THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ AND ADJACENT REGIONS

Edited by

Konstantinos Kopanias and John MacGinnis
## Contents

List of Figures and Tables........................................................................................................................iv

Authors’ details ........................................................................................................................................... xii

Preface............................................................................................................................................................ xvii

Archaeological investigations on the Citadel of Erbil: Background, Framework and Results................. 1
*Dara AL YAQOONI, Abdullah KHORSHEED KHADER, Sangar MOHAMMED,*  
*Saber HASSAN HUSSEIN, Mary SHEPPERSON and John MACGINNIS*

The site of Bazyan: historical and archaeological investigations............................................................ 11
*Narmin AMIN ALI and Vincent DEROCHE*

Short notes on Chalcolithic pottery research: The pottery sequences of Tell Nader (Erbil) and Ashur (Qal’at Sherqat) ............................................................................................................ 19
*Claudia BEUGER*

New Evidence of Paleolithic Occupation in the Western Zagros foothills: Preliminary report of cave and rockshelter survey in the Sar Qaleh Plain in the West of Kermanshah Province, Iran ........................................................................................................... 29
*Fereidoun BIGLARI and Sonia SHIDRANG*

Activities of Sapienza-University of Rome in Iraqi Kurdistan: Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Duhok .......... 49
*Carlo Giovanni CERETI and Luca COLLIVA*

The Achaemenid Period Occupation at Tell ed-Daim in Iraqi Kurdistan ................................................. 57
*John CURTIS and Farouk AL-RAWI*

‘Inscription D’ from Sennacherib’s Aqueduct at Jerwān: Further Data and Insights................................. 65
*Frederick Mario FALES and Roswitha DEL FABBRO*

The Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Overview on the Pottery and Settlement Patterns of the 3rd Millennium BC in the Northern Region of Iraqi Kurdistan .......... 75
*Katia GAVAGNIN*

Animal husbandry and other human-animal interactions in Late Ubaid-Early Uruk northern Iraq: the faunal remains from the 2012 excavation season at Tell Nader................................. 87
*Angelos HADJIKOUMIS*

Hawsh-Kori and Char-Ghapi: Why the Sassanids built two monuments in the west of Kermanshah and the south of Iraqi Kurdistan ........................................................................................................ 101
*Ali HOZHABRI*

Across millennia of occupation: the Land of Nineveh Archaeological project in Iraqi Kurdistan: The prehistory and protohistory of the Upper Tigris rediscovered ..................................... 125
*Marco IAMONI*

The Iraqi Institute: Education for Archaeological Research and Conservation ....................................... 135
*Jessica JOHNSON, Abdullah KHORSHEED and Brian Michael LIONE*

Copyright Archaeopress and the authors 2016
Two seasons of excavations at Kunara (Upper Tanjaro): An Early and Middle Bronze Age city ...... 139
Christine KEPINSKI and Aline TENU

Excavations of the Chalcolithic Occupations at Salat Tepe on the Upper Tigris, Southeastern Anatolia ................................................................................................................. 147
Tatsundo KOIZUMI, Minoru YONEDA, Shigeru ITOH and Koichi KOYABASHI

Insights into the settlement history of Iraqi Kurdistan from the Upper Greater Zab Archaeological Reconnaissance Project ............................................................... 163
Rafał KOLIŃSKI

Two Ottoman Trade Buildings (Qaisariya) in the Bazaar of Erbil from Building Archaeology to Refurbishment Planning ............................................................. 173
Dietmar KURAPKAT

Ninevite 5 – culture or regional pottery style? .................................................................. 181
Dorota Ławecka

Back to the Land of Muşafir/Ardini: Preliminary report on fieldwork (2005-2012) ............ 189
Dlshad MARF

New Researches on the Assyrian Heartland: The Bash Tapa Excavation Project ............... 201
Lionel MARTI and Christophe NICOLLE

Materials from French Excavations in Erbil Area (2011-2013): Qasr Shemamok ............ 209
Maria Grazia MASETTI-ROUAULT and Ilaria CALINI

Current Investigations into the Early Neolithic of the Zagros Foothills of Iraqi Kurdistan .......... 219
Roger MATTHEWS, Wendy MATTHEWS and Kamal Rasheed RAHEEM

About Bakr Awa .................................................................................................................. 229
Peter A. Miglus

Magnetic investigations in the Shahrizor Plain: Revealing the unseen in survey prospections ...... 241
Simone MÜHL and Jörg FASSBINDER

The Bazaar of Erbil within the Context of Islamic Trade Routes and Trade Buildings ........... 249
Martina MÜLLER-WIENER and Anne MOLLENHAUER

Halaf Settlement in the Iraqi Kurdistan: the Shahrizor Survey Project .............................. 257
Olivier NIEUWENHUYSE, Takahiro ODAKA and Simone MÜHL

Contextualizing Arbīl: Medieval urbanism in Adiabene .................................................. 267
Karel NOVÁČEK

Filling the Gap: The Upper Tigris Region from the Fall of Nineveh to the Sasanians. Archaeological and Historical Overview Through the Data of the Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project .......................................................................................... 277
ROCCO PALERMO

Satu Qala: an Assessment of the Stratigraphy of the Site ................................................ 297
Cinzia PAPPI
Helawa: A New Northern Ubaid/Late Chalcolithic Site in the Erbil Plain ........................................ 309
Luca PEYRONEL, Agnese VACC and Gıóia ZENONI

From the banks of the Upper Tigris River to the Zagros Highlands. The first season (2013) of the Tübingen Eastern Ḫabur Archaeological Survey ............................................................... 323
Peter PFÄLZNER and Paola SCONZO

Gre Amer, Batman, on the Upper Tigris: A Rescue Project in the Ilısu Dam Reservoir in Turkey ........................................................................................................... 333
Gül PULHAN and Stuart BLAYLOCK

In the Neo-Assyrian Border March of the Palace Herald: Geophysical Survey and Salvage Excavations at Gird-i Bazar and Qalat-i Dinka (Peshdar Plain Project 2015) ........................................................... 353
Karen RADNER, Andrei AȘANDULESE, Jörg FASSBINDER, Tina GREENFIELD, Jean-Jacques HERR, Janoscha KREPPNER and Andrea SQUITIERI

New investigations at Shanidar Cave, Iraqi Kurdistan ...................................................................... 369
Tim REYNOLDS, William BOISMIER, Lucy FARR, Chris HUNT, Dlshad ABDUMUTALB and Graeme BARKER

Materials from French excavations in the Erbil area (2010): Kilik Mishik ........................................ 373
Olivier ROUAILT and Ilaria CALINI

Kurd Qaburstan, A Second Millennium BC Urban Site: First Results of the Johns Hopkins Project ........................................................................................................ 385
Glenn M. SCHWARTZ

The Sirwan (Upper Diyala) Regional Project – First Results ............................................................. 403
Tevfik Emre ŞERIFOĞLU, Claudia GLATZ, Jesse CASANA and Shwkr MUHAMMED HAYDAR

Tracking early urbanism in the hilly flanks of Mesopotamia – three years of Danish archaeological investigations on the Rania Plain .............................................................. 411
Tim Boaz Bruun SKULDBØL and Carlo COLANTONI

The Activities of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Iraqi Kurdistan (MAIKI): The survey area and the new evidence from Paikuli blocks documentation ........................................ 417
Gianfilippo TERRIBILI and Alessandro TILIA

The Kani Shaie Archaeological Project ............................................................................................... 427
André TOMÉ, Ricardo CABRAL and Steve RENETTE

Philological and scientific analyses of cuneiform tablets housed in Sulaimaniya (Slemani) Museum ...................................................................................................................... 435
Chikako WATANABE

‘Carrying the glory of the great battle’. The Gaugamela battlefield: ancient sources, modern views, and topographical problems ................................................................. 437
Kleanthis ZOUBOULKIS
Satu Qala: an Assessment of the Stratigraphy of the Site

Cinzia PAPPI

The view of historical developments within the area of Idu, identified with Sâtu Qalâ on the Lower Zâb in Iraqi Kurdistan (Van Soldt 2008), and its hinterland have so far been closely connected to available information on the imperial expansion of Assyria in the region. Through the support of the Directorate of Antiquities of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq, an international team consisting of the universities of Leiden (2010-12), Leipzig (2010-14), the Salahaddin University of Erbil (2010-12), and the University of Pennsylvania (2013) was able to conduct several seasons of fieldwork at Sâtu Qalâ. Data from this fieldwork can now provide a much wider historical sequence for the settlement.

The historical data can be correlated with the archeological evidence for Middle Assyrian settlements along the river: Tall Mâhâzî, identified with the provincial capital Turša; Tall ’Allî, identified with Atmannu; and the still unidentified settlement of Tall Bâzmûsiyân in the Râniya plain. These have revealed that Assyria controlled the valley of the Lower Zâb at least as far as the Râniya plain from the reign of Tukultî-Ninurta I to Tiglath-pilesîer I (Pappi 2012). The extension of Idu’s catchment area still remains unknown. However, according to Middle Assyrian records, the provincial center of Idu played an active role in political and economic relations between Assyria and this region as a central hub for the redistribution of agricultural products. Both the epigraphic and archaeological evidence gained from the fieldwork at Satu Qala revealed that Idu served not only as a Middle Assyrian provincial capital, but also as the seat of a local dynasty ruling between the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 9th century BC. The seven local kings of this dynasty (Van Soldt et al. 2013, 210-3) built upon the political and economic collapse of the Middle Assyrian Empire at the end of the reign of Tiglath-pilesîer I. A royal inscription of Adad-nârû II refers to the Assyrian reoccupation of Idu in the early phase of the Neo-Assyrian period at the beginning of the 9th century BC (RIMA 2.0.99.2:34), suggesting a terminus ante quem for the end of the dynasty. A fragmentary inscription on a wall plaque, found reused in a later domestic context (SQ 1064.301=SQ 11-T14 cf. Van Soldt et al. 2013, 204 fig. 14), confirms the Assyrian institutional presence at the site, consisting of a royal building constructed by Ashurnasirpal II. The most recent Assyrian reference (RIMA 3.0.102.6 ii 10-12) attests to the conquest of a number of cities belonging to Idu, but located in the land of Zamua during the reign of Shalmaneser III. (Van Soldt et al. 2013, 216-21)

The evidence sketched above is related primarily to the history of Idu in connection with Assyria. The evidence from primary contexts excavated at Satu Qala provides additional insights into the historical episodes dating before and after the episodes known by the Assyrian records. This study will assess the stratigraphic data from excavations and organize the excavated materials into occupational levels. These data, combined with the preliminary results of the analysis of the ceramic collections and with those of the radiocarbon datings of some of the organic samples, collected during season 2011 and taken to Europe in 2013, will suggest a more precise dating for the occupational sequence of the site. In particular, I will discuss the urban layout of the site and its occupational processes during the Late and Post-Assyrian periods within a wider archaeological and political context.

Description of the Site and Excavation Areas

The site of Satu Qala is located 70 km south-east of Erbil (Fig. 1). It consists of an oval tell, heavily eroded on its the provincial center. For an overview of Idu in the Middle Assyrian administrative records cf. Van Soldt et al. 2013, 217-8. A study on the reconstruction of a model of the economic network of Satu Qala based on the textual sources and the spatial analysis is in preparation.

7 University of Leipzig (Germany) until 2015.
1 I here take the opportunity to thank the General Directorate of Antiquities of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq and the Directorate of Antiquities of Erbil for their generous support. Specifically, I would like to thank Mr. Abubaker Othman Zendin (Mala’awat), General Director of the Kurdish Regional Government, Mr. Haydar Hussein, Former Director of the Directorate of Erbil (2010-13), and Mr. Nader Babaker Mohammad, current Director of the Directorate of Erbil. I would also like to thank Mr. Ahmad Yodat, director of the Museum of Ancient Civilizations of Erbil, and all his staff for having hosted our work in 2013, and Mr. Sarkawt Sofîy, manager of the Department of Antiquities of Koya, as well as Mr. Hemin Namn for having generously given us the permission to access the materials stored in the Qishla of Koya during our several visits. Thanks are also due to Lauren Ristvet for sharing preliminary data on the ceramic typology and to Janoscha Krepnner and Rocco Palermo for bibliographical references.
2 The project, supervised initially by W. H. Van Soldt (2010-12) and later by C. Pappi (since 2012), was mainly supported by the Netherland Organization for Scientific Research NWO in 2010-11, by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation from 2010-13. In 2013 L. Ristvet with her team of the University of Pennsylvania joined the project as co-director. The study season in 2013 was also supported by the University of Pennsylvania and by the American Schools of Oriental Research.
3 The systematic delivery of offerings to the temple in Assur most likely denotes a regular economic exchange between the capital and
southeastern side by a branch of the Lower Zāb (Fig. 2), while the northeastern slope is visibly worn by rivulets caused by the winter rain and by regular digging. The latter serves mostly to supply building materials for the seasonal upkeep of the nearby mud-brick houses. The main mound, covering an area of two hectares, is almost completely covered by a modern village of mud-brick structures, which continues at the foot of the mound along the northern and northeastern slopes. Since 2011 the systematic construction of concrete buildings and, more recently, of fish ponds has almost completely covered the area of the lower town. Inspection of satellite imagery suggests the presence of two different landscape features surrounding the main tell which might be interpreted as the outline of a lower town. Confirmation of this hypothesis is made difficult by the increasing urbanism. However, the existence of an extensive lower town is already suggested by the sporadic discovery of pottery and other archaeological finds, now stored at the local Directorate of Antiquities in Koya, by the inhabitants during modern construction.

Surface investigations in Operation D, located on the southwestern slope of the mound, revealed that the earliest occupational phase of Satu Qala dates back to the Neolithic (Van Soldt et al. 2013, 207-8). However, the archaeological evidence obtained from Operations A and B, located on the northern and northeastern upper part of the mound (Van Soldt et al. 2013, 201-7), indicates a sequence of functional changes of both areas of the site. This evidence consists mainly of stratified Late and Post-Assyrian domestic contexts, followed by alternating levels of graveyards and defensive structures which can most likely be dated from the Post-Assyrian to the Achaemenid Periods. Unfortunately, both areas are also characterized by systematic extensive digging, modern pits, leveling, and rebuilding activities.

A Stratigraphic Assessment

Operation A has provided the best overview of the stratigraphic sequence of the latest occupational phases so far, with a sequence of eight occupational levels (A0
to A7, Fig. 3), while operation B has provided five (B0 to B4, Fig. 4). Occupational levels have been differentiated according to the functional use of the area. Correlations between both operations can be suggested, but not confirmed. They provided non-continuous coverage for the diachronic gap from the 7th BC to the most recent episodes of the history of the region. The earliest phases in both operations include materials dating to the Late and Post-Assyrian periods. A closer typological investigation, including data from the petrographic analysis of the different fabric types, is still in progress.4

Late and Post-Assyrian Levels: A7 and B4

The earliest excavated evidence in both operations, designated as A7 and B4, dates back to the final phase of the Neo-Assyrian Period. In operation A, phase A7b (cf. Van Soldt et al. 2013, 233 fig. 12) consists of two separate domestic structures, named Buildings 2 and 3, connected by a sloping surface. This surface is paved with pebbles of different sizes mixed with fragments of baked bricks, mostly reused from earlier contexts.5 Building 2 originally had two rooms, named A and B. This internal layout, belonging to a sub-phase A7a, does not persist into a later reuse of the building, here assigned to a sub-phase A7b. The latter is characterized by a domestic unit without partition. Here, an almost complete globular storage jar standing in the north-western corner of the room and a domestic installation made of four baked bricks forming a squared platform lying on the floor were found in situ. The latter can most likely be identified

4 A study of the ceramic typology is in preparation. L. Ristvet (University of Pennsylvania) generously shared preliminary data on typological developments in the ceramic collections of Sâtu Qalâ.

The masonry of both structures reveals evidence for the re-use of construction materials, including decorated tiles originally belonging to the architectural decoration systems of the dynasty of Idu and to the palace of Ashurnasirpal II. The ceramic materials found in buildings 2 and 3 of the Assyrian period (7th–6th Century BC) are of note.

6 A contemporary parallel was found at Tall Abū Ḏāhir, Phase 11.5; cf. Simpson 2007, 84-5 with previous bibliography.

---

### Level Archaelogical Feature Primary Evidence for Dating Date

**A 0**
Modern village after the Anfal Campaign
Material culture. Personal interview with villagers
After 1989

**A 1**
Modern village before the Anfal Campaign
Before 1989

**A 2**
Modern village before the Anfal Campaign – silos
20th Century AD

**A 3a**
Domestic Structure – Building 1
AMS radiocarbon dating of bone sample from Burial 1017
750 BC (10.2%) 680 BC 670 BC (3.1%) 640 BC 560 BC (82.1%) 370 BC
6th-4th Centuries BC (?)

**A 3b**
Burials
AMS radiocarbon dating of bone sample from Burial 1045
790 BC (95.4%) 390 BC
6th-4th Centuries BC (?)

**A 4**
Domestic Structure – paved floor related to pyrotechnic structures
Late and Post-Assyrian Period (7th-6th Century BC)

**A 5**
Burials
AMS radiocarbon dating of bone sample from Burial 1045
790 BC (95.4%) 390 BC
6th-4th Centuries BC (?)

**A 6**
Monumental Structure
Ceramic collection
Late and Post-Assyrian Period (7th-6th Century BC)

**A 7a**
Domestic Structure – Building 2
Ceramic collection
Late and Post-Assyrian Period (7th-6th Century BC)

**A 7b**
Domestic Structure – Building 2 and 3
Ceramic collection
Late and Post-Assyrian Period (7th-6th Century BC)

---

**Figure 3. Occupational levels of operation A.**

---

**Figure 4. Occupational levels of operation B.**

---

---

---
represent a homogenous collection dating to the Late and Post-Assyrian Periods. The collections consist mainly of open shapes, with some examples of storage jars of different sizes with beaded and squared rims, well attested elsewhere in the Late Assyrian repertoire (e.g. Hausleiter 2010, fig. 103, FG 3.3-6). Common shapes include wide-neck ridged jars, for which the closest parallels are known from the materials of Khirbet Qasrij (Curtis 1989, fig. 35-6, 210 and 218). Globular and squat cooking pots with simple (Hausleiter 2010, fig. 19, TK 1R1) or folded rims (Curtis 1989, fig. 41, 287) are attested as well. Open shapes such as bowls (Fig. 5) were found in some quantity in the inner spaces of Buildings 2 and 3. These find parallels in the plain pottery tradition of Assyria in later periods. A good example is provided by bowls with inverted and thickened rims, with close parallels among the materials of both levels 3 and 4 of Khirbet Khatuniyeh and in the pottery collection of Khirbet Qasrij (Curtis and Green 1997, 88; Curtis 1989, 47).

In Operation B, phase B4 yielded a domestic space as well, almost contemporary to A7. The architectural context is, however, almost entirely absent.Collapsed materials, consisting of mudbricks, baked bricks, stones, and burnt remains of bulk, covered an assemblage of storage and cooking vessels, most likely leaning on a poorly preserved pisé wall running northeast-southwest along the southern section of the excavation area. The radiocarbon analysis of a charcoal sample provided a dating between the 8th and the 6th centuries BC. The pottery assemblage (Fig. 6) consists mainly of closed shapes, including storage jars of different sizes, e.g. tall straight-sided jars with knob-shaped base (cf. Curtis and Green 1997, 90 and fig. 42; Hausleiter 2010, 324), medium-sized jars with rounded body and base (cf. Curtis and Green 1997, 90 and fig. 41), ovoid and globular body pots, ridged on the short neck, with beaded (cf. Curtis and Green 1997, fig. 47, 218-21; Hausleiter 2010, 327 and fig. 117, TGi R1) or folded rims (Hausleiter 2010, 327 and fig. 117, TGi R4). Both of the latter types also occur within the collections of Khirbet Qasrij (Curtis 1989, fig. 35, 207 and 209).

The radiocarbon age was obtained through Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) of a charcoal sample from L. 3138. The analysis, conducted by the Center of Radiocarbon Dating of the University of Salento (Italy), refers to 2574±40, calibrated: 820 BC (62.6%) 730 BC, 650 BC (24.8%) 740 BC, 690 BC (8%) 540 BC.
Historical Transitions and Urban Change

Although the pottery materials does not present consistent changes, later occupational levels reveal a functional change in both areas denoting a reconfiguration of the urban landscape of the site. Alternating fortification structures and graveyards replaced both domestic contexts.

**Levels A6 and A5**

A monumental structure, most likely a wall, almost 3m wide, was built to follow the general plan of the earlier structures of phase A7 and seals the whole area (cf. Van Soldt et al. 2013, 233 fig. 11). This structure was again roughly built through the re-use of materials, including both baked bricks with incised lines and bricks bearing inscriptions of the local kings Bā’īlānu and Erištienni. It was later dismantled and leveled already in antiquity. Unfortunately, the ceramic materials belonging to this level reveal no particular innovations. The area next underwent a further functional change. Phase A5 consists of a graveyard, with three burials cut directly into A6. Two of the bodies, identified as two female adults and a child, were buried in crouched position without goods. The radiocarbon analysis of a bone sample, indicating a date between the 8th and the 5th centuries BC, is too imprecise to provide a more accurate chronological sequence for the area.

---

A report of the osteological evidence of all the burials of Satu Qala is in preparation by Megan Luthern (Temple University) for the final publication.

The radiocarbon age was obtained through Accelerator Mass Spectometry (AMS) of a bone sample from L. 1045.2. The analysis, conducted by the Center of Radiocarbon Dating of the University of
Levels B3 and B2

In operation B, a small group of three burials, here designated B3, was cut into the collapsed structure, here designated B4. The graveyard consists of two different sub-phases, named B3a and B3b, respectively. The older burial, here named under sub-phase B3b, was cut directly into the collapse in a shallow pit marked by a few boulders (Van Soldt et al. 2013, fig. 19). Unfortunately, the fragmentary preservation of pelvis and cranium do not allow for an estimate of sex or age. However, the analysis of the teeth, combined with the presence of an iron blade (SO 11-04) laid across the pelvis as burial gift, suggests that the body should belong to a male adult. Radiocarbon analysis of bone samples suggest, as for A5, a date range between the 8th and the 5th centuries BC. A similar deposition habit, the same posture, and the same gift can be noticed in the record of Late Assyrian burials of Khirbet Shireena in the Eski Mosul area, while similar burials at Assur, presenting a similar posture, usually include a wider range of funerary goods (Haller 1954, 12-5; Hauser 2012, 144-7). Two further burials, here assigned to a different sub-phase, B3a, were cut into a later surface. This most likely resulted from the continuing degradation of the structures of Level B4. Each burial contained the body of a child found in flexed position. The body belonging to burial 3124 was contained by two large jar fragments belonging to different jars, closed by a baked brick. Grave gifts include a bronze bracelet and earrings (Van Soldt et al. 2013, 206 and fig. 18). The radiocarbon analysis suggests a date for grave 3127 between the 7th and the beginning of the 4th century BC. A similar child burial is attested below the earliest Hellenistic level at Nimrud (Haller 1954, 12-5; Hauser 2012, 144-7). Two further burials, here assigned to a different sub-phase, B3a, were cut into a later surface. This most likely resulted from the continuing degradation of the structures of Level B4. Each burial contained the body of a child found in flexed position. The body belonging to burial 3124 was contained by two large jar fragments belonging to different jars, closed by a baked brick. Grave gifts include a bronze bracelet and earrings (Van Soldt et al. 2013, 206 and fig. 18). The radiocarbon analysis suggests a date for grave 3127 between the 7th and the beginning of the 4th century BC. A similar child burial is attested below the earliest Hellenistic level at Nimrud. A massive mudbrick structure, related to a sequence of four trodden floors corresponding to four sub-phases, named B2a-d, was built on the small graveyard of Level B3. The related surfaces are not associated with any particular archaeological features. However, a preliminary analysis of the pottery collections provided several examples of jars and pots with rolled over rims, finding parallels in the materials of Khirbet Qasrij (Curtis 1989, 48-48 and fig. 37, 227-33) as well as in Level 2 of Khirbet Khutnijeh (Curtis and Green 1997, fig. 63, 451-3).

Levels A4-A3

Operation A again changes its functional use in the upper levels. The main archaeological features of level A4 include evidence of a floor, partly paved with baked bricks. This has unfortunately been highly disturbed by modern pits, but can still be securely connected to domestic installations, including an oven, a fire place, and a number of pits, indicating an outdoor area. Biconical spindle whorls and loom weights found on the surface of the level suggest that the area was associated with the small-scale, domestic production of textiles. Although the following occupational phase, designated A3, is also associated with domestic production, the layout changed drastically. The area was again leveled with mudbricks. A new building, designated Building 1, consisted of at least two rooms and most likely extended for at least 10 m southwards. A group of three graves belongs to this phase. These were cut into the surface outside the building and bear no gifts. Although modern disturbances have led to a very poor state of preservation, the radiocarbon analysis on a sample dates the grave to a period between the 6th and the 4th centuries BC. Unfortunately, due to a lack of documentation of the fieldwork in 2010, the data to be gained by the analysis of the ceramic collections is currently not available.

The Recent History of the Village

Finally, the three most recent levels are dated to the modern history of the village. Phase A2 is characterized by an open yard with the several siloes, while A1 and A0 represent levels dating to the last decades and directly reflect urban changes connected to episodes in the recent history of Iraq. A destruction level is also well attested in Operation B, clearly marking the transition between B1, which consisted of a traditional bakery dating to the 1980s.

New Data and Perspectives for a Historical Reconstruction

The data, collected in the two field-seasons 2010 and 2011, provide a wealth of evidence for the reconstruction of historical developments of the site and its region. Both had been almost completely unknown until 2008. This evidence contributed in particular to two largely obscure topics of the first millennium BC in the region between Erbil and the Zagros chain: (1) the international policy of the early phase of the history of the Neo-Assyrian Empire; and (2) the historical developments during the Late and Post-Assyrian periods, the main focus of this study.

The radiocarbon dates were obtained with Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) of a bone sample of L. 1017.2, conducted by the Center of Radiocarbon Dating of the University of Salento (Italy). The calibrated age of 2377±45 reveals a date included between 560 BC and 370 BC (82.1%).
Developments in the Political Landscape of Assyria

The domestic architecture of levels A7 and B4 and their related materials mainly attest to activities linked to the consumption, preparation, and storage of food, in addition to small-scale textile production, within the context of a locally based subsistence economy. These can most likely be dated to the late 7th and 6th centuries BC. The economic frame hardly matches the economic picture suggested by the earlier Assyrian records in the Late Bronze Age. Furthermore, the rich architectural elements belonging to institutional buildings of older settlement phases, dating to the 10th and 9th century BC, were consistently found decontextualized in the masonry of domestic buildings of later levels. In combination with the lack of evidence for an Assyrian institutional presence in the 7th Century BC, their re-use highlights the discontinuity of Idu within the Assyrian institutional and economic developments in the flourishing phase of the Empire.

The data from the earliest excavated levels at Satu Qala thus raise questions about the changing urban landscape along the middle valley of the Lower Zāb in the Iron Age and, secondly, about the role of Idu within the Neo-Assyrian provincial system.

The drastic change of the urban layout at Satu Qala at least partly reflects the settlement patterns suggested for the Neo-Assyrian periphery: a dense rural hinterland composed of small centers. This pattern finds several parallels in case studies conducted in the Syrian and Iraqi Ježirah, as well in the sample areas recently investigated in the plain of Erbil (Ur et al., 2013: 102 with previous bibliography). The economic and political developments of Satu Qala in the late phase of the Assyrian empire can be better explained within this wider historical and archaeological context. The lack of Assyrian institutional presence both led to and reflected the decline of Idu’s political role. It also confirms the dissolution of the infrastructure system related to both the provincial center, which had existed until the 11th century BC, and to the peripheral royal ‘palace’ built in the 9th century BC. Both can be ascribed to the location of Sātū Qala as a communicative node along the Lower Zāb. Similarly, later changes can be ascribed to a combination of political and military events, including: (1) the first campaign of Ashurnasirpal II; (2) the Assyrian control of the pass of Bābītu; and (3) the foundation of the new capital at Kalḫu. All of these represent policies initiated by Ashurnasirpal II and consolidated by Shalmaneser III. The combination of these events served to shift Assyrian focus from the region of Idu and the northern bank of the middle valley of the Lower Zāb to regions closer to the imperial frontiers, for example the region close to the pass between Qala Dizeh and Sar Dašt to the East and the region of Zamua to the Southeast. The consequences of the above mentioned historical events can be summarized in the following three points.

1. The increasing Assyrian control of the regions located beyond the land of Idu, i.e. Tummê and Ḥaburû (Radner 2006: 51), led to the gradual annexation of the region included between the chain of the Ḥabb as-Sulṭān Dāġ and the Chain Magistrale (Levine 1974: 6 Fig. 1), corresponding mainly to the Rāniya Plain, into the imperial territories. This process, initiated after the first campaign of Ashurnasirpal II (e.g. RIMA 2, A.0. 101.1 i 43-58; campaign Ia cf. Liverani 1992: 19-28 and 87), shifted the Assyrian frontier further east. A recently discovered Neo-Assyrian text, found in the region east of the Rāniya plain and dating to the end of the 8th Century BC (Radner 2015), refers to the Palace Herald. The text thus supports Liverani’s suggestion for the location of the Province of the Herald in the region of the upper valley of the Lower Zāb (Liverani 2004: 218; Radner 2015: 195-6) and demonstrates Assyrian institutional presence close to the border with the territories controlled by the West Iranian states. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence gained by the investigations conducted before the construction of the Dokān dam (as-Soof 1970: 66-7) reveals a widespread Neo-Assyrian presence in the Rāniya plain. As a consequence, the territorial shift of the political and strategic interests of Assyria towards the Zagros, which developed gradually after the campaigns of Ashurnasirpal II and which were likely meant to establish greater control of the pass through the Zagros between Qala Dizeh and Sar Dašt, would explain the simultaneous decline of Idu/Satu Qala.

2. The subsequent Assyrian conquest of the pass of Bābītu, the modern Bazyan (RIMA 2, A.0.101 ii 23-31; cf. Liverani 1992: 90), also opened the route towards the heartland of Zamua, representing an insidious enemy which has been annexed into Assyria only under Shalmaneser III (Radner 2006: 52), and towards the southwestern Iranian plateau (Altaweel et al. 2012: 14). The pass is easily accessible from the Eastern Tigris regions located south of the Lower Zāb, e.g. Arraţha and Arzuţhina, both directly connected to the Assyrian capitals though the ford of Altûn Köprü.

3. Finally, the relocation of the imperial capital, in particular to Kalḫu, combined with subsequent changes in the political and economic landscape of heartland Assyria (cf. Harmanşah 2012: 65-8; Morandi and Iamoni 2015: 24-5), was partly meant to revitalize the urban landscape of the region located north of the main Assyrian centers. This in turn should have improved the economic and military exchange along the valley of the Tigris, and in particular along Upper Zāb.
Assyria after Assyria

The radiocarbon dating showed that the areas investigated underwent several functional changes within a relatively short period of time. Unfortunately, the different levels of occupation cannot be situated more precisely within the historical timeline of Northern Mesopotamia. However, the evidence gained can be used to locate the latest occupational phases within absolute chronology and thus lead to a better understanding of the historical developments of the immediate surroundings of the site.

The functional changes in the stratigraphic sequence from A6, A5, A4, to A3 for Operation A (Fig. 3) and B3 and B2 for Operation B (Fig. 4) appear at present to have taken place within a span of two to three centuries. This chronological analysis is based on a terminus post quem for the levels A7 and B4 at the end of the 7th or beginning of the 6th centuries BC, according both to the radiocarbon analysis and to the ceramic assemblage, and on a terminus ante quem, based on the youngest calibrated radio carbon date for the burials in levels A3b and B3a-b, corresponding to the last decades of the 4th century BC. In particular, the archaeological features of levels A6 reveal evidence for fortification activities on the top of the tell. The ceramic assemblage does not reveal any remarkable changes. As a consequence, few insights into a relative or absolute date could be provided. Furthermore, the absence of grave gifts, combined with a variety of depositional processes, likely reflecting a hybrid social context, likewise yields little data on chronology. It seems certain, however, that the drastic functional changes of the area from a sequence of fortification to structures to graveyards, to domestic buildings dating roughly to the time span included between the 6th and the 4th centuries BC, closely reflect the political changes occurring in the region.

This period is characterized by the fall of the major centers of the Assyrian heartland under the attacks of Median and Babylonian troops and the subsequent Achaemenid occupation of the region. Archaeological investigations of the main Assyrian centers, e.g. Nineveh, Assur, and in particular Kalhu, have provided evidence for destruction and resettlements (e.g. Curtis 2003: 160; Miglus 2000; Oates and Oates 2001: 125 and 257-8). The Babylonian Chronicle and later classical authors provide most of the data for the historical reconstruction of this specific period, indicating several military campaigns by Medes and Babylonians (e.g. Dalley 1993; Reade 2003; Rollinger 2010). However, evidence for the Median and Babylonian presence within the political landscape of northern Mesopotamia remains scant. What little evidence of Babylonian institutional infrastructures in northern Mesopotamia has been observed includes the presence of a governor at Assur (BM 63283 cf. MacGinnis 2000: 335; Jursa 2003: 173) as well as Neo-Babylonian stamp seals found at Nimrud (Parker 1955: pl. XIX 6-7; Curtis 2003: 160). Archaeological traces of an Achaemenid presence in the region are more common (Curtis 2005). The case of Tall Şeh Ḥamad in the valley of the Ḥabūr is crucial for the western provinces. The site shows a homogenous continuity in the use of the Neo-Assyrian pottery until the beginning of the 5th century BC (Kreppner 2015: 229-30; Röllig 2003), while Late-Babylonian influence is noticeable in the administration of the site since the beginning of the 6th century BC (Postgate 1993; Brinkman 1993).

The relevant levels at Sātu Qalā show neither traces of wide-spread destruction nor traces of any kind of administrative or institutional infrastructure. Similar to the case of Tall Şeh Ḥamad, however, the ceramic assemblage seems to be relatively homogenous. The evidence of fortification activities combined with the site’s strategic position on the Lower Zāb indicates a defensive function. The site had been already used as a defensive center during the conflicts between Assyria and Babylonia at the end of the 2nd millennium BC (Van Soldt et al. 2013: 218-9; Pappi forthcoming). This would confirm the persistence of the site as a strategic center along the valley of the Lower Zāb. This functional change can be compared to the Achaemenid fortified palace at Tall ad-Dēm, located further upstream in the Rāniya plain (al-Tekriti 1960), which has been interpreted to reflect a strategic defensive policy of the Achaemenid power within the region.

Conclusions

The discontinuous settlement sequence from the Neolithic to at least the end of the 1st millennium BC at Sātu Qalā can be correlated with historical shifts. However, the persistence of the settlement as a strategic stronghold and as an agricultural center indicates that Sātu Qalā remained strongly tied to its environment. The flourishing phase of Idu as an Assyrian provincial center and, later, as an independent kingdom embedded the site into a wide political and economic network which connected Assyria, Babylonia, and the region beyond the Zagros. Subsequent political shifts also influenced the economy of Idu and its catchment area both during the great expansion phase of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and after the fall of the central powers of Assyria. Developments in the urban layout of the site mirror the functional roles of Sātu Qalā within this network. The shape of this regional network, the degree to which the roles of the site of Sātu Qalā extended on a regional scale, and what effects its role as an economic hub or defensive stronghold exerted onto the infrastructural systems in its immediate hinterland, remain unclear. All of these questions can only be answered through further research in the region.
Bibliographical References


ROLLING, W. 2003. ‘Aramaica Ḥaburen sia VI drei Ostraka aus Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad.’ In Festschrift für B. Kienast,
C. Pappi: Satu Qala: an Assessment of the Stratigraphy of the Site


