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20th Century BC in the Khabur Triangle Region and the Advent of the Old Assyrian Trade with Anatolia

o. Introduction

For some time, the turn of the third millennium BC in Northern Mesopotamia has been considered a period of settlement collapse that witnessed the abandonment of the whole area (Weiss et al. 1993). Recent research in the Khabur Triangle, a region located in the central part of the Jazirah, has demonstrated that during the so-called Post-Akkadian (or Early Jazirah V) period the central part of the area at least had been settled and probably politically divided between Urkes and Nagar, both serving as seats of local dynasties of Hurrian origin. A dark period starts with the abandonment of the Post-Akkadian levels at most of the sites in the area. As for the subsequent period, lasting approximately 100 to 200 years little or nothing is known about the archaeology of the area. Only with the advent of the Middle Bronze Age II period, in which the well-known Khabur Ware pottery appears in its technically and stylistically most developed form, do settlements in the Khabur Triangle seem to be reestablished. Yet, this process can hardly be dated with precision. At some sites Khabur Ware is contemporary with Samsī-Addu's 'Kingdom of North Mesopotamia' (1809–1776 BC) (Barjamovic et al., 25, 29–32, fig. 10) such as at Tell Chagar Bazar, Tell Rimah, Tell Leilan, and Tell Bi'a, i.e., belong to the first quarter of 18th century BC2, but it appears as well on sites with later texts, dating after the Samsī-Addu's death.3 On the other hand, pottery earlier than the 18th century BC has turned out to be very difficult to identify (Faivre / Nicolle 2007, 185). In consequence, while excavations and surveys identified a considerable number of sites located in the central and the eastern part of North Mesopotamia yielding what I call Classic (i.e., Middle Bronze Age/Old Jazirah II) Khabur Ware pottery (Meijer 1986; Lyonnet 2000), no site with earlier pottery was identified, suggesting a long period of abandonment in the area.

This view stands in opposition to information provided by the so-called Old Assyrian texts. These texts cover a period of more than a century, before Samsī-Addu's ascent to the throne in Assur, in which the Khabur Triangle area was frequented by merchants traveling from Assur towards the Euphrates crossing in the area of present-day Samsat (Veenhof 2008b) and further, up to Anatolia. It is hard to believe, that they had chosen to travel through a country that was entirely abandoned. While a reconstruction of the network of their caravan routes is still a matter of dispute, there is no doubt that a number of settlements existed on the way, serving as stopping stations after a day of travel (Nashef 1987; Joannès 1996; Forlanini 2006).

The aim of this paper is to identify pottery predating Classic Khabur Ware, pottery that could be subsequently used for the identification of settlements contemporary to the first period of the Old Assyrian trade to Anatolia (prior to 1800 BC) in the Khabur Triangle area.

- The reason for used of this term, popular among French scholars, is explained in Charpin 2004, 153.
- 2 Despite all the reservations concerning the middle chronology, it is used consistently throughout this paper, cf. Veenhof 2007, 60.
- This issue will be addressed more extensively by the present author in a book The Eponym Lists from Kaneš and the Mesopotamian Chronology of the Early Second Millennium BC.

1. The Old Assyrian trade

1.a Sources

The primary source for the knowledge of the Old Assyrian period are substantial archives found during initially illicit and later scientific excavations at Kültepe (ancient Kaneš), a large site located in the Kızıl Irmak valley in central Turkey. The number of tablets found at the site was estimated at *ca.* 23,000 in 2005 (Albayrak 2005) and has probably increased since then, as new texts are discovered during each field season. Of these tablets *ca.* 20 per cent have been published in copies, but only half of those were translated and commented.

A limited number of tablets (in comparison to the Kültepe/Kaneš archives) were found at some other Anatolian sites: Alişar Höyük (63 tablets), Boğazkale (72 documents), and Kaman-Kalehöyük (one tablet) (Michel 2002).

Surprisingly, only an extremely small number of Old Assyrian texts are known from Assur, the city that formed the base for the trade. Twenty-three tablets that were identified are mainly stray texts found in Middle Assyrian archives (Donbaz 1974; Pedersén 1985, 2). This situation results from the fact that the early second millennium city was not excavated to any significant extent by either early or late 20th century explorers. Paradoxically, nearly the same number of Old Assyrian tablets are known from Mesopotamian sites such as Nuzi (six tablets), Abu Habba/Sippar (14 tablets), Tell Asmar/Ešnunna (one tablet) Nippur (one tablet) and Mari (three tablets) (Michel 2002). Old Assyrian texts from the Jazirah are even less numerous: there are three tablets from Tell Rimah, one tablet from Tell Leilan, one tablet from Tell Hammam et-Turkman, and, if Jesper Eidem is right, an envelope fragment from Tell Arbid may also be added to this list (Eidem 2008b, 40). A small fragment of a tablet from Lidar Höyük published recently (Müller 2008) belongs to the Syrian scribal tradition and seems to be later than the Old Assyrian trade.

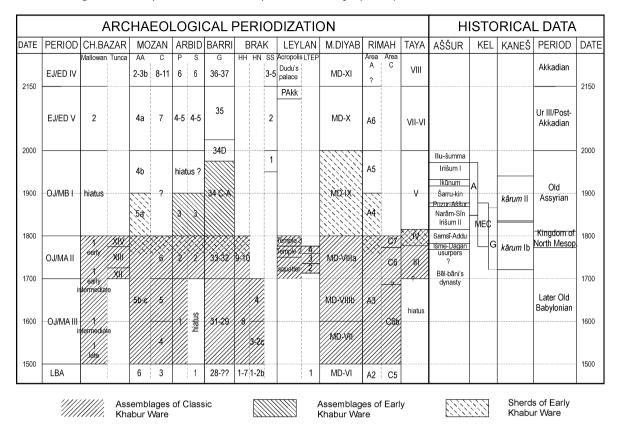
It has to be noted that Northern Mesopotamia also yielded a considerable number of Old Babylonian texts produced by the administrations of various local kingdoms. Archives dated to the 18th century BC were found at Tell Bica, Tell Chagar Bazar, Tell Leilan, Tell Rimah, and in Mari, as well as stray texts known from Tell Taya and Tell Hadi. Many of them use date formulas involving the name of the holder of the *līmum* office in Assur, which can now be converted into calendar years (cf. below), and provide an extremely useful way of dating.

1.b Chronology (table I)

The Old Assyrian texts from the lower city ($k\bar{a}rum$) area of Kültepe have been found in two levels of occupation separated by a conflagration layer. Most of the tablets came from level II. The level Ib houses were much poorer in epigraphic material but cuneiform tablets of the same date were also found in contemporary layers of the main mound (where earlier texts were not attested). All the tablets discovered at other Anatolian sites date to level Ib as well.

It is more difficult to qualify the tablets found in Mesopotamia in terms of $k\bar{a}rum$ Kaneš settlement periods. There is no doubt that the texts form Hammam et-Turkman, Leilan, and Rimah, as well as most tablets from Mari and Tuttul, are contemporary with the Kaneš Ib level. This is also the case for the Sippar tablets, most of which concern the merchant Warad-Sîn, active between the forty-second year of

Table I | Chronology and stratigraphy of North Mesopotamia and Anatolia at the turn of the Early and during the Middle Bronze period (EJ: Early Jazirah, ED: Early Dynastic, OJ: Old Jazirah, MB: Middle Bronze, MA: Middle Assyrian, LBA: Late Bronze Age, Ch. Bazar. Chagar Bazar, M. Dyab: Tell Muhammad Diyab, KEL: Kaneš Eponym List).



Hammurapi (1792–1750 BC) and the eighth year of Samsu-iluna (1749–1712 BC). The tablets from Ešnunna, Nuzi, and Nippur show a number of features of the Old Assyrian dialect, but cannot be dated safely to any of its sub-periods (Jesper Eidem, pers. comm.).

The dating of *kārum* Kaneš II and *kārum* Kaneš Ib levels was until recently a subject of scholarly discussion,⁴ including the question of the length of the abandonment period separating both levels, usually estimated to be about 30 years (Balkan 1955, 60). The situation changed with the publication of several Kaneš Eponym Lists (KEL) (Veenhof 2003; Günbatti 2008), which presently cover a period from the enthronement of Irišum I (*ca.* 1974 BC, cf. Veenhof 2008a, 29) and continue down to *ca.* 1720 BC (Günbatti 2008, 117). As KEL G, the list providing the latest *līmum* names, was discovered in Kültepe, there is no doubt that Assyrian trade with Anatolia did not stop before this date. The length of the *kārum* Kaneš Ib period is presently calculated to be *ca.* 113 years (from 1833 to 1720 BC) and an interval of two or three years can be assigned to the break between levels II and Ib (1835–1833 BC) (Günbatti 2008, 117). The beginning of the *kārum* Kaneš II settlement is more difficult to date. The oldest *līmum* names that appear

- 4 This issue was addressed extensively by Veenhof (2008a, 28–35), though some of his conclusions have to be corrected due to a recent publication of the Kaneš Eponym List G (Günbatti 2008), cf. Barjamovic / Hertel / Larsen 2010, 1–40.
- 5 However, it seems that a serious attempt to revive the trade dates to the period of Samsī-Addu.

on the tablets belong to the time of Ikūnum (1934–1921 BC) (Veenhof 2008a, 32, n. 72). There is also limited evidence suggesting that Ikūnum was personally involved in the trade (Veenhof 2003, 42). Yet, it is very likely, that the onset of commercial activities may be dated to the very beginning of Erišum's reign, as suggested in a royal edict, whose content is repeated in an inscription found on a door-socket from the Assur temple (RIMAI: A.O.33.2). Some scholars argue that the edict was in fact a regulation, which created favorable conditions for the Old Assyrian trade and traders (Larsen 1976, 63–78). This point of view may be corroborated by a fragment of an envelope bearing an impression of Erišum's seal found at Kültepe in 1983 (Veenhof 2003, 41; 2008a, 129). Consequently, it is clear that Assyrian traders were present in Anatolia from the beginning of the second half of the 20th century BC (about 150 years before Samsī-Addu's ascent to the throne at Assur), and plausible that Assyrians had already settled in Anatolia during the reign of Erišum I (1974–1935 BC). The establishment of reliable commercial links in Anatolia probably took some time, but it may be assumed that this system started to fully function before Ikūnum's ascent to the throne in 1934 BC. By this date, merchants' treks through the northern Jazirah had also been well established.

2. Commercial roads of the Old Assyrian period

There have been a considerable number of attempts to reconstruct the distribution of Old Assyrian commercial roads (Goetze 1953; Hallo 1964; Nashef 1987; Beitzel 1992; Oguchi 1999). This discussion has not been limited to the identification or ordering of cities names mentioned on the tablets themselves, but has also focused on reconstructing the main caravan trek, in particular on whether it followed the Tigris River or crossed the Northern Mesopotamian plain towards the Euphrates and if the latter, whether this route was to the south or north of the Sinjar Range. The starting point of the trek was, of course, Assur, and the last Mesopotamian station was Ḥaḥḥum, where a crossing of the Euphrates was located. Klaus R. Veenhof has recently proposed locating this city in the area of Samsat (or at the site of Samsat itself) on the Turkish Euphrates (Veenhof 2008b). Road stations are mentioned in several co-called 'itineraries', i.e., texts that list expenses on the way from Assur to Anatolia. Twenty-eight such lists were collected and compared by Khaled Nashef (Nashef 1987). Some of them refer to stations located either between Ḥaḥḥum and Kaneš, or within Anatolia, as well as on detours from the main road. On the basis of the remaining 15 texts, Nashef reconstructed the following sequence of stations located on the Mesopotamian part of the trek, set in an order starting from Assur:

ASSUR – Šadduatum – Razama ša Bura – Abidiban – Qaţţara – Razama ša Uḫakim – Kaluzanum – Adubazum – Daraqum – Apum – Amaz – Naḫur – Ela/uḫut/Luḫayu – Abrum – Burallum – Ḫaqa – Zalpa – Buruddum – ḤAḤḤUM.

It should be noted that the position of some names on this list is disputable, and that in an open country (as is the Jazirah) there were various ways of traveling across the region. Moreover, some detours were caused by political or natural events, and we cannot exclude a certain role of personal preferences.

Massimo Forlanini (2006), who included into his study some texts published since the time of Nashef's book, concluded that two main roads led to Anatolia; a northern one, running along the Tigris, and a southern one, crossing Jazirah. According to him, there were several 'fixed points' on the route through the Jazirah, which were visited by all (or nearly all) caravans, while between these points differ-

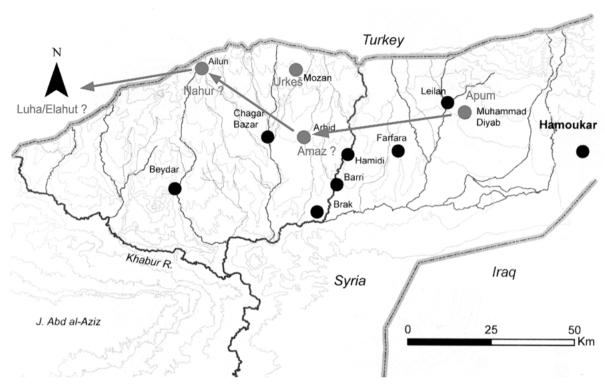


Fig. 1 | The most important cities of the Old Jazirah/Middle Bronze Age II period Khabur Triangle area and the reconstructed Old Assyrian caravan road (drawn by the author, background map courtesy of Jason Ur).

ent paths could be chosen. The first of these fixed points was obviously Apum, and the whole first part of the distance is often described as 'from the City to Apum' (fig. I). The second section of the road covered the distance from Apum to Ḥaḥḥum and is the most interesting part for my study. According to Forlanini, at least three variant routes existed on this section of road:

- a southern one, via Pahudar/Puhidar,
- a central one, via Amaz and Nahur,
- and a northern one, via Buruddum and Ela/uḥut, located in Kašiyari mountains, most probably
 joining the path that ran along the Tigris.

The eight stations suggested by Nashef for the Apum–Ḥaḫḫum section of the road were distributed by Forlanini between two or three different routes, and consequently, the number of stations located on the 'main' road (the central one) can be reduced.

Another problem is caused by the fact that most of the names mentioned on the list have never been convincingly attributed to any of the archaeological sites located in the area. The exceptions are Qaṭṭara (= Tell Rimah6) and Zalpa (Tell Hammam et-Turkman). At first glance it is surprising that large cities such as Urkeš and Nagar, which were the seats of prosperous local dynasties of Hurrian origin during the Post-Akkadian period (*ca.* 21st century BC) and which most likely existed continuously throughout the first quarter of the second millennium BC, are not mentioned in the lists. Šeḥna is also absent, although this is hardly a surprise, as the site seems to have been abandoned from the Late Akkadian

6 Some scholars prefer an identification of this site with Karana, for instance Dalley 1984; Joannès 1996, 323.

period onwards, and most probably resettled shortly before Samsī-Addu decided to transfer the capital of his kingdom there (Frayne 1995). The lack of Old Jazirah (OJ I) material from Leilan provides an argument for the identification of Tell Muhammed Diyab with Apum, tentatively proposed by Eidem (2008a, 270). His reservations were based on the lack of Early Jazirah V and Old Jazirah I material from the site although a recent publication provides evidence that the site was settled during this period (Nicolle 2006, 234–235). This is corroborated furthermore by a surface find of an Old Assyrian style cylinder seal in the lower city area (Castel 1990).

Helpful information as to where some of the stations on the trek were located is provided by the Mari archives. The evidence has been presented by Francis Joannès (1996) and David Sevaliè (2006). According to the first study, most of the settlements listed in the Old Assyrian texts were small cities during the period of the Mari archives (the only exceptions being Kaluzanum and Adubazum, located between Qaṭṭara and Apum). For the Khabur Triangle area, Joannès reconstructed three branches of the road:

- a northern one: from Šubat-Enlil to Amaz via Šuna,
- a middle one: from Šubat-Enlil to Ilansura via Ašnakkum,
- and a southern one: via Hazikkanum, Taidu, and Kaḥat (Joannès 1996, 343).

Only the northern route seems to reflect an Old Assyrian road as documented by the Old Assyrian 'itineraries'. This identification is corroborated by information provided by two letters concerning Assyrian merchants written by Itūr-Asdu, a governor residing in Naḫur from the sixth till the thirteenth year of Zimrī-Lîm (1775–1762 BC) (Guichard 2008). They clearly indicate that the road passed through the territory of the city of Naḫur, where a *miksum*-tax was levied on the merchandise. According to an Old Babylonian itinerary (Hallo 1964) Naḫur was also located on a main caravan road during the Old Babylonian period, on a stretch starting at Apum and going through Amaz and Naḫur to Luḫa, a city that is often mentioned in the correspondence from Naḫur. As Itūr-Asdu also seems to have supervised the city of Urkeš when it was dependant on Zimrī-Lîm, Naḫur should be located in the vicinity of Urkeš, probably to the west of it. Other texts mentioned by Michaël Guichard suggest a location in the vicinity of Ašnakkum, a city that is certainly to be identified with Tell Chagar Bazar, which would point to the area of Amuda or Derbasiye as the location of Naḫur. In my opinion, the most likely candidate for the location of Naḥur is the impressive site of Tell Ailun.

It is, of course, tempting to connect names mentioned by texts with places that were prominent sites in the early second millennium BC (as I have just done in the case of Naḫur). The main difficulty, however, is caused by problems with the identification of early second millennium BC (that is pre-Samsī-Addu) sites, that were contemporary with the first phase of the Old Assyrian trade. As mentioned above, all of the Khabur Ware contexts that can be precisely dated by tablets belong to the period of Samsī-Addu or later, i.e., they are contemporary with *kārum* Kaneš Ib period. Consequently, the presence of Classic Khabur Ware could be considered as a marker for *kārum* Kaneš Ib period settlements, while there is no instance of securely dated deposits of pottery of this kind which can be attributed to the *kārum* Kaneš II period. Still, texts of this period clearly hint at the presence of pre-Samsī-Addu settlements in the area, providing Assyrian traders with stopping places on the road to or from Anatolia.

In this situation two working hypotheses could be postulated. The first is, to assume that Classic Khabur Ware, dated by textual evidence to the 18th century BC, started much earlier, at the turn of the Post-Akkadian period, but these early contexts cannot be precisely dated due to the lack of textual sources. The other is, to assume that other kinds of pottery occurred on sites (or in the levels) belonging to the Old Jazirah I period.

In order to falsify one (or both) of these hypotheses there are two clear lines of inquiry that we might follow. The first is to address the problem of the periodization of the Khabur Ware pottery, with particular emphasis on its early phases. The other is to look at the material from sites in the Jazirah, focusing on the levels which predate the period of Samsī-Addu (or more generally, the 18th century BC).

3. Early Khabur Ware in earlier research

3a Divisions of Khabur Ware pottery

Sir Max Mallowan, who dubbed the painted pottery from the first half of the second millennium BC found at Tell Chagar Bazar Khabur Ware, reflected in this name not only the geographical position of the site but also the relative abundance of pottery of this kind at sites surveyed in the Khabur area prior to excavations (Mallowan 1937, 102–104). On the basis of the relative stratigraphy of the Tell Chagar Bazar graves, he proposed dividing stratum 1 into four sub-units: early, early intermediate, intermediate, and late. But this division does not shed any light on the problem of Early Khabur Ware, since tablets dated to the period of Samsī-Addu were found together with sherds of the classic variant of the Khabur Ware in a context dated to early level 1 (Mallowan 1947, 82–83).

Later attempts to phase the Khabur Ware follow the basic division into Older and Younger Khabur Ware proposed by Barthel Hrouda (1957, 38–40), and will not be discussed here, as this division is of no relevance for my study (cf. Oguchi 2000, tab. 6).

The periodization of Khabur Ware pottery was one of the main research tasks carried out by Hiromichi Oguchi in his unpublished Ph.D.-thesis. His conclusions were presented in a series of papers published in *Al-Rafidain* (Oguchi 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2003). He proposed dividing the Khabur Ware period into four sub-periods (Oguchi 1997, 195–196):

- Period I (ca. 1900–1814 BC), represented at some sites located in the Niniveh region and in the Khabur Triangle;
- Period 2, Classic Khabur Ware period (*ca.* 1814–1700 BC), present on sites such as Leilan, Chagar Bazar, Rimah, Taya (level III), where it is dated by the presence of tablets, as well as at other sites: Tell Brak, etc. (for a full list cf. Oguchi 1997, 212–216);
- Period 3, Late Khabur Ware period (ca. 1700–1550 BC), present at Tell Rimah;
- Period 4, Transitional Khabur-Mittanian pottery (ca. 1550–1400 BC) present at Tell Rimah and Tell Brak.

Oguchi addressed the problem of the transition from Post-Akkadian pottery to Khabur Ware more specifically in a paper of 2003. He remarked that the problem of the gap between the late third millennium pottery tradition and Khabur Ware might be solved in several different ways:

- by accepting the existence of a hiatus (in settlement and culture),
- since the gap may result from applying evidence from a single site to the entire Northern Mesopotamia, the problem could be resolved by introducing evidence from other sites in the area,
- by bringing forward the date of the beginning of the Khabur Ware period and pushing back the end of the Post-Akkadian period.

The second solution was favored by Oguchi, who discussed the evidence provided by trench G-4 at Tell Jigan. Levels 3a and 3b yielded assemblages composed partly of Khabur Ware (Oguchi 2001, fig. 8) and partly of late third millennium BC pottery (Oguchi 2003, fig. 4). Oguchi suggested that, despite the

fact that all of the pottery discussed came from fill or refuse deposits, this situation may reflect the contemporaneous use of late third millennium BC pottery and Khabur Ware sometime during the 20th century BC. I will comment on this hypothesis later.

An attempt to study the origins of Khabur Ware was undertaken by Christophe Nicolle in a paper presented at the 1st ICAANE in Rome (Nicolle 2000). He observed that the period of long discontinuity between the Akkadian period and Samsī-Addu time in the north, characterized by a lack of settlements and pottery, may be the result of applying the 'long' chronology of south Mesopotamia, which requires to accommodate the Ur III and Isin-Larsa periods between the Old Akkadian period and Samsī-Addu. Subsequently, he turned to a study of unpublished pottery from the excavations at Tell Muhammad Diyab, where a sequence of five levels, featuring the renewal of a sacral building on summit A, was discovered. Based on pottery comparisons, he proposed dating level II to the period of Khabur Ware at Leilan (from the start of Samsī-Addu's presence to the destruction of the site by Samsu-iluna of Babylon). Consequently, the four earlier levels (including a short abandonment in level III) should be dated to the times prior to 1800 BC. The apparent, prolonged use of level V made Nicolle think about moving the beginning of the Khabur Ware period closer to the beginning of the 20th century BC (Nicolle 2000, 1181-1182). He has, however, abandoned this point of view in later publications. In a paper written with Xavier Faivre discussing the identification, dating, distribution and origin of Khabur Ware pottery (Faivre / Nicolle 2007) he concluded that the origin of Khabur Ware falls into a period between 1900–1850 BC (i.e., to the early part of Old Jazirah II according to their chronology) and that at present it is impossible to differentiate Khabur Ware pottery predating Samsī-Addu from that used during and after his reign (Faivre / Nicolle 2007, 185). This opinion is repeated in his publication of seasons 1992-2000 at Tell Muhammad Diyab (Nicolle 2006, 168-176). He has also rejected the assumption made by Peter Pfälzner (Dohmann-Pfälzner / Pfälzner 2002, 154) that the origins of Khabur Ware may date back to the 21st century BC (Nicolle 2006, 234-235).

The excavations at Tell Mozan, directed by Pfälzner, revealed a continuous sequence of strata covering a period from Early Jazirah III to Mittani times in the central part of the High Mound. Level C6 of this sequence corresponds to a period dating *ca.* to 2000–1800 BC. It includes the late reuse phase of the Post-Akkadian Puššam's house and yields fragments of painted Khabur Ware that were, however, less frequent there than in later levels dated to Old Jazirah II (Dohmann-Pfälzner / Pfälzner 2001, 105; 2002, 154). As there was no evident break in occupation, Pfälzner insisted on a continuity of pottery traditions at the turn of the third millennium BC and suggested that the decoration of Khabur Ware originates from rare painted vessels of the Post-Akkadian period.

3b.1 Early Khabur Ware from the perspective of Oguchi

The Khabur Ware Period I phase was discussed briefly in note 3 of Oguchi's 1998 paper and to a much greater extent in his 1999 paper on the Old Assyrian trade routes. According to his own definition, Early Khabur Ware is characterized by:

- 1) wide but uneven bands of paint, and
- 2) combination of painted and grooved decoration.

In his opinion, pottery belonging to this phase could be identified at Tell Jigan, Tell Rimah (AS 3), Tell Taya (IV), and at Tell Mozan, with some early forms found at Tell Billa, in the earliest graves at Chagar Bazar and in phase b—c at Dinkha Tepe (Oguchi 1998, n. 3).

In two more recent papers Oguchi presented some drawings of the pottery from Tell Jigan, which in his opinion should be belong to the 20th century BC. In his first contribution Oguchi presents "the earliest examples of Khabur Ware" (Oguchi 2000, fig. 8). In the second paper, more examples of pottery from level 3 a–b from Tell Jigan are shown, though they represent types from the late third millennium BC exclusively (Oguchi 2003, fig. 4). In conclusion, Oguchi puts forward the thesis that during the 20th century BC, late third millennium BC pottery and Khabur Ware pottery were used contemporaneously, at least at some North Mesopotamian sites.

3b.2 Evaluation of the Period 1 (Early) Khabur Ware examples of Oguchi

3b.2.1 Tell Jigan

Oguchi published a drawing of seven potsherds from Tell Jigan as an example of Period I Khabur Ware (Oguchi 2000, fig. 8). All of them belong to the category of pots, representing vessels with a wide mouth, comparable in diameter to the height of the vessel, with no distinctive neck under the rim and a very short or non-existent shoulders. They all show painted decoration which is characterized by a carelessness of execution as the bands are of uneven width and do not have straight edges, painted points resemble drops rather than regular circles, and occasionally droplets of paint appear on the walls. Three examples feature horizontal grooving on the shoulders (Oguchi 2000, fig. 8: I–3) and two others have grooving on the upper surface of the rim (fig. 8: 6–7). According to Oguchi, a combination of grooving and painted bands is a feature of Early Khabur Ware (in this statement he is clearly influenced by Joan Oates). Two of the illustrated vessels have scraping marks on the inner surface. All pots are either buff or pinkish in color and show chaff (one example) or a combination of chaff and mineral temper.

The last example of Early Khabur Ware from Jigan was published in 2003 (Oguchi 2003, fig. 4.28). This is a body-sherd decorated with two horizontal and one wavy line executed with a comb between two painted lines. The vessel is made of pale green clay with medium dense chaff and medium size grit temper. The color of the paint is not given.

The potsherds described above can hardly be qualified as Early Khabur Ware pottery. Examples published in the 2000 paper rather belong to the Classic, or Period 2, phase of Khabur Ware, as demonstrated by the vessel shapes, the color of potsherds' paste, and the quality of their decoration. The combination of grooved and painted decoration has to be dismissed as an early feature (against Oates *et al.* 1997, 65), because numerous examples of this decorative combination are present on the pottery dated to 18th century BC (cf. for instance Faivre / Nicolle 2007, nos. 205–213, all from Tell Brak HH level 10; no. 262 from Tell Leilan Lower Town Palace 3; no. 299 from Tell Leilan Lower Town East Palace 2, nos. 328, 332). On the other hand, the sherd published in 2003 clearly belongs to the late third millennium BC repertoire (as do other potsherds illustrated on the same plate). Consequently, none of Oguchi's examples from Jigan can be allowed as an example of a distinct Early Khabur Ware (Period 1) pottery.

3b.2.2 Tell Mozan

The Tell Mozan example (Buccellati / Kelly-Buccellati 1990, fig. 26, MI-84) belongs to a pot with an S-shaped rim. The rim of the vessel is painted with red paint and a horizontal band of ribbing is visible just under its concave 'neck'. This sherd was found in sounding P, on the northern slope of the Tell, together with another similar fragment (MI-83) and belongs to 'a series of red painted and unpainted potsherds'. The whole pottery assemblage from the square is described as containing finer Khabur shapes than those encountered in trench BI. Both of the sherds in question are described as 'transitional' between late third millennium BC/Ur III assemblage (represented by sherds MI-77-78) and typical Khabur Ware (MI-79-82; Bucellati / Kelly-Bucellati 1990, fig. 26). The reason for this qualification is not clear, but most likely it was again the presence of a combination of grooved and painted decoration. The Mozan potsherds cannot be considered as Early Khabur pottery for the following reasons:

- their stratigraphic position (above late third millennium BC level) is not defined precisely enough,
- their shape is typically that of Classic Khabur Ware vessels, known for instance from Tell Brak, HH
 level 10 (Oates *et al.* 1997, fig. 191, no. 247; fig. 193, no. 300),
- grooved and painted decorations are typical for Classic Khabur Ware.

3b.2.3 Tell Rimah

Oguchi presented two sherds discovered in a sounding located on the southern slope of the Temple Mound, in a context clearly predating the construction of the temple, which falls into the period of Samsī-Addu. The first of the two is a large vessel without rim, decorated in transparent paint forming slashed triangles on the shoulder and a wide band filled with a checker-board motive; the other is a bowl with painted decoration on the rim. Their stratigraphic position under the temple suggests a date prior to 1800 BC and both vessels most likely represent Early Khabur Ware pottery. This opinion was recently confirmed by Oates (cf. Oates 2007, 397, fig. 5: 2–3).

3b.2.4 Tell Taya

Level IV was dated by its stratigraphic relation to the subsequent level III, which yielded two cuneiform tablets. In level IV some houses and a temple building located on the opposite side of an open space were discovered. The same temple was in still use in level III. Both levels yielded Khabur Ware pottery, but because of stylistic differences, Reade proposed to date level III to the Zimrī-Līm's reign and level IV to 1850–1800 BC (Reade 1968, 258). One of the tablets found in level III bears the name of *līmum* Idna-Aššur, son of Abu-šalim, whose date of tenure is disputable. If the later date is right, level III may be dated to the third quarter of the 18th century BC, and level IV, while certainly earlier, may cover the first quarter of the same century, as suggested by the continuous use of the temple. Of the three forms of

Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen proposed to equate this eponym with *līmum* of year KEL 175 (1798 BC) (Barjamovic / Hertel / Larsen 2012, 99). This identification is impossible to accept, because on the same tablet there is an impression of a seal belonging to a certain Hasidanum, who is a servant of Samsī-Addu and who is known as well from the Mari texts dating to the terminal years of the 'North Mesopotamian Kingdom' (Villard 2001, 94–97). This suggests a date between 1780 and 1775 BC.

pottery from level IV illustrated in the interim report, the most peculiar (checker-board decoration combined with triangles) is thought to be an import (Reade 1968, 258, pl. LXXXVII, 26–28). The next shape in question is a cup in a typical Khabur Ware form, which may very well fit into an early 18th century BC assemblage. The remaining vessel, a deep bowl with a flanged rim, ribbed on the upper surface and provided with a band of paint on the rim, seems to belong to an earlier part of the same century as well. All vessels are of buff fabric with brown, plum red, or black paint. The Taya pottery of level IV may slightly predate 1800 BC, but could also be later.

3b.2.5 Tell Chagar Bazar

The graves GI-3 have a similar stratigraphic position and were found under the foundations of some level I structures, moreover G2 and G3 were cut into a *pisé* platform underlying level I (Mallowan 1936, 55). Grave GI yielded eight vessels of plain pottery and one painted pot. Grave G2 included three painted vessels and a copper beer strainer, while grave G3 contained a pottery lamp, six pieces of painted pottery, a copper dagger and a copper pin. Metal implements are difficult to date, but the lamp (Mallowan 1936, figs. 5, 25) and the copper strainer (Mallowan 1936, figs. 8, 18) are typical for graves containing Classic Khabur pottery. Some vessels from G1 may represent Classic Khabur Ware, while two 'shouldered cups' (Mallowan 1936, fig. 17:5–6) and a painted jar (Mallowan 1936, fig. 16:5) may even represent Late Khabur Ware (cf. Postgate *et al.* 1997, pl. 73). The pottery from G2 and G3 features a type of low-neck jar with wide shoulders and with painted bands on the maximum width of the body, which is a shape typical for a Classic Khabur Ware assemblage (Oguchi 1997, fig. I, no. 8). Consequently, there is no reason to date the pottery from graves G1–3 at Chagar Bazar to an early period of the Khabur pottery.

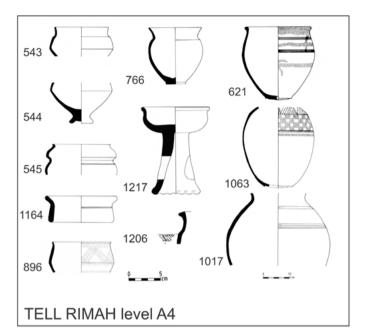
3b.2.6 Tell Billa

The Tell Billa sherd (Speiser 1933, pl. LXXII, left, fourth from top) in fact looks quite peculiar. It comes from a deep pot or wide-mouthed jar and bears incised and painted decoration. Comb incisions form a horizontal band and a wavy line above it. Paint is used for a band on the rim and dots appear in the spaces formed by the wavy line. Moreover, there is an animal silhouette painted with bitumen on the shoulder. This peculiar set of decoration motives and techniques suggests a date during the Post-Akkadian period.

Consequently, of all of the supposed examples of Early Khabur Ware pottery quoted by Oguchi only those from Tell Rimah seem to belong to this early group. Still, two vessels are not enough to attempt a convincing identification of the features typical for the Early Khabur Ware pottery.

4. Recent finds of Early Khabur (Old Jazirah I) pottery from the Jazirah

My review of recent evidence will start with an evaluation of pottery from Tell Rimah, as it is possible that more examples of the early pottery were illustrated in the final publication of the site (Postgate *et al.* 1997) that was published more recently than the discussed paper by Oguchi. Then other sites will be reviewed, especially those with a continuous sequence of occupation through the late third and early



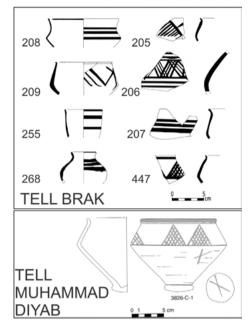


Fig. 2 | Early Khabur Ware and contemporaneous pottery from Jazirah, A: Tell Rimah, level A4 (numbers refer to Postgate et al. 1997), B: Tell Brak (numbers refer to Oates et al. 1997), C: Tell Muhammad Diyab (after Nicolle 2006, figs. 2-3).

second millennium BC: Tell Barri, Tell Brak, Tell Mozan, Tell Taya, and Assur. Pottery predating Samsī-Addu has also been reported at Tell Leilan and Tell Muhammad Diyab. Finally, unpublished pottery assemblages excavated at Tell Arbid (sector P) in the years 2008–2010 will be presented.

4.1 Tell Rimah

The only part of the site in which excavations reached deposits predating the 18th century BC is the Temple Mound, which is in fact a tell formed by third millennium BC deposits and later encased with the walls of the temple terrace. Three soundings were excavated in the Area AS located on the southern slope (originally labeled levels AS 1-3, but in the final publication designated as A4-6). The lowermost stratum yielded a mixture of Late Akkadian and Post-Akkadian material (Postgate et al. 1997, pl. 27). Stratum A5 most likely belonged to the Post-Akkadian assemblage as well, since it yielded examples of burnished Taya Ware, while A4 was dated to the Early Khabur Ware period. According to David Oates, two (or three) rooms and an oven excavated there are to be dated to ca. 1900–1800 BC but certainly no earlier than 1950 BC (Postgate et al. 1997, 53). Distinctive features of the pottery from level A48 include: painting with thick, dusky red or dark, reddish-brown paint (Postgate et al. 1997, pl. 19), joint use of deep grooving and painting on jar shoulders, and a painted decoration including hatched and cross-hatched triangles, sometimes with dots in-between (fig. 2 A).

8 The pottery from level A4, which is dispersed in the publication of Postgate, was collected and shown on one plate in Faivre / Nicolle 2007, pl. VI, 159–168.

It has to be remarked that, according to the published information, only one-third of the illustrated pottery forms found in level A4 occurred exclusively in this context. A similarly numerous group of the forms continued throughout level A3 (Classic Khabur Ware)⁹ and the remaining forms are present in all later Bronze Age contexts (A3–A1).¹⁰ This situation may be explained in two ways. Either layer A4, which was encountered just under the surface of the temple platform, was contaminated by later intrusions (this is suggested by the presence of the shouldered beaker no. 766, a form typical for Classic or even Late Khabur Ware), or there was a significant continuity of the pottery tradition throughout the Old Jazirah I–II periods. If the second case is true, separating Old Jazirah I and Old Jazirah II material may turn out to be a very difficult task.

4.2 Tell Barri

A synthesis of stratified pottery assemblages discovered in area G at Tell Barri was presented at the 5th ICAANE in Madrid in 2006 (Baccelli / Manuelli 2008) (fig. 3). The material was divided into two phases (Early Khabur Ware and Advanced Khabur Ware designated as phase I and II). Phase II was then divided into two sub-periods (IIA and IIB respectively) reflecting the time 'of Mari domination' (strata 33–32B-A in Area G) and the 'Late Old Babylonian Period' (strata 31B-A) (Baccelli / Manuelli 2008, pl. 8). Period I, corresponding to the period of the Old Assyrian trade (Middle Bronze I), is evidenced by pottery of strata 34C-A, and slightly predated by layer 34D, which yielded eight graves, containing terminal third millennium BC pottery and a cylinder seal from the same period.

Pottery of the Early Khabur Ware stage at Barri is characterized by a prevalence of Common Ware pots (painted Khabur Ware which only makes up *ca.* 5 per cent of the assemblage, mostly came from the latest stratum, 34A) and the absence of Grey Ware. Incised decoration (comb and linear incisions) is quite popular, appearing on *ca.* 14 per cent of the sherds, which compelled Giulia Baccelli and Federico Manuelli to consider painted decoration to be a secondary development. On the painted pots banded decoration prevails, although hatched triangles also occur. Early Khabur assemblages yielded a wide variety of shapes, including shouldered beakers. However, typical shapes are not indicated and the only feature mentioned is the presence of double or triple rims in the case of jars, which is interpreted as an archaic element. Chaff temper is typical for the assemblage, but a considerable number of vessels feature chaff temper of fine granulation; sand of fine granulation is also used as a temper. The whole collection of Period I pottery from Tell Barri consists of about 1500 fragments, therefore the described material is representative for the Early Khabur Ware.

⁹ Postgate *et al.* 1997, nos. 237, 520, 522, 540–1, 551, 555, 559, 563, 880, 1041, 1098, 1100, 1104.

Postgate *et al.* 1997, nos. 228, 521, 523, 525–6, 542, 550, 566, 764, 875, 896, 1051, 1102, 1103. Of these, only no. 896 seems to belong to Early Khabur Ware.

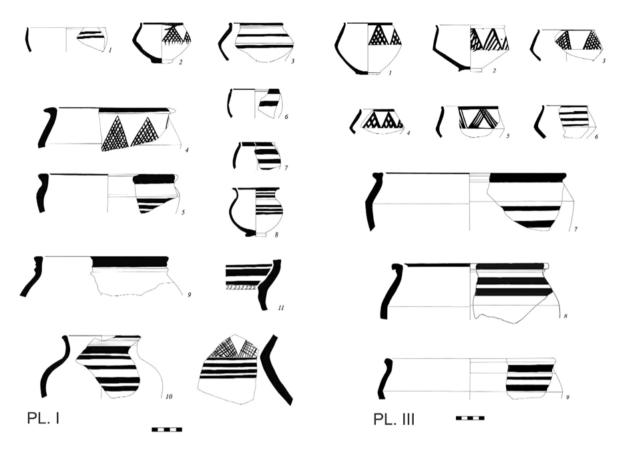


Fig. 3 | The Early Khabur Ware from Tell Barri. Left: pottery from Initial Middle Bronze level (Baccelli / Manuelli 2008, pl. I). Right: Early Khabur Ware pottery from Advanced Middle Bronze I level (Baccelli / Manuelli 2008, pl. III).

4.3 Tell Mozan/Urkeš

Sequences covering the transition from the third millennium BC to the Khabur Ware period were recorded independently in two sectors: above the AK palace (by the mission of Giorgio Buccellati) and in the southeastern part of the site (Pfälzner's team).

In the AK area, an undisturbed sequence from the Akkadian period palace towards the mid second millennium BC was cleared (Kelly-Buccellati / Omar 2004–2005). Phase 4, representing a 'Bitumen Use Ceramic Tradition' is dated to the Post-Akkadian period (2100–2000 BC). Phase 5, incorporating strata 7 and 6, included burials and houses containing Khabur Ware pottery, dated to the period between 2000–1800 BC (Buccellati / Kelly-Buccellati 2000, 146–151). Among the published sherds of phase 5 there are two forms which may be tentatively identified as Early Khabur Ware (Kelly-Buccellati / Omar 2004–2005, figs. 6.1, 7.5). However, in a later report labels of strata of the AK sequence were entirely changed. A new phase 3 label was given to the Early Jazirah IV period. Phase 4 was divided into two units: 4a – referred to the Early Jazirah V settlement described as 'Ur III', while phase 4b was described as Isin-Larsa and dated to the Old Jazirah I period. Finally, phase 5 referred to a settlement from the Old Jazirah II period (Buccellati / Kelly-Buccellati 2001, 61–63). The sparse published evidence confirms continuity of the settlement sequence in the area and hints very strongly on presence of the Early Khabur Ware at the site.

During the first three seasons of work in area C, a hiatus in the settlement sequence was observed between Early Jazirah IV and Old Jazirah II levels. But after the 2000 season, the gap was filled with two periods: C6A contemporary to the Old Jazirah I period, and C6B, dated to the Post-Akkadian period featuring comb-impressed and bitumen painted pottery, and a large structure known later as Puššam's House (Dohmann-Pfälzner / Pfälzner 2001, 105–107). It was observed, that the House of Puššam was reused during the C6A phase. This chronological distinction was further elaborated in the 2002 report, where a label C7 was introduced for the Post-Akkadian settlement and C6 came to be used exclusively for the phase Old Jazirah I. Phase C6 included the reuse of Puššam's House as well as an early usage phase of Houses I, II, IV, V, and VII, together with related graves (Dohmann-Pfälzner / Pfälzner 2002, 154–155).

Phase C6 yielded a pottery assemblage which included some Post-Akkadian sherds mixed with Classic Khabur Ware fragments. This situation led Pfälzner to propose a continuity in the pottery tradition through the turn of the third millennium BC, and to look for the origin of Khabur Ware among the 21st century BC pottery. No pottery similar to the Early Khabur Ware found at Barri or at Rimah was identified in sector C (Schmidt 2007).

4.4 Tell Brak

The publication of work of Oates *et al.* (1997) on the second millennium BC layers included very little of early material, because the most extensive exposure of layers from this period, the excavations at the HH site, focused on Mittani and Middle Assyrian levels. The lowermost levels of HH (10–8) contained houses and pottery kilns and the material retrieved included Classic Khabur Ware forms, contemporary with those from the Samsī-Addu period of the temple at Rimah (Oates *et al.* 1997, 62–65). Another set of pottery of a similar date was retrieved from a large pit in area AL. The only context that was thought to have yielded an earlier second millennium BC assemblage was the remains of a defense wall found in Area TW. This assemblage seems to include some very early forms, especially cups with bead rims, straight shoulders and a painted decoration of triangles (Oates *et al.* 1997, fig. 190: 207), ¹¹ and a small jug (Oates *et al.* 1997, pls. 191, 268) (fig. 2 B), although they were mixed with some potsherds of the 'Classic' form (e.g., Oates *et al.* 1997, pls. 190: 208; 191: 255; 202: 492).

The last early group of pottery to be discussed was found in two rooms marking the top of the stratigraphic sequence of the SS area. Because of its resemblance to south Mesopotamian material from Uruk, this entire assemblage was given the label Isin-Larsa and dated to the very beginning of the second millennium BC (Oates 2001, 173–174, nos. 270, 309, 374, 447, 556–557, 559–560, 566–567, 570–571, similar to 740, 793).¹²

Soundings in area HN, excavated by a mission led by Roger Matthews in 1994–1996, yielded a set of pottery starting from the Classic phase of the Khabur Ware (level 4) and continuing till the mid second millennium BC (levels 2c–a) (McDonald / Jackson 2003).

The second millennium BC pottery from the more recent excavations has not yet been published.

- II Similar sherds were found in sector HH and on the surface, cf. Oates *et al.* 1997, nos. 205–206, 209.
- However, some of those sherds are close to post-Akkadian pottery at the site, and in the publication were classified as belonging to phase N, i.e., the Post-Akkadian period, e.g., nos. 270, 309, 557, 559, 570–571, 793.

4.5 Tell Taya

Levels VIII, VII, and VI are Late and Post-Akkadian in date. Level III should be dated to the second quarter of the 18th century BC, and it is very likely that level IV, which yielded Khabur Ware pottery as well, covers the earlier part of the same century. Level V, encased between a stratum containing the latest Post-Akkadian pottery and a stratum that corresponds to the very beginning of 18th century BC should thus contain material related to the first two centuries of the second millennium BC. It was composed of a thick layer of ashy deposits, said to have resulted from the accumulation of sheep dung, and yielded very little pottery, of which only one complete, hand-made and undecorated vessel is illustrated (Reade 1968, 256–257, pl. LXXXVII, 25). Although a few published potsherds suggest that some early forms of the Khabur Ware may be present at this site (mainly in level IV), it is difficult to identify a set of features typical for the Early Khabur Ware known from Tell Barri.

4.6 Tell Leilan

The bulk of the pottery from excavations carried out before 1995 (Acropolis Temple, levels III and II, Lower Town East Palace, levels IV, III, II, and Defense Wall Area) was analyzed by Julia Frayne in her Ph.D.-thesis (Frayne 1995). Assemblages forming the corpus of the Khabur Ware pottery come from a period between the transfer of the capital Samsī-Addu's state from Assur (or rather Ekallātum) to Šeḥna and the destruction of the city by Samsu-iluna of Babylon, i.e., from a period covering most of the 18th century BC. An earlier assemblage has only been uncovered in the Defense Wall Area, where four subsequent floors belonging to domestic structures, all predating the construction of the Defense Wall (dated tentatively to the period of Samsī-Addu) were cleared (Frayne 1995, 56–57). This pottery does not have the features typical of the Early Khabur Ware pottery from Tell Barri, although the same context also yielded some sherds similar to Post-Akkadian forms and therefore may support the suggested early date for this assemblage.

4.7 Tell Muhammad Diyab

The most recent publication of the results from fieldwork at Tell Muhammad Diyab presents data retrieved during the 1992–2000 seasons (Nicolle 2006).

Remains from the Old Jazirah I period, labeled by Nicolle MD-IX and dated 2000-1900 BC, were exposed in several areas. In chantier 2 (level 5) single tomb 3826 was cleared. The grave has the form of a large mud-brick chamber (1.6×1.1 m) in which the skeleton of one individual lying on its left side in a constricted position was found. Beside the bones, a single pottery cup and a bronze pin with a 'star' head and pierced shaft, above and below decorated with a number of singular incisions a hole, were found. The cup in question has straight, medium-high shoulders, a bead rim, and convex disc base. The decoration, executed in paint, consists of irregularly spaced cross-hatched triangles placed on the shoulders and a single horizontal belt on the rim (fig. 2 C). Formally, it is very close to Early Khabur pottery from Tell Barri.

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13 Frayne 1995, figs. 4, 2; 9, 6; 32, 4; 42, 5; 46, 3; 48, 4; 49, 14 Frayne 1995, figs. 80, 3; 84, 4. 1; 50, 4; 51, 2; 69, 1; 111, 4; 117, 3.
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In chantier 5a, on the highest part of the Tell, the period Old Jazirah I has been identified in level 5a–II. In table 4.I, it is described as a hiatus, but the adjoining text describes a compact, gray layer of earth, 2.3 m in thickness, resulting from the construction of a *pisé* structure or an attempt to level the area in question in preparation for the construction of Old Jazirah II period temples (levels IO–6 of chantier 5a). The lower part of this level contained a small number of potsherds of greenish paste, related to the third millennium BC. Painted Khabur pottery only appeared in the upper part of the deposit (*ca.* I m in thickness), representing both Old Jazirah I and Old Jazirah II material. Yet, the illustrated potsherds from this level are nearly exclusively Post-Akkadian (Nicolle 2006, figs. 7–23) and only nos. 9, 14, and 17 may be tentatively dated to the early second millennium BC.

4.8 Assur

Archaeological contexts that can be dated to the Old Assyrian period are quite limited. In the Ishtar temple area, excavated by Walter Andrae, they consist of phases E-D of the temple, of which the oldest (Temple E) dates to the Ur-III/Isin-Larsa/Old Assyrian period, and the other (Temple D) to the period of Samsī-Addu, according to Claudia Beuger (2005). In a more recent dig by Reinhardt Dittmann (1990) executed in the area of the Nabu temple, Ur III period pottery was identified in level IIIb3, and Khabur Ware in level IIIb2-I. The pottery of Assur had only been published in a very partial way as far as the old dig is concerned (cf. Andrae 1922; 1935; Haller 1954; 1955; Miglus 1996). This situation changed with Beuger's dissertation, in which both the pottery from the old dig in the Ishtar temple and from newer research were brought together. The rich catalogue of pottery vessels and potsherds does not include any examples of what may be called Early Khabur Ware, as defined above. This is true of the shapes of the vessels, but primarily refers to their decoration. In Assur, at the turn of the third millennium BC decoration is typically either incised (quite often combed) or painted, but consists of a single band on the rim or solid circles on the shoulders, or combination of these two motifs. Covering of the inner wall of a vessel with paint is also quite frequent, a custom hardly known in the north. Motifs typical for the Khabur Ware, such as multi-banded decoration, hatched triangles and metopes, appear mostly on bodysherds found in later contexts (from Middle to Neo-Assyrian periods) (Beuger 2005, 275-278). Fragments of bowls with rim decoration appear earlier, but not before the Samsī-Addu period. It is thus possible that Assur had its own tradition of decorating pottery, and that Khabur Ware, which appeared relatively late at the site, was imported and never very popular among the population of the city. This may also explain the lack of Early Khabur pottery in Assur.

4.9 Tell Arbid

The site of Tell Arbid is another of the Khabur Triangle tells showing occupation during the late third and early second millennium BC. Post-Akkadian settlement has been identified on the High Mound (Rutkowski 2006) and on its eastern slope (sector P), while dispersed pottery of the same period was found in the northwestern part of the site as well (mainly in sector D). Houses of the Classic Khabur Ware period are located in the same areas as Post-Akkadian structures, as well as in Sector M in the west, and characteristic painted sherds were found on the surface of southern slope of the High Mound, suggesting that the Middle Bronze Age settlement was more extensive than the Post-Akkadian one. Old

Jazirah I levels are, however more problematic. On the High Mound, no structural remains were identified, but a substantial ashy deposit of up to 3 m in thickness was encountered, covering the remains of Post-Akkadian structures, and enclosed from the top by houses which yielded Classic Khabur Ware pottery. This ashy deposit, in appearance resembling layer V at Taya, was pierced by a number of pits, some of which contained burials. In some cases, shafts leading to the burials were dug from the level of the Old Jazirah II houses, but in other cases, the shafts clearly predated these houses, most likely holding pre-Old Jazirah II material. Another place where early Old Jazirah material was encountered in a clear stratigraphic position is sector P. In the western part of the sector Old Jazirah II houses were constructed directly over the top of Post-Akkadian structures, which were in many places cut by pits dug before the Old Jazirah II period occupation started. These pits were usually round, with a diameter ranging from 1.5 to 0.7 m, in most cases filled with clay of decomposed bricks and holding mainly fragmented Post-Akkadian pottery. In the east, earlier remains were covered by several horizontal layers of clay and ash. In this area round pits seem to be absent, but two large, roughly rectangular pits were encountered, filled with ashy deposits (only one of them, located in square 37/62 was explored). The fill from this pit yielded numerous potsherds showing features atypical for the Classic Khabur Ware. Moreover, some shaft-graves containing pottery with similar features were dug into the fill of the pit. Finally some sherds with similar features were discovered in mixed deposits identified on the eastern slope of the Tell, especially in its northeastern part, most likely formed by debris washed down from the top of the Tell. Under this deposit, which was pierced with shafts of the Classic Khabur Ware graves (contemporary to the Old Jazirah II houses) remains of two pottery kilns were encountered. In the fill of the southern kiln other examples of Early Khabur Ware were found.

The pottery discovered in the described contexts at Tell Arbid (figs. 4–6) is mainly wheel-made and, if it was tempered, it was mainly with a chaff temper. The surface of these vessels is either pinkishcream, light brown, chocolate, or olive. Painted decoration is not as frequent as in levels with Classic Khabur Ware. The colors of the paint vary: on pinkish vessels the paint is usually deep-red turning towards purple. On brown and chocolate surfaces it is either deep-purple or dark-chocolate. On olive-colored sherds, it is either brick-red, or darker olive. The paint is often thin and transparent, and flakes off the vessel's surface, which sometimes makes it very difficult even to notice the decoration. The most typical motifs are horizontal bands, hatched, or cross-hatched triangles. This second motif is typically not 'underlined' with a horizontal band (as typical for the Classic Khabur Ware variant of this decoration); in many cases of the triangle, a horizontal band on the rim is also missing. A grooved or incised decoration is rare, and in most cases appears together with the painted motifs. On large, deep bowls sometimes there is a decoration of short, oblique parallel incisions forming a horizontal band on the body of the vessel, a motif which is absent in the Classic Khabur Ware. Typical shapes are cups with disc bases, high and straight shoulders and bead rims, deep carinated bowls with a rims in form of a horizontal ledge, sometimes with incised lines on the upper surface, as well as jars with medium-high or high neck, and steep and straight shoulders. Some other forms appear as well, for instance sieves.

The number of features observed in the Early Khabur Ware identified at Tell Arbid that reappear in the Early Khabur Ware assemblage identified at Tell Barri is remarkable. The presence of small cups with high straight shoulders and a bead rims, and of deep bowls with a low carination is also worth mentioning (Baccelli / Manuelli 2008, pls. 1, 3).¹⁵ These similarities allow to suggest that these assemblages

15 Plate 3 presents pottery qualified as Advanced Middle Bronze Age (Phase II) yet, they represent material similar to Arbid's Early Khabur potsherds.

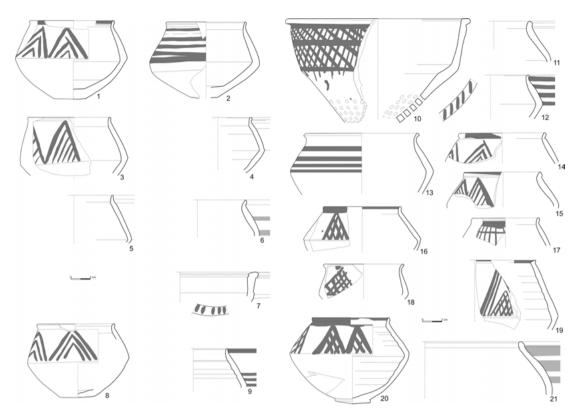


Fig. 4 | Early Khabur Ware from Tell Arbid. Small cups (drawn by Marek Puszkarski).

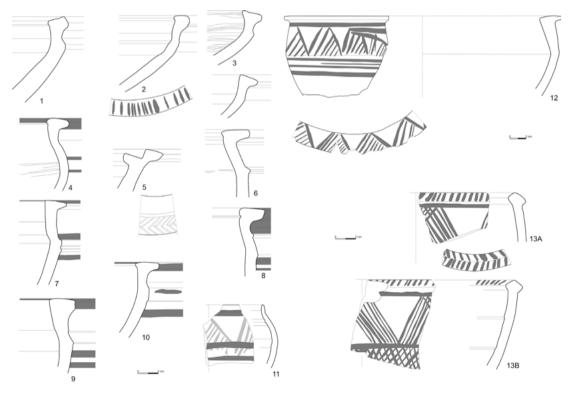


Fig. 5 | Early Khabur Ware from Tell Arbid. Bowls and deep bowls (drawn by Marek Puszkarski).



Fig. 6 | Early Khabur Ware from Tell Arbid. Vessels from early Old Jazirah II graves: I. from grave G8/37/62 (photo by Marcin Szabłowski), 2. from grave G5/37/60 (drawn by Marek Puszkarski), 3. from grave G5/37/60 (photo by Marcin Szabłowski).

form a representative sample of pottery typical for the earliest part of the Old Jazirah period in the Khabur Triangle Area.

5. Conclusions

Recent research in the Khabur Triangle area resulted in the identification of pottery which, on stratigraphic (but also on a formal) basis can with certainty be identified as Early Khabur Ware and dated to the Old Jazirah I period (*ca.* 1950–1800 BC).

This pottery is characterized by the presence of cups and jars with high and straight shoulders, and an angular carination appearing in the middle or below the midline of the vessel. For cups, bead rims are typical. Bowls are usually deep, with thick walls and ledge rims. The paste of larger vessels uses thick chaff temper, while for smaller vessels a paste with a thin organic and mineral temper is used. The vessels' surface is chocolate to light brown, or light olive in color, but sometimes cream-pinkish vessels also appear. Painted decoration does not appear often, but is more popular in the case of cups and bowls. Typically, the decoration consists of horizontal bands, however on the cups and more rarely on jars, hatched and cross-hatched triangles also appear. A feature that is characteristic of this motif is that the triangles are not 'closed' with a horizontal band at the bottom. Another typical feature is that the rims of open vessels are quite often left unpainted, whereas paint on the rim is a must in the case of Classic Kha-

bur Ware. The paint is carelessly applied, purple or plum-violet in color, in some cases thick, but more often thin, and nearly transparent. As a result, the decoration is sometimes hardly visible.

Similarities in the assemblages retrieved from comparable stratigraphic contexts at Tell Arbid and at Tell Barri, as well as the presence of dispersed fragments of analogous pottery at Tell Brak, Tell Muhammad Diyab, and Tell Rimah, demonstrate that the pottery identified above as belonging to the Old Jazirah I period is present on a number of sites in the Khabur Triangle region (fig. 1). Consequently, it can be accepted as an *index fossile* for the Old Jazirah I period in the area. This identification will certainly allow for a new evaluation of the settlement situation in the Khabur Triangle area during the Old Jazirah I and it will finally make it possible to integrate archaeological data into attempts to reconstruct the Old Assyrian trade network in North Mesopotamia in the 20th and 19th centuries BC.

The number of sites on which Early Khabur Ware pottery assemblages are presently known is at the moment limited to Tell Barri and Tell Arbid. However, dispersed sherds similar to those described above can also be identified among the published pottery from sites such as Tell Brak, Tell Rimah, and Tell Muhammad Diyab (fig. 2).

On the other hand, the absence of sherds showing features similar to Early Khabur Ware as defined above at sites such as Tell Chagar Bazar, Tell Mozan (Area C), and Tell Jigan suggests very strongly that those sites/sectors were not occupied during the earliest part of the second millennium BC. This conclusion is of importance especially in the case of Tell Mozan, area C, since Pfälzner insisted on the continuity of occupation in this part of the Tell during the terminal centuries of the third millennium and the first half of the second millennium BC. In my opinion, the lack of Early Khabur pottery at the site¹⁶ does not allow for such a conclusion. It is very possible that the city was not totally abandoned, but at least in the area C there is a clear break in the sequence. For this reason, the Classic Khabur pottery appears together with Post-Akkadian sherds transferred from the underlying levels in the oldest second millennium BC stratum in area C. A very similar situation is encountered in trench G at Tell Jigan. For the same reason as in the case of Tell Mozan, I strongly suspect a gap in the sequence, at least in this part of the site. The situation described by Oguchi (2003) results not from the contemporaneity of the Post-Akkadian and Classic Khabur Ware pottery, but from a settlement break.

The identification of Early Khabur Ware pottery does not much enhance our knowledge of the settlement network of the Old Jazirah I period in the North Mesopotamia at the moment and therefore does not contribute greatly to the reconstruction of the Old Assyrian trade network. I hope that identification of the pottery material typical for this period will provide colleagues working in this area with a tool which will eventually make possible the identification of the pottery of the Old Jazirah I period on other sites, which was earlier not possible, because there was no comparable material available. The publication of Tell Brak is a good example that such pottery can be found on sites where the Old Jazirah I layers have not been identified and excavated.

Finally, the presence of rich assemblages of Early Khabur Ware pottery on Tell Arbid (potsherds of this type were encountered on the High Mound, and on the flat area of the Upper City, to the east, west, and north of the High Mound, on a surface of *ca.* 5 ha) supports the proposal of Eidem to identify the site of Tell Arbid with Amaz (Eidem 2008b, 40), an important stopping point on the Old Assyrian trade road to Anatolia, mentioned in numerous itineraries.

16 Schmidt in his Ph.D.-thesis has shown only several sherds which on the basis of shape and decoration may belong to the Old Jazirah I period (Schmidt 2007, pls. 126: 1325, 1327; 138: 1424–1426; 161: 1649; 286: 2973).

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