

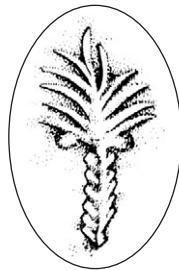
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FEDERICO ZAINA*

DELVING INTO ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES, A SINGLE-RESEARCHER APPROACH. THE CASE STUDY OF ANCIENT KISH (CENTRAL IRAQ)

ABSTRACT

Archive archaeology emerged in the last decades as a significant approach in the study and interpretation of cultural heritage. However, while the majority of past and current projects applied a large-scale mostly team-based approach, less attention has been paid to the potential of single-researcher studies.

By using the case study of ancient Kish (Central Iraq), in this paper I will show how archive archaeology can contribute to the study and reconstruction of an old excavation. In particular, I will present the methodology and the dissemination strategy of a single-scholar research.

KEYWORDS

Archive archaeology; single-researcher; old excavations; Mesopotamia; Kish

The archaeology of scientific archives emerged in the last decades as crucial in the study and interpretation of cultural heritage in the Ancient Near East. While the theoretical and practical roots of this approach date back to the early 1960s, the onset of the digital era provided the real breakthrough by enhancing and quickening data collection, elaboration and sharing through different devices and the web.

The present work draws on the author's PhD research¹ carried out through European and U.S. archives of the ancient near eastern site of Kish.² By using the case study of ancient Kish, I will show how archive archaeology can contribute to the study and reconstruction of an early excavation. A single-scholar oriented approach will be presented to design efficient strategies for such study.

After a brief introduction on the theoretical debate behind the emerging field of archive archaeology, I focus on some practical issues including the organization of a proper working protocol for single-researchers dealing with old excavation data. An overview of the development of methodological approaches to the study of old excavation data in the Near East since 1960s onward, is followed by the definition of issues (financial support, copyright and permissions, external collaborations and feedback need) and strategies concerning single-researcher projects, eventually defining a possible working protocol developed in the frame of the Bologna OrientLab open projects. In the last paragraph I make explicit my approach through

the case study of the ancient Mesopotamian site of Kish, in central Iraq.

I. *Archive archaeology: an introduction*

In the last decades new theoretical approaches and the greater accessibility to sophisticated technologies boosted the interest for archaeological documentation and artifacts housed in both public (museum and universities) and private institutions. The relevance of this new trend has been stressed by J. Baird³ stating that "*the study of archaeological photographs – and materials – and archaeological archives can contribute to our understanding of the history and epistemology of archaeology*". Further emphasis has been also placed by H. Swain⁴ according to which "*Archives should represent a prime research and heritage asset; and yet historically they have been under-resourced and underused*". Particularly significant is the variety of interests and scopes related to this practice extending well beyond the traditional reconstruction of unpublished or under-evaluated archaeological contexts to embrace the history of the archeological research itself as well as more anthropologically oriented searches.

This academic phenomenon gave birth to what has been defined as "Archive Archaeology".⁵ As a result,

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¹ This is a revised version of a paper presented at the workshop "Old Excavation Data, What Can We do?" organized during at the 10th ICAANE in Wien in 2016. I wish to thank the organizers Edeltraud Aspöck, Matthias Kucera, Karin Kopetzky and Seta Stuhec for the useful comments and critiques to the first draft of the article. The new project on Kish has been conducted by the author since 2007 under the supervision of Nicolò Marchetti (University of Bologna) to whom I would express my gratitude, for his guidance and support. I am particularly grateful also to Paul Collins (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), Jack Green (Corning Museum of Glass, Chicago) and to Jim Phillips, Jamie Kelly and Karen Wilson (Field Museum, Chicago) for their permission to study the unpublished documentation and materials from Kish. Thanks are also due to Aage Westenholz for his fruitful critiques and suggestions. Any errors are my own.

² ZAINA 2011; IDEM 2015a; IDEM 2015b; IDEM 2016; IDEM forthcoming.

³ BAIRD 2011, 427.

⁴ SWAIN 2012, 352.

⁵ BAIRD 2011; SWAIN 2012.

a wealth of mostly theoretically-oriented papers attempted to explore this subject with the aim of better understanding the potential, the application and the strategies to efficiently deal with archaeological archives.⁶ This also led to diverse definitions of archive archaeology, and multiple points of view from which it can be treated. For example, according to Baird and McFayden⁷ archives should not be considered as static entities (i.e. mere places containing ancient artefacts and documents) but rather subjects themselves, meaning that “*the form of archive itself, is something that has direct relationship to the creation, form and possibilities of archaeological knowledge*”. Archives include different levels of information, from the “raw data” (plain photos, artefacts etc.) to the notes and sketches where excavators provided their own interpretation often “*fitting the ancient structure in a known schema*”.⁸ Therefore, it is of the greatest importance to keep in mind how the organization and the past use of many archaeological archives is the results of the archaeological knowledge and strategies of use of that time.⁹ For example, it is critical to understand the background and mind of the archive creators, to retrieve the excavator’s personalities, including their purpose and the results. This is particularly true when dealing with interpretations reported by the excavators but without providing the “raw data” to confirm or reject their assumptions.

But while a growing number of papers seek to fully explore and define the theoretical framework of Archive Archaeology, it is certainly through the web and the wide range of digital tools that this practice has shown all its potential. Indeed, since the early 2000s there has been a relevant increase in the number of online digital archives as a result of the initiative of public institutions, like museums or universities. The access to at least part of these digital archives through the web, brought to a dramatic cut both in the time (in terms of research visits and publications) and costs of scientific research. This is particularly significant as far as young students, PhD candidates and early career researchers are concerned.

II. Past to present: previous strategies and current trajectories in the scholarship on the Ancient Near East

Almost two centuries of excavations in the Ancient Near East produced an outstanding amount of data from thousands of sites on a wide chronological range. Due to the continuous development of recording methodologies and thanks to the technological advances of the last century, the way data have been collected, stored and treated has changed considerably.

The area considered in the present paper, the modern Iraqi region, has been one of the most densely ex-

plored since the dawn of the archaeological research in the Near East. However, investigations carried out prior to the onset of the WWII suffered from outdated excavation and recording methodologies and most of the results can no longer be verified. In addition, the political situation of the last two decades caused a dramatic drop of in-field international projects also affecting scientific advances in the study of ancient Iraq.

From the early 1960s onwards the reappraisal of old excavation data stored in museum and university archives became part of the Near Eastern archaeologists research agenda. As a result, a growing number of what H. Martin¹⁰ called “*academic kind of salvage excavation*” were undertaken by various institutions and scholars with different aims and results. To better understand what were and are still the main trends, I broadly distinguished between two main types of archive archaeology projects in the Near East: 1) team-based projects, 2) projects carried out by single-researchers. The former are composed by multidisciplinary groups of scholars, possibly involving one or more academic institutions, generally supported by generous regional, national or even international grants and dealing with entire sites, sometimes regions. Several years or sometimes a whole decade is the average timing to provide final results.

On the other hand, single researcher projects usually span over a short time and have to deal with small funding. Furthermore, single scholars have to face with the simple fact that they would hardly be able to process an entire site (unless very small) and the bulk of data that came from the excavation.

In this sense, different strategies driven by diverse academic interests have been applied by scholars. Among those, the most challenging type of single researcher project certainly regards the albeit rare reconstructions of the archaeology and history of entire sites. This has been the case of some relevant ancient Mesopotamian cities like Fara/Shuruppak,¹¹ Jemdet Nasr¹² and Bismaya/Adab.¹³ Another and probably more widespread type of studies concerns researches focused on certain part of sites or selected classes of finds. Those include among others, the study of C. Beugé¹⁴ on the pottery assemblage from the temple of Ishtar at Ashur excavated at the beginning of the

⁶ BAIRD 2011; BAIRD, MCFAYDEN 2014; HICKS 2013; LUCAS 2010; SCHIRR, STAHL 2015; STAHL 2015; SWAIN 2012.

⁷ BAIRD, MCFAYDEN 2014, 16-18.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 19.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 16; BEYER, STAHL 2015, 20.

¹⁰ MARTIN 1988, 2.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² MATTHEWS 2002.

¹³ WILSON 2012.

¹⁴ BEUGER 2005.

MAURIZIO VIANO*

SOME BUSINESS DOCUMENTS FROM EMAR

ABSTRACT

The Late Bronze Age site of Emar on the middle Euphrates was an important commercial center at the crossroad of trade routes connecting Mesopotamia, Syria, Anatolia and the Levant. This contribution explores a small number of documents, mainly written according to the Syro-Hittite tradition, which deal with various commercial activities. By revealing the trade routes as well as the money-lending practices used by merchants, these sources strengthen the role of Emar in the international trade. Additionally, other sources show that also small-scale commercial activities were carried out at Emar during the Late Bronze Age.

KEYWORDS

Emar; Trade; Late Bronze Age; Merchants; Hittite Empire.

According to the texts from Mari, Emar was an important commercial emporium during the Middle Bronze Age due to its geographical position along the trading routes connecting Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean coast.¹ Epigraphic finds from Late Bronze Age Emar, however, shed less light on the city's trading role during the 14th – 12th centuries BC, mainly because of the scarce attestations of the terms for merchant (*tamkāru*) and harbor (*kāru*). However, Pruzsinsky and Solans have recently reassessed the crucial role of Emar as a transshipment center between Mesopotamia, Assyria, Anatolia, and the Levant during the Late Bronze Age.²

Documents related to trade activities are well known from House 5 in Area A, which yielded a group of tablets (Emar VI 23 – 28) dealing with the affairs of foreign merchants. The same merchants as well as other foreign traders are also mentioned in documents of the family of Ḫima (Area T).³ The aim of this contribution is to discuss other lesser-known documents dealing with trade and the commercial activities of various entities. The documents treated here are attested both on Syrian and Syro-Hittite tablets, so they date to different periods of Emar history.

Among the older Syrian tablets, two silver loan contracts - Hirayama 33 and Hirayama 34 - are relevant. These documents provide no information on

the purpose of the loans apart from the specification that the refined silver was weighed out by the weight of Emar, x KÙ.BABBAR *sur-pu NA₄^{uru}E-mar^{ki}*. This is an unequivocal reference to trade activity,⁴ which is mainly found in documents dealing with commerce, usually in relation to payments made to foreigners or in different places.⁵ The business context of the loan appears more explicit in Hirayama 33: Iddi'-Dagan son of Ba'al-abu borrowed 200 shekels of silver from three individuals: Še'i-Ba'li, Bēlu-kabar, and Ilī-Dagan. The sum lent cannot be associated with a consumptive debt because it is one of the largest attested in the Emar credit documents. Because the three money lenders are not specifically identified as brothers,⁶ they may perhaps be regarded as members of a trade partnership financing another business associate. In Hirayama 34, the sum lent is only 20 shekels of silver, which suggests a small business transaction.

The number of Syro-Hittite documents that attest trading activities is certainly greater. Although according to Pruzsinsky and Solans the archive of Building M₁ "provides basically no direct information on Emar's trade or exchange issues,"⁷ at least four documents (Emar VI 200, Emar VI 252, Emar VI 277, and Emar VI 278) can be viewed as records of various

* This research is part of the PRIN Project (2015) "L'Anatolia antica: politiche imperiali e culture locali tra XV e VII secolo a.C. Problemi di etnicità, assetti urbani e territoriali, tradizione e innovazione." This article ensues from work undertaken in preparing the forthcoming monograph *The Socio-economic Background of Debts at Emar*. I thank Sophie Démare-Lafont for reading through the manuscript of the book and for her numerous suggestions, some of which appear in the present contribution.

¹ FINET 1985, DURAND 1990, 65-84; for the international trade at Mari see DURAND 2018.

² PRUZSINSZKY, SOLANS 2015. See also ZACCAGNINI 2018.

³ For the business documents from House 5 and Area T see PRUZSINSZKY, SOLANS 2015, 327-328, Viano *forthcoming*, in particular §§ 1.3.2, 1.3.7, 5.8.

⁴ See PRUZSINSZKY, SOLANS 2015, 324-325, ZACCAGNINI 2018, 49-61.

⁵ Emar VI 24, Emar VI 75, AOAT 265.1, see CHAMBON, FAIST 2014, 20-21 and n. 8

⁶ No patronymic is recorded.

⁷ PRUZSINSZKY, SOLANS 2015, 329 n. 109.

business activities. Building M₁, formerly regarded as a temple, is now identified as a multifunctional building serving as the private residence of the family of Zū-Ba'la,⁸ whose members held the office of diviner of the gods of Emar and were closely associated with the Hittite overlord. The building contained the family's private archive as well as many other texts, but of the aforementioned four documents, only Emar VI 200 can be positively attributed to the family of Zū-Ba'la.

Trade is clearly the subject of Emar VI 252 and of Emar VI 277. The former document records a lawsuit before the overseer of the land Mutri-Tešub and the Great Ones concerning a debt of 26 shekels of silver and 1 shekel of gold. The interpretation of this debt as commercial proposed here rests on the fact that the sum of silver and gold is defined as *mandattu*, which signifies an "endowment capital" given to merchants:⁹

(1) *a-na pa-ni* ^m*Mu-ut-ri*-dIM (2) *ù LÚ.MEŠ.GA*[L.M] *EŠ* ^{iñ}*E-mar* (3) *Al-ḥa-ti* [it-ti] ^m*ARAD-DIĞIR-li* DUMU *A-ta-wa* (4) *it-ti* [LÚ.]*MEŠ-ši-bu-ti-ši* (5) *a-na pa-ni* LÚ.*UGULAKALAM.MA* *iz-zi-iz* (6) [a]-kán-na *iq-bi* *ma-a* 26 GÍN KÙ.*BABBAR.ME* (7) 1 GÍN KÙ.*SIG*₁₇ *ma-an-da-at-tù-mi* (8) *ša ŠEŠ-ia a-na AR[AD-DIĞ]IR-li ú'-šal-[lim]*

Before Mutri-Tešub and the Great Ones of Emar, Al-ahātī stood against Abdi-ili son of Atawa together with her witnesses before the overseer of the land (and) spoke as follows: «26 shekels of silver and 1 shekel of gold, the *mandattu* of my brother, I paid to Abdi-ili».

Thus the creditor (Abdi-ili son of Atawa) entrusted capital to a merchant, i.e. the debtor (Itūr-Dagan), who seemingly did not fulfill his task. Two other elements are indicative of a commercial context: first, the mention of gold as one of the commodities lent, which is obviously unrelated to consumption; and second, the fact that the creditor did not sue the merchant but his sister (Al-ahātī). It can be surmised that she was acting as the representative of her brother and partner, who could not appear in court in Emar because he was undertaking a business trip.

The other document, Emar VI 277, is a very fragmentary tablet, possibly an administrative record, that lists holders (X GÍN *ša PN*) and recipients (X GÍN *ana PN*) of quantities of silver. The only clue to the context is the mention of several place names, notably the land of Qadeš ([x GÍJ]*Na-na KUR Ki-in-za*) and the town of Salhu ([x G]*JIN a-na* ^m*GAL*.^d30 *i-na* ^{uru}*Sà-a[l'-hi]*]), which, as suggested by Démare-Lafont and Fleming,¹⁰ refer to mercantile expenditures. Despite the lack of explicit references, it is not excluded that it was the family of Zū-Ba'la who disbursed the silver, or that at least Emar VI 277 recorded their business activity.

Of very different tone is another fragmentary tablet, Emar VI 278. This document records a quantity of 260 shekels of bronze given to Dagan-abu son of Başsu¹¹ as a debt: (1) 2 *me-at'* 60 ZABAR (2) *a-na* ^{md}*KUR-a-bu* DUMU *Bá-as-şa* (3) [x x] *x hu-bu-la-ti*. Given the large quantity of metal transferred, it seems plausible that the bronze was lent for some business activity or employed for manufacturing.

The only document that can be clearly attributed to the private affairs of the family of diviners, Emar VI 200, is a receipt for the payment of a loan of 30 shekels of silver made to Zū-Ba'la.¹² The purpose of the loan is not reported, but the borrower's social status excludes that it was issued for consumption or financial problems. Most likely the silver was used for purchase or for some minor business activity. Cash shortage was not uncommon in the ancient Near East, even among wealthy people, but it is unexpected that the diviner of Emar did not have 30 shekels of silver at his disposal. The lender is a certain Dagan-kabar son of Bēlu who is found in two other texts: TBR 22, as a sealer,¹³ and TBR 52, as purchaser of a slave-girl. Most likely this person belonged to the same social class as the diviner since he lent him money. Thus, the loan can be understood as an advance to a friend or fellow.

The family of Zū-Ba'la was perhaps involved in another business document, a Middle Assyrian letter published by Faist. (AOAT 265.1)¹⁴

To Ba'al-qarrād my lord: tablet of Ḥamiṣ-Dagal, your servant. Say to my wife Ḥilissa: «2 minas and 5 shekels of silver according to the Canaanite weight, 2 *niksu*-textiles and 1 *lubēru*-textile, all Assyrian, I have given to Abī-samaka, the posthumous son of Tuanani, to Ahī-rahaq son of Iahṣu, to Še'i-Bā'al son of Būla, the stonemason, (and) to Abī-Rašap. I have given (it) for tin. The Assyrians hold me in pledge, I have to work as a slave. If you have received the silver, send the tin so that I can give it and release (my self). If you have not received the silver, put (our) properties, whether fields or our houses, up for sale. I'll then come to testify in court. If they handed out the silver to you, give (it for tin) and send the tin. I want to leave».

In the letter the Emarite merchant Ḥamiṣ-Dagal instructed his wife to collect the money required to pay a debt for which he was being held as a pledge in Assyria. The letter, however, is formally addressed

⁸ See RUTZ 2013, 303-307, see also McCLELLAN 1997, 30, OTTO 2006, 491.

⁹ CAD M/1, 15.

¹⁰ DÉMARE-LAFONT, FLEMING 2018, 38.

¹¹ Dagan-abu son of Başsu appears as a sealer in TBR 71.

¹² Note that the tablet is sealed by the lender.

¹³ Emar VI 200 and TBR 22 bear the same seal impressions, see BEYER 2001, 138.

¹⁴ FAIST 2001, 251-254 and Tbls. 3-6.

STEFANO DE MARTINO*

THE FALL OF THE HITTITE KINGDOM¹

ABSTRACT

The first part of the present essays deals with the time when Ḫatti collapsed and the events related to its fall. Besides, we have tried to investigate four possible causal factors that might have determined the fall of the Hittite kingdom, namely, a situation of shortage of foods, movements of peoples, an economic crisis and, lastly, the break of the political and social network.

KEYWORDS

Hittite kingdom; Sea Peoples; Famine; Collapse.

1. Premise

The fall of the Hittite kingdom was a complex process that involved the abandonment of the capital Ḫattuša, the fragmentation of the Hittite kingdom into smaller polities, the breakdown of a centralized system of control over the Anatolian territory, and the disappearance of cuneiform writing as well as the Hittite language.

The events that brought about the fall of the Hittite kingdom have been the focus of several essays published in recent years.² Nevertheless, substantive differences remain among the proposed historical reconstructions.

Furthermore, the collapse of the Hittite kingdom happened at a moment when political and economic crises were afflicting other polities, such as the Mycenaean kingdoms, the communities of Cyprus, and the coastal polities of Syria. Hence, the situation in Anatolia must be viewed in the wider context of the Eastern Mediterranean, and some interdisciplinary conferences have indeed been held on the passage from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.³

Lastly, several volumes on the decline, erosion, collapse, and fragmentation of ancient and modern political entities are now available, and thus the fall of the Hittite kingdom can also be studied in the context of global history.⁴

2. When?

No Hittite document indicates the exact date of the collapse of the Hittite kingdom. The inscription of Ramesses III on the front of the second pylon in the

Medinet Habu temple states that Ḫatti and its subordinated countries fell victim to the “Sea Peoples” in the eighth year of the reign of this pharaoh. Focusing exclusively on this chronological statement here, we will discuss the reliability of Ramesses III’s inscription in more detail (see § 4.1.2.).

As is well known, there is no agreement concerning the years of Ramesses III’s reign. E. H. Cline,⁵ for example, argued that Ramesses III took power in 1184. His regnal years are listed as 1187-1157 in the *Handbook of Egyptian Chronology* edited by E. Hornung, R. Krauss, and D.A. Warburton.⁶ Th. Schneider⁷ preferred an earlier date and placed the beginning of Ramesses III’s reign in the year 1195. Thus, the Medinet Habu inscriptions cannot be summoned to testify to the exact time when Ḫatti disappeared.

Evidence coming from other archives offers further indications concerning the last years of the Hittite kingdom. The latest securely datable document found in Ugarit is the letter RS 88.2230, sent by the Egyptian official Beya to Ammurapi, the last king of Ugarit. The sender of the letter can be identified as an Egyptian dignitary who was active during the reign of two pharaohs, namely Sety II and Siptah, and died in the fifth year of the reign of the latter king.⁸ Thus, the letter presumably dates from the end of the first

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¹ This research is part of the PRIN Project (2015) “L’Anatolia antica: politiche imperiali e culture locali tra XV e VII secolo a.C. Problemi di etnicità, assetti urbani e territoriali, tradizione e innovazione”.

In the present essay I call Ḫattušili II the brother of Muwatalli II; he is also known as Ḫattušili III in the secondary literature. His son and follower was Tuthaliya III, who is also called Tuthaliya IV.

² See, for example, OTTEN 1983; HOFFNER 1989; GIORGIERI, MORA 1996; SINGER 2000; HAWKINS 2002; DE MARTINO 2009; FREU 2009; STROBEL 2011; CLINE 2014.

³ See WARD, JOUKOWSKI 1992; GITIN, MAZAR, STERN 1998; FISCHER *et alii* 2003; BACHHUBER, ROBERTS 2009.

⁴ See TAINTER 1988; YOFFEE, COWGILL 1988; DEVER 1989; SCHWARTZ, NICHOLS 2006; MCANANY, YOFFEE 2010; DIAMOND 2011; see also the proceedings (in press) of the conference held at Hildesheim on “The End of Empires. Decline, Erosion and Implosion” (October 2018).

⁵ CLINE 2014.

⁶ HORNUNG, KRAUSS, WARBURTON 2006.

⁷ SCHNEIDER 2010.

⁸ See SINGER 1999, 713-714; FREU 2006, 228-234; 2009, 23; KLINGER 2006, 213, n. 92; CLINE 2014, 109.

decade of the 12th century BCE and indicates that Ugarit had not yet been attacked at that time.

Furthermore, the Ugaritic *omen* RS 12.061 records an eclipse of the sun that M. Dietrich and O. Loretz⁹ date to the year 1192 and hence confirms that Ugarit was not destroyed before the beginning of the second decade of the 12th century BCE.

If the Hittite kingdom had collapsed before this date, we assume that such a dramatic event would have been reported in the tablets found in Ugarit, but the hypothesis that Ḫatti disappeared after 1192 BCE is only supported by evidence *ex silentio*.

The Ugaritic letter RS 4.475¹⁰ alludes to a lost battle. The sender of the letter, who bears the Hurrian name of Ewri-Šarri, relates what he heard from Tarhuntišši and Kalbaya about the negative result of a military conflict. The two aforementioned individuals may be officials of the Hittite army, but we have no other information on them, apart from the fact that Kalbaya bears a Semitic name, whereas Tarhuntišši is a Luwian name.¹¹ This document presumably refers to the dramatic events that affected Ḫatti before its ultimate collapse, but its exact historical and chronological context is unknown.

The city of Ugarit also was in danger, as a letter found in the Urtenu archive (RS 94.2169) demonstrates; in fact, it contains an urgent request for military support in order to counter groups of enemies who are approaching Ugarit. The author of this letter was the last king of Ugarit, whereas the intended recipient presumably was the king of Karkemiš. The letter was found at Ugarit and hence was never sent, which suggests that it was written on the eve of the city's destruction.¹² Another letter, RS 16.402,¹³ contains a dramatic report made by an official to the queen of Ugarit. The sender writes that enemies are approaching from Mukiš, whereas he is near Mount Amanus;¹⁴ furthermore, he repeats his previously unsuccessful request for two thousand horses.

We can compare the aforementioned Ugaritic documents with an unpublished text from Tell Sabi Abyad (T 93-12), where Ilī-ipadda asks for information on Ḫatti. This passage has been interpreted as evidence that news of either the fall of Ḫatti or a grave emergency in the kingdom had reached the Assyrian court.¹⁵

The legal document Emar 26, which was part of a small archive or cache found in House 5 in area A,¹⁶ mentions the second year of the reign of the Cassite king Meli-Šipak, who ascended to the throne in the year 1187¹⁷ and thus demonstrates that Emar was still standing in 1185 BCE.

Y. Cohen¹⁸ assumed that Emar survived, though for a short time, after the Hittite kingdom collapsed. In fact, unlike his predecessors, the last "overseer" of Emar does not bear a name of Hurro-Hittite tradition but a Semitic name, and this may mean that he was politically independent from Ḫatti.

Lastly, two Emar texts¹⁹ mention the terrible year when the *tarwa* troops, or hordes, besieged the city. We are unable to specify who this enemy actually was; nevertheless, this fact may be related to the events that brought about the fall of Emar.²⁰

In conclusion, all the aforementioned documents support the assumption that Ḫatti collapsed in the second decade of the 12th century BCE, and presumably before Ugarit and Emar were attacked.

3. What Happened?

3.1. The Abandonment of Ḫattuša

J. Seeher²¹ demonstrated that the Hittite capital was abandoned and the official buildings were meticulously cleaned out.²² We can exclude that the city was looted by enemies, because there are no traces of fighting; if the capital had been attacked or plundered, either smashed pottery or pieces fallen from the hands of the looters should have been found; besides, the domestic quarters were not burnt.²³ The only possible explanation is that the court moved to another place to which it transported all the temple inventories and precious goods.

Concerning the tablet collection discovered at Boğazköy, the scarcity of documents datable from the time of the last king, Šuppiluliuma II, may be explained by assuming that the most significant texts were moved to another place.²⁴

After the court left Ḫattuša, occupation was reduced to small areas in the former Hittite city.²⁵ Some of the city gates were blocked, presumably because the inhabitants felt insecure and were no longer able to control the whole extent of the city walls.²⁶

⁹ DIETRICH, LORETTZ 2002.

¹⁰ See CUNCHILLOS 1989, 275-280; SINGER 1999, 726-727.

¹¹ See CHUNCILLOS 1989, 277 nn. 7 and 8.

¹² See LACKENBACHER, MALBRAN-LABAT 2016, 33-35.

¹³ See CUNCHILLOS 1989, 325-340; SINGER 1999, 724-725; 2017, 624; FINK 2010, 140; DEVECCHI in press.

¹⁴ See SINGER 1999, 724 n. 411.

¹⁵ See COHEN, D'ALFONSO 2008, 15 n. 54; HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

¹⁶ See COHEN, SINGER 2006, 134; COHEN 2009.

¹⁷ See BRINKMAN 2017.

¹⁸ COHEN 2012.

¹⁹ See ARNAUD 1991, ns 25 and 44.

²⁰ See SINGER 2000, 25; HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

²¹ SEEHER 1988; 2001.

²² See SCHACHNER 2011; 112-113; GENZ 2013.

²³ See GENZ 2013.

²⁴ See BEMPORAD 2006, 74; KLINGER 2015, 99; also see here § 4.5.

²⁵ See KEALHOFER *et alii* 2009; SEEHER 2018, 89-90.

²⁶ See SEEHER 1988; GENZ 2013, 471.

ABBAS AL-HUSSAINY*

INSCRIPTIONS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR II
FROM THE IRAQI EXCAVATIONS AT MARAD

ABSTRACT

This paper presents five inscribed artifacts from the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, which were found in the Iraqi excavations at Tell as-Sadoum, the ancient Babylonian city of Marad. One of them, a fragment of a terracotta cylinder, is particularly remarkable in that it allows us to identify a temple building as the shrine of Lugalmarda, the city-god of Marad.

KEYWORDS

Marad; royal inscriptions; Neo-Babylonian; Nebuchadnezzar II; Lugalmarda; E'igikalama temple.

Four fragments of baked bricks of Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon, and one terracotta cylinder fragment with an inscription by the same ruler were excavated during the 2nd season of Iraqi excavations at Tell as-Sadoum (fig. 1), ancient Marad, in 2005.¹

All bricks were stamped with the same standard inscription,² but they differ in some detail of writing. Nebuchadnezzar II's bricks come from the temple in area A (nos. 1 and 4), from the *temenos* (no. 2), and from the administrative complex next to the *temenos* wall (no. 3). Clearly, Nebuchadnezzar II made construction works in the city, as the Iraqi excavations have documented in various excavation areas.³ From a superficial layer above the inner sector of the Old Babylonian temple in area A also comes an inscribed fragment from a cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar II whose inscription mentions the temple of the god Lugalmarda. It is probable that the temple of area A is the shrine which is referred to in that inscription.

Some considerations on the building that we have brought to light (figs. 2-4) are in order. The massive structure, which had a broad *cella* with a niche in the middle of its rear wall, was filled up with clean sand containing no sherds, except for some 2nd mill. BCE pottery materials from the niche. After careful consideration of the evidence, we have concluded that the Old Babylonian original construction continued into use into Kassite times and was then intentionally and ritually obliterated by Nebuchadnezzar II in view of its reconstruction, which is supposed to have followed the earlier layout of the shrine. It should be noted, however, that we could not observe any structure above the sandy fill of the temple.

The temple of Lugalmarda at Marad was called E'igikalama (*e₂-igi-kalam-ma*), "House – Eye of the

Land."⁴ According to written sources, it dates back at least to the time of King Naram-Sin of Akkad (ca. XXIII century BC).⁵ Subsequently, four Babylonian kings claimed to have rebuilt the E'igikalama in their inscriptions: the Kassite rulers Kadashman-Enlil and Kadashman-Turgu, and the Neo-Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus.⁶

The fragment of the Nebuchadnezzar Cylinder was found in the sand fill above the walls of the Old Babylonian temple. Bricks 1-4 were similarly found in superficial layers above the Old Babylonian structures.

An edition of all the royal Neo-Babylonian inscriptions from the excavations of Marad follows below.

Brick 1 (fig. 5a-b)

Excavation no.: Marad S.2/135

Location: Area A, Sq. G₂ 16

Dimensions: L. 25 cm, W. 15 cm, Th. 7 cm

Transliteration:

1. [⁴AK-ku-du-ri-URI₃]
2. ʳLUGAL KA₂¹.[DINGIR.RA^{ki}]
3. za-ni-in e₂-sa[g-il₂]
4. u₃ e₂-zi-da
5. IBILA a-ʳša¹-re-du
6. ʳša¹ ⁴AK-ʳIBILA-URI₃¹
7. LUGAL KA₂.DINGIR.RA^{ki}

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¹ The second and third seasons of excavations at Marad took place in 2005 and 2007 by an Iraqi team under the direction of the Author, on behalf of the University of Al Qadisiyah and the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage. I would like to thank all the participants in the excavations at Marad. Thanks are also due to Gianni Marchesi and Nicolò Marchetti, who kindly revised my manuscript in view of its publication. The topographic survey of the site and the map in fig. 1 were made by Giampaolo Luglio; the pictures of the inscriptions were taken by Khalid Al Timimi and Nawfal Mohammed: their help is gratefully acknowledged. Our old grid system of squares has now been superseded by an UTM grid; in fig. 1, our topographical data for the inscriptions have been translated there.

² Cf. WALKER 1981, 82-85, no. 102.

³ See AL-HUSSAINY 2010 and 2018.

⁴ See GEORGE 1993, 104, no. 520.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

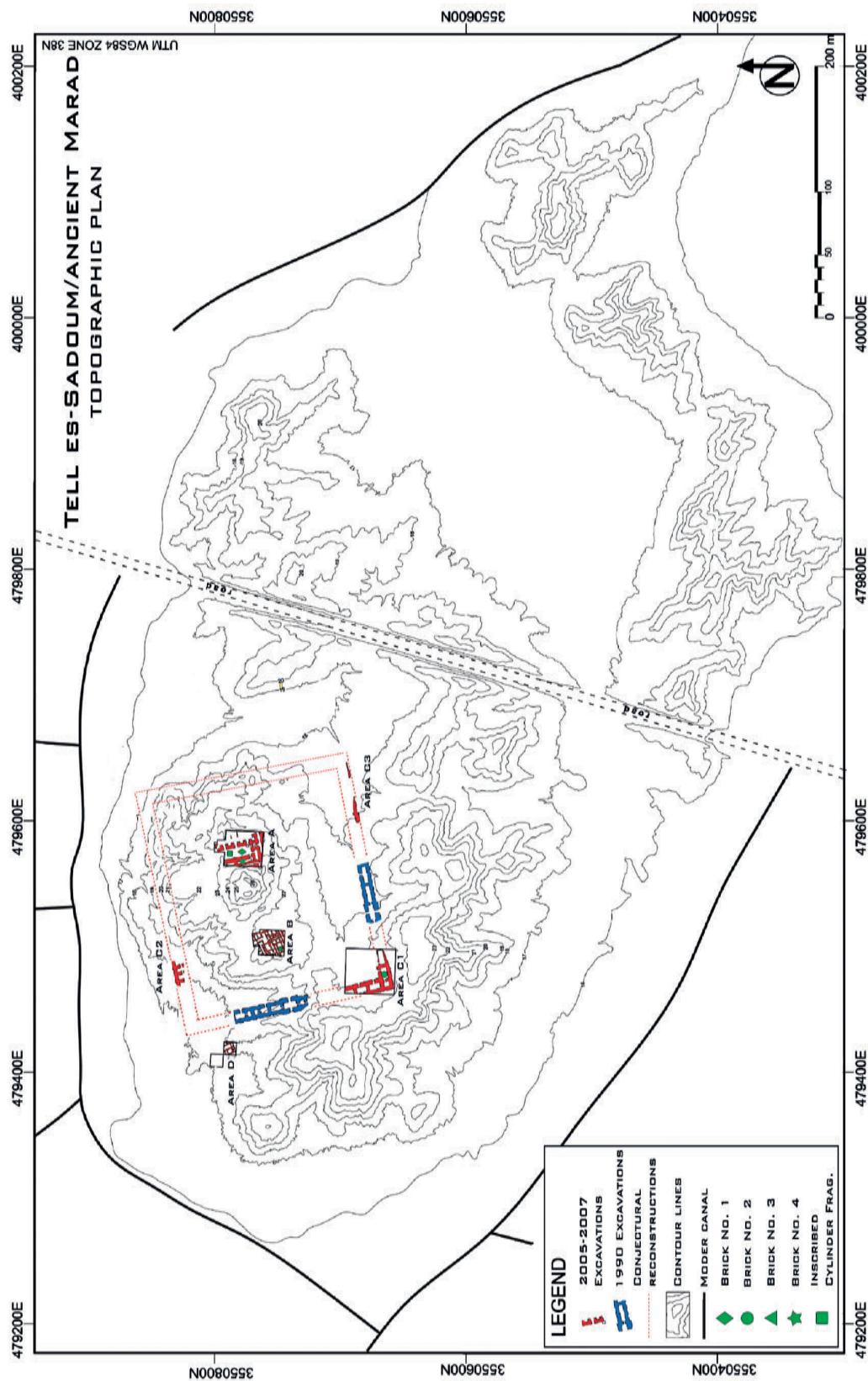


Fig. 1 - Topographic map of Marad with indication of the findspots of the inscriptions.

WATHIQ AL-SALIHI*

THE ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATIVE ELEMENTS
OF TEMPLE OF ALLAT AT HATRA

ABSTRACT

The paper illustrates the architecture and the sculptural decoration of the temple of Allat, one of the main religious buildings in Hatra, located in a prominent position within the Great Temple complex. The temple was investigated by the Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage of Iraq between 1974 and 1975.

KEYWORDS

Hatra; Parthian architecture; religious architecture; architectural decoration; inscriptions.

*To the memory of my close friend
Hazim Al-Najafi*

Numerous studies and researches have been published on the inscriptions and sculptures discovered during the 1974-75 excavations¹ conducted by the Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage in the temple of Allat, an important religious building in Hatra.² The temple is situated within the Great Temple complex, in a prominent location coinciding with the north-western corner of its forecourt. W. Andrae, as reported in his second volume, named this construction "Building B" and interpreted it as a palace with administrative functions.³

The excavations exposed an east-oriented rectangular building consisting, like most of the temples in the complex, of three iwans: a large central iwan flanked by two smaller ones (Fig. 1). Behind the northern iwan, which is deeper than the southern, there is a single room with a side door connecting it to the central iwan. The southern iwan, on the other hand, presents two rooms at the back. The one located immediately behind it can only be accessed through the opening in its eastern wall, which coincides with the main entrance of the iwan; the second room, instead, is characterized by two apertures: the first passage, leading to the central iwan, is symmetrical and opposite to the one in the room behind the northern iwan, while the second passage opens onto the room located in the south-western corner of the building. The western wall encases a few steps of a staircase that did not go further up. The building stands on a 1.75 m high platform and can be accessed frontally or laterally through ten steps. On the façade of this triple-iwan structure there are four engaged columns. While the southernmost and northernmost ones flank-

ing the outer sides of the smaller iwans are regular in size, with a diameter of 1.45 m, the two engaged columns framing the central iwan, projecting from the wall more than their radius, are larger and have a diameter of 2.81 m. The rectangular bases of these engaged columns lean against the façade of the temple and are decorated with architectural mouldings. It has to be noted that they are not uniform in their dimensions: for example, the plinth of the southern engaged column measures 2 m in height, while the northern one is only 1.35 m high, despite the level of the ground in front of the southern iwan being higher than that in front of the northern iwan. As for the two larger engaged columns, the base of the northern one is 1.3 m high, while the southern one is 1.53 m. The different thickness of the column bases at floor level is strictly connected to the discrepancy in the width of the two smaller iwans: if the entrance of the northern iwan is 6.75 m wide, the opening in the southern iwan is only 5.05 m wide. This difference of about 1.7 m affects the proportions of the corresponding front arches. As a consequence, in order to compensate the resultant lack of symmetry, the architect was forced to raise the floor of the platform in front of the southern iwan.

Corinthian capitals similar to those on the façade of the juxtaposed iwans originally surmounted the engaged columns. The capitals of the smaller columns present a plaited ornament, two rows of acanthus leaves of different sizes, two volutes and a rosette. The capitals of the larger columns have a similar decoration enriched with the addition of egg patterns and lesbian leaves. These end with the level of the Corinthian capitals built above the smaller arch, while the smaller columns also end at the level of the same arch, where another attached column with Corinthian capital starts, and at the same time terminate with the level of the smaller Corinthian columns erected

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I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Hazim Al-Najafi for giving his permission to publish this material.

¹ SALMAN 1974.

² AL-NAJAFI 1981; IDEM 1983; IBRAHIM 1985-1986; RASHID 1984; AL-SALIHI 1982; IDEM 1985; IDEM 1989; INVERNIZZI 1989.

³ ANDRAE 1912, 116-118.

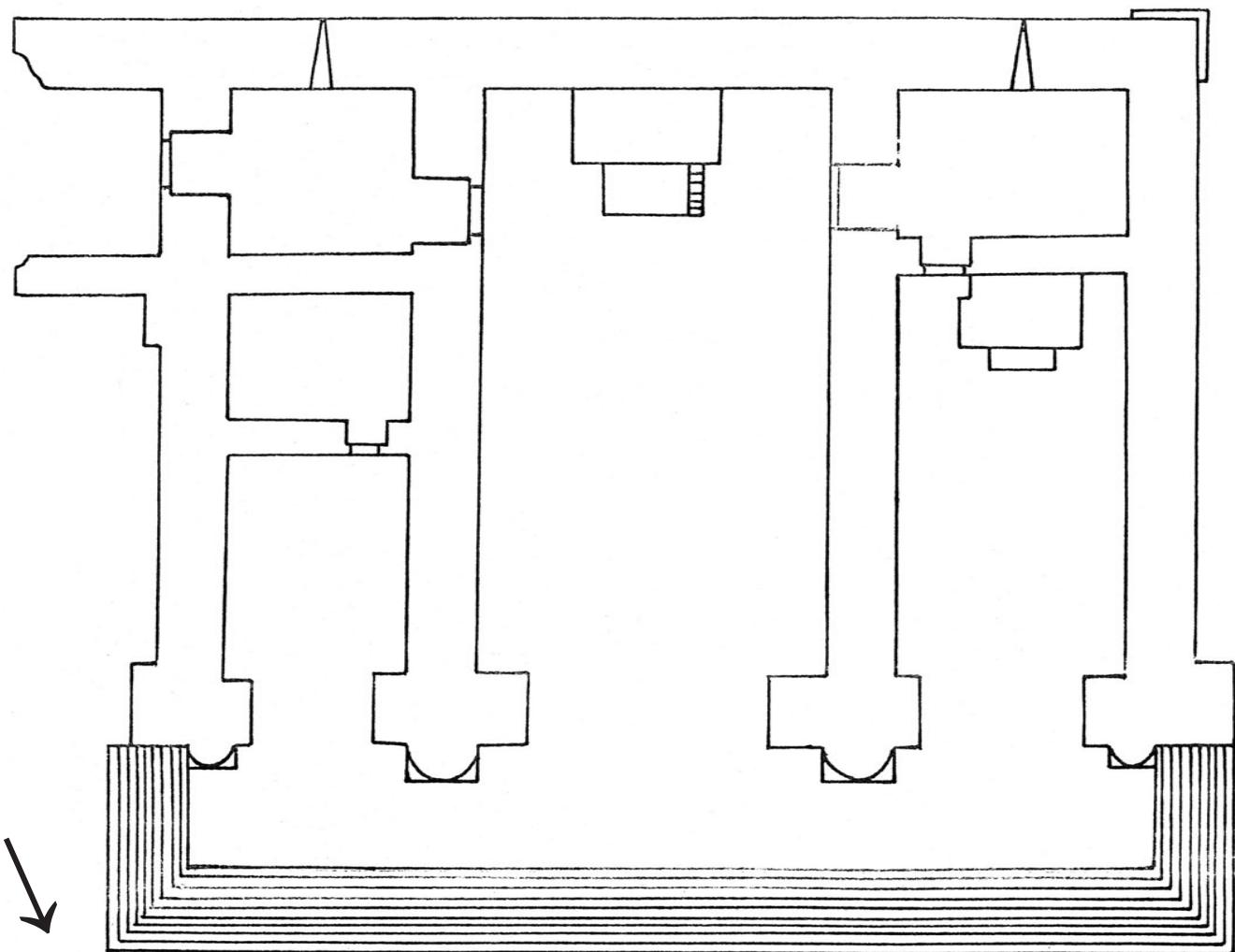


Fig. 1 - Hatra, Temple of Allat, Plan.

above each of the smaller iwans. The north-western corner of the temple presents a 2.7 m wide buttress protruding from the wall of about 29 cm. A similar buttress is located in the south-western corner, but it measures 3 m in width and projects 38 cm from the wall. In the middle of the exterior western façade of the temple there is another buttress, 2.75 m wide and protruding 75 cm from the surface of the wall; this buttress is carved with the high relief of king Sanatruq I on a support consisting of four slabs. That the king was responsible for the construction of the temple is evidenced by literary and sculptural evidence. In this context, his son 'Abdsmy', who completed the construction of the building, had commissioned this statue to perpetuate the memory of his father. It can be assumed that this space became a sort of sacred place in its own right, as testified by an incense burner/altar set against the back of the building; moreover, evidence of intense burning is still visible on the wall behind the altar and in the surrounding area. A fourth

buttress is located on the southern wall: it is 2.65 m wide and 95 cm thick; in its proximity there is a 10.5 m deep well with a round limestone mouth and walls coated with a layer of plaster. Several statues, whole and fragmentary, were found at the bottom of the well along with a large collection of small drinking jars. Both the north-eastern and south-eastern corners of the temple were encased within slabs of stone functioning as supports for the two arches of the smaller iwans and extending up to the height of the frieze running around the exterior walls of the building, or possibly higher. The decorative frieze stretches over the buttresses and, on the northern exterior wall, it presents two different elevations, probably due to the floor height differences.

The façade of the temple has several distinctive features hitherto unknown in the religious and secular buildings of Hatra. In spite of its being a single-storey edifice, the architectural mouldings and the various typologies of columns adorning the upper levels of

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THE ITALIAN-KURDISH EXCAVATIONS AT GIR-E GOMEL IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 2017 AND 2018 FIELD SEASONS¹

ABSTRACT

The article presents the preliminary results of the Italian-Kurdish excavation project carried out by the University of Udine and the Directorate of Antiquities of Duhok at the site of Gir-e Gomel (Kurdistan Region of Iraq). From at least the mid-3rd millennium BC onwards, Gomel was the central site of the entire Navkur Plain, a very fertile and well-watered region on the route linking Arbail and the Greater Zab Valley with the Upper Tigris region to the north of Nineveh. The Eastern Tigris plains between the modern city of Duhok and the Greater Zab have never been the object of a target-oriented archaeological excavation aimed at establishing a stratigraphic reference sequence for this still under-explored archaeological landscape and investigating diachronically the development of the region's material culture. With this purpose – and the aim of exploring the character and function of this important site on a local and regional scale, investigating the role it played in the region's cultural and socio-economic processes – Gir-e Gomel has become the subject of extensive archaeological excavations as from 2017 and 2018. The main results of the first excavation seasons are discussed in the following article.

KEYWORDS

Gir-e Gomel; Iraqi Kurdistan; Chalcolithic; Bronze and Iron Age; Classical and Islamic periods.

1. Introduction and project goals

The Transtigridian plains located between the modern city of Duhok and the Greater Zab have never been the object of a target-oriented archaeological excavation designed to establish a stratigraphic reference sequence for this still under-explored archaeological landscape and investigate diachronically the development of the region's material culture (Fig. 1). The region comprised between the Tigris Valley, the Zagros foothills dominating the modern city of Duhok, and the Navkur Plain, crossed by the Gomel and Al-Khazir rivers, was investigated from 2012 to 2018 by the University of Udine. The exploration of this region covering almost 3,000 sq. km was carried out in the framework of a multidisciplinary landscape archaeology project with the goal of investigating the formation and transformation of the cultural and natu-

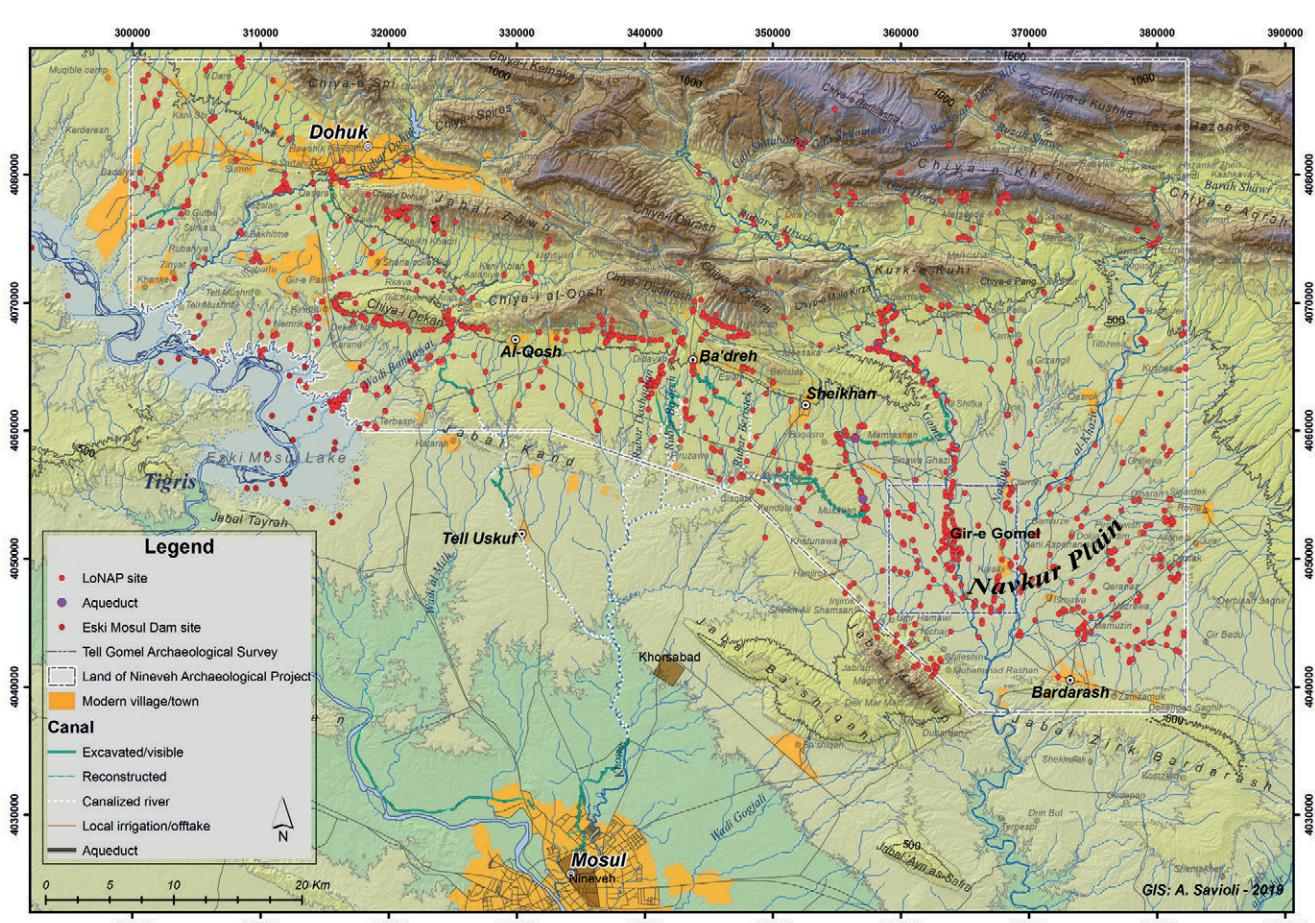
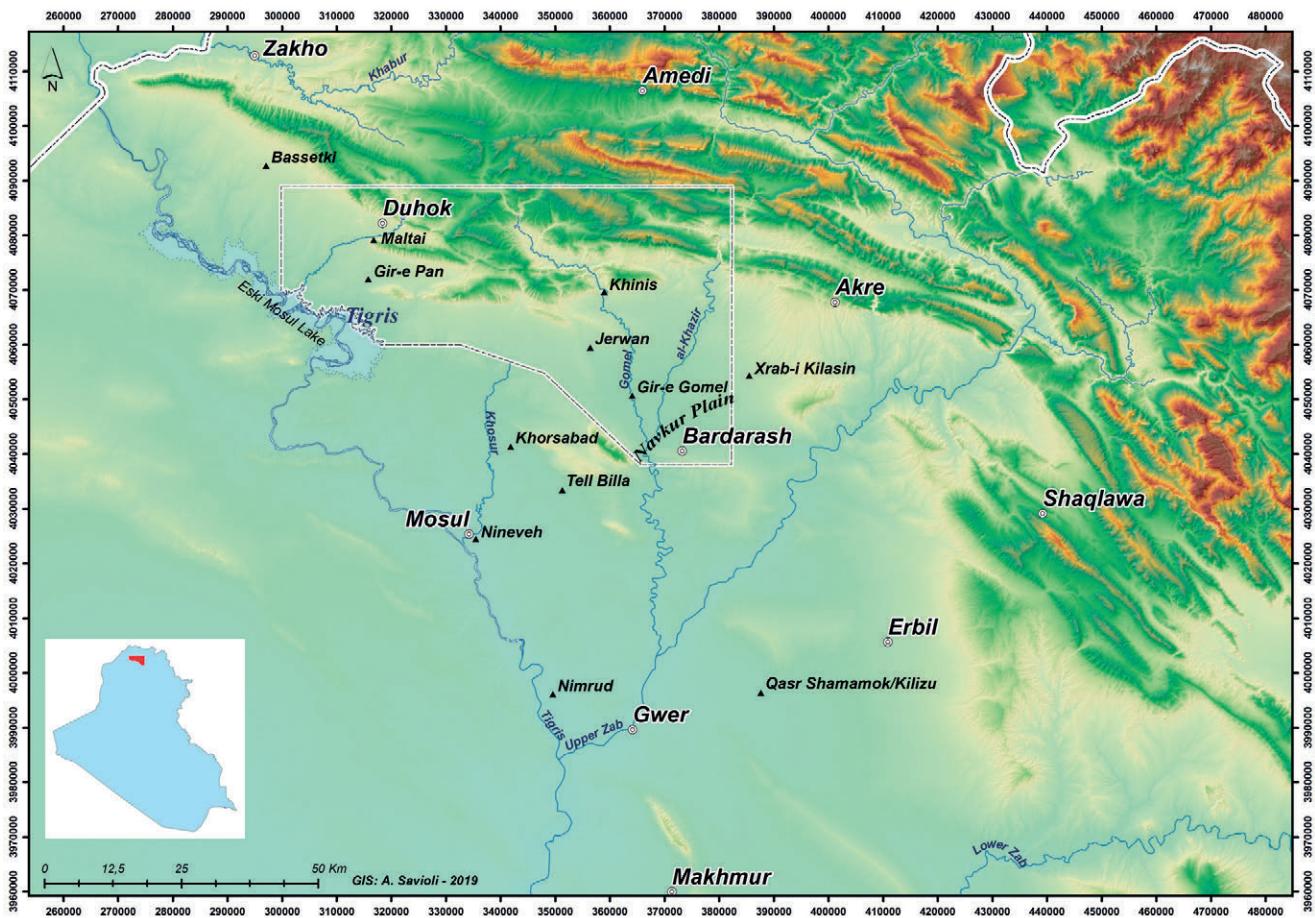
ral landscape of one of the hitherto most uncharted regions of Upper Mesopotamia.² The project is based on a twofold strategy: on one hand, the analysis of settlement and land use through extensive and intensive survey and the geoarchaeological study of the region's environment and climate and their evolution as a result of anthropogenic impact and climatic fluctuations and, on the other, the excavation of a reference archaeological site with a long and continuous settlement sequence. The evidence gathered during the survey indicates that the prominent site of Gir-e Gomel would be an appropriate choice for archaeological investigation.

The excavation of Gir-e Gomel, located in the heart of the Navkur Plain, 4 km west as the crow flies of the modern town of Kelekchi, in the northern region of Iraqi Kurdistan, is an Italian-Kurdish co-operation undertaking entitled "The Kurdish-Italian Gir-e Gomel Archaeological Project" (KIGAP). The project, which is co-directed by Daniele Morandi Bonacossi of Udine University and Hasan Ahmad Qasim of the Duhok Directorate of Antiquities, fills the gap that exists in our knowledge of the region's archaeological landscape and material culture. The site, which today's Kurdish inhabitants of the village call Tell Jomel and in 20th century cartography is recorded as Tell Gomel or Tell Jomel,³ was first

¹* University of Udine, ⁺ Directorate of Antiquities of Duhok, [•] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Sections 1-4 and 9 were co-authored by Daniele Morandi Bonacossi and Hasan A. Qasim, section 5 by Katia Gavagnin (with an analysis of the Early Islamic pottery from Gir-e Gomel by Cristina Tonghini), section 6 by Costanza Coppini, section 7 by Marco Iamoni, and section 8 by Elisa Girotto.

² MORANDI BONACOSSI 2012-2013, IDEM 2016, IDEM 2018a-b; MORANDI BONACOSSI, IAMONI 2015; GAVAGNIN, IAMONI, PALERMO 2016; IAMONI 2016; PALERMO 2016; COPPINI 2018.

³ See for example the "Operationskarte" published in 1917 by the kartographischen Abteilung der Königlichen Preußischen Landesaufnahme (Mosul Sheet: Tell Gomel), the map of Mesopotamia published in 1919 by the Great Britain War Office (Survey Party M.E.F. Baghdad, TC Anglo-Indian series of Mesopotamia, Dohuk Sheet 137 O/SW: Tell Jomel), the map published in June 1942 by the U.S. Army Map Service (Sheet J-38 T: Tell Jomel), and the GDP Survey Map published in 2009 by the Kurdish Regional Government where the site is recorded as Tal Jumar (Shekhan Sheet 38n.). In his *Mu'jam al-buldān* (Dictionary of Countries), 1977, vol. II, 189, written between 1224 and 1228, the Arab geographer Yakut al-Hamawi (1179-1229) refers to the site as Jawmal.



archaeologically investigated in 2012 during the extensive survey conducted in the region by the University of Udine. A small trial trench was dug along the site's south-western edge in 2012 and 2013 in order to get a first insight into the mound's stratigraphy.⁴ This first trench was then enlarged as from 2017 to become Operation 1 (see below). In 2016, an intensive survey programme was carried out at Gir-e Gomel with the aim of investigating more in depth its overall occupation history.⁵ Extensive excavation started in 2017 in Operation 1 and was extended to Operations 2 and 3 in 2018.

The main goals of the Gir-e Gomel excavation consist of establishing a stratigraphic reference sequence at the site and well-stratified and relatively and absolutely dated seriations of ceramics and other archaeological artefacts. The accomplishment of these objectives will make available the first reference series of material culture in the region and enable comparisons to be made with neighbouring areas, thus shedding light on cross-cultural relationships and exchange patterns in Upper Mesopotamia. At the same time, the excavation in Gomel will explore the character and function of this important site through the millennia on a local and regional scale, investigating the role it played in the production dynamics and socio-economic processes in the region.

2. The environmental setting of Gir-e Gomel

The site of Gomel, which entered the scientific literature thanks to the work of the first scholars who studied the region from the early 18th century onwards,⁶ lies in the middle of the Navkur Plain ("mud plain" in *Badînî/Kurmanji*), a 30 km wide roughly triangular plain in the eastern part of our survey area delimited to the north and east by the first Zagros foothills, to the south by the low hill range of the Jebel Zirkh Bardarash, and to the west by the Jebel Maqloub (Figs. 1-2).

Mean annual rainfall in the Navkur Plain rises from south to north from 400 to 600 mm per year (500-550 mm in the Gir-e Gomel area), dropping in dry years to 300 mm in the southern part (Gir-e Gomel about 350 mm) and 500 mm in the north.⁷ Today the entire plain is located well to the north of the "zone of uncertainty", i.e. the belt of marginal cultivation characterised by an increasing frequency of crop failure,⁸ and is part of the stable dry-farming zone of Upper Mesopotamia (Wilkinson's Zone 1b).⁹ Here, at between 350 and 600 mm and not less than 300 mm in two out of every three years, rainfall is reliable and cereals can be predictably and extensively cultivated using a rain-fed system even in years with lower rainfall figures. Gir-e Gomel and the Navkur Plain enjoy not only adequate rainfall but also from an extreme abundance of surface and ground water. The plain is crossed by the River Al-Khzir, a major tributary of

the Greater Zab, and the minor Nardush and Gomel rivers that join the Al-Khzir at the southern end of Navkur. Numerous *wadis* and ephemeral streams feed the main watercourses. The plain is thus potentially much richer in soil moisture than any other region to the north of the Greater Zab's confluence with the Tigris and offers ideal conditions for highly productive agriculture.¹⁰ Ground water is also extremely abundant and many springs, supplied by the aquifers located in the Zagros foothills, contribute to making Navkur an intensively cultivated area, sustained also by irrigation from wells. Today, cereals (mainly wheat, but to a lesser extent also rice and barley) and vegetables are grown there.

In the Navkur Plain, the presence of abundant water is combined with fertile soils. The region is characterised by deep and productive agricultural soils, mainly "Brown Soils (Deep Phase)" developed on alluvial sediments, which occur at average depths varying between 2 and 4 m and are non-saline.¹¹ In the presence of the high rainfall characterising the Gomel area and the entire Navkur Plain, these soils can produce high yields. These overall very favourable conditions for extensive and intensive agriculture account for the fact that the greatest density of the 1081 archaeological sites hitherto identified in the region by the Udine University's survey project, of which 608 can be classified as habitation sites,¹² is situated in this plain (Fig. 2).

3. The site: topography and occupation history

The ancient settlement of Gir-e Gomel is located on the eastern bank of the River Gomel approximately in the centre of the Navkur Plain. The town was located at a strategic crossing point¹³ on the route con-

⁴ Excavation work was conducted by Marco Iamoni, assisted in 2013 by Francesca Simi.

⁵ This project was conducted by Francesca Simi in her PhD research programme (SIMI in press).

⁶ BACHMANN 1927, Taf. I; JACOBSEN, LLOYD 1935, 32; STEIN 1942, 163-164; FIEY 1965, 230.

⁷ BURINGH 1960; WIRTH 1962, Abb. 9-10; GUEST 1966, figs. 5-6; TAVO maps AIV.4-5.

⁸ WILKINSON, HRITZ 2013, 14-18, fig. 2.1.

⁹ WILKINSON 2004, 42-43.

¹⁰ MORANDI BONACOSSI 2018a, 84-87, figs. 5-6.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, fig. 3; BURINGH 1960, 78 and folding chart.

¹² The 473 sites which did not yield archaeological material include many different non-settlement features, such as aqueducts, primary and secondary canal sections, weirs, stone water-mills and other productive installations, rock-reliefs, rock-graves, cairn fields and isolated cairns, karst springs etc.

¹³ YAQT AL-HAMAWI 1977, 189, referring generally to earlier historians, mentions the existence in the area of a Qantarat Jawmal, thus indicating that at Gomel there was a bridge crossing the river that at the time he wrote was no longer present (HONIGMANN 1954, 97; FIEY 1965, 230).

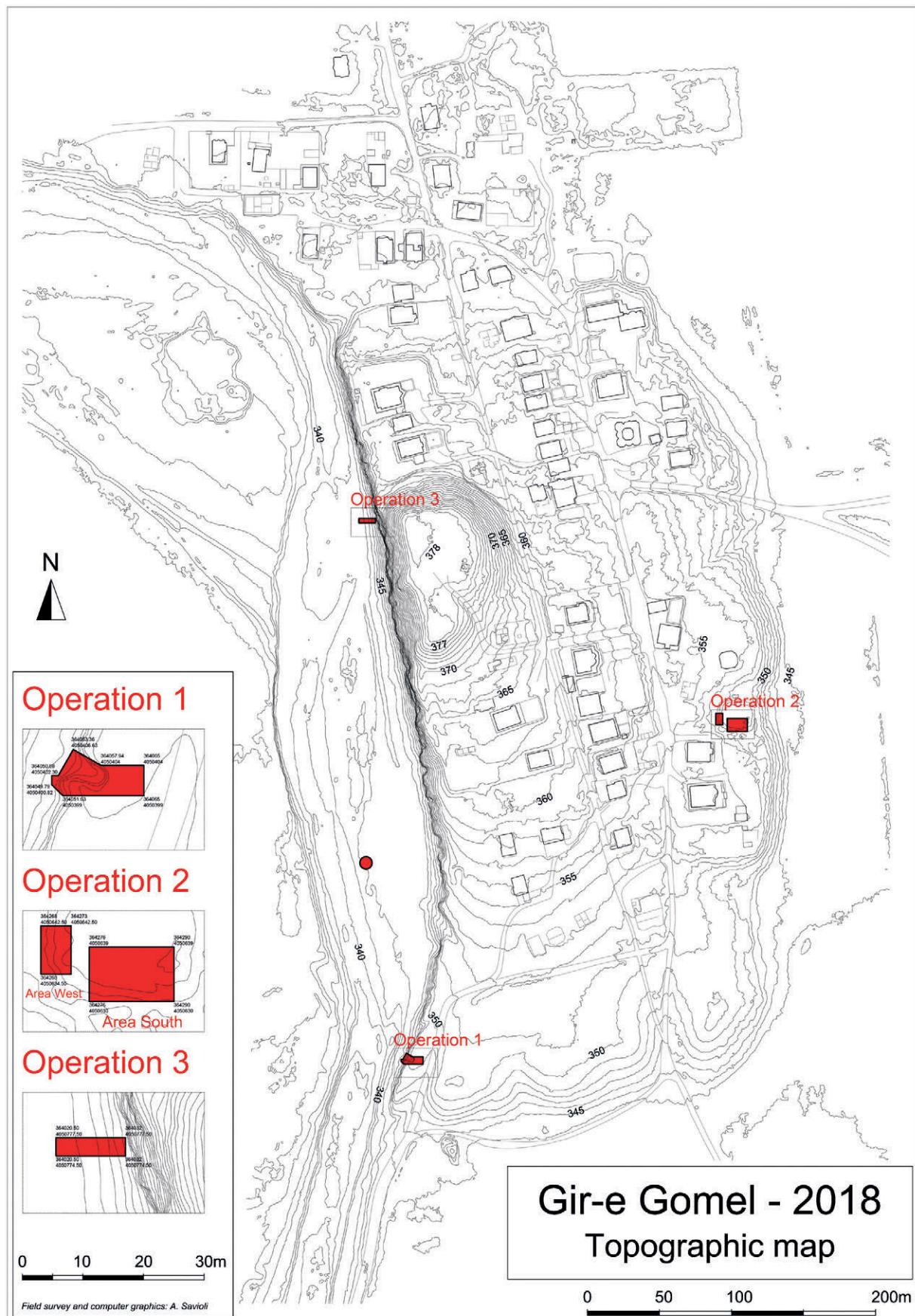


Fig. 3 - Topographic map of Gir-e Gomel.



Fig. 4 - UAV oblique view of Gir-e Gomel from the south (September 2018).

necting the Erbil/Arbela Plain with the Greater Zab Valley, the Navkur and Duhok plains and the Tigris Valley. Over the millennia, the river has modelled the shape of the site, which consists of a small mound measuring 155 x 86 m with a surface area of 1.4 ha that, with its height of 38 m, today towers over the riverbed¹⁴ and a large surrounding lower town to the north, east and south (Figs. 3-4). The high mound slopes gently to the south, more steeply to the east and north, while its western side was eroded by the River Gomel, the course of which undermined the mound's margin determining the formation of an imposing, nearly vertical section. The latter gives an impressive insight into the upper town's stratigraphic sequence (Figs. 4 and 50). Mud-brick walls on massive stone foundations and baked brick paving belonging to different settlement phases can be clearly recognised in the section.

Today the lower town overlooks the surrounding landscape from an average height of 10-15 m and covers a surface area of approximately 30 ha. A U2 aerial photograph, taken on January 29th 1960 (Fig. 5), shows the presence of anthrosols around the eastern Gomel lower town.¹⁵ The anthrosols extend into

the surrounding plain further eastward than the edge of the lower town, indicating that the site was larger than suggested by its present-day morphology. The intensive survey carried out by Francesca Simi in 2016 has provided the necessary field confirmation of this interpretation of the U2 image.¹⁶ Especially in its central and western parts, Gomel's lower town is now occupied by the scattered houses and gardens of the modern village. The construction of these buildings, which have been erected in the last two decades,¹⁷ required the levelling of the ground in the lower town, thus damaging the latest archaeological deposits. The steep eastern slopes of the lower town and a deep erosion gully located in the area of Operation 2 (see

¹⁴ The top of the mound is 33 m above the adjacent plain.

¹⁵ On anthrosols and the interpretation of their signature on remotely sensed imagery, see MENZE, UR 2012.

¹⁶ SIMI in press.

¹⁷ The above-mentioned U2 aerial photograph of Gomel shows only a cluster of abandoned collapsed dwellings in the northern lower town immediately to the north of the high mound, the remains of a small pre-1960s village.

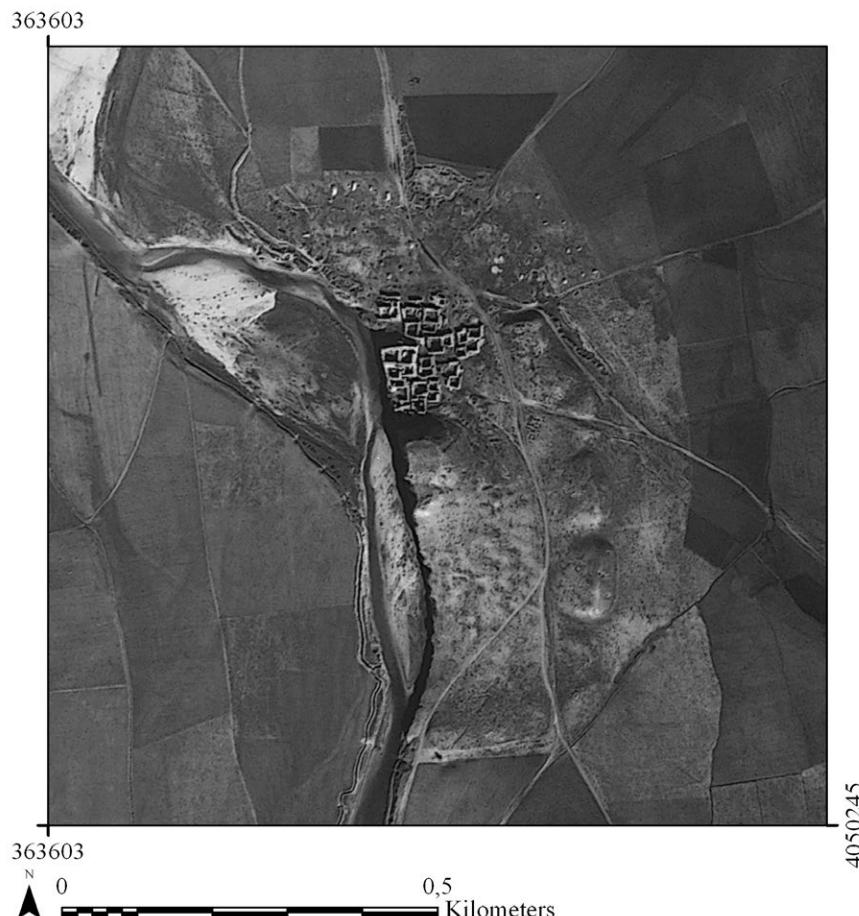


Fig. 5 - U2 mission 1554 (29 January 1960) aerial photograph. Courtesy of Jason Ur, Harvard University.

below) might suggest the existence of a fortification system protecting the ancient settlement, and a city gate. These features are particularly visible in the U2 image. The original topography of the northern lower town can no longer be reconstructed since this part of the site has undergone levelling and terracing operations to create flat surfaces on which the houses of the modern village could be constructed. The southern edges of the lower town slope quite gently down to the surrounding plain.

As for the original form and size of the ancient site, fluvial erosion has removed part of the high mound and the western lower town. The contour lines in the topographic map of Gir-e Gomel, the U2 aerial photograph and the oblique image of the site emphasise the persistence at the foot of its western section of a semi-circular portion of the ancient site with a surface area of 4 ha where the archaeological deposit has been partly removed by the river (Figs. 3-5). What remains of this eroded part of the site are the lowest archaeological deposits, partially removed by water erosion and now covered by thick gravel

deposits laid down by the river. This interpretation of the topographic and archaeological evidence is supported by the discovery made in 2013 of three poorly preserved baked-brick walls of a building located in what is today the Gomel riverbed in the southern part of the eroded site slice, about 140 m to the north/north-west of Operation 1 (Fig. 3, red dot). The building, part of which is still buried under the river gravel, was associated with Middle Bronze Age pottery.

The available evidence shows that the ancient site of Gomel must have reached an overall surface area of about 35 ha, which was entirely occupied during the mid-late 3rd millennium and the Middle Bronze Age (see below), thus undoubtedly serving as the central place of the Navkur Plain during these periods. At other periods during its occupation history, the site may have been significantly smaller. Gomel's size thus equalled the 34 ha of the mid-late 3rd millennium site of Xrab-i Kilaşin discovered about 20 km to the west of the Greater Zab and 22 km to the east of our site by the Upper Greater Zab Archaeological

Gir-e Gomel periodization	Operation	Relative chronology	Absolute chronology
1	1-3	Recent/modern	1922-today
2	1	Late Islamic	c. 1500-1922 AD
3	So far not attested in the excavation	Middle Islamic	c. 1000-1500 AD
4	1	Early Islamic	636- c. 1000 AD
5	So far not attested in the excavation	Sasanian	224-636 AD
6	1-2	Parthian	c. 100 BC-224 AD
7	1	Hellenistic	331-c. 100 BC
8	1	Post-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Achaemenid	612-331 BC
9	1-2	Neo-Assyrian, Iron Age	c. 900-612 BC
10	1	Middle Assyrian, Late Bronze Age II	c. 1300-1100 BC
11	1	Mitanni, Late Bronze Age I	c. 1550-1300 BC
12	1-3	Middle Bronze Age	c. 2000-1550 BC
13	1, 3	Mid-late Early Bronze Age, EJZ 2-5	c. 2750-2000 BC
14	So far not attested in the excavation	Earlier Early Bronze Age, Early Ninevite 5, EJZ 0-1	c. 3100-2750 BC
15	3	Late Chalcolithic 3-5	c. 3850-3100 BC
16	3	Late Chalcolithic 1-2	c. 4500-3850 BC

Tab. 1 - Archaeological periods recorded in Gir-e Gomel during the excavation.

Reconnaissance.¹⁸ Gir-e Gomel and Xrab-i Kilaşin were thus the most extensive sites in the region to the west of the Greater Zab and east of the Tigris before Bassetti, a 50 ha mid-late 3rd millennium and Middle Bronze Age site in the Selemani Plain north-west of the city of Duhok.¹⁹

The result of the extensive and intensive surveys carried out in Gir-e Gomel show that the site was continuously occupied without significant interruptions from the beginning of the Late Chalcolithic²⁰ to the Middle and Late Islamic period.²¹ As mentioned above, the site's at least seven millennia long history is also witnessed by the remarkable height of the upper town, which rises almost 40 m from the level of the River Gomel. The first two excavation seasons at the site have made it possible to establish a stratigraphic sequence covering the Late Chalcolithic 1-5, the time span from the later Early Bronze Age (mid-late 3rd millennium) to the Iron Age, and the Hellenistic, Parthian, Early and Late Islamic periods. Hitherto not recorded in the excavation – even though attested at Gomel by the extensive and intensive surveys – are the earlier Ninevite 5, Sasanian and Middle Islamic periods (Tab. 1).

With its not able size that makes it the largest site in the Navkur Plain, its essentially continuous occupation for at least almost seven millennia, and its

strategic position on the left bank of the river nearly at the centre of the fertile and well-watered plain and on the main south-east-north-west route connecting

¹⁸ KOLIŃSKI 2018, 17-18 and https://www.academia.edu/5709687/UGZAR_The_site_catalogue_2013_part_2_Sectors_D1-F5,_site_074. According to Rafał Koliński, the size of Xrab-i Kilaşin shrank to approximately 14 ha during the following Middle Bronze Age, thus marking a change in the function of the settlement that became a rural centre of local importance (Rafał Koliński, personal communication, March 05, 2019).

¹⁹ PFÄLZNER *et alii* 2017, 14. A smaller area of the site was also settled during the following Late Bronze and Iron Age.

²⁰ The discovery of an Ubaid period white stone stamp seal found on the site's surface in 1933-1934 and now in the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago (A12466; FRANKFORT 1935, 29-31, fig. 31) suggests that Gomel was already occupied during the Northern Ubaid/Early Chalcolithic period. The recovery of a so far very limited amount of unstratified ceramic material possibly dating to this and the Halaf periods in Operations 1 and 3 may suggest the existence under the later occupation levels of a Late Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic prehistoric site.

²¹ The Late Islamic period, i.e. the Ottoman period, is attested too at Gomel. However, the density of the diagnostic pottery and its distribution on the site's surface suggest the existence of a very small hamlet in the northern part of the site, which was possibly settled only during the very late Ottoman period or even after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. A sub-recent cemetery was brought to light in Operation 1 (see below). However, the still limited understanding of the Ottoman period pottery may influence our conclusions.

the Erbil Plain with the Tigris Valley, Gir-e Gomel was the most important site in the area and commanded the entire Navkur Plain, in particular in the periods of its maximum extension during the mid-late 3rd millennium BC and the Middle Bronze Age. The UGZAR Project located the site of Xrab-i Kilaşin about 22 km to the east of Gir-e Gomel, in the environs of the modern town and the archaeological site of Rovia.²² With its 34 ha surface area the site equals the extension of Gomel. However, its peripheral location on the eastern margin of the Navkur Plain and non-continuous occupation – starting only in the mid-late 3rd millennium, when the site reached its maximum extension, and continuing in the Middle Bronze Age (though with a significant reduction of its original size), the Middle Assyrian period and then in the Islamic era – suggest that Xrab-i Kilaşin was not the central site of the fertile Navkur Plain.

4. Written sources on Gomel and its region

The history of the Navkur Plain is scarcely illuminated by ancient written evidence. The Old Babylonian texts from the Mari and Shemshara archives of the time of Samsi-Addu mention in the region to the east and west of the Upper Iraqi Tigris a poorly known Amorite tribe, the Ya'ilanum, ruled by a king called Mar-Addu whose neutrality Samsi-Addu tried unsuccessfully to negotiate.²³ This tribe lived in the lands of Nurrugum and Qabra and was defeated and eradicated through deportations by Ishme-Dagan immediately before the joint conquest of Qabra and Urbil (Erbil) by Dadusha, king of Eshnunna, and Samsi-Addu in 1781 BC.²⁴ According to the cuneiform sources, sites such as Talmush (probably Ger-e-pan), Ninet/Nineveh, Shibanum=Shibanibe/Tell Billa, and Kilizum/Qasr Shemamok belonged to the local kingdom of Nurrugum.²⁵ During the reign of Samsi-Addu, the Navkur Plain and the entire region explored by the University of Udine were certainly part of Nurrugum. The capital city of the Land of Nurrugum, which according to Eidem and Ziegler spanned both banks of the Tigris to the north of Ekallatum, had the same name and must have been located to the east of the Tigris, as an unpublished Mari letter suggests.²⁶ The city of Nurrugum resisted the siege by Samsi Addu's army for almost a year (while Nineveh fell after a few weeks) and was thus certainly well fortified.²⁷ After the conquest of the capital city in 1780, the Land of Nurrugum was incorporated into the kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia and many of its inhabitants were enlisted in Samsi-Addu's army. After this period, the Ya'ilanum tribe that lived in the region disappears from the cuneiform sources.²⁸ Slightly later, during the 17th-early 16th century BC, the otherwise unknown Pizigarra, of probable Hurrian descent – either the ruler of Nineveh, or coming from

this city – is mentioned in a fragmentary context of the preamble to the “The Song of Release”, a literary composition written in Hurrian with Hittite translation discovered during the excavations in Hattusha that mentions the destruction of Ebla.²⁹ This textual evidence suggests that the region studied by the University of Udine had passed under the control of an emerging Hurrian polity.

A similar scenario, characterised by conquest by Samsi-Addu's army followed by the emergence of a local Hurrian political entity, can now also be outlined for Bassetki during the Old Babylonian/Middle Bronze Age period. This site, located slightly to the west of our study region (see above), is now providing important fresh evidence for the Late Bronze Age in particular, due to the discovery during the 2017 excavation campaign of 92 Middle Assyrian texts stored in a jar on the floor of a building destroyed by fire.³⁰ Thanks to the discovery of this Middle Assyrian archive, the site can be identified as the Assyrian city of Mardama, which was the administrative seat of a currently unknown mid-13th century BC Middle Assyrian governorate. The city is already mentioned under the name of Mardaman in an Akkadian period inscription of Naram-Sin, who celebrates its destruction, and again by sources from the Third Dynasty of Ur. The city was then conquered by Samsi-Addu in 1786³¹ and later became an independent kingdom under a Hurrian ruler called Tish-ulme,³² before being destroyed by the Turukkaeans. The Middle Assyrian archive from Bassetki will hopefully also shed new light on the historical geography of the region to the east of Mardama during the Late Bronze Age.

As for the 1st millennium cuneiform sources, not very much is known for the Navkur Plain. According to Radner, from the 8th century onwards the plain perhaps belonged to three different Neo-Assyrian

²² See footnote 18.

²³ ZIEGLER 2011, 149.

²⁴ CHARPIN, ZIEGLER 2003, 90-101; EIDEM, LAESSØE 2001, 23; ZIEGLER 2004, 24 and 2011, 149-150; VIDAL 2013.

²⁵ CHARPIN, ZIEGLER 2003, 77; ZIEGLER 2004, 2011 and Nele Ziegler, personal communication (February 26, 2014).

²⁶ CHARPIN, ZIEGLER 2003, 97-99; EIDEM 1985, 101 and no. 84; ZIEGLER 2004, 21.

²⁷ As for the possible identification of Nurrugum with Gir-e Gomel, see the discussion in the conclusions to this article (Section 9).

²⁸ VIDAL 2013.

²⁹ DE MARTINO 2012; NEU 1996; WILHELM 2001.

³⁰ PFÄLZNER *et alii* 2017 and <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/newsfullview-landingpage/article/cuneiform-tablets-from-bassetki-reveal-location-of-ancient-royal-city-of-mardaman.html> (2018). To the Middle Assyrian tablets, a few other Neo-Assyrian tablet fragments can be added.

³¹ CHARPIN, ZIEGLER 2003, 145.

³² *Ibidem*, 183.



Fig. 6 - Examples of sub-recent graves (Phases 1-2): stone cist (from the east), baked-brick cist (from the east) and simple pit burial (from the west).

provinces: from west to east Barkhalzu, Shimu and Shibkhinish.³³ As admitted by Radner herself, however, this reconstruction is very tentative and is not based on firm documentary evidence. The only site in the Navkur Plain for which identification with an ancient toponym has been proposed to date is Gir-e Gomel. Reade³⁴ and Fales and Del Fabbro³⁵ have tentatively identified it as the ancient Assyrian town of URU *Gam-ma-ga-ra*, mentioned in the Inscription B of Sennacherib at Jerwan.³⁶ The archaeological evidence does not contradict such a proposal, since at Gomel Neo-Assyrian levels have been identified in Operations 1 and 2 (see below). If Gir-e Gomel can be identified with Gammagara, whose name involves a metathesis possibly as an erroneous outcome so that Gammagara should stand for *Gamgamara,³⁷ a toponomastic formation with internal duplication, then the equivalence with the Greek toponym of Gaugamela already proposed by Reade³⁸ would not give rise to particular difficulties.³⁹

9th century Syriac sources mention the site of Gomel as Gogemal, a clear distortion of the name of Gaugamela.⁴⁰ The *Chronography of Bar Hebraeus* (1226-1286) refers to the “town of Gomel” as one of the biggest centres of the diocese of Marga, spanning the region between the Upper Greater Zab Valley, the foothill region of ‘Aqra and the Atrush Valley and the Navkur Plain to the River Gomel.⁴¹ Gomel was the seat of two Monophysite bishops of Marga in the 7th and 9th centuries.⁴² This documentary evidence indicates that in the Byzantine/Early Islamic period the site of Gomel held a central socio-economic and religious position in the Marga diocese and was an important crossing point of the River Gomel on the Erbil-Tigris route.⁴³

Medieval Arabic sources, with the exception of Yaqut al-Hamawi⁴⁴ mentioned above, do not refer to the site of Gomel,⁴⁵ and neither do the 16th century Ottoman *defters* pertaining to the regions of Mosul and Duhok.⁴⁶ The silence of the Arabic and Ottoman period sources with regard to the site suggests that during the Late Islamic period Gomel did not play an important role as an economic and religious centre or

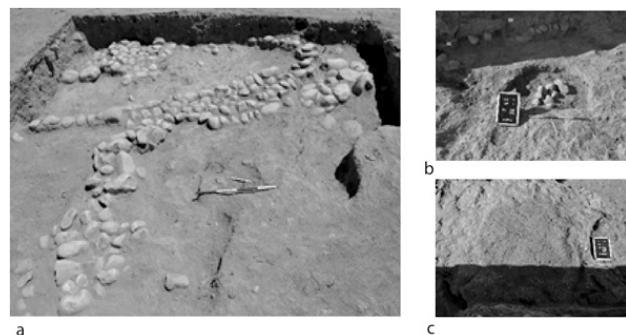


Fig. 7 - Early Islamic occupation (Phase 3), with walls 224, 232, 233, and floor 234 (a) and two of the pits (b, c).

as a strategic river crossing point, as it did during the Byzantine/Early Islamic and Middle Islamic periods, but rather was one among many rural villages and hamlets of the productive Navkur Plain.

5. Operation 1

Introduction

Operation 1 is located along the south-western edge of Gir-e Gomel’s southern lower town, in the area where the site was eroded by the River Gomel (Figs. 3-4). Excavations here were carried out in 2012, 2013, 2017 and 2018. In the first two years, a step trench was opened with the aim of investigating the archaeological sequence in this part of the site. The area was selected after a careful examination of the eroded section of Gomel’s south-western lower town. In this part of the mound, the river erosion and illicit digging had exposed baked-brick structures in a section through an extensive occupation sequence from the sub-recent period to the 3rd millennium BC. In 2017, excavations were resumed and extended through the opening of a new square (5 by 5 m) to the east of the 2012-2013 step trench. The overall

³³ RADNER 2006, Karte 1.

³⁴ READE 1978, 169. See also READE, ANDERSON 2013, 75-76.

³⁵ FALES, DEL FABBRO 2014, 80-81.

³⁶ GRAYSON, NOVOTNY 2014, no. 226: line 4.

³⁷ FALES, DEL FABBRO 2014, 80, footnote 61.

³⁸ READE 1978, 169.

³⁹ FALES, DEL FABBRO 2014, 80, footnote 61 for details.

⁴⁰ Gogemal is mentioned in the “Book of Governors” written by Thomas of Marga, bishop of the diocese of Marga in about the mid-9th century (HONIGMANN 1954, 97; FIEY 1965, 230).

⁴¹ FIEY 1965, 225-303 and map p. 224.

⁴² BUDGE 1932. See also FIEY 1965, 230-231.

⁴³ See footnote 13.

⁴⁴ See footnote 3.

⁴⁵ Miroslav Melčák, personal communication (February 11, 2019).

⁴⁶ Onur Usta, personal communication (February 12, 2019).

Early Islamic Pottery from stratigraphic unit 318.

N.	SU	PHASE	WARE	DESCRIPTION
1	318.35	3	w6	Pale-yellow ware, with medium occurrence fine inclusions
2	318.37	3	w5	Pink ware, reddish-yellow ceramic body, with abundant fine inclusions; pale-yellow surface
3	318.68	3	w14	Cooking ware, reddish-grey hard fire ware, with abundant inclusions, presence of quartz
4	318.33	3	w7	Eggshell ware, pale-yellow, well levigated body
5	318.30	3	w7	Eggshell ware, pale-yellow, well levigated body
6	318.31	3	w7	Eggshell ware, pale-yellow, well levigated body
7	318.32	3	w7	Eggshell ware, pale-yellow, well levigated body
8	318.27	3	w7	Eggshell ware, pale-yellow, well levigated body
9	318.28	3	w4	Gritty ware, light-grey/pale yellow ceramic body with abundant fine inclusions

area excavated in Operation 1 amounts to about 85 sq. m. Twenty-six different occupation phases have been identified so far in this part of the site, which was used as a burial ground in the sub-recent period, the Neo-Assyrian period, and in the Middle and Early Bronze Age, while it was an inhabited area during the Late Bronze Age, and the Post-Assyrian, Parthian and Hellenistic periods.

Sub-recent occupation (Phases 1-2)

The first two phases of occupation are dated to very recent times (probably the 20th century AD) and are represented by 21 graves of a cemetery located immediately below the topsoil. Three types of burial have been recorded (Fig. 6): one baked-brick cist grave and seven stone cist graves (or with stone covers), while the remaining burials are simple pit graves. 60% percent of the bones analysed belong to adults/juveniles, while 40% pertain to young individuals (from newborns to adolescents). The burials were mainly oriented west-east, but in some cases east-west orientation is found. All the skeletons faced south and lay directly on the grave bottom, mostly lying on one side or on the back, with slightly bent or outstretched legs. No grave goods were recovered from the burials.

Early Islamic occupation (Phase 3)

The third occupation phase, dating to the Early Islamic period (7th-10th century AD), is represented by an external trodden floor abutting three walls (224, 232 and 233) and some waste pits (256, 268 and 318). The walls (Fig. 7a) were built with large cobblestones of different sizes (20-40 cm) taken from the nearby river, laid in courses and bound with brown or grey mud; they are probably the foundations of mud-brick walls that were not preserved. The above-mentioned

graves heavily damaged this level. The ceramic material found in several large rubbish pits (diameter: 2-2.5 m; depth 1-1.5 m; Fig. 7b-c) is particularly interesting. The pottery assemblages from the bell-shaped disposal pits, which might originally have been used as storage pits, are homogeneous and of great interest for understanding the material culture of the poorly known earliest phase of the Islamic period in the Gir-e Gomel region.

The excavated evidence is far too fragmentary to ascertain the nature of the area's occupation. However, the uncovered features suggest that in the Early Islamic period this part of the site was used for domestic and storage activities.

The pottery from the Early Islamic dumps (C. Tonghini)

It is well known that the material culture of northern Iraq in the long Islamic period is still poorly understood and that a well-established reference chronotaxonomy for the ceramic finds is not available yet. However, it must also be said that the situation is gradually changing thanks to the most recent fieldwork seasons.⁴⁷ The excavation of a site such as Gomel, characterised by continuous occupation dur-

⁴⁷ See for example NOVÁČEK *et alii* 2016, 122-159. At the 11th ICAANE held in Munich, April 2018, ceramic assemblages from on-going projects in Iraqi Kurdistan were discussed: M. AHMAD "Islamic Archaeology in Iraqi Kurdistan: Sulaymaniyah region as a case-study"; K. KAERCHER "Chronology and Social Identity in the Middle and Late Islamic Periods in Northeastern Iraq via the Study of Unglazed Earthenwares"; C. TONGHINI, V. VEZZOLI "The Islamic period settlement in Kurdistan/Iraq: results from the Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project".

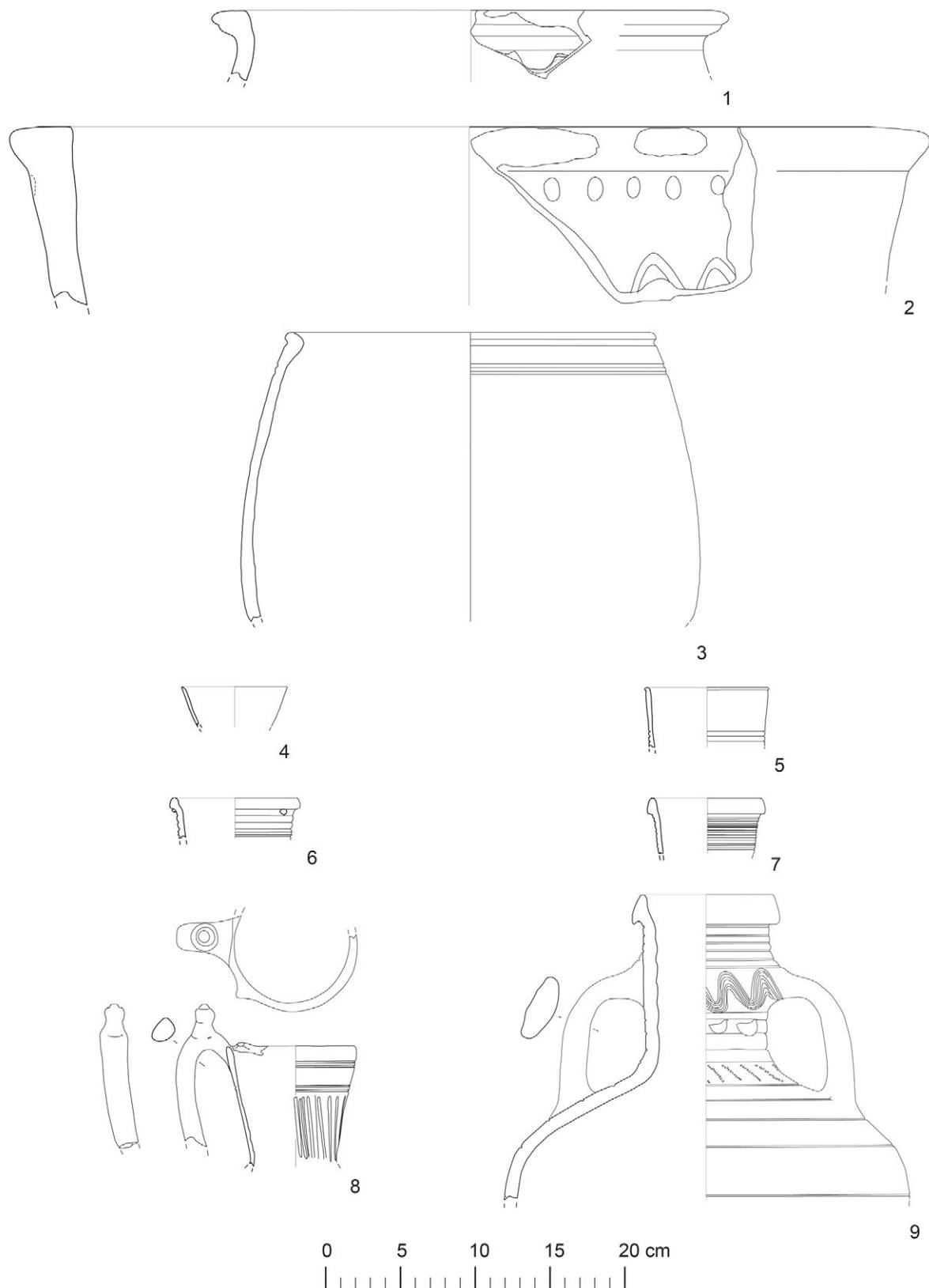


Fig. 8 - Early Islamic Pottery from stratigraphic unit 318.