

# ARCHEOLOGIE ET HISTOIRE DE LA SYRIE I

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# Archéologie et Histoire de la Syrie

## I

La Syrie de l'époque néolithique à l'âge du fer

édité par

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## Avant-propos

En 1989 parut le volume II du livre « Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie », traitant des périodes de la domination des Achéménides jusqu'aux débuts de l'islam. Il était alors prévu d'entamer dans la foulée le travail pour le volume I présentant une période allant de l'époque du néolithique jusqu'à l'empire néoassyrien. Pour diverses raisons, les préparatifs pour ce livre furent retardés et c'est seulement en 2002 qu'à la demande de la Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées de la République Syrienne, le travail reprit. Les collaborateurs pressentis pour les différentes parties se déclarèrent prêts à envoyer leurs textes et illustrations dans un délai raisonnable et au cours de l'année 2003 les premiers manuscrits parvinrent. Malheureusement, il fallut finalement une dizaine d'années pour réunir tous les textes compris dans ce volume.

Entretiens, la recherche avait fait des progrès considérables, grâce à une activité intense de fouilles à laquelle participèrent directement un grand nombre de collaborateurs de ce volume. Les auteurs des manuscrits achevés depuis longtemps ont saisi l'opportunité d'actualiser leurs textes au regard de ces recherches récentes et d'intégrer dans leur bibliographie de nouvelles publications. Les éditeurs de ce volume remercient tous les collaborateurs pour leur patience et leur effort d'actualisation.

Dans la recherche archéologique en Syrie, plusieurs systèmes chronologiques et désignations de périodes sont pratiqués. Les éditeurs n'ont pas estimé utile de pousser à une unification de la terminologie à l'intérieur de ce volume, celle-ci étant amenée à d'autres modifications dans les prochaines années, en raison d'initiatives telles que notamment ARCANE. Le tableau au page 584 essaie de donner une concordance des différentes terminologies pour l'âge de bronze en Syrie.

*Paolo Matthiae  
Winfried Orthmann*



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# The Ḫābūr Region in the Old Babylonian Period

LAUREN RISTVET, HARVEY WEISS

## *Introduction*

The past thirty years have produced ten archaeological surveys of the Ḫābūr region, eight excavations at late 3rd and early 2nd millennium BC (ca. 2000–1600 BC) settlements (Fig. 113), the retrieval of Old Babylonian archives at T. Leilān [Šehna/Šubat-Enlil], Šāgīr Bāzār [Ašnakkum?], and T. Ṭābān [Ṭabātum],<sup>1</sup> the publication of related letters and administrative texts from T. Harīrī [Mari],<sup>2</sup> and long-sought paleoenvironmental records for 3rd and 2nd millennium BC West Asia (WEISS et al. 2012, figure 26). These data provide new perspectives on long-standing early historic Mesopotamian archaeological problems. Two settlement hiatuses frame the Ḫābūr region in this period. The earlier hiatus, 2200–1900 BC, included the Akkadian collapse, regional abandonment, nomadization, and habitat-tracking at its onset, and Amorite resettlement, state formation, and territorial feuding at its terminus. The second hiatus, 1700–1500 BC, essentially still unexplored, began with the collapse of the Habur ware period/Old Babylonian settlement system and was followed by the Mitanni/Ḫanigalbat resettlement and reorganization.

*“...seven generations since the fall of Akkad...”*

Seasonal rainfall from the Mediterranean westerlies provides for the highest yield cereal agriculture in northern Mesopotamia on the Ḫābūr Plains, bordered by the 450 mm isohyet at the foothills of the Tur ‘Abdin to the north and the 250 mm isohyet at the wadi Radd to the south (WEISS 1986). From ca. 2300 BC, imperialized north Mesopotamian harvests were shipped to the Akkadian capital in southern Mesopotamia (RISTVET 2012a). However, an anomalous reduction of the Mediterranean westerlies, the 4.2 ka BP abrupt cooling and aridification event, which began ca. 2200 BC and terminated abruptly at ca. 1900 BC, dramatically transformed this landscape. The qualities and magnitude of this event are recorded in more than sixty paleoclimate proxies in the Mediterranean, west Asia, and immediately adjacent areas, including recently retrieved high-resolution proxies, such as the Koçain speleothem (GÖKTURK 2011),

1 T. Leilān: RISTVET, WEISS 2011; EIDEM 2011; ISMAIL 1991; VINCENTE 1992; VAN DE MIEROOP 1995; Šāgīr Bāzār: TUNCA, BAGHDO 2008; T. Ṭābān: SHIBATA, YAMADA 2009; YAMADA 2008.

2 CHARPIN, ZIEGLER 2003, pp.4–7 provides a general bibliography. For additional sources see ARCHIBAB ([www.archibab.fr](http://www.archibab.fr)).

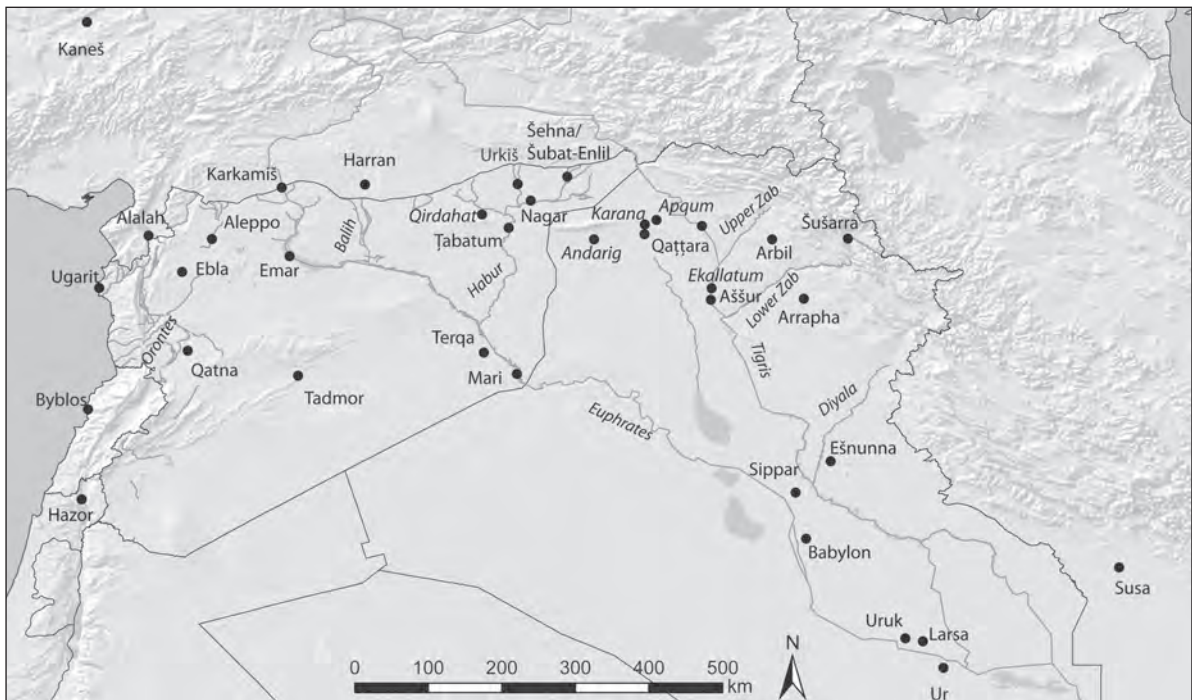


Fig. 112. Northern Mesopotamia, late 3rd to early 2nd millennium BC

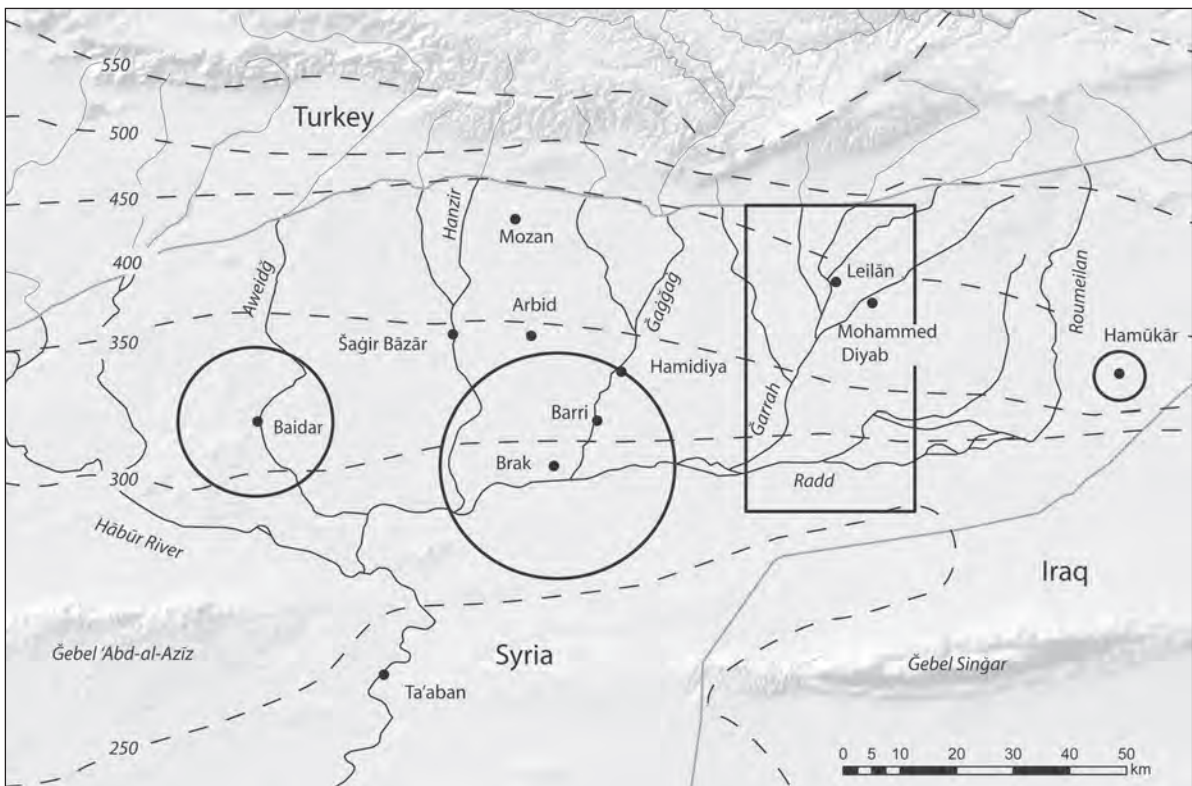


Fig. 113. Hābūr plains, with sites and survey areas discussed in the text

Lake Van varves (LEMCKE, STURM 1997), the Shaban Deep (ARZ et al. 2006), and Gulf of Oman (CULLEN et al. 2000) marine cores, as well as lower resolution proxies such as the Tecer (KUZUCUOĞLU et al. 2011) and Göl Hisar (ROBERTS et al. 2008) lake cores, and the charcoals from Arslantepe (MASI et al. 2012)(Fig. 114).

The swift 30–50% diminution of West Asian precipitation reduced the Ḫābūr Plains’ cultivable land and cereal harvests, and forced region-wide societal adaptations shaped and constrained by sub-regional environments and politico-economic conditions (WEISS et al. 1993; STAUBWASSER, WEISS 2006). In northeastern Syria, and adjacent plains to the east and west, the failure of rain-fed agriculture lead to regional abandonment, truncated Akkadian imperial revenues, and compelled imperial collapse shortly after 2200 BC (WEISS et al. 2012). Bayesian wiggle-matching of high-resolution T. Leilān radiocarbon dates provides the chronology for Leilān IIc adaptive collapse (post-Akkadian, 2230–2200 BC,  $2\sigma$ ), Leilān II abandonment (2200–1950 BC,  $2\sigma$ ), and Leilān I Amorite resettlement (1950–1700 BC) at the return of pre-aridification event precipitation (WEISS 2012b).

The two-stage Ḫābūr Plains settlement reduction, Šamši-Adad’s “...seven generations since the Fall of Akkad,” (GRAYSON 1987, p. 53) and synchronous abandonments across northern Mesopotamia and western Syria, was accompanied by habitat-tracking to the riparian, paludal, and karstic-spring refugia along the Euphrates, Tigris, and Orontes rivers and Madeḫ, Amuq and Radd swamps, where sedentary settlements multiplied in size and number (WEISS 2012b). Some agriculturalists adopted pastoral nomadism, the low-energy alternative to agriculture, visible archaeologically in the levels of temporary constructions at T. Taya (READE 1973, pp. 168–169), the defensive Très Long Mur (GEYER et al. 2010), and The Repeller-of-the-Amorites Wall (GASCHE 1987–1990). In the Ḫābūr plain some settlements remained occupied for a generation (Leilān IIc, EJZ 4c), but almost all of these settlements were abandoned soon afterwards (Leilān II, EJZ 5) and lay vacant for more than two centuries.

*Excavation data*

At T. Leilān, the “Akkadian Administrative Building”, within the shell of the destroyed pre-Akkadian palace, was abandoned and “The Unfinished Building’s” construction, supervised by *Hayabum*, *šabra*, was terminated. A small four-room house was built on top of the ruins of the “Akkadian Administrative Building” and was occu-

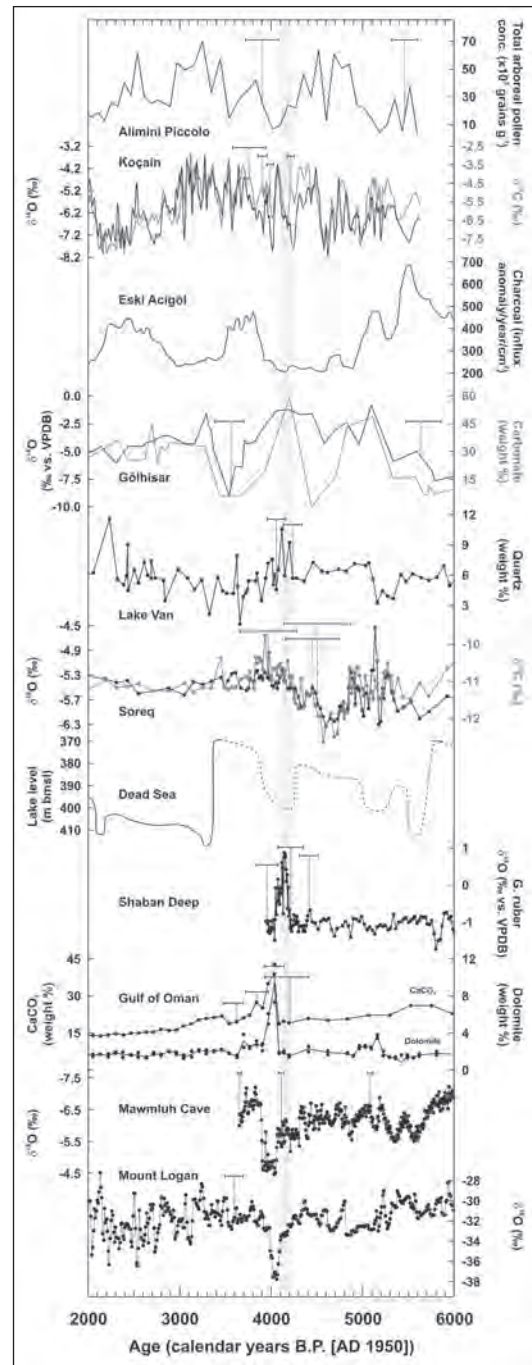


Fig. 114. Variable resolution paleoclimate proxies record the 4.2–3.9 ka BP abrupt climate changes linked to high-resolution radiocarbon-based Leilān chronostratigraphy and regional Akkadian imperialization, collapse, abandonment, and Ḫābūr ware period Amorite resettlement



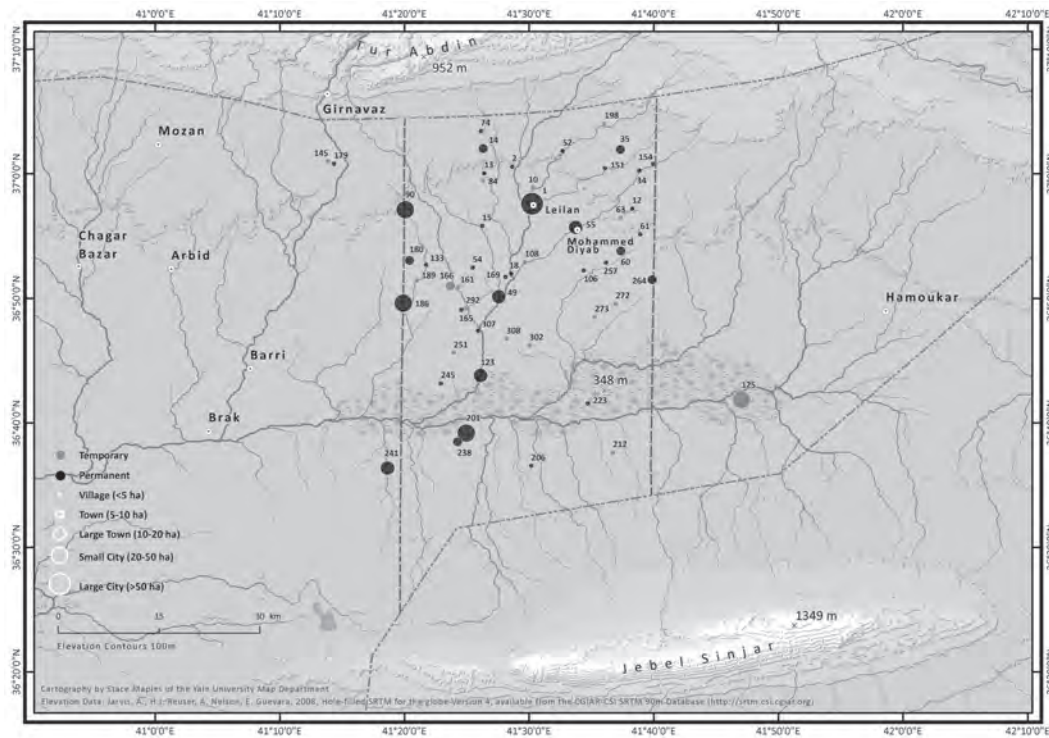


Fig. 115. Leilan Region Survey Period IIb (ca. 2300–2230 BC)

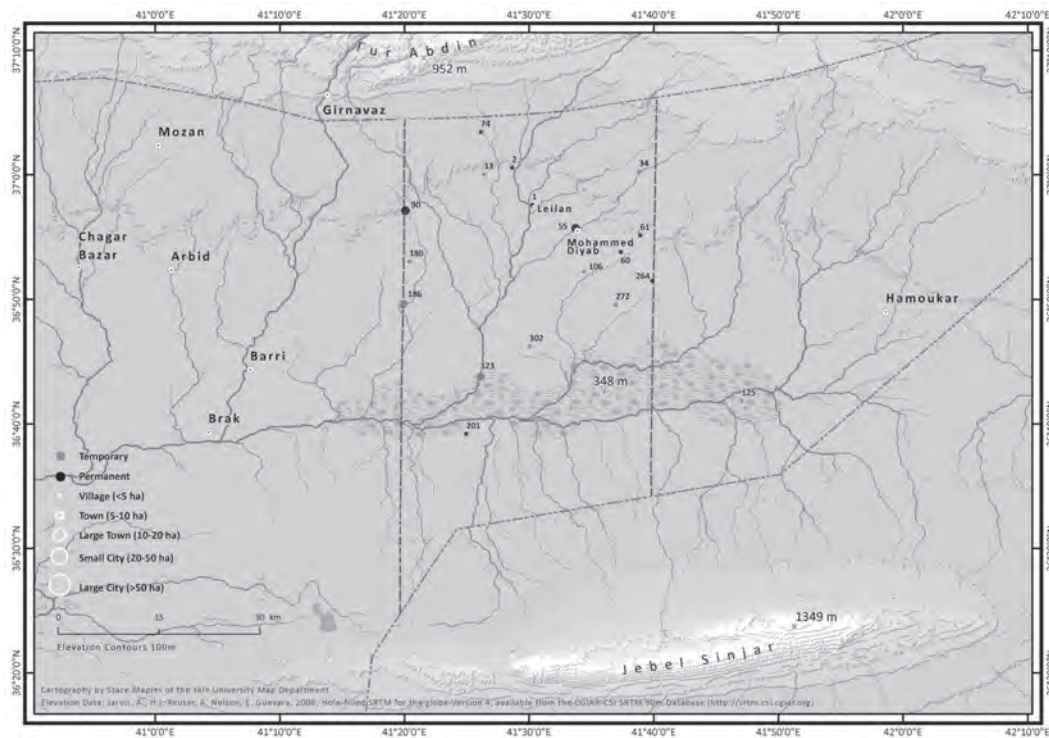


Fig. 116. Leilan Region Survey Period IIc (ca. 2230–2200 BC)



Fig. 117. Leilan Region Survey Period IId (ca. 2200–1950 BC)

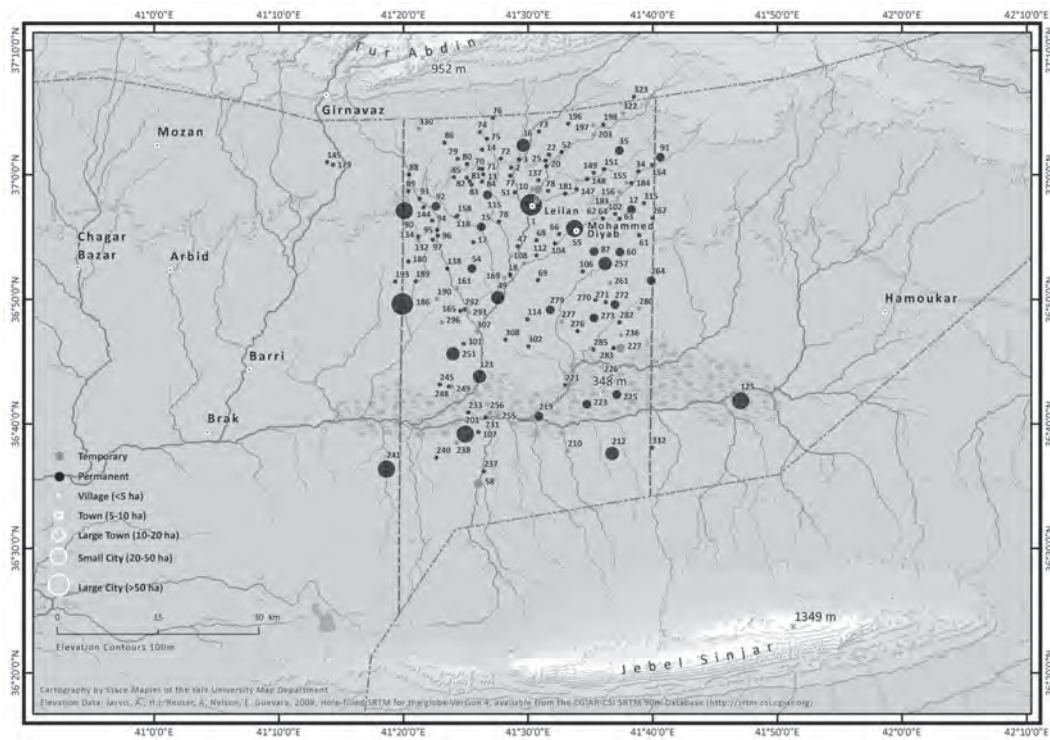


Fig. 118. Leilan Region Survey Period I (ca. 1900–1728 BC)

pied until ca. 2200 BC (WEISS et al. 2012). The “Unfinished Buildings” at Moḥammed Diyāb were probably synchronously terminated, although this period is not well-documented (NICOLLE 2012).

Along the Ġagġaġ, settlement at T. Brāk retracted to the main mound around 2200 BC, as residents abandoned the extensive lower town (COLANTONI 2012, p. 52). The ritual complexes in FS and SS were ritually closed (OATES et al. 2001, pp. 170–177). At Šāġir Bāzār, west of the the Ġagġaġ, a large, possibly communal, building was occupied in the post-Akkadian period, soon abandoned, then subjected to pitting (MCMAHON 2012, p. 30, TUNCA, MCMAHON, BAGHDO 2007). Similarly, the post-Akkadian “Main Building” at ‘Arbīd was abandoned, and pits were dug into its ruins (KOLINSKI 2012). Hamūkār, ca. 100 ha, was abandoned sometime in the Akkadian or post-Akkadian period, with post-Akkadian pits dug into its ruins, and not reoccupied for 1000 years (REICHEL et al. 2012; UR 2010, p. 109). At Mōzān the palace along with the lower town were abandoned, reducing the 120 ha city to an acephalous town of less than 20 ha (DOHMANN-PFÄLZNER, PFÄLZNER 2002, pp. 163–168).

### *Survey data*

In the Leilān Region Survey (1650 km<sup>2</sup>) total population fell dramatically: 67% of sites were abandoned and total area occupied declined by 87% (Fig. 115, Fig. 116). Among urban sites, the occupied areas of T. Farfara (no. 186) and T. ‘Aid (no. 90) were substantially reduced. The average size of the Leilān IIc settlements decreased from 7.2 ha in Leilān IIb to 3.8 ha during Leilān IIc. The only permanent settlements lay along wadis above the modern 450 mm isohyet or beside the Radd, which provides unique marsh resources and a high water-table (ARRIVABENI 2012, pp. 268–270). Survey of the regions of T. Brāk (EIDEM, WARBURTON 1996, p. 55; COLANTONI 2012), T. Beidar (WILKINSON 2000, p. 11; UR, WILKINSON 2008), the Ġebel ‘Abd-al-Azīz (HOLE 2002–2003) and the western Ḥābūr Plains between the Ġagġaġ and Rā’s al-‘Ain (LYONNET 1997), show that settled area decreased substantially at the end of the 3rd millennium similar to the Leilān Region Survey.

After three to five decades the remnant IIc population of the Ḥābūr Plains disappeared (Fig. 117). The Leilān IIc period is defined chronologically by the radiocarbon-defined terminus of Leilān IIc and the onset of Leilān I. Ceramically, the only definition is provided by the post-post-Akkadian, or EJZ 5, assemblage at the Puššam house at T. Mōzān (ROVA 2011; SCHMIDT 2012). No ceramics clearly dating to this period or to the OJ1 period were found in the Leilān or Hamūkār survey collections (ARRIVABENI 2012, p. 268; UR 2010, pp. 109–110). This suggests that during this period there was no settlement on the Ḥābūr Plains but for refugia at a reduced T. Barrī, T. Mōzān, and perhaps Girnawaz. Simultaneous abandonments and political collapse, alongside habitat-tracking occurred throughout Mesopotamia (WEISS et al. 1993; WEISS 2012b) and the Levant (PALUMBO 1990).

### *Nomads and Villages*

At ca. 1950–1900 BC the abrupt return of pre-2200 BC precipitation encouraged the resettlement of west Asian rain-fed domains, including the Ḥābūr Plains, part of a region known as *Šubartum* in the Mari letters (GUICHARD 2002, pp. 136–137). Surface reconnaissance of areas east and west of the Ġagġaġ River define the divergent resettlement dynamics that ensued.

In the east, this resettlement is the largest recorded in the Leilān Region Survey, with 157 sites occupying 767.2 ha, but the average settlement size of 4.89 ha was a third less than in the late 3rd millennium (IIb) (Fig. 118, Fig. 119). The majority of these settlements (72%) were both founded and abandoned during the three or four century span of Habur ware, while a correction for site contemporaneity suggests that 32 sites were occupied synchronously.<sup>3</sup> The instability of this population, however, is quite marked: 53%

3 Calculations here follow KINTIGH 1994.



of settlements occupied during Leilān IIa remained occupied during IIb, but only 17% occupied during Leilān I were occupied during the following Mitanni period (DONELLA 2002). Moreover, this resettlement introduced a new system of urban-village dependency, with numerous satellite villages adjacent to cities, unlike in the 3rd millennium BC (RISTVET 2012b).

Settlements around Brāk also bounced back, from 3 to 113, but incomplete publication precludes observation of other settlement changes here (COLANTONI 2012). As in the Leilān Region Survey, where the resettlement generated the first extensive occupations around the Radd marsh, in the North Ġezīra the dry, southwestern region, previously unsettled, was occupied by small, perhaps transient, villages (WILKINSON, TUCKER 1995, pp. 53–54, fig. 37). In the Hamūkār survey ( $r = 5$  km), settlement returned with the foundation of eight small-medium sites, although it never reached its third millennium levels (UR 2010, p. 111, Fig. 6.20).

In the Ḫābūr Plains west of the Ġagġag, Period I settlement was nucleated in a few towns like Šāġir Bāzār, surrounded by plains empty of villages, but full of nomads. Along the Middle Ḫābūr, then dominated by pastoralists, T. Tābān may have been the only sedentary occupation (NUMOTO 2007; NUMOTO 2009). Early 2nd millennium settlements were not noted near the Ġebel ‘Abd-al-Azīz (HOLE 2002–2003). The scant Habur ware recovered at the large sites along the Ḫābūr River from Rā’s al-‘Ain to Ḫassaka has been explained as pastoral campsite residue rather than vestiges of permanent settlement (Fig. 120; LYONNET 1996, pp. 371–372; LYONNET 2000). Similarly, in the 12 km survey around T. Beidar, only one site had a major Habur ware occupation, and five sites had possible occupations (UR, WILKINSON 2008, p. 308, fig. 4). In general, the western Ḫābūr was uninhabited or only lightly inhabited during the early 2nd millennium BC (WILKINSON 2002).

Why are these two neighbouring regions dominated by opposing settlement patterns? What explains the great increase in the number of sites and population on the eastern Ḫābūr Plains and the concomitant decrease in the west? One climate model suggests that by 1900 BC humid winds from southern Iraq traveled along the Tigris to provide extra spring moisture to the area east of the Ġagġag (EVANS, SMITH 2005). West of the Ġagġag, the inhabitants of the drier region therefore focused on pastoralism, while the higher rainfall to the east facilitated both cereal agriculture and pastoralism.

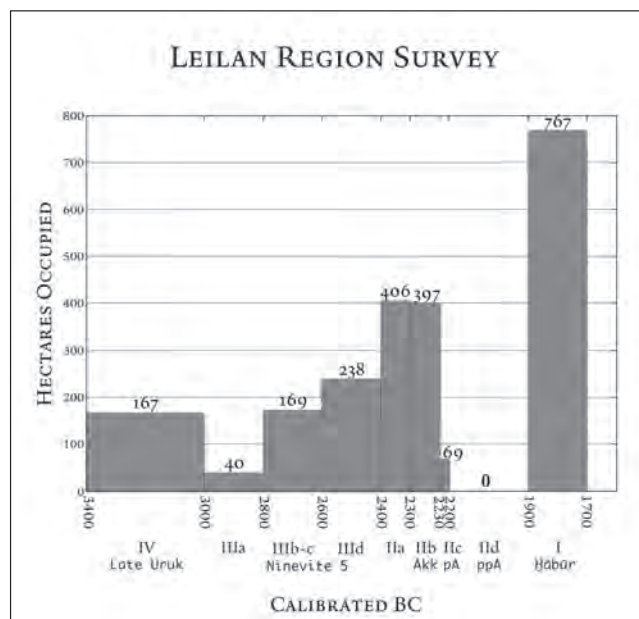


Fig. 119. Leilān Region Survey Histogram of Settlement/Ceramic Periods (M.Arrivabeni, L.Ristvet, E.Rova, H. Weiss).



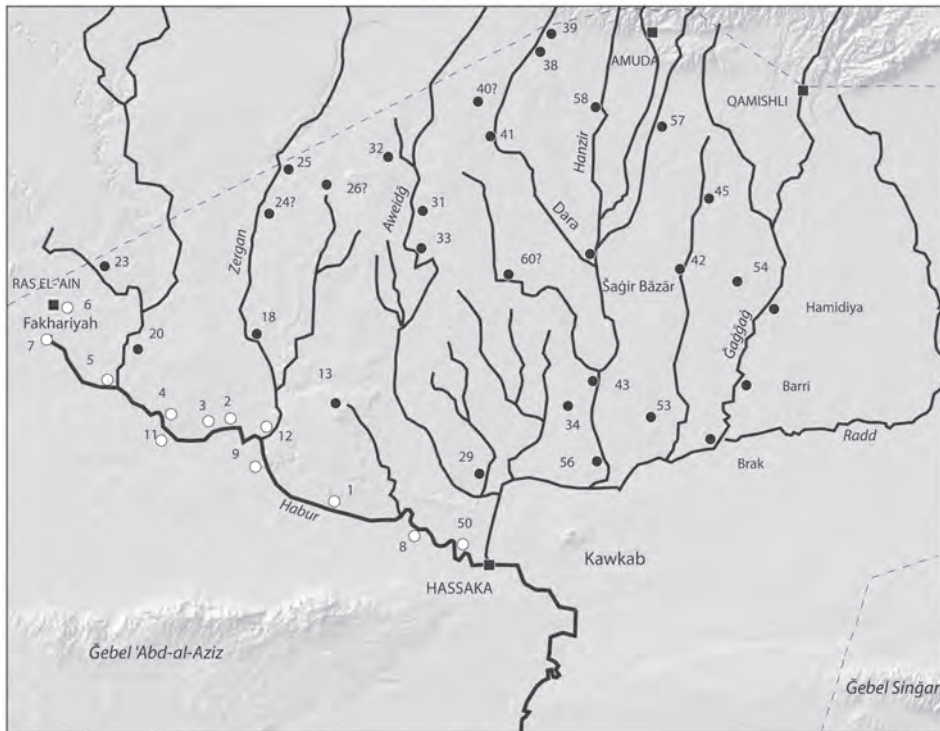


Fig. 120. West Hābūr plains survey map, indicating early second millennium settlements and possible nomadic camps (adapted from Lyonnet 1996, Fig. 5).



Fig. 121. Šāgir Bāzār Old Babylonian closely packed domestic quarters (courtesy of A. McMahon)

Different land tenure regimes and land use practices prevailed in each of the two lands. The grazing territories of the Sim'alites, one of the major tribal divisions recognizable from the Mari letters, were located in the *Ida-maraš* in the west (DURAND 2004, pp. 120–121, citing A.2730), while the major kingdom to the east was *Apum*, the “Land of Reeds” beyond the wadi ar-Radd, which was controlled by Šubat-Enlil/Šehna (CHARPIN 1990, pp. 117–118). The archaeological evidence for a number of medium-size towns that were likely the fractious kingdoms of *Ida-maraš*, and for wide-stretches of open pasture, corresponds to the epigraphic evidence.<sup>4</sup>

In *Apum*, agricultural resettlement did not mean a return to earlier patterns of land management. Unlike the long-lived villages of the later 3rd millennium, the small-size and short life of most settlements suggest that the resettlement was accompanied by transformed land tenure concepts and agricultural practices. In the 3rd millennium BC, the long time-span of village occupation probably strengthened agricultural property institutions. Evidence of wadi flow management and faunal remains also indicate that settlements in the Leilān region during the late 3rd millennium (Leilān IIb) focused on intensive agriculture, not pastoral management (RISTVET 2012a; ZEDER 1998). By contrast, in the early 2nd millennium BC, land may have been held communally by tribe, enabling villages to relocate when water or soil became exhausted.<sup>5</sup> Textual and ethnographic evidence for semi-mobile and semi-sedentary communities, which emphasize a fluid economy within a tribal structure, may help to explain some details of the archaeological record (RISTVET 2008).

### *Hollow Cities, Vibrant Towns*

At first glance, the resettlement on the eastern Ḫābūr Plains seems far denser than during the late 3rd millennium BC. Excavations at several sites, however, suggest that intra-site settlement organization diverged from earlier patterns (PFÄLZNER 2012a). East of the Ġaġġaġ, early second millennium “hollow” capital cities, containing administrative buildings but little domestic architecture, were common (OATES 1982; AKKERMANS, WEISS 1991; WEISS 1985a), while west of the Ġaġġaġ towns like Šāġir Bāzār (MCMAHON et al. 2001, p. 214), Mōzān [Urgiš] (DOHMANN-PFÄLZNER, PFÄLZNER 2000), and T. ‘Arbīd (BIELÍNSKI 1998) featured closely packed domestic quarters (Fig. 121). Along the Ġaġġaġ, the early 2nd millennium exposures are small at T. Brāk, which was probably only a 10 ha site, (MCDONALD, JACKSON 2003; MCMAHON et al. 2007) and T. Barrī (PECORELLA 2003; ORSI 2012), and yet untested at T. Hamīdī.

The 2nd millennium excavations at T. Leilān illustrate this pattern. The site was initially reoccupied around 1950 BC, although it is likely that settlement was limited to a small building on the Acropolis and perhaps some houses along the city wall (STEIN 1990; WEISS et al. 2012, p. 171). Under Šamši-Adad’s Amorite paramountcy, Leilān was transformed into his capital, Šubat-Enlil (WEISS 1983; WEISS et al. 1990). The new capital’s distinctive Acropolis temple façades and cylinder seal iconography represent the introduction of southern ‘Babylonian’ styles into northern Mesopotamia for legitimation of the new Amorite polities, a stratagem previously deployed in the Leilān IIIc period, ca. 2600 BC (RISTVET, WEISS 2012).

The Building Level II–III temples of the Leilān Acropolis are early examples of the Assyrian temples of the 9th and 8th centuries BC, with direct access entrance – wide room antecella – long room cella. Similar to Old Babylonian temples elsewhere, and following a tradition that extended back to the Uruk period in southern Mesopotamia, the Leilān temple façades were decorated with mud-brick semi-engaged columns fashioned to resemble, in intricate variety, the trunks of trimmed palm trees (Fig. 122; WEISS et al. 1990). Another temple to the south (Building Level “X”), may have been linked to the Building Level II temple

4 See ARM 28 20, ARM 28 126 and the unpublished texts: M.5777, A.915 (DURAND 2004, pp. 129; 142–144).

5 On tribal ownership in Apum, see ARM 28 95, for collective land ownership in the Mari juridical texts, see ARM 7, CHARPIN 1997 and the commentary in DURAND 1998, p. 519.

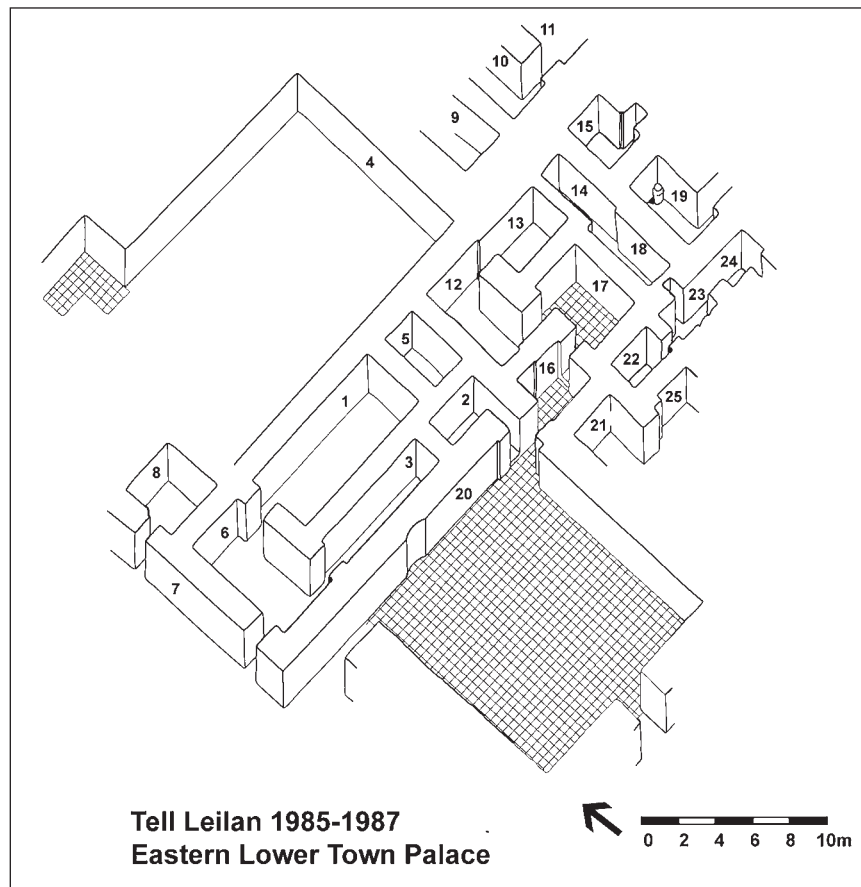


Fig. 122. T. Leilān Acropolis Period I Building Level II, spiral column north façade (courtesy of H. Weiss)

enclosing ca. 6000 m<sup>2</sup>, as large as the contemporaneous eponymous temple at Aššur. Ash and trash that accumulated above the foundations in both buildings included parts of an administrative archive dated with *limus* from Šamšī-Adad's reign and seal impressions of servants of the kings of the city, providing the first excavation-retrieved linkages of Leilān with Šubat-Enlil (WEISS 1985 a, b; WEISS et al. 1990; PARAYRE, WEISS 1991).

Šamšī-Adad's palace was retrieved in part in 1985 and 1987 in the Lower Town East, but the excavated sample of 1000 m<sup>2</sup> is less than 10% of the one-hectare rise that defines this building (Fig. 123; RISTVET, WEISS 2011; AKKERMANS, WEISS 1991). Three rooms of the earliest palace construction, Building Level 4, with seal impressions of servants of Išme-Dagan and Šamšī-Adad, were retrieved. Šamšī-Adad's servants' sealings were also deposited in rooms of Building Level 3, where the destruction can be associated with the region-wide turmoil following Šamšī-Adad's death, the seizure of Šubat Enlil by the *sukkalmah* of Elam, and its conquest shortly thereafter by Atamrum of Andarig. Building Level 2 was probably constructed by Himdiya of Andarig, Atamrum's son. Here more than 600 royal letters and administrative texts and 300 tablet fragments and sealings were retrieved. The abandoned palace ruins subsequently sheltered temporary occupants only briefly. A partially contemporary second palace, the Lower Town Palace North, was built for Qarni-Lim of Andarig, perhaps as his "embassy." Twelve palace rooms surrounding a courtyard were excavated; one room contained four small jars that held the 647-tablet beer archive of Šamaš-dayyān, a servant of Qarni-Lim (WEISS et al. 1991; VAN DE MIEROOP 1995; PULHAN 2000).

Fig. 123. T. Leilān Lower Town East Palace (courtesy of H.Weiss).



Hence the 2nd millennium excavations at T. Leilān have uncovered several administrative palace complexes, but almost no domestic residences except in a small area, adjacent to the city wall (RISTVET, WEISS 2012). Outside of the Ḫābūr Plains, T. ar-Rimāḥ (OATES 1982), T. al-Hawā (BALL et al. 1989, p. 35), and Mari were also hollow cities during this period with palaces, temples, but few small private houses (AYNARD, SPYCKET 1987–90; FLEMING 2004, p. 2; LYONNET 2009). In contrast, smaller dependent settlements were the locus of densely packed domestic worker populations, as documented at Moḥammed Diyāb (DURAND, NICOLLE 1999; NICOLLE 2006; CASTEL 1996, pp. 275–277), Šāḡir Bāzār (MCMAHON et al. 2001, pp. 210–219), T. ‘Arbīd (BIELÍŃSKI 1998, pp. 211–213; BIELÍŃSKI 2001), and Mōzān (PFÄLZNER 2012b). Outside of the Ḫābūr region, at Ḫammām eṭ-Ṭurkmān on the Balīḥ, this general pattern also obtains (VAN LOON 1988).

### *Collapse and the Establishment of Ḫanigalbat*

The Amorite resettlement was, however, a relatively short-lived *oecumene*: neither the eastern nor the western settlement systems continued into the later 2nd millennium BC. East of the Ḡāḡḡāḡ the pattern of hollow administrative cities and densely occupied shifting villages collapsed with the abandonment of much of the Leilān Region Survey settlement. West of the Ḡāḡḡāḡ, survey data indicate that sparse settlement remained the rule.



The absence of a fine ceramic periodization for this period complicates dating and confounds explanations for the collapse of this system, as it is not always recognized in survey collections. The only useful temporal distinction for analyzing survey data remains that between “early” and “late” Habur ware.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, this ceramic evidence is suggestive. Only 57 late Habur ware sherds, on 17 sites, were retrieved in the Leilān Region Survey – as opposed to more than 5000 general diagnostics from the entire period (RISTVET 2012b: fig. 4). The regional settlement collapse visible in the survey data corresponds to the virtual abandonment of Leilān (following its 1728 BC destruction by Samsuiluna), Šāgīr Bāzār, and Mōzān, and a reduction in size at Moḥammed Diyāb. Moḥammed Diyāb, for instance, is characterized by isolated graves and pottery kilns, built into the ruins of abandoned houses (CASTEL 1996, 274; DURAND, NICOLLE 1999). No sites dating to this period were located in the northern and northeastern area of the Leilān Region Survey. While some sites to the west and south of *Apum* may have remained inhabited, the small amount of late Habur ware suggests sparse occupation.

The last half of the 2nd millennium BC (Mittani and Middle Assyrian periods) witnessed a recovery in Leilān Region Survey settlement, with 33 Mittani and 32 Middle Assyrian sites, although site density did not approach the levels of the early 2nd millennium BC (DONELLA 2002). Following the abandonment of Leilān, the region was reorganized around the 164-hectare T. Farfara, perhaps the Mitanni capital, Waššukanni. West of the Ġaggaġ, the earlier pattern of Ḥābūr period rigid nucleation yielded to Middle Assyrian-Mittani dispersion. In the Beidar survey area, occupation ceased at both T. Hanū and Seqar Fōqāni; new settlements were built atop two large tells, and four new villages were either established on low prehistoric mounds or on virgin soil (WILKINSON 2000, fig. 12, p. 32–37). Farther west, along the Balīḥ, the Late Bronze Age witnessed a sudden dispersal of villages following a period of strong MBA centralization (WILKINSON 1998, p. 72). This evidence suggests that LBA economic organization, particularly land tenure, was unlike that of the early 2nd millennium BC.

### *A failed experiment?*

The three-century 4.2ka BP drought episode generated the break between the social and political institutions of the late 3rd millennium Akkadian imperialization and the early 2nd millennium Amorite resettlement.

From 2600–2200 BC, the Leilān Region Survey documents a stable, expanding settlement system based upon urban growth at Leilān and Farfara and the expansion of numerous smaller town sites and sizable villages. A comparable situation emerges from surveys across the Ḥābūr plains and in the Iraqī Ġezīra. Most sites were occupied for several centuries and rates of settlement creation and abandonment were low (Ristvet 2012a). Although ceramic differences – as well as differences in site morphology – existed throughout this area (Lebeau 2011), the basic pattern of urbanization and secondary state development remained the same. Excavation of both *Kranzhügel* like Beidar and Ḥuēra, as well as other urban settlements, like Mōzān, Brāk and Leilān, show that these earlier cities contained large residential populations unlike the later hollow capitals. Hence this late third millennium pattern of long occupied sites within a settlement hierarchy contrasts with the early second millennium pattern of small, shifting settlements of the east Ḥābūr Plains as well as the lightly populated, town-dominated pattern reconstructed for the west Ḥābūr Plains.

There is also no evidence for widespread, tribally organized pastoralism during the 3rd millennium BC in the rain-fed Ḥābūr plains – at least not above the 250 mm precipitation isohyet. Neither the texts from Ebla nor those from Beidar contain evidence for tribal herds as opposed to state-controlled herds (BUCCELLATI 1992, p. 94; PRUSS, SALLABERGER 2004; cf. PORTER 2012). There is no mention of nomads

<sup>6</sup> Published MBA ceramic sequences from the Ḥabur include Moḥammed Diyāb (FAIVRE 1992; FAIVRE 1999), Leilān (FRANE 1996), Brāk (OATES et al. 1997) and Barī (BACCELLI, MANUELLI 2008). Previously published materials have also recently been analyzed (POSTGATE et al. 1997; OGUCHI 1997; OGUCHI 2000; OGUCHI 2006; HROUDA 2001).

(*banû*), pastoral encampments (*nawû*), tribes (*lîmû*), or tribal divisions (*gayû*) – nor is there a parallel Eblaitic vocabulary for these institutions. Pastoralism was no doubt present, but its organization and political import was very different from later practices.

Although there is evidence for some continuity in toponym survival (EIDEM 2000, pp. 262–263; HEIMPEL 2003; FLEMING 2004, pp. 38–39), the Amorite resettlement of the Ḫābūr plains differed from the 3rd millennium settlement, and may represent the introduction of a dynamic agro-pastoralist economic strategy following the return of pre-4.2 ka BP precipitation. These new 3rd-early 2nd millennium data for dynamic settlements and environments indicates that the time has come to replace the static, functionalist, explanations of nomad-sedentary interaction in West Asia (ROWTON 1974), with a dynamic, and historically contingent, model.

Three research efforts will provide further understanding of these historical processes. Stratigraphic excavation, ceramic quantification, and radiocarbon dating will break this period into shorter time units and facilitate definition of intra-period settlement dynamics. Second, the forces that drove Amorite sedentarization and regional resettlement require testing and definition, through the excavation of pastoralist encampments and agricultural villages and analysis of ecofactual data. Finally, the collapse of the flexible Amorite resettlement requires examination in light of the Mitanni emergence, with stratigraphic excavations at sites like the massive Late Bronze Age T. Farfara and its satellites.

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Table of terminologies in use for the Bronze Age of Syria

Approximate Dates BC	Historical Terminology for Mesopotamia	Historical Terminology for Syria	Bronze Age Terminology for Syria	Jezirah Terminology
4000	Late Uruk Jamdat Nasr		LC / EB I	EJ 0
2900	Early Dynastic I		EB II	EJ 1
2700	(Early Dynastic II)	Early Syrian 1	EB III	EJ 2
2600	Early Dynastic IIIa		EB IVa	EJ 3a
2500	Early Dynastic IIIb	Early Syrian 2 ('Mature')		EJ 3b
2350	Akkadian post-Akkadian		EB IVb	EJ 4
2100	Neosumerian / Ur III	Early Syrian 3 ('Late')		EJ 5
2000		Old Syrian 1	MB I	OJ 1
1800	Old Babylonian	Old Syrian 2	MB II	OJ 2
1560				OJ 3
1525	Kassite / Mittani / Middle Assyrian	Mittani	LB I	MJ 1
1350			LB II	MJ 2
1200				

## List of Abbreviations

AAA	Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology (Liverpool)	IstM	Istanbuler Mitteilungen
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research	JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
AASyr	Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes.	JdI	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung	JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology	JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
AnSt	Anatolian Studies	MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft
APA	Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica	NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament	OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis,
AoF	Altorientalische Forschungen	OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
ArchAnz	Archäologischer Anzeiger	OrAnt	Oriens Antiquus
ARES	Archivi Reali di Ebla - Studi	RIME	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods
AUWE	Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte	RIA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie
BagF	Baghdader Forschungen	SAAB	State Archives of Assyria Bulletin, Padova.
BagM	Baghdader Mitteilungen	SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
BAH	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique.	SBA	Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
BAR	British Archaeological Reports	SMEA	Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici, Roma.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research	SUN	Studien zur Urbanisierung Nordmesopotamiens
BATSH		SVA	Schriften zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient	TMO	Collection travaux de la Maison de l'Orient
BCSMS	Bulletin of the (Canadian) Society for Mesopotamian Studies	UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
BiMes	Bibliotheca Mesopotamica	VicOr	Vicino Oriente. Annuario del Dipartimento di Scienze storiche, archeologiche e antropologiche dell'antichità, sezione Vicino Oriente
CDOG	Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft	VMOS	Vorderasiatische Forschungen der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung
CRAI	Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres	WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
CRRA	Comptes rendus de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale	WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
DamM	Damaszener Mitteilungen	ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie
FAOS	Freiburger Altorientalische Studien		
HSAO	Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient		
ICAANE	International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East		
IstF	Istanbuler Forschungen		

## Topographical Index

N.B.: The designation ‘Tall/Tell’ and the Arabic article ‘al’ usually have been omitted from the placenames. The transcription of Arabic names follows the usage of the “Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients”.

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