

Not far from the limits of the Northern Uruk Culture in the Middle/Upper Euphrates: the Later Chalcolithic levels of Surtepe (Birecik, Southeastern Turkey)

No lejos de los límites de la cultura del norte de Uruk en el Medio-Alto Éufrates: los niveles del Calcolítico Final de Surtepe (Birecik, Sureste de Turquía)

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Abstract

The Uruk Expansion, which took place during various phases throughout the 4th millennium BC, also developed in Northern Mesopotamia. In the area of Birecik, in eastern Turkey, on the edge of the Euphrates, various archaeological sites have been discovered, showing different phases of expansion of the Uruk culture. We focus this study on the Surtepe site, a 8 ha settlement, where we have distinguished a possible Late Chalcolithic 5 ritual building, in a phase that we consider Terminal Uruk within the chronology of this Mesopotamian culture.

Key words: Mesopotamia, Late Uruk, Late Chalcolithic 5, conflict, reserved slip jar, squat-lugged jar, tables with numerical signs, eye idols, glyptic

Resumen

La Expansión Uruk que tuvo lugar durante varias fases a lo largo del IV milenio a. C., se desarrolló también en el Norte de Mesopotamia. En la zona de Birecik, en el este de Turquía, al borde del Éufrates, se han descubierto diversos lugares arqueológicos, que presentan las diferentes fases de expansión de la cultura Uruk. Centramos este estudio en el yacimiento de Surtepe, un asentamiento de 8 ha, donde hemos distinguido un posible edificio ritual del Calcolítico Tardío 5, en una fase que consideramos Terminal Uruk dentro de la cronología de esta cultura mesopotámica.

Palabras clave: Mesopotamia, Uruk Final, Calcolítico Final 5, conflicto, reserved slip jar, squat-lugged jar, tablillas con signos numéricos, ídolos oculares, glíptica

Краткое описание

Экспансия Уруков, которая происходила на разных этапах в 4-м тысячелетии до нашей эры, также развивалась в Северной Месопотамии. В районе Биреджик, на востоке Турции, на берегу Евфрата, были обнаружены различные археологические памятники, показывающие разные фазы распространения культуры урук. Мы сосредоточили это исследование на месте Суртепе, где мы выделили возможное ритуальное здание позднего кальколита 5, на этапе, который мы считаем Терминальным Уруком в хронологии этой месопотамской культуры.

Ключевые слова: Месопотамия, поздний урук, Поздний энеолит 5, Конфликт, Зарезервированная скользящая банка, Баночка с приземистыми ушками, Таблетки с цифровыми знаками, Глаз идолы. Глиптический

1. Introduction: the Uruk expansion

With the term “Uruk”, an attempt has been made to explain a period of time that covers a large part of the 4th millennium BC, perhaps one of the most decisive periods of the late prehistory of ancient Mesopotamia. A major and suggestive aspect of the Mesopotamian Uruk culture was its great expansion (Mallowan, 1947); and a development that some researchers in their day attributed mostly to the Late Uruk phase of the southern fertile crescent (Strommenger, 1980; Van Driel, 1980).

The Uruk period and culture thus affect various countries within the physical map of present-day Western Asia, due to its dispersion over hundreds of kilometres. Its presence in the North of Mesopotamia is very solid; but in some areas, not all the Uruk phases of southern Mesopotamia seem to be present. It explains that there are researchers who used extensively until the end of the 20th century, a nomenclature based on the “Northern Uruk” (Oates and Oates, 1997); nowadays of almost no employ, due to the popularity of the Late Chalcolithic (LC) categorization (Rothman ed., 2001). However, owing to the presence of abundant Uruk diagnostic material throughout extensive geographical areas, the previously used classification may appear to be correct in part.

In the early 1970s, with the work being carried out respectively on the Syrian and Turkish Euphrates, and in various territories of Iran, it seemed undeniable that the “Sumerians” of the late 4th millennium BC had extended their culture to these territories. The term “proto-Sumerian” (Algaze, 2004), and the meaning of the Sumerians, “men of the southern country”, from Early Bronze (EB) Mesopotamia onwards, is actually used here appropriately. The excavations of Habuba Kabira (Strommenger, 1980), Tell Kannas (Finet, 1979; Finet et al., 1983), Jebel Aruda (van Driel, 1980) or Hassek Höyük (Behm Blanke, 1992) as well as those of Susa (Stève and Gasche, 1971), Choga Mish (Delougaz and Kantor, 1996), Godin Tepe (Weiss and Young, 1975), Tal-i Malyan (Sumner, 1985) or Tepe Yahya (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 1970) showed that during the end of the Uruk period were present at Middle and Northern Euphrates many of

the main director fossils of the period such as bevelled rim bowls, or other typical ceramics and artifacts, for instance spouted jars, reserved slip, plus cylindrical seals, and even clay tablets with writing or numerical signs, in addition to specific architectural essentials, as the generalization of tripartite arrangement in various buildings, or yet specific mobile elements, for instance types of homes or decorative devices such as niches and façades with mosaics formed by clay or stone cones (Gil Fuensanta, 1996; Butterlin, 2012: 188-193, 2018a: 84-85, 100 fig. 3.14 and 2018b) (figure 1 a-b).

Several theories of interpretation with anthropological base, complementary or alternative, were suggested since the decade of 1980s, after the first archaeological discoveries on the “Uruk periphery”, and as the preliminary reports of the works were published. Among all of them from the first moment, the idea advocated by Guillermo Algaze about an “informal” empire created by the city-states of southern Mesopotamia and which, due to the lack of natural resources in its area of origin, had spread to the various corners of the world at that time, including pre-pharaonic Egypt (Algaze, 1993), with special interest to get access to copper mines (Ozbal, Adriaens and Earl, 1999: 58 fig. 1; Montero Fenollós, 2012: 456). An alternative proposal would be that Uruk was the capital of a confederal system with merchant kings (Butterlin, 2018a: 83-84, 89 fig. 3.1 and 2018b) (figure 1 c-d).

Several criticisms regarding this imperial expansionist thesis of Algaze emerged over the years (Stein, 1999), especially on the basis of the appearance of novel data from new archaeological excavations, particularly in the east and southeast of Turkey during the 1990s. Excavations such as those of Arslantepe (Malatya) (Palmieri and Frangipane, 1988) or Hacinebi in Birecik, Turkey (Stein et al., 1996a and 1996b) showed that from a date prior to the final phase of Uruk, the local cultures of the Eastern Anatolian “Late Chalcolithic” already demonstrated at that time a degree of development in their material culture not enviable to their contemporaries from the Proto-Sumerian South, with whom contact could have been initiated, in an apparent more peaceful or “less imperialist”

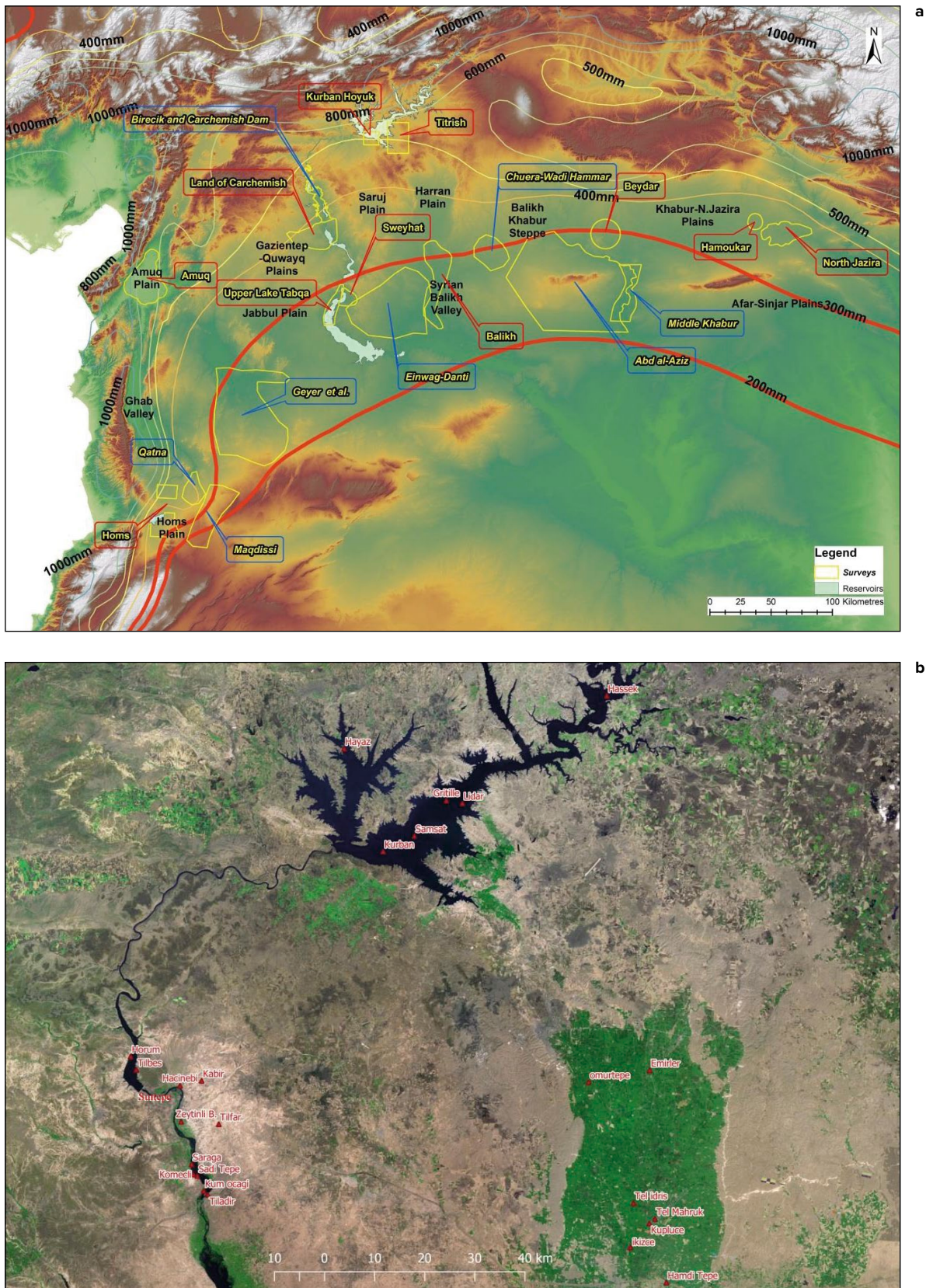


Figure 1. a. Main surveys in North Mesopotamia, including the Carchemish-Birecik dams (Lawrence et al., 2017: 61 fig. 1). b. Surtepe and Hacinebi in the Middle-Upper Euphrates (based on Can, 2018: 115 fig. 8)

Figura 1. a. Principales prospecciones en el norte de Mesopotamia, incluidas las presas de Carchemish-Birecik (Lawrence et alii, 2017: 61 fig.1). b. Surtepe y Hacinebi en el Eufrates medio-alto (a partir de Can, 2018: 115 fig.8)

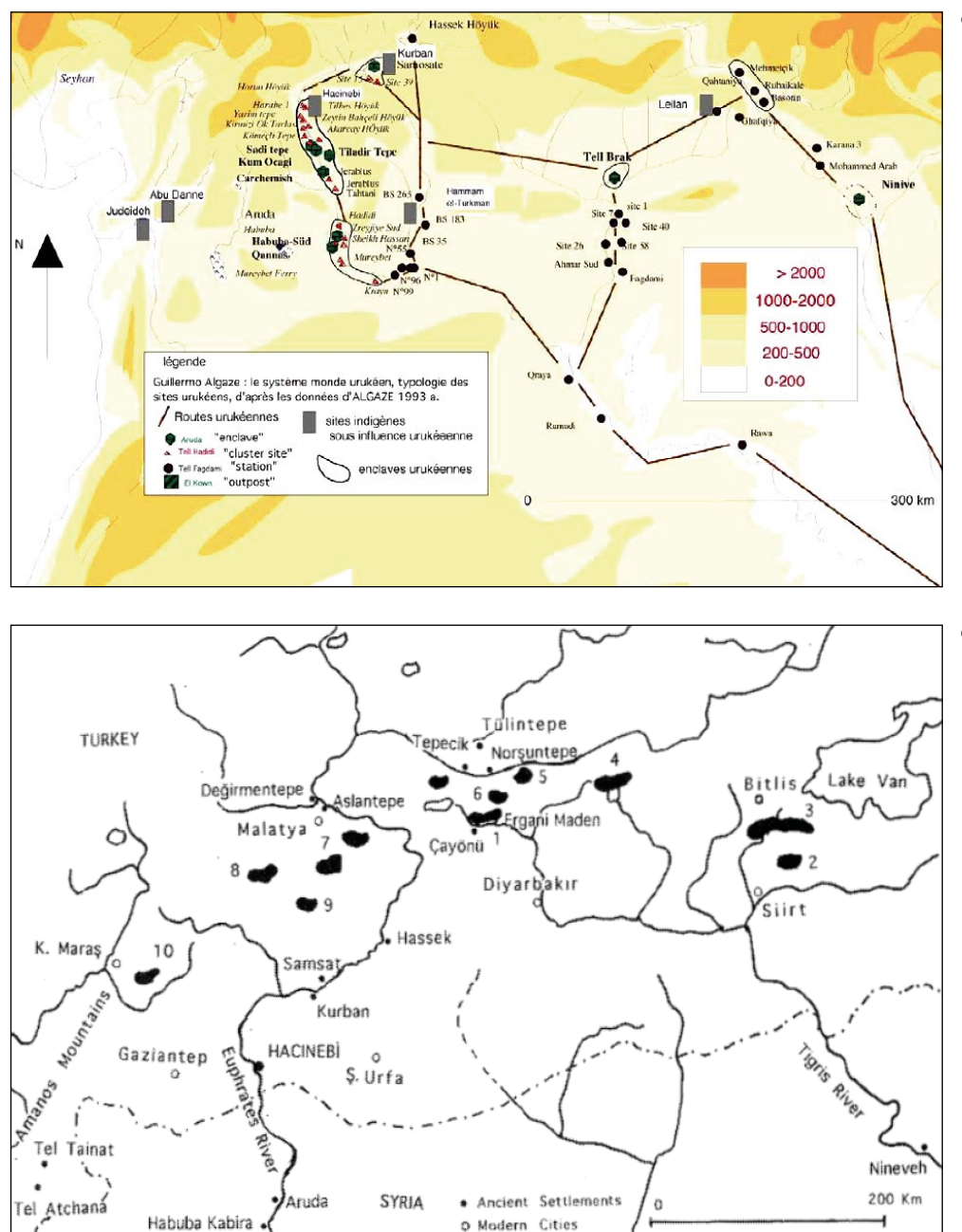


Figure 1. c. Enclaves, stations and outposts in North Mesopotamia during the Uruk expansion (Butterlin, 2018a: 101 fig. 3.15 based on Algaze, 1993). d. Major copper ore sources of Southeastern Turkey: 1 Ergani Maden; 2. Siirt Madenköy; 3. Bitlis area; 4. Genç; 5. Kedak; 6. Kundigan; 7. Palusagt; Dogan Sehir; 9. Çelikhan; 10. Elmalı (Ozbal et al., 1999: 58 fig. 1)

Figura 1. c. Enclaves, bases y puestos avanzados en el norte de Mesopotamia durante la expansión de Uruk (Butterlin, 2018a: 101 fig. 3.15 basado en Algaze, 1993). d. Principales fuentes de mineral de cobre del sureste de Turquía: 1 Ergani Maden; 2. Siirt Madenköy; 3. Área de Bitlis; 4. Genç; 5. Kedak; 6. Kundigan; 7. Palusagt; Dogan Sehir; 9. Çelikhan; 10. Elmalı (Ozbal et alii, 1999: 58 fig. 1)

way. Following the thesis of these researchers, it took place throughout a previous phase of the Uruk culture of Southern Mesopotamia, perhaps from Middle Uruk-Late Chalcolithic (LC) 3 onwards, 3850-3100 BC (Wright and Rupley, 2001; Rothman ed., 2001; Stein, 2012: 129 tab. I), and not

only in Late Uruk-LC 5, 3300-3100 BC, accepted also by Algaze (2004: 217).

Even contemporary archaeological works that were developed during those same years in Syria or eastern Turkey, and particularly at other sites in the province of Urfa, seemed to show that such

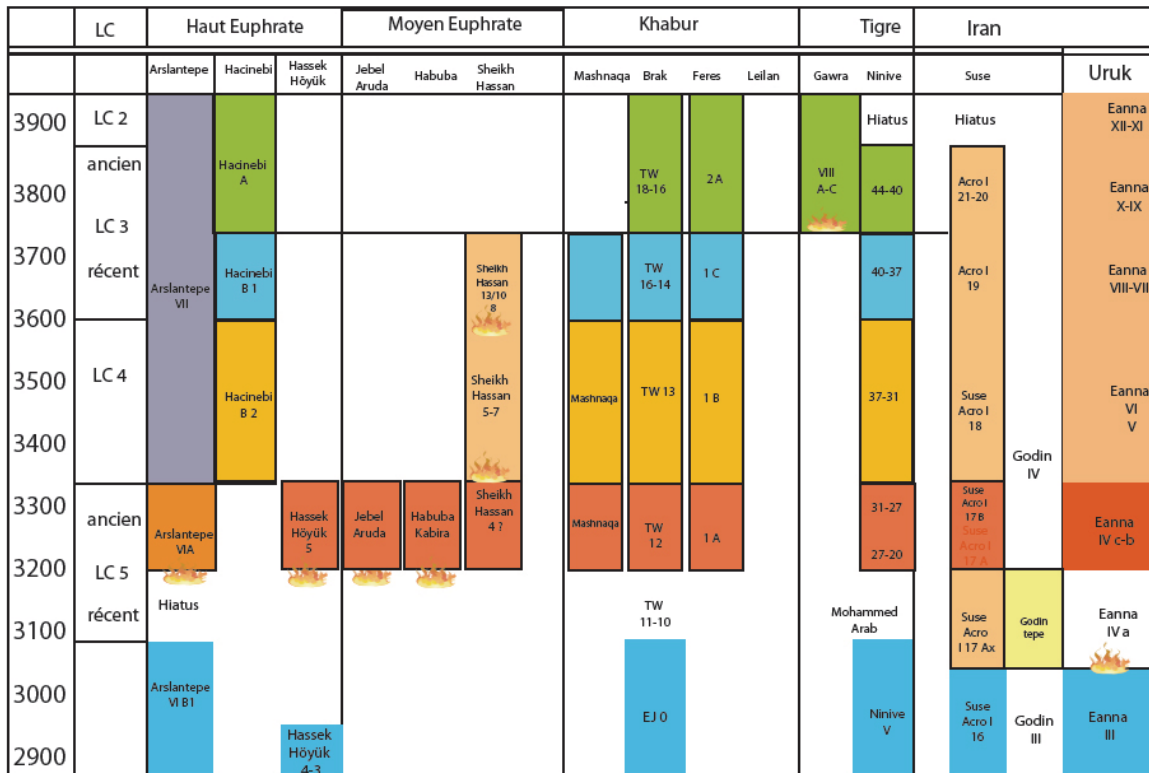


Figure 2. Main destructions in North Mesopotamia during LC 4 and LC 5 (Butterlin, 2018a: 92 fig. 3.5)

Figura 2. Principales destrucciones en el norte de Mesopotamia durante LC 4 y LC 5 (Butterlin, 2018a: 92 fig. 3.5)

contact between the south and the north had begun in chronologies prior to the Uruk culture, in any case during the Late Ubaid and the dawn of the Late Chalcolithic of the area (Boese, 1994; Esin, 1989; Rotmann, 2001; Gil Fuensanta and Charvat, 2005; Lawrence and Ricci, 2016).

A theory was proposed by Dietrich Sürenhagen on the existence of an alternative trade route between southern Mesopotamia and the Syrian Jâzirah, composed of the following sections: Tigris-Wadi Zarzar-Jebel Sinjar-Khâbur-Balikh-Euphrates (Sürenhagen, 1986). This would be also an explanation for the absence of Uruk elements between the Mari area and the Lower Euphrates. Diederik Meijer, after prospecting in the Khâbur area, suggested the presence of a northern tradition of the Uruk culture different from the southern convention, and eventually concluded the communication of the city of Uruk/Warka with Habuba Kabira-South across the Euphrates (Meijer, 1986). Sürenhagen proposed a third approach, based on the Euphrates-Mosul/Niniveh axis, from the Carchemish area

(Sürenhagen, 1986). A different explanation about the location of places located near trade routes was formulated by Guillermo Algaze (2001: 200).

A new revision of the “Uruk” and “Ubaid” chronology for northern Mesopotamia was broadly accepted at the turn of the century, after a round table held in Santa Fe, United States (1998). This new chronology based on the Late Chalcolithic (LC) was based on the presence of local cultural elements at the end of the Chalcolithic, different from those of the south and with certain variations. The so-called “post-Ubaid” and Uruk became part of the “Late Chalcolithic” (LC) 1-5 when referring to the northern territories of Mesopotamia, especially Syria and Turkey, and where the LC 5 phase was generally paralleled to the southern Mesopotamian phase Uruk IV (Rothman ed., 2001).

On the other hand, in the early 1970s, the archaeological site of Choga Mish, in western Iran, provided images of cylinder seal impressions where the destruction of monumental buildings was depicted (Delougaz and Kantor, 1996); a fact that could be corroborated by the abandonment of the site after

the Middle Uruk phase of southern Mesopotamia (Alizadeh, 2008). Evidence from the stamp seals narrative supported such images, albeit later dated, in neighboring Susa (Charvát, 1988) or in the eponymous settlement of Uruk/Warka (Brandes, 1979), both with dates matching the later phase, Late Uruk.

In the middle of the first decade of this new century, however, the excavations of the Syro-American project at Tell Hamoukar, in the Syrian Khabur (Reichel, 2012), highlighted that during the local phase LC 3-4, that is, the Middle Uruk of southern Mesopotamia, the large urban settlement discovered there had been attacked and apparently destroyed after a conflagration (figure 2).

With these data, the Middle Uruk phase began to take a clear shape as the moment of the first great expansion of the Uruk culture (Boese, 1994); and that initial extension seemed to have an end because of violent means (Butterlin, 2018a: 92 fig. 3.5). In addition, the Uruk culture, in its almost a thousand years of history, seemed to have experienced a rather convulsive second half, paradoxically the one connected with its time of greatest territorial or cultural expansion, the Late Uruk phase.

The truth is that after that stage of destruction of the Middle Uruk of Mesopotamia (LC 4 in the North) we again find only human occupation in strategic points such as Tell Brak or Surtepe itself; all evidence of a resettlement of the population in specific cities, with the abandonment of certain rival or minor settlements (Tell Hamoukar for the Khabûr, Tell Hammam et-Turkman in the Balikh), as if two large cities had not been able to coincide in the same environment to a day of walking (about 25 km).

A contest between city-states of the Uruk orb seems to take place in a Middle Uruk time, LC 3-4. For this reason we know that the phenomena that occurred in Iranian Khuzistan during Middle Uruk and that led to the abandonment of Choga Mish in favour of Susa are reflected in the dominance that Tell Brak/Nagar acquires in Syrian Khabûr to the detriment of Tell Hamoukar.

In this later period, LC 5 or Late Uruk, it seems the climax of the first urban civilization of Mesopotamia, but at one late moment there is again iconography that shows conflict, defensive buildings, and images of

power (the figure of the EN, the king-priest of the period, in Surtepe or Choga Mish). Such destruction apparently occurs during the Uruk IVa phase of the city of Warka. But something tells us that conflicts with the first pharaohs of Egypt had more to do with the issue.

There is greater evidence of the existence of war or conflicts after the iconography of Nagada III, contemporary with Early LC 5; it is a period when the possibility of clashes was greater than previously due to the rich goods in movement and the excessive desire for control of the process by regional leaders in Egypt (Hassan, 1988: 172). Narmer's palette and other inscriptions (Williams, 1988) — such as the ivory label from Cemetery U of Abydos (Dreyer, 1992; Wilkinson, 2000) — seem to show a series of alleged Egyptian victories over bearded characters that we could compare with “men of Mesopotamia”, according to the iconography and uses of the time. We do not know if they are real or fictitious victories, but above all else they suggest conflicts between Egypt and the urban world further east.

Narmer's palette is considered to be the most recent in the chronology of all those related discoveries, and is dated to Late Naqada IIIa-Naqada IIIb (Needler, 1984: 28). This representation could be, in some way, the commemoration of a war event that occurred and was associated with the Narmer name, the same one that has been found not only in multiple places in predynastic Egypt but in the South Levant, like the serekh on ceramics found at Tell Arad (Amiran, 1981) and Tell Erani Stratum V/local Early Bronze IB, seen as related to the latest moments of “Dinasty 0” at Egypt (Kempinski, 1992: 68, 69 fig. 2). So far, the palette could be an older item in relation with Narmer, because the depicted sovereign yields only the white crown of Upper Egypt, but not the red one from Lower Egypt. However on the Narmer macehead is depicted with the Lower Egypt crown; and there is associated with a sledged individual similar to that depicted either on cylinder seal impressions from Arslantepe, Uruk/Warka (Frangipane, 1997: fig. 16) and the so-called SIII “private building” at Jebel Aruda (van Driel, 1982). According with egyptologists it bears a marriage meaning, and the depicted person is a princess called Neith-hotep (Hoffman, 1979: 322; Emery, 1991: 43; Wilkinson, 1999: 68-69).

Let us remember that a sign on that palette has been interpreted as “fortification”, and possibly it was located in ‘Arabah, south of the Levant (Yadin, 1958: 5 n. 8). Petrie identified the presence of Syro-Palestinian vassals or captives at the Nile court based on his reading of the hieroglyph *Sst* found in a tomb at Abydos (Petrie, 1900: pl. XII.12-13, XVII.30).

Cemetery U of Abydos has been related to the so-called “0” and First Dynasties of Egypt, the earliest kings of the Nile country (Kemp, 1967). That burial site seems later than the Cemetery B, with a few tombs dated in Naqada IIIb period, considered before Hor-Aha (Savage, 2001: 119), a monarch sometimes related with Narmer himself (Lorton, 1987). Hor-Aha and the beginning of the First Egyptian Dynasty could be coetaneous with Arslantepe VIA₃, the phase where was found a tomb belonging to a kind of royal person and with hybrid Transcaucasian and Mesopotamian artifacts inside (Frangipane, 2006).

On the other hand, Cemetery U itself is plenty of tombs with niched façades resembling Late Uruk temple architecture, as it was U-j tomb, the biggest of the place, and dated circa 3150 BC (Dreyer, 1993: 33, fig. 4). Objects of the Abydos Cluster 3 are noted as of “oriental origin” (Savage, 1997).

We did not find extensive destructions inside the cities of the Uruk koine in Mesopotamia during this phase, but abandonments and some buildings burned at the end of the period, that is, Uruk IVc phase in Warka, and some northern cities, such as the religious and power center of Jebel Aruda, nowadays submerged by the Tabqa dam in Syria. The Uruk conflicts must have been continuous and endemic, and where the residents of the great population centers fallen in the battle between the first city-states, could well have been taken to other nuclei.

Perhaps the first major Uruk expansion, was gradual since the post-Ubaid and accelerated in the Middle Uruk, which seems the “authentic Uruk cultural expansion”, and what we see in the Late Uruk is nothing more than the zenith of that culture (Johnson, 1988-1989), a period of regression, conflict and fighting between the city-states of Southern Mesopotamia, and that would affect the stability of the then known world, in particular neighbours areas as predynastic Egypt.

It may be that equally the Ubaid and Uruk cultures did not have an initial expansion after conflict reasons, but the construction of city-walls in both, as well is suggested by their iconography in the later stages of the Uruk period, show an interest in just “defending their territory” and “urban segregation”. In contexts of the Late Uruk of southern Mesopotamia we have examples of segregation of space in public buildings; a clear case is the Eanna of Uruk/Warka (Richard, 1987: 26).

Although with a precedent from the late Neolithic in Tell es-Sawwan, belonging to the Samarra culture, this “segregationist” practice of some buildings was already clearly present in southern Mesopotamia since the Late Ubaid. A clear model is given by Building A at Tell Abada I-II, which had a rectangular mudbrick wall, in its northern half, which fulfilled a more segregationist function than a defensive wall (Forest, 1983: fig. 8). It was also the only architectural complex that presented a planimetry with recesses, as niches and buttresses (Sievertsen, 2010: 204). Also the Late Ubaid of the North offers contemporary examples of mudbrick walls, with a thickness greater than one meter, and that refers to the segregation of “important houses” or public buildings, rather than for defensive purposes, as provided in Tell Zeidan, Syrian Balih (Stein, 2012: 129 fig. 9).

2. Violence and abandonments of Uruk sites during LC 3-5

It is being demonstrated by the archaeological record, especially by the latest excavations carried out in the area during the first decade of the century (Reichel, 2012; McMahon, Soltysiak and Weber, 2011) that the period immediately prior to the Late Uruk, apparently a more formative period within that great koine of cities in the north of Mesopotamia that represented the second half of the fourth millennium, could have been a much more violent and aggressive epoch. In this phase, Late Chalcolithic 3-4 or Middle Uruk of southern Mesopotamia, destruction of buildings or abandonment of various places are evidenced throughout remote areas, for that time, and geographically different; cases appear in Iranian

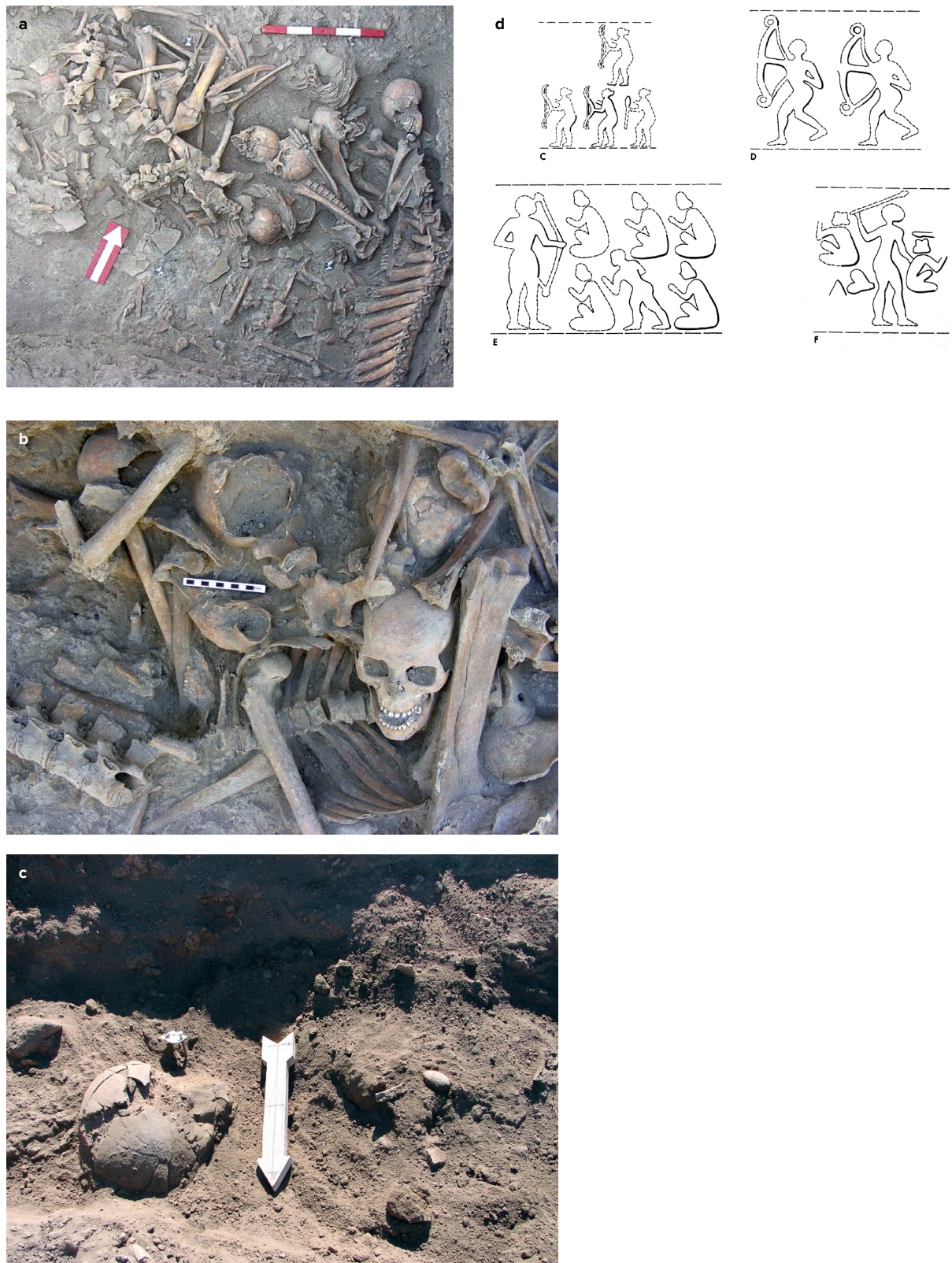


Figure 3. a-b. Mass grave around Tell Brak, Tell Majnuna, area MTW (McMahon et al., 2011: 207 fig. 5). c. Died person and sling bullet from Tell Hamoukar. (Photo: C. Reichel). d. War scenes in seal impressions, Choga Mish (Iran) (Delougaz and Kantor, 1996: figs. 150c-f)

Figura 3. a-b. Fosa común alrededor de Tell Brak, Tell Majnuna, área MTW (McMahon et alii, 2011: 207 fig. 5). c. Cadáver y proyectil de honda de Tell Hamoukar. (Foto: C. Reichel). d. Escenas de guerra en impresiones sobre sellos, Choga Mish (Irán) (Delougaz y Kantor, 1996: figs. 150c-f)

Khuzistan (Choga Mish), as other areas of northern Mesopotamia, for instance the Syrian Khabur (Tell Hamoukar or Tell Brak), the Balikh (Tell Hammam et Turkman, bordering the Turkish province of Urfa), or the main course of the Euphrates.

To date, the most dramatic example is found in the Syrian Khabur, where lies Tell Brak, an immense artificial hill, a great capital at the dawn of civilization in Mesopotamia, all through the Late Uruk, 3300–3100 BC, identified with the historic Nagar. There during the aforementioned Late Chalcolithic 3–4/Middle Uruk, around 3800–3600 BC, when the Nagar of the time was a sprawling city, this experienced one of its most thrilling moments. Several tombs discovered recently showed that hundreds of young people and adolescents had died as a result of some large-scale violent event. The same afterlife treatment did not seem peaceful, perhaps finding a burial by enemies or strongly rival groups that despised the victims, since they did not receive a post-mortem interment or peace (McMahon, Soltysiak and Weber, 2011). It is the most violent chapter witnessed during the time arc of the Uruk expansion (figure 3 a–b).

The fire remnants at Hammam et-Turkman Phase VB in the Syrian Balikh (Van Loon, 1988; Wright and Rupley, 2001: 98–100, fig. 3.1–3, 3.10) support the theory of a likely Middle Uruk crisis. The Tell Brak TW16 level ceases to be used around 3600 BC, after destruction by fire (Wright and Rupley, 2001: 101–102, fig. 3.1–3, 3.12; Emberling and McDonald, 2003: 9), therefore it implies a Middle Uruk or LC 3 context in the chronology of northern Mesopotamia. Tell Sheikh Hassan allows us to verify a destruction at an epoch after the Late Uruk but that does not entail the abandonment of the given settlement.

It was similar to what happened in Tell Hamoukar, Syrian Khabur, where the excavation of the site during the first decade of the 21st century revealed hundreds of slingshot clay bullets, dead bodies and buildings burned in the LC 3–4 (Reichel, 2012), with an abandonment of the settlement. In Hamoukar there is an Northern Early Middle Uruk, LC 3, dated between 4000 and 3700 BC, Middle Uruk (ca. 3700–3500 BC), and Late Uruk phases, ca. 3500–3100 BC (Reichel, 2007: 16, fig. 6, 33) (figure 3c).

At Tell Hamoukar was yielded evidence of a large number of small projectile weapons. The northern tripartite building of Area B, TpB–A, was discovered in a good state of preservation, without traces of erosion due to wear or the passage of time; such edifice was destroyed by reason of a fire around 3600 BC according to the calibrated dates (Reichel, 2007: 70). The existence of another tripartite unit, TpB–B, adjacent to this presumed “big building” evidences another construction, perhaps somewhat later. The destroyed building of Hamoukar is not one “public building” but a possible structure belonging to extended families with a very important “decision making” within the life of the settlement, perhaps merchants of regional rank, or members of the ruling elite of the place prior to the Late Uruk period.

The Hamoukar paradigm supposes a more direct and incontestable evidence of interpersonal violence than some contemporary artifacts discovered in the “distant” Choga Mish of the Iranian Khuzistan (Alizadeh, 2008: pl. 81). There, many images of war were discovered after cylinder seals impressions, and slightly different to those found in other settlements in the area. In the subsequent local period contemporary to the Late Uruk, there were no discovered burned or destroyed buildings at Choga Mish, but there was an abandonment of the population (figure 3 d).

The issue of warfare during the Uruk period resurfaces as a Late Uruk phenomenon of the Middle Syrian Euphrates, where Habuba Kabira-South yielded a large quantity of stone balls for sling that were found in the so-called city-gate of Kannâs (Strommenger, 1980: 46).

Those aforementioned sites will no longer show evidence of great fires, but rather an abandonment during the Late Uruk. It is known that a number of other sites in distant parts of the supposed core of the Late Uruk culture of south-central Iraq, show not only fires in their buildings but desertions of the settlement. Besides these we have in the Middle Euphrates, Habuba Kabira-South and Tell Kannas (Late Uruk).

The image of destruction or attack is a depicted theme found in both Susa and Habuba Kabira-South; but in the excavated portion of Susa hardly

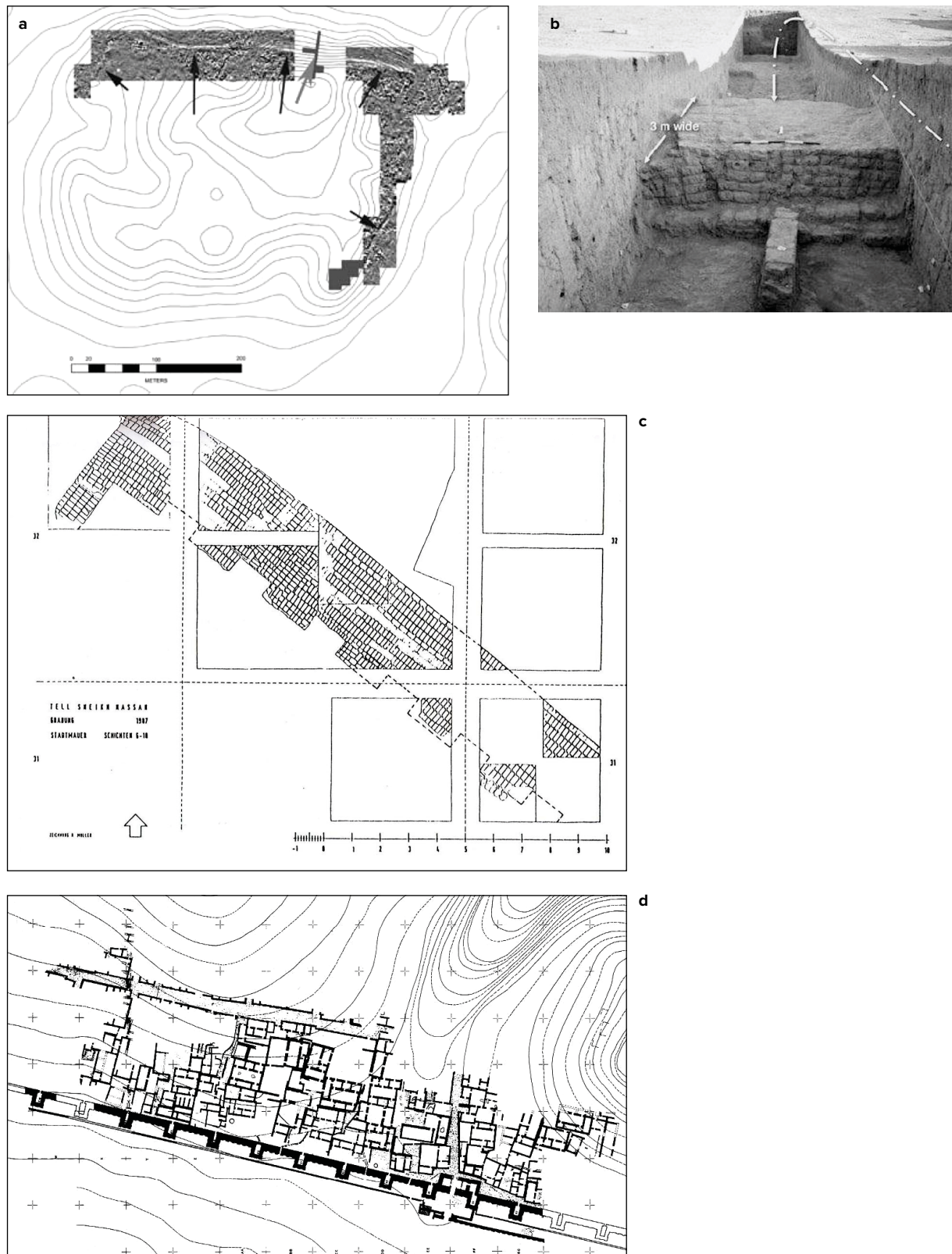


Figure 4. a-b. City wall from Tell Hamoukar (Reichel, 2009: 83 fig. 9a-b). c. Wall of Tell Sheikh Hassan, LC 4 (Boese, 1987-88: fig. 18). d. Wall and Kannas gate from Habuba Kabira-South (Strommenger, 1980: 90-91 fig.)

Figura 4. a-b. Muralla de Tell Hamoukar (Reichel, 2009: 83 fig. 9a-b). c. Muro de Tell Sheikh Hassan, LC 4 (Boese, 1987-88: fig.18). d. Muro y puerta Kannas de Habuba Kabira-South (Strommenger, 1980: 90-91 fig.)

any buildings destroyed by the action of fire have been found, although it is also evidenced in part of Habuba and its acropolis, Tell Kannas. Both places show abandonment during the Late Uruk.

Habuba Kabira South may well have been abandoned at the end of the 3300 BC. A radiocarbon dating is available giving a date of 5085 ± 65 BP, 4038–3664 BC (Strommenger, in Heinrich et al., 1973: 170; Strommenger, 1980: 15). In a later publication, a member of the team thinks that it should probably be dated to the end of the Acropolis 17 level of Susa (Kohlmeyer, 1996: 89). The temporary occupation of Habuba Kabira-South has received different interpretations according to different researchers; Sørensen dated the occupation to an initial time of the Late Uruk phase, a time parallel to the Eanna VII–VI levels in Warka (Sørensen, 1978).

Some of the buildings in Habuba Kabira-South show remnants of fire, but judging from the stratigraphy, the catastrophe did not spread to the entire settlement. But it is striking that many of the tripartite constructions of Habuba Kabira-South, as it is the case of the “Eastern house”, were found burned (Ludwig, 1980: 66); this building could offer perhaps an image of power or the household epicentre of a family clan during the Uruk culture.

We know of the existence of complex city-walls, at least in the final phase of Middle Uruk and the Late Uruk, specifically during Uruk IV in southern Mesopotamia (or mediated by LC 5 in the north), due to the archaeological record, later texts and contemporary cylinder seals iconography (figure 4 a–c).

A mudbrick city-wall with stone foundation protected the city of Habuba Kabira-South on three sides. Due to its somewhat rough layout at times, it can be thought that the erection of the wall was not foreseen when Habuba was founded, perhaps due to the construction of Habuba Kabira-South at a time when there were no hostilities that could have affected the place. There are doubts about the existence of walls in the southern part of the city (that is, south of Tell Kannas), and it even seems that part of the city was outside the perimeter of the wall (Vallet, 1997: 53).

The wall featured a total of 36 rectangular towers (Ludwig, 1980); they rose a little apart from each other about 13.5 m. Each tower contained a chamber of about 2 m. The keep chambers could

have served, according to Heinrich’s interpretation (Strommenger, pers. comm. October 1994), as a dwelling or as a warehouse.

There were apparently only two city gates, located in the west of the city, and they were located between two towers. The gates were called “Habuba gate”, the northernmost, and “Kannas gate”, the southern door. Both have a very characteristic shape, with a double access, a large front space and a fore wall that acted as a protector (Strommenger, 1980: 16). The two gateways were not symmetrical, but unlike part of the usual layout of the wall, they suggested careful placement. The differences between the two doors can be interpreted as evidence of their erection and planning at different times. Other no less suggestive theory infers the construction of both gateways at the same time. The modification of the southern gate, due to the probable existence of greater danger to the city in its most recent phase, was done in any case to protect this sector of the city (figure 4 d).

On the other hand, some findings in the site attest to the presence of warlike activities, such as the representations of prisoners in the glyptic materials (Heinrich et al., 1973: 24), or the high quantity of sling stone balls found in the so-called “Kannas gate” (Strommenger, 1980: 46), elements that are an index of hostile activities against Habuba Kabira-South and Tell Kannas.

The excavators of Choga Mish (Delougaz and Kantor, 1996: 37, 45, 47) noted that among all the places outside the Iranian Khuzistan (and therefore apart from Susa) it is precisely Habuba Kabira-South the site with Uruk culture that yielded more parallels for the Choga Mish ceramic bulk (Delougaz and Kantor, 1996: 54, 60, 65, 86); not even Godin Tepe or Jebel Aruda itself have so many parallels. There are indications of some kind of relationship with Tello and somewhat less with Warka, being very marginal in Tal-I Malyan or Arslantepe VI. It is an indication that can be accepted as a chronological and geographical marker in terms of the dispersion of influences. Both Choga Mish and Tell Brak TW seem typical of a Late Middle Uruk, which coincides with Hacinebi phase B2.

Finally, the Uruk IVa period in Warka ends with a level of destruction, suggesting a conflagration or

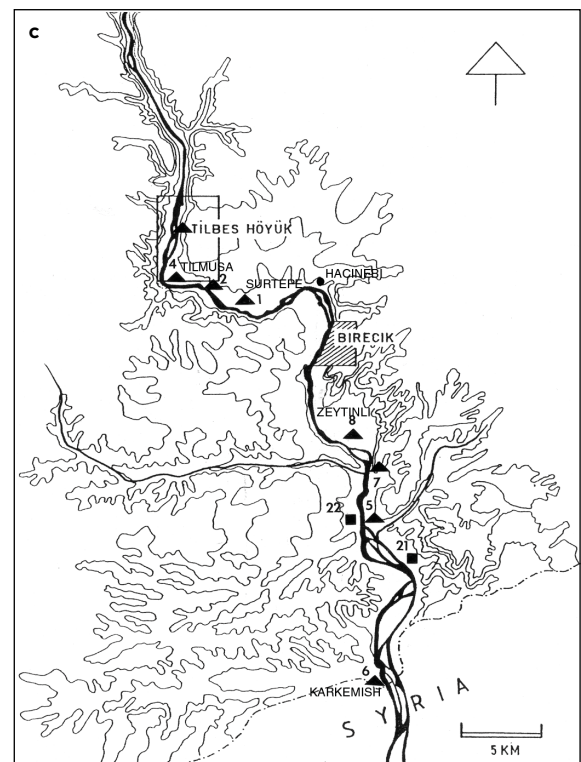
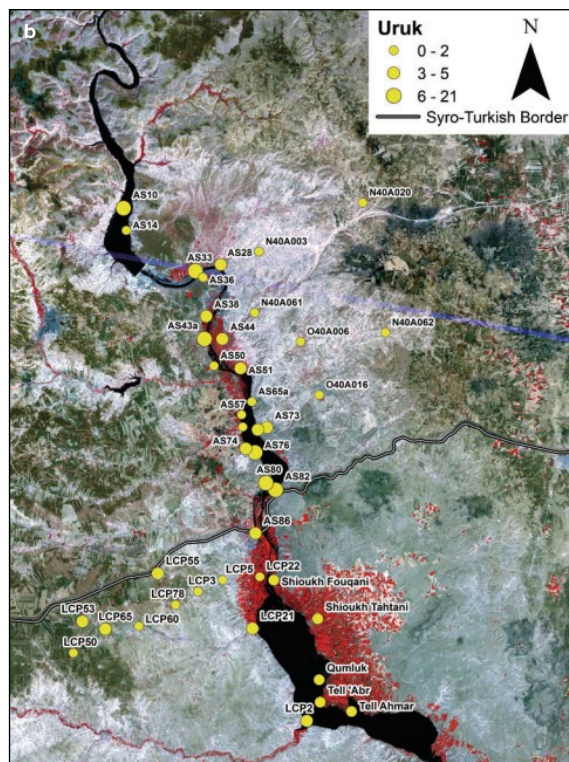
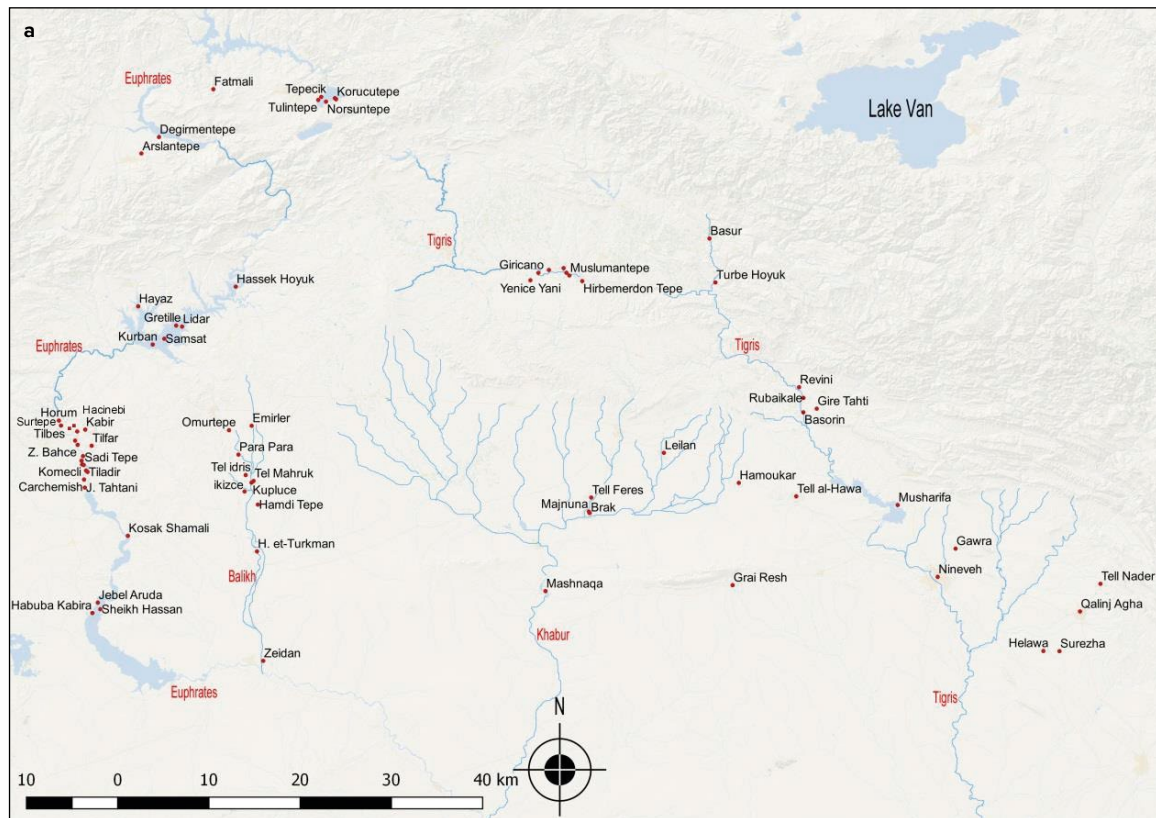


Figure 5. a. LC sites in North Mesopotamia (based on Can, 2018: 119 fig. 15). b. Map of the Middle Euphrates with the Birecik-Carchemish Dam surveys and LC 4-5 sites (Wilkinson et al., 2012: 161, fig. 16). c. Map of the Middle Euphrates with Surtepe, Hacinebi and Zeytinli Bahçe (based on drawing by Ben C. Cookson/MAET)

Figura 5. a. Yacimientos del Calcolítico Final en el norte de Mesopotamia (a partir de Can, 2018: 119 fig.15). b. Mapa del Éufrates medio con las prospecciones de la presa Birecik-Carchemish y yacimientos LC 4-5 (Wilkinson et alii, 2012: 161, fig. 16). c. Mapa del Éufrates medio con Surtepe, Hacinebi y Zeytinli Bahçe (a partir del dibujo de Ben C. Cookson/MAET)

violent activities (Charvát, 1993: 132). However, the abandonments or changes in the organization of the buildings are noted before, during the Uruk IVc phase

In the most recent phase, Eanna IVa, there are buildings burned in the city of Uruk/Warka, such as the building built with *riemchem*, the *Riemchemgebäude*, and which was partially built on the *Steinstifttempel*, the Temple of the Stone Cones, a testimony that was somewhat forgotten by previous generations. Its platform was made of stone, obtained from the most archaic building (Collins, 2000: 34). The *Reimchemgebäude* was decorated with murals of geometric shapes for the most part. After a fire, it ceased to be used, but the conflagration did not affect the temporary use of other buildings located in the same north-western sector of the Eanna, such as the so-called Tempel C and Tempel D, and a monumental room, the room of mosaics, *Pfeilerhalle*. The ¹⁴C date from a beam from Temple C places the building's end use around 2900 BC. Some researchers place this date as the end of the Uruk IVa level (Nissen in Finkbeiner and Röhlig, 1986: 224), but as it is verified with the dates of the IV millennium in other places and in the Early Bronze 1 period of northern Mesopotamia this it seems very late. In our opinion, we would see it as parallel in time with the transitional phase between LC 5 and EB1 seen in Uruk places, such as Tilbes or Zeytinli Bahçe, in the Birecik area.

As a paradox, during level Eanna III, the buildings of level IVa were destroyed almost to the foundations and their area was covered by terraces, but not by the action of fire (Lenzen, 1962).

It seems that the glyptic images with symbols of violence in late Uruk are concentrated in the Uruk IVa phase of southern Mesopotamia, not at a late time. The figurative and glyptic arts of that particular period offer powerful arguments for judging possible analogous activities during the time. The first figurative glyptic imagery that evokes images of power, and even violence or conflict, appears right with the Uruk culture. Although there were abundant scenes of social or work life, they are also present, and distributed over thousands of kilometres, those images that show symbols of "control", "social order" or political command. The priest-king,

called EN in Sumerian (associated or not with a ship, a Mesopotamian symbol since the V millennium, started with the Late Ubaid culture) is also present in the glyptic imagery of Susa and Choga Mish, in Western Iran. Many of these attestations of the glyptic come from impressions, but the original seals that printed them have not been found.

3. The region of Birecik-Carchemish in the context of the Uruk expansion

Archaeological excavations over the past decades in southeastern Turkey have shed new light on the Late Prehistory of the northern region of Mesopotamia. The Uruk expansion is one of those periods that have been significantly affected, with 19 new foundations during the LC 4-5 of the Carchemish/Birecik area (Lawrence and Ricci, 2016: 46). We focus this research on the Birecik-Carchemish subregion, when crossing the Syro-Turkish border from the Middle Euphrates (figure 5 a-c).

As we shall see, the occupation strategy at the end of the late Chalcolithic period in Birecik-Carchemish is quite similar to the situation in the Atatürk Dam region, north of the Urfa province, bordering the mountainous province of Adiyaman. Few places that are strictly Uruk have been located up there, and it could be interpreted as a cause of a population decline in the area during the middle of the 4th millennium (Algaze, 2004: 68-70).

With its 12 ha in extension and 4 m of presumed stratigraphical depth, Tiladir Tepe appears to be the oldest of the Uruk sites near Carchemish, then only with 4 ha (Lawrence and Ricci, 2016: 44, 46), and provides specific materials, from the beginning of the 4th millennium, not present in the other Late Chalcolithic settlements in that area. Situated on the left bank of the Euphrates, just opposite Carchemish, Tiladir was occupied during the dawn of the local Late Chalcolithic and was lately the supposed largest settlement of the Uruk culture in the vicinity of Carchemish; with this it seems to form a kind of dipolis, twin-city, divided by the two banks of the river, a model observed in the Birecik-Carchemish subregion for later cultural periods.

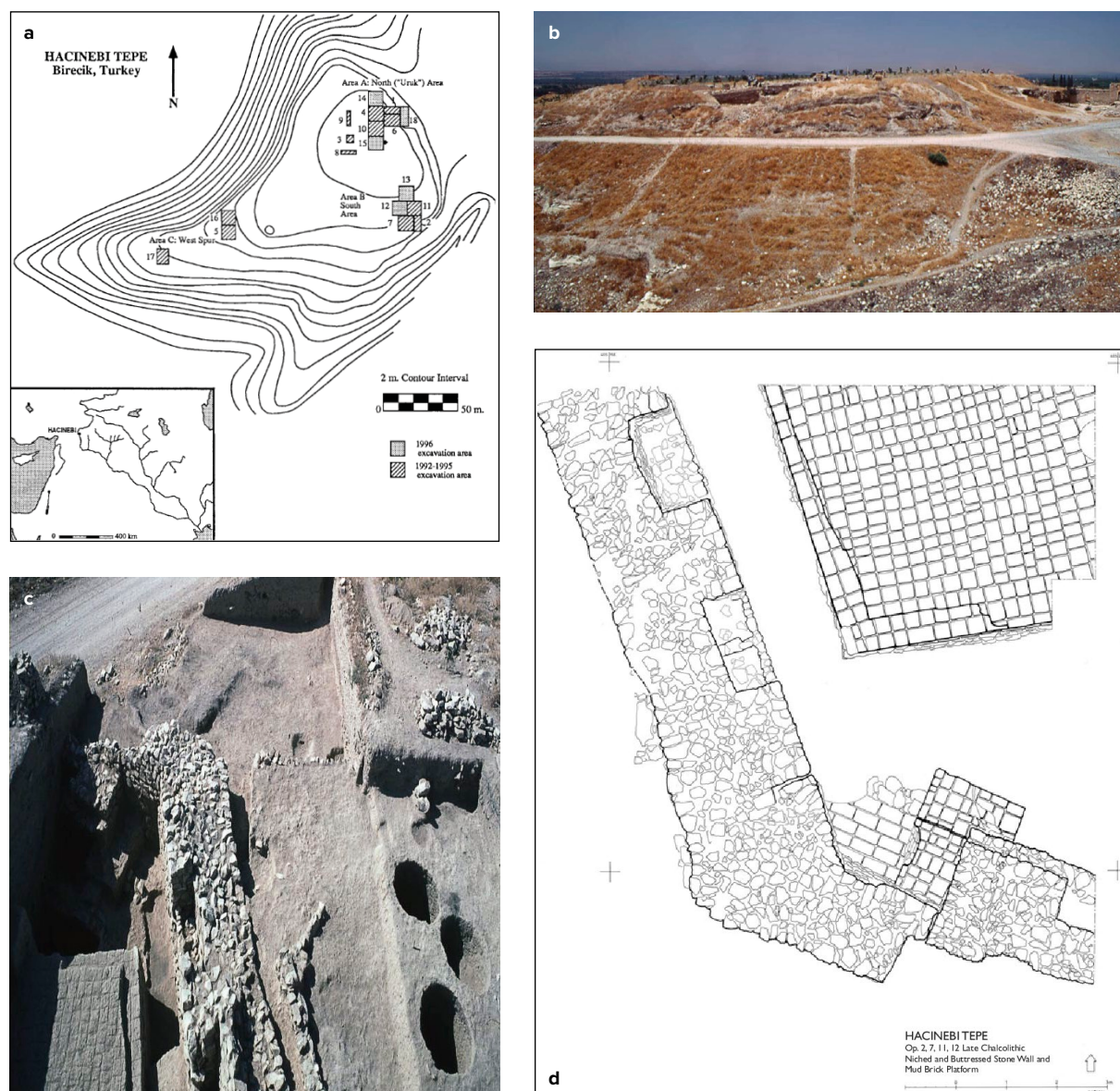


Figure 6. a. Plan of Hacinebi with the Uruk area in the North (Stein, 1997: 154 fig. 1). b. Tell of Hacinebi Tepe. (Photo G. Stein). c-d. Fortification wall of Hacinebi A, LC 2 (Stein, 2001: 272 fig. 8.2)

Figura 6. a. Plano de Hacinebi con el área de Uruk en el norte (Stein, 1997: 154 fig. 1). b. Tell de Hacinebi Tepe. (Foto G. Stein). c-d. Muro de fortificación de Hacinebi A, LC 2 (Stein, 2001: 272 fig. 8.2)

Tiladir also has ceramics typical of an Early Uruk sequence, such as the conical cups with lips, discovered in the survey on the western sector of the settlement (Algaze, 1993: 32-33). The fact of having on the same left bank of the Euphrates a place like Tiladir Tepe with diagnostic elements of Early Uruk when barely 25 km upstream there were contemporaneous settlements of the LC 1-2, such as Tilbes-Körche, or LC 2-3, for instance Hacinebi, it presupposes a long temporary contact of the Birecik-Carchemish region with the Uruk koine of southern Mesopotamia; long

enough for the great mass of autochthonous population with local Anatolian tradition to be impregnated by cultural elements and Uruk ideology as well as its distinctive artefactual diagnosis.

In some places of the Birecik-Carchemish subregion, small satellite settlements appear around the supposed double city that acts as a central place during Late Uruk: these are the cases of Kum Ocagi, Shadi Tepe or Sheraga Höyük near Carchemish/Tiladir, and Tilbes Höyük and Zeytinli Bahçe near Surtepe, a pattern that must respond to some specific intention or function.

Zeytinli Bahçe Höyük on the left bank of the river, 2 km south of modern town of Birecik, is a small conical mound at 31 m high above the river level. It was excavated since 1999 by the same Italian mission of the Arslantepe project (Frangipane, 2010). There are quite a few stratigraphic deposits from the Late Chalcolithic, and during the period the occupation extended at least half a hectare. This is where several Uruk director fossils come from such as the bevelled rim bowls, conical cups, and the banded rim bowls. There are levels with material very similar to that of Hacinebi phase B2 (LC 4). The Middle Uruk ceramics were found in a public type building, destined for a warehouse, with its plan similar to the small cell building of Tell Sheikh Hassan, also associated with pottery from the Middle Uruk of southern Mesopotamia (Boese, 1994). The following remains of interest on the site refer to the end of LC 5 or even an immediate later phase.

The area north of the modern city of Birecik and its surroundings provides few places with local Amuq F-Late Chalcolithic culture, which always tend to be small. One of the largest settlements is Hacinebi, located 3.5 km north of the modern city. The place is at the top of a hill; that is to say, in a strategic and defensible position, with a big wall found, 3 m thick and 3.3 m height, maybe part of a fortification (Stein, 1999a: 187 and 2001: 272, fig. 8.2) (figure 6 a-d).

We must take into account the determining fact of the occupation of Hacinebi on the shore of the Euphrates, and the nearby Surtepe, only separated by 2 km, on top of a hill. The activity of Hacinebi since LC 2, a time that does not seem present in Surtepe, Tilvez Höyük, Tilbes Höyük or even Tilbes-Körche, may be due not to the fact that the populations of Later Prehistory were threatened not only by human enemies, but mostly to the terrible floods of the river over the mounds during the Chalcolithic period or the Early Bronze Age.

The Hacinebi settlement of the LC provides dates that specify its temporal space. Hacinebi A phase corresponds to the period 4200-3850 BC and Hacinebi B1 to 3850-3700 BC (Stein et al., 1996b: table 1). In the upper B1 strata, bevelled rim bowls start to appear together with local pottery (Stein and

Edens, 2000: 168). The place does not look like an ex-novo foundation from the 4th millennium as some fragments of painted pottery were found that could be dated to the Ubaid 4 phase (Stein, pers. comm., August 1996). A bitumen-coated clay mosaic cone was discovered, very similar to those found at Hassek Höyük (Behm-Blancke, 1992: ill.2.II), evidence of the existence of public buildings in Hacinebi during the mid-4th millennium (Stein, 2001).

On the other hand, we highlight the large amount of bitumen in the settlement, where there is a huge presence of bevelled-rim bowls, which were used both for transportation and for handling this material (Stein and Misir, 1994: 151), a fact that supports our thesis of the multi-use of the bevelled rim bowl. Bitumen for the proto-Sumerian cities was a clearly imported product from northern Mesopotamia, which was also important in such a typical Middle Uruk settlement as Tell Sheikh Hassan, Syria (Stein and Misir, 1994: 267) where it was found in a building with not administrative but presumed religious context, the Kleiner Tempel. This material was also used in Hacinebi for different uses, and it seems that it was brought in the form of blocks (Stein et al., 1996a: 215).

Without cultural rupture, in the next horizon “of contact”, also called Hacinebi phase B2, and which ended in 3300 BC, both local materials and Uruk are distinguished as well as took place then an architectural reorganization in shape and concept, when a small Middle Uruk-LC 4 trading enclave was established in the Northeastern sector of the site, with presumed little or no power over the local polity (Stein, 2000: 16, 20), and in peaceful coexistence because no weapons or fortifications were found with the Uruk material (Stein, 1998: 241).

In Hacinebi during phase B2b there are bowls, with mineral degreasers, carinated and fine paste. Small jugs with pale brown surfaces abound. Local Amuq F-type Chalcolithic is associated with Uruk-type materials. We see different uses and patterns of behavior typical of the Uruk culture among the inhabitants, which defends the theory of a colony in Hacinebi (Stein, 1999: 138s). The technoceramic ensemble seems to have parallels with Tell Sheikh Hassan or the typical forms of the Middle Uruk or LC 3 in Mesopotamia. Most (90%) of Uruk

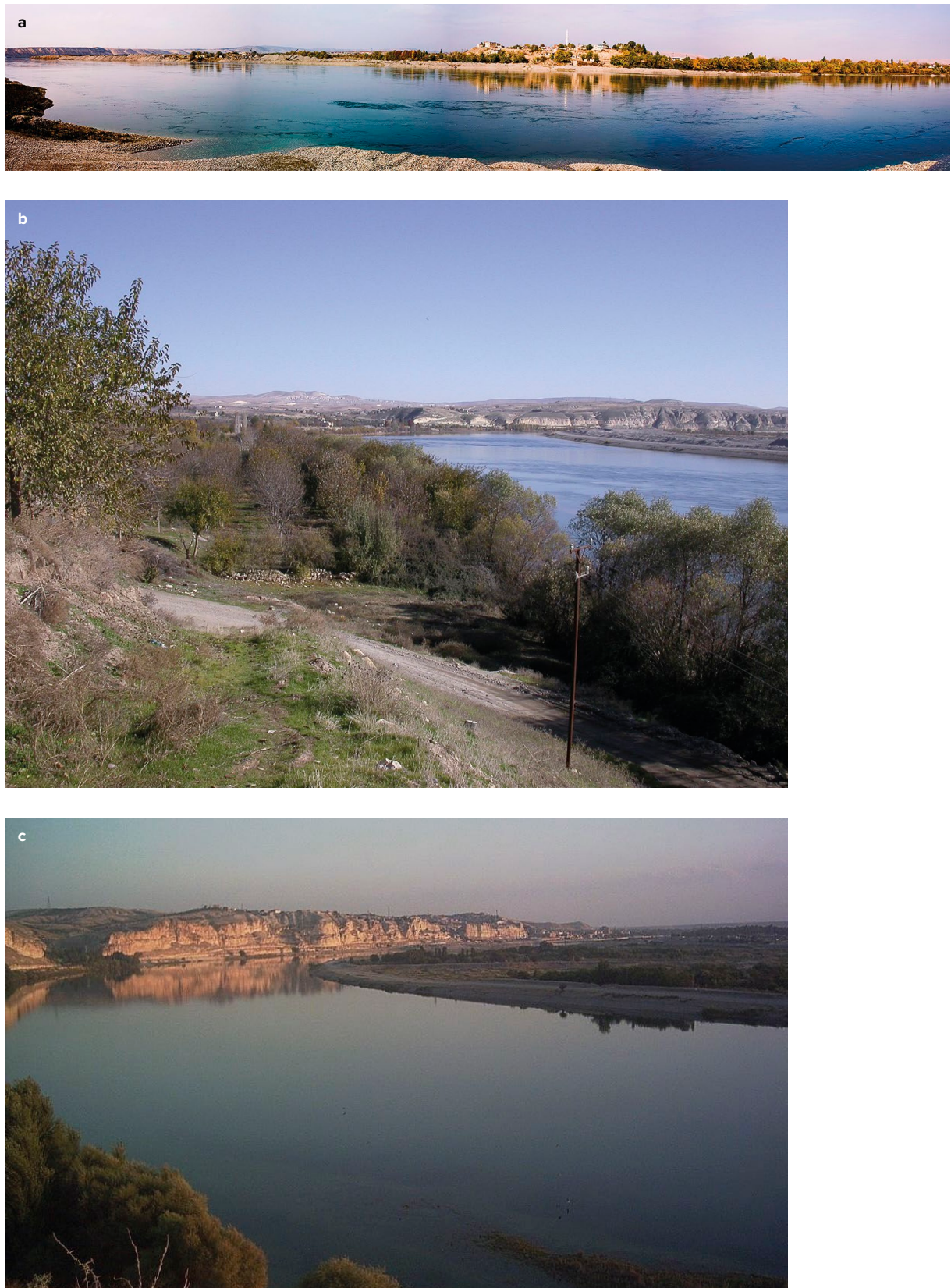


Figure 7. a. Panoramic view of Surtepe and the Euphrates river. b. Hachinebi view from Surtepe. c. Hachinebi and the Euphrates river. (Photo G. Stein)

Figura 7. a. Vista panorámica de Surtepe y el río Éufrates. b. Vista de Hachinebi desde Surtepe. c. Hachinebi y el río Éufrates. (Foto G. Stein)

ceramics are bowls (Stein et al., 1996a: 238). Middle Uruk presence in Hacinebi is thus around 3500 BC (Stein, 1999a: table 1 and 1999b: fig. 7.2).

There is also a glyptic of foreign flavour, with bullae, clay balls, with cylinder-seal impressions and filled with accounting records that imply the imposition of a Uruk administrative practice and foreign to the local tradition. Neutron activation analysis on the clay of the Hacinebi cylinder-seal impressions (Pittman, 2001: 432) shows that the material of these in particular was not of local origin but from the region of Susa (Blackman, 1999), a clear example of long-distance exchange of jars and consumables.

4. The excavations at Surtepe Höyük

Prior to the investigation on Surtepe, we had evidence of the presence of the Uruk/LC 5 culture during the excavations of Tilbes Höyük, carried out in the second half of the 1990s, when we achieved two surveys until reaching virgin soil in sectors E4b and AE1-5 during August 1999. In E4b squares, the first phase of occupation of Tilbes Höyük was located on the virgin level, in a cultural context of Late Ubaid, that is, Ubaid 4 of southern Mesopotamia, or Middle Chalcolithic in the Mesopotamia nomenclature of the North. There the standardized Coba bowls and painted pottery had a high percentage among the discovered remains (Gil Fuensanta, Mederos and Muminov, 2020). The subsequent cultural presence of Uruk, after a prolonged hiatus of disuse of the place, seems the product of a very advanced LC 5 phase (Gil Fuensanta, Charvat and Crivelli, 2008). It is a transitional phase similar to one identified in the nearby Zeytinli Bahçe, 9 km south of Surtepe (Frangipane, 2010).

The main site chosen by our Archaeological Project is Surtepe, the largest höyük on the Euphrates north of Carchemish, located 2 km north upstream from Hacinebi. Surtepe is the principal of the artificial mounds of archaeological ruins that were affected by the construction of the Birecik Dam throughout the 1990s. Surtepe Höyük, like Tilbes, was an ideal point to cross the river during the Prehistory of the region. After Carchemish, Surtepe

seems the primary Turkish site in this subregion, and due to its possibilities and stratigraphic depth it is key in our research on the first urban architecture in the region. Turkish Ministry of Agriculture officials always warned us that the most fertile land in the entire Birecik district is in the immediate vicinity of Surtepe (figure 7 a-c).

The Surtepe mound covers an area between 8 and 10 hectares. It was composed of several cones, now eroded due to modern illegal constructions and looting. The main cone of the Surtepe mound has a height of up to 16 m and a diameter of 120 m. Some houses in the village of Surtepe were built on the mound and the river eroded the foundations of the tell to the east and southeast. The secondary road from the village has cut the northern and western slopes of the höyük.

In Urfa province, Surtepe Höyük was detected by Guillermo Algaze's team (Algaze et al., 1994) during the 1989 survey within the area flooded by the Birecik dam. In Surtepe, salvage excavations were carried out in the decade 2000-2010 by the joint team of the Spanish Archaeological Mission in Turkey/University of Alicante, Area of Recent Prehistory and Oriental Institute, Madrid; in collaboration with the Shanliurfa Museum, Plzen University, Oriental Institute, Czech Republic and the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research, Argentina (Gil Fuensanta, Charvat and Crivelli, 2008).

Surtepe Höyük is part of the project of the international excavations with Spanish direction that were developed in the area of the Birecik dam during the period 1996-2009, and which also included, from north to south, Tilbes Höyük, Tilmusa, Tilöbür and Tilvez Höyük. Only Surtepe and Tilvez have remained outside the Birecik dam, although partially affected by its construction, as well as the Gaziantep-Urfa highway that crosses in the vicinity of the archaeological sites.

Surtepe Höyük dominates the environment because a location in front of the caves carved into the rock next to Belkis/Seleucia, 7 km north of the modern city of Birecik, on the left bank of the Turkish Euphrates, and which is 22 km away from the border with Syria. With its about 10 ha present in the



Figure 8. Surtepe topographic plan 2000-2009

Figura 8. Plano topográfico de Surtepe 2000-2009

main höyük, there is evidence of a lower city from the early Hellenistic period that would add another 40 ha of settlement at least from the end of the 4th century BC, and that would reach Tilvez Höyük and its surroundings.

“Sur-” is a Turkish word that indicates the presence of a historical city-wall, which seems to be located in the northern sector of the mound, which was identified during the first excavations in the place, amid the autumn of 2000. This city-wall was used at least during the Imperial Roman period; and it appeared near bastions of Early Bronze I.

At this moment, there is no evidence of a Late Chalcolithic city-wall on the southern flank of Surtepe. On the other hand, the settlement was located a few meters from the edge of the Euphrates. In addition, during the Late Uruk/LC 5 there is evidence of a lack of walling in southern sectors of cities, those near to the river, as it was the case of Kannas-Habuba Kabira. They are urban centers in which only those sectors that face the interior are walled, as witnessed by the wall in the north and northeast sector of Surtepe in EB I.

Surtepe Höyük seems to have had at least one initial occupation in the final Neolithic phase, perhaps prior to the Halaf culture, with several long periods of apparent population hiatus, until the Middle Ages. With the absence of levels of the Neolithic exposed in extension, based on the archaeological excavations carried out there, we can determine that its periods of main occupation and maximum splendor were some precise moments of the Late Chalcolithic, Early Bronze 1 and 3/4, and the final epoch of the Iron Age (Achaemenid). It is presumed an important Halaf presence and other proto-historical periods as Late Middle Bronze- Early Iron Age.

At Surtepe, thirteen operations were carried out on the south, central and north side of the mound, over an open area of almost 1,500 m², including a staggered survey to find the rocky river bed. Through extensive excavation, access was obtained to the earliest levels of the initial Late Chalcolithic 1 and early 2 that contained post-Ubaid type ceramics, including some imported ones (Gil Fuensanta, Mederos and Muminov, 2020).

Until 2005, and due to the opening of extensive excavations in the central southern sector of Surtepe, the one closest to the old river edge, we were not able to obtain the first levels of excavation, not only soundings, with architecture on place belonging to the Late Chalcolithic phases in the höyük, although we were aware of their existence thanks to the stratigraphic soundings C1 and C2 carried out during the years 2000-2001, when we concentrated the excavations in the central and northern sector of the höyük, the one near the supposed wall of the city.

Having verified the stratigraphic sequence of Surtepe in its southern sector, we are clear that there is no extensive presence of the final LC 2 and LC 3 documented in Hacinebi phases A and B1 (Stein et al., 1996a: 208-220; Stein, 2001: 270-279), located just 2 km south of Surtepe, although there are elements that somehow reinforce the presence of the Hacinebi B2 phase in Surtepe, in particular Hacinebi B2b (Stein, 2001: 285-298; Stein, 2012: 142), an advanced LC 4 phase. In 2000, the first year of excavation in Surtepe, the stratigraphic sounding C1 has shown a few rebuilding phases of either mud-brick or stone walls associated with LC 5 phase sherds. After the campaigns of 2005-2009, we have in Surtepe just over 500 m² excavated in extension, for the Late Chalcolithic 5.

During 2005 archaeological excavations were focused on the southern and southeastern sector of the höyük, closest to the river. Cuts were opened in three sectors, E20a-c of 12 × 8 m, 96 m², E30-E32 with 132 m² and E40-44 of 5 × 5 m, 125 m². In the 2008 campaign, annexes to the previous cuts were opened E46 of 5 × 4 m and E47-E48 of 5 × 5 m, totaling 70 m². On the other hand, the E20 section was expanded with the 6 × 6 m, section E21 and 5 × 5 m in E22, which represent another 61 m² (figure 8).

During the opening of the excavation sectors E40-E47, we were aware not only of the stratigraphic depth of the Late Chalcolithic occupation but also that this period in the höyük apparently occupied various phases of the period, and that during the LC 5 phases, Surtepe had close contact with the expanding Uruk culture. Surtepe, in the southern sector of that ancient Chalcolithic settlement (possible a city), seemed to demonstrate a

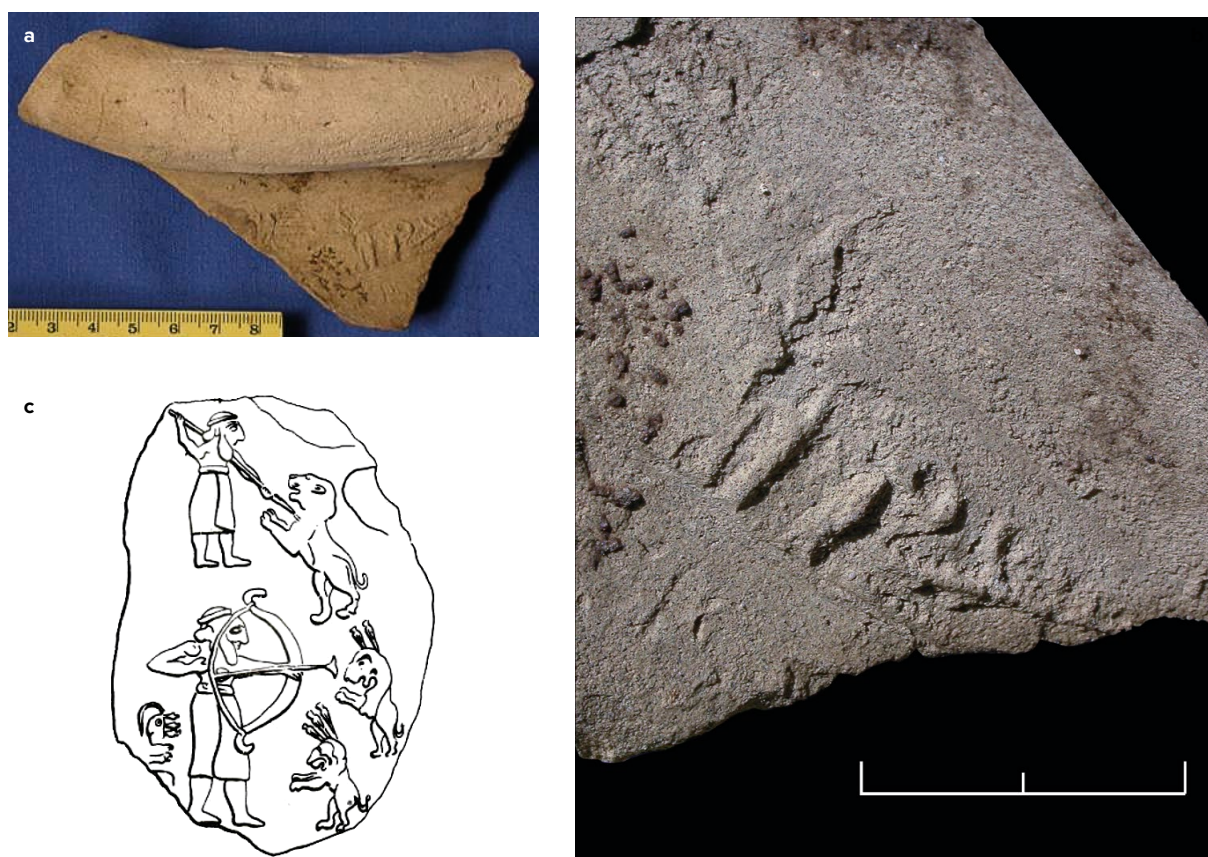


Figure 9. a-b. Uruk-like cylinder seal impression with representation to the right of the priest-king which carries an open bow and on his left a goddess touches a tree, symbol of fertility. Surtepe 2005, E40, locus 3003. c. Lion-hunt stelae with the priest-king which carries a bow hunting lions (Amiet, 1980: pl. 40, no. 611)

Figura 9. a-b. Impresión de sello cilíndrico similar a los de Uruk con representación a la derecha del sacerdote-rey que lleva un arco abierto y a su izquierda una diosa toca un árbol, símbolo de la fertilidad. Surtepe 2005, E40, locus 3003. c. Estela de caza de leones con el sacerdote-rey que lleva un arco cazando leones (Amiet, 1980: lám. 40, n.º 611)

strong Uruk presence in the place based on the remains of diagnostic material culture discovered as ceramic fragments, lithic tools or the iconography of the cylindrical seal impressions typical of the Mesopotamian Uruk culture. We do not have evidence that the excavated area of Surtepe has production of elements (ceramics, food), but there is a large number of stone tools, as well as administrative, visual and ritual elements.

Because of the close discoveries at Hacinebi of an Uruk-Anatolian hybrid culture during much of the local Middle Uruk (early LC 3-4?), we might get the impression that such a hybridization may well have taken place at a later time, although LC 5 of Surtepe shows us an overwhelming presence of cultural elements of Uruk origin, and few local Anatolian artifacts. This impression is maintained judging the results obtained in the “Terminal” LC 5

phase of Tilbes Höyük and initial EB1 in this same site and the referred Surtepe; even by then we could speak not only of a maintenance of the culture of the Middle Euphrates, but of an increase and one of its periods of maximum splendour.

Surtepe’s sprawling exhibition offers a social picture from a later period, LC 4-5, and the balance of local power appears to have changed, with a predominance of Uruk pottery at the site controlling the main river traffic. It would be an analogous evidence to other places in the “periphery” of Mesopotamia, where they offer no changes but a breakdown of settlement after LC 3 (Tell Hamoukar in the Khabur, Sheikh Hassan in the middle course of the Euphrates, Choga Mish in the Khuzistan), verification of a major transform in the cycle of Uruk cultural expansion that affected the margins of their presence.

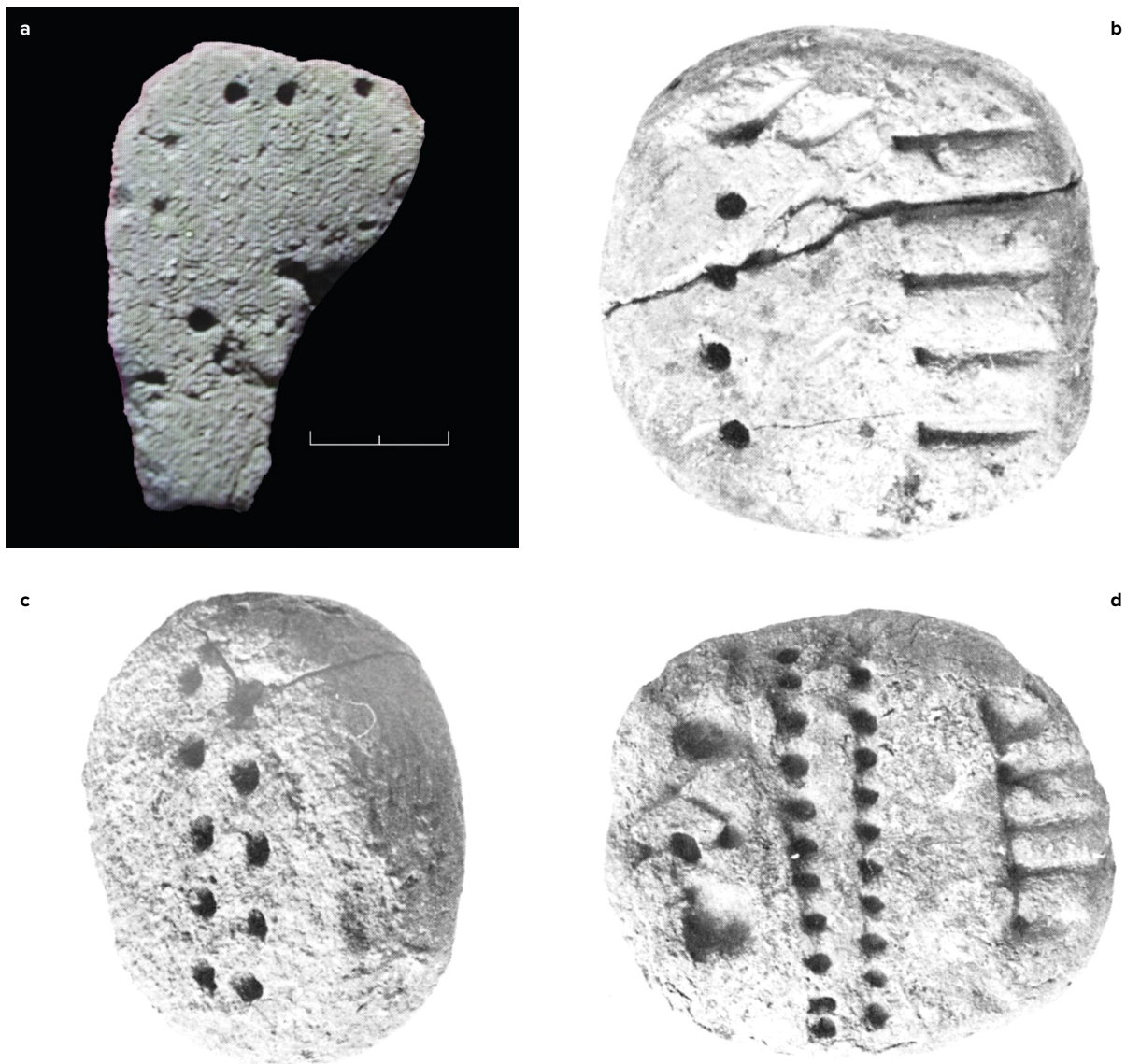


Figure 10. a. Stone tablet with numerical signs. Surtepe 2005, E40. b-d. Clay tablets with numerical signs from Jebel Aruda (van Driel, 1982: 12, nos 6-8)

Figura 10. a. Tablilla de piedra con signos numéricos. Surtepe 2005, E40. b-d. Tablillas de arcilla con signos numéricos de Jebel Aruda (van Driel, 1982: 12, n.º 6-8)

There is no evidence of a neighbourhood with alleged local people from the late Chalcolithic period at Surtepe. The excavated area there seems to be the Uruk district of the area, or that Surtepe is primarily a settlement with an Uruk predominance and mentality, as evidenced by the yielded artifacts.

In contrast, in Hacinebi B2b (LC 4) we could see the local Anatolian administrative traditions with stone stamp seals and unbaked clay impressions of stamp seals at the same time that in the Uruk sector were recovered cylinder seals impressions on bullae, tablets and jar stoppers (Stein, 1998: 243-245 fig. II.7-II.8).

The “cultural division” by sectors of the settlement present in Hassek Höyük and Tepecik does not appear in the excavated sector of Surtepe; the lack of chaff-faced diagnoses present in the previous surveys on the site after the C1 and C2 soundings lead us to suppose a possible absence of local ceramic elements from the later LC in Surtepe during the Uruk cultural expansion. There is existence of chaff faced ceramics within monumental buildings associated with elite elements in the Hacinebi LC during its contact phase, Hacinebi B1, comparable to the LC 3 (South Middle Uruk).

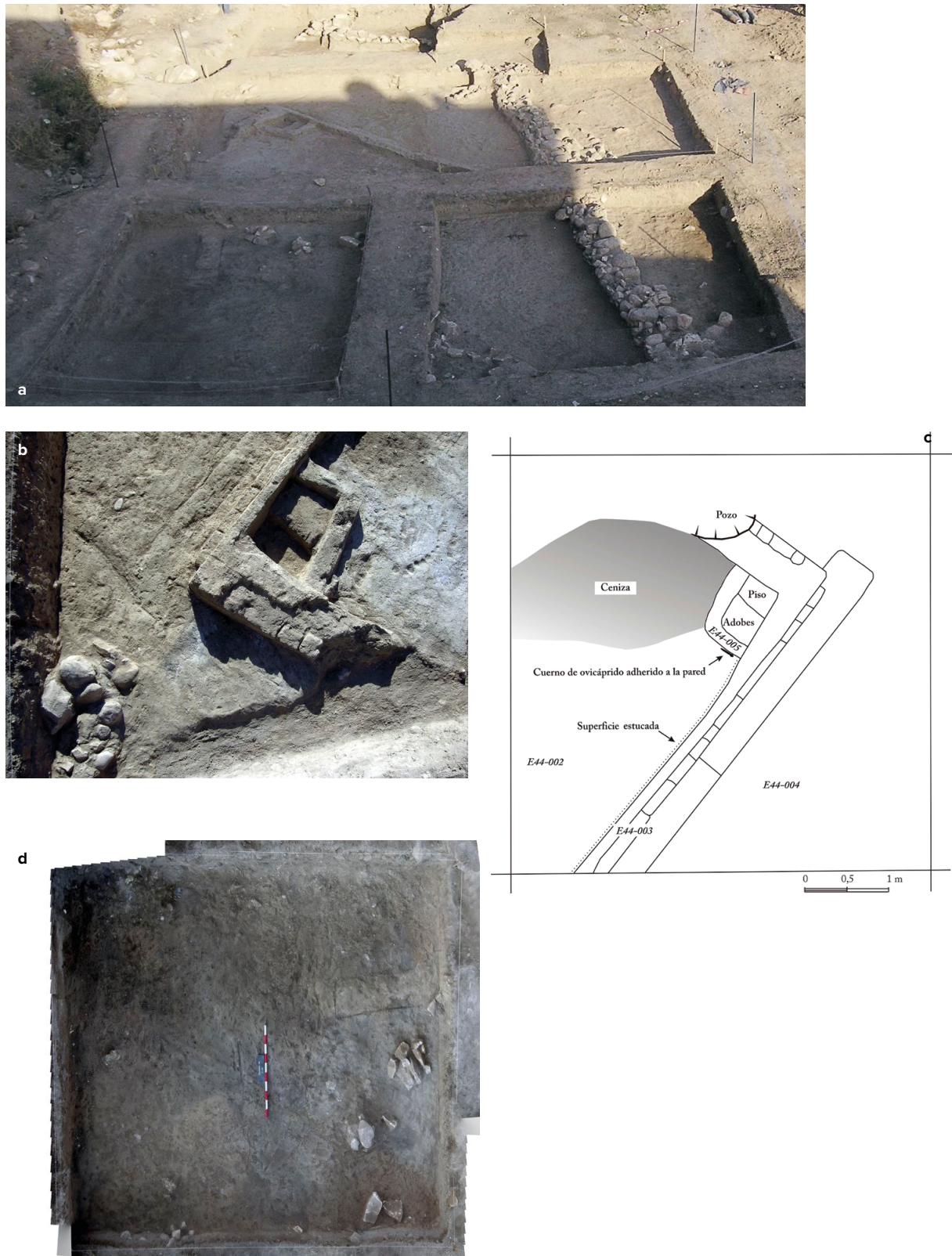


Figure 11. a. LC 5 bipartite or tripartite sanctuary building and stone wall. Surtepe, 2008, E47. b-c. Stuccoed mudbrick walls of the building with a small bench in its NW corner, Surtepe, 2008, E44, locus 005. d. Level of combustion inside the building. Surtepe, 2008, E46

Figura 11. a. Santuario en edificio bipartito o tripartito y muro de piedra LC 5. Surtepe, 2008, E47. b-c. Muros de adobe del edificio con un pequeño banco en su esquina noroeste, Surtepe, 2008, E44, locus 005. d. Nivel de combustión en el interior del edificio. Surtepe, 2008, E46

5. The Uruk “public” buildings of Surtepe Höyük

Several tens of meters to the southwest of the mud-brick platforms of the southeastern areas, squares E20/25, were discovered in the 2005–2007 campaigns, remains of another type of architecture. Long walls appear that were eroded by later Early Bronze (III–IV) pits. Associated with this area are the impressions of cylinder seals on unbaked clay (and one of them on a jar fragment). By typological parallels of ceramics, we date it to the end of LC 5. These strata with a predominance of Uruk ceramics were raised on previous levels of a settlement of the Late Chalcolithic with elements of the Middle Uruk (LC 4) in turn on a long occupation of the Terminal Ubaid (LC 1–early LC2) whose architecture in extension has not yet been able to be individualized.

There, and below the Early Bronze 1 remains, the excavation on Squares E40–42 provided us with evidence of apparent building that had mudbrick columns in the Late Chalcolithic 5, nowadays in a very eroded state of preservation. And, in whose interior, there was used Uruk pottery from the Uruk IV (LC 5) phase of southern Mesopotamia, including bevelled rim bowls and spouted jars, polished in red, clear fossil directors of Late Uruk culture; there were performed administrative activities, typical of Uruk cultural context, as demonstrated by an Uruk-like cylinder seal impression, and no stamp seals of local tradition.

After Petr Charvát’s analysis of the iconography of the seal, a scene of clear Mesopotamian roots can be seen, where on his left a divinity (goddess) touches a tree, symbol of fertility, an old Mesopotamian legend, and to their right we have a larger-scale representation of the priest-king, the EN, of southern Mesopotamia, which carries an open bow, along with a stylized boat typical of the period and a likely Sumerian pictographic sign, KAL, which means “power.” According to Professor Charvát, the political intentionality of the scene reveals that “all political power must be left in the hands of the EN because it will provide the inhabitants of the city-state with everything necessary for life” (Gil Fuensanta, Charvat and Crivelli, 2008: 112 fig. 10;

Charvát, pers. com. May 2008). The uniformity of the Uruk glyptic also reflects the ideological integration into the Uruk political system (figure 9 a–c).

The presence of pictographic signs and a stone tablet with numerical signs at square E40 in Surtepe (Gil Fuensanta, Charvat and Crivelli, 2008: 111 fig. 9), refer us to a phase parallel to Uruk IV in the South, never before Late Uruk in any case. It refers to parallels in Jebel Aruda (van Driel, 1982: 12, n° 6–8) and the White Temple at Uruk-Warka, tablet W 16050 (Boehmer, 1999: 88, 186, fig. 93.12). Thus, the parallels appear to be limited to a not too late date in the Uruk sequence of southern Mesopotamia (figure 10 a–d).

In the foundations of all the Uruk buildings of Surtepe, stone was used, of different sizes, and very available in the vicinity. The mudbrick is of high quality, standardized, almost square, reminiscent of the type of a *riemchem* derivative, also typical of the city-wall in the first moments of EB1, in the site northern sector.

In Surtepe, there is no evidence of the open spaces between buildings of the Late Uruk; rather, it resembles the “labyrinth” or constructions as a “agglutinate” layout proper of the construction tradition typical of northern Mesopotamia. There is not even the presence of open backyards, very emblematic of the Ubaid tradition in the Irak Hamrin, as Tell Abada II shows. The open backyard also seems absent in Habuba Kabira-south, which also offers a layout of buildings as a “agglutinate” in most of its urban layout, despite the existence of a street axis and water drainage system.

6. The Chalcolithic Sanctuary of Surtepe

We know abundant monumental architecture from the Uruk period, especially in the south-central Mesopotamia, considered the core of the Uruk culture. Most of the buildings have been interpreted as temples (Finet, 1975; Heinrich, 1982; Collins, 2000). Until the time of Jemdet Nasr, there is not much justification about their attribution as palaces. There are authors who disagree (Moorey, 1976; Tunca, 1990; Forest, 1999) and think what the presumed Uruk “colonies” did not include any real temple (Forest and Vallet, 2008: 46).



Figure 12. a-b. Sacrifice of caprids and other animals, at the foundation of the Surtepe sanctuary, Sector E44.
c. Chalcolithic idol which reminds the “eye idols”. Surtepe 2008, E41, locus 3102

Figura 12. a-b. Sacrificio de cápridos y otros animales, en el nivel de fundación del santuario de Surtepe, Sector E44.
c. Ídolo calcolítico que recuerda a los «ídolos oculados». Surtepe 2008, E41, locus 3102

However, temples were also the domain of the first bureaucrats, legitimized by the main gods, and with partial control of production and redistribution.

After the extension of the excavated area around the Squares, E40-47, in the following years this became an excavated area of more than 500 m², and where buildings of the “local” Late Chalcolithic appeared, but closely related to the Uruk culture. Among the architectural remains discovered, a building that began to be excavated during the campaign of 2008 in E44, and then stood out. It is a construction with stuccoed mudbrick walls that had an inner ashy filling and with charcoal. Inside a room there was a small bench in its NW corner, locus 005 (figure 11 a-c).

That building, which could have an original tripartite or bipartite plan, had been destroyed at some point during the Late Chalcolithic 5 judging by the archaeological record. Several walls of this collapsed architectural unit, especially in the southern sector of the same, and the building is currently very deteriorated in its western sector. In the first instance, the collapse of walls due to the fire could have trapped a human being, whose few skeletal remains recovered show a high level of combustion during the disaster (figure 11 d).

One issue that we consider essential in the expansion of the Uruk culture is the tripartite layouts of many monumental buildings, or houses that are larger than the average (Butterlin, 2012, 2015: 64-67 fig. 6.3 and 2018b). The tripartite building appears to establish its standard form during the Ubaid phase of the Tigris and Euphrates. The tripartite plan consisted of a large central space with adjoining rooms, arranged on both sides of the central and main hall. This type of building was therefore arranged in three transepts, but sometimes additional rooms also appeared on three of the sides. The plan showed a better organization regarding the distribution of space compared to the tripartite plan typical of the Ubaid period. In the Uruk tripartite building, the internal access, coordinated from the central hall, was better ordered than in the Ubaid buildings. Some type of internal layout alteration occurred during this 4th millennium along the Uruk expansion. Perhaps the changes in the spatial conception of buildings, throughout the different centuries of the Uruk expansion, had a basis in family or social ideology.

The place of Surtepe Höyük evidenced a ritual building (a temple perhaps) contemporary of those described (Kannas, Hassek), that was set on fire and destroyed. A large quantity of lithic tools was discovered in its vicinity, as well as badly destroyed fragments of human bones among the building's ashes. All evidence linked to a violent conflagration, but not with the destructive fury seen in contemporary Syrian Khabur (eg. apparent absence of postmortem profanations).

The building featured various ritual elements such as a sacrifice of caprid, and a horn, at the foundation of it by placing Uruk bowls upside down on the same remains; a practice that resembles that of a supposed LC 5 Uruk temple at the Hassek Höyük site, some 150 km upstream (Behm-Blancke, 1989). The employ of goats and deers in a ritual used with pigs in Hassek, an animal more linked to Uruk culinary jobs, suggests that despite the similarities, some type of cultural composition different from the Uruk enclave of Hassek Höyük had to live in the Surtepe of the late LC 5.

In the eastern sector of the building, E43, there are burned bones of animals, herbivores, apparently young, with the epiphysis missing. It calls us the presence of some peculiar antlers, and in addition they appear associated to fragments of jugs of Uruk reserved slip.

Another survival of the local ancestral mentality may be the ritual ablaze of the Surtepe sanctuary, which included the burning of human bones (possibly on its roof), and the sacrifice of a bovid at its foundation, despite the presence of sacrificed pig (animal linked to the diet of Uruk populations) in another similar context of the LC 5 upstream, such as Hassek Höyük (figure 12 a-b).

Let us remember that prior to the local culture in the area, in the nearby Hacinebi, the diet focused more on ovicaprids than on bovines or pigs (Stein et al., 1996a: 258 table 13; Stein, 1999: 132). However, in Arslantepe, the opposite happened: the predominance of pigs during the Arslantepe VII phase (linked to earlier phases in the LC chronology) changed to caprids during the Arslantepe VIA phase, that contemporary with the Late Uruk culture (Bökönyi in Palmieri and Frangipane, 1988).

A clear example of these “imposed cultural changes” can be the absence of human burials below the Uruk buildings of Surtepe; despite being a fact



Figure 13. a. Obsidian blades imported from SE Turkey. b-c. Canaanite flint blade and projectile point. Surtepe 2008, E44

Figura 13. a. Hojas de obsidiana importadas del sureste de Turquía. b-c. Hoja de sílex cananeo y punta de proyectil. Surtepe 2008, E44

verified in the LC 2 of Hacinebi. There are no burials in Surtepe LC 5, and cremated human bones may obey a ritual like the one that appeared in the Balikh during the Ceramic Neolithic as Tell Sabi Abyad proved (Verhoeven, 2000).

It is curious that the ritual of the deposition of inverted bowls above burials, was associated with humans in the city of Ur (Woolley, 1955: pl. 9a-b, 54-55), during the local Jemdet Nasr, and where the quality and typology of the bowls found was similar to that of the Surtepe locus. The same excavator, at the Ur city of southern Mesopotamia, related the red washed and slipped lugged-jars to this phase (Woolley, 1955: pl. 26f). A revealing fact is that the period tombs in Pit W of Ur had arsenic copper objects with very little nickel, 82.33 Cu and

0.05 Ni, to which a possible Anatolic source was attributed (Woolley, 1955: 165); a metal object associated with Surtepe's LC 5 provides 82.5 of Cu and 0.06 of Ni (Özbal and Turan, 2002: 69, table 39, Kazi no 4033).

On the other hand, not far from the same find, in E41, locus 3102 was discovered a figure of a curious variant of a spectacle idol that resembled an owl in its shape (Gil Fuensanta, Charvat and Crivelli, 2008: 109 fig. 7). This Chalcolithic idol reminds the “eye idols”. The appearance of “spectacle idols” in the LC 5 of Surtepe or in the LC 3 of the nearby Hacinebi (Stein et al., 1996a: 216 fig. 8a) are connected with a symbol that seems more typical of the north of Mesopotamia (Tell Brak, Khabur) than of the south in Uruk times. The statuette of



Figure 14. a. Small squat lugged jar, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E44. b. Horizontal reserved slip, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E44. c. Reserved slip jar with relief decoration, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E41. d. Wheel-made flat-bottomed bowls, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E44

Figura 14. a. Jarrita para transporte, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E44. b. Jarra con engobe reservado horizontal, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E44. c. Jarra con engobe reservado y decoración en relieve, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E41. d. Cuencos a torno con fondo plano, LC 5. Surtepe 2008, E44

Surtepe has great value as a sacral element to being small, portable and be near the temple/sanctuary (Wasilewska, 1993: 477) (figure 12 c).

The Surtepe idol vaguely recalls specimens of owl-like idols from western Anatolia from the 3rd millennium; especially some that appeared in Troy, Afyon and Ushak in contexts of the local EBA II-III or half of the III millennium BC (Saygili, in press, fig. 84A-B, 85A, Tr [2C] 19-21). An alternative interpretation is that it is the representation of an owl; we must remember a Mesopotamian story of the third millennium, “the curse of Akkad” on the uku-ku, “the animal that destroyed cities”. In that context, the owl is not a symbol of wisdom but of desolation (as it appears in the Middle Bronze), linked to the Sumerian Ishkur, an incarnation of Adad, the god of the tempest and the waters (Haussig, 1965).

The motives of the goddess of fertility, Inanna or the various incarnations of her, is an element of

the diffusion of the Uruk culture of Sumerian origin, not Susian, which links Surtepe in LC 5 with this orbit of dispersal. On the surface of this excavation sector, a statuette mutilated in antiquity was found, and that refers to representations of Ishtar or fertility goddesses typical of the Bronze Age of the area.

Regarding the ideology, rituals and habits present in this presumed sanctuary or temple, we would have in the Surtepe contexts a “hybridization” of Uruk and local cultural elements in a context where Uruk-type ceramics predominate.

Despite apparent Surtepe’s rise during a good part of EB1, something happened through a moment of LC 5 that involves changes in the urban strategy of the place, including the possible ritual closure of a temple or sanctuary dedicated to a deity related to the Uruk’s Northern spectacle eyes. It appeared not far from where human remains were found in an apparent building collapse at E44.

To the south of the wall, we discovered another wall of considerable length, more than 10 m, and a large amount of lithic material, one of the highest concentrations of this type of material in loci found in Surtepe throughout the history of its occupation, Chalcolithic or not. At Square E44 locus 1002 the presence of Canaanite-type blades and several variants stand out, as well as small blades of translucent obsidian imported from the mountainous area of Turkey. The obsidian does not seem to have been worked on place at Surtepe, since in the long months of excavation we have never found a Late Chalcolithic obsidian core (figure 13 a).

Among the pieces of Canaanite blade found in the contexts of the Uruk burned building, we note that those were made of fine-grained flint. Some are found in two or three fragments due to breaks, transversely, in ancient times. The heel is dihedral, and the point of percussion coincides with the edge that separates both planes. The wide edge of the inner face shows irregular touch-ups. We also found projectile points typical of the period (Crivelli and Gil Fuensanta, 2009) (figure 13 b-c).

Up to 30% of the ceramic fragments recovered in this sector of Surtepe Höyük show secondary cremation. Associated with the locus are various diagnostic types of broken ceramics from the Uruk period, including fragments from at least three different gray polished ceramic vessels, typical of the Middle/Late Uruk of southern Mesopotamia (LC 4-5 in local context), as well as other fragments from local reserved slip ceramics, and a spouted jar, which both revealed a possible Late Uruk moment, for the area. However, the concentration of Uruk ceramics in this specific space, at Square E44 locus 10002, is similar to that of lithic tools at the other loci, with a large amount of material and fragments of pottery. It is a fine ceramic consisting of small bowls, especially at locus 10001, on the other side of the wall, to the south, which separated the presumed central room of the building; there is also a fine kitchen pottery, with grit inclusions, of the Uruk type, but nothing associated with the local late Chalcolithic types; we include at least two fragmented jugs of reserved slip. We are therefore in a context in which the predominant ceramic assemblage was composed of bowls

(locus 10001). The fine clear clay and its fabric reveal a high quality within the Uruk pottery of the area, which shows the high “purchasing power” of the people who had such vessels. The chaff-faced Late Chalcolithic pottery, commonly used for cooking, is too minor, almost absent, in the collection discovered at Surtepe, and even plain Uruk ware predominates over it. There is a presence of locally made Uruk bowls and a fragment of a red polished Uruk jug. But the bevelled rim bowls seem quite secondary in this building.

In short, the Surtepe ceramics of the phase similar to the Late Uruk of Southern Mesopotamia (LC 5) consist of conical bowls, wheel-made and light coloured, jugs and jars with handles with low edges decorated by a series of parallel incisions, vertical reserved slip and abundant reserved slip jugs, a few with spouted necks. There are a high percentage of late fourth millennium artifacts, among those ceramic shapes typical of the Uruk culture. The appearance of bowls and cups, with fine mineral inclusions, and seems to be connected with truly artisans of the Uruk typology (figure 14 a-c).

Some close parallels for Surtepe’s ceramic typology can be seen between the Karababa or Tabqa dams area, where distinctive Late Uruk/LC 5 sites such as Hassek Höyük 5 and Habuba Kabira-South shows.

A similar technique for round, flat-bottomed bowls of the type similar to those found at Surtepe, and with even striations, is observed in Habuba Kabira-South (Sürenhagen, 1978: tab. 34, esp. J5, Flachboden 2-3). The pottery assemblage of Jebel Aruda has plenty of those wheel-made flat-bottomed bowls on light colours (Van As, 1987: fig. 3.1-5) (figure 14 d).

Small squat lugged jars (figure 14 a) appear in the Hassek 5, Jebel Aruda (Van As, 1987: fig. 3.13) and Habuba Kabira-South techno-ceramic bulks (Trentin, 1993: fig. 1.7; Sürenhagen, 1978: fig. 18, 130-133), with a tendency to globular bodies as occurs in other Surtepe jars in these contexts. Similar exemplars appeared in Tell Kannas made on stone (Finet, 1983). An equal exemplar in shape and size but on red clay and slip appeared in Tilbes Höyük Terminal LC 5 levels during August 1999 excavations. The

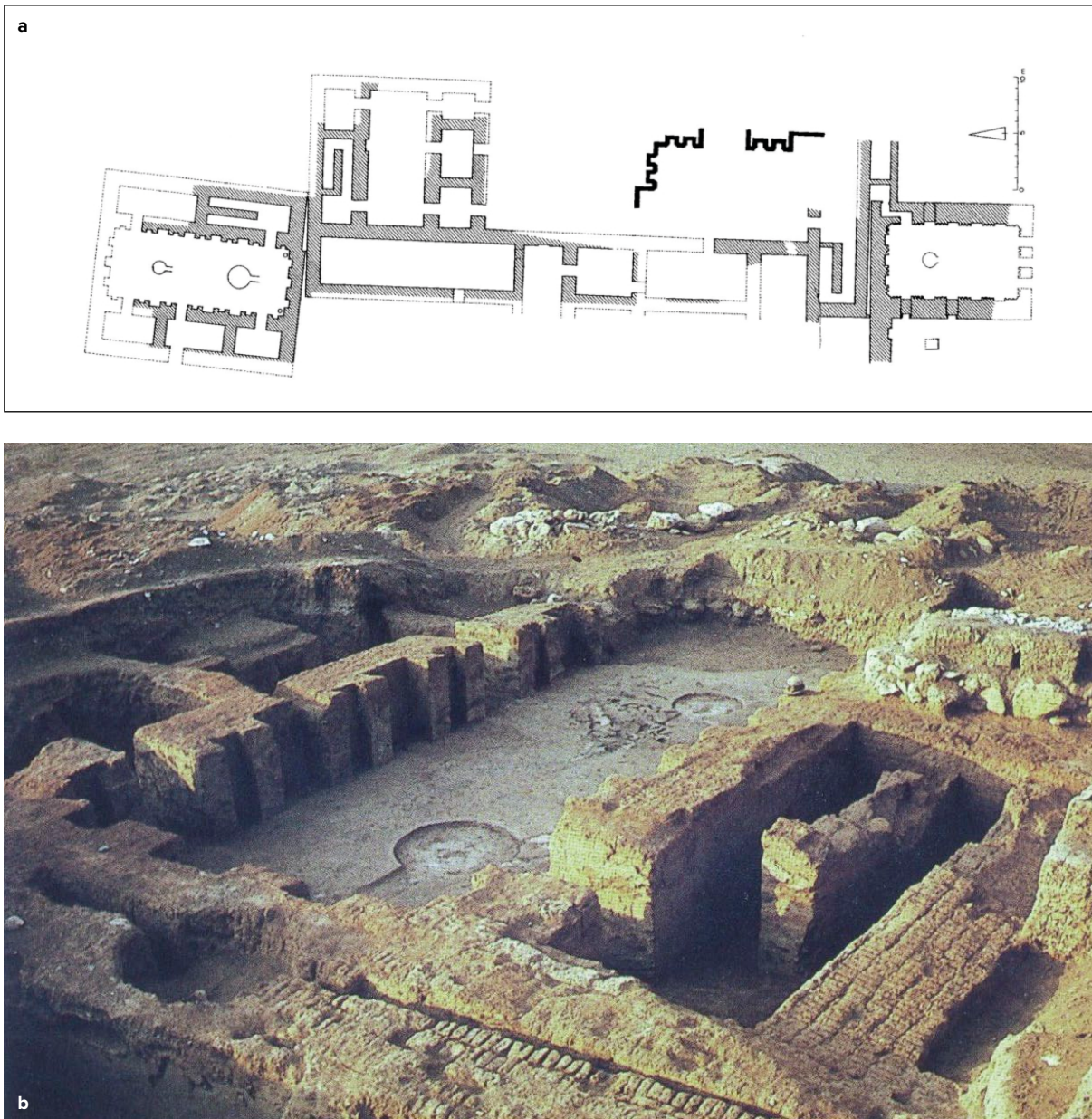


Figure 15. a. Tell Kannas monumental complex (Heinrich, 1982: fig. 129). b. Tell Kannas South Temple (Finet et al., 1983: photo 1)

Figura 15. a. Complejo monumental de Tell Kannas (Heinrich, 1982: fig. 129). b. Templo sur de Tell Kannas (Finet et alii, 1983: foto 1)

small red-slipped squat-like jars are also present at the public area of Arslantepe VIA (Frangipane, 1997: fig.11); there appeared in the same context, the main cella of Temple B, as the light-coloured reserved slip jars (Frangipane, 1997: fig. 9.6) similar to those from Surtepe.

In Southern Mesopotamia, squat-lugged jars appear to be common in the ceramic record of the great Jemdet Nast building (Mackay, 1931: fig. LXIV), where one of the types (Mackay, 1931: fig. LXIV.4), unslipped, resembles the specimen found in Surtepe.

The squat-lugged jugs were seen as ceramic prototypes of stone imitations; and the importance of these ceramic shapes seemed pronounced within the Diyala technoceramic collection (Delougaz, 1952: 39, pl. 22). Several variants of squat lugged jugs made of semi-precious stones appear throughout the Uruk orb, reaching contexts in northern Mesopotamia as evidenced by the Tell Kannas or Samsat specimens. A ritual connection was also attributed to the squat-lugged jars made on pottery or stone (Delougaz, 1952: 40).

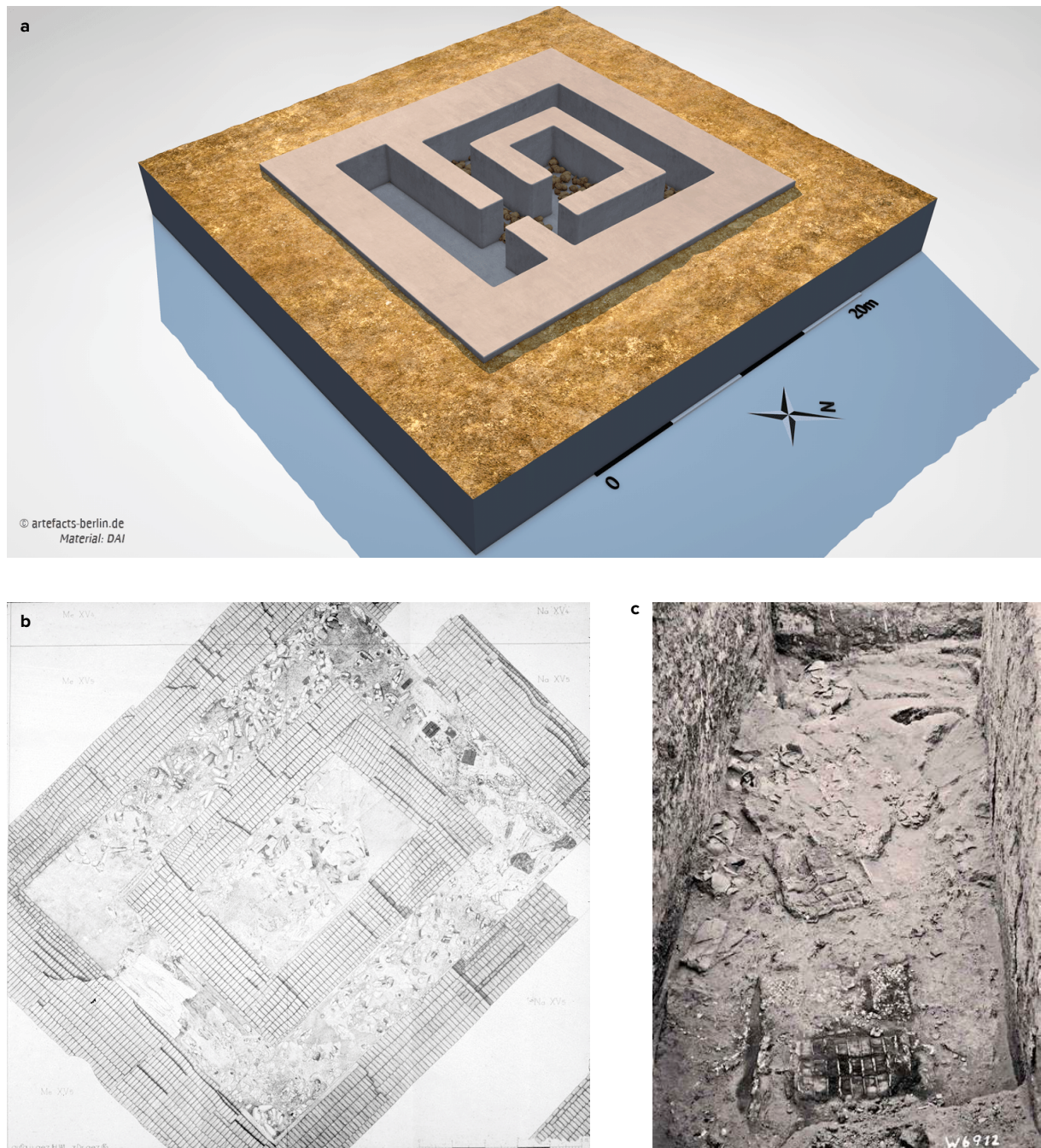


Figure 16. a-c. Riemchengebäude, LC 5, Eanna IVa, Uruk-Warka, with ritual closing burning. Reconstruction (Artefacts-Berlin-DAI). b-d. Plan and photo of the destruction layer (Benati, 2018: 143 fig. 4.1)

Figura 16. a-c. Riemchengebäude, LC 5, Eanna IVa, Uruk-Warka, con incendio ritual para su abandono. Reconstrucción (Artefacts-Berlin-DAI). b-d. Plano y foto de la capa de destrucción (Benati, 2018: 143 fig. 4.1)

In the Surtepe Squares E40-E45 we see local or imported reserved slip. The presence of reserved slip typical of the Late Uruk culture (Mazzoni, 1980: 243) in this area of the excavation is striking. The presence of jars with yellowish or whitish slip is reminiscent of a local variant of the technique used in specimens from Habuba Kabira-South (Sürenhagen, 1978: 64;

tab. 5, 60-61); and like in the Tabqa place, Surtepe exemplars are not chaff-tempered. There is a certain difference with the observed specimens of Hassek Höyük arranged in the Old Urfa Museum (Turkey) and those of Surtepe, more in keeping with the reserved slip of the Middle Euphrates. Similar motifs to some of the depicted relief decoration on

the neck of reserved-slip jars from Surtepe Höyük (figure 14 b) were also discovered at Habuba Kabira-South (Sürenhagen, 1978: tab. 37, 32).

Surtepe's reserved slip jars do not seem related with those found in LC 5 of the Turkish Upper Euphrates in places like Arslantepe or Tepecik (Mazzoni, 1980: pl. III.1-2), where in the latter even the reserved slip appears to have a "horror vacui" on the surface, and absent at Surtepe exemplars.

Local and regional developments during Late Uruk were already observed some decades ago (Trentin, 1993: 177 ff.). Each Uruk place seems to have a series of characteristic and own forms, in spite of the great transregional koine during this period; possibly this fact must be related to some specific type of function for each Uruk settlement.

But the area was also fully occupied in moments prior to Early Bronze Age 1 of Northern Mesopotamia, the so-called transitional phase of Uruk that we have identified, Terminal Uruk as we call it, and which would be comparable to a time after Uruk IVc phase of Southern Mesopotamia.

Materials from Kurban Hoyuk Phase VI (Algaze et al., 1990: pl. 25R) have parallels with some also discovered in Surtepe in other sectors of the höyük, a settlement area with later implantation and continuity in EB1, such as the Squares E20-22. On the other hand, distinctive Early Bronze 1 fragments in the Kurban Höyük phase V (Algaze et al., 1990: pl. 49P, 50B) or Hassek Höyük EB 1 (Gerber, 2000: fig. 3, 9 and 4, 14) appear as clear postquem markers of the sequence found around the E44-47 building of Surtepe, where those earlier EB1 materials appear generations later in the stratigraphic sequence.

So, we could distinguish two main different moments in the long Uruk presence in Surtepe. In addition to this corpus of Late Uruk-LC 5 ceramic parallels we have the recent dates and older materials from Tell Kuran in Syria and Tell Hamoukar (Hole, 2001). The sparsely fragments of gray Uruk-type pottery and bevelled rim bowls at Surtepe could correspond to that LC 4 period, with some typical shapes from southern Mesopotamia, but apparently locally manufactured.

Apparently, we have evidence of a partial destruction of Uruk Surtepe in the entire southern area, near the Euphrates, during an epoch (Late/

Terminal Uruk?), related to the Uruk IVb-c of southern Mesopotamia, which seems to be the time with the most southern evidence in this regard.

7. Ritual abandonment and fires in Mesopotamian Temples of the Late Chalcolithic 3-5

Other places in northern Mesopotamia show evidence of fires during Late Uruk. In Kenan Tepe there are remains of a building, with sectors dedicated to workshops and warehouses, which caught fire around 3100 BC, according to calibrated dates (Bradley Parker, pers. comm., June 2007). Arslantepe VIA in its public area all the buildings show abundant remains of burning, but they are partial, which suggested a destruction of the system by the fire (Frangipane and Palmieri, 1988: 297). But it seems that the Arslantepe fires initially affected only one area with ritual use; and for that reason perhaps it was not the end of the settlement, since it shows a continuity of use, despite the introduction of other non-Uruk cultural elements. In any case, if it was the end of that area with public use in Arslantepe VIA.

Therefore, the abandonment or partial burning of buildings is a phenomenon to consider in this context. Some of the Late Uruk buildings in Tell Kannas or Jebel Aruda may have a relationship with similar phenomena in southern Mesopotamia, where temples dedicated to different gods appeared in the same city, such as the sanctuaries of Anu and Ishtar in Uruk/Warka. On the other hand, we consider Jebel Aruda later than the Habuba Kabira-Kannas dipolis. That presumed regional religious center was abandoned, without traces of the burning that could be seen in Tell Kannas. Based on its archaeological history and diagnostic materials, we believe that Jebel Aruda survives the occupation of Habuba Kabira-South-Tell Kannas.

Tell Kannas, with its monumental architecture dominating Habuba Kabira-South and its surroundings, is a place of great importance, since unlike the small proportion of tripartite buildings burned in Habuba Kabira, the acropolis shows evidence of fires in two buildings from a specific moment in time (Finet et al., 1983; Finet, 2002). The North temple

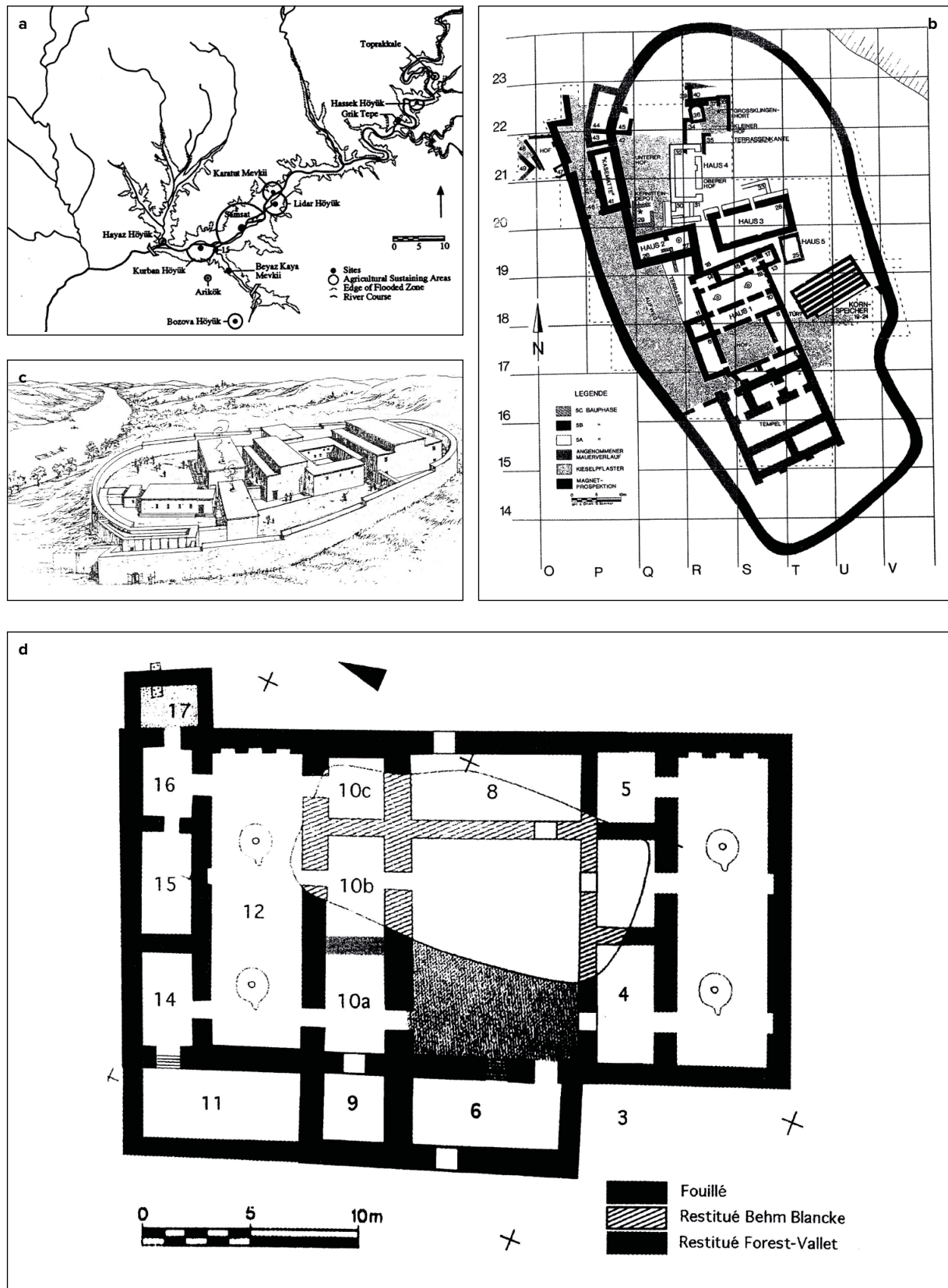


Figure 17. a. Upper Euphrates LC 4-LC 5 sites (Lupton, 1996: 53 fig. 3.11). b-c. Hassek Höyük plan of the fortification and reconstruction (Behm-Blancke et al., 1992: pl. 31, fig. 1). d. Hassek Höyük Haus 1 reconstruction (Forest and Vallet, 2008: 50 fig. 4)

Figura 17. a. Yacimientos LC 4-LC 5 del Éufrates superior (Lupton, 1996: 53 fig. 3.11). b-c. Plano de la fortificación de Hassek Höyük y reconstrucción (Behm-Blancke et alii, 1992: pl. 31, fig. 1). d. Reconstrucción de la casa 1 de Hassek Höyük (Forest y Vallet, 2008: 50 fig. 4)

of Kannas according to André Finet had the original function carried out as the lateral annex of another temple located to the west. That sanctuary, destroyed by fire, would have been evicted, its location flattened, and the communications with the annex, promoted to the rank of a temple, closed. In addition, another building perhaps after a large combustion (Finet et al., 1983), which would put an end to the use of that edifice, as suggested by the destruction of the warehouse by the action of the fire. On the other hand, the excavator did not think of a violent end for the acropolis, since the conflagrations are not simultaneous in all the buildings (figure 15 a-b).

An almost contemporary example appeared in the Warka of the period. In the most recent phase, Eanna IVa, parallel to Northern LC 5, a construction built with *riemchem* mud-bricks, the *Riemchemgebäude*, was partially built on the *Steinstifttempel*, the Temple of the Stone Cones, testimony of previous generations. After a burning, the building was not used anymore (Collins, 2000: 34). It seems that we are facing a practice of ritual and controlled fires on some buildings of a sacred or religious type during this period (figure 16 a-c).

The southern Jemdet Nasr administrative building, made of *riemchem* bricks, and dated during a phase parallel to the terminal LC 5 of Northern Mesopotamia (Moorey, 1976), appears to have been destroyed by fire (Mackay, 1931). Pictographic tablets were associated with this construction, but this writing of a somewhat later character than that found in Surtepe.

8. The borders of the Uruk Culture in the Middle-Upper Euphrates

The abundant variety of regions and habitats influenced by the Uruk culture, as well as the dispersion of Uruk ceramic, can suggest an exogenous cultural implantation. Uruk already had an early cultural presence in the northern area, and specifically Tiladir Tepe points to a presence from Early Uruk in the Birecik-Carchemish area. Places like Hacinebi could also be evidence of a gradual penetration into the local Chalcolithic material culture

in the area (Butterlin, 1999: 131 ff.). Surtepe is in a strategic position on the river and the raising of public buildings, whether religious or not, was key to the cultural dominance of the surrounding territory during Later Uruk.

The Birecik-Carchemish area can be thought of as the “real” limit or crossroads of direct Uruk control over the north of the Euphrates, on the basis that the percentages in Karababa of typical Uruk elements are different or less than those found in the area of the Tishrin and Tabqa dams in Syria (Algaze, 1993; 2004).

Samsat appears to be the largest site in the Karababa area, with its 17.5 ha (Algaze, 2004: 68), better than 10 ha (Lupton, 1996: 53 table 3.1), and a prolonged temporary presence, as well as extensive and decisive, of Late Uruk material (Özdoğan, 1977: 131; Özten, 1976-1977). In addition, there is evidence of a city-wall built in the early moments of the local Late Uruk phase (Algaze, 1993: 14) (figure 17 a).

There are elements of Samsat that refer to a possible simultaneous construction with some buildings of the Late Uruk epoch of Hassek Höyük, located 40 km north of Samsat, during the phase of Samsat XXIV, whose end of phase coincides with remains of building pavements and the wall of the fortification, with evidence of their destruction (Özguç, 1992). This is, on the other hand, the phase with the largest number of bevelled-rim bowls present in all the Uruk phases of the place. Obsidian artifacts predominate in the later phases of the Uruk presence of Samsat.

Hassek Höyük is currently under the waters of the dam, it was a small place of almost 1.5 ha and 9 m of stratigraphic depth. Hassek is the place in the Karababa region that has the largest excavation in extension at its IV millennium levels.

At its Uruk levels, Hassek V level, the place showed various subphases (Hassek VA-C) with two different, local Uruk and Late Chalcolithic cultural traditions in the same settlement (Behm-Blancke, 1985: 88). This place seemed to be oriented towards the so-called Balikh route (Algaze, 1993: 50), and it has an unquestionable key position, on the left bank of the Euphrates. The end of the Uruk occupation there is supposed to be catastrophic — as it

was in Samsat — due to the remains of burning according to geologists (Behm-Blancke et al., 1992); but despite this and a reorganization of the architecture, the settlement was not completely abandoned after the Late Uruk phase.

Hasek Höyük was provided with an oval wall of almost 2 m thick, and which gave the settlement of the time a “castle” aspect (Behm-Blancke et al., 1992: pl. 31); the city-wall dates from around 3400 BC, its initial construction phase (figure 17 b-c).

Hasek's Haus 1 yielded pottery, stone vessels, bronze needles, bone artifacts, and flint knives. In addition, some elements were found that indicate a ritual meaning; among these, highlighting the bevelled-rim bowls in an inverted position in the foundations of the building next to the almost complete remains of a pig with ashes and charcoal, which suggests a foundation sacrifice. On the other hand, a sunken room was built 2 m below normal ground level. Directly under the foundations of rooms 12, 15 and 16 there was a pit with ash from c. 6 m long and 1.80 m high, to which the beads and remains of coal were associated. An infant grave appeared in pithos, placed a few cm under the pavement of room 12. It consisted of a child under 7 years old, and on the left side of the skeleton with traces of dark red ochre. Calibrated ¹⁴C samples from charred wood and grain tell us that the so-called Haus 1 was built and used during Hasek's 5B phase and is dated to between 3300-3200 BC. One of Hasek's most characteristic activities was the production of lithic tools in a centralized and organized way, especially Canaanite blades (figure 17 d).

The relationships of Surtepe with some cultural elements of Hasek Höyük compel us to review particularities of the Uruk presence in the Anatolian area upstream of the Euphrates, where Hasek Höyük, Karababa area, is based. Due to what was discovered in the levels after LC 5 of Hasek and Squares E40-42 and E20-25 in Surtepe, and that show a maintenance of administrative practices with similar iconography in the post-Uruk/EB1 of both sites, it may have happened some type of narrow relationship between its people for a few generations.

Hasek Höyük does not seem to reflect a collapse of the Uruk system, but its gradual transformation

into another culture; this seems to apply if we also take into account the presence of local hybrid elements in its ceramic assemblage (Helwing, 2000), and in a way demonstrating the gradual geographical limit of the Uruk expansion in the upper Euphrates.

Elsewhere in the Karababa basin area, there was Kurban Höyük, where the techno-ceramic assemblages of the local phases subsequent to the Uruk cultural presence in the area and dating to Early Bronze 1, Kurban VB and VA, have their own features derived from the Uruk-type ceramics of Kurban VI phase (Algaze ed., 1990; Lupton, 1996: 76).

9. Conclusions

One of the main objectives of our research on the archaeological fieldwork is the study of the impact of urban societies in southeastern Anatolia during the 4th and 3rd millennia BC. At Birecik, both Hacinebi and Surtepe were located at a key geographic point to dominate the eastern bank of the Euphrates, and the main river route between Mesopotamia and Anatolia.

In the same left bank of the Euphrates, Tiladir Tepe, with 12 ha and diagnostic elements of Early Uruk, was barely 25 km downstream to contemporaneous settlements of the LC 1-early LC 2 such as Tilbes-Körche or LC 2-3 such as Hacinebi. They presuppose a long temporary contact of the Birecik-Carchemish region with the Uruk koine of southern Mesopotamia.

On the other hand, we could see two main peaks of the Uruk cultural imprint over the Birecik-Carchemish area: the Middle Uruk (LC 3-4) and the later Late Uruk (Terminal LC 5). Not only is the strategy of occupation of the Uruk places in Birecik reminiscent of that of the adjoining places to the north of Urfa, in the Ataturk Dam area, sited on top of the river or on low terraces that border the river, but some elements of material culture present clear similarities. Let us remember that the contiguous area of the Tabqa dam was one where there is a greater concentration of places with Uruk ceramics (Algaze, 2004: 226).

Surtepe at least shows two phases of Uruk occupation in its southern sector, and one of them could be at a transitional moment from LC 5 to EB1. It involves several generations of use of this sector of the tell, by populations of Mesopotamian origin, not specific Anatolian. What was excavated in the Uruk levels of Surtepe E40-47 show that LC 5-EB1 transition did not mean the end or total abandonment of the settlement, but it did presuppose some type of fluctuation in the river level, with significant flood cycles, which must have affected the normal development of the cultures of the Later Prehistory of Surtepe.

A central administrative or control system seems imported from the Uruk culture in Surtepe during the LC 5. In some places of the Birecik-Carchemich subregion, small satellite settlements appear around the supposed double city that acts as a central place during Late Uruk: these are the cases of Kum Ocagi, Shadi Tepe or Sheraga Höyük near Carchemish/Tiladir, and Tilbes Höyük and Zeytinli Bahçe near Surtepe. The small satellite settlements around the central double city, a pattern that responds to some specific intention or function of the Uruk expansion, and is clearly applied to the area, which reveals a presumed “Uruk-minded political domain” and not typical of people from the Local Late Chalcolithic. With Uruk, the leadership becomes more despotic and searches the symbols of the high priest, the monarchy and a social order structured legitimizing their budgets.

As observed by the excavated levels of the Surtepe of the later Late Chalcolithic, the Uruk expansion in the Birecik area during this period had an eminently commercial and redistributive character, although it was impregnated with important ritual (“Uruk type” foundation sacrifices, eye idols) and ideological Uruk elements (seal impressions depicting Mesopotamian images and iconography, tablet with numerical signs from Uruk IV of the Lower and Middle Euphrates). However, distinctive local elements (an ancestral ritual of building sealing from North-Mesopotamian origin; a different predominance of animals within the typical Uruk diet and an excessive number of lithic materials in the archaeological record compared to other places or

even sectors of the site) presuppose a certain local component among the individuals who managed (or “clients” of) that sector of the Uruk city at Surtepe. The amount of lithic material can be explained by a circumstance of storage of goods dedicated to trade or exchange.

Surtepe seems to have carried out during the Uruk phase tasks of an administrative center, or of distribution of lithic and ceramic objects, judging the different origin for the recovered artifacts. Among the activities assigned to that southern sector of the place, we highlight those of administration — entry and exit of goods —, storage of stone tools, and “rituals”; but the absence of spindle-whorls or the elaboration of ceramics or cooking of food stands out. The remains of seal impressions on jars reveal some kind of central warehouse activity in that Surtepe southern area for the period. There is a stone tablet with numerical signs at Square E40. The appearance of sparse unused bevelled rim bowl fragments in this area supports this perception for the use of Squares E40-47 during the local LC 5. Anatolian Late Chalcolithic tradition pottery seems absent in these excavated contexts. Despite its proximity to the riverbank, during the time, there is no evidence of the area as residential or for family use, not even to consider the excavated buildings such as “private merchant houses”.

A striking and revealing fact that stamp seal imprints did not appear in Surtepe’s Late Chalcolithic contexts, could be a further proof that the local cultural element was mostly absent in certain Uruk places.

There are only two periods during the Uruk cultural expansion in which iconography referring to violence are contemplated on administrative artifacts (seal impressions, bullae): at the end of Middle Uruk (LC 4) and at the end of Late Uruk (LC 5). The images of city-walls and burned buildings seems to be typical of those of the LC 5.

The images of power or potential conflict found in Surtepe do not seem typical of the final moments of Late Uruk, since these were characterized by a more explicit violence than those of Surtepe. Rather, it seems an affirmation of the political (and sacred) power already established, in the line of the

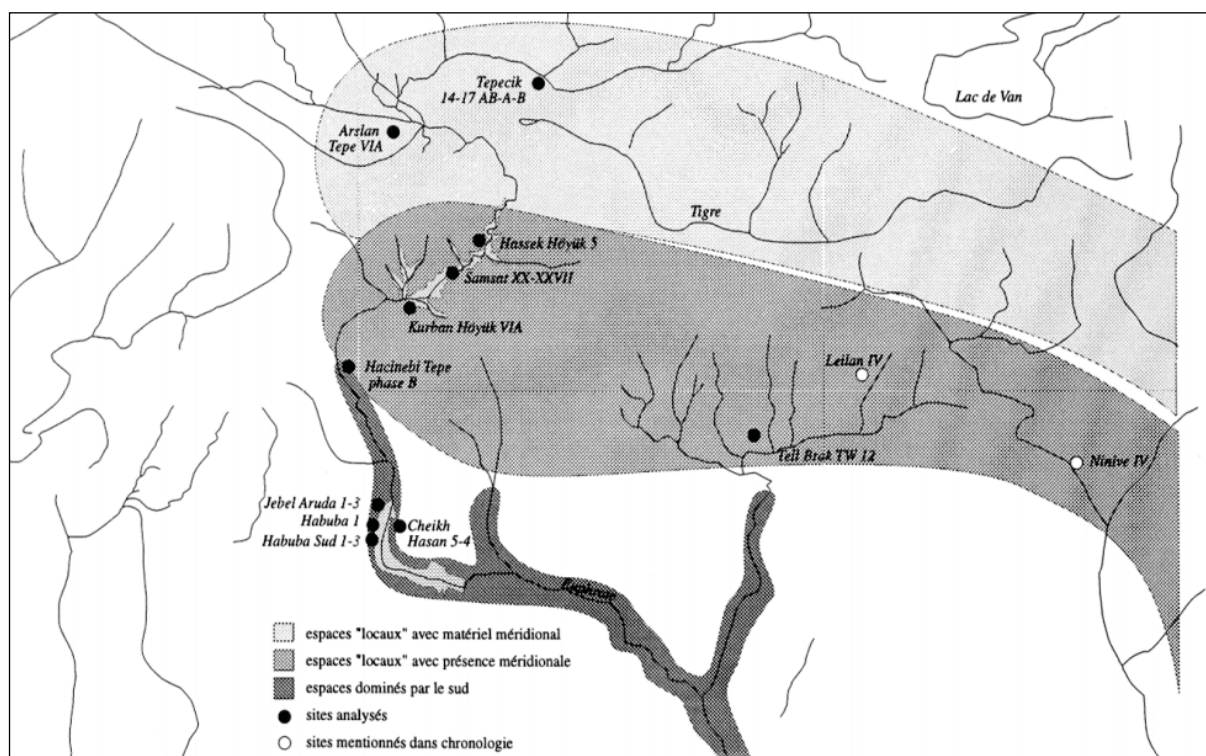


Figure 18. Uruk expansion during LC 4 reaching Hacinebi B2b in the Middle Euphrates and local Late Chalcolithic in the Upper Euphrates with Uruk stations as Hassek Höyük (Butterlin, 1998: 155 fig. 6 based on Lupton, 1996: 67 fig. 3.19)

Figura 18. Expansión de Uruk durante LC 4 alcanzando Hacinebi B2b en el Eufrates medio y Calcolítico tardío local en el Eufrates superior con bases de Uruk como Hassek Höyük (Butterlin, 1998: 155 fig. 6 basado en Lupton, 1996: 67 fig. 3.19)

seal impressions found in Choga Mish, and that is connected with a tradition of the LC 4/Late Middle Uruk (Delougaz and Kantor, 1972: 72, pl. Xd).

There is no representation of prisoners in the Surtepe glyptic, which implies that this destruction in the ritual building may precede Uruk IVc or Susa 18, where it was a more common glyptic motif (Heinrich ed., 1973: 24; Brandes, 1979; Amiet, 1981).

On the other hand, in the iconography of the Late Uruk of the South or LC 5 of the North there is a greater representation of violence than previously, in addition to the presence of city-walls or fortifications in the middle and upper Euphrates, which implies some type of external or internal dissension regarding to the Uruk expansion.

There is pottery in the presumed Surtepe shrine that may refer to a Middle/Late Uruk tradition, but not to Hacinebi's chaff faced, and it leads us to wonder the absence of similar chaff faced materials in this sector of Surtepe. An alternative theory is the occupation of Surtepe immediately after Hacinebi.

Perhaps the “sudden catastrophe” of Surtepe (a flood or rise in the river's waters) did not happen in a single night, and hence the area of the sanctuary was ritually sealed or “destroyed”. This is a point of support to explain the absence of settlement in the direct margins of the river during periods such as LC 3 or post-EB 4, and yet a concentration of greater population in nearby hills (Hacinebi, Tilbes-Körche) or higher points, for some of those periods.

The absence of sling balls of clay or other material in this area of the site is an argument in favour of the hypothesis of destruction not due to elements of warfare. In addition, the large number of stone tools found in a compact location on the other side of an apparent external wall of the sanctuary is proof of accumulation or offering, but not an unexpected destruction by external causes. In this context we must remember that when there is no sudden catastrophe, the sacred elements are hidden, with careful ritual care (Wasilewska, 1993: 478). This would explain the absence of mobile elements in the supposed central room of the Surtepe sanctuary.

The iconography associated with certain special, or monumental, buildings may give us some additional clue about the socio-political events that took place in Mesopotamia at the end of the 4th millennium BC. In this respect, the eye idols seem predominant in the Middle Uruk contexts of northern Mesopotamia (Sheikh Hassan, Hacinebi) and later in places of great significance such as Tell Brak or the Eanna of Warka. But nevertheless, during the Late Uruk they seem absent in many diverse settlements of the Uruk orb, including the North. If found, as in the case of Surtepe, they are in a secondary position or apparently displaced from their original position, perhaps due to their loss during a flight or some episode of iconoclasm or “religious revolution” against this cult.

On the other hand, we could think of the existence of religious ritual archaisms in the Surtepe of the late Chalcolithic, since some of the offering elements (appearance of partial human bones mixed with animal bones) refer to the Neolithic of the middle course of the Euphrates or the Balikh/Urfa area. Other types of archaisms have been noted in the sanctuaries of Tilbes Hoyuk of EB 1-4 (Gil Fuensanta, Mederos and Muminov, 2019) or the place of Tilbes Körche during LC 1/2 (Gil Fuensanta, Mederos and Muminov, 2020). We must remember that religion resists continuous political change (Wasileska, 1993: 478) and the History of the Ancient Near East is the rule, not the exception.

However, at the end of LC 4/Middle Uruk there are destruction of large places in strategic points of the world of the Uruk expansion and its neighbours: Choga Mish in Western Iran, Tell Hamoukar in Syrian Khabur, Tell Hammam et-Turkman in Syrian Balih or even in Tell Brak. There are elements that speak of extreme violence against human beings or victims of a conflagration, despite the apparent absence of burning buildings. Everything seems to indicate that in each strategic sector of a territory where there were two core cities or likely centers of the period, one was destroyed. This appears to be the case for Surtepe in the Birecik-Carchemish area.

The destructions at the end of LC 4 could explain the absence of LC 5 in Hacinebi and the vast majority of places in the Birecik area. The presence

of a subsequent later LC 5 phase in Surtepe could be a presence of new coming inhabitants, if we consider the presence of a sterile level of occupation, hiatus that appeared in a few squares of Surtepe.

Regarding the almost absolute prominence of Uruk materials along several strata, two different main phases (LC 4-5 and later) in the same sector of Surtepe, and different types of buildings, we can infer that:

1. It was an area controlled by Uruk populations related to the south of Mesopotamia for generations and replaced the post-Ubaid locals of LC 1-2, or
2. They were local merchants with a great cultural, social or family link with the Uruk culture for generations and were in charge of distributing upstream a series of imported Uruk ceramics, as well as the circulation of high-quality stone or metal elements.

The second hypothesis may have overtones of reality considering the centralizing tendency around Surtepe-Hacinebi area in Birecik over the centuries, from the LC 1-2 onwards, as a likely production/distribution area for specific materials (bitumen, stone, metal, ceramics, etc.). It could even be applied to other apparently trivial artifacts within the archaeological record of Tilbes or Surtepe, such as the continuous presence of obsidian, although in already prepared objects, and never with the presence of obsidian cores.

Nothing discovered in the Late Chalcolithic 5 levels of Surtepe contradicts or breaks the tradition of local people or an apparently indigenous elite controlling this sector since LC 1, as evidenced in Tilbes-Körche or Hacinebi. But in the case of LC 4-5 in Surtepe, it is not shown that the settlement in the Birecik area was independent of the Uruk exchange network, but rather intricately linked to this system, its ideology and even its important part as a channel is presumed. It could be a place for the intermediate distribution between the last Uruk places upstream (Samsat-Hassek) and prime points downstream such as Carchemish or the Aruda-Habuba-Kannas axis (figure 18).

The presence of the iconography of Uruk and the South-Mesopotamian world, in addition to the techno-ceramic assemblages, suggest a predominance and cultural colonization of Uruk in the later Late Chalcolithic levels of Surtepe. Its lack of rupture in the post LC 5-EB1 settlement presupposes that the previous destruction of the building with religious attributes (Square E44) could well have been a punctual event or specific ritual, since afterwards a similar culture seems to be maintained in the Early Bronze 1.

In Surtepe there are indications of a terminal phase of LC 5, such as Eanna IVa of Warka or Susa 17 in Khuzistan, as well as a very early Early Bronze 1, as found in other places in the Birecik area such as Tilbes Höyük or Zeytinli Bahçe Höyük. It is an archaeological moment after the destruction of Habuba Kabira/Kannas, Hassek Hoyuk, Jebel Aruda, and that increases in the occupation of places in Birecik (Tilbes Höyük is occupied again since LC 1/2) could have some connection with this fact.

Apparently due to some key typological parallels, such as *antequem* and *postquem*, of various ceramics of the presumed sanctuary found in Surtepe E43-47, it may belong to a terminal LC 5 phase; that is, that transitional phase from Uruk to EBA 1 that appeared in the late 1990s in Tilbes Höyük and Zeytinli Bahçe Höyük, and which apparently is a phenomenon located in the Carchemish-Birecik subregion.

The bowls found in E44 of Surtepe are local adaptations almost truncated conical and string-cut, which coexist with the bevelled rim bowls, but of higher quality and technical semblance, which seemed not to abound among the samples found in August 1999 in the E4b area by Tilbes Höyük. This makes us wonder if it is due to two different moments of this terminal phase of LC 5, or because of a different functionality for the Uruk Terminal settlements of Tilbes Höyük and Surtepe. From what we see in the long and long *postquem* EBA 1 sequence of Surtepe, these wheel-made bowls gradually replace the beveled rim bowls there, before a flood occurs that leaves the settlement of the southern sector of Surtepe until the EBA 3-4 period.

Other factors such as the links of the jar seal impression with iconography rooted in the “realism of

Uruk images” but far removed from the EBA 1-type geometric stamps also found in Surtepe in the Squares E20-25 with EB1 contexts; and that resemble the Hassek glyptic during the EBA 1 (C. Gerber, pers. comm. June 2001). Or that the ocular figure, is so different from other regional eye idols, despite the far parallels with a few urukian exemplars, refer us to social and religious events after the LC 5 of Habuba-Kannas-Aruda but prior to the EBA 1 world of the Turkish Middle and Upper Euphrates.

Let us remember that in spite the presence of eye idols in northern Mesopotamia from Middle Uruk times, there is a concentration of these images buried in a context of religious building during the terminal moments of the Uruk culture in Tell Brak, and what if well an important institution for the city may not even be the main deity of the place (Emberling, 2002: 84-85).

It is a Uruk-minded world, foreshadowing some of the characteristics of the EBA 1 so abundant in the Birecik-Carchemish area; and that due to the *postquem* EBA 1 parallels of Surtepe E40-47 it is present in places in the Karababa area such as Hassek Höyük, Kurban Höyük and Samsat. But whose technological and typological Uruk origin is rooted apparently in the Uruk places of the Tabqa area such as Habuba Kabira, Tell Kannas or Jebel Aruda.

The technological and typological derivation, from specimens in the Tabqa area, of the techno-ceramic complex of the Uruk Terminal in Tilbes Höyük and Surtepe as well as the population increase in Birecik during this phase and the entire following period EB 1 can be a point of support for our old theory of a population transfer from that area of Habuba-Kannas-Aruda to Birecik after the events during the LC 5. In Surtepe also the presence of a tablet with numerical signs and parallels in Jebel Aruda means another link for this hypothesis of a certain close connection of people and culture of both subregions for that specific archaeological moment.

That large *post-Uruk* Terminal subregional settlement in Surtepe and other places in Birecik is also a support of the ritual fire thesis of the building/shrine discovered at E44-47, since there is no population hiatus *postquem*.

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