern deities do not love their human creatures. They accept and tolerate them, they appreciate men’s practical usefulness, but gods do not feel any emotional

attachment towards humankind. For this reason, Mesopotamian deities (as they are depicted in the literary poems that are available to us) do not show any remorse when they attack human lives for more or less futile or justified reasons. On the contrary, Gen. 6:6 does not just shed light on Yhwh’s repentance: in its mentioning the fact that men’s evil deeds “grieved him to his heart”, it also highlights God’s profound and direct involvement in the destiny of humanity.

In Mesopotamia, gods are often represented as indifferent and unaffected by the words and actions of their creatures, unless these have a direct impact on the divine well-being. In the Hebrew Bible, however, Yhwh is indeed deeply concerned by the way his creatures live, at times even feeling for them.<sup>35</sup>

In general, the contrast between Mesopotamian polytheism and the monolatry of the Hebrew Bible is evident in the two texts taken into consideration. In *When gods were men*, the moments before the sending of the calamity are characterized by a multiplicity of divine personalities and ideas, fighting against each other in the heated divine assembly that precedes and ratifies the deluge. In *Genesis*, on the other hand, the choice of whether to send the Flood is silent and introspective, consisting of a monologue that takes place in Yhwh’s mind after he becomes conscious of his feeling of repentance.<sup>36</sup>

Again, in the Mesopotamian account many deities are involved in the unleashing of the Flood: different beings are described as upsetting the natural elements on the earth, each one thus contributing to a particular aspect of the catastrophe.<sup>37</sup> The monotheistic perspective of the story of *Genesis*, however, implies that there must be an ethical reason to send the Flood for a God who, as described only a few chapters earlier, loved unconditionally those creatures that he had originally created in order to make the earth even more perfect.<sup>38</sup> The storm, then, occurs exclusively because of extreme natural manifestations: the water flows from the sources of the abyss, the rain falls from the “cataracts of heaven”, while the wind is sent and controlled by Yhwh himself.

The problematic of the interpretation and translation of emotional worlds, such as the ones that I have offered here, is particularly interesting on an epistemo-

<sup>32</sup> “The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created – people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them’” (Gen. 6:5-7).

<sup>33</sup> Sonnet 2010, 474-475. Note that in the Hebrew Bible, the “heart” is considered to be the seat of intelligence, not only of emotions: it refers, therefore, to the most profound essence of a living being. Men’s “evil heart” in Gen. 6:5 contrasts thus with “God’s heart” which is “grieved” in the following verse (cf. Alter 1996, 28). For the role of Yhwh’s heart and its particular significance in Gen. 6:6 and 8:21 see also Flek 2003, §2.2.3.

<sup>34</sup> Simian-Hofre 1998, 343; Sonnet 2010, 483-484. Note that Yahweh’s remembrance in the Hebrew Bible very often has a tangible, positive effect on the person(s) he remembers: see de Hemmer Gudme 2013, 135-138.

<sup>35</sup> Maier 2004, 135.

<sup>36</sup> Sonnet 2010, 492. Note a further difference between the pained monologue of Yhwh and the divine deeds described in the Mesopotamian poem, in which gods act “irrationally” (*When gods were men* III v 42).

<sup>37</sup> In the very first moments, Šullat and Haniš announce the imminent catastrophe, while Erra tears out the mooring poles and Ninurta makes the dykes overflow (*When gods were men* II vii 49-53); then, during the Flood itself, Adad roars in the clouds (III ii 49) while Anzu rends the sky with his talons (III 8-9).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. the previously mentioned Gen. 1:26-28 and Gen. 2:15.

logical level. This is because feelings are an integral part of human consciousness, and in a world that tends to project human characteristics even to the divine sphere, every living being is depicted as an emotional creature, besides being a rational one. This kind of research also requires particular care: the absence of a specific word or set of lexemes does not necessarily imply the absence of awareness with regard to a specific feeling.<sup>39</sup>

In neither of the two accounts does the Flood happen by chance: in both cases the calamity results from a crisis in the relationship between human and supernatural beings. In Mesopotamia, the crisis is instigated by the gods' selfishness: deities decide to destroy humankind although the latter has committed no "crime" apart from being numerous and, as a consequence, loud – but the text lets us understand that the Mesopotamian gods repent this choice after the Flood, because of its consequences. In the Hebrew Bible, however, the original crisis is caused by men's evil attitude, which unleashes in Yhwh such a feeling of regret that it leads to the Flood.

Repentance, then, is present on the scene throughout both the accounts: the different narrative rendering finds its justification in the cultural milieu within which these texts were conceived and written, and in the different (in a way opposite) perception of man's relationship with the supernatural.

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<sup>39</sup>The same is valid for institutional realities: the clearest example is the fact that there is no word in Akkadian that conveys the modern idea of "religion", either – and yet the Mesopotamian religious system developed in a complex and structured form (see Buccellati 2012, 25-26).

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## THE ROMAN BRIDGE OVER THE CHABINAS: MEANING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

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### *Abstract*

The great Chabinas Bridge of the Roman emperor Septimius Severus in Turkey is touted as a marvel of Roman engineering and dynastic advertising. Consideration of its physical and cultural contexts also reveals multiple rich levels of meaning integrating regional styles, techniques, and histories that reverberated at the other end of the Empire.

### 1. THE ROMAN BRIDGE OVER THE CHABINAS: MEANING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

A huge bridge leaps over the Chabinas River (modern Cendere River) near Kâhta in upper Mesopotamia, modern eastern Turkey (figs. 1, 2). Erected soon after the Roman emperor Septimius Severus subdued the region, the massive structure is proud in its display of inscribed columns and boastful in its engineering, identified as one of the largest single span arched bridges in the classical world.<sup>1</sup> As part of extensive road systems, bridges were essential to the expansion and unification of the vast territories under Roman control. On a practical level, they facilitated movement in peace as well as war. Simultaneously they marked territorial boundaries and purposely tied together lands and peoples. While valuable modern research has been done documenting Roman bridges and analyzing their structural aspects, much remains to be learned about their possible meanings in antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Situated on major transportation networks and requiring great effort, major Imperial bridges were billboards that powerfully and effectively conveyed complex, multi-layered messages.

### 2. PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The waters of the Chabinas River gain speed as they flow through a narrow gorge before spewing out onto a broad riverine plain where they join other tributaries on a relentless rush to the Euphrates River. For

generations the width and unpredictable levels of the Euphrates precluded the construction of permanent bridges. As a result the river became a delimiting edge, crossed only by those brave enough to board unstable barges or pontoon structures. On the west bank roadways ran roughly parallel to the Euphrates, with small wooden bridges constructed over the more manageable tributaries. A well-traveled track from the city of Samosata ran northward along the base of the craggy Taurus Mountains, intersecting with the Chabinas at the mouth of the gorge 22 kilometers north of the Euphrates, then continued up and over the rugged slopes to the Black Sea. Travelers lingered at the crossing, attracted by the pooled water, cooling shade from the cliffs, and firm shores that facilitated attempts to cross the fast-flowing waterway.<sup>3</sup>

The Chabinas River lay in highly contested territory. At the end of the first millennium BCE, various regional powers as well as Rome competed to control the important caravan and military routes over the Taurus Mountains and numerous riverine crossings.<sup>4</sup> These tracks crisscrossed the wealthy domain once controlled by the Hellenistic Kingdom of Commagene. Squeezed between superpowers, including Parthia, Syria, Armenia, and Rome, this buffer state repeatedly played one side against the other, gaining and losing independence several times until fully absorbed by Rome.<sup>5</sup> The Chabinas River dissected

<sup>1</sup> Assessing the accuracy of dimensions for ancient structures is challenging due to the lack of standards about the point of measuring, variations in tool accuracy, irregularity of surfaces on extant remains, and building deformation over time. Traditionally, the Pont Saint Martin bridge in the Aosta valley of Italy has been identified as the largest Roman single span arched bridge measured at 35.64 to 36.65 meters; O'Connor 1993, 89. A more recent study calculated its width at 31.4 meters; if accurate, the Cendere Bridge with a span of 34.2 meters would take first place; Frunzio *et al.* 2001, 592.

<sup>2</sup> O'Connor 1993, Galliazzo 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Though borders often shifted, the Chabinas River probably marked that between the Roman Province of Cappadocia and Commagene territory in Roman Syria; Mitford 2018, v1, 108-111.

<sup>4</sup> During the first century CE, Roman troops generally approached upper Mesopotamia from the Black Sea to the north; in the next century CE, improved roads to the west facilitated access from the Mediterranean; on major transportation routes see Mitford 2018, v1, 109-112; Comfort *et al.* 2000; French 1980.

<sup>5</sup> The Commagene kingdom became part of a Roman province in 17 CE, was twice reinstated as an independent kingdom under the Julio-Claudians, and finally fully integrated into the province



the road between two of the most important cities: nearby Arsameia pro Nymphaios (Eski Kâhta) to the northeast, and the walled city of Samosata (Antiochia in Commagene, modern Samsat) to the south.<sup>6</sup> The Antiochene kings of Commagene must have provided safe transit over the Chabinas to facilitate communication between these centers, though physical evidence is scant.<sup>7</sup> A ring carved in the stone near the southwest, upstream corner of the existing third-century bridge may have been used for ropes to secure a pier or pontoon structure similar to those deployed at the crossings of the Euphrates at Samosata and Zeugma. A few courses of gray stone blocks under the southeast pier of the extant structure may indicate an earlier bridgehead, possibly erected by Roman troops in the first century CE similar to those depicted on Trajan's column (fig. 3).<sup>8</sup> In fact soldiers may have constructed several different bridges over a century of confrontations – from the siege of Samosata by Mark Anthony (38 BCE), to Germanicus' annexation of Commagene (17 CE), to Vespasian's full assimilation of the area into the Province of Syria (72 CE). During this contentious history, the path crossing the Chabinas River carried increased traffic as troops and suppliers moved southward from the shores of Pontus, or traveled between legionary fortresses at Samosata and Melitene (Malatya).

The Commagene region flourished as part of Roman Syria. The Romans greatly improved the regional infrastructure, expanding the network of roads and bridges. As in other provinces, much of the construction was undertaken by the legions, including Legio XVI Flavia Firma deployed in Samosata and Legio III Scythia at Zeugma.<sup>9</sup> During the second century the region became more fully integrated into the Roman world.<sup>10</sup> Conflict, however, was on the horizon. Roman campaigns against the Parthians initially occurred outside Comma-

gene, though the region was compelled to garrison and provision troops. Soon, Parthian incursions into Armenia and Osroene northeast of Commagene sparked the Roman-Parthian war of emperor Lucius Verus (161-166 CE), followed by sporadic outbursts. In the tumultuous year of 193 CE five different men claimed to be emperor of Rome. Even after the Senate recognized Septimius Severus as supreme ruler, legions in the east championed Pescennius Niger as claimant to the throne. Septimius responded with force, decisively defeating Niger in 194 CE and justifying his title.<sup>11</sup> He attacked Parthia in retaliation for backing his rival, and in hopes of securing the loyalty of his troops by quickly initiating a campaign against a non-Roman enemy.<sup>12</sup> After sacking various Parthian cities Septimius negotiated a face-saving agreement, declared victory and took the title of *Parthicus Maximus* in 198 CE (Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 76.9.4-5). Soon after he gave orders to consolidate control in northern Mesopotamia, shrewdly dividing Roman Syria into three provinces to weaken the power of any one governor. In the northern one, Syria Coele, he initiated an extensive rebuilding of the regional infrastructure.<sup>13</sup>

During times of peace, improved roads facilitated consolidation of control, promoted trade and agricultural growth, and at times served as legible provincial boundaries.<sup>14</sup> Milestones inscribed with the names of Septimius and his sons attest to the breadth of improvements to the transportation network throughout the region. Like the Flavians, he and his heirs paid special attention to the strategic route from the Black Sea over the uncompromising Taurus range.<sup>15</sup> They replaced existing bridges built with pontoons, wood trusses, and swaying ropes, with solid, inflexible structures of *opus quadratum* (squared stone blocks) and *opus caementicium* (concrete). These new structures were not only stable and durable; many were far larger than anything seen before. At least four boasted a single majestic stone arch spanning around 100 Roman feet (over 30 meters).<sup>16</sup>

### 3. THE SEVERAN BRIDGE

The best preserved of these impressive constructions is the bridge over the Chabinas River.<sup>17</sup> Stand-

of Syria in 72 CE, then later became part of Syria Coele under Severan reapportionment; Millar 1993, 248-249; Blömer, Winter 2011, 18-33.

<sup>6</sup> With completion of the Atatürk Dam in 1992 water filled much of the region southwest of the Chabinas River, submerging Samosata and many other ancient sites, roads, and bridges.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to barges, boats, and pontoons, people used inflated animal skins (*kellek*) to cross smaller tributaries and rivers with projecting piers; Comfort *et al.* 2000, 107-108.

<sup>8</sup> Mitford v1, 2018, 108-109.

<sup>9</sup> Speidel 2009, 250-253. Writing in the Severan period, Dio Cassius noted: "Rivers are bridged by the Romans with the greatest ease, since the soldiers are always practicing bridge-building, which is carried on like any other warlike exercise, on the Ister, the Rhine, and the Euphrates" (Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 71.3). Scholars debate whether the soldiers considered such work a positive or debasing activity; Comfort *et al.* 2000.

<sup>10</sup> The emperor's portrait became common on civic coins; Imperial sculpture and buildings graced cities; regional architectural styles declined; Ball 2000, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Though called *Imperator* in 194 CE Septimius Severus did not have full control over the western empire until he defeated his former ally Clodius Albinus in 197 CE.

<sup>12</sup> Gradoni 2013, 3-24.

<sup>13</sup> Birley 2002, 134-135.

<sup>14</sup> On road improvements after Trajan see Young 2001, 108-110; Mitford 2018, v1, 108-109.

<sup>15</sup> Birley 2002, 134; Blömer, Winter 2011, 92-94; Mitford 2018, v1, 75-77.

<sup>16</sup> Smaller stone bridges were also erected as part of the same infrastructure project; Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 140.

<sup>17</sup> The most detailed description of the bridge is found in Gal-

ing at the southern end of the frontier road, it was lavishly appointed, most notably with long inscriptions, honorific columns, and statues (figs. 2, 5).<sup>18</sup> Though the inscription refers to a “rebuilding” (*restituerunt*), the cohesiveness and quality of the design and construction indicate a new project rather than an upgrade to an extant structure.<sup>19</sup> In size, ornamentation, and grandeur the bridge was obviously meant to be more than a functional project. A single great arch of yellow local limestone blocks rises 17 meters above the mean water level. Spanning 34.2 meters, the arch is composed of 101 rows of *voussoirs*. The body of the bridge is of finely cut *opus quadratum*, probably with a solid concrete core, as evident in the other large Severan bridges in the region.<sup>20</sup> A small arch (4.5 m wide) perforates the southern pier, probably to reduce pressure during floods and to minimize materials and labor during construction. Complex buttressing includes a brick wall upstream cut into the embankment on the right side and a reinforcing wall in ashlar on the north. The paved carriageway atop the bridge is 7.5-8.2 meters wide and over 123 meters long. The flanking sidewalks are stepped, as are the parapets composed of slabs (60 cm tall) slotted into floor grooves. These are grouped into segments varying in length up to around seven meters.

Three steles (one is missing) roughly two meters in height, and 75 meters wide are inserted into the parapet. Located at different distances between end columns and the bridge center as calculated from the keystone, the steles loosely face one another (fig. 4). Approximately the same Imperial dedication is carved on the three remaining uprights, offering a repeated chorus proclaiming that Septimius Severus and his sons Caracalla and Geta rebuilt the bridge over the Chabinas to restore passage, with the work completed under the governor of Syria L. Alfenus Senecio by the Legion XVI Flavia Firma based in Samosata, and

commanded by the legate L. Marius Perpetuus (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* III 6709-6711). A small altar next to each of the towering steles encouraged ancient travelers to make offerings in gratitude for their crossing.<sup>21</sup>

Pairs of soaring columns emphasize the entryways to the bridge. Inscriptions on each of the smooth shafts facing the road center proclaim that four Commagene cities erected the bridge, with each column honoring a different member of the Imperial family.<sup>22</sup> Travellers approaching from the populous regions to the south read the dedications to the emperor Septimius Severus (on the east side) and his elder son Caracalla (on the west) named joint *Augusti* in 198 CE. Exiting at the northern end they saw a column to Julia Domna, wife of Septimius. The fourth, northwest column is missing, but presumed to have honored the younger son Geta; either it was never put in place or removed when he suffered *damnatio memoriae* after being murdered by his brother.<sup>23</sup> Rising over eight meters in height, the columns were composed of Attic bases, eight unfluted drums, and squat Corinthian style capitals with acanthus and palm leaves (fig. 5). A large abacus above each capital is thought to have supported a looming stone or bronze statue of the inscribed honoree, an arrangement known from other bridges such as the Hadrianic Pons Aelius in Rome.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. PROPAGANDA VALUE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Roman infrastructure building with large workforces and sophisticated technological expertise was admired throughout antiquity.<sup>25</sup> Especially on the frontiers, complex, labor-intensive, expensive projects such as enormous bridges projected multiple messages. In his famous text on the Gallic Wars, Julius Caesar impressed a senatorial audience with a lengthy technical description of the design and machinery deployed by the army to erect a wooden bridge over the raging Rhine River (over 1000 m wide) in 55 BCE; he ended the section noting that the rapid completion of the project in a mere ten days compelled some enemy tribes to sue for peace and others to take flight (*BGall.* iv.17-19). Crossing the bridge, Caesar spent eighteen days in enemy territory before returning to Gaul; he

liazzo 1995, vol. 2, no. 824, 390-394; see also Mitford 2018, v1, 107-110; Blömer, Winter 2011, 91-95. Restoration work was undertaken in 1951 and again 1997; the Severan structure remained in use until a parallel bridge for cars opened in 2005.

<sup>18</sup> The motivation for the elaborate bridge are unclear; Septimius may have wished to mark entry to the frontier road to the Black Sea (possibly for toll collection), to celebrate the massive aqueduct he built from the mouth of the Chabinas River 32 kilometers to the garrison at Samosata, or to compete with the dramatic natural setting; Wagner 1975, 78.

<sup>19</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* III.6709-6710. Hogarth and Yorke reported an erased inscription on the northeast column of the bridge recording work by an earlier emperor (Vespasian?); Yorke 1898, 315; cf. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* III. 13611. However, given their known inaccuracy regarding other inscriptions and lack of corroborating remains, their account is discounted; Mitford 1974, 175 n. 101; *contra* see Leaning 1971, 386-389.

<sup>20</sup> No clamps to secure the blocks have been recorded at the Chabinas Bridge, though some were found at other large Severan bridges in the region, including at the Göksu River; Blömer, Winter 2011, 165.

<sup>21</sup> The offerings may have been made to the imperial cult, a river god, or military deities as at similar altars dedicated to Caracalla and Geta at the Sarakya River; Darbyshire *et al.* 2009.

<sup>22</sup> The four cities certainly included nearby Samosata, and possibly Perrhe, Doliche, and Germanicia.

<sup>23</sup> Curiously, Geta's inscribed name is intact on the parapet stele even though its erasure would have been easier than removing a column; Blömer, Winter 2011, 94-95.

<sup>24</sup> The identities of the statues on the Pons Aelius remain unknown; Asolati *et al.* 2013; Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 43-44.

<sup>25</sup> In the first century BCE, the Parthian king Vologeses compelled the overpowered Romans to erect a bridge over the Arsania River (Murat River), an act of submission that also acknowledged superior Roman technical skill; Tacitus, *Annales*, 15.15.

then ordered the bridge be torn down in order to reaffirm the river as a regional boundary, forestall further incursions, and (equally important) concretize the memory of the great construction in its pristine form. A century later in 63 CE the general Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo similarly exploited rapid bridge building for military advantage; he directed his troops to throw a pontoon bridge across the great Euphrates and build a legionary camp, “with a speed and a display of strength which induced the Parthians to drop their preparations for invading Syria” (Tacitus, *Annales*, 15.9). The emperor Trajan celebrated military construction skill on his great commemorative column erected in Rome (dedicated 113 CE). Several scenes show soldiers crossing pontoon and truss bridges over the mighty Danube River (also over 1000 m).<sup>26</sup> For the largest of these wooden truss structures, the architects erected tall ashlar bridgeheads and replaced wooden piles with stone and concrete piers (fig. 3). This building design utilizing timber trusses to cross major spans minimized the cost, building time, and need for heavy equipment, yet the extensive use of wood was not without problems. Untreated ancient timbers were subject to fire and rot, as well as failure during heavy flood; even if undamaged they required continuous maintenance.

Composed of stone and concrete, the bridge over the Chabinas River took longer to construct and was obviously more costly than wooden structures, but also more sturdy and long lasting. Furthermore, the complicated act of actually building this major project had distinct propaganda value. Military wooden bridges were erected quickly and efficiently with standardized, easy-to-handle components and simple equipment (primarily pile-drivers) as described regarding the bridges of Caesar and Corbulo. Much of the work was repetitive and did not require specialized technical skill. In contrast, stone and concrete construction needed larger machinery (including massive cranes and block and tackle pulleys), and greater coordination among workers with different specialties. The complex process in antiquity, as today, attracted spectators. Military workers quarried tons of limestone blocks and transported them to the site in slow-moving construction parades which clogged the highways and attracted onlookers.<sup>27</sup> Teams cut forests for wood to make scaffolds. On site laborers laid basket after basket of hydraulic concrete in formwork to

create the stable piers. Skilled work crews manned large cranes lifting stones over 20 meters above the ground; others scampered over the complex formwork supporting the great arch springing across the deep river below. Construction must have taken many months, many man-hours, and many *sesterces* to complete.<sup>28</sup> Though not in a densely populated urban setting, the act of building drew attention. Travelers waiting for a ferry or other means to cross the Chabinas River during construction, the suppliers of materials and food for the workers, caravan drivers watering their animals, and undoubtedly locals from nearby settlements gathered to watch the spectacle, transforming the construction site into a destination.<sup>29</sup> Some reveled in the engineering mastery on display; others admire the complex organization of workers; a bloodthirsty few hoped to see an accident. Even after the work was done, the ledge at the base of the arch and the shadowy square holes used for the formwork of the arch recalled the act of making (fig. 7).

The finished bridge was (and is) impressive. Severan architects pointedly created the largest single span structure in the Near East. The powerful size and crisp lines of the light-colored stone bridge contrasted with the rough, dark backdrop of the chasm in the Taurus Mountains (fig. 2). The great stone expanse of the piers and upper wall signaled permanence, especially when compared to the unsteady pontoon bridges of the region that were pulled open using chains, or set free to thwart incursions. In appearance, such boat bridges, along with creaking wood-truss structures, projected a vulnerable kit-of-parts image that was reinforced by the on-going replacement of various components during maintenance. Pre-existing, stone bridge structures in the area (most dating to the Flavian era) had low-lying, relatively level profiles with small arches close to the water line.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, the Severan structure had a simplified

<sup>26</sup> Coulston 1990.

<sup>27</sup> Dörner’s proposal that builders at Chabinas used stones robbed from the Karakuş tomb is generally discounted. The archaeological evidence is tenuous, and the transporting of blocks from a hilltop (900 m.) seems untenable when there were numerous quarries near low-lying waterways and roads; Dörner 1979, 275-276; Blömer 2008, 104, n. 5; Blömer, Winter 2011, 99; Brijder 2014, 217-218.

<sup>28</sup> The calculation of building expenses in antiquity is problematic, but a sense of possible costs for the Chabinas Bridge can be made by applying the calculations of the engineer Espérandieu derived from the impressive infrastructure Pont du Gard aqueduct at Nîmes; Espérandieu 1926, 46. Assuming the Severan Bridge to be about 1/8 the size of the aqueduct, the projected cost is c. 470,000 sesterces or over six years’ pay for 500 legionary recruits. For estimates on man-days of work required by Roman building projects see Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 48-49.

<sup>29</sup> While the Severan Bridge was under construction, parallel wooden bridges may have allowed travellers to cross the Chabinas and simultaneously closely view the work underway; for bridges in rows see Scenes 4-5 on Trajan’s Column; on the spectacle of Severan construction at Rome see Favro 2011.

<sup>30</sup> For example, the long Karasu Bridge (75 m) to the southwest of the Chabinas Bridge had at least six arches; Blömer, Winter 2011, 183-184. The soldiers presumed to have worked on this structure inscribed their legion’s title on the stones at a nearby quarry; Comfort 2002.

form; the single arch conveyed power, unity, and engineering bravura. The lofty statues of the imperial family atop the columns as well as their inscriptions advertised the project's *gravitas*. Such a reading of the Chabinas Bridge is, of course, interpretive based on an assessment with modern eyes. Yet some aspects move beyond sensorial universalism. Ancient texts on mnemonic training affirm that the Romans read buildings as texts, recommending the memorization of long speeches by mentally associating significant content with architectural forms large in size, distinct in shape, and in contrast with their surroundings, all characteristics conveyed by the Severan Bridge.<sup>31</sup>

Being part of a series also reinforced identity. The bridge at Chabinas was the most elaborate in a succession of giant-arch bridges erected as part of the Severan upgrading of the major frontier road (fig. 1). All reveal similar construction techniques and forms, with ashlar masonry and concrete cores. Travellers passing north from Zeugma and Samosata encountered one at Göksu/Singae (31 m span), followed by those at the Chabinas River (34.2 m span), Bahadin on the Arabkir Çay (c. 30 m span), and Burmahan on the Çaltı Çay (c. 30 m span).<sup>32</sup> Unlike the Chabinas Bridge, the others are not well preserved and lack evidence of inscriptions or ornamentations. The Chabinas crossing may have been elaborated as the capstone in the string of Severan bridges, but without more information about the other structures, the most salient factor is their group identity as a recognizably unified collection experienced in sequence.

##### 5. REGIONAL REVERBERATIONS

Modern research has emphasized the military aspects of Roman bridges and their value as Imperial propaganda in the service of Rome.<sup>33</sup> Such associations are obvious, as evident with the sculptures of the Imperial family and the inscriptions crediting the XIV Legio with the construction at the Chabinas Bridge. Yet during its construction as well as in its final form this structure was obviously more than a military-driven project to facilitate troop movement, occupy soldiers on the frontier, and celebrate territorial conquest. Like all Roman infrastructure works, this project represented not only imperial intervention, but also local engagement through funding, building, maintenance, and form. Throughout the Roman Empire municipalities were expected to provide

funding for construction and thereafter for upkeep of nearby aqueducts, roads, and bridges.<sup>34</sup> This was far more than an imposed levy, it was a shared responsibility for localized as well as greater good that reverberated in the forms, construction, and interpretations of the bridge shared by all.

The inscriptions crediting involvement in the creation of the Severan Bridge by four Commagenian cities at first glance imply association with a specific regional identity. Yet like other groups in Syria, the Commagenian kings pointedly had not established a distinct architectural identity, but interwove the influences of several diverse ethnic lineages and cultures (including Persian, Armenian, Phoenician, and Greek) into their projects. Once the Romans occupied northern Mesopotamia, performative responses to styles and other cultural associations continued, with indigenous residents deploying various historical and stylistic references as the situations demanded, taking turns directing evolving conversations.<sup>35</sup> The 'Commagenian' cities mentioned on the Chabinas Bridge probably identified simultaneously as part of an administrative district defined by geography, a collective for provincial negotiations, and a partnership for strategic and economic security. A shared architectural identity is less easily hypothesized.<sup>36</sup> 'Commagenian architecture' is not readily classifiable beyond the boastful royal hilltop monuments. At the breathtaking sanctuary of Nemrud Dağ the kings proudly claimed descent from the great Persian ruler Darius I; at the towering tumulus of Karakuş they honored the women of the royal family.<sup>37</sup> Both sites mixed styles and construction techniques from various sources, yet they shared three distinct features that reverberated in the Chabinas Bridge: indestructible stone construction, gigantic scale, and dynastic sculpture juxtaposed with a powerful landscape.

In form and construction the Chabinas bridge followed established Roman traditions, with notable enhancements. Its magnitude may have been due to the functional demands of the site, or the hubris of

<sup>31</sup> *Auctor ad Herennium*, 3.16-24; Favro 1993.

<sup>32</sup> The bridge over the Arabkir Çay appears to be the only one with a single arch; the others, like Chabinas, had one or more smaller flood arches to the side; Galliazzo 1995, vol. 2, 388-400, no. 821 (Arabkir Çay), #822 (Çaltı Çay), #835 (Göksu); Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 140.

<sup>33</sup> Ferris 2004, 128-129; Dench 2018, 49-62.

<sup>34</sup> Presumably the Chabinas Bridge was restored many times over the centuries, but the lack of associated inscriptions or identifiable later alterations demonstrates both the structure's solidity and the enduring significance of the Severan imperial association.

<sup>35</sup> Andrade 2013, 68, 344; Dench 2018. Versluys underscores the folly of equating nation states of the Near East with specific identities and styles; Versluys 2017, 24-29. Scholars today are moving beyond the loaded term "Romanization" in describing acculturation in the Near East, suggesting instead more interactive descriptors (e.g. turn-taking, code-switching, and creolisation) to more accurately convey the give-and-take aspect of the exchange; Smith 2016 (turn-taking); Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 26 (code-switching); Webster 2001 (creolization); Dench 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Versluys 2012, 55-60; Andrade 2013, 125-147; Speidel 2012, 23-24.

<sup>37</sup> Canepa 2018, 241-250.

the donor and architect. Yet another, local, variable may also be postulated. The size of the bridge was remarkable for any where in the Empire; in Syria the only possible comparison in scale was with the Commagenian royal monuments within 13 kilometers of the bridge. In conceptualizing the project all concerned – the emperor and family, Roman governors, military overseers, and local residents – may consciously (or unconsciously) have wished to be in a dialogue with the gigantic Commagene memorials. Such turn-taking may have influenced the specifics of the design in competition, or homage, or both. Nemrud Dağ and Karakuş impress with their scale, massing, and repetitiveness of elements orchestrated in relation to a man-made mass, a giant tumulus. In contrast, the bridge impresses through its refined design set against the shadows of a deep natural void. Sophisticated features abound. For example, the architect accentuated the keystone by making it larger than the flanking *voussoirs*, projecting it out from the wall plane to create an enhancing shadowline, and using contrasting blue limestone; he chose the same material and projection for the parapet wall above. Such refinements appeared regularly on civic buildings, but contrast with other Roman bridges in the area composed largely of wood.

The parapet design is notable in the Roman world. On most Roman bridges with a high central arch the balustrade slopes parallel to the roadbed. In contrast, the walls flanking the roadbed on the Chabinas Bridge rise toward the keystone in long horizontal steps aligned with the stone ashlar courses below.<sup>38</sup> This configuration follows a masons' logic, with every component rectilinear and parallel, obviating the need to calculate and carve sloping blocks. The crispness and modulation of the long stepped parapet segments recall the marching steps of legions in formation. Yet beyond such experiential imagery, the configuration resonated with regional historic architecture. Stepped forms symbolizing sacred mountains occur in art and architecture throughout Mesopotamia, including famously at the Persian palace of the Commagene ancestor Darius I.<sup>39</sup> Looking at the Severan Bridge an ancient viewer from Italy might marvel at the rectilinear rationality of the ashlar masonry and parapet profile, while a resident of local heritage considered the relationship between humans and mountains, place and past.

The inscribed columns on the bridge likewise encouraged multiple readings. Similar commemorations topped with statues are found on bridges and

other infrastructure projects across the Roman world. Like memorial arches, they originated as a means to improve visibility by raising a donor's sculpted image above street level. In contrast to Severan bridges in other provinces ornamented with triumphal arches, the selection of honorific columns at the bridge entries may have been calculated to minimize recent associations with conquest in Syria, including campaigns pitting Romans against Romans.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, the choice may have been informed by familiarity with local column monuments. The obvious comparison is with paired columns displayed at nearby Karakuş honoring Commagene women. Originally, three sets of two unfluted Doric columns approximately nine meters tall flanked the burial mound, with each pair having an animal atop one column and a figural relief on the other.<sup>41</sup> The only preserved relief depicts the donor Mithridates II with his sister; inscriptions discovered at the site affirm that the funerary monument also honored his mother, another sister, and her daughter. Dynastic memorials remained popular in the Near East well into the third century CE and certainly would have been familiar to Severus' wife Julia Domna, the daughter of a priest and descendant of the royal family of Emesa (Homs).<sup>42</sup> The four-column ensemble on the Severan Bridge recalled the lofty uprights honoring Commagene royal families while celebrating the Roman Imperial dynasty headed by an emperor with Punic heritage, a royal wife from Syria, and two sons to guarantee a secure succession.<sup>43</sup>

After the devastating year of five emperors and conflicts throughout Syria an emphasis on family structure and stability was appreciated. The marriage of Septimius Severus to Julia Domna in 187 CE was followed in quick succession by the births of Caracalla (188 CE) and Geta (189 CE). After defeating Pescennius Niger in Syria (c. 193/194) Severus was proclaimed emperor, and soon after *Pater Patriae* (father of his country), an honorific title voted by the Senate in Rome.<sup>44</sup> The people of Syria welcomed a

<sup>38</sup> Like that at the Chabinas River, other Severan bridges in the region also had stepped parapets with chamfered upper sections; Galliazzo 1995, vol. 2, nos. 821, 822, 829.

<sup>39</sup> Pope 1967, 3015-3016.

<sup>40</sup> Honorific arches appear at coastal cities in the Near East, but rarely inland with the possible exception of arched stone bridge-heads like those shown on Trajan's Column (fig. 3). In 208 CE Severus minted coins from Rome depicting a bridge flanked by elaborate arches probably to commemorate his British campaigns; Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 140.

<sup>41</sup> Blömer, Winter 2011, 96-97.

<sup>42</sup> Millar 1993, 476-477; Ball 2000, 287-290. Without sculptural remains it is impossible to determine if Julia Domna emphasized her Syrian heritage in dress or hairstyle, or if the sons were shown as children.

<sup>43</sup> Born in Leptis Magna, Septimius was of Roman and Punic descent and demonstrated an interest in Phoenician culture; 2000 1989, 404-405.

<sup>44</sup> Pertinax had been named *Pater Patriae* when proclaimed *Imperator* in 193 CE; Birley 2002, 90, 110. Caracalla was called *Pater Patriae* (a young 'father' at age 11!) in a single known inscription.

benevolent father tied to the region by marriage. Throughout his reign Severus emphasized family. The inscriptions on the Chabinas Bridge describe the boys as sons and brothers, with Caracalla (age 12) as co-*Augustus* and Geta (age 11) as *Caesar* despite their young ages. Their representation on separate columns along with those for their parents clarifies the individuality and significance of each.<sup>45</sup> On hers Julia Domna is not described as wife and mother of the two boys, but as *Augusta* and *Mater Castrorum*, “mother of the (army) camps.” The latter title, in use by 195 CE, commemorated her active role in military campaigns, however it implied an over-arching maternal care for all in the empire, since the title was pointedly not put on coins or inscriptions targeting the troops but sought a broader audience.<sup>46</sup> The parapet inscription extols the paternal oversight of Septimius Severus by succinctly articulating the chain of responsibility for building the bridge – from *Imperator*, to *Augustus*, to *Caesar*, to Governor, to propraetor, to legionary commander – mirroring the family structure atop the columns. The texts and sculptures of the imperial family members projected a comforting sense of strength, orderliness, and good management, the same characteristics conveyed by the completed stone bridge.

The success and stability of the Chabinas Bridge, like the success and stability of the Roman empire resulted from the cohesive interactions of individual components (stones), powerful mixtures (concrete), and regional elements (materials and design features), all integrated with a collective vision emanating from Rome. In truth, cultural exchange across the empire did not always involve the center. Tasked with moving to where danger threatened and with creating infrastructure, Roman troops disseminated architectural influences as they passed from province to province. Around 205 CE, not long after overseeing the bridge project at the Chabinas River, Alfenius Senecio left his governorship in Syria to assume that of Britain where he began strengthening forts and facilities along Hadrian’s famous frontier wall. Among projects dating to this period is a stone bridge over the River North Tyne near the cavalry fort of Cilur-

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tion of 199 CE (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* VIII 6307); he and Geta formally received the title after their father’s death.

<sup>45</sup> The separate display of each family member contrasts with the more common familial groupings of the Severas as on the arch of the *Argentarii* in Rome and of Severus in *Leptis Magna*.

<sup>46</sup> A statue of Julia Domna as *Mater Castrorum* was erected on the *Via Sacra* in Rome. In addition to wide-reaching promotions, she was the first woman to have her name on milestones; Williams 1902, 264; Gorrie 2004. After Severus’ death Caracalla further expanded Julia Domna’s title to *Mater Augusti et Castrorum et Senatus et Patriae*, “Mother of the *Augustuses*, of the Camps, of the Senate, and of the Country;” Langford 2013, 37, 134.

num (Walwick Chesters).<sup>47</sup> Known as Chesters 2, this structure had four stone arches of equal span (10.4 m) supporting a level roadway (57.6 m) with horizontal parapets; guard stations and splayed wing walls protected each end (fig. 6). Construction was of *opus quadratum* with clamps and tie bars. Despite differences in the number of arches and overall profile, the Chesters 2 Bridge reveals intriguing connections with that at the Chabinas River. The most obvious is the ornamentation with unfluted, tapered columns inserted into the parapet, probably also embellished with statues and inscriptions.<sup>48</sup> The shaft pieces were not connected with dowels as was usual Roman practice, but mortise and tenon joints, a system common in Commagene projects (fig. 6, detail).<sup>49</sup> Though the parapet was not stepped like that at the Chabinas Bridge, it did have altars and stele with inscriptions inserted into grooved uprights. Part of an inscribed stele (now lost) of the Severan period recorded a presumed dedication by the praefect Aelius Longinus, possibly the legionary commander overseeing the bridge construction.<sup>50</sup> Though not conclusive, these design and construction elements at the Chesters 2 Bridge suggest that the legionary architects had familiarity with the Chabinas project. Aware that Britain had few bridges with stone piers or skilled masons, Alfenius Senecio may have brought military workers who had participated in his road and bridge building in Syria Coele with him when he relocated. In the cold of the westernmost Roman province the transferred design features and construction techniques became woven into new, but still Roman, conversations.

Large Roman infrastructure projects are practical and boastful. Their configurations celebrate both broadly shared technical knowledge and locally meaningful design features. The reverberation of this

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<sup>47</sup> The bridge, similar to stone structures at Willowford and Corbridge, was part of a Severan reworking of roads in northern Britain. The Chesters 2 project replaced a pre-existing bridge that had carried Hadrian’s Wall, not a roadway. The construction techniques of the superstructure differ from those evident in the piers and abutments, possibly indicating different work crews; Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 28, 46, 117, 138.

<sup>48</sup> The carving and design of the columns at Chesters 2 are not as high in quality as those from Syria Coele; the shafts are roughly cut with irregular circular sections with no moldings at the base and top. The exact number and placement of the columns is uncertain; based on *comparanda* it is assumed they were erected in pairs on either side of the roadway; Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 44-47.

<sup>49</sup> The joining method used for column drums at the Chabinas Bridge is undocumented. In form and joining the Chesters’s shafts compare with those found at *Arsameia pros Nymphaio* and *Nemrud Dağ*; author site visits; Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 40-44, 131.

<sup>50</sup> *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* 1470. Excavators assume Chesters 2 had several such stele as well as shrines to water deities probably placed over the piers; Bidwell, Holbrook 1989, 28, 46-47, 141.

project in a structure at the opposite end of the empire affirms the potent possibilities for the cross-fertilization of ideas and skills in the Roman world, an exchange that enriched, dispersed, and compromised regional identities. In an age familiar with fraying infrastructure, we can appreciate the Chabinas Bridge as an enduring work that remained in use for over 1700 years (fig. 7). Like other monumental structures, this bridge was more than a way to cross over water. At the end of the nineteenth century Hogarth wrote,

“Nothing could demonstrate better how the long arm of the Empire reached to its uttermost confines, than this monument in a remote Commagenian gorge; and that fine comparison of the Roman Imperial system to one of its own buildings, more costly and more painful to destroy than to construct, has no better illustration than the Kâhta (Chabinas) bridge.”<sup>51</sup>

Indeed the message endures. On a research visit to the site on a hot Sunday in the summer of 2018, I was surprised to find hundreds of people. Children splashed in the water, families barbecued lunch on small grills, and young people played music while chatting. Of course they were drawn to the cool water and shade cast by the gorge, yet other nearby tributaries of the Euphrates offer similar attractions. Equally important was the draw of the great bridge, not only for the swaths of shade it cast, but because it was, and is, so clearly a Monument. As with its genesis, this architectural magnet continues to connect diverse peoples. Strolling across the top of the bridge and sitting around its base, Kurds, Turks, Syrians, Armenians, and my small group of Americans shared food, laughter, songs, and discussions about how the bridge was made, its antiquity, its design, its endurance, its beauty, and its strength, ignoring for the afternoon current politics and instead appreciating a shared place, shared heritage, shared history, shared admiration of human achievement, and each other.

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<sup>51</sup> Hogarth 1896, 116-117.

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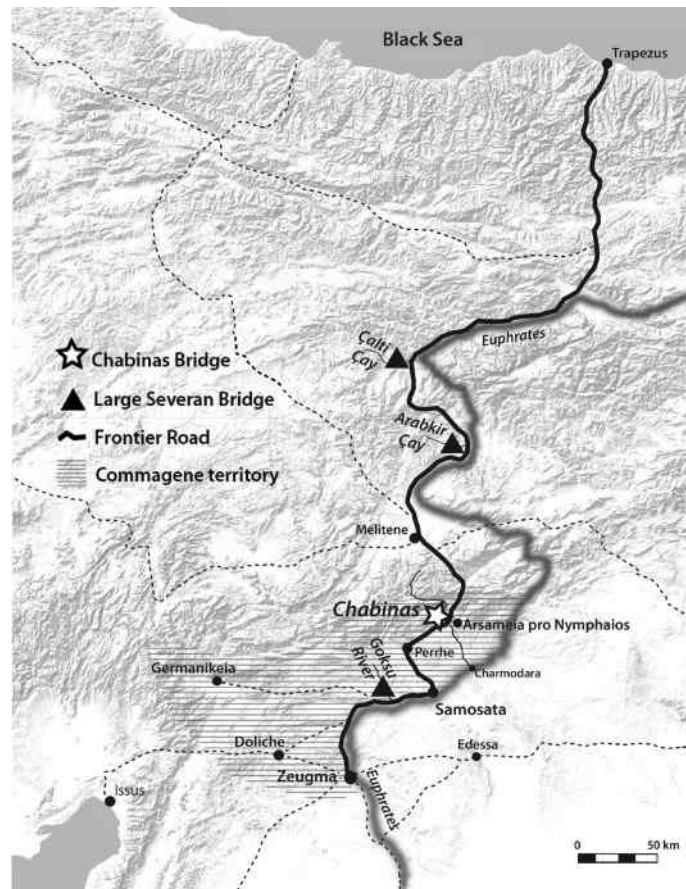


Fig. 1. Map of northern Mesopotamia region; render by author.



Fig. 2. Severan Bridge over the Chabinas River, Turkey; Carole Raddato from FRANKFURT, Germany [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.



Fig. 3. Trajan's column with stone bridgehead to secure pontoon bridge; pontoon; Benjamín Núñez González [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)], from Wikimedia Commons Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.



Fig. 4. Inscribed parapet stele with altar to the right, Chabinas Bridge; Carole Raddato from FRANKFURT, Germany [CC BY-SA 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>], via Wikimedia Commons Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.



Fig. 5. Looking northward towards columns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla at entry to Chabinas Bridge Carole Raddato from FRANKFURT, Germany [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) Generic license.

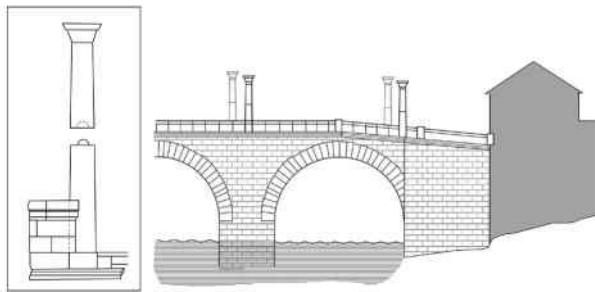


Fig. 6. Reconstruction of the Chesters @ Bridge over the North Tyne River, Britain, with detail of column shaft with mortise and tenon joint; image by author.

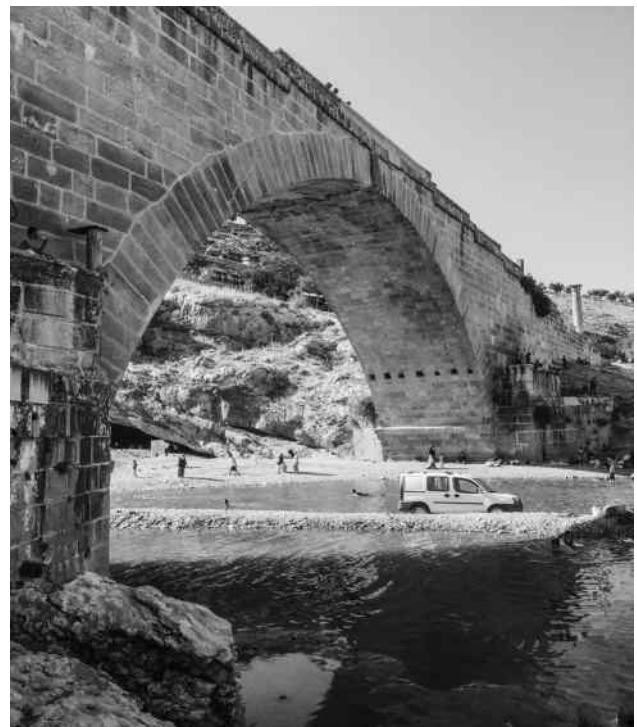


Fig. 7. View of Chabinas Bridge, 2018, photograph by author.

# LADIES AND CUPS: A RECONSIDERATION OF SOME AKKADIAN ARTEFACTS FROM NORTHERN SYRIA

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## *Abstract*

In 1999 the discovery in the palace at Mozan, ancient Urkeš, of a number of door sealings with the impressions of the seal of Tar'am-Agade, a Naram-Sin's daughter previously unknown, threw new light not only on the history of the site but also on the important role of Akkadian women in diplomacy and international relations. This paper looks back to some objects belonging to Akkadian women excavated elsewhere in Northern Syria, already known in the literature, with the aim to bring further food for thought on the question in the light of the Mozan evidence.

## 1. INTRODUCTION: STARTING FROM MOZAN

In 1999 the discovery of a number of door sealings in a cache in the AP palace at Mozan, ancient Urkeš, with the name of Tar'am-Agade, a Naram-Sin's daughter previously unknown, threw new light not only on the history of the site but also on the reconstruction of the dynamics of relationship between the area and the Akkadian kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The name of the king in the seal legend is written with the divine determinative as usual after the Great Revolt, an indication of the dating of the seal after that event.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, no further information can be inferred from that legend, nor from other sources, on Tar'am-Agade and her role at the site. Two hypotheses have been put forward by the excavators: either the lady was a priestess placed by his father in a temple of the town, as usual in Mesopotamia since the time of Sargon, or, as reckoned more likely, was the queen, wife of the local ruler (*endan*).<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, sealings bearing the impressions of the seal of an *endan* whose name is no longer preserved were found in the same deposit: unlike that of his predecessor Tupkiš, the original seal had a contest scene too<sup>4</sup> and maybe the adoption of this very specific Southern iconography can be read as an indication of a changed political situation at the site.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, fig. 2; Kelly-Buccellati 2010. It is a great pleasure to offer this small note to Marilyn and Giorgio on a theme of shared interest, remembering their warmful and generous hospitality at Mozan, inclusive of an early, private session on the still unpublished sealings.

<sup>2</sup> See however the *caveat* in Westenholz 2000, 553, according to whom the presence of the divine determinative in the inscriptions could not be compelling even after the Great Revolt and therefore its absence would have a limited chronological value.

<sup>3</sup> See last Kelly-Buccellati 2010; see also Sallaberger 2007, 427.

<sup>4</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 18, fig. 3, where stylistic differences with that of Tar'am-Agade are duly underlined.

<sup>5</sup> Sallaberger 2007, 427; see also Felli 2015a, 222, n. 229.

As underlined by the two excavators, the Tar'am-Agade's seal from which the sealings originate is unique for at least two reasons: its contest scene, the usual theme for Akkadian official seals, is unusual for women's ones.<sup>6</sup> In Early Dynastic times only two women, Ninbanda wife of Mesannepadda and Baranamtara wife of Lugalanda, had contest scene seals in their capacity of queens.<sup>7</sup> The second reason is that is the only Akkadian seal known belonging to a princess, while all other seals with a legend mentioning persons of this rank are in fact seals of their servants, as in the cases of Enheduanna, Enmenana and Tudanapšum: the only other instance of a seal belonging to an actual member of the Akkadian royal family is that of another son of Naram-Sin, Ukin-Ulmaš, again a contest scene seal.<sup>8</sup>

As to the former point, a special case was probably made for her in consideration of her role at Mozan: the fact that the seal was used to close doors in the official building of the site would indicate a direct responsibility on her behalf in that building, to be shared with at least two high-ranking male figures, Ewrīm-atal and Išar-beli, revealed by their sealings found in the same cache as Tar'am-Agade's.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. AKKADIAN PRINCESSES

When considering the extant evidence on princesses during the Akkadian period, we find them mostly attested in the role of priestesses:<sup>10</sup> Enheduanna, Sar-

<sup>6</sup> For few attestations see Collon 1982, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Collon 1987, 123, figs. 522 and 525; see also recently Asher-Greve 2013, 366.

<sup>8</sup> Boehmer 1965, fig. 256. For a detailed survey of seals linked to the royal court of Akkad see the catalogue drawn by Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati in Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 15, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Glassner 1986, 12; as to the archaeological record see Suter 2007, 323-327.

gon's daughter, Enmenanna and Tudanapšum, daughters of Naram-Sin, the first two, *entu* priestesses of the god Nanna in Ur and the third, *entu* priestess of the god Enlil in Nippur; in addition, we know also that Naram-Sin's niece, Lippuš-ijā'um, the daughter of his son Nabī-Ulmaš, was BALAG.DI of the god Sin most likely in Tutub.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, at least another attestation comes from Syria: at Mari, in an area of poorly preserved houses above the *Maison Rouge*, two bronze bowls have been found, each inscribed with the name of a daughter of Naram-Sin, Simat(ME)-Ulmaš and Šumšani, the latter a high priestess of the god Šamaš in Sippar as indicated in the inscription.<sup>12</sup> The lack of a divine determinative in the writing of the king's name is an indication of the early dating of the objects<sup>13</sup> and would seem to place them in a different time-frame than Tar'am-Agade's sealings. Leaving out the question of chronology and historical reconstruction raised by these objects,<sup>14</sup> such findings remain an important piece of evidence of Akkadian contacts with this northern site, nonetheless, bowls are a different thing from sealings and, unlike Mozan, the actual presence of neither of these princesses at Mari can be surmised in absence of further evidence.<sup>15</sup>

### 3. THE INSCRIBED CUP FROM TELL MUNBAQA

In this connection the retrieval of another Akkadian inscribed bronze bowl at the site of Munbaqa in the early '70s appears relevant (fig. 1):<sup>16</sup> from the inscription, we learn that it was dedicated by Mesuni, the daughter of a certain Puzur-Ḫattum,<sup>17</sup> a temple administrator (*sanga*) of a city written BĀD<sup>ki</sup>. Piotr Steinkeller, commenting upon the toponym occurring in the bowl inscription, which should be read Durum, suggested at least two main possibilities: either a Syrian site (Munbaqa itself, or, perhaps more likely, a city in the Ebla region) or a site in the Hamrin val-

ley, in consideration of the fact that the father's name is attested on a Sargonic tablet from Tell Sleimeh.<sup>18</sup> More recently, David Owen has expressed himself in support of a location of the site in Syria.<sup>19</sup> We know that the ancient name of Munbaqa at least in the 2nd millennium was Ekalte, maybe Yakaltum at the time of the Mari kingdom, but unfortunately no clue is available for the 3rd millennium.<sup>20</sup> Therefore no conclusive argument is so far available for connecting the toponym with the finding place of the cup.

The title *sanga* is generally found in association with temples and not with toponyms, but exceptions are known: apart from epigraphic occurrences,<sup>21</sup> we can recall the case of Lu-dingirana, *sanga* of IN.KI/Isin, whose name is found on the seal of one of his servants now preserved in the Yale Babylonian collection.<sup>22</sup> This type of seal is known in the literature as "arad-zu" seal on the basis of the legend formula in which the owner of the seal declares him/herself servant of a higher in rank person, who is usually a king or a member of the royal family or, less frequently, very highly placed officials or priests with some role in the functioning of the state.<sup>23</sup> In Early Dynastic Mesopotamia *sangas* were very important officials and could have great economic and political power as well, and that would seem to be the case also in the Akkadian period, as for example at the time of Sharkalisharri, at least as far as the area of Lagash.<sup>24</sup> According to Ingo Schrakamp, some *sangas* there would seem to belong to the most restricted circle around the royal family.<sup>25</sup> What about Puzur-Ḫattum? The man might be one and the same individual mentioned in a letter sent by Mesag, *ensi* of Umma at the time of Šarkališarri:<sup>26</sup> in consideration of the appellative "brother" used in the letter, Puzur-Ḫattum should be at least equal in rank with the *ensi*, if not a brother in terms of blood.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Sommerfeld 1999, 37.

<sup>12</sup> Parrot 1955, 195, pl. XVI.1, 2; see now Margueron 2004, 310, figs. 294, 295. For a reading of the inscription see Frayne 1993, 157, n. 51.

<sup>13</sup> *Contra* Margueron 2004, 306.

<sup>14</sup> The bowls were found by A. Parrot in a cache deposit over the *Maison Rouge* (Parrot 1955, 195, pl. XVI.1, 2), in the level succeeding the destruction of the *ville* II, which Jean-Claude Margueron ascribes to Naram-Sin: Margueron 2004, 306, 308 and 309, figs. 294, 295; 2008, 295, 296; see however *contra* Sallaberger 2007, 429; Charpin 2008, 225, 226; Sallaberger, Schrakamp 2015, 100-104, for which the destruction is ascribable to Sargon.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, the observations in Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000, 5, n. 12; Charpin 2008, 226.

<sup>16</sup> Wäfler 1974, 43, fig. 56; 1980; Boese 1983; Mayer-Opificius 1986; Braun-Holzinger 1991, 167, G 242; Werner 1998, 113, n. 1008, pls. 104, 205. The inscription is edited by Frayne 1993, 297, n. 2001; Marchesi 2015.

<sup>17</sup> According to the new reading of the bowl inscription provided by Gianni Marchesi: Marchesi 2015, 426.

<sup>18</sup> Steinkeller 1984. *Contra* Werner 1998, 113, the seal mentioned by Steinkeller (Steinkeller 1984, 84) as a further attestation of the toponym does not come from the Hamrin region, but is unprovenanced.

<sup>19</sup> Owen 1995, with reference to further literature.

<sup>20</sup> Frayne 1993, 297. See also Charpin 2003, 13; Ziegler 2009, 189-202.

<sup>21</sup> See for example the *sanga* of URU×A<sup>ki</sup>: Foster 1982, 21; *sanga* of the city of Niqqum: Röllig 1998, 569.

<sup>22</sup> Buchanan 1981, 444, n. 423.

<sup>23</sup> On these seals see now Rakiç 2018, with reference to earlier literature.

<sup>24</sup> Steinkeller 2017, 56, 57.

<sup>25</sup> Schrakamp 2017, 107.

<sup>26</sup> Catagnoli 2003, with reference to earlier literature; see now also Schrakamp 2017, 110.

<sup>27</sup> This could be an indication to consider Puzur-Ḫattum an important figure in the Umma area: Catagnoli 2003, 107. However, the argument in Kienast, Volk 1995, 65 on the language of the letter being Sumerian, thus indicating a southern ascription, appears not so compelling, since Puzur-Ḫattum is not the sender but the addressee of the letter.

Another attestation of the figure, which not only confirms his role, but is also a further indication of his high rank, can be found in the legend of a splendid seal of one of his officials (another “arad-zu” seal type), the scribe Šakullum (fig. 2), which Dominique Collon recognizes as the work of a royal workshop active at the time of the king Šarkališarri.<sup>28</sup> Unlike the seal mentioning the sanga of Isin referred to above, which appears of lower quality in comparison with other examples with similar legends mentioning royal figures, as already acknowledged by Richard Zettler,<sup>29</sup> the outstanding piece granted to one of the officials at his dependency places him very high in the hierarchy of the Akkadian kingdom, close to royal family members. Unfortunately, the seal of the servant of Puzur-Ḫattum is unprovenanced: being acquired by the British Museum in 1825 as part of the Claudius James Rich’s collection, one would think that a Central or Northern Mesopotamian origin would be the most obvious option, but it has to be taken into consideration that in the market at al-Hilla, near Babylon, where Rich bought many objects among which seals, it was possible to find antiquities from a large area, “especially on the banks of the Euphrates, from Raka to Samawa”.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, another late Akkadian contest scene seal most likely coming out of the same royal workshop as the one of the “servant” of Puzur-Ḫattum has been found at Mari, thus indicating not only the wide circulation of these objects but also the strategic importance of the site in the administration of the northern periphery of the Akkadian kingdom.<sup>31</sup>

Taking all this into consideration, Mesuni, Puzur-Ḫattum’s daughter, would be a highly placed figure, albeit not a princess as far as we know: if so, we would then have here another connection between a female representative of the Akkadian court and a Syrian site along the Euphrates, much alike that which can be established with the two princesses at Mari already at the time of Naram-Sin.

#### 4. A RECONSIDERATION OF THE EVIDENCE

A focus on Mari was already established by both Johannes Boese<sup>32</sup> and Ruth Mayer-Opificius<sup>33</sup> in their studies on the Munbaqa hoard, in special reference to the inscribed vessel. In particular, it is possible to appreciate that the type of bowl of Mesuni is close to the

one of Šumšani, mentioned above (fig. 3).<sup>34</sup> They are both small vessels, in fact a cup, of the type one can easily hold in one hand for drinking and that is in fact the function acknowledged, as confirmed by their frequent retrieval near the hands or the face when found in graves.<sup>35</sup>

In Akkadian glyptic scenes similar vessels occur in the hands of seated people in banqueting scenes, less frequently of gods in some adoration or encountering scenes.<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, if we look at roughly contemporary, though Syrian, attestations, it can be mentioned the case of the three Mozan seals of the local queen, Uqnitum, attested by sealings found in the service wing of the palace (AK), and most likely earlier than those of Naram-Sin’s daughter: in one case, the king, and in the other two, the queen herself, are shown seated holding a small bowl in their hands, apparently banqueting but in fact in what appears clearly a statement of their status (see below).<sup>37</sup>

Copper/bronze bowls are a rather frequent item within the category of votive objects during the Akkadian period:<sup>38</sup> a best known example is the one found in the hoard in the Earlier Northern Palace at Tell Asmar which was dedicated to god Abu (and indirectly responsible for the attribution to this god of the temple nearby).<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, metal vessels are also prized personal belongings of members of the urban élites, as shown by their presence in wealthy burials throughout the 3rd millennium.<sup>40</sup> They are also mentioned as part of the property of the king and of the queen in an Akkadian text preserving memory of a trip of the royal family to the south.<sup>41</sup> It is important to add that cups in particular were objects

<sup>28</sup> Collon 1982, 24, 25, no. 114; see also Steinkeller 1984.

<sup>29</sup> Zettler 1977, 36.

<sup>30</sup> Simpson 2003, 198.

<sup>31</sup> See last Margueron 2004, 246, fig. 298, according to which the seal was found in the area of the “temples anonymes”, near the angle of one of the altars (see below). The legend bears the name NAM-ZI.

<sup>32</sup> Boese 1983.

<sup>33</sup> Mayer-Opificius 1986.

<sup>34</sup> They are included in the form group *Kalottenschalen* in Müller-Karpe’s classification of Mesopotamian metal vessels, along with the other uninscribed bowl included in the Munbaqa hoard (Müller-Karpe 1993, 82, 83 and n. 41), which is one of the most widespread in the Akkadian period: Calmeyer 1993, 137. The bowl of Simat-Ulmaš is instead a more oval shaped, apparently a slightly earlier type: see Müller-Karpe 1993, 129.

<sup>35</sup> Müller-Karpe 1993, 81.

<sup>36</sup> See for example, Boehmer 1965, figs. 549, 673 (women), fig. 725 (deities).

<sup>37</sup> On these seals see last Kelly-Buccellati 2010, figs. 2, 3 and 7; 2015. On the possibility that Uqnitum was an Akkadian princess as well see Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1996, 83, n. 91; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1998, 202; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 25.

<sup>38</sup> Goodnick Westenholz 1998, 48, 49.

<sup>39</sup> Frankfort 1934, 37-39, fig. 35 above; see also Delougaz 1967, 184, 185. A relevant number of uninscribed copper vessels are included in the same jar, among which many bowls, and further more are found in another hoard discovered under the floor of the reception room in a later phase of the same building: Frankfort 1934, 35-37, figs. 31, 32.

<sup>40</sup> Müller-Karpe 1993, 281, 282. See also the observations in Boese 1983, 10.

<sup>41</sup> Foster 1980, 34.

charged with a highly symbolic meaning, especially in the establishment of relationships between kings and their vassals or simply their dependents.<sup>42</sup> In this connection, it is maybe not out of place to recall the important role that cups play in Ur III glyptic scenes centering on the figure of the king.<sup>43</sup>

Both the Mari vessels and the Munbaqa one have been considered votive offerings in the relevant literature.<sup>44</sup> However, none of them bears any reference to a deity, which is considered a prerequisite for defining an object a votive gift, especially in absence of other indications such as the finding context.<sup>45</sup> The piece from Munbaqa is part of a deposit within a jar found next to a stone wall in the *Kuppe 1 (Hortfund 1)*, which contains a number of valuable, mostly metal, objects (bronze pins and weapons, plus seven eye inlays, in dark stone, limestone or bone and lapis-lazuli) including some precious metal ornaments, placed separately inside a smaller ceramic vessel.<sup>46</sup> The recent publication of the whole lot of materials contained in the deposit in the site's final excavation report on small finds has provided a detailed analysis of all the objects, which there is no use to reproduce here.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, no further information is given on the finding context of the hoard: it is simply said that the jar was buried under the floor of a house. However, being that the area of the later *Tempel I*, of which a third millennium antecedent was also found digging beneath the level reached in 1971 (fig. 4), the year in which the hoard was found, in a following campaign, the possibility that the jar was originally buried in a cultic building yet unexplored or, at least, contained objects coming from a cultic context, should not be overlooked.<sup>48</sup>

As seen above, the context in which the two bowls at Mari, though not clearly illustrated, would seem to be ascribable is a domestic area. However, it is to recall that the "Maison Rouge", above which the bowls were found, was located just to the south-east of the

temple of Ninni-zaza, therefore close to a religious quarter of the so-called *ville II*.<sup>49</sup> The deposit included at least another bronze vessel, a chalice, inscribed with the name of a scribe, Dabala,<sup>50</sup> and some bronze tools (a sickle blade, a pair of tweezers, a hoe with a dingir sign inscribed, a small axe and a hook), apparently placed in two discrete lots.<sup>51</sup>

Hoards with precious objects, especially metal, are attested at a number of northern sites in the Akkadian period, mostly in private houses, and have been interpreted as non-ritual in character.<sup>52</sup> Questions such accumulation of wealth in private hands has been called upon to explain such phenomenon, especially in the presence of scrappy or unfinished items in valuable material.<sup>53</sup> However, I suspect that the quality of the items included in such findings would claim for a different explanation, at least for some of them. Eva Braun-Holzinger's survey of magical figures encountered both in archaeology and texts has shown that protection can be expressed by a number of different items ranging from metal figurines to amulets from seals to jewellery.<sup>54</sup> If we consider all the hoards attested, including those from Mari<sup>55</sup> and Munbaqa, similar objects which can be interpreted as *apotropaia* are almost always found along with apparently more mundane metal objects, as if some protection was needed on the lot of material put aside. In the case of Munbaqa, what appears significant under this respect is the presence of eye-inlays:<sup>56</sup> such items are attested in Northern Syria in a number of different funerary (Mari, Banat, Chuera, Umm el-Marra) and non-funerary contexts (Selenkahiye). Although no clear explanation can so far be offered for their *raison-d'être*, the possibility of a protective value should be taken into consideration.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, a number of similar objects have been found also on the floor

<sup>42</sup> On this theme Michalowski 1994, 36, 37; see now Suter 2012, 216; Goodnick Westenholz 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Winter 1986; 1991; see also the observations in Guichard 2005, 12, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Boese 1983, esp. 11, 12. Eva Braun-Holzinger (Braun-Holzinger 1991, 163, 167) includes all them three in her catalogue of *Weihgaben*.

<sup>45</sup> On the question of votive objects there is an extensive literature: see *inter alia* Selz 2011, 284.

<sup>46</sup> Machule, Rhode 1974, 20, fig. 32, 33 and 48; Wäfler 1974.

<sup>47</sup> Czichon, Werner 1998a, *passim*. For the ceramic container of the deposit see Czichon, Werner 2008, 63, pls. 30.5183 and 303.

<sup>48</sup> Orthmann 1975, 132, 133, figs. 5-8; see also Werner 1994, 85, pl. 2.2, 1. Although no direct connection had been made with the hoard in the excavation reports, already Machule, Rhode 1974, 14, 15 suggested that the levels underlying the *Steinbau I* could belong to earlier temples. Boese 1983, commenting on the cup, assumes that the object was part of a temple inventory.

<sup>49</sup> Margueron 2004, 149.

<sup>50</sup> Margueron 2004, 306, fig. 296; see also Müller-Karpe 1993, 155, *Form 26 II*.

<sup>51</sup> Parrot 1954, 194-202, pls. XVI.1-3; XVII.1-3.

<sup>52</sup> Matthews 1994, esp. 298, following Richard Bradley's distinction of ritual and non-ritual deposits of European prehistoric hoards on the basis of the state of preservation of the objects and the location of the deposit. An exception is made for the deposits found above the floor in the FS building (Matthews 1994, 299) for which now see McDonald *et al.* 2001, 233-246; Oates, Oates 2001, 389-391.

<sup>53</sup> Matthews 1994, 298, 299.

<sup>54</sup> Braun-Holzinger 1999.

<sup>55</sup> We can also recall the case of the "Trésor d'Ur" found in the area of the palace, which now Margueron would consider a foundation deposit ascribed to the P-0, and no longer to the P-1, level: Margueron 2004, 212. Be that as it may, the deposit includes a number of elements (seals, an Imdugud pendant) which have also a protective value.

<sup>56</sup> Czichon, Werner 1998b.

<sup>57</sup> Black, Green 1992, 78, 80. For a recent overview see Felli 2015b, 139.

of the cult room and adjacent areas of the Ištar temple G at Assur, where a number of statuettes were indeed retrieved (many with empty eye sockets), but no clear match between them and the eye inlays has proved possible.<sup>58</sup>

Coming back to the vessels, one aspect which catches attention is their inscriptions which certainly testify their ownership. Albeit the lack of information on the lady who left her name on the bowl of Munbaqa and her role in society, I suggest she was a member of the Akkadian elite, as her filiation suggests, as much as the ladies of the Mari bowls. The idea is thus that the bronze cup was originally an object belonging to her being a highly placed lady, maybe part of her personal supply, if not a more specific status symbol linked to her role. It is impossible to indicate more clearly its use, although its material surely would speak for a non-ordinary (i.e. non-daily) one; as seen above, it cannot be excluded that the item was offered in a temple, even if not explicitly stated. At some point, the object was put aside for unknown reasons along with other items (maybe of similar provenance?), which were nonetheless conceived as sacred in some way and therefore disposed of in a careful manner, placed inside a vessel and buried. I do not think it probable that the cup had come independently from far away,<sup>59</sup> as in the case of booty vessels,<sup>60</sup> but I would associate it, and her owner, to the site of Munbaqa, although the whole story behind it escapes to us.<sup>61</sup> The same would apply to the bowls from Mari. I see too much of a coincidence that three bowls belonging to Akkadian women had been looted from Mesopotamia and brought up in two different sites of the middle Euphrates valley in a rather short turn of years. It is maybe not out of place here to recall the retrieval at Mari of a wealthy pit grave, T 1082, the so-called princess burial, in level b of the chantier F (fig. 5). The female skeleton is accompanied by two seals, one an Akkadian cornaline contest scene seal with golden caps and the other, smaller, seal, still with golden caps but this time in lapislazuli: while the latter is unfortunately totally effaced so that no reading is any longer possible,<sup>62</sup> the former seal, inscribed with a name followed by the title dubsar and therefore most likely not a personal belonging of the lady, is nonetheless an indication of her link with Akkadian officialdom and can be dated to the

time of Naram-Sin.<sup>63</sup> Some grave goods find close parallels in a rich Akkadian burial found in a multiple grave in the area WF at Nippur: skeleton 2 of tomb 14 in level XIIB was buried with a similar gold band, gold spiral earrings<sup>64</sup> and two large silver arm-rings along with a very specific type of bronze handled vessel, maybe part of a drinking set, attested also at the Royal Cemetery of Ur;<sup>65</sup> particularly worth noticing is the presence of a lapislazuli contest scene seal, quite similar to the Tar'am-Agade's one, unfortunately with the legend erased.<sup>66</sup> The burial is thought, rightly, to be female: according to the excavator, the seal "must be a 'cast off' of the woman's husband or another male relative and worn as an ornament or as an amulet. Alternatively, a woman may have been powerful enough to have been doing business and sealing documents on her own or on her family's behalf, although, in such a case, one would expect the seal to be inscribed with her name and to have a presentation scene, marking it as a personal seal rather than the scene of the figures in combat, which seems to be an official motif linked to the official linked to the Akkadian administration".<sup>67</sup> The evidence of Tar'am-Agade's contest scene seal has offered an alternative view on the matter of distribution and use of contest scene seals in the Akkadian society. Of course, I am not meaning that the woman buried in that grave was beyond any doubt a princess nor the one in the Mari grave<sup>68</sup> – maybe one of the Naram-Sin's daughters whose names are inscribed on the bowls, although that could be a possibility not to be discounted – but just bring attention on these contexts and their similarities and add some archaeological evidence to the scanty epigraphic evidence in relation to the Akkadian presence in this area, especially of highly placed female figures.

<sup>58</sup> Klengel-Brandt 1995; see now Bär 2003, pl. 36.Sk30-42.

<sup>59</sup> See for example Boese 1983, 15.

<sup>60</sup> See last Sallaberger 2007, 424, on the evidence from Northern Syria.

<sup>61</sup> I tend to think with Westenholz 1999, 48, that all these scattered Akkadian materials in the North are just a tip of an iceberg.

<sup>62</sup> Jean-Marie 1999, 194, 195, T 1082, pls. 239-242.

<sup>63</sup> Margueron 2004, 417, 418, fig. 412.12, underlining its links with Early Dynastic glyptic. However, it is most likely a seal to be placed during Naram-Sin's reign, because of the presence of the water buffalo, probably quite early in consideration of the number (six) of figures composing the scene which is a characteristic of Early Akkadian seals.

<sup>64</sup> Nicolini 2010, 118, n. 67 (type 14), pls. 69-73. Interestingly, these ornaments are also the type contained in the Munbaqa hoard: Czichon 1998, 181, 182, pl. 128.1907-1909.

<sup>65</sup> MacMahon 2006, 49, 50, pls. 58b, 63b, 64a, 145.3, 146.1-3 and 150.3. Both the gold band and the handled vessel is found also with skeleton 1 of the same grave (level XIIB), which however is reckoned male on the basis of the presence of weapons and two inscribed seals with the same male name: MacMahon 2006, 52, 53, pls. 58a, 152.10, 156, 2 and 159.1, 2. On precious diadems as signs of distinction see Felli 2015b, 125, 126.

<sup>66</sup> MacMahon 2006, 120, pl. 158.1.

<sup>67</sup> MacMahon 2006, 50.

<sup>68</sup> See Nicolini 2010, 429, 430, for the proposal of a priestess' burial.

## 5. THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES VALLEY DURING THE AKKADIAN PERIOD

The above mentioned finds brings our discussion on the question of Akkadian control over the Middle Euphrates region. Walther Sallaberger views this area, with a possible exception for Mari, as marginal in the context of Akkadian interests to the North in comparison to the Habur area.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, according to Gianni Marchesi, following Piotr Steinkeller, Akkadians established garrisons in two Middle Euphrates sites, Mari and Tuttul, modern Tell Bi'a, in order to gain control over the riverine trade route.<sup>70</sup> The retrieval of seals, plus sealings in the case of Tuttul and tablets in the case of Mari, even leaving out other paraphernalia, like the above mentioned bowls,<sup>71</sup> would attest the Akkadian presence at both sites: however, no building activity can be indisputably ascribed to Akkadians as at Brak, neither the *Pfeilergebäude* at Bi'a nor the palace P-0 at Mari, although all these buildings are certainly occupied in this period.<sup>72</sup> It is difficult to tell on the basis of present evidence how much was direct the control of the Akkadians on the area; if ever, the latter did not extend, at the maximum, beyond the upper limit of the Tabqa region, maybe reaching as far as Hammam al-Turkman to the east. Sites such as Munbaqa, as well as Habuba Kabira and Selenkahiye, were presumably only limitedly affected by the actual presence of southerners which most likely resided in the main centres but of course that is difficult to ascertain. The chronological development of the events is also a matter of debate. On the basis of the diffusion of seals and seal impressions bearing the battle of the gods theme, all began presumably after Sargon's conquest in the later part of his reign,<sup>73</sup> as suggested also by his inscriptions preserved in an OB copy which records the conquest of Mari, of which memory was also kept in one of his year-names.<sup>74</sup> Naram-Sin cer-

tainly campaigned on the Euphrates and destroyed Armanum,<sup>75</sup> As far as the still few tablets from Mari are concerned, they would seem to date at a late stage in the Akkadian period (i.e. Naram-Sin/ Šarkališarri) as much as those found at Leilan, Brak and Mozan.<sup>76</sup> It is possible that the Akkadian control in the region after the death of Naram-Sin did not go much beyond the site of Mari, as suggested by the retrieval of an axe bearing the name of a local ruler (en) of Tuttul in Late Akkadian writing.<sup>77</sup> This does not mean that diplomatic contacts with some of the centres located upstream, such as Munbaqa, were no longer established or maintained, as the cup of the Akkadian lady (maybe another royal figure?) during Šarkališarri's reign would indicate. It is perhaps not out of place to recall here that Šarkališarri was the last Akkadian king who should have been active in the region as suggested by one of his year names commemorating a victory in the area of Gebel Bishri, which is located just to the west of Tuttul.<sup>78</sup>

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- <sup>69</sup> Sallaberger 2011, 330, 331.  
<sup>70</sup> Marchesi 2015, 424. We can recall the case of Quradu, the merchant, presumably from Sippar, active at Mari and Tuttul: Michalowski 1993, 84.  
<sup>71</sup> See also the fragment of stone vessel from Tell Bi'a with an inscription of Rimuš recently identified in Marchesi 2015, 425, pl. 2.  
<sup>72</sup> After the destruction of the *ville II*, the only parts of Mari with signs of immediate rebuilding are the palace (P-0) and the so-called *temples anonymes*, a religious building with an unusual layout (Margueron 2004, 244, figs. 236 and 377), from which come at least two Akkadian seals, the one mentioned above and one with the battle of the gods scene, some earlier in date (Margueron 2004, 309, fig. 284; on the latter see also Amiet 1985, 481, fig. 20).  
<sup>73</sup> Felli 2015a, 224, 225, in which the value of this type of evidence is discussed.  
<sup>74</sup> Frayne 1993, E2.1.1.1, lines 87-93; E.1.1.2, lines 92-99; see also E2.1.1.11, lines 14-35; E2.1.1.12, lines 6-21.  
<sup>75</sup> Salgues 2011.  
<sup>76</sup> Colonna d'Istria, Criaud 2014.  
<sup>77</sup> Marchesi 2015, 425, pl. 3.  
<sup>78</sup> See last Sommerfeld 2000, 435, 436, with reference to earlier literature.



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Fig. 1. Munbaqa, inscribed bronze cup (adapted from Rouault, O., M. G. Masetti-Rouault, eds, *L'Euphrate e il tempo. La civiltà del medio Euphrate e della Gezira siriana*, Electa, Milano, 1993, fig. 206)

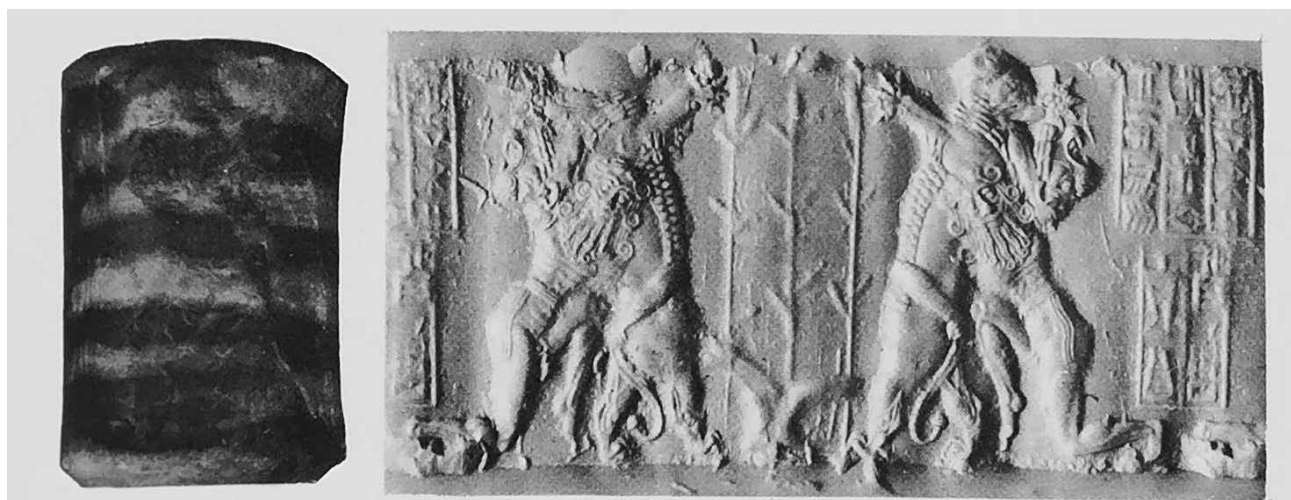


Fig. 2. British Museum, cylinder seal of a servant of Puzur-Ḫattum (adapted from Collon 1982, n. 114)



Fig. 3. Mari, inscribed bronze cup (adapted from Margueron 2004, fig. 294)

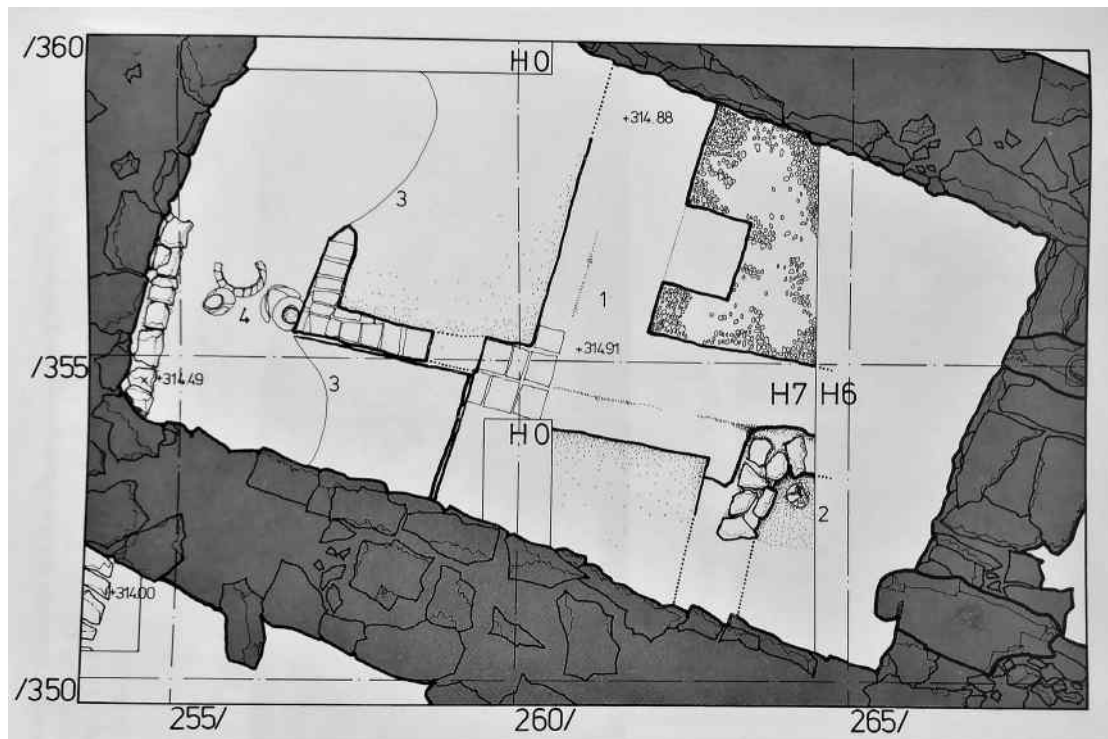


Fig. 4. Plan of the finding context of the Munbaqa hoard (adapted from Machule, Rhode 1974, fig. 32)

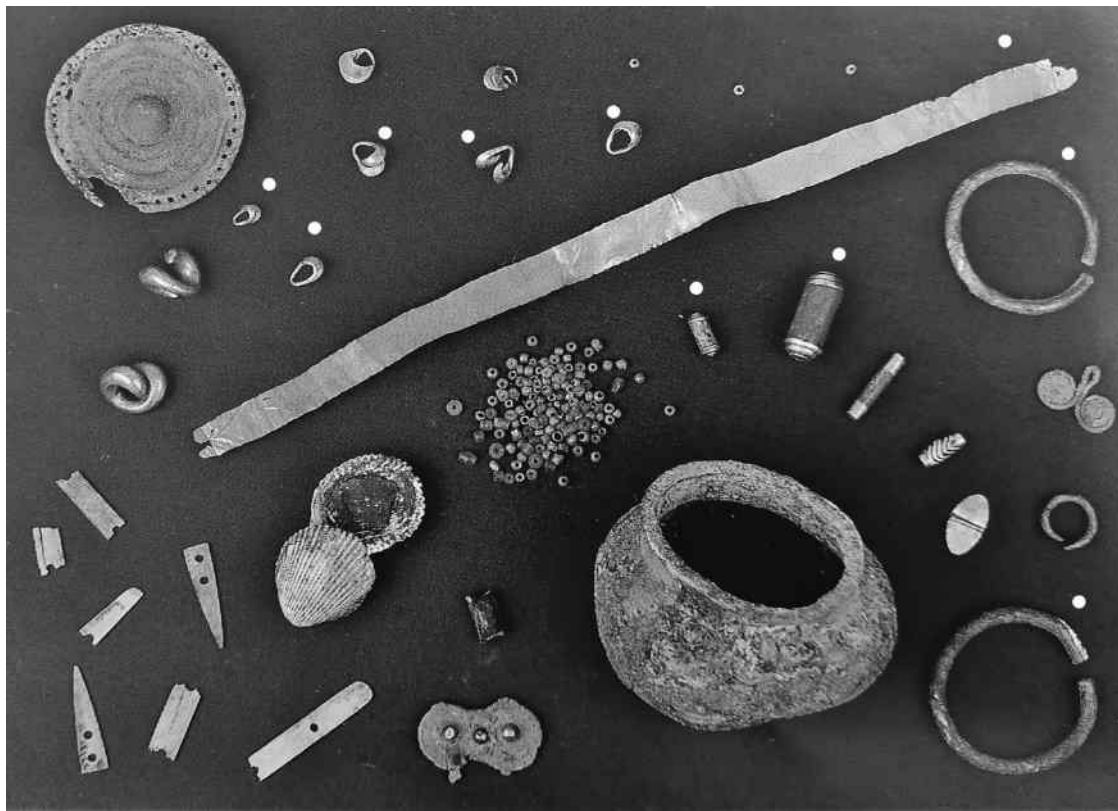


Fig. 5. Mari, grave T 1082: selection of grave goods with the white dots indicating the objects mentioned in the text (adapted from Margueron 2004, pl. 57)

# SEEN THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY: REEXAMINING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN MESOPOTAMIA AND THE CAUCASUS

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## *Abstract*

It has long been debated whether the Hurrians, who inhabited the zone between the Anatolian highlands and Mesopotamian lowlands, were immigrants from the northeast or indigenous to the region. I consider the implications of new obsidian studies on the issue of social networks that linked Mesopotamian settlements to the Caucasus.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2005, I attended a talk by Rick Hauser about his work on the clay animal figurines at Tell Mozan. During his talk, Rick showed a map that illustrated how the site lies along the foothills between the Anatolian highlands and Mesopotamian lowlands, and he also included a photograph with Tell Mozan in the foreground and the Mardin mountain pass into Turkey in the background. By the end of the talk, I knew I wanted that site to be a focus of my doctoral research, reconstructing obsidian distribution during the Early and Middle Bronze Age. Rick put me in touch with the Buccellatis, and in 2006, I visited Tell Mozan in order to document the obsidian assemblage and select artifacts for chemical analysis to determine their volcanic origins. Here I revisit one focus of my doctoral research: whether there is evidence to support northern origins of the Hurrian population and/or the maintenance of social networks with the Caucasus region. At the time, I did not identify any obsidian artifacts from sources within the Kura-Axares river basin (fig. 1). There are, however, new obsidian data, published since I completed my dissertation in 2010, that hint at the existence of previously invisible social or economic links between Mesopotamian sites and Caucasus populations.

## 2. HURRIAN IDENTITY & TELL MOZAN

A focus of Buccellatis' work at Tell Mozan has been the Hurrian identity of the city's inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> It is common for adjectives such as "mysterious" or "enigmatic" to be applied to the Hurrians. In *The Hurrians*, Gernot Wilhelm explains our fragmentary knowledge:

We have far less information, linguistic as well as historical and cultural, about them than we do about the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the

Hittites, or the Canaanites. However, the very contradiction between the obvious importance of the Hurrian role in the ancient Eastern world and the fragmentary evidence about it has given rise to a variety of assessments and even to rank speculation.<sup>2</sup>

A key issue is that "Hurrian" remains a language-based identification. At present, "Hurrians" must be regarded as "speakers of the Hurrian language" or "individuals with Hurrian names." Wilhelm points out that "linguistic differences between the Hurrians and other inhabitants of the ancient Near East should not lead us to assume profound cultural differences."<sup>3</sup> Almost all information about the Hurrians is predicated on textual sources, principally Hurrian texts in Hittite archives and tablets from Late Bronze Age cities on the edges of a Hurrian kingdom as well as letters, seal impressions, and lists of individuals' names.

The distribution of such evidence indicates that Hurrians inhabited a transitional zone between the Anatolian highlands and Mesopotamian lowlands. Their language appears during the third millennium BCE and disappears from the historical record ~1300 BCE. In Northern Mesopotamia, many archaeologists have sought alternatives to relying on texts to reconstruct movements of the Hurrians. Ceramics, such as Khabur ware, have attracted the most attention in such endeavors, but the areas across which the wares occur were too culturally complex to associate them with one particular group.<sup>4</sup> In *The Ancient Near East: c. 3000-330 BC*, Amélie Kuhrt explains that there are many outstanding questions regarding the Hurrians:

The remaining problems are enormous. For example, where were the people associated with the Hurrian language located, and when? Did a definable movement take place at some stage, bringing

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm 2002, 174.

<sup>4</sup> Akkermans, Schwartz 2003, 308; Kramer 1977; Stein 1997, 126-127.

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1997; 2001; 2005; 2007, *inter alia*.



them into western Asia, or not?... How extensive was it? Can we trace its history at all? Finally, are there any distinguishing cultural, political or legal features that we might call ‘Hurrian’? If we want to try to answer any of these questions, it is essential to examine the sources for the Hurrians, which are exclusively linguistic: there are no artefacts or buildings that can with any certainty be defined as ‘Hurrian’ in type.<sup>5</sup>

This changed in 2001 when the Buccellatis published evidence that established Tell Mozan is the city of Urkesh, the cultural, religious, and political capital of Hurrians.<sup>6</sup>

Of the outstanding questions about the Hurrians, I considered the debate surrounding a proposed Hurrian “homeland” to the northeast, perhaps as far as the Caucasus. For example, Steinkeller held that “their homeland was located somewhere in the Trans-Caucasian region, quite possibly in Armenia.”<sup>7</sup> In contrast, Kuhrt suggests that it is most probable “the Hurrians were a cultural-linguistic group *always* located among the foothills and mountains fringing the northern Mesopotamian and Syrian plains.”<sup>8</sup> She points out that they, “as far as we can tell, were from prehistoric times connected with this region – we do not need to visualize them as a group migrating from somewhere further north.”<sup>9</sup>

The Buccellatis have discussed influences of the Early Transcaucasian complex – also known as the Kura-Araxes (KA) cultural complex – at Tell Mozan.<sup>10</sup> The KA complex, which occurred across the Armenian highlands and into Mesopotamia during the Early Bronze Age, is defined by red-and-black burnished ceramics with incised and/or ribbed decorations and, to a lesser extent, horseshoe-shaped fireplace andirons, arsenical bronze, and bovine figurines.<sup>11</sup> After nearly two decades of excavations, “a small amount of Early Transcaucasian pottery has been discovered” in the temple and palace.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, andirons in Khabur Period houses have “decoration very similar to the Early Transcaucasian examples.”

The significance of these KA influences is not straightforward. On one hand, the KA complex is often cited as one of the best examples of migration in the Near East.<sup>13</sup> Sir Leonard Woolley speculated that the KA complex was evidence of “an outpouring of

barbarians from the north,”<sup>14</sup> but others suggest that there were “numerous separate migrations or ripples [that] involved small groups of transhumant pastoralists mixing with the local population.”<sup>15</sup> The proposed reasons for migrations vary, from KA-making populations spreading out “in search of new sources of metal”<sup>16</sup> to practicing viticulture (i.e., grape growing and wine making) and filling a niche within a region occupied by emerging complex societies.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, it has not yet been proven that the spread of KA (material) culture reflects population movement *en masse* instead of emulation, exchange, or other phenomena. Pottery and people are not interchangeable, and it is little exaggeration to state that nearly all aspects of the KA complex are open to debate. Adam Smith argued that “the debate over Kura-Araxes origins may be conceptually misplaced... because we do not have a clear understanding of what the Kura-Araxes actually is.”<sup>18</sup> Others concur our understanding is limited:

The Kura-Araxes phenomenon... remains a most remarkable example of cultural connectivity across geographical and social boundaries. This connectivity falls into no known models: it is neither colonial nor trade-based, it appears to have no political organization, and it is certainly not uniform in all its expressions... [It] is far from being a closed case; in fact, in some ways it seems hardly to have begun.<sup>19</sup>

Chemical analyses have established that KA ceramics at Sos Höyük in Eastern Anatolia were locally made, not imported.<sup>20</sup> Hence, Philip Kohl proposes that the KA “package,” including its hallmark ceramics, was transmitted via regional communication links:

The characteristic red-and-black burnished wares, one of the hallmark features of Kura-Araxes material remains, may actually have originated at some sites beyond the catchment basins of the Kura and Araxes... and subsequently spread east into Transcaucasia... There seems to have been fairly rapid intra- and inter-cultural communication among these different contiguous regions, leading relatively quickly to the emergence of a recognizable Kura-Araxes *koine* or broadly defined ‘cultural-historical community’.<sup>21</sup>

If true, the distribution of Caucasus obsidian may have increased during the Early Bronze Age, reflect-

<sup>5</sup> Kuhrt 1995, 284.

<sup>6</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Steinkeller 1998, 96.

<sup>8</sup> Kuhrt 1995, 288.

<sup>9</sup> Kuhrt 1995, 289.

<sup>10</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 145; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2007, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Palumbi 2003, 2008; Batiuk 2005, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 34.

<sup>13</sup> Rothman 2003; Kohl 2007; Batiuk 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Woolley 1953, 31.

<sup>15</sup> Batiuk, Rothman 2007, 9.

<sup>16</sup> Kohl 2007, 254.

<sup>17</sup> Batiuk 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Smith 2005, 258.

<sup>19</sup> Greenberg, Goren 2009, 132.

<sup>20</sup> Kibaroglu et al. 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Kohl 2009, 89.



ing proposed networks tied to the spread of KA material culture.

### 3. WHY OBSIDIAN? AND HOW?

American explorer and diplomat John Lloyd Stephens made one of the first published observations of trade evidenced by obsidian far from its geological source:

At the head of the skeletons were two large vases of terra cotta, with covers of the same material. In one of these was a large collection of Indian ornaments, beads, stones, and two carved shells... The other vase was filled nearly to the top with arrowheads, not of flint, but of obsidian; and as there are no volcanoes in Yucatan from which obsidian can be produced, the discovery of these proves intercourse with the volcanic regions of Mexico.<sup>22</sup>

Obsidian is an extrusive volcanic rock that forms only under specific conditions. This natural glass requires the pressures and temperatures that exist at or near Earth's surface. The magma cools quickly, leaving little time for macroscopic minerals to grow before solidification. The composition of obsidian varies, but it tends to form from rhyolitic magmas, which have a high viscosity. Glascock and coauthors explain that, fortunately for sourcing, the "composition of obsidian at any particular source or flow is, with few exceptions, homogeneous and different sources or flows are compositionally different from each other."<sup>23</sup>

Just like artificial glass, obsidian is smooth, hard, brittle, and extremely sharp when fractured. These properties mean that obsidian, when struck with a hammerstone, experiences conchoidal fracture, readily yielding sharp flakes in a predictable manner. People worldwide realized that these traits made obsidian ideal for making flaked (knapped) stone tools. Because it was desirable but rare, obsidian was moved long distances. Thus, obsidian sourcing has been applied to a variety of anthropological questions, including issues of ethnicity, migration, and social relationships among geographically distributed populations.<sup>24</sup>

M. S. Shackley claimed: "Just about the most frequently asked question by archaeology students is: 'Which instrument is best to analyze my stone objects?' The answer, unfortunately, is: 'It depends.'"<sup>25</sup> Roger Green noted that four analytical techniques "stand out" for sourcing obsidian artifacts: neutron activation analysis (NAA), X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF), inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP-MS), and proton-induced X-ray/

gamma ray emission (PIXE/PIGME).<sup>26</sup> Shackley lists the same four techniques and explains: "nearly every archaeologist who sends his or her samples to an analyst anywhere on the globe will send it to a lab that uses... the former two," that is, either NAA or XRF.<sup>27</sup>

NAA was often used to source Near Eastern obsidian during the 1960s to 1990s, but its drawbacks have led to a drop in its use. Specifically, NAA almost always requires a sample to be removed from an artifact, placed in a nuclear reactor, and discarded as radioactive waste. Instead, the majority of Near Eastern obsidian artifacts sourced since 2010 have involved non-destructive varieties of X-ray spectrometry: energy-dispersive XRF (EDXRF), portable XRF (pXRF), scanning electron microscopy with energy-dispersive spectrometry (SEM-EDS), and electron microprobe analysis (EMPA). Together, these techniques have analyzed 95% of the Mesopotamian artifacts since 2010, and pXRF alone accounts for two thirds.

### 4. PIONEERING WORK OF THE 1960s & 1970s

The pioneering studies of Colin Renfrew with Cambridge geologists Johnson ("Joe") Cann and John Dixon began as a way to investigate the Cycladic culture of the Early Bronze Age. In an interview, Renfrew explained how obsidian sourcing came about:

There was an important obsidian source on the Cycladic island of Melos. When I began to think about the Cyclades, I saw that this presented a fascinating problem and that it ought to be possible to do something with it technically. An old school friend of mine, Joe Cann... suggested the optical emission spectroscopy approach... Then when the result came through, it did prove to be anti-diffusionist in the sense that there was no Aegean obsidian in the West Mediterranean and no so-called liparite in the Aegean through the Bronze Age and into the Neolithic... so it did undermine the idea of very long-distance links.<sup>28</sup>

The Neolithic revolution in the Near East was also a topic of considerable interest at the time, and scholars hoped to identify the mechanisms by which agriculture spread between Neolithic villages. The transport of obsidian showed that the villages were not isolated and hinted that, as obsidian moved across the Near East, so too could have ideas.

The obsidian distribution pattern reported by Renfrew and colleagues (fig. 2) is based on 160 sourced artifacts from 53 archaeological sites, obsidian abundance in the lithic assemblages of 14 sites, and the proportion of green obsidian at 12 sites.<sup>29</sup> That is, the

<sup>22</sup> Stephens 1843.

<sup>23</sup> Glascock *et al.* 1998, 17.

<sup>24</sup> Shackley 2005, 134-146.

<sup>25</sup> Shackley 2005, 89.

<sup>26</sup> Green 1998, 228.

<sup>27</sup> Shackley 1998, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Bradley 1993, 74.

<sup>29</sup> Renfrew *et al.* 1966, 1968.

pattern is largely predicated on an average of three artifacts per site and their assumption that green-tinted obsidian derives from one source: Nemrut Dağ volcano. Over the following decades, researchers have slightly redrawn the boundaries of these zones (figs. 3-5), but such patterns still rely heavily on the early work of Renfrew and colleagues.

Mehmet Özdoğan regards the work of Renfrew and colleagues as a highly important initial study that laid a framework for future work on Near Eastern obsidian sourcing, but their findings were viewed as conclusive. He explains that their work

could have had a stimulating impact for a more thorough and systematic survey of obsidian sources, and a lot could have been achieved during the last 25 years. However, regardless of the incipient nature of the evidence and the minimal number of specimens obtained from sources, their paper sounded conclusive for source identifications and almost dismissed the possibility of other sources of obsidian being present... Those who were not well accustomed with the particularities of research in Anatolia accepted the published facts as conclusive and intensified their research on elaborating the exact paths of the trade networks.<sup>30</sup>

That is, Özdoğan argues that their results seemed so definitive that, instead of spurring further development of obsidian sourcing (e.g., seeking additional sources, analyzing greater numbers of artifacts per site), time was spent developing models based on too little data.

#### 5. DECLINE OF THE 1980s TO 2000s

In a paper on the status of obsidian sourcing in the Near East, Olwen Williams-Thorpe showed that the number of published studies increased steadily from the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s.<sup>31</sup> After about 1985, the number of papers decreased precipitously. She provided a few possible reasons for the drop in obsidian studies in this region:

First, the basic distributions are now established, and it becomes rather less exciting to simply 'fill in the gaps.' Second, archaeological science has become increasingly focused on environmental and biochemical studies in recent years; in such a climate, lithic studies may gain less attention. And third, it is probably simply a reflection of fashion: obsidian research was a bandwagon on which many workers (including the present author) jumped with enthusiasm, but it has now lost its initial momentum.

In addition, there are two other factors. Traditionally obsidian sourcing has been conducted in dedi-

cated laboratories using destructive analytical techniques. Therefore, one of these factors is damage to artifacts. For example, the analyses of Renfrew and colleagues needed ~100 mg to be cut from an artifact and ground into a fine powder. Second, there is the cost of chemical analyses, for which funding must compete with all other excavation needs. Today, portable and non-destructive techniques have largely eliminated these factors.

Table 1 summarizes Mesopotamian obsidian sourcing studies published from 1980 to 2009. This table includes a few corrections<sup>32</sup> but excludes a handful of studies that did not fully publish their findings (table 1).<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the sources of 539 obsidian artifacts were published over those three decades. The table demonstrates that these studies reinforced the findings of Renfrew and colleagues regarding the origins of obsidian at Mesopotamian sites. There were a few unidentified artifacts that might match Caucasus sources, but researchers were simply not searching for such obsidians at Mesopotamian sites during this time.

#### 6. ORIGINS OF TELL MOZAN OBSIDIAN

In 2006, there were ~820 obsidian artifacts in the Tell Mozan lithic assemblage. I was able to export 97 artifacts for sourcing with EMPA, but export approval required the artifacts to be nondiagnostic debitage. My findings are reported in detail elsewhere,<sup>34</sup> so there is only a brief discussion here. The analyses showed that 60% of the artifacts derived from two flows inside the caldera of Nemrut Dağ volcano, which is a level of spatial precision previously not possible.<sup>35</sup> Nearly a quarter of the artifacts originated from the Bingöl A and B sources: 5% and 18%, respectively. I attributed 3% of the sourced artifacts to Meydan Dağ and 6% to the adjacent Tendürek Dağ, but recent work suggests that all should be assigned to Meydan Dağ. New surveys of Meydan Dağ volcano have revealed two obsidian flows associated with the Gürgürebaba Tepe lava dome.<sup>36</sup> My obsidian specimens for the volcano were collected in 1991 by the late Tuncay Ercan, Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration, Turkey. His notes implied that several specimens were collected from Tendürek Dağ, but it now seems that the specimens derived from Meydan Dağ and reflect a slightly different composition. Thus, 9% of the artifacts came from Meydan Dağ, which is Renfrew and colleagues' "Group 3a" obsidian. Another 6% matched Muş, which lies between Nemrut Dağ volcano and the Bingöl sources. Finally, 3% originated

<sup>30</sup> Özdoğan 1994, 425, 427.

<sup>31</sup> Williams-Thorpe 1995.

<sup>32</sup> Francaviglia, Palmieri 1998; Frahm *et al.* 2016.

<sup>33</sup> e.g., Francaviglia 1994; Le Bourdonnec *et al.* 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Frahm, Feinberg 2013a; 2013b.

<sup>35</sup> Frahm 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Robin *et al.* 2016.

in Central Anatolia, specifically the K m rc  source of G ll  Dađ, an unexpected result based on distribution models published since the 1960s. Within the sample (12% of the obsidian), no Caucasus obsidians were identified. Figure 6 shows examples of obsidian tools found at Tell Mozan during the Buccellatis' excavations (fig. 6).

#### 7. SOURCING STUDIES FROM 2010 TO 2018

Table 2 summarizes the results of Mesopotamian obsidian sourcing publications from 2010 to 2018, and figure 7 shows the locations of these sites (table 2; fig. 7). This table does not include sourcing data summarized – but not yet published in their entirety – by the University of Manchester Obsidian Laboratory.<sup>37</sup> Including their unpublished analyses, there were at least 3700 Mesopotamian obsidian artifacts sourced between 2010 and 2018.

The findings from several of these Mesopotamian sites are entirely consistent with the work of Renfrew and colleagues. For example, analyses of 517 artifacts from the site of Qdeir 1 revealed obsidian only from the anticipated sources.<sup>38</sup> At the Epipaleolithic-Neolithic site of K rtik Tepe,<sup>39</sup> an obsidian bladelet originated from Muř, which I recognized at Tell Mozan.<sup>40</sup> This, too, is consistent with the conclusions of Renfrew and colleagues, even though they did not identify it within their corpus of artifacts. In addition, based on its geographic distribution and composition, “Group 3d” obsidian, initially identified by Renfrew and colleagues, almost certainly originates near the Muř source, and it also was identified at a few sites. For example, 261 Neolithic artifacts from Abu Hureyra were sourced at the McMaster Archaeological XRF Laboratory,<sup>41</sup> and all originated from the anticipated sources: G ll  Dađ volcano, Nemrut Dađ volcano, the two Bing l obsidian sources, and “Group 3d” obsidian.

Other sites, however, had occasional obsidian artifacts from Caucasus sources<sup>42</sup> in the KA basin (fig. 8). For example, obsidian from the two Sarıkamıř sources was identified at Tell Hamoukar, Tell Brak, Surezha, and Khirbat al Fakkar.<sup>43</sup> Obsidian from Pokr Arteni in Armenia occurs at Tell Majnuna and, with Pasinler obsidian, at Tell Zeidan.<sup>44</sup> These sources were identified despite fairly small numbers of analyzed artifacts from these sites. Three sites with larger numbers of sourced artifacts are worth considering in detail.

First, at the University of Manchester, Campbell and Healey sourced 882 artifacts from Kenan Tepe using pXRF.<sup>45</sup> The stratigraphic distribution of these obsidian artifacts permitted a diachronic perspective: 509 from the Ubaid Period, 119 from the Late Chalcolithic, 21 from the Early Bronze Age, 89 from the Middle Bronze Age, and 150 from uncertain contexts. Of these, nine matched Caucasus obsidian sources. Specifically, there was one artifact each from Pasinler (a *pi ce esquill e*, Ubaid Period), Sarıkamıř 1 (a blade, Ubaid), Sarıkamıř 2 (a blade, Ubaid), and one of the Syunik sources in Armenia (a blade, MBA). In addition, five artifacts – four from the Ubaid Period, and one without a context – match Pokr Arteni in Armenia. Such findings were only possible due to sourcing a multitude of artifacts: the Syunik-derived blade was their 742<sup>nd</sup> analyzed artifact. It is also worth noting that all but one or two of the Caucasus artifacts date to the Ubaid Period during the first half of the Chalcolithic.

Second, as part of the GeObs Project, Mouralis and colleagues analyzed 388 artifacts from Arslantepe, spanning from the Late Chalcolithic to Early Bronze Age, using pXRF.<sup>46</sup> Of these, 359 were matched to the sources expected from Renfrew and colleagues. The remainder are Caucasus obsidians: 15 from Pasinler (Late Chalcolithic flakes, blades, and bifacial points), 13 from two Sarıkamıř sources (Late Chalcolithic flakes, blade cores, and bifacial points), and one Late Chalcolithic bladelet from Pokr Arteni in western Armenia.

Third, at the University of Minnesota, I analyzed 66 Late Neolithic obsidian artifacts from Domuztepe using EMPA and pXRF.<sup>47</sup> Of these, 20 artifacts matched five sources within the KA basin: Pokr Arteni ( $n=15$ ) in Armenia as well as Sarıkamıř ( $n=2$ ), Pasinler (1), Kars-Arpa ay 1 (1), and Kars-Arpa ay 2 (1) in northeastern Turkey. This sample was non-random, so these proportions cannot be readily extrapolated to the entire assemblage, but statistically significant (yet still imperfect) correlations between visual obsidian classes and geochemical identifications hint that ~8% of the obsidian corpus may have originated from these Caucasus sources. It is also worth noting that these artifacts include ground and polished objects. For example, the two Sarıkamıř artifacts are a bead blank and a ground vessel fragment, and the Kars-Arpa ay 1 artifact is a fragment from a polished obsidian mirror.

<sup>37</sup> Campbell, Healey 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Orange *et al.* 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Carter *et al.* 2013.

<sup>40</sup> Frahm, Feinberg 2013b.

<sup>41</sup> Carter *et al.* 2011.

<sup>42</sup> *sensu* Frahm *et al.* 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Khalidi, Gratuze 2011; Khalidi *et al.* 2016.

<sup>44</sup> Khalidi *et al.* 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Campbell, Healey 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Mouralis *et al.* 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Frahm *et al.* 2016.

## 8. DISCUSSION

As I have documented elsewhere,<sup>48</sup> prior to 2010, all reports of Caucasus obsidians in Mesopotamia were either misidentifications, ambiguous attributions, or secondhand accounts with no supporting data. Today, though, there are several Mesopotamian sites known to have, in small quantities, obsidian acquired from sources within the Kura-Araxes basin. One of the reasons that Caucasus obsidians have been identified at sites like Kenan Tepe and Arslantepe is the large number of sourced artifacts using pXRF. It is possible that the 97 sourced artifacts at Tell Mozan is simply too small a corpus in which to encounter Caucasus obsidian. A larger sample size might have yielded a different outcome. Equally important is that pXRF permits more types of stone tools to be sourced. At Domuztepe, Caucasus obsidian artifacts include ground items, like vessel and mirror fragments, and tools – notably, blades and points – were made from Caucasus obsidians at Kenan Tepe and Arslantepe. In contrast, I was only allowed to export obsidian debris from Tell Mozan for sourcing, likely biasing the results. The ability to source obsidian across lithic types and size classes – from cores down to small debitage<sup>49</sup> – is another advantage offered by pXRF instruments.

It is also noteworthy that the Caucasus obsidians reported at Mesopotamian sites date to the Late Neolithic, Ubaid, and Late Chalcolithic periods. Ceramics from these times have been discovered at Tell Mozan,<sup>50</sup> but I only sourced obsidian artifacts dating to the Early and Middle Bronze Age. At present, it is unknown if the broad distribution of Caucasus obsidians was a phenomenon of the Late Neolithic to Late Chalcolithic or if this simply reflects a wider bias in Mesopotamian obsidian sourcing studies toward earlier periods. Identifying temporal differences will help to elucidate the mechanisms by which these obsidians arrived at sites in Mesopotamia. Was there a network that circulated diverse obsidians, or do Caucasus obsidians reflect the movement of a particular group, such as the KA-producers?

Regarding the Hurrian migration into or autochthonous emergence along the Northern Mesopotamian foothills, it remains unclear if the mechanisms involved pure information (i.e., language, style) moving, migrating people retaining such information within their population, and/or local change without transmission or migration. Identifying the movement of obsidian (or a lack thereof) allows us to concentrate on certain mechanisms, while acknowledging that exchange can occur without cultural intermin-

gling or social change. Nevertheless, “obsidian didn’t fly”<sup>51</sup> – people had to move it. The presence (or lack) of Caucasus obsidians in Northern Mesopotamia is one more piece of evidence to study phenomena that shaped cultural change, such as the appearance of the Hurrians and spread of KA material culture.

## 9. THE FUTURE

As demonstrated by Campbell and Healey for the site of Kenan Tepe and by Mouralis and colleagues for Arslantepe, the future clearly lies in pXRF for obsidian artifact sourcing in Mesopotamia. The rise of pXRF allows us to source much larger numbers of artifacts and the entire range of lithic types and sizes. It is a non-destructive technique, meaning that artifacts are not altered or damaged in any way, and it is fast, requiring less than a minute to measure dozens of elements. Furthermore, pXRF can be conducted at a museum, in a field house, or at a site. Therefore, artifacts can be sourced without concern for the practical, legal, and ethical limitations associated with distant analytical facilities and destructive techniques. Prior to the outbreak of violence in Syria in 2011, my plan was to bring a pXRF instrument to Tell Mozan and analyze the full obsidian assemblage. Until it is safe to return to Syria, obsidian sourcing studies for the region will remain predicated on museum collections.

Having a pXRF instrument onsite will also permit ceramics to be analyzed, providing another medium with which to explore the Hurrian emergence and the spread of KA material culture. I recently analyzed a small sample of Tell Mozan sherds using pXRF, demonstrating the usefulness of such analyses for ceramic studies.<sup>52</sup> Locally manufactured chaff- and calcite-tempered ceramics allowed me to establish the composition of pottery from Tell Mozan and, in turn, identify pottery made elsewhere. One result is an ability to chemically distinguish far-traveled imports and locally/regionally made imitations. For example, two Ninevite V sherds matched the local composition for Tell Mozan, whereas the clay for another sherd originated elsewhere in the Khabur Triangle or its surroundings. In contrast, the sherds of Metallic ware and the so-called “Imitation” Metallic ware exhibited compositions (i.e., non-calcareous clay and crushed basalt rock) that could not have been locally made. Analyses of the KA ceramics unearthed at Tell Mozan could reveal their local and/or distant manufacture.

The Buccellatis’ interest in northern influences on

<sup>48</sup> Frahm *et al.* 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Frahm 2016.

<sup>50</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1995, 389.

<sup>51</sup> Binder 2002, 85.

<sup>52</sup> Frahm 2018.

Tell Mozan<sup>53</sup> and other sites in the Khabur Triangle remains as relevant as ever. Identifying the geological origins of the material culture, from stone tools to pottery, offers the potential to scientifically address such questions with greater resolution and specificity than has been previously possible.

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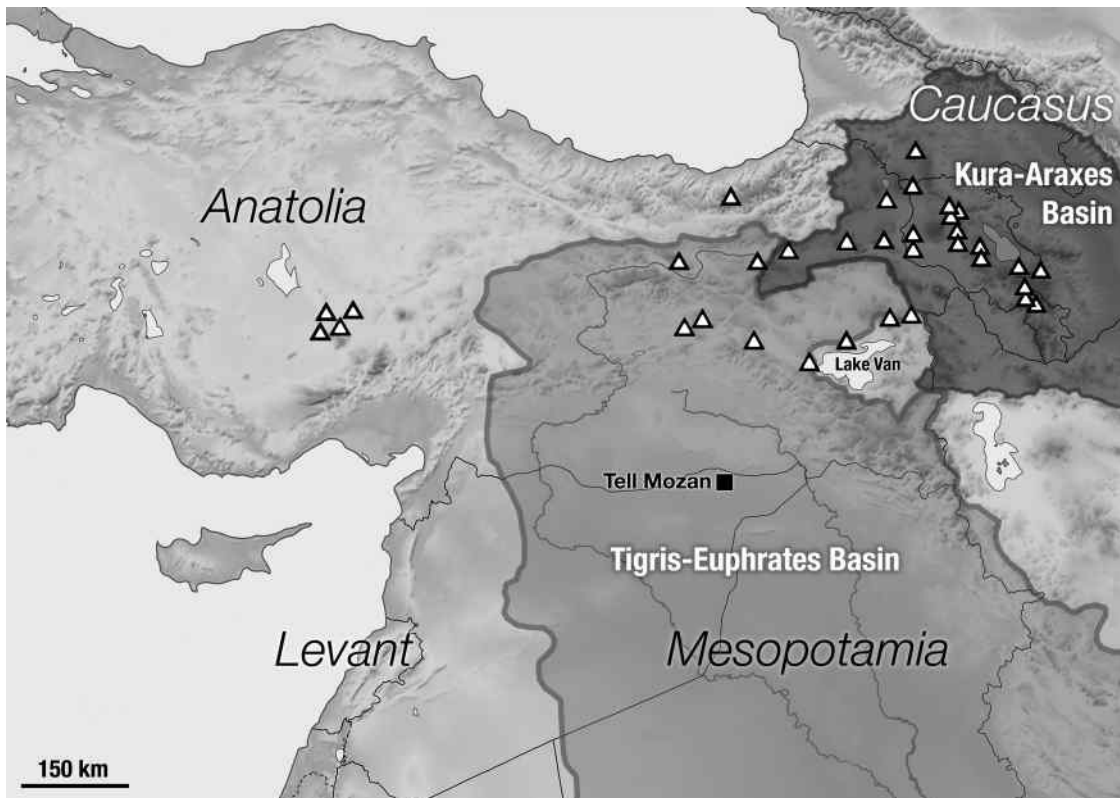


Fig. 1. Regions of the ancient Near East. For the purposes of this chapter, “Mesopotamia” is defined as the Tigris-Euphrates Basin, and the “Caucasus” is defined as the Kura-Araxes Basin. The triangles here and in the following figures are obsidian sources.

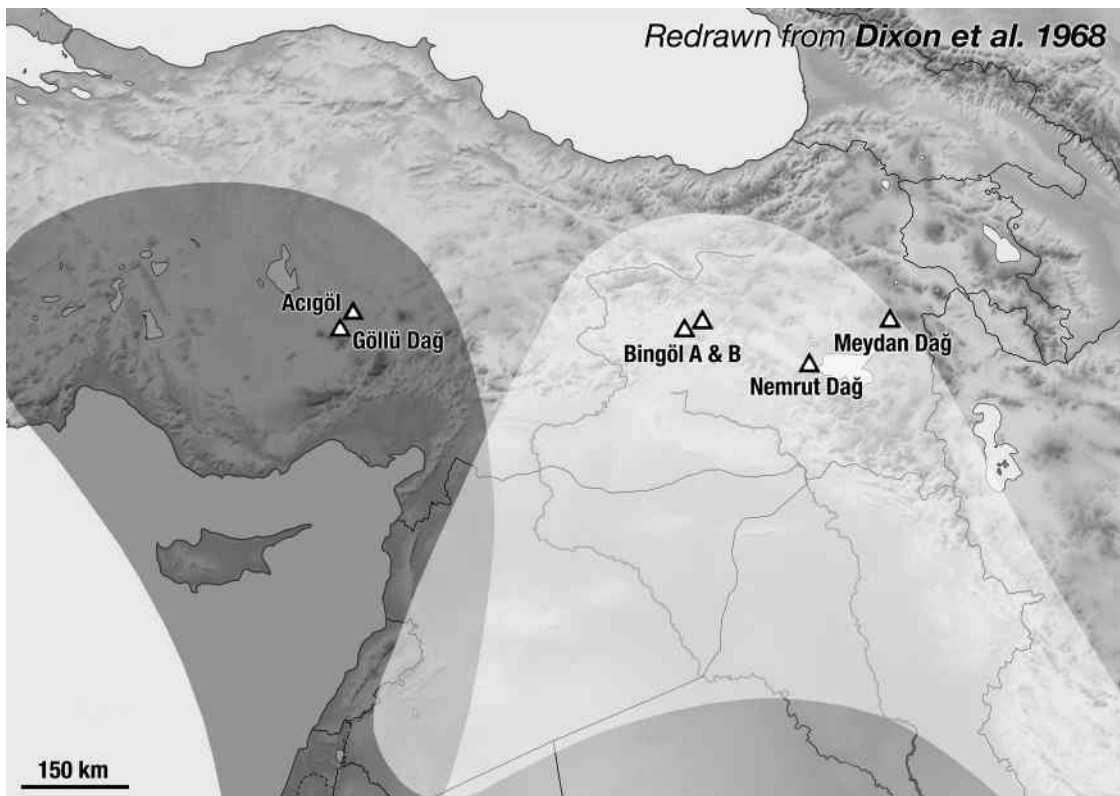


Fig. 2. Reconstruction of Neolithic obsidian distribution patterns from the 1960s studies of Renfrew and colleagues. These shaded areas were conceptualized as “contact zones,” within which obsidian exchanged hands through down-the-line trade.



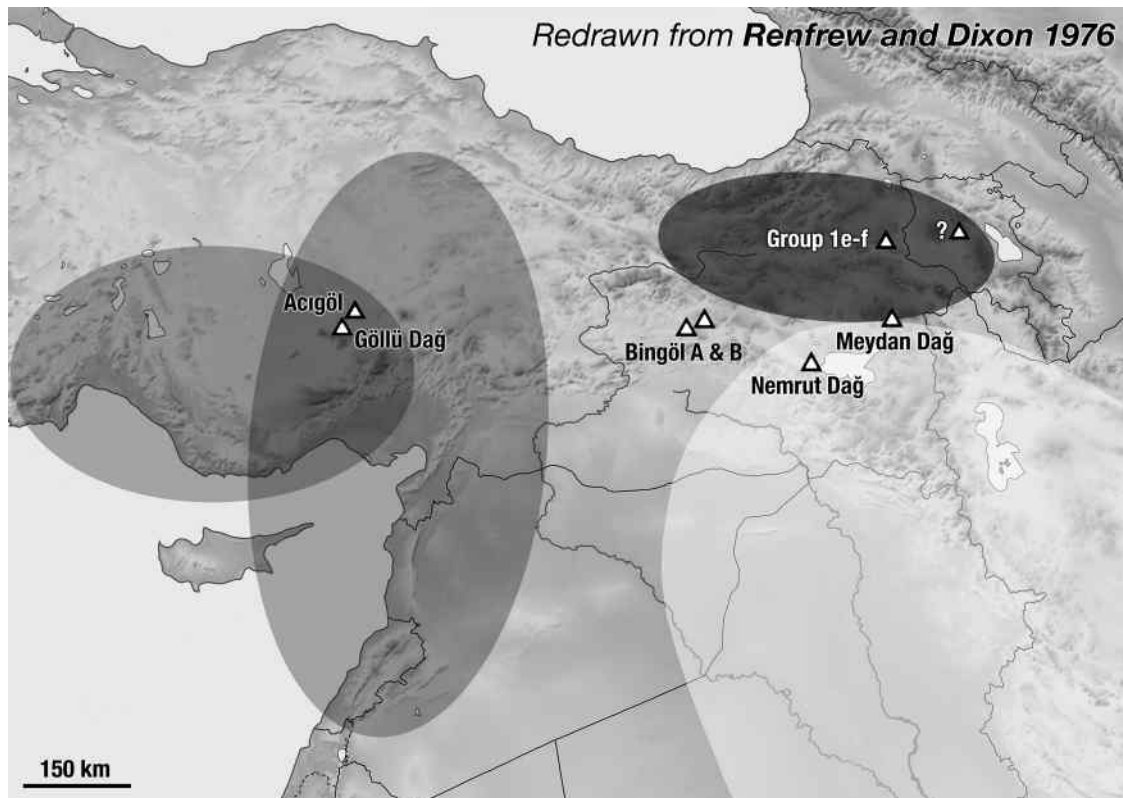


Fig. 3. Obsidian interaction zones from Renfrew and Dixon (1976) for 5000 to 3000 BCE. Their reconstruction adds a zone for obsidian sources in the Kura-Araxes Basin, illustrating that, according to their 1970s data, Caucasus obsidians largely remained within that region.

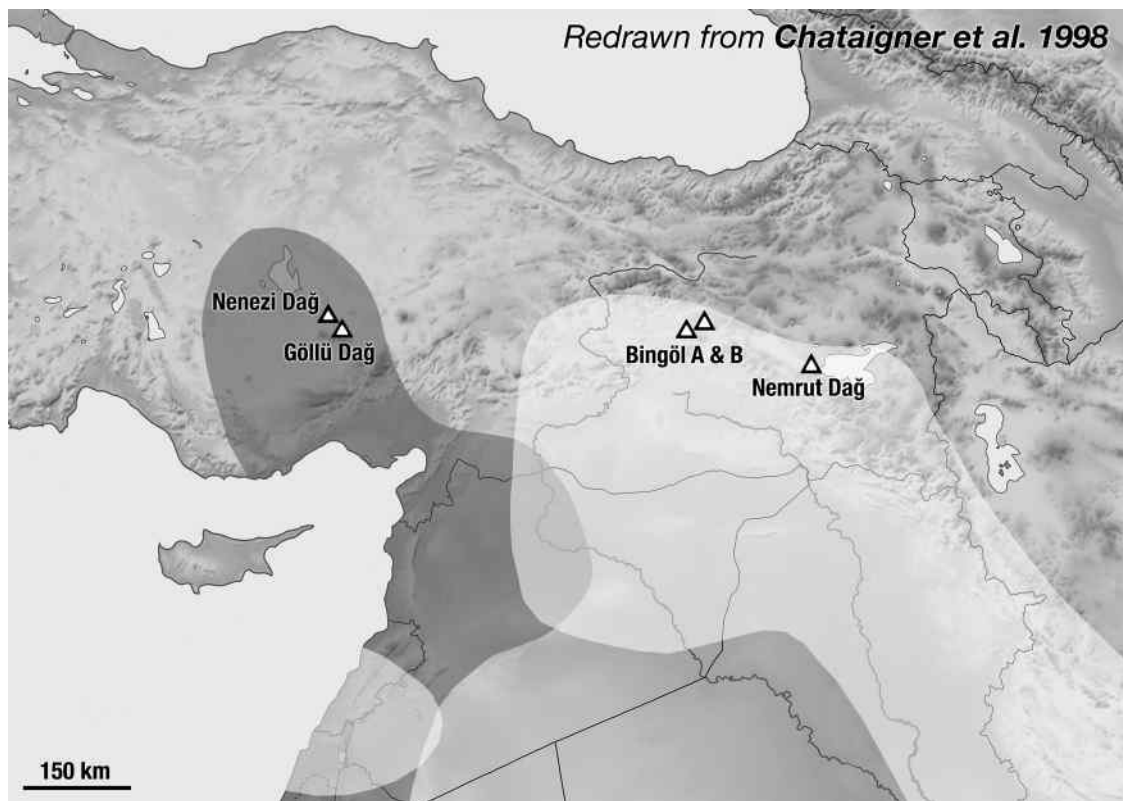


Fig. 4. Obsidian diffusion zones from Chataigner *et al.* (1998).

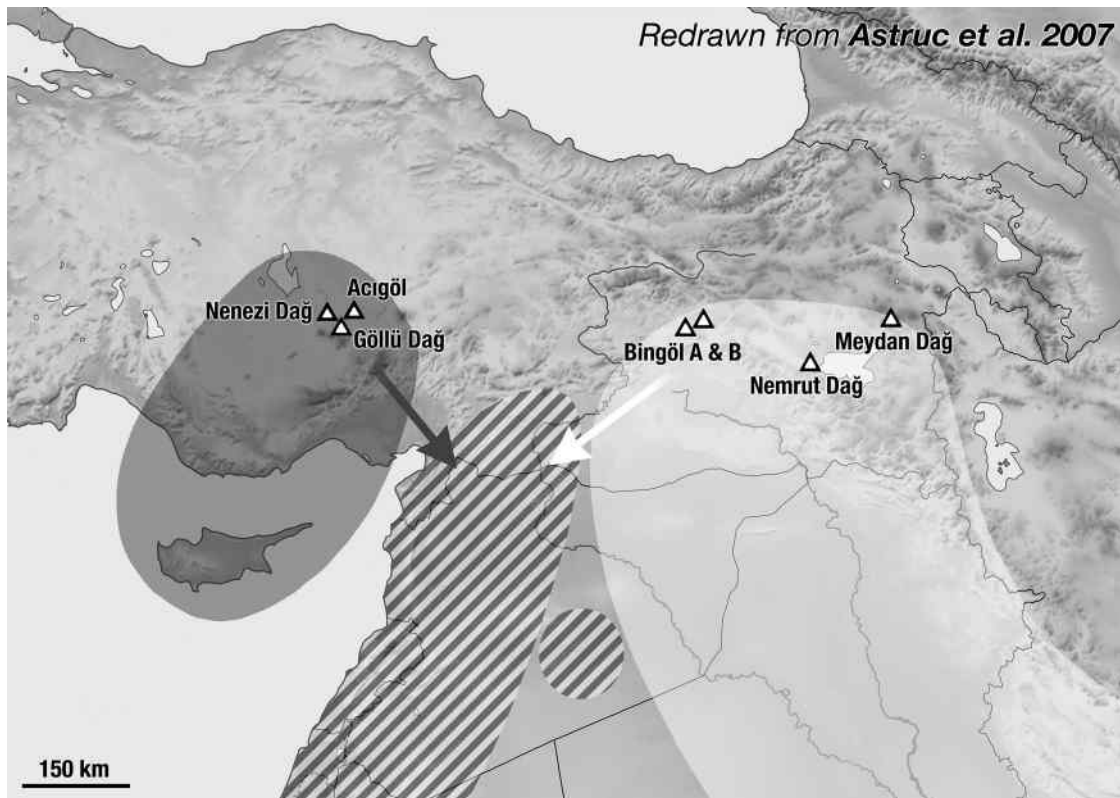


Fig. 5. Obsidian diffusion zones from Astruc *et al.* (2007).

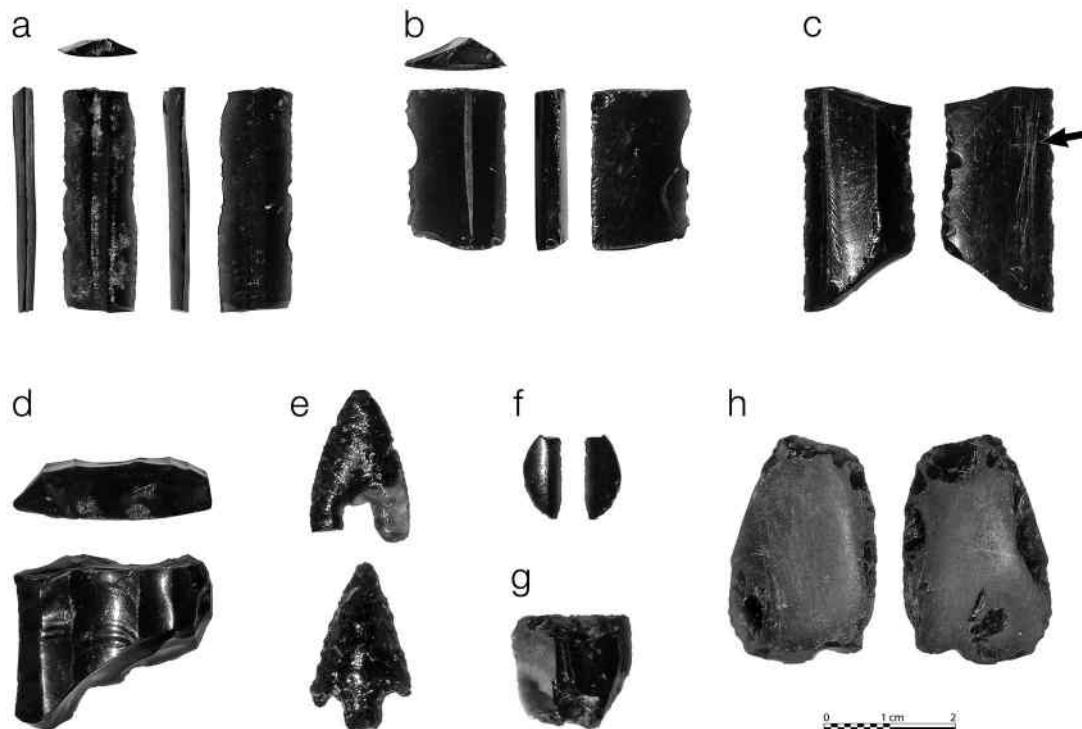


Fig. 6. Obsidian artifacts from Tell Mozan: (a) and (b) prismatic blades, (c) prismatic blade segment with use-wear scratches (arrow), (d) prismatic blade core, (e) winged and tanged points, (f) lunate microlith, (g) transverse arrowhead or endscraper, and (h) tabular scraper.

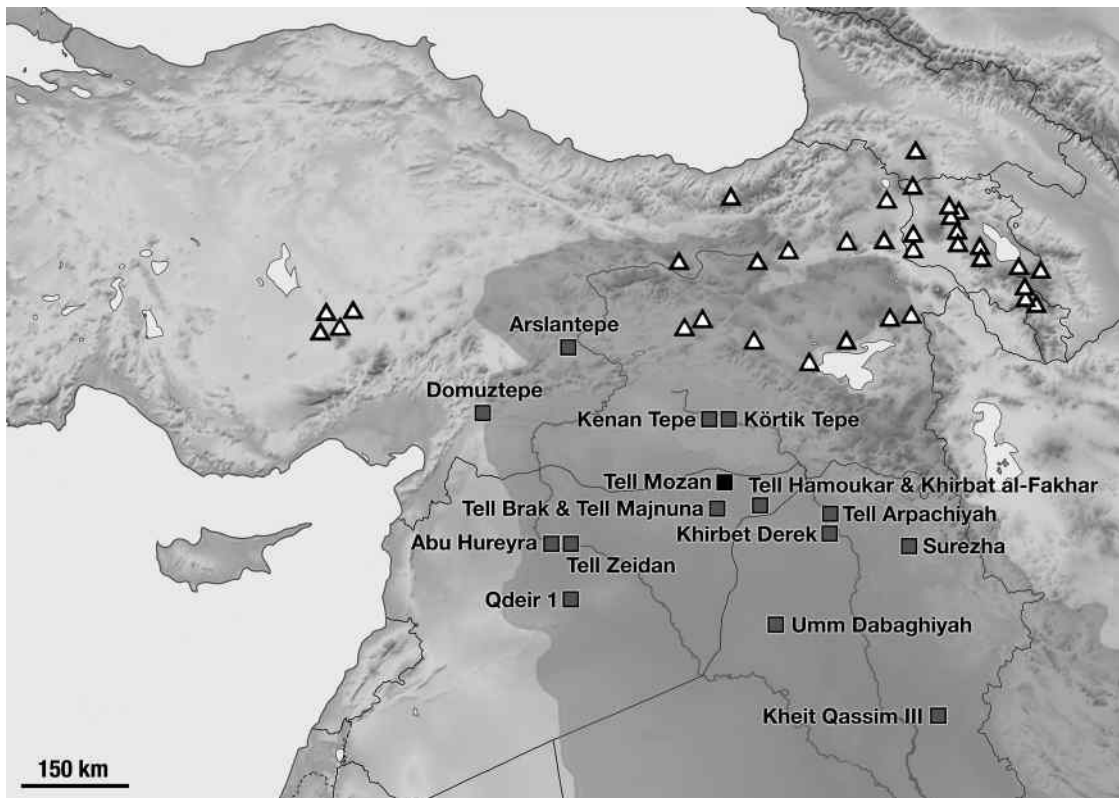


Fig. 7. Mesopotamian sites with obsidian sourcing data published between 2010 and 2018.

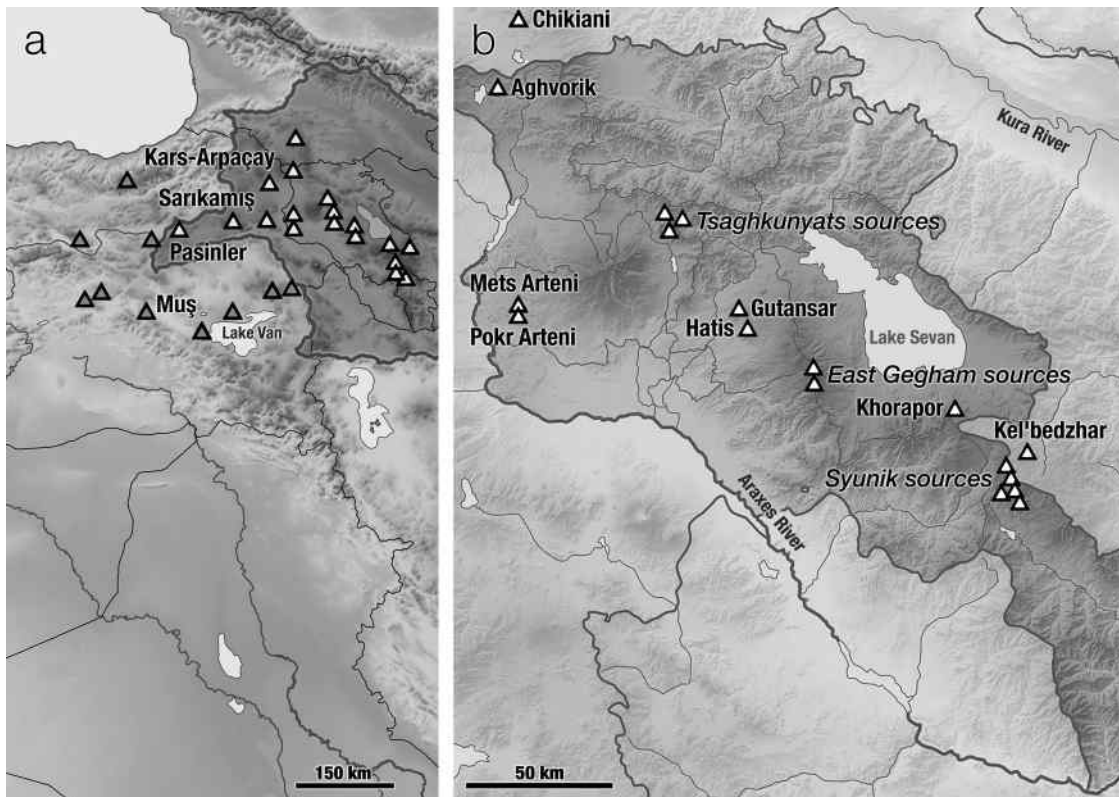


Fig. 8. Obsidian sources in the Kura-Araxes basin (a), which includes all of Armenia (b).

Region	Site Name	Time	n	Eastern Anatolia			Central Anatolia		Unidentified	Technique	Publication
				Nemrut/Bingöl A	Bingöl B	Meydan Dağ	Göllü Dağ	Nenezi Dağ			
Khabur Triangle	Hirbet Tueris	surface	11	11					EDXRF	Hall & Shackley 1994	
	Tell 'Atij	Bronze Age	6	4					2 ICP-AES/MS	Chabot et al. 2001	
	Tell Barri	Neolithic	22	18	2	2			WDXRF	Francaviglia & Palmieri 1998	
	Tell Brak	Chalcolithic	8	4	3	1			LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2009	
		Neolithic	5	4	1				WDXRF	Francaviglia & Palmieri 1998	
	Tell Gudeda	Bronze Age	4	4					ICP-AES/MS	Chabot et al. 2001	
	Tell Halaf	Neolithic	7	2	1	2	1		1 WDXRF	Francaviglia & Palmieri 1998	
	Tell Hamoukar	Chalcolithic	32	27	2	1			2 LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2009	
		Neolithic	16	16					WDXRF	Francaviglia & Palmieri 1998	
		surface	10	9		1			EDXRF	Hall & Shackley 1994	
Tell Kashkashok	Neolithic	8	4	4				NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993		
Tell Mulla Matar	Bronze Age	1	1					NAA	Pernicka et al. 1997		
Middle Euphrates	Cheikh Hassan	Neolithic	2				2		NAA	Pernicka et al. 1997	
	Dja'de	Neolithic	6	1	2		3		NAA	Pernicka et al. 1997	
	Jerf el Ahmar	Neolithic	1				1		NAA	Pernicka et al. 1997	
	Mureybet	Neolithic	10	1	1		8		NAA	Pernicka et al. 1997	
	Tell Halula	Neolithic	20	7	4		6	1	2 NAA	Pernicka et al. 1997	
	Abu Hureyra	Neolithic	100	47	28		24		1 NAA	McDaniels et al. 1980	
	Cheikh Hassan	Neolithic	3	1			1		1 NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
		Neolithic	19	1	4		14		ICP-MS/PIXE	Abbès et al. 2003	
	Jerf el Ahmar	Neolithic	44		23		21		ICP-MS/PIXE	Abbès et al. 2003	
	Mureybet	Neolithic	10	1	1		8		NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
	Neolithic	40				37		3 ICP-MS/PIXE	Abbès et al. 2003		
Upper Euphrates	Cafer Höyük	Neolithic	12	5	7				ICP-AES	Cauvin et al. 1986	
	Hassek Höyük	Chalcolithic	17	7	10				NAA	Pernicka 1992	
		Bronze Age	1	1					ICP-AES	Otte & Besnus 1992	
Balikh Basin	Tell Assouad	Neolithic	5	2	3				NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
El Kowm Oasis	El Kowm	Neolithic	7	3	1		2	1	NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
	Qdeir	Neolithic	25	5	11		9		NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
	Umm el Tlel	Neolithic	8		5				3 NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
Sinjar Valley	Yarim Tepe	Neolithic	62	48	2				12 WDXRF	Francaviglia 1994	
S. Mesopotamia	Tell as-Senkerah	Bronze Age	1	1					NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
	Tell el-'Oueili	Neolithic	5	2					3 NAA/PIGME	Gratuze et al. 1993	
	Uruk	Bronze Age	11	5	6				NAA	Schneider 1990	
			Total	539							
			Mean	16							

Table 1. Results of Mesopotamian obsidian sourcing studies published from 1980 to 2009.

Region	Site Name	Time	n	Eastern Anatolia					Central		Caucasus					Unidentified	Technique	Publication
				Nemrut Dağ	Bingöl A	Bingöl B	Meydan Dağ	Muş	Group 3d	Göllü Dağ	Nenezi Dağ	Pasinler	Sarıkamış	Kars-Apaçay	Pokr Arteni			
Khabur Triangle	Khirbat al-Fakhar	Chalcolithic	33	28	2	1						2					LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
	Tell Brak	Chalcolithic	18	7		6	4					1					LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
		unknown	4		4												pXRF	Forster & Grave 2012
	Tell Hamoukar	Chalcolithic	33	28		2	1					2					LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi & Gratuze 2011
	Tell Majnuna	Chalcolithic	28	10		14	3							1			LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
Tell Mozan	Bronze Age	97	58	5	17	8	6		3							EMPA	Frahm 2010, <i>inter alia</i>	
Upper Euphrates	Arslantepe	Chalco/EBA	388	16	124	203	2		13	15	13	1	1			pXRF	Mouralis et al. 2018	
Middle Euphrates	Abu Hureyra	Neolithic	261	47	26	123			5	60							EDXRF	Carter et al. 2011
	Tell Zeidan	Chalcolithic	35	15	7	7	1		1		3		1				LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
Upper Tigris	Kenan Tepe	Ubaid/Bronze	878	339	122	122	5	2	278		1	2	5	1			pXRF	Campbell & Healey 2016
	Körtik Tepe	EP/Neolithic	120	15	36	68		1									EDXRF	Carter et al. 2013
Middle Tigris	Arpachiyah	Chalcolithic	3	2					1								LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
		Chalcolithic	5			1	4										pXRF	Forster & Grave 2012
	Khirbet Derek	Chalcolithic	1			1											LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
	Surezha	Chalcolithic	25	16		6		1			2						LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
Lower Tigris	Kheit Qassim III	Chalcolithic	5	4		1											LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
N. Iraq Jazira	Umm Dabaghiyah	Chalcolithic	4	2	1	1											LA-ICP-MS	Khalidi et al. 2016
El Kowm Oasis	Qdeir 1	Neolithic	479		102	230			143	4							EDXRF	Orange et al. 2013
Kahramanmaraş	Domuztepe	Late Neolithic	66	3	21	9	3	1	9		1	2	2	15			EMPA	Frahm et al. 2016
			Total	2483														
			Mean	131														

Table 2. Results of Mesopotamian obsidian sourcing studies published from 2010 to 2018.

# ABOUT THE EBLAITE NAMES OF THE “CULTIC JOURNEY”\*

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## *Abstract*

A new attestation of the sumerogram šu mu-nigin in ARET XX 5 offers the opportunity to re-examine the uses and meanings of šu mu-nigin and á-nigin and the interpretation of their glosses. The linguistic analysis of the ARET XX passage suggests that this refers to the two ritual cycles described in ARET XI 2.

Some new attestations of the sumerogram šu mu-nigin appear in some administrative texts published recently in ARET XX. One of these attestations offers the opportunity to re-examine the uses and meanings of the sumerograms šu mu-nigin and á-nigin and to propose a different interpretation of the passage, which is otherwise difficult to interpret:

[01] 1 túg-NI.NI 1 gír mar-tu babbar: kù [(about 8 lines)] / *ma-lik-tum* / in-na-sum / in ud / šu mu-nigin / é / dingir-dingir-dingir / áš-du / da-i-la (ARET XX 5 obv. I 1-17).<sup>1</sup>

### 1. THE SUMEROGRAM ŠU MU-NÍGIN

The Sumerian verb šu nigin (which is written šu nigin), is attested in Mesopotamia in the second half of the third millennium BC with the meaning “to make a round trip”.<sup>2</sup> The sumerogram appears in numerous attestations in the administrative texts of Ebla (it is always written with the verbal prefix mu-), in which it indicates a “cultic journey” or “circumambulation”. It refers, almost exclusively, to the god Hadda-ba‘l.<sup>3</sup> In these texts the sumerogram šu mu-nigin (L.) appears without a preposition where the syntax requires

it, as, for example, in [02] and [03], or preceded by the preposition *in*, as in [04]. More rarely it appears preceded by the preposition *mi-nu*, as in [05]:

[02] (cloths) / PN<sub>1</sub> / lú PN<sub>2</sub> / PN<sub>3</sub> lú PN<sub>4</sub>, PN<sub>5</sub>-PN<sub>11</sub> / šeš-II-ib / L. / <sup>d</sup>A<sub>5</sub>-da-bal<sup>l</sup>(KUL) / Lu-ba-an<sup>ki</sup> “(cloths) for PN<sub>1</sub> son of PN<sub>2</sub>, PN<sub>3</sub> son of PN<sub>4</sub>, PN<sub>5</sub>-PN<sub>11</sub>, acolytes of the cultic journey of Hadda-ba‘l of Luban” (ARET IV 5 obv. I 1-II 3).

[03] 1 u<sub>4</sub> mu-DU / 2 u<sub>4</sub> i-ti-bu / uru<sup>ki</sup> uru<sup>ki</sup> / L. / <sup>d</sup>A<sub>5</sub>-da-bal<sup>l</sup>(KUL) “the first day they arrive, the second day they leave the places of the cultic journey of Hadda-ba‘l” (TM.75.G.2377 rev. I 4-II 2 // TM.75.G.2379 rev. III 3-7).<sup>4</sup>

[04] (cloths) / PN<sub>1</sub> / PN<sub>2</sub> / šu mu-tak<sub>4</sub> / uzu / <sup>d</sup>A<sub>5</sub>-da-bal / Lu-ba-an<sup>ki</sup> / in / L. “(cloths) for PN<sub>1</sub> (and) PN<sub>2</sub> who delivered the meat of Hadda-ba‘l on the occasion of the cultic journey” (ARET I 2 + ARET IV 23 obv. XI 19-rev. I 6).<sup>5</sup>

[05]: (cloth) PN<sub>1</sub> maškim PN<sub>2</sub> šu mu-tak<sub>4</sub> igi-du<sub>8</sub> áš-du PN<sub>3</sub> dumu-nita PN<sub>4</sub> mi-nu L. <sup>d</sup>A<sub>5</sub>-da-bal<sup>l</sup>(KUL) “(cloth) for PN<sub>1</sub>, representative of PN<sub>2</sub>, who delivered the due from PN<sub>3</sub>, son of PN<sub>4</sub>, (coming) for the cultic journey of Hadda-ba‘l” (TM.75.G.10076 obv. III 14-IV 13).<sup>6</sup>

Alongside these uses, where the meaning corresponds to that of the Sumerian texts, in the Royal Rituals and in the chancery texts published in ARET XI, XIII, XVI, XVIII, the sumerogram šu mu-nigin appears in other contexts that do not indicate a close correspondence with the meaning attested in the Sumerian texts. In the editions mentioned above the meaning “to return”, “return” has been proposed. Since a different meaning has recently been proposed for some of these attestations, it seems appropriate to review the 14 relevant passages:

[06] *wa* / L. / é dingir-dingir-dingir / má-na-ga-

\* This article is dedicated to Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati in memory of a long friendship. - I would like to thank A. Catagnoti with whom I discussed some of the passages in this article. Apart from the usual abbreviations, the following are to be noted: ARET = Archivi Reali di Ebla. Testi, Roma 1981-2010 and Wiesbaden 2018; MEE = Materiali epigrafici di Ebla, Napoli 1979-2001; A, B, C, D, A2 = sources of the Eblaite bilingual lexical list (Archi 1986, 83); a, b, c, etc. = extracts of the Eblaite bilingual lexical list (MEE 4). For the interpretation of the quoted texts, see the corresponding edition.

<sup>1</sup> The passage is interpreted by the editor as follows: “Cloth (1), 1 m. dagger (decorated with) silver [...] the queen has given on the occasion of the procession of the temple(s) of the gods concerning the recitation”.

<sup>2</sup> ePSD, s.v. šu niġin.

<sup>3</sup> For attestations, see Archi 2002b, 26-29. The interpretation /Hadda-ba‘l/ (<sup>d</sup>A<sub>5</sub>-da-BAL) of the spelling of the divine name was proposed as a working hypothesis in Fronzaroli 1997, 288-289; for some objections, see Archi 2015, 620.

<sup>4</sup> The two parallel texts were published in Archi 1979, 107-108, figs. 33-34; for the interpretation, see Catagnoti 2015, 137; also Archi 2015, 616.

<sup>5</sup> According to the joint proposed in Bonechi 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Archi 2002a, 17.

*tim* / nídba / SA.ZA<sub>x</sub><sup>ki</sup> / kú “And they return to the temple of the gods to eat the *doelings* of the Palace offer” (ARET XI 3 rev. VI 6-12 // *wa* L. [...], 2 rev. XVIII 15-16).

[07] *wa* / L. / PN / ká / 'Á-ma<sup>ki</sup> / uru<sup>ki</sup> / uru<sup>ki</sup> / 10 bar<sub>6</sub>:kù / i-na-sum ... “And (when) PN returns to the Gate of Hama each village will give (!) 10 silver (shekels)” (ARET XIII 9 obv. VIII 15-IX 6).

[08] *ap* / PN / L. / uru<sup>ki</sup> / maḥ / 5 bar<sub>6</sub>:kù / in-na-sum “Whereas (when) PN returns, a large village will give 5 silver (shekels)” (ARET XIII 9 obv. IX 12-18).<sup>7</sup>

[09] *en-ma* / uru<sup>ki</sup>-uru<sup>ki</sup> / 'Áma<sup>ki</sup> / lu-ma-du-ma / L. / PN<sub>1</sub> / wa / PN<sub>2</sub> “So (say) the villages of Hama: May they know the return of PN<sub>1</sub> and PN<sub>2</sub>” (ARET XIII 9 rev. IV 15-22).

[10] *ap* / ad-da-ba-al<sub>6</sub>-ma / in / zé / áš-du-nu / Ar-mi<sup>ki</sup> / SA.ZA<sub>x</sub><sup>ki</sup> / L. “And therefore I have provided for the maintenance, with an order on our part, for (the men of) Armi (when) they will return to the Palace” (ARET XVI 4 obv. II 10-III 1).

[11] *su-ma* / uru<sup>ki</sup> / L. / maškim-e-gi<sub>4</sub> / an-na / si-la-ga / wa / du-du / a / na-'a<sub>5</sub>-rí / a / wa-ki-lu-na / è-ma / kam<sub>4</sub>-mu / Du-na<sup>ki</sup>; “If I send your consignment for the return to the city, either my servant or our two superintendents should go to let the *families* of Duna out” (ARET XVI 4 obv. V 8-VI 5).

[12] *i-na ma-na* / 1 li-im Ar-mi<sup>ki</sup> / SA.ZA<sub>x</sub><sup>ki</sup> / L. / in / iti ḥu-lu-mu “Of course !, as regards the provisions of the 1000 (men) of Armi who return to the Palace the month X” (ARET XVI 10 obv. I 5-II 1).

[13] *su-ma* / Ar-mi<sup>ki</sup> / uš-da-ki-du / L. / uru<sup>ki</sup> / iti <sup>d</sup>A-dam-ma / kalam-tim<sup>ki</sup> / kalam-tim<sup>ki</sup> / i-ti “If ( the men of) Armi will have brought (the barley) on (their) return to the city, (it) will arrive for (our) countries for the month I” (ARET XVI 10 obv. III 9-IV 1).

[14] *ap* / u<sub>9</sub>-mu / a-ti-gu / L. / uru<sup>ki</sup> / še / mu-túm / lú PN / níg-gú-DU “In the past on (their) return to the city they poured the barley PN had determined” (ARET XVI 10 obv. IV 2-10).

[15] *wa* / i-na-sum / na-se<sub>11</sub> na-se<sub>11</sub> / ma-ti-iš / ba il-da-zu / u<sub>9</sub>-mu / kam<sub>4</sub>-mu / uru<sup>ki</sup> / L. “And I will give it to the people who shouted a lot here on the day when the *families* returned to the city” (ARET XVI 10 obv. V 1-9).

[16] ŠÈ / L. / SA.ZA<sub>x</sub><sup>ki</sup> / dam / PN / in / Û-gú-na-am<sup>ki</sup> / al<sub>6</sub>-tuš / ... / wa / e-gi:maškim / PN / è / dam-sù “To allow a woman of PN who resided in Ugunam to return to the Palace... PN sent (him) to let his woman out” (ARET XVI 24 obv. V 3-rev. II 5).

[17] *wa* / ar-ḥi-iš / maškim-e-gi<sub>4</sub> / PN / kam<sub>4</sub>-mu / L. / [...] -tum “And I quickly sent PN to make the *families* return [GN]” (ARET XVIII 13 obv. IV 4-V 1).

[18] *ap* / kam<sub>4</sub>-mu / L. / a / I-LUM<sup>ki</sup> / si-in A-bar<sup>ki</sup> / igi-gar / na-se<sub>11</sub> na-se<sub>11</sub> / è / in / uru<sup>ki</sup> “And then, (when) the *families* really returned to Ilum (on their way) to Abar to inspect (the waters), you brought out (provisions) for the people (who were) in the city” (ARET XVIII 17 rev. I 3-II 5).

[19] *wa* / al<sub>6</sub>-gál / L. / uru<sup>ki</sup> “And will it be available on (their) return to the city?” (ARET XVIII 19 obv. III 3- 6).

The same sumerogram also appears in similar contexts in some administrative texts such as, for example, in the following passages:<sup>8</sup>

[20] 1 mi-at 50 gú-bar za-[la-tu]m / k[ú] / i-ti / en / lú L. / uru<sup>ki</sup> “150 g. of semolina, consumption for the arrival of the king who returns to the city” (ARET IX 27 obv. V 7-VI 5).

[21] iti / nídba / <sup>d</sup>Ga-mi-iš / uru<sup>ki</sup> / L. / wa / al<sub>6</sub>-tuš / i[ti] B[AD-li] “month IV return to town and stay in month V” ( ARET IX 104 obv. III 4-IV 1).

[22] ... / lú-kar Ma-rí<sup>ki</sup> / lú L. / SA.ZA<sub>x</sub><sup>ki</sup> “... the trader of Mari who has returned to the Palace” (ARET IV 12 obv. 10-12).

In nine attestations ([06], [07], [08], [10], [12], [15], [18], [20], [22]) the sumerogram corresponds to forms of a Semitic verb of the theme 0/1, while in two other attestations it corresponds to forms of the themes 0/2 ([16], [17]). In all these passages the context requires the meaning “to return (from a journey, a place)”. In all these attestations the verb is constructed with the accusative (in [18], *a* is probably to be interpreted as the asseverative particle /la/ “really”). In six attestations ([09], [11], [13], [14], [19], [21]) the sumerogram probably corresponds to nominal forms that require the meaning “return (from a trip)”, all of which are constructed without a preposition. In particular, in passage [21] the sumerogram corresponds to the subject and in [09] it corresponds to the direct object, whereas in all the other passages it corresponds to circumstantial complements in the accusative.

Only the oldest of the four sources of the bilingual lexical list provides a gloss for the sumerogram šu mu-nigin (*da*-LUM, D). In the texts of the Archives the sign LUM can have different uses, among them /lum/ and /rum/, while the sign DA can correspond to three different Semitic consonants, /d/, /t/, /t̃/. The spelling *da*-LUM can then be traced to three different Semitic roots that indicate movement: \**dwl*, \**dwr*, \**twr*. The least probable identification seems to be the one with the root \**dwl*, which is continued in Akkadian in the verb *dâlum*. The meaning of the Akkadian verb, “to wander around aimlessly”, does not seem at all adequate to indicate well-defined cultic itineraries.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Archi 2015, 616, n. 1, proposes the meaning “to travel (to)” for šu mu-nigin in the passages [07], [08].

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Archi 2002b, 27, n. 18.

<sup>9</sup> AHw, I, 154-155: “umhergehen, herumlaufen”; CAD, D, 58-

Therefore, the two remaining possibilities are the verbs derived from \**dwr* and \**twr*. Choosing *da-lum* as a gloss of *šu mu nigin* “to make a round trip” the scribe of D appears to have wanted to indicate a Semitic form that referred primarily to a circular movement. Since there seems to be no trace of the meaning “to move in a circle” for the verbs that continue \**twr*, either in Akkadian or in the other Semitic languages, the most economic hypothesis is perhaps to suppose that the Eblaite language had a verb \**dawārum* that had developed, besides the meaning “to turn, to move in a circle”, widely attested in the western and southern Semitic languages, the additional meaning “to return”, as occurs in a modern language of the South Arabian area (Jibbāli) and in the Ethiopian area in Tigre.<sup>10</sup> The form indicated by the spelling of the gloss can be interpreted as a noun, /*dawr-u(m)*/ “circular movement”.<sup>11</sup> In the eastern area, forms that are attributable to \**dwr* are only reported in Sargonic Akkadian.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. THE SUMEROGRAM Á-NÍGIN

In some administrative contexts that are quite similar to those related to the Hadda-ba<sup>1</sup> cult mentioned above ([02], [03], [04], [05]) the sumerogram á-nigin (**L**<sub>2</sub>) is found instead of *šu mu-nigin*. This sumerogram also appears without a preposition where the syntax requires it, as in [23], or preceded by the preposition *in*, as in [24]:

[23] ...] / PN<sub>1</sub>-PN<sub>6</sub> / šeš-II-ib / **L**<sub>2</sub> / <sup>d</sup>A<sub>5</sub>-*da-bal'*(KUL) / *Lu-ba-an*<sup>ki</sup> “...] PN<sub>1</sub>-PN<sub>6</sub> acolytes of the **L**<sub>2</sub> of Hadda-ba<sup>1</sup> of Luban” (ARET III 457 obv. III 1-10).

[24] (cloth) / PN<sub>1</sub> / NÍG-mul(-an) / PN<sub>2</sub> / *in* / **L**<sub>2</sub> / <sup>d</sup>A<sub>5</sub>-*da-bal'*(KUL) / *Lu-ba-an*<sup>ki</sup> / šeš-II-ib “(Cloth) for PN<sub>1</sub> which brought the news that PN<sub>2</sub> was acolyte on the occasion of the **L**<sub>2</sub> of Hadda-ba<sup>1</sup> of Luban” (ARET IV 5 rev. II 2-10).

For this sumerogram, which apparently is not attested outside the texts of the Archives, a similar meaning to that of *šu mu-nigin*, has been supposed,<sup>13</sup> although it has not been identified so far. An updated examination of the glosses now allows us to propose an interpretation.

In the preliminary edition of Pettinato’s bilingual lexical list, the sumerogram and gloss of VE 546 appeared on the edge of a gap, without it being possible to

recognize á-LAGAB.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore understandable that the spelling a-nigin and its glosses (*du-lum*, C, D, *da-wa-lum*, b) were thought to belong to the same semantic field of *šu mu-nigin*, despite the fact that in the administrative texts the á-nigin spelling is always used. Krebernik traced the glosses of a-nigin back to the ar. *dāra* “sich im Kreis bewegen”.<sup>15</sup> Civil interpreted the glosses of a-nigin as /*turru*/ “to return” and was followed by Conti who also referred the gloss of *šu mu-nigin* to \**twr*.<sup>16</sup> Sallaberger traced the glosses of *šu mu-nigin* and a'(Á)-nigin back to the akk. *dālum*.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, however, the documentation grew. Picchioni identified the sumerogram á-LAGAB in a fragment of the monolingual list and this allowed Conti to report its existence in source D of the bilingual list.<sup>18</sup> Finally Archi, who was studying the text of source C, was able to return the gloss of VE 546.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps, partly due to the scarce weight Archi placed on this important discovery, which was confined without any comment to a concise footnote, the existence of an á-nigin entry in the bilingual lexical list seems to have been completely ignored<sup>20</sup> in subsequent works. In reality, the existence of the spelling á-nigin in the bilingual list, which is identical to that of the administrative texts, makes one exclude the interpretation of a-nigin as the equivalent of á-nigin (despite the apparent resemblance of the glosses of a-nigin with the gloss of *šu mu-nigin* that is preserved in D), which had been considered certain in previous studies.<sup>21</sup>

		C	D	b
VE 509	<i>šu mu-nigin</i>	-	<i>da-lum</i>	-
VE 546	á-nigin	NI- <sup>r</sup> a <sup>2</sup> -[ <i>d</i> ]u	[x-x]- <i>du</i>	-
VE 629	a-nigin	<i>du-lum</i>	<i>du-lum</i>	<i>da-wa-lum</i>

The sumerogram á-nigin, which apparently is not attested outside the texts of the Archives, could be a parallel formation to *šu mu-nigin*, created at Ebla or originated from an unidentifiable scribal school.<sup>22</sup> The á- “arm” element suggests that the sumerogram refers to the lifting and transport of the cult statue. This hypothesis is coherent with the gloss <sup>r</sup>a<sub>5</sub>-<sup>r</sup>a<sup>2</sup>-[*d*]u of VE 546 which can be interpreted as /<sup>r</sup>alāy-t-u(m) / “going up”.<sup>23</sup>

59: “to wander around aimlessly, to wander about in despair, to prowl”; CDA, 54: “to move, roam around”.

<sup>10</sup> Johnstone 1981, 42-43, cf. also Johnstone 1987, 76 (mehrī “to go and come back, come”); Littmann, Höfner 1962, 536.

<sup>11</sup> The form of the infinitive would probably have been indicated by the spelling \**da-wa-lum* (cf. *a-wa-um* /*lawāyūm*/ “to surround, wrap”, TM.75.G.1623 obv. IV 2, Fronzaroli 1998, 228).

<sup>12</sup> AHw, III, 1551: “schützend umgeben”; CDA, 61: “to surround, enfold”; Hasselbach 2005, 59-60, 268: “to go around”.

<sup>13</sup> Archi, 2002b, 29; Tonietti 2016, 81.

<sup>14</sup> MEE 4, 261.

<sup>15</sup> Krebernik 1983, 23, n. 78.

<sup>16</sup> Civil 1984, 82; Conti 1990, 173.

<sup>17</sup> Sallaberger 2003, 621, n. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Picchioni 1987, 160-161; Conti 1990, 154.

<sup>19</sup> Archi 2002b, 29, n. 21.

<sup>20</sup> As in Tonietti 2016, 80, n. 84, which quotes without comment the interpretation of a-nigin given by Sallaberger 2003, 621, n. 23.

<sup>21</sup> The glosses of a-nigin will probably refer to the sem. \**dahlw-* (var. \**dawl-*) “a bucket”, as indicated in PSD, A. I, 126.

<sup>22</sup> For the influence of other scribal schools in the Eblaite documents, see Fronzaroli 2014.

<sup>23</sup> For the use of <sup>r</sup>a<sub>5</sub> for /<sup>r</sup>a /, see Catagnoti 2012, 56.

### 3. THE PHONETIC SPELLING *DA-I-LA*

The administrative record, published in ARET XX 5 and quoted above in [01], deserves some comment. It contained the indication of the goods assigned, now largely in lacuna, followed by a short juxtaposed relative proposition. It will be noted that the sumerographic spelling *in-na-sum* is usually used to indicate a verbal form of durative. The corresponding Eblaite form will therefore refer to an action of the queen which takes place in the circumstance indicated by the proposition that follows, introduced by the subordinating particle *in u<sub>4</sub>* “when”: “(that) the queen gives when ...”.

The interpretation of this proposition depends on the meaning of the sumerogram *šu mu-nigin*. The editor preferred the meaning “cultic journey” (“procession”). However, the ablative function of the preposition *áš-du* “from” suggests that the sumerogram in this case has the meaning of “to return from a journey, a place”, which is customary in chancery texts.<sup>24</sup> The corresponding Eblaite verb is built with the accusative (*in u<sub>4</sub> / šu mu-nigin / é / dingir-dingir-dingir* “when she returns to the temple of the gods”), as in the chancery texts ([06], [07 ], [10], [12], [15], [18]) and the administrative texts ([20], [22]). In particular, passage [06] will be compared, where the same formula (*šu mu-nigin / é dingir-dingir-dingir*) refers to the return of the king and queen from the cultic journey to the mausoleum of NENAš.

In this context the phonetic spelling *da-i-la*, preceded by the preposition *áš-du* “from”, appears therefore to indicate the place or ceremony from which the queen is returning. The editor has proposed “*recitation*” dubitatively, which is justified in the glossary as “from \**t*’l?”; one derivative of this root is *tēltum*, which means “saying, proverb” in Akkadian, but does not seem to have been employed in the cult. Alternatively, as a working hypothesis, one can propose that the spelling represents a derivative of \**dwr*, with the meaning of “cultic journey”. If this hypothesis is correct, the scribe would have resorted to the phonetic spelling to avoid repeating the sumerogram which had already been used above with a different meaning.

The attested spelling can be interpreted as a form /dayīr-/ from \**dawīr*- with the assimilation of /w/ to the following vowel. The names of scheme *1a2ī3* are well attested in Akkadian as suppletive noun formations of the infinitive 0/1.<sup>25</sup>

The ending *-a* in a name that is dependent on a preposition must necessarily be interpreted as the ending of the dual oblique, /-ay(n)/, which is to be

compared with similar spellings as, for example, *i-da* for /yid-ay(n) / “the two hands” (VE 531, a; 626, D).

The text of ARET XX 5 could therefore be interpreted as follows:

[25] 1 túg-NI.NI 1 gír mar-tu bar<sub>6</sub>:kù [...] / *ma-lik-tum* / *in-na-sum* / *in u<sub>4</sub>* / *šu mu-nigin / é dingir-dingir-dingir / áš-du / da-i-la* “1 cloth, 1 dagger-m. (decorated with) silver [...] (that) the queen gives when she returns to the temple of the gods (coming) from the two cultic journeys”.

The reference to the return to the temple of the gods suggests the possibility that this administrative record refers to the more recent Royal Ritual (ARET XI 2).<sup>26</sup> In fact, the events described in ARET XI 2 start in the first week of month V and continue throughout the following month, as shown in the following diagram.<sup>27</sup>

month V (iti <i>ha-li-it<sub>x</sub></i> )		
	journey to NENAš (4 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> day of the 1 <sup>st</sup> week)	§§ 20-63
	cultic activities in the Mausoleum (2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> week)	§§ 64-98
month VI (iti <i>i-rí-sá</i> )		
	journey to the Palace	(§§ 99-104
	cultic activities in the temple of KUrA (7 and 7 days)	§§ 105-115
	return to the temple of the gods	§§ 116-120

The date of the administrative text at month VI (iti *i-rí-sá*, ARET XX rev. XV 17) is therefore perfectly compatible with the description of ARET XI 2, as well as with the attribution to the period of minister Yibriyum proposed by the editor.<sup>28</sup> The two ritual cycles at the Mausoleum of NENAš and at the temple of KUrA are carefully indicated by the scribe of the administrative text in the form of the dual of *da-i-la*.

<sup>24</sup> For a thorough examination of the uses of the preposition *áš-du*, see Tonietti 2013, 61-65.

<sup>25</sup> Soden 1995 74, § 55 i.

<sup>26</sup> A dating in a text that registers, among other things, the delivery of precious goods mentioned in ARET XI 2 also refers to the same Royal Ritual (*ma-lik-tum* / *i-na-sum* / *in u<sub>4</sub>* / *šu mu-nigin / é / dingir-dingir-dingir*, MEE 7, 34 rev. XVI 9-14).

<sup>27</sup> The paragraphs indicated refer to the edition of ARET XI 2. For the names of the four weeks of the month, see Catagnoti 2019.

<sup>28</sup> ARET XX, 26.



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## LA PATRIA PROTOINDEUROPEA E LE MIGRAZIONI INDEUROPEE

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### *Abstract*

The past decades were characterized by a resumption of the researches about the *Urheimat*, the original homeland of Indoeuropeans.

Considering different semantic groups and loanwords, this paper deals with the problems of migrations of the Proto-Indoeuropeans from Anatolia.

Gli scorsi decenni sono stati contrassegnati, negli studi indeuropeistici, da una rinascita delle ricerche intorno al problema della sede originaria degli Indoeuropei, la cosiddetta “Protopatria” (*Urheimat*), che è quasi altrettanto antico, quanto la linguistica indeuropea stessa.

Una revisione e riformulazione della struttura di base del Protoindeuropeo con Viacheslav V. Ivanov<sup>†</sup> ed una ricostruzione formale-semantica del vocabolario Indoeuropeo Comune secondo i nuovi modelli fonologici necessitano, come conseguenza, di gettare uno sguardo nuovo ai problemi areali et etno-culturali, che riguardano la distribuzione degli antichi dialetti indeuropei e l’originaria localizzazione dei parlanti del Protoindeuropeo<sup>\*</sup>...

L’analisi semantica del vocabolario ricostruito e le sue implicazioni per l’ambiente ecologico e la cultura materiale e spirituale delle tribù **parlanti antichi dialetti** indeuropei pone il centro di diffusione di questi dialetti e, conseguentemente, la patria protoindeuropea in qualche punto della vasta area, che si estende dai Balcani in Occidente alla Mesopotamia Settentrionale e l’altipiano iranico in Oriente, al più tardi nel V-IV millennio avanti Cristo.

L’“ipotesi asiatica” della sede originaria dei Protoindeuropei cambia totalmente le opinioni tradizionali sul percorso delle loro migrazioni preistoriche verso i territori del loro insediamento storico nell’“Antica Europa” e altrove nel Continente Eurasiatico.

Il primo attributo abbastanza certo della Madrepatria del Protoindeuropeo è il suo paesaggio montuoso.

I dati sui nomi indeuropei di “alberi” e “piante”, conformi ad una caratterizzazione montuosa della patria d’origine dell’Indeuropeo, ubicano quest’ultima

nelle regioni relativamente più meridionali dell’area mediterranea in senso lato, comprendente i Balcani e la parte settentrionale del Vicino Oriente (Asia Minore, le regioni montuose dell’Alta Mesopotamia e le aree circconvicine).

La conclusione che la madrepatria non possa collocarsi nell’Europa centro-orientale (salvo la parte sudorientale), tratta dalle risultanze geomorfologiche ed ecoambientali, concorda con i dati culturali e storici su animali domestici e piante coltivabili presumibilmente noti agli antichi Indoeuropei. La terminologia agraria costituisce una prova attendibile a suffragio della possibile ubicazione del gruppo indeuropeo nelle regioni contraddistinte (nel quarto millennio avanti Cristo e anteriormente) da un’agricoltura assai progredita, ossia nei territori meridionali estesi dai Balcani fino all’Iran. La presenza di una terminologia alquanto sviluppata per l’agricoltura e la viticoltura esclude regioni europee più settentrionali.

L’indicatore particolarmente prezioso per stabilire il luogo, ove vissero in origine gli antichi Indoeuropei, ed individuare quindi la terra madre dell’Indeuropeo è la terminologia protoindeuropea per i mezzi di trasporto – nomi di “veicoli a ruote”, di metalli (“bronzo”) indispensabili per fornire di ruote i veicoli costruiti con il legno duro dei boschi montani, e la forza di trazione (“cavalli”) – che si devono presupporre esistenti all’epoca del Protoindeuropeo, quindi nel quarto millennio avanti Cristo.

La ricostruzione del lessico protoindeuropeo per i vari gruppi semantici denotanti fauna, flora, economia e cultura materiale consente di delineare con una certa approssimazione l’area geografica, all’interno della quale avrebbe potuto trovarsi la patria originaria Indoeuropea e da cui dovrebbe aver avuto inizio la migrazione delle tribù Indeuropee, che le portò a espandersi, in tempi storici, attraverso vasti territori dell’Eurasia.

La più antica comunità a differenziarsi dal Protoindeuropeo e a proseguire un’esistenza indipen-

<sup>\*</sup> Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans. A Reconstruction and Historical Analysis of a Proto-Language and a Proto-Culture (in two parts) by Thomas V. Gamkrelidze & Vjačeslav V. Ivanov, with a preface by Roman Jakobson†. English version by Johanna Nichols. Edited by Werner Winter. Mouton de Gruyter. Berlin • New York 1995

dente, isolata rispetto alle successive, deve ritenersi quella del gruppo dei dialetti anatolici, come risulta chiaro dallo schema di suddivisione dei dialetti dal Protoindeuropeo originario (al più tardi alla fine del terzo millennio a.C.).

L'area linguistica del Protoindeuropeo andrebbe infatti situata nella parte della regione delineata poc'anzi, in cui fossero possibili contatti tra il Protoindeuropeo, il Semitico ed il Caucasic meridionale, stante la presenza in queste lingue di un intero strato di elementi lessicali mutuamente imprestati e di numerose caratteristiche strutturali complesse, rivelatrici di durature interazioni reciproche.

L'ipotesi che colloca la terra d'origine dell'Indeuropeo nel sudovest asiatico definisce del tutto naturalmente il senso della migrazione di parlanti di dialetti greci attraverso l'Asia minore, fino alle loro sedi storiche nel Peloponneso e nelle isole del Mar Egeo.

Una prova evidente della migrazione di parlanti di dialetti paleoeuropei attraverso l'Asia verso l'Occidente è offerta dalla presenza di imprestiti lessicali indeuropei in Ugro-Finnico, che scaturirebbero da dialetti "Paleoeuropei", probabile gruppo linguistico ancora poco differenziatosi in singoli dialetti durante il periodo della migrazione e dello spostamento verso l'Occidente dall'Asia Centrale dei loro parlanti.

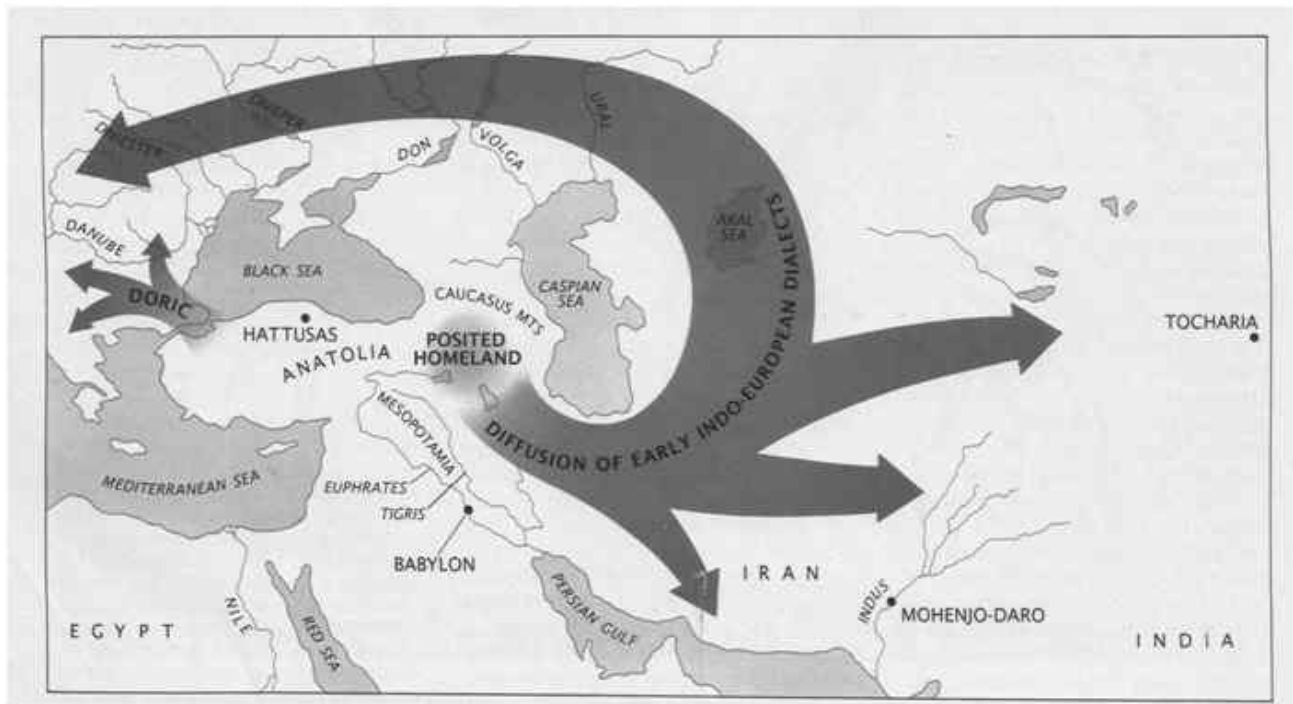
L'itinerario verso occidente che portò i parlanti dell'Europeo Antico dall'Asia centrale all'Europa

può spiegare anche vari fenomeni immunologici riscontrati nella storia delle migrazioni del Continente Eurasiatico.

I parlanti dei dialetti paleoeuropei formarono gruppi compatti in Europa centrale, si sovrapposero alle culture locali e gradatamente le assimilarono. Dapprima permasero isolotti separati dalle culture locali alcuni dei quali perdurarono durante la prima età di bronzo. Un residuo a nord dei Pirenei di queste tribù non indeuropee, che un tempo abitarono l'intero continente europeo, potrebbero essere i Baschi, la cui lingua ha miracolosamente retto all'urto e all'espansione storica delle lingue indeuropee discendenti dai dialetti paleoeuropei.

Il tragitto proposto in questa sede per le migrazioni degli Indeuropei da un centro nell'Asia sud-occidentale verso i nuovi territori eurasiatici e i loro contatti con parlanti di altre lingue concorda abbastanza bene con il quadro fisico-antropologico delle migrazioni e delle mescolanze tra razze in Europa Occidentale.

Le migrazioni qui descritte a proposito degli Indeuropei li portarono dalle loro terre d'origine del Vicino Oriente e dell'Asia Sudoccidentale verso nuovi territori, ove interagirono con le popolazioni indigene, con conseguente diffusione dei dialetti Indeuropei su vaste estensioni del Continente Eurasiatico e distribuzione delle lingue indeuropee, testimoniata all'inizio dell'epoca storica.



Carta delle migrazioni dei dialetti Indeuropei dalla sede primitiva (cf. «SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN», March 1990, 112)

## LEARNING FROM *CANIS 203*. IMPRESSIONS OF AN ABSENT ARTIFACT

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### *Abstract*

In a sense, the corpus of terra-cotta figurines published in 2007/8 as the fifth volume in Urkesh/Mozan Studies is hostage. Hostilities of a complex war deny access to the artifacts, preventing study and possible re-evaluation. This paper revisits a miniscule example from the collection in memory if not in fact.

It has been a number of years since I have visited the excavation site of Storehouse AK on Tell Mozan in northern Syria where I worked alongside compatriots from the village, as well as student archaeologists and professional colleagues from around the United States and the world.<sup>1</sup> As is generally known, the site has been all but inaccessible due to the conflict which rages in the region. It remains so.

It is some wonder that the diminutive object here under consideration (fig. 1)<sup>2</sup> was recovered at all from the matrix of excavation debris of Royal Building AK. It is smaller than the nail on my little finger, yet it leapt to attention as excavators sifted through dust and discards.

I hesitated just a heart-beat before deciding that this diminutive object had a place in the typology of terra-cotta figurines I was cataloguing. Its value, however, was only *representational*. That is to say, A6.274 “looked like” it belonged with other figurines in the Mozan corpus – “animals” all – and it exhibited characteristics that were “dog-like”.

Yet it remained apart because of its size and the material from which it was crafted; there was none

other like it. In that sense, its diagnostic usefulness seemed limited. And because the physical object was no longer available for analysis, I would have to proceed by careful inference, basing myself on what was knowable, working within recognizable categories that could be measured.

### 1. COLOR

The Munsell reading that I reluctantly accepted for the artifact was “pinkish white” (2.5YR8/2). Today, at the remove of some decades, if my visual memory serves, I still find this characterization less than satisfactory. I was unhappy with the reading when we took it and preferred instead the reading from an earlier Munsell edition that had been discontinued,<sup>3</sup> which favored some variant of “very pale brown”, a reading rather more useful diagnostically, as it tended to corroborate my own impressionistic characterization of the hue of A6.274 and did foreshadow a natural process of deterioration. But of course, “pure white” has no corollary in the Munsell tabulations and, indeed, Krzyszkowska has explicitly warned us that, even though color is “one of the first features to strike us..., [it] is not in itself a reliable guide.”<sup>4</sup>

### 2. MATERIAL AND FORM

Be that as it may, this aspect of the artifact was indeed striking enough for me tentatively to identify the material from which it was crafted, in all likelihood, as hippopotamus ivory. Krzyszkowska credits Aegean craftspersons with an “appreciation of the resplendent appearance of hippopotamus ivory” although she allows as how this observation is well-

<sup>1</sup> I continued to dig at Urkesh for the better part of 35 years. I had been lucky enough to be introduced to the site by the Co-Directors, Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati. Their kindness, not to mention their sturdy forbearance, remains for me the very model of friendship. Not least among their gifts to me personally was an understanding of what it means to *collaborate*, to cultivate a community of colleagues.

<sup>2</sup> *Canis 203/A6.274*. Head and forequarters. Left median, partial cranial view. Miniature. “Probably ivory” as noted in the catalog. Manufacturing details are visible in this photograph, showing reductive cutting, as opposed to additive modeling. Other descriptors from the original catalog: “Recovered from feature 358 locus 22 • length (snout to torso break) 1.5375 • forequarters 0.575 • neck (just under ears) 0.49 • torso (body) 0.525 • height of forequarters (crown of head to termination) 1.46 • cranial measurement (snout to back of head, curve of neck) 0.85 • thickness (snout, short axis) 0.215 • thickness (snout, long vertical axis) • 0.28 • thickness (ear to ear) 0.64 • fabric hard and white, as ivory • preservation: head intact; tip of left foreleg broken off, left foreleg itself chipped • Munsell reading (approximate) 2.5YR 8/2 • color (approximate) pinkish white.” Hauser 2007/8, 225.

<sup>3</sup> This was in 1983. I still use for reference a version published as the “1994 Revised Edition.” I note with some satisfaction that the categories “8/1 to 8/4 have been added to the 2.5YR chart.” (Munsell Soil Color Charts 1994, 4).

<sup>4</sup> Krzyszkowska 1998, 212.

nigh impossible to prove archaeologically.<sup>5</sup> What is more, failure to distinguish between different types of ivory influences our research agenda; the relationship of form to material is “rarely discussed, no doubt a consequence of the assumption that elephant tusk, which places few restrictions on carvers, was the only kind of ivory used in the Aegean.”<sup>6</sup> Once we disentangle “decorative schemes and typological value” (characteristics of form), our understanding of manufacture, production techniques, and processing is revitalized.

### 3. ORIGIN AND RANGE

I had at first taken the artifact to be a modern discard. My coworker at that time was, fortuitously, the noted archaeozoologist Sándor Bökönyi. He apprised me of the fact that the behemoths lolled in the waters of the Euphrates and lumbered over the steppe in the time of Urkesh.<sup>7</sup> I would never have guessed this, because to me, uninformed as I was, “hippopotamus” was a creature that inhabited far-off fetid jungles conjured by Edgar Rice Burroughs, certainly not the arid regions that I now took to be the original state of the Mesopotamian steppe. No less surprising, we learn that

“... the elephant thrive and formed huge herds in both Asia and Africa. Elephants are adaptable in diet and habitat and are equally at home in forests or grassland, savannah and bush, or in the hills, feeding on grasses, shrubs and trees, bark and leaves, and on the roots and fruits of plants, but always within reach of water.”<sup>8</sup>

Specification of the range of the elephant has newly recaptured interest in the field thanks to discoveries of huge elephant bones at Qatna. As the rooms where they were recovered have no doors, it is likely that the remains were ritually deposited and noteworthy in themselves, although the origin of the animal(s) is still under discussion.<sup>9</sup>

“The elephant population, particularly in the jungles and savannas of Africa, must have been immense, their habitat extending in antiquity northwards into Libya and Mauritania. However in many areas general desiccation, marsh draining and cutting down of jungle, but above all slaughter by hunters and poachers in antiquity continuing into modern times greatly reduced the herds and their distribution.”<sup>10</sup>

Now – as I naïvely assumed – if A6.274 had been crafted in ivory from the tusks of an African

elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), then the artifact from Mozan would most likely have been imported, at least early on before native populations of elephant would have had a chance to become established. Issues to consider would have included possible trade networks of unworked ivory and the nature of maritime or overland exchange of what may have been trophies or luxury goods destined for the Royal Family of Urkesh.

Had the piece been crafted from the tusks of an Asian specimen (*Elephas maximus*), a discussion regarding the variable range of what is commonly termed the “Syrian elephant” would have been appropriate.

[F]ossil elephant remains are found as far east as Japan. In ancient China in the Shang and Chou periods (1521 – 221 B.C.E.) it was evidently tamed and ridden by the emperors of those dynasties with other wild animals in parks.<sup>11</sup>

If this were the geographic range under consideration, material from which our *Canis* representation had been crafted would have been “local”, likely from nearby marshes bordering the Orontes River.

“... The remains of a large-sized elephant in the Palace of Qatna raise a number of larger issues such as animal-human relations, the introduction of exotic species (or a residual Pleistocene population), and trade routes” – [all of which remain under study by the original excavation team].<sup>12</sup>

### 4. FINISH AND HUE

Although not invariably the case, depending upon circumstances of conservation, elephant tusk ivory tends over millennia to rupture, to exhibit tiny fissures over all (fig. 3)<sup>13</sup>, and to discolor. It turns brown (fig. 6).<sup>14</sup> Nothing could be less like the finish of the luminous minuscule sculpture that first attracted our attention in the dark soil at Urkesh.

As was Krzyszkowska, I was much taken with the radiant aura of hippopotamus ivory.<sup>15</sup> Not less so, presumably, than “the makers [of sculpted artifacts, who] prized hippopotamus ivory for its whiteness” – she cites Moorey who, even though he is unable to find evidence for

<sup>5</sup> Krzyszkowska 1998, 215.

<sup>6</sup> Krzyszkowska 1998, 209–210.

<sup>7</sup> See Bökönyi [1994 and 2001, 2], cited in Hauser 2007/8, 226.

<sup>8</sup> Barnett 1982, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Vila 2015, 487ff.

<sup>10</sup> Barnett 1982, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Barnett 1982, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Vila 2015, 494.

<sup>13</sup> See the specimen tusk in fig. 3 (below). These light breaks in a relatively unmarked surface would pose only a slight problem to the ivory craftsman, because they are not deep. Although if the medium were walrus as opposed to elephant ivory, the margin available for elaboration and sculptural niceties is limited.

<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 6). Ivory discards from Mycenaean workshops as collected for display in modern museum context (image courtesy Charles Skrief, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> Krzyszkowska 1988, 215, referenced above (n. 5).

the existence of the beast in Mesopotamia,<sup>16</sup> references Penniman.<sup>17</sup>

As shade terminology is characterized,<sup>18</sup> an object's hue is "not easily detected if the chroma is low". Intensity or saturation of the hue is difficult to detect in lighter/brighter shades. The surface of A6.274 had indeed been polished until it shone – "a smooth finish" is the only characterization of the secondary finishing technique in my catalog. Barnett<sup>19</sup> tells us that this procedure was accomplished "with abrasives or with skate or shark skin."

#### 5. A6.274, THE URKESH FIGURINE CORPUS AND CATALOG

Whatever material comprised the object, it had obviously been crafted and subsequently finished by a human artisan. Less for its form than its manufacture and substance, it was an outlier, anomalous. When I wrote that the material was "probably ivory", back when we discovered the piece, I had seen few examples for comparison. I simply could not be certain about the medium – that is why my published catalog hedged its bets somewhat.

A representational impulse seemed clear – this was *an animal*, most likely familiar to its human creator. Since only forequarters were intact, two important diagnostic features for canids – a deeply-curved back and a curly tail – were absent. The manner in which the head joined the body, depending upon orientation, was "dog-like" – head, neck and forequarters were close to being the same width. When viewed in profile, the head was "wedge-shaped". Finally, when seen frontally, the head/muzzle was carried high (see "Attitude" in my volume on the Urkesh figurine corpus).<sup>20</sup> So did A6.274 find a place in the corpus of terra-cotta animal representations recovered from the Royal Storehouse. "Dog", it was.<sup>21</sup>

#### 6. TOOLS AND PROCEDURES

In the Mediterranean region, since at least the Bronze Age, plaques of ivory carved in relief were used to decorate wood furniture and boxes. "While the subjects, decorative motifs, and styles of these plaques [do vary] over time and place, many of the tools and procedures for decorating and attaching

them changed little over more than two millennia."<sup>22</sup> We can therefore speculate that this tiny artifact may have been elaborated in somewhat the same manner as other coeval "ivory" artifacts.<sup>23</sup> A6.274 had been drilled through in two passes. As a single piece, it could have been attached to a garment by a thread.

#### 7. A DOMESTIC CORPUS

But the artifact was not a single instance of a domestic animal before it was lost in the Royal Storehouse. I believe that it was part of a grouping along with other animals in a setting (the folds of a garment might serve in effect as "backdrop" for this pastoral) that provided some perspective on domestication. This ivory representation, very like its terra-cotta counterparts, I wager, bore some relationship to *the everyday lives of the inhabitants of Urkesh*. It is a "domestic" corpus. By studying it, we learn about what animals were kept, and in some cases, how they were kept. It is noteworthy that there is not a single fantastical creature represented in the entire corpus – 335 creatures, more or less. Not every animal at Urkesh was "wild", by any means. Some were untamed, true; but each and every animal would have been familiar to the citizenry, rather like companions on a shared journey of urban development, a co-creator of still-developing community. That the craftspersons who lived and worked in Urkesh fashioned animal likenesses in clay is testimony to this experiment in contemporality.

#### 8. A VIOLENT, REDUCTIVE CARVING TECHNIQUE

Our minuscule example of *Canis* had been "carved" reductively; that is to say, the form had been achieved by removing sections of the original material in bold strokes using generally simple "manufacture methods ... involving sectioning and cutting rather than elaborate carving".<sup>24</sup> In some cases, the simplest shapes – cylinders, for example, made from incisors – are "scarcely more than transverse disk sections ... with the cementum removed".<sup>25</sup> Strictly speaking, the sections are not "carved"; one might rather say they had been "abraded", the surface of the ivory selectively worn away by repetitive action. Finer details, such as shallow incisions that continue the mouth or legs, or that outline an eye, as with A6.274, might have been elaborated using a stick or, alternatively, a sturdy cord dipped first in some adhesive and subsequently

<sup>16</sup>Moorey 1994, 115: "If, and when, hippopotamus ivory was used in Mesopotamia it would have been imported raw or as ready-made artefacts from the west... [O]nly some of these [objects] may at present be tentatively cited as examples [from Mesopotamian context]..." See Oates 1987, 187-188 and pl. XLII: a-d. Also, see Caubet and Poplin, 1987, 279ff.

<sup>17</sup>Penniman 1994, 115 in Hauser 2007/8, 226.

<sup>18</sup> – in a table documenting shade and hue provided courtesy, University of Minnesota Faculty Dental Practice.

<sup>19</sup> In *Qedem* 14, 14.

<sup>20</sup> Hauser 2007/8, 201.

<sup>21</sup> See <https://janedogs.com/head-shapes-and-outlines/>.

<sup>22</sup> Stern, Thimme 2007, 13, n. 1.

<sup>23</sup> See fig. 9. No less than a "gash", this cut, a break in the surface of the walrus tusk, actually has much to tell us about the resistance of the material to the carver and to his/her blade. It should be compared with the manner in which the carver laid out his/her lines on A6.274. The "slice" in the same image of the walrus incisor convinces us that the merest adjustment of blade could result in a vastly different sculptural technique.

<sup>24</sup> After Krzyszkowska 1988, 215.

<sup>25</sup> Krzyszkowska 1988, 216.

in sand or another abrasive material, then dragged across the surface. In the doing is the telling.<sup>26</sup>

So we scrutinize A6.274. This “object” has a story to tell, a biography. Social practice, Conkey reminds us, may be recovered by studying materials and technologies of approach to the imagery as elaborated in the era under consideration, asserting that

“[t]he ways in which materials are worked and the maintenance or changes in particular technological styles are often . . . nonverbal ways through which communities may enculturate, elaborate, and challenge all sorts of values and ideas. People do organize their technical behaviors along lines that are socially, economically and ideologically meaningful.”<sup>27</sup>

What we may take to be a civilizing impulse epitomized by a singularly refined artifact may rather be a gesture of extreme violence. Whether elephant or narwhal, walrus or shell, the raw material – the brute “ivory” – had to be extracted from an animal. This involved the death of some creature, whether mollusk, walrus, or mastodon. Subsequently, the craftsman worked to disengage a representational image from the raw material.

All commentators – Herrmann, Moorey, Caubet and Poplin, Krzyszkowska – describe the medium as being somewhat intransigent, difficult to carve, not unlike a hard wood. We should expect the medium, whether discard or finished relic, to bear the marks of this struggle. And, indeed, this turns out to be the case.

Herrmann provides a surprising assessment of the skill of the makers, given our admiration for the ivory overlays, appliques and small sculptures that have come down to us from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia:

“There is little indication that the Assyrians were more than competent ivory workers. Ivory works like a hard wood, and hard woods were not readily available in Assyria, so such craftsmanship would have been indigenous, as it was in the Levant with its excellent supplies and long tradition of woodworking.”<sup>28</sup>

## 9. FIGURES AND ANALOGICAL REFERENCE

In the remainder of this essay, I have chosen to document this process of not-quite-routine craftsmanship by macro photographic examination of a walrus tusk that I received from an anonymous source. In post-juvenile elephants (as well as their extinct relatives, the mammoths), the ever-growing tusks are completely composed of dentine, the tiny

amount of enamel capping the ends having long since been worn away. Much the same happens in walrus.

Of course, walrus ivory is not elephant ivory. With elephant ivory, a substantial portion of the tusk can be carved, as it is in large part composed of unremodeled or primary dentine and is thus, depending upon where it is sectioned, available for carving. Life is comparatively easy for the worker in elephant ivory.

In the case of walrus, the tooth also grows throughout life, but its center is taken up by a relatively large pulp cavity around which *secondary* dentine may form. The outer parts are formed by both primary dentine and cementum.<sup>29</sup>

This void is something of a headache for the carver in walrus ivory (see figs. 2, 3, and 4), who must negotiate both curvature in the walrus tusk and the relative thinness of the brittle cementum layer. But for purposes of illustration, ivory from the walrus – *Odobenus* (“tooth-walker” in Latin) – can provide useful analogical detail that helps us understand how A6.274 might have been fashioned. As the millennium advances, the native population of hippopotamus declines and the carver’s preferred medium is eventually extinguished.<sup>30</sup>

No wonder the artifact is tiny! It is the result of an understandable need to salvage absolutely every available scrap of ivory remaining from what must have been a cautious production process.

I acknowledge that the differences amongst the various types of ivory available to craftsmen of the era render this discussion analogical rather than literal. The “absent” artifact – *Canis* 203 (A6.274) – does indeed loom large.

Fig. 1. *Canis* 203 (A6.274), before cleaning. As noted, anyone who encounters this miniature artifact is first struck by surface finish and color, both seemingly unvarying and remarkably uniform. Once cleaned, the surface has been brought to a high gloss by repeated polishing. Our little guard dog (if such he be – an acolyte of Gula/Ninkarrak’s, helpmate/companion animal in healing) aims, we think, to be a model of perfection. It is rather the imperfections of the artifact that will enable us to think more closely about processes of manufacture. We should ask ourselves “Are there places where the finish is broken, not perfect? And if so, where does dirt adhere? Is the color uniform and unvarying? Was it a single blow cleanly struck that opened the little jaws or do the irregularities of the jaw betoken a lapse of craftsmanship? If so, how did this come to be? Is it perhaps due to the scale, which certainly would be daunting for detail work without magnification?”

Fig. 2. Schematic, walrus tusk (rough sketch).

<sup>26</sup>The waste (filings and powder) from such a procedure extended to its use as medicine. The practice continues in modern times (Barnett 1982, 77, n. 49).

<sup>27</sup>Conkey 1993, 114.

<sup>28</sup>Herrmann 2009, 108.

<sup>29</sup>McPhee 2011.

<sup>30</sup>Moorey 1999, 115.

This is not a precise rendering as would be required for archaeological analysis, but rather a reference drawing only, giving approximate dimensions and their relation to one another. In particular, the vertical cross-section (EG) does not give a true sense of tusk thickness, and the relation of secondary dentine to cementum as illustrated in Penniman's definitive and very useful "pictures of ivory, other animal teeth, bone and antler" (Plate VIII, left. Oxford 1952) and fig. 4, herein below (fig. 4).

Fig. 3. Tusk corresponding to schematic (DSC0485). All close-up images are of this surface. Note how the shallow fractures follow the curvature of the tusk. Another image of the tusk at closer range is shown in fig. 5. The discontinuous nature of surface fractures can be appreciated at this magnification. Secondary dentine (pulp) is visible to the left of the image, at the center of the shattered tusk. The enamel (cementum), as is usual in the species, is mostly worn away, due to the animal's mode of locomotion – heaving itself forward across the ice by means of the tusks.

Fig. 4. Walrus tusk transverse section (US Fish & Wildlife Service, Forensics Laboratory ([https://www.fws.gov/lab/ivory\\_natural.php#walrus](https://www.fws.gov/lab/ivory_natural.php#walrus)))

The dentine (D) in walrus teeth is mainly primary dentine (PD). The center of the tooth may contain a small core of apparent secondary dentine (SD). The dentine is completely surrounded by a cementum layer. Enamel may or may not be present according to the extent to which the tooth has been carved or worn. A cross-section of a walrus tooth will show very thick cementum with prominent cementum rings. (Legend following the referenced manual).

Fig. 5. Untreated walrus tusk/surface (DSC0104). See fig. 3, a close image of a portion of the tusk.

Fig. 6. Discards from an ivory-carving workshop (Cretan). Different processing modes can be recognized, including deep and regular incisions, subsequently rounded (bottom / foreground). Other pieces are tentatively sculptural (lower right), possibly the fashioning of a peg or chair-leg (in process).

Fig. 7. Walrus tusk with irregular chopping (DSC0131). These markings should lay to rest any thought we may have had regarding the pacific nature of the encounter between walrus and hunter. The hunter must've "laid about", chopping wherever and however he could to sever the tusk from the animal's skull.

Fig. 8. Walrus tusk with successive hatch-marks (DSC0152). These cuts must've been laid down in quick succession; it's rather unlikely that they should have been measured and precisely laid down in successive and separate episodes of chopping. By the time these marks were made, the walrus must've been dead for a time – these are test marks, calibrating for the hunter the hardness of the tusk and the possible difficulty that lay ahead in its disengagement from the animal's skull.

Fig. 9. Deep cut/adjacent "slice" (DSC0176).

Close-up, we can see the exact nature of how the "cut" was delivered – powerfully, forcing a blade down into the dentine of the tusk. It is almost as if the surface of the ivory were pried apart, rather than incised. This mark can be taken as diagnostic. Slightly above and to the right, the outer surface (cementum) has been sliced away, leaving behind a slightly off-white smooth inner layer where the blade passed.

It is rather the *imperfections* of the artifact that will enable us to think more closely about processes of manufacture.<sup>31</sup> We should ask ourselves "Are there places where the finish is broken, not perfect? And if so, where does dirt adhere?"<sup>32</sup> Is the color uniform and unvarying? Was it a single blow cleanly struck that opened the little jaws or do the irregularities of the jaw betoken a lapse of craftsmanship? If so, how did this come to be? Is it perhaps due to the scale, which certainly would be daunting for detail work without magnification?"

The dentine (D) in walrus teeth is mainly primary dentine (PD). The center of the tooth may contain a small core of apparent secondary dentine (SD). The dentine is completely surrounded by a cementum layer. Enamel may or may not be present according to the extent to which the tooth has been carved or worn. A cross-section of a walrus tooth will show very thick cementum with prominent cementum rings. (Legend following the referenced manual).

## 10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As I take leave of A6.274 and associated animal representations, I cannot deny that I experience a humbling surge of irony. I think of the redoubtable Georgina Herrmann and her colleagues confronted by the "enormous jigsaw puzzle" of some "tens of thousands" of ivory artifacts recovered at Nimrud and her patient rediscovery of their form and outline.<sup>33</sup> At Mozan, I recovered a single piece of ivory among some three hundred terra-cotta figurines. Its very rarity invites speculation and prompts a host of questions about the Royal Family and their relationship to the fauna and to the land and to the urban peoples who were such canny and careful observers of their lifeways.

This essay only suggests possible avenues of investigation. I am grateful for the opportunity to come home again.

<sup>31</sup> I have "pushed" the CURVES adjustment in PhotoShop in this image so as to heighten modifications to the surface of the ivory.

<sup>32</sup> Agatha Christie, wife of the excavator, Max Mallowan, describes gently prying the debris from the face of the Nimrud ivories with an orange-stick and cleaning it thereafter with face-cream. I remember being taken aback by this bold tactic, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/mar/07/british-museum-assyrian-treasures-agatha-christie>.

<sup>33</sup> Chandler 2019, 29.



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Fig. 1. *Canis* 203 (A6.274), before cleaning.

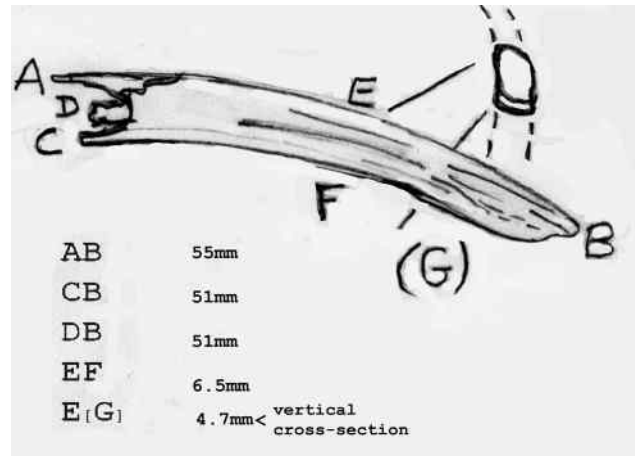


Fig. 2. Schematic, walrus tusk (rough sketch).



Fig. 3. Tusk corresponding to schematic (DSC0485).

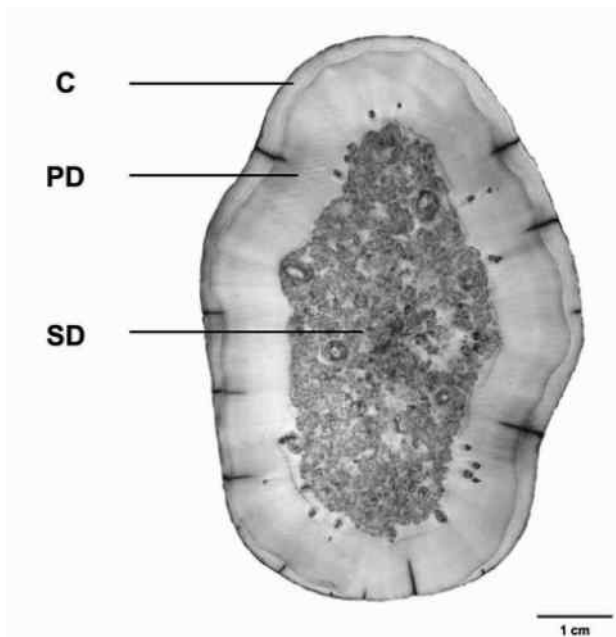


Fig. 4. Walrus tusk transverse section (US Fish & Wildlife Service, Forensics Laboratory, <http://www.fws.gov/lab/images/walrtus.jpg>)



Fig. 5. Untreated walrus tusk/surface (DSC0104) See fig. 3, a close image of a portion of the tusk.



Fig. 6. Discards from an ivory-carving workshop (Cretan).



Fig. 7. Walrus tusk with irregular chopping (DSC0131).



Fig. 8. Walrus tusk with successive hatch-marks (DSC0152).



Fig. 9. Deep cut/adjacent "slice" (DSC0176).

# TRACES OF THIRD MILLENNIUM PASTORALISM IN THE JEBEL ABD AL-AZIZ REGION

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## *Abstract*

What is the archaeological evidence for mobile pastoralists in the third millennium? Surveys by Yale University teams of the steppe west of the middle Khabur River and on either side of the Jebel Abd al-Aziz, have discovered 78 sites that may be campsites of herders integrated with large agricultural settlements.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is an honor to acknowledge the support and friendship of Marilyn and Giorgio who sponsored the initial excavation of Tell Ziyadeh, encouraged our subsequent work there and have contributed so much to our overall understanding of the third millennium in northern Syria. Among these, Giorgio has made significant contributions to our understanding of steppe pastoralism, which is the subject of this paper. Our first survey in 1986 of the steppes to the east and west of the middle Khabur River was designed to find traces of the antiquity of nomadic pastoralists. Subsequently we carried out several seasons of survey, recording sites of all periods, and made careful observations of modern pastoral camps. This paper describes the results of our survey of the western steppe surrounding the Jebel Abd al-Aziz, with a focus on third millennium sites.

The role of nomadic/pastoral people in the Khabur Basin is contentious owing to an absence of physical remains that can be attributed to either a nomadic pastoral group, or a people such as the Amorites. The region between the Euphrates south of the Balikh and eastward to the Khabur is thought to have been under the influence of Mari during the third millennium BC. In Buccellati's view, large scale nomadism of the steppe occurred when peasants in the *Zor* became herders in the mid-third millennium.<sup>1</sup> When he speaks of the "industrialization of the steppe", he sees a tight relationship between the urban and mobile populations cemented by their economic and cultural interdigitation. Pastoral groups "were more or less specialized but integrated parts of larger agrarian-urban societies within a shared kinship idiom, sociopolitical organization, or other institutions" in the Bronze Age.<sup>2</sup>

The broader historical picture of the second half

of the third millennium is cloudy at best, although for our purposes the Beydar texts, which focus largely on agropastoral matters, are particularly revealing. They describe animal husbandry at smaller settlements (including herders) as being under the control of officials in Beydar.<sup>3</sup> In other words, in the Upper Khabur there were no largely independent herders.

The picture may be different for the region south of the Jebel Abd al-Aziz where steppe grazing rather than agriculture was the dominant feature. Nevertheless, all of the tell sites, north and south of the Jebel are situated where at least *some* agriculture may have been practiced.<sup>4</sup> Beyond this, there are a number of sites where agriculture would have been unlikely.

The question of pastoralists in the west Jazirah in the third millennium must consider the qualities of the steppe through the seasons.<sup>5</sup> Precipitation ranges from around 250 mm to 150 mm, sufficient to support desert and steppe shrubs and grass, but problematic to impossible for agriculture without special conditions, such as playas, wadi channels, springs and wells. Further, thin soils and prevalence of gypsum impede agriculture. In any event, steppe cultivation at most sites was on a scale unlikely to support both humans and herds. The steppe has abundant graze in winter/spring, but is reduced to dried grass, woody shrubs, and legumes in summer and fall.<sup>6</sup> Herds of sheep kept on the steppe year round would require supplemental grain and straw to survive the lean season.

During winter, herds (and herders) also need protection from cold, wind and wet conditions, but there is little natural shelter on the steppe, making it unlikely that there was a substantial herder population living

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati 2008, 142.

<sup>2</sup> Khazanov 2009, 125.

<sup>3</sup> Lerberghe 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Kouchoukos 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Smith 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Hirata *et al.* 1998, table 1.

there year round. Rather, seasonal retreat to agricultural settlements must have been the norm. Either the Khabur or Euphrates valleys might have been winter refugia for herders south of the Jebel. However, by mid-Third, the middle Khabur Valley was largely empty of settlements. To the north of the Jebel, with its more favorable conditions, seasonal foddering at sites such as Mabtuhah Gharbi and Mabtuhah Sharki, south of the Khabur River and Tell Beydar, as we know from the Beydar texts was the norm.<sup>7</sup> The needs of herds and people essentially require that pastoralists in the third millennium were one component of an agro-pastoral system, who detached seasonally from the tell sites and riverine bases.

While the steppe is known today as prime pasture for thousands of tent-dwelling herders, the question of when it first saw intensive exploitation remains a question. The first archaeological indication that substantial numbers of pastoralists occupied the steppe derives from the enigmatic site of Jebelet al-Beida where a hundred years ago Baron Max von Oppenheim, during a topographic survey, found basalt stelae on a low hill, one of the outliers of the Jebel Abd al-Aziz. During his excavations there in 1927-29 he uncovered most of an additional stela, and fragments of three more from what he described as a leveled surface on the rocky gypsum outcrop.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, he claimed to have found a cross-shaped series of pits that may have been sockets for stelae. The two stela bear unmistakable dress and iconographic elements similar to third millennium figures found in sites elsewhere. On stylistic grounds, but without exact parallels elsewhere, these stelae, are mid-third millennium.<sup>9</sup> Parallels of a bearded man wearing a fringed garment are found at Chuera, Nipur, Mari, Khafadje.<sup>10</sup>

The relation of the Jebelet site to pastoralism can scarcely be doubted as the site faces south over a seemingly endless steppe, while to the north is a stretch of jumbled rocky outcrops and then the low relief southern side of the Jebel Abd al-Aziz. Near the central-eastern part of the steppe, at Marqada, there is an outcrop of basalt. To the east are a number of small tells close to the base of the Jebel, the small *Kranzhügel*, Muazzar, and the Khabur River. Westward of Jebel Abd al-Aziz, low relief steppe provides access to the northern drainage of the Wadi Hammar, where the *Kranzhügel* sites of Chuera, Tell Bogha and Tell Abu Shakhat are.<sup>11</sup> Very far south are the *Kanzhügel* or fortified sites of Khirbet Malhat, Tell Zahamak,

Site 45, and Tell Sha'ir.<sup>12</sup> The steppe is thus framed by the Chuera group in the northwest, the Balikh River on the west, the Khabur River on the east and the Jebel Abd al-Aziz on the north. The steppe alone south of the Jebel encompasses some 2500 km<sup>2</sup>. The most prominent sites in this southern zone, Malhat, Zahamak, and Muazzar are approximately equidistant, forming a triangle roughly 35 km on a side.<sup>13</sup> We might add that Jebelet al-Beida would form the northwest corner of such a group. Quenet wonders whether each of the three large sites administered distinct territories.<sup>14</sup> All of the sites are in the "Zone of Uncertainty", where rain-fed agriculture is problematic, however, shallow ground water and perhaps surface water in the third millennium may have allowed agriculture even at Malhat.<sup>15</sup>

The question of herding in the Malhat region has been answered in part by surveys carried out in a 20 km radius of the site. It is reported that there is only one small site in the agricultural zone on a natural hill. The remainder of the 20 sites discovered are not "places of sedentary occupation".<sup>16</sup> Apart from this, most of the steppe has not received the intensive survey that would be required to find ancient pastoral camps. However, the question of whether and when the steppe supported pastoralists is partially answered by results of the Yale surveys. Here we focus not on the large sites, but rather on sites that may have been pastoral camps. This means narrowing our focus down to the smallest traces, sites that are less than a hectare in extent and lack the mounded remains of a settlement. Our ability to find such sites depends on the occurrence of pottery and flint artifacts, which in turn depends on our ability to find them through vegetation, trampling, modern settlements and other disturbances. We expect that we missed many ephemeral sites, although we were guided in our initial efforts by a former pastoralist with keen knowledge of the steppe and the locations of his former campsites.

## 2. YALE SURVEYS

Intermittently, over a number of years (1986-1997), members of the Yale University Khabur Basin Project, carried out surveys of the steppe surrounding the Khabur River and regions to the west. At each discovered site, as many diagnostic ceramics as could be seen were collected and eventually sent to Yale University where they remain accessible for study. The present study is specific to the middle and western Khabur region flanking the Jebel Abd al-Aziz.

<sup>7</sup> Sallaberger 2007, 418.

<sup>8</sup> Moortgat Correns 1972.

<sup>9</sup> Moortgat Correns 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Quenet 2008, 203, pl. 28/1.

<sup>11</sup> Smith 2015, 266-267.

<sup>12</sup> Smith 2015, 274-279.

<sup>13</sup> Quenet, Sultan 2014, 121.

<sup>14</sup> Quenet, Sultan 2014, 121.

<sup>15</sup> Quenet, Sultan 2014, 120; Kouchoukos, Wilkinson 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Quenet, Sultan 2014, 120.

One of the goals of our survey was to determine whether settlement reflected the trend seen in the upper Khabur Triangle; few Late Chalcolithic sites, but a plethora of Early-Middle and later third millennium sites until around 2300 BC. Smith suggests that there was an incursion of new settlers to account for the apparent increase in population in the mid third millennium, and a nearly three century-long aridification to account for the dearth of sites at the end of the millennium.

Hole had suggested that the earlier centuries of the third millennium enjoyed wetter conditions, which allowed expansion of agriculture. By the time settlement had reached its peak, aridity began to set in, affecting the southernmost vulnerable sites first, before decimating the entire Khabur Basin.<sup>17</sup> Given this hypothesis, can we verify the sequential abandonment of sites, or changes in their productive base, from agriculture to herding? The short answer is, No.

Based on evidence from the 22 third millennium sites on the middle Khabur River itself, we can state that each appeared *de novo*, following a hiatus of sites on the river of approximately 400 years after the termination of Uruk influence.<sup>18</sup> Among the first settlements were Ziyadeh and Raqa'i, but others soon followed and most terminated around the end of EJ II, or 2600 BC.

Because many of these riverine sites had large storage facilities, it had been proposed that their agricultural surplus was destined for shipment to one of the large sites in the upper Khabur (e.g., Brak) or even Mari.<sup>19</sup> Counter proposals, that the storage was sufficient only for each site, or that the storage was to support a herding population in exchange for animal products, were advanced.<sup>20</sup> The issue has not entirely been resolved because there are arguments for each of the positions.<sup>21</sup>

The Yale survey examined a large region of the steppe in the Middle Khabur drainage, but not sites on the river itself where previous surveys and excavations had concentrated. By modern standards the steppe is arid and largely unsuited to agricultural settlements, but is fine pasture for livestock. Nevertheless, we found hundreds of sites ranging from Palaeolithic to modern, with a high proportion dated to the third millennium. Most of the sites are small, many barren of vegetation, wind-abraded, and yielded relatively few sherds, although extensive surface remains of structures and abundant pottery are seen on some.

### 3. CERAMIC COMPARISONS

The key to understanding settlement history is accurate dating of the sites. While there have been many reports on aspects of the archaeology of the Khabur Basin, with few exceptions ceramics are not well documented. This paucity of evidence led Nicholas Kouchoukos and Stefan Smith to restrict their analyses of the third millennium to two parts, Early and Late Early Bronze Age.<sup>22</sup> Effectively this meant that processes of change within and between 500-year blocks of time could not be discerned. That is, the contemporaneity of sites or their durations could not be judged. Our analysis, which is ongoing, is an attempt to improve on earlier studies.

In 1998 Nicholas Kouchoukos completed his dissertation, part of which was based on his analysis of the survey sherds. At that time, his Early third millennium comparative ceramic material consisted of preliminary publications of Tell Atij,<sup>23</sup> and Raqa'i.<sup>24</sup> For the later Third, the relevant sites were Chuera.<sup>25</sup> He judged Leilan and Sweyhat to be of "uncertain relevance".<sup>26</sup> As a result of these limitations Kouchoukos divided the sites into an early and a later group, based on seriation. "Sixty-one third millennium B. C. pottery types, identified by comparison of form and/or ware to known examples, were used to construct a similarity matrix for the 40 sites where at least five types were found".<sup>27</sup> The remaining third millennium sites, from which fewer than five diagnostics were recovered, were omitted from his analysis. Our current study includes all sites that yielded at least one diagnostic third millennium sherd. This has resulted in adding more than one hundred sites to his catalog of sites.

In the twenty years since Kouchoukos's dissertation, a number of other sites with relevant ceramics have been published and we make use of these. Despite the much larger set of potential comparative material, often published in excellent detail, most of this pertains to either special classes of ceramic, or to a short span of time. In other words, it is difficult to extract a *sequence* of diagnostic types for help in assessing our survey collections. The additional comparative sources have allowed us to estimate dates for single sherds. As a result, by not restricting our analysis to sites with five or more known types, we have been able to date about 150 sites to the third millennium. Nevertheless, many of the sherds could be dated only very generally – to the third millennium. There

<sup>17</sup> Hole 1997; 2002a; 2002b.

<sup>18</sup> Monchambert 1984; Röllig 2008; Kühne, Röllig 1978/79.

<sup>19</sup> Fortin 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Hole 1999; McCriston 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Summarized in Schwartz 2015, 631-638.

<sup>22</sup> Smith 2015.

<sup>23</sup> Fortin 1988; 1990.

<sup>24</sup> Curvers, Schwartz 1990; Schwartz, Curvers 1992.

<sup>25</sup> Kühne 1976; Fielden 1981; Lebeau 1983.

<sup>26</sup> Kouchoukos 1998, 367-371.

<sup>27</sup> Kouchoukos 1998, 371.

may be two reasons for this. First, perhaps most sites were occupied for only short periods so that changes are not evident. Second, there was relative stasis in ceramic styles, and changes occurred largely through extra-local introductions via trade, migration or both. Furthermore, the quantity of sherds that could be recovered varied greatly depending on the nature of ground cover, erosion, graves, and modern structures on putative sites. The paucity of diagnostic sherds on some sites may indicate that they were occupied for only short periods.

#### 4. SURVEY FINDINGS

First, we provide some statistics pertinent to settlement changes in and around the steppe. These give the presence of sites dated to three phases of the third millennium: Early-Middle, Middle-Late and Late. We found no sites that are unequivocally Early so that we may consider the entire time span of the recorded sites to be on the order of 500 years, that is from ca. 2800-2300 BC. The latter date corresponds to the 4.2 ka abandonment of most sites in the region, and the former to dated sites on the Khabur. The periodization for the Yale surveys thus divides the “millennium” into three phases.

As a result of the inadequacy of evidence, other surveys have relied on a few apparently diagnostic features that are thought to characterize Early or Late third millennium.<sup>28</sup> This leads to distribution maps and histograms that describe the numbers of sites ascribed to each period, as well as their relative sizes.<sup>29</sup> Some aspects of settlement dynamics are thus revealed. Using our refined periodization, three tables show some of the data for our survey area (tables 1-3). On these tables, sites are listed as North and South of the Jebel to show differences between the two regions.

Following an apparent near absence of sites dating to the late fourth millennium, and a temporal gap of some four hundred years, a number of small settlements appeared along the Khabur River and also on the steppe on either side of the river during the Early Bronze Age (EJ 0-1).<sup>30</sup> By the mid-third millennium, with a few exceptions, most of these riverine sites ceased to exist, for reasons that remain to be explained, but the shift to the steppe away from the river is well documented by Kouchoukos and our results.

The first published hint of the large numbers of previously unrecorded sites in the western Jazirah is in Stefan Smith’s dissertation, which used CORONA and satellite imagery to detect sites.<sup>31</sup> For the region

of our survey Smith recorded 151 sites, albeit without ground truth verification that they were of either Late Chalcolithic or third millennium. With our new analysis we can now verify that more than 150 sites in our survey area have third millennium sherds on them (fig. 1), but we have yet to work out a concordance between Smith’s sites and ours. It is likely that he missed some sites that we found, and we missed some that he found, but we agree that there are many small sites in an area that did not sustain large ones (fig. 2, table 2).

These numbers need further interpretation, as we cannot accurately account for the duration of most sites: how many were simultaneously occupied? Nor do these raw data inform on the probable number of people who resided at a site. Finally, these data do not indicate whether a site had special function. The most vexing of these questions concerns simultaneity of occupation. In the absence of radiocarbon dates, or even long, well-stratified comparative sequences, and the general paucity of sherds on sites, we are restricted to considering lengthy blocks of time as units rather than a dynamic series that might show sites going in and out of occupation (table 3).

We do, however, have observations on the sizes of sites and their immediate surroundings, from which we can infer potential function (table 1). For example, a surface scatter of a few sherds at a small spring with no apparent cultural deposit, suggests transitory use of the site, perhaps by herders. On the other hand, widespread evidence of stone-walled architecture on the flanks of a tall mound implies lengthy residence and an agricultural base. A simple categorization of sites by their size and mass, gives some indication of the cores and peripheries of the major sites.<sup>32</sup> It is significant that the number of sites by phase parallels the results of other surveys, where settlement begins in Early-Mid, rises to a maximum in Mid-Late and falls dramatically in the Late third millennium (table 3, fig. 3).

To illustrate the trends in settlement we have a map that shows all sites that have three phases (fig. 1). These occur on both sides of the Jebel and imply a strong agricultural base, even though there is a disparity in the sizes of sites on the two sides of the Jebel. The demise of settlement is illustrated by fig. 3, which shows only Late third millennium sites (fig. 3).

#### 5. EVIDENCE OF PASTORALISM

In his dissertation, Nicholas Kouchoukos discussed 50 third millennium sites within our survey area.<sup>33</sup> Stefan Smith, using spectral differences on

<sup>28</sup> Ur 2013; Wilkinson 2000.

<sup>29</sup> See examples such as Ur 2002; Wilkinson, Tucker 1995; Wilkinson 2000.

<sup>30</sup> Monchambert 1984.

<sup>31</sup> Smith 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Especially well discussed by Ur 2010; Wilkinson, Barbanes 2000; Wilkinson *et al.* 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Kouchoukos 1998.

satellite images, counted 151 sites of uncertain age in the same area, but most presumed to be third millennium.<sup>34</sup> Subsequent analysis of sherds from the Yale surveys now attributes 150 sites to the third millennium. For the most part these additional sites, often identified on the basis of a few sherds, are small and include mere surface scatters near springs or wadis (fig. 2). During survey, we often encountered remains of recent camps of mobile herders in the same or near the locations of the small sites: the suitability of these sites for herding camps is thus underscored. The inescapable reason for this inference is that, while the steppe has enormous potential for grazing, both people and livestock need water. In the survey area, seasonal wadis bring fresh water and fill playas. At least since Oppenheim's surveys, most springs on the south side of the Jebel, and many on the north, are brackish and suited, if at all, for livestock only.

A further indication that many of the small sites are remnants of herders or small-scale agropastoralists, is that they exist where thin soil is on gypsum bedrock, which cannot support much agriculture even when precipitation might seemingly allow it.<sup>35</sup> There are, however, sizeable sites scattered within the steppe where playas, depressions, broad wadi bottoms, and shallow ground water, as already discussed by Kouchoukos, can support agriculture (Malhat, for example). Nevertheless, until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century there were no large-scale attempts to cultivate most of the steppe within the zone of uncertainty south of the Jebel, and most of these failed.<sup>36</sup>

There is no pottery that we can identify as specific to any pastoral group. Indeed, as is likely, pastoralists were in close interaction with settlements, and they obtained needed vessels by trade or from kin. There is also no need to assume that mobile pastoralists did not have and need ceramics, but more likely a lesser set (i.e., no large storage vessels) than a villager might have. Third millennium ceramics are well fired and seemingly quite durable so that they would travel well, be broken rarely, and need replacement irregularly. These considerations allow us to expect, but not assume, to find some ceramic evidence if a campground was used repeatedly. If a camp was also used for opportunistic agriculture, one might expect to find sickles as well as ceramics. If a site is truly "ephemeral", essentially a surface scatter without depth of deposit, and is close to a source of water, and it yields ceramics and flints, there is a good chance that it is a pastoralist site. Pastoralists travel in groups of households, so that their camps generally cover an area of a hectare or more. Such a "settlement" is nec-

essarily diffuse. The implication that a scatter represents a campsite, is further enhanced if ceramics also represent different periods, e.g., Neolithic, third millennium, and Islamic, implying repeated, but transitory use of the site. The case is more problematic with small tells whose size suggests a settlement of only a few houses, although some of these appear to be on gypsum outcrops with little potential deposit. Small sites with graves on top, on the other hand, must have a meter or more of deposit, which might be degraded mud-brick and household refuse. Each site, then must be evaluated independently to assess whether it might have been occupied only seasonally and whether it had agricultural potential.

We have only the landscape today against which we can assess some of these factors. However, we know that during the late Chalcolithic some meters of colluvium spread across parts of the north side of the Jebel and down the Khabur River, potentially erasing or burying earlier sites.<sup>37</sup> A later movement of sediment buried some stone foundations of third millennium sites.<sup>38</sup> North of the Jebel, the extent to which geomorphic processes affected small sites or pastoral camps is unknown. The situation on the south side of the Jebel appears to be different: rather than depositional events, wind and water erosion, and overuse of pastures may have played the larger part, leaving sites barren, with thin soil, but otherwise intact.

The literal outlier of evidence for pastoralism is the stelas on Jebelet al-Beida, also known as Ras et-Tell. Their prominence on a hill overlooking endless steppe implies that stelas were meant to be seen by herders who gathered there seasonally. Did they signify the territory and identity of an early "confederation" of herder groups – a proto-tribal structure, such as described in Mari texts, and suggested by Quenet.<sup>39</sup> Meyer and Porter suggest the use of monuments as funeral memorials.<sup>40</sup> Dolce concluded that the double stela may have commemorated a victory over the pastoralists, perhaps by the Akkadians.<sup>41</sup> Clearly the stelas, made of non-local basalt, were not the work of pastoralists, yet they may have represented, and been made by, the agro part of the integrated society. Close stylistic parallels in alabaster have been found in Mari in a sanctuary dedicated to the "Lord of the Land".<sup>42</sup> Unlike many third millennium figures, however, those at Ras et-Tell lack devotional clasped hands; rather

<sup>34</sup> Smith 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Kouchoukos 1998, 360, fig. 7.8.

<sup>36</sup> Hole, Zaitchik 2007; Hole, Smith 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Hole 1997; Kühne 1991; Hole, Tonoike 2016; Hole, Johnson 1989/90.

<sup>38</sup> Kouchoukos, Wilkinson 2007.

<sup>39</sup> Quenet, Sultan 2014, 121.

<sup>40</sup> Meyer 1997; Porter 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Dolce 1986.

<sup>42</sup> Butterlin 2016, fig. 5.



one hand is grasping an object. In one *reconstruction* a man is standing above two small figures.<sup>43</sup> This is reminiscent of the Stela of Narim-Sin, recovered from Susa.<sup>44</sup> His presence in the Khabur is indicated by the “fortress”, “fortified warehouse”, or “palace” attributed to Narim-Sin at Tell Brak.<sup>45</sup> The other stela, whose head is missing, is holding a mace.<sup>46</sup> Quenet observes that bearded men with fringed dress are also seen at Chiera, Khafaje, Nippur, and Mari thus confirming the mid-third millennium date, although the latter are typical devotional figures with clasped hands.<sup>47</sup>

Ras et-Tell was in a highly degraded condition when Oppenheim found the first stela. “Judging from the ashlar and other worked stones, the top of Ras et-Tell had a platform, said to have been 20 x 15 m. The ashlar made up the edge while the space within was filled up and paved”.<sup>48</sup> “On it we found great limestone ashlar... about 60 cm in section and were mostly 1-2 metres long. The ashlar together with smaller, only slightly hewn stones, flattened on one side, were put together to make several roundish walls or enclosures”.<sup>49</sup> The walls Oppenheim saw were not part of an original structure; rather Ras et-Tell had been modified at various times in the past, including when the stelae were defaced, broken, and in part carried to a Roman camp, Kasr el Abiad, 1.5 kilometers away. Ras et-Tell “was found to be a natural mass of gypsum covered with humus, partly also with burnt fragments and detritus”. In other words, Oppenheim had to excavate through piles of ashlar and other limestone blocks before he reached the “platform”.

The basalt of the stelae apparently (based on visual lithology) came from a quarry on Kbise, some 100 km away on the north side of the Khabur River. “The stones with prongs must have been 4 metres long and more. The stone with the god on the bull was at least 1½ metres broad. The stones were probably cut into cylinders on Kbise and then rolled through the deep wadis across country to Jebelet-al-Beida, first westwards from Kbise, where the Khabur in summer is dry, and then due south” and then up the 20 m high Ras et Tell.<sup>50</sup>

There are other sources of basalt, which may bear on the attribution of the stelae. One is at Kowkab, across the river just east of Hasseke, about 60 km from Muazzar. Marqada on the eastern side of the steppe, only 35 km from Malhat, is about 60 km from Muazzar and 75 km from Jebelet al-Beida. Both Malhat

and Muazzar are known to have used basalt in their constructions, so either might have been a source for the stelae. Absent a lithological study of the potential sources to compare with the Jebelet stelae, the actual source remains unknown.

The stelae at Jebelet al-Beidha looked over the steppe and must, therefore, have been placed where herders could see them. They stood as a symbol of domination of the land and its people, few of whom other than herders would ever see them, as the site is not on a recognized route across the steppe or through the Jebel. The only audience for the stelae was herders. Whether they were placed on behalf of Narim-Sin or another powerful local leader may never be known.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The hypothesis that favorable precipitation in the early to mid-third millennium ceased, first in the south and gradually moved northward, cannot be sustained. Malhat was occupied until the region-wide collapse, as were most of the sites in our survey region. What is notable is the abandonment of settlement in the Late Third. Our surveys give no evidence so far of continuing use of the steppe after the 4.2 ka event, which reinforces the idea that the pastoralists were tied to agricultural communities.

Archaeological evidence that supports the presence of large-scale *independent* herding on the West Jazirah steppe during the third millennium is equivocal at best. While we have identified a large number of third millennium sites that can be plausibly related to herding camps, we find no reason to suppose that the herders had yet achieved the independence indicated by Mari texts of the second millennium. Nor is there any way we can even estimate how many pastoralists ranged the steppe. It is evident, from historical sources and the archaeological evidence that while pastoralists in the third millennium may have been mobile, they were tethered to sites that produced grain for both humans and herds.

Environmental conditions on either side of the Jebel Abd al-Aziz differ in that potential agriculture and pasture are richer on the north than on the south. This is reflected in the sizes of settlements, but on either side of the Jebel, the apparent determining factors in both the presence and sizes of sites are the extent of arable land and sources of potable water, the latter being sweeter and more abundant on the north. Most of the steppe remains unexplored beyond our surveys and the evidence that Smith acquired through remote sensing. There is no doubt, based on our findings, that the most convincing evidence of large-scale herding has and will come from texts.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nicholas Kouchoukos who participated in most of the surveys and headed those of 1995 and 1997, car-

<sup>43</sup> Oppenheim 1931, pl. LXIII; Moortgat Correns 1972, pl. XVIII.

<sup>44</sup> Oppenheim 1931, pl. LXIII.

<sup>45</sup> Oates *et al.* 2001, 19; Sallaberger 2007, 427-428.

<sup>46</sup> Oppenheim 1931, pl. LXII; Moortgat Correns 1972, pl. X.

<sup>47</sup> Quenet 2008, 203, pl. 28/1.

<sup>48</sup> Oppenheim 1931, 243.

<sup>49</sup> Oppenheim 1931, 229.

<sup>50</sup> Oppenheim 1931, 247.

ried out the initial and basic research reported here. His use of an early version of GPS, lent by Robert Brakenridge of Dartmouth College in 1994 enabled us to accurately locate sites, on other than the French topographic maps at a scale of 1/200,000. Kouchoukos's dissertation contains extensive background on the geology and geomorphology of the landscape, as well as his interpretation of the findings.<sup>51</sup> The entire collection of pottery has been re-analyzed by Yukiko Tonoike, verified by Dawn Brown, and entered into a relational database. Laboratory space, office facilities, and the collections of pottery are in the Department of Anthropology, Yale University.

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<sup>51</sup> Kouchoukos, Wilkinson 2007.

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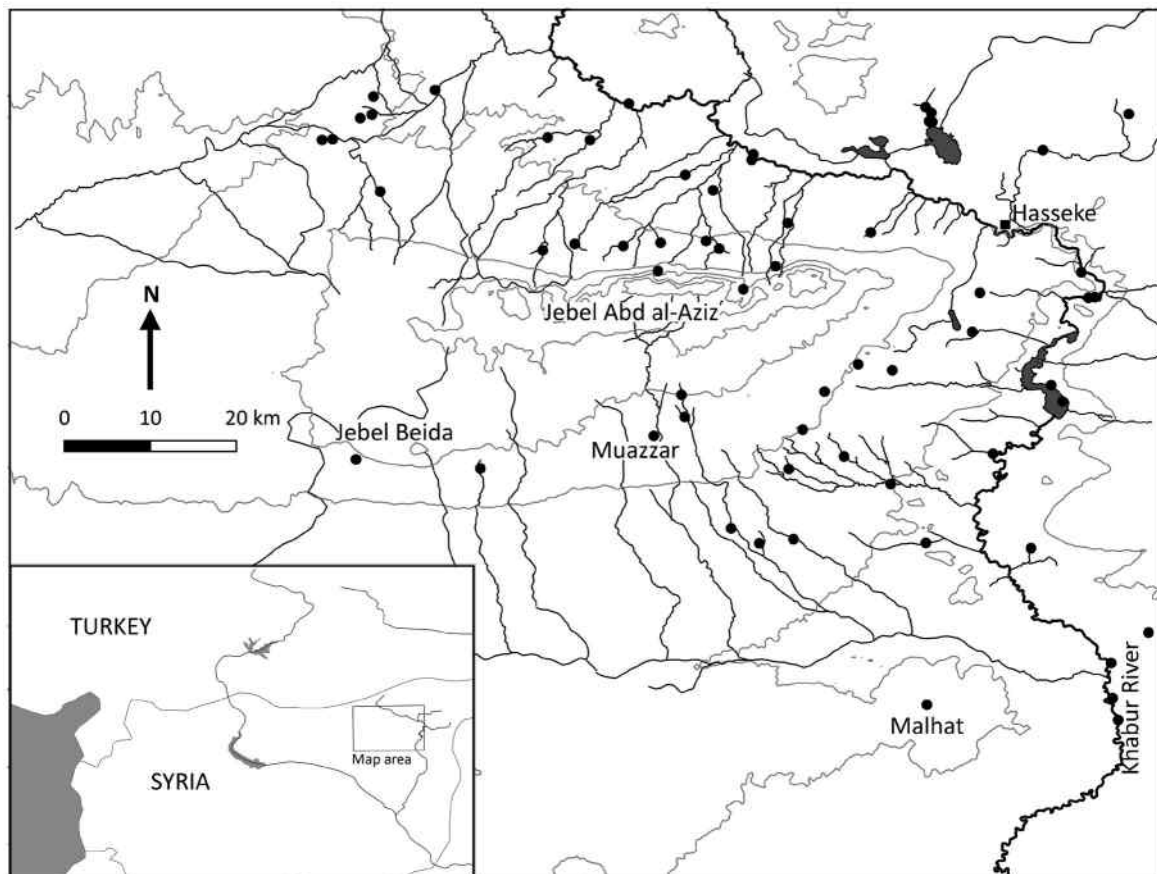


Fig. 1. Map showing sites that have sherds from all three periods of the third millennium (Early-Mid, Mid-Late, and Late)

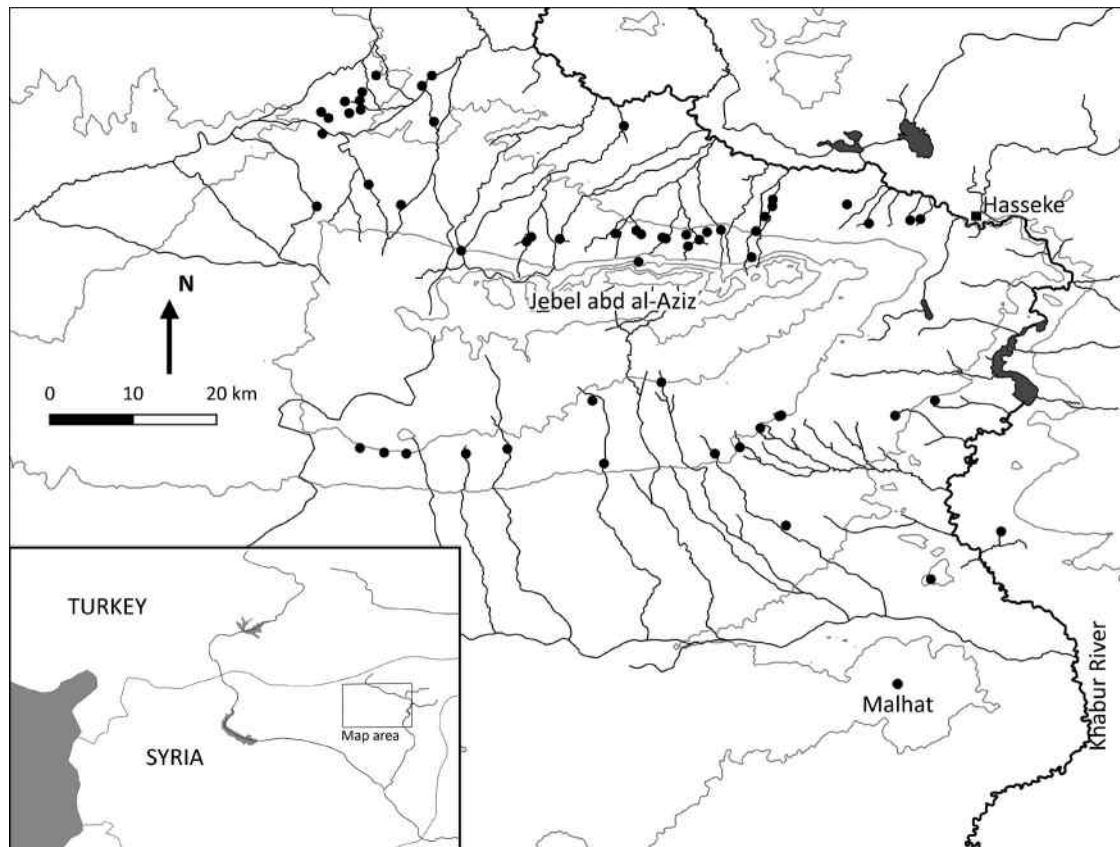


Fig. 2. Map of small third millennium sites (camp sites) found by the Yale University Khabur Basin Survey Project

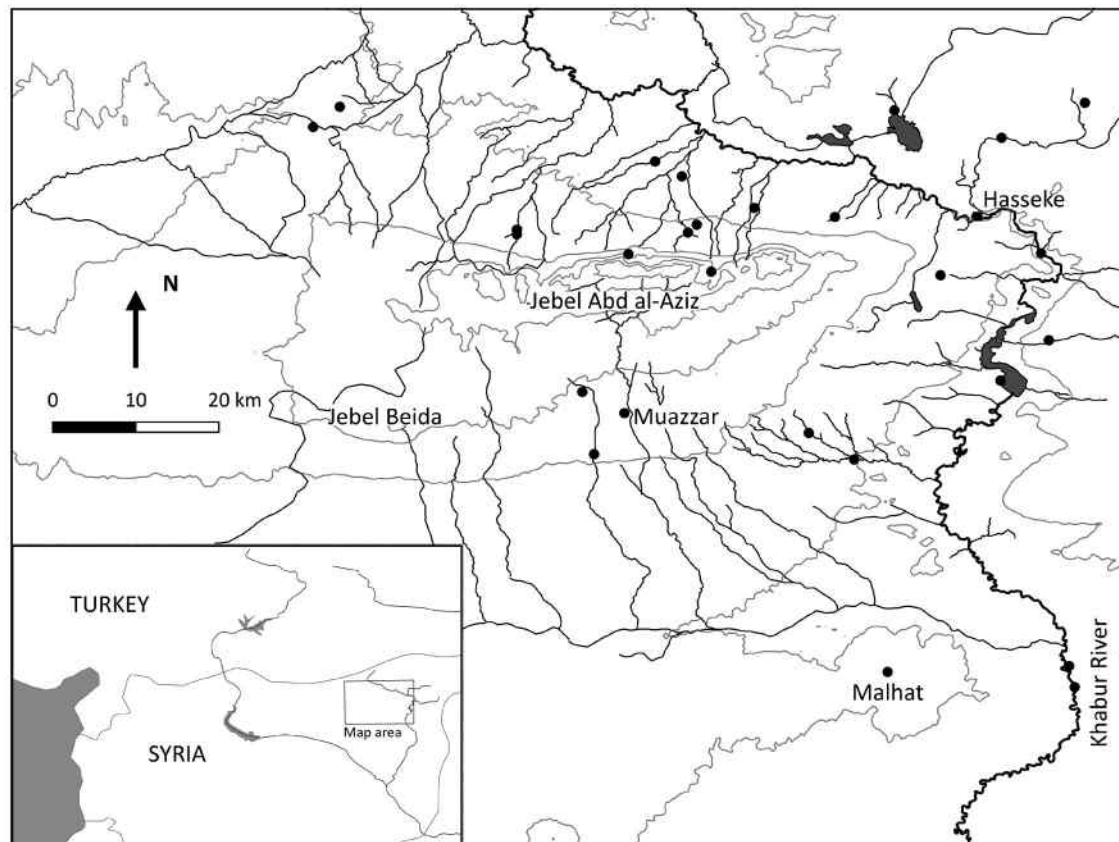


Fig. 3. Map showing sites that have sherds from the Late third millennium

		Size (ha)			
		0—1	2—5	6—11	>27
Number of Sites	North	32	2	5	2
	South	46	4	8	0

Table 1. Size distribution of third millennium sites of all periods. We note that the dominant site in the south, Muazzar at 11ha, is a mid-level site. The *Kranzhügel* in the north, Mabtuhah Gharbi and Sharki, stand out as many times larger than any on the south. These figures are not corrected for length of occupation and possible growth over time, and the totals are sites that were measured.

		Number of Sites			
		North	South	Total	% (n=90)
Phases	Late	5	7	12	13%
	Middle-Late	18	28	46	51%
	Early-Middle	19	13	32	36%

Table 2. Camps sites (0-1ha) on either side of the Jebel, by period. The distribution of sites by period follows the pattern seen in Table 3 where all dated sites (n=90) were included.

		Number of Sites			
		North	South	Total	% (n=140)
Phases	Late	12	11	23	16%
	Middle-Late	29	39	68	49%
	Early-Middle	22	27	49	35%

Table 3. Proportions of sites of each period to the total third millennium sites (n=140). Sherds that were attributed only to the third millennium and not to a specific phase are not counted here. This shows, as also indicated by other surveys, that Mid-Late (from ca. 2600 BC) was the peak of settlement, and that it tapered off rapidly in the later third millennium.

## BETWEEN ENDURING SYMBOLS AND ELITE IDENTITY: NEW GLYPHTIC EVIDENCE FROM NUZI

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### *Abstract*

This up-to-date analysis of clay sealings found in the ancient Hurrian town of Nuzi, and since housed in the Nuzi Bullae Collection of the Harvard Semitic Museum, discusses iconographic, political and identity symbolism of the glyptic of high ranking officials Tišam-mušni and Erwe-šarri while presenting new drawings of their respective seals.

It is daring to approach a subject so dear to the jubilees as glyptic and the more so if connected to another theme they are more than versed on, that is the material culture of a Hurrian town. But knowing of their scientific openness and plain human kindness, it is a task I take upon with joy!

In the last years, I have recurrently been examining the Nuzi Bullae Collection housed in the Harvard Semitic Museum<sup>1</sup> stemming from the joint excavations undertaken by the Harvard-Baghdad Expedition at the site of Nuzi, during the late 20s and early 30s of the last century. Elsewhere I have sketched the overall characteristics of the collection and the importance of analysing not only tablets but also bullae<sup>2</sup> for a more thorough understanding of the impressed motifs as well as the modalities and agency of the administration in a Late Bronze Age city, such as Nuzi.

Of course, the challenge when looking at cylinder seal impressions on sealings is that – contrary to the Nuzi tablets, where the name and often patronymic of the owner/user of the seal is generally inscribed on top of the impressions in cuneiform writing, or in some cases it is etched in the very gem of the seal<sup>3</sup> – these bullae are anepigraphic. Therefore, the search for an identity of the seal owner/user must pass through comparison with those seal impressions on tablets for which we have a positive identification via the written record.

Recently, through the study of the Nuzi bullae I was able to propose an identification for and discuss the possible role of the seal of a less known official, Tatip-teššup, son of king and envoy of the palace. The impression is attested on several bullae and one single tablet.<sup>4</sup> During this research and while looking to identify some of the other functionaries attested on bullae, I started to single out – because of the similarity of their dossiers – two further important persons in the Nuzi administration: one Tišam-mušni and one Erwe-šarri. They are both officials well attested on the anepigraphic bullae, sealing ca. one dozen specimen each, of different shapes. Luckily, they are also documented on tablets that convey us

<sup>1</sup> It is always my privilege to thank Prof. Dr. Peter Der Manuelian, Director of the Harvard Semitic Museum, Prof. Dr. P. Steinkeller, Curator of Tablets, Dr. Joseph A. Greene, Deputy Director and Curator and Dr. Adam J. Aja, Assistant Curator of Collections for their encouragement as well as for permission to publish the material discussed in the present article. PD Dr. Anne Löhnert with her usual generosity shared with me not only excerpts of her Habilschrift (Löhnert 2015a) and the photos of tablets EN 9/1, 4, HSS XVI, 263, 351 and 361 she took while at the HSM, but also my passion for all things Nuzi. Without her data, this article would look significantly less informed. Mariko Cantley and Vicki Sato sustain my efforts by being evermore impressing and graceful hosts. On the basis of my reconstruction and several digital photos of each impression, Helga Kosak, Berlin has prepared the digital drawings of the composite seal designs as impressed on bullae and tablets (figs. 3 and 4). It goes without saying that I remain the sole responsible for any mistakes.

<sup>2</sup> Luciani 2019, pp. and fn. 2. I will use the term bulla because of the material in the Harvard Semitic Museum being part of the Nuzi Bullae Collection and as a synonym for sealing or any clay support on which a seal was impressed.

<sup>3</sup> To give only the more famous examples, King Sauštatar, King Itḫi-teššup or Aršali (for whom a function as king has also been hypothesized by some scholars [Deller, Fadhil 1972, 204; Mayer 1978, 108-109 and n. 4] though problems remain [Löhnert 2015a, 88 and n. 372]), see Stein 1993b, 528-529 (= AdŠ 711), 498-490 (= AdŠ 659), 350-353 (= AdŠ 406). For other examples with seals bearing a personal name in the inscription, see Stein 1993a, 129-131.

<sup>4</sup> Luciani 2019. Of course, Tatip-teššup, the official, is known also from other cuneiform records that were not impressed with his supposed seal (see Mayer 1978, 118; Wilhelm 1992, 139-140, no. 270; Stein 1993b, 193; Dosch 2009, 210).

their names. Their position, therefore, is easier to investigate. The similarity of their diverse attestations has compelled me to devise a comparative research of these two groups of bullae and tablets. More specifically, I have started looking at the written records of their activities as registered on cuneiform tablets in the light of the administrative practices as evidenced by the sealings/bullae they impressed with their seal. This investigation has sparked a novel and more elaborate one: I propose to check the evidence of identity given by impressing the seal against an investigation of fingerprints and textile impressions on the same artefacts<sup>5</sup>. The present contribution is the first part of this study.

While documenting the officials mentioned above, I noticed that Tišam-mušni (fig. 1 lower part)<sup>6</sup> often sealed documents together with one Pai-Tilla (fig. 1 upper part) and a third person, less well known than the other two, Ezira (fig. 2). A drawing of the composite seal of the latter administrator will shortly be published.<sup>7</sup>

Pai-Tilla and a fourth officer, Šurki-Tilla, who also sealed with Tišam-mušni on at least a couple of occasions, both used seals of their predecessors/forefathers. The former used the famous seal of “Aršali, son or Ariya, servant of Šamaš and Addu/Teššup”.<sup>8</sup> The latter used the seal of his father, the prominent real estate owner Tehip-Tilla<sup>9</sup> that had originally been cut for Šurki-Tilla’s grandfather, Puhišenni.<sup>10</sup> Both these impressions have been object of scholarly discussion in the past.

On the contrary, a composite drawing of Tišam-mušni’s seal as reconstructed from attestations on tablets and more completely on bullae (see table 2), has never been published before. Therefore, I would like to present it here for the first time (fig. 3) and approach the evaluation of Tišam-mušni’s choice of

seal, if compared to the ones the other public officials used. At the same time, I will comment on the similarities that emerge if we compare his seal with the one used by another official performing similar functions in Nuzi, i.e., Erwe-šarri. While the latter’s seal has been known for decades,<sup>11</sup> new analysis of the bullae<sup>12</sup> (fig. 6) grants finally reconstructing the entirety of the design (fig. 4).

As Marilyn and Giorgio have expertly shown in their own work,<sup>13</sup> besides being fascinating material for stylistic and art historical analysis, sealings are vital in their potential to convey through their shape<sup>14</sup> and seal iconography an array of very diverse information: from politics to administration, from culture to identity. Therefore, this is my attempt to follow in the path they have travelled so expertly before. I plead for openly acknowledging the meaning also of anepigraphic artefacts<sup>15</sup> and for “the importance of doing archaeology with old museum collections”,<sup>16</sup> to fully achieve the right valorisation of meaningful material that has unduly been neglected for too many decades.<sup>17</sup> Such an encompassing evaluation shows how members of the Nuzi elite<sup>18</sup> refunctionalised ancient themes and how they used them in the construction of their *specific* identity.

<sup>5</sup> The research is ongoing. For fingerprints I will rely on the expertise of Dr. A. Darvish Zadeh (University of Vienna) and for textiles on Dr. K. Grömer (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna), who have kindly agreed to cooperate with me on this work.

<sup>6</sup> Luciani 2019, n. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Since Dr. Diana Stein kindly told me that she had submitted an article containing a composite drawing of Ezira’s seal (Stein 2020), I forgo presenting it here and refer to her work for the first publication of its design.

<sup>8</sup> Stein 1993b, 350-353 (= AdŠ 406). This seal was used by a total of five different administrators over at least two-three generations. Pai-Tilla, however, changed the metal (golden) caps during his tenure. On the history of the different caps on Aršali’s seal, see Gavin 1981, 46-147 esp. n. 3 and again Stein 1993b, 353.

<sup>9</sup> Porada 1947, 50, 52, no. 663; Stein 2009, 562-564, no. 19, for a drawing of the seal and a summary on its use.

<sup>10</sup> Porada 1947, 50, 52, no. 663; Stein 2009, 562-564, no. 19, for a drawing of the seal and a summary on its use.

<sup>11</sup> Stein 1988, 182, 208-209, no. 40.

<sup>12</sup> A complete listing of attestations of impressions of Erwe-šarri’s seal includes 12 bullae and one tablet (but Erwe-šarri’s name is mentioned in a dozen further tablets). This data will be discussed in detail at a later stage.

<sup>13</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1996; 1997; Kelly-Buccellati 1996; 2005; 2015; Buccellati 2010; 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Provided, of course, one looks not only at their recto with the seal impression but also at the verso. Luckily, this has now become standard procedure. See below n. XXIII.

<sup>15</sup> Bullae and sealings have not been at the centre of investigations in Nuzi as much as the written records have (for exceptions see Stein 2010; 2020; Luciani 2019). However, they harbour a great amount of information and potential for the study of a number of different dealings – not exclusively administrative or commercial – in the life of the town (see below nn. XXIII and 23). For a comprehensive overview of the different Late Bronze Age administration systems, including Nuzi’s, see Postgate 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Frieman, Janz 2018.

<sup>17</sup> For the creation and first attempts to study the Nuzi Bullae Collection, see Gavin 1981. C. Gavin’s project did not foresee looking at the rear of bullae but aimed solely at documenting Nuzi’s iconography. For the structure of the Nuzi collection at the Harvard Semitic Museum, see Fincke 1999.

<sup>18</sup> On distinguishing the seals used by the different social and economic classes attested at Nuzi, see Stein 1993a; 1993b; 1997.



## Attestations of Tišam-mušni's seal on tablets

Text no.	find spot	Attested seals	References
SMN 17 SM 1998.05.07	1 Room L 2	All on verso: <sup>I</sup> Seal A: Ezira <sup>II</sup> Seal B: Pai-Tilla <sup>III</sup> Seal C: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>IV</sup> (upside down)	HSS XIII, 17 (= Pfeiffer, Lacheman 1942, 2) Mayer 1978, 15, no. 16 Personnel list: 16 women from the city Turša <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408289.jpg">https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408289.jpg</a>
SMN 352 (SM 3924) SM 1998.05.249	2 Room (C 2) L 2	All on left side of tablet: <sup>V</sup> Seal A: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>VI</sup> Seal B: Ezira Seal C: Pai-Tilla	RA 36, 216-217 (= Lacheman 1939, 216-217) HSS XIII, 352 (= Pfeiffer, Lacheman 1942, 62-64) Mayer 1978, 16, no. 27 List of 224 slaves of the palace from URU Turša with their children <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408530.jpg">https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408530.jpg</a>
SMN 435 SM 1998.05.316	3 Room R 81	All on left side of tablet: Seal A: Ezira (upside down) Seal B: Pai-Tilla (upside down) Seal C: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>VII</sup>	RA 36, 157 (= Lacheman 1939, 157) HSS XIII, 435 (= Pfeiffer, Lacheman 1942, 85) Mayer 1978, 83 no. 461 Long list of furniture that either belong to or are under the responsibility of Tišam-mušni <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408597.jpg">https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408597.jpg</a>
SMN 605 SM 1999.02.122	4 Room L 1	On recto, sideways and head to head: Seal A: Pai-Tilla <sup>VIII</sup> Seal B: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>IX</sup> On verso: Seal C: Ezira (perpendicular to Seal D) Seal D: Šurki-Tilla	HSS XIV, 232 (= Lacheman 1950, pl. 94) Mayer 1978, 20, no. 45 Palace: list of men from Anzukallim <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408769.jpg">https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408769.jpg</a>
? SMN 636 SM 1999.02.231	5 Room R 76	Seal A: [ <b>ti-ša-am-mu</b> ]uš-ni <sup>X</sup> Seal B: Kula-ḥupi	HSS XIV, 636 (= Lacheman 1950, 40-41) List of palace personnel <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408878.jpg">https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408878.jpg</a>
SMN 916 IM - ?	6 Room L 1	Seal A: Ezira <sup>XI</sup> Seal B: Šurki-Tilla (upper edge) Seal C: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>XII</sup> Seal D: Pai-Tilla <sup>XIII</sup>	RA 36, 213 <sup>XIV14</sup> (= Lacheman 1939, 213) HSS XV, 182 (= Lacheman 1955, pl. CXV) Mayer 1978, 21, no. 53 Palace: list textiles <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P498563">https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P498563</a> Cuneiform copy - no photo available
SMN 958 SM 2000.03.219	7 No Room	All on verso: Seal A: Ezira <sup>XV</sup> Seal B: Pai-Tilla <sup>XVI</sup> Seal C: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>XVII</sup> (perpendicular to A and B)	HSS XVI, 351 <sup>XVIII18</sup> (= Lacheman 1958, 103) Löhnert 2015a, 90, 95 and 99. Account of daughters moved to <i>hupšu</i> status <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P409339">https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P409339</a>
SMN 1195 SM 2000.03.223	8 Room L1	Seal A: Ezira (on recto) Seal B: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>XIX</sup> Seal C: Pai-Tilla <sup>XX</sup> (on verso)	HSS XVI, 361 (= Lacheman 1958, 106) Mayer 1978, 21, no. 53 Palace: personnel list from Eluḥewe <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P409343.jpg">https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P409343.jpg</a>
SMN 1408 SM 2000.02.079	9 Room R 81	Seal: <b>Tišam-mušni</b> <sup>XXI</sup> Seal: Ezira <sup>XXII</sup>	HSS XV, 146 (= Lacheman 1955, pl. CI) Inventory <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408968.jpg">https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408968.jpg</a>

Table 1.

As mentioned above, Tišam-mušni repeatedly sealed with the same officials. Except for one case, SMN 958 (= HSS XVI, 351), it is difficult to be sure whether the three or four administrators always followed a specific protocol and fixed order in the sealing proceedings – besides sealing before the name was incised in cuneiform above the seal impression – and whether this related to rank.

An indication of high status of these persons is given by the absence of patronymic, suggesting these were well known officials in no need to specify a widely known information, and by the use of distinguished seals, often displaying golden caps.

<sup>I</sup> As for the localisation of seals on Nuzi texts see Stein 1993a; Postgate 2013, 365 writes: “In the other category of sealed administrative tablet [i.e., those involving outside agents or merchants, Stein 1993a, 48] the seal is impressed by an individual who has some form of oversight over the transaction and is authorising or authenticating the contents”.

<sup>II</sup> Only parts of the volute tree, the lower part of the vulture on top of it and the central part of the bull-man/*lahmu* wrestling the winged, standing lion are visible on this impression. However, this is the only seal where we can see the lower part of the bouquet tree clearly and presumably the lower part of the seal design.

<sup>III</sup> Stein 1993b, 351 sees on these impressions Aršali's seal with

**Attestations of the Tišam-mušni's seal impression on bullae\***

	<b>Nuzi Bullae Collection No.</b>	<b>Recto</b>	<b>Verso</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1	NBN 214a (fig. 5)	Three impressions of the complete Tišam-mušni seal, fingerprints, textiles	Impressions of three ropes around a large wooden peg	Door (of storage house) sealing
2	NBN 214b	Fragments of two superimposed impressions of Tišam-mušni's seal, fingerprint	Traces of folded textile?	Possible fragment of textile wrapping on vessel?
3	NBN 214c	Fragment of one impression of Tišam-mušni's seal	Impressions of three ropes around a large wooden peg	Door sealing
4	NBN 214d	Fragment of one impression of Tišam-mušni's seal	Rope, peg and wrapping textile	Door (of box?) sealing
5	NBN 214e	Fragment of one impression of Tišam-mušni's seal	Traces of ropes, wrapping textile and fingerprints on parallelepiped-shaped bulla	Door sealing?
6	NBN 214f	Five, partially superimposed impressions of Tišam-mušni seal and fingerprints on a dome-shaped verso	Flat, circular shape, with a central, parallelepiped-shaped mortise. Textile impressions.	So-called "mushroom-shaped" bulla <sup>xiii</sup>
7	NBN 214g	Fragment of one impression of Tišam-mušni's seal and fingerprints	Impressions of two ropes	Sealing of container
8	NBN 214h	Fragment of one impression of Tišam-mušni's seal and fingerprints	Impressions of two ropes	Sealing of container
9	NBN 214i	Small fragment of a Tišam-mušni seal impression on a dome-shaped verso?	Fragment of a central, parallelepiped-shaped mortise	Fragment of "mushroom-shaped" bulla?
10	NBN 214j	Impressions of Tišam-mušni seal on flat top and rounded side of sealing	Impressions of ropes and textile	Sealing of jarneck
11	NBN 214k	Impressions of a Tišam-mušni seal on flat top	Traces of folded textile on ropes	Sealing of jarneck
12	NBN 499	Impressions of the complete Tišam-mušni seal and fingerprints	Impressions of ropes and wooden pegs	Door sealing

\* All these descriptions are to be considered preliminary, as the study is still ongoing. A complete publication of the documentation of the sealings with exact measures, drawings and photos (but see below for picture of bulla NBN 214a, fig. 5) will find their place in a dedicated contribution.

Table 2.

narrow plain bands to be attributed to Pai-Tilla, administrator.

<sup>iv</sup> Only the lower part of the guilloche and the row of heads are visible of Tišam-mušni's seal on this tablet. The names were all incised into the clay in cuneiform after the seal had been impressed, often obliterating part of the impression.

<sup>v</sup> All impressions, and especially Tišam-mušni's and Ezira's, though strongly worn, can be discerned with certainty.

<sup>vi</sup> The row of heads are identifiable.

<sup>vii</sup> The upper part of the lower register, the row of griffins, is well visible as well as its upper limit, the double line incised at the mid of the seal. The heads were probably never fully impressed, due to the limited space at disposal for sealing on the side of the tablet.

<sup>viii</sup> The trace of the impression of narrow plain bands – those associated to Pai-Tilla's use of the seal as administrator – is very faint on this tablet and can be detected only on a single spot above Teššup's head.

<sup>ix</sup> The row of human heads are well recognisable and a tiny fraction of the lower part of one of the guilloche circles, the mid seal double line and the heads of the griffins.

<sup>x</sup> This would be the only time Tišam-mušni seals together with an officer of a following generation (for the administrators using Aršali's seal: Aršali, Hełtip-apu, Pai-Tilla, Šar-teššup, Kula-ħupi see Stein 1993b, 351-353). And while overlaps of administrators from adjoining generations are well documented in other cases, it must

be remarked that Tišam-mušni's name is largely reconstructed. An extremely faint trace of a double line, like the one on Tišam-mušni's seal, may be visible on the cdli photo.

<sup>xi</sup> On the cuneiform copy Lacheman 1955, pl. CXV (= HSS XV, 182) Šurki-Tilla' and Tišam-mušni's seals are clearly intelligible, if the design not visible in its entirety. However, in the position of Ezira's seal, there are a couple of extremely fragmentary lines, which do not convey a recognisable design. One could possibly distinguish the lower part of the bull-man and, in the upper left corner, parts of the sphynx that frames the demonic mask on the left. No photo of this tablet is available to me.

<sup>xii</sup> On the cuneiform copy the five of the human heads and the lower part of the guilloche are clearly drawn.

<sup>xiii</sup> Löhnert 2015a, 48 also has Pai-Tilla as one of the persons sealing the text and Stein 1993b, 351 proposes to restore Pai-Tilla's name based on room location.

<sup>xiv</sup> This reference, RA 36, 213, is given by Mayer 1978 (28, no. 112) as publication of tablet SMN 1514 (HSS XV, 209) where he reads: "Siegel: <sup>m</sup>Ezira; <sup>m</sup>Šurki-Tilla; <sup>m</sup>Tišam-mušni." However, on the photo at disposal on the cdli website ([https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival\\_view.php?ObjectID=P409007](https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P409007)) other seals are visible on SMN 1514 but none of the above-mentioned functionaries. Moreover, RA 36, 213 does not present the cuneiform copy of SMN 1514 but rather of SMN 916, as indicated above. The latter tablet does feature the

seal of Ezira, Šurki-Tilla and Tišam-mušni. Therefore, the reference in Mayer 1978, 28, no. 112 must be corrected to SMN 916.

<sup>xv</sup> The seal is partially flattened but well comprehensible in its parts: the rampant winged lion, the lower part of the branches of the bouquet tree, the gown and exposed leg of the figure standing (holding the scimitar) and the flouncy gown of the goddess. However, it is on this tablet that it is possible to catch a glimpse of the lower part of Ezira's seal, normally not impressed: the foot of the standing human figure as well as the lower hem of the gown can be seen. I wish to thank A. Löhnert for sending me high-resolution photos of this tablet. The chronological sequence of operations appears thus: first Ezira's seal was impressed, then Tišam-mušni's and as last Pai-Tilla's top seal (see following n.).

<sup>xvi</sup> For this tablet, Stein 1993b, 351 proposes again to restore Pai-Tilla's seal on the basis of room location, but Pai-Tilla's seal is well visible and was actually impressed twice, one on top of the other on the lower part of the tablet. Faint but clearly identifiable is also the impression of the triangles, i.e. of the golden caps that must have been on the seal, on the upper border of the seal impression. So this must correspond to the earlier phase of activities of Pai-Tilla, before he changed the granulated caps to the thin band (see above n. 8).

<sup>xvii</sup> The row of heads, the mid double line and the heads of the griffins are visible.

<sup>xviii</sup> I wish to thank A. Löhnert for putting at my disposal her photos of this tablet and its seal impressions. With only the published images, an accurate assessment would not have been possible.

Tišam-mušni's seal is never impressed in its entirety on tablets (see footnotes table 1), but rather mostly only its central part is, as if indicating a very swift operation. On the other hand, its design in its simplicity is so unique, that this "signature" resulted in an immediately recognisable trademark.

Out of nine potential attestations, Tišam-mušni sealed with Ezira and Pai-Tilla on five or six occasions (above nos. 1-3, 7-8, 9?), and in two further cases with the same two and an additional functionary, Šurki-Tilla (above nos. 4 and 6). Only in one case, he possibly sealed with a successor of Pai-Tilla, one Kula-ḥupi, who, like his predecessor, still used Aršali's seal.<sup>19</sup>

These are all palace records – as is confirmed also by their findspot – and include among others: a list of 224 palace personnel, a long list of furniture, a list of persons from the town of Anzukalli(m) and a textile account.<sup>20</sup> These documents provide a very homogeneous picture of Tišam-mušni's range of activities as someone systematically involved in procedural guarantees on furniture and materials destined to or stemming from the palace.

In my investigation of the Nuzi Bullae Collection at the Harvard Semitic Museum, I could establish that the same seal used by Tišam-mušni on tablets is also used on twelve different bullae (see table 2). The bullae are particularly interesting because only here can we see complete impressions of the seal (esp. on NBN 214a and NBN 499) used by this official. Only

<sup>xix</sup> On lower edge, well visible row of human heads and mid line. Also these photos were kindly provided by A. Löhnert.

<sup>xx</sup> I rely on Stein 1993b, 351, who saw traces of granulated caps on Pai-Tilla's seal on this tablet. The cdli photo does not allow verifying this observation.

<sup>xxi</sup> This text is referred to by Löhnert 2015a, 48 as sealed by Tišam-mušni, and by inference also by Ezira, who had already sealed with him seven times. I wish to thank A. Löhnert for sending me good photos of HSS XV, 146 from which a clear impression of Tišam-mušni's seal can be seen.

<sup>xxii</sup> Ezira seals also twice on his own, once with Šurki-Tilla (SMN 2766 = HSS XV, 302, I am indebted to D. Stein for this reference) and once with Tarmiya (SMN 1504 = HSS XVI, 441). In the latter tablet, moreover, I believe one could discern traces of metal caps of Ezira's seal.

<sup>xxiii</sup> These are the bullae that initially prompted my research on the Harvard Semitic Museum Nuzi Bullae Collection, see Luciani 2014a; 2014b; 2019. I have identified with certainty 12 identically-shaped artefacts (NBN 204, 214f, 369, 401, 440A+440B, 567, 672A, 679, 682, 792, 844, 930) and an additional 7 fragments (NBN 27, 214i, 387, 388, 825, 901, 642, Nuzi D2 5/3/30) that may be attributed to this class. While the discussion of their function (see Starr 1939, 297) widely exceeds the limits of this paper, it is important to say that they are not attested in any other published bullae/sealings repertory (e.g., Reichel 1998; Otto 2004; Bretschneider, Jans 2013) and thus remain rather cryptic.

thanks to these artefacts can we reconstruct the entire design reliably and accurately (fig. 3).

Moreover, seal impressions offer additional proof of administrative activities undertaken by Tišam-mušni on site, in the city of Nuzi. Of the other administrators supervising and sealing with him, Pai-Tilla and Šurki-Tilla are also attested on bullae.<sup>21</sup> Ezira, however is not, and while absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, this data may indicate a possible difference in the set of competences this specific colleague was invested with or even his home-base being different from Nuzi, in another town of the kingdom.

The listing shows that Tišam-mušni was guarantor for a number of different administrative transactions, from opening of storage houses<sup>22</sup> to mobile containers (boxes and vessels) and even to the enigmatic function that was certified by the applying and sealing with "mushroom-shaped" bullae.<sup>23</sup> It is

<sup>21</sup> Also e.g. Urḫa-tarmi, Hašip-apu, Wirrištani and Erwe-šarri (for the latter see below) are all attested on both tablets and bullae.

<sup>22</sup> I mentioned in a previous contribution (Luciani 2019), the issues and challenges one faces in identifying the exact provenance of the majority of the bullae. In single instances, such as here (fig. 5) or in others cases (e.g. NBN 222, NBN 440A+440B, NBN 682) the excavators have written on the verso of the bulla a pencil note indicating the original find spot. In this case, on the verso of NBN 214a, it is a 'W'. Since the study is ongoing, I have not yet reconstructed the meaning of this reference for identifying a specific provenance. I am, therefore, not yet able to propose a localisation for this specific storage facility.

<sup>23</sup> As explained elsewhere (Luciani 2014a; 2014b), this was most likely linked to the formal disposal and protracted treatment of

<sup>19</sup> But see above n. X.

<sup>20</sup> Postgate 2013, 365.

important to underline that bullae always feature the seal of one person only, thus pointing to a procedure that differs in the degree of single responsibility from the one seen implemented on most tablets, where officials sealed with additional colleagues. Because of these differences, it will be revealing to establish what fingerprints tell us about identity and number of the persons involved in manipulating the clay and impressing it with the sealing. However that will turn out, already now, these clay material correlates of activities indicate that Tišam-mušni was an officer with wide-ranging competences, in charge of the most diverse matters by order of the Palace administration.

#### 1. DESCRIPTION OF TIŠAM-MUŠNI'S SEAL DESIGN

Reconstructed size: length: 37.7 mm, height: 24.2 mm; diameter: 12 mm.

An ornate, horizontal guilloche features on the upper part of a seal divided in two horizontal registers by a double, thin line.

On the upper register is a row of five pigtailed, male heads in profile, with round cap with double brim (and sometimes possibly horns?),<sup>24</sup> a schematic rendering of a long nose and eye, well visible lips and long, horizontal (?) beard/neck. The lower part of the beard/neck of single heads overlaps the mid seal double line separating the upper and lower halves of the design.

On the lower register, there is a row of three recumbent, wingless, long-plumed griffins. Thin lines build both the upper and the lower frame of the design.

#### 2. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF TIŠAM-MUŠNI'S SEAL

If compared to the seals of the others member of the elite, i.e. the administrators who were sealing with him, the design of Tišam-mušni's seal is very simple and in this respect, stands out for its plainness. But there is more to it than initially meets the eye.

Pai-Tilla used Aršali's seal (fig. 1 upper part) featuring the very elaborate presentation/confrontation scene of a kid-bearing worshiper around a standard with the god Teššup and a three-line cuneiform inscription.

Ezira's seal (fig. 2), which also contains a presentation/confrontation scene, is equally detailed and complex, displaying four, finely cut tableaux, each with a different theme: (1) the person in long robe holding a scimitar standing in front of the goddess Lama underneath a starred sun-crescent; (2)

dead bodies belonging to a specific age group and social class in Nuzi.

<sup>24</sup> Compare Stein 1987, 278, no. 46 for very clearly visible double brimmed hats.

an "Akkadianising" contest scene between a heavily feathered, winged lion standing upright and a bull-hero with six curls; (3) a vulture with splayed wings and a prey in its beak, hovering above an elaborate volute tree; (4) two sphinxes that raise a paw to frame a so-called demonic mask (human-bull).

And even Šurki-Tilla's seal (fig. 7) – the one he uses when sealing with Tišam-mušni<sup>25</sup> – features a quite elaborate design picturing a confrontation of two standing deities and one sitting on a throne, with rosettes and other filling motifs. All these seals would be best classified as belonging to Stein's:<sup>26</sup> Group 1 "Humans and Deities in Presentation and Confrontation Scenes", the one clearly favoured by the Nuzi elite.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, the only official whose's seal is apparently different and distinct is Tišam-mušni. I would like to argue that, because of its simplicity and the non-cluttered syntax of its design, it was the most iconic, most clearly recognisable. It shares with Ezira's or the second of Šilwa-Teššup's seals<sup>28</sup> the lack of filling motifs and secondary scenes, something that contributes significantly to the individuality, immediate identification and uniqueness of the motif.<sup>29</sup>

The division of the entire seal in two equal halves – here through the double thin horizontal lines – has rather ancient antecedents but is unusual in the Nuzi

<sup>25</sup> He also had a second seal, see Löhnert 2015a, 96 and § IV.5.1.

<sup>26</sup> Stein 1993a, 81-86.

<sup>27</sup> Also administrator Tarmiya (on SMN 1250 = HSS 14, 240 see Lacheman 1950, pl. 113, no. 278 and <https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P408775.jpg>), another high official who sealed with Ezira and Šurki-Tilla, has a rather elaborate, high quality seal with similar theme.

<sup>28</sup> Stein 1993b, 258-259 = AdŠ 258.

<sup>29</sup> Among the over two thousands seals from Nuzi already published (Porada 1947; Stein 1987; 1988; 1993a; 1993b; 2001; 2009; 2016) only the seal of Šumu-libšit s. of Taia (Porada 1947, 39-40, no. 558) may possibly be compared because featuring a row of heads under a guilloche. However, the heads are smaller and closer to each other if compared to Tišam-mušni's seal. It is not clear if the illustrated impression is half of a larger seal and if so, what was represented on the other half. He was apparently active during the time of Tehip-Tilla.

Not really equivalent are Ita-aḫḫe's (Stein 1987, 293, no. 67) or Ukur-atal/Arimmu's (Stein 1993b, 126, no. 48) seals. While they both display a number of similar elements: a horizontal (double) guilloche above a row of men (entire body) next to a winged lion-demon the first and next to two non-winged, long-plumed griffins the second, in both cases their overall syntax is starkly different. Equally substantially different is Š[eš]aja's seal (Stein 1993b, 496 = AdŠ 657). Though featuring a row of three pigtailed heads in profile with round headgear looking right above a guilloche composed of dots connected by three horizontal lines, this is just an ancillary motif of the main scene featuring a typical antithetic pair of persons on both sides of a bouquet tree, as in Porada 1947, 20-21, nos. 141, 188?, 200.

glyptic, though not entirely unknown.<sup>30</sup> Beyond the very Early Dynastic prototypes, the division may go back to Akkadian seals,<sup>31</sup> which also feature animals' friezes. Of the period post-Akkadian to Ur III is one seal from Ur that presents a row of pigtailed standing figures in the upper register divided by the lower one featuring a frieze of geese.<sup>32</sup>

In the Nuzi glyptic more often an uneven horizontal partition of the seal is attested: with a significantly broader main scene with standing persons, deities or demons, in contest or presentations scenes and an ancillary thin band, mostly with recumbent or grazing animals<sup>33</sup> placed either in an upper or lower register. Because of this, the subdivision on Tišam-mušni's seal in two equal halves looks archaizing.<sup>34</sup>

The uppermost element of this seal, below the thin line, is the guilloche. While this was a very widespread motif, in this phase – and already amply during the Old Babylonian period<sup>35</sup> – it was mostly used as filling element.<sup>36</sup> In this case, in keeping with the entire conception of the design, it spans the entire length of the seal and as such is unusual<sup>37</sup> in the Mitanni period.

I see two potential sources of inspiration for the upper register with five bearded male heads shown in profile<sup>38</sup> and wearing a rounded, double brimmed cap. *Lectio facilior* would surely be assuming a *pars pro*

*toto* representation, i.e. the head, as most important part of the body, standing in for the entire person. Whole series of Mitanni seals use the motif of row of men (naked or dressed, worshippers or others), more or less schematic, as main motif, filling the entire scene, or as secondary one occupying only parts of it.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, if the intended meaning had been to simply represent a row of men, exactly this would have been the signifier used, with the body represented in its entirety. If we espouse Giorgio's systemic approach,<sup>40</sup> we must recognise that these must be seen as *specific* symbols, discrete heads standing in for a precise meaning. Alternatively, they were really just heads: discrete because detached, severed heads.

There are clear attestations of heads in profile (in rows or single) in Early Old Assyrian glyptic:<sup>41</sup> they are scenes depicting war or maybe better, celebrations of victorious battles (figs. 8 and 9). Because of the general context, there is little doubt about the interpretation of these heads as battlefield-related. The orderly representation of the heads induced E. Porada and D. Collon to interpret them as an army rather than fallen soldiers.<sup>42</sup> Compelling similarities of severed heads in profile with headgear and beard with representations on media larger than seals, such as, e.g. the Dadusha stele<sup>43</sup> – also associated with images of vultures – would rather indicate the severed heads to stand in for war casualties. While our seal does not have an explicit reference to a battlefield, like those representations, our five discrete (severed?) heads in profile are characterized by headgear<sup>44</sup> and beard.

A recently discovered stele from the same chronological horizon and stemming from a northern geographical context may be relevant for arguing this cultural milieu may have influenced Mitanni glyptic. The large (2.72 m x 2.42 m) monolithic stone

<sup>30</sup> Though fragmentary, Stein 2001, 345, no. 160 has winged griffins and animals in the lower register and a winged starred sun disk and recumbent animals in the upper one. Divided by a single line. For other examples see below n. 34.

<sup>31</sup> Of the so-called "Tigris'-Gruppe", Boehmer 1965, pl. XXXIX, nos. 467-470.

<sup>32</sup> Collon 1982a, 121, nos. 286 and 287. See also the Ur III period seals Collon 1982a, nos. 331 and 334-336.

<sup>33</sup> Porada 1947, 26-27, nos. 346, 349-351; Stein 1993b, 258-259 = AdŠ 258; Collon 1982b, 103, no. 87.

<sup>34</sup> Some seals, attested in the Šilwa-teššup archive, may have been also divided in two equal registers. However, as the impression seldom conveys the design in its entirety, it is difficult to be certain: Stein 1993b, 104, 162, 245, 251, 253, 255, 398 and 570, = AdŠ 26 (divided by a line), = AdŠ 104??, = AdŠ 232 (divided by a line), = AdŠ 245? (divided by a line), = AdŠ 248 (divided by guilloche), = AdŠ 251?, = AdŠ 476 (divided by a branch motif) and = AdŠ 786?. They seem to feature rows of animal heads. One fragmentary example, with griffins walking in the lower register is Porada 1947, 42, no. 598. She does specify: "The rows of walking monsters can be compared to and are perps ultimately derived from rows of walking monsters found among the glyptic products of the earliest periods", especially the walking griffin, which recalls the seal imprints from Susa, Delaporte 1920, 49, pl. 44, fig. 10 S 366, and pl. 45, fig. 2 S 368 for proto-Elamite examples.

<sup>35</sup> For attestations of the human head in profile as filling motif see below n. 51.

<sup>36</sup> Because evocative of precious metal decorations?

<sup>37</sup> One exception, albeit with vertical guilloches, is Stein 1993b, 294 = AdŠ 307.

<sup>38</sup> For the first attestations of en face heads/masks see Kelly-Buccellati 1996, 258-260, fig. 11 (ED/old Akkadian from Mari) and fig. 13 (pre-Akkadian Tell Brak).

<sup>39</sup> Porada 1947, nos. 285, 352-413, 1004; Stein 1987, no. 1; Stein 1993b, *passim* = AdŠ 182, = AdŠ 183, = AdŠ 196, = AdŠ 479, = AdŠ 549, = AdŠ 601, = AdŠ 616, = AdŠ 618, = AdŠ 628, = AdŠ 669, = AdŠ 688, = AdŠ 717, = AdŠ 772, = AdŠ 785; Stein 2001, nos. 57, 75/122, 99. See also Porada 1948, no. 947; Kühne 1980, 83-84, no. 38.

<sup>40</sup> For an example applied to the question of ethnicity see Buccellati 2010, 80 and *passim*; Buccellati 2016. Giorgio proposes a structuralist stance, imbued with deep theoretical and even philosophical awareness, combined with bottom-up knowledge of the material culture of Northern Mesopotamia.

<sup>41</sup> Frankfort 1939, 249, pl. XL m, now Porada, Collon 2016, pl. 1 OA 9, OA 10 and OA 11, and Castel 1990, fig. 1; see also Frankfort 1939, 243, text-figs. 72 and 75 (Cappadocian).

<sup>42</sup> So Porada, Collon 2016, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Miglus 2003; Pongratz-Leisten 2015; Rollinger 2017; Suter 2018. For a thorough discussion of the theme of severed heads, see Dolce 2018 and for depiction of war in general, Battini 2016.

<sup>44</sup> A round cap with two horns associated with a beard are also the characteristics of the "Vogelmensch" on the Nuzi king Ithi-teššup's second seal (Stein 1987, 178, fig. 10; Stein 1993b, 498 = AdŠ 659).

relief found in Harput near Elaziğ<sup>45</sup> in the spring of 2016 and dated to the first century and a half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE portrays a siege in ten different frames (fig. 10). In the panel displaying the attack, it features aligned beheaded bodies and severed heads. Interestingly enough, in the adjoining panel a second important image can be found which was surely influential in Nuzi glyptic: that of the snake goddess or southern wind<sup>46</sup> demon-goddess. The latter was not only attested on Babylonian seals from Sippar but, as D. Collon rightly pointed out, showed quite clearly a northern inspiration.<sup>47</sup> Probably it is through this connection that both these motifs were well preserved and, in the case of the winged, wind demons, were repeatedly revived and made use of in several Mitanni seals of high ranking officials or royals.<sup>48</sup>

If, however, we see the heads not as severed but as representing specific persons, a possible source for our row of male heads in profile are the Old Babylonian and Old Syrian<sup>49</sup> glyptic (figs. 11-12). Here too, an unambiguous meaning must have been intentional and well recognisable, irrespective of our ability to decipher and reconstruct this intended content. Even if large parts of the Mitanni glyptic are often inspired by Akkadian predecessors, single heads in profile as filling motif<sup>50</sup> are not attested in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE and first appear in the iconography of the Isin-Larsa/Old Babylonian period.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Demir *et al.* 2016.

<sup>46</sup> For the snake goddess see Buchanan 1971. For the Southern Wind demon (although her hair is not blown by the wind in this case) see Wiggermann 2007; Collon 2017; Luciani 2019. In a Mitanni specimen from Cyprus, see British Museum cylinder seal no. 89332.

<sup>47</sup> Collon 1986, 176.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. the Sauštatar seal, Stein 1988, fig. 42; Stein 1989; Stein 1993b, 528-529, = AdŠ 711, the Iṭhi-Teššup seal, Stein 1988, fig. 10; Stein 1989; Stein 1993b, 498, = AdŠ 659; the Arrunti seal, Lacheman 1950, pl. 118, no. 301; the [Ta]tip-teššup seal, Luciani 2019.

<sup>49</sup> See for example Otto 2000, 111-125, nos. 7, 18, 23 present a very similar horizontal syntax and an association of discrete heads in profile with rows of hares, gazelles or birds. The seals of the “Senkrechte Spalten-Gruppe”, Otto 2000, nos. 35-65, while featuring several row of heads, display a very different organisation of the scene.

<sup>50</sup> In the Ur III period we have the first filling motifs, which are symbolic memes, signifying larger contexts. One example is the introduction of the “spread eagle” (but it really looks like a vulture with something in the beak) in front of the sitting goddess and the worshiper being introduced to the deity, Collon 1982a, 150, no. 390. For the Isin-Larsa period see Blocher 1992b, no. 22 from Isin (period of Išbi-’erra)

<sup>51</sup> According to Moortgat 1988, 32 starting with the Hammurabi period. He does not explain the meaning of this *Nebenmotif*. For examples, see Frankfort 1939, 243, text-figs. 72 and 75 (Cappadocian); Frankfort 1939, 254, text-figs. 73, pl. XXIX a, pl. XLI e (First Syrian Group) and pl. XLII d (Second Syrian Group); Porada 1948, nos. 359, 399, 402, 421, 434, 451, 521, 540 for the Old Babylonian period, Porada 1948, nos. 921, 923, 935 (Green

On Old Babylonian seals representing the sun god Šamaš<sup>52</sup> or a classic presentation/worshipping scene with other deities<sup>53</sup> (fig. 11: a-d), a head appears either in front or at the back of a worshiper offering a kid to the deity so that its association with a cultic/votive context seems arguable. The human head in profile belongs to a number of “small, possibly apotropaic designs”<sup>54</sup> that are added to the seals in this period.

We can recognise at least three types of heads as *Nebenmotif* in the glyptic of the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE. The so-called demonic mask (figs. 11: a and 12) and the head of the human-bull<sup>55</sup> (fig. 11: b) are always represented frontally. But the only one represented in profile, like the ones on the Tišam-mušni seal, are different: they are fully human heads. Because in some instances this head is represented on a seal that already has a depiction of a priest, I am not sure, that is the best interpretation for this icon, as has been suggested.<sup>56</sup> Sometimes this Old Babylonian human head in profile has a recognisable round cap with horns and sometimes it does not (fig. 11). E. Porada thought they were stand-ins for worshippers.<sup>57</sup>

However that may be, it is interesting that none of these heads, nor the demonic mask, for that matter, are reutilised in subsequent Kassite or Middle Assyrian seals even when they continue to use the presentation/worshipping scene. On the contrary, they are enthusiastically adopted from Old Babylonian and especially Old Syrian tradition and revitalised to become enduring symbols in the Mitanni glyptic.<sup>58</sup>

Whichever the source of the heads in profile on Tišam-mušni’s seal may have been, and whether the

Jasper) and no. 911 for the so-called First Syrian Group and down to the Porada 1948, nos. 979 and 980 for the later Second Syrian Group/Mitanni glyptic; Moortgat 1988, 35-45, 110, 114, 115, 131, nos. 294, 341, 350; 1988, 131, no. 519? (Syrian seal).

For earlier attestations in the Isin-Larsa/OB period see Blocher 1992a, 21, 28, 72, 102, nos. 14, 36 (age of Immerum, Isin-Larsa period) always associated with the kid-offering worshiper, nos. 209 (Period of Apil-Šin), 323, 324; Blocher 1992b, 40, no. 59 from Larsa (period between Nūr-Adad and Šilli’-Adad).

For OB attestations see Collon 1986, 92-94, 136, 147, 156-159, 161, 170-171, 173-174, 190-192, 198, nos. 122, 128, 301, 352, 388, 401, 429, 439, 445, 492, 523, 529, 530, 559.

<sup>52</sup> Porada 1948, 40, 49-51, pl. XLIX, no. 346, pl. LVII, no. 399e, pl. LVIII, no. 402, pl. LX, no. 421.

<sup>53</sup> Porada 1948, 40, 53, pl. LXII, no. 434.

<sup>54</sup> Porada 1948, 40.

<sup>55</sup> Frankfort 1939, pl. XXVIe and pl. XXIXh.

<sup>56</sup> Blocher 1992a, 72 “Kopf eines Priesters”.

<sup>57</sup> Porada 1947, 39.

<sup>58</sup> A single head as filling motif: Porada 1947, pls. XLI and LIV, no. 813 and a human (or human-bull?) head is also on Stein 2001, 331, no. 111.

Horizontal rows of single heads with goats or other animals and large bouquet tree: Stein 1993b, 219 = AdŠ 189 and *ibid.*, 252 = AdŠ 706. Also attested in Alalakh Level II (Collon 1982b, 99, no. 81). Rows of single heads, lined up vertically: Stein 1993b, 201 and 242 = AdŠ 171 and = AdŠ 227; 2001, 305, no. 20.

reference was to the annihilation of the enemy, the power and glory of the victor<sup>59</sup> and control of an army or whether the message referred to worshipping and offering in a cultic context, the evidence seems to point to this not being a theme from everyday life, nor the seal displaying a syntax more commonly chosen by the elite.

The lower register of Tišam-mušni's seal presents three couchant plumed griffins, a feature not so often attested in the Mitanni repertoire as other real-life animals. While images of different quadrupeds are very common and seemingly present a direct visual reference to important economic activities of the town of Nuzi and its hinterland, such as animal husbandry,<sup>60</sup> hunt or grazing animals,<sup>61</sup> non-winged, long-plumed griffin (monsters)<sup>62</sup> are extremely rare.<sup>63</sup> They too, must refer to a fantastic, symbolic context.

For the Old Syrian glyptic, A. Otto<sup>64</sup> proposes that the griffin should be interpreted as the "ruling

power or, more in general, the power that destroys the enemy; from this descends its highly apotropaic value". And even if we should heed the warning that "fantastic creatures often undergo profound changes of meaning when changing their habitat"<sup>65</sup> and – I would add – shifting chronological milieus, it is interesting to remark that E. Porada<sup>66</sup> for the Mitanni glyptic accepted H. Frankfort's proposal that "we should regard the griffin as an 'Angel of Death'"<sup>67</sup> and recognise its links with death, burial and the possible powers of the deceased. This interpretation would underscore the strongly apotropaic, and chthonic theme, possibly in both halves of Tišam-mušni's seal.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF ERWE-ŠARRI'S SEAL DESIGN<sup>68</sup> (fig. 4)

Reconstructed size: length: 32 mm, height: 23 mm; diameter: 10.2 mm.

Framed above and below by a double guilloche, the seal is divided longitudinally in equal halves by a third horizontal double guilloche.

The upper register features a small, starred, sun standard framing one demonic mask. Another starred sun disk is carved<sup>69</sup> between the latter and two further demonic masks. The masks present a schematic representation of a flat hat and horns/curls/large ears, exaggerated physiognomic characteristics such as brow, nose and cheek and do not present a beard hanging below the chin.<sup>70</sup>

In the lower register, the same sequence of one plus two demonic masks is partitioned by an eight petals rosette, directly underneath the small standard in the register above. A small star is placed directly under the sun disk to create a mirroring effect throughout the seal.

<sup>59</sup> Dolce 2018; van Dijk-Coombes 2018.

<sup>60</sup> E.g., Stein 1987, no. 22.

<sup>61</sup> E.g., Stein 2001, no. 28, 29, 36.

<sup>62</sup> E. Porada (Porada 1947, 120-122) remarked: "We thus have two representations of the griffin-demon on the sealings of Nuzi: one, the portrayal of a human conjurer-priest who bound the mask over his head and thus became the griffin-demon whose beneficial functions he acted out; the other, the griffin-demon as the genuine superhuman creature in whom the features of the bird (such as the head and claws) were organically combined with a human body". This, however, is not linked to the presence/absence of wings and long plumes per se, as I would propose (see following n. below), but to the two different forms the griffin takes, i.e. a human body wearing a mask as opposed to a *Mischwesen*.

<sup>63</sup> Especially if one distinguishes them from the winged griffins, who also often display a peacock head with feathers on top. The latter are attested much more often in the Nuzi glyptic repertoire than the wingless ones. Out of the over 70 attestations of griffins on the seal impressions of the tablets from Šilwa-teššup's archive (Stein 1993a, 213, i.e. ca. 10% of the repertory), only two have no wings (Stein 1993b, 101 = AdŠ 19; Stein 1993b, 126 = AdŠ 48). For griffins see also Porada 1947, 121 nos. 29, 69, 70, 85, 93, 119, 134, 267, 268. That non-winged, long-plumed griffins should *not* be interpreted as shorthand for winged ones should possibly be evinced from Tipna-meli's seal (Stein 1993b, 101 = AdŠ 19) which features both types in different positions in the same scene. The same could be suggested by the famous seal impressions Porada 1947, 18, pls. VI and LI, no. 93, now also in Stein 1987, 280, no. 48; Porada 1947, 74-78, pls. XLI and LIV, 813.

Three examples where there may have been a winged griffin with a long plume are fragmentary (Stein 1993b, 486 = AdŠ 642; Stein 1993b, 495 = AdŠ 655; Stein 1993b, 516 = AdŠ 691), one seems granted (Stein 1993b, 526 = AdŠ 709). A further example seems Stein 1987, 284, no. 52.

For ambiguities in distinguishing the plumed griffin from a sphinx, especially when the impression is fragmentary see Stein 1993b, 243-244 = AdŠ 229 and = AdŠ 231 (and also, for the Old Syrian period, Otto 2000, 252). At least one of the two sphinxes on Ezira's (above fig. 2) seal also features a long, curling up plume starting from the head, like the ones we see on the three griffins on Tišam-mušni's seal.

<sup>64</sup> Otto 2000, 252.

<sup>65</sup> Frankfort 1937, 106.

<sup>66</sup> Porada 1947, 78.

<sup>67</sup> Frankfort 1937, 121.

<sup>68</sup> Its first publication (Stein 1988, 208-209, no. 40) is based on the impression on tablet HSS XIV, 263 (= Lacheman 1950, pl. 108). The cdl website only has a scan of the published cuneiform copy. A. Löhnert has kindly sent me a copy of an old picture of the tablet. As often is the case, the impressions on bullae are significantly more complete than those on tablets and in this case they show completely both upper and lower end (both double guilloches) and details of the masks (see figs. 4 and 6) not visible on tablets.

<sup>69</sup> Because the limits of this sun disk overlap the hair-ears area of the masks, this feature may have been added as last to the carving of the seal.

<sup>70</sup> As is more commonly the case: see e.g. Ezira's seal (fig. 2). However, the lower line within the profile of the face could indicate a short beard, designer stubble-like.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF ERWE-ŠARRI'S SEAL

The first publication of Erwe-šarri's seal, being an investigation of the mythological contents in the Nuzi glyptic, has underlined the connections of these demonic masks, though seen as beardless, to the bearded demonic mask motif attested on seals such as the king Iṭḫi-Teššup's,<sup>71</sup> as representing or referring to the goddess of the Hurrian pantheon, Ištar-Šawuška.<sup>72</sup> The other elements of the design, the eight-petal rosette and the eight-pointed star, as additional clear symbols for the same deity, worked as an amplification of the same signified meaning.

Contrary to the above discussed discrete heads in profile, bearded, horned, large-eared, human-bull heads shown frontally are clearly developed in the glyptic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE, already within Early Dynastic contest friezes.<sup>73</sup> The motif, sometimes referred to as Humbaba/Huwawa mask,<sup>74</sup> is very well liked in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE (see figs. 11: a and 12)<sup>75</sup> and down the Mitanni period.<sup>76</sup>

While a specific discussion of this motif exceeds the focus of this contribution, Erwe-šarri's seal has been chosen for comparison with Tišam-mušni's because of the similarities of their dossiers of attestations in the written and anepigraphic record, hinting at a likeness in their respective functions as public officials. I propose to see the similarities in the archaizing,<sup>77</sup> but clear-cut syntax of their seals, in both cases starkly different from those of their contemporaries and in both instances obtaining unique, unequivocally identifiable seals, as an intentional signifier linked to their specific, public function.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

Old museum collections are often treasure troves of very relevant material. Nuzi studies have long focused on written documents – and on seal impressions on tablets! – but there is an impressive amount of information to be culled from seemingly unimportant material such as clay sealings, too. Few have shown this better than Marilyn and Giorgio with their work on the seal impressions from the palace of Urkesh.

Tišam-mušni, whose patronymic or titles are not known, is mentioned in and sealed several tablets from the palace dealing with moving goods. His role has been read as that of mayor of a near-by city of the Nuzi kingdom, Turša.<sup>78</sup> B. Lion and M. Sauvage have proposed that he must have been a representative of the palace.<sup>79</sup> A. Löhnert, while studying the palace records, suggested that the reading of his title as [*hazan*]nu, “mayor” needs to be revised<sup>80</sup> and Tišam-mušni's role, though not explicitly stated, must not have been very different from Erwe-šarri's, *šakin bīti ša āl Nuzi*, i.e., that of majordomo of the palace. Because of the synchronisms with the other administrators he signs together with,<sup>81</sup> he was most likely superintendent of the Nuzi palace before Erwe-šarri took up the office, so that they were active at subsequent times.<sup>82</sup>

Whether the cultic / death-related associations here evoked really obtained, Tišam-mušni's seal was well recognisable because unique and distinctive. The fact that the chronologically later Erwe-šarri,<sup>83</sup> whose responsibilities greatly resemble those of Tišam-mušni, makes himself a similar seal, with two registers divided horizontally by a guilloche<sup>84</sup> and two rows of heads – even if different discrete heads – cannot be considered a coincidence. Nor the fact that both these seals propose an archaizing syntax, clearly divergent from the ones most favoured by colleagues.

Palace superintendents Tišam-mušni and after him Erwe-šarri could both easily have relied on elaborate style, complex presentation designs, typically chosen by members of the Nuzi elite. Instead, they chose to refunctionalise old themes, cherished in the Greater Mesopotamian Northern imaginarium, to create distinctive seals, clearly signalling their important role in the palace administration. Not differently than one thousand year earlier one Urkesh public official: “His different choice of iconography, and the independence of this choice, indicate that variations in imagery and style could be an option for high administrators in this time period and context... The choice made by Innin-shadū clearly connected him to the past with

<sup>71</sup> Stein 1993b, 498-500 = AdŠ 659.

<sup>72</sup> Stein 1988, 182.

<sup>73</sup> Porada 1948, no. 85.

<sup>74</sup> Blocher 1992a, 45, 67, 68, 78, 100, 101, nos. 106 (Period of Sabium), 186, 190, 234, 312, 318 (Period of Apil-Sīn); Collon 1986, nos. 149, 288, 389, 451. For different attempt at an iconographic interpretation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE see Kelly-Buccellati 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Porada 1948, 47-48, pl. LV, no. 383: representing the god Nergal?

<sup>76</sup> See e.g., chalcedony cylinder seal British Museum no. 89745.

<sup>77</sup> “The emphasis [in Nuzi] on discrete heads of figures seen already in the third-millennium is striking” Kelly-Buccellati 1996, 264,

<sup>78</sup> Mayer 1978, 15: „[*hazan*]nu, i.e. “Bürgermeister [von URU T] urša”

<sup>79</sup> Lion, Sauvage 2005, 63

<sup>80</sup> Löhnert 2015a, 44, n. 195.

<sup>81</sup> Of the palace records and the repeated joint sealing by these three-four administrators, Postgate (2013, 365-366) writes: “by impressing their seal they are either vouching for the correctness of the contents of the text or supplying proof that they have authorised a transaction it records.” See also Löhnert 2015b.

<sup>82</sup> Löhnert 2015a, 49.

<sup>83</sup> Stein 1988, 199, nos. 40 and 209.

<sup>84</sup> See Wirrištanni's seal Stein 1993b, 253 = AdŠ 248.



all the connotations of this as a mechanism through which he sought recognition for his social and political power”.<sup>85</sup>

A connection to the past, even a millenary one, is shown in many instances in the Nuzi glyptic. Marilyn is surely right in underlining the importance of the braid in the scene showing the queen of Urkesh braiding the hair on at least two seals. It indicates that “the hair style of Uniqtum was one of the symbols of her status and power”.<sup>86</sup> I wonder whether the strength and uniqueness of the symbolic power of that specific sign did not endure for almost one thousand years, to resurface later in the representation of the central figure in Sauštatar’s seal featuring in very prominent position a very similar, very visible long braid.<sup>87</sup> It seems that the essence of the Hurrian visual culture – as detectable through the iconography of the elites’ glyptic – is admixture and through it preservation of old themes and symbols of North(eastern) Mesopotamian and North Syrian culture and thus the re-functionalisation and re-vitalisation of ever evolving and yet enduring identitie(s).<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2015, 124.

<sup>86</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 31.

<sup>87</sup> While this being is only partially human and the braid develops from wings worn by the figure and then goes down the entire back to reach the position of a tail (Stein 1988, 184), it is definitely drawn as a human braid. Its prominence in the picture proves the strength of the message.

<sup>88</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 40.

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Fig. 1. Upper part of image: Seal of Pai-Tilla (upside down). Lower part of image: Seal of Tišam-mušni. SMN 605 (=HSS XIV, 232; SM 1999.02.122). Photo: M. Luciani, Courtesy of the Harvard Semitic Museum.



Fig. 2. Seal of Ezira. SMN 605 (=HSS XIV, 232; SM 1999.02.122). Photo: M. Luciani, Courtesy of the Harvard Semitic Museum.

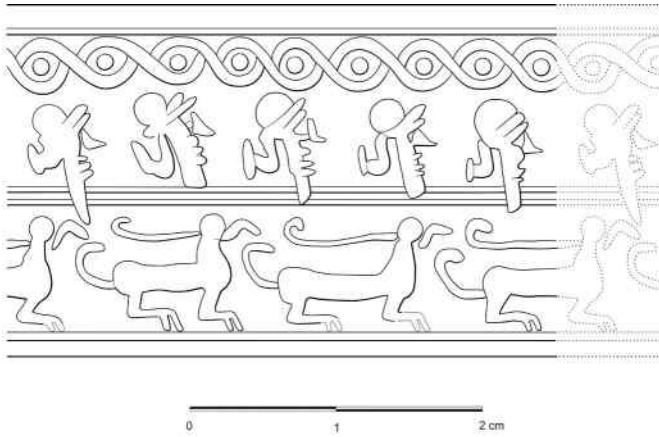


Fig. 3. Composite seal of Tišam-mušni. Reconstruction: M. Luciani; Digital drawing: H. Kosak.

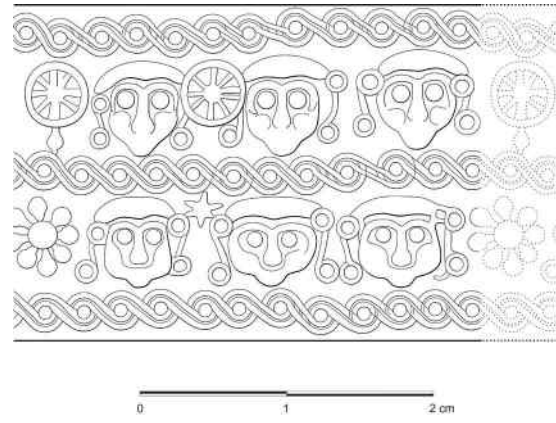


Fig. 4. Composite seal of Erwe-šarri. Reconstruction: M. Luciani; Digital drawing: H. Kosak.



Fig. 5. Recto (with Tišam-mušni's seal impressions) and Verso (with impressions of ropes and wooden peg) of bulla NBN 214a. Photos: M. Luciani, Courtesy of the Harvard Semitic Museum.

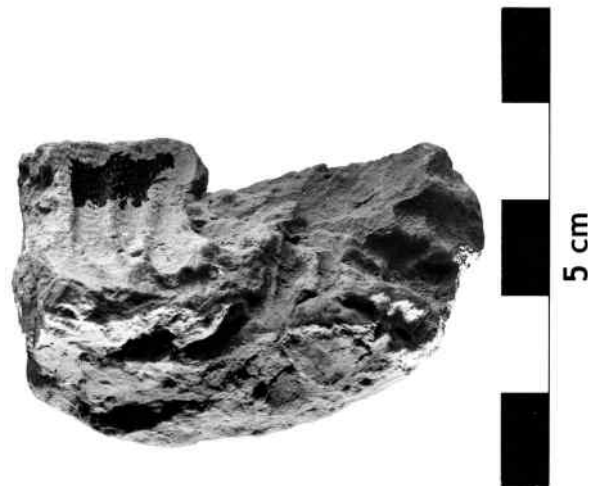
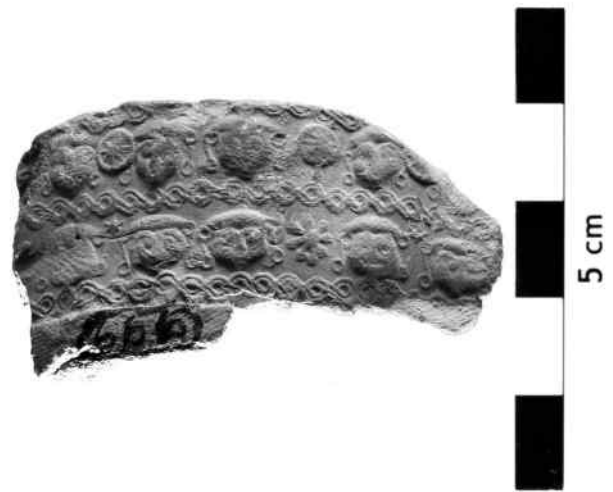


Fig. 6. Recto (with Erwe-šarri's seal impressions) and Verso (with impressions of ropes) of bulla NBN 666. Photos: M. Luciani, Courtesy of the Harvard Semitic Museum.



Fig. 7. Impression on tablet of Puḫi-šenni's / Šurki-Tilla's seal (from Porada 1947, pl. XXXIII, no. 663).



Fig. 8. Modern Impression of Black Hematite Old Assyrian Cylinder Seal. Museum Number 89774. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 9. Modern Impression and Black Hematite Old Assyrian Cylinder Seal from Nimrud. Museum Number 89654. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 10. The Harput Relief (from Demir *et al.* 2016, XI, fig. 3).





399E



402



421



434E

Fig. 11. Modern seal impressions of seals nos. 399e, 402, 421 and 434e (from Porada 1948, pls. LVII, LVIII, LX, LXII).



383

Fig. 12. Modern seal impressions of seal no. 383 (from Porada 1948, pl. LV).

# THROUGH THE EYES OF THE ANCIENTS. THE PERCEPTION OF BEAUTY IN 3<sup>RD</sup> MILLENNIUM SYRIA

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## *Abstract*

The archaeological record is a channel that leads to the understanding of ancient life and the evolution of thought, in this case through the corpus of human representations from the cities of Ebla, Mari and Urkesh. We take a look through their eyes, and see what they deemed as beautiful.

It is a great privilege to write this article in honor of Giorgio and Marilyn Buccellati, my teachers, my mentors and my extended family, with whom I have been working for over 10 years and from whom I learned a great deal.

I chose this topic because I wanted to investigate an issue of interest to all of us: the representative art and the philosophy behind it. I hope it conveys the incredible effect our collaboration had on me as a person and as a student.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. But our eyes are influenced by social and aesthetic considerations imposed on us by years of traditions, or by new trends pushed forward by fashion industry and advertisement companies, to the point of altering and manipulating our perspective, and clouding our judgement regarding what we consider as beautiful.

Striving for beauty has been a quest from the dawn of history. It is in our nature as humans to create beautiful things and to try and become beautiful and aesthetically more appealing. But did the ancients experience what we are experiencing now? In every culture, in all parts of the world, there are desirable features considered as a standard for beauty, like the long neck in some African tribes, the small feet in China, and the overweight women in Mauritania. And these desirable features shifted and changed with time periods. In our modern days, the change is very quick. But in antiquity, the change must have been slower because they did not possess the communication means that we have today, but this did not stop the influence from traveling.

Since the perception of beauty is very different in every culture and in every period, can we see what was the perception of beauty in 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium Syria through the artifacts that were found during excavations?

What actually constitutes beauty in any given era is very complex. Today's world, modifies the images of men and women in ads and art works to fit what we consider as beautiful. But did the ancients do the same thing? Is what we see on seal impressions, reliefs and sculpture, actually a modified image to fit their perception of beauty? Is it possible that all people had large noses like we see them depicted on seal impressions from Urkesh for example? Or where they depicted this way because these were considered aesthetic traits desirable by all? This issue is surely affecting individuality in our modern days, where diversity is being celebrated less and we are molded in to a standard measure of beauty. It would be most interesting from an anthropological point of view, if we can discuss this issue in antiquity as well.

In this article, we will look at the body of anthropomorphic figurines and statues, the depiction of humans on seal impressions and reliefs, to try and determine whether we can see the desirable aesthetic features, and the beauty trends of that time.

It is impossible to consider all the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium sites in this paper, so I chose three different sites: Ebla, Mari, and Urkesh.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. TRENDING IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MILLENNIUM

It is fairly easy to know what was desirable esthetically from the point of view of Romans and Greeks. There are written testimonies, such as what Plato wrote about the structure of the human body and face

<sup>1</sup> The reason behind choosing these sites specifically is 1) these are major cities who had reciprocal influences with other neighboring cities and 2) they cover different geographical areas of Syria which will highlight my point in a good way and 3) Urkesh in particular represents a strong ideological identity.

It would be very interesting to follow the progress of the human representation across a wider area and a longer time period, but this would be beyond the scope of this paper which aims at offering an insight to a very specific period, and opening a discussion on this subject.



as a system of triads. For Greek mathematicians, the number 3 had a special significance. The perfect face was divided into three sections: from hairline to eyes, from eyes to upper lip, and from upper lip to chin. The ideal face was two thirds as wide as it was high.<sup>2</sup>

We can also see it in their sculptures that represent the human body as sleek, fit and hairless, the face with pointed nose, and subtle features. It is however more difficult when dealing with previous periods, as there are no written sources which describe their philosophy regarding beauty, and the body of material culture is very diverse in style.

Looking at the representation of human figure in ritualistic context from the Neolithic period all the way to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, we see a shift in style. The mother goddess representation shifted from a large woman with huge breasts and very wide hips, to a more sleek body with small breasts and only a slight accentuation of the hips.<sup>3</sup> It appears that even the statuettes used in rituals were preferred thinner. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, the mother goddess with the large breast seems to have disappeared. A tendency towards thinner women seems to be the trend, and this assumption is based on the fact that usually, the ritualistic figures are represented bearing desirable traits.

### 2.1. Mari

The art of Mari (Tell Hariri) offers a great insight into the beauty standard of the city. The female statuette from Mari, from the pre Sargonic palace, room 27, which dates back to around 2500 B.C is probably a representation of Ishtar.<sup>4</sup> In this statuette we can see a tendency towards a slim body and small breast, even though it was interpreted as the goddess of fertility and love. There is a slight accentuation on the hips, but it is not exaggerated.

Many other examples from Mari highlight some desirable features of the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, or at least they show a trend, if we can say so. The bold headed males with long pointed beard seemed as a desirable look, as evident from the statue of Shibus, from the temple of Nini-Zaza dating back to 2500-2400 B.C.<sup>5</sup> The man is depicted with a large nose, abnormally large eyes, and a very defined mono brow, which also seem to be fashionable at that period, and it shows in other representations from Mari, such as the female statue from the temple of Ishtar, cella 17, priest's chamber, where the figure has a dispro-

portionately large nose and eyes, and a well-defined mono brow.<sup>6</sup> Another example is the seated female statue also from the temple of Ishtar, with large eyes and a mono brow, all dating back to 2550-2400 B.C.<sup>7</sup> Even the mask that was found in massif rouge temple dating back to 2500-2400 B.C presents the same features, in an even more exaggerated manner.<sup>8</sup>

An interesting example also from Mari, from the temple of Nini-Zaza, is the statuette of Ur-Nansheh.<sup>9</sup> The statuette is dedicated to the goddess Nini-Zaza, which means that it had to be perfect. One would ideally offer the gods the best gift, and in the case of a statue, the best looking one. This would therefore, represent a strong indication of how desirable the large eyes and noses were considered to be, and how appealing the mono brow was.

Someone could say that such desirable features were represented on purpose, because the statuettes described above mostly consisted in offerings for temples, and they were found in sacred spaces, but the male head found at the temple of Nini-Zaza (2660 B.C), seem to confirm the same standard of beauty. This person has been identified as a member of the court, and yet, its image shows all the typical characteristics that we see in the other statues: the extremely large nose, very big eyes and a mono brow.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.2. Ebla

The same type of mono brow can also be found in a specimen from the city of Ebla (Tell Mardikh), from the royal palace G, the administrative quarter (2400-2300 B.C). It is a miniature representation of a male's head (fig. 1), probably of a royal figure.<sup>11</sup>

An interesting example also from Ebla, is the standard of Maliktum, which represents a standing female figure, and the statue of a seated lady. Both were found in palace G and were all represented in a naturalistic way. Matthiae argues that the two figures and the incense burner that were found at a close proximity from one another, are a part of the same miniature representation, and they were probably fixed together on a bronze base (fig. 2). The standing woman is made with wood and covered with silver foil lining, while the seated lady is dressed with a fleeced cloak covered with gold. This, and the difference in size between the two representations, points to an explicit and deliberate indication of the fact that the two figures were not homogeneous: the standing

<sup>2</sup>For more on this subject, refer to Plato 1961.

<sup>3</sup>See the mother goddess representations from Tell Kashkashuk from the Halaf period, and from Tell Aswad.

<sup>4</sup>Parrot 1968, 15-18, fig. 7, pls. IV-VI; Moortgat and Moortgat-Correns 1974, 155; LB no.57; PBA n.10

<sup>5</sup>Parrot 1953, P.208, pls. XXI-XXII; Parrot 1967, 37-39, pls. XII-XIII.

<sup>6</sup>Parrot 1935, 27-28, pl. X 1.

<sup>7</sup>Parrot 1953, 212, plates XXVI 3; Spyket 1981, 110; LB no. 64; PBA no. 98.

<sup>8</sup>Parrot 1952, 196, figs. 2-3, pl. XX.

<sup>9</sup>Parrot 1967, 89-93, pls. XLV-XLVI; Sollberger 1969, 95.

<sup>10</sup>Margueron 2008, 51, fig. 23.

<sup>11</sup>Matthiae 1978, 227, fig. 18.

figure represented a real woman, while the sitting figure represented a precious statue. In fact, the use of gold for the cloak and stool of this figure reproduces, on the one hand, possibly in a realistic way, the extreme preciousness of a votive or cult image of a very peculiar female character, and, on the other hand, stresses the patent difference, in nature itself, from the standing figure, where all the materials employed are different, except for the hairdo, which in both cases is made of steatite.<sup>12</sup>

In this case, both women were represented baring similar facial features, despite the difference in status. Both women had disproportioned large nose, and a mono brow.

The inlay depicting the scene of soldiers leading and executing prisoners found also at the palace G in Ebla (2400-2350 B.C), is a good example of the artistic trend that was very widespread at the time.<sup>13</sup> Although the scene does not depict royal subjects or a deity, the artist followed the same style. All the figures were represented with a large nose, large eyes and very well defined eyebrows, which could be an indication of how aesthetic trends, becomes the norm with time.

What gives the most solid evidence of the desirable features, are the representations of high ranking members of the society and the representation of deities, because no one would represent these figure as what is perceived as hideous or un-desirable features. The same could be said about regular people's representation to some extent, but in this case, the inference cannot be so well-founded.

### 2.3. *Urkesh*

Urkesh (Tell Mozan), the Hurrian city dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C., offers a great insight through its seal impressions, where we can find many representations of the royal family and courtiers.<sup>14</sup>

If we look at the scene from seal impression q2, depicting the royal consort (fig. 3), we can see the king, the queen and their children.<sup>15</sup> The queen is represented with a large nose. In fact, all the characters represented on the seal have a large nose. There could be three interpretations as to why the queen was depicted with a large nose: The first has to do with realism in Urkesh. The artist at the seal workshop did not lack the skills to make a representation with more refined features, so the queen might have had a large nose, but she did not request the artist to make it

smaller or to change her appearance. She is celebrating her appearance, that in our modern day is considered unattractive, but in 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium Urkesh, it could have been quite appealing. The second interpretation is actually the opposite of this opinion. The queen might have had a small nose, but she intentionally requested the artist to depict it in this manner, because the big nose was considered a desirable aesthetic trait, which she did not possess, and if this interpretation is plausible, then Urkesh was influenced by Akkadian or foreign trends more than it is thought so. The third interpretation is that the artist did this on purpose, but not based on the queen's request, but rather as a sign of appreciation and respect, by depicting her in an attractive manner.

The same emphasis on the big nose can be found in seal impression q3, the boar scene, and q4, the Lyre scene.<sup>16</sup> And building on this, the most plausible interpretation would be that the queen probably had a big nose, and requested the artist to depict it as it is, and celebrate her appearance.<sup>17</sup>

The large nose is still very characteristic in the region of Jezirah and lower Anatolia to this day, and this could be an indication of the realistic representation of characters on seal impression. The only difference now, is what we consider as beautiful in our days, which is extremely different from the antiquity.

From the seal impressions of Urkesh, we can see that the female courtiers wore their hair in a bun, while the queen and the princess had either long hair tied with an ornament at the end, or a braid.<sup>18</sup> It is safe to assume that it was a matter of distinguishing the working people from the royal household members, but it could also indicate a preferred hairdo in the eyes of the ancients, giving the fact that important people set the trends in all societies.

As for human statuettes of Urkesh with ritualistic nature, there are two examples available to us: the first one is a statuette of a female (A12.30) that was probably used for medicinal purposes, hence a healing practice.<sup>19</sup> The female was represented with emphasis on the hips and the pubic triangle but with a very thin torso and small breast (fig. 4). The other example comes from an anthropomorphic vessel representing a female, found in the Abi (A12.108), and was probably used in the Abi rituals as medium to communicate with the spirits of the ancestors.<sup>20</sup> This

<sup>12</sup> Matthiae 2009, 282-283, fig 9-11. The argument presented here regarding the two representations is discussed at length in Matthiae's article which is referenced here.

<sup>13</sup> Matthiae 1989c, 32-39, fig. 2, pl. IV.

<sup>14</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2010b.

<sup>15</sup> Buccellati, Kelly- Buccellati 1995.

<sup>16</sup> Buccellati, Kelly- Buccellati 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Queen Uqnitum asserted her power as the primary wife and the mother of the crowned prince through her seal images, which depict her in this manner. This was most probably done on her request. For more on this, refer to Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1996; and Kelly-Buccellati 2010a.

<sup>18</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Recht 2014.

<sup>20</sup> For the analysis of the function of the Abi and its finds, refer to

statuette is very round, because it served as a container for a liquid (oily aromatic substance most probably), and it has very small breasts, unproportioned to the rest of the round body, which implies a tendency towards small breasts even for representations of ritualistic nature.

Another aspect that could shed light on the ancient's perception of beauty, is the representation of garments. The ruffled garments with geometric triangular patterns, executed in a parallel and even way, suggests a tendency towards structured shapes which are pleasant to look at. This tendency towards geometric patterns can be seen not only in clothing styles from the three cities, but in architecture and material culture as well. Striving to achieve geometrical equilibrium was obviously a goal, which implies a very refined sense of visual aesthetics. One example that could serve this case very well, is the mirrored sector in the royal place of Urkesh. The service wing of the royal palace, sectors A, B, C and D are built as a mirrored plan, with minor exceptions in sectors D and C.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BEAUTY

Freud explains bodily beauty as originating from the sexual drive: through a transformation, sexual attraction is moved away from the primary sexual characteristics (reproductive organs) and instead to the secondary sexual characteristics.<sup>22</sup>

As I mentioned before, the mother goddess representation had all the sexual characteristic very exaggerated,<sup>23</sup> but the face is blank and emotionless. And as the human experience evolved and matured, more concentration was placed on other attributes, the ones that could reflect an inner beauty as well as exterior beauty, which is a major leap in the evolution of human thought.<sup>24</sup> And the women in particular are no longer represented as mere sexual objects.

It has also been suggested that finding someone attractive has to do with our perception of their fertility. For example, in women, a low waist-to hip ratio, where there are more fat deposits around the hips as compared to the waist, were considered more attractive in many different time periods. These women were seen as healthier and reproductively viable. Interestingly, studies have shown that women with high waist to hip ratios are generally less healthy, with higher incidences of diabetes and infertility.<sup>25</sup>

Figurines from many sites in Syria, among them Mari, Ebla and Urkesh especially towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, exhibit these traits. Even the ones that are considered to be abstract representation of the anthropomorphic figure, or not the most realistic in their representation of features and proportions, such as the clay figurines from Ebla,<sup>26</sup> where we see an emphasis on the hips, the small breasts, and the pubic triangle. In the representations from Urkesh, we see sexual attributes are almost always emphasized but not sexuality.<sup>27</sup>

I am in no way suggesting that this emphasis on the hips and low waist was a result of the ancient's knowledge about the link between fertility and these traits. I am simply referring to the fact that this intentional emphasis is connected with the idea of fertility.

This emphasis on sexual attributes rather than sexuality which could be deeply connected with our subconscious survival instincts, is in my opinion one of the earliest steps of thought evolution where the body of women is celebrated instead of being objectified.

In order to better understand how the minds of the ancient perceived beauty, we have to understand the influence of the image in a non-reading society.<sup>28</sup>

The way we value beauty is an argument deeply connected with our psychology. Our judgment about things is dependent on their setting, and on the context. We are more likely to think that someone is beautiful if we learn that he/she did some heroic act for example, and we are more likely to appreciate music if it is played in an opera house, by a famous musician, on a Stradivarius instrument<sup>29</sup>. By the same logic, it is more likely that the ancients were led to find beauty in the high ranking officials of the state, the hero's representations in folk stories and the royal family members. It is not surprising that they would have perceived their

Kelly-Buccellati 2005; 2016.

<sup>21</sup> F. Buccellati 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Freud 1953.

<sup>23</sup> See Maqdissi 1995, 176, figs. 26-28.

<sup>24</sup> Plato wrote that "Beauty is not just any Form. It bears some close relationship to the good" (Plato, *Symposium*, 296 d), the argument is of interest as it deals with the human's thought on beauty and the link between beauty and morals.

<sup>25</sup> Darwish 2009.

<sup>26</sup> For further reading on the terra cotta figurines mentioned here, one can refer to publications by Badre 1980; and Ramazzotti 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Ramazzotti 2011 mentions the notion of sexual attributes rather than sexuality.

<sup>28</sup> This notion is discussed in Pinnock 2014.

<sup>29</sup> The *Washington Post* wrote an article about an experiment made by Joshua Bell, one of the best concert violinist in the world who played for free, for 45 minutes, on a violin worth 3.5 million dollars at a subway station. Over a thousand people passed by Bell, only seven stopped to listen, including a 3-year old boy, and only one person recognized him, which could prove how our evaluation of beauty depends on the setting and the presentation. To read more about the experiment, refer to the article by Gene Weingarten entitled *Pearls before breakfast* published in the *Washington Post* on April 8, 2007, or refer to this link: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/pearls-before-breakfast-can-one-of-the-nations-great-musicians-cut-through-the-fog-of-a-dc-rush-hour-lets-find-out/2014/09/23/8a6d46da-4331-11e4-b47c-f5889e061e5f\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.7175c6f9c9eb](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/pearls-before-breakfast-can-one-of-the-nations-great-musicians-cut-through-the-fog-of-a-dc-rush-hour-lets-find-out/2014/09/23/8a6d46da-4331-11e4-b47c-f5889e061e5f_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7175c6f9c9eb)

features and their attire as very desirable, hence unconsciously setting a mental template.<sup>30</sup>

The constituents of beauty are not arbitrary, and people from the same ethnic group or the same cultural sphere agree on a mutual beauty standard, according to Darwin.<sup>31</sup> This notion could explain, to some extent, the difference in beauty standards between Mari and Ebla on the one hand, and Urkesh on the other.

Aside from the influence of the cultural sphere, the mental templates that are formed in an area, are very susceptible to other elements. Landscape, being one of these elements, can have a major influence on our taste and perceptions. A mountainous landscape, in the case of the Hurrians in Urkesh, had an effect on many aspects of their life, such as architecture for instance.<sup>32</sup> And in this light, it might have had a big effect on their thoughts regarding beauty. Another element that could have a strong effect on the mental templates is of an ideological nature. The fact that Urkesh was a major Hurrian religious center,<sup>33</sup> strongly established the ideological identity of the city and made it less susceptible to influences from outside. Whereas in the case of Mari and Ebla, both major metropolitan cities, we see more interactions and exchange of cultural influences, which is why we see many similarities in the desirable aesthetic traits, and faster change in these beauty standards with the arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium.<sup>34</sup>

Urkesh was probably not excluded from these influence, especially because we know that the daughter of Naram-Sin, the king of Mari, was married to the king of Urkesh, and that there was an alliance between the two cities through dynastic marriage. This is evident from the seal impressions found at Urkesh bearing her name and the names of her courtier, and from the shift in sealing style into an Akkadian style.<sup>35</sup> Yet the body of art work dating to this period that we have from this city retained its Hurrian identity.<sup>36</sup> Further excavations at Urkesh could change this scenario, as there is still the formal wing of the royal palace to be excavated, which holds a great potential, especially from the cultural material aspect, and we might learn that the Akkadian influence had a much greater effect of the Hurrian ideology.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Kant 1914.

<sup>31</sup> Darwin 1871.

<sup>32</sup> For the effect of the mountainous landscape on Hurrian architecture, refer to Buccellati 2016; 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Buccellati, Kelly- Buccellati, 2001.

<sup>34</sup> We know of the relations between Mari and Ebla from the many literature that was written in this regard: see for example Catagnoli 2012; Pinnock 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002.

<sup>36</sup> It is unfortunate that I am not able to discuss this issue further because the material involved are yet to be published.

<sup>37</sup> For more on the Hurrian Ideology, refer to Buccellati, Kelly-

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Even though the body of material culture from the three cities discussed here is very diverse in nature, it still offers an insight into the minds of the ancients.

Tracing the perception of beauty from the ancient time, to our modern days, sheds light on one of the aspects of the evolution of human thinking.

Knowing the desirable features and preferred appearance in the eyes of the ancients, might not hold a great deal of importance when looking at it from a narrow and direct angle. But if we widen our view on this subject and interpret these finds, we discover a new window into the progress and the maturity of the human mind on the one hand, and on how the psychological effect of power figures was dominant even in these early periods on the other hand. And on that notion, I would like to think that the first transformation from a sexually driven representation of women into a fertility driven one, was done by a woman artist, hence giving us the oldest record of a feminist movement! A beautiful notion, if only could be proven!

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Fig. 1. Miniature head found at the royal palace G at Ebla, TM.77.G.220. Matthiae 1978, 227, fig. 18.

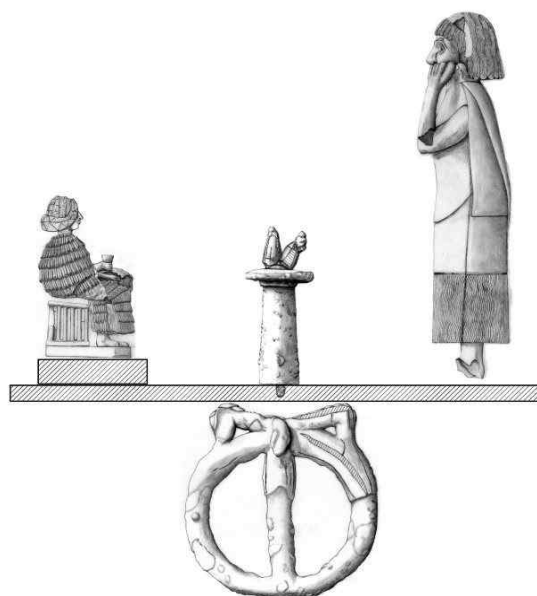


Fig. 2. Reconstruction of the two figures TM.07.G.230, and TM.07.G.231 from royal palace G at Ebla, together with the incense burner.



Fig. 3. Seal q2 the royal consort, from Urkesh. Buccellati 1996, 10, fig. 4. Rendering by Pietro Pozzi.



Fig. 4. Female statuette from Urkesh (A12.30). Photo courtesy of IIMAS

# THOUGHTS ON ANCIENT TEXTUAL SOURCES IN THEIR CURRENT DIGITAL EMBODIMENTS

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## *Abstract*

The paper provides an overview on the current status of Digital Humanities projects concerned with the edition of cuneiform texts, as well as on academic education aimed at the implementation of ad-hoc digital tools for philological and historical research. It argues that basic skills in both programming languages (scripting in Python or Perl) and data visualization are becoming crucial to contemporary scholars, in order to deal with an ever increasing amount of on-line, open-access, complex information. In turn, this new way of approaching ancient textual sources must be paired with a proper conceptual framework for the digital representation of ancient texts, their encoding, and deep structure(s). As a case study to test the potential of a scripting-oriented approach to philological research, a survey of the similarity between three large lexical repertoires is provided (Old Akkadian, Old Babylonian, and Old Assyrian): as the outcome shows a slightly more pronounced proximity of Old Akkadian to Old Babylonian, the formulation of the problem in digital terms exemplifies how the above-mentioned methodologies may contribute in achieving results in such complex domains.

I would like to present the following considerations as a small token of gratitude to Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, who shared with me their profound knowledge on all matters concerning the ancient Near East, in both Tell Mozan (Syria) and Beola (Italy). Their willingness to discover, explore, and understand human past using innovative methodologies is a constant source of inspiration to me, as it is their kindness and friendship.

## 1. ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTS AS BIG DATA

Despite the fact that Assyriology, as a discipline, has a history of a little more than a century and a half, it appears to be still in its infancy.<sup>1</sup> Every year, specialists have to confront themselves with new texts that provide fresh insights on crucial aspects of Mesopotamian civilizations: social history, politics, economy, historical geography, etc. The abundance of information is in fact overwhelming, to the point that most scholars in the field of Ancient Near Eastern studies are forced to build their expertise

around specific sub-periods of Mesopotamian history. Although there is plenty of scholarly work to go around, many would agree that the future of cuneiform studies is uncertain. In fact, talks and articles on what will happen to Assyriology in the next couple of decades are rather frequent.<sup>2</sup> Leaving aside for the moment the debate on the importance of such field of inquiry within the humanities, most scholars assume that the Ancient Near East, as a historical problem, must be understood as a whole. Of course, this is not to say that long *durée* approaches to Mesopotamian matters are justified *a priori*. But especially in the eyes of historians involved in the study of later periods, it would be unwise not to try to achieve broad conclusions on such crucial phase of the human past, especially since we have at hand exceptionally detailed and diverse primary sources, covering roughly three millennia of written history. However, the very amount of information we can retrieve from cuneiform documents raises profound methodological issues, which are in fact a concern in all scientific fields dealing with big data (including hard sciences): how can we achieve both a general understanding of large-scale factors and in-depth knowledge of micro-events, in all sorts of complex (and sometimes complicated) variations? To scholars in hard science, perhaps the term big data may sound inappropriate here: however, this is because of a common misconception on what a text actually is.

<sup>1</sup> If one has to pick a precise date, most scholars would agree on 1851. In that year, the four major scholars in the field were invited by the Royal Asiatic Society to prove (or disprove) that they could independently translate Akkadian with confidence and mutual coherence. The four gentlemen who took part to this experiment were: Sir Henry Rawlinson, Edward Hinks, Julius Oppert, and Fox Talbot. It is amazing to me that the latter invented the calotype process, a precursor to photographic processes. In less than two centuries, we went from calotype to 3D scan of cuneiform tablets.

<sup>2</sup> Westenholz 2006.

In a broad sense, a text is of course a sequence of signs, arranged in such a way as to produce meaning to a reader (i.e. decoded, not necessarily by a human). However, almost all words in such definition have profound implications in terms of semiotics, grammar, theoretical linguistics, and digitization practice. What is a sign? What does “meaning” mean in such context? What are the rules for arranging graphemes and signs? What does encoding/decoding imply? Unfortunately, answering such questions would take more space than it is here permitted. It is however important to note that a state-of-the-art digital representation of ancient textual sources must necessarily embed not only transliterations and photos, but also all possible meaningful relations between their constituents. As for photos, constituents are region of interests – in turn loosely defined as boundaries or borders (of an inscribed object, or of parts of it having gradient above a certain threshold); as for text, constituents are of both linguistic and non-linguistic nature: minimal visual units within the writing system, graphemes, signs. Now, signs within text carry by definition semantic information, and probably phonetic information as well, i.e. they express a language. Besides phonology, language has obviously morphology and syntax, which imply again sets of rules and relations between their constituents (morphemes and words). Now, if we accept that understanding text implies to be able to spot regular structures within its entities, i.e. to be able to manipulate relations and correlations, the best approach to dig meaning out of text is probably a network approach. If we are to capture not only all of the above-mentioned entities, but also all possible relations between such entities, the amount of information to be handled explodes to astronomical numbers (quite literally, see below). This is true even for relatively small textual samples, such as for instance the Ebla archives: <http://ebda.cnr.it>. Presently, the database includes 3069 tablets, 276,369 words in total, 14,791 unique words, 1,822 unique readings, 533 unique signs (including numbers). In a recent article,<sup>3</sup> I produced a graph showing the prosopographical connections within the Ebla archive (still preliminary, as the edition process is ongoing). I did so taking advantage of the fact that the database contains 38,702 lemmatized words, out of which roughly 24,000 are marked as personal names (corresponding perhaps to 3,000 individuals, as a given name may occur several times within the archive, with variations in spellings). It turns out that inquiring what personal names are shared between two or more tablets (i.e. building dossiers based on prosopography) implies parsing roughly 200.000

relations. Although this is already challenging to a human, the hardest part is still to come: each of those relations may in turn have second-order relations with other entities. Let us consider for instance technical terms commonly found in accountable entries, such as income, outcome, receipt, exchange, etc. The question is: what individuals are related by what kind of administrative relation to what other individuals? This implies parsing selected second-order relations within a much larger graph, finding bridges between the nodes of a three-mode network (tablets, individuals, technical terms). We might add still other elements having a possible meaningful correlation to the ones considered so far, such as palaeographical variations bearing chronological significance, in order to study how their use correlate with personal names and/or administrative patterns. It is hard to estimate how much information (in the form of relations between nodes) such graph would contain. I may just add here some considerations to give at least a hint of the quantities involved. Let us imagine a graph having all words attested within the Ebla archives as nodes. Two nodes are connected by an edge if they have a relation of some kind, be it palaeographical, linguistic (they share the same root), contextual (they happen to be in the same text), etc. It is easy to see that any given word has probably a relation of some kind with any other within the graph. Therefore, the graph is a complete one. Now, such graph contains 38,189,773,896 relations ( $\sim 4 \times 10^{10}$ ), but again this merely scratches the surface of all possible graphs we may build out of our relatively small dataset. A larger corpus, such as the one for Ur III texts, which is at least an order of magnitude larger, may easily have  $10^{12}$  word relations, which is an order of magnitude greater than the numbers of stars in the milky way. To me, this is surprising. It may turn out that there are more relations in the cuneiform dataset than there are stars in the observable universe. To be more explicit, this is a pretty large data-set.

## 2. THOUGHTS ON CURRENT DIGITALITY

In the past 20 years, Assyriologists familiarized themselves with a number of new acronyms: ArchiBab, BDTNS, CDLI, DCCLT, EbDA, ePSD, ETCSL, OCHRE, ORACC – the list is long.<sup>4</sup> These projects provide abundant open-access material for the study of ancient Near Eastern textual sources, usually in the form of searchable transliterations, photos, and/or English translations. Given that on-line projects are flourishing, it is becoming increasingly clear that historians and philologists of cuneiform sources must increase their stock of knowledge, as to include

<sup>3</sup> Maiocchi 2016, 148-152.

<sup>4</sup> Charpin 2014.



digital tools such as database (MySQL, PostgreSQL, etc.), network analysis (Gephi), programming languages (Python, Perl, XML). However, many fellow colleagues openly refuse to do so, stating that they either don't have time enough to learn how to use such tools, or that they already put much effort in learning Sumerian and Akkadian, or simply that they are not interested in doing so. The latter two arguments are statements of laziness, to be dismissed. The first one is instead worth commenting. Before I move on, I would like to stress here that these arguments are in striking contrast with the attitude in archaeological research. Many archaeologists are in fact happy to expand their methodologies as to include satellite imagery, remote sensing (LIDAR, geoscanner), 3D spatialization software, Global Information Systems programs, X-Ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy, etc. Such diverse technological skills aimed at recovering as much information as possible from the remote past are considered a requisite for most contemporary archaeologists. There can be little doubt that in the next decades these methodologies will be given for granted. Going back to the not-enough-time argument, this may be easily debunked: the time spent to learn digital humanities tools is not only quickly repaid in full, but it will certainly free up much time to do further research, and in a more creative way, enabling along the way new stimulating questions. A digital approach toward philology has also the added bonus of producing data that may be exploited by other scholars, thus making research a collective effort useful to all – as it should be. Assyriologists spend in fact much of their time to format data in a specific way, so that they may be able to achieve conclusions on the basis of the evidence thus gathered. Clearly, the discussion of the evidence is the only thing here that is truly philological in nature – sadly enough, all the preliminary filing work is just a time-consuming activity that has little to do with the way research should be carried out. For instance, one may be interested in selected key terms within Akkadian and Sumerian documents. Probably, such inquiry would start from current dictionaries (PSD, CAD, AhW, etc.). In order not to miss important pieces of evidence, research would then move to check what is there in on-line projects. Unfortunately, many text corpora are not yet lemmatized, which implies to perform a long series of queries, as spellings and morphology attached to the terms one intends to study may vary considerably. Different transliteration conventions further complicate the quest. Quite often, one ends up populating a spreadsheet or database with existing legacy transliterations from a number of different sources: on-line repositories, legacy transliterations circulating in Assyriological environment, searchable pdfs, etc. The disturbing fact is that information is there somewhere, but it is hard to extract it and

present it in a useful way. This happens because most on-line transliterations of cuneiform texts, despite the fact that they are digital in nature, are conceptualized pretty much as on-screen versions of a printed book. This is not to diminish the value of such data, but admittedly there is much more to do with fully digital transliterations, which may embed links to internal and external data. Certainly, good progress has been made in this direction, taking advantage of modern mark-up languages, such as XML. This is a standard to mark “words” by means of special tags, which are usually declared (i.e. explained in terms comprehensible to a machine) in the initial section of the individual files (heading). It is worth to mention here the pioneering approach to lemmatization put forward by G. Buccellati back in the late 70s:<sup>5</sup> the effective in-line encoding he conceived, which are reminder of contemporary mark-down system in terms of simplicity and human readability, are still in use to encode the input files of the current EbDA project. For instance, all personal names are preceded by p\_, all toponyms by g\_, etc.<sup>6</sup> More importantly, the little extra effort to embed useful information within transliterations allows for very powerful searches and string manipulation within the database. For instance, the above-mentioned encoding allows for extracting the complete list of personal names and toponyms out of transliterations. Of course, much work is still to be done. Open linked data is in fact still a desideratum in Assyriological editions of cuneiform texts. In this regard, let us consider the standard edition of a cuneiform tablet. It usually includes photo, copy, transliteration, translation, and commentary of noteworthy features as emerging from the document. Unfortunately, these components are almost invariably unrelated. There is no way for a computer to guess that a given word in the transliteration is translated in a certain way elsewhere in the document, nor that it is commented in the commentary section, despite the fact that the information is there. It is equally impossible to extract a palaeographic repertoire of signs and readings out of the edited texts. In other words, present texts editions are not much different from those of the early days of Assyriology. Unfortunately, few people think digitally, not only in our field, but in the humanities in general. This is of course due to the fact that the digital revolution happened perhaps too quickly. A generation of digital teachers – meaning people who educate students not only to use certain pieces of software, but more importantly how to think digitally – is still to be born.

<sup>5</sup> Buccellati 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Di Filippo *et al.* 2018.

### 3. BEYOND CURRENT LIMITATIONS IN ASSYRIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Although lemmatization is in my view an inescapable step toward digital Assyriology, it is a time-consuming process. While machine learning algorithms and artificial neural networks are being tested for automatic translations of Ur III administrative documents,<sup>7</sup> one has to find a work around current limitations in the digital representation of cuneiform inscriptions. I believe that scripting techniques may provide good help to this extent. As for me, I first came across programming languages during my PhD, as I had to produce extensive indexes of cuneiform terms attested in the corpus of Old Akkadian tablets I was editing, later published as CUSAS 13. I quickly realized that the cut-and-paste operations I was performing followed predictable patterns. Therefore, a relatively simple program should be able to do the same. I spent two weeks learning the basics of Perl, which saved me a month or two of tedious work. I have been using it since then, for many of my projects, as a convenient way to extract and format textual data out of ancient text corpora. I also used it to update the UGR programs, which are used to build the on-line digital discourse on Urkesh, as conceptualized by the *festschrift's* honourees (<http://www.urkesh.org/>). I would like to stress here that I am not a professional programmer, but I am definitely able to provide a computer with a list of tasks to do following a certain logic. Perl is an open source programming language, poorly known outside of the informatics world, almost entirely unknown among scholars of the Ancient Near East. However, it was in fact conceived by a linguist, Larry Wall, who put a lot of effort to produce a very flexible language, whose syntax reminds of plain English. Perl is multi-platform, so it can be installed on every kind of machine (Linux, Mac, Windows). Presently, it is massively used in on-line servers to manage webpages. The power of Perl lies in the fact that it is meant to deal with strings of text, performing all sort of useful operation for a philologist, most notably smart pattern matching. Because of this, it is often referred to as a scripting language. In fact, users are required to fill a plain text file with instruction on what Perl should do with texts given as input. An extensive set of “plugins” to deal with natural languages is freely available on-line, despite the fact that there is still very little related to cuneiform texts. It must be noted here that Perl is not the only possible choice for manipulating text files: other programming languages such as Python – the preferred choice for science – can

do the job. Let me here illustrate the potential of scripting with a practical example. Being focused on the third millennium BCE, I often come across terms that are either not attested in later periods, or they pop in and out of existence throughout Mesopotamian history. When this happens, it raises all sort of questions to me: how does the lexicon of Mesopotamia vary as a function of space and time? What is the decay rate of the lexical repertoires, conceived as a whole? Can we map lexical change as a function of political and social change? What are the implications of the introduction of a new spelling? Is it a random mutation or an indication of a change in scribal education? Can we read the history of scribal education throughout millennia looking at how lexicon evolved? What lexical terms are shared between the individual cuneiform text corpora? Answering such questions would of course require a book or two. Here, I will re-formulate the last question, considering a much more limited, technical domain. Given that Old Akkadian shows morphological features common to both Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian,<sup>8</sup> I wondered whether Old Akkadian is lexically closer to the former, or to the latter. Such inquiry would certainly take months of tedious work: one has to file all terms belonging to the individual periods and check what is attested when. Having at hand a digitized version of the Akkadian dictionary, I converted it to a text file encoded in UTF8, then I parsed it using Perl and regular expressions. It took me an afternoon to write down the script that produces a graph file, to be spatialized in Gephi (a tabular representation of data is detrimental in this case) (fig. 1). It turns out that Old Akkadian sits slightly closer to Old Babylonian than to Old Assyrian in terms of lexicon. Admittedly, this leaves me a bit disappointed, as I was hoping for a more thought-provoking scenario. However, my point is that to achieve the same results using only traditional methods (i.e. manually checking paper dictionaries) would have required too much time. Of course, this approach opens up new perspectives on Akkadian historical linguistics, to be discussed elsewhere.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

From the discussion above, it appears that I frequently end up using network representation of data, regardless of the subject of my research. This is not by chance, as the reconstruction of history and ancient languages is often a matter of understanding relations, which in turn are the very subjects of graph and network theory. I argued that a graph

<sup>7</sup>Pagé-Perron *et al.* 2017.

<sup>8</sup>Hasselbach 2007.

representation of data is often the most useful one, as all links in the data-set are immediately apparent. In addition, a visual display of data often fosters questions on the structure of graph: what are its core structures? What features are visually striking? What happens in its core and periphery? Quite surprisingly, a graph-oriented approach provides a new conceptual framework for dealing with ancient texts as well (in fact, the same is true for any highly connected data-set made of discrete structures, including archaeological objects). Not only linguistic and non-linguistic information of ancient texts may be conceived as a graph, but graphs relating different entities may be related to one another. A graph whose nodes represent words in cuneiform documents may be expanded adding a second class of nodes representing time periods (thus making it a two-mode network). In turn, the resulting graph may be expanded with nodes representing tablets where the words occur (a three-mode network), and so forth. It is quite instructive to consider the spatial properties of such graph. If we take the nodes belonging to the individual modes (words, tablets, period of attestation, etc.) and place them in individual parallel planes, we see a 3-D representation of text, where each plane represents a slice of data. In such scenario, we may imagine planes representing tablets, having nodes corresponding to the words attested in them (figs. 2, 3). Two such planes touch each other in all points representing a word in common. One may say that the identity relation (word<sub>2</sub> in plane<sub>1</sub> = word<sub>2</sub> in plane<sub>2</sub>) bends the planes as to make them touch. If the word in common has also the property of being attested in the same period, the period plane fits in between the other two planes, touching them in the same point. Finding relations thus becomes a problem of topology. Once all possible relations are encoded in our data-set, we may build a space where all possible correlations are self-evident. At that point, queries in database become obsolete, and philologists may finally put their efforts in understanding things without the need of formatting data. Until this becomes the standard methodology to find correlations in data, scripting remains in my opinion an excellent way to perform

data mining, overcoming limitations of current research, and contributing to limit the issue of over-sectoralisation in our field.

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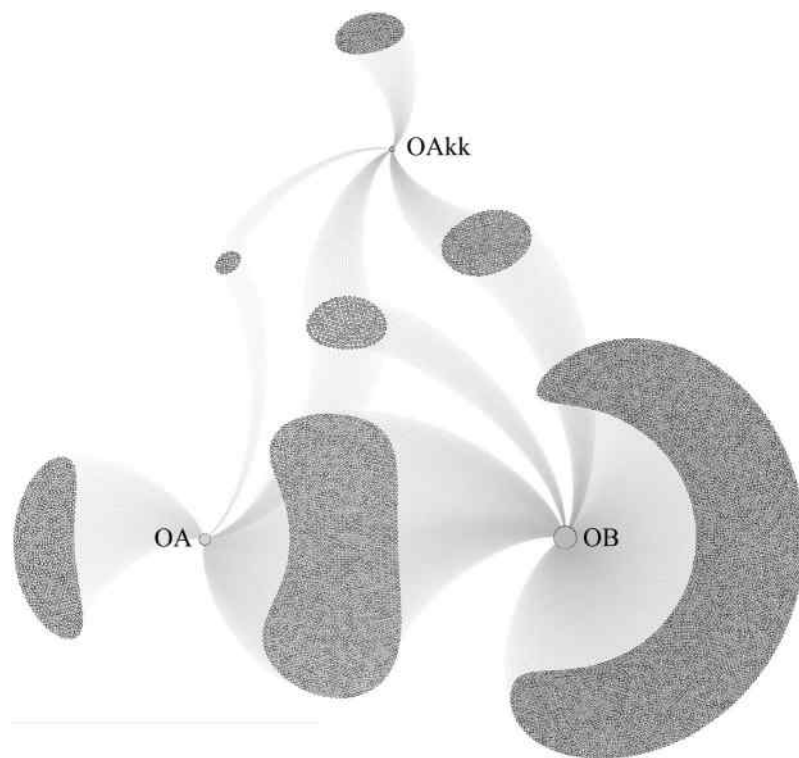


Fig. 1. A two-mode graph showing the connections between Old Akkadian (= OAKk, top), Old Assyrian (= OA, bottom left) and Old Babylonian (= OB, bottom right) lexical repertoires. The dotted blobs in between those nodes are made of nodes representing individual lexemes.

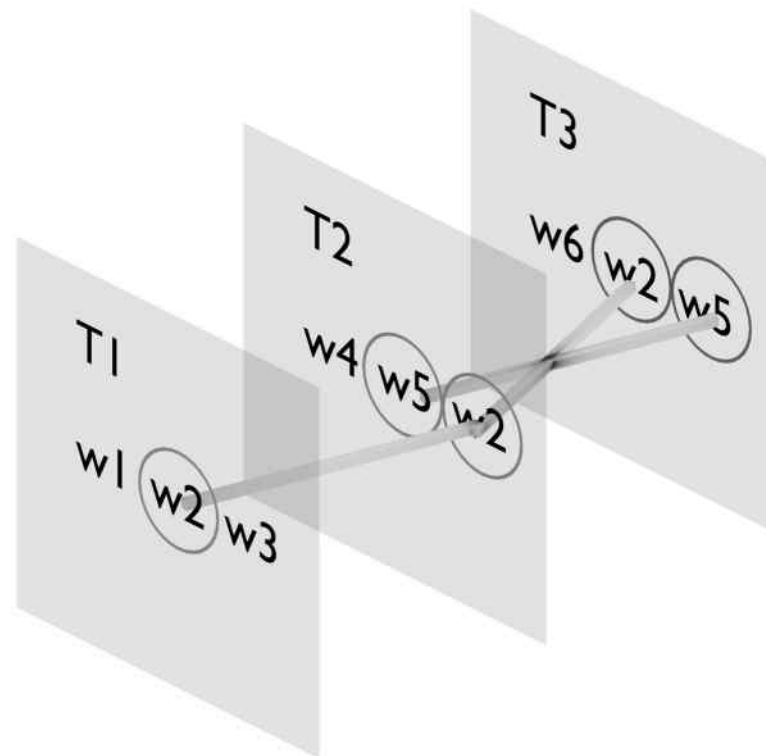


Fig. 2. Conceptual scheme representing three texts (T1, T2, T3), each having three words in it (w1, w2, ..., w6). Some words (w2, w5) occur in more than one text, thus forming prosopographical connections.

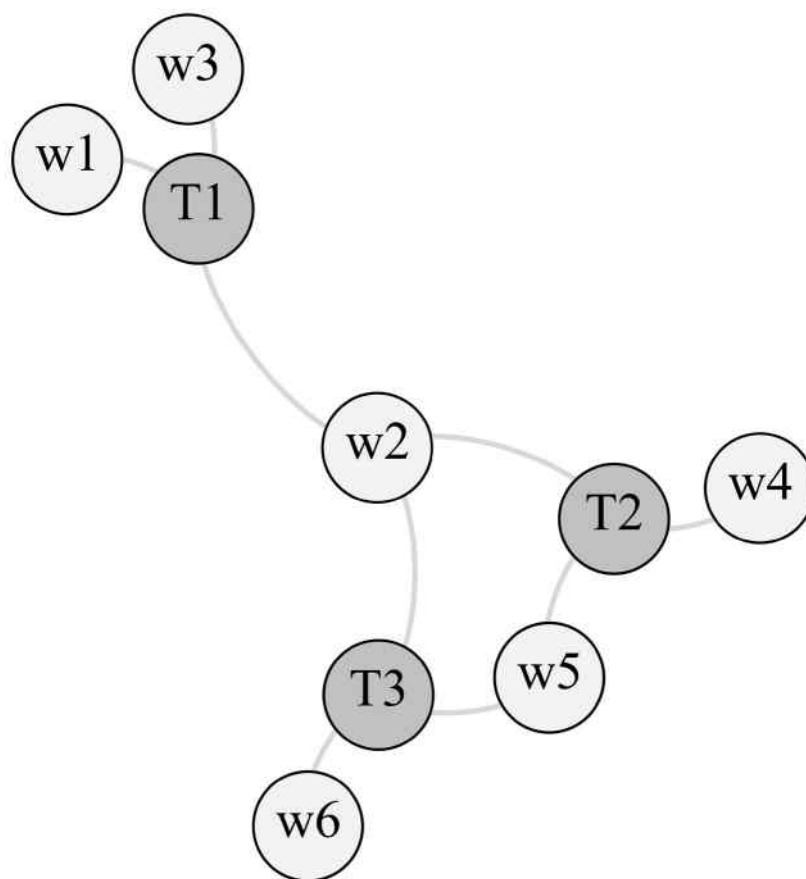


Fig. 3. Graph representation of the texts illustrated in fig. 2. Adding further modes (such as nodes representing the period of attestation) would result in words being more connected, albeit indirectly. With enough modes, the derived word graph is going to be a complete one (all words are connected to all others).

## LES MURS DE KILIZU\*

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### *Abstract*

The texts found at Qasr Shemamok-Kilizu mention the presence of urban walls, both in the late Bronze Age than during the Neo-Assyrian period. Their remains are still visible in the modern landscape. The archaeological excavation, helped by magnetic and geomorphological surveys as well as by the study of satellite images, allowed a better understanding of their nature and evolution.

C'est A. H. Layard qui, lorsqu'il visita pour la première fois Qasr Shemamok (fig. 1), en 1852, a pu associer le site à l'empire assyrien, ayant reconnu sur des briques le nom de Sennachérib, mentionné avec celui d'une ville dont il avait pu copier les signes cunéiformes sans être capable de les lire.<sup>1</sup> Le texte, publié par la suite par Rawlinson, faisait référence aux opérations de reconstruction, par ce souverain, des murs de la ville de Kalzu/Kilizu, nom lu alors KAK-zu.<sup>2</sup> Différentes versions de cette inscription ont été retrouvées sur des centaines de briques cuites, toujours recopiée à la main par des scribes (on ne voit jamais les traces qu'aurait dû laisser un tampon), avec quelques variantes sans incidence sur la signification du texte. La première lecture semblait établir une claire distinction entre les murs intérieurs et les murs extérieurs : « Sennachérib, roi de l'univers, roi d'Assur, a édifié, en briques cuites, le mur intérieur et le mur extérieur de la cité de Kalzi ». L'interprétation du passage mentionnant précisément le ou les murs de la ville a fait couler beaucoup d'encre depuis la première copie, par Rawlinson, de l'inscription sur la brique déposée au British Museum où on lisait, dans un contexte manifestement érodé et restitué, « BĀD u šá-al-hu », « les murs (intérieurs) et les murs extérieurs ». Cette lecture s'appuyait sur la comparaison avec d'autres inscriptions de Sennachérib où la distinction est clairement faite entre BĀD /*dûru* et *šalhu*.<sup>3</sup>

Toutefois, K. Bezold, après avoir réexaminé en 1890 la tablette au British Museum, proposa d'abandonner la lecture BĀD u šá-al-hu, induite par la copie de Rawlinson (I k 7 11), et de voir dans les traces lues u šá-al les restes du signe šul, lisant donc finalement BĀD šul-hu.<sup>4</sup> Il supprimait ainsi la conjonction de coordination « u ». Par ailleurs – remarque allant dans le même sens – à notre connaissance, aucune autre version de la même inscription découverte ultérieurement à Qasr Shemamok n'offre la variante avec la conjonction « u/et ». G. Furlani l'avait bien remarqué mais proposait néanmoins, avec prudence, que la conjonction puisse être sous-entendue, se fondant lui aussi sur les parallèles concernant les murs de Ninive et d'Assur.<sup>5</sup>

Dans la dernière édition des inscriptions de Sennachérib, les auteurs ont choisi la transcription logographique BĀD.ŠUL.HU, mais ils font remarquer en note que cette interprétation n'est pas certaine et se fonde sur la comparaison avec le logogramme BĀD.ŠUL.HI, attesté dans des textes lexicographiques dans lesquels n'apparaît pas, par contre, la variante BĀD.ŠUL.HU, qui correspondrait à l'orthographe constatée sur les briques de Qasr Shemamok.<sup>6</sup>

L'incertitude demeure donc quant à savoir si les inscriptions sur les briques de Qasr Shemamok, ne comportant pas la conjonction « et » entre BĀD et šul-hu, font allusion seulement à la muraille extérieure, ou bien à deux enceintes, l'une associée à la citadelle et l'autre entourant l'ensemble de la ville.<sup>7</sup>

\* Les travaux de G. et M. Buccellati sur les murs de Terqa ont été un modèle du genre et c'est pour nous un plaisir de leur offrir ces quelques considérations concernant les murs de la cité de Qasr Shemamok-Kilizu sur laquelle nous travaillons maintenant.

<sup>1</sup> Layard 1853, 223 ; Postgate 1980. Sur l'histoire de ces briques, voir Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 2016, 209, et voir, fig. 1, une carte situant l'emplacement de Qasr Shemamok/Kilizu.

<sup>2</sup> Rawlinson, Norris 1861, 7, H. ; Luckenbill 1924, 155, XXIII.

<sup>3</sup> Voir par exemple Luckenbill 1924, 153, XVII, l. 16-17 ou 154, XIX, l. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Bezold 1890, 114-115 et Saporetti 1934-35, 127.

<sup>5</sup> Furlani 1935, 133.

<sup>6</sup> Grayson, Novotny 2014, inscr. 219, l. 12. Voir aussi Frahm 1997, 190 col. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Sous le terme de « citadelle », nous désignons, par commodité, le tell lui-même, qui ne mérite en fait cette appellation qu'à partir du moment où existe une ville basse.

Les découvertes archéologiques peuvent toutefois apporter quelques compléments intéressants dans cette discussion. De nombreuses briques inscrites ont été retrouvées sur la citadelle, mais toujours dans des contextes secondaires qui auraient pu laisser suspecter qu'elles avaient été apportées depuis les ruines de la muraille extérieure. Cependant, la découverte, en 2013, dans le chantier A-Est (fig. 2), sur la pente sud de la citadelle, d'une brique cuite portant l'inscription standard de Sennachérib, insérée dans un escalier monumental (fig. 3), semble bien prouver que ce texte fait référence aussi au système de murs urbains intérieurs.<sup>8</sup> Le choix de Furlani de traduire finalement « muro e antemurale » était donc judicieux.<sup>9</sup>

Concernant la forme générale et l'apparence du site, Layard se contentait de remarquer : « The mound is both large and lofty, and is surrounded by the remains of an earthen embankment ».<sup>10</sup> Quant à V. Place, il est très impressionné par sa taille et l'aspect différent de ses ruines par rapport à ce qu'on savait de l'urbanisme assyrien à cette époque : « Il n'a aucun rapport avec ceux que j'ai vus jusqu'à ce jour ». Il le décrit comme une série de monticules dont la réunion présente l'apparence d'une « immense cité ». Il précise que la réunion de ces monticules « est partagée régulièrement d'une extrémité à l'autre par une voie large d'environ soixante mètres, nivelée, presque droite, et au milieu de laquelle coule une rivière assez abondante ».<sup>11</sup> Cette description, avec la rivière passant dans le site, laisse penser que V. Place a considéré une partie des reliefs situés au nord du Shiwazor comme des restes de la ville. Dans une carte publiée par ailleurs, il attribue à Qasr Shemamok une surface considérable et il se demande même s'il ne s'agit pas du site de l'ancienne Arbèles assyrienne.<sup>12</sup>

Dans les quelques quatre-vingts ans entre les travaux de V. Place et l'arrivée sur le site de Qasr Shemamok, en 1933, de la mission archéologique italienne dirigée par G. Furlani, le paysage des rives du Shiwazor a dû subir d'importantes transformations, sans doute consécutives à des aménagements de type agricole. Le premier relevé du plan du site, réalisé par F. Franco, qui travaillait avec D. Levi dans l'équipe de G. Furlani, montre clairement une topographie générale très différente de celle décrite par V. Place, mais proche de celle qui apparaît encore au-

jourd'hui.<sup>13</sup> Les restes archéologiques sont reconnus uniquement sur la rive sud du Shiwazor et la citadelle est située à la limite nord du site, parallèle à la rive sud du cours d'eau. Dans ce plan, la forme du site est mise en évidence par les différences d'élévation par rapport à la plaine qui sont assimilées à la présence des restes d'une enceinte. Vers le nord, la continuité de cette structure, encore bien visible aujourd'hui, est interrompue, dans le plan de Franco, par la limite nord de la citadelle et son éventuelle enceinte qui présente une pente très raide, mais sans lui être complètement associée.<sup>14</sup> La situation n'était manifestement pas claire, sans doute en raison de la segmentation de cette alignement, coupé par plusieurs routes nord-sud, dont la plus centrale monte jusqu'au sommet de la citadelle. L'incision profonde de cette dernière avait déjà été remarquée par Layard, qui l'avait interprétée comme la marque de la présence d'une porte, et d'une grande voie de circulation, menant de la rive du Shiwazor vers le centre du quartier de prestige.<sup>15</sup> Cette partie du site reste encore aujourd'hui d'interprétation difficile, aussi en raison des grands travaux d'aménagement réalisés au moment de la construction – puis de la destruction et de l'arasement – d'une installation militaire moderne de l'armée irakienne sur le sommet du tell, pour laquelle ce vallon a été utilisé comme voie d'accès.

Dans le plan de la mission italienne, le tracé de la grande enceinte extérieure est marqué par la présence de deux puits construits en brique cuites, dont certaines portaient l'inscription de Sennachérib, l'un à l'est et l'autre au sud, peut-être associés à deux portes de la ville basse. G. Furlani, qui a fouillé surtout autour de ces puits, insiste sur la grande quantité de briques cuites constituant la structure du mur. La situation actuelle, où pratiquement aucune brique cuite associée à la levée de terre témoignant de l'emplacement du mur ne peut plus être retrouvée en surface, se comprend mieux à la lecture du récit de Furlani qui décrit leur pillage par les habitants locaux et leur transport, en grande quantité, jusqu'à Erbil, pour servir à la construction de maisons modernes.<sup>16</sup> Ce n'est que dans l'une de ses tranchées que l'archéologue a pu observer certaines caractéristiques de cette construction : « Soltanto nella trincea I si sono scoperte le mura della città. I mattoni sono infatti ancora quasi intatti al loro posto primitivo. Si è scoperta una serie di mattoni in file regolari, aggettanti e in senso obliquo alla trincea. Per meglio dissotterrare tutto il muro si aprì poi una larga trincea a piano inclinato. I filari sovrapposti sono sette. Il tratto di mura messo

<sup>8</sup> Masetti-Rouault, Rouault 2015, 110 ; Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 2016, 215 et n. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Voir Furlani 1935, 133.

<sup>10</sup> Layard 1853, 223.

<sup>11</sup> Place 1852, 453-455 ; sur l'urbanisme proche-oriental ancien, voir Novák 1999 ; 2013. Voir aussi, en ce qui concerne les murs et fortifications urbaines à l'âge du Bronze, Rey 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Place 1852, 454-455. Voir aussi la carte publiée dans Place 1867, pl. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Furlani 1934, fig. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Furlani 1934, 277.

<sup>15</sup> Voir Layard 1853, 223.

<sup>16</sup> Furlani 1934, 268.

allo scoperto si estende per circa sei metri, con andamento però curvilineo e con un'elevazione massima di sette filari, mentre i filari superiori sono stati evidentemente strappati. Parecchi mattoni, ad intervalli regolari, portano la solita iscrizione di Sennacheribbo ». <sup>17</sup> Cette rapide description ne donne pas de renseignements sur l'épaisseur du mur, les sept files de briques mentionnées étant à comprendre probablement dans le sens de la hauteur et non de l'épaisseur du mur, l'effet décoratif de la disposition régulière des inscriptions permettant de penser que cette face était visible. <sup>18</sup>

La ville basse est actuellement couverte de champs mis en culture de façon intensive et l'emplacement de la partie méridionale de l'enceinte est partiellement recouverte par les maisons du village de Sa'adawa. Autrefois établi au sud du site, il a été reconstruit, après les conflits récents, sur la surface de la ville basse, probablement sur les ruines de l'ancienne porte sud, et son extension s'accroît chaque année. La Mission Archéologique Française, travaillant sur le site depuis 2011, n'a pu explorer ces espaces que par des reconnaissances de surface et des opérations de prospection magnétique. <sup>19</sup> Il a toutefois été possible, pendant ces sept missions, de recueillir de nombreuses informations, permettant de mieux comprendre l'organisation et l'évolution des enceintes de Qasr Shemamok. Un relevé topographique moderne (fig. 2) ainsi que les multiples photos satellites et aériennes par hélicoptère ou par drone, ont permis d'avoir une idée précise de la configuration du site lui-même et de ses environs. <sup>20</sup> Des prospections de surface et des sondages, à des fins archéologiques, géomorphologiques et géologiques, ont aussi livré des informations permettant de mieux comprendre l'urbanisme de cet ensemble.

La ville basse, dans son développement tel qu'il est encore visible en surface, entoure la citadelle,

s'élargissant vers le sud, selon une forme elliptique, d'orientation principale est-ouest. La limite nord de la citadelle semble alignée avec la partie nord de l'enceinte extérieure. Depuis les fouilles de G. Furlani, il est clair que cette forme urbaine est assurée au moins à partir de l'époque de Sennachérib. En effet, d'après le matériel céramique récolté dans la ville basse ainsi définie, il s'agirait d'une occupation surtout néo-assyrienne même si, à la base du tell, des niveaux construits du Bronze récent ont pu être mis en évidence et si d'assez nombreux tessons d'époque parthe et sassanide apparaissent dans certains secteurs. <sup>21</sup> La continuité de l'occupation de cette partie du site semble donc assurée, de l'époque assyrienne jusqu'à l'antiquité tardive, comme sur la citadelle, mais, n'ayant encore pu effectuer là ni sondages ni fouilles, nous ne pouvons pas encore préciser la nature de l'habitat de la ville basse, ni dire si l'enceinte néo-assyrienne, avec ses portes et structures associées, a continué à fonctionner comme telle.

Les photos satellites, en particulier celles des années 1960, montrent la présence d'une série de reliefs marqués au nord de la limite actuelle du site et, se développant sur les deux rives du Shiwazor, pouvant paraître en correspondance avec l'urbanisme de Qasr Shemamok. <sup>22</sup> Comme semble l'avoir pensé V. Place après sa visite au 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle, on pourrait postuler une extension de l'habitat, à certaines époques anciennes, selon un plan incluant le cours de la rivière, avec une forme générale approximativement circulaire. L'opération de réfection des murailles par Sennachérib aurait peut-être été l'occasion de réorienter vers le sud un urbanisme jusque-là tourné prioritairement vers le nord. <sup>23</sup> Cette hypothèse reste à confirmer, dans la mesure où des sondages réalisés en 2012 et en 2016 (chantier D) ont montré que, si les rives du Shiwazor, à proximité du site, présentaient bien de nombreuses traces d'occupation, il s'agissait plutôt des restes de quartiers industriels, et d'espaces où la terre avait été, sans doute à plusieurs époques, déplacée et utilisée pour des travaux de terrassement ou pour fabriquer des briques. La présence, dans ce secteur, de vastes bassins associés à la rivière, comme installation portuaire, n'est pas non plus à exclure, mais aucune structure bâtie n'a pu y être décelée. <sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Furlani 1934, 273.

<sup>18</sup> Furlani précise bien que toutes les briques inscrites retrouvées – sauf une – étaient sur une de leurs faces latérales (Furlani 1935, 133), le texte étant donc éventuellement visible sur la surface du mur. L'absence d'information sur l'épaisseur du mur ne permet pas de savoir s'il s'agissait seulement d'un parement sur la face extérieure ou intérieure du mur, dont la masse aurait été constituée de briques crues (Furlani 1934, 268).

<sup>19</sup> Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 2014, 6 et fig. 10 ; Rouault 2016, 159 s. et fig. 15.10. Ces opérations ont été menées en collaboration avec l'équipe d'A. Tabbagh, Université Pierre et Marie Curie – Paris 6 (voir Vitale 2018 ; Kessouri 2018). Depuis 2016, la prospection, dans le même cadre scientifique, sous le contrôle de J. Thiesson, a été réalisée par Ch. Sanchez.

<sup>20</sup> Pour les photos satellites, voir par exemple Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 2014, fig. 3 et 4. Plus généralement, voir Ur 2018. La mission remercie tout particulièrement J. Ur, professeur à Harvard, ainsi que la Direction des Antiquités de la région d'Erbil (Nader Babakr Mohammed, directeur et Khalil Ali Barzanjy, spécialiste de prises de vues par drone) pour nous avoir communiqué la couverture photographique de notre site.

<sup>21</sup> Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 2015b, 114 et fig. 4 ; Masetti-Rouault 2018 ; Calini 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 2014, 1-11, fig. 3 et 4. Masetti-Rouault, Rouault 2015, 109, fig. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Cette hypothèse, proposée par M. G. Masetti-Rouault, a été développée et argumentée du point de vue architectural par P. Azara (Azara *et al.* 2018b). Voir aussi Azara *et al.* 2018a.

<sup>24</sup> Nováček 2018, 278-280 et voir Rouault 2016, 158. Une autre mission de prospection et sondages a été menée au printemps 2016 (4-20 juin), avec la collaboration de géologues et géomorphologues, V. Picotti (Institut Polytechnique de Zurich et Uni-



Dans le cadre d'une étude géologique et géomorphologique et d'une opération menée à la limite nord de la citadelle, au printemps 2016 (chantier E) une tranchée a été creusée entre la base de la pente et la route moderne qui la longe, à partir de la cote 283, sur une profondeur d'environ 5 mètres et une longueur de 25 mètres. Le but était d'obtenir une section perpendiculaire à la limite nord du site. Aucun niveau construit n'a été identifié et il semble donc que cette limite nord de la citadelle – et peut-être des parties urbanisées du site dans son entier – soit très ancienne.<sup>25</sup>

Afin de mieux comprendre la nature des murs extérieurs encore visibles, un sondage a été réalisé par K. Nováček, en 2012, au nord-ouest de la ville basse, dans un secteur (chantier C) proche de la citadelle et non cultivé (voir fig. 2).<sup>26</sup> On a pu constater qu'à cet endroit le mur était constitué d'un appareil massif en briques crues, mais il a été impossible d'en identifier avec certitude la face, qui était peut-être originellement couverte d'un parement en briques cuites, dont des fragments ont été retrouvés dans une fosse, postérieure au mur, résultant peut-être d'opérations de récupération de matériel. Alors que la hauteur actuelle des restes du mur fait environ 6 à 7 mètres, l'épaisseur conservée dépasse les 6 mètres, avec des briques crues de dimensions et formes irrégulières (rectangulaires ou carrées, de 40 à 60 cm de côté). Très peu de céramique correspondant aux époques médio et néo-assyriennes a pu être récoltée dans ce contexte. Dans ce secteur, sur la face nord de la citadelle, la pente est très raide, et peut résulter surtout de l'érosion des différents systèmes d'enceinte délimitant tant la citadelle que la ville en général au cours du temps, non seulement à l'époque assyrienne, mais aussi durant les périodes parthe et sassanide. Les lourdes perturbations qui ont modifié cette partie du site, en rendent l'étude très difficile.

Quant aux prospections magnétiques, elles ont confirmé, au moins dans la partie ouest, la correspondance entre d'une part la levée de terre et le dénivelé qui limitent le site et, d'autre part, une grande enceinte urbaine : l'emplacement de cette dernière apparaît clairement sur l'image et nous espérons pouvoir trouver un accord avec les agriculteurs pour effectuer un sondage permettant de compléter notre documentation.<sup>27</sup>

Quant au système de fortifications de la citadelle, il a fait l'objet de nos recherches dès les premières saisons de fouilles.<sup>28</sup> La longue tranchée nord-sud

du chantier A-Est (fig. 2) nous a permis de mettre en évidence la présence d'une imposante masse de briques, identifiée depuis la cote 303 environ, presque au sommet du tell, et que l'on retrouve sur plus d'une quarantaine de mètres dans la pente, jusqu'à la cote 291. Son épaisseur varie et un sondage, facilité par la présence d'une grande fosse d'époque hellénistique, nous a permis de la reconnaître à partir du niveau de la cote 300. Nous avons mis en évidence au moins deux phases de construction massives en briques crues rougeâtres, séparées par un sol en briques cuites nettement incliné, sans doute les restes d'une rampe.<sup>29</sup> Ces deux niveaux sont épais respectivement d'environ 2 mètres et 1 mètre. Au fond du sondage est apparu du matériel du Bronze récent.<sup>30</sup>

L'épaisseur de cette construction diminue rapidement après la cote 293 jusqu'à ne plus être constituée que de deux ou trois lits de briques, recouvrant des couches livrant une grande quantité de céramique et quelques documents épigraphiques de la fin du Bronze récent, dont une brique inscrite d'Adad-nirari Ier, dans la disposition caractéristique d'un remblai : du matériel ancien a sans doute été récupéré plus haut vers l'intérieur du tell pour constituer un remblai destiné à soutenir les nouvelles constructions, à l'époque néo-assyrienne. Plus bas encore dans la pente, à partir de la cote 293 environ, à ce massif de briques est associée la rampe monumentale en briques cuites marquée par la présence de l'inscription standard de Sennachérib, et préservée seulement sur la largeur des cinq mètres de la tranchée initiale (fig. 3).<sup>31</sup> Nous pouvons donc interpréter cet ensemble comme un système de terrasses ou de glacis constitué, dans la pente, par un remblai utilisant du matériel ancien, recouvert par un coffrage en briques crues. C'est dans ce contexte qu'a été aménagée la rampe menant probablement à l'une des entrées de la citadelle, ou bien à un grand bâtiment, sans doute le palais que Sennachérib s'est fait construire à Kilizu au tout début de son règne.<sup>32</sup> Un sondage d'environ 4 mètres de profondeur, plus au sud, a traversé une couche de terre presque pure, sans tessons ni objets, sorte de remblai qui devait soutenir la rampe. Au fond du sondage, à la cote 288, sont apparus des restes de constructions associés à du matériel céramique de la fin du Bronze récent, mais à une cote trop basse et trop proches d'une route moderne pour pouvoir en continuer aisément l'étude.<sup>33</sup>

La fouille du chantier A-Ouest (fig. 2 et 4) a été entreprise à partir de 2014, dans un secteur où le re-

versité de Bologne), S. Cremonini et V. Rossi (Université de Bologne). La publication est en préparation, dans la série EMMS (Études Mésopotamian Studies - Mesopotamian Studies), Archaeopress, Oxford.

<sup>25</sup> Rapport en préparation, à paraître dans la série EMMS.

<sup>26</sup> Nováček 2018, 277.

<sup>27</sup> Vitale 2018 ; Kessouri 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Rouault *et al.* 2018a, 216-232 ; 2018b, 256-262.

<sup>29</sup> Rouault 2016, 157-158 et fig. 15.7.

<sup>30</sup> Masetti-Rouault, Rouault 2017, 113-114 et fig. 2 et 3.

<sup>31</sup> Voir le plan détaillé dans Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 2018b, 258, fig. 4. Pour une reconstitution en trois dimensions, voir Azara *et al.* 2018, fig. 40 et 46 à 48.

<sup>32</sup> Voir Glassner 2004, 175, l. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Masetti-Rouault, Rouault 2015, fig. 4.

lief nous donnait l'espoir d'étudier plus facilement la séquence stratigraphique de la citadelle et où nous pouvions atteindre, sur une étendue suffisante, des niveaux du Bronze récent en place.<sup>34</sup> C'est aussi là que nous avons retrouvé l'un des fragments de tablette qui, grâce à la comparaison avec un document presque complet, ramassé sur le site par un villageois, nous a appris que la ville avait porté, au Bronze récent, le nom de Tu'e, et qu'elle était dirigée par un souverain portant le nom d'Irishti-enni. Ce roi dit avoir bâti l'enceinte de la ville de Tu'e et il est probable que ces documents et fragments proviennent de dépôts de fondation dont nous ignorons l'emplacement précis. La construction ou reconstruction de cette enceinte a probablement eu lieu à une époque la ville était le centre d'un état plus ou moins associé à la fédération mitannienne, avant l'intégration dans le royaume médio-assyrien.<sup>35</sup>

Nous avons mis en évidence une stratigraphie comparable à celle du chantier A-Est, et retrouvé les deux niveaux de terrasse/glacis néo-assyrien, le plus ancien (fig. 5, phase 5) recouvrant des niveaux du Bronze récent, cette fois-ci en place.<sup>36</sup> Plusieurs phases de constructions de cette époque ont pu être identifiées, attestant des activités domestiques et de stockage, avec des céramiques diagnostiques en place sur des sols (fig. 5, phases 6 à 8). L'autre différence significative avec la situation que nous avons rencontrée dans le chantier A-Est est la présence, tout près de la surface, à partir de la cote 294, des restes d'un mur massif limitant au sud l'espace occupé par les maisons du Bronze récent et, par endroits, recouvert par des restes très érodés du glacis/terrasse néo-assyrien (fig. 6). Il pourrait s'agir du mur mentionné dans les inscriptions d'Irishti-enni. La fouille de 2018 nous a permis de constater que la construction néo-assyrienne descendait plus bas, dans la pente, que nous ne l'avions estimé en 2017 et qu'elle se terminait, juste en deçà du mur du Bronze récent, par une sorte de mur de soutènement (voir fig. 6).<sup>37</sup> Le mur du Bronze récent, peut-être très ancien, mais qui était encore en fonction ou visible à l'époque de la construction du glacis/terrasse d'époque néo-assyrienne, était large d'environ 8 mètres. Nous avons effectué, environ 15 mètres au sud de la face extérieure de ce mur, un sondage de 4 mètres de profondeur, à partir de la cote 289,19, pour explorer la limite possible entre la

citadelle et la ville basse, sans pouvoir atteindre des niveaux construits. Les couches traversées, de type remblai, ont livré, contrairement au sondage correspondant du chantier A-Est, un peu de matériel diagnostique, montrant une stratigraphie inversée, les objets les plus récents (tessons glaçurés probablement sassanides) au fond et les plus anciens (une brique inscrite et un sceau médio-assyriens) plus proches de la surface.<sup>38</sup> Il semble donc que le dénivelé sous le mur du Bronze récent dont nous avons dégagé la phase supérieure, soit resté important et visible pendant une très longue période et ait constitué, bien après le Bronze récent et l'époque néo-assyrienne, la limite extérieure de la citadelle, au moins dans ce secteur.

Les textes trouvés à Qasr Shemamok documentent clairement la présence d'enceintes urbaines, aussi bien à l'époque du Bronze récent – et sans doute bien avant – qu'à l'époque néo-assyrienne, dont des restes sont encore bien visibles dans le paysage moderne. L'organisation de l'espace urbain a certainement connu de profonds changements dans le temps et la relation de la ville avec son terroir agricole, avec le réseau hydrographique et avec les voies de communication, par terre comme par eau, a certainement induit des évolutions complexes, selon des priorités variant avec les époques. La fouille archéologique, aidée par les prospections magnétique, géologique et géomorphologique ainsi que par l'étude des images satellites, permet d'en approfondir la connaissance et d'en mieux comprendre l'évolution. Le plan apparent dans le paysage, malgré ses transformations anthropiques, agricoles, urbanistiques et militaires, donne une image reflétant le dernier remaniement néo-assyrien, à l'époque de Sennachérib. Il apparaît toutefois que la ville assyrienne a été marquée par ses origines plus lointaines, dès l'âge du Bronze, et qu'une partie du plan, au moins de la citadelle, respecte probablement un ordonnancement ancien. Des évolutions profondes ont dû avoir lieu aussi pendant les époques médio et néo-assyrienne, avant même le **grand remaniement organisé par Sennachérib**. Enfin, il convient de noter que la nature exacte des constructions d'époque néo-assyrienne reste à définir avec plus de précision : pour l'instant, les grandes constructions mises en évidence en haut de la pente sud du site (chantiers A-Est et Ouest), peut-être à cause de l'érosion naturelle et des réoccupations ultérieures, ressemblent plus à des terrasses, plateformes et glacis, qu'à des murs proprement dits, utilisant peut-être encore, comme limite basse, un mur de l'âge du Bronze.

<sup>34</sup> Masetti-Rouault, Rouault 2015, 113-114 et fig.4 ; Masetti-Rouault 2017, 113-114 et fig. 2-5.

<sup>35</sup> Ces textes, encore inédits, ont été présentés à l'occasion de plusieurs colloques et conférences, et sont en cours de publication.

<sup>36</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2017, 113.

<sup>37</sup> Il conviendra, lors d'une prochaine mission, d'élargir le dégagement de cette masse de briques, pour savoir s'il s'agit d'un simple mur de soutènement arrêtant un glacis/terrasse, ou bien la base d'un véritable mur d'enceinte.

<sup>38</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2017, 114.

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Fig. 1. Le tell de Qasr Shemamok, vue aérienne, vers le nord, avec carte (copyright Mission Archéologique Française à Qasr Shemamok).

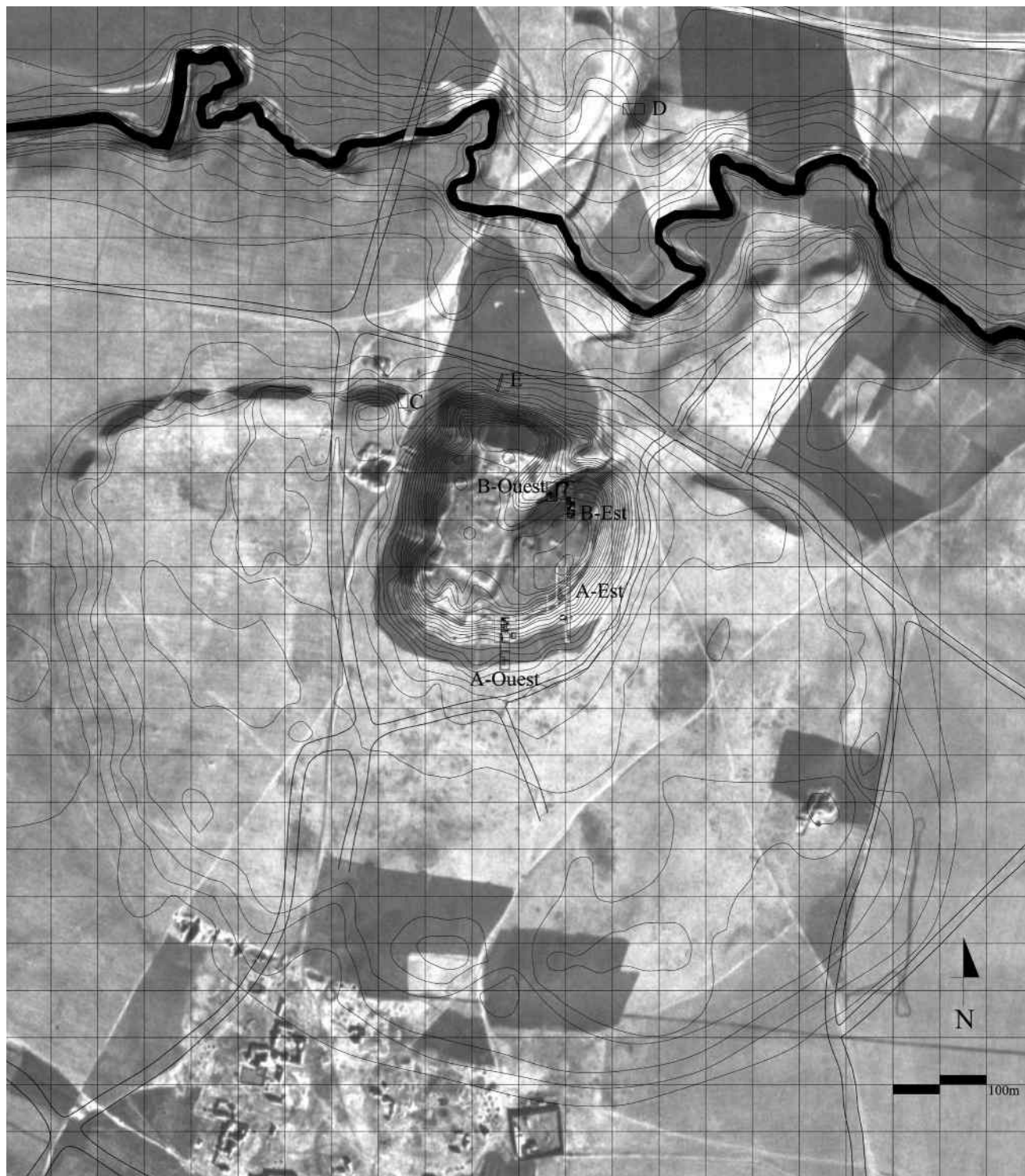


Fig. 2. Plan général du site sur fond de photo U2 (1960) déclassifiée (copyright Mission Archéologique Française à Qasr Shemamok).



Fig. 3. Chantier A-Est, la rampe monumentale, avec brique inscrite de Sennachérib, au centre vers le bas (copyright Mission Archéologique Française à Qasr Shemamok).

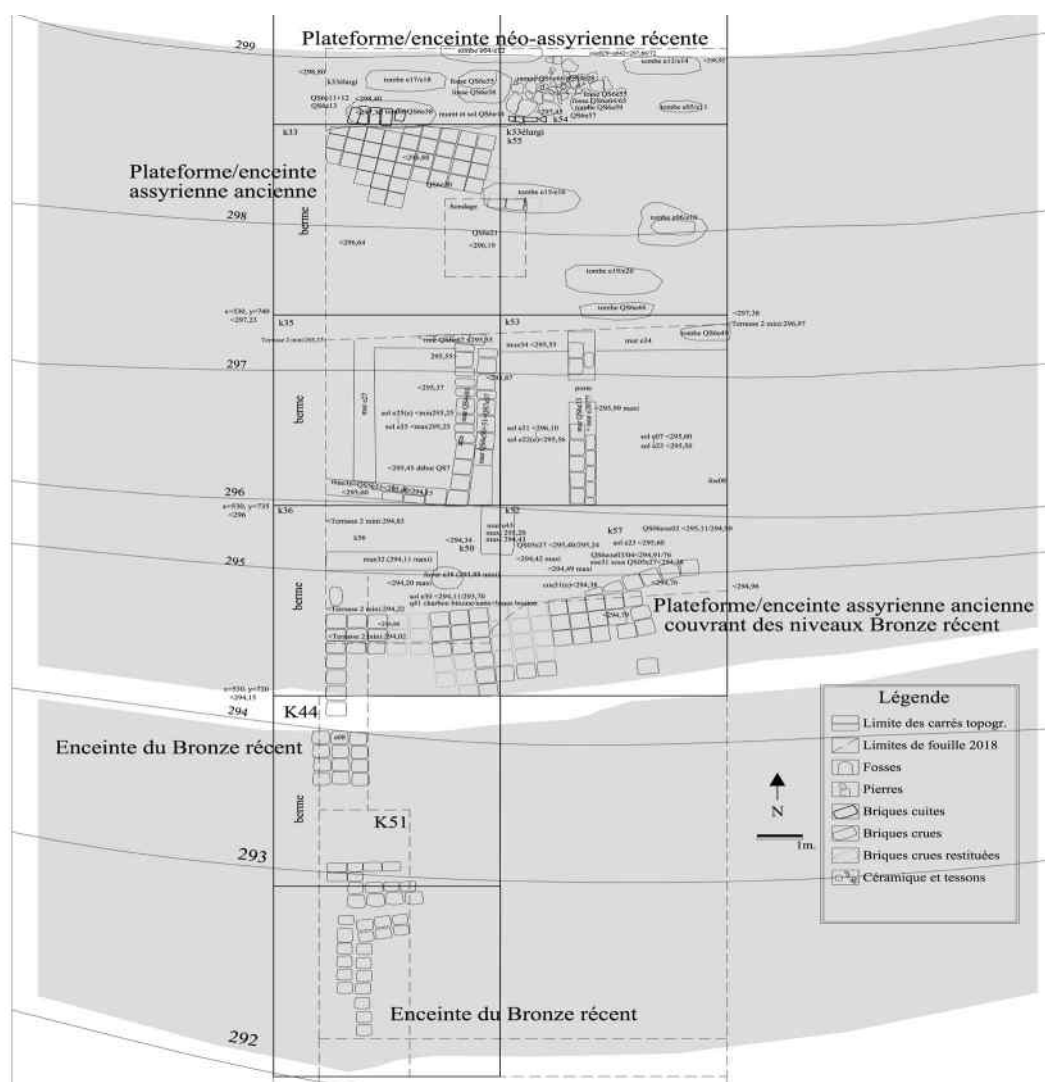


Fig. 4. Plan du chantier A-ouest (mission de 2018), avec mise en évidence de l'emplacement des murs et terrasse des différentes époques (copyright Mission Archéologique Française à Qasr Shemamok).



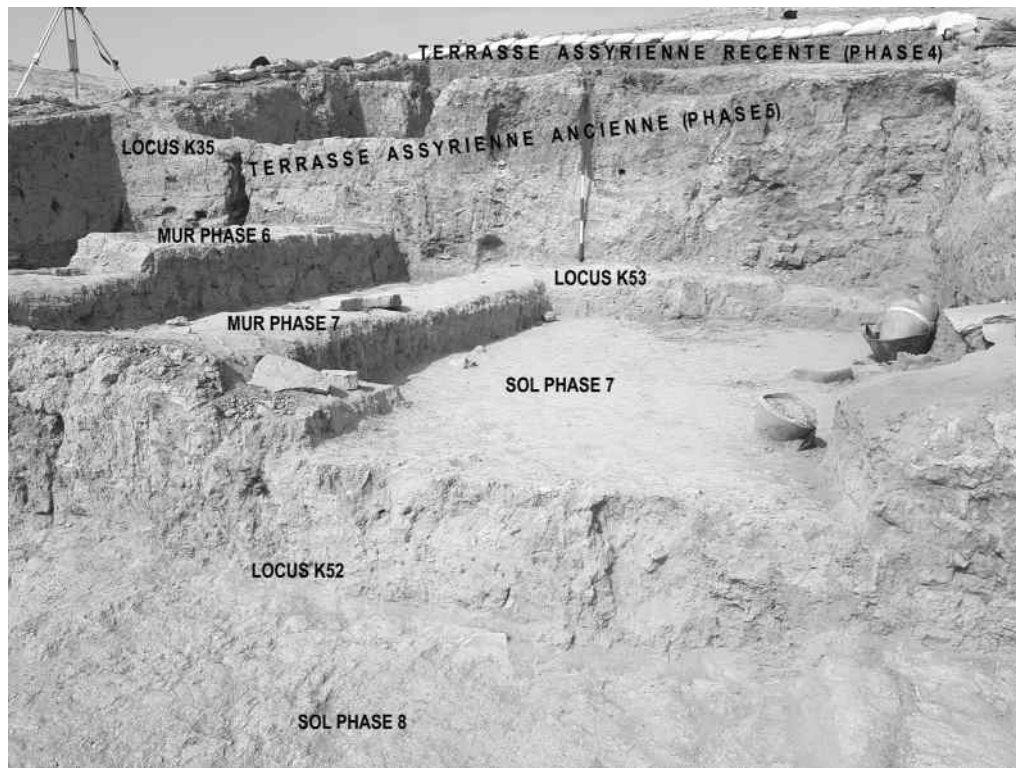


Fig. 5. Chantier A-Ouest (mission de 2018), le glacis/terrasse assyrien couvrant les niveaux du Bronze récent (copyright Mission Archéologique Française à Qasr Shemamok).



Fig. 6. Chantier A-Ouest (mission de 2018), section ouest, montrant les limites sud du glacis/terrasse assyrien et le mur d'enceinte du Bronze récent (copyright Mission Archéologique Française à Qasr Shemamok).

## A NOTE ON LIONS AT TEMPLE ENTRANCES IN OLD AND MIDDLE SYRIAN TEMPLES

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### *Abstract*

The use of lion's images at the entrances of Ebla Middle Bronze I temples is clearly related only to the sacred buildings dedicated to Ishtar. In Middle Bronze II this use was probably diffused in Ishtar temples of other cities. In Late Bronze I-II also temples dedicated to other deities could be provided with lion's figures at their gateways.

Of the five Old Syrian temples until now identified and fully excavated at Ebla only two – those in Area D on the west side of the Acropolis and in Area P in the Lower Town North-West – had carved images of lions at doorjambs.<sup>1</sup> In the three others there is no hint that figurative jambs of any kind were present.

Ishtar's Temple of Area D, explored since the beginning of Tell Mardikh excavations (1965-1966), was identified in 1986 as the palatial shrine of the great polyad goddess, who certainly was both the main deity of the Old Syrian city and the patron deity of the Eblaic kingship and dynasty,<sup>2</sup> probably established by king Ibbit-Lim, son of Igrish-Kheb(at).<sup>3</sup> Ishtar's Temple of Area P (Sector P Centre), identified in 1988,<sup>4</sup> was considered, at the same time, to be the great pu-

blic sanctuary of the goddess and the sacred place employed for particular rites related to her dynastic protective function on ritual occasions for which the Northern Palace of adjacent Sector P1 was used as the temporary residence of the Ebla king.<sup>5</sup> The Temples P2 and D at the time of the final destruction at the end of Middle Bronze IIB, around 1600 BC according to the conventional Middle Chronology,<sup>6</sup> had different fates: Temple P2 was destroyed and no more employed as a sacred building as it became a heap of ruins, whereas Temple D was again used as sacred place during at least Late Bronze I- II, notwithstanding the fact that it had suffered the same fate at the end of Middle Bronze IIB.<sup>7</sup>

In Temple P2, in front of the unique southern gate, a large basalt headless sculpture of a standing lion was found,<sup>8</sup> despite the very serious destruction of Middle Bronze IIB, the destruction of all the votive statues and sacred furniture,<sup>9</sup> and the fact that the large area of the cella became in the following centuries a real mine of rough and polished stones which were originally parts of its imposing foundations. The original function of this lion's image certainly was the figu-

<sup>1</sup> Matthiae 2010, 262-261, 419-433, figs. 135-137, 228-235.

<sup>2</sup> Matthiae 1986a (English translation in Matthiae 2013b, 301-322); Matthiae 2010, 265-267, 419-422, figs. 135, 228; Matthiae 2016, 22-23, figs. 13-15. The conspicuous and repeated presence of the image of the "austere" Ishtar's image in Temple D is proved by the dedication of Ishtar's Stele and Ishtar's Obelisk: Matthiae 1986b (English translation in Matthiae 2013b, 516-555); Matthiae 2013a; Matthiae 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Gelb 1984; Matthiae 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Matthiae 1990, 410-414: the identification of Ishtar's Temple P2 presence was the consequence of a sounding made immediately to the south of the southern perimeter wall of Northern Palace of Area P, in the Sector P Centre. The initial tentative definition of Hadad as titular deity of Temple P2 (Matthiae 1990, 412) was based on the incorrect provenance indication of an important fragment of stele found during the demolition of a Mardikh village house by its owners: this stele rest was published by Matthiae 1993a (= Matthiae 2013b, 619-630). A crucial element for the identification of Ishtar as titular goddess of Temple P2 (Matthiae 1991 = Matthiae 2013b, 258-284, in particular 273 and Matthiae 1993b) was the finding of two poorly preserved remains of a ritual carved basin with the image of the great goddess: Matthiae 1996 (= Matthiae 2013b, 575-585). The real provenance of the large fragment of Hadad's Stele, found in the demolished foundation of a Mardikh house was later specified by the house owner and indicated in the Lower Town South-East, with the consequence that the stele was probably erected in Temple HH2: Matthiae 2009b, 721, n. 76.

<sup>5</sup> Matthiae 2010, 254-256, 457-461; Matthiae forthcoming.

<sup>6</sup> Matthiae 2006; Matthiae 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Matthiae 2009a.

<sup>8</sup> Matthiae 1990, 424, n. 118; Matthiae 1992, 113, pl. 49. 1; Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 103, fig. 7; Matthiae 2013a, 379-380.

<sup>9</sup> Matthiae 2006; Matthiae 2009a: it is difficult to be sure whether the royal statues dedicated in Temple P2 were destroyed, as is more probable, at the time of the final conquest and annihilation of the late Old Syrian Ebla, around 1600 BC, or during the repeated stone pillage many years, and centuries, later. Various explications may be forwarded for the reason why only the probably-not-royal statue was spared and, certainly during the Iron III or Persian period, was carefully laid down upon the collected remains of the torn-apart king and queen statues. For a case of heavy destruction of a politically meaningful piece of votive furniture in Shamash/Shapash's Temple (Area N) certainly at time of the final conquest of Ebla at the end of Middle Bronze II see Matthiae 2018.



rative decoration of one side of the temple entrance, whereas no remains were found of the corresponding figure of the other jamb.<sup>10</sup>

In Temple D, in the antecella, against the rear face of the front wall in its eastern sector, one fragment of a large original representation of a recumbent lion was found, whose image was carved on probably six basalt blocks:<sup>11</sup> in this single preserved block, showing a rear lion's paw with its claw and a small part of the belly, the side and upper faces are flat, as clearly they were conceived to join with one lower and one upper block. Considering the size of the preserved paw, the original complete lion's figure was very probably carved on three lower and three upper blocks reaching approximately a length of 1.50/2.00 m.<sup>12</sup> Obviously, it is impossible to reconstruct whether the lion's head was carved in relief or sculptured in the round: this second hypothesis is perhaps more plausible in consideration of the in-round carving of the leonine grinding heads in at least two Old Syrian basalt ritual basins of Ebla.<sup>13</sup> The original position of this poorly-preserved composite lion's figure was certainly on the eastern jamb of the passage from the vestibule to the antecella of the temple, as the intermediate wall was ca.2.80 m deep.

The findings of the remains of lion's sculpture in Temples D and P2, not in the original position, but clearly close to it, do not allow any other restitution but that of jamb decorations of the entrances. There is no sound explanation for the different iconography of the two lions' images – standing in Temple P2 and recumbent in Temple D. It is possible that the probable different times of production of the two sculptures were, at least in part, at the origin of the different iconographies, but the very poor conservation of the fragment of Temple D and the lack of any remains of the heads prevents accurate chronological attributions, even if the large composite lion of Temple D could reasonably be later than its foundation, plau-

sibly datable from Middle Bronze IA, whereas the one stone lion's sculpture was probably contemporary with the foundation of Temple P2, most likely in Middle Bronze IA.

The absence of any hints of carved jambs in Temple B dedicated to Rashap, Temple N belonging to Shapash/Shamash, and Temple HH2 and HH3, for which there is a weak clue it was dedicated to Hadad certainly is of some meaning. This is reasonable despite the fact that the entrance areas of Temples B and N are not well preserved and the walls flanking the door are completely lost in both temples.<sup>14</sup> So the hypothesis has to be kept in mind that, at least at Old Syrian Ebla, the temples not dedicated to Ishtar did not have lion's images at the gate and probably did not have any animal images at the entrance at all.

In relation to the data provided by Ebla temples of the Old Syrian period, it is necessary to consider whether in other cities of the same time the temples had lion's, or other animals', images at the entrances or not.<sup>15</sup> Two important temples have to be taken into account for this issue: Temple of Ishtar at Alalakh VII and Temple C at Tuttul.

The case of the temple of Alalakh VII is particularly meaningful, not only because it was destroyed only few years before Ebla temples, but also because it is certain that it was dedicated to Ishtar according to contemporary textual evidence.<sup>16</sup> In the Temple VII there is no trace of any lion's sculpture, but in Alalakh IB there were two basalt sculptures of recumbent lions decorating the entrance *in situ*<sup>17</sup> and a lion's protome of similar style was found in a well of Temple IA re-employed in the foundations of the temple of Alalakh IA.<sup>18</sup> C. L. Woolley rightly observed that the lions of

<sup>10</sup> *Contra* to that affirmed by Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 103, it has to be stressed that this lion's sculpture was not found in the *cachette* where some king, queen and dignitary statues were deposited (at the eastern corner of the vestibule: Matthiae 1989, 51-52, pl. Xa-b), but in an isolated position in front of temple entrance, as is clearly visible in Matthiae 1992, pl. 49, 1: it means in a place very close to its original collocation.

<sup>11</sup> TM.66.D.211: Matthiae 1967, 123-125, 126, 132, l. XXXVII, 1. For the finding position of this block see Floriani Squarciapino 1967, 65, pls. XXII, 1-3, XXIV, 1. This fragment was left *in situ* together a second block void of any sculpture rest but with a flat face, surely pertinent to the original composite lion's sculpture; both rests were again in place when, in 2008, a sounding was made in the antecella in order to find remains of Red Temple of Early Bronze IVA: Matthiae 2009c, 766-768, fig. 16.

<sup>12</sup> This approximate size restitution is considered reasonable also by Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 102-103.

<sup>13</sup> Matthiae 2013a, 383-384, fig. 213.

<sup>14</sup> Matthiae 2010, 429-435, figs. 232-235. Werner 1994, 88-89 rightly considers both Temple B and Temple N long room temples, but does not include them in the type of *in antis* temples as a consequence of the strongly damaged condition of the fore sectors of the side walls and the entrance area, but there is no doubt about their restitution: see also Metzger 2012, 262-273, 285.

<sup>15</sup> In an appraisal of lion's images issue as carved jambs in Old Syrian temple gateways the case of the so-called Lion's Temple of Mari has to be excluded, because the placement of the two famous bronze lions was *inside* the cella upon a peculiar two-steps podium built against the rear face of the entrance wall: Margueron 2004, 380-387. Despite the treatment by Otto 2013, 363, 378 (but see the assessments of the same Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 101-102 and Seidl 2013, 479) even Margueron 2004, 382-383, fig. 374 clearly excluded any relation of the bronze lions with the tradition of lion's images of the Old Syrian temple jambs.

<sup>16</sup> Na'man 1980; Lauinger 2008.

<sup>17</sup> AT/39/314 and 315: Woolley 1955, 85-86, 242, fig. 34, pls XIb, XIIa, XLIXa-b, L.

<sup>18</sup> AT/40-45/1: Woolley 1955, 85, 242-243, pl. LIa-b: the fragment of lion's image AT/40-45/5 preserving the two front paws only and coming from the same well is perhaps a rest of the similar sculpture for the other entrance jamb. However, the fact that at

Temple IA were re-used from one of its predecessors, not later than Temple III.<sup>19</sup> On the basis of stylistic considerations and comparisons with the lion's protome of Ebla carved basins, W. Orthmann ascribed the recumbent lions to the Temple VII,<sup>20</sup> whereas A. Otto assigned them to Temple IV.<sup>21</sup> It is clear that, probably since Temple VII and certainly since Temples IV-III, this sacred place whose titular deity was no doubt Ishtar, traditionally had lion's sculpture at its entrance.

In Temple C of Tuttul, an *in antis* temple with a podium defined by two very short antae in a rather precarious state of preservation, there is no hint of the presence of any carved decoration at the entrance, nor of the identity of the divinity titular of the sacred building.<sup>22</sup> The likely presence of two temples in Area F, probably dedicated to the city great god Dagan and his paredra,<sup>23</sup> does not allow any solid presumption about the god or goddess revered in Temple C.

However, in the case of the very long history of the monumental Hadad Temple of Aleppo Citadel, despite the finding of few impressive Old Syrian carved slabs of the presumable sculptured decoration of the cella,<sup>24</sup> there is absolutely no indication of lion's images at the Middle Bronze I-II temple entrance, contrary to what happened in Iron Age.<sup>25</sup>

In the religious architecture of Middle Bronze II in Syria, therefore, only, certainly, for both Ishtar Temples of Ebla (Areas D and P) and, very probably, for Ishtar Temple of Alalakh (VII), lion's images were employed as jambs at the entrance, whereas apparently no figurative decoration at all was used in the gateways of temples dedicated to other deities, even very prestigious deities such as Hadad at Aleppo. So, in the Old Syrian temples, peculiarly but not only at Ebla, the lion's images were very likely used as jambs *only* for Ishtar/Ishkhara's temples, because the lion was the symbolic animal of the great goddess.

Two different, and important but problematic cases are the Temple I of Tell Bazi and the temple named "Steinbau 1" of Tell Munbaqa. In Tell Bazi Temple I, an *in antis* temple dated from Middle Bronze II or at maximum early Late Bronze I, two strongly

degraded remains of lion's jambs were found *in situ*.<sup>26</sup> On the basis of Ebla evidence, taking into account that the temple foundation is within Middle Bronze II,<sup>27</sup> two possible interpretations may be considered: either Tell Bazi Temple I was Ishtar's Temple or it documents a development according to which the lion's jambs also started to be used in temples dedicated to other deities. Similar is the case of Tell Munbaqa "Steinbau 1", in front of which were found two rough (unfinished?) lion's protomae,<sup>28</sup> rightly supposed to be originally placed as jambs of a temple entrance, because even this sacred building had its main phase in Late Bronze I-II, but was founded in Middle Bronze II.<sup>29</sup>

The finding of two large fragments of recumbent lion's slabs in front of the Ba'al's Temple at Emar in the Sacred Area of the two Temples of Ba'al and Ishtar/Astarte, dating from Late Bronze II, and their likely attribution to Ba'al's Temple seem to be taken as a solid evidence that in Middle Syrian period the lion's jambs were by now used for temples of any deity.<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion, notwithstanding the difficulty of the lack of evidence suggesting the titularity of Tell Bi'a, Tell Bazi, and Tell Munbaqa Temples in contrast with the cases of Ebla, Alalakh, and Emar, it is possible to formulate a tentative general interpretation of the use of lion's image at temple entrances of Old and Middle Syrian periods. In a first phase, in Middle Bronze I, ca. 2000-1800 BC, the lion's figures were reserved only for Ishtar's Temples, particularly at Ebla which was the main cult venue of the deity in all Inner Northern Syria, because the lion was the symbolic animal of the great goddess. In a second phase, during Middle Bronze II, ca. 1800-1600 BC, the use of lion's jambs was perhaps largely diffused in other cities like Alalakh and possibly at Tell Bazi and/or Tell Munbaqa, if their temples were really dedicated to Ishtar. In a third phase, as an imitation of prestigious Ishtar's Temples of some cities, in Late Bronze I, ca. 1600-1200 BC, even temples not dedicated to Ishtar were equipped for lion's jambs at their entrances, if the titular god of Tell Bazi and/or Tell Munbaqa Temples was other than Ishtar. In a fourth phase, in Late Bronze II, ca. 1400-1200 BC, any temple could be provided with lion's figures at its gateway, as is the case of Ba'al's Temple at Emar.<sup>31</sup>

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least another basalt fragment of sculpture with the left fore-paw of a lion only (AT/46/301: Woolley 1955, 243) was found in the foundations of Temple IA might suggest that lion's images were decorating the gateways of more than two rebuilt temples over the centuries.

<sup>19</sup> Woolley 1955, 242.

<sup>20</sup> Orthmann 1975, 481; Matthiae 2013a, 382.

<sup>21</sup> Einwag, Otto 2012, 107.

<sup>22</sup> Miglus, Strommenger 2002, 102-104, 112-113, pls. 25, 121, 1, 124.

<sup>23</sup> Miglus, Strommenger 2002, 113-114, pls. 133, 4-5, 134.

<sup>24</sup> Kohlmeyer 2012, 65, pl. 14A.

<sup>25</sup> Kohlmeyer 2012, 60-61, fig. 2; Kohlmeyer 2016, 301-303, figs. 3-5.

<sup>26</sup> Otto 2013, 371-374; Einwag, Otto 2012, 91-100.

<sup>27</sup> See also the argument given by Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 111-112.

<sup>28</sup> Heinrich *et al.* 1970, 76-77, fig. 32; Heinrich *et al.* 1971, 52-54, fig. 32a-b; Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 197-198, fig. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Werner 1994, 59, 102, Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 108, 110.

<sup>30</sup> Margueron 1982; Margueron 1996; Sakal 2007; Otto in Einwag and Otto 2012, 198, fig. 14; Sakal 2012, 85-85, figs. 5-6, pl. 22A.

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# UP AND DOWN IN EARLY SYRIAN PALACES: SPACES OF POWER PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMIC WEALTH

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## *Abstract*

Early Syrian palaces show different forms of implantation, structural organization and circulation across their various wings for residence, reception and services; the capacity of building on terraces on the slopes of the citadels characterizes some unique cases that share a similar conception of passageways and staircases with their physical and ideological movement upward and downward.

Second Urbanization in Upper Mesopotamia and northern Syria (fig. 1) reached its floruit around the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C.<sup>1</sup> Agro-pastoral élites emerged and consolidated their economic power exploiting often vast territories with their resources, expanding and controlling their routes of communication and exchange and establishing powerful dynasties that forged kingdoms which competed for regional and inter-regional supremacy. Urbanism was then able to expand with its concentration and specialization of physical spaces for housing the various social and economic activities that supplied the state with resources, food and labour. This process saw different degrees of intensity and timing of development related to the geographic and environmental zones and the relative settlement growth in earlier phases. A number of towns had already experienced a not inconsiderable growth and centralization in the 4th millennium B.C. (especially in the eastern Jazirah: Tell Brak, Tell Leilan, Tell Hamoukar) and provided them with a solid basis for their further economic and urban development in 3rd millennium B.C. Other towns, instead, were founded or developed in the early 3rd millennium, gradually attaining the status of administrative, political and religious centres.

Urban landscapes were consequently characterized by very different physical spatial concepts and planning models. Adaptation to topographic conditions was a primary requirement everywhere in shaping and providing settlements with the necessary spaces for their growth in various geographical settings: along the banks of rivers, in shallow valleys and wide plains or in elevated positions. A principal difference between lowland and hilly/highland urbanism sees the contrast between the Levant, the Anatolian and Iranian plateaus and the Mesopotamian

plains with, also, the different capacities in terms of centralization, food accumulation and settlement size. The archaeological documentation reveals consistent regional models for the various environments and as well as a pronounced differentiation of towns characterised by different shapes and sizes, overall plan and organization of space. A good example of this process is furnished by a few relevant towns in northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, documenting a sophisticated urbanism around the mid 3rd millennium B.C., during the Early Bronze III-IV periods, which reveals, individual local differences notwithstanding, the presence of a distinct and common regional model of development.

Large-scale palaces were planned and constructed at that time, gradually expanding in size and complexity and mirroring the political growth of the local states;<sup>2</sup> they provided the élites with spaces for residences and related services, for housing social and political activities, administration and the storage of goods, primary resources and food. Palaces were the ideological and socio-economic core of the state and were consequently located in the physical centre of towns. Centrality constituted a physical, visual and political requirement, with elevation and domination over the urban space and its adjoining hinterland being a further element influencing the location of a palace.<sup>3</sup>

Centrality and elevation may have been driven in some cases by the choice of occupying and building

<sup>1</sup> Introduction and discussion by G. Schwartz, in Akkermans, Schwartz 2003, 233; Liverani 2014, 115.

<sup>2</sup> As for the Jezirah, Pfälzner 2011, 170 notes that no palaces are attested in periods EJZ0-1/EB I and most of EJZ2/EB2 were “in line with the general development of political structures.”

<sup>3</sup> The towns of the Jezirah, particularly Kranzhügel, with their round form, were organized around a physical centre constituted by high terraced buildings: Meyer 2011; Meyer 2013, 120-126, figs. 2-4; Pruss 2013, 138-140, fig. 3. However, Meyer 2011, 136, recognizes two different conceptions: one in Khuera and Mozan where a *plaza* is in the centre with a temple complex adjoining it and one in Beydar with its temple/palace complex in the centre of the settlement.

on naturally high places, or over the remains of older structures. Furthermore, both technical and ideological concerns may have been contingent critical factors. Rebuilding over previous dry mud-brick substructures provided solidity and thermal insulation, whilst rebuilding over the house of the ancestors supplied protection and legitimacy. Usually, extensive flat surfaces could be properly levelled to provide a level, dry and solid base for the new structures. Occasionally, this practice could also be carried out by levelling terraces at different altitudes, but this method required a careful planning and the capacity to overcome physical constraints, such as erosion of the slopes and the weight of the constructions. This method with its building procedures and urban conception is well documented by the palaces of Ebla, Urkish, Tell Khuera and Nabada which here offer me the occasion for a comparative re-consideration of their architecture, as a toast to Marilyn and Giorgio in an imaginary journey through the palaces where we have spent the majority of our lives as archaeologists.

Since its discovery and with the extension of excavations, Royal Palace G at Ebla has been carefully described and analysed, in order to define its architectural tradition<sup>4</sup> and to reconstruct its references and identification in the texts.<sup>5</sup> Here, I will re-address some of its characteristics that can illustrate the presence of a distinct building plan and structural organization which appear to be shared by other notable contemporary Syrian palaces. The palace at Ebla provides the example of a building which is well diversified in its functional aims and the spatial articulation of its units which consequently present multiform and distinct plans. I defined its complex as a multi-cellular and poly-functional organism, composed of single systems which were interrelated and permeable, at the same time being morphologically and functionally distinct.<sup>6</sup> The entire structure was carefully planned in different building operations and temporal stages on the summit, slopes and at the bottom of the mound (fig. 2) which was created by a pre-existing acropolis. The archaeological documentation concerning earlier phases of occupation on the western sector of the acropolis indicates that the first palace was planned in this upper sector (Central Complex West) and that it gradually expanded, by means of terracing, to the south, its southern limit and different zones of the western slope (fig. 3). The latest topographic extension was achieved by building, at the bottom of the western side of the acropolis, a large external open space, which was founded directly over a limestone pla-

teau (Audience Court). The court was a large *plaza* which extended to the west of the terraced building whose façade (M.2751) consisted of a thick wall with a porch supported by wooden columns (not preserved). A further (and last) building stage was carried out by walling the *intercolumnii* of the porch to create rooms to house the Central Archives. The western façade with the intersection of solid thick orthogonal walls could bear the pressure of the terraces with their built blocks towards the open space of the court, and, at the same time, the thick eastern wall of the Administrative Unit (M.8565) and the solid northern mud-brick platform (M.3117) of the Southern Unit could support the sloping sides of the south-western acropolis. Moreover, the wall separating Central Complex West into a northern and a southern sector (M.3905) and the equally massive wall separating the Northern Quarter to the east from the North-West wing (M.9333) have to be interpreted as massive terracing walls built against the inner part of the mound and the high accumulation layers of the earlier archaic settlement (ENL1-3/EB I-III), their purpose being to prevent subsidence and collapse of the slopes. It is clear that the operation was conducted in different stages, beginning with the Central Complex West (south of the Red Temple) and ending with the construction of the Central Archive. It is also clear that this development corresponded directly with the rise in the political power of the dynasty of Ebla, and its capacity to mobilize manpower and economic investment in urbanism as well as in agriculture, herding, crafts production and the accumulation of resources.

The palace was consequently enlarged to cover over 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> of which 4,500 have been excavated.<sup>7</sup> It included reception and residential units and spaces, with annexes for administrating the state, its income and redistribution, and for preparing, cooking and storing foodstuffs, and for accumulating reserves of valuable materials. These activities are well documented in archaeology and by the local cuneiform archives and we can accordingly present a detailed interpretation of the functional complexity of the palace. The architecture reflects this complexity and its emergence and flourishing also through the accretive building of its many wings.<sup>8</sup> We know, in fact, from the local texts that the palace underwent a long life and can be dated to the reigns of the kings Igriš-Halab and Irkab-damu, and that the central archive was built

<sup>4</sup> Matthiae 1978; 1982; 1983; 2010a; 2010b, 377-387; 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Archi 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Mazzoni 2014/15.

<sup>7</sup> Matthiae 2010b, 377; 2013, 49.

<sup>8</sup> P. Matthiae (2010b, 350-351) recognized four main characteristics: the method of integrative composition, the principle of adaptation, the taste for scenographic effects and the concept of constant variation in the definition of spaces and in the distribution of compositional elements. See 2013.

around the sixth year of Irkab-damu, some 50 years before the fall of Ebla.<sup>9</sup>

The palace was built, as already noted, at different altitudes, by terracing the slopes of the earlier mound; circulation between the wings was organized through staircases which had to cover 5 and 10 meters of difference in altitude. To the north, the Northern Unit included two flights of a stair (L.2610)<sup>10</sup> connecting the lower rooms (L.9038 and L.2601) around 419.65 m in altitude<sup>11</sup> to at least three sectors, each built at different elevation. At its base, in fact, the stairs opened to the south onto a wing (at 419.65 m): its southern room (L.2856) contained a small archive of 32 lenticular tablets, the first ones to be discovered in 1974, proving at that time the official character of the palace and now dated to the third year before the destruction of the palace).<sup>12</sup> A second passage from the stairs led at the corner of the two flights into L.2812 (the northern side of L.3914), in the north-eastern sector of the Central Complex West (with its working areas for grinding cereals) standing at around 423.00. This passage was not preserved, having been destroyed by a waste-pit of a later period but can be reconstructed. The upper ramp of stairs apparently provided access to a zone west of the Red Temple which was at 422.25 m. As the floors of the rooms of the Western Complex immediately south of the temple were at 425.00 m., it is possible that this elevation may have been the original level at which the temple was founded. A further difference is registered in the long blind corridor L.2617 opening to the west onto the passage L.2716 which was 2 m lower, at 417.50. This was a storage unit installed deep inside the thick and high structures which walled up this side of the acropolis and also supported its weight over the adjacent open *plaza*. This northern sector was then built over three different terraces which had a difference in altitude of around 2 m the lower two, and 4 m the topmost one.

The Audience Court was a *plaza* of nearly 60 x 42 m built over a limestone bedrock pierced by cavities which were used as water reservoirs; the floor of the *plaza* was at around 416.00 m but a few differences of level, from 0.50 to 1.00 m (sloping from north to south) could be registered. These may reflect the irregular elevation of the original bedrock and as well possible subsidence of the underground cavities as documented in the Central Archive L.2769, the floor

of which sank in part following the collapse of the underlying rock. The north-eastern side of the *plaza* gave access to a solid tower-like structure composed of thick mud-brick walls containing a staircase (Ceremonial Staircase) with its three flights preserved in place. These climbed from an elevation around 416.00 m to an upper floor, which was not preserved but which must have been at least at 423.00/24.00 m, the elevations documented by the top of its walls. The stairs had mud-brick steps richly decorated with geometric and floral designs (probably impressions left by inlays)<sup>13</sup> and may have connected a residential unit (not preserved), possibly reserved for the private use of the royal family. The king himself fulfilled his official obligations as ruler and attended collective ceremonies standing or sitting on the dais on the northern side of the *plaza*. The more secluded royal residential wing on the first floor could have occupied an area of at least 10x10 above this massive block, a space that may have contained a few small rooms.

The Administrative Wing built over the same limestone terrace of the *plaza* presents limited variations of altitudes, between 414.80 m (L.2866) and 415.20 m (L.2913). The *intercolumnii* along its front were closed up by walls to create the space for the Central Archive (L.2769) and its antechamber (L.2875) for the preparation and writing of the tablets on banquettes. Therefore, the buttressed gate of the unit was accessible through this room, which opened to the west onto the *plaza* by two steps decorated with inlays with geometric designs. The unit was structured around two open courts; to the north, court L.2913, possibly containing a balcony, included a narrow door on its north-east side giving access to a preserved flight of a staircase climbing to 417.65m and probably turning to the west to a space which originally lay above this sector. A second court to the south, L. 2866 gave access to the so-called Throne Room and treasure with its rich contents of objects and tablets.

The *plaza* was connected to the acropolis by means of the Monumental Stairway, a large passageway 22 m long, with its single flight of 40 steps of flagstones, each step consisting of large, well dressed basalt and limestone blocks, in the centre, and smaller stones to either side. Beneath these side blocks canals drew water below to a pit, the stone cover of which is visible in the floor of the court (L.2752) south-west of the entrance and stairs. The stairs led from 416,10m to 421.35 m. The kitchen unit was accessible via the stair, the floors of its two rooms (L.2834, L.2890) lying at 417.80 m, i.e. 2 m above the floor of the *plaza*. As no archaeological evidence remains of

<sup>9</sup> Archi 2014/15, 73-74; 2019, 2.

<sup>10</sup> According to Matthiae 2009, 274, n.10, this sector with stairs L.2610 was separated from the Northern Unit (L.9328, 9339, 9583).

<sup>11</sup> The actual altitude of the summit of the acropolis is 431.00 m over the sea: see fig. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Archi 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Matthiae 2010b, 382.



the topmost sector of the Monumental Stairway or of a possible upper gate, eroded by later levels of occupation, we do not know which were the room and unit accessible via this passageway. This may, however, have served the Central Complex West with its inner unit standing on the north as well as other units housed in other zones of the centre of the acropolis. Its size seems to indicate relatively unrestricted circulation and we could suggest that, at its top, it may have emerged onto an open area, and from there provided access in various directions. Nor can we exclude the possibility that it originally led to the Hypogeum G4 which included two rooms (L.5762-6402) at 418.73 m, 418.77 m<sup>14</sup> (i.e. 5,85 m below the floors of the Central Unit West) with a door in the easternmost one opening to the south via a step. We may presume that a staircase could have led down to the underground hypogeum and that it may have joined the upper gate of the Monumental Staircase.

Central Complex West included different units built at different elevations rising, from the south from 421.49 m (L.4800), to 422.30 m (L.3926, 3932), and, north of the large wall M.3905 to 424.36 (L.4424, 4436) and again in the northernmost room L.4850 (south of the entrance of Temple D) to around 425.00.

A general evaluation of the architecture of this palace must also consider the sophisticated technical and spatial planning of the entire complex; it attests to a notable mastery in integrating the available spaces at different elevations into an organic system of permeable terraced blocks that could sustain the heavy mass of the mound with their solid intersection of thick walls. This was an efficient and durable system, that could protect the building from occasional cases of collapse or slip of the masses, above and also from the pressure resulting from continuous re-occupation and over-building. It is remarkable that it still resists today, notwithstanding the physical raising and growth of the mound with its many ruins over the millennia of occupation and then the excavations which, by exposing the structure with its empty spaces, added further stress to its by now fragile structure.<sup>15</sup> Despite the complex organization of blocks and units, great attention was paid to integrating and connecting these and directing the movement of people with their various activities across the different functional spaces. The numerous staircases made easy to go up and down, from the most secluded royal apartment down to the public and official spaces, up again to the productive units and down to the audience court, up

to the temple and down to the underground core of the ancestors' cult.

Palace G, given its global (textual and archaeological) documentation has no real comparisons; its architecture, the composition and organization of wings on terraces built at different elevations are undoubtedly unique. However, the practice of building on high, directing movement upwards and downwards across the different functional units with their ideological implications, finds good parallels in the Early Syrian towns.

At Tell Khuera, Palace F<sup>16</sup> included a residential and service wing, which was built on an upper terrace, and an official wing, built on a lower terrace; this latter consisted of a courtyard with a podium of stone slabs and, to its north, a large hall, both used for public receptions. A semi-circular stone staircase provided access from this court to the other unit which was built on different elevations, a lower one with rooms for official use and an upper one for services and private use. The temples, with their distinct plan *in antis*, were also constructed over massively built terraces which were accessible by staircases made of flagstones.<sup>17</sup> A route, as a sort of *via sacra*, climbed by a large staircase of stone to Steinbau III, identified as a monumental *propylaeum* opening onto sacred successive precincts, culminating with the Kerntterrasse over which Steinbau I stood (fig. 4).<sup>18</sup>

The Royal Palace AP at Urkish/Tell Mozan (fig. 5), known as the palace of Tupkish from the sealings bearing the name of this king of Urkesh,<sup>19</sup> is built on the western side of the high mound, along the southern slope of hill A on two levels, which were determined by pre-existing structures (earlier city walls on the west; on the east, further structures on an incline that sloped towards the centre of the city).<sup>20</sup> A lower level was occupied by services, cooking, storage and working areas (A-D: at 483.00 m), and was six meters above the plain; 2.50 m higher again stood the residential and official wing (H-I), which opened onto a flagstone courtyard (H3: at 485.00). The two units were probably connected by a staircase, which was not preserved but can be convincingly restored in sector G. The southern front of the building with its recess, platform and drainage system opened onto an

<sup>14</sup> See Matthiae 2000, fig. 8; Matthiae 1997, 269-270.

<sup>15</sup> The numerous activities of restoration concerning the ruins of the palace confirmed that the entrance of the Monumental Staircase, despite the presence of the side buttresses, could not alone have borne the heavy burden of the actual mass of the acropolis.

<sup>16</sup> Pfälzner 2011, 170-171, fig. 43; the palace dates to Khuera ID late and ID early, in EJ 3b and was attached to the inner city wall.

<sup>17</sup> Pfälzner 2011, 184-187.

<sup>18</sup> See reconstruction in Meyer 2001, fig. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 2013, 150-157; Buccellati 2016, 14. For the sealings of Tupkish, see Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1995; 1996. Chronology and discussion of the palace in Pfälzner 2011, 174, fig. 47.

<sup>20</sup> Buccellati 2016, 5, 14-16, 37, illustrations 4, 14; for the use of terracing documented at various palaces contemporary to AP, such as Beydar and Palace F at Tell Khuera, see: 75.

open-air space, a *plaza*, with two features pre-dating the Palace but also in use during its life,<sup>21</sup> platform X and the underground structure W, identified as the *abi*, a necromantic shaft destined to house ritual activities connected with the cult of Netherworld deities, as suggested by its deposits and materials.<sup>22</sup> A further, higher level held the monumental Temple Terrace (BA), with its southern massive stone revetment and stairs with 27 steps ascending to the shrine that stood at its top; a large open-air *plaza* faced the temple.<sup>23</sup> Palace, *plaza* and temple terrace were, however, all spatially linked.<sup>24</sup> The oval shape of this terrace<sup>25</sup> may be connected with south Mesopotamian sacral precincts, as rightly pointed out.<sup>26</sup> Also the symmetrical layout of the palace<sup>27</sup> may relate to north-Mesopotamian traditions. G. Buccellati and M. Kelly-Buccellati stated that “Just as the temple terrace projects the image of an ascent to the heavens, another astounding structure seems to thrust you downward in the direction of the netherworld.”<sup>28</sup> This is a vivid illustration of the practical as well as the ideological, ritual and mundane circulation through the buildings of the acropolis of Urkesh.

Nabada/Tell Beydar presents a further and distinct example of the practice of building the official quarters at different altitudes (fig. 6).<sup>29</sup> A single passageway (Main Street), oriented NNE-SSW, connected the lower level with the temples and the Acropolis Palace, standing on the summit of the citadel. However, here, various official buildings were also connected by this street. Starting from the lower level, the route, in fact, skirted first the large Temple E<sup>30</sup> on its west side, and on the east, the White Hall and (to its north) the Southern Square,<sup>31</sup> which was paved with baked bricks, before climbing to the S Gate. The street consisted of a staircase paved in baked bricks and, in the sectors leading to the main buildings, of passages and stairs made of well dressed basalt blocks. At the inter-

mediary terrace the passage gave access, on the west, to Temple C (and Temple B adjacent to it on its west side) and a further building on the north of Temple C across a street. On the eastern side, the passage led to Temple D, north of the *plaza*. The stairs then climbed to the upper terraces, skirting on the west Temple A and on the east the administrative unit, before reaching the Palace. Also in Nabada there was a circulation upwards and downwards which served the various buildings and *plazas* which were connected by stairs; the focus of the movement may have been on the palace at the summit of the passageway, which was, in fact, directed towards its entrance. However, the system was not unidirectional but permeable and all the blocks at different altitudes and buildings of various function were easily accessible.

We can certainly agree that a local regional tradition can be recognized in the plans of the official buildings and especially temples of the Jezirah, in comparison to more western towns such as Ebla (but also those along the Upper Euphrates). The plans and organization of the temples at Tell Mozan and Beydar have been compared with palaces and temples of Nagar/Tell Brak and Tell Leilan, which appear to illustrate a tradition oriented to the south-east, to Mari and, farther south, to the well known temples of Mesopotamia. Temples on the summit, their volumes rising above the upper towns as spaces of ideological reference and social identity of the urban landscape may, in fact, continue a southern tradition documented along the Euphrates during the Uruk period and also developed locally during EB I.<sup>32</sup> However, a new regional development can be recognized in the urban characteristics of the Early Bronze Age towns of Upper Mesopotamia and northern Syria, and particularly in the capacity of employing a layout, and shaping and adapting the built spaces according to the topography (natural or historical) of the high mounds. Single blocks and individual buildings could stand, rising at different elevations, being connected by stairs which drove the movement upwards and downwards between the highest and the lowest parts of the citadels. Ideological and topographic factors both contributed to defining the position and connectivity of the different buildings, and, as a consequence, the design of the inner and outer routes of circulation.

In the cases analysed above, the palaces are located in different positions on the upper mounds in relation to the temples. Only in Urkish/Tell Mozan could the excavations document and show that the temple and its terrace were built during the Early Bronze Age II/EJZ 2 on the summit of a citadel already occupied during the Late Chalcolithic period. The palace was

<sup>21</sup> Buccellati 2016, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 110-113, fig. 1; Kelly-Buccellati 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 41-42, reconstruction: fig. 3; Kelly-Buccellati 2013, 160-163; Buccellati 2010; 2016, 112-113, figs. 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> Buccellati 2016, 36.

<sup>25</sup> Pfälzner 2010, 4-6, figs. 1-2; Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2014, 27-38, 62-64, figs. 14-16; architecture and stratigraphy in Bianchi 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Pfälzner 2011, 187.

<sup>27</sup> For the “mirrored plan” see Buccellati 2016, 26 and comparisons in 76.

<sup>28</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2016, 112.

<sup>29</sup> Lebeau 2013, 129, fig. 45; Pruss 2013, 140-145, figs. 2-4; Lebeau, Suleiman 2014, figs. 3-4. Chronology and discussion of the Acropolis Palace in Pfälzner 2011, 171-172, figs. 44-45.

<sup>30</sup> Area M: Suleiman 2014, 107-109, pls. I-II.

<sup>31</sup> Area S: Dezzi Bardeschi. Sténuit 2014, 149-154, figs. 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> A general presentation and discussion in Cooper 2006, 143-150, 160-163.

then adjoined in EB IV/EJZ 4 south of the temple on a lower elevation, but extended downwards to include access to the underground structure, the *abi*, built some time before. In Nabada/Beydar, instead, the palace was apparently on the summit and to the north of Temple A which was built on the same terrace in EBIV/EJZ4; but other temples were then built on lower terraces and the last to be excavated and only partially exposed, the largest one, Temple E, was situated at the bottom of the long route that ascended to the palace. In Ebla/Tell Mardikh, the older unit of the Palace was built to the south and in front of the entrance of the Red Temple, and included to the southeast the deep Hypogeum G4, as a sort of ideological foundation in the lineage of the ancestors of the dynasty. Connecting the different functional wings and buildings, the staircases may have conveyed upwards and downwards movements and routes of ritual performance besides the movement of the daily activities with their transfer of food and goods. This is why stairs with their steps were conceived and built with a distinct element of “grandeur”, often in well-drafted basalt and limestone blocks, or decorated with motifs, and even inlays. The gradual expansion and enlargement of the ceremonial wings, as Ebla documents precisely with the addition of the *plaza* at the base of the palace (Audience Court), indicate that the ritual and social performances could be attended by a large number of officials and courtiers; but they also indicate that this public performances were probably a social development of the late phases in the state of Ebla. These collective rituals and meals (well documented by the kitchen at the base of the stairs and the storage unit (located behind the throne dais in the court) could be easily conveyed also from the Central Complex West; but the stairs could also convey processions to the Hypogeum and to the Red Temple. These official buildings were permeable inside and the circulation between and through the wings was organised according to a highly functional concept, which, again, attests to the mastery of workers and architects<sup>33</sup> and the ability of their patrons to create their spaces of power.

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<sup>33</sup> See Buccellati 2016, 123-130, 173-175.

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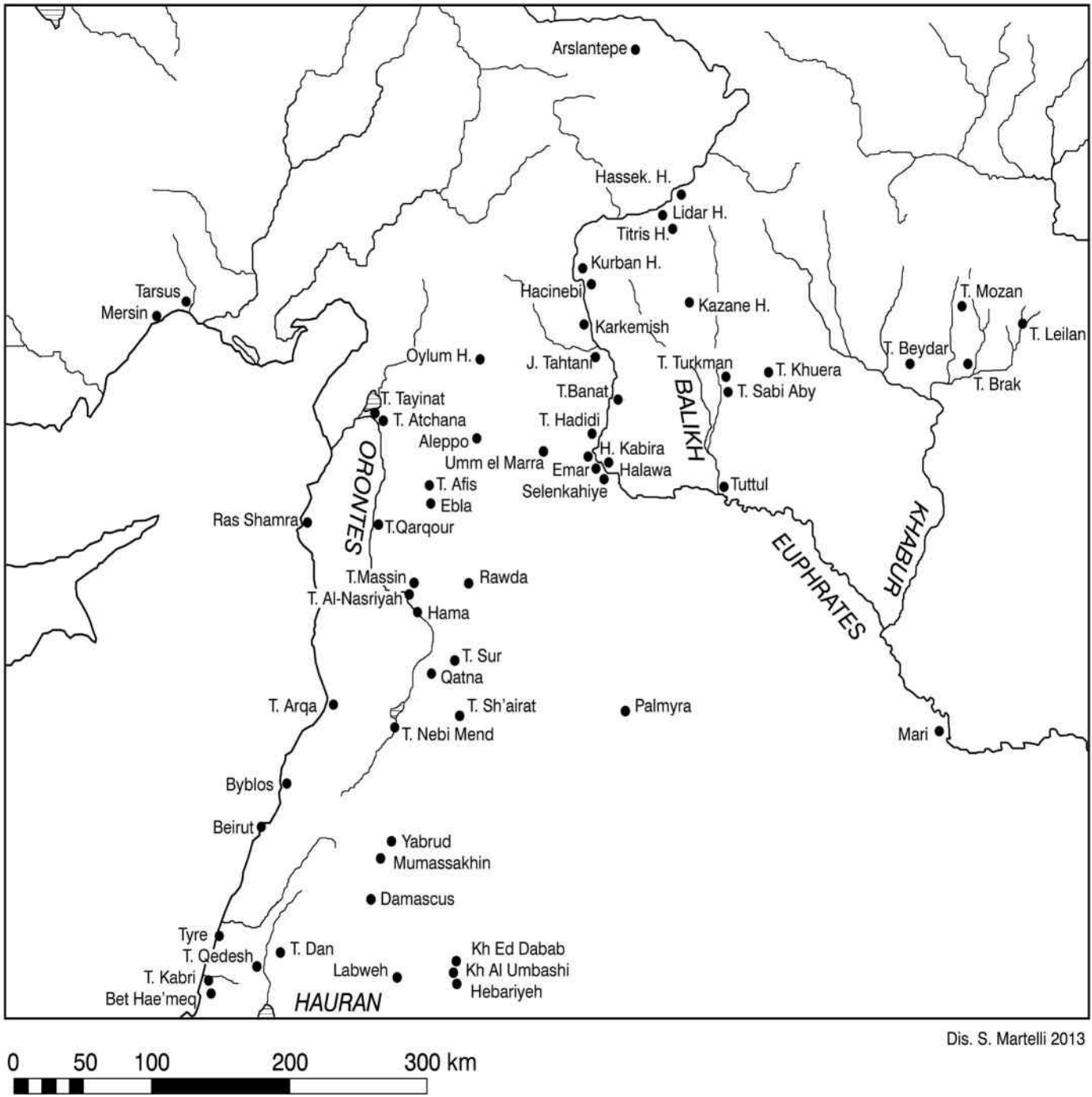


Fig. 1. Map of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia in the time of Second Urbanization (mid 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.)

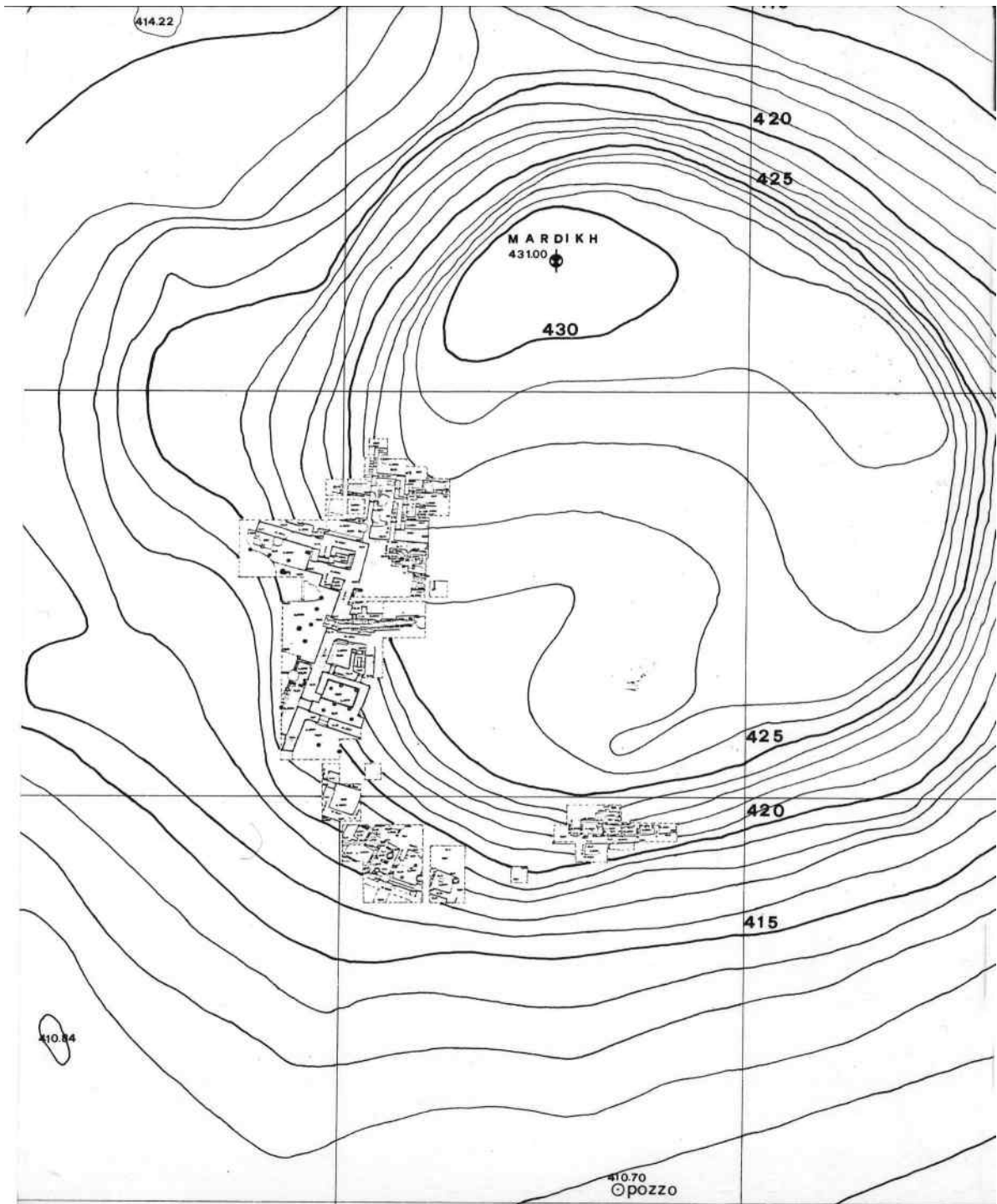


Fig. 2. Palace G of Ebla on the acropolis. MAIS, University of Roma la Sapienza.

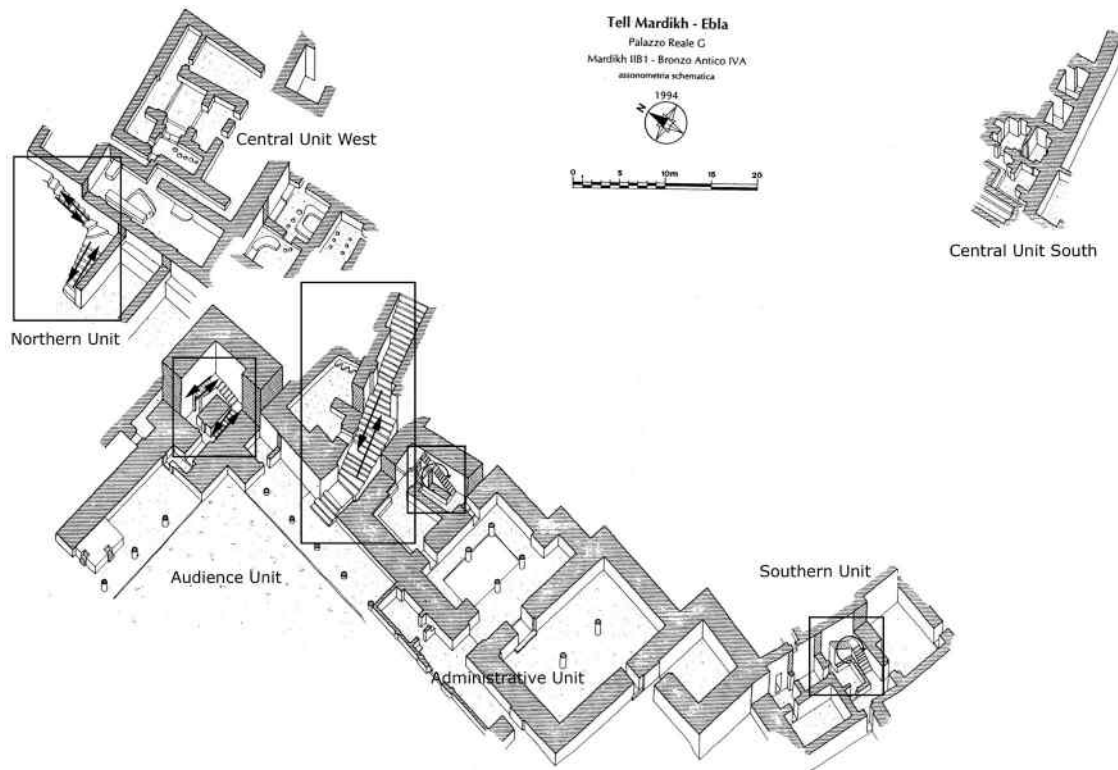


Fig. 3. Isometric view of Palace G with the stairs for inner circulation.

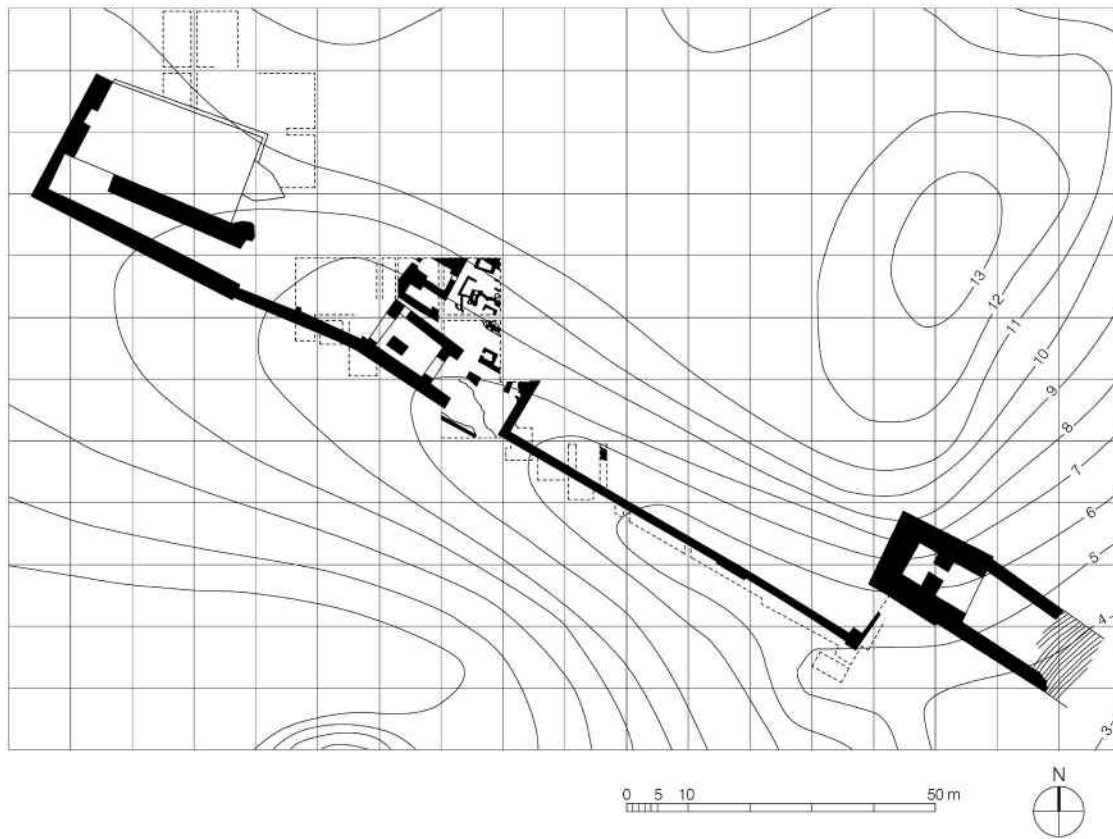


Fig. 4. Tell Khuera: Temples I, II, III, drawing by S. Martelli (after Meyer 2001, fig. 2).



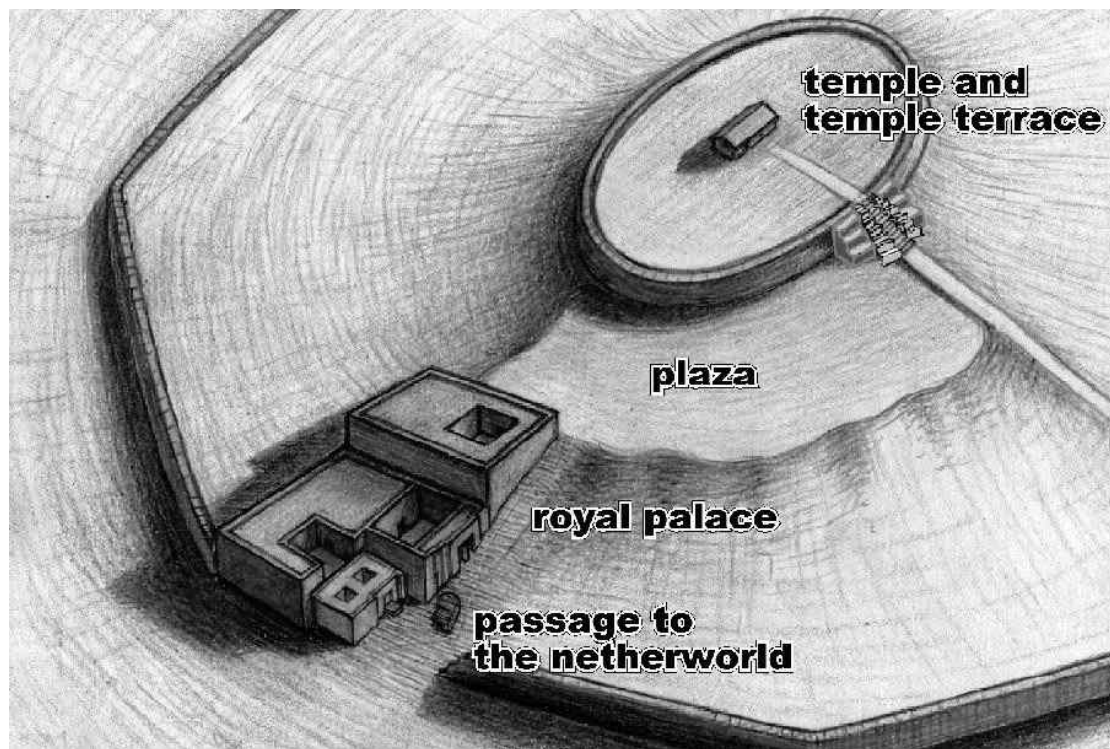


Fig. 5. Tell Mozan: the urban organization of the citadel. After Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2007, 9 (fig.).

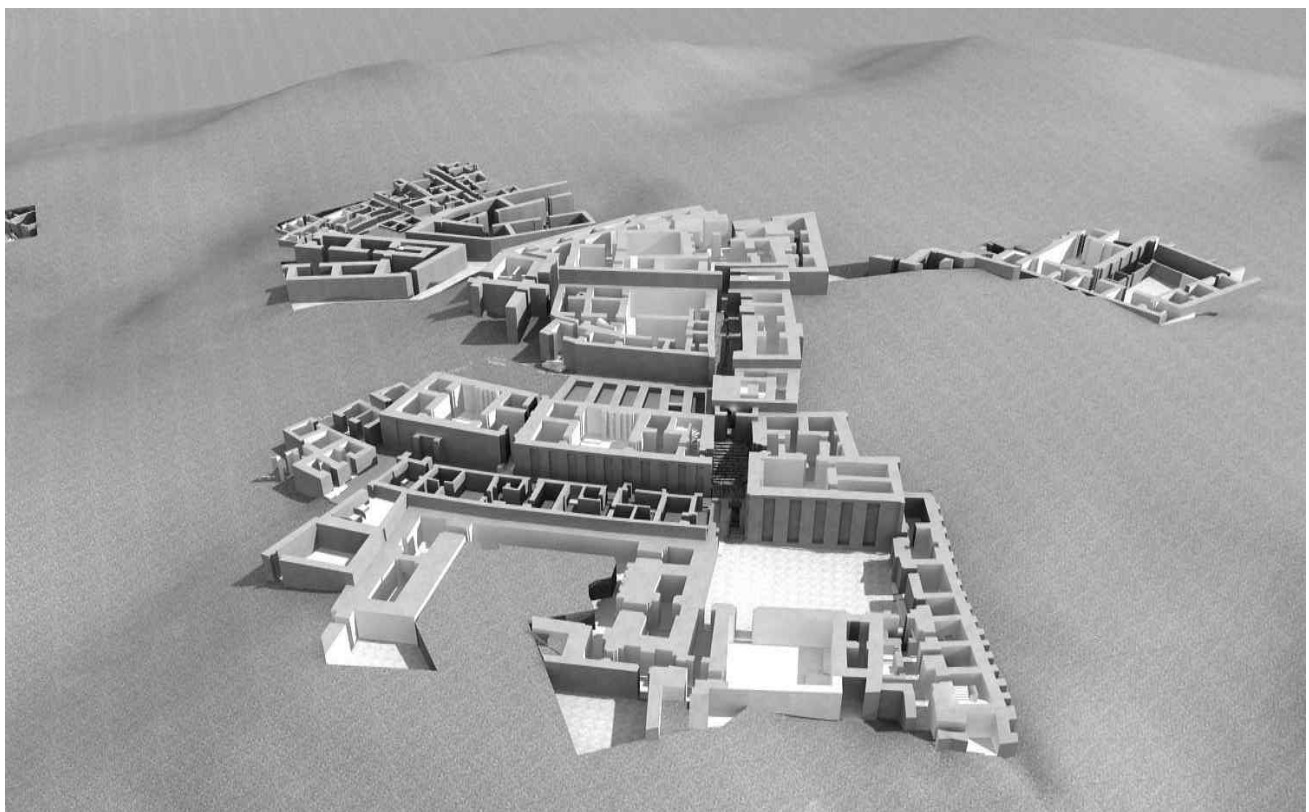


Fig. 6. Tell Beydar: the urban organization of the citadel. After M. Lebeau & H. ed-Din Hammoudeh, *Tell Beydar / Nabada. An Early Bronze Age City in the Syrian Jezirah, Virtual Tour, 3D Images.* [www.beydar.org](http://www.beydar.org).



SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON WALTER ANDRAE'S "URFORMEN DES KULTBAUES"  
IN *MENSCH UND BAUKUNST. EINE CORRESPONDENZ 2* (1953): 1-5, OR RATHER...  
ON A HIDDEN *GRUNDTHEMA* OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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“Im Flusse künftiger Forschung wird es geschehen, daß Neues hinzukommt und Mißverstandenes richtigstellt. Das schreckt uns aber nicht, denn alles Menschenwissen ist und bleibt Stückwerk. Von jeder Stufe der Erkenntnis jedoch, die wir erklimmen, halten wir Umschau und teilen das Gesehene mit, erfüllen zugleich aber auch die Pflicht, den Nachfolgenden Alles zu hinterlassen, was sie zum Weiterbauen brauchen. Denn niemand kann sich künftig Rats an den Ruinen holen, weil keine Macht sie so wird erhalten können, daß man jederzeit an ihnen nachzuprüfen vermöchte, was wir beim Ausgraben gesehen haben.”

W. Andrae, *Die archaischen Ishtar-Tempel in Assur*, 1922: 1-2.

*Abstract*

The paper narrates the development of some of Walter Andrae's concepts regarding ancient sacred architecture that could have been influenced by his personal religious beliefs as an anthroposophist. The media of their diffusion, their possible audience as well as the effects on the ancient Near Eastern studies are then evaluated.

1. INTRODUCTION

I learned that Walter Andrae was an anthroposophist at the very beginning of researching Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, one of the most influential voices on Indian art and Curator of Indian Art in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.<sup>1</sup> At once, I came to know that Coomaraswamy not only appreciated Andrae but also translated into English and published some pages from his works, and furthermore I discovered that Andrae, the excavator of Assur and Director of the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* in Berlin, whose work and drawings I have extensively investigated, was an anthroposophist. Even though their fields of research, their origin and educational backgrounds were widely different, there are strong similarities between Andrae and Coomaraswamy that are evident even to scholars who have no particular knowledge of these figures: not only did they belong to the same generation, being perhaps influenced by the same “anti-classicist” cultural impulse so prominent in those years,<sup>2</sup> but

they also had very similar public roles: after field research, they devoted their activity not only to publications, but also to the introduction, by means of museum collections, lectures and exhibitions, of hitherto unknown ancient arts and civilizations, to the societies in which they played a role. Both names are generally unknown outside of the specific academic literature of their own fields of research. However, whereas Andrae is absent in the literature on Indian art history, Coomaraswamy is sometimes quoted by Near Eastern art historians. Irene J. Winter cites Coomaraswamy extensively, and it cannot be a coincidence that one of her students, Mehmet Ali Ataç, extensively refers to Coomaraswamy's concepts in his last two monographs.<sup>3</sup> Relatively recent is also the contribution by the Assyriologist Pietro Mander,<sup>4</sup> who investigates the relationship between Coomaraswamy's *philosophia perennis* and Mesopotamian myths.<sup>5</sup> These considerations

<sup>1</sup> These initial readings on Coomaraswamy began with the most detailed biography of the scholar (Lipsey 1977). These determined the starting point of my broader research on E. Walter Andrae and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and their elaborations of the concept of the living past, or rather of the past that relives, in the light to their individual adherence to pseudo-philosophical movements, sometimes of esoteric nature (known as *Perennialism*, *Traditionalism* for Coomaraswamy, and *Theosophism* and *Anthroposophism* for Walter Andrae) and their reflections on the scientific and popular production of both scholars.

<sup>2</sup> The German cultural and educational environment of the years when Andrae was active is portrayed in Suzanne Marchand's works on German Classicism and Orientalism. See, in particular,

Marchand 1996; 2000; 2009, with extensive bibliography. For the cultural milieu in the countries where Coomaraswamy was an active cultural player, see, again, Lipsey 1977 and, more recently, for his role in the American contemporary art environment, the illuminating Kroiz 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Ataç 2010; 2018 where he admits, more explicitly than in his earlier book, to being “sympathetic” with Coomaraswamy's approach to art as a *traditionalist* one (Ataç 2018, 17).

<sup>4</sup> Mander 2009/10.

<sup>5</sup> The clearest publication I know on *Traditionalism*, *Perennialism*, their protagonists (including Coomaraswamy, but the book reveals connections even with fascist and right-wing eversive movements) and the influence of these circles in the intellectual history of the 20th century is Sedgwick 2004. But see also Oldmeadow 2004.

of Coomaraswamy's thought, however, are the exception in ancient Near Eastern research. On the contrary, it seems very improbable that anyone who knows Andrae's biography and works would ever know that he is one of the scholars most often quoted in Coomaraswamy's writings. To an art historian of ancient Mesopotamia, this may sound as if Andrae had a second life. And perhaps he had.

In the light of the initial disorientation (I needed to discover what it meant in Andrae's time and/or what it means today to be an anthroposophist) as well as of the unpredictable turns that this research has taken, I perhaps should have added to the title of this contribution: "...on the dark side of archaeological research". However, this qualification wouldn't be appropriate; Andrae's membership in the controversial Anthroposophical Society, created by Rudolf Steiner in 1913, is mentioned in some contributions on his person and career by German scholars and was alluded to also by Andrae himself in the 1950's, when with the end of the Nazi era it was, I imagine, once again possible to publicly refer to Anthroposophism after a 1935 Gestapo ban on the *Anthroposophical Society*.<sup>6</sup> Clearly it wasn't a secret in the German academic environment at the time of his activity and in the following decades up to the present day, but certainly almost unknown or irrelevant to non-German colleagues. Andrae's self-portrait also made reference to this relevant detail. Nevertheless in Andrae's works it is always possible to select the arguments of interest and to extract the data relevant for the purpose of an archaeological investigation and just, so to say, "bypass" all the (more or less open) references to anthroposophical principles that, in fact, may seem to be secondary considerations or even meaningless details to an unaware reader.

One of the unexpected turns in my research on the relationship between Andrae and Coomaraswamy

lies in following the traces of veiled references in Andrae's work that could be directly reconnected to anthroposophical principles and beliefs – keeping the research focus, however, not on his biography as much as on my own interests (i.e. iconography and architecture) and on the relationship with Coomaraswamy's work.<sup>7</sup> While the analysis of Andrae's religious beliefs and activity in the Anthroposophical Society stems from my own interest and is not directly relevant to the scope of this contribution, a certain research on Anthroposophy itself is necessary in order to differentiate between the voice of the scholar and the voice of the "believer", and to evaluate its impact on the archaeological production by Andrae, his possible influence on other scholars perhaps familiar with such mystical beliefs, but also to determine the reception of some of his interpretations in the subsequent archaeological literature.

None of my investigatory works could have been possible without the indispensable guide of the Walter Andrae Bequest (*Nachlass Walter Andrae*) held in the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin,<sup>8</sup> which was crucial for this research but, as is so often the case, raised more questions than it answered. Thus, even though the specific relationship between Andrae and Coomaraswamy will not be discussed here, this contribution represents a first written discussion of my research on this very relationship, which remains my principal intent.

## 2. ANTHROPOSOPHICAL ARCHITECTURE

The multiple possible implications of anthroposophical beliefs on Andrae's research on ancient architecture force me to start telling this story from one of the last episodes (fig. 1). *Mensch und Baukunst. Eine Correspondenz* is the journal of the correspondence of the "anthroposophist architects" circle published in Stuttgart from October 1951 until 1972.<sup>9</sup> The fact that

<sup>6</sup> Sabine Böhme (2017; 2018) began recently working and publishing on some aspects of Andrae as anthroposophist. Heinrich (Heinrich 1957) refers to Andrae's religious approach to his research, but not explicitly to Anthroposophism. Particularly clear is, on the contrary, Barthel Hrouda: "Die Teilnahme an den Vorlesungen Walter Andraes war ein prägendes Erlebnis. Sie fesselten durch die Art der "Globalisierung der Antike". [...] Diese Sicht gründete auf seiner Religion, der Anthroposophie, für die er auch als Priester tätig war" (Hrouda *et al.* 2009, 175). Particularly interesting is the fact that, in his autobiography, Andrae alluded to his being an important member of that community: "1937 wurde die von uns mitbegründete Rudolf-Steiner-Schule geschlossen, welche drei unserer Kinder besuchten." (Andrae 1988, 291). The literature on Rudolf Steiner, the history and the principles of the *Anthroposophical Society* is immense. I can here quote only Staudenmaier 2014, whose study is a well documented historical essay on the meaning and the role of the *Anthroposophical Society* in Germany 1930's and 1940's, the years of the most intense activity of Andrae in Berlin as Director of the Oriental department of the Museum and as a university professor.

<sup>7</sup> I have to point out here that the present contribution deals exclusively with a selection from Andrae's production that deals almost exclusively with architecture. The clear starting point of the relationship between the two scholars is the review of *Die ionische Säule. Bauform oder Symbol?* that Coomaraswamy published in 1935 in *The Art Bulletin* (Coomaraswamy 1935). Even though this publication of Andrae deals also with architecture, I will address this volume in a future analysis, which includes the series of unpublished lectures by Andrae on the same theme and would therefore need a separate treatment.

<sup>8</sup> I would like to express here my deep gratitude to Prof. Dr. Eef Overgaauw, the Director of the Manuscripts Department at the State Library in Berlin, for the kind assistance as well as the permission to use and publish original documents preserved in his Department.

<sup>9</sup> For these dates I refer to Götz 1987, 234. Particularly interesting and of particular use in understanding the principles of anthroposophical architecture is the seminal chapter by Wolfgang Pehnt (Pehnt 2011) published in the catalogue of the exhibition *Rudolf Steiner. Die Alchemie des Alltags*.

Andrae contributed to a journal as anthroposophist architect is not a unique event. In fact, after Andrae's retirement from the *Vorderasiatisches Museum*, he also contributed to *Das Goetheanum*, the international weekly for "Anthroposophy and Threefolding" (*Dreigliederung*),<sup>10</sup> founded in 1921 by Rudolf Steiner as the central media organ of the movement, with papers related to antiquities, the metaphysical dimension of sacred architecture and the interpretation of past material remains.<sup>11</sup> This group of later publications, addressed to the audience of the Anthroposophical Society, are perhaps not particularly relevant from a strict archaeological point of view. What Andrae had to say about Near Eastern architecture and visual culture was already written, his arguments were already formulated and very wisely distributed over almost 30 years of publications, public lectures, conferences and university classrooms, where Andrae seems to have adapted tone and content to multiple audiences and expectations. However, some of these latest articles offer the opportunity for deeper reflection on the history of the construction of his arguments and to question whether some of this message resonates within the archaeological literature.

Andrae opened his contribution with a quotation of Rudolf Steiner's assumptions on the Persian (*urpersischer Kulturzeitraum*) origin of sacred architecture, probably as an opening homage paid to the memory of the movement's founder. He explained that the *urpersische* culture clearly moved from Persia to Mesopotamia according to the geographical and chronological distribution of the buildings archaeologically documented (from Tepe Gawra in the north, to Uruk in the south). At the beginning, he seemed to be willing to describe and discuss the temple of Tepe Gawra Stratum XIII, which allows him also to refer to Ernst Heinrich and his own considerations on the development (and subsequent "immortalization") of wooden architecture into mud-brick architecture as well as on the hypothesis that the central room of such a structure was covered with a saddle roof.<sup>12</sup> The description of this building is calibrated for an audience of architects more or less experienced with the ancient Near East, but not necessarily for someone not familiar with the lexicon of Anthroposophy and Steiner's division of eras in *nachatlantische Kulturperiode*.<sup>13</sup> It is to

this concept, in fact, that Andrae referred when he adapted the historical periodization (3rd, 2nd and 1st Millennia) to the so-called third *nachatlantische Kulturperiode*, then interpreting this period of intense architectural inventiveness and building activity as a particular moment of progress of the human "consciousness". On the one hand, there are certainly some points of interest in Andrae's argumentation, echoes of "traditional" topics known in the archaeological literature, such as the Hurri-Mittannian character of the *bent axis Breitraum* common in northern Mesopotamia and Syria, and anticipations of future debates, such as the value of perceptive human experience within three dimensional architecture. However, lacking any real analysis of the historical and typological development of these structures (which, admittedly, was not the scope of these works), these points are also difficult to be understood as a consistent whole. On the other hand, "odd" interpretations are numerous throughout this short text, such as the explanation of the floorplan and structure of the earliest temple in Eridu as a place where a single person could contemplate the stars (assuming the building was not roofed) and feel the divine force. Andrae connected the development of architectural typologies to the development of human soul from childish simplicity (Eridu XVII-XVI) to complex civilization (Uruk VI-IV). Andrae didn't make clear, however, what the causal relationship is between human spiritual evolution and evolution of the architectural forms, but perhaps the anthroposophist reader would already have known the answer.

In order to identify the voice of Andrae the excavator of Assur in such a non-academic text, access to the original typescript of this contribution seems of some interest. The handwritten corrections of the title is illuminating (fig. 2).<sup>14</sup> One finds out, in fact, that the original title of the contribution was *Das Werden der Bauformen*, that it was changed (in one or more times) into *Ur- und Grundformen des Kultbaues in Vorderasien* and that, as a consequence, in its definitive version (*Die Urformen des Kultbaues*) the paper lost what probably didn't fit into the lexicon of Anthroposophism, that is "Near East".

some research perhaps through sources that I am not always able to judge as reliable. For those who would like to read more regarding Steiner's idea of time and the prehistory of mankind, see Steiner 1959.

<sup>14</sup> The corrections may have not been done by Andrae himself, who was already in these years affected by severe problems of sight. The fact that in the margin of the first page one finds the handwritten name "Gessner", the editor of the journal, seems to suggest at first glance that he was the author of the corrections. However, a comparison with other typescripts seems to suggest that the corrections were made in reality by Andrae's wife.

<sup>10</sup> On this journal in general, see again Götz 1987, 85-92.

<sup>11</sup> Three articles were published in *Das Goetheanum* after Andrae's death in July 1956: "Vorboten der Zeitenwende: Delphi und Babylon" (Andrae 1956a); "Museum, geistgeschichtlich gesehen" (Andrae 1956b); "Ausgrabung, geistgeschichtlich gesehen" (Andrae 1957).

<sup>12</sup> Andrae 1953, 1.

<sup>13</sup> In order to understand to what exactly Andrae was referring, while speaking of *nachatlantische Kulturperiode*, I had to make

Two years later, in 1955, Andrae published a paper with the title *Das Werden der Bauformen* in the *Festschrift* for Carl Weickert, therefore a publication addressed to an academic audience.<sup>15</sup> The paper is certainly equipped with more technical references, but both style and content remained similar to the article of 1953. Also in this article Andrae presented his categorization of sacred architecture according to the three types of Near Eastern *Kultraum* he identified. In this case, however, he added some more details, alluding to the correspondence between the three shapes of the cella to the anthroposophical concept of *Dreigliedrigkeit* and emphasizing the importance of the entrance and direction of approach to the most important sector of the temple (i.e. the location of divinity's manifestation). This spatial relationship is important because it is in relation to the direction of approach that the rays of the "divine light" touch a person within a determined space and in a specific spot of this space; this spatial relationship is further complicated by Andrae's hypothesis that it changes based on the different stages of mankind's spiritual development. The difference of location of the divine presence in a temple is fundamental to his argument, since he also assumed that in the past a human being was able to perceive differently the impact of the "divine radiance" coming from different directions, while the feeling for the essentiality of these differences has mostly been lost in modern time. Again, Andrae emphasized the role of the perception of the three dimensional space in the evolution of the relationship between mankind and built environment or, more specifically, sacred architecture. According to the most recent trends in studies on architecture and perception, it is largely recognized that architecture affects the person who experiences it. Thus the modern reader of such an article may pose some unresolved questions: who is the author of this effect? Does the spirit of humankind make progress after architecture, or does instead architecture change after mankind's spiritual evolution? The answers perhaps were not so relevant for an anthroposophist, but the audience of the *Festschrift* for Carl Weickert would likely have been larger. The comparison between the printed version, manuscript and typescript with relatively few corrections reveals that also in this case the title changed several times and that perhaps the text was not initially written for this volume, but Andrae later corrected and re-adapted for the *Festschrift* (fig. 3). The manuscript, probably written by Andrae himself,<sup>16</sup>

was entitled *Das Werden der Raumformen*, whereas the typescript was originally entitled *Das Werden der Bauformen*, then changed into *Ur- und Grundformen des Kultbaues in Vorderasien*. Surprisingly, also in this publication the presence of the "Near East" in the title seems not to have been relevant for Andrae. More important, in order to understand the imagined audience of this article at the moment it was written, is the fact that in the preliminary versions of the text the references to historical or cultural periodization were absent and, in their place, Andrae wrote of *nachatlantische Kulturperiode*, references that in the final and published version were substituted with general allusions to "Near Eastern", "Chaldean" or "Egyptian" periods (fig. 4). The original typescript of this text contains an extra page, not included in the final version, where Andrae expressed some considerations reflecting the *ex Oriente lux* approach to the diffusion of civilization from the ancient East to the modern West through Greco-Roman and Medieval cultures, whose source must be identified in the earliest Iranian culture despite the fact that the earliest material traces of this culture are archaeologically documented in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Who was going to read these texts? And who, in reality, did end up reading them? I already mentioned the possible nature of the audience of these two publications and also advanced the hypothesis that the paper for the Carl Weickert *Festschrift* was in reality written some time before and then readapted as much as possible in order to be acceptable to an academic audience. It is, however, unlikely that these publications had a serious resonance in Near Eastern studies and related disciplines, whereas Andrae's earlier publications certainly had a much greater audience and resonance. Nevertheless these two short, sometimes odd and unclear publications can help re-reading Andrae's earlier works on architecture that are still part of the archaeological literature and are widely cited. He probably spent part of his life trying to give a religious sense to his work as an archaeologist and to his study of the ancient world,<sup>17</sup> a portrait of a person that, beside his own autobiography, also some private letters to family members and other archival documents dating to the beginning of his career can help to reconstruct.<sup>18</sup> In the first years of

years of his life he was blind and that his wife helped him with his manuscripts.

<sup>17</sup> See Heinrich 1957.

<sup>18</sup> The Walter Andrae Bequest is very rich of letters that Andrae wrote to his family, and especially to his mother, since the first years of his participation in the Babylon expedition. It is normal to find in these documents ideas and opinions that wouldn't be known otherwise. However, it seems more interesting to me to take into consideration the private letters that he chose to make public and use in order to construct his self-portrait. Among these

<sup>15</sup> Andrae 1955.

<sup>16</sup> Manuscript and typescript are undated, and there are no significant elements within the text to determine an approximate year of composition. Heinrich, in his introduction to the first edition of Andrae's autobiography (Andrae 1988, ix) asserts that in the last

the 1950's he certainly only wrote a few occasional papers. Andrae's main publications were written several years before, when he started to publish an unprecedented archaeological graphic documentation and, at the same time, to subtly combine his religious beliefs with his archaeological studies.

### 3. IN SEARCH OF THE *URFORMEN* IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SACRED ARCHITECTURE

The publication in which Andrae explained ancient architecture using what seems to be anthroposophical principles, or, perhaps better, *vice versa* where ancient architecture is used to explain and support those principles, appears in 1930 with the monograph *Das Gotteshaus und die Urformen des Bauens im alten Orient*.<sup>19</sup> It is not clear when Andrae exactly embraced Anthroposophy, but it was most likely already in the 1920's.<sup>20</sup> That means that in 1930 Andrae's specific arguments and research approach in this publication were clearly expressed in the title and largely developed through the entire text, after a short introductory explanation where he assumed the importance of these buildings for "our own spiritual life" beyond a mere historical value.<sup>21</sup> The volume was certainly intended for a public of specialists, archaeologists but mostly architects who dealt also with ancient architecture. It is published, in fact, as the second issue of the *Studien zur Bauforschung* published by the *Koldewey-Gesellschaft* and dedicated to Cornelius Gurlitt, "[...] dem achtzigjährigen Meister der Baukunst-Forschung, am 1. Januar 1930".<sup>22</sup> The book is organized in three sections:

the first section is the description of the two main types of temple building that Andrae distinguished in the Near East: the high-temple/*ziqqurrat* (that he interpreted as divine residence), and the low-temple, or temple on earth (that he interpreted as the place of the divine manifestation); the second section is the description of the single architectural, structural and decorative elements, where a significant meaning is given to temple gates and their images as they signify (as ideograms) the deity's entrance into the world of appearances;<sup>23</sup> the third section aims at detecting and explaining the "reflection" of the "deepest knowledge" and of the divine in ancient Near Eastern temples,<sup>24</sup> basing his arguments on two fundamental assumptions: 1) that the "deepest knowledge", that is an esoteric form of knowledge, does not need traditional and sometimes misleading sources (texts, images and the built architecture); and 2) that the intensity of the reflection of this knowledge depends on the *media* that carry it. Temples, houses and palaces as well as tombs constitute a coherent system according to which architecture is just a reflection of the "secret" knowledge (*geheimes Wissen*). Moreover, Andrae assigned a peculiar additional importance to Mesopotamian temples, when compared to those of other periods and cultures, due to the fact that, thanks to the archaeological research, their development can be traced almost to a (not further described!) primordial or mythical time, i.e. to its very source. As a consequence, the latest historical tangible architectural forms would allow us to glimpse the prehistorical and primeval world from which they must have developed.<sup>25</sup>

It should be mentioned here that, contrary to the synthetic but sometimes confusing articles discussed above, in Andrae's 1930 complex publication there are traces of his idea regarding the responsibility, or authorship, of the transmission of this esoteric knowledge through time and of the translation of this knowledge itself into architectural forms. A central role was assigned, in fact, to high spiritual leaders endowed with greater powers and responsible of inventions and knowledge<sup>26</sup>—a concept that Andrae used some years later (in *Die jüngeren Ishtar-Tempel*, 1935) and that, from time to time, reappears in the literature on the ancient Near East.

Alongside numerous highly valuable contributions to the knowledge of Mesopotamian architecture and

letters, some passages from a letter to his mother from Babylon, dated June 1902, sound particularly interesting for the argumentation he uses in order to explain in part the value of his fieldwork: "Wenn Du, liebe Mutter, einmal die Bibel vornimmst, so kann ich Dir raten, die Apokryphen zu lesen, vom Bel zu Babel, den wir jetzt leibhaftig für Augen haben. Der Drache ist am Ischhtar-Tor zu sehen, das wir gerade graben. [...] wie mir scheint, ist es wichtiger, dass die Juden die ersten waren, die ihren Gott geistig erfassten, d. h. ohne Abbild, im Gegensatz zu den übrigen Völkern der demaligen Zeit." (Andrae 1988, 110-111).

<sup>19</sup> Andrae 1930.

<sup>20</sup> The concept of the *Stufe der Erkenntnis* is fundamental in Anthroposophy and seems to be referred to in Andrae's introduction to the first publication on the archaic Ishtar temples in Assur (Andrae 1922, 1), but completely absent (together with any other reference to Anthroposophy) in the rest of the publication.

<sup>21</sup> Andrae 1930, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Walter Andrae was a student of Cornelius Gurlitt, see Andrae 1988, 3-4. Gurlitt was responsible for the participation of Andrae in the Babylon expedition — a biographical detail that I have already reported on in another contribution (Micale forthcoming). This is shown in a letter, now in the Cornelius Gurlitt Bequest (Brief-nummer 032/138), from Cornelius to his brother Wilhelm, dated 27-07-1899, where he writes: "Viele Freude habe ich an den Berichten meines Schülers Reg. Bauführer Andrae, dem ich die Stelle in der Expedition nach Babylon verschaffte. Hetze ihn auf eine Frage, die mich mehr interessiert als Alt-Assyrien, näm-

lich auf die Sassaniden- und frühe mohammedanische Zeit, um die sich dort noch niemand kümmerte: Wohntypen, Entwicklung der Gewölbe, der Tonindustrie etc."

<sup>23</sup> Andrae 1930, 37.

<sup>24</sup> Andrae 1930, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Andrae 1930, 88.

<sup>26</sup> Andrae 1930, 45.

its historical development (including a very useful set of drawings, illustrations, and plans to scale),<sup>27</sup> there are numerous critical points present in the volume, from the description of images as representations of the invisible essence of the real world to the “daring” comparison between features of Mesopotamian temples, the *megaron*, the *frühgermanische* houses, a comparison (with subsequent speculations) which sounds a lot like diffusionism.<sup>28</sup> But since my contribution is not intended to be a review of Andrae’s book almost 90 years after its publication, I want only draw attention to that crucial aspect of the reception of Andrae’s point of view, that is the clarity by which Andrae justified his interpretative system, evoking a system with an internal coherence, a self-evident truth that does not necessitate demonstration or verification of sources.

We can certainly follow the development of Andrae’s scientific career between museum and university activities, but we cannot follow what happened in Andrae’s life as anthroposophist. It is evident, however, that between 1922 and 1930 a huge leap was made in Andrae’s publications in terms of the explanation of the presented data when one considers the 1922 *Die archaischen Ishtar-Tempel in Assur* and the 1930 *Das Gotteshaus und die Urformen des Bauens im alten Orient*. There are few works of Andrae concerning architecture in the 1920’s (the same years when he substituted R. Koldewey in the Near Eastern department, brought back to Berlin the findings of Assur and Babylon, and became director of the department after O. Weber’s premature death), whereas some traces of his growing interest in symbols and symbolic forms can be seen in other publications that directly lead to his *Die ionische Säule, Bauform oder Symbol?* in 1933.<sup>29</sup> In his preliminary presentation of the publication of the early temples of Ishtar to the members of the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft*,<sup>30</sup> Andrae emphasized the peculiarity of the fieldwork in Assur in respect to other excavations (including

Babylon), and the unprecedented results which came from the possibility of tracing an Assyrian temple complex backwards through time. In fact, this stratigraphic sequence revealed the origins of what was then the already well known Assyrian culture of 9th-7th cent. – a reconstruction of the origins of an Assyrian tradition impossible to detect before these excavations in Assur. It seems that concepts like “tradition” and “persistence” originated in Andrae’s research from his actual interaction with the excavation, browsing through layers deep in the stratigraphic sequence (and the “history printed in the stratigraphy” itself, according to Andrae’s own definition) all the way down to the origins “covered by a veil of oblivion”.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, his description of architecture in *Die Kunst des Alten Orients*, within the *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*,<sup>32</sup> despite some daring comparisons of formal elements, remains free of allusions to *Urformen* and related concepts.

It is only in 1927 that Andrae, in a contribution to the *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*,<sup>33</sup> explicitly commented on ancient Near Eastern architectural discoveries through the lens of his new research scope, i.e. the implementation of the knowledge of the religious and spiritual dimension of ancient mankind and architecture, that correspondence between *Mensch und Baukunst* that Andrae had been studying over the entire course of his professional life. The language becomes difficult here, interpretations sometimes odd and not supported by any textual or archaeological data. The presence of graves under the floor of houses and palaces in ancient cultures was explained, for example, with the impossibility for a person to abandon a fellow-creature since in him/her was recognized the “divine spark”. To an archaeologist it is clear that the very few examples proposed by Andrae testify, in reality, to an elitist practice, instead of describing a universality of the religious sentiment which Andrae is alluding to with the concept of *Ur-Mensch*. Expressions like “metaphysic” also enters this contribution to one of the most prestigious international journals of oriental studies. However, as is common in Andrae’s publications, these arguments, perhaps fundamental for Andrae himself, sounded marginal when compared to the analysis of the architectural forms in temples and houses in the ancient Near East that constituted one of Andrae’s most important and long lasting contributions to the knowledge of the historical and typological development (despite his apparently opposite approach!) of Mesopotamian architecture.

<sup>27</sup> Particular significant is the review of the volume by Th. Dombart (Dombart 1932). On the one hand, he expressed some doubts on the necessity to embrace a research for “ancestors”, which by necessity includes a high degree of subjectivity and speculation, while also noting that some concepts had been already expressed by other scholars (e.g. Koldewey and Dombart himself). On the other hand, he recognized an unquestionable value in Andrae’s attempt to find connections between formal elements and to explain them, a necessary type of research that in the future would have seen all Andrae’s mistakes corrected.

<sup>28</sup> Andrae 1930, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Andrae 1933a. As anticipated in note 7 here above, the analysis of symbols in ancient Near Eastern art is out of the scope of this contribution and will be discussed in a separate specific study as part of a larger research project on Andrae and Coomaraswamy.

<sup>30</sup> Andrae 1921.

<sup>31</sup> Andrae 1921, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Andrae 1925.

<sup>33</sup> Andrae 1927.

The nature of Andrae as architect emerged also in the care he took in specifying whether the building plans shown in the same illustration were to scale or not. In order to better understand the subsequent developments of Andrae's ideas of symbols and symbolism, and of the persistence of ancient images over time, and also to understand how advanced and complex the construction of his system of interpretation already was, it must be mentioned that in some short passages of this article in the *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* Andrae assumed a Babylonian influence in the addition of two projecting towers to the main entrance of Ishtar temple E as well as in the arrangement of a high podium in the main cella of the temple at the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I. He hypothesized, in fact, that the Assyrians added the typical feature of a gate to a temple in order to enable the "manifestation" of the divine as without one the goddess could not otherwise enter the sensible world; furthermore the new high podium in the later temple (Tukulti-Ninurta I) was a way to elevate the location of the goddess' residence, following what Andrae assumed is the Babylonian but originally Sumerian concept of the *ziqurrat* as residence of the divine. At the same time, these passages anticipate the idea that the *medium*/symbol can be transmitted emptied of its original significance (Andrae is not sure whether the Assyrians, whom he labels a *konsumierendes Volk*, adopted only form without meaning), a concept that will be fundamental not only in Andrae's subsequent work on symbols and architectural forms but also in those arguments that connected Andrae and Coomaraswamy.

It is difficult to understand why in 1927 Andrae wrote so explicitly of some arguments with such an unprecedented language, whereas, for example, in 1928, in the keynote lecture for the Archaeological Society in Berlin *Urfomen und Überlieferung in der Altorientalischen Kunst*<sup>34</sup> he used very descriptive tones and anticipated the main arguments of his complex and controversial work *Das Gotteshaus*.

#### 4. ON THE MATERIALIZATION OF THE SPIRITUAL (AND SOME REACTIONS)

It often happens that Andrae's arguments on art and architecture are blended and sometimes even mixed up with his religious beliefs, as clearly came out in the discussion above. Additionally, his way of conflating the built architecture, as known from the archaeological excavations, with the image of architecture and its potential symbolic value as known from contemporary sources, does not help to

select Andrae's writings concerning architecture and art, as my contribution would require. But, of course, this difficulty has to do with the development of Andrae's approach to the interpretation of the *media*, i.e. the support by which the primordial knowledge is transmitted through time, in a clear shift of his interest from the *media* (architecture and/or art) to the symbol and its message.<sup>35</sup>

The most consistent example of the development of this approach and shift in relation to architecture can be found in the 1935 publication *Die jüngeren Ishtar-Tempel*, which remains one of the most important publications of Assur excavations. A stunning amount of stratigraphic, architectural, and material data were, in fact, published thirteen years after the first volume on the early temples, giving to the scientific community a complete sequence of data through the entire life of the city and through all the political and cultural changes that had conditioned the main periods archaeologically represented in the temple area. Andrae presented the planimetric development of the Ishtar temples chronologically, comparing them with other Assyrian temples and trying to explain the coexistence of the two different temple types identified in Assur (i.e. long room with straight entrance and long room with *bent axis* entrance). Also in this publication Andrae repeated his assumptions on the function of the gate that, in both types of temple, where the approach to divine is either direct or bent, symbolizes the path through which the god enters the sensible world or through which the initiate finds entrance into the metaphysical world, where he rejoins the divine—an idea to which Andrae connects some Christian ritual performances in a continuity of both symbol and its meaning.<sup>36</sup> Of fundamental importance in the development of Andrae's argument, also in respect of the *Urfomen* of 1930, is the idea that what the initiated (guardians of the secret knowledge, who directly contemplated

<sup>34</sup> Andrae 1928.

<sup>35</sup> This analysis excludes two series of documents and publications. Even though pertinent, and perhaps a fundamental publication when considering Andrae the anthroposophist, the study of the monograph *Das wiedererstandene Assur* (1938) will be part of an individual study together with the unpublished manuscripts of a series of three lectures (dated 9-11-1937, 23-11-1937, and 7-12-1937) that Andrae gave in the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* as a presentation of this book together with other publications concerning the meaning of stratigraphy. A separate study is also planned for a series of short notes and articles that Andrae wrote during the 1930's in *Forschungen und Fortschritte. Nachrichtenblatt d. Deutschen Wissenschaft und Technik*. This was a German journal where several contributors expressed sympathy for the racial classification of peoples. An analysis of Andrae's contributions to this journal in the light also of the development of research in the 1930's, as proposed in this journal, clearly necessitates a separate treatment.

<sup>36</sup> Andrae 1935, 7-10.

the primeval times and determine temple forms) experience with their spirit (i.e. also the experience of the architectural space and its perception), is presented to laypeople in a symbolic form. This is true not only for architecture, but also for figurative art, where images, as symbols, are instruments for the materialization of the spiritual.<sup>37</sup>

Andrae expressed in the same years similar concepts concerning ancient architecture and the *Ur-Mensch* in other allegedly archaeological writings, but sometimes with less archaeology and more speculation, as in *Das Nordische und das Sumerisch-Agyptische* published in the *Festschrift* for Wilhelm Dörpfeld<sup>38</sup> and in *Die monumentale Kunst der Sumerer*,<sup>39</sup> where however he assumed that in architecture there is no monumentality without symbolism, referring in particular to the symbolism inherent to the idea of climbing the sacred mountain (the *ziqurrat*) to get closer to the divine.<sup>40</sup> Worthy of note are also *Kultbau im Alten Orient*, published in the *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud*<sup>41</sup> and, in particular, *Die Tempel der Assyrer*,<sup>42</sup> which was a review of Günter Martiny's work *Die Gegensätze im babylonischen und assyrischen Tempelbau*, where Andrae concluded his very critical text blaming Martiny for having chosen a way of interpretation other than the "experience" of the divine. Martiny, in his volume, criticized Andrae's excess of research on ancient religion using architectural analysis,<sup>43</sup> which may have provoked Andrae's hard reaction.

Before I move on to some concluding remarks on the relevance of studying an anthroposophical vein in Andrae's studies beyond a pure biographical interest, it is worth considering Martiny's (very limited) criticism and Andrae's reaction in a wider context. The reactions that Andrae's publications aroused in the scientific community of those years is quite interesting, especially concerning Andrae's interest in the connection between architecture, religion and spiritual domain. The most accurate description of *Die jüngeren Ishtar-Tempel* is certainly the review by Elisabeth Douglas Van Buren,<sup>44</sup> who had several research interests in common with Andrae and described the real archaeological value of the volume (beyond digressions of non-historical interest), that is the publication of the long history of the temples of Ishtar in Assur and the great amount and variety of materials found in them. Concerning the same

publication, Ephraim Speiser<sup>45</sup> complained of the fact that Andrae's interest in the spiritual background of Oriental religions "colors" his interpretations and that the results presented in his book are inevitably subjective. Two further reviews must be mentioned here, even though they are not directly related to these publications of Andrae nor, in one case, directly with Andrae's publications at all. The first one was written by Valentin Müller,<sup>46</sup> Professor of Classical Archaeology at Bryn Mawr College, for the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Born in Berlin, the same generation as Andrae and, most probably, since he was German himself, perfectly aware of the religious background that was behind part of Andrae's *Die Ionische Säule*, Müller opened his review asserting that "An excavator of enviable reputation has written a strange book", and went on assuming that "the reader to whom such a *Geistwelt* is esoteric and who believes only in the *Kausalnexus physischer Realitäten* may wonder whether it is worth while to read the book except in the case that he is interested in the evolution of modern thought or in the history of archaeology". To readers interested only in archaeological investigation, Müller suggested they read only the first part of the book. Even harsher was the judgment of Martiny's book mentioned above by Giuseppe Furlani in his review published in the *Rivista degli studi orientali*.<sup>47</sup> Furlani, who was an Assyriologist with a specific focus on the religion of Assyrians and Babylonians, put the accent on the weakness of Martiny's attempt to interpret ancient religion by means of architectural forms, while ignoring the textual evidence that could have supported diverse conclusions. More interesting for the arguments of my contribution is, however, the hard invective against the "school of Koldewey" and Andrae, in particular, who were at fault, in Furlani's opinion, for trying to go beyond their excellent and incomparable fieldwork, which Furlani considers a model of archaeological research, in order to give interpretations that were beyond their own competence. Furlani concluded his review, unfortunately for archaeology as scientific discipline, with a general negative judgment of the value of archaeological data (assuming perhaps the supremacy of written sources over material ones), and wondering if, according to different interpretations of the same archaeological data, Martiny's reader must conclude that architecture is a relativist discipline, as someone claims is the case for mathematics.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Andrae 1935, 105.

<sup>38</sup> Andrae 1933b.

<sup>39</sup> Andrae 1937a.

<sup>40</sup> Andrae 1937a, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Andrae 1939.

<sup>42</sup> Andrae 1937b.

<sup>43</sup> Martiny 1936, in particular 5-6.

<sup>44</sup> Douglas Van Buren 1935/36.

<sup>45</sup> Speiser 1936.

<sup>46</sup> Müller 1934.

<sup>47</sup> Furlani 1939.

<sup>48</sup> The original passage in Italian says: "Chi legga questo libricino del Martiny deve arrivare alla conclusione che anche l'architettura è un'opinione, come, secondo taluni, sarebbe altresì



Did these opinions reflect a generally critical opinion on Andrae's attempt to reconstruct the religious beliefs as well as the spiritual development of mankind as reflected in ancient Near Eastern sacred architecture? It is difficult to have a complete picture of the reception of some of Andrae's theories in the years immediately following their publication. It is certainly more difficult for non-German scholars who don't have the measure of the "feelings" of the scientific community in respect of specific topics, specially if the (anthroposophic?) language used by Andrae is interpreted by non-German speakers as "cloudy abstractions of German philosophical language".<sup>49</sup> It must be said, however, that I would not be able to suggest an interpretation of the first words of Bartel Hrouda's article on the origin of the Assyrian "tree of life"<sup>50</sup> ("Dieser Beitrag ist keine religionswissenschaftliche, sondern eine ikonographische Studie"), which sound like a very superfluous clarification, if I was not aware of the content of *Die ionische Säule*, from which Hrouda perhaps wanted to take distance (he doesn't quote Andrae's book at all).

##### 5. TRADITION OF STUDIES OR OCCASIONAL TRENDS?

It is not easy, and perhaps not even possible, to follow each possible ramification of Andrae's interpretation of ancient architecture in the light of a hypothetical anthroposophical influence on his work. Some might criticize my approach as not adequately informed or prepared in the field of Anthroposophy and that, as a consequence, I have not understood the influence that this sort of esoteric alternative avant-garde had on him. This is certainly a possible point of criticism; however, it is certainly also possible to identify arguments that are extraneous to the methodology of the archaeological and art historical research, even considering the plurality of methods developed in more than one hundred years of studies on the ancient Near East. The positions of other scholars, which may sound inexplicable or without foundation, could in fact depend on the reading of Andrae's works, if not even on the agreement with his assumptions. An echo of Andrae's religious interpretation can be detected much easier in his works concerning art history, iconography and symbolism rather than in those concerning architecture, even though architectural forms and symbols are often addressed in the same interpretative

context.<sup>51</sup> No wonder, then, that Ernst Heinrich, in one of his first works (*Schilf und Lehm Baugeschichte*)<sup>52</sup> was strongly conditioned by the works of his mentor concerning the origins of mud-brick monumental architecture, but part of his conclusions would sound suspicious or even totally incomprehensible if one was unaware of Andrae's own interpretation of the connection between ancient architecture and human spiritual evolution.<sup>53</sup> When Henri Frankfort mentioned,

<sup>51</sup> It seems that Andrae was not a point of reference for the most important art historians of the ancient Near East in the first half of the twentieth century. Some of Andrae's arguments can be seen as parallel to some proposed by Henri Frankfort, but only superficially. On the one hand, concerning architecture, Frankfort and his wife Henriette Antonia Groenewegen-Frankfort assumed, for example, that in Egypt the sacredness of a place became manifest by means of architecture, that the temple was the architectural material expression of the sacrality of the place (Frankfort, Frankfort 1946, 21), a concept that seems to recall the architecture as "materialization of the spiritual" in Andrae. But certainly there is no echo in Frankfort's writings of a possible sharing of a primeval past between ancient and modern man, as for Frankfort both architecture and sacrality of the place are the cultural products of a specific place and time. In another example, concerning symbols and archetypes, the two Frankfort assumed that images had already become traditional at the time when we encounter them in art and literature (Frankfort, Frankfort 1946, 7) alluding to a prehistory reflected in the later archaeological and textual record, whose existence is thus a phenomenological deduction. He argued that many iconographies and motives remained in use through long periods or were revived after temporary eclipse (Frankfort 1939). However, there is no doubt that Frankfort did not believe in the immortality of the symbol and the persistence of the significance, since no symbol can be interpreted irrespective of the age to which its medium belongs. Different and more ambiguous, on the contrary, is the position of Anton Moortgat who worked in the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* for several years and was in direct contact with Andrae. We cannot find direct quotations of Andrae's interpretations in any of Moortgat's writings, although of course he quoted specific objects published by Andrae. However, it is hard to imagine that Andrae's writings (and maybe also his lectures) are completely extraneous to some of the fundamental and long lasting concepts of Moortgat's productions. One of his most important and widely debated publications on the myth of Tammuz and the Mesopotamian belief in immortality (Moortgat 1949) is, in fact, based on assumptions that sound familiar to a reader of Andrae's interpretations, such as the intrinsic value of archaeology in proving the spiritual connections, the persistence of symbols and symbolic meaning with religious association through the millennia, such as the "tree of life", while he also expressed odd associations between ancient Mesopotamian cultic performances and Greek mystery cults (Moortgat 1949, 82, 112). It is certainly possible that scholars other than Andrae inspired Moortgat system of interpretation, but it is equally meaningful because this would suggest that Andrae perhaps was not a single and isolated voice.

<sup>52</sup> Heinrich 1934.

<sup>53</sup> So incomprehensible is the shift of tone, that one reader of one copy of this book hold in the library of the Free University in Berlin marked passages like "Die Wiedergeburt der Architecture hängt zusammen mit der Wiedergeburt unseres ganzen Innenlebens", "Uns bleibt die Hoffnung, wenn sich erst wieder Herz su Herz gefunden hat, den alten Geist unserer Kunst, der schon ver-

la matematica." (Furlani 1939, 293). It would be interesting to know, considering the history of ideas at the end of the 1930's, to what is referred with this comment on relativity and mathematics, but it must be assumed that he refers to largely known theories.

<sup>49</sup> Expression used by Cyril Gadd in his review of *Das wiedererstandene Assur* (Gadd 1939).

<sup>50</sup> Hrouda 1964, 41.

in his article on the origin of monumental architecture in Egypt, the irrelevance of the theory of a derivation of mud-brick monumental architecture in Tepe Gawra from woodwork for his argumentation,<sup>54</sup> he certainly was referring to the ideas of Andrae and Heinrich, even if he did not mention them directly. The echo of some incomprehensible assumptions disappeared in Heinrich's works over time. However, in his seminal publication on the Mesopotamian temple, fundamental at least for the graphic repertoire of cases presented, Heinrich asserted that the prehistoric monumental buildings are identical basically everywhere in the world (from Europe to Japan), and that only in the course of the time each region developed its own architectural forms.<sup>55</sup> Andrae, according to the Hrouda quote above, was a proponent of *Globalisierung die Antike*,<sup>56</sup> the idea of a unique prehistoric world from which all subsequent civilizations developed – an idea that is still proposed from time to time.<sup>57</sup> Post-colonial archaeology has often addressed historical facts in terms of hybridization and globalization. However – and this is fundamental to the proper understanding of the assumptions of my research as presented here – there is a huge difference between a single point of origin and the perspective (Andrae's perspective) that those primeval times, when the initiated saw the *Urform* of the divine residence, transmitting its secret knowledge, can be revealed to us in the same manner as to the inhabitants of ancient Mesopotamia, following the stream of an uninterrupted tradition, which ends up being a-historical to the extent it “violates the historical truth”.<sup>58</sup> Here is the moment where one can return to the initial question proposed here, the relationship between Andrae and Coomaraswamy. Coomaraswamy himself, in his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, wrote a paragraph (“Indo-Sumerian”) where he asserted: “[...] the further we go back in history, the nearer we come to a common cultural type, the further we advance, the greater the differentiation. [...] We must now realise that an early culture of this kind once extended from the Mediterranean to the Ganges valley, and that the whole of the Ancient East has behind it this common inheritance”.<sup>59</sup>

loren schien, in neuer Form zum Leben zu erwecken” (Heinrich 1934, 58) with a considerable amount of question marks.

<sup>54</sup> Frankfort 1941, 336.

<sup>55</sup> Heinrich 1982, 5.

<sup>56</sup> Hrouda *et al.* 2009, 175.

<sup>57</sup> Just to quote one of the most voluminous and recent studies on the matter of a prehistoric global system, see Beaujard 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Paraphrasing Frankfort on his “unhistorical” treatment of religious implication of kingship in ancient Egypt (Frankfort 1948, ix).

<sup>59</sup> Coomaraswamy 1927, 3.

## 6. CONCLUDING

Coomaraswamy's approach to mankind's global prehistory certainly didn't depend on any contact, direct or indirect, with Andrae, but perhaps reflected certain ideas circulating in the academic environment that find in Coomaraswamy's adherence to *Perennialism* and *Traditionalism* the perfect means to be amplified, to circulate and to be reinforced by the pseudo-philosophical assumptions of these alternative avant-guards. The *Traditionalism* of Coomaraswamy and the *Anthroposophy* of Andrae were apparently very different to each other, but some common ideas may have been the *humus* for the dialog between the two scholars. According to my preliminary research outlined elsewhere, Andrae must have had an influence on Coomaraswamy and probably caused Coomaraswamy to modify his initial paradigms of interpretation. Most probably it is this very influence, which remains still difficult to fully demonstrate at the current state of the research, that really opened the doors of the ancient Near East to Coomaraswamy making his work applicable in our field of research and thus making Coomaraswamy himself the intellectual steward of this relationship, as it were, even now when Andrae's position seems to be almost forgotten.

I hope that this short foray into the multiple lives that an archaeologist can live will please Marilyn and Giorgio considering their own wide ranging interest on the intellectual history of mankind.

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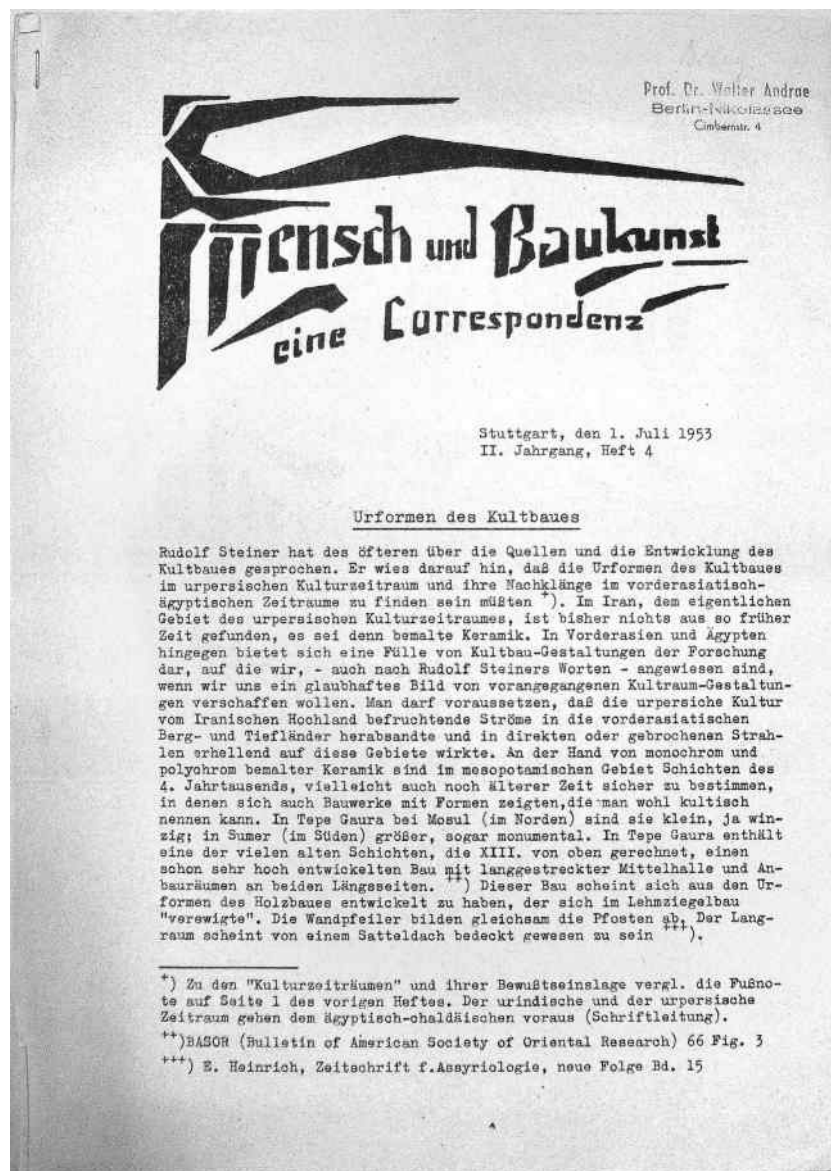


Fig. 1. Page one of Walter Andrae's offprint of his article on *Mensch und Baukunst* 2. Nachlass Walter Andrae, 83, no. 2 (Courtesy of the Handschriftenabteilung – Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

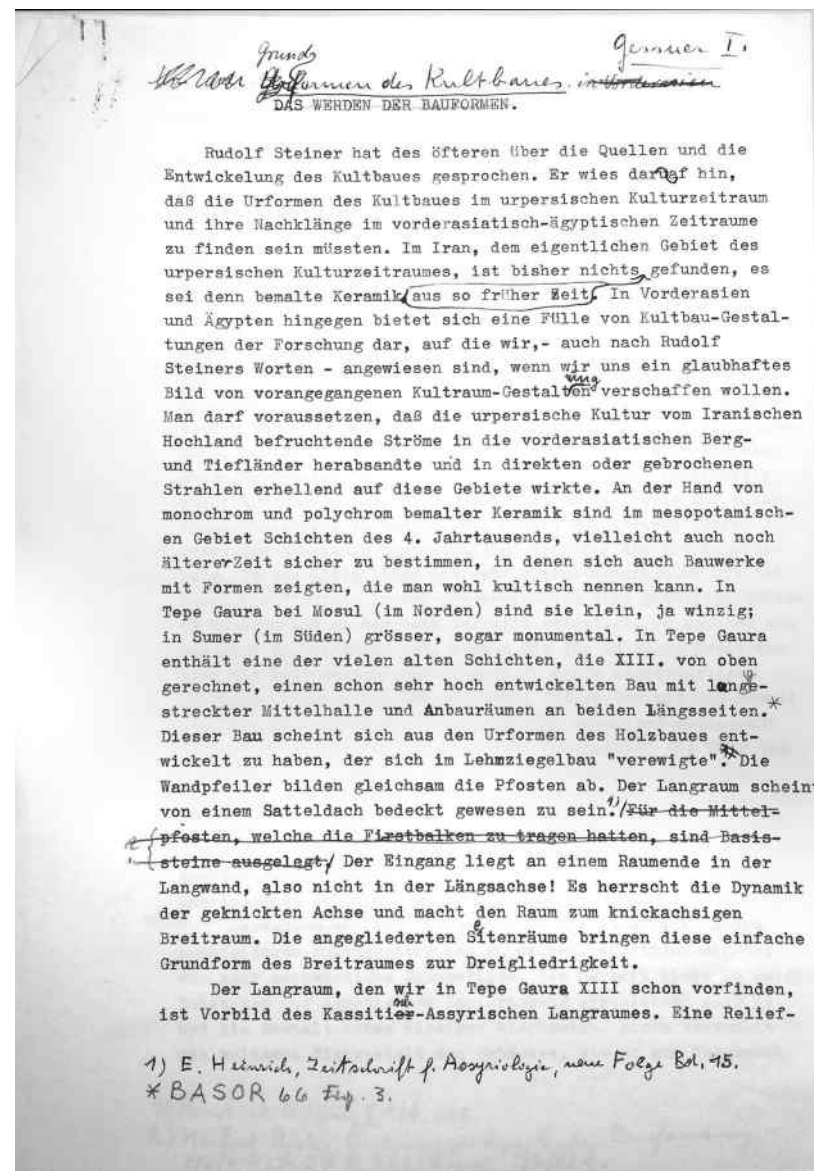


Fig. 2. Page one of the typescript of Andrae's article for *Mensch und Baukunst* 2. Nachlass Walter Andrae, 83, no. 1 (Courtesy of the Handschriftenabteilung – Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

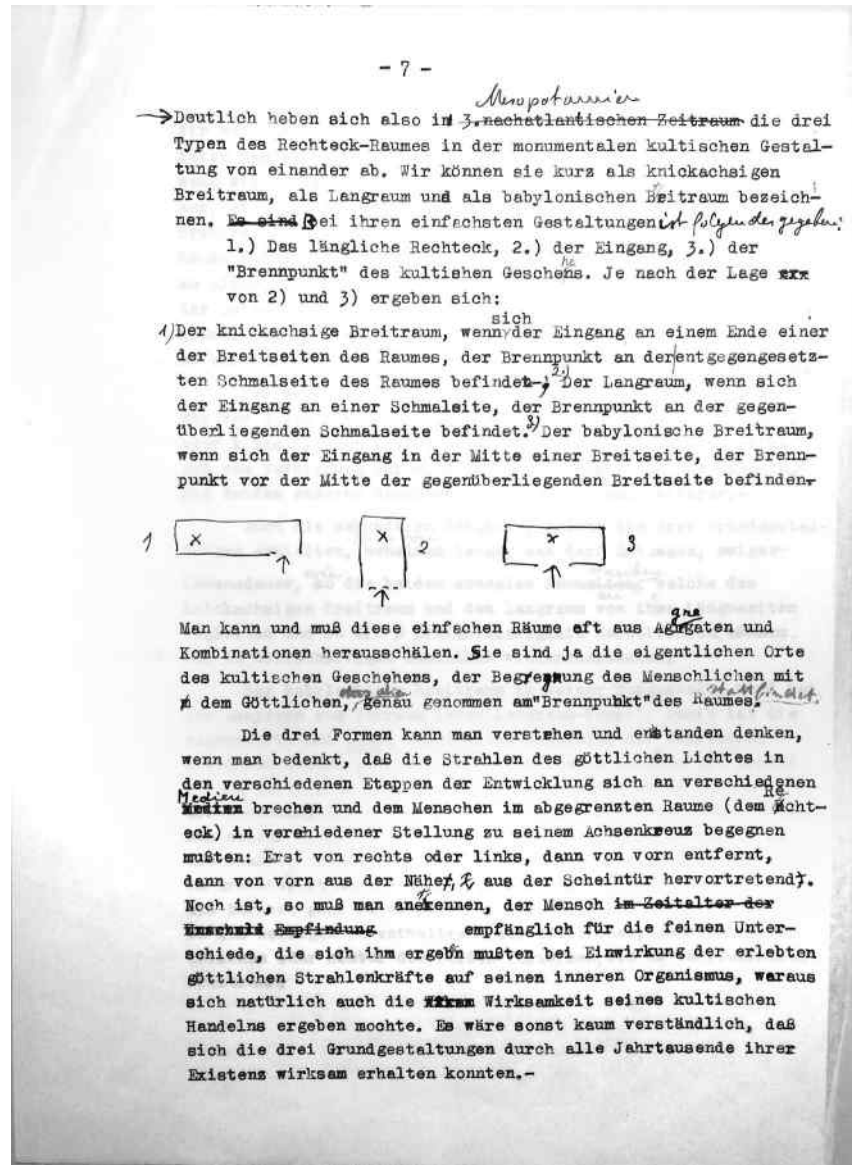


Fig. 4. Page seven of the typescript of Andrae's article for the *Festschrift* for Carl Weickert. Nachlass Walter Andrae, 92, nos. 1-5 (Courtesy of the Handschriftenabteilung – Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

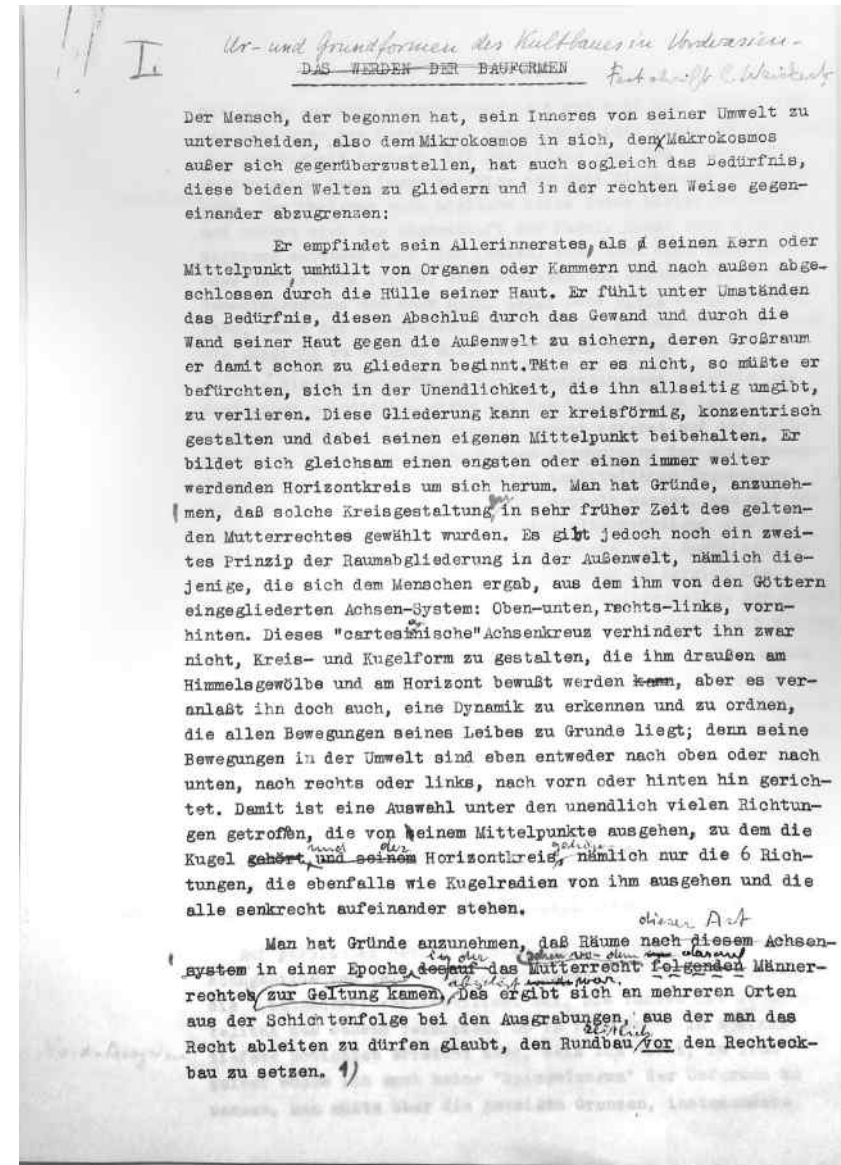


Fig. 3. Page one of the typescript of Andrae's article for the *Festschrift* for Carl Weickert. Nachlass Walter Andrae, 92, nos. 1-5 (Courtesy of the Handschriftenabteilung – Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

## COLLECTION OF SEALS FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF TELL HAZNA 1 (SYRIA)

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### *Abstract*

The article is devoted to diachronic analysis signs of ownership (seals and sealings) that were found on Tell Hazna 1 settlement (North-East Syria) in cultural deposits dated from Late Chalcolithic 2 to “Ninevite 5” period.

We are very happy to present this article to our dear friends Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, as a sign of respect for their great contribution to investigation of ancient Jazira, and also as a memory of our unforgettable meetings on Tell Mozan and Tell Hazna.

### 1. TELL HAZNA 1 SETTLEMENT

Tell Hazna 1 settlement is placed in southern part of Khabur steppe region (Al-Haseke province of N-E Syria), in the belt of unstable rain-fed agriculture, with rate of modern annual precipitation a little bit less than 300 mm of isohietes. Settlement is disposed directly near the Wadi Hanzir riverbed (fig. 1 map).<sup>1</sup>

Tell Hazna 1 settlement is covered an area of about 2 hectares, and has cultural deposits accumulations close to 17 m. The area uncovered during the field seasons of 1988-2010 is more than 5000 sq. m. In some places cultural deposits were investigated to the virgin soil.

The first settlement of Tell Hazna 1 was founded before middle of IV mill. BC, and can be approximately dated to the period of Late Chalcolithic 2.<sup>2</sup> The peculiarity of the settlement is its monumental architecture (figs. 2-4) of religious and administrative purpose. Monumental constructions of administrative and religious function were built on the settlement in the end of IV mill. BC. Administrative and temple complex of Tell Hazna 1 existed as centralized managed unit approximately within XXXI-XXX centuries BC timespan, following which it ceased to exist.

After short hiatus, the life on the settlement revived, and continued in the form of North Mesopotamian “Ninevite 5” material culture. The settlement existed for two more centuries, till the beginning of XXVII century BC. The final period of the settlement’s existence is marked by deterioration in the quality of life and high infant mortality, which was related with the process of gradual climate aridization.

Proposed periodization for Tell Hazna 1 cultural deposits is consisting of 6 chronological stages of the settled life. Among them period 6 is the earliest one, and period 1 is the latest one.<sup>3</sup> One supplemental phase, named period 0, was added in order to distinguish the latest seasonal camp existed on the site.<sup>4</sup>

### 2. TELL HAZNA 1 SEALS

A total of 36 seals and seal impressions were collected in the settlement of Tell Hazna 1. Among them 23 cylinder seals and sealings, and 12 stamp seals and sealings, and supplementary one sealing of unclear provenance. As for the seals themselves, 25 samples were excavated at the settlement (figs. 5-7). Among them cylinder seals - 14 examples and stamp seals - 11 examples. Among 10 known sealings, 9 belong to cylinder seals and only one to stamp seal.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, Tell Hazna 1 population used seals in their economic activity from the very beginning to the end of life of the settlement. The earliest one (fig. 6: 8) was found in bottom levels of the settlement. It is presented by defective suspension-seal that was broken during the process of manufacture. This one find could be dated to the period Late Chalcolithic 2, within the frame of the first third of IV mill. BC. In the overlying levels, preceding to the period of monumental building activity, there were no seals detected at all. This absence could be explained by the fact that investigated deposits dated to the periods before administrative-religious complex existence are unrepresentative due to the insufficiency of the excavated area. This is especially true for individual finds, such as seals.

The first statistically important group of collected seals is dated to the period of functioning of the temple

<sup>1</sup> Амиров 2010, 21-34.

<sup>2</sup> Amirov, 2014, 323-334.

<sup>3</sup> Periods discriminated for the upper levels (periods 1-2) are divided to three sub periods each one.

<sup>4</sup> Amirov 2014, 323-334; Мунчаев, Амиров 2016, 23-94.

<sup>5</sup> Мунчаев, Амиров 2016, 287-309.



complex (end of IV-beginning of III mill. BC)<sup>6</sup> and evidently are related with its existence. There were found four stamp-seals inside or close to “temenos” monumental constructions position (fig. 6: 1, 3, 4, 10)<sup>7</sup>.

Because of the fact that uppermost levels of Tell Hazna 1 are investigated on a much larger area, the quantity of the seals dated to the “Ninevite 5” period significantly exceeds the number of seals of the previous time. In total in layers belonged to this period 28 evidences of seals usage are recorded.

In cultural deposits accumulated immediately after temple complex being (period 2) eight indications of seals usage were recorded. Here the first appearance of cylinder seals on the site was fixed. These levels are related to the very beginning of “Ninevite 5” culture, and can be dated within XXIX century BC.

Since the advent of cylinder seals on the settlement, gradual increase of their relative and absolute number in the deposits of 2-1 periods was noted. Stamp seals continue to be used, but their number is reduced. From other side, since the moment of appearance of cylinder-seals, they were used two times more often than stamp-seals. It means that cylinder seals on Tell Hazna 1 settlement even in the beginning of “Ninevite 5” period were used more intensive than traditional stamp-seals.

In cultural deposits dated to the 1st period and the latest one 0 period, it was fixed 20 evidences of the seals usage. The most quantity of 12 examples was found inside constructions belonged to the final stage of sedentary life of the settlement. The fact that in the deposits dated to the latest period of the settlement's life, there were recorded much more seals than in the deposits of preceding period is quite logical. Cultural accumulations of Tell Hazna 1 late period represent uninterrupted episode of life on the settlement. For this reason, the final period of sedentary life on the settlement have accumulated almost all set of seals were used by inhabitants of the settlement during long period.

As we could understand from burial gifts and from the domestic context of the very final period of life of the settlement, named period 0, marks of ownership continued to be used in limited ways even after sedentary style of life on the settlement was stopped.<sup>8</sup>

All images on 23 cylindrical seals and sealings are represented by geometric or extremely stylized ornaments (fig. 7).

Stamp-seals were used on Tell Hazna 1 settlement much longer, than the cylinder ones. Most of the

stamp-seals were found in layers close to the time of operation of the temple center and to the period immediately after its use. Apparently, stamp-seals usage during the period of temple complex operation was more intensive than in the late stage of life of the settlement.

Five stamp-seals from Tell Hazna 1 settlement are round-shaped, two seals of irregular shape, close to circular, and three seals have rectangular shape (fig. 6). The geometric pattern is fixed on six seals, images of animals on four seals; human images are not fixed at all. The geometric pattern typical to a rectangular seals is presented by oblique crosshatching. The geometric pattern on the round seals is represented either by groups of points, or by hatching that fills the space divided into sectors. Depiction of animals is represented by images of predators (usually lion) and ungulates. Most of them are shown in the form of paired compositions, when animals are placed opposite to each other. In this composition the head of one of them is oriented to the tail of the other. Paired images of two hoofed animals (fig. 6: 4), two predators (lions?) (fig. 6: 11) and predator (lion) together with ungulate (gazelle) (fig. 6: 10) were fixed. Most of the seals with animal depictions (three examples) were found in the premises of “temenos” and dates back to the time of its operation. It means that period of active use of seals with animal images on the site is dated to the second half of Jemdet-Nasr (according to South Mesopotamian terminology) period that in absolute values corresponds to XXX-the beginning of XXIX centuries BC.

The finds of stamp-seals and their grouping (five examples) in the constructions dated to the final period of life of the settlement testify to the long-term use of this valuable category of finds, which were handed down by the inhabitants from generation to generation, and remained until the end of the settlement functioning.

At Tell Hazna 1 settlement we found 13 seals of stone (among them cylinders five examples; stamp-seals eight examples) and 10 seals of clay (including eight cylinder-seals, and two stamp-seals), and also two cylindrical seals made of alabaster.

Cylindrical stone and alabaster seals were noted mainly in layers dated from the end of the second period to the end of the first period. An important observation is the use of cylindrical seals made of clay only at the late stage of life of the settlement. At the final stage of the settlement's life, their number roughly coincides with the number of stone seals. As regards five mentioned stamp-seals fixed in latest cultural accumulations of Tell Hazna 1 settlement, four of them were made of stone.

Speaking about the cylindrical seals found in the Khabur steppe region, it should be noted that earliest cylinder sealings here are dated back to the time of

<sup>6</sup> The temple complex of Tell Hazna 1 functioned as a centrally managed organization for no more than two centuries period.

<sup>7</sup> Fig. 6: 10 stamp-seal could be dated to the very final period of Tell Hazna 1 temple-complex existence.

<sup>8</sup> Мунчаев, Амиров 2016, 289.



Late Uruk period. For example, they were found at Tell Brak,<sup>9</sup> Tell Mozan.<sup>10</sup> In the first half of the III Millennium BC cylindrical seals and their prints are known practically in all settlements of the Khabur steppe region. Significant collections of them are collected in urban settlements, such as, Tell Brak,<sup>11</sup> Tell Beydar,<sup>12</sup> Tell Barry,<sup>13</sup> Tell Arbid.<sup>14</sup>

Cylindrical seals are regularly found in temple settlements, like Tell Hazna 1, Tell Kashkashok III,<sup>15</sup> and even in ordinary settlements like Tell Raka'i on Khabur river.<sup>16</sup>

In this context, it becomes clear, what is the value of collection from Tell Hazna 1 settlement. First of all, it is important to note the time of the first appearance of cylindrical seals in cultural deposits of Tell Hazna 1. As it was already mentioned, their very first samples were recorded here in the layer accumulated after a short break in the settlement's life that took place following cessation of the temple complex existence, and could be dated within XXIX century BC. The earliest cylindrical seals of Tell Hazna 1 settlement were found in the context of the "Ninevite 5" culture.<sup>17</sup>

Finds of cylindrical seals from Tell Hazna 1 deposits show that only one seal (fig. 7: 1) found in the latest layer of the settlement, contains highly schematic, linear image of ungulates. All other cylinder seals depict only geometric compositions.

Summarizing the observations made on other settlements of the Khabur steppe dated to the first half of the III Millennium BC, it can be concluded that in general, for cylindrical seals belonged to the first half of the period of "Ninevite 5" (XXIX-XXVIII centuries BC) geometric images are typical.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, for the second half of "Ninevite 5" period (XXVII-XXV centuries BC), along with geometric subjects, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic images are also typical, which by the middle of the III Millennium BC become qualitatively more complex in terms of composition, subjects and iconography of images.

Here, in particular, is interesting comparison of cylindrical seals found in equivalent settlements

of Tell Hazna 1 and Kashkashok III. In the case of Tell Hazna 1 settlement, which ceased to exist at the turn of the XXVIII-XXVII centuries BC we almost do not know other images except geometric ones. In the settlement of Kashkashok III, which functioned somewhat longer than Tell Hazna 1, and his most recent deposits may live to XXVI century BC,<sup>19</sup> in addition to the five cylinder seals with geometric ornamentation similar to that opened at Tell Hazna I there were found also one cylindrical seal depicting gazelles, and two cylinder sealings with anthropomorphic images.

#### CONCLUSION

In the settlement of Tell Hazna 1, stamp-seals were known from the earliest period of the settlement existence, and were used until the end of his life. The earliest stamp-seals have a geometric pattern. Stamp-seals with images of animals (feline predators and ungulates) were detected mainly in the monumental premises of the administrative-temple complex and date back to XXXI - the beginning of XXIX century BC.

The first appearance of cylinder seals in Tell Hazna 1 settlement is fixed to the time after the cessation of existence of administrative-religious complex (XXIX century BC), and belongs to deposits of "Ninevite 5" culture. This was the last period of Tell Hazna 1 settlement's life that is dated to the interval of XXIX - the beginning of XXVII century BC. It is characterized by minimal external contacts and the progressive declining of the quality of life that was associated with climate deterioration. This fact was also reflected in the glyptic. A significant number of the latest cylindrical seals found in Tell Hazna 1 cultural deposits were made of clay.

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<sup>9</sup> Oates, Oates 1997, 294, fig. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2007, 149, fig. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Collon, 1988, fig. 41; 50; 51; Matthews D. 1997; Matthews R. 1999, 294-297, figs. 3, 7; Oates 2005, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Rova 2006, 295-312; Rova, Devecchi 2008, 63-194.

<sup>13</sup> For example Pecorella, Benoit 2002, 37, fig. b.

<sup>14</sup> Bieliński 2009. P.1-9.

<sup>15</sup> Мунчаев *et al.*, 2011, 27-41, fig. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Curvers, Schwartz 1990, 20, figs. 22, 23.

<sup>17</sup> Мунчаев, Амиров 2016, 287-308.

<sup>18</sup> This statement is not contradicted by the fact of detection in urban settlements of the Khabur steppe like Tell Brak, since the late Uruk time, exceptionally rare prints of cylindrical seals with images of people and animals (Oates, Oates 1997, 294, fig. 14), which indicates, most likely, external trade contacts.

<sup>19</sup> Мунчаев *et al.* 2011, 27-41; Munchaev, Amirov 2012.

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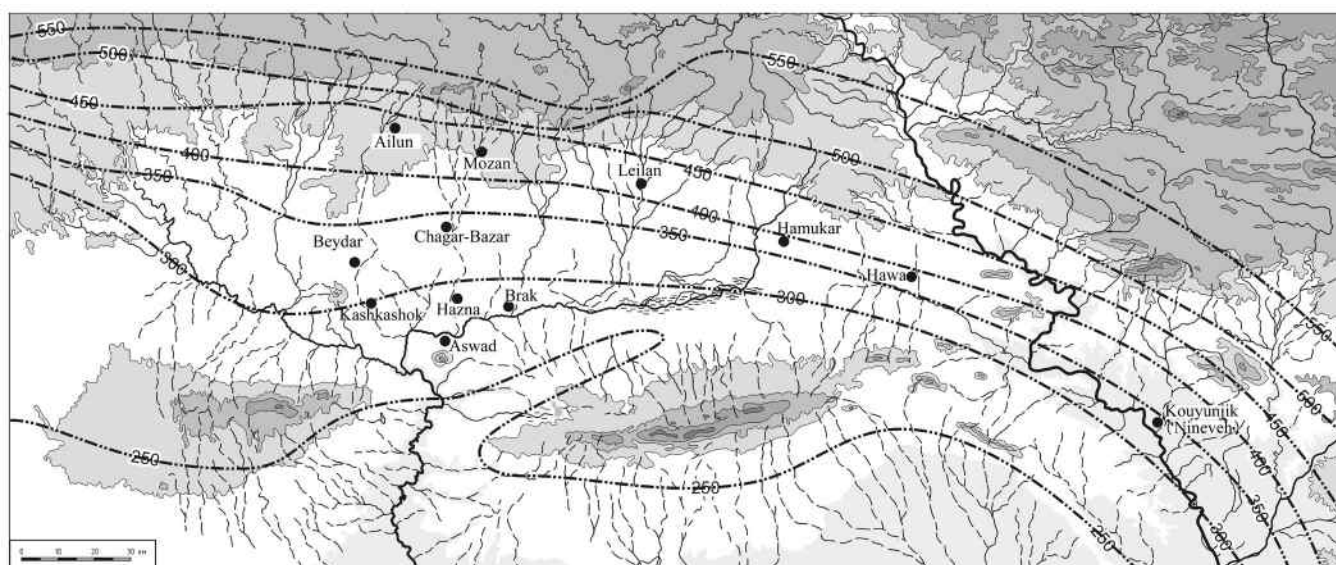


Fig. 1. Map of East Jazira. Sites and precipitation.

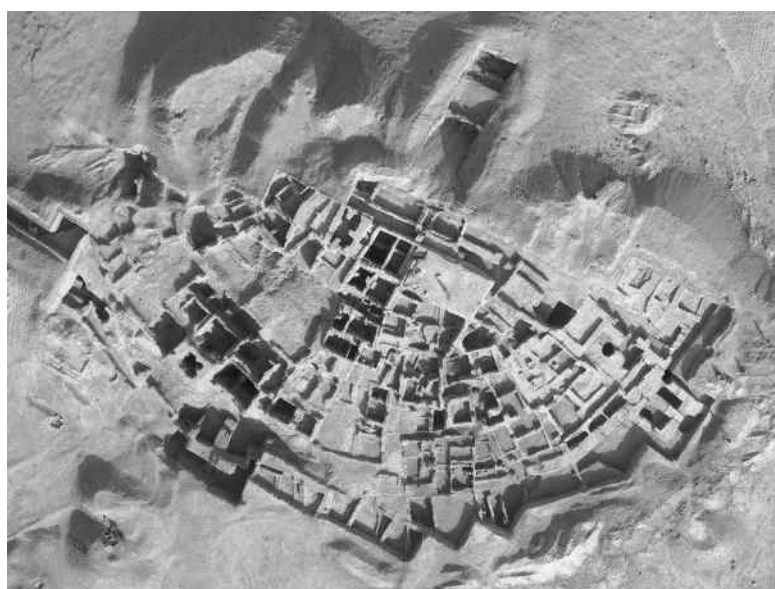


Fig. 2. Tell Hazna 1 settlement. Aerial view.



Fig. 3. Tell Hazna 1 settlement. View from south-west.



Fig. 4. Tell Hazna 1 settlement. "Temenos" monumental constructions.

Serial number	Dimensions (cm)	Material	Square	Deepness (m)
Fig. VI, 1	d – 1,4; h – 1,3	stone	XII/18	- 12,00
Fig. VI, 2	l – 2,2; b – 1,4	stone	XIX/19	- 7,80–7,90
Fig. VI, 3	d – 1,9; h – 0,6	stone	XIII/20	- 12,20
Fig. VI, 4	d – 2,7; h – 3,2	stone	XI/19	- 11,70
Fig. VI, 5	d – 2,7; h – 1	stone	XIII/18	- 10,00
Fig. VI, 6	d – 3,2; h – 1	stone	XV/10	- 4,00
Fig. VI, 7	d – 1,2; h – 0,6	stone	XXII/14	- 8,10
Fig. VI, 8	d – 1,6; h – 2	clay	XV/18	- 15,00
Fig. VI, 9	d – 1,6; h – 2,6	clay	XIX/15	- 5,00
Fig. VI, 10	a – 3; b – 4	stone	XII/18	- 8,10
Fig. VI, 11	a – 2; b – 4	stone	XIV/17	- 5,60
Fig. VII, 1	d – 1,7; h – 3,5	clay	XXII/14	- 7,60
Fig. VII, 2	d – 1,6; h – 3,4	clay	XIX/15	- 8,0
Fig. VII, 3	d – 1,6; h – 2,5	clay	XVI/17	- 6,0
Fig. VII, 4	d – 1,3; h – 2,6	alabaster	XV/11	- 2,15
Fig. VII, 5	d – 1,7; h – 3,2	clay	XIX/15	- 7,20
Fig. VII, 6	d – 1,3; h – 3,5	stone	XIV/14	- 2,35–2,40
Fig. VII, 7	d – 0,8; h – 1,6	stone	XIII/14	- 5,10
Fig. VII, 8	d – 0,8; h – 1	alabaster	XVII/17	- 6,25
Fig. VII, 9	d – 0,8; h – 2,5	clay	XV/14	- 3,0
Fig. VII, 10	d – 1,5; h – 2	clay	XX/14	- 5,2
Fig. VII, 11	d – 1,5; h – 3,2	clay	XXII/10	- 9,50
Fig. VII, 12	d – 1,3; h – 2	clay	XVI/15	- 4,50
Fig. VII, 13	d – 2,6; h – 3	clay	XVIII/17	- 6,05

Fig. 5. Summary table of seals from the settlement of Tell Hazna 1.

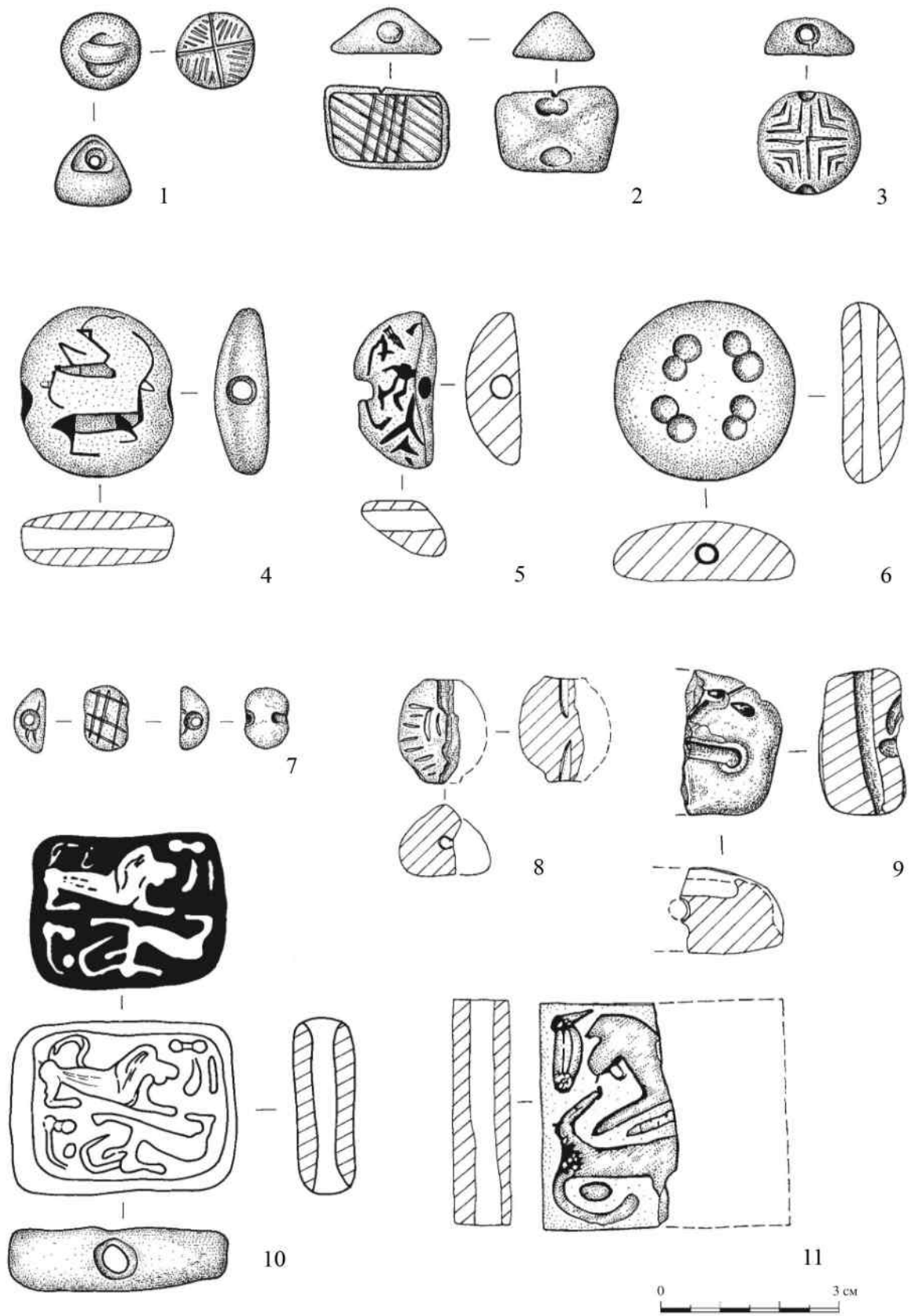


Fig. 6. Tell Hazna 1. Stamp – seals.

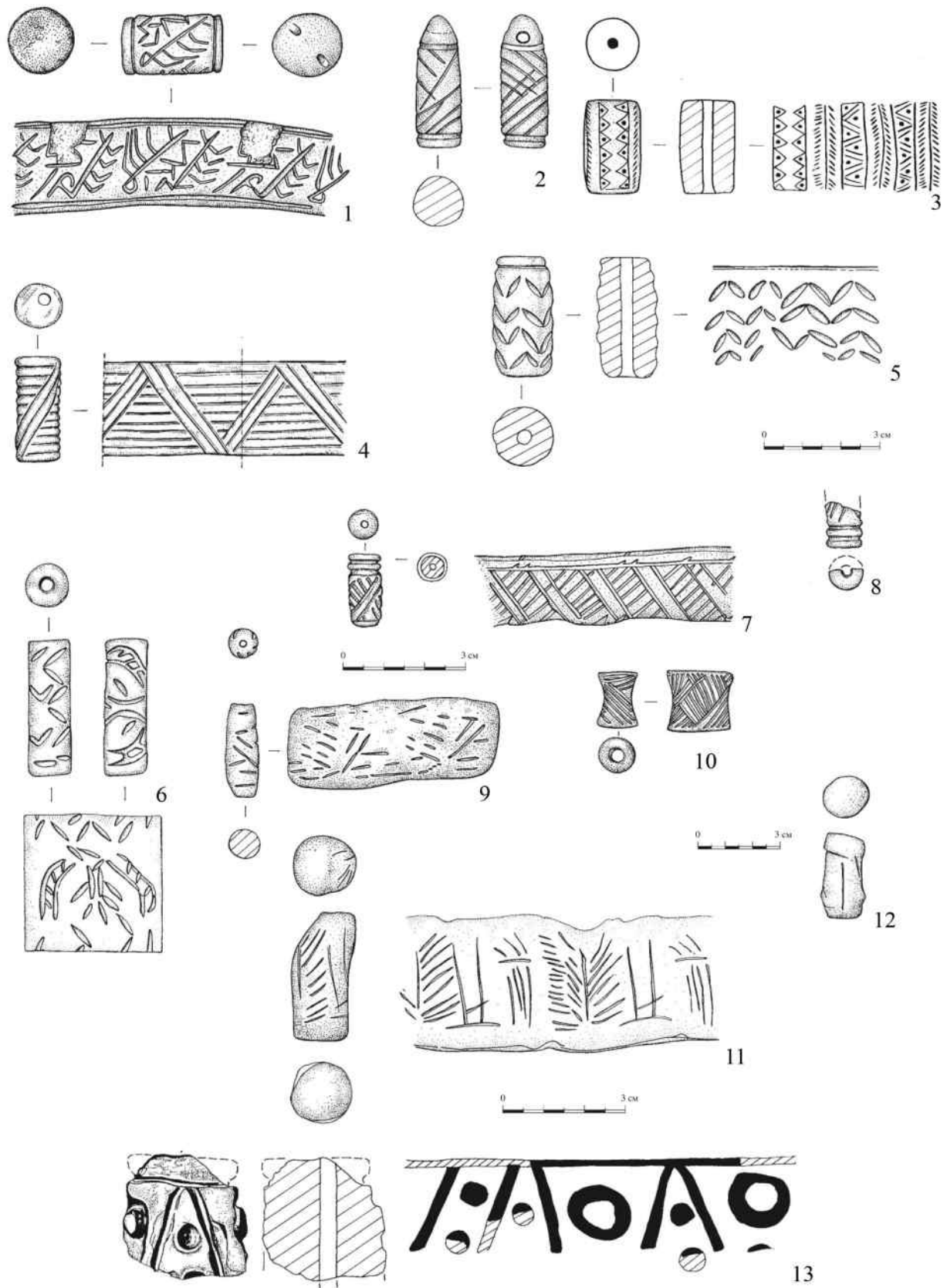


Fig. 7 . Tell Hazna 1. Cylinder – seals.

MINIATURES OF WARS: FIGHTS, SKIRMISHES AND CONFLICTS  
IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SEALS

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*Abstract*

Starting from two seal impressions from Tell Mozan, ancient Urkeš (Syria), this paper presents and discusses some Near Eastern seals from Syria and Mesopotamia whose iconography is related to war or warlike scenes. The figurative theme resembles the narrative representations of war in major monuments (such as bas-reliefs on wall panels and steles) – or vice versa? – with a clear selection of culminating moments due to the restricted surface that the seal can offer. Because of the similarity with major visual monuments, what is the meaning of and reason for carving scenes of warfare on ancient seals? The question of visibility and circulation of the theme of war and victory in ancient Near Eastern societies, with all implications of the political and religious ideology of war, will be considered.

Next to the major compositions of scenes of warfare on wall panels and steles,<sup>1</sup> “snapshots” of war and conflicts can also be found on cylinder seals: the present study focuses on cylinder seals from Mesopotamia and Syria, dating from mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, more precisely on the periods of Early Dynastic IIIA-B (ED) for Mesopotamia and Early Bronze Age III-IVA (EB) for Syria.<sup>2</sup> In particular, two seal impressions (figs. 1-2) with scenes of warfare come from Tell Mozan, ancient Urkeš, and they can be both dated to the Early Bronze Age (ED III/EB IVA):<sup>3</sup> it is with great pleasure that I present these short reflections to Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Giorgio Buccellati who devoted themselves, with great effort, to the excavation and study of the ancient city of Urkeš in Syria, especially in the time when our beloved second Country needed the support and help of friends.

Both impressions are small fragments and the image impressed is only partially preserved: for this reason, they can be both described as chariot scenes (*Wagenszene*), while the implication of a warlike attitude and context is not automatically implicit – as for example in the impression of fig. 1. As rightly pointed out by P. Amiet,<sup>4</sup> the representation of chariots on seals cannot be exclusively associated with

war action; in this respect, particularly in Mesopotamian seals, when a banquet is represented in the upper register and a wagon occupies the lower register, this combination is commonly understood as a reference to a military event – the banquet is the occasion for the celebration of the military victory (this implication is inferred from the scenes of the so-called Standard of Ur).<sup>5</sup> However, only the presence of the corpse of an enemy beneath the legs of the animals and overwhelmed by the wagon can suggest that the scene precisely refers to a battle.

Several cylinder seals from Mesopotamia, dated to the Early Dynastic Period, bear representations of combats between animals that are represented standing on their hind legs (the so-called *Figurendband* composition) fighting each other with weapons (e.g. daggers): these representations have been interpreted as symbolic depictions of war,<sup>6</sup> an allegory where animals stand in for men. The seal impressions from Tell Mozan do not enter this allegoric category of depictions but they can be more generally ascribed to the typology of third millennium seals with wagon and chariot scenes, being in a war context or not.<sup>7</sup>

The pottery fragment MZ99 C2-i0245 (fig. 1) bears three impressions of the same seal: a war chari-

<sup>1</sup> On visual monuments celebrating war and victory, see Börker-Klähn 1982; Nadali 2007; Bahrani 2008.

<sup>2</sup> For the chronological framework of Early Bronze Age in Syrian Jezirah, see Lebeau 2001; 2011.

<sup>3</sup> MZ99 C2-i0245 and MZ01 C2-10207: the former is a seal impression on a pottery sherd; the latter is a clay sealing. See Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2000, 226, fig. 29; 2002, 185-186, fig. 22, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Amiet 1980, 124.

<sup>5</sup> Matthews 1997, 136; Mayer-Opificius 2006, 55-56; Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 203. See Selz (Selz 2002, 168-169) who interestingly suggests that banquet scenes could indeed be also interpreted as an antecedent of war rather than simply the conclusion for the celebration of the victory.

<sup>6</sup> Mayer-Opificius 2006, 55-60.

<sup>7</sup> See the catalogue provided by Jans, Bretschneider 1998, 166-173 and the considerations by Pittman 2018 within a broader context that also encompasses Iran.

ot (it is equipped with the typical box of spears on one side), pulled by three equids, advances to the right, two men (one is the driver) stand on it; animals (one fish and three winged animals – ducks?) fill the scene with one dog following the wagon. The style of the seals recalls the so-called “Brak Style”:<sup>8</sup> in particular, seal impressions from Tell Brak are very similar where however, based on Amiet’s assumption, war is explicitly referred to because of the presence of the corpse of an enemy between the legs of the draught equids and real fights between armed men.<sup>9</sup> A military context cannot of course be totally excluded for the impression from Mozan since the scene is incomplete: anyhow, the recurrent detail of the enemy corpse between the legs of the draught animals is lacking. The detail of the dog following the chariot is particularly interesting: although few, other examples of cylinder seals from Mesopotamia do show the presence of a dog:<sup>10</sup> a seal impression from Ur (fig. 3),<sup>11</sup> a seal in the Morgan Library Collection (fig. 4),<sup>12</sup> and a seal in the Vorderasiatische Museum of Berlin (fig. 5).<sup>13</sup> Dogs are not frequently depicted, at least in military context scenes,<sup>14</sup> and in fact only the seal impression from Ur can be clearly marked as a representation of a fight: a man, upside down, with a shield (?) in his right hand is pierced with an arrow or dagger at the stomach; in front of him, preceding the chariot, is a man holding a weapon (spear/javelin?). The seal impression from Ur shows the dog twice: behind the wagon and underneath the legs of the draught animals: a similar situation could be reconstructed for the seal in the Berlin museum where the figure between the legs of the draught animals is partially preserved, more probably an animal.<sup>15</sup> With the exception of the seal impression of Ur, the presence of the dog – as the seal impression from Tell Mozan also suggests – seems to be related to non-military contexts, despite the presence of three armed men (two with an axe, the third with a spear) behind the wagon in the Berlin seal.

<sup>8</sup> Matthews 1997, 151.

<sup>9</sup> Matthews *et al.* 1994, 193, fig. 13: 1-3. See also Matthews 1997, 151, cat. nos. 200-203.

<sup>10</sup> Van Buren 1939, 16, fig. 13; Jans, Bretschneider 1998, cat. nos. 2, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Legrain 1936, cat. no. 298. This seal, coming from SIS 6, can be dated to the ED I (Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 53-54; Pittman 2018, 324).

<sup>12</sup> Porada 1948, cat. no. 1081.

<sup>13</sup> Moortgat 1940, cat. no. 145.

<sup>14</sup> Jans, Bretschneider 1998, 169, n. 100.

<sup>15</sup> Moortgat 1940, 96. Jans, Bretschneider (Jans, Bretschneider 1998, 169, n. 100) argues that if the figure between the animals’ legs is an enemy, then the seal enters the category of military context; should it be an animal (they suggest it might be another dog), then the seal should be rather part of the hunting scenes repertoire. For an interpretation of the scene as hunting, see also Bollweg 1999, 186, fig. 182.

The clay sealing MZ01 C2-10207 (fig. 2) is even more fragmentary and the scene is very badly preserved: the fragments bear the picture of a wagon (only the upper part box containing the weapons is visible), pulled by an animal. To the left, the head of the driver of the chariot is preserved, while above the animal another man is represented, his face pierced with a spear hurled by the driver. As recognized by Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner,<sup>16</sup> the preserved scene of the clay sealing from Tell Mozan recalls the representation on the Stele of the Vultures of King Eannatum of Lagash with the king himself in his chariot hurling the spear against the enemy.<sup>17</sup> The pole of the spear is unclear and incomprehensible bunch-shaped objects hang: might they be a stylization of flames that would in fact prove the launch of inflamed weapons?<sup>18</sup> No other figurative examples that can be compared to the scene of the Mozan seal are attested: therefore, the nature and function of the objects hanging from the pole are still unsolved and unclear.<sup>19</sup>

The two seal impressions from Tell Mozan testify a common figurative topic in 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium glyptic of Syria and Mesopotamia:<sup>20</sup> the representations of wagons, on one hand, and the representation of war, on the other. As already pointed out, not all wagon scenes can be interpreted as war scenes – including the Mozan seal impression MZ99 C2-i0245 (fig. 1); nevertheless, chariots seem to have been chosen as a preferred figurative theme, probably because it refers to the world of gods and rulers which are often represented on other visual documents (inlays, bas-reliefs) acting in chariots. In particular, the world of rulers: this is in fact particularly interesting if one thinks of the time when these types of scenes emerged and

<sup>16</sup> Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2002, 185.

<sup>17</sup> Romano 2007, fig. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the use of inflamed weapons seems to be suggested by the representations of the launch of an inflamed arrow to set enemy buildings on fire during a siege operation on a plaque from the palace of Mari, phase *Ville II* (Margueron 2004, 288-289, figs. 110, 278; Gilibert 2004/5, 98-99; Collon 2008, 96).

<sup>19</sup> It is known that wooden poles of spears and javelins could be reinforced with wool, bitumen, and leather strings (Schrakamp 2011, 632). Other representations of hanging objects from the poles of spears can be seen in the palace inlays from Mari and Ebla, to be dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC: here, soldiers carry spears on their shoulders from where the fringed robes taken from enemies hang. These scenes, however, occur in the aftermath, when soldiers of Mari and Ebla escort naked prisoners and carry the booty (Nadali 2007, 346, n. 30). Finally, in the second register of the Stele of Vultures of Eannatum, two strings hanging from the pole of a spear in the chariot quiver are visible (for a detail, see the picture in Strommenger 1962, pl. 68): the strings seem to be tied to a metal ring at the end of the wooden pole of the weapon, while the seal of Mozan shows hanging objects all along the pole.

<sup>20</sup> See the catalogue provided by Jans, Bretschneider 1998. See also Braun-Holzinger 2007, 48-51; Pittman 2018.

spread that corresponds to the moment, at the half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC (in ED IIIA in Mesopotamian terms),<sup>21</sup> when the concept of kingship started to be conceived, formulated, and thus visually represented.<sup>22</sup>

Why did seal cutters choose the representation of wagons and war scenes? Can they be in fact linked to historical events? Can cylinder seals be considered a medium to visualize events and successes of the rulers? In 2009, starting from the analysis of the impressions of the seal of Ishqi-Mari from Mari and the seals from Tell Beydar, J. Bretschneider, A.-S. Van Vyve, and G. Jans proposed that “a historic fact is portrayed on all three seals seems likely”.<sup>23</sup> They follow in stating that “in this case the representation of historic battles, once depicted on monumental art in Southern Mesopotamia would have found a new and smaller bearer”.<sup>24</sup> The idea sounds really intriguing, but can we conclude that seals substituted monumental art for the representation of military events and victories? I wonder whether the conclusion might be different and whether one can suggest that the contents of cylinder seals have been inspired by the representations of war on monumental art instead of having simply substituted it. Maybe this monumental art that inspired the carving of the seal of Ishqi-Mari and Beydar has not yet been found, but assuming that cylinder seals acquired the status of becoming the way of visualizing and promoting rulers’ deeds might be a bit forced. What, for example, if archaeologists and historians relied the study and understanding of the policy of war by the Assyrians having only at their disposal the cylinder seals with scenes of siege,<sup>25</sup> without the large and more comprehensive corpus of the Assyrian palace bas-reliefs? Actually, I. Winter has shown that some Assyrian seal-motifs replicate Assyrian palace reliefs, noting in fact that the direction of the scene as carved on the seal is exactly the reverse of the one sculpted onto the bas-reliefs.<sup>26</sup>

I am most inclined to think that a similar pattern can be inferred for the seals’ imagery of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC with scenes of chariots and particularly those with representations of war events:

cylinder seals do not substitute monumental art, but they were used to replicate and propagate the icons of the ruler in his chariot and while defeating the enemies. It is interesting to notice that, due to the reduced surface offered by cylinder seals, seal cutters operated a selection and reduction of the motifs, concentrating on the culminating event and often representing the chariot trampling over the corpse of the enemy only.

This conclusion does not deny the idea of the historical iconography of the cylinder seals of Ishqi-Mari and Beydar, as suggested by J. Bretschneider, A.-S. Van Vyve, and G. Jans: indeed, seals might have well represented true events and, in the case of warfare, real battles conducted and won by the rulers. But it seems odd to conclude that cylinder seals have been purposely and exclusively chosen to depict those important moments. If monumental art has too often and simplistically been targeted as the product of royal propaganda – a trend that has been recently reconsidered and re-evaluated – cylinder seals can be targeted as means of propagation: the image of rulers in their chariot, being in war or not, circulates impressed on several items within the palace (e.g. door sealings, vessels) and outside, even over a long distance (sealed goods, vessels, containers). One might in fact think that officials in charge on behalf of the king accomplished their administrative duties by using the certified palace/state seals that were carved with a specifically chosen image that constantly referred to the ruler. It is precisely this referential pattern and connection that guaranteed the officiality and validity of the operations of sealing, on one hand, and granted the officials of the administration with an object emanated by the central power and representing the authority and legitimization of the rulers, on the other.

Seal imagery reflects the religiosity and political ideology of the central power;<sup>27</sup> the several (one could say infinite) possibilities of impressing the seals guaranteed the diffusion of the message via the actions of the officials who have been entrusted precisely because they received the seal. It can be argued that propagation of the image via the action of sealing was the main task and objective: in this respect, the choice of representing the ruler in his chariot or a scene of military success was purposely done to make that image disseminate. It was a code, built upon a common shared figurative language that was therefore immediately clear to everyone who was seeing the enrolled scene,<sup>28</sup> and this in fact explains the similarity of the iconography. In the case of itinerant sealed objects, one can then wonder whether the recipient was able

<sup>21</sup> The seal from Ur (fig. 3) dates back to the ED I. See n. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 87-96, 103-113, 205-207, 217; Pittman 2018, 334. Pittman interestingly observes that “the motif of the king in the cart does not continue into the imagery of kingship of the Akkadian or Ur III rulers” (Pittman 2018, 325): I wonder whether this choice not only reflects “a change in the practices of warfare” – as implied by Pittman – but it might also depend on the different needs and objectives kingship had at the end of the third millennium BC after the period of formation was probably considered fully accomplished.

<sup>23</sup> Bretschneider *et al.* 2009, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Bretschneider *et al.* 2009, 18-19.

<sup>25</sup> Bleibtreu 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Winter 2000, 64-65.

<sup>27</sup> Micale, Nadali 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Nadali 2007, 357.



to distinguish from which ruler or city the goods came and which ruler or city the seal belonged to.

Maybe the historicity of the carved image was not essential and fundamental; although we cannot of course exclude that it depicted a real event: real or not, the ruler presented himself via a clearly recognizable icon that places him on the same level as other rulers.

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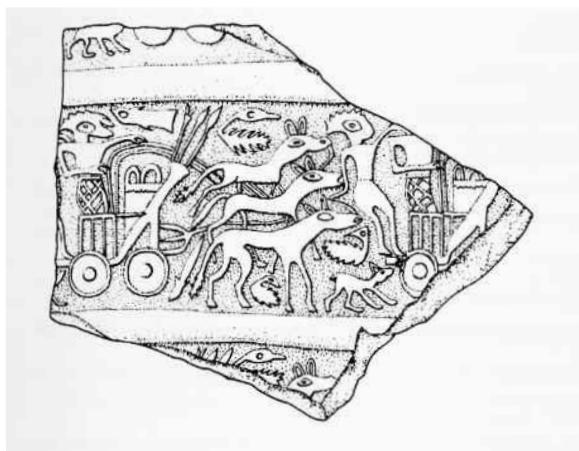


Fig. 1. Pottery sherd with seal impression, MZ99 C2-i0245, from Tell Mozan (after Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2000, fig. 29).

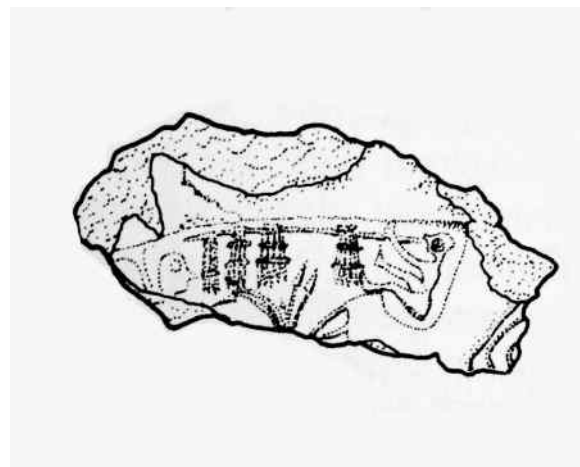


Fig. 2. Clay sealing with seal impression, MZ01 C2-10207, from Tell Mozan (after Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2002, fig. 22).



Fig. 3. Drawing of the seal impression from Ur (after Legrain 1936, cat. no. 298).



Fig. 4. Modern impression of the seal in the Morgan Library (after Porada 1948, cat. no. 1081).



Fig. 5. Modern impression of the seal in the Vorderasiatische Museum (after Moortgat 1940, cat. no. 145).

## IL RUGGITO DEL LEONE. QUALCHE OSSERVAZIONE SULLE IMMAGINI FERINE NEL MONDO SIRIANO DEL III MILLENNIO A. C.\*

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### *Abstract*

The presence of the motif combining human figures fighting or killing a lion is attested since the Late Chalcolithic period in Mesopotamia. Apparently, different trajectories of the relationship between the beast and the kingship can be traced in the northern and southern regions. The domain over the chaotic wild nature is only one aspect of what was a multifaceted ideological interaction imbued by differentiated cultural meanings, as testified by the early association of the beast with deities – and above all Ishtar – in Mesopotamia and with specific king's prerogatives in Syria. The rich evidence from Ebla and Urkesh here reviewed is therefore particularly important for the definition of various meanings of the lion's image in the Syrian cultures during the 3rd millennium BC.

Quando nel 1948 il Louvre e il Metropolitan aggiungono alle loro collezioni orientali due particolarissimi chiodi di fondazione in rame a morfologia leonina ancora quasi nulla era noto del mondo politico e culturale hurrita del III millennio a. C.<sup>1</sup> L'esemplare parigino, dono della Società degli Amici del Museo, è uno splendido bronzetto raffigurante la fiera ruggente che artiglia con le possenti zampe anteriori una lamina al di sotto della quale era posta una tavoletta in calcare, entrambe recanti la medesima iscrizione. Il breve testo celebra la costruzione del tempio cittadino dedicato a Nergal da parte di Tishatal, *endan* di Urkesh. L'acquisizione del museo di New York, mancante della tavoletta in pietra, di analoghe dimensioni e similissima fattura, varia nella testa della fiera, leggermente ruotata, mentre la lamina iscritta risulta abrasa e conserva solo tre righe del testo dedicatorio. Soprattutto il mirabile insieme parigino suscitò l'attenzione della comunità scientifica, conservando il più antico testo in lingua hurrica conosciuto, variamente datato tra l'epoca akkadica e il

periodo neosumerico, e attestando una dinastia di Urkesh, centro la cui localizzazione precisa era all'epoca ancora ignota. Sarà infatti solo a partire dal 1984, grazie alle scoperte dalla missione archeologica statunitense a Tell Mozan, diretta da Giorgio Buccellati e Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, che la Urkesh menzionata dai chiodi di fondazione verrà identificata con sicurezza, dando inizio ad una nuova fase di ricerca sulla storia più antica della regione che le genti dell'alluvio mesopotamico chiamavano Subir/Subartu.<sup>2</sup>

Gli scavi di Tell Mozan hanno riportato alla luce alcuni settori pubblici dell'insediamento del Bronzo Antico: in uno dei punti più elevati del mound la zona culturale, imperniata su un tempio monocellulare fondato alla metà del III mill. a. C., era accessibile mediante una grande scalinata in pietra e raccordata da uno spazio aperto (Plaza) con il quartiere palatino.<sup>3</sup> È proprio da un deposito di fondazione dell'area sacra che dovrebbero provenire i due leoni di Tishatal,<sup>4</sup> mentre una scultura in pietra raffigurante un leone rinvenuta fuori dal contesto originario, era con ogni probabilità parte dell'apparato del tempio.<sup>5</sup> Nella zona ai piedi della terrazza templare, dove si trovava il settore pubblico palatino, è stato scavato un ampio settore dell'edificio dei sovrani di Urkesh, che includeva il quartiere dei magazzini posti sotto il controllo dell'amministrazione.<sup>6</sup> Da questa zona provengono infatti quasi un migliaio

\* In questo breve saggio dedicato a Marilyn e Giorgio ho scelto di presentare alcune osservazioni sull'immagine leonina nella Siria dell'età del Bronzo Antico, tra Ebla e Urkesh, cercando di porre in evidenza le strette relazioni culturali che si formano durante il III mill. a. C. nel mondo siro-mesopotamico settentrionale. Una fitta trama di interazioni testimoniata da elementi iconografici, riferimenti testuali, circolazione di materiali che aggiunge dati preziosi al composito quadro storico di un'epoca cruciale dell'età del Bronzo. Gli studi condotti dai Buccellati sono in tal senso esemplari, nel comporre particolare e generale, archeologia e epigrafia, rigore scientifico e comunicazione al pubblico. Un modello di ricerca che diviene riflessione epistemologica sul ruolo dell'archeologia vicino-orientale tra passato e presente. Nel contesto attuale della Siria, un impegno a non abbandonare le comunità che sono custodi ed eredi di un patrimonio culturale stratificato come le sequenze dei tell che scandiscono il paesaggio di quei luoghi amati.  
<sup>1</sup> Parrot, Nougaryol 1948; Muscarella 1988; Wilhelm 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Buccellati 1999; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1997; Salvini 1998; Steinkeller 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Buccellati 2010; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2009; Kelly-Buccellati 2013; 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2009, 58-67.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly-Buccellati 1990, 127, tav. 9.1.

<sup>6</sup> Buccellati 2016.

di cretule con impronte di sigilli cilindrici, tra cui una eccezionale serie di sigilli reali e di altissimi funzionari palatini.<sup>7</sup>

Il leone compare nuovamente in associazione al sovrano, in uno dei sigilli di Tupkish (sigillo k2) nel quale l'animale è reso in maniera naturalistica accucciato ai piedi di un personaggio assiso in trono e con apparentemente al di sopra del dorso una figura di ridotte dimensioni che protende il braccio a toccare le gambe della figura seduta.<sup>8</sup> Il sigillo di un altro *endan*, Ishtar-kīnum, mostra invece una divinità in trono con al di sotto due leoni rivolti in direzioni opposte, con le lunghe code distese e incrociate a formare il piano di appoggio.<sup>9</sup>

La rappresentazione leonina è dunque strettamente connessa alla regalità di Urkesh e assume al contempo una funzione apotropaica nei chiodi di fondazione.<sup>10</sup> Una relazione resa esplicita da formulazioni iconografiche che paiono seguire tradizioni e percorsi ideologici differenti da quanto è noto in Mesopotamia meridionale, dove nella glittica protodinastica e akkadica l'associazione prevalente del leone è piuttosto con esseri semi-divini e altri animali nelle scene di combattimento, secondo schemi figurativi che sono peraltro recepiti e rielaborati anche in area hurrita e nord-siriana.

In epoca protourbana il leone è rappresentato in sigilli e vasi di pietra mentre attacca animali domestici.<sup>11</sup> È il simbolo della natura selvaggia che si manifesta come forza caotica e che quindi deve essere dominata, come mostra la Stele della Caccia dall'Eanna di Uruk. Una volta soggiogata questa diviene, da minaccia, espressione di forza nell'esercizio del potere. Il richiamo a tale valenza appare esplicito in epoca protodinastica nelle mazze cerimoniali scolpite a protomi leonine, come quella di Mesalim di Kish o nell'esemplare anepigrafo da Tell Agrab.<sup>12</sup> Negli ambienti culturali meridionali,

tuttavia, questo percorso appare segnato soprattutto dal riferimento alla sfera divina e a precisi ambiti cerimoniali e rituali.<sup>13</sup> La glittica akkadica documenta già in una serie di sigilli la belva associata ad Ishtar, posta sotto al suo carro o ai suoi piedi, e il collegamento prevalente, ma non esclusivo, alla dea nella sua connotazione guerriera si manterrà immutato sino al I mill. a. C.<sup>14</sup>

Il tema del dominio sulla fiera, che è all'origine del motivo del sovrano che uccide il leone, di lunghissima e articolata diffusione, fino ai sigilli reali e ai rilievi neo-assiri di Nimrud e Ninive e a quelli achemenidi di Persepoli,<sup>15</sup> compare per la prima volta nel secondo quarto del IV millennio a.C. (Tardo Calcolitico 2-3 iniziale) proprio in quelle regioni settentrionali che vedranno l'affermazione del potere hurrita. Alcune impronte di sigilli a stampo rinvenute a Tell Brak/Tell Majnuna mostrano non solo la rappresentazione del leone colpito con una lancia da una figura maschile, attestando la assai arcaica presenza del motivo iconografico, ma anche delle scene in cui l'animale è rinchiuso in una gabbia.<sup>16</sup> Sembra dunque possibile ipotizzare che lo stretto legame tra la regalità e il leone si sia sviluppato assai precocemente in area siro-mesopotamica settentrionale, dove le traiettorie dell'urbanizzazione videro sviluppi dissimili da quanto conosciuto nell'alluvio meridionale.<sup>17</sup>

In tal senso è interessante osservare che nelle regioni settentrionali l'evoluzione iconografica del motivo del re e del leone trova una concatenata sequenza di attestazioni, mentre in Mesopotamia centro-meridionale si riscontra un vuoto documentario per tutta l'età del Bronzo, sebbene una serie di riferimenti testuali di epoca neosumerica e paleobabilonese testimonino l'accostamento del sovrano alla fiera. Questi elementi assai peculiari della terminologia, ripresi forse a calco di epiteti divini, non è peraltro escluso che possano essere derivati da ambienti siriani o hurriti alla fine del III mill. a. C.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1995/96; 1996; 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1995/96, 12, figg. 4-5; 1996, 72-77. Per i Buccellati il personaggio assiso, vestito con lunga veste a balze di lana, sarebbe Tupkish stesso e il bambino sul leone potrebbe dunque rappresentare il principe di Urkesh, figlio dell'*endan* e della regina Uqnitum.

<sup>9</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 39-40, fig. 6. Sulla coda del leone di sinistra poggia anche i piedi un personaggio di piccole dimensioni che forse rimanda al medesimo ambito cerimoniale del sigillo di Tupkish, sebbene questa impronta sia databile ad una fase akkadica successiva a Tar'am-Agade, forse al tempo di Sharkalisharri.

<sup>10</sup> La presenza di chiodi di fondazione a forma leonina è nota soltanto da Urkesh, mentre sono rarissimi in Mesopotamia esemplari a forma di toro accosciato, databili alla II dinastia di Lagash: Tsouparopoulou 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Strawn 2005, 135.

<sup>12</sup> Watanabe 2002, 42-44. Due mazze votive iscritte con dediche di Gudea (da Tello) e di Shulgi (da Susa) sono scolpite con protomi di leone così come due bassi contenitori in pietra del sovrano

della II dinastia di Lagash, attestano la continuità dell'impiego dell'immagine ferina per rari vasi cerimoniali e simboli regali anche nel periodo post-akkadico: Desset *et al.* 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Una testimonianza diretta di questo precoce legame con la sfera religiosa è il ritrovamento delle ossa di un leone e di un leopardo sepolti ritualmente nell'angolo orientale del Tempio Bianco di Kullaba a Uruk: Heinrich 1982, 65.

<sup>14</sup> Colbow 1991; Cornelius 2009, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Cassin 1981; Cornelius 1989; Watanabe 2002, 76-82.

<sup>16</sup> McMahon 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Nei sigilli a stampo provenienti dai siti del Tardo Calcolitico 1-3 della Gezira siro-irachena e della alta Mesopotamia sono attestate raffigurazioni di leoni che attaccano animali (ad es. a Gawra, Brak, Hamoukar, Hacinebi, Arslantepe), così come sono documentati rari esemplari zoomorfi a forma leonina, mentre trova ampia diffusione e profondità diacronica il motivo del 'signore degli animali': cf. Pittman 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Watanabe 2002, 46-50; Ulanowski 2015.

La documentazione proveniente dalla Ebla degli Archivi di Stato (Periodo Protosiriano Maturo, BA IVA, c. 2400-2300 a.C.) consente di precisare ulteriormente questi percorsi ideologici relati alla figura del leone e al suo rapporto con la regalità durante il Bronzo Antico, ed è inoltre possibile seguirne l'evoluzione nella statuaria e nel rilievo del successivo periodo amorreo.<sup>19</sup>

Nell'arte aulica di Ebla la fiera compare come elemento di intarsio in pannelli compositi, negli intagli lignei appartenenti ad arredi mobili e nei sigilli cilindrici, documentati da rarissimi esemplari e da numerose impronte su cretula, provenienti dal Palazzo Reale G.

La raffinata produzione polimaterica delle figurine composite e degli intarsi in pietra e conchiglia, di tradizione protodinastica, ma certamente riferibile alle botteghe di palazzo del centro protosiriano, documenta, tra gli animali, soprattutto quelli domestici, sebbene siano presenti anche immagini leonine e di felini.<sup>20</sup> Una splendida figurina di leone, rinvenuta nel settore meridionale della grande Corte delle Udienze del Palazzo Reale G, è composta da due elementi, in diaspro quello utilizzato per la criniera e in calcare bianco quello per la testa dell'animale (fig. 1).<sup>21</sup> Il contrasto cromatico ottenuto dall'abbinamento delle due differenti pietre, la resa impressionistica della criniera mediante incisioni lanceolate sovrapposte e il sobrio naturalismo del muso, fanno di questo pezzo uno dei capolavori della statuaria miniaturistica eblaita. Oltre ad un notevolissimo intarsio in calcare con leopardo/pantera rampante (fig. 2)<sup>22</sup> e ad alcune tarsie dove compare ancora lo stesso tipo di felino (fig. 3),<sup>23</sup> che permettono di individuare fregi di pannelli

decorati con scene venatorie e di lotta e trionfo sulle belve, la figura ferina si ritrova in rare statuette composite, sempre assai frammentarie, fors'anche a causa di un particolare accanimento proprio su queste immagini al tempo della distruzione e del sacco della città. L'impiego di rivestimenti in lamina aurea per decorare alcune parti degli animali, il cui nucleo interno era realizzato in legno, è testimoniato da due zampe di felino, provenienti l'una dai livelli del Bronzo Antico IV sottostanti il grande tempio paleosiriano dell'Area Sacra di Ishtar ai piedi della Cittadella e l'altra dal vano L.2586 del Palazzo Reale G,<sup>24</sup> e da una eccezionale lamina d'oro modellata a sbalzo a riprodurre una testa leonina, rinvenuta nella zona del Quartiere Amministrativo del palazzo alle spalle della presunta sala del trono, laddove con forte probabilità vanno localizzati gli ambienti del Tesoro reale.<sup>25</sup> Quest'ultimo pezzo conserva quasi completamente il muso e la testa dell'animale ed è formato dal rivestimento della lamina, in origine corredata di elementi a intarsio per gli occhi, e da un nucleo ligneo con terminazione a perno che ne permetteva il fissaggio a un qualche oggetto o arredo mobile (fig. 4).<sup>26</sup>

Numerosi ma assai frammentari resti carbonizzati di mobili di pregio, recuperati in due ambienti dell'Ala Nord-Ovest del cd. Complesso Centrale del palazzo (L.2601, L.2586), erano decorati da elementi ad intaglio figurativo traforati a giorno, con tematiche in prevalenza riconducibili alla sfera della regalità o ad ambiti simbolici a questa connessi<sup>27</sup>. Nelle scene, purtroppo solo in modo assai approssimativo ricostruibili, il leone è rappresentato sia mentre attacca tori e capridi (fig. 5), sia in combattimento con un personaggio maschile nudo, che lo trafigge con una spada-pugnale (fig. 6). Il rimando alla forza caotica della natura selvaggia è esplicito, e la figura dell'eroe che uccide la belva si inquadra in un contesto mitico-simbolico tipicamente regale, peraltro richiamato dalla rappresentazione negli stessi arredi della figura del sovrano con tiara, mantello e ascia.

<sup>19</sup> Matthiae 1989b; 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Dolce 1980; Matthiae 1980; 2010a, 152-167; Pinnock 2018. Sulle varie figure di animali nell'arte protosiriana eblaita v. anche Dolce 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Matthiae 2004, 312, fig. 10. Si dovrebbe trattare di un elemento di fregio inserito in modo che la protome leonina risultasse aggettante dal piano del pannello.

<sup>22</sup> Matthiae *et al.* 1995, 324, n. 111. L'intarsio doveva far parte di un gruppo composto da due animali simmetrici e da un personaggio centrale che li tratteneva dominandoli ed era forse completato da decorazione in lamina d'oro e riempimenti policromi nei forellini che ne scandiscono il corpo, a indicare la pelle maculata del felino. Il tema del controllo sulla natura selvaggia da parte di una figura che poteva rimandare all'ambito della regalità (un eroe o il sovrano stesso) ovvero alla sfera divina (un uomo-toro o una divinità) è attestata peraltro tanto nella sfragistica che negli intarsi lignei.

<sup>23</sup> Matthiae 2010a, 163-166, fig. 79. Le tarsie piatte in calcare bianco erano pertinenti ad un pannello ligneo di tipo arcaico, dove gli elementi inseriti sono soltanto incisi e non hanno parti ad incrostazione o a rilievo. Provenienti dai livelli pavimentali della grande Corte delle Udienze, raffigurano scene di caccia alle fiere, tra cui si riconosce un leopardo capovolto di fronte ad un personaggio maschile con gonna a terminazioni lanceolate.

<sup>24</sup> Matthiae *et al.* 1995, 326, n. 114; Dolce 2008, 554, figg. 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> La convincente interpretazione dei due vani L.2982 e L.2984, di forma quadrangolare, comunicanti tra loro e aperti solo sulla sala di rappresentanza L.2866, come pertinenti al settore preposto all'immagazzinamento dei beni preziosi dell'edificio palatino, è suffragata sia dalla posizione dei due vani, sia da una grande quantità di resti smembrati di intarsi e elementi compositi in materiali preziosi e da una impressionante quantità di blocchetti di lapislazzuli grezzo, rinvenuti in situ sui piani pavimentali coperti dallo spesso strato di distruzione, questi ultimi stranamente sfuggiti al saccheggio finale dell'edificio: Matthiae 2004, 310-317; Pinnock 2006; Dolce 2008, 557-560.

<sup>26</sup> Matthiae *et al.* 1995, 325, n. 113; Dolce 2008, 558, fig. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Matthiae 1985, tavv. 37, 41-43; 1989a, 105-111, tavv. 37-43; 2010a, 168-172; Dolce 2006.

La presenza del sovrano e della regina assieme a divinità, esseri compositi e animali è del resto una caratteristica della glittica prodotta dalle botteghe palatine di Ebla, in una particolarissima combinazione ed elaborazione delle scene di combattimento di derivazione protodinastica mesopotamica. In tali scene, l'inserimento della coppia regale nella lotta con le fiere a difesa degli animali domestici, assieme ad una divinità femminile, interpretata come la dea Ishkhara, rivela una concezione assai peculiare della regalità protosiriana, che si collega precocemente al simbolismo legato alla forza ambivalente della natura selvaggia rappresentata dalle figure dei felini.<sup>28</sup> Il leone compare così in diverse impronte di sigilli cilindrici su cretule, nel sigillo di Ushra-Samu e in un esemplare in osso, di inusuale grandezza, con il partito figurativo scandito da tre registri. In quest'ultimo, forse impiegato per apporre impronte su contenitori ceramici, secondo un sistema documentato ampiamente nel Levante dell'età del Bronzo, la figura leonina è alternata a gazzelle nel registro mediano.<sup>29</sup> Quattro sigilli provvisti di iscrizione, certamente relativi ad altissimi funzionari del palazzo, mostrano scene di lotta in cui compare il leone (figg. 7-8).<sup>30</sup> Anche la dozzina di sigilli anepigrafi ricostruibili dalle impronte presenti su circa duecento cretule, quasi tutte concentrate nei magazzini-corridoi a nord della Corte delle Udienze, nella sala degli Archivi e in alcuni ambienti del Quartiere Amministrativo, è caratterizzata da scene di combattimento, in cui quasi sempre si ritrova il leone dominato dalla dea frontale assistita dalla coppia regale.<sup>31</sup> Questa peculiare elaborazione iconografica, estranea agli ambienti culturali mesopotamici, dai quali pure forti dovettero essere stati gli influssi sulle botteghe dei lapidici eblaiti, rivela quanto fosse strutturata la concezione della regalità protosiriana, espressa in un simbolismo che coniugava la forza eroica del capo della comunità e la giustificazione divina del potere.

Se le immagini ferine risultano dunque attestate in modo ricorrente e variato nelle produzioni auliche dei centri di alta Siria e Mesopotamia, ma anche nelle impronte su giara riferibili ad una produzione

specializzata di stile corsivo e schematico, è piuttosto singolare la loro quasi totale assenza nella coroplastica della seconda metà del III millennio a. C., nonostante alcune migliaia di figurine zoomorfe in argilla rinvenute negli insediamenti della Siria settentrionale, dell'Eufrate, della Gezira siro-irachena.<sup>32</sup>

Fa eccezione proprio il sito di Mozan, e tale singolarità potrebbe esser dovuta alla particolarissima valenza della figura del leone nella concezione della regalità di Urkesh, e hurrita più in generale. È stato infatti identificato, nella produzione fittile del sito, un numero piuttosto significativo di felini, sempre assai schematici, con la criniera, laddove conservata, indicata da incisioni oblique, il corpo e il collo massiccio, il sesso ad individuare gli esemplari maschi talora presente.<sup>33</sup> Non vi è mai in queste figurine strutturata modellazione dei corpi, tanto che nei pezzi frammentari, senza elementi distintivi come la criniera o la testa, l'attribuzione, basata su un sistema di proporzione delle parti che non appare sempre convincente, è solo ipotetica.<sup>34</sup> Tuttavia, sembra indubbio che nel centro dell'alto Khabur l'immagine del leone fosse rappresentata nella diffusa produzione "popolare" di terracotte modellate a mano, assieme soprattutto ad equidi, caprovini e bovini. Il dato è dunque significativo e in contrasto con la documentazione da altre regioni, ma anche da siti della stessa Gezira siro-irachena. Nell'area eufratica sono, infatti, rarissime e di incerta attribuzione le figurine di felini, mentre nel Levante settentrionale non sono presenti nei pur consistenti corpora di Hama ed Ebla di epoca protosiriana matura.

Ad Ebla le uniche due attestazioni di figurine riconducibili a leoni provengono dall'area sacra del cd. Tempio della Rocca nella zona sud-orientale della città bassa (Area HH) e sono databili al periodo protosiriano tardo (BA IVB, c. 2300-2000 a. C.).<sup>35</sup> La straordinaria sequenza di strutture sacre sovrapposte, a partire dal monumentale tempio monocellulare fondato assai verosimilmente attorno alla metà del III mill. a. C., integrata da quanto documentato per l'area

<sup>28</sup> Matthiae 1989a, 101-105, 2010a, 172-178; Pinnock 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Mazzoni 1992, 42-46, tav. 43: 8; Matthiae *et al.* 1995, 330, n. 122. La figura del leone che attacca animali domestici ricorre non di rado nelle impronte su giara di area levantina variamente databili nel corso del Bronzo Antico, ad es. a Biblio, Sidone, Fadous, 'Arqa (Mazzoni 1992, 91-92; Thalmann 2013), mentre nel pur ampio corpus eblaita è attestato solo in un'impronta con scena di lotta di derivazione mesopotamica: Mazzoni 1992, 67, tav. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Si tratta di due dei tre diversi sigilli appartenenti ad Ibdulu/a, del sigillo di Rei-Na'im, noti da alcune decine di impronte su cretule, e del sigillo in calcare di Ushra-Samu, unico esemplare originale rinvenuto nel palazzo: Micale, Nadali 2010; Matthiae 2010b; Peyronel 2016, 54-57.

<sup>31</sup> Per la distribuzione delle cretule v. Peyronel 2016, 55-56.

<sup>32</sup> Sulla produzione di figurine zoomorfe del Bronzo Antico v. da ultimo Peyronel, Pruss 2018. Le figurine di Mozan sono pubblicate in Hauser 2007 e Wissing 2009. Per gli altri siti della Gezira si rimanda a Pruss 2011 e per l'area eufratica a Pruss 2015 (con bibliografie di riferimento), mentre una presentazione generale della coroplastica eblaita di periodo protosiriano maturo e tardo si trova in Peyronel 2008; 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Hauser 2007, 251-294.

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. Hauser 2007, in particolare 22-53, dove è sviluppato il sistema di identificazione delle diverse specie. Per critiche a tale metodologia v. Wissing 2009, 39.

<sup>35</sup> Sugli edifici sacri nell'Area HH v. soprattutto Matthiae 2008; 2009a; per una analisi preliminare delle strutture sacre rinvenute al di sotto del Tempio di Ishtar di periodo paleosiriano sulla Cittadella, Matthiae 2009b, 762-773 e per una discussione generale sui templi di Ebla, Matthiae 2015; 2016.

sacra di Ishtar sulla cittadella e dai diversi edifici sacri di epoca paleosiriana, è stata decisiva per ricostruire l'evoluzione della tipologia templare canonica nel Levante settentrionale, ma anche per definire la sequenza crono-tipologica ceramica del Bronzo Antico IVB e le caratteristiche della produzione coroplastica dei secoli finali del III mill. a. C.<sup>36</sup> Dopo la sigillatura rituale della cella del Tempio della Roccia, avvenuta senza dubbio non molto tempo dopo la distruzione finale del centro protosiriano dell'età degli Archivi, sulle rovine colmate e livellate dell'edificio sacro del BA IVA, vengono costruite due nuove strutture sacre (Tempio HH4 e Sacello HH3), disposte affiancate e caratterizzate da uno sviluppo longitudinale della cella. È a questa fase che sono riferibili i due esemplari, entrambi rinvenuti nei riempimenti che coprivano il piano esterno al Tempio HH4 nella zona nord-occidentale.

La statua in terracotta TM.06.HH.226 (fig. 9), conserva il collo massiccio e la testa, le fauci sono aperte, la criniera rappresentata mediante incisioni parallele e oblique, gli occhi applicati mediante pastiglie forate di argilla. L'iconografia, senza precisi confronti nella coroplastica, potrebbe rimandare alla tradizione delle immagini leonine documentate su sigilli, intagli e elementi di statuaria miniaturistica, di un paio di secoli più antiche, e riferibili alle produzioni palatine del Protosiriano maturo, rappresentando una preziosa testimonianza del collegamento tra arte aulica e coroplastica. L'altra figurina di leone (fig. 10), realizzata in una argilla marrone differente dagli impasti chiari di comune utilizzo nel periodo, è una testa di manifattura piuttosto rozza, ma nonostante la resa approssimativa, con solchi incisi a rappresentare il manto dell'animale, muso appena accennato e fauci rese mediante una profonda incisione, non sembrano esservi dubbi nell'identificazione. Senz'altro significativa la presenza dei due esemplari nel medesimo contesto sacro, dal quale provengono anche una rarissima figurina di scimmia/babbuino e una splendida perla in corallina importata dalla valle dell'Indo.<sup>37</sup>

Le due figurine, databili ad una fase tarda del BA IVB, si inquadrano in una produzione coroplastica che accanto ad elementi di forte continuità con la tradizione fittile protosiriana matura mostra innovazioni che troveranno affermazione agli inizi del II mill. a. C. e poi compiuto sviluppo nel corso del Bronzo Medio I. Nella coroplastica paleosiriana le figurine di felini rimangono assai rare e mostrano peculiarità stilistiche, come la criniera resa mediante decorazioni a pettinatura, le fauci con la lingua visibile, la lunga

coda ripiegata sul dorso.<sup>38</sup> Questi esemplari sembrano inquadrarsi, tuttavia, in nuove sperimentazioni coroplastiche di età amorrea e potrebbero esser collegate al valore simbolico dell'animale in riferimento alla dea Ishtar. È tuttavia certo che nella statuaria e nel rilievo l'immagine leonina continua a essere presente come manifestazione del potere regale. Ne sono testimonianza esplicita le basi su cui certamente dovevano essere fissate statue di sovrani, scolpite con raffigurazioni di leoni, ma anche un esemplare di peso da bilancia in ematite a morfologia leonina rinvenuto del Palazzo Occidentale, probabile residenza del principe ereditario, diretto antecedente delle serie di campioni bronzei iscritti in aramaico e assiro, strumenti ufficiali dell'ammistrazione imperiale neoassira.<sup>39</sup>

In questo percorso così articolato e di così ampia profondità cronologica, il significato e il valore dell'immagine leonina sono legati ad aspetti ideologici e religiosi che interagiscono e si influenzano, ma anche ad interazioni tra ambiti culturali differenti che cogliamo certo solo in modo parziale, attraverso elementi iconografici e riferimenti testuali. La documentazione di Urkesh e di Ebla è in tal senso esemplare, permettendo di indagare alcuni aspetti significativi del complesso simbolismo della fiera nella sua affermazione all'epoca dei grandi regni urbani della seconda metà del III millennio a.C., quando viene compiutamente elaborata la tradizione protostorica legata al dominio sulla forza selvaggia della natura e si definiscono aspetti fondamentali connessi all'ideologia della regalità, ponendo le basi dell'affermazione e dello sviluppo di un legame che resterà indissolubile per i due millenni successivi.

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<sup>36</sup> V. da ultimo D'Andrea 2018 per la ceramica del BA IVB; Peyronel 2014 per la tipologia delle figurine fittili dell'Area HH.

<sup>37</sup> Peyronel 2014, 619.

<sup>38</sup> Marchetti 2001, 101-102, 108, figg. 48-49, tavv. 68-69, 75, 181, 189.

<sup>39</sup> V. Matthiae 2000 per la rappresentazione del leone nella scultura paleosiriana. Mazzoni 1980 e Ascalone, Peyronel 2000 per i pesi reali a forma leonina.



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Fig. 1: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Figurina di leone dal Palazzo Reale G (TM.03.G.20). Diaspro e calcare. © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.

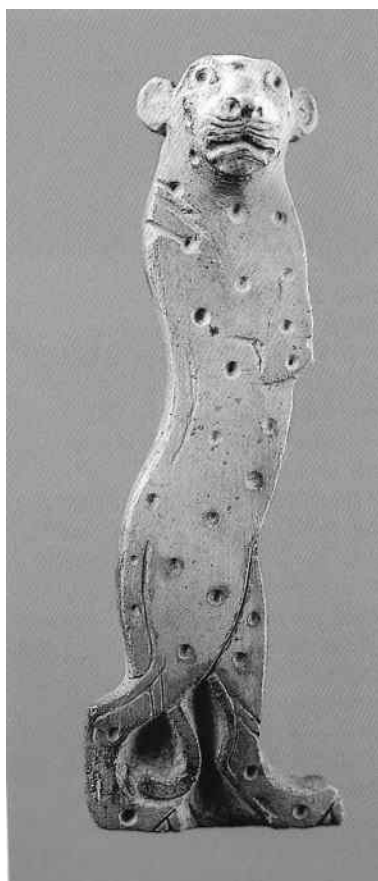


Fig. 2: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Intarsio con figura di leopardo dal Palazzo Reale G (TM.77.G.260). Calcare. © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.

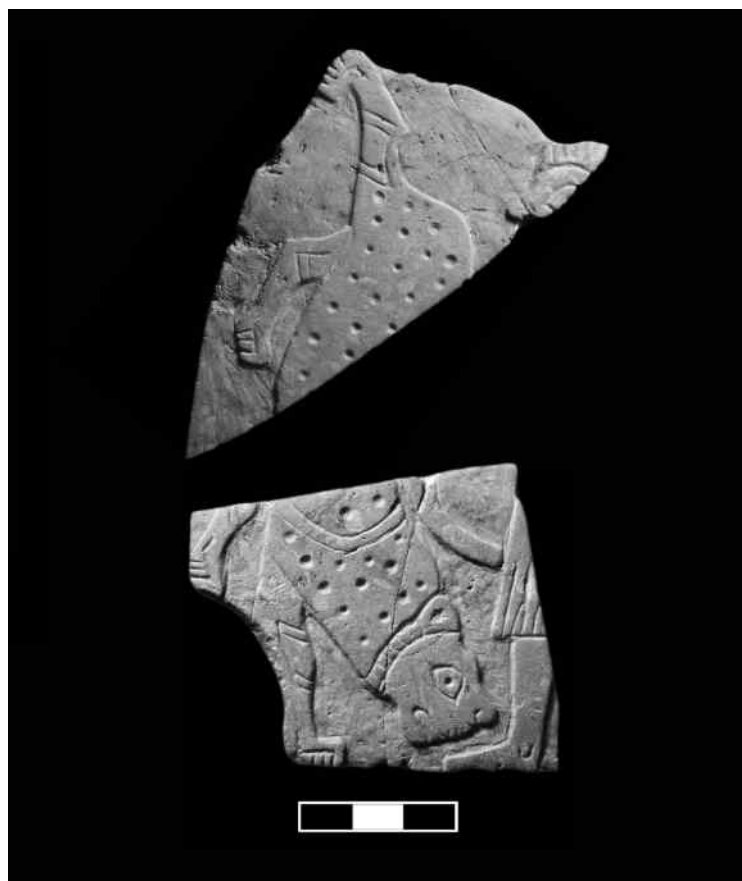


Fig. 3: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Intarsi con figura di leone e personaggio umano (TM.04.G.550). Palazzo Reale G di Ebla. Calcare. © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.

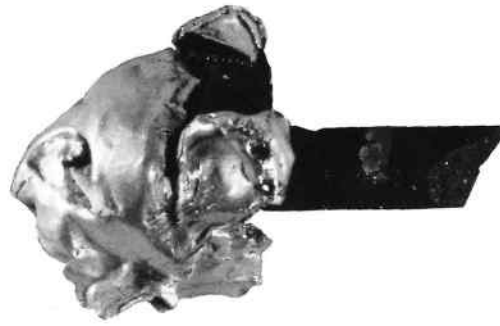


Fig. 4: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Elemento decorativo a testa di leone (TM.79.G.295). Oro e legno. © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.



Fig. 5: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Intaglio ligneo con leone e capride (TM.74.G.1012-1013). © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.



Fig. 6: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Intaglio ligneo con leone e eroe (TM.74.G.1007-1009). © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.

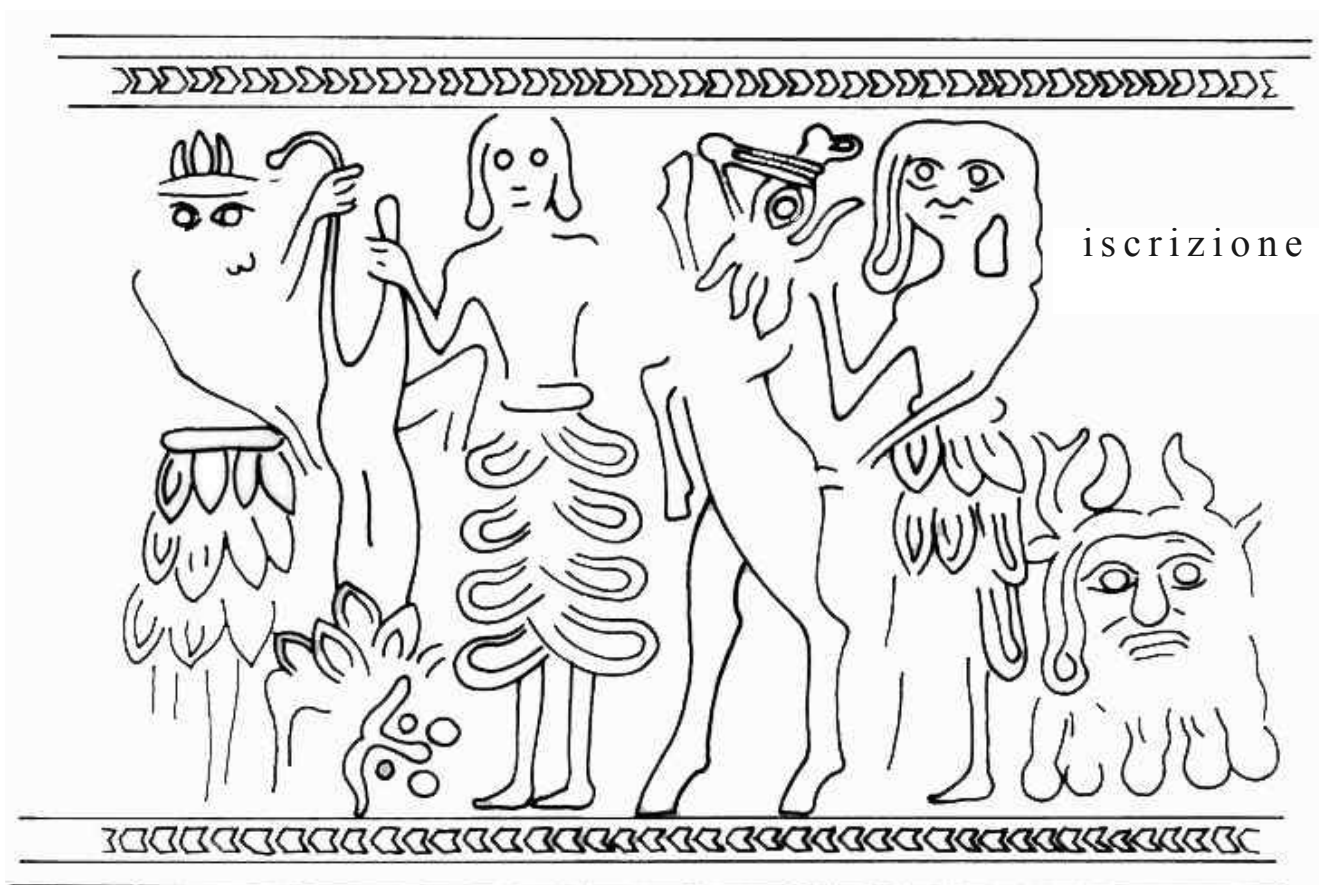


Fig. 7: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Disegno ricostruttivo del sigillo di Rei-Na'im. © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.

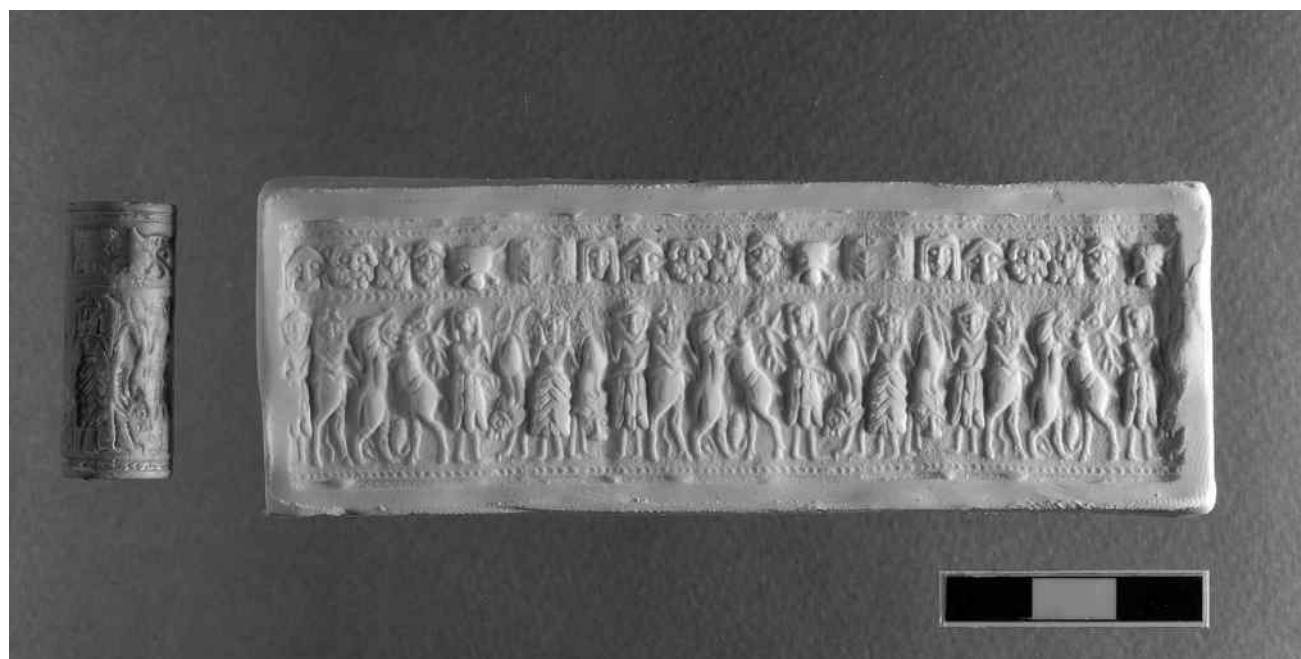


Fig. 8: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Palazzo Reale G (c. 2400-2300 a. C.). Sigillo di Ushra-Samu (TM.07.G.200). Calcare e oro. © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.



Fig. 9: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Tempio HH4 (c. 2200-2000 a. C.). Figurina in argilla di leone (TM.06.HH.226). © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.



Fig. 10: Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Tempio HH4 (c. 2200-2000 a. C.). Figurina in argilla di leone (TM.06.HH.60). © Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria.

A GAME OF GODDESSES (AND THRONES?). SOME REFLECTION ABOUT A CYLINDER SEAL IMPRESSION FROM THE ROYAL PALACE G OF EBLA (CA. 2300 BC)

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*Abstract*

In this contribution I present one of the seals in the “palace style” from Palace G of Ebla of 2300 BC. The seal is characterized by the presence of two divine female figures, Ishkhara and Aštar/Ištar who were important in the Eblaic pantheon and were closely related with kingship. For this reason, and for the location of the sealings, I propose that the seal belonged to a very important official, personally related with the king.

It is a special pleasure to offer these short considerations about a cylinder seal impression from Ebla to Marilyn and Giorgio, two great scholars, who gave a masterly contribution to the knowledge of pre-classical Syria, and with whom I had the privilege of sharing many pleasant moments, in the past, in their beautiful house in Malibu and, most of all, in Syria; in the present, we have still been side by side, through the tragic period our beloved Syria is facing.

The excavation of the Royal Palace G of Ebla (fig. 1), dating from the mature Early Syrian period (ca. 2400-2300 BC), led to the recovery of more than 200 fragmentary sealings from different rooms of the Palace.<sup>1</sup> Only two cylinder seals were found, one of which belongs to the so-called “palace style glyptic”,<sup>2</sup> whereas the second one is a fragmentary bone cylinder in the “common style”.<sup>3</sup> The sealings were preliminarily presented by P. Matthiae in several occasions,<sup>4</sup> and he identified at least 17 original cylinder seals, numbering them in succession.<sup>5</sup> One

of the most evident peculiarities of the figurative patterns in this corpus is the constant presence of human figures, taking part in the fight: the king, or the king and queen together,<sup>6</sup> act as protectors of animals – usually bulls – or as defeaters of lions; in some instance they cooperate in this endeavour with divine beings or with bull-men. All the figures are represented of the same height and are engaged in the same acts. Apart from the king and queen, the other human figures are all female and their identification is more complicated.

The intact cylinder seal, according to the inscription, belonged to a high court official, one Ushra-Samu, who is known from the cuneiform texts as responsible for female sectors of the administration.<sup>7</sup> Publishing the seal, P. Matthiae elaborated at length and convincingly about the identification of the female figure placed in the middle of the group including the king and queen holding two upturned lions by their tails, while the central figure grabs them by one of their rear paws.<sup>8</sup> He proposed that this

<sup>1</sup> All the sealings and the two seals were found inside the Palace, with a higher concentration in the two stores behind the north façade of the Court of Audience (L.9328 and L.2617), and in the rooms of the Administrative Quarter. No seals or sealings were found in the other structures of Early Bronze IVA thus far excavated at Ebla – Building P4 (Marchetti, Nigro 1995-1996), the Temple of the Rock (Area HH) and the red Temple (Area D).

<sup>2</sup> Pinnock 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Mazzoni 1992, pl. XLIII, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Matthiae 1995, 101-105; 2010a, 172-178; 2010b is devoted to the only complete cylinder seal found at Ebla. The largest number of sealings was found between 1975 and 1978, and these were analysed and numbered by P. Matthiae. The intact cylinder TM.04.G.200 (Matthiae 2010b) was never included in this first list.

<sup>5</sup> As P. Matthiae charged me with the final publication of this corpus, I checked the evidence, and I presume there are two more seals to add to the corpus; moreover, there are several fragments of sealing, which are too small to be attributed to any identified

seal. For a preliminary presentation of this material see Pinnock 2013.

<sup>6</sup> The male and female figures – whose joint presence is constant in the seals – are frequently engaged in the same action of protecting bulls or defeating lions. They must be identified as king and queen (Matthiae 2010a, 216-217; Pinnock 2008; 2013, 67) for the characteristics of their attitude and attire: both are front-facing and wear only a skirt, held at the waist by a belt; the man wears the peculiar royal turban with side tassel, whereas the woman has long, wavy hair. On the turban, see Biga 1992; Pinnock 1992.

<sup>7</sup> This is quite interesting, because the seal was found in a room behind the north façade of the Court of Audience, where the elements of a queen’s standard were also recovered: Matthiae 2010b, 274; see also Micale, Nadali 2010, 20, n. 34, for the official Ushra-Samu. Thus far, no sealing from Palace G bore the impression of this seal.

<sup>8</sup> Matthiae 2010b, 282-285.



character was one of the most important deities of the mature Early Syrian pantheon – namely the goddess Ishkhara – who appears in six cylinder seals from the Royal Palace G, always related with the king alone or with both sovereigns, as in Ushra-Samu's seal.

Here, I would like to deal with another Eblaic seal, numbered X in Matthiae's list (figs. 2-3), reconstructed from 13 sealings, some of which are very fragmentary. Six sealings were found in the Trapezoidal Store of the Administrative Quarter (L.2764): five are too small to understand if they belonged to the same sealing; one of them bore the clear marks of a textile with which it had been in contact. One sealing comes from the staircase (L.2917) leading from the court of the Administrative Quarter to the first floor;<sup>9</sup> one was found in the inner court (L.2913) of the Administrative Quarter and three sealings were kept in the northernmost of the two small rooms built as a secondary feature of the Throne Room of the same quarter. Two sealings were retrieved in the debris of the Palace but are not related with a specific room. As some of the fragments are very small and might belong to one sealing, when they come from the same spot, it seems evident that the original seal was not used frequently, and that it was used in very specific and limited sectors of the Palace, in close contact with royalty: in this sense the finding inside the Throne Room looks particularly meaningful.<sup>10</sup>

The figurative pattern of the seal includes two groups: on one side, the figure already identified as the goddess Ishkhara stands front-facing (fig. 4), protecting two bulls standing on their rear legs. The goddess is represented in the usual way: she wears a horned cap, with one pair of horns, has cow-ears and her hair falls down on both sides of her face; she wears a distinctive skirt with swollen oblique flounces and short fringed hem. The other group features a bull-man in the middle, holding two upturned lions by their hind paws; the lions are grabbed by their tails by a king to the left and by another female character to the right. The king wears the usual attire represented on seals (fig. 5): the turban with a tassel on one side

and the fleeced skirt with a belt. He is bearded and front-facing. The group of the bull-man, the king and the other human figure apparently reproduces the group which in a proposal of mine, might represent a typical royal emblem, as used in the king's standard identified some years ago.<sup>11</sup> In my interpretation, this group includes a bull-man flanked by the king and queen: several fragments of one such standard were found in 2003 in one of the storerooms behind the Throne Room in the Administrative Quarter.<sup>12</sup> In the seal examined here this pattern is respected, but the female figure to the right can by no means be identified with the queen (fig. 6). In fact, the queen usually features long hair and a *kaunakés* skirt, which is identical to the king's skirt, in shape and number of flounces, whereas the figure represented in this seal features hair longer than the queen's and wears a different skirt, longer on one side, which leaves one leg quite bare; this skirt, possibly made of woollen tufts, is longer and less regular than the usual *kaunakés*. Moreover, she also wears a double swollen belt, holding her skirt, similar to the bull-man's belt, whereas the king's skirt features a simple single belt, similar to Ishkhara's.

In a previous occasion, analysing another sealing from the Royal Palace G of Ebla – n° V in the seals' list –, I proposed that this figure might represent the goddess Aštar/Ištar,<sup>13</sup> based on a number of considerations. This goddess is well attested in the Eblaic pantheon of the mature Early Syrian period, where she shares some characteristics with Ishkhara, as they are both related with kingship and with lions.<sup>14</sup> The two goddesses are also mentioned together in the three versions of the Ritual of Kingship of Ebla,<sup>15</sup> and they receive the same gifts. In these texts, Aštar/Ištar is not mentioned by name, but only as "Lioness of the king".<sup>16</sup> In one text, T3, she is not called *labbadu*, lioness, but *sigar*, though always "*sigar* of the king".<sup>17</sup> This second epithet is interpreted as "bolt", or "door lock", and one interpretation, as proposed

<sup>9</sup> The object was found in level 5, which is not the destruction level, but rather a level of collapse, and possibly from the upper floor.

<sup>10</sup> The Administrative Quarter included, from north to south, the Trapezoidal Store (L.2764), the inner court (L.2913), the Throne Room (L.2866) and two stores, south of the Throne Room (see n. 12). At a closer analysis of the structure of the Quarter and based on the textual evidence, it seems now that the definition as "Administrative Quarter" is a limitative one. This region, in fact, rather than being only a place where operations for the central administration took place and were registered on cuneiform tablets, was also – and perhaps mainly – the location for a part of the ceremonial acts involving the sovereigns: Pinnock 2012, 278-279.

<sup>11</sup> Pinnock 2015, 18-22.

<sup>12</sup> Room L.2982 and room L.2984 were located south of the Throne Room, communicated with each other, whereas access to both was possible only through a door opening in the south wall of the Throne Room L.2866, probably to the right of the throne of the king: Pinnock 2015, 6-7, fig. 4. According to P. Matthiae, these two rooms might be the é-siki "House of Wool", which, notwithstanding the name, was probably the Palace Treasury: Archi 1988, 211; Matthiae 2013a, 458; 2014, 493. The same opinion is shared by Bonechi 2016, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Pinnock 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Pinnock 2018, 341-342.

<sup>15</sup> The Ritual, which is related with the renewal of kingship, is preserved in three versions, all dating from the final years of the Royal Palace G and is published in Fronzaroli 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Fronzaroli 1993, 20.

<sup>17</sup> Fronzaroli 1993, 70.

by Pomponio and Xella, might be that the goddess, as divine lioness, had the apotropaic function to prevent access.<sup>18</sup>

The presumed Aštar/Ištar is represented four more times in the Royal Palace G glyptics: in Cylinder IV there are two groups, one including Ishkhara and the king holding a lion and Aštar/Ištar protecting a bull standing on its hind legs;<sup>19</sup> in Cylinder V she appears in a group including the queen, with whom she cooperates in supporting, or protecting, a stele;<sup>20</sup> in Cylinder VI she seizes a lion and a standing bull, which is attacked by a lion, in its turn attacked by a bull-man;<sup>21</sup> in Cylinder IX she is placed on the side of a group with a lion attacking a bull, on the other side of which there is a similar figure, but turned in profile; the figurative pattern is completed by a naked hero holding an upturned lion and by a group including a bull-man sided by two bulls.

As far as we know, this figure is attested only in this period, and only at Ebla in the glyptic repertoires. It is based on the evidence of Cylinder V that I proposed the identification if this figure with a goddess, and specifically with Aštar/Ištar: the most important point is that, in the group including the queen, she is the counterpart of the bull-man of the other group, including the king and she should, therefore, represent a character belonging like the bull-man to the divine, rather than to the human world. The relation of this figure with the stele and with lions, or rather lionesses, might support this identification.

The Eblaic glyptic of the so-called “palace style” shows a definite derivation from the Mesopotamian glyptic of the Early Dynastic period, particularly from the Contest Scenes, elaborated since the Early Dynastic II period and, within this group, with those where the fighting lion and bull are accompanied by semi-mythical beings, like the bull-man and a kind of hero with curly hair.<sup>22</sup> Comparing the Eblaic evidence with the Mesopotamian one two main differences

may be singled out. In the first place, at Ebla there is a constant presence of human figures – either human or divine –; in the second place, the killing of the lions is never attested, as is, on the contrary, quite frequent in the Mesopotamian seals.<sup>23</sup> The active presence of divine figures is very interesting, particularly because both the deity identified for certain – Ishkhara – and the deity whose identification is proposed – Aštar/Ištar – are female and – though they are certainly very important – they do not belong to the topmost level of the Early Syrian Eblaic pantheon, whose main deities were Kura and his companion Barama.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, both goddesses are closely related with kingship, as both share the definition “of the king”, and evidently they had a relevant role in the protection of the ruling dynasty.<sup>25</sup> This being the case, we are probably witnessing here the first manifestation of the close relation between the ruling dynasty of Ebla and female deities, which, in the Old Syrian period, will become a well-known peculiarity of the Eblaic religion.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from the few seals with inscriptions, it is not easy to identify the owners of the seals: in my contribution on seal V, based on the presence of the stele, and on a mention in an Ebla tablet of the fact that the vizier Ibrium had placed a stele at the borders of the kingdom, I proposed to attribute that seal to the vizier. Concerning seal X, there are at present no hints about any possible owner, and we can only maintain that it belonged to a very high official, very close to the king, whose activities were concentrated in the Administrative Quarter (fig. 7), thus mainly to the control of precious imported goods.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Pomponio, Xella 1997, 322.

<sup>19</sup> This seal also bears an inscription with the name of its owner, one Rei-Na'im, probably the same person mentioned in the texts as *ugula* responsible for the labour units of the Palace: Micale, Nadali 2010, 15.

<sup>20</sup> Pinnock 2018. The figurative pattern of the seal includes another symmetrical group including, on both sides of another stele, the king and a bull-man.

<sup>21</sup> This seal belongs to another official of the central administration, Ibdula, *ugula* in charge for crops and livestock raising. Thus far, the inscriptions on the sealings gave the names of two officials only – Rei-Na'im and Ibdula – one of whom, Ibdula, is owner of more than one seal: Micale, Nadali 2010, 17. The only cylinder seal found – for which no sealing is preserved – gave the name of a third official, Ušra-samu, overseer for the female sectors of the palace: Micale, Nadali 2010, 20.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Frankfort 1939, pls. X, i (Early Dynastic II), XI, n (Early Dynastic II, from Fara), XII, b (Early Dynastic III).

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Frankfort 1939, pls. X, d, g, i (Early Dynastic II), XI, b-d, g-h (Early Dynastic II), XII, a, c (Early Dynastic III); XIII, f (Early Dynastic III).

<sup>24</sup> Matthiae 2013c, 40.

<sup>25</sup> Matthiae 2008, 141-154.

<sup>26</sup> Matthiae 2013b, 538-544. On the two goddesses in the III<sup>rd</sup> and II<sup>nd</sup> millennia BC see also Archi 2015, 676-686.

<sup>27</sup> One possibility is that this official was in charge of the control over the incomes of lapis lazuli, huge amounts of which were kept in the probable é-siki, south of the Throne Room: Pinnock 2006.

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Fig. 3. TM.76.G.2101, fragment of clay sealing, bearing large parts of two impressions of seal X, from the Trapezoidal Store L.2764 of the Administrative Quarter.

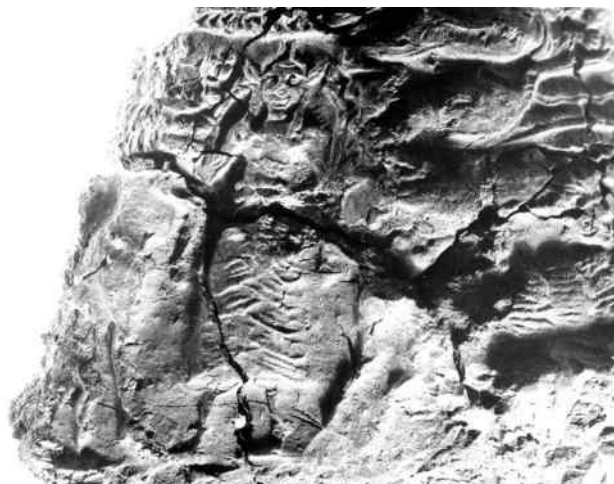


Fig. 4. TM.75.G.556, fragment of clay sealing, bearing the remains of two impressions of seal X.



Fig. 5. TM.76.G.825, fragment of clay sealing, bearing the remains of two impressions of seal X, from the Trapezoidal Store L.2764 of the Administrative Quarter.



Fig. 6. TM.76.G.658, fragment of clay sealing, bearing the impression of seal X.



Fig. 7. TM.04.G.173, fragment of clay sealing, bearing the remains of one impression of seal X, from the repository L.8496 inside the Throne Room.

## WILD WATER BUFFALO (*BUBALUS ARNEE* [KERR, 1792]) IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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### *Abstract*

The status of wild water buffalo in the archaeological, historical and iconographic record of the ancient Near East is examined, with particular focus on whether or not the water buffalo was indigenous to the region; the status (wild or domesticated) and origins of the water buffalo depicted on Akkadian cylinder seals; and the re-introduction of water buffalo in late Antiquity.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the striking aspects of the seal impressions of Tar'am-Agade and Išar-beli, discovered at Urkesh (mod. Tell Mozan) in 1999, is the depiction on them of a water buffalo (wild *Bubalus arnee* [Kerr, 1792]; domestic *Bubalus bubalis*).<sup>1</sup> These images and the ongoing discussion of the status of *Bubalus* in the ancient Near East prompted the reflections that follow. While not always conclusive, they illustrate just how productive of new scholarship the material brought to light in the long and fruitful careers of Giorgio and Marilyn, two of the most indefatigable scholars I have ever met, has been. I dedicate these thoughts to them with the greatest respect and admiration.

The representation of water buffalo on Akkadian cylinder seals has been discussed repeatedly over the years, but one point of significance remains unresolved. Were these bovinds wild or domestic? If they were wild, were they indigenous in Iraq, or introduced, e.g. as relatively docile juveniles (calves), from a foreign area? If they were domesticated, were they brought to Iraq from another region?

### 2. *BUBALUS ARNEE* IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The notion that wild water buffalo were once present in the Near East and eventually became extinct has a long history. In 1910 the American Orientalist William Hayes Ward wrote, 'It is perfectly evident from the early Babylonian art that it [water buffalo] was as indigenous to the Euphrates valley as to India, although India is generally spoken of as its original seat.... The wild buffalo must have been the most formidable animal known to the early Babylonians, even more so than the bison and much more

so than the lion.'<sup>2</sup> Almost a quarter of a century later Benno Landsberger implied that the wild water buffalo had once inhabited Western Asia but that it had completely disappeared by the end of the Akkadian period.<sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, E. Douglas Van Buren called the water buffalo 'the first of the wild cattle to die out in Mesopotamia, for it may have been already extinct by 2500 B.C.'<sup>4</sup> More cautiously the eminent American zoologist Robert Torrens Hatt (1902-1989) noted that, 'Although the evidence is not conclusive that the water buffalo was indigenous to Mesopotamia, the wild type was frequently portrayed until about 2100 B.C. at which time it presumably became extinct.'<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not these scholars were correct with respect to the timeline of *Bubalus arnee*'s extinction in Western Asia, there is now no doubt that, at times during the remote past, *Bubalus arnee* inhabited parts of the region. As H.A. McClure's recovery of *Bubalus* remains at fossil lakebeds in the Rub' al-Khali of Saudi Arabia demonstrated over 35 years ago, wild water buffalo lived in the Arabian peninsula during the late Pleistocene.<sup>6</sup> The survival of the species into the Holocene is confirmed by its representation in rock art<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 13 and fig. 2D, and 22 and fig. 5A. For a comprehensive review of the status of *Bubalus arnee* see Choudhury 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Ward 1910, 415.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Landsberger 1934, 89, 'Völlig verschwunden in der realen Welt wie in der Kunst ist seit der Dynastie von Akkad die dritte Wildrinder-Art, der Arni-Büffel (*Bos bubalus*).'

<sup>4</sup> Van Buren 1939, 74, citing Max Hilzheimer's contribution to the Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte 8, 195. Despite its discovery below the Royal Cemetery, a seal impression fragment referred to by Van Buren (U. 11684) bears an impression of the seal of the scribe of Sargon's daughter Enheduanna and was thus not as early as she presumed. See Woolley 1934, 358, no. 309. Cf. Legrain 1936, 45, n. 537.

<sup>5</sup> Hatt 1959, 22.

<sup>6</sup> McClure 1984.

<sup>7</sup> Wyrwoll 1997, 482 and fig. 1; Garcia and Rachad 1997, 107a.

and in archaeological deposits<sup>8</sup> at Jabal al-Makhrūq (MK2), near Sa'dah in Yemen. In a sounding at MK2 fragments of *Bubalus* mandibles and post-cranial skeletons were recovered in association with a typically Arabian 'Neolithic' lithic assemblage.<sup>9</sup> A C14 date from this deposit falls in the late 6th or early 5th millennium BC (Gif 8627: 6250±90 BP, 5385-4991 [92.3% probability] calBC).<sup>10</sup> Further north, in Syria, discoveries in Halaf contexts at Shams-ed Din Tan-nira show that water buffalo 'were present in small numbers in the Euphrates valley in the 6th millennium BC',<sup>11</sup> i.e. more or less contemporary with the MK2 finds.

Late 3rd/early 2nd millennium BC finds of *Bubalus* were discovered in Yemen at Wādī Rūbay', c. 15 kms. north of Sa'dah. Two C14 dates from WR3 and WR3-2A of 3790 ± 60 BP (Gif 8628; 2410-2116 [81.1% probability] calBC) and 3600 ± 40 BP (Gif 8630; 2061-1871 [81.5% probability] calBC) overlap with the late 3rd millennium BC. As Inizan noted, 'Ces dates calibrées indiquent une occupation au cours de la deuxième moitié du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire. La grande faune chassée, l'Aurochs et le Buffle, est encore présente dans la couche archéologique et dans les représentations rupestres, ce qui implique l'existence de suffisantes étendues d'eau. On y rencontre aussi le bœuf (*Bos taurus*).'<sup>12</sup>

### 3. SPURIOUS CLAIMS OF *BUBALUS*

All of the other claims of *Bubalus* that pre-date the 1st millennium AD have been shown to be false. At Grai Resh, near Jabal Sinjar, the 'almost perfectly preserved horns of a water-buffalo'<sup>13</sup> of Late Uruk date<sup>14</sup> were said to have been found. Seton Lloyd noted 'the easily recognizable horn of a water-buffalo, suggesting that in 3500 B.C. the *gamoos* was a new addition to Iraq's domestic animals.'<sup>15</sup> One horn core thought by Lloyd to be that of a water buffalo was illustrated,<sup>16</sup> but this was later identified by Boessneck as that of a male wild sheep.<sup>17</sup> The al-

leged discovery of two water buffalo skeletons beneath the Ur-Namma ziggurat at Uruk, announced by H. Lenzen,<sup>18</sup> was never confirmed and was in fact contradicted by him in a later publication.<sup>19</sup> Woolley and Mallowan claimed to have found a water buffalo cranium in the Hendursaga shrine (1 Church Lane) at Ur,<sup>20</sup> in a context dated by texts from one of the rooms in the building to the 19th century BC,<sup>21</sup> but this too has never been confirmed. A bovine ceramic spout from Alişar Höyük, stratum II,<sup>22</sup> datable to the Old Assyrian or *kārum* period (c. 1950-1700 BC), has been identified as a depiction of a water buffalo,<sup>23</sup> whereas in fact the extant horn is nothing like that of *Bubalus*.<sup>24</sup> Although the presence of water buffalo in Layer II on the Büyükkale of Boğazköy (12th-7th centuries BC) has been claimed,<sup>25</sup> this was the result of an unfortunate misunderstanding of the German in which the relevant faunal report was written, for von den Driesch and Boessneck were emphatic in stating that *no* water buffalo remains had been found at the site.<sup>26</sup> Nobari and colleagues claimed that, at Iron Age

lässt, nicht um den Hornzapfen eines Wasserbüffels, sondern um denjenigen eines starken männlichen Wildschafes. Solche Zapfen sind verhältnismäßig leicht zu verwechseln, der Ansatz am Schädel läßt aber die Diagnose stellen.'

<sup>18</sup> Lenzen 1937, 22 wrote, 'In der Räumen 213 und 214 wurden Skelettreste von Büffeln gefunden (das Skelett in 213 war sehr zerstört, während das Skelett in 214 recht gut erhalten war). Ob diese Skelette in die Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur oder in die altbabylonische Zeit zu setzen sind, kann nicht einwandfrei entschieden werden. Jünger aber können sie nicht sein.' Cf. Brentjes 1969, 190.

<sup>19</sup> Lenzen 1960, 133 referred to them as 'Rinderskelette' and 'der Skelettfund von zwei Stieren,' i.e. cattle (*Bos taurus*).

<sup>20</sup> Woolley, Mallowan 1976, 127 wrote, 'Against the NE wall, about the middle, was the skull of a water-buffalo, remarkably well preserved.'

<sup>21</sup> Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013, 233.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt 1932, 136, fig. 171. Stratum II is now referred to as Levels 11T and 10T; see Michel 2011, 316.

<sup>23</sup> Brentjes 1969, 190; Dupré 1993, 144. Cf. Casabonne 2006, 73; Aubaile 2012, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Given the horn shape I cannot agree with Collins 1999, 60, who noted that, like gazelle and zebu, water buffalo 'were not native Anatolian species and yet are represented in the art of the Assyrian Colony period.' Further, she noted that, whereas 'Dupré attributes its presence in the art from Cappadocia to Sargon's military campaign into Anatolia. A better suggestion is that the artists were familiar with the animal not from the immediate environment, but from northern Mesopotamia and Syria, the regions they transversed on the journey from Assur to the karums in Anatolia, i.e. that the artists may not have been Anatolians at all.' This all presumes that the water buffalo was in fact depicted in Anatolian coroplastic art which, as noted above, is hardly justified on the basis of the Alişar zoomorphic ceramic spout.

<sup>25</sup> Hongo 1997, 281.

<sup>26</sup> von den Driesch, Boessneck 1981, 24, 'Soweit der Erhaltungszustand der Rinderknochen eine diesbezügliche Beurteilung zuläßt, fehlt der Wasserbüffel (*Bubalus bubalis*) unter den Funden. Mit seinem Auftreten brauchte in dieser Zeit in Anatolien allerdings auch gar nicht gerechnet zu werden, denn wenn der Was-

<sup>8</sup> Garcia et al. 1991; cf. Fedele 2008, 167; Crassard et al. 2013, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Inizan 2007, 'des mâchoires de bovinés avec des éléments post-craniens, de petits blocs d'hématite et du matériel lithique... Les vestiges d'une faune comme l'aurochs, le buffle, le bœuf ainsi que l'âne ou le bouquetin, peuvent être mis en relation avec les représentations rupestres.'

<sup>10</sup> Dates given here and below have been calibrated using the online version of OxCal 4.3.2 available at <https://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk/oxcal/OxCal.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Arbuckle 2012, 215-216. Cf. Uerpmann 1982.

<sup>12</sup> Inizan 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Lloyd 1940, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Salonen 1976, 167.

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd 1943, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Lloyd 1940, pl. 2, fig. 5.9.

<sup>17</sup> Boehmer 1974, 4, n. 15, where Boessneck is cited as having written, 'Es handelt sich, wenn es die Abbildung richtig erkennen

Hasanlu, 'some bones of Bovidae can be allocated' to *Bubalus*.<sup>27</sup> This, however, was later contradicted by Marjan Mashkour who, in writing about faunal remains from Sasanian sites along the Gorgan Wall in northeastern Iran, noted, 'One of the highlights of the Gorgan Wall archaeozoological studies was the discovery of water buffalo remains, confirmed by DNA analyses and attested for the first time in Iran.'<sup>28</sup> Finally, a single find identified as water buffalo from the 1970/72 excavations at Bastam in northwestern Iran has been called into question by the absence of any further finds in Urartian levels at the site, despite the presence of six water buffalo bones in mediaeval layers there.<sup>29</sup>

#### 4. PHILOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The philological evidence for water buffalo is inconclusive and highly contested. The Early Dynastic Practical Vocabulary A contains a list of bronze objects including Sum. **gu<sub>4</sub>-a<sup>zabar</sup>**, which, following Civil, has been translated 'a water buffalo of bronze' by Wagenonner.<sup>30</sup> However, Sjöberg noted that, in the Early Dynastic Animal List B 98 **gu<sub>4</sub>-a** 'has been placed after three entries beginning with nin-, referring to rodents... and "turtle"... a fact which points to gu<sub>4</sub>-a as a smaller animal, not a water buffalo.'<sup>31</sup> Sum. **áb-za-za** (Akk. *apsasū*) one of the exotic animals that 'jostled each other' in the public square of Agade,<sup>32</sup> has sometimes been understood as denoting water buffalo.<sup>33</sup> However, it has also been identified as the zebu bull (*Bos indicus*).<sup>34</sup> Landsberger suggested the possible identification of *alap nāri* (Sum. **gud-íd**), lit. 'river cow,' or 'river ox' as water buffalo.<sup>35</sup> Others have suggested that the term denoted the hippopotamus.<sup>36</sup> The Standard Babylonian (Jungbabylonisch)

term *alpu kīši* has been tentatively identified as water buffalo<sup>37</sup> while Akk. *burhiš*, attested in a text of Tiglath-pilser I's (1114-1076 BC)<sup>38</sup> and sometimes translated as 'yak,'<sup>39</sup> is much more likely to have been a bovid like the 'buffalo.'<sup>40</sup>

#### 5. *BUBALUS ARNEE* AND AKKADIAN GLYPHTIC

In his 1899 monograph on cattle in ancient Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt, the Swiss zoologist Johann Ulrich Dürst (1876-1950) argued forcefully that, on the basis of the size and conformation of the water buffalo horns, as well as other physical features, shown on Akkadian cylinder seals, the animals were, without question, *Bubalus arnee*, i.e. wild water buffalo (fig. 1).<sup>41</sup> A decade later W.H. Ward affirmed the wild nature of the 'Buffalo or *Bos bubalus*... the native water-buffalo of the swamps of southern Baby-

<sup>37</sup> Black, et al. 2000, 13.

<sup>38</sup> RIMA (Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Period) 2, A.0.87.4, ll. 67-71.

<sup>39</sup> CAD (The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago) B, 329.

<sup>40</sup> Black, et al. 2000, 49; Lang, Rollinger 2010, 222, n. 83.

<sup>41</sup> Dürst 1899, 6-7, 'Der auf den erwähnten Cylindern abgebildete Büffel besitzt grosse, auf den Rücken herabhängende Hörner, deren Spitzen sich einander nähern, während die Scheiden einen gewaltigen Bogen beschreiben, der völlig einem Halbkreise gleichkommt. Die Hornscheiden sind mit Ausnahme der Spitzen quer gerippt, und zwar sind diese Rippen auf allen gut ausgeführten Cylindern angegeben. Der Körper des Tieres ist gross, mit gewaltiger Muskulatur und geradem Rücken. Zwischen den Hörnern ist hie und da auch ein Haarschopf angedeutet. – Ich halte diesen Büffel für den wilden Armbüffel (*Bubalus Arni*) in der Form, wie sie sich jetzt noch in den Wäldern Indiens und Assams findet. Eine ausgestorbene Form anzunehmen ist, glaube ich, unnütz aus dem Grunde, weil die zoogeographischen Verhältnisse zu jenen Zeiten andere gewesen sein müssen, was auch aus der Erwähnung von Elephantenjagden im nördlichen Mesopotamien, sowohl in der assyrischen, wie in der ägyptischen Litteratur hervorgeht. Damit aber, dass ich den Büffel auf den genannten Cylindern mit dem *Bubalus Arni* identifiziere, ist noch nichts über sein Vorkommen in Babylonien bewiesen... [Mir] erscheint es feststehend, das er sich um 5000 v. Chr. in Mesopotamien vorfinden konnte und dann allmählich zurückgedrängt wurde. Er lebte möglicherweise noch in assyrischen Zeiten im Zweistromlande, [citing Assurnasirpal hunting rimu in Suhu which Dürst thought more likely to be a herd animal (wild buffalo) than wild cattle/oxen]... Aus allen diesen Gründen halte ich es für unbestreitbar, dass ein Wildbüffel, von dem Beginne der Geschichte an, in Mesopotamien vorkam und wahrscheinlich bis zur assyrischen Zeit dort verblieb. Der Gedanke, dass es sich schon um einen zahmen Büffel handelt, ist von vornherein abzuweisen, denn einerseits wird der babylonische Nationalheld Isdubar stets im Kampfe mit Löwen oder im Streit oder in Begleitung anderer wilder Tiere dargestellt, und andererseits ist die Hornform des gezähmten *Arni* rasch eine andere.' Cf. Dürst 1900, 137, 'Nous avons donné les preuves de la présence d'un grand Buffle de la forme de l'*Arni* en Babylonie pendant les anciens empires chaldéens. Le cylindre chaldéen qui montre le mieux ce type de Buffle est celui dédié par Ibnischarru le scribe au roi d'Agadé Sargon. Ce cylindre se trouve dans la collection de M. de Clercq... Il disparaît de Babylonie au commencement de l'histoire.'

serbüffel auch kurzzeitig im letzten Drittel des 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr. in Mesopotamien bekannt gewesen ist, seine eigentliche Einführung aus Indien erfolgte zur Zeit der Sassaniden,' citing Boehmer 1974 for the final point. Vogel 1952 mentions only cattle.

<sup>27</sup> Nobari et al. 2017, 37.

<sup>28</sup> Mashkour et al. 2017, 77-78. These finds have been dated to between the 5th and 7th centuries AD.

<sup>29</sup> Boessneck, Kokabi 1988, 226.

<sup>30</sup> Wagenonner n.d., 22. K. Wagenonner (pers. comm.) based this interpretation on Civil 2008, 81.

<sup>31</sup> Sjöberg 2000, 407.

<sup>32</sup> Curse of Agade, ll. 10-24, <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr215.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Boehmer 1974, 12; Westenholz 1987, 48, no. 28, where door bolts in the shape of a water buffalo are mentioned. Schneider 1941-1944, 71 only noted that the term referred to a real, not a mythological animal, and that it must have been a rare or special kind of cattle.

<sup>34</sup> Butz 1979, 354-355, n. 258; Steinkeller 1982, 252, n. 57; Englund 1995, 382, n. 11.

<sup>35</sup> Foxvog, Kilmer 1975, 8. Cf. CAD (The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago) A1: 335, s.v. *alap nāri*.

<sup>36</sup> Butz 1979, 355, n. 258. Cf. Civil 1998, 13, n. 19.



lonia which prevails on the cylinders of the time of Sargon I. and his successors,<sup>42</sup> without, however, singling out any particular characteristics that distinguished it from *Bubalus bubalis*. Hatt noted that Seton Lloyd ‘considered it probable that the culturally advanced Uruk people... used the water buffalo as a domestic animal,’<sup>43</sup> whereas, ‘The fact that this species is clearly depicted on cylinder seals of the late Agade period... does not support the Lloyd hypothesis, for these early representations show the wild water buffalo, with flat, widely flaring horns... The poses, too, are those usually used for wild animals. The buffalo stand on their hind legs.’<sup>44</sup> Seemingly unaware of these observations, Boehmer suggested in 1974 that the *Bubalus* depicted on Akkadian cylinder seals were domesticated,<sup>45</sup> a position for which he was sharply challenged five years later by Kilian Butz who again pointed out that the extreme size of their horns pointed to their being instead wild animals, though he was apparently unaware that Dürst and Hatt had made the same observation decades earlier. Moreover, Butz suggested, these must have been the last of the indigenous wild water buffalo known in the Near East.<sup>46</sup>

A comparison of the horn spans of buffaloes depicted on some Akkadian cylinder seals and those of domesticated *Bubalus bubalis* (fig. 2) confirms the great discrepancy between them, i.e. between wild *Bubalus arnee* and domesticated *Bubalus bubalis*. As Hodgson noted in 1847, ‘There is no animal upon which ages of domestication have made so small an impression as upon the Buffalo, the tame species being still most clearly referrible to the wild ones at present frequenting all the great swampy jungles of India. But in those wildernesses as in the cow-houses, a marked distinction may be observed between the long-horned and curve-horned Buffaloes, or the

Macrocerus and Speirocerus of my Catalogue... The length of the horns of Macrocerus is sometimes truly enormous, or 6 1/2 feet each.’<sup>47</sup> Nowhere is the enormous breadth of the *Bubalus arnee* horns in Akkadian glyptic better demonstrated than on the seal of Ibnišarrum, the scribe of Šar-kali-šarri,<sup>48</sup> but it is well-illustrated on the seal impressions of Tar’am-Agade and Išar-beli from Tell Mozan<sup>49</sup> as well.

If we follow this line of evidence then we must eventually ask what the sources of the Akkadian seal-cutters’ knowledge of wild water buffalo were? Even though it is now clear that *Bubalus* was indigenous to parts of Western Asia (central and southern Arabia, Syria) before, presumably, becoming extinct, this fact alone does not demonstrate that specimens of this population served as the models for seal-cutters in Mesopotamia. While the *Bubalus* remains from Wādī Rūbay‘ show that wild water buffalo in Yemen survived into the late third millennium BC, it is difficult to argue that these animals were relevant to the work of the maker of the seals of Ibnišarrum or Tar’am-Agade. If, then, the indigenous *Bubalus arnee* was not the source of the Akkadian seal-cutter’s knowledge of water buffalo physiognomy, what was? Two scenarios may be suggested by which those seal-cutters could have been exposed to the anatomical details of *Bubalus arnee*: via the import of their images or via the import of live animals.

With respect to the import of images, it has been alleged that ‘zebu and water buffalo images from the Indus region... spread to Mesopotamia during the Akkadian Period.’<sup>50</sup> This may be true in theory, and would be supported by the discovery of Harappan artifacts in the shape or bearing images of water buffalo in southern Mesopotamia. To date, however, the only Harappan seals found in Iraq depict the zebu (on a seal from Nippur), and an ‘Einhorn,’ on a seal from Kish.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the extraordinarily lifelike depictions of standing and rearing water buffalo on Akkadian seals bear no resemblance to the more stylized renderings of them on Harappan ones from sites in India and Pakistan, and indeed it is difficult to imagine creating such realistic images of water buffalo without having drawn and/or carved them from living models.

As far as an import of live adult *Bubalus arnee* goes, this is difficult to imagine. In describing the aggressiveness of the wild water buffalo Hodgson

<sup>42</sup> Ward 1910, 414.

<sup>43</sup> I have been unable to find a statement to this effect in either Lloyd 1940 or 1943.

<sup>44</sup> Hatt 1959, 68-69.

<sup>45</sup> Boehmer 1974, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Butz 1979, 354-355, n. 258. Cf. Englund 1995, 382, n. 11, who also noted that ‘R. Boehmer’s posited identification... of the buffalo – presumably brought into Agade from the Indus Valley – depicted in numerous cylinder seal friezes of the Old Akkadian period, and the animal á b. z a. z a still attested in late Ur III texts from Drehem... with domesticated water buffalo, was refuted by K. Butz... with the compelling argument that the horn span of the animal in the Old Akkadian seal depictions was compatible only with the very dangerous wild Arni water buffalo, and that the nutritional value of domesticated water buffalo milk together with the ideal conditions for their breeding in southern Mesopotamia... make improbable their extinction following an assumed introduction in the Old Akkadian period.’ Although he used both the terms ‘Arni-Büffel’ and ‘water buffalo’ to describe the animals shown on Akkadian cylinder seals, Frayne 2010, 181 was not clear about whether the animals were wild or domesticated.

<sup>47</sup> Hodgson 1847, 710. For more data on horn spans see Groves 1996. According to Blanford 1888-1891, 492, ‘The longest recorded single horn known, one in the British Museum, measures 78 1/2 inches, which would give an outside sweep of about 14 feet.’

<sup>48</sup> Boehmer 1974, fig. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, figs. 2D and 5A.

<sup>50</sup> Kenoyer 2010, 53.

<sup>51</sup> Possehl 2002, fig. 2.

noted that, 'This noble species is...a truly stupendous animal...and of such power and vigour as by his charge frequently to prostrate a well-sized elephant! The wild animals are fully a third larger than the largest tame breed, and measure from snout to vent 10 1/2 feet, and six to six and half feet high at the shoulder.'<sup>52</sup> Catching such an animal alive, getting it onto a boat and transporting it to southern Mesopotamia, while perhaps not impossible, would have been a formidable task.

On the other hand, one could imagine *Bubalus arnee* calves being caught and sent by boat to Mesopotamia,<sup>53</sup> where, once mature, they could have been observed by Akkadian artists. As an analogy, one may point to the notoriously shy *Equus hemionus khur*, or onager, which is so fast that it has proven difficult to hunt throughout history. Despite this, foals were caught in Iran in the late 18th century and raised with relative ease in a royal Qajar menagerie kept by Aga Mohammad Shah (r. 1782-1797).<sup>54</sup> Moreover, onager foals were even brought to Paris where they were 'bred there for a series of generations, and...daily mounted and ridden.'<sup>55</sup> The possibility that *Bubalus arnee* calves were imported into southern Mesopotamia where they were reared like pets and, as adults, served as models for Akkadian seal-cutters, is perfectly plausible.

Sargon's boast that ships from Meluhha, Magan and Dilmun came to his capital Agade as a result of his conquests led Wolfram Nagel,<sup>56</sup> Burkhard Brentjes,<sup>57</sup> Rainer Boehmer<sup>58</sup> and more recently Massimo Vidale<sup>59</sup> to suggest that the appearance of the water buffalo in Akkadian glyptic iconography represented an introduction from the Indus Valley (Meluhha) that followed on from these events. As an extension of this view, in

discussing the significance of the lion and the water buffalo in royal Akkadian contest scenes, Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati suggested that the lions 'represent the north,' while 'the water buffalo represents the south-east,' and drew the inference that 'the contest scene in the Akkadian period' was 'used to represent their [the Akkadian dynasty's] domination (or projected domination) over these two geographical areas.'<sup>60</sup> The posited association between the water buffalo and the 'south-east' alluded to here echoes the belief in the Indian origin of both *Bubalus arnee* and *Bubalus bubalis* and the diffusion of the latter to southern Mesopotamia during the Akkadian period.<sup>61</sup> In addition, it necessarily implies that the inspiration for the iconography was not the indigenous *Bubalus arnee* of Western Asia, which in certain regions was still alive during the late third millennium, but rather *Bubalus arnee* imported from the Indus region. The evidence reviewed above is inconclusive, but it does show that the situation was far more complex than has often been assumed by students of bubaline cylinder seal iconography. An absence of faunal remains at sites anywhere closer to the carvers of the Akkadian seals showing water buffalo than Yemen is a telling argument against the native wild fauna having served as models for Mesopotamian seal-cutters. On the other hand, the importation of *Bubalus arnee* calves could have afforded a short-lived population of exotic animals that served as models for Akkadian seal-cutters. Whether or not they were exploited economically depends in large measure on how one renders the Sumerian and Akkadian terms noted above, but it certainly would not seem that the milk, meat or draught capability of *Bubalus* were exploited in Mesopotamia during the late Akkadian period as they were much later in history after the water buffalo's re-introduction in late Antiquity. If indeed only a few individual animals were sent to Mesopotamia as diplomatic gifts, then the fact that they were never exploited economically is easily understood, particularly if they retained the status of royal 'pets' on Akkadian crown domains.

#### 6. POSTSCRIPT: *BUBALUS BUBALIS* IN LATE ANTIQUITY

While the presumption that the *Bubalus* population in lower Mesopotamia of the late third millennium BC did not survive and was not ancestral to later populations in the region is almost universal, the date of the re-introduction of the species has been vigorously debated for centuries. In 1827 Smith suggested, that following its initial domestication in India, 'from thence, commerce or remote military expeditions seem to have introduced it into Tartary and Eastern Persia, till by either of

<sup>52</sup> Hodgson 1847, 710.

<sup>53</sup> Perhaps as diplomatic gifts like other exotic animals, including the cheetah, on which see Potts 2002a, 347-352.

<sup>54</sup> Olivier 1807, 64-65. Cf. Potts 2014, 645-646.

<sup>55</sup> Blyth 1859, 251. Cf. Potts 2002b, 107.

<sup>56</sup> Nagel 1962, 204, 'In der vorderasiatischen Bildkunst fehlt der Wasserbüffel bis zur Reichsakkadischen Periode, wo er schlagartig und gleich sehr häufig auftritt. Eine Einfuhr aus dem Indus-Gebiet liegt hier nahe.' In this regard, note Parpola 2002, 241 who asserted that 'the mighty water buffalo' symbolized 'the chief male deity of the Harappans.' Hatt 1959, 69 suggested, as an alternative to the theory that indigenous, wild *Bubalus* were the models of Akkadian seal-cutters, that domesticated animals might have been brought from the Indus valley between c. 3000 and 1500 BC but he did not specify that this was a result of Sargon of Akkad's conquests as Boehmer did.

<sup>57</sup> Brentjes 1969, 190, 'Zudem treten die Büffel auf den irakischen Siegeln erst dann auf, als der Irak Handelsbeziehungen mit der Induskultur unterhielt. So könnten die Büffel indische Importe sein. Die Kampfszenen wären dann vielleicht kultische Spiele in Tiergärten – oder symbolische Aussagen über Triumphe im Osten.'

<sup>58</sup> Boehmer 1974.

<sup>59</sup> Vidale 2018, 291-292.

<sup>60</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 29, n. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Particularly as elaborated in Boehmer 1974.

these means the Domestic Buffalo was found on the shores of the Caspian. Here they resided at the time of the Macedonian invasion... They were found by the Mahomedan Arabs in Persia, and during their wars brought westward into Syria, and Egypt. Baron Cuvier, with his accustomed research, proves the pilgrims and writers concerning Palestine to have noticed them by the name of Buflus, early in the eighth century.<sup>62</sup> Half a century later matters had not progressed at all. Houghton could only note, ‘The original home of the Indian buffalo [water buffalo, wild buffalo or Arne] appears to have been India, in the swampy jungles of which country it found a congenial home. I do not think it occurred west of the Indus in the time of the Assyrians. According to Cuvier, the buffalo, now so much used as a beast of burden in the East and West, was not introduced into Europe before the Middle Ages, though its introduction into Western Asia was probably anterior to that date. No buffalo was known to the ancient Greeks and Romans.’<sup>63</sup>

The presence of *Bubalus arnee* in Achaemenid Arachosia (the region around Kandahar in Afghanistan) was first posited by Samuel Bochart<sup>64</sup> on the basis of Aristotle’s reference (*Historia Animalium* 2.1) to ‘the wild cattle [βούς ἄγριος]... of the Arachosians’ which ‘differ from their domesticated congeners just as the wild boar differed from the domestic one.’ Bochart’s identification was later endorsed by such scholars as Cuvier,<sup>65</sup> Hutton and Blyth,<sup>66</sup> Houtum-Schindler<sup>67</sup> and Dürst,<sup>68</sup> who took its presence in Arachosia to indicate that, having disappeared from the Babylonian landscape, it had been pushed by civilization towards India.<sup>69</sup> Rather than seeing

the presence of *Bubalus* in Afghanistan as a relict population of Western Asia, it is surely more logical to see it as an extension of the Indian populations of *Bubalus arnee* to the south. The wider presence of water buffalo in the Achaemenid period may be inferred from the Achaemenid Elamite personal and geographical name Kammiša.<sup>70</sup>

The likely presence of the water buffalo in the same area south of the Hindu Kush is suggested seven or eight centuries later by the unique buffalo head crown of the Nezak Shahs, a dynasty of Iranian Huns. The crowns attested on Nezak Shah coinage are unique in showing, on the obverse, the bust of a king wearing a crown with a buffalo’s head between two wings. Based on other iconographic details, the Nezak Shahs have been dated very imprecisely from c. 460<sup>71</sup> to well after 600 AD.<sup>72</sup> Possibly related is a silver rhyton in the Cleveland Museum of Art which shows a water buffalo and, although from the art market, is iconographically datable to the early 6th century AD.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, reports from the mid-19th century do not suggest that water buffalo were much in evidence in Afghanistan.<sup>74</sup>

Boehmer suggested that the water buffalo’s re-introduction to lower Mesopotamia occurred in late Antiquity,<sup>75</sup> and this has been accepted by a number of scholars.<sup>76</sup> Re-reading Boehmer’s text, however, shows that the evidence in support of this view is fragile at best. Invoking studies of the Jat/Zutt,<sup>77</sup> i.e. gypsies, and positing their

<sup>62</sup> Smith 1827, 393. This is not what Hatt purported Smith to have said. Hatt 1959, 69, wrote, ‘Later introduction was presumed by Smith (1827, 393) who believed that these animals were introduced into Persia and lands to the west by Arabs in the eighth century A.D.’

<sup>63</sup> Houghton 1877, 339-340.

<sup>64</sup> Bochart 1692, 960.

<sup>65</sup> Cuvier 1826, 141, ‘Und selbst der wilde Ochs mit auseinandergedrückten Hörnern, den Aristoteles in Arachosia setzt, kann nur der gewöhnliche Büffel gewesen seyn.’

<sup>66</sup> Hutton, Blyth 1846, 147, n. 42, ‘The “Arachosian Ox” of Aristotle is, beyond doubt, the Buffalo.’

<sup>67</sup> Houtum-Schindler 1897, 44, n. \*.

<sup>68</sup> Dürst 1899, 6-7, ‘Dennoch will mir dies enleuchten, wenn ich damit einen Bericht des Aristoteles (Aristotle, Anim., 2.1) vergleiche, aus dem hervorgeht, dass ein Ochse, dessen Hörner ἐπίγυρτοι d.h. auf den Rücken zurückgebogen waren, in Arachosien, der heutigen persischen Provinz Kokand, vorkam und den auch schon Bochartus (Bochartus, Hierozoicon, 960) als Büffel erkennt... dieser Büffel zur Zeit des Aristoteles, also um 384-322 v. Chr. noch in Persien vorhanden war.’ Cf. Dürst 1900.

<sup>69</sup> Dürst 1900, 137, ‘Il disparaît de Babylonie au commencement de l’histoire, mais Aristote parle encore d’un Bovidé différent de

nos Bœufs ordinaires “comme le sanglier diffère du cochon” et dont les cornes était ἐπίγυρτοι, c’est à-dire penchées sur le dos. Cet animal se trouvait en Arachosie (actuellement la province de Khokand [Perse]) (384-322 av. J.-C.). – Il fut donc repoussé par la civilisation vers l’Inde.’

<sup>70</sup> Hinz, Koch 1987, 427, s.v. h/f.kam-mi-šá; cf. Hallock 1969, 708; Hinz 1975, 104, \*gaumaiš/ča.

<sup>71</sup> Vondrovec 2008, 278-279.

<sup>72</sup> Vondrovec 2010, 184. Some of the Alkhan Hun rulers also used the buffalo-crown. See now also Vondrovec 2014 for a comprehensive survey of the coinage of the Iranian Huns.

<sup>73</sup> Minardi 2015. The attribution to ‘Dailaman’ near the Caspian Sea, given by Shepherd and Ternbach 1966, is worthless, as it comes from an antiquities dealer who was probably trying to capitalize on market interest in Sasanian silver.

<sup>74</sup> Thus, according to Hutton, Blyth 1846, 142, ‘The Buffalo is scarce and does not occur wild; the few that are kept are evidently from the east of the Indus, and are precisely the same as the domestic buffalo of the Bhawulpore country, where they occur in immense herds along the banks of the Garra. There they are kept for the sake of the milk and ghee, and during the heat of the day they forsake the jungles and repair to the river, where they immerse themselves in the water, leaving only the head on the surface... The only domestic buffaloes that I saw in Afghanistan were a few kept at Candahar, for the sake of the milk and ghee.’

<sup>75</sup> Boehmer 1974, 14.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. Porada 1987, 285; Sima 2000, 48.

<sup>77</sup> Particularly Westphal-Hellbusch, Hellbusch 1968, 42ff. which

westward migration from India to Iraq in the early 7th century, Boehmer cited a study by the great Dutch Orientalist Michael Jan de Goeje, noting, 'Daß der Büffel charakteristisch für die vorislamischen Jat des Iraq ist, ist schon M. J. de Goeje... nicht entgangen.'<sup>78</sup> Yet an examination of de Goeje's text shows that, far from presenting any convincing evidence, de Goeje simply expressed his surprise that later, mediaeval Arab geographers made no mention of buffaloes – al-Biruni alone referred to the Gypsies as 'cattle owners' – and then proceeded to claim that such an omission was of no consequence, noting that some sources attributed the extraordinary development of Gypsy music to their employment of music in raising their buffaloes, which were, he maintained, very receptive to music.<sup>79</sup> In fact, the available historical evidence suggests rather that the 'Zuṭṭ... had been transplanted from western India by the early Arab conquerors,'<sup>80</sup> for although Al-Baladhuri attributed the deportation of the Zuṭṭ to the Persian Gulf and Khuzistan to Bahram V Gur (r. 420-438), it does not seem that they reached southern Iraq until they were settled around Basra by Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, one of the Prophet Muhammad's companions.<sup>81</sup> While it is true that images of water buffalo appear, though rarely, on several Sasanian stamp seals<sup>82</sup> and on at least one Sasanian silver vessel,<sup>83</sup> nothing can be said of the provenience of these finds and whether they come from an eastern, even Central Asian milieu, of no relevance to the animal's re-introduction into Mesopotamia. Looking as far west as the Mediterranean shore, *Bubalus bubalis* is not thought to have reached Israel/Palestine until the early Islamic (Umayyad) period.<sup>84</sup>

is far from convincing in charting the westward migration of the Zuṭṭ (Jat), relying almost entirely on de Goeje cited below.

<sup>78</sup> Boehmer 1974, 14.

<sup>79</sup> Goeje 1903, 13, 'Il est bien curieux que nos géographes ne fassent aucune mention des buffles qui constituaient sans doute de leur temps, comme avant eux et de nos jours encore, la richesse de ces peuples. Nous pouvons en conclure qu'un argumentum ex silentio n'a souvent pas la moindre valeur. Car on attribue même le développement extraordinaire que la musique a eu chez les Zott au fait qu'ils s'occupent de l'élevage de ces animaux, qui son très sensibles à la musique.'

<sup>80</sup> Van Bladel 2017, 64.

<sup>81</sup> Bosworth 2012.

<sup>82</sup> Boehmer 1974, figs. 9-10; Brunner 1980, 35.

<sup>83</sup> Sarre 1925, pl. 107; Boehmer 1974, fig. 11.

<sup>84</sup> Amar et al. 2010, 10. I have not been able to consult Amar and Serri 2005. This view is diametrically opposed to Borowski 1998, 191, who suggested that the 'water buffalo (tē'ō) is another bovid that has survived to the present.'

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Fig. 1. Illustration of the horn span of a specimen of *Bubalus arnee* from the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London. Illustrations. 1848-60, vol. 1, Mammalia, pl. XL*, originally published in 1855.

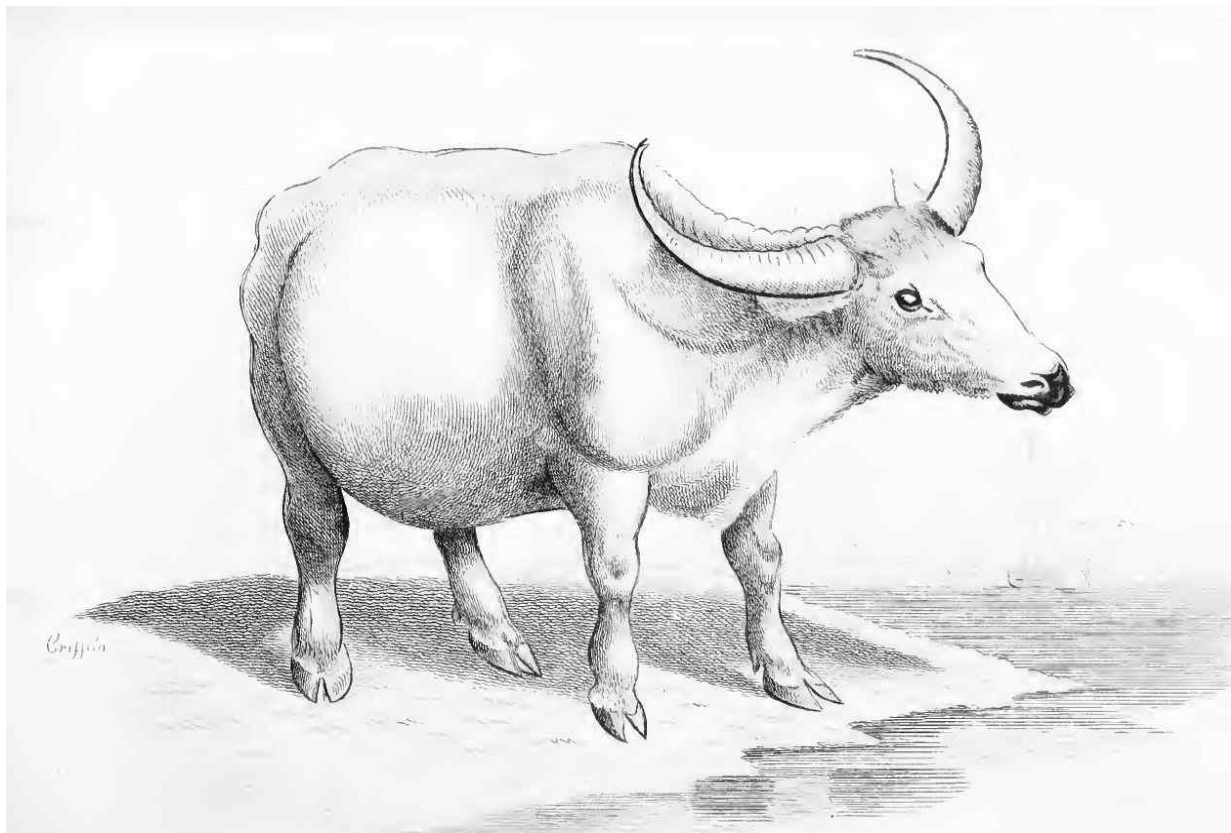


Fig. 2. Illustration of *Bubalus bubalis* (Smith 1827, 393).



GOING RED IN THE IRON AGE II: THE EMERGENCE OF RED-SLIP POTTERY  
IN NORTHERN LEVANT WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO TELL AFIS, CHATAL HÖYÜK  
AND ZINCIRLI HÖYÜK

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*Abstract*

This paper aims at providing a general overview on the Iron Age II-III Red Slip production in Northern Levant, with special reference to the ceramic assemblage from Tell Afis, Chatal Höyük and Zincirli, emphasizing common features and differences.\*

1. INTRODUCTION

Giorgio Buccellati in his comprehensive work on the origins of politics<sup>1</sup> sketches for the Syrian Region during the first stages of the Iron age the solid presence of Aramaeans and an Aramaean Eucumene in the following 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Since the 1960s archaeologists attempted to link archaeological material to the Aramaean presence both in carving style<sup>2</sup> and in ceramic production, identifying as “Aramaean” a specific red slip and burnished ware found in northern Mesopotamia and ascribed to a coastal Levantine production.<sup>3</sup> Although as it is already clearly emphasized by Kreppner<sup>4</sup> the term “Aramaean” for this specific production should be discarded, this specific class of pottery is considered a marker for the Iron Age II and III over a very large area ranging from southern<sup>5</sup> to northern Levant<sup>6</sup> from the Mediterranean coast to Inner Syria.

Main aim of this article is to discuss this specific pottery class with special reference to northern Levant including Inner Syria under the light of archaeological excavations carried out or published in the last twenty years in order to provide a general overview on the appearance of this class in this specific geographic region, its chronological distribution, most representative shapes and, when possible, its origin.

Red Slip Ware<sup>7</sup> is a ceramic class identified by a specific external appearance: a red/orange or brown

slip, which covers in part or completely the internal and/or external surface of a ceramic container, makes these vessels immediately identifiable. In northern Levant the pottery belonging to this class is usually also burnished (in most cases horizontally but also vertically in specific sites productions) at least in the part where the surface is slipped. The fabric does not differ from the local simple ware, suggesting that the Red Slip in northern Levant is locally produced.<sup>8</sup> The technique employed to apply the slip on the vessel has not been investigated in detail. Analysis of the slip has been carried out on some samples from Tell Afis (see below), from Sheikh Hamad and from Tell Tayinat, the colour (at least for Tell Afis) being the result of hematite reflections with a composition rich in iron oxide, potassium oxide, silicon dioxide and aluminium oxide.<sup>9</sup>

2. MATERIAL EVIDENCE

*2.1. The Amuq and the arrival of the Red Slip and Burnished*

The data provided here are mainly based on the personal analysis of the Iron Age II pottery assemblages from Chatal Höyük<sup>10</sup> and of the Late Bronze Age II and Iron I assemblages from Tell Atchana.<sup>11</sup>

\* Both authors coauthored sections 1 and 3, MP section 2.1, SS sections 2.2 and 2.3.

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Dion 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Hrouda 1962, 76-81, 117.

<sup>4</sup> Kreppner 2006, 62-63.

<sup>5</sup> Holladay 1990, Mazar 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Braemer 1986.

<sup>7</sup> It has been called Red Slip or Red Slip Ware (Braemer 1986; Soldi 2013; Mazar 1998), Red Slip and Burnished (Holladay 1990; Welton et al. 2019), Red Burnished (Pucci 2019b), *céramique douce polie* (Lebeau 1983) indicating the same kind of production.

<sup>8</sup> Falcone and Lazzarini 1998, the same phenomenon has been observed and proven through chemical analysis for the Red Slip production at Tell Shekh Hamad, cf. Schneider 2006, 402.

<sup>9</sup> Falcone, Lazzarini 1998, 488.

<sup>10</sup> Pucci 2019a and b.

<sup>11</sup> The Chatal Höyük publication project has been carried out in the period between 2008 and 2013 and has processed the material from the American excavations at the site (Braidwood 1937; Haines 1971). The project in collaboration with the Turkish team led by Aslıhan Yener started in 2013 and it is still ongoing. Part of the Iron Age material from Tell Atchana has been analyzed and processed by Maricarmela Montesanto in her PhD (Montesanto 2018). I would like to thank prof. Yener for her support in my work in the Amuq.

Both sites, located 32km apart from each other in the Amuq plain (fig. 1), were inhabited during the Late Bronze Age, underwent a period of decay and ruralization in the last stages of the Late Bronze Age and were still occupied during the first stages of Iron Age I.<sup>12</sup> While Atchana was probably definitely abandoned by the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, Chatal Höyük experienced a period of urban re-growth and flourishing until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The archaeological contexts from the two sites are also very different from each other and provide different information on the Red Slip Ware. Chatal H. offers an extremely rich pottery assemblage for the Iron Age II and III (Amuq Phase O), a fairly good inventory of Iron Age I (Phase N) occupation and a quite smaller extent of Late Bronze Age archaeological exposure. By contrast, at Atchana Iron II stratified Red Slip materials were found only in two areas of the acropolis excavated by the Turkish team since 2003:<sup>13</sup> these were found in the uppermost deposits of square 42.10 and others were found reemployed in the floor of the structure identified in square 32.42. It seems likely that during the Iron Age II the site was definitely abandoned with the exception of a single structure paved with pottery sherds, which was probably erected during the Iron Age III reemploying several sherds as foundations for the floor; these sherds were probably collected from the old surface of the mound and were mixed with sherds dated to different periods.

Chatal Höyük presents in three areas a continuous stratigraphic sequence from levels ascribed to Iron Age I (with very little Red Slip ware), to levels (Phase O, Iron Age II-III) in which majority of open vessels was produced with homogenous sizes and red slip and burnish surface treatment. For this reason the site provides a good overview on the very first (beginning of the Iron Age II) Red Slip production and on the range of shapes employed in this class in these first stages. The very large assemblage of Red Slip shapes dated to the following periods (Iron Age II late and Iron Age III) will not be considered here as this part focuses mainly on the first appearances of Red Slip ware and on its relationship with similar wares in former periods.

At Chatal H. the Iron Age II-III sequence has been divided into three stages named O\_beginning, O\_middle and O\_Late, using the Amuq regional phase nomenclature established by Braidwood<sup>14</sup> and adding a further subdivision which applies only for Chatal H. The pottery assemblage of the beginning of phase

O includes the first appearance (and progressive increase) of red slip and burnished pottery, the progressive decrease of patterns in the monochrome painted pottery, and a very slow increase in bichrome painted pottery, whose presence was very scant in the previous phase. All Red Slip vessels are burnished. The burnishing is generally wheel made and horizontal on the open forms, while on closed forms the burnishing tends to be handmade and vertical, although some variety is seen in conical plates (i.e., external wheel burnishing and internal hand burnishing). Therefore, these Red Burnished assemblages disprove Swift's statement<sup>15</sup> that the hand burnishing predates the wheel burnishing in this specific class.

There are only three main shapes which occur in the Red Slip class in phase O\_beginning deposits, i.e. plates, single serving bowls and kraters/deep bowl (fig. 2).

**Plates:** Plates with a rounded or squared lip (fig. 2: a-g), conical body, and ring base<sup>16</sup> are the first shape to appear in phase O, and the one most frequently produced building more than 50% of the whole Red Slip assemblage. These are exclusively multiple serving vessels with a diameter size ranging from 220 to 340 mm, though on most pieces it is closer to 340 mm. The small Simple Ware plates (diameter of 120 mm) from phase N were only produced in small quantities in phase O, as well as very few Red Burnished examples of this smaller type with incurving rims were found (fig. 2: o); the largest production of Red Slip single serving plates imitates the same shape as the larger ones (fig. 2: h), but possibly fulfilling a different function.

**Bowls:** smaller bowl (fig. 2: n, p) with a flaring rim, low carination, and a rounded base. These bowls tend to be mid-sized (with a diameter approximately 180 mm in diameter) and have no handles. Their thinned lip and rounded base suggest their use as single serving in the drinking set. Ledge bowls: these bowls with a simple or slightly thickened rim (fig. 2: i) and low ring base have a medium-large rim size (with the diameter measuring around 270 mm), are quite short, and appear in equal numbers in the Simple Ware and Red Burnished classes. Very elongated ledge handles are applied just underneath the rim, building a ledge along the vessel with slightly protruding edges. This feature becomes typical only in the later period of phase O. The same is true for hemispherical bowls with flat rim (fig. 2: m), which sporadically appear in O\_beginning assemblages and will become extremely common in later periods.

<sup>12</sup> Pucci 2019a.

<sup>13</sup> Yener 2010; Yener et al. forthcoming; Montesanto and Pucci forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> cf. Pucci (2019b, 6-8 and references).

<sup>15</sup> Swift 1958, 128.

<sup>16</sup> Only ring bases (having a diameter between 100 and 140 mm) were found as belonging to this kind of shape.

Deep Bowls/kraters: Biconical and carinated bowls have a basic geometric shape (fig. 2: o-q), which derives from a Simple Ware shape observed in phase N contexts. The shape consists of an upper cylindrical part and a conical bottom with a flat or low ring base. The junction between the upper flaring mouth and the lower conical part is often angular or S-shaped. During this beginning phase, the carination is not heavily emphasized. The lip is always thinned, the opening is slightly flaring, and the vessels are medium/large in size (although the rim was approximately 280-320 mm in diameter, the bowl's bottom part tended to be narrower). A few fragments of this shape were found in the first levels of phase O and, when they broke above the carination, were occasionally confused with conical bowls, the only differences being the thickness of the walls (the bowls have thinner walls) and the shape of the rim (which is thicker and squared in the plates). These shapes become extremely popular during phase O, with accentuated carination and flaring rims. Over time, this shape developed into several variations such as a deep biconical krater with a slightly flaring upper part, conical bottom, and a vertical loop or stranded handle, which appears in few examples already in these more ancient deposits (fig. 2: p). Amphoroid kraters (fig. 2: o), for example, were also produced with a Red Burnished treatment, begin to appear in phase O\_Beginning and will become more common in phase O\_mid and late.

Standardization is evident in terms of size, shape and surface treatment only in the plates, which definitely share not only a common shape but standardized dimensions and shape of rim and base. Single serving bowls instead vary greatly in terms of rim shape (thickened as in fig. 2: l, incurving as in fig. 2: o; thinned as in fig. 2: n, p) and represent only 10% of the whole assemblage. Standardization of larger bowls (biconical or amphoroid kraters) which build 28% of the Red Slip and burnished assemblage, is more difficult to state mainly due to their state of preservation. Red Burnished closed shapes seem to be completely absent at the beginning of phase O.

Establishing a date for the arrival of the Red Slip at the site, and, consequently, for the transition from phase N to phase O, is related mainly to the general analysis of the whole assemblage from O\_Beginning levels and in particular to imported pottery that appears at the same time as the Red Slip, which is in all excavated areas very well defined.

Imports of Black on Red I (III) juglets appear in almost all levels assigned to O\_Beginning,<sup>17</sup> as do Bichrome III jars or deep bowls.<sup>18</sup> According to neutron activation analysis carried out on the Black on

Red (BoR) ware,<sup>19</sup> all Black on Red juglets found at Chatal Höyük were imported from Cyprus. According to their shape, these BoR imports can be assigned to the end of the ninth century BC.<sup>20</sup> This date is also supported by the Bichrome III imports found in the same contexts, which, together with the BoR, all belong to a Cypro-Geometric IIIa-b period. All these elements seem to set the level O\_Beginning at Chatal to the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>21</sup>

Although the massive production of Red Slip pottery is typical only for phase O, as clearly stated by Braidwood, a couple of observation can be made as far as their origin is concerned. Sporadic sherds of Red Slip and Burnished plates were almost continuously found in the assemblages from the late Bronze Age to the Iron Age I (Fig. 3: a, c and g): at Chatal Höyük in both assemblages they represent such a low percentage (3% in the late bronze Age, both in phases M\_Mid and Late; 2% in the Iron Age I, but only 0.9 % in the beginning of Iron Age I to 2.2% towards the end of Iron Age I, phases N\_Beginning to Late) of the diagnostic fragments that they cannot be considered to be representative of those phases. Nevertheless it is evident that the technique employed was known at the site and it is not necessary to hypothesize a technological transfer at the beginning of the Iron Age. As a matter of fact, Red Slip and burnish tradition in the Amuq is known already in the Late Bronze Age II, a period during which the red/brown slipped tradition is well attested in Cilicia both at Sirkeli and at Kinet Höyük<sup>22</sup> on both open and closed vessels. Among the open vessels (both in Cilicia and in the Amuq) there are also plates with a red slip and burnished band on the internal and external rim. These plates<sup>23</sup> are well known also in the Amuq in particular in the Late Bronze Age II levels at Tell Atchana (Fig. 3: b, d and f): sometimes the red bands are also burnished, becoming very similar to the Red Slip Ware production, while in other examples, these plates are only painted in red, owing their connection to the banded ware production well known at the site.

Thanks to the work carried out on the inventories from Area 4 at the site of Tell Atchana, it has been possible to monitor the quantity of Red Slip and burnished ware that appear in a context far from the acropolis, and how this changes over time. By looking at the assemblage it became evident that large serving conical plates with ring base

<sup>19</sup> Matthers et al. 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Schreiber 2003, figs. 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> A much earlier date has been hypothesized for the phase O evidence from Tell Tayinat, cf. Harrison 2013; Welton et al. 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Kozal forthcoming; Gates 2001, fig. 2, nos. 9-11.

<sup>23</sup> Kozal forthcoming, fig. 11, no. 9.26.2

<sup>17</sup> cf. Pucci 2019b, 192 pl. 88d.

<sup>18</sup> Pucci 2019b, pls. 125c, 12b and 160a.

were a production specific for the Late Bronze Age II<sup>24</sup> in particular in the local phases 2 and 3 of this area approximately 20% of all large serving plates were decorated with a red burnished band.

Thus it seems possible to make following observations: 1) In the Late Bronze Age (phase M) Amuq, the red colour was used to emphasize specific containers for communal food consumption (plates). 2) In the neighbouring Cilician region red slip and burnish treatments were used not only on large plates (as in the Amuq) but also on closed mid-sized jars. 3) During the Iron Age I (phase N) Red Slip ware in the Amuq was still found and only on large serving plates. 5) The renewed production of Red Slip Ware in the Iron Age II, started again with the same shape, that was previously already produced in red, i.e. the plate. All these features may indicate that both the technological knowledge and the use of this specific color and treatment on multiple serving plates were never completely abandoned, but rather mirror a practice already well known. The reasons for this revival and increased production of red slip and burnished pottery in phase O go well beyond the data the material can provide us, however, the red slip and burnish production will develop so much during the phase O\_mid and O\_Late (until the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) that it will be not anymore a class present in only specific shapes, but rather one of the most common surface treatments employed in all shapes.

## 2.2. Tell Afis and inland Syria<sup>25</sup>

Tell Afis, in the fertile Jazr plain some 80 km south-west of Aleppo, is one of the key sites for the definition of the Iron Age pottery sequence in inner Syria. The excavations undertaken by the Italian expedition directed by Stefania Mazzoni has revealed continuous occupation at the site from the Late Bronze II to the Iron III, providing not only a reliable sequence but also an outstanding amount of Red Slip ware from various areas of the site.<sup>26</sup> Though Red Slip has been recovered from any excavation area which has revealed a Iron Age II-III occupation, it shall be stressed that the great majority of the items were collected on the acropolis,<sup>27</sup> especially in Area G, where the imposing square structure on the eastern side of the acropolis contained hundreds of large fragments of slipped ware.<sup>28</sup>

Petrographic and chemical analysis on a sample of 20 fragments of Red Slip from Area G revealed that Afis Red Slip is all locally made, sharing the same raw materials and fabrication techniques as local common ware analysed from lower town Area D.<sup>29</sup> Petrography, X-Ray diffraction and chemical analysis on the red engobe applied on the vessel surfaces distinguished two different compositions of the slip: type A, is the most common one, more bright red coloured deriving from the haematite present in clay and becoming red in a oxygen reduced environment; type B is much less frequent, dark brownish-red, very homogenous and with a different composition of haematite rich in potassium oxide, obtained by higher firing temperature and probably with vegetal ashes.<sup>30</sup> Whereas most of Red Slip ceramics were fired at 650-700 C, sharing the same technical features of common ware, Red Slip of type B was fired at temperatures higher than 800 C. We are able to recognize the results of the analysis in the ceramic record, with some specific item distinguished by the thick dark reddish-brown burnished slip usually covering the whole surface of the vessel, both inside and outside. Production is thus local and homogenous, except for some items, which are still local but produced and finished with different techniques, evidently matching peculiar functional or decorative purposes.

Morphological repertoire consists almost completely of open shapes, plates and mid to large deep bowls, reflecting the mass standardization of the common light red/orange ware horizon, even more stressed by the absolute predominance of open shapes, since almost no closed jar, amphora or pitcher are attested in red burnished ware.<sup>31</sup> One interesting feature is the association we observed between the type of slip and shapes variability: slip type B, which is the more specialised dark red slip with heavy burnishing, is mostly associated with deep large bowls with thickened double profiled rim, sometimes presenting bone-shaped ledge handles, with slip and burnishing covering the entire inner and outer surface (fig. 4: h-m).<sup>32</sup> This “specialised” Red Slip is the one we may confidently associate to the suggested skeuomorphic nature of Red Slip, with the function of imitating or reproducing, in a cheaper and more easily accessible material, bronze vessels:<sup>33</sup> such shapes are not only peculiar to Red Slip productions at Afis and do not occur in plain Common Ware, but also find

<sup>24</sup> Horowitz 2015, Horowitz forthcoming.

<sup>25</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Stefania Mazzoni and Prof. Serena Maria Cecchini, director and co-director of the Italian excavations at Tell Afis, for allowing me the study of the pottery of the site.

<sup>26</sup> Recent reassessment of the Iron Age II-III sequence at Afis in Mazzoni 2014; on Red Slip, see Soldi 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Soldi 2009, 103; Mazzoni 2014, 350.

<sup>28</sup> Cecchini 2000; Cecchini 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Falcone, Lazzarini 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Falcone, Lazzarini 1998, 488.

<sup>31</sup> Soldi 2013, 206-207: see Chart 3 and 4 comparing morphological variation between Red Slip Ware and Common Ware.

<sup>32</sup> Soldi 2013, 222, fig. 5, especially 9-12.

<sup>33</sup> Soldi 2013, 212; on the substitution of bronze vessels with Red Slip Ware, see Whincop 2009, 225.

close resemblance to bronze prototypes in the Levant and Cyprus.<sup>34</sup> This shape is attested in Red Slip in western Syria, at Tell Mastuma,<sup>35</sup> Tell ‘Acharneh,<sup>36</sup> and Mishrifeh,<sup>37</sup> but also finds good parallels in the southern Levant, at Hazor and also at Tell Jawa in Transjordan.<sup>38</sup> The peak of attestations is in Level 5 of the collapse of Area G’s L.1344, where they are found together with other more common Red Slip shapes.<sup>39</sup>

Main shapes for Red Slip in Afis, associated to the slip type A (bright red, lighter than type B), are mid and large bowls which have a certain degree of rim and profile variety. Principal shapes are hemispherical bowls with simple rim and thin walls (fig. 4: a-c), biconical bowls with simple rim (fig. 4: d-e) and bowls with triangular (or folded thickened) rim (fig. 4: f-g). These shapes are attested, though with fewer occurrences than on Afis acropolis, in nearby sites in the Idlib plain: at Tell Mardikh/Ebla<sup>40</sup> and Tell Tuqan<sup>41</sup> in the Iron Age levels, as well as Tell Mastuma,<sup>42</sup> Tell Denit<sup>43</sup> and Tell Qarqur.<sup>44</sup> Southwards Red Slip on same shapes occurs at Hama,<sup>45</sup> Tell ‘Acharneh,<sup>46</sup> Tell Khan Sheikoun,<sup>47</sup> Mishrifeh/Qatna<sup>48</sup> and Tell Nebi Mend.<sup>49</sup>

North-east of Afis Red Slip is still well attested, defining coherently all the ceramic region until the Euphrates area. It has been studied and identified as “céramique douce polie” by Marc Lebeau in Tell Abou Danne,<sup>50</sup> east of Aleppo, and found by the British excavation at Tell Rifa’at,<sup>51</sup> north of Aleppo. On the Euphrates many sites where Iron Age levels are preserved, show evidence of Red Slip among the local pottery assemblage, as Tell Shiukh Fawqani<sup>52</sup>, Tell Ahmar<sup>53</sup> and now Karkemish<sup>54</sup> clearly demonstrate.

It seems that the Euphrates area represents the eastern border of diffusion of Red Slip, which is not a statement to affirm that such ceramic is not present beyond this borderline,<sup>55</sup> but that the great diffusion of this consistent horizon tends to stop in this area,<sup>56</sup> where west-Syrian ceramic culture matches with an Assyrian-oriented horizon well attested in the Khabur area.

Tell Afis is thus in the centre of the diffusion of Red Slip in the Syrian region between the Euphrates and the coast, offering a privileged point of view on the Iron Age II and III Syrian material culture with its interactions with neighbouring regions.

### 2.3. Zincirli Höyük and the İslahye Valley<sup>57</sup>

In the İslahye Valley, on the eastern fringe of the Amanus, the main site which has provided a good documentation of Iron Age materials, including evidence of Red Slip Ware, is Zincirli Höyük, capital of the ancient kingdom of Sam’al. Beside the already known documentation from the German excavations by the Orient-Comité directed by Felix von Luschan which took place between 1888 and 1902,<sup>58</sup> new excavations by the Universities of Chicago and Tübingen are providing new evidence from different areas of the site, with new excavation areas both in the lower town and on the citadel.<sup>59</sup>

The work of the Chicago-Tübingen expedition is aimed at a general reassessment of the understanding of the local Iron Age, paying attention to the material culture in its stratigraphic and architectural context. In this regard the documentation of the pottery horizon of the Iron Age II-III includes a small but significant amount of Red Slip Ware. On a general level, it shall be stated that Zincirli in the Iron Age II and III fits very well with north-western Syria’s ceramic assemblage, showing morphological traits in common with the area of the Amuq, inland Syria and the region west of the Euphrates.<sup>60</sup> Common Ware is largely composed by a homogenous light red / reddish-yellow fabric associated to a standardized set of shapes, mostly open vessels like plates and bowls and rela-

<sup>34</sup> Matthäus 1985, 134-135, pl. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Level I: Egami et al. 1984, fig. 6: 5.

<sup>36</sup> Coupe dans la Ville Basse: Cooper 2006, fig. 3: 4; Ville Basse: Cooper 2006, fig. 7: 18.

<sup>37</sup> Phase J1: Besana et al. 2008, fig. 13: 7.

<sup>38</sup> Daviau and Graham 2009 propose an interesting connection of 7th century BC red-slipped and black-slipped and burnished pottery from Jawa with Northern Syrian and Assyrian productions, hypothesising a foreign origin of this shape with such treatment in the Jordanian area.

<sup>39</sup> Soldi 2013, 212-213, fig. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Mazzoni 1992

<sup>41</sup> Fiorentino 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Egami et al. 1984.

<sup>43</sup> Personal observation during the works conducted at the site by the Syro-Italian team in 2002-2004 within the frame of the EU financed MEDA Project: See Rossi 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Dornemann 2000.

<sup>45</sup> Hama Phase E: Fugmann 1958.

<sup>46</sup> Cooper 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Du Mesnil du Buisson 1932, 179, pl. XXXVII: 205.

<sup>48</sup> Besana et al. 2008; Russo 2018.

<sup>49</sup> Whincop 2007.

<sup>50</sup> Lebeau 1983.

<sup>51</sup> Seton-Williams 1961; 1967.

<sup>52</sup> Makinson 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Jamieson 2000, Jamieson 2012.

<sup>54</sup> Zaina 2019, 125-126.

<sup>55</sup> See the case of Red Slip from the renewed excavations at Arslan Tash: Cecchini, Venturi 2018, 26-27, fig. 8: 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> In the northern Euphrates Red Slip is attested at Lidar Höyük, (Müller 1999), and most recently evidence of attestation of Red Slip has been provided by the renewed excavations at Arslantepe/Malatya (Manuelli, Pittmann 2018, 155-156).

<sup>57</sup> I would like to thank Prof. David J. Schloen and Dr Virginia R. Herrmann, director and co-director of the Zincirli Chicago-Tübingen expedition, for allowing me the study of the pottery of the site.

<sup>58</sup> The pottery is only partially published in von Luschan and Andrae 1943; recent overviews of the German excavations in Wartke 2005; Pucci 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Schloen, Fink 2009; Herrmann, Schloen 2014; Schloen 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Lehmann 1996; Soldi forthcoming.

tively less closed shapes, namely jars and pitchers. In the local horizon a role, though minor, is played by Red Slip, present in very low percentages both in lower town's excavation areas (especially Areas 5 and 6) and on the citadel (Areas 3 and 2).

The evidence of Red Slip is mostly represented by open shapes: plates have simple rounded rims or everted rims as the most common profiles (fig 5: a-b). Bowls present a larger variety, with classical hemispherical bowls with simple rim (fig. 5: c-e), biconical or carinated bowls with flaring rim (fig. 5: f-g), in some cases with protruding knobs along the rib (fig. 5: h); other shapes are deep bowls with folded thickened rim (fig. 5: i), double thickened rim (fig. 5: j) and deep bowls with rounded thickened rim (fig. 5: k). A peculiar shape is a shallow hemispherical bowl with grooved squared rim and hollow on the inside (fig. 5: l),<sup>61</sup> which finds good parallels only in a 7th century context at Chatal Höyük.<sup>62</sup> the vessel is slipped only on the inner side, but it cannot be excluded that the red engobe was present as well on the exterior side.

Unfortunately all the fragments of Red Slip pottery coming from the lower town are very badly preserved and severely weathered on the surface, very often erasing most of surface treatments.<sup>63</sup> This element prevents a clear analysis of the technical aspect of the slip, the extension of the red coloured part (band or full covering of the vessel) and the association (or lack of it) to burnishing or polishing of the slipped surface. We can nevertheless observe that completely slipped and banded slipped items coexist in the Zincirli documentation in the phases of mature IA II and IA III. The type of slipped covering on the vessels surfaces varies from a lighter red to a darker brownish red, which is usually accompanied by a stronger horizontal burnishing, when conditions of the objects do not prevent the analysis.

Because of the fading out of surface treatments of many items excavated in the lower town, it is impossible to have a clear picture of the real amount of slipped vessels from these trenches, but it seems that the number is quite low, especially in lower town's Areas 5 and 6. The picture changes on the citadel's Area 3, where a deeper sounding on the southern limit is providing a fairly larger documentation of Red Slip.

Chronologically Red Slip is attested at Zincirli in the span of period between 9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, as the attestations in lower town Area 5 seem to be contemporary to phase 2, dated by Katumuwa mortuary stele to mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BC and later during the inclusion of Sam'al within the Assyrian empire.<sup>64</sup> On the citadel, fragments of Red Slip have been found associated to Cypriot Bichrome IV and Black-on-Red II (IV), and to some sherds of Assyrian Palace Ware, testifying to a continuous production of this ware in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.

A small sounding during 2018 campaign has reached the lowest Iron Age II levels in Area 3, providing a few sherds of plates with dark red inside and outside slip and burnishing, with thick walls and simple rim, very similar to the Amuq exemplars. It is still too early to evaluate this evidence, lacking the complete assemblage of the context, but we tentatively associated these earliest Red Slip exemplars to a mid-final 9<sup>th</sup> century horizon, belonging to the first monumentalization and occupation in the Iron Age of this southern sector of the acropolis.

In Zincirli the Red Slip phenomenon seems thus to have been present during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century, but in a fairly limited proportion, not having affected the general ceramic assemblage, and confined mostly, if not only, to a few open shapes mainly used for serving and consuming solid food; the complete absence of closed shapes, such as pitchers or decanters and of drinking cups (with the exception of hemispherical bowls), seems to indicate that at Zincirli Red Slip was not commonly part of drinking sets, probably composed by bronze vessels, weakening the strict association of Red Slip to the tradition of wine consuming during banquets, even though it could have been anyway part of the paraphernalia of feasting.

The diffusion of Red Slip in the İslahye corridor connecting the area of Marash to the Amuq is attested as well in Taşlı Geçit Höyük, on the road between Tilmen Höyük and Yesemek, where a rescue expedition of the University of Bologna has opened trenches revealing a Middle and Late Bronze Age settlement reoccupied during the Iron Age III.<sup>65</sup> The preliminary analysis of the pottery of the iron Age III is consistent with the picture offered by contemporary Zincirli, with a predominance of plates and bowls in local simple ware, treated on the surface with red slip burnishing. It shall be stressed that at Taşlı Geçit red slip treatment has been observed on double-handled jars with rounded shoulders and no neck and on some exemplars of kitchen ware:<sup>66</sup> this issue is a peculiar trait recorded at Taşlı, where probably some red clay was used as bor-

<sup>61</sup> It is difficult to argue whether this rim peculiarity might be due to functional reasons or to the needs of the rim's construction technique.

<sup>62</sup> Pucci 2019, pl. 132: k.

<sup>63</sup> We suppose that the high water table of the Kara Su river in the northern part of the İslahye valley, associated to the acidity of the highly basaltic soil, is one of the reasons for the ceramics of Zincirli's lower town to be heavily damaged once recovered from the excavation trenches. This is probably one of the causes that reduces the chances of identifying exemplars of Red Slip among the assemblage of the lower town.

<sup>64</sup> Herrmann 2017, 294-299.

<sup>65</sup> Marchetti 2012; 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Zaina 2013, 68.

botine engobe, but it is likely that these items should not be part of proper Red Slip assemblage.

It is remarkable the presence of red slipped ware at Taşlı Geçit as a further element reinforcing the presence of this ceramic in this northwards expansion along the İslahye corridor.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

According to this small survey on the Red Slip production of the northern Levant, it is possible to state that, although there is a strong regional trend towards a production of pottery related to the consumption of food characterized by a specific appearance, each site provides local inventories and local tradition different from each other. All sites in northern Levant have a local Red Slip production which is site related and a set of shapes, that, although all open vessels and although mainly probably connected to food consumption, they are not identical and completely overlapping from one site to the other. Comparing shapes is quite difficult considering the different dating of the sets analyzed here: while the assemblages from Chatal can be ascribed to the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, the contexts from Tell Afis and from Zincirli are mostly related to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, with some pieces from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is however relevant to point out that at Tell Afis there is one specific shape which occurs only in the Red Slip class and that finds no comparisons in the assemblages from other sites in northern Levant. At Chatal by contrast no specific shapes were produced exclusively in the Red Slip class, but the most ancient deposits of Iron age II show a strong majority of multiple serving Red Slip conical plates compared to the simple ware ones. In all three sites the shapes are mainly mid- or small-sized open vessels; closed shapes are by far almost completely absent at Zincirli, very few at Afis, and approximately 1.5% (mainly mid-sized jugs, bier flask or jars) at Chatal but only in later phases.

Also red burnishing varies from site to site, at Tell Afis the slip is mainly partial, leaving the full body slip to a specific single shape, at Chatal Höyük it is since the beginning mainly full body, leaving a partial slip only to later singled out large containers. Other sites, such as Zincirli, or Tell Rifa'at present both kinds of slipped surfaces (complete or partial), suggesting that this element cannot be considered a chronological marker. The burnishing treatment is always present in the sites analyzed for Northern Levant, and the production of Red Slip mixes together hand and wheel burnishing depending on the shape of the vessel, a phenomenon different from the one observed in southern Levant.<sup>67</sup> Both at Tell Afis and in part also at Zincirli the quantity of Red Slip

pottery is higher in the contexts on the acropolis rather than in those in the lower town, likely suggesting that this specific class of pottery might have fulfilled a different function possibly as a marker for social or functional difference. This cannot be proved for the evidence from Chatal Höyük, as only the acropolis was excavated.

Red Slip developed over a quite long period of time. The evidence from Chatal Höyük suggests the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century for its first appearance and it is similar to the date suggested for Tell Afis<sup>68</sup> or Ras el Bassit.<sup>69</sup> This class has been continuously produced at Chatal until the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, as well as at Tell Afis and Zincirli.

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<sup>67</sup>Holladay 1990.

<sup>68</sup>Oggiano 1997; Mazzoni 2014.

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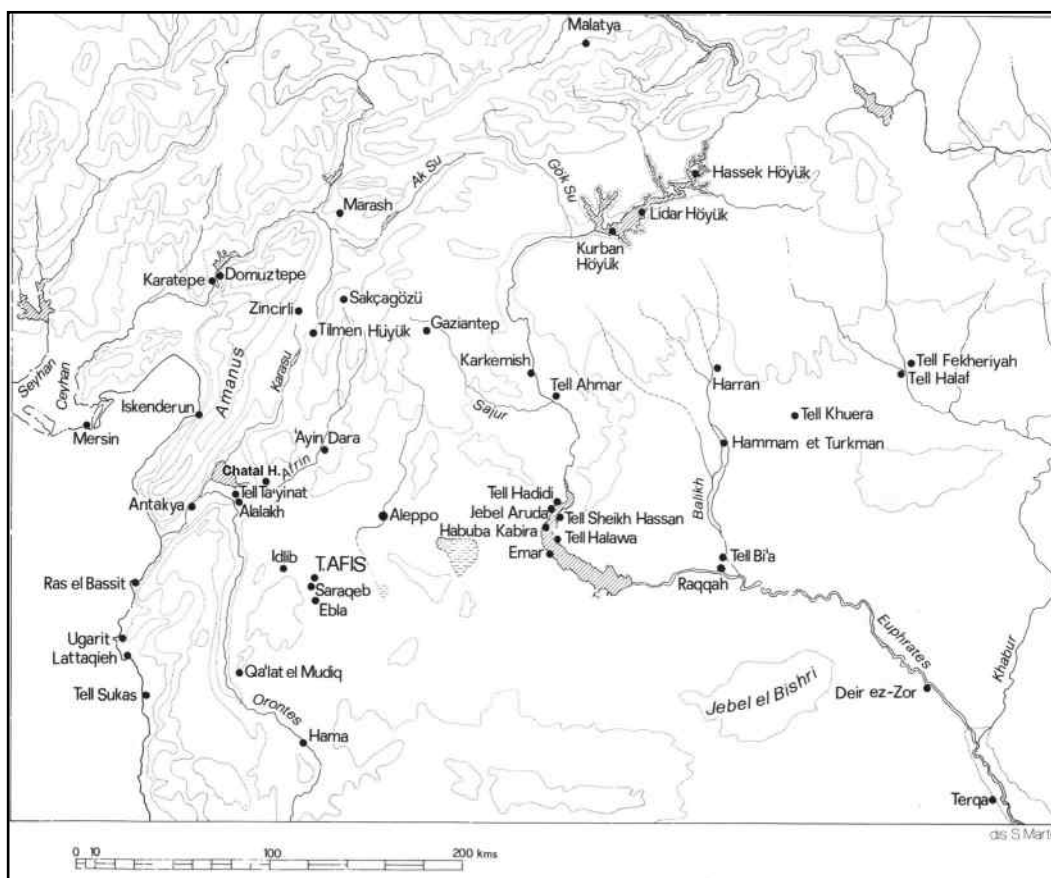


Fig. 1. General map of Levant and Inner Syria with location of sites quoted.

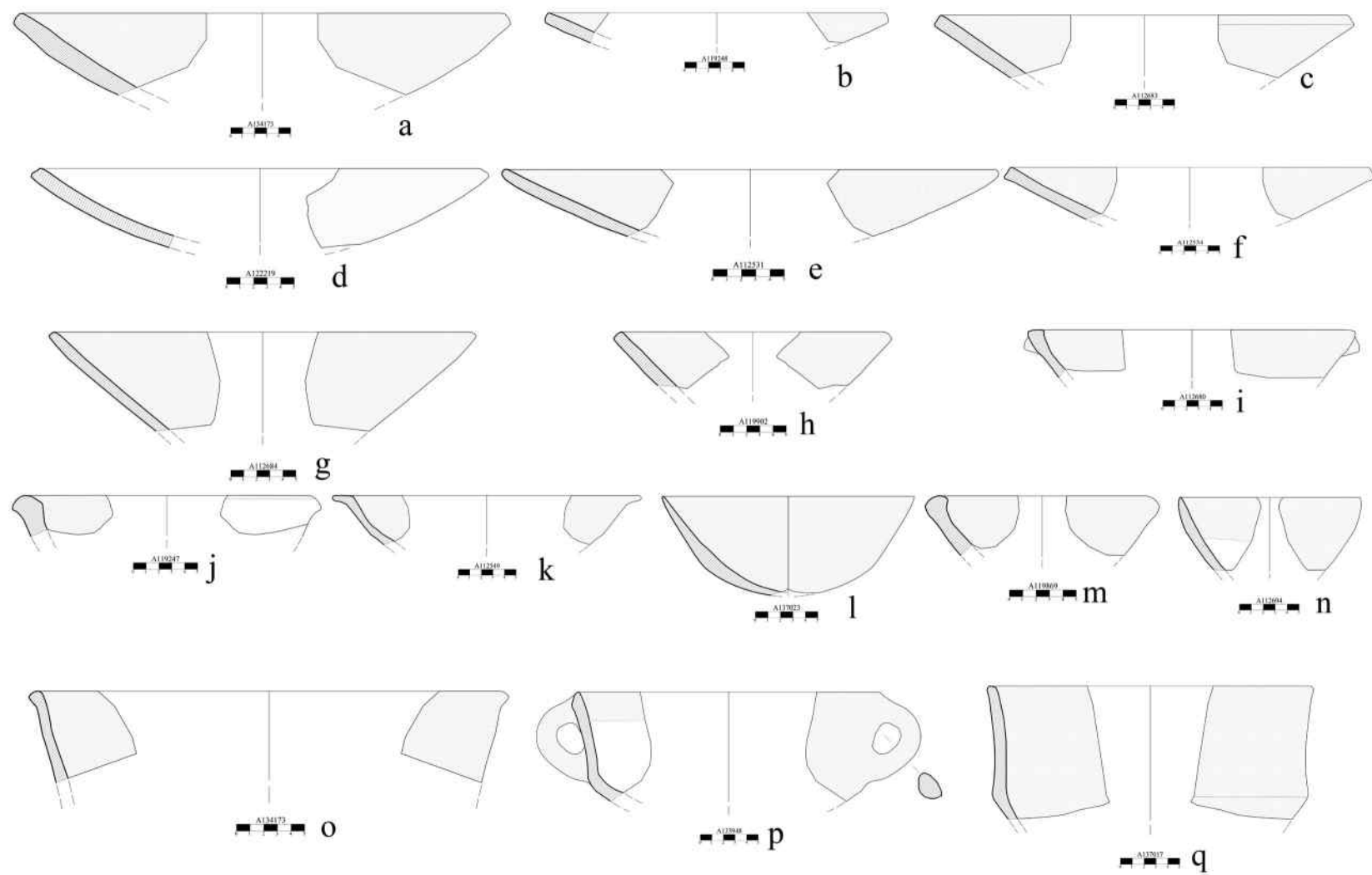


Fig. 2. Chatal H. Red slip pottery found in context dated to the very beginning of Iron Age II (local Phase O\_Beginning). Gray dots indicate red slip (paint) and burnish.

Fig. 3. Red slip (or red banded) pottery found in Late Bronze Age contexts from Atchana (d, e, and f) and Chatal Höyük (a, b, c and g). Solid grey fill or dotted fill indicate red slip and burnish.

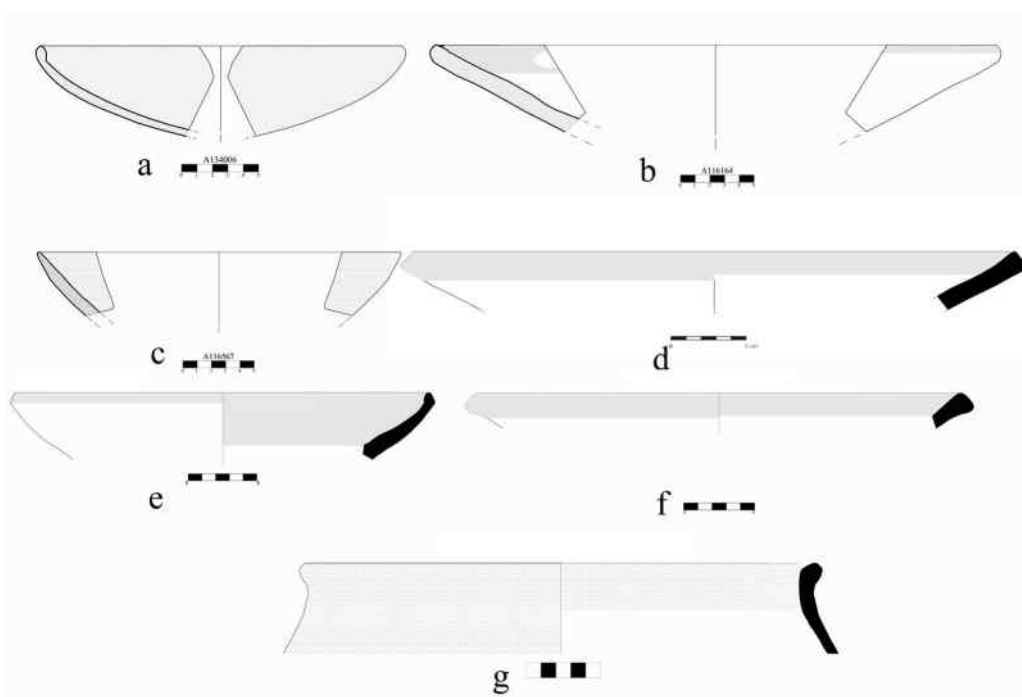
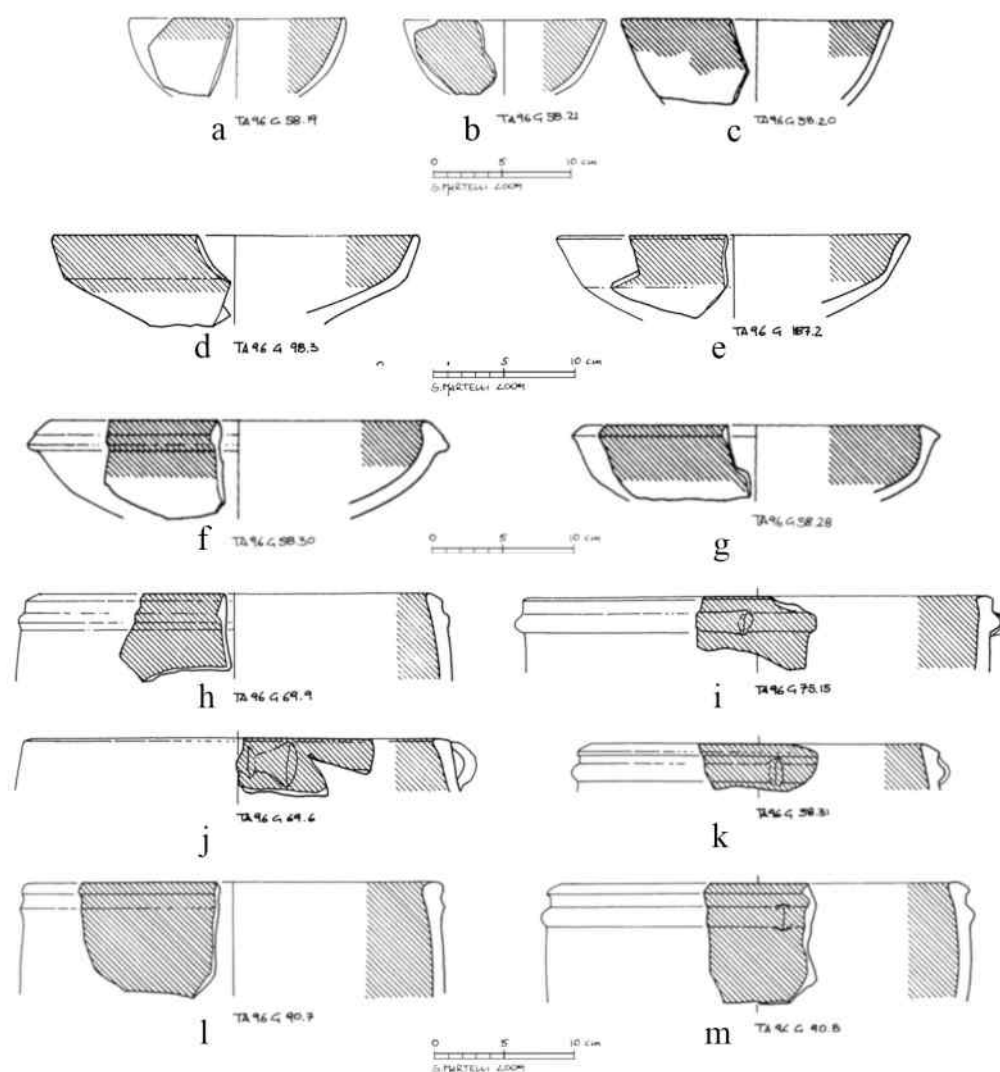


Fig. 4. Red Slip pottery from Tell Afis, Area G, Level 5.



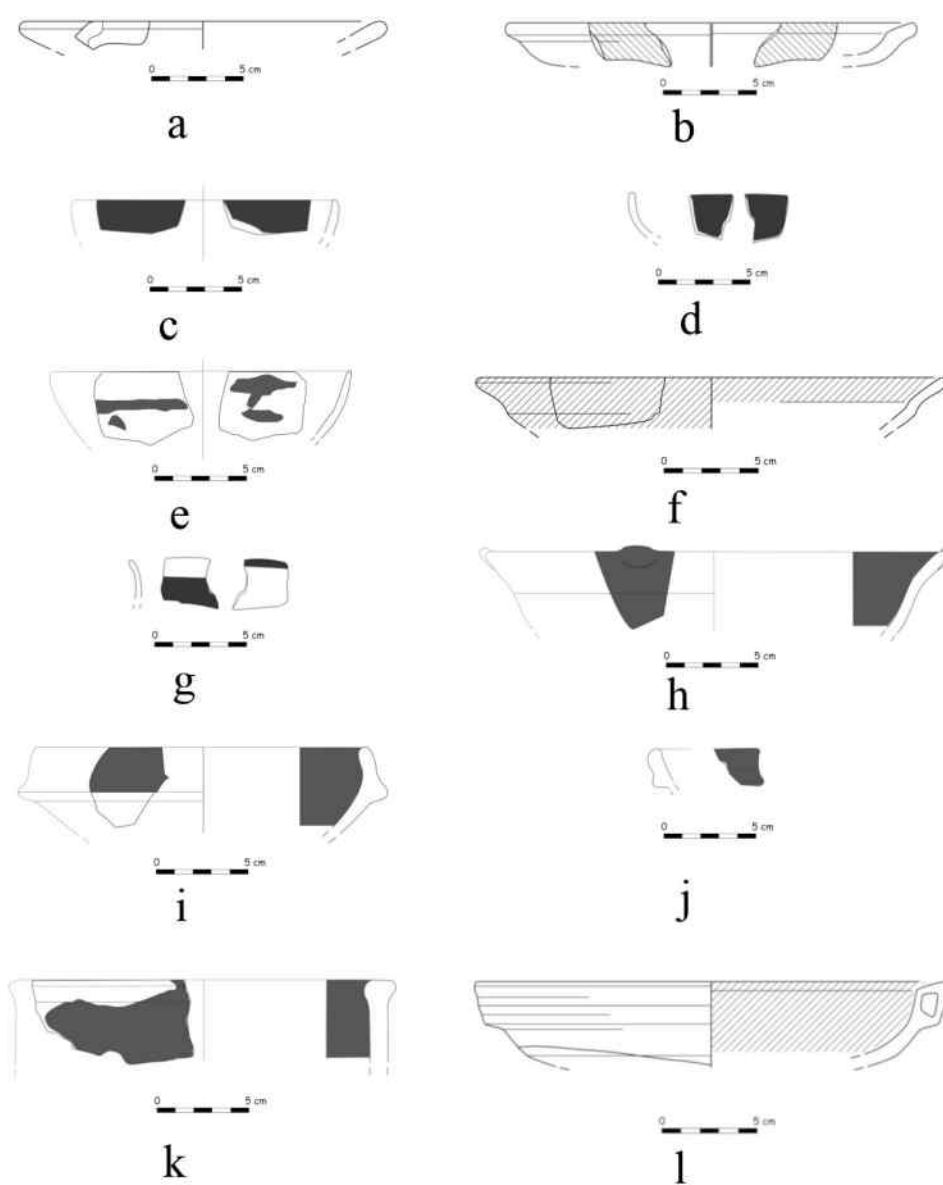


Fig. 5. Red Slip pottery from Zincirli, Areas 3, 5 and 6.

NEL SEGNO DI EBLA.  
MEMORIA TOPOLOGICA PER LA CITTÀ DEL TRONO  
AL CENTRO DELLE QUATTRO PARTI DEL MONDO

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*Abstract*

The present paper was carried out with the aim of formalizing some peculiar aspects of the urbanistic plan of Ebla (Tell Mardikh) discussing the topology of the “City of the Throne” through the mythopoetic conceptual framework of the ancient Near East kingship ideology and cosmic geography.

Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's  
symbolic activity advances.  
E. Cassirer 1944.<sup>1</sup>

1. INTRODUZIONE

Il lavoro che presento vuole definire e analizzare gli aspetti peculiari dell'urbanistica di Ebla per porre in relazione il suo modello topologico<sup>2</sup> con alcune memorie della geografia cosmica ispirate dal pensiero mitopoietico,<sup>3</sup> e che sono riconoscibili, in vari modi e con diverse sfumature, nella documentazione lette-

raria, epigrafica e figurativa precedente, contemporanea e successiva alla fondazione della grande capitale siriana.<sup>4</sup>

Per l'ampiezza della superficie indagata, per la coerenza delle interpretazioni funzionali ascritte ad ogni edificio e per l'organicità del suo piano urbanistico, la morfologia urbana di Tell Mardikh si offre infatti naturalmente ad essere codificata anche in un modello geometrico elementare per la strutturazione del quale utilizzeremo il piano urbanistico del Bronzo Medio I, costituitosi a partire dal 2000 a.C. ca., come un'ampia ripianificazione dell'abitato che insiste sui depositi del Bronzo Antico IV.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cassirer 1944, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Un contributo questo che dedico a Giorgio Buccellati e a Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, che incontrai la prima volta agli inizi degli anni Novanta ad Ebla e che da allora accompagnano, con le loro ricerche e con i loro studi, la mia crescita professionale. E comunque un tema che riprende la filosofia delle forme simboliche di Cassirer (1923), proprio come scrive l'amico Giorgio nel senso di tendere verso una critica della coscienza mitica, non di una ragione mitica (Buccellati 2017, 297), ovvero nel senso storico-culturale di contribuire alla “storia delle immagini e del rapporto tra culture figurative dell'Oriente antico e mondo medioevale occidentale” come ricorda Matthiae riguardo ad una delle principali direttrici di ricerca aperte da Henri Frankfort. Matthiae 2009, 123-138.

<sup>3</sup> La differenza tra il pensiero creatore di miti e il pensiero scientifico è puntualmente descritta da Cassirer: «accanto al contatto spaziale delle cose è anzitutto la loro somiglianza qualitativa a determinare il rapporto di dipendenza mitica. Il momento della somiglianza rientra nel concetto causale del mito in tutt'altro senso che nel caso del pensiero scientifico. Al pensiero scientifico della legge, e in particolare a quello della fisica matematica, non basta affatto che si possa mostrare qualche somiglianza diretta o indiretta, per affermare una connessione tra due elementi dell'essere. Tale pensiero non trova una tale connessione là dove gli elementi si corrispondono in qualche modo l'uno con l'altro e si lasciano coordinare reciprocamente l'uno con l'altro secondo un determinato schema, bensì dove determinati cambiamenti di grandezza dell'uno condizionano quelli dell'altro secondo una regola generale». Cassirer 1992, 66.

2. I MAGGIORI RACCORDI SPAZIALI: IL LIMITE ESTERNO, LA CIRCOLAZIONE INTERNA E LE PORTE

Una breve descrizione degli elementi architettonici che in parte dettano le regole dello spazio insediato, è condizione prima all'identificazione di quella presunta geometria che sembrerebbe codificare il modello urbanistico, teorico e unitario, di Ebla nel periodo Paleosiriano; recuperando la sua forma geometrica astratta saremo più agevolati, in seguito, nel rapportarla ad alcune *figurae* e ad alcuni *topoi* della tradizione cosmogonica del Vicino Oriente antico.

Il terrapieno paleosiriano di Ebla definisce il limite ellissoidale della città interposto tra il piano di

<sup>4</sup> Gli intenti di questo lavoro vorrebbero, dunque, seguire una delle linee d'analisi suggerite da Paolo Matthiae: «[...] far emergere dalle numerose testimonianze testuali gli elementi fondamentali e persistenti del modo di concepire il rapporto tra mondo umano e mondo divino e dalla documentazione figurativa ed architettonica le forme più significative dei mutamenti di atteggiamento affioranti nei modi dell'espressione simbolica». Matthiae 1994, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Fase, tra l'altro, ricchissima di informazioni di cultura materiale, ma non ancora adeguatamente documentata su un piano architettonico. Matthiae 1989a, 133-220; 2010, 226-278.

campagna e il piano della città bassa; il suo corpo architettonico era composto da gettate di terra battuta disposte in successione, in parte prelevate dall'esterno (terreno rossastro non antropizzato), in parte dalla città bassa (terreno grigiastro antropizzato ascrivibile al BAIVB).<sup>6</sup>

All'interno del terrapieno ellissoidale si estendeva un piano stradale sovraordinato, che prevedeva un sistema di circolazione a raggiera impostato su quattro arterie principali, le quali connettevano quattro maggiori porte di accesso alla strada anulare collocata alla base della seconda cinta interna, dotata di slarghi e di piazze.<sup>7</sup>

Le quattro porte di accesso sottolineavano un poderoso sistema di entrate fortificate che indicava il passaggio dall'esterno all'interno della città bassa, ed erano innestate nella massa muraria del terrapieno ai margini Nord-Ovest, Nord-Est, Sud-Ovest e Sud-Est.<sup>8</sup>

Sebbene alcuni varchi completassero il sistema di accesso, le quattro porte del terrapieno erano i punti fondamentali dell'articolazione interna alla città, infatti gli assi viari passanti per le loro direttrici dovevano intersecarsi con vie ausiliari favorendo, al contempo, una distribuzione ragionata di lotti sui quali erano disposte le abitazioni private e alcune grandi residenze,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Questa imponente struttura ebbe una primaria funzione difensiva, ma sembrerebbe aver assolto un ruolo importante almeno in altre due direzioni: nel definire il limite urbanistico dell'abitato e nel separare geograficamente il centro urbano dall'entroterra rurale. Alla base il suo spessore era oscillante e risultava di ca. 40 m, ma è possibile che tale estensione si fosse determinata anche a seguito degli smottamenti cui fu certamente soggetta la massiccia sovrastruttura; se così, una misura più realistica è quella di uno spessore compreso tra i 30 m e i 40 m. L'altezza massima conservata era di 22 m dal piano di campagna e ca. 12 m da quello della città bassa; verso l'esterno, alla base, il corpo della struttura possedeva un rivestimento in pietra conservatosi in alcuni punti per un'altezza di 1.20 m, ma in origine adattato per una altezza di 3-4 m ca. Tale rivestimento aveva la duplice funzione statica di scarpa del terrapieno e ammortizzatore delle naturali spinte verso lo smottamento che la massa di terra doveva esercitare; la parte superiore, come nelle strutture, di poco successive ma analoghe, della Palestina nel BM IIB-C era coperta da un intonaco gessoso; l'intero sistema difensivo risultava integrato da un fossato esterno. Matthiae 1989a, 141; 1998, 574-584.

<sup>7</sup> Ad Ebla, durante il periodo Paleosiriano è stata verificata l'assenza totale di edilizia privata ai piedi dell'acropoli, zona che si presenta come una catena ininterrotta di edifici pubblici, sacri e palatini. Lo spazio di divisione strutturale tra l'insieme degli edifici disposti sull'acropoli e quest'area monumentale pubblica sembrerebbe essere stato segnato da una sola strada anulare. Matthiae 1989a, 139-148.

<sup>8</sup> Nella pianta topografica le quote delle curve di livello nei settori H5 e B8 fa supporre che alcuni varchi (passaggi) fossero posizionati nel corpo del terrapieno e assolvessero il ruolo di entrate ausiliarie. Matthiae 1989a, 143-147.

<sup>9</sup> Le abitazioni private fino ad ora rintracciate sono quelle dei settori B (sud-ovest dell'acropoli) ed A (nella città bassa subito all'interno della porta sud-ovest) e la cosiddetta residenza nel settore Z. Matthiae 1989, 148-149; Baffi 1998, 151-169; Ascalone *et al.* 2014, 243-266. Per la presunta organizzazione radiale dell'a-

bitato cfr. già Matthiae 1991, 304-315; 1997, 1-29; 1998, 584.

Sull'urbanistica di Ebla paleosiriana vedi Matthiae 1991, 304-371; 2002, 531-574; Pinnock 2002, 13-34 e da ultimo Matthiae 2010, 226-278. Ipotesi di rilievo inerenti differenze topografiche ed architettoniche tra l'urbanistica di Ebla paleosiriana e quella protosiriana sono state avanzate anche da Dolce 1988, 99-120; 1999, 122-145; 2011, 11-28.

<sup>10</sup> Tracce di strade consolari sono state rinvenute in alcuni settori dell'abitato indagati (settori A e B), tra le aree abitabili delle maggiori fortezze sul terrapieno (settori V e AA) e in prossimità di edifici pubblici monumentali nella città bassa (settori P, P Nord, N, Z); esse segnavano un confine tra le diverse case nella città bassa (settori A e B), separavano gli edifici maggiori dal brulicare civico (settori P, N e Z) o costituivano la rete di collegamento interna a complessi estremamente funzionali e, in parte, isolati dalle abitazioni (settori V e AA). Per quanto riguarda una capillare ricostruzione del sistema viario vedi ora Matthiae 2010, 247, 248, 251, 252, 386, 387, 423, 432, 445, 450, 458, 462, 465, 466, 467 e 468.

<sup>11</sup> In ogni caso, entrambi gli elementi architettonici (porte e terrapieno) risultarono come parti integrate di una medesima pianta e probabilmente costituirono i segnali architettonici necessari per impostare la distribuzione organizzata dell'abitato. Alcune caratteristiche accreditano questa ipotesi; infatti, risulta evidente come la precisa collocazione spaziale delle quattro entrate possa aver fornito anche un solido punto di riferimento topografico al posizionamento dei maggiori edifici presenti all'interno della città; inoltre, l'intersezione delle assi passanti attraverso le porte, come sostenuto, cade al di sopra dell'acropoli, e si deve ricordare come queste traiettorie non siano virtuali, quanto piuttosto studiate per porre in rilievo visivo il cuore cittadino; infine, le porte sono poste in modo simmetrico sulle quattro curve di una struttura ellissoidale (il terrapieno) e disegnavano un rettangolo con orientamento N-S che certo avrebbe fornito misure angolari e allineamenti utili, forse già in fase progettuale, per collocare le fabbriche architettoniche dell'interno.

<sup>12</sup> L'isomorfismo dell'area abitata, la disposizione chiastica delle entrate nella cinta ellissoidale, la divisione mantenuta tra centro storico pubblico e aree abitate possono anche essere considerati gli indicatori urbanistici di un sistema la cui logotecnica aveva previsto una articolazione ragionata non solo dei residenti, ma anche delle funzioni produttive, politiche e abitative. In altri termini, un sistema organico che diveniva al contempo segno, fisicamente impresso, di un ordine e di un controllo che si voleva mantenere e sottolineare. Alcuni aspetti di questa topologia sono la peculiare configurazione ellissoidale che ha forti analogie con l'impianto urbanistico di Ur (Ramazzotti 2012, 53-72), e la 'opposizione' tra un'acropoli e una città bassa che viene individuato in Babilonia. Battini 1998, 5-29.

### 3. DALLA RIPIANIFICAZIONE URBANISTICA AL SUO MODELLO ASTRATTO, BIDIMENSIONALE E GEOMETRICO

Per l'insieme dei motivi che abbiamo elencato, il limite esterno (terrapieno), la circolazione interna (il piano stradale) e la disposizione delle quattro porte fortificate possono definire la pianta di una città circolare, concentrica e quadripartita che costituisce in sé un modello urbano astratto, a fondamento geometrico.<sup>13</sup>

Questo modello urbano astratto e geometrico edotto dall'urbanistica di Ebla paleosiriana, è qui inteso come una figura simbolica e archetipica interposta tra la regalità e la cittadinanza,<sup>14</sup> che ha comunicato dunque ai residenti i messaggi della propaganda politica con l'uso, strutturato e pianificato, di accorgimenti e regole dell'arte visuale e dell'apprensione estetica.<sup>15</sup>

E nello specifico, la figura simbolica e archetipica dell'impianto urbanistico di Ebla paleosiriana suggerisce che la ripianificazione della città possa essere stata ispirata sia dal controllo politico della regalità sull'ecumene conosciuto, che dal senso di apparten-

enza ad un mondo urbano e civilizzato, espressione di un ordine stabilito dagli dei in terra.<sup>16</sup>

### 4. IL MODELLO GEOMETRICO E ASTRATTO DI EBLA E LA REGALITÀ SUL MONDO QUADRIPARTITO

Il motivo della divisione in quattro parti della terra non è semplicemente narrativo, ma riferito ad un complesso sistema teorico che si sviluppa probabilmente nell'ambito delle conoscenze geografico-naturalistiche,<sup>17</sup> e presto verrà adottato, con valore ideologico, per magnificare l'azione politica di controllo sulla totalità del mondo conosciuto.<sup>18</sup>

L'adozione ideologica del motivo venne formalizzata con Naram Sin di Accad,<sup>19</sup> il primo ad assumere il titolo di «re delle quattro parti del mondo»,<sup>20</sup> ma lo stesso epiteto lo ritroveremo sia nelle iscrizioni dedicatorie del periodo Paleobabilonense che, alcuni secoli dopo, nei formulari celebrativi della cancelleria assira.<sup>21</sup>

E non si tratterà, in questi casi, solo dell'emulazione di un modello letterario, quanto piuttosto di un voluto ritorno al passato, dell'acquisizione partecipe e rinnovata di una comune appartenenza: l'epigrafe «re delle quattro parti del mondo» assumerà un valore allusivo, sarà ἐπώνυμος e al tempo stesso descriverà l'esito del suo operato, politico e militare.

L'archetipo della sovranità esercitata su un mondo quadripartito, formalizzato nella titolatura regale di Naram Sin di Accad, potrebbe tuttavia risalire all'ico-

<sup>13</sup> Quali sono gli elementi che ci consentono di tradurre il piano urbanistico di Ebla nel modello geometrico astratto della città circolare e quadripartita? In primo luogo il canone della proporzionalità aritmetica tra le varie parti strutturali dell'impianto: quattro sono le porte di accesso, quattro gli assi viari principali, quattro le direttrici che si originano dal centro, divise probabilmente in quattro le aree della città bassa maggiormente abitate e, infine, articolati in quattro i distretti sotto controllo dell'amministrazione palatina. In secondo luogo la ricorrenza geometrica tra l'allineamento dei maggiori edifici pubblici e la loro collocazione nello spazio fisico; l'unica eccezione in tal senso sembrerebbe essere costituita dal Tempio N, ma confermerebbe la regola proprio per il fatto che tale eccezione sarebbe ascrivibile alla funzione particolare dell'edificio, innalzato in onore del dio Shamash; in ogni caso, gli angoli di tutti i maggiori edifici (compreso il Tempio N) ripetono un medesimo orientamento. Infine, la forma ellittica della cinta del terrapieno e di quella circolare della cittadella non sembrerebbero esse stesse casuali; sebbene la possibilità di articolazione degli spazi che si presentano agli architetti eblaiti su una superficie grossomodo isomorfa fossero molteplici, la scelta di progettare e realizzare una cinta difensiva concentrica e di raccogliere in uno spazio della medesima forma, costruito con tecnica analoga le sedi prestigiose del potere regale e di quello religioso, risponde ad una pianificazione unitaria.

<sup>14</sup> La dimensione archetipica in senso proprio di questa figura simbolica è più chiara laddove si consideri ad esempio che esiste in diversi altri contesti culturali del mondo antico, come quello Inca, dove appunto il termine *Tahuantinsuyu* in lingua Quechua indicava un "Regno delle Quattro Parti" inteso proprio come regioni unificate di un solo stato. Pärssinen 1992, 236-256.

<sup>15</sup> Infatti: «Ogni apprensione estetica di forme spaziali vuole radicarsi in elementari sentimenti sensoriali, ogni senso della proporzione e della simmetria vuole potersi ricondurre al senso del nostro proprio corpo – e d'altra parte c'è per noi una vera comprensione di forme spaziali, un'intuizione plastica o architettonica, solo per il fatto che generiamo in noi stessi queste forme e possiamo divenire consapevoli della legalità di questa generazione». Cassirer 1992, 106. Sul concetto di archetipo, inoltre, vedi Bing, Frankfurt 1958, 166-178.

<sup>16</sup> Naturalmente l'intento è di carattere sperimentale: verificare se, data una distribuzione dello spazio insediato, progettato e realizzato in tempi brevi, ridotto alla sua dimensione nucleare (il modello topologico) è possibile recuperare alcune trame del pensiero mitopoietico che ne determinarono la formalizzazione spaziale e la forza espressiva.

<sup>17</sup> «The geographic term "The Four Region" is based on a tradition of dividing the earth's surface into northern, southern, eastern, and western quadrants derived from the four winds or compass point directions. Ancient Mesopotamians could determine the four direction by correlating the position of the sun, moon and stars with wind direction and the time of year». Horowitz 1998, 298.

<sup>18</sup> Per quanto riguarda la prima attestazione del titolo si veda: Hallo 1957, 21-26; Seux 1965, 1-18; Maeda 1984, 67-72. La discussione sulle posizioni politiche e militari assunte dai sovrani accadici è stata anche correlata ad alcune sfumature di significato degli epiteti e delle titolature regali. Vedi Glassner 1984, 17-34 e Michalowsky 1993, 69-90.

<sup>19</sup> L'ansia di racciardare la fisica del mondo divino a quella del mondo umano ci appare come se fosse una tensione propedeutica ad ogni celebrazione erudita del potere divenendo *exemplum* di una propaganda che vuole reificarne la dimensione cosmica.

<sup>20</sup> Il titolo di "re delle quattro parti del mondo" venne assunto per la prima volta da Naram Sin (Hallo 1957, 49-53) ed ebbe l'evidente funzione di formalizzare una specifica condizione della regalità universale accadica sulle cui origini, se orientali nel senso di Mesopotamiche (Glassner 1984, 17-34) o occidentali nel senso di Siriane (Matthiae 2010, 167-177) si discute ancora.

<sup>21</sup> Cagni 1971, 31; Horowitz 1998, 298-299.



nografia dell'atlante eblaita nell'atto di sostenere un simbolo circolare e chiastico, con due teste opposte di leoni e due umane, forse da intendere come gli aspetti contrapposti della natura selvaggia le prime e della regalità le seconde.<sup>22</sup>

Oltre duemila anni a seguire, nelle descrizioni analitiche della cancelleria assira l'epiteto del sovrano che «governa sulle quattro parti del mondo» comparirà all'inizio o alla fine, quasi a sottolineare come ogni evento, avvenuto in un tempo storico, sia predestinato a concludersi nel perimetro ideale del potere assoluto, sottolineato e celebrato dalla fraseologia celebrativa.<sup>23</sup>

In questa direzione, si potrebbe dunque ipotizzare che il piano urbanistico di Ebla paleosiriana abbia riprodotto topologicamente, in una sorta di microcosmo circolare e quadripartito, l'archetipo della regalità esercitata sull'ecumene quadripartito sostenuto dalla figura dell'atlante nella glittica protosiriana, e che la titolatura regale accadica ne sia stata una resa astratta e letteraria tradotta successivamente nei formulari paleobabilonesi e assiri.<sup>24</sup>

La quadripartizione di Ebla palesosiriana celerebbe così una grammatica urbanistica appresa con rigore dagli architetti palatini, una grammatica composta secondo regole tradizionali e fortemente radicate, una grammatica, inoltre, circolante e fruibile in ambienti elitari, unici interessati ad avallare in modo propagandistico il loro primato, la loro forza, il loro potere.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Per il simbolo tenuto dall'atlante vedi Matthiae 2010, 172, figg. 88 e 174, fig. 90 e l'ampia nota bibliografica a pag. 507 e a pag. 508.

<sup>23</sup> Così ad esempio sul retro della Lastra 2 della Porta K questo epiteto non è semplicemente usato per definire la condizione atemporale e immutabile della regalità («[...] Sargon, governatore in nome di Enlil, sacerdote - nešakku di Assur, re forte re dell'universo, re del Paese di Assur, re delle quattro regioni del mondo, favorito dai grandi dei [...]»), ma esprime al contempo una concezione dinamica e geografica dell'estendersi del potere («[...] dall'inizio della sua signoria, rivale non ha avuto e in guerra e in battaglia non ha veduto avversario; che tutti quanti i paesi ha frantumato quali vasi (di coccio) e i re rivoltosi delle quattro (regioni) del mondo ha messo alla cavezza [...]»). Cagni 1971, 49. Inoltre negli atti di commemorazione della capitale Dur Sharrukin: «Popoli delle quattro regioni (del mondo), di lingua straniera e di diversa parlata, abitanti delle montagne e delle pianure, tutti coloro che erano governati dalla luce degli dei, io, il signore di tutti trasferii all'ordine del dio Assur, mio signore con il potere del mio scettro». Matthiae 1994, 11.

<sup>24</sup> Si ripete dunque con questo espediente quel medesimo rapporto tra formalizzazione e astrazione che caratterizza, in parte, anche l'arte figurativa: quanto più forte è l'intento celebrativo delle imprese militari tanto più rilevante diviene la sua resa formale e più alto il suo grado di astrazione; anche in questo caso si tratta di una scelta estetica, che utilizza una specifica simbologia per esprimere un messaggio estremamente ideologico.

<sup>25</sup> In questa prospettiva è interessante anche l'analogia tra l'organizzazione urbanistica di Ebla Paleosiriana e lo schema planimetrico ricostruttivo di Babilonia Paleobabilonese secondo A. R. George. Non solo la cinta muraria di Apil-Sin è di forma circolare (ovoidale), ma la disposizione delle porte di accesso segue il me-

## 5. IL MODELLO GEOMETRICO ASTRATTO DI EBLA E LA CITTÀ SEDE DELL'ORDINE DIVINO

Nella tradizione culturale e religiosa della Mesopotamia antica il tema della creazione primordiale è espresso tramite modelli letterari e figurativi diversificati e complementari, inseriti in contesti narrativi e iconologici variabili. Tuttavia, i momenti che riguardano la nascita del cosmo (ordine) dal caos primordiale sono stati stabiliti secondo un ordine tassonomico e geometrico.<sup>26</sup>

E per quanto attiene alla fondazione della città, il pensiero mitopoietico la presenta come metafora dell'ordine che gli dei hanno stabilito sulla terra; tuttavia, se nel tempo reale questa nascita costituisce un momento cronologicamente successivo a quello della formazione del mondo, nel tempo dei miti essa ci appare come una forma del cosmo, esito di un atto divisorio istantaneo, e diviene, di quello stesso cosmo, il simbolo.<sup>27</sup>

Se la letteratura presenta la nascita dei primi centri in questa dimensione (agiografica e cosmica), i destinatari di questo erudito messaggio dovevano, in parte, fruirne e riconoscersi, dovevano accoglierlo nella quotidianità, conservarlo e tramandarlo. L'ambiente fisico, quello vissuto, lo spazio cittadino avrebbe dovuto garantire che quella dimensione circolasse, quasi ridondasse nelle vie, tra gli abitanti delle città.

È certo difficile restituire l'entropia suscitata da quest'ansia di raccordare la fisica del mondo celeste a quella del mondo terreno, ma è certo che i luoghi prediletti a questo esercizio fossero proprio le mura, le strade e i monumenti principali delle città, nelle quali sarebbe stato necessario trovare anche convincenti proiezioni visive e soluzioni pratiche per connettere lo spazio e il tempo della vita reale ai mitologemi.<sup>28</sup>

Il modello geometrico astratto edotto dal piano urbanistico di Ebla risponde all'archetipo di questa città, che definiamo cosmica nel senso di sede del cosmo che

desimo orientamento NO-SE e NO-SE di Ebla. Un'analogia di questo genere, non implica nessuna correlazione diretta, è tuttavia significativa nel senso che potrebbe restituire l'immagine di un patrimonio simbolico condiviso ed architettonicamente espresso con le medesime soluzioni topografiche. George 1992, 20, fig. 3. <sup>26</sup> Vedi in questo senso specifico: Jacobsen 1946, 125-184; Komoroczy 1973, 21-45; Ramazzotti 2009, 54-65.

<sup>27</sup> La città è, in altri termini, un'entità superiore che il pensiero creatore degli antichi ha posto sopra la volontà umana e sotto la paternità divina, in una dimensione atemporale. Ramazzotti 2013, 20-22.

<sup>28</sup> Come nella Babilonia di Nabucodonosor II, che sull'impostazione dettata da *Semiology and Urbanism* di Roland Barthes del 1988 verrà così descritta da Marc van de Mierop: «Simultaneously, while it was clearly delineated by its straight walls, meticulously protected, it was an organizing principle for the entire universe. On a vertical axis it tied all the levels of the universe together as a large post in its center. On a horizontal axis, with its size and its widespread contacts, it extended that order throughout the regions of the world». Van de Mierop 2003, 273.

gli dei hanno scritto in terra. Le sue geometrie interne non sono casuali, esprimono nel complesso un messaggio unitario, polisemico e stratificato che doveva essere comunicato su larga scala a tutti gli abitanti e doveva coinvolgerli nella comune visione di uno spazio ordinato, stabilito dagli dei e ricco di riferimenti al passato.

In questo senso specifico, la tavoletta TM.75.G.336 rinvenuta nell'Archivio Reale di Ebla ha costituito e costituisce ancor oggi una fonte di estrema rilevanza, in essa sono contenute informazioni inerenti una distribuzione quadripartita del piano urbanistico della città nel Bronzo Antico IVA, probabilmente non dissimile da quella, bene evidente, nella morfologia che l'area urbana ha assunto nel Bronzo Medio I.<sup>29</sup>

Questo isomorfismo tra i due piani urbanistici è stato anche, negli ultimi anni, verificato a seguito degli scavi archeologici dell'area HH, nel quadrante sud-orientale della città bassa, dove in prossimità di una grande anomalia geomagnetica di forma rettangolare è stata poi indagata la lunga sequenza stratigrafico-architettonica riferibile al cosiddetto Tempio della Rocca, collocata proprio nel punto dove si riteneva che fosse posizionato un edificio sacro.<sup>30</sup>

Questi pochi elementi, che nel tempo potranno essere ulteriormente dettagliati e precisati, implicano un'equivalenza tra il piano urbanistico di Ebla protosiriana e quello della città ripianificata agli inizi del Bronzo Medio; un'equivalenza che, anche se non deve essere intesa come calco dell'antica topografia della città, **ci fa intuire almeno come il progetto unitario, di costruzione e rinnovamento del centro, fosse stato ispirato dalla traduzione in *forma urbis* della città cosmica, simbolo agiografico e archetipico di un disegno celeste, ben noto alla letteratura dell'antica Mesopotamia e alla sua dotta esegesi assira.**<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Questo testo è, nel suo genere, unico poiché elenca un totale di 488 dipendenti suddivisi in quattro unità assegnate ai quartieri / frazioni dell'abitato nella città-bassa (éduru<sub>5</sub><sup>ki</sup>) e altre quattro unità assegnate alle maggiori fabbriche architettoniche della cittadella; su questa interpretazione topografica del testo tentata da Pettinato e Matthiae (Pettinato 1976, 1-15; Matthiae 1976, 16-30) si leggano poi anche le osservazioni di Archi 1995, 269 e Milano 1995, 121-134, e la più recente ipotesi topografica ricostruttiva della quadripartizione di Ebla nel Bronzo Antico in Ramazzotti et al. 2016, 435-441.

<sup>30</sup> Per quanto riguarda l'ipotesi che un edificio sacro fosse collocato nel quadrante sud-orientale della città-bassa di Ebla vedi Ramazzotti et al. 2016, 437, articolo riferito ad un contributo presentato nel 2000. Riguardo invece la collocazione dell'anomalia geomagnetica di forma quadrangolare che si è poi rilevata parte del riempimento in calcare della grande cella del Tempio della Rocca vedi Ramazzotti 2008, 191-205. Sul Tempio della Rocca vedi soprattutto Matthiae 2006, 458-492; 2008/9a, 451-494.

<sup>31</sup> L'abitante di Ebla paleosiriana avrebbe vissuto all'interno di un'ellisse quadripartita (il piano urbanistico) dove in ogni punto era possibile ripercorrere visivamente la storia mitica della fondazione urbana e della continuità del potere, seguire i movimenti del sole e della luna e rapportarli ai luoghi fisici che li cadenzavano

## 6. CONCLUSIONI

Sulla base di quanto discusso, i piani urbanistici di Ebla protosiriana e paleosiriana rispondono alla forma geometrica di un cerchio quadripartito e, in questo senso, sembrano aver replicato una percezione della regalità quadripartita e della città cosmica come elaborata nel pensiero mitopoietico dell'antica Mesopotamia.

La traduzione della regalità quadripartita e della città cosmica in *forma urbis* avrebbe orientato il campo conoscitivo dell'abitante di Ebla, radicando la sua permanenza ad un sistema di valori condiviso; infatti, non è escluso che la quadripartizione della città avrebbe funzionato come una visione sintetica e diretta della topologia del potere religioso, pensata dagli architetti eblaiti come *medium* coerente e strutturato.

Ad esempio, procedendo dalle quattro porte verso la cittadella comparivano in ordine: le abitazioni private, i maggiori edifici pubblici (sacri e palatini) e, infine, sull'acropoli, il palazzo reale sormontato dal monumentale Tempio di Ishtar, quasi come se questa disposizione avesse disegnato sulla terra la metafora della gerarchia reale, o ne avesse rappresentato la sua traduzione al contempo semplificata e amplificata.

Questa urbanistica planare avrebbe di fatto segnato anche i limiti e i punti di un mondo ordinato stabilito fisicamente in terra per intercessione del re e della regina, e chi vi accedeva come colui che vi risiedeva l'avrebbe vissuta in una dimensione immaginifica (zenitale) e in un sistema di gerarchie visuali (orizzontali) le cui traiettorie convergevano, tutte, a sottolineare i luoghi del potere.

In ogni caso, queste tecniche approntate per alimentare la percezione di una città sede della regalità sulla terra quadripartita, da intendere come *locus* civilizzato opposto alle forze esterne, risultano, in parte, già documentate nelle suggestive descrizioni di alcuni rituali di intronizzazione rinvenuti nell'archivio amministrativo protosiriano, laddove le metafore usate in questi documenti prescrittivi richiamano ad un coinvolgimento corale della cittadinanza nel rito e ad una sua percezione visiva e acustica.

La distruzione di Ebla ad opera di Sargon di Accad fu certamente determinata dalla crescita economica e politica del centro, ma al contempo ci racconta di una vicinanza delle due tradizioni (Eblaita ed Accadica), già altrove riconosciuta, e conferma un contatto che sarebbe inutile e superfluo considerare semplicemente come divisione culturale. Esso, infatti, produsse rapporti dina-

con solenne religiosità (Tempio N, Area Sacra di Ishtar, Santuario B1), osservare la stella Venere dal punto più alto di visione sull'acropoli, il Tempio D. Ed è certo che questa fosse la realtà del quotidiano; una realtà che risuonava nei monumenti e nelle loro geometrie prestabilite, come se confermasse e ripetesse, da sempre, l'ineluttabilità del buon governo, metafora sin troppo esplicita della ciclicità del potere e della sua forza. Vedi Ramazzotti 2013, 217-272.

mici, quasi osmotici, recuperabili sia in ambito letterario che figurativo, e che, come abbiamo tentato di ricordare, furono una delle cause preminenti della nuova razionalizzazione urbana occorsa nel BMI.<sup>32</sup>

Per tutto questo, il piano urbano di Ebla del Bronzo Antico formalizzato nel Bronzo Medio divenne un modello da emulare, plastico e astratto al punto da poter essere scelto e adattato a diversi altri *melieux* culturali; nella sua semplicità erano allusi i simboli del potere regale, i messaggi della propaganda, e la retorica di una geografia cosmica condivisa. E non è dunque da escludere che proprio questo modello astratto e geometrico codificato in uno dei centri amorrei più antichi e più rilevanti della Palestina settentrionale sia arrivato, per effetto del trascinarsi simbolico e per l'inevitabile permanenza di archetipi e mitologemi alla pianta di Gerusalemme medievale e cristiana.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Sulla distruzione di Ebla vedi da ultimo Matthiae 2010, 48-63, e l'ampia nota bibliografica di pagg. 490 e 491. Si integri anche con Lebeau 2016, 55-64.

<sup>33</sup> Per la quale vedi ad esempio le suggestive *vignettes* della Gerusalemme medievale, circolare e quadripartita che Arnaud descriverà come «*centre et image du monde*». Arnaud 1984, 571.

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# THE TERQA CLOVES AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF AROMA

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## *Abstract*

The discovery of spices at Bronze-Age Terqa in Syria provide the opportunity to consider long-distance exchange in aromatics as a component of ancient cuisine, ritual, and social life, and the opportunity to assess the role of “singular” finds as a component of archaeological theory.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The starting-points for this paper are the tiny botanical remains found by Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Giorgio Buccellati in their excavations at Terqa in 1976, where they reported cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*) from a second-millennium BCE context.<sup>1</sup> Yet at the time of the discovery this seemed impossible: cloves come only from the Southeast Asian archipelago of the Maluku islands, which would have made this the first such find in the ancient Near East.

We should not be surprised when such discoveries occur, however. Ancient people were certainly very creative, and cognizant of the social value of handling unusual items. The perception that singular objects are “rare” or “unique” is more likely due to our relative lack of knowledge about the scope of ancient material culture than to the perceptions of uniqueness on the part of ancient people. After all, most sites have been excavated to 1% or less of their entire occupational areas, suggesting that our statistics are often misleading. Instead of viewing singletons as aberrations, archaeologists should be encouraged to think of them as a leading edge for discoveries elsewhere in the site and region.

## 2. SINGULAR ITEMS

The recovery of a singular object in an archaeological context is treated with a certain intellectual curiosity because it cannot be assessed through the usual practices of comparison and statistics. Is it a singleton because we have recovered so few of them and excavated so little, or is it unusual because it was scarce in its own time? As a physical fact, its appearance *must* be explained somehow. Of course, it is

always possible that the singleton is the result of an unusual site formation process, such as bioturbation that has introduced later elements into an earlier context. In the case of the Terqa finds, such a dismissal is impossible, for the cloves were found in a jar that was upside down, and the building in which it was located was burnt. Thus the find is a clarion call to evaluate singularity in a secure ancient context.

Singular objects in antiquity were the result of purposeful ancient human acts emanating from a variety of intents. Some singletons were crafted as unique works of art; others were “beta” versions of new technologies that never achieved popularity or became popular much later. And some singular finds in archaeological contexts represent items that were naturally abundant or manufactured in great quantities in their locus of origin but that are found in smaller and smaller quantities at a temporal or spatial distance from the source.

Each type of singleton encompasses a specific theoretical apparatus of analysis. Items designed as singular creations elicit a great deal of interest, not least in today’s museum cases. In ancient times as in the present day, elites sponsored the crafting of distinct objects and rewarded traders who brought forth unusual items. Yet such objects were perceived by their owners as being within a general parameter of value, in which distinction was encompassed within a set of recognized characteristics, such as an especially labor-intensive or carefully-crafted cup among many other vessels, or a rare bead among others on a strand. The emergence of new items could only be intelligible to potential users if such items were within a range of already-known qualities within the “bandwidth” of communication.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1977/78; 1983.

<sup>2</sup> For the archaeological concept of “bandwidth” see Stiner 2014.

Some ancient items were undoubtedly unique not because they were sought-after exemplars of a particular genre but because no one could figure out what to do with them. Ancient craftsmakers experimented with new strategies of production and decoration that sometimes revolutionized consumption patterns, as in the case of the innovation of bronze metallurgy or the advent of Attic red-figure vases. Yet some innovations did not result in an increased production or consumption because they were not yet perceived as useful or because their adoption entailed social or practical restraints that people were unwilling to make at the time.<sup>3</sup>

In some cases, items that were abundant in their point of origin (such as shells or stones or ivory) came to be rarer and rarer as they were traded further away in the process of what Colin Renfrew has called “down-the-line” trade.<sup>4</sup> In this model of object transmission, items are dispersed from their point of origin along trade routes with intermediate stops, in which any such stop might result in a few items staying locally while the others continue to be carried forward. At every point, the distribution of such objects followed purposeful decisions about whether to keep or pass along novel items, such that there is rarely a simple distance-decay curve or linear falloff rate.

In sum, what makes objects “unique” is often not their original circumstances or natural distribution but mediated through the decisions and values of ancient people as well as our circumstances of recovery. As we excavate and explore the world’s archaeological sites in greater detail and over longer time periods, objects that appear at first to be outliers become joined by other finds. The result is an increasingly complete picture of the way in which trade has permeated our global village for thousands of years, as well as a greater understanding of the way in which individual decisions and actions in the past resulted in a complex and multifaceted archaeological record.

### 3. THE ORGANIC AND THE PERISHABLE

Much of archaeology depends on the recovery of tangible and durable elements of ancient life: architecture, stone tools, and artifacts such as beads, grinding stones, and pottery vessels. As humans diversified their artifact repertoire, there are more and more items that occasionally survive the passage of time. By contrast, the assessment of the role of perishables in ancient patterns of trade is sometimes harder to grasp. Ethnohistoric and textual accounts of the large-scale production of perishables illustrates

that we are often missing a good deal of trade activity because of the ephemeral, organic nature of goods such as salt, cloth, wood, and food.

Among the categories of perishable objects most used by our species, food ranks the highest in terms of regular intake and household manipulation. Archaeologists have largely focused on caloric intake as the rubric for the assessment of both forager and agricultural impacts, although increasing attention has been paid to matters of food preference as a component of selection among myriad types of edibles.<sup>5</sup> Yet somewhere along the way, it was not merely the type of food, nor its selection, that was the only means by which items became viewed as “good to eat.” The development of varied modes of preparation provided the impetus for a diversification of production practices in the form of cuisine, particularly after the development of pottery vessels which allowed for boiled, stewed, simmered, and other combinatorial modes of preparation.

Cuisine, as an idiosyncratic yet culturally-bounded concept of daily practice, provides the opportunity to examine the interface between trade and food preference whenever exotic ingredients enabled the addition of novel flavors. Although grains are known to have been traded and imported in ancient times to result in the diffusion of new crops (maize from its original domestication point in Mexico adopted in South America; millets from Africa adopted in the Bronze Age cultures of the Indus region of today’s Pakistan and western India), spices are different because they usually cannot be grown outside of their place of origin and thus are direct evidence for the transfer of products, sometimes along great distances.<sup>6</sup>

### 4. SPICES AS A FORM OF CUISINE

The study of spices, as a subset of the archaeology of food and cuisine, links the world of calories with the larger world of ephemeral meaning through cookery. When the bulk of a meal is made up of carbohydrates and meat, spices make a mark all out of proportion to their size or weight because they lend an altogether distinct scent and flavor to the food. Nina Etkin has noted that “spices are signatures... that distinguish the cuisines of ethnically diverse peoples and, within groups, mark social asymmetries through varied applications, combinations, and frequency and volume of consumption.”<sup>7</sup>

An archaeology of aroma highlights the agentive use of trade goods that were displayed through the release of scents into the surrounding atmosphere

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Schiffer 2008 on the earliest uses of electricity; Crown, Wills 1995 on the adoption of pottery in the prehistoric American Southwest.

<sup>4</sup> Renfrew 1975, 41-43.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Smith 2010; Wadley, Hayden 2015; Zeder 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Van der Veen 2015, 427.

<sup>7</sup> Etkin 2006, 84.

and the experience of taste when spices were infused in food. The archaeology of aroma parallels the increasing interest in the ephemera of existence that were nonetheless guiding components of ancient activities, as shown by recent studies on the archaeology of darkness, the archaeology of color, the archaeology of performance, and the archaeology of dance, ritual, and music.<sup>8</sup>

An archaeology of aroma is an archaeology of intimacy, of home and hearth, of family and friends gathered around a fragrant dish, usually served warm as a marker of proximate time. When food is “ready,” it is a moment of synergy that marks the beginning of a daily event that also binds people together and creates a framework for memory-making. An archaeology of aroma is also about the lingering scents that carry out into the broader world from the hearth itself. Even everyday cooking, such as baking bread or roasting meat, carries an unmistakable fragrance as well as a directionality such that passers-by can discern from whose house a particular scent emanates. At that point the aroma is no longer possessed by the household that has cooked the food, but enters into the public realm.

Because spices are generally traded from small and localized places of origin, their appearance and use far from those origins provide an olfactory proof of connectivity, household wherewithal, and access to traded goods. Nor is the reality of long-distance contact something that renders spices used only on special occasions; witness, for example, the use of cardamom from the Indian subcontinent that is a staple in Scandinavian baked goods today, or the global presence of pepper as the counterpart to common salt and a standard condiment on restaurant and domestic tabletops alike. Spices are lightweight but effective arbiters of taste (in both the physical and metaphorical sense), with a carryover into the social realm.

In her study of what she calls “vibrant matter,” Jane Bennett discusses the ways in which food is not merely a passive entity, but is itself “an actant in an agentic assemblage.”<sup>9</sup> Although Bennett’s perspective considers food in general, her assessment of agency and vibrancy is particularly apt when applied to spices. Because they contain volatile compounds that release their aroma even without cooking, spices are in a perpetual state of becoming and when kept in a jar are able to perform an olfactory task over and over again with little visible wearing away.

## 5. THE BRONZE-AGE SPICE TRADE

The use of spices is not merely a sign of the investment of resources into the creation of particular tastes (although that is important), but an integration of everyday pharmacology given that spices contain enhanced properties that make them an intermediate entity between food and medicine.<sup>10</sup> In the Bronze Age of Mesopotamia and the Levant, people made use of many local and regional herbs and aromatics. Mesopotamian texts refer to medicine, perfume, and incense; the Bible similarly refers to desirable aromatics such as frankincense and myrrh.<sup>11</sup> The draw of aroma as a culinary and medicinal ingredient was the natural rationale for a trade in aromatics that began in the Bronze Age during a time when many other perishable trade goods such as textiles also were exchanged across long distances.<sup>12</sup>

Cumulative evidence for the spice trade is aided by the fact that some spices are highly recognizable and analytically distinctive.<sup>13</sup> In 2013, Dvory Namdar and colleagues reported on the recovery of cinnamaldehyde in ten small narrow-necked Iron Age flasks from the Levant (11<sup>th</sup>-mid 9<sup>th</sup> cent BCE), and suggested that the cinnamaldehyde could only have come from the Indian subcontinent or Southeast Asia in the form of cinnamon. They placed the recognition of cinnamaldehyde within a broader context of precocious occurrences including the recovery of peppercorns in the Egyptian mummy of Ramesses II (13<sup>th</sup> c. BCE), and conclude that such finds “attest unequivocally that indeed, spices from South East Asia reached the ‘West’ already during the Late Bronze Age.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the team identified traces of cinnamaldehyde in excavated vessels from five different sites, confirming that there was a much more widespread access to exotic spices than had earlier been conceptualized.

Thus, the cloves at Terqa are in good company with other discoveries of spices originating from the Indian subcontinent and beyond. At Terqa, the items in question were found in the first season of excavation, and described as “Carbonized spices, found inside an upside down jar in the storage room ST 4 in SG4.”<sup>15</sup> This storage room was within a structure identified as the “House of Puzurum,” a structure across the street from the temple of Ninkarrak. The find was placed into social context by the excavators as “evidence of long distance trade of a very fragile commodity which

<sup>8</sup> e.g., Dowd, Hensey 2016; Gonlin, Nowell 2018; Hosier 1995; Inomata, Coben 2006; Looper 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Bennett, 2010, 51.

<sup>10</sup> Etkin 2006, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Ben-Yehoshua *et al.* 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Smith 2013.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Kingwell-Banham *et al.* 2018, 1565, 1567 on the single clove in the archaeological investigations at Mantai, Sri Lanka.

<sup>14</sup> Namdar *et al.* 2013, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1977/78, 94.



required specialized use and therefore specialized markets – all the more remarkable inasmuch as the find comes from a rather simple middle-class household.”<sup>16</sup>

The reporting of the finds from Terqa, combined with the types of reporting on spices found in other unexpectedly “early” contexts, provides the opportunity to understand and map out broader mosaic patterns of ancient trade. Such connectivities illustrate that single finds are not merely lone data points in the cartographies of time; ancient people created everyday worlds out of exotica in ways that stretch our imaginations and provide a path forward for research. A future archaeology of aroma depends on the combination of textual studies and extensive and rigorous recovery of the traces of organic elements from archaeological contexts. Excavations that make use of flotation and other forms of paleobotanical recovery are more likely to report the recovery of the physical fragments of spices. Other promising sources of study include the analysis of coprolites and the analysis of chemical residues in plaster, pottery, and soils.<sup>17</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION

There is an irony in the long-distance trade in spices, in that the items that were brought at such a distance and with some expense were intended to be consumed and to disappear from the physical world leaving only aroma and memory behind. Yet it is in those traces that social longevity is the greatest, like the other sensory elements that permeate the realm of home and family such as music, emotion, gestures, and physical ambiance. These everyday elements combine to create a sense of place from which individual identities emerge, with the daily acts of food consumption providing a bridge between the biological and social worlds of care and familiarity. As Janet A. Flammang has noted, “Cuisines are... an example of thoughtful practice. They are bodies of knowledge: distilled over time through a process of trial and error, passed down by word of mouth and hands-on learning... providing sustenance and pleasure on a daily basis.”<sup>18</sup>

The thoughtful practices of cuisine integrate both grand and humble households with the broader cultural worlds of trade and transportation; in the past as in the present, food was never just a matter of nutrients and calories. Cuisine is a performance that has numerous time-stages with a preconsumption phase of cooking aromas that prepare the eater for the event to come as well as advertising to others that food preparation is being undertaken, followed

by an actual consumption phase and then the discard of the food waste (bones, shells, and other inedible parts as well as food scraps and occasional discard of containers and eating utensils). Throughout, the aroma of food lingers in the hearth and home beyond the brief moment of eating. Like other “small things” in the archaeological record, the Terqa cloves reveal gestures of an ancient globalization whose impacts were intertwined with hearth and home.

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BETWEEN PHILOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY.  
SOME COMMENTS ON URARTIAN LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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*Abstract*

The present article is devoted to a general reconsideration, starting from philological and archaeological evidence, of the land use and landscape management systems developed by the Urartians over about two centuries (from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> up to the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC).

Urartu was one of the most important and distinctive kingdoms of the ancient Near East during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. It was a rival of the Neo-Assyrian Empire between the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Urartu was the result of a long formation process whose climax was reached with the unification under one ruling dynasty of some tribes in the Armenian Highlands, known as the countries of Nairi and Uruatri.<sup>1</sup> The first kings started to shape the political and propaganda system on the model of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. However, over time certain characteristic elements began to emerge as a result of the merging of the Mesopotamian administrative and cultural base and the traditions of the ancient Caucasian cultures that inhabited part of the Armenian Highlands. Without wishing to exaggerate in geographical determinism, it can be said that among the major factors that contributed to the definition of Urartu as a distinctive and indeed unique entity were the climate and physical geography of the territories they controlled. The highlands of Urartu, which correspond roughly to the later maximum extension of Armenia Major, were in fact distinguished by the presence of high mountains and extreme climatic conditions, which deeply influenced the character of the new state. An essential aspect for understanding Urartian power is the systematic and thorough study of the geo-

graphical and climatic characteristics of the territories under their control. Almost all areas have very hard winters, with a remarkable amount of snow that lasts for more than six months a year. We can hypothesize that the Urartians were able to conquer lands with territorial and climatic characteristics similar to those of the area around Lake Van, the central nucleus of their political power, according to a carefully planned strategy. Consideration of the climatic component is an essential factor in the study of Urartian culture; their entire political and administrative system was seasonal and the winter months saw the complete closure of mountain passes, lines of communication, and all productive activity. Blocks of territory remained isolated for months and survived by means of vast amounts of food stored in huge warehouses in the main strongholds. It thus seems evident that food production and, above all, its preservation, were at the centre of Urartian productive strategy, given its semi-isolated and seasonal economy. Of course, to ensure the production of solid and liquid foodstuffs necessary to sustain the population in the strongholds and in the settlements that grew up immediately behind them, during winter or wartime, it was necessary to have direct control over the entire production chain without depending on intermediaries. This meant direct control over all the steps involved in food production, from the agricultural activities right up to the finished product ready for consumption. To this end, the Urartians constructed complex irrigation systems and vast warehouses, to optimize land use and the concentration of resources. This harsh climate and the organization it entailed must be considered main reasons for the absence of large settlements (such as were present in Mesopotamia) in these mountain regions, which instead featured a sort of encastellation *ante litteram*. The present ar-

\* We would like to dedicate this paper to Giorgio and Marilyn, dear friends and colleagues, with whom we shared beautiful memories, especially related to the time spent together in Rome at ICEVO. The contents of this article were conceived and developed by both authors. Specifically Marie Claude Trémouille wrote paragraphs 1-3, while R. Dan wrote paragraphs 4-7. Introduction was written jointly by the authors.

<sup>1</sup> On this formation period, see Salvini 1967.

ticle is devoted to a general reconsideration, starting from philological and archaeological evidence, of the land use and landscape management systems developed by the Urartians over about two centuries (from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> up to the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC). It should be borne in mind that although the philological data are generally homogeneous for all the phases of the kingdom, with inscriptions that, although in smaller or larger quantities, cover the whole chronological period of life of the Urartian state, the archaeological situation is much more inhomogeneous. Indeed, the archaeological framework currently at our disposal mainly covers the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, an imbalance explained by the fact that the main sites investigated date to the reign of Rusa II (first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC) and can also be explained by the oldest sites' continuity of use up to the end of Urartu. Therefore a precise chronological scan never corresponds to an equally detailed archaeological picture. The philological and archaeological data allow us to assert with little doubt that the impact of the two centuries of Urartian presence on the Armenian plateau contributed to change the landscape in a way that was unprecedented. Subsequently, it was not until the modern period that such important changes occurred in this territory. These changes were mainly caused by the creation of complex water-management systems, and a remarkable number of artificial canals and lakes, and through an unprecedented use of wood, which led to the total deforestation of large areas, a circumstance that certainly contributed to the transformation of entire ecological niches. It is clear that Urartian techniques, for example in the field of hydraulics, did not arise from nothing but were the development of ancient local traditions going back hundreds – or thousands – of years. However, these old models were reinterpreted on a much larger scale of much other greatness, undoubtedly due to imitation of the contemporary Neo-Assyrian Empire, following a process of Assyrianization that involved Urartu especially in the first decades of its history, and linked to a determined attempt to compete with the Assyrians in terms of production and development.

#### 1. 'NOTHING WAS BUILT'

One of the first aspects that deserves to be highlighted is the ideological concept expressed explicitly in some inscriptions regarding the creative activity of the sovereign.<sup>2</sup> Since their first inscriptions, the Urartian rulers boasted of having acted in favour agricul-

<sup>2</sup> On the ideology of landscape modelling, see Harmanşah 2013, 25-28.

ture, but as an accessory activity to that of being great builders. The introductory formula used was 'nothing was built'. We can read below some examples of Urartian texts bearing this expression:

'(...) Nothing had (ever) been built here (before). Işpuini, son of Sarduri, established a new fortress, as well as a new vineyard. He installed a *burganani*, he planted a new fruit garden (...)' (CTU A 2-9A-B, ll. 8-13).<sup>3</sup>

'(...) Işpuini, son of Sarduri, and Minua, son of Işpuini, planted (sg. he planted) a new vineyard for the god Դaldi kue and they (lit. he) planted a new orchard, nothing had (ever) been built here (before) (...)' (CTU A 3-1, ll. 27-28).

'(...) This channel traced and this city founded, the imposes name Minuaşinili, nothing there was built (...)' (CTU A 5-24 Vo, ll. 1-7).

'(...) This *şiribişuzi* of the god Ura erected in the city of Arşuniuini, nothing was built there (...)' (CTU A 5-28, ll. 5-8).

'(...) He erected this cult stele(?) (*şiribişuzi*) of(?) the god Ua in the city Arşuniuini. Nothing had (ever) been built here (before) (...)' (CTU A 5-30 Ro, ll. 10'-12').

'[Through] the protection [of the god Դaldi] Minua, son of Işpuini, built a *tulurini* (as part of the?) fortress to perfection. He (also) built a city. Nothing had (ever) been built here (before) (...)' (CTU A 5-34, ll. 1-2).

This simple expression, used to underline the importance of the sovereign's creative activity, was used in this form only in the first decades of Urartu's life, from Işpuini (about 830-820 BC;<sup>4</sup> CTU A 2-9A-B), to the period of the co-regency with his son Minua (about 820-810 BC; CTU A 3-1), and during the time in which he was king alone (about 810-785/780 BC; CTU A 5-24, A 5-38, A 5-30). In this period also appear the first references to the organization of the territory from both the point of view of water infrastructure and the construction of agricultural fields, which will be discussed later in this text.

<sup>3</sup> Some of the English translations of the Urartian texts presented in this contribution are taken from Electronic Corpus of Urartian Texts (eCUT), available online in the page of The Munich Open-access Cuneiform Corpus Initiative (MOCCI). Because the site is still under construction, other translations are by the authors of this contribution.

<sup>4</sup> All the chronological references concerning the Urartian kings are taken from Salvini 2008, 23. When Urartian inscriptions are mentioned in the text, Salvini 2008 is abbreviated as CTU followed by the inscription's identification code.

## 2. 'THE LAND WAS DESERTED/INTACT/VIRGIN, NOTHING WAS BUILT HERE'

Starting from Argišti I (785/780-756 BC) the expression used to introduce the description of the activity carried out in favour of agriculture changed. Moreover, this was not only a formal modification, but also a substantial one. With these kind of inscriptions, the king on one hand showed to the community his unique ability to transform unruly and uncivilized nature through the building and then creating. On the other hand, this kind of text involves a non-explicit testimony of the destruction of the previous landscape (agricultural, settlement, etc.) to make way for the new landscape model<sup>5</sup>. According to the Urartian kings it would seem that they built their new state in an 'empty landscape'<sup>6</sup> – when instead, as we will see, they reused part of what was came before. This expression was attested in Argišti I (CTU A 8-1, A 8-15, A 8-16, A 8-17A, A 8-17B, A 8-18, A 8-19, A 8-21), Sarduri II (about 730-713 BC; CTU A 9-17), Argišti II (713-? BC; CTU A 11-1), Rusa II (first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC; CTU A 12-1, A 12-7, A 12-8, A 12-9) and Rusa III (CTU A 14-1). Here are some examples of this:

'(...) Argišti, son of Minua, says: I built a fortress to perfection, I gave it the name Argištiḫinili. The land was deserted, nothing had (ever) been built here (before). From the river I dug four canals, I planted vineyards and orchards (...)' (CTU A 8-16, ll. 3-9).

'(...) Sarduri says: [the land was deserted, nothing] had (ever) been built there (before). I [built] there a temple of the god Ḫaldi [and a tower temple?] for the god Irmušini and a fortress to perfection. [I dug] a canal from the river Gugunaini; [I planted a vineyard?], fields of grain, I founded a new settlement there, (and) [I accomplished] mighty under[takings]. I gave it the name Sarduriḫinili (...)' (CTU A 9-17, ll. 1-7).

'(...) Argišti says: near the city NA□.ANŠE, in front of Mount Quria, the land was deserted, nothing was there, not even a field of grain, a vineyard (nor) a fruit orchard was there, no canal had (ever) been dug there. Once the god Ḫaldi gave the command, the god Ḫaldi gave it to me. I made this lake *asuahina* (...)' (CTU A 11-1, Ro ll. 25-32).

## 3. 'THE ROCK WAS UNTOUCHED, NOTHING WAS BUILT HERE'

A last variant of this type of formula appears in the last years of Urartu's existence and seems to have been used only during the time of Rusa II. Indeed, in

four inscriptions (CTU A 12-1, A 12-7, A 12-9, A 12-10) the formulas 'the rock was bare/naked', 'it was rock, nothing here was built', 'the rock was intact' appear. This circumstance should not surprise; first of all, rock is certainly the dominant natural feature in the territories ruled by Urartu, as well as being an essential architectural material. In fact, the Urartians built mainly directly on the rock, to confer greater anti-seismic stability on their buildings and to exploit all the available space on the narrow rocky spurs that often housed their fortresses. On the other hand, the evolution of these epigraphic formulas should not surprise either; indeed, in all fields of Urartian production, from art to architecture, a progressive change may be noticed in which the Urartians freed themselves from Assyrian cultural models, so as to create new ones. The results of this process were in any case influenced by Assyrian models, but in them new elements may be seen that sometimes represented the re-emergence of reinterpreted local cultural traditions of the Southern Caucasus. The period of Rusa II can be considered the end-point of this process that lasted about two centuries, a process of creation of a new and well-defined cultural identity.<sup>7</sup> Here are some examples of this type of formula:

'(...) Rusa says: the rock was (bare) and the land was desert, nothing was built here (...)' (CTU A 12-1, ll. 3-4).

'(...) Rusa says: it was rock, nothing here was built. I have perfectly constructed both an É.BĀRA sanctuary and a fortress (...)' (CTU A 12-9, ll. 3-6).

'By virtue of the greatness of Ḫaldi Rusa, son of Argišti, created this *ašihusi* building. The rock was intact, no king had done (it). As soon as Ḫaldi ordered, I did it (...)' (CTU A 12-10, ll. 1-3).

In general, we can support the hypothesis that all these formulas used by the Urartians were simplified versions of formulas used in the Middle Assyrian period by kings such as Adad-nirari I and Tukulti-Ninurta I:

'(...) When I saw the deserted (and) uncultivated areas of ... the city Ta[idu ...] ... I delineated its territory (and) therein founded a palace. I built (it) from top to bottom and deposited my monumental inscription (...)' (RIMA 1: A.0.76.22, ll. 55-60).

'(...) At the command of the god Aššur, the god who loves me, I built before my city, Aššur, a city for the god Aššur on the opposite bank, beside the Tigris, in uncultivated plains (and) meadows where there was neither house nor dwelling, where no

<sup>5</sup>Smith 2003, 160-161.

<sup>6</sup>Ristvet 2018, 184.

<sup>7</sup>On the architectural side, see for example the introduction in this period of the 'module' (Dan, Herles 2017).

ruin hills or rubble had accumulated, and no bricks had been laid. I called it *Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta (...)*' (RIMA 1: A.0.78.23, ll. 43-47; A.0.78.24, ll. 43-47; A.0.78.25, rev. ll. 11-16).

It is clear that the Urartians made them using and simplifying some formulas widely used previously in Mesopotamia, in keeping with a process of imitation seen in many aspects of their civilization, especially during the state's early decades.

#### 4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LANDSCAPE

As we understand by analysis of Urartian inscriptions, there was evidently a strategy aimed at the construction of a distinctive landscape after the conquest of enemy territories. As in the previous textual examples, Urartian documents are always more concise than Assyrian ones. Despite this, the numerous Urartian texts relating to the organization of new areas are clearly based on established practices, most likely still inspired by Assyrian models. The construction of the 'new landscape' passed through a series of repeated phases that involved, after the construction of the administrative centres, the organization of all the potentially exploitable land and territories. After the conquest of a new area, the provision of pre-existing fortresses was first checked. Those that responded to Urartian construction criteria, above all in terms of positioning, were kept and perhaps restructured, whereas the others were abandoned. In addition, new fortresses were built according to specific land control/management plans. Urartian fortresses were generally located in strategic high-altitude positions to control the surrounding territories, following the criterion of direct intervisibility between fortresses, but usually at lower elevations compared to the fortresses of previous periods. Fortress construction was always followed by the carefully planned organization of water resources, with the creation of artificial lakes and impressive works of canalization that channelled spring water and meltwater from thawed winter snow.<sup>8</sup> Currently forty-three Urartian inscriptions refer to the construction of various types of hydraulic works. The oldest one is an inscription from the time of Išpuini and Minua (CTU A 3-6), followed by thirty-two inscriptions by Minua<sup>9</sup>, three by Argišti I (CTU A 8-1, A 8-15, A 8-16), two by Sarduri II (CTU A 9-9, A 9-17), two by Argišti II (CTU A 11-1, A 11-2), seven by Rusa II (CTU A 12-1, A 12-2, A 12-3, A

12-4, A 12-5, A 12-5a, A 12-8) and two by Rusa III (CTU A 14-1, A 14-2).

#### 5. HYDRAULIC WORKS

KING	N° INSCR.	TYPE	AREAS
Išpuini and Minua	1	fountain	north of Lake Van
Minua	32*	canals, fountains, cisterns	Lake Van basin (31), Orumiyeh (1)
Argišti I	3	canals	Araxes basin (3)
Sarduri II	2	canals	Lake Van basin (2)
Argišti II	2	lakes, canals	Lake Van basin (2)
Rusa II	7	canals	Lake Van basin (3), Araxes basin (3), Orumiyeh (1)
Rusa III	2	lakes, canals	Lake Van basin (3)

\*Of these inscriptions, fourteen are dedicated to the same hydraulic work, the so-called 'Semiramide channel'. It is undoubtedly the most celebrated work in Urartian history. On this, see Salvini 1992.

It is evident that while certainly hundreds of hydraulic works were built during the course of Urartian history, only the most important ones were celebrated in cuneiform inscriptions. With regard to the data just presented, we must underline that, with the exception of Minua, there is a certain constancy in the quantity of major works celebrated, approximately two for each king. Constructions of this sort were, not unreasonably, concentrated mainly around the Lake Van basin, the heart of the kingdom and the most easily defensible area. We must bear in mind the cost in terms of building and maintenance of these works, which had to be built in peaceful areas, and maintain the operation and continuity of the production cycle, which was vital for the survival of the population during the long winters. After the establishment of the water-supply systems, the land was organized, and often terraced,<sup>10</sup> to take advantage of as much surface as possible to host vineyards, orchards and agricultural fields of various kinds. It is clear that the foundation of the fortress was only one aspect of a wider-ranging plan of modification of the whole territory. This type of intervention had a profound impact on

<sup>8</sup> On Urartian hydraulic works, see Çifçi, Greaves 2013; Dan 2014a.

<sup>9</sup> CTU A 5-12A, A 5-12B, A 5-12C, A 5-12D, A 5-13, A 5-14A, A 5-14B, A 5-14C, A 5-14D, A 5-15A, A 5-15B, A 5-15C, A 5-15D, A 5-15E, A 5-16, A 5-17, A 5-18, A 5-19, A 5-20, A 5-21, A 5-22, A 5-23, A 5-24, A 5-58A, A 5-58B, A 5-58C, A 5-59A, A 5-59B, A 5-59C, A 5-59D, A 5-62, A 5-67.

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that right in front of the Hazine Piri Kapısı inscription made by Išpuini (CTU A 2-5), located not far from Van, there are the remains of ancient terracing that probably housed the orchards and vineyards whose creation is celebrated in the inscription (Dan 2010, 59).

the landscape, an impact that emerges clearly in the admiring description that Sargon II gives of the territories under Urartian control in the Lake Orumiyeh region, which he crossed during his 8<sup>th</sup> campaign in 743 BC:

“(...) Moved by Tarmakisa and I approached [...]. Ulḫu, the fortified city at the foot of [the mountain ...] and his men like fish in [...] could not drink nor satiate. Ursā, the king who governed them, wishing [...] showed the exit of the waters, dug a channel that led the flowing water [...] he flowed [water] of plenty like the Euphrates, he derived innumerable ditches [...] irrigated the pastures. His uncultivated countryside, which has always [...] wet fruit trees and vines as rain, formed on his countryside a dome of plane trees and šurathu trees like a forest [...] and in his fields at rest he let his men [sing] the song arahḫu by raising like a god the sweet call *alāla*. With 300 some of seed it grew in abundant furrows so that the sale of barley doubled, the meadows changed its fields into uncultivated [and ...] in large quantities, and in spring grass, in winter and in autumn was the pasture grazing available without interruption, made it a fence for horses and herds of cattle, and domesticated the camels of its whole remote? country so that they could pile up ... [Built] on the bank of the canal a palace as a royal residence for his pleasure and covered it with juniper beams making it sweetly perfumed. In the Kišter region [built] the Sarduri-ḫurda fortress as an outpost and set it up for the protection of his country [the troops of ...] (...)”<sup>11</sup>

Urartian inscriptions frequently mention the type of crops and plantations that were created after the realization of the hydraulic systems. In the documents vineyards, orchards, wheat fields and more generic vegetable gardens are mentioned:

KING	INSCRIPTION (CTU)	PLACE	CONTENT
Išpuini	CTU A 2-5	Zivistan (Turkey)	vineyards/ orchards
Išpuini	CTU A 2-9A	Karahan (Turkey)	fortress/ vineyards/ orchards
Išpuini	CTU A 2-9B	Karahan (Turkey)	fortress/city/ vineyards/ orchards
Išpuini e Minua	CTU A 3-1	Meher Kapısı (Turkey)	vineyard/ orchards
Minua	CTU A 5-11A e B	Aznavurtepe (Turkey)	wheat fields/ vineyard
Minua	CTU A 5-28	Karahan (Turkey)	fortress/city/ vineyards/ orchards
Minua	CTU A 5-29 Ro	Karahan (Turkey)	fortress/city/ vineyards/ orchards

<sup>11</sup> English translation after Mayer 2013, 116-119 (col. II 199-212).

Minua	CTU A 5-30 Ro	Karahan (Turkey)	fortress/city/ vineyards/ orchards
Minua	CTU A 5-31 Ro	unknown	fortress/city/ vineyards/ orchards
Minua	CTU A 5-33	Köşk (Turkey)	gate of Ḫaldi/ fortress/ vineyards/ orchards
Tariria	CTU A 5A-1	Katepans (Turkey)	vineyards
Argišti I	CTU A 8-16	Sardarapat (Armenia)	vineyards/ vegetable gardens
Sarduri II	CTU A 9-11	Karataş (Turkey)	vineyards
Sarduri II	CTU A 9-12	Armavir (Armenia)	vineyards/ orchards
Sarduri II	CTU A 9-16	Davti-blur (Armenia)	vineyards/ orchards/ wheat fields
Sarduri II <sup>12</sup>	CTU A 9-17	Çavuştepe (Turkey)	vineyards/ wheat fields

As for the vineyards, especially in the early stages of Urartu, up to Minua, their establishment seems to have occurred in conjunction with the construction of new fortresses or inhabited areas and was often associated with the creation of orchards and wheat fields. Starting from Sarduri II, the construction of vineyards appears to be celebrated in a more exclusive way, without necessarily any association with other buildings, except for the hydraulic works that were often used precisely for their cultivation. The importance of wine, which evidently was not considered a mere drink, becomes explicit in a series of inscriptions in which it is mentioned in connection with libations for cultic purposes (CTU A 3-1, A 5-33, A 11-1Ro and Vo, A 12-1 V). Particularly interesting is the content of a stele from Zvartnots, bearing an inscription of Rusa II (first half of the 7th century BC, CTU A 12-8), which informs us about the Urartian *modus operandi* related to the organization of an area:

“To Ḫaldi, his Lord, this stele Rusa, the son of Argišti, erected. Under the power of Ḫaldi, Rusa, Argišti’s son, says: the valley of the village of Qublini was empty, nothing was here; as soon as Ḫaldi commanded, I planted this vineyard, (as well as) a

<sup>12</sup> The son and successor of Sarduri, Argišti (II), mentions vineyards in two duplicate inscriptions (CTU A 11-1 and A 11-2). Unfortunately the text is incomplete, and in the preserved part does not explicitly mention the vineyard’s realization, although this was probably mentioned in the continuation of the text, as in CTU A 14-1 and A 14-2. For this reason they have not been included in the present table.

field of wheat and an ex novo orchard I planted. I have founded new settlements here, a canal I deduced from the river Ildarunia named Umešini in the same (?) Rusa valley. (...)” (CTU A 12-8, ll. 1-16).

The inscription, which in accordance with Urartian usage contains a dedication to the god Haldi, the greatest deity of their pantheon, describes the creation of vineyards and orchards, the consequent creation of new settlements for the communities that had to occupy those lands, and the construction of hydraulic works for the area’s water supply. This was a usual practice; there are similar accounts in other Urartian inscriptions.

In a Sarduri II inscription, the looting of goods from a country, whose name has been lost, is mentioned. Among the spoils there are 111 *aqarqi* of wine (CTU A 9-3 VII). The wine was transported in large ceramic *pithoi* carried in carts drawn by animals. An example of this is illustrated on a metal plate from the Assyrian site of Balawat/Imgur-Enlil, located a short distance from the Assyrian capital Nimrud. The booty captured from an Urartian fortress at the time of the military campaigns of King Shalmaneser III in the Urartian highlands is depicted: a large terracotta *pithos* carried in a large four-wheeled cart pulled by men.<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that to exemplify the loot taken from the Urartian site the Assyrians chose a *pithos*, presumably full of wine. Once again the Assyrian sources help us to enrich our perception of the Urartian world. The narration of the VIII campaign against Rusa I king of Urartu (714 BC) carried out by the Assyrian king Sargon II is undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary and detailed accounts of a military campaign that has survived to this day. In the descriptions of the destruction and looting conducted by the Assyrian army, there are detailed accounts of the hydraulic works and gardens of the Urartian palaces that are located in the current area of Lake Urmia in north-western Iran<sup>14</sup>. These descriptions often include references to vineyards and the ‘sweet wine’ produced by the Urartians:

“(…) I entered fiercely into Ulḫu, the city where Ursā used to rest, and I went triumphant to the mansion of his royalty. (...) I opened his granaries and deposits and made to eat to my troops without limits the abundance of his barley, I entered in his secret cellars and the vast Assyrian armies drew sweet wine with wineskins and goatskin like [water] from a river. (...) I let my proud warriors enter his pleasant gardens which were the characteristic of his city, filled

with fruit trees and dripping vines like the rain of the sky and they made the sound of iron *kalappu* like the thunder of Adad resonate, they received abundant fruit without limits and left nothing for the future to an anguished heart to rejoice (...)”<sup>15</sup>

(...) I cut his lush gardens and cut his vines in large quantities putting an end to his sources of drink (...)”<sup>16</sup>

In these detailed descriptions, we can see the Assyrians’ admiration for the capacities and technological abilities of the Urartians, in particular regarding competent territorial management and the beauty of their lands full of fruit trees of all kinds. Regarding the advanced state of Urartian agriculture, we have important archaeological information from various Urartian sites. There is no doubt that most of the information comes from the organic material recovered by B.B. Piotrovsky inside the warehouses of the great fortress of Karmir-blur, in Armenia. The lower part contained more than 130 rooms<sup>17</sup> and constituted a sort of huge artificial terrace on which stood the palace areas, following an architectural model similar to that of Neo-Assyrian palaces of the same period, especially the almost contemporary palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad.<sup>18</sup> In these storerooms, which were filled with about 400 *pithoi* with an estimated capacity of between 800 and 1200 litres each; they were over two metres high and partly buried in the floor. Inside these *pithoi* an extraordinary quantity of grains was found that provides a great deal of information about Urartian agricultural crops and the rich diversity of food plants in the region.<sup>19</sup>

## 6. FORMS OF TERRITORIAL CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

The conquest and annexation of new territories by the Urartians involved two forms of control:

- 1) Direct control, through the creation of fortifications and administrative centres, the installation of local governors (probably from the royal family) and the allocation of permanent garrisons.
- 2) Indirect control, through the collection of taxes and local rulers’ dependence on Urartu.

While the first case is more easily detectable from an archaeological point of view due to the presence of canonical Urartian cultural markers, in the second

<sup>13</sup> King 1915, tav. VII.

<sup>14</sup> Paradoxically, the only area from which no Urartian inscriptions referring to vineyards are known is the Orumiyeh basin area, described in such detail by Sargon II.

<sup>15</sup> English translation after Mayer 2013, 120-121 (col. II 216-col. III 225).

<sup>16</sup> English translation after Mayer 2013, 122-123 (col. III 265).

<sup>17</sup> The fortress was not completely excavated, especially in the southern part, so the total number of rooms is unknown.

<sup>18</sup> Dan 2015, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Piotrovskij 1959, 131-160.



case the identification of archaeological evidence is very complex. First of all, it must be emphasized that the more we move away from the centre of the kingdom, the more archaeological remains, even of palaces, are less distinctive. Even in centres newly founded by the Urartians in peripheral areas, the signs of their presence may be scarcely distinguishable. Indeed, the absence of clear Urartian cultural markers, or the presence of local imitations of Urartian material (pottery, metal) or architectural culture, can lead to confusion with respect to the productions of neighbouring populations, where the process of imitation of Urartian state productions is known – and also typical of the relations between social organizations of different complexity (state-chiefdoms). The difficulty of recognizing these indirect forms of influence is also heightened by the existence of post-Urartian productions, with continuity in the production of red-polished ware which in some cases can be confused with lower quality Urartian pottery produced far from primary centres. An archaeological example of this indirect control is the fortress of Lchashen, located on the north-western shore of the Lake Sevan. This fortress stood on one of the roads that led from the Ararat valley to the southern shore of Lake Sevan (fig. 2).<sup>20</sup> It is an early Iron Age fortress, but with evident construction work from the Urartian period, especially around the rebuilt entrance door. However, the architecture of these modifications is not that ‘classic’ Urartian; it is possible that these interventions were carried out by a local governor who wanted to imitate contemporary Urartian structures using local workers. What is certain is that the fortress was in use in the middle Iron Age; a form of indirect control was perhaps in place here, with a local ruler who also served as governor for the Urartians.<sup>21</sup> In case the Urartians decided to occupy a new territory permanently, this practice would have been widespread. Once a new area was occupied, the actions pursued were as follows:

- 1) maintenance of the smaller centres, which were mainly agricultural, without alteration;
- 2) verification of the possibility of re-using pre-existing fortifications;
- 3) construction of an administrative centre and new outposts;
- 4) construction of ‘road stations’ that facilitated communication with the new area.

The first action and second actions were aimed at maximizing energy and manpower savings. Above all, the maintenance of agricultural centres provided for or maintained the local population

without major alterations. At times new groups deported from other regions were installed, and also used as forced labour. This circumstance clearly emerges from the annals of Argišti I (CTU A 8-3 II, ll. 32-77) and in one of the foundation inscriptions on the site of Arin-berd/Erebuni, one of the earliest administrative centres built by the Urartians on the northern side of the River Araxes. Both texts recount that to build the fortress 6600 soldiers were brought from the lands of Ḫatti and Šupa. In order to save energy, the possibility of re-using pre-existing sites was verified. Existing fortresses were assessed with regard to their agreement with Urartian parameters, above all for strategic positioning. In the event that the fortresses were maintained, they were refurbished and modified according to Urartian needs, to advertize their presence and to create an architecture that was distinctive. The addition of buttresses or the rebuilding of some parts of walls in some cases is very evident.<sup>22</sup> The conquered sites that did not possess Urartian characteristics were abandoned.<sup>23</sup> After these checks, the newly founded centres were built. As mentioned earlier, the fundamental element in the construction of the Urartian landscape was the foundation of the fortresses. An Urartian fortress was not just a military structure, but possessed multiple functions. It was an administrative headquarters, royal palace, religious centre and location of the central storerooms. Urartian sites have been divided into four or five hierarchical levels that testify to the complexity and variety of the settlement system

<sup>22</sup> For example, this happened in the Lake Sevan basin area, where the pre-Urartian fortresses of Kra and Tsovinar were adapted to be Urartian centres but built according to local traditions. The local influence on this architecture is so evident that it suggests that they were built ‘with the participation, or maybe even under the direction, of local architects’ (Sanamyan 2002, 323-324; Biscione 2005).

<sup>23</sup> An interesting exception to this practice is the Hasanlu Tappeh site. The site was clearly abandoned after the destruction wreaked by Išpuini and Minua, for quite clear reasons: it was a large site but was not located on a hill that could be well defended. The Urartians would never have established an administrative centre in place of an important city-state located in the middle of a vast plain. However, something happened towards the end of the history of Urartu when they decided, however, to try to re-use the abandoned ruins of the site. Indeed, as R. Biscione first showed (Biscione 1972, 13), and S. Kroll later (Kroll 2010), the unfinished Urartian fortifications on the top of the Hasanlu site appear to date to the time of Rusa II (first half of the 7th century BC), since they are very similar to those of Karmir-blur/Teišebai URU. This can be explained by Rusa’s wish to partially change the organizational structure of the territory, a circumstance that must have determined the position of Karmir-blur itself. It is the only known administrative centre built not on a large hill, but on the plain (like Hasanlu). At present little is known of this change in the settlement pattern.

<sup>20</sup> Dan 2018, 357-361.

<sup>21</sup> Biscione, Parmegiani 2006, 297.

implemented by the Urartians.<sup>24</sup> Urartian fortresses possess all the characteristics of the cities on the plains of the Near East, but have neither the size nor the population. The lower cities which surrounded the Urartian settlements are not comparable to the residential areas of Near Eastern cities, since they housed rather sparse populations closely connected with the activities that took place in the fortress. The lower cities of Urartu testify to a system of population distribution and a concept of agglomeration completely different from those of the plains; the fortress and the lower city are clearly non-urban complexes.<sup>25</sup> The administrative centres were built *ex novo*; even when on pre-existing sites they did not make use of earlier structures. Their position within the valley was established on the basis of the area's physical geography. Preferred sites were hills or large rocky spurs surrounded by flat land. These circumstances apply to sites such as the capital Van Kalesi/Tuşpa, as well as Arin-berd/Erebuni, Davti-blur/Argiştihinili and Çavuştepe/Sardurihinili. In other cases, in the absence of these landscape features, the directional centres were built on plain margins. An example is Bastam/Rusai URU.TUR, built on an imposing rocky spur on the western edge of the plain of Qarah Zia od Din. The other fortresses were built for different purposes.<sup>26</sup> Those relating to land control were built to form a protective ring around an administrative centre. These structures were built on large hills near mountains or halfway up the outer edge of mountains overlooking valleys. The criterion with which they were sited was that of direct intervisibility.

Cases in which there was no direct visibility between secondary sites and the administrative centre are rarer. This type of system was partly inherited by the Urartians through the – at least partial – maintenance of the settlement pattern of the Late Bronze/early Iron Age. The emblematic example of the construction practice adopted by the Urartians is that of the Van plain, which is also where the oldest Urartian inscriptions related to the construction of buildings and the general arrangement of the area are found. Here, once the capital was established by Sarduri I on the limestone Van cliff in the centre of the plain of the same name, his successors, his son Ispuini and nephew Minua, constructed a ring of eight fortresses, forming an arc of 180° on the exposed side of the capital<sup>27</sup> to protect against any access from the

Van plain (A. Anzaf, Y. Anzaf, Kalecik, Kız Kalesi, Kavuncu), and also to support the capital in the agricultural exploitation of the fertile plain itself (Y. Anzaf, Kevenli, Zivistan, Kız Kalesi, Kıratlı). These fortifications all had direct visibility with the capital with the exception of the fortresses of Anzaf, which were the most distant and separated from the plain by a series of hills. Communication was still guaranteed by smoke signals.<sup>28</sup> This model made in Van, which was improved and strengthened throughout Urartian history, served as a template for all the later operations of territorial organization.<sup>29</sup>

#### 7. SOME REMARKS ON THE USE OF TIMBER DURING URARTIAN TIMES

A modern-day traveller through the Urartu highlands cannot fail to notice that they are mostly rather barren mountainous areas with rather fragmented forests concentrated in small patches. The situation before Urartu's advent must have been very different. Timber was cut for the following activities:

- 1) Firewood for domestic heating;
- 2) Timber as a building material;
- 3) Timber felled to clear land to be used for agriculture;
- 4) Timber used for metallurgy

The quantity of wood used by the Urartians was certainly without precedent in these regions, since Urartu was the first state in the region and consequently possessed a greater degree of organizational complexity and structuring compared to previous eras. The maintenance of the inhabitants of the hundreds of fortresses throughout the winter would certainly have required the accumulation of large quantities of wood that had to be stored directly in specific areas inside the fortresses, to prevent it getting wet or being covered by metres of snow. The construction of the fortress itself must have required large quantities of timber. It has been estimated that for the construction of the fortress of Ayanis, in eastern Turkey, 40,000 tall trees would have been used, which would correspond to around 10 to 20 hectares of destroyed forest. These estimates support the idea that these ancient construction activities could have played a very important role in the process of deforestation of these regions.<sup>30</sup> Metalworking, for which the Urartian

eastern shore of Lake Van. The water level of the lake in Urartian times would have been considerably lower. An article by the same authors of this article is currently in preparation on this topic.

<sup>28</sup> If today one looks from the top of the cliff of Van in the direction of the fortresses of Anzaf, the effect that these must have made in antiquity may be imagined. Unfortunately, not far from the fortresses a modern landfill has been built, which constantly produces fumes related to combustion activities.

<sup>29</sup> On the ring of fortresses that defended the Urartian capital, see Dan 2014b; 2017, 193-196.

<sup>30</sup> Çilingiroğlu 2004, 214.

<sup>24</sup> Biscione 2012, 80-81, 85-86; Biscione, Dan 2011, 107-08, 110; 2014, 122-123.

<sup>25</sup> Biscione 2002, 364-365; forthcoming.

<sup>26</sup> On the different types of Urartian fortresses, see Hejebri-Nobari 2007.

<sup>27</sup> The east side was naturally defended by the presence of the

were famous, also needed large quantities of timber. All these activities certainly led to a rapid process of deforestation in the roughly two centuries of Urartu's existence, which would also have caused considerable change in the ecosystem. It is clear that while Urartian had large forests, its situation was diametrically opposed to that in Mesopotamia. Although, as was rightly noted,<sup>31</sup> Urartian inscriptions never mention the removal of timber from plundered territories, the same cannot be said for the Assyrians, as for example in the account of the destruction by Sargon II of the Urartian fortresses in the Orumiyeh area, from which the wooden beams were removed to be transported to Assyria. The intensive exploitation of forests continued, albeit in different ways and quantities, up to the Middle Ages where there was a peak in forest destruction probably comparable to that of the Urartian era. The continuous forest depletion was probably the basic cause of the progressive drying up of the territory, which, once deprived of vegetation cover, in some areas – especially in the Orumiyeh basin – went through a process of desertification.<sup>32</sup> The subsistence capacity of the territory, initially high enough to allow for the first time the creation of a highly complexed social organization in the region, had no way to renew itself due to the ever-increasing continuous harvest of vegetation. The end of Urartu is still an open question.<sup>33</sup> However, it is interesting to consider the possibility that this deforestation process, together with possible climatic changes, may have been one of the factors that contributed to the progressive weakening of Urartu.

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<sup>31</sup> Çilingiroğlu 2004, 214.

<sup>32</sup> The term 'desertification' is used in this context in the sense of general drying of the land that did not necessarily result in a fully-fledged desert.

<sup>33</sup> Regarding the end of Urartu – or more precisely the end of the Urartian royal dynasty, and the survival of portions of the Urartian state as independent city states up to the Achaemenid conquest of the Armenian Highlands, see Dan 2015, 4-7.

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## PLACENTAS, SIEVES AND THE ANCESTORS

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### *Abstract*

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Egyptologists used anthropological studies from East Africa to understand the “primitive” phases of Egyptian civilization, separate from the high culture of Pharaonic Egypt. The interpretation of the meaning of a hieroglyphic sign provides an apt example of the importance of studying any analogies in their full context.

Art in ancient Egypt uses scale to express importance, not just among gods and mortals, but also to articulate relations in the family. The group statue of Ka-Nefer shows his wife kneeling at his feet, his son standing to his right (fig. 1). Clearly Ka-Nefer is the protagonist of this family group, while his wife and son are depicted approximately at a scale of a fifth of his size. From the same period dates a fragment of a noble and his wife (fig. 2). Rather than being relegated to embrace her husband’s calf (the gesture in which Ka-Nefer’s wife is depicted), the nameless noble woman lovingly wraps her left arm around her husband’s shoulders and lightly holds his fore arm with her right hand. It seems to be a sign of appreciation, dignity and equality, perhaps with a hint of restraint.

When I think of Giorgio and Marilyn, then I think of that loving couple: two equally sized, equally impressive scholars, who have always worked closely together, but who remain distinct persons, with their own careers. Co-directing excavations, authoring articles and books together, requires great talent in delivering and accepting input, ideas and critique. They are both colorful and vibrant, much like the painted limestone statues of high status tomb owners of Egypt’s Old Kingdom. They are the scholarly giants on which next and future generations of archaeologists stand. Most importantly, they treat the people with whom they work closely together as members of an extended family: their American, Italian and Syrian students, the women of the villages around Mozan, and their close colleagues in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, as well as the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, of which Giorgio was the founding father, and Marilyn the ever-present mother. By now they are grandparents of Marianna and of the PhDs of the students of their students. In my contribution to this

book, which celebrates their scholarly work, I want to highlight some familial matters in ancient Egypt.

Egyptology has a history in which the culture of ancient Egypt is considered unique, perhaps even superior to those around it, similar to the way that anciently the country and its culture presented itself in textual and visual sources. The Middle Kingdom Tale of Sinuhe stresses how the protagonist who fled Egypt, came upon well-educated people in the Levant who took him in and actually spoke Egyptian. Nevertheless, the story ends with his relief and thankfulness that he was allowed to return to Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The xenophobic or even vilifying approach to foreigners as enemies of Egypt is prevalent in, especially royal, visual representations, but hides a complexity and fluidity in actual relationships.<sup>2</sup> The importance of understanding ancient Egypt as a multivalent entity in a cultural continuum that comprises southwest Asia and the eastern Mediterranean has been recognized, but northern and northeast Africa are often excluded in those approaches. This was different in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when several researchers used anthropological research in Nilotic or East African cultures, to draw far reaching conclusions based on perceived similarities of cultural traits. The analogies were drawn based on the reasoning that the primitive stages of Egyptian culture (the Pre- and Protodynastic periods) were best compared to primitive African cultures. This approach was stimulated by the rise of the discipline of Anthropology, for instance at Oxford University, where Egyptology was understood broadly, and considered to potentially

<sup>1</sup> Parkinson 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Schneider 2010, 147.

provide an important contribution to understanding ancient cultures world-wide.<sup>3</sup>

An example is the identification of the hieroglyph depicted in figure 3 (fig. 3). In the early days of Egyptology, the identification of the hieroglyphic signs was an important subject of study and speculation. This research is still relevant, because hieroglyphs are not only representative of a sound combination, but also contain a tacit classification of Egyptian thought. This is in particularly true for the “determinatives” or “classifiers”, the signs that in Egyptian are at the end of words and have no sound, but indicate the content of the term<sup>4</sup>. A good example is the hieroglyphic spelling of *khet*, which can mean “wood” when it has the branch classifier. It can also mean “thing” when the classifier is a scroll, a determinative that generally stands for abstract concepts (table 1).








Hieroglyph	Transcription	Translation and comment
	<i>h - kh</i>	Hieroglyph Aa1
	<i>ht - khet</i>	Wood
	<i>ht - khet</i>	Thing
	<i>hy - khy</i>	Child
	<i>hnw nsw - khenu nesu</i>	The inner thing of the king
	<i>hnw nsw - khenu nesu</i>	The inner thing of the king
	<i>hnsu - Khonsu</i>	The moon god Khonsu

Table 1 Spelling of referenced terms written with hieroglyph Aa1

Gardiner’s Grammar organized the signs in 27 categories, each named with a letter of the western alphabet, of which the last one (Aa) stands for “unknown or uncertain”.<sup>5</sup> Hieroglyph Aa1 is our circle with horizontal stripes, while in some cases the parallel stripes are slanted (fig. 3). The number of stripes is variable and in reliefs they are sometimes carved, other times painted on. The color of Aa1 can be green or yellow with black, red or yellow stripes.<sup>6</sup> Gardiner gave a tentative identification of this hieroglyph as “placenta”. The research history underlying this suggestion is interesting, because it shows the early British anthropological slant of Egyptology.

In an article from 1911 the Egyptologist Margaret Murray and the MD C.G. Seligman drew attention to a Predynastic symbol, usually depicted on a standard (fig 4). They interpreted this sign, a bulbous shape with one or two streamers coming down from it, as a placenta, and more specifically the placenta of the king. They pointed at the importance of the placenta among the Baganda from central Africa, where the after-birth was called “the second child”, as well as the importance of the placenta among the Shilluk and the Swahili. Murray and Seligman outlined a link between the reverence of the Baganda for the jawbone and the royal umbilical cord (rather than the placenta proper), with Egyptian royal symbolism. The Baganda revered and protected the stump of the umbilical cord, and this “second child” also featured in certain ritual occasions. The phenomenon that many of the early rulers of Egypt seem to have two tombs, or a pyramid with a subsidiary grave or smaller pyramid, was linked to the suggestion that in ancient Egypt too, a king’s “double” was held in high esteem.<sup>7</sup>

If the placenta was thought to be the bulbous object known from the royal standards, why then was the circular striped hieroglyph also considered to represent the placenta? The argument for this was related to an unspoken supposition by the Egyptologists of the day. In early Egyptology it was generally accepted, although not supported with any evidence, that every graphic sign obtained its phonetic value from a primal word in the Egyptian language used to describe the original object represented by that sign. In other words, the phonetic value of Aa1, the consonant *h* was thought to equal the object that the sign represented. The word *h* or *hy* is one of the Egyptian words that seem to mean “child”, but is not commonly used. It consists only of the Aa1 hieroglyph followed by a classifier depicting a young child, or in some cases a young child wearing a white crown. This was taken as evidence that *h* specifically indicated the royal child (table 1). Based on the previously mentioned speculative link to the Baganda and other African peoples, the suggestion was made that *h*, or *hy* was not just “child”, or “royal child”, but “second child”, in the form of the royal after-birth.

Because the argument was made by Blackman that the word *hy* represented the royal placenta, it followed that the circular sign with horizontal stripes should be taken to represent the after-birth. Thus the suggestion that the sign Aa1 should be interpreted as a placenta was taken up by Gardiner in his sign list, but still under the category Aa, “uncertain”.

In 1916, Aylward Blackman continued this argument by pointing out that the emblem on the head

<sup>3</sup> Stevenson 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Goldwasser 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Gardiner 1927; Gardiner 1950; Gardiner 1957.

<sup>6</sup> Griffith 1898.

<sup>7</sup> Seligmann, Murray 1911.

of a goddess in the birth scene in Deir el-Bahari had some similarity to a Baganda reliquary containing the desiccated stump of the royal umbilical cord.<sup>8</sup> The author voiced the critique that inevitably was expected to follow such speculation already in the article itself:

“I am painfully conscious of the weakness of my arguments and especially of the dubious nature of the documentary evidence. Indeed the only written records that can in any way be said to support my supposition are a very ambiguous sentence in the Pyramid Texts, and a portion of a very late version of the Seth-Horus legend, the interpretation of which is made difficult by rare and obscure words and a lacuna at an important point. It is a far cry from Uganda to Egypt.”,

but then follows with

“Yet it must be remembered that the Baganda royal family is Hamitic in origin, and consequently akin to the Proto-Egyptians.”<sup>9</sup>

By 1916 the writing of the word *nsw* for “king” had been firmly established and the term *hnw nsw* (*khenu nesu*), the “innermost of the king”, or “the inner thing of the king”, was taken as meaning the royal placenta. From there Blackman set out to demonstrate that the hieroglyphic sign Aa1 itself represented a placenta, even if the bag-like depiction of the placenta on the royal standard was very different. Blackman not only pointed to the Baganda for parallels, but also to Sumerian and Akkadian texts. Furthermore, he linked the sign to the god *Khons*, spelled *hns* (Table 1), as the personification of the royal placenta. In later texts and imagery *Khons* was often depicted as a falcon headed moon god, but he is also known in his representation as a youth, with the side lock of childhood.<sup>10</sup> The duality of a personality is well-established in our understanding of ancient Egyptian personhood, but usually the “double” is the *ka*, or the life force of a person.<sup>11</sup>

Van der Leeuw, the Dutch specialist in Egyptian religion, took up the argument in a short note in 1918.<sup>12</sup> He enthusiastically agreed with Blackman’s reasoning and furthered the argument by seeking an explanation of why *Khons* as moon god would be connected to the royal placenta. He saw the moon as the counterpart of the sun, similar to the way the Pyramid texts refer to the gods *Ra* and *Thoth* as sun and moon, who are sailing together through the sky. In the early Old Kingdom the title Son of *Ra* became

a standardized designation for the king, although Van der Leeuw suggested that *Ra*, the sun, was the king par excellence and his placenta would logically be represented by *Thoth*, the moon. Thus the link of the god *Khons* with the moon would have risen as a result of his connection to the royal after-birth, an association which the author considered to represent the primary function of the god.

The matter is still unresolved and requires further study. The term that is known for ‘placenta’ (*mwt rm.t*, “mother of people”) is not written with the hieroglyph Aa1. The classifier at the end of the word is that of “people” (a man, a woman and three stripes indicating the plural, followed by the sign for “flesh”, Gardiner sign list F51). The word for umbilical cord (*npꜣ*) has as its determinative a coil of string (Gardiner V1) and the three plural signs.

The most thorough argument on the object depicted by sign Aa1 was made by Silvio Curto, who traced the speculative identification of the hieroglyph to Murray and Blackman. Curto considered carefully what the different appearances of the sign were over time, including the carving, coloring and painted lines, which provide details that are only visible on signs on which the paint is preserved. He discussed the rules of representation in art and alternative interpretations, such as a tambourine, a round bread loaf or a ball, but finally made a convincing argument that this sign represents a sieve instead.<sup>13</sup>

Extant sieves mostly date to the New Kingdom Period, and are made of palm leaf, most often from the thick fan-shaped leaves of the doam palm (*Hyphaene thebaica*), or from the hard nerves of the feathered leaves of the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*). A grid of regularly spaced, parallel sturdy strips is held in place by rows of twining. This is a basketry technique that consists of two leaf strips that are twisted around the parallel strands and each other to hold the grid in place. The functionality of the sieve (and the fineness of the lattice) depends on the size of the strands and on how narrow the strips and twining rows are spaced. The rim is generally coiled and can vary between just one row of coiling (fig. 5), or of multiple rows, thus forming a low open basket with an open mesh as base. Such high-rimmed sieves were, for instance, used in the process of brewing beer.

Twining and coiling are the oldest basketry techniques that have been attested in Egypt. Twined matting has been found in many of the Predynastic burials, while evidence for well-developed and finely coiled baskets dates back as early as the Neolithic. Even though we do not have extant evidence, the methods used to make sieves through a combination

<sup>8</sup> Blackman 1916a.

<sup>9</sup> Blackman 1916a, 206.

<sup>10</sup> Blackman 1916b.

<sup>11</sup> Wendrich 2010b.

<sup>12</sup> Van der Leeuw 1918.

<sup>13</sup> Curto 1959.

of these two techniques were certainly available by the time the writing system was developed. Curto mentioned that several of the oldest hieroglyphs actually have two vertical stripes, in addition to the horizontal stripes. This is in keeping with how twined matting was depicted in Old Kingdom tombs.<sup>14</sup>

No “primordial” word for sieve is known that is composed with the *h* sound. This does not necessarily mean that such a word never existed. As today, the thousand kilometers long Nile Valley undoubtedly had many local terminologies and dialects. Nevertheless, we need to question whether the hunt for the “origin word” for a hieroglyphic sign might be asking the wrong question. There are clear indications that ancient Egyptians had at times difficulty in understanding the textual and visual communications from their ancestors. The habit to present every symbol, theme or phrase as belonging to an (often imaginary) continuum and continuity of meaning makes it difficult for Egyptologists to identify where and how re-interpretation took place, but the extensive use of rubrics, glosses written in red to indicate clarifications of older texts, are a clear indication that the meaning of the words of the ancestors was changed to be understood within each new context.

If we start, instead, by looking at the meaning of sieves then we can find several instances of a relation to child birth in ethnography. Winifred Blackman, the sister of Aylward and the first woman working in Egypt who was trained as an anthropologist, described a particular use of a large sieve by women in 1920’s Egypt. She even included a photograph of an older woman who demonstrated how a sieve was used as support during delivery of a child.<sup>15</sup> A woman who was about to give birth did so upright, squatting on a stool or birthing bricks and supporting herself by leaning on a large sieve. The daily use of a sieve at that time depended on the size of the mesh. The finest quality was used to sieve flour. The coarser grids were employed in the last phase of winnowing, as well as on a daily basis for sorting and cleaning grain such as wheat, barley or rice and legumes such as beans, chickpeas, peas and lentils.

The sieving and sorting of these seven most widely used grains and legumes have a parallel in the use of a sieve in a present day ceremony to celebrate a baby’s birth. During the *sebu*a festivities, a ritual that takes place on the seventh day after the birth, the baby is put in a sieve, usually on top of seven kinds of grain and legumes. The child is (gently) shaken or sifted, to ensure good health, prosperity and fertility. The women of the house surround the baby and its

mother, making loud noises by banging metal pestles and mortars. They shout advice to the baby, among which the most important, and tongue in cheek is “Listen to your mother; don’t listen to your father!”<sup>16</sup> The receptacle used to be a sieve that was normally employed in the house or the field, but when I attended a birth festival in 2006 the family went to a specialized shop to purchase a decorative sieve especially for the ceremony. This was a lower class family that did not have much spending power, and yet the purchase of the *sebu*a sieve was considered a vital element of the celebrations. When asked the reason why the sieve was essential to the ritual, the family was reluctant to give one, perhaps because the festive use of the sieve, wide-spread among Coptic Christians and Muslims alike, does not have a particular “official” religious meaning.

These links of the sieve to child-birth, and especially to the celebration of the seven-day survival of a child do not provide any insight in the original meaning of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic sign. This does not mean that there may not have existed a relationship of birthing rituals with hieroglyphic signs representing every day household objects. The convoluted reasoning that linked the Aa1 sign with the royal placenta as the young king’s “double” is, however, an example of associative thinking based on presumed “Hamitic blood relations.” The importance of blood as an ethnic link is a Eurocentric approach and such arguments are not considered an acceptable basis to surmise direct historical analogies of present day ethnographic phenomena with “Proto-Egyptians.” The fact that early Egyptologists did not consider such, biblically founded, blood relations as suitable interpretations to explain the culture of later phases of Egyptian culture, such as the Old Kingdom or other Pharaonic periods, shows that they considered both the Pre- and Proto-Dynastic Periods, as well as the early 20th century East African cultures as primitive. It is in line with theories that surmised a “dynastic race”, which was supposed to have entered Egypt from Mesopotamia and conquered Egypt, establishing the dynasties that led to the pyramid builders. Such theories are considered inherently racist by present day authors. It is shocking to realize that these theories, developed in the 1920’s continued to be published until the mid and late twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> While keeping our distance from such fallacious reasoning, it is nevertheless important to appreciate the potential of considering East African cultures as a valid basis for comparison and a correction of a mostly Eurocentric approach to ancient cultures.

<sup>14</sup> Wendrich 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Blackman 1927.

<sup>16</sup> el-Assyouti n.d. with thanks to Maryan Raghav for this reference; see Gamal 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Derry 1956; Adamson 1985.



## CONCLUSION

The efforts to explain the very early phases of Egyptian culture, especially the origin of writing and the Predynastic symbolism, by making use of much later evidence, is a very problematic approach. Opaque allusions to Osiris and other gods in the pyramid texts cannot be explained by referencing Greco-Roman narratives, which date to over three millennia later.<sup>18</sup> Selecting specific phenomena that have a vague, and intuitive resemblance with those in cultures that are removed in time and space is an incorrect use of analogy. On the other hand, it sometimes works well to consider terminology in relation to the materiality of Egyptian representations. Exegesis based on daily life interpretation of generally used objects can help to avoid far-flung speculation and may lead to new insights.<sup>19</sup> The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century interest in the anthropological approach of ancient Egypt has led to very interesting comparisons with Nilotic cultures, even if the reasoning behind these is completely unacceptable at present. To consider ancient Egyptian culture as an African culture, provides the opportunity to seek potentially useful analogies. This will only be successful, however, if this approach avoids the pitfalls of previous attempts, by making use of well-developed theory and method.

A good starting point is to consider ethnoarchaeological research and the fierce debates around it. Ethnoarchaeology has been critiqued and vilified.<sup>20</sup> However, ethnoarchaeological researchers have developed methods of carefully drawing analogies within the cultural context. A proper use of ethnoarchaeology, then, is the study of present day society from archaeological research questions, without considering analogous phenomena as being necessarily, directly or historically, related. This type of research provides an avenue to broaden our understanding of ancient Egyptian culture, without using analogous reasoning to identify “survivals” of ancient Egypt in present day societies. While a critical approach to a flawed use of analogy is vital, we all use analogy in some form or another. Doing so in an explicit and critical manner is an extremely important endeavor and a powerful heuristic tool.<sup>21</sup>

Studying East African cultures as the broader context of ancient Egyptian culture is of importance, but not as a means to discover “survivals” of ancient cultures, or drawing a direct historical relationship. Studying cultural phenomena in different contexts is usually helpful, as long as they are not considered in isolation, but as part of the broader cultural fabric.

Moreover the constant change, development and reinterpretation of culture more often than not proves that “ancestral” traditions are not necessarily long-lived. Developments that can be traced back three or four generations are considered carved in stone and everlasting. The limitation of human cultural memory results in the phenomenon that after a few generations re-interpreted rituals become eternal truths much like beloved deceased become - often nameless - ancestors. Even if rituals or habits appear to be identical, their meaning most probably will have changed over time and in conversation with their changing contexts. Studying only one aspect of a society, be this the special care of preserving the royal umbilical cord, or the production of ceramics, is bound to give a skewed impression, which makes taking formally analogous aspects, ideas and attitudes outside their context very problematic. Considering similarities in culture as the result of shared “Hamitic blood” is a fraught explanatory framework, especially after the abuses in the past, and the continuing misapplication of identities in conflicts where perceived race, ethnic or tribal differences are central arguments for attacking the other. Egypt’s position in East Africa invites us to look at the wider region to aid in understanding human culture, as well as its interaction with the environment.

For almost a century, students of Egyptology have thus learned that the hieroglyph known as Aa1 in Gardiner’s sign list, perhaps represented a placenta. The suggestion of Silvio Curto, who in 1959 argued that the hieroglyph most probably represents a sieve, rather than a placenta, seems however more likely. The tentative identification of Aa1 as placenta was based on early twentieth century anthropological work in East Africa and the analogical reasoning that led to this identification, also led to the interpretation of an unknown word for child, and a term that refers to “the inner thing of the King”, as evidence for a special ritual or consideration of the royal placenta. This interpretation needs to be revisited if the sign is interpreted as a sieve. In the early twentieth century, and in many regions of Egypt still today, the practical uses of sieves were often related to harvest and food preparation. Both childbirth and the festive ceremonies on the seventh day after a child was born, featured sieves. At present both Coptic and Muslim households celebrate the *sebua* by putting the child in a sieve with seven different grains and pulses. This connection with celebrations around the birth of a child is a means to provide good health, fertility and affluence, rather than a distant memory to rites regarding the after birth. Although the art of writing provides a means of bridging generations, it is naïve to suppose that the interpretations and meanings of the texts are immutable. Focusing on the continuous re-interpretation of Egyptian signs, symbols and texts that

<sup>18</sup> Wendrich 2010a.

<sup>19</sup> Wendrich 2006.

<sup>20</sup> David, Kramer 2001; Gosselain 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Wylie 1985.

took place over 4000 years of Egyptian history, opens up questions that can only be understood by taking into account the agency of both ancient and present-day cultures. The conundrum whether hieroglyph Aa1 depicts a placenta is, therefore, asking the wrong question. We are not looking for the ancestors of the signs, but for the Egyptian understanding of the signs from their ancestors.

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Fig. 1. Old Kingdom Group Statue of Ka-Nefer, and his family (Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX). This image is in the public domain.



Fig. 2. Old Kingdom statue fragment of a loving couple, depicted at the same size, 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty, ca. 2494-2345 BCE (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, photograph by Daderot). This image is in the public domain.

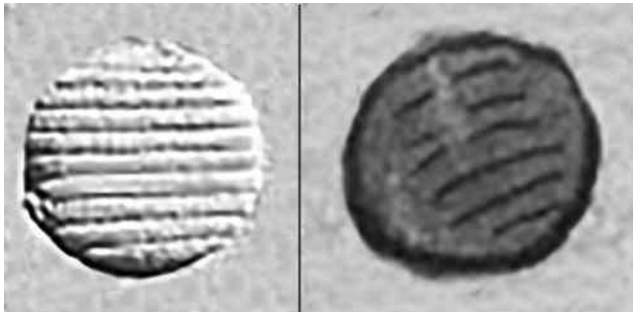


Fig. 3. Two variants of hieroglyph Aa1: to the left a raised bas relief version from the Old Kingdom stela of Ka-Aper, to the right a painted version, green with black lines, from the New Kingdom tomb of Queen Nefertari.



Fig. 4. The Narmer Palette and the standard with the bulbous object, interpreted as placenta. This image is in the public domain.

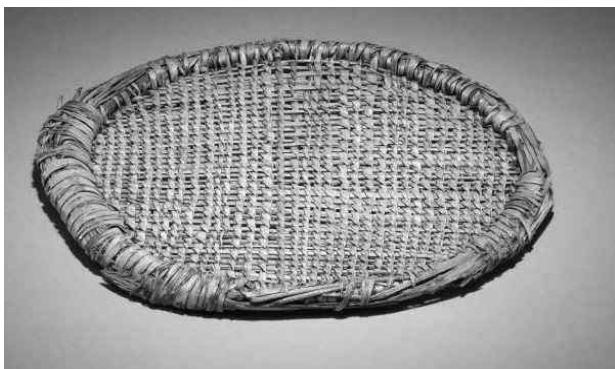


Fig. 5. New Kingdom sieve from the workmen's village in Amarna, British Museum 1921, EA55130 (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

## GIORGIO BUCCELLATI'S *CRITIQUE* AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

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### Abstract

This contribution takes Professor Giorgio Buccellati's recent book (2017) as a point of departure for discussion on several theoretical matters, and is meant as a token of my deep appreciation and admiration for this magnum opus of a great philologist turned great archaeologist. As they say, behind all great men there stands a great woman, and these lines double as a token of dear friendship and appreciation also for Marilyn.

Anyone concerned with the 'explanation' of cultural phenomena tries to formulate the necessary steps to proceed from observation, through perception, to understanding. Whether dealing with architecture, music, hand tools or anything else, what is sensed by our eyes, ears and touch is subjected to those steps, at least in our everyday idea of scientific procedure.

Giorgio Buccellati has recently served us with an impressive theoretical treatise that contains his ideas on what archaeologists do and should do in their desk work and in their field work in order to achieve an understanding of the meaning of the things we dig up in their contexts. This book constitutes a serious addition to archaeological thinking which deserves serious attention; the following lines are an attempt to enter the arena and take up some of our honoree's points.

The author paints a meticulous picture of how the archaeologist's activities might progress, and one of his tools to that end is his definition of "grammar": "...I use the term to refer to a formalized insight into the very life of an organism."<sup>1</sup> This formalized insight might be described as an evolved (as in structurally generated) patterning of cultural traits. "Grammar focuses on the inner dimension of a system (...) with an emphasis on its structural make-up", and: "Hermeneutics, on the other hand, focuses on the extra-referential dimension of a cultural system."<sup>2</sup> One might call this the "etic" side of explanation.

What we find in the ground is the material precipitate of a human culture. Especially when that culture is not ours, the links that we posit between objects and their meaning or function (Binford's "Middle Range Theory") are tenuous and uncertain;

Buccellati speaks of "broken tradition" in this context.<sup>3</sup> The book is full of ideas on the possibilities and pitfalls of interpretation, and by isolating and naming various steps in our processes of interpretation, he strives to achieve a better-fitting approach to meaning and function, in short, to a more securely based understanding of material culture.

There exists a huge literature on understanding cultural traits in anthropology as well as in archaeology, both of general scope and for specific cases, and we cannot do justice to it here. Concerning the understanding of the various Mesopotamian cultures I have always been impressed by Landberger's term *Eigenbegrifflichkeit*, which is a valuable term for an object of research on the meaning of cultural phenomena; but of course this term does not imply *impossibility* of understanding.<sup>4</sup> In reflection on the interpretation of Mesopotamian and Syrian architecture one also has to deal with the possibilities of misinterpreting iconography which at first sight looks quite simple.<sup>5</sup> What all these discussions have in common is our innate but frustrated quest for certainty – the best we can hope to achieve is unequivocal theories.

Without going into "the meaning of meaning",<sup>6</sup> our common aim is to find the most probable function that an object or a constellation of objects had for the original maker and user. "Original" is a key-word here, because multi-functionality and later adaptation and adoption are of course ubiquitous cultural phenomena, and they in themselves pose a further problem for interpretation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati 2017, 28. See also p. 52: "An archaeological grammar spells out a method of analysis into which all the individual techniques neatly fit so as to produce an organic and well-integrated record."

<sup>2</sup> Buccellati 2017, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Buccellati 2017, 22f. and cf. 301.

<sup>4</sup> Meijer 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Meijer 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Ogden, Richards 1923.

<sup>7</sup> The "original" in this remark may lead to misunderstanding. It refers to the primary intention of the maker, who undoubtedly aims for a specific reception. That other receptions or 'meanings' can be read into his product by others is a different matter, whether we are talking about pots, architecture, or art. For

Attributing meaning “does not mean fabricating and projecting, but rather letting the object of study disclose what meaning was enshrined in it,”<sup>8</sup> and to that end Buccellati devises his ‘grammar’: “...we build on the results of stratigraphic, typological and integrative analysis, but going one step further, for we look now for the deeper reasons that triggered those particular configurations that we have established on the basis of formal correlations.”<sup>9</sup> Two approaches are considered useful for formalizing this grammar: *distribution* and *linking*, and “in both instances, it is the existence of patterning that is relevant for our question.”<sup>10</sup> This interesting statement opens up a whole array of points for discussion, which I shall try to pick a few items out of.

To my mind this patterning just referred to is just a perception by us, archaeologists, and it is not inherent in the material. This means that we shove the problem of interpretation up one stage, to the problem of classifying things into a pattern. “Observe!” the philosopher of science Karl Popper told his students one day, and they were baffled.<sup>11</sup> Observe what, how? Popper’s point was that any observation requires preceding observations and perceptions (in his terms “theories”) for us to work with it. The same sentiment is observable in art historian Erwin Panofsky’s remark that: “...the process of investigation seems to begin with observation. But both the observer of a natural phenomenon and the examiner of a record are not only confined to the limits of their range of vision and to the available material; in directing their attention to certain objects they obey, knowingly or not, a principle of pre-selection dictated by a theory in the case of a scientist and by a general historical conception in the case of a humanist.”<sup>12</sup>

Our perception of patterning is, in other words, something which rests on our experience of other patterning, and it may be valid or it may not be valid. Again, this depends on the classification that we impose, and it constitutes a once-removed problem of interpretation.

As archaeologists we are considering the material remains of human activities, and since we are all human, there will of course be many instances where our perception of patterning and its interpretation of

cultures might be “true”.<sup>13</sup> The nasty question even in those circumstances is: “how true?” Consider the attribution of a religious character (“temple”) to the Uruk-period tripartite monumental buildings. This question, posed for instance by Ö. Tunca in his dissertation,<sup>14</sup> has mostly been skirted in the literature, although at least bi-functionalism, e.g., as meeting halls for the elders of the community is quite possible. We know that Inanna was the main revered deity in Uruk at the time, but to which deities were the other tripartite building in Uruk dedicated, if she was perhaps “housed” in the Limestone Temple? And did the ruler, whom we know as a type from both iconography and texts, reside in building E? We might think so, since that monumental building is regularly patterned yet quite distinct from the others, suggesting a lofty function to us, conditioned as we are through our own history of palaces. Or was building E a *suq*-like market, or a caravanserai?

Answering such legitimate questions requires an *ad-hoc* differentiated mind-set (and background material) for each question separately. If we want to apply these, how are we to go about it? Our honoree suggests using his ‘grammar’, (that is, an established set of inner-referential rules), and his approach is more extensive than, but does remind one of, Panofsky’s three-stage analysis for iconography and iconology.<sup>15</sup> I mention this, because Panofsky’s model can, I think, be fruitfully applied to much wider fields than the icon, up to and including archaeological finds in general, among which architecture certainly takes its place, as Krautheimer has so poignantly demonstrated.<sup>16</sup> And on the road to establishing such grammar, Buccellati sometimes applies almost Wittgensteinian precision in defining his concepts, as for instance in his treatment of categorization. He writes: “What is important in this respect is to distinguish between definition as the act of defining on the one hand, and, on the other, definition of an already understood meaning.”<sup>17</sup> The act of defining obviously entails imposing boundaries or limits, since definitions define – but in archaeology, if one takes it as a social science, definitions cannot be definite. I mean this in the sense of David Clarke when he discusses the distinction between monothetic- and polythetic classification,<sup>18</sup> for archaeological classification is predominantly polythetic: not every

instance Baxandall, in his discussion of Piero della Francesca’s *Resurrection* (Baxandall 2003, 117ff.) would include meanings that are read into an original work (of art) by the onlooker. In our case such an extension of ‘original meaning’ is counterproductive, for it constitutes the entirely different problem of reception in its wider social context.

<sup>8</sup> Buccellati 2017, 324.

<sup>9</sup> Buccellati 2017, 324.

<sup>10</sup> Buccellati 2017, 328.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.conspiracyanddemocracy.org/blog/observe/>.

<sup>12</sup> Panofsky 1955, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Buccellati comes back to this on his p. 301, speaking of “the coherence of human experience across the ‘breakage’” (Buccellati 2017, 301).

<sup>14</sup> Tunca 1984, xviii ff. and 199ff.

<sup>15</sup> Panofsky 1972, 14f. Although the terms are different, they are often used interchangeably. I would prefer to see *iconology* as the discipline studying *iconography*.

<sup>16</sup> Krautheimer 1942.

<sup>17</sup> Buccellati 2017, 40.

<sup>18</sup> Clarke 1978, 35ff.

member of a class need possess all the variables that define the class. Even in material things like pottery, one may define a 'beaker' as having specific measurements as against other measurements that define a 'goblet', but there will always be cases of doubt, when a 'beaklet' or a 'goblet' is excavated. This is because these definitions or rather classifications are devised and imposed by us, beforehand and not after the fact. Of course one might, after such a find, establish a new class, of beaklets or goblets, but this would soon lead to infinite regress with every new find that straddles the boundaries of the class-definition. As said above, classification is goal-oriented, *ad hoc* for every exercise, and a generally valid classification is not possible, and definitions, which are the main tools toward classification, are imprecise and only indicative in a general sort of way.<sup>19</sup> Classification of things or phenomena helps us to manoeuvre through the world, but it is not inherent in those phenomena and should not be reified.

We go on to the next point. In section 5.2 Buccellati treats *emplacement* vs. *deposition*. At first sight this might remind one of Michael Schiffer's distinction between systemic and archaeological context, but this is not quite what is meant.<sup>20</sup> Here the author returns to the actual ground work of archaeology. Emplacement concerns, for instance, the abutment of walls. Yet from there archaeological practice should be subjected to sets of laws,<sup>21</sup> where *emplacement* is the actual placement of things, and *deposition* concerns the archaeologist's interpretation of how the constellation of his finds came about. And these concepts should be properly defined, or rather framed into laws, in order to generate sound archaeological practice. What is inferred here is that on the basis of such laws we attain a surer base for interpreting our stratigraphy. Thus we are talking about interpretation and understanding - the understanding of forms, to be sure. In Panofsky's scheme we would be at the second step: this stage is his "secondary or conventional subject matter (...)", where the 'act of interpretation' is the "iconographical analysis", for which the 'equipment' in our case is the knowledge of and familiarity with the traces in the soil.<sup>22</sup> It remains a subjective standard based on experience, and if turned into a law it means that the law is only useable within that subjective context.

After highly interesting sections on stratigraphic and typological analysis, constituting part II of the book, there follows a part III, called the *Reassembled*

*Construct*.<sup>23</sup> In its introduction, it says: "How can an overarching synthesis materialize out of the minute and intentionally atomistic congeries of observations that has been assembled from the physical data? It is a construct that reassembles the parts into a coherent whole and in doing so takes a variety of different shapes" (i.e. types of publication - DM). To my mind, here we arrive at the stage that in Panofsky's schema is termed "III, *Intrinsic meaning or content*, constituting the world of 'symbolical' values", where his 'act of interpretation' is iconological interpretation and the 'equipment for interpretation' is "*Synthetic intuition* (familiarity with the *essential tendencies of the human mind*), conditioned by personal psychology and '*Weltanschauung*.'" <sup>24</sup> In both cases, it is naturally acknowledged that our conclusions depend on syntheses that may be deficient because of lack of sufficient data or mistakes in the (subjective) interpretation, or both.

It is in part V, "The Wider Frame", that we enter a more philosophical arena. "The archaeological construct is an intellectual construct par excellence, because the (stratigraphic) data are construed at the very moment they are both given and lost..."<sup>25</sup> In discussing these constructs Buccellati refers to Kant's philosophy, in particular to the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* with its transcendentalism and its *Sinnlichkeit* and *Verstand*.<sup>26</sup> The connection between the two, *senses* and *intellect*, is called *bracing* by Buccellati, "...and it is at the root of its applicability to our immediate interests."<sup>27</sup> The bracing is thus the necessary tie between Kant's sense and intellect, which Kant exposes as necessary for synthetic understanding in an interesting section that can be found in his *Kritik*:<sup>28</sup> "*Anstatt im Verstande und der Sinnlichkeit zwei ganz verschiedene Quellen von Vorstellungen zu suchen, die aber nur in Verknüpfung objektivgültig von Dingen urteilen könnten, hielt sich ein jeder dieser grossen Männer (Leibniz and Locke - DM) nur an eine von beiden, die sich ihrer Meinung nach unmittelbar auf Dinge an sich selbst bezöge, indessen dass die andere nichts tat, als die Vorstellungen der ersteren zu verwirren oder zu ordnen.*" This brace, Kant's *Verknüpfung*, constitutes the necessary combination for as full an explanation and understanding as possible: that is Buccellati's point. This brace as a means to insight might perhaps be compared to Panofsky's "Corrective Principle of Interpretation," the "...insight into the manner in

<sup>19</sup> Buccellati mourns this lack of precision (2017, 40), which he calls "a basic flaw in current archaeological discourse."

<sup>20</sup> Schiffer 1972.

<sup>21</sup> Buccellati 2017, 75ff.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Panofsky 1939=1972, 40-41.

<sup>23</sup> Buccellati 2017, 121ff.

<sup>24</sup> Panofsky 1972, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Buccellati 2017, 260.

<sup>26</sup> Buccellati 2017, 266.

<sup>27</sup> Buccellati 2017, 265.

<sup>28</sup> Kant 1787=1998, B 327.

which, under varying historical conditions, essential tendencies of the human mind were expressed by specific themes and concepts,”<sup>29</sup> for Panofsky’s *tendencias* seem to include both senses and reason. It is clear that this section in Buccellati’s book aims to establish a firm philosophical basis for the tenets used in the interpretation of archaeological finds, by comparing these tenets to Kant’s *a priori* concepts.

But to my mind, these *a priori* concepts might perhaps have some kind of validity in the contemplation of well-known human cultures on a *very general* level. Ultimately, however, any interpretation of phenomena in more unknown cultures must follow the track of harnessing subjective ideas into a well-formulated (i.e. unequivocal) theory which should then be tested against independent material. *A priori* concepts are hard to find in archaeology, as in any discipline concerned with human behavior. This is further underwritten by Buccellati’s remark “(...)that the archaeological data proper do not exist as concrete self-standing data. They are essentially ‘invented,’ in the sense of ‘discovered and conceptualized,’ by the excavator or the researcher.”<sup>30</sup>

Thus we enter into hermeneutics. From p. 301 onward Buccellati recaps the notion of Archaeological Reason which he had already broached in his section 2.4.2. Overcoming the broken tradition (i.e. perception of a culture that is not one’s own) should involve “empathy/assent,” explained in section 16.9.1. And here we meet one of the key sections of the book. “We, as observers, (...) exclude ourselves as referents.” This comes down to an *etic* approach, but Buccellati calls it *epoché*.<sup>31</sup> And an important sentence follows: “What *epoché* explicitly excludes in the social sciences, namely appropriation of experience, is instead the goal of the humanities.” But: “Not in the sense of modifying the observed system to suit one’s own point of view. Rather, objectivity remains the goal: it is the objectivity of inner-referentiality, defined grammatically. But it is a system retrieved archaeologically (i.e. retrieved across the gulf [of] a broken tradition), and hence re-appropriated hermeneutically in the observer’s experience.”<sup>32</sup>

These quotes show that in Buccellati’s view archaeology is not a social science. But more importantly they show that our interpretation and explanation of the archaeological record, broken traditions or not, ultimately depend on empathy, that is, on ex-

plaining culture on the basis simply of the fact that we are all human. One could argue that such a stance in itself turns archaeology into a social science! And why should we exclude the social sciences from the humanities, other than because of perhaps misguided academic tradition?

In the above I have tried to highlight some of the points that struck me upon my first reading of this extremely rich and thought-provoking treatise. Parts of it made me think of Panofsky’s work, whose exposition of iconographical and iconological methods has, as said above, a much wider applicability beyond the visual. One wonders if not also the ideas of a language philosopher such as Searle (1978) might be taken into consideration, because he discusses the meaning of a sentence as needing a background of previous concepts, just like Popper and Panofsky – it is the same kind of patterning needing previous patterning that was mentioned above. Thoughts about language, pictures and archaeology come together here, for it seems that the concepts used to ‘elicit meaning’ all have a wider applicability beyond that of specific disciplines.

Not at all meant as a comprehensive review, my remarks may rather, I hope, in all their fallibility, function as a stepping stone for much more meditation by colleagues on what we archaeologists do and must do. In our honoree’s case, his thoughts are solidly rooted in his long experience of field work together with Marilyn, lastly in the important site of Tell Mozan/Urkesh, and therefore all the more worthy of reflection!

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<sup>29</sup> Panofsky 1939=1972, 15 schema.

<sup>30</sup> Buccellati 2017, 300.

<sup>31</sup> Buccellati 2017, 348f.

<sup>32</sup> Buccellati 2017, 349. These sentences suggest that once rules (“grammar”) have been agreed upon, objectivity is guaranteed. However, this disregards the fact that the rules are derived from (archaeological) experience which is not at all objectively achieved.

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