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**Seven Generations
Since the Fall of Akkad**

Edited by Harvey Weiss

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Cover illustration: Tell Leilan, 2006, Acropolis Northwest, Akkadian Administrative Building, room 12, period IIb1, terminal stratum 10a floor with grain-storage jar, ground basalt 2-liter ration measure, 10 clay balls, 5 uninscribed clay tablets (photo: Harvey Weiss) ; cf. Weiss et al., this volume pp. 163-192 Fig. 10.

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Preface

This volume catches midstream the surge since 1993 of research directed at examining the Akkadian collapse and subsequent history of the Khabur Plains, a period recognized as unique at its terminus even in the 19th century BC as “the seven generations since the Fall of Akkad.” The fifteen papers of this volume were prepared for a workshop at the 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, May 2, 2012 at Warsaw University. To encourage collaborative discussion, workshop participants pre-distributed their papers in April and were also asked to address “The Four Questions”: When did Akkadian imperialization of the Khabur Plains collapse? How many settlements/persons (Akkadian and local) abandoned the Khabur Plains? What was the size of remnant post-Akkadian settlement on the Khabur Plains? What was the duration of remnant post-Akkadian settlement on the Khabur Plains? However, the number of papers and the limited workshop time available precluded lengthy discussion of divergent views among the contributors, and time was spent mostly on the illustrated and detailed presentation of the pre-distributed papers.

About half of the papers presented focus upon ceramic types and typologies, of various analysis and reporting qualities, for the continuation of some settlement at some sites for some time after the Akkadian abandonment. Other papers, enhanced with multiple high-resolution radiocarbon-dates for settlement durations (Weiss et al, Emberling et al), precise measurement of agricultural and administrative activities (Smith, McCarthy, Emberling et al), and regional settlement distributions (Ristvet, Arrivabeni, Colantoni), develop a framework for Khabur Plains research that confirms and refines adjacent region observations for this period. Alongside the independent paleoclimate data, these researches now provide the archaeological data for the dynamics of regional collapse across the Khabur Plains and northern Mesopotamia.

The essence of this quantitative framework is derived from the Tell Leilan excavations’ stratigraphic occupation sequence, its associated high-resolution radiocarbon chronology, and the Leilan Region Survey, which define (1) region-wide collapse and abandonment at 2254-2220 BC (68.2%), (2) minor remnant settlement for ca. 30-50 years terminating at ca. 2233-2196 (68.2%), with subsequent occupation only at the 84% reduced Tell Mozan refugium, (3) the region-wide Amorite resettlement beginning “seven generations” later at ca. 1969-1919 BC (68.2%). Still awaiting integration within some Khabur Plains analyses is the coincidence of the 4.2 – 3.9 kaBP megadrought, – an abrupt, high magnitude, centuries-long event in west Asia, and globally – with reduced dry-farming agro-production, regional abandonment and the “Fall of Akkad,” habitat-tracking, and the Amorite resettlement.

To be sure, several contributors to this volume do not share in these perspectives. Rafal Koliński reasons Tell Arbid ceramic assemblage analyses will prove the site was inhabited ca. 2200-1900 BC as part of a trade route from Tell Brak to Tell Mozan. Valentina Orsi suggests Tell Barri was occupied through spans across the late third-early second millennium. Carlo Colantoni and Augusta McMahon deploy a chronology unfettered by radiocarbon dates and imagine that Tell Brak excavations will someday locate a major post-Akkadian Hurrian city. Christophe Nicolle reconfigures labile Mohammed Diyab stratigraphy and posits a new reverse occupational chronology. Peter Pfälzner contends that Tell Mozan was a trade-enriched dry-farming city surrounded by Khabur Plains occupations from the Akkadian to the Khabur ware period.

In retrospect, some shared perspectives appear a function of shared data constraints: small excavation exposures (Mohammed Diyab, Barri, Arbid), scarce or uncertainly dated ceramic assemblages (Arbid, Mohammed Diyab, Hamoukar), no radiocarbon data (Chagar Bazar, Barri, Mohammed Diyab, Mozan, Hamoukar), no paleobotanical data (Mohammed Diyab, Barri, Arbid, Chagar Bazar, Hamoukar), no regional survey data (Arbid, Chagar Bazar, Mozan), or unintegrated paleoclimate, geoarchaeological, paleobotanical, and occupational data (Mozan). The value of this volume, therefore, resides in its self-evidence. Archaeologists can evaluate the available data, analyses, and interpretations, and to some degree can assess their limitations, falsifiability, and verisimilitude. Conversely, we can now identify the types and qualities of data required for further testing and refinement region-wide.

For these many accomplishments the contributors deserve thanks and congratulation. A special debt of gratitude is owed Professor Rafał Koliński, who energetically facilitated the workshop's programming within the 8th ICAANE meeting in Warsaw. Moreover, the workshop participants heartily acknowledge the grace and diligence with which Professor Hartmut Kühne arranged for the swift publication of this volume within the series *Studia Chaburensia*. All offer a toast to Tobias Schmidt for his superb typesetting.

Harvey Weiss

New Haven CT
September 2012

Tell Barri before Kahat

The earliest historical references to Tell Barri date to the Old-Babylonian period, when the settlement - ancient Kahat - was a major urban centre in the Upper Mesopotamian economic, political and cultural spheres (see Orsi 2011: 286-292). During the second half of the third millennium BC, the small settlement of Tell Barri was most likely part of the kingdom of Nagar, nearby Tell Brak. In the second half of the 18th century BC, the documents of the Tell Leilan archives (ca. 1755-1728 BC) shed new light on the central area of the Upper Khabur valley and the political situation appears to be inverted. The city of Nagar unmistakably maintains a cultural prominent position; on the other hand, while alternatively experiencing Mari and Old Assyrian hegemony, Kahat seems to have had a leading role in the area, now including within its boundaries the ancient third millennium capital (Matthews and Eidem 1993: 203; Ristvet 2008: 589-590; Eidem 2008: 297-298). During the transition phase that precedes the Khabur ware period, Weiss et al (1993) have argued that the settlements of the Khabur Plains faced anomalous environmental conditions that lead to the collapse of some of the major Early Bronze Age sites (Tell Chuera, Tell Beydar, Tell Leilan, Tell Hamoukar) and to radical changes within others (Tell Brak, Tell Mohammed Diyab). This paper focuses on this turbulent phase, defined best as “intermediate” between the “Fall of Akkad” and the rise of Shamshi-Adad’s power.

The contribution that Tell Barri might offer to this issue lies in the long settlement sequence revealed in Area G, almost uninterrupted from the ED to the Post-Assyrian periods. It allows us to follow a precise evolutionary trend - exemplar of a medium/small-size settlement in the centre of the Upper Khabur basin, and specific to a peripheral quarter of the city - and provides a ceramic sequence that will contribute to the establishment of the regional sequence and chronology. Supplementary data to the evidence obtained from Area G was acquired from the recent excavations in Area Q, where a pre-Khabur occupational layer has been brought to light below 4 meters of Khabur Ware period accumulations.

We have no available conclusive evidence that could precisely define the settlement size between the late 3rd and early 2nd millennium BC: highly intensive surface surveys have not been carried out on the actual site, but some suggestions may be hazarded on the basis of excavation results and topography. The mound is approximately 6 ha, while the lower town is 17 ha. At the moment we do not have any traces of occupation in the lower town before the Parthian/Roman period, hence one could assume the settlement’s major extension in ancient periods to be within 6 ha.

During the Khabur period, the settlement likely reached its main extension on the upper mound (6 ha). Contemporary evidence was retrieved during excavation in areas P (slope N), Q (slope S) and G (slope SE), and Khabur ware sherds scattered all over the surface were recovered. During the pre-Khabur period the settled area is certainly smaller (< 6 ha): the identification of the settlement’s boundary in the area Q (slope S) attests that the occupied area did not extend to cover the whole southern sector of the main mound. Definite evidence

is not available for the post-Akkadian and Akkadian periods, therefore we assume the settlement's size was 6 ha or less. The attribution of a precise chronological value to the different occupational phases identified relies upon the correlation with well-dated ceramic contexts from sites of the same cultural area.

1 The regional sequence and dating limitations

In the Early Bronze Age, the latest reference that securely links the archaeological sequence of the Khabur Plains to the Mesopotamian historical sequence dates to the time of Naram-Sin. Archaeological evidence for that period derive from Tell Brak's palace-fortress, whose bricks stamped with the name of the sovereign clearly relate phase M to the Akkadian ruler (Oates and Oates 2001 a: 384-385 and fig. 381), and from Tell Mozan, where the seal impressions of Tar'am-Agade, daughter of Naram-Sin, date phase 3a in the Palace sequence (Area AA) (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: 73-74). Additional points of reference for the Akkadian period come from Tell Leilan. The excavation of the administrative district, situated on the north-west area of the acropolis, has been the source of a series of radiocarbon dates, as well as dated epigraphic documents and cylinder seal impressions (Ristvet and Weiss 2000; Weiss et al. 2002; Ristvet, Guilderson and Weiss 2004; de Lillis-Forrest, Milano and Mori 2007; Ristvet and Weiss 2008).

For the Middle Bronze Age, the earliest evidence that allows to see a link between the local archaeological sequence and the historical one originates from levels datable by inscriptions coming from the Upper Mesopotamian Kingdom of Shamshi-Adad. At Tell Leilan, the period I levels (beginning in the 2nd millennium BC) are connected with the sequence of the local sovereigns of Shubat-Enlil, beginning from Shamshi-Adad (Akkermans and Weiss 1991). Despite the availability of documents that permit a relatively precise dating of these layers, the ceramic sequence does not provide a comparable set of data. The continuity in the use of the buildings during the reigns of Shashi-Adad's successors has prevented the preservation of a large ceramic corpus related to the foundations of the MBA city.

A good MBA ceramic repertory from Chagar Bazar is now available, but the sequence, starting from the final years of Shamshi-Adad's reign, is largely attributable to the period of his successors (McMahon, Colantoni and Semple 2005; McMahon 2009). The oldest MBA levels discovered by Mallowan were not reached in the course of the recent excavations.

Located immediately to the east of the Khabur region, Tell Taya and Tell al-Rimah provide references for the Shamshi-Adad period. A connection between the archaeological and historical sequences is provided by the recovery of cuneiform tablets (Reade 1973; Reade 1997; Dalley, Walker and Hawkins 1976: 202; Postgate, Oates and Oates 1997: 21). However, the available ceramic material is rather limited in both cases.

Despite the recovery of archaeological levels that can be dated with some degree of certainty to the Shamshi-Adad period, there is no clearly defined ceramic sequence. We do know that the painted Khabur ware was already in use at this time, but we are not able to recognize with precision the ceramic horizon that is characteristic of the initial phase of the Upper Mesopotamian Kingdom on the Khabur Plains. For the entire period, which spans almost four centuries – beginning from the withdrawal of the Akkadians from Jazirah, currently attributed to the end of the reign of Sharkalisharri, until the rise to power of Shamshi-Adad in the region – there are currently no ceramic assemblages that provide a secure

link to the Mesopotamian historical sequence. The assignment of a precise chronological value or historical connotation to a single intermediary ceramic phase must therefore be considered hypothetical.

We are able to define with some certainty the ceramic tradition of the immediate post-Akkadian period (EJZ 4c-beginning of EJZ 5) represented by Tell Brak N, Chagar Bazar II (area D) and now by Tell Barri P and to a certain extent also Tell Mozan 3b-4; based on current correlations and according to the middle chronology, they are datable to around the 21st century BC. At the same time, we are able to identify with some certainty the ceramic tradition deriving from the central period of the MBA – starting approximately from the end of the 19th – beginning of the 18th cent. BC – which is characterized by the full diffusion of Khabur ceramics (classic Khabur Ware). Alternatively, an understanding of the interim period – corresponding to most of the 20th cent. and the first half of the 19th cent. BC – remains extremely challenging due to difficulties in identifying phases and possible gaps between them.

2 The correlation of ceramic sequences – The evidence of the Tell Barri ceramic sequence from late 3rd to early 2nd millennium BC

According to the ceramic inventory, the phase Q in Area G, sectors A-D 1-6 (strata 37-36), is mostly to be dated to the Akkadian period (Orsi 2011: 308-341, 381-384, *schema* 22 pg. 426 and tav. 168-179. Note that *schema* 22, pg. 426, is based on Early Jazirah chronology as in Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2002: 155 fig. 3) or to EJZ 4a-b periods in terms of new regional chronology (Lebeau 2011; EJ 4 in Lebeau 2000). The end of the phase probably falls within EJZ 4c. The ceramic inventory bears high similarity with that of Brak M (Oates 2001; Steele *et alii* 2003) and Leilan IIb, while it includes typologies of both Mozan (Area AA) phase 2 (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2000: fig. 15 a -15 b; Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: fig. 15; see also Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2002: fig. 9) and phase 3 (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2000: fig. 16-17; Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: fig. 16), of Mohammed Diyab period XI (Nicolle 2006: figs. 7.13-7.17) and some of period X (Nicolle 2006: figs. 7.18-7.22). It displays all the elements characteristic of Beydar IV (Rova 2003) though they are not very common, suggesting a distance in terms of chronology or, most likely, in terms of ceramic tradition. According to the considerable amount of ceramic types comparable to Brak phase L late ED III destruction layers (Oates 2001), and contemporaneous layers from sites of the middle Khabur area, Barri phase Q may include the Sargonic period. Since most of these types seem common to both pre-Akkadian (EJZ 3b) and Akkadian (EJZ 4a-b) periods, as well as to both phase Q and phase R at Tell Barri, it is difficult to assure a precise dating (See also Rova 2011: tab. 6a). The continuity attested at Tell Barri in the ceramic tradition from ED to the Akkadian period matches well with the Mesopotamian contexts (Gibson and McMahon 1997 with previous bibliography; Oates and Oates 2001 a), suggesting that a precise date for this transition, both in the north as well as in the south, is difficult on the basis of the material culture alone.

The Phase P (strata 35B-35A) dates to the post-Akkadian (and Ur III) period, approximately at the end of EJZ 4c-EJZ 5 in terms of the ARCANE regional chronology (Orsi 2011: 341-360 and tav. 180-190). The label «post-Akkadian» has been commonly used to describe the

period extending from probable Akkadian withdrawal from the North – the «post-imperial Akkadian» period in Buccellati's definition (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: 61 note 2) – to the end of Ur III period, since this last denomination has been tendentially rejected in Upper Khabur framework (Oates 2001: 170). The whole span has been divided otherwise into “early post-akkadian” and “late post-akkadian”, the latter extending to include potential Isin-Larsa contexts pre-dating the wide spread of Khabur ware (McMahon and Quenet 2007: 69; Orsi 2011; Orsi 2012). In the regional sequence eventually elaborated by the *ARCANE* project (Lebeau 2011), the term “post-akkadian” assumed a different meaning, being related solely to the “early” stage of the period, namely EJZ 4c, while a later phase connected with Ur III corresponds to EJZ 5. Potential Isin-Larsa contexts fall within OJZ (MBA) periodization. Nevertheless, EJZ 4c has not always been isolated at Jazirah key sites (Quenet 2011: 40; Rova 2011: 64). When dealing with “post-Akkadian” in the broad sense – that is EJZ 4c-EJZ 5 – the reference to Ur III will be added in brackets in order to avoid misunderstandings between pre- and post- EJZ chronology labelling.

The ceramic inventory of Tell Barri phase P is composed by a large number of typologies common to both Brak phase N (Oates 2001) and Chagar Bazar Area D period II (McMahon and Quenet 2007), but the lack or the limited distribution of some of the most representative categories of these contemporary sites in Barri P suggests the possibility of a chronological or cultural differentiation (Orsi 2011: 413-417) (see Fig. 1: 16-32. Cf. e.g. McMahon and Quenet 2007: ns. 40-41, 27-32, 69, 71-72 and Oates 2001: ns. 603-604, 607, 572-573).

Therefore, one could hypothesize a short gap in the sequence of the area G. A-D 1-6 at Tell Barri corresponding to the period of main increase at Tell Brak and Chagar Bazar of some of these ceramic types. A short gap somewhere in the long phase N of Brak would not be surprising: in fact, phase N covers quite a long span of time, extending from (early) post-Akkadian (EJZ 4c) to Ur III (EJZ 5) and early Isin-Larsa periods, while the ceramic inventory is related to different contexts.

Differently, the post-Akkadian (and Ur III) ceramic inventory of Chagar Bazar Area D period II (EJZ 4c-EJZ 5) is related to a single peculiar context (Building I) to be dated to a more circumscribed span of time. Such a gap in the sequence of the area G at Tell Barri might be possible if the discontinuity represented by the change in the area's plan from phase Q to phase P is taken in consideration. However, this seems quite unlikely if we consider the ceramic sequence. Other ceramic types found in Tell Barri phase P and common to Tell Brak N and Chagar Bazar area D period II are markedly in continuity with the preceding phase Q of Tell Barri and with Akkadian assemblages (Fig. 1).

As an alternative to chronological distance, we may hypothesize a cultural differentiation, connected with the archaeological context of area G, or to the geographical location of the site. Area G in phase P was a very sparse settlement, with noticeable evidence for craft activities: Chagar Bazar's context is deeply divergent, being a large residence likely devoted to community purposes (Tunca and Miftāh 2007: 34). Alternatively, Tell Brak presents a variety of contexts, both sparsely settled areas as well as conspicuously domestic quarters.

For the geographical differentiation, some of the ceramic types not frequent in Barri P seem likely to coincide with distinctive western variants, recalling types attested in the latest third millennium strata of Tell Beydar, Tell Chuera and Kharab Sayyar (see for example Pruß 2000: fig. 9). The Jaghjagh River should be considered a sort of dividing line in this case, but the absence of extensive ceramic assemblages as for post-Akkadian (Ur III) eastern Khabur sites makes it difficult to delineate precisely the boundaries of ceramic provinces. The reason

for the slight difference between post-Akkadian (and Ur III) assemblages lies most probably within both cultural aspects.

More dubious is the absolute dating of the subsequent phase O (strata 34D-34A) (Orsi 2011: 360-374, 418 and tav. 191-203), since it depends upon the dating of the first appearance of the painted Khabur ware in the region. The painted Khabur ware in the area G A-D 1-6 at Tell Barri seems to have become relevant in the latest layer of phase O (Chart 1). Layers 34 C and 34 B revealed only two rim-sherds in painted Khabur ware – respectively 1,63% and 1,92% of layer 34 C and 34 B ceramic *corpus* – and they are likely not to be particularly significant. The percentage in layer 34 A, which approximately reaches 4% of ceramic *corpus* (eight Khabur ware rim-sherds), starts to be indicative.

Tell Barri Area G. A-D 1-6	Rim-sherds	Khabur Ware (rim-sherds)	Khabur Ware (rim-sherds %)
Stratum 37	600		
Stratum 36	943		
Phase Q	1543		
Stratum 35 B	421		
Stratum 35 A	247		
Phase P	668		
Stratum 34 D	13		
Stratum 34 C	123	2	1.63 %
Stratum 34 B	104	2	1.92 %
Stratum 34 A	205	8	3.90 %
Phase O	445	12	2.70 %

The current dating of early Khabur ware to the first half of the 19th cent. BC has been accepted here (see Faivre and Nicolle 2007: 181-183; Rova 2011: 64) but, due to the lack of well-dated ceramic inventories to refer to, this section of Tell Barri area G sequence might be subjected to slight revision with new discoveries.

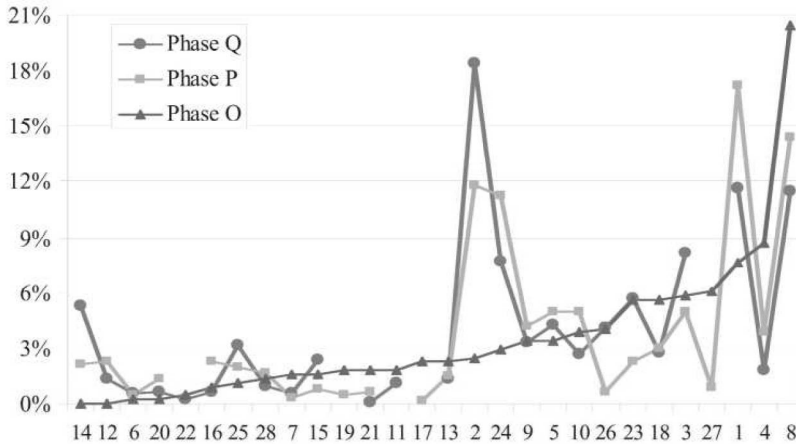
A few other elements may be added that could be of some chronological value: a seal (E.3406) recovered in a tomb of layer 34 D (Pecorella and Pierobon-Benoit 2004: 33, tomb 1148), that suggests a date between the end of third millennium BC and the beginning of the second, and a seal impression coming from the fill between stratum 34 and 33 (Pecorella 1999: 18), at the very end of phase O or beginning of phase N, whose iconography suggests a date between the first two centuries of 2nd millennium BC.

A major contribution from Tell Barri is an extensive ceramic repertoire related to the period immediately preceding the diffusion of painted Khabur ware and contemporaneous with its first appearance (Fig. 2). From the comparison between ceramic sequences of the Khabur Plains sites, in area G of Tell Barri and at Mozan the Palace area (area AA), emerges the presence of a section of the regional sequence at present not well-attested. This phase is characterized by the spread of particular ceramic types not common to other Khabur Plains post-Akkadian (and Ur III) inventories (small cups carinated; large vessels with ribbed rim; convex-sided/cylindrical beakers) that find some parallels in the levels of transition from Early to Middle Bronze Age in nearby regions (like in middle Euphrates or middle Tigris valley sites) or anticipate elements of Khabur ware period ceramic tradition in Upper Khabur.

In addition to (1) elements recalling EBA local ceramic traditions, and (2) elements recalling MBA local ceramic traditions – that also characterize the transitional phase identified

in the Euphrates valley – here a third category has been detected, that corresponds to traits not entirely comparable with local specimens of earlier and later periods, and that therefore should be distinctive of this proper phase (Orsi 2001: 387-413, 424-425, 428). Evidence for this period at Tell Barri derives from recent investigations in the Area Q on the southern slope. The investigation of area Q (10 x 8 m) began in 2007 and continued until the last campaign, held in 2010. The analysis of the ceramic sequence is at a very preliminary stage. The ceramic inventory associated with the uppermost layers (strata 1-8) is clearly recognisable, pertaining to the MBA Khabur ware horizon. The painted Khabur ware is largely widespread until layer 9, while in layer 10 it is almost absent. The lower sub-phases of layers 9 and 10 revealed a large inventory of common ware associated with the period of first appearance of Khabur Ware and, as for stratum 10, pre-Khabur Ware.

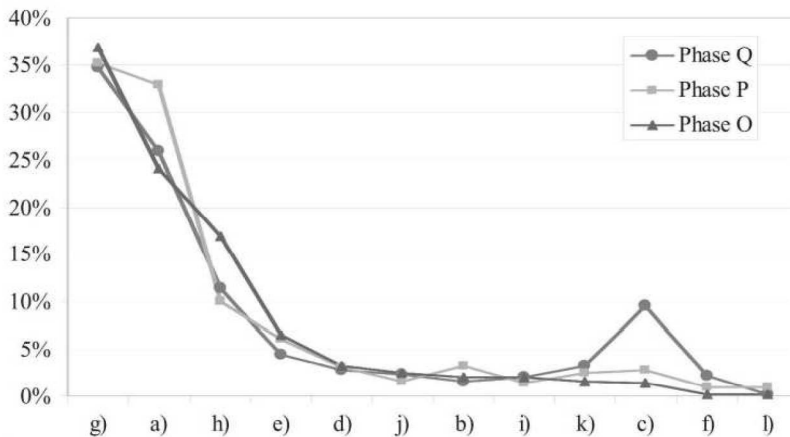
Between phase Q and O different traits of change may be followed both in technological and morphological aspects (Orsi 2011: 374-380), for instance visible in the distribution of rim typologies (see Graph n. 1).



Graph n. 1: Tell Barri - Rim typology and percentages.

1) Simple, rounded profile; 2) Simple, squared profile; 3) Simple, pointed profile; 4) Simple, flared; small-banded; small-banded, short; rounded; 5) Simple, slightly outer-convex; 6) Upper and lower thickened, with central groove; 7) Lower thickened, pointed, outer-convex; 8) Outer thickened, rounded; 9) Outer thickened, pointed; 10) Outer thickened, lower pointed and upper rounded or straight; 11) Outer thickened, pointed, upper straight; 12) Outer thickened, pointed, lengthened, upper straight; 13) Outer thickened, squared; 14) Inner thickened, pointed, or rounded; 15) Equally outer and inner thickened; 16) Outer and inner thickened, various; 17) Outer thickened, outer and upper single grooved; 18) Outer thickened, single grooved; 19) Outer and inner thickened, single grooved; 20) Banded, multiple grooving; 21) Thickened, multiple grooving; 22) 'Hammer headed' (metallic); 23) Banded, outer-straight; 24) Banded, outer-convex; 25) Outer thickened, lower pointed and flared; 26) Straightened, simple or thickened, lower corrugated; 27) Simple or thickened, with a thin grooving on the lower margin; 28) Undetermined.

However, in terms of functional categories the composition of the assemblages is quite similar (see Graph n. 2): comparable trajectories mostly correspond to similar 'cultural' trends; divergent trajectories correspond to diverging trends. In this case, the most visible difference is represented by the distribution of basins, which seems to be a peculiarity of phase Q. The reduction of basins in phase P is partially balanced by an increase in the number of bowls and of large and deep open vessels: similar shapes destined to related but slightly different functions. In fact, bowls are particularly frequent in phase P, as are high-necked jars in phase O. This trend matches well with the attested continuity in the use of this part of the settlement, mainly related to domestic and craft activities, and with a context of cultural continuity in every-day aspects.



Graph n. 2: Tell Barri - Main morphological groups. a) Bowls; b) Large open vessels; c) Basins; d) Beakers and cups; e) Small jars; f) Pots; g) Short necked jars; h) High necked jars; i) Various; j) Stands; k) Large closed vessels; l) Undetermined forms

The ceramic sequence from the late third to the early second millennium BC depicts a radical transformation, represented by the transition from an unpainted tradition, characterized by the use of mostly purified tempers for common wares and low percentages of more technologically advanced fine wares (post-Akkadian metallic wares, Taya wares, fine burnished wares; see Orsi 2011: 346-351, 367-358 and 410-413), towards a ceramic tradition that makes substantial use of decorative elements, specifically painting (Khabur ware), but that conversely seems to be technologically less complex. But even in light of this radical transformation clear elements of continuity are attested.

3 Tell Barri before Kahat

Having established the range of suitable dating, we turn to the archaeological contexts of Tell Barri phases Q, P and O in order to figure out the ‘history’ of the site during the “seven generations since the Fall of Akkad” - as far as one may learn from investigation of the peripheral quarters of the city- and its regional setting.

3.1 The Akkadian period in Upper Khabur (EJZ 4a-b)

Located in western Khabur Plains, the centre of Tell Beydar/Nabada was the capital of a small kingdom under Tell Brak/Nagar at the end of the Early Dynastic period. It probably fell under the control of the Akkadians at the beginning of Sargon’s rise to power, marking the start of its rapid decline (Lebeau 2006: 19). A similar phenomenon of decrease in settlement size appears to have occurred at Tell Arbid in central-western Khabur (Koliński 2008; 2009), and at Tell Mohammed Diyab in eastern Khabur (Nicolle 2006: 233-234). On the other hand, the context of Chagar Bazar remains mostly unknown (McMahon, Tunca and Baghdo 2001: 205). An example of urban development apparently in continuity with the preceding phase is recorded at Tell Mozan/Urkes (Buccellati 2005), while local development at the centres of Tell Brak/Nagar (Oates and Oates 2001 a: 383-386) and Tell Leilan/Shekhna (Ristvet, Guilderson and Weiss 2004) is clearly interrupted by an Akkadian occupation. The nature of the Akkadian interference is difficult to evaluate. In the cases of Tell Beydar and Chagar Bazar, a form of occupation can only be hypothesized, while at Tell Brak and Tell Leilan it is distinctly visible. The Akkadian period at Tell Barri is not characterized by any noticeable changes.

3.1.1 The Akkadian period at Tell Barri

Remains of the Akkadian period at Tell Barri were discovered in area B, on the western slope of the site (Biscione 1998), and in sectors A-D 1-6 of area G, on the eastern slope, corresponding to phase Q, strata 37-36 (Pecorella and Pierobon-Benoit 2004, 2005; Orsi 2011). While the limited extension of the recovered surface prevents an explicit understanding of the occupation typology on the western slope (area B) where evidence is very scanty, the presence of numerous features linked to the use of fire on the eastern part of the settlement (area G), together with both complete and fragmented *in situ* containers for food and different ceramic floors, indicates that the area was used for domestic and working activities. In layer 37, an open area was located in the northern and western sectors of area G, while in the southern and eastern sectors small rooms were constructed (Pecorella and Pierobon-Benoit 2005: 26; Orsi 2011: tav. 162). Included among these were rooms 1122 and 1074, inside of which were discovered large, broken ceramic containers on the floor; the two adjacent small rooms are 1215 and 1087, inside of which were found two *tannurs* (1087 and 1089) and a ceramic floor (1221). Rooms 1090 and 144 were only partially excavated. In the successive layer 36 the buildings are abandoned: only a few of their damaged remains are visible, while all of the area is left exposed with small structures like benches, *tannurs* and low dividing walls. Courtyard 1127 of layer 37 instead is paved with ceramic fragments, fired bricks and crushed basalt (*locus* 107) (Orsi 2011: 430-433).

Although phase Q in area G is chronologically attributable to the Akkadian period, available data does not inform us about a potential Akkadian presence at the site. Still, the ceramic production development followed an internal evolutionary trajectory (Orsi 2011: 430-433). Despite changes in plan, the archaeological context of area G is quite similar to that of previous phase R, with clear evidence of domestic and craft activities.

3.1.2 Akkadian ‘imperialism’

As attested by epigraphic documentation and archaeological evidence available from the palace-fortresses at Tell Brak and Tell Leilan, the Khabur Plains experienced the Akkadian presence in a very concrete manner (see Ristvet, this volume, p. 201) that does not have parallels in upper Mesopotamia. Following a system that may have already been in use during the preceding period, the Akkadian administration probably dictated the management of the agricultural lands - as it would seem on the basis of the centralization noted at Tell Leilan - in order to ensure maximum yield (Wilkinson 1997). Local powers in the past would have hoarded surpluses, thereby ‘reinvesting’ them in the territory; but during the Akkadian period a large portion seems to be diverted towards the south. Evidence from the Akkadian Administrative Building at Tell Leilan (Ristvet, Guilderson, Weiss 2004: 11-12) seems to be particularly significant in this regard.

Although the nature of the Akkadian presence at Tell Brak is still under debate (Oates and Oates 2001 a: 383-386), it did consist in a physical presence that included a garrison and a dominant elite, the extent of which still needs to be more clearly defined. The dominant elite at Tell Mozan most likely had local origins, but the centre is deeply connected to Akkad on a political level as evidenced by the marriage between one of the daughters of Naram-Sin and the local ruler. The presence of both Hurrian and Akkadian names among the members of the court, as well as the combination of Akkadian iconography and Hurrian onomastic in the glyptic assemblage appears to confirm a culturally fluid context (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2002 b). One of the minor sites where a form of Akkadian presence is hypothesized is Tell Beydar, a possible military headquarter for the Akkadians (Lebeau 2006: 19).

While Akkadian interference in the Jazirah is likely to have influenced the region’s socioeconomic development as well as local politics, the outcomes in terms of ceramic assemblages and intensity in upper Mesopotamia seem to have assumed a distinctly local significance, leading them to remain highly debated. As pointed out by E. Rova (Rova 2011: 64), whether or not changes in the ceramic repertoires at different sites can be associated with the impact of the Akkadian conquest is still a crucial, unsolved question. Contrastingly, whether related to sites that were most likely ‘Akkadian’ (Tell Brak, Tell Leilan) or to minor centres (Tell Beydar, Tell Barri), the ceramic tradition does not seem to register any large breaks with the previous phase: new morphological elements do appear and some others went out of use, but a considerable amount of varieties continue to be attested, or developed from local EJZ 3 components, maintaining regional differentiations (Orsi 2011: 430-433).

The general impact of the imperial Akkadian activity in northern Mesopotamia and particularly in the Khabur region – even if invasive in some cases (Tell Brak, Tell Leilan) or destructive in others (Tell Brak?) – did not seem to trigger new cultural traditions within the local material culture; instead, it developed throughout the period, and followed an internal evolutionary trajectory that permitted regional diversification.

3.2 The post-Akkadian and late post-Akkadian (Ur III) periods in Upper Khabur (EJZ 4c-EJZ 5)

The evidence for the period on the Khabur Plains is difficult to evaluate in some cases. At both Tell Beydar, which probably remained occupied for only a brief phase at the beginning of the period (EJZ 4c) (van der Stede 2003; Lebeau, Rova 2003: 8), and at Chagar Bazar, the only evidence is represented by a culturally significant building, either of a sacred nature (Tell Beydar) or a communal one (Chagar Bazar) (Tunca and Miftāh 2007: 34), bearing no signs of residential areas. Other important structures with possible community or public functions were also recognized in the “Residence” at Tell Arbid (Koliński, this volume, p. 99) and in the “Puššam House” of area C at Tell Mozan (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner, 2002). However, in both cases they are also accompanied by traces of residential quarters, specifically in the form of craft production, which are comparable to Tell Barri and Tell Brak. Evidence at Tell Mohammed Diyab for this period (phase X in the local sequence) is very scanty (Nicolle 2006: figs. 2.2, 4.5 and pgs. 65, 168, 234).

The transition from the Akkadian to the post-Akkadian (and Ur III) period is characterized by a marked discontinuity among the settlements of the Khabur Plains. Tell Beydar underwent an obvious decrease in the occupied areas and was probably abandoned at the beginning of the period. The occupied area of Chagar Bazar decreased in size and was displaced; settlements at Tell Arbid and Tell Brak decreased in size (Oates and Oates 2001 a: 393; Colantoni, this volume, p. 35); Tell Leilan, with its exceptional period IIc context (Ristvet and Weiss 2008), is mostly abandoned, and a temporary abandonment or a huge contraction is likely to have occurred at Tell Mohammed Diyab (see evidence for areas 5a and 6a, Nicolle 2006: 234). At Tell Mozan, the location of the settlement is maintained: in area AA a first phase (phase 3b in the local sequence, approximately EJZ 4c in the regional chronology) in continuity with the Akkadian period is recognized (phase 3a in the local sequence; EJZ 4b in the regional chronology), and a second phase (phase 4a in the local sequence; EJZ 4c/5) then presents a strong discontinuity (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2002 a); in area C a slight change in the functional use of the area is noted. In regards to Tell Barri, the layout of area G is completely renewed, but the location and use of the settlement in this part of the *tell* remains mostly unchanged from the preceding phase.

3.2.1 The post-Akkadian and late post-Akkadian (Ur III) periods at Tell Barri

The complete change in the layout of area G of Tell Barri between phase Q and the successive phase P, corresponding to layers 35 B and 35 A (Pecorella 2003; Pecorella and Pierobon-Benoit 2004: 25; Orsi 2011: tav. 164), suggests the possibility of a brief period of disruption in the settlement’s sequence. However, the absence of heavy accumulation layers between the two phases and the continuity visible in the ceramic production allows the supposition that this was probably very limited in terms of chronology. A further aspect of consistency is the functional purpose of the area: as already seen in the earlier phase Q, phase P is also a domestic context with strong evidence for craft production activities.

The settlement in area G is sparse, with broad open areas and scattered structures. It revealed numerous installations linked to the use of fire, arranged around the large vertical kiln 1016, and ceramic and broken fired brick flooring (St 1044). Layer 35 A, that was identified in correspondence with sectors C-D 1-6 only, at last provides evidence for the abandonment

of the structure of layer 35 B. The passage from the Akkadian to the post-Akkadian period at Tell Barri was a complete renewal of the layout of area G. This discontinuity, however, was associated with neither significant abandonment nor displacement of the settled area, and even the function of this quarter of the city was unchanged.

3.3 The Isin-Larsa/pre-Khabur periods in Upper Khabur

Among the layers that clearly date to the post-Akkadian/Ur III (previously named «late post-Akkadian») or Khabur periods, a few contexts have been isolated from the Khabur Plains sites that indicate the possibility of a form of occupation during a very late phase of the EBA or very early at the beginning of the MBA, prior to the diffusion of painted Khabur ware. The incomplete documentation relative to the associated ceramic finds and the absence of clear chronological references, in addition to the transient nature of some of these examples, prevent a more specific setting of these contexts within the regional sequence, as well as an unequivocal definition of terminology. Regarding the denominations of the period, the definition of the «Isin-Larsa phase» derives from the discovery of ceramic lots at Tell Brak with types similar to those of the Isin-Larsa period in southern Mesopotamia, and therefore mainly attributed to the initial centuries of the 2nd millennium BC; analogous types were identified in the corresponding phases of Tell Barri and Tell Mozan, but the lack of comparable assemblages on a regional level precludes validation of such definitions in reference to a segment of the ceramic sequence of the Khabur Plains. The alternative definition of “pre-Khabur phase” used here, that could obviate the reference to an external historical sequence, is based on the analysis of the sequences from Barri’s area G and Tell Mozan’s area A in reference to occupational phases that immediately preceded the spread of painted Khabur ware (Orsi 2011: 426). The improvement of a regional chronology for the second millennium BC, parallel to that developed for the third with the *ARCANE* project (Lebeau 2011), as proposed by P. Pfälzner with the “Old Jazirah” sequence (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2002: fig. 3), might resolve this issue in the future.

On the basis of stratigraphic comparisons and current dating that place the appearance of Khabur ware to about the first half of the 19th cent. BC according to middle chronology, the ‘pre-Khabur’ phase should correspond *grasso modo* to the 20th cent. BC.

The evidence of the Isin-Larsa/pre-Khabur period on the Khabur Plains is quite limited, only possible sporadic occupation at Tell Brak (Isin-Larsa contexts and surface finds – Oates 2001: 174 and fig. 416; Oates, Oates and McDonald 1997: 62) and perhaps also at Chagar Bazar (Area D pits – McMahon and Quenet 2007: 69-70) and Tell Mohammed Diyab (period IX – Nicolle 2006: 234-235 and fig. 7.23). Tell Mozan (area A7, A9, A11 – Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2000 – and A15 – Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2002 a) and Tell Barri could have experienced more regular occupation, yet both settlements have a markedly sparse pattern. The transition from the post-Akkadian to the Isin-Larsa/pre-Khabur periods indicates major reductions in the settlement sizes at Tell Brak and Chagar Bazar, while continuity is evident in Tell Mozan’s area AA and Tell Barri’s area G, despite the presence of some changes.

3.3.1 The Isin-Larsa/pre-Khabur periods at Tell Barri

Contemporaneous levels in Tell Barri area G correspond to the end of phase P and the beginning of phase O. The subdivision of layers 34 and 35 into phases has been modified as research has progressed, allowing for either the unification or the differentiation of the dif-

ferent layers in the phases. Traces of this evolution are evident in the preliminary excavation reports: layer 35, attributed to phase O in Pecorella 2003: 11, actually is phase P (as already seen in Pecorella and Pierobon-Benoit 2004: 24). Layer 34D, attributed to phase N in Pecorella 2003: 11, actually is phase O (as already seen in Pecorella and Pierobon-Benoit 2004: 25). Layers 34 A-C are phase O. In this period, the area undergoes numerous transformations that document brief periods of change that interrupted the regular flow of daily life. Following the assignment of craft production activities to layer 35, the area was temporarily converted into a necropolis in the successive layer 34 D (Pecorella and Pierobon-Benoit 2005: 33; Orsi 2011: tav. 165), and thereafter re-inhabited in level 34 C, with the construction of small buildings used for domestic or craft activities. Layer 34 D however was identified in correspondence with a few sectors only of the area, and the absence of heavy accumulations suggests the nature of the layer to be quite ephemeral. In the successive 34 B and 34 A layers, where the first appearance of the Khabur ware must be located, these buildings undergo various rearrangements and reconstructions, but without any major break (Pecorella 2003: 15; Orsi 2011: tav. 166). The element of increased discontinuity suggested by the numerous changes in the area, in particular the temporary conversion to a necropolis, appears to be moderated by the long sequence of occupation of layers 34 C-A, and by elements of continuity recognizable in the ceramic production. Evidence of the same period derived from area Q (slope SW), where the southern boundary of the settlement was brought to light.

3.4 The beginning of the Khabur ware period on the Khabur Plains

The diffusion of painted Khabur ware is accompanied by a sharp increase in urbanism, more evident at Tell Leilan (Old Assyrian Shubat-Enlil), Tell Mohammed Diyab, Tell Arbid, Chagar Bazar and Tell Barri (Old Assyrian Kahat), which for the most part can be linked to the time of Shamsi-Adad. While Tell Barri and Tell Mozan have almost uninterrupted sequences throughout the period of transition between the EBA and the MBA, other sites where continuity in occupation is not so evident – like Tell Arbid, Tell Brak, Tell Leilan and Tell Mohammed Diyab – bear at least faint traces attributable to a phase immediately predating the wide spread of Khabur ware (see Tell Arbid – Koliński, this volume, p. 99; Tell Brak area A4 level 10 – Oates, Oates and McDonald 1997: 21-23; TW surface – Oates, Oates and McDonald 1997: 142; AL rubbish pit – Oates, Oates and McDonald 1997: 143 and fig. 167; Tell Leilan – Stein 1990; Mohammed Diyab area 5a level 11; level 1 in areas 6a and 6d; area 6b level 6 and level 5 in areas 6e and 6f – Nicolle 2006: 235-236).

3.4.1 The beginning of the Khabur ware period at Tell Barri

The copious remains of the Old Babylonian period discovered on the south-eastern slope of Tell Barri area G comprise a dense domestic quarter and rich hypogeum tombs with vaulted coverings in baked brick (area G. A-D 1-6 layer 31, Pecorella 1999: 19, 22, 40-46; Pecorella 2003: 16-21). In addition, the 4 metre high sequence of occupation recently excavated on the southern slope in area Q testifies to the great flowering of the site in the Khabur period, confirming the central role of the city of Kahat in the complex geo-political scenario of the era (See Orsi 2011: 286-292).

4 The transition from the EBA to the MBA: an overview

4.1 The beginning of decline and abandonment

On the Khabur Plains one of the first sites that appears to have experienced a large abandonment is Tell Leilan, followed to the west by Tell Beydar and Tell Chuera, the latest levels of which date to the late Akkadian or early post-Akkadian periods (EJZ4 b-c). The case of Tell Leilan however might not be exemplary of a general trend on the Khabur Plains, since no other sites suffered a comparable 'foreign' domination, except maybe for Tell Brak. The decline of Tell Beydar is also attributed to the Akkadian presence (Lebeau 2006), even though the site did not seem to have experienced the same degree of Akkadian interference as that recorded at Tell Leilan. In contrast to the relatively sudden abandonment that took place in the eastern Khabur site, the slow process of decline at Beydar could be linked to a different form of Akkadian intervention.

The abandonment of other centres in eastern Jazirah, such as Tell Hamoukar (Colantoni and Ur 2011) and Tell al-Hawa (Ball, Tucker and Wilkinson 1989: fig. 122) were probably not much later: despite some difficulties in comparison with central Khabur ceramic assemblages, their final 3rd millennium BC ceramic production in fact does not seem more recent than the late Akkadian or post-Akkadian periods (EJZ4 b-c) (Orsi 2011: 439).

At Tell Brak, the passage from the Akkadian phase M (EJZ 4a-b) to the post-Akkadian (and Ur III) phase N (EJZ 4c-5) is characterized by definite reductions in the settlement size. A comparable trend, however, seems to be already evident in the latest Akkadian levels in the form of diminished architectural and material culture remains, namely marked in areas FS and SS layer 3 (Oates and Oates 2001 b: 41-62; 73-93). A similar phenomenon occurs at Tell Mozan, where during the late Akkadian period (EJZ 4b) an entire wing of the AP palace is abandoned, marking the beginning of the area's re-designation in use (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: 73). According to Buccellati, the abandonment of the AK wing should have been followed by the construction of another official section nearby (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: 60). Should this hypothesis correct, the partial abandonment recorded in the late Akkadian period should not be considered an element of decline, but rather evidence of transformation.

Even though the impact of Akkadian intervention is difficult to evaluate, especially in cases of minor sites that contain no traces of a 'foreign' presence, the intrusive form of occupation experienced at some of the major Khabur Plains centers (Tell Leilan, Tell Brak) suggests that this event played a key role in the region's evolution. Nonetheless, the first sign of a crisis not plainly imputable to Akkadian military activity might be datable to the late-Akkadian period, around the second quarter of the 22nd century BC (Naram-Sin - Post Naram-Sin).

4.2 The transition from the Akkadian to the post-Akkadian (and Ur III) periods

Despite major abandonment in the late Akkadian or early post-Akkadian periods, the transition from the Akkadian to the post-Akkadian and Ur III periods shows a continuation of the settlements at different sites, like Chagar Bazar, Tell Brak, Tell Mozan, Tell Barri and Tell Arbid. More dubious is the context of Mohammed Diyab.

Despite the continuity in the occupations and generally speaking ceramic productions, elements of discontinuity cannot be ignored, such as the relocation of settlements to different areas of a site (Chagar Bazar), changes in the city plans (Tell Barri; Tell Brak), conversions in the use of neighbourhoods from administrative functions to residential ones (Tell Brak; Tell Mozan), and maybe changes in the dominant elite (as suggested for Tell Brak; Oates and Oates 2001 a: 393).

4.3 The Isin-Larsa/pre-Khabur period

A moment of major discontinuity dates approximately to the end of the post-Akkadian (and Ur III) period, when the settlements at Tell Brak N and Chagar Bazar D II went out of use. The available data reflects a context characterized by rare sedentary settlements and an apparent lack of urban sites. However, such interpretation could reveal itself as incorrect.

It is possible that the region's apparent low level of sedentarization between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC could be the result of the continued occupation in the settled sites between the Isin-Larsa/pre-Khabur periods and the Old-Assyrian/Khabur periods (as is the case of Tell al-Rimah; Tell Leilan; Tell Mohammed Diyab) or even later periods (like Brak) (Orsi 2012: 109). The construction of large buildings in the more recent phase, which in most investigated cases was generated by Shamshi-Adad's activities, could in fact have damaged or even completely removed the evidence of the previous period. In this context, the discovery of pre-Khabur occupation levels at Tell Barri and Tell Mozan would therefore be justified by their marginal location in respect to the alleged centre of the contemporaneous settlement.

4.4 The beginning of the 're-sedentarization' process

A new urban phase in the region is associated with the widespread diffusion of painted Khabur ware, and the main archaeological contexts seem to be connected with Shamshi-Adad's activity.

All of the administrative centres planned by Shamshi-Adad on the Khabur Plains, such as Tell Leilan (Stein 1990) or Tell al-Rimah in eastern Jazirah (level 4 of area A; phase 3 of area AS – Postgate, Oates and Oates 1997), as with the vast majority of the other settlements of this period (Tell Barri, Tell Mozan, Tell Mohammed Diyab, Tell Arbid) show at least faint traces of earlier, disturbed or altered, occupation levels. The transient nature of such contexts could be determined by construction activities of later large buildings or, in a different case, could indicate the presence of a dispersed settlement, but each of these scenarios suggest that the urban evolutions of the Khabur period cannot be considered a completely new phenomenon, but maybe interpreted as an innovative development of an earlier local tradition.

Evidence for elements of discontinuity that distinguish the post-Akkadian and Khabur periods, clearly visible both in the context of the settlements – which experience a decrease in dimension, abandonment, displacement, etc. (see Weiss, this volume, p. 11) – and in the context of ceramic tradition – from unpainted to painted – imply a dramatic transformation of local society, that with every likelihood underwent changes on both a cultural and socio-economic level. It is, however, possible to identify signs of continuity. Regarding the settlements, most of the larger MBA centres that have been investigated originate in the EBA, while for the ceramic production the transition from an unpainted tradition to a painted one seems to have been gradual, as is definitely evident in the development of the ceramic morphologies.

Tell Barri before Kahat

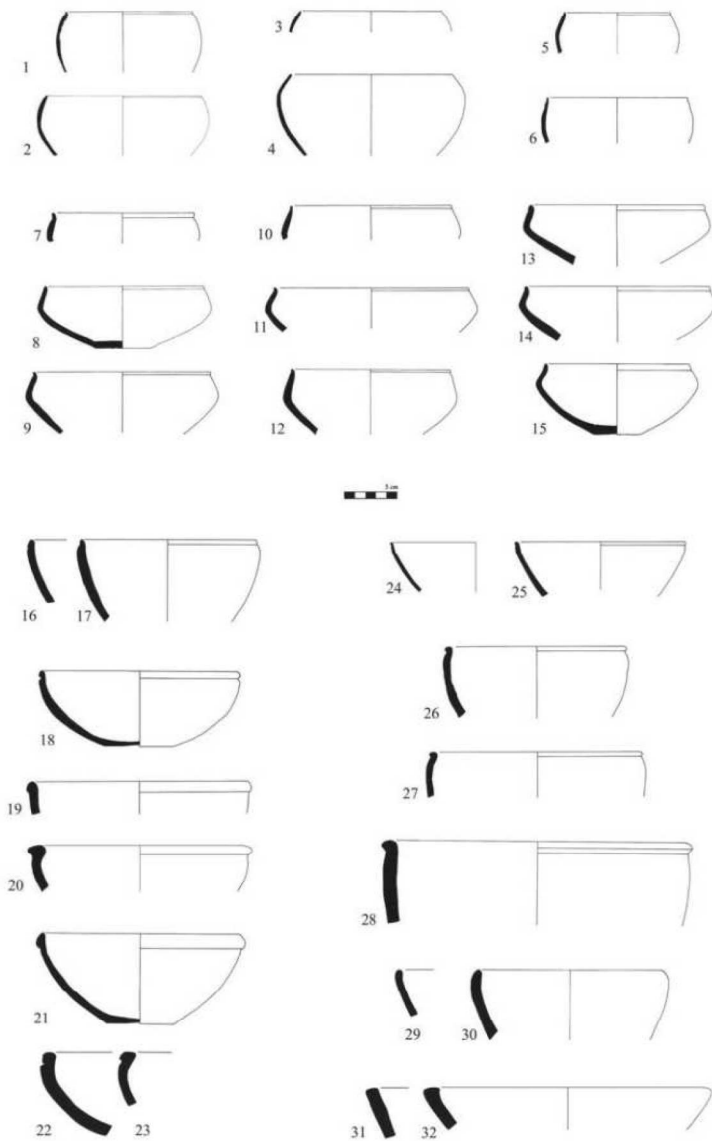


Fig. 1: Selection of pottery sherds from Akkadian and post-Akkadian layers. Area G. A-D 1-6 phase Q: n. 1-2, 7-9, 16-23; Phase P: n. 3-6 (Fine ware/Fine burnished ware), 10-13, 24-32; Phase O: 13-15.

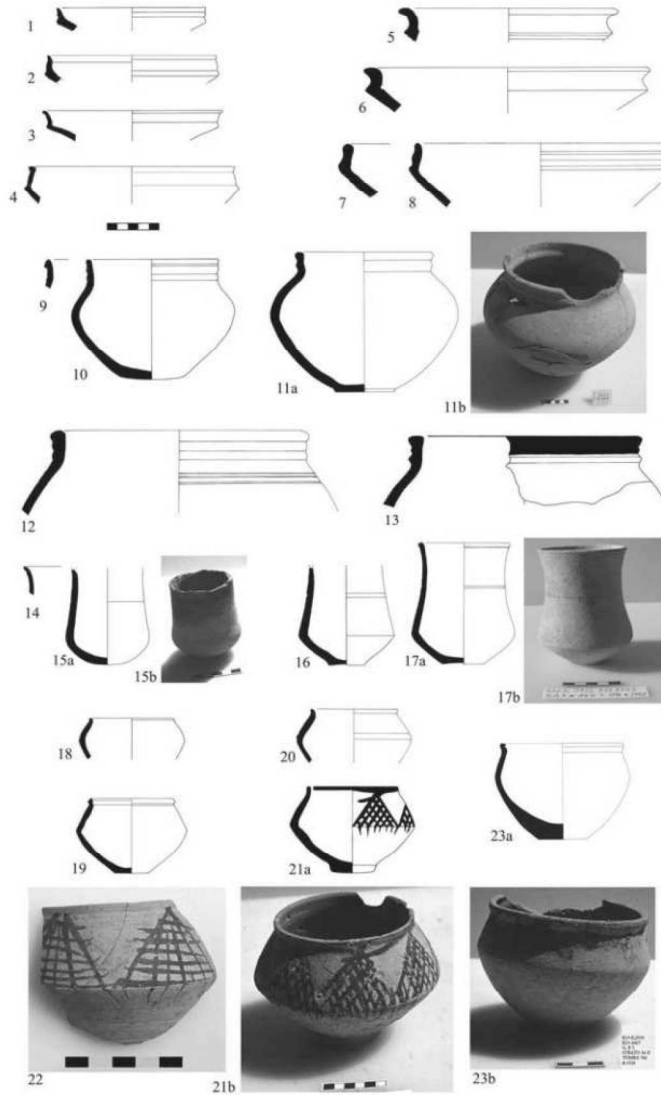


Fig. 2: Selection of pottery sherds from pre- and early-Khabur ware levels. Area G. A-D 1-6 phase P: n. 1, 3-4 9-10, 12, 14-15, 18-19; Phase O: n. 5-8, 11 (stratum 34 D, tomb 1440), 13 (bitumen painted rim), 16 (stratum 34 D, tomb 1047), 17 (stratum 34 D, tomb 1298), 20 (stratum 34 C), 21 (Khabur ware, stratum 34 A), 23 (stratum 34 D, tomb 763). Area Q: n. 2 (common ware), n. 22 (Khabur ware, stratum 9B).

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