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THE PASSAGE FROM THE EARLY BRONZE TO THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE IN JEZIRAH: A PARALLEL BETWEEN TELL MOZAN AND TELL BARRI CERAMIC SEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT

Despite recent archeological efforts in this field, one of the difficulties in comprehending the period of transition between the Early and the Middle Bronze age in the Syrian Jezirah, is the still inadequate calibration of compared ceramic sequences. This paper will offer a synchronic analysis of unpublished ceramic evidence provided from Tell Mozan and Tell Barri excavations. In particular, diagnostic types in relation to the different provenance contexts will be stressed in order to give a contribution towards the building up of a chronological framework at a regional level.

This contribution will be focused on some aspects of the transition between the Early and the Middle Bronze age in the Syrian Jezirah. These observations are based on the analysis of ceramics from Tell Barri Phases P and O, and on a preliminary vision of a new set of ceramics from Mozan Phase 4, the pottery from Barri coming from the area G and that from Mozan coming from the areas A7, A9 and A15.¹

The topic of *transition* has been often approached from locally oriented, particularistic perspectives, therefore various interpretations of the period have been suggested, sometimes profoundly divergent. Among the reasons of the discrepant interpretations there is the lack of a reference terminology that has been recently proposed by scholars, together with a remark on the interpretative methodology and the effective interpretability of the available archaeological data.²

As a result of the improved archaeological research, the study of that period has been particularly well developed in the Syrian Euphrates region, where it has been analysed especially in terms of collapse, continuity and discontinuity. The most recent theories tend to emphasise the regeneration capability more than the real collapse, and

1 This paper is a preliminary communication: the complete study of Tell Barri ceramic *corpus* will be presented in the third volume of Tell Barri studies, while the study of Tell Mozan ceramic *corpus* is still in progress. Therefore, the ceramic types illustrated here must be considered as samples. The author would like to thank the directors of Tell Barri and Tell Mozan archaeological missions for allowing the possibility to study new set of ceramics from the excavations, and especially Prof. M. Kelly-Buccellati for her useful assistance and help. A particular thanks goes to Dr A. McMahon and to Dr J. Oates, for her advice and for the opportunity to analyse ceramic samples from Brak, Rimah, Taya and Gawra stocked at the Cambridge University.

2 Kuzucuoğlu, Marro 2007.

to point out different developments within a substantial cultural continuity.³

THE JEZIRAH

With regard to the state of research in the Syrian Jezirah region, both archaeological and philological data allow a 'quite' clear framework for the mid third millennium, approximately to the end of the imperial Akkadian period. Subsequently there is a probable gap in the documentation, which will turn out to be of a certain consistence only by the Old Assyrian and Amorite period.

According to different surveys undertaken in the area of Leilan,⁴ the area of Brak,⁵ Beydar,⁶ and in the western Khabur basin, between the Jaghjagh and Ras el-Ain,⁷ by the late 3rd millennium there is a clear decrease in settlements. However by the early 2nd millennium new settlements appear.⁸ These data are based especially on surveys, and the date and localisation of settlements are based on the distribution of Khabur ware. But when does the Khabur ware production begin?⁹ Despite recent and constructive archeological efforts in this field, one of the difficulties in comprehending this period is the still inadequate calibration of compared ceramic sequences, that allow a correlation of events of different sites. Furthermore, can the scarce late 3rd millennium archaeological data be interpreted as a real depopulation¹⁰ or better as a shift in settlement patterns?¹¹

The capital site of Leilan is abandoned. According to the investigations undertaken on the site, the excavators state a quite complete depopulation of the region connected with an abrupt climatic change and the subsequent retraction of the Akkadian administrators. Tell Beydar is also abandoned by the late Akkadian period, and to the

3 Cooper 2006 b; Schwartz, Nichols 2006; Porter 2007.

4 Ristvet, Weiss 2005.

5 Eidem, Warburton 1996: 55.

6 Wilkinson 2000: 11.

7 Lyonnet 1997a.

8 It seems there is a slight differentiation between the eastern and western Jezirah settlement pattern by the early 2nd millennium. Settlements to the west are not as definitely increased as settlements to the east. According to surveys, none of *Kranzhügels* seems to be occupied (Lyonnet 2004: 38); along the Balich only Tell Hammam et-Turkman (Cuvers 1988b: Hammam Period VII), Tell Jidle and Tell Sahlan are occupied; the western Khabur area, as confirmed by excavated sites, seems to be poor inhabited, and a similar situation is attested in the middle Khabur area, where a lot of sites show early 2nd millennium sherds in surveys but no early 2nd millennium levels, except maybe in Tell Tneinir, are attested in the excavations (Lyonnet 2004). The prospection of lower Khabur region revealed an increasing number of sites, however not as much as indicated in the Mari texts (Lyonnet 2004: 37).

9 On the basis of the ceramic sequence of the Puššam Houses in Tell Mozan, presented by C. Schmidt at the 6ICAANE (workshop 'Looking the North') the Khabur ware dates back to the very beginning of 2nd millennium (concerning the question of the date of the Khabur ware see also Oguchi 1997 and 2001). On the basis of this chronology, the settlement distribution presented here should be slightly reinterpreted, assuming the gap/diminishment of settled sites being very short, or better completely lacking.

10 Weiss, Courty 1993; Weiss 2000.

11 Peltenburg 2000; Lyonnet 2004.

west, Tell Chuera and Karab Sayyar seem to have a scarce 'early' post-Akkadian¹² occupation and to have been soon abandoned.

Brak, Mozan and Chagar Bazar appears to be the main sites of reference for the late 3rd- early 2nd millennium period, though other sites, minor in dimension or in archaeological surface exposition, give some interesting suggestions.

In the central Khabur area, the site of Tell Brak testifies, during the Akkadian period, a phase of prosperity and centralisation, as attested by the presence of the administrative buildings CH, SS, FS and the TC Oval. Even if the classification of the time and the nature of the Akkadian presence on the site is still difficult, the stamped bricks of the Naram-Sin Palace are incontrovertible evidence of Akkadian activities.¹³ The Palace itself is the main reference for the dating of the Brak sequence. The span of time between the building of the Palace in level 4 and the destruction in Level 3 of the Akkadian city, should be very short. Due to the late dating in the reign of Naram-Sin of the brick stamps, the reign of Naram-Sin's successor is suggested as the last period of Akkadian presence on the site.¹⁴ The subsequent phase in Brak occupation, namely the Phase N, starts with the 'departure' of Akkadians from Brak and principally corresponds to the Ur III period in the South. Nevertheless, two rooms of domestic character, which constitute the latest preserved level at the westernmost end of the site, attest a clearly Isin-Larsa ceramic repertory.¹⁵ The transition from the Phase M, Akkadian, to the Phase N, post-Akkadian, is violent, and it does not show substantial architectural continuity. The public buildings are replaced by private houses, but the settlement still reflects a considerable level of prosperity.¹⁶

At the site of Tell Mozan, ancient Urkesh, the huge palace AP (Royal Palace of Urkesh), during the Akkadian period gives evidence of an important administrative centre. Since the different levels of the palace are dated on the basis of seal impressions and tablets, the sequence offers a very important point of reference. The palace is composed by an official wing, AF, and by a service wing, AK, next to the *ābi* (*Underground Necromantic Structure*). The Mozan Phase 2 corresponds to the first construction of the palace. The subsequent Phase 3 marks a different use of the building. Phase 3a corresponds to a first re-use of the palace dependency, and Phase 3b corresponds to its uppermost levels. In the subsequent Phase 4, the building is no longer in use and the area is characterised as a domestic and artisan area, marked by large open spaces with *tannurs*, houses, and craftsman workshops. According to the seal impressions of Tupkish and Uqnitum and to the attestations of Tar'am Agade in

12 The term 'post-Akkadian', even if considered not ideal, is used here as in other excavations in Upper Mesopotamia to indicate the end of the 3rd millennium and possibly the very beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, by the Middle Chronology. This would fall entirely within the early 2nd millennium by the chronology of Gashe *et al.* 1998. In terms of Early Jezirah terminology (Lebeau *et al.* 2000) it corresponds to late EJ IV and EJ V (See also McMahon, Quenet 2007: 69; Oates 2001).

13 Steele *et al.* 2003: 193.

14 Oates, Oates 2001b.

15 Oates 2001: 173.

16 Oates, Oates 2001b: 392-393.

the Phase 3a, the palace was built before Naram Sin, or at the latest, at the beginning of his reign. The Phase 3a dates back to the period of Naram-Sin/Shar-kali-sharri, while the Phase 3b is indicated as Post-imperial Akkadian.¹⁷ The Phase 4a is tentatively considered as the very last 3rd millennium phase, dated to the Ur III period; the 4b as the very first 2nd millennium phase, dated to the period of Isin-Larsa.¹⁸ The German excavations, which were concentrated in the south-eastern part of the higher mound, revealed a sequence very close to that of the palace. They excavated a dwelling area dating to the Akkadian period, in Level 8. The subsequent Level 7 shows a significant change, marked by the construction of the *Puššam-Hause*, a large official structure connected with pisé platforms. In the subsequent Level 6 the large structure has no longer official function. However based on the stratigraphy, the span of time between Level 7 and 6 should not have been long. Level 7 dates back to the Ur III/Early Jezirah V period, while Level 6 dates to the Isin-Larsa/Old Jezirah and it corresponds with the Khabur ware horizon.¹⁹

At Tell Chagar Bazar, an important administrative building in area D period II is attested, dated to an ‘early’ phase of the post-Akkadian period. The building is partially cut by some later pits. The ceramic repertory coming from the pits is representative of a ‘late’ post-Akkadian period,²⁰ but no contemporary architectural evidence has been recovered on the site. While late 3rd millennium levels are located on the southern mound, Khabur Ware period remains are located on the northern mound.²¹

The site of Taya testifies a flourish within the level VIII/Akkadian. The transitions between Taya VIII and VII and between Taya VII and VI are each marked by the destruction and immediate rebuilding, until the last 3rd millennium phase, the Phase VI/Ur III. That phase is dated back to 2100²² and it is followed by a gap of at least 100 years. The subsequent occupation in Level V, described as ‘unusual’, is connected with the nomadic presence and the Phase IV/Old Assyrian is connected with the Khabur ware.²³ A similar evolution is postulated for Ashur H-E.²⁴ At Rimah, the AS Phase 3, on the basis of stratigraphy and of ceramic references, dates as Post-Akkadian/Ur III-Early 2nd millennium. The ceramic repertory suggests a correlation with the site A Level 4, immediately under the Shamshi-Adad levels. It is not perfectly homogeneous,

17 With the term ‘Post-imperial Akkadian’ the excavators intended to refer to the period following Shar-kali-sharri and down to the end of the reign of Shu-durul, covering the entire time span between the last major Akkadian king and Gudea/Ur-Nammu (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001: 61).

18 Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001; 2002.

19 In Level 7 a few Khabur ware sherds are attested, while the first proper Khabur ware level is the Level 6 (Pfälzner, Dohmann-Pfälzner 2002: 154). Pfälzner, Dohmann-Pfälzner 2002: 154.

20 The pottery repertory from the pits attests some interesting shapes, clearly more recent in date than Phase II area D building. Nevertheless, they could pertain to a long time span. The study of the repertory is still in progress (A. McMahon *pers. comm.*).

21 McMahon, Quenet 2007.

22 Reade 1971.

23 Reade 1971; 1997.

24 Reade 1968.

but it constitutes a good reference for a general pre Shamshi-Adad inventory.²⁵ The late 3rd millennium levels in Tell Hamoukar, on the basis of the pottery, date back to the Ur III period, and they testify to an urbanised site before a gap of 1000 years.²⁶ Tell Mohammed Diyab attests to a late 3rd millennium occupation which dates back to the beginning of the Ur III period. A more intense occupation is attested in the Khabur period.²⁷

In Tell Barri, levels of late 3rd and early 2nd millennium have been discovered in the area G, which has revealed a sequence of human occupation that, starting from Early Dynastic period levels, ends with the Hellenistic period without any significant break. The Phase Q, Akkadian in date, has revealed an artisan and domestic area, as well as the previous Phase R and the subsequent Phase P, post-Akkadian. After the Phase P, for a short period, the area was turned into a cemetery in the stratum 34d, likely to be dated to the Isin-Larsa period, and then rebuilt. The cemetery stratum 34d and the subsequent rebuilding strata 34a-c correspond to the Phase O, which is to be assigned to the early 2nd millennium period (Orsi *forthc.*). Between Phase Q and P and between Phase P and O, there is no architectural continuity.²⁸

CERAMICS

The ceramic repertory of Barri Q has a clear level of correspondence with Brak M, and it matches well in the context of contemporaneous EJ IV sites (maybe late EJ III also), in the central Khabur area. With regard to the issue of the Akkadian presence in the Jezirah, Barri Q is Akkadian in date, but it doesn't show any trace which could be interpreted as a result of an Akkadian presence on the site. Considering the more ancient phases, some transformations can be identified, but nothing that could not be explained as an evolutionary trend within the 3rd millennium local tradition.

The degree of continuity seems to be slightly less when analyzing the transition to the subsequent Phase P and the next O. While some shapes are continuing or developing from the previous phase (Fig. 1: 6-9; Fig. 4: *c left series*), new types appear.²⁹ The most interesting aspect of Phase O in respect to the preceding phases, is the change of the wares.³⁰ The criteria used for 3rd millennium ceramics, both technological,

25 Postgate *et al.* 1997.

26 Gibson *et al.* 2002; Ur 2002.

27 Faivre 1992.

28 Pecorella, Pierobon-Benoit 2004; 2005.

29 Orsi *forthc.*.

30 For the recording of all the 3rd millennium ceramics from Barri four main wares of reference had been used, reflecting a functional generic interpretation: 1) the *fine ware*: standardized; compact texture and purified fabric with little sandy or mineral inclusions; 2) the *common ware*: medium quality with visible mineral and/or vegetal temper and generally self smooth surface; 3) the *coarse ware*: very rough, with abundance of inclusion mainly of vegetal origin, generally reddish colour with a black core and often hand made; 4) the *kitchen ware*: mineral temper and often vitrified/burnished surface. To all these standard classes, particular classes, or 'luxury' variants, had been added such as *grey*, *metallic ware*, and related types (Orsi 2008; *forthc.*).

based on the ware quality and functional, become unserviceable. During this period there is a slow reduction of ceramic wares toward a medium ware of poor quality, principally composed by a highly variable common pottery. A similar phenomenon has been observed within the sequence of Mozan: by the very late 3rd millennium there is a shift from the simple ware tradition, typical of 3rd millennium repertoires and characterized by fine green/yellow wares, toward the chaff tradition, characterized by chaff tempered wares of coarser quality.³¹ The subsequent ceramic tradition attested in Mozan, the late Phase 4 'bitumen use tradition', is not singled out chronologically at other sites, even if the sporadic use of bitumen as a decoration is attested in both Chagar Bazar and Brak.³²

Another remarkable phenomenon is the change in Barri P of the luxury repertory. A specific range of types is attested: light grey in color, slightly upper convex sided bowls or necked small jars in shapes, with a dense hard fabric, highly smooth/burnished surface and no visible temper. As already noted for comparable type from Brak N,³³ the typology is close to the metallic ware, though distinguishable (Fig. 1: 4-5; Fig. 4: f. See below for another reference to f). Convex sided bowls with a disc base in a similar hard, dense fabric, highly smooth/burnished surface, frequently light green in color, but buff or pinkish too, are furthermore attested in Barri P (Fig. 1: 1-2), and correspond to the Brak N 'Taya ware'.³⁴

A few observations should be highlighted with regard to the relationship between 'Taya' and metallic ware:

- classical stone ware is scarcely attested in these late levels and the geographical distribution of stone ware production is far more westwards than the central Khabur area, by now sparsely inhabited;
- in Barri P, Mozan 4 and Kujunjik late 3rd at least, 'Taya ware bowls' are attested together with a light grey ceramic similar to the 'late' metallic ware of Brak, and 'Taya bowls' are attested in a grey color too.

If we consider these aspects, we could hypothesize the particular late metallic type to be correlated with a new regional luxury production, and specifically of an early-post-Akkadian eastern Jezirah horizon³⁵.

31 Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000. As noted by the excavators, these changes may also in part be determined by the change in function of the archaeological context, *i.e.* from Palace to Post-palace use (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2000: 180).

32 McMahon, Quenet 2007: 81.

33 Oates 2001: 154.

34 Oates 2001: 154. Comparable pottery is widespread in the central-eastern Khabur area, in the Jebel Sinjar region, more eastwards in the Eski Mosul region and southwards up to Ga.Sur. For comparisons and discussion see Orsi 2008; *forthc.*. Of recent publications see Chagar Bazar period II: McMahon, Quenet 2007: Pl. 3.8:39.

35 It has been already suggested by B. Lyonnet to isolate the so-called Taya ware as a reference for a regional differentiation (Lyonnet 1997b: 138. See also Oates, Oates 2001 a), but that criterion has no longer been considered. The scarce percentage which seems to be characteristic of 'Taya ware' where retrieved, might be a proper objection to its use as a reference. However, according to an optometric analysis of specimens from Brak, Taya, Rimah, Gawra, Barri and Mozan, the 'Taya ware' production

With regard to some of the new types in Barri P/O and Mozan 4 which seem to have a different geographical distribution³⁶:

- Carenated bowls with flaring sides (Fig. 1: 10-13; Fig. 4: *c right series*); they are attested in Barri P, in Mozan 4, partially in Brak N. They are clearly attested to the east, in Niniveh and Assur, and in the south, where they are considered a very distinctive type of Ur III and Isin Larsa period.³⁷

- Cylindrical beakers, sometimes concave sided (Fig. 2: 17-19; Fig. 4: j); they generally have rounded base in Barri P, and carenated body in Barri O and Mozan 4. Something similar is attested in Brak N, but they are especially present in the eastern Jezirah, in Niniveh, Assur and in the Hamrin basin.³⁸

- Small cups rounded/carenated body, frequently with a template decoration (Fig. 2: 20-25; Fig. 4: g); the carenated variant (n. 20) seems to be later than the rounded variant and it is typical in Khabur ware. They are attested in Mozan in the rounded side variant, and they are more frequent in Barri O than in P. They are not present in Brak, where we mostly find round shapes; they are attested in Hammam VI and especially VII and also in the Syrian Euphrates Valley.³⁹

- Grooved rim pots (Fig. 2: 26-29; Fig. 4: d-e, h-i); they are attested both in Barri P and O, and in Mozan 4. Something similar comes from Brak N, but it seems to be a western type.⁴⁰

resulted impressively homogeneous.

36 Ceramic types of reference are given here only in outline, considering the widest typological parameter only (See note 2).

37 For related type in Brak N see Brak (Oates 2001) n. 609. Perfectly matching type are attested in Niniveh (McMahon 1998 Fig. 7: [25], 26-28, liv. VIA; considered typical south Mesopotamian Ur III and Isin-Larsa [see Nippur WF: Gibson, McMahon 1995: Fig. 19:3; Fig. 19:2]); in Assur, where they are dated *Altassirishe* (see Miglus 1996: Pl. 49: Ass 21505 and Pl. 52), and in Mari (Pons 2007, *form 7*). In the Euphrates something similar is attested in Cooper (2006 a) Phase 4 (Fig. 1.5: n) and in Cooper (2006 a) Phase 5 (Fig. 1.7: i). Something similar to Mozan Fig. 1: 12 is in Hammam VI West (Curvers 1988: a n. 10).

38 In Brak Phase N perfectly matching types are not attested: there are therefore straight sided and slightly rounded side beakers (see Oates 2001: Fig. 421-2). They are present in Rimah (Postgate *et al.* 1997: n. 532); Niniveh (McMahon 1998: Fig. 7: 1-5, liv. VIA and B. *Spec.* n. 1-2; Gut *et al.* 2001: Fig. 10: 136); Assur (See Miglus 1996: Taf. 48, 51) and in the Hamrin region (Yaseen 1995: Pl. 58-60).

39 The closest parallel in Brak N (Oates 2001) is n.747, not carenated but rounded side, more similar to round sided beakers than to carenated cups. For related types in Rimah late 3rd millennium levels see Postgate *et al.* 1997 n. 536-538. In Hammam similar round sided variants are attested both in Hammam VI West (Curvers 1988a: n. 36) and VII (Curvers 1988b: nn. 54-57, 61, 63 cf. Barri O n. 21). The samples of Hammam VII (Curvers 1988b: n. 58-9) seem therefore to have particularly accentuated carenations and ring bases, not corresponding to Barri samples. In the Euphrates region see Hadidi (Dornemann 1992: Fig. 15: 9) for the carenated variant, and Cooper 2006b: Fig. 1.9: b for the rounded variant.

40 Differently from Barri and Mozan, in Brak N (Oates 2001) they usually have more than 2 or 3 incisions on the rim. See for example Brak n. 288 and n.751-2. Brak n. 753-5 seems to have to have been associated to bigger class of shapes. For related types with linear rim see Brak n. 749, similar to the western types, and Brak n. 289-90. In Hammam VI West (Curvers 1988a) both linear and single grooved rims are attested: nn. 33-35; 37. On the Euphrates, related types are attested both in Porter (2007) Phase 5 (Pl. VI: 18) and in Phase 6 (Pl. VII: 2-3). See also Medium Bronze I levels in Tell Kabir

- Jars with grooved rim (Fig. 2: 30-32); this is a very widespread type in Barri P and O, and in Mozan 4. Only some of the variants are attested in Brak N, while they seem to be more widespread in the west.⁴¹

- Large and deep open shapes with grooved rim (Fig. 3: 39-42, a); they are attested both in Barri O and P, and in Mozan 4. They are sporadic in Brak; they are attested in Niniveh in the straight sided variant and they are clearly present in the western MBI.⁴²

- High necked jars with grooved rim (Fig. 3: 33-38, b); this is a very widespread type in Barri P and O, and in Mozan 4; it is attested but not distinctive in Brak N. On completely different shapes, the rim type is attested in the Iraqi Tigris valley and in south Mesopotamia, while it seems to be a very widespread and conservative type in the Syrian Euphrates valley.⁴³

SOME PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS

With Regard to the Ceramic Sequences

It seems that we have the possibility to delineate with a certain clearance an Upper Khabur 'early' post-Akkadian, namely identified with Brak N,⁴⁴ Chagar Bazar II area D, Mozan 3b-4a and Barri P. However, in Mozan 4b, Barri late P-O and partially in Chagar Bazar area D pits,⁴⁵ ceramic types are attested which are lacking in Brak N

(Porter 1995: Fig. 20: 3) and in Tell Sweyhat (Holland 1976: Fig. 9, 21-22), where they are indicated as typical early MB I *protocollared bowls*.

- 41 They are attested in Rimah late 3rd millennium levels (Postgate *et al.* 1997: n. 539). The comparisons from Brak are not perfectly matching, but see Oates 2001: n. 753-9. They are present in Chagar Bazar II (McMahon, Quenet 2007: n. 207-8). At Hammam, related types are attested in large dimensions in Hammam VII (Curvers 1988b: n. 111-2, 114, 177). For the Euphrates area see Porter (2007) Phase V (Pl. VI: 19-21).
- 42 In Mozan see also Pfälzner, Dohmann-Pfälzner 2002: Abb. 9: MZ01.C2.11630, EJ IV levels. In Brak the grooved rims are attested on wide mouth jars (see Oates 2001: n. 846, attested in Barri P also) and on big open shapes carenated (see Oates 2001 n. 566, Isin-Larsa date). A particular ribbed rim vat is attested in Taya VII (Reade 1968 n. 23), and more typical ribbed rims are attested in Khabur ware from level IV (n. 28). In Niniveh, ribbed rim are especially attested on closed shapes, but on open shapes too, in a variant well represented in Mozan 4 (see Kuyunjik, McMahon 1998: Fig. 10: 6, liv. VIA). In Hammam the ribbed rims are present on closed shapes in Period VI (Curvers 1988a: n. 52) and they are more frequent in Period VII (Curvers 1988b: n. 138-143). Related types are attested in Tell Amarna (Pons 2001: groupe 13).
- 43 For Mozan see also Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 2001. Abb. 18: 1; it dates EJ V, but it is typical of OJ I also. In Brak N, high necked jars are attested both with wide and narrow mouth (Oates 2001 n. 801-4, 809; see also Fig. 404-6 and spec. n. 302, 309, 322, 324-5, 347). In Assur the rim typology is attested, but in association with completely different shapes (Miglus 1996: Taf. 51). Attested both in Hammam VI West (Curvers 1988a n. 67-8) and VII (Curvers 1988b n. 181, 184-190). For the Euphrates region see Cooper (2006 a) Phase 4 (Fig. 1.6: a-b) and Phase 6 (Fig. 1.9, j). They are typical in Mari (Lebeau 1990. Pl. III: 19; late XXI sec.), and they are dated MB IA by L. Nigro (1998).
- 44 An exception is the so-called Isin-Larsa context, which seems to be considered apart from the rest of Phase N repertory (See Oates 2001: 173).
- 45 Namely the multiple grooved rim deep containers and the biconical cups (P. Quenet *pers. comm.*).

and in Chagar Bazar period II area D. Considering the most important comparisons, the impression is that these types could correspond to later specimens (Fig. 2: 20, 29; Fig. 3: 35, 40-42). Mozan 4, Barri P-O and probably Chagar Bazar pits are therefore comprehensive of a more recent phase compared to Brak N⁴⁶ and Chagar Bazar II periods. They are later than Chuera and Karab Sayyar late 3rd millennium levels. They do not have significant Khabur Ware percentages and are followed, in the case of Barri and Mozan, by clearly Khabur ware levels.

With Regard to the 'Ceramic Province' Issue

It seems that by the early post-Akkadian period the sites of Brak, Chagar Bazar, Mozan and Barri delineate a clear Upper Khabur ceramic province, with strong connections to the eastern sites, as far as the Tigris river.⁴⁷ Interesting connections are visible also with the south.⁴⁸

Differently, the likely 'late' post-Akkadian specimens seem to be attested in similar variants as far as the Syrian Euphrates valley and the northern inner Syria. The shift in regional connections between early and late post-Akkadian period clearly suggests a similar shift in cultural connections.

With Regard to the 'Transition' Issue

What the ceramic sequences of both Barri and Mozan stress,⁴⁹ are mostly slow changes which occurred, but within a basic continuity of potting traditions. The long-term potting tradition should reflect the stability of population and the relative absence of external pressure, but not a complete continuity. Both long standing, and abrupt elements of change can in fact be observed, each one likely to be connected with a different range of phenomena. The slow evolutionary elements have been identified for the most part in technological aspects and in common pottery production, not connected with fashion or taste aspects, but mostly influenced by practical necessities and economic habits.⁵⁰ They give rise to a slow but decisive assemblage change and it is likely that they reflect some socio/economic transformations.⁵¹ On the other hand, the appearance of new fine wares restricted to a short time span, the appearance of morphologies which do not develop from previous shapes and are comparable with ceramics from different regions (Fig. 1: 10-11; Fig. 2: 17-19), seem to suggest a more

46 Except for the Isis-Larsa context, which is rather to be considered contemporaneous of Mozan 4, Barri P-O and probably Chagar Bazar pits.

47 J. Oates had noted already the ceramic repertory of Brak N to be very close to that of Taya, Rimah and Niniveh (see Oates, Oates 2001 a: 388-389).

48 As regards the repertory of Barri and Mozan, the connections with southern ceramics seem to be principally linked to the beakers and to the carenated bowls, that is to the fine production. A wider range of connections has been identified within the repertory of Brak N ceramics (Oates 2001).

49 See also Kelly-Buccellati 2001.

50 Namely the change of the wares.

51 Orsi 2008; *forthc.*

rapid development, probably to be connected with an increase in mobility.

Brak attests from the Akkadian to the post-Akkadian period a reduction in terms of settled area and a change of the inhabited area functionality. The same evolution is registered by the excavations in the palace zone at Mozan⁵² and a change in function is registered in the south-eastern higher mound.⁵³ At Barri there is a change of settlement plan, while a gap is registered at Taya.

Chagar Bazar, Brak, Mozan, Hamoukar all attest consistent likely 'early' post-Akkadian settlements, continuity in ceramic tradition, but change in settlement function or character in respect of the previous phase. Major changes occur subsequently.

There is a limited Isin-Larsa context within the same area occupied during post-Akkadian period at Brak, but potentially, more consistent contemporary levels had to be located in a different part of the Tell.⁵⁴ At Chagar Bazar there are no MB structure on top of late 3rd millennium levels, Khabur period levels being located on the northern mound. Hamoukar gives evidence of an urbanized city by the early post-Akkadian, and a subsequent abandonment.

There is therefore a gap, or at least there is no continuity within the same area in Brak, Hamoukar and Chagar Bazar. Settlement continuity within the same area results from Mozan, Barri and maybe Taya, but it is a sparse settlement in Mozan (phase 4), and a cemetery at Barri (stratum 34d). Contemporary abandonment, settlement dislocation and decrease in settlement density clearly reflect a huge transformation within the region in respect of 3rd millennium settlement pattern stability. If an increase in the pastoral and mobile component of society can not be detected at the moment by excavation records, nevertheless a general decrease of urban life at least seems to be indisputable.

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52 Buccellati, Kelli-Buccellati 2000: 152. Form Palace (phase 2) to dwellings (phase 3).

53 From dwelling area (level 8), to official area (level 6).

54 The only material which can be dated to the period of Shamshi-Adad has been recovered in HH Level 10; TW surface; Trench A4 kiln and AL rubbish pit (Oates *et al.* 1997: 62).

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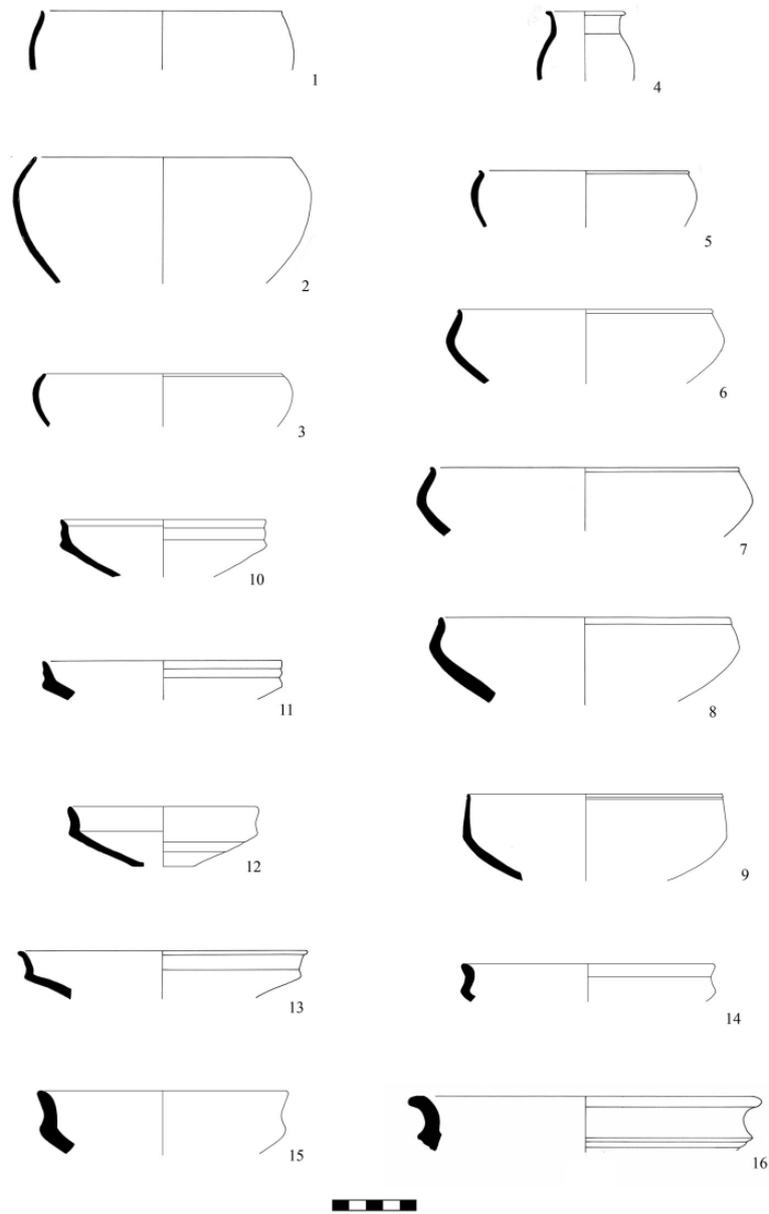


Fig. 1: Selected pottery from Tell Barri phases P (n. 1-2, 4-5, 7-8, 11, 13 and O (n. 16) and from Tell Mozan phase 4 (nn. 3, 6, 9-10, 12, 14-15).

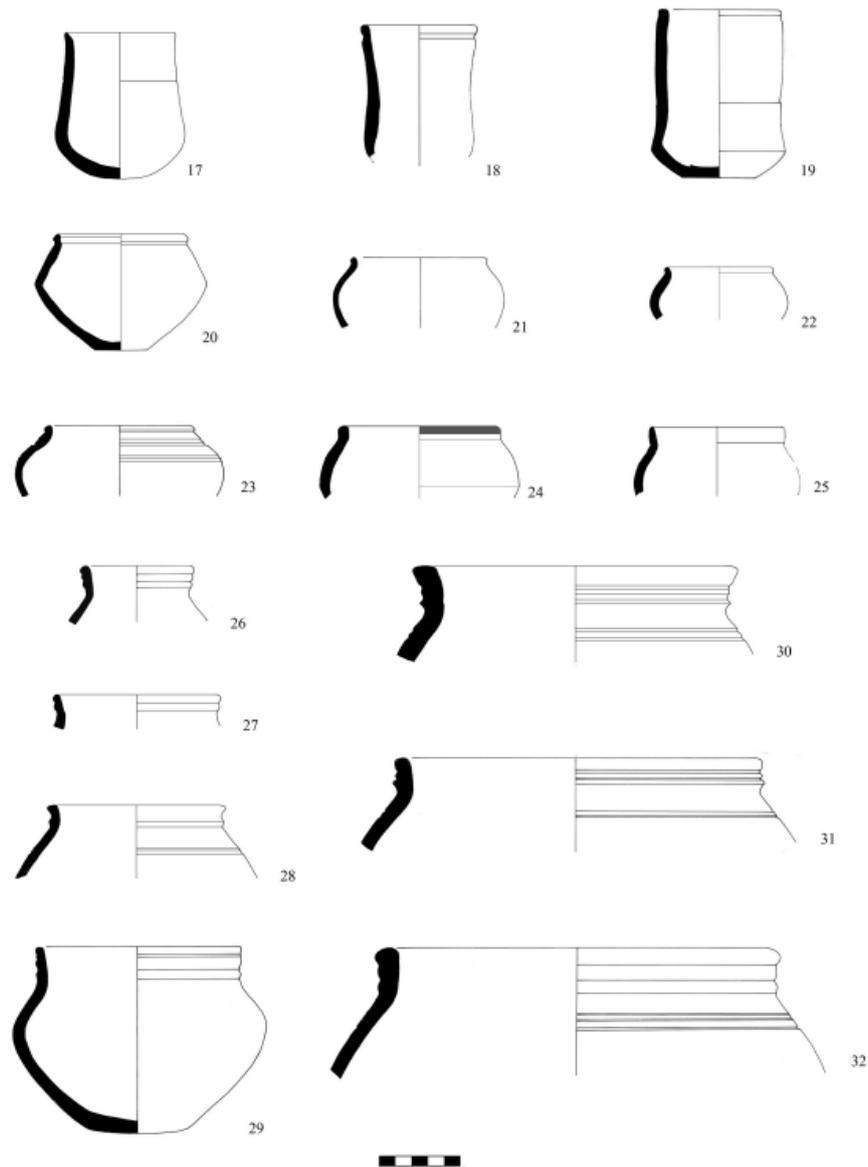


Fig. 2: Selected pottery from Tell Barri phases P (n. 17, 20, 23, 29, 31-32) and O (n. 19, 21, 26) and from Tell Mozan phase 4 (n. 18, 22, 24 “bitumen rim”, 25, 27-28, 30).

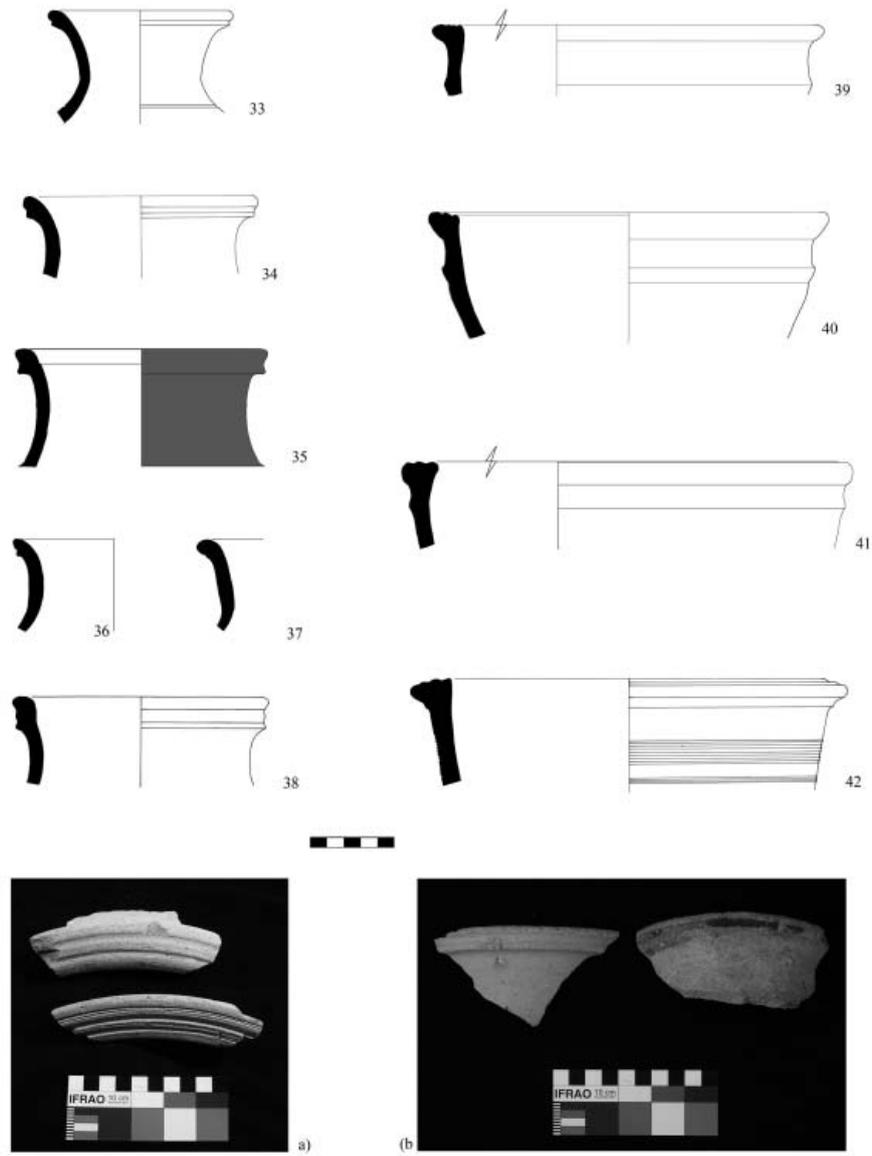


Fig. 3: Selected pottery from Tell Barri phases P (n. 38, 42) and O (n. 34, 37, 41) and from Mozan phase 4 (n. 33, 35 “bitumen neck”, 36, 39-40, a-b).

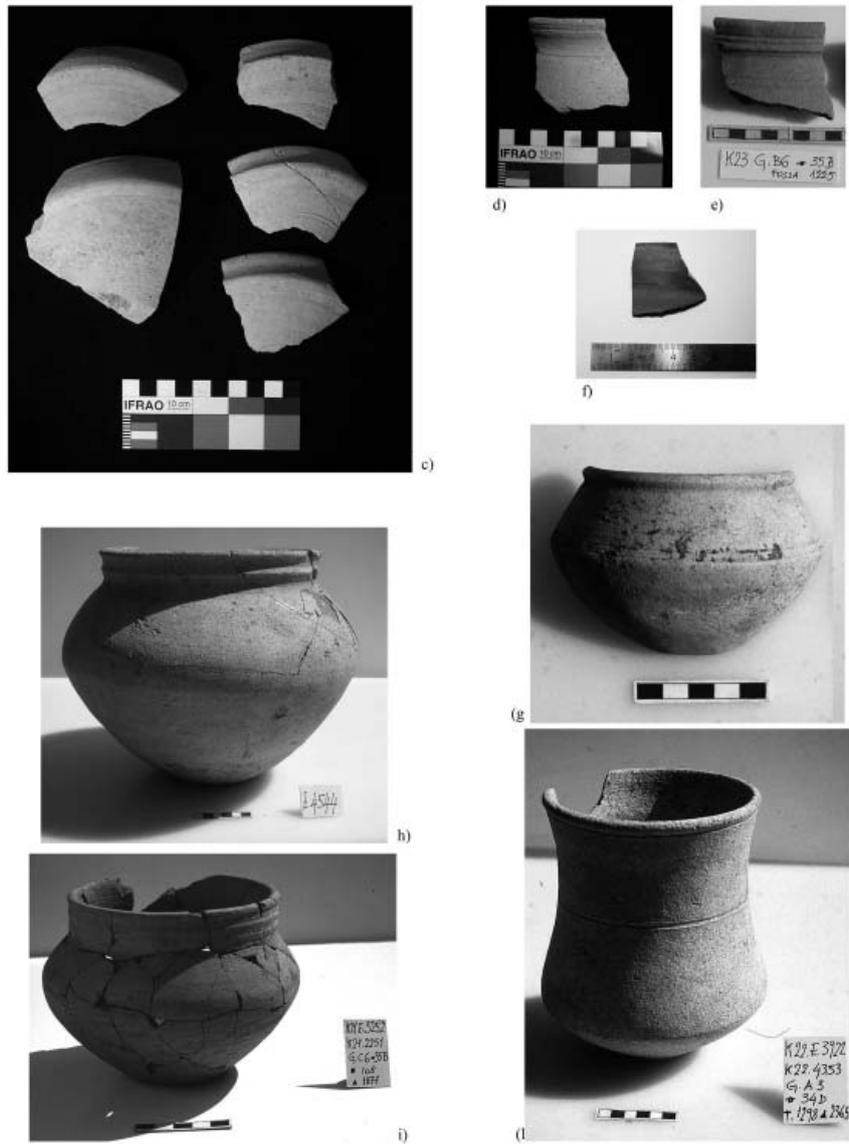


Fig. 4: Selected pottery from Tell Barri phases P (e-g, i) and O (h, j) and from Mozan phase 4 (c-d).