

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID

Proceedings of the 5th International Congress  
on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East



**Universidad Autónoma de Madrid**

**Proceedings of the 5th International  
Congress on the Archaeology of  
the Ancient Near East**

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La artesanía y el arte en el Oriente Antiguo

**4. *Reports on the Results from the Latest Archaeological Seasons***

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### **Programme - Programa**

# Between continuity and transformation: The late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC ceramic sequence from Tell Barri (Syria)

Valentina Orsi, Florence

## Abstract

The 1998-2002 excavations in the Area G at Tell Barri (Syria) uncovered a continuous sequence of human occupation that dates back to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium BC. The data available from Tell Barri will provide scholars with a new set of stratified pottery assemblages. The analysis of the diagnostic ceramic types belonging to phase Q, pertaining approximately to the Early Jazira IV period, will emphasize elements of strong continuity with the preceding production in the Tell Barri sequence, while the more recent phase P repertory reveals an increasing occurrence of new ceramic groups. The emergence of a new Fine Ware assemblage and the transformation of the morphological and technological characteristics might be part of broader changes in Tell Barri social and economic environment.

**Keywords:** Late III Millennium BC., Pottery, Tell Barri.

Tell Barri lies on the east bank of the wadi Jaghjagh, at the mid-point on the road from Qamishlie to Haseke and roughly in the centre of the Upper Khabur region. The investigation of the area G, on the South Eastern slope of the *tell*, started in 1983 and still in progress, has revealed a sequence of human occupation that, starting from III Millennium BC period,<sup>1</sup> ends with the post assyrian period without significant moment of break.

Between 1999 and 2002, have been uncovered the two occupational phases Q<sup>2</sup> and P.<sup>3</sup> The phase Q includes the strata 37 and 36; the phase P includes the strata 35b and 35a, and they can be dated to late III Millennium BC period.

The stratum 37 has revealed an artisan and domestic area, with single rooms end large open air spaces with various fires places.<sup>4</sup> The general structures plan have changed in respect to the more ancient stratum 38,<sup>5</sup> but the fact that some architectural elements<sup>6</sup> remain in use in both strata suggests a substantial architectural continuity. The more recent 36 stratum depicts the time of the abandoning of the 37's buildings, which have fallen into ruins but are still visible.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The more ancient occupation of the area G dates back to EJ II period (Pecorella, Pirobon-Benoit 2005 b).

<sup>2</sup> Pecorella, Pirobon Benoit 2004: 4-6, 15-51; Pecorella, Pirobon-Benoit 2005 a: 15-56.

<sup>3</sup> Pecorella, Pirobon-Benoit 2003: 11-12; Pecorella, Pirobon Benoit 2004: 4-5, 15, 24-47.

<sup>4</sup> Pecorella, Pirobon-Benoit 2005: 26.

<sup>5</sup> Pecorella, Pirobon-Benoit 2005: 25.

<sup>6</sup> Such as the fire places n. 1117, 1147, 1088, 1089 (Pecorella 2005 a: 23).

<sup>7</sup> Pecorella, Pirobon-Benoit 2005: 30.

The aim of this paper, is to present the ceramic assemblage of the Q phase in relation to the previous and more ancient phase R,<sup>8</sup> including stratum 38, and to the subsequent and more recent phase P.<sup>9</sup>

In the phase Q levels 2240 diagnostic sherds have been recovered: 531 of these are associated with *loci*,<sup>10</sup> the others derives from the filing room.

The ceramic of the phase Q, has been classified according to criteria already stated for the classification of all III Millennium pottery in Tell Barri. The parameters have been detailed starting from a set of samples pieces coming from the «G» and from the «B» area of Tell Barri which include all III Millennium levels.

Technological and morphological characteristics of pots are singularly described in an alphanumerical way according to the Tell Barri ceramic's code. On the base of the recurrence of a set of fixed parameters, every piece is assigned to a class of reference which summarizes its characteristics and suggests a functional generic interpretation. If the analysis of the recurrence of single technological and morphological particularities is useful for a precise rendering of a ceramic repertoire, the use of wide parameters such as the concept of class, dealing with macroscopic transformations collectively, is useful in comparing a set of ceramic repertoires.

The main wares of reference are four standard classes, such as fine, common, coarse and kitchen ware, and tree particular classes, such as grey, metallic and painted wares.

The fine ware is quite standardized; it has compact texture and a fabric of thin sand with no more or little mineral inclusions of small dimension. The surface may be smoothed, and the most common colors are buff, buff tending to green, and buff tending to yellow.<sup>11</sup>

The common ware has medium quality, it has principally sandy fabric base, but are clearly visible mineral and/or vegetal inclusion of variable dimension. In some cases the surface presents a very thin slip, and the most common colors are buff, buff tending to various yellow grading and various brown and orange grading.<sup>12</sup>

The coarse ware has rough fabric, with abundance of inclusion mainly of vegetal origin. It generally has a reddish fabric with a black core, and it is very often hand made.

The kitchen ware has a surface that is generally treated with burnishing and has a mineral temper. The set of colors comprises principally the nuances of brown: light brown, dark brown, reddish brown and buff tending to brown.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Pecorella, Pierobon-Benoit 2005 a: 21-23, 25.

<sup>9</sup> This paper is a preliminary communication based on remarks upon ceramic assemblage of late III Millennium BC period found at Tell Barri. The study of the *corpus* is still in progress, and the complete data and the chronological frequencies will be presented in the in the third volume of Tell Barri studies. I thank the Barri management to gave me photos and pictures of the materials.

<sup>10</sup> Namely they have been founded on the floors.

<sup>11</sup> Corresponding to Munsell 7.5 YR 7/2, 7.5 YR 7/4, 5 Y 6/1, 6/2, 6/3, 7/2, 7/2, 7/3; 2.5 Y 8/4, 8/6, 5 Y 8/4, 8/6.

<sup>12</sup> Corresponding to Munsell 10 R 6/4, 5 YR 7/6, 7.5 YR 8/2, 7.5 YR 7/2, 7.5 YR 7/4, 10 YR 8/2, 10 YR 8/3, 2.5 YR 6/6, 5 YR 6/2, 7.5 YR 6/2, 10 YR 6/3.

<sup>13</sup> Corresponding to Munsell 7.5 YR 6/4, 7.5 YR 6/6, 7.6 YR 4/4, 7.5 YR 4/6, 7.5 YR 5/4, 7.5 YR 5/6, 5 YR 5/6, 5 YR 5/8, 5 YR 6/2, 7.5 YR 6/2, 10 YR 6/3.



Concerning *metallic wares*, the major variant attested in these levels is the dark grey one (fig. 1: 4, 5, 7, 11), which once compared with the material published from Brak, it would seem corresponds to the noncalcareous variant.<sup>14</sup> There is a scarce percentage of green metallic type (fig. 1: 1), which seems to correspond to the calcareous variants.<sup>15</sup> The same is true for the red and black metallic type, which is more common in the more ancient levels (fig. 1: 2).

A grey ceramic would seem likely to correspond to the one sometimes pointed to as *Jazīra grey ware*<sup>16</sup> and to the ones that in Brak is defined *near stone ware*<sup>17</sup>. It reproduces the grey color of the metallic fabric, but when compared to it, is less dense and depurated (fig. 1: 3, 9-10).

Other pieces would seem to correspond to the *imitation stone ware* of Brak.<sup>18</sup> It reproduces the superficial treatment of the metallic type, but it has a common buff temper with mineral inclusive (fig. 1: 6, 8).

We have verified a noticeable degree of specialization. Specific shapes correspond to specific classes, and this constitutes an aspect of the standardization of the repertoire.

Concerning morphological aspects, much elements of Q repertoire shows a high degree of continuity in respect to the repertoire of the more ancient phase R. Round sided bowls with flat base (fig. 1: 18) and bell-shaped bowls in fine and common ware (fig. 1: 19), common ware basins (fig. 2: 13), kitchen ware pots and collared rim storage jars in common and coarse ware (fig. 2: 16-18) are attested throughout both phases without significant morphological or technological differentiations. These types are largely widespread in other Jazira sites: they are generally attested in levels ranging from Early Jazira III to Early Jazira IV period, and it seems they remains in use for a long period.<sup>19</sup>

The conical cups and beakers are attested in both R and Q phases (fig. 1: 20-21), but in the phase Q dominate variants with sharp junction between base and wall and with simple rim inside pointed (fig. 1: 21). They show a high variability in rim's diameter and depth. The middle and large bowls in common ware and the basins in common and coarse ware (fig. 2: 15) are attested in both phases, but whereas in the phase R clearly dominate simple rims (fig. 2: 5), in the subsequent phase there is a strong increase in rim's varieties, especially thickened varieties (fig. 2: 4, 6-7, 14). The wide-mouthed jars and the collared rim jars in common ware are attested even in more ancient phases, but in the phase Q they show narrower proportions and more complex rim's morphologies: banded rims straight outer

<sup>14</sup> Oates J. 2001: 153; Schneider, Daszkiewicz 2001: 205; 212.

<sup>15</sup> Oates J. 2001: 153, fig. 394; Schneider, Daszkiewicz 2001: 211.

<sup>16</sup> Pruss 2001.

<sup>17</sup> According to J. Oates, *near stone ware* approximates *true stone ware* in fabric, but lacks its surface vettrification and density. Some such a vessels appear literally to be *failed stone ware*, and they are probably of the calcareous variety (Oates J. 2001: 154).

<sup>18</sup> Oates J. 2001: 159.

<sup>19</sup> Leilan period II b (Stein 1990; Weiss 1990; Ristvet, Weiss 2000; Ristvet *et alii* 2004); Mozan phase 2 (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001) Brak phase M (Oates J. 2001; Steele *et alii* 2003); Beydar EJ III-IV periods (Rova 2003); Chuera ID (Klein, Orthmann 1995: Steinbau 2 Abb 39; Orthmann, Pruss 1995); Bderi area 2965 (Pfälzner 1988).

side derive from S phase<sup>20</sup> and are still present (fig. 2: 19), but their percentage is very scarce; collared concave grooved outer side rims are present in both phase R and Q (fig. 2: 20-22), but in the next one there is an improvement of tendentially squared types (fig. 2: 22) and the appearance of new variants (fig. 2: 21). The narrow-mouthed jars and the slightly high necked jars are attested in both R and Q phases (fig. 2: 8-12), but in the second one some new rim's typologies with central grooving on the outside are appearing (fig. 2: 8).

Other morphological elements of fine ware and partially of common ware seems to spread only starting from the phase Q. Between these we can enumerate the concave bases (fig. 1: 22), the ring bases (fig. 1: 23), the bottles (fig. 1: 24), the closed, slightly in turned simple rim bowls (fig. 1: 16), the thickened inside rim bowls (fig. 1: 17), the convex side bowls (fig. 1: 13-14) and the convex angled sides bowls (fig. 1: 15), the thin-beaded rim bowls (fig. 2: 2) and the bowls with outer side grooving rim (fig. 2: 1). It doesn't seem at all random the fact that the most innovative morphological elements have been found among the fine ware, that is supposed to be less influenced from the functional needs than other wares and mostly from extempore facts, such as taste. The frequency of a grooving pattern below the external rim on both open and closed shapes could be a characteristic element of that phase (fig. 2: 1, 6, 8, 14).<sup>21</sup>

Are attested comb-pattern decorations in groups of straight-combed bands, sharply angled combing and wavy combing, and snakes decorations in relief with impressed circles.

The more common forms in metallic wares are represented by medium and large size jars with beaked rim in grey color (fig. 1: 5), that in Brak phase M are mostly in non calcareous metallic ware.<sup>22</sup> According to this parallel, probably some of the examples from Barri end with a pedestal base (fig. 1: 11). The small jars with a distinct neck (fig. 1: 4) would seem to be in real metallic and in grey fabric.<sup>23</sup> The small jars with a short neck (fig. 1: 7-9) are probably both in metallic ware and in grey fabric and in imitation stone ware, so as in Tell Brak.<sup>24</sup> There are shown two examples of double handle only and both are in grey fabric, popularly shown in the EJ III and EJ IV period.<sup>25</sup> Conical cups in yellow/green metallic ware are present, but in a scarce percentage only. The convex side bowl (fig. 1: 3) is in grey were too, and it could seem to correspond to some examples coming from central and eastern Jazira sites.<sup>26</sup>

The first shape in order of classification are the storage jars of medium and big dimension (fig. 2: 20-22; Fig. 5: 6-7), some of which have been found on the

<sup>20</sup> Pecorella, Pierobon-Benoit 2005 a: 15-21.

<sup>21</sup> See also Rova 2003: Pl. 27: R. SJ.024-027. R. SJ. 27 is considered typical EJ IV.

<sup>22</sup> Oates J. 2001, fig. 397: 154.

<sup>23</sup> The examples coming from Tell Brak phase M also are both in *stone ware* (Oates J 2001, fig. 396: 144-145) and in *imitation stone ware* (Oates J. 2001, fig. 398: 180).

<sup>24</sup> J. Oates 2001, pp.158, fig. 396 and 398.

<sup>25</sup> Pruss 2001, Abb. 1-2. In Tell Brak this type is attested both in true *stone ware* and in *imitation stone ware* (Oates J. 2001: 158).

<sup>26</sup> Hamoukar (McGuire Gibson *et alii* 2002, fig. 22: 12-13; Ur 2002, fig. 13: 12-13); Fisna (Numoto 1988, fig. 23: 171-176), Mohammed Diyab (Lyonnet 1990, fig. 11: 1-2, 4).

floors complete or in fragments. These are followed from the various bowls of medium and large size and from basins principally in common ware (Fig. 5: 4). These same types, corresponding to most elevate percentages in the ceramic complex of the phase Q, were already present with some variants on the morphology of the single components,<sup>27</sup> in the more ancient phase R ceramic complex. The architectonically stated continuity between R and Q phases is not particularly evident in the planimetric organization of the area, that in the two phases is different, but it seems to be clearly confirmed by the ceramic material's analysis.

Surly, such a composition of the ceramic *corpus*, have to be connect to the domestic archeological context, common to all the second half of III Millennium BC structural phases of Barri G area.

In this context, the percentage of about 5% is represented by the sole conical cups in fine ware (Fig. 5: 2-3), that results particularly significant. In the EJ IV levels of central and eastern Jazira sites this is a particularly widespread type. In Leilan, the so-called *sila bowls* are considered part of a high standardized three-modal capability and functional to the rations distribution from the central Akkadian authority.<sup>28</sup> A functional study carried out on ceramic material from Tell Mozan confirms the very mass character of this production,<sup>29</sup> and in Brak the Leilan interpretation is not confirmed,<sup>30</sup> but conical cups are the most M phase widespread type.<sup>31</sup> The not as much extended investigation area and the quantitatively inferior material of the Tell Barri case does not permit to speak of production's centralization or standardization in such a terms, but we can say that the elaboration of a careful formal typology of conical cups, mostly based on pot sherds, has been unserviceable because of the big differences of diameters and of the inclination of the sides:<sup>32</sup> the standardize character of the repertory of the Q phase remains indisputable on the whole, but it does not reach the degree of mass production registered in such a site like Leilan. The only fragment of stacked-kiln-waster similar to those found in Leilan, comes from the phase R level.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding to chronological aspects, the ceramic materials of the phase Q includes types principally attested in levels corresponding approximately to the EJ IIIB and EJ IV levels of other Jazira sites,<sup>34</sup> but are also present some types some-

<sup>27</sup> Rim/neck/body/handle/base.

<sup>28</sup> Senior, Weiss 1992.

<sup>29</sup> Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000: 180.

<sup>30</sup> Oates J. 2001: 155.

<sup>31</sup> Oates J. 2001: 178.

<sup>32</sup> This tentative typology have been based on pot sherds principally because of the lack of sufficient complete profiles. Available complete profile have been used as reference.

<sup>33</sup> In Tell Brak the only stacked kiln wasters similar to those found in Leilan came from the phase L deposits, so they precede the so called akkadian phase (Oates J. 2001: 155). Likewise in Tell Barri the staked kiln waster came from the phase R level, dated to the same chronological period (Pecorella, Pierobon-Benoit 2005 a: 6).

<sup>34</sup> Brak early akkadian (Steele *et alii* 2003) and phase M (Oates J. 2001); Mozan phase 2 (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000, fig. 15 a-15 b; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001, Abb. 15; Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2002, Abb. 9) and phase 3 (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000: fig. 16-17; Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001, Abb. 16); Leilan period II b (Stein 1990; Weiss 1990; Ristvet, Weiss 2000; Ristvet *et alii* 2004) and Beydar EJ III-IV periods (Rova 2003).

times dated to late akkadian period.<sup>35</sup> According to this comparisons and to the Tell Barri internal sequence we can consider the phase Q pertaining to the span of time between the end of the EJ IIIB period and the EJ IV period.<sup>36</sup>

In regards to the distribution of ceramic types, Tell Barri results well integrated in the ceramic region of central-eastern Jazira.<sup>37</sup> The extreme geographical closeness with the Brak site is mirrored by the very good correlation of the ceramics, indeed so many as to confirm the supposition that Barri would be in this phase extremely tied to the territory of influence of Brak.<sup>38</sup>

With reference to the common and popular ceramic production, the most part of these have been found both in western and eastern Khabur sites,<sup>39</sup> on the contrary, a regional differentiation appears in the production of fine ware. Some types, like the conical cups, or some convex sides bowls and convex angled sides bowls, seem to be more typical of eastern Jazira sites, while other types, like some thin-beaded rim bowls, the bowls with outer side grooving rim and the slightly high necked jars with external lower grooved rim, of western Jazira sites. According to the percentages, Tell Barri seems to be directed mainly towards the east rather than towards the west.

The later phase Q level's, the stratum 36, testifies to a moment of partial abandonment.

The following phase in the Tell Barri sequence is the phase P, and it comprises two architectural levels: the stratum 35B, which reveals another artisan and domestic area, characterize by the presence of a big kiln (1016), and the stratum 35A, which corresponds to another partial abandonment of architectural structures.<sup>40</sup>

On the whole, the phase P assemblage presents some elements of similarity with late akkadian or post akkadian repertory of Jazira sites.<sup>41</sup> The repertoire of Barri phase P,<sup>42</sup> is still clearly influenced by the domestic archeological context and just like the prior phase is composed mostly by rare quality large containers either open or closed. Some types seem to continue or develop from the phase Q: very deep conical cups (Fig. 5: 5), bowls with convex sides and convex angled sides (fig. 3: 7-8), bowls with slightly in turned or thickened inside rim (fig. 3: 1-4), small jars, storage jars and urns. But some new types are appearing: multiple grooved rims on high necked jars or on open shapes (fig. 3: 10-16), or carinated beakers (fig. 3: 9). They'll spread in the stratum 35A, and they'll share renewing the ceramic assemblage.

<sup>35</sup> Brak area TC (Emberling, McDonald 2001, fig. 14); Mozan phase 3 b (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001, Abb. 16).

<sup>36</sup> For the correspondence with the others chronological syntheses see Pruss 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Barri repertoire seems to be very closed to the ones from Brak, Leilan and Mozan. Moreover much ceramic types of Tell Barri are similar to types from Rimah, Taya, Hamoukar and Niniveh.

<sup>38</sup> Weiss 1992: 93.

<sup>39</sup> Namely Chuera, Beydar, Mozan, Brak and Leilan.

<sup>40</sup> Pecorella, Pierobon-Benoit 2003: 12.

<sup>41</sup> Brak area TC (Emberling, McDonald 2001, fig. 14); Brak phase N (Oates J. 2001); Mozan phase 3 b (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000, Fig. 16-17) and 4 (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001, Abb. 17-18; Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2001, Abb. 7).

<sup>42</sup> The phase Q includes 946 diagnostic sherds.

In addition to the III Millennium ceramic tradition, rich in yellow and green colors, fine and dense fabrics, and well-finished surfaces, we find new trends: colors tending to orange, red and brown; fabrics rich in chaff and lime inclusions; some thick smooth surfaces. The new typologies cohabit with the oldest in this phase, but will substitute them in progress.

Owing to the leveling out of pottery production towards a medium ware of scanty quality, new fine wares distinguish themselves by their quality. Forms are quite standardized: mostly they are simple or everted rim bowls with convex sides and small ring bases (fig. 3: 6). They have a dense, hard fabric, with little visible temper and pattern burnishing. They are attested in light green, buff tending to pink or light brown. These types are sometimes referred to as Taya ware, in reference to similar wares from Rimah, Taya and Brak<sup>43</sup>. Comparable pottery is diffused in the central eastern Khabur area, in the Jebel Sinjar region, more east in the Eski Mosul region and south up to Ga.Sur.<sup>44</sup> They really seem, as already said by D. and J. Oates, a very distinct type of later III Millennium BC period.<sup>45</sup>

Some convex bowls and little jars in grey green compact fabric (fig. 3: 5) are very similar to some vases from Brak N phase:<sup>46</sup> in this site they are named *very fine stone ware*, but the aspect of tell Barri examples looks very different in respect of the classic metallic type.

On the base of this preliminary analysis and of the comparison with the repertoires of contemporaneous sites, the ceramic repertory of the phase P of Tell Barri seems to suggest an intensification of contacts with the east, but also presents parallels with the west, which in the preceding phase are very scarce.

Evidence from Tell Brak and more subtly, from other sites, suggest the existence of an Akkadian imperial administration in the Khabur region,<sup>47</sup> but at the moment it seems the quality of their presence can't be established. The presence of an Akkadian enclave has been proposed for some of the major Khabur centers, like Brak and Leilan. At Leilan, the labeled *sila bowls*, in addition to the heavy reorganization of pattern settlement recovered at the site and in the nearby area, are considered to be the direct expression of Akkadian centralized direction.<sup>48</sup> In all

<sup>43</sup> See for example Wilkinson, Tucker 1995: 96; Curtis 1982, pl. 5; Lyonnet 1997: 138. For a definition of the type see Oates J. 2001: 154.

<sup>44</sup> Similar types and correlated types are attested in Brak (Oates, Oates 2001 a. Fig. 1: 3; J. Oates 2001 Fig. 205: a, b. post-akkadian; Matthews 1994, 44ff, post-akkadian), Mozan (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001, Abb. 16: 7-8, phase 3B; Abb. 17: 10, phase 4; Abb. 18: 5, phase 4), Rimah (Postgate *et alii* 1997: 27, late III Millennium levels), Taya (Reade 1968, Taf. 85: 17-18, level VII), Gawra (Speiser 1935, Pl. LXVII: 84, 86-87. Stratum 6), Kuyunjik (Gut *et alii* 2001, Abb. 10: 123-131; McMahan 1998, fig. 7: 8-10, late akkadian), Tell Billa (Speiser 1933, taf. 56: 4, level 4), Hamad Aga as-Sagir (Spanos 1990: 106f), Assur (Haller *et alii* 1954, Taf. I p2, period Ur III and precedent; Miglus 1996, Taf. 52: Ass 20561 t, Ur III and *Altassirischen*) and Yorgha Tepe (Starr 1939, Pl. 50: M, O, level 4, phase Ga.sur).

<sup>45</sup> Oates, Oates 2001 a.

<sup>46</sup> Oates J. 2001, fig. 395: 85. Two pieces from Kuyunjik also (McMahon 1998, fig. 7: 8-9), considered Metallic Ware, may be pertaining to the same category.

<sup>47</sup> Oates, Oates 1989; 1991; Catagnoti e Bonechi 1992; Finkel 1985; Weiss 1990; 1991; Senior, Weiss 1992; Weiss, Courty 1993.

<sup>48</sup> Senior, Weiss 1992.

other cases the Akkadian presence is detected only by written documentation. The well-known upper Mesopotamian material culture bears virtually no resemblance to that from southern Mesopotamia.<sup>49</sup> A ceramic tradition distinguished by a local tradition or clearly innovative in respect to the preceding pottery production has not been identified, and surveys suggest between 2600 and 2200 BC a continuity pattern of long occupied sites.

In regard to the Tell Barri case, apart of the evolution of single morphological elements, it seems that the one of the most interesting phenomena resulting from the pottery production analysis is represented by the transformations of some technological aspects, which give rise to a slow but decisive assemblage renewal.

In the Q and P phases, the common ware is definitely predominant in respect to the other wares (fig. 4: a). This data is surely in part influenced by the archaeological context, but the constant increase of common ware in respect to the other classes is a long standing phenomenon which can be observed across the all third millennium span, yet the G area context does not change his domestic and artisan pattern since phase S.

The same evolution is clearly visible even in the brief lag between the two phase Q strata: between strata 37 and 36 there is no clear variation in context category, but there are clear variations in wares percentages (fig. 4 b). This data mirror a slow transformation exactly in the ceramic class system. Ceramic classes, in the course of time, will lose their specificity and the pure characterization typical of more ancient III Millennium BC levels, and they level out towards an intermediate common class highly variable.

These evolution elements have been identified most in technological aspects and in common pottery production, which have not much connection with fashion or taste aspects, but which are mostly influenced by practical necessities, economic habitude, and also by the technical and ecological availability of raw materials. For this reason, it is probable that these pottery evolution elements reflect significant and important social and economic transformations.

The origin of this trend does not correspond with phase Q: it dates back to more ancient phases, and it seems we must explain it as a local evolution trend. An external interference, as it could have been the akkadian presence in the nearby region, could have in some ways influenced it, but surely it did not engineered it. This is another small confirmation of the impression that without the aid of texts, probably the existence of such a formidable Akkadian empire might not have been identified.<sup>50</sup>

The Tell Barri ceramic assemblage of Q phase, highly in continuity with the preceding phase, is still technologically of III Millennium BC type. The continuity between Q and P phases is not so striking as that between Q and R phases: in the ceramic assemblage of the P phase, especially in the more recent strata, the new wares in reddish fabric imposed themselves, and they'll be typical of II Millennium BC assemblages, but on the whole, Tell Barri presents a substantial settlement

<sup>49</sup> Oates, Oates 2001 b: 383.

<sup>50</sup> Liverani 1993: 7-8; Oates, Oates 2001 b: 383.

continuity even in a period of general transformation as the Akkadian and the post Akkadian periods experienced.

The substantial continuity of pottery production on the Tell Barri sequence seems to suggest that eventual moments of abandonment, if the area G settlement were really experienced such a moments, should have been very short. On the other hand, it seems to be of some significance the fact that Tell Barri registers different transformations in a very short span of time: the G area settlement is partially abandoned and soon rebuilt, the pottery production increased in new fine wares: all these elements could mirror the imagine of a certain instability period, maybe connected to widespread transformations at a regional level.

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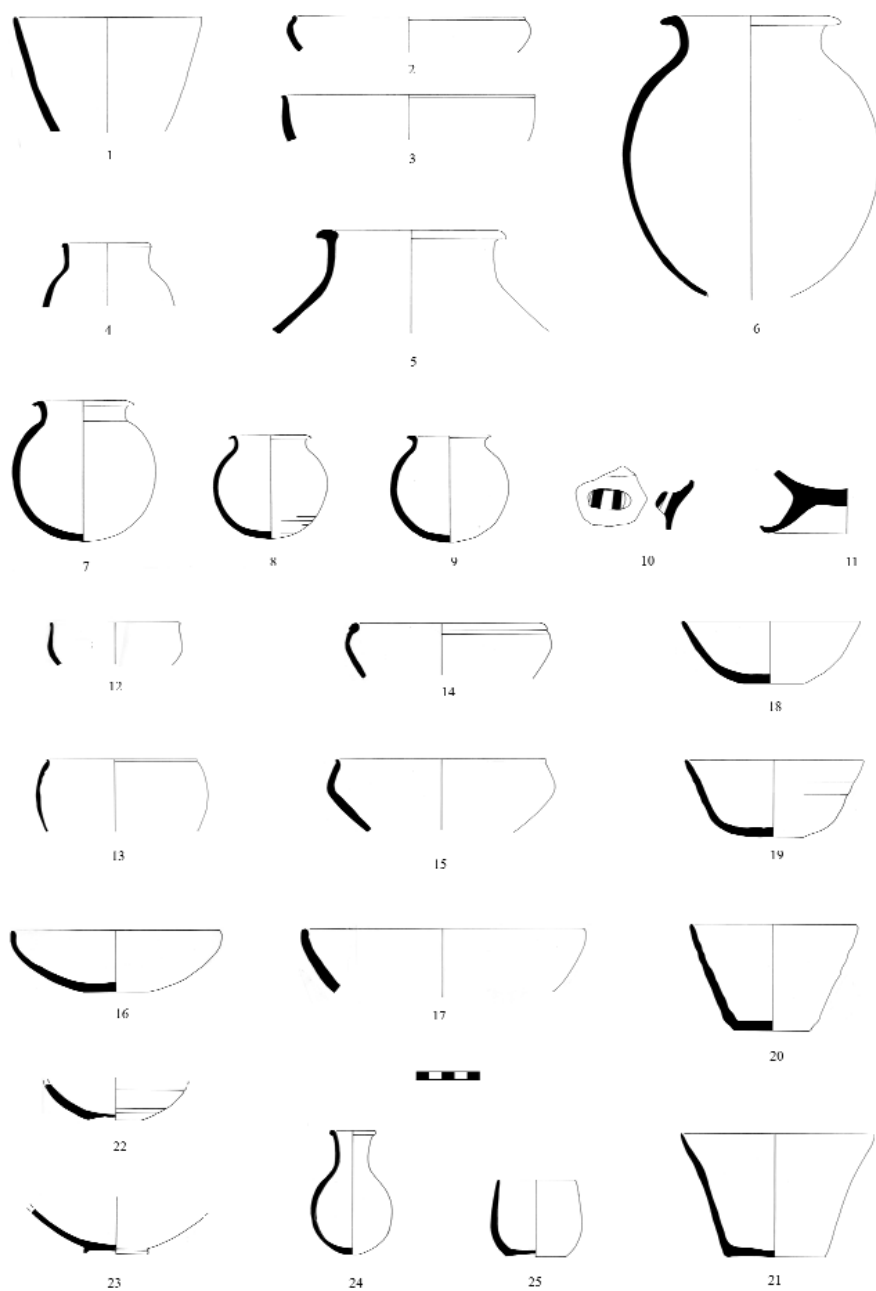
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**Fig. 1: Selected pottery from phase Q; 1-11: metallic and grey wares, 12-21: fine ware.**



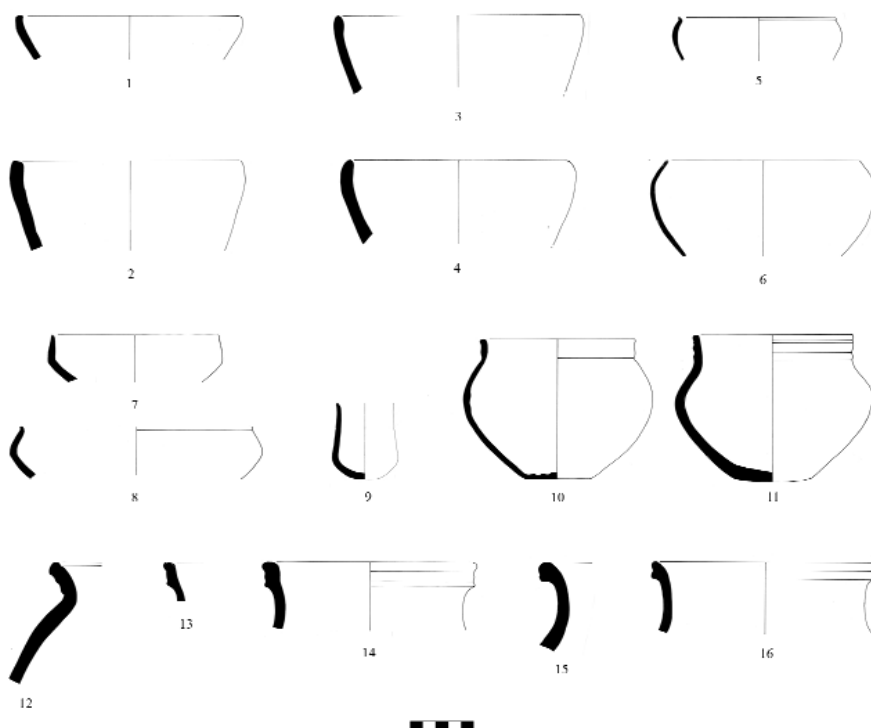
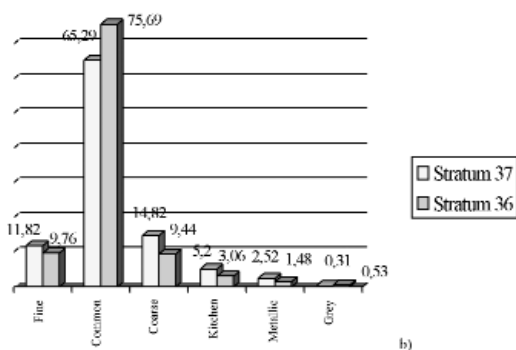
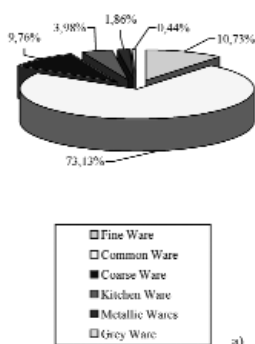


Fig. 3: Selected pottery from phase P; common ware.



Graphic a: Percentages of ceramic classes in phase Q, b: Percentages of ceramic classes in the two phase Q strata. The Percentages are calculated in the base of rim sherds.



Fig. 4: Selected Pottery of phase Q (2-4, 6-7) and P (5). 1: stacked kiln waster from phase R.