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**Patterns of socio-religious and economical relations
in ancient urban societies in Upper Mesopotamia**

Master's Thesis

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Introduction

Mesopotamia as the cradle of civilization has been in the spotlight of scientific study since the 19th century. Excavations in southern Mesopotamia in the area between the two great rivers of Tigris and Euphrates has revealed archaeological remains and thousands of cuneiform tablets, which can be considered as the first historical sources. On the basis of these findings scholars have developed models to describe the societies of these ancient civilizations. These same models were later used as the basis of investigations of other Near Eastern areas. According to these models, urban societies i.e. cities developed over a long period of time out of sedentary village societies where everyday life prevailed thanks to irrigation agriculture. Over time these villages developed into protected urban settlements, which had irregular ground plans, and the development of the settlement took place in a natural way and besides the private houses of people, they also contained workshops, temples and other sanctuaries and in later periods also the palaces of kings.¹ The same models and methods were introduced also to the investigation of Upper² Mesopotamia³, but soon it became clear to scholars that northern societies were fundamentally different and the old models did not fit to explain the societies of Upper Mesopotamia.

Subject reasoning, perspective and method

The author chose this topic for this master's thesis mainly because of author's fascination with ancient civilizations and urban history. Old Near-Eastern archaeology seminars completed in the bachelor's studies were now complemented in master's level with further studies in the seminars about theories and controversies of the origin of civilizations and states. Consequently, the choice of the topic was not difficult, because the bachelor's thesis written by the author was already on an introductory subject – also about urbanization in Upper Mesopotamia, but from a topographical point of view, the topography of the *Kranzhügel*⁴ settlements were compared with the topographies of Sumerian city-states of southern Mesopotamia. This thesis is a natural evolution of the previous work, but now through a much wider spectrum.

¹ Lyonnet 2009: 179.

² In this thesis the designation Upper/Lower and northern/southern Mesopotamia are both used and are meant as synonyms that represent the same geographic area.

³ See Appendix: Figure 2. For a map of the region.

⁴ For the explanation of the term see subchapter 1.3.1. *Kranzhügel* - leading the Second Urban „Revolution“?

In this thesis instead of comparing two different urban settlements, which existed in different geographical regions, the concentration here is more on the north-eastern region of modern day Syria. The focus is on the regions river valleys and alluvial plains, and particularly the Upper Khabur Basin⁵. Precisely in that geographic region the most extensive and rapid urbanization process in the history of Syria took place. This geographic area is also the home of the *Kranzhügel* culture, which will be discussed further in this research.

The chronological period in this thesis falls into the framework of the third millennium, 2900-2200 BC to be more exact, but extra material from earlier and later periods, for the purposes of consistency and comparison is sometimes given.

There are numerous ways to monitor socio-religious and economic relations in ancient urban societies. Present thesis was written by using the empirical qualitative research method and is based on in detail analysis of those two aspects of society separately, to find the patterns that join them together. These developments in society are viewed from the very beginning of urbanization in Upper Mesopotamia, until the final phase of third millennium BC, when during the Upper Mesopotamian urbanization apex, first „state“ like organizations formed and new types of settlements were being built on seemingly empty spaces. Until all that came to a halt with the rise of the Akkadian empire in the south, that put an end to the independent north.

Thesis objectives and questions

This research aims to examine the patterns of socio-religious and economical relations in ancient urban societies of Upper Mesopotamia. In order to do that, we must take a look at the evolution of settlements in that particular area, how and why urbanization began there and how it developed through time.

To understand the formation of cities, it is necessary to understand human relations that laid the foundation to the process. Social, religious and economical behaviour of human beings is the backbone of society. To better understand this, we have to examine how power and authority are related to each other and between different human groups in these ancient settlements. It can be seen that the most powerful and authoritarian institutions in ancient cities

⁵ See Appendix: Figure 1.

are the temple and the palace. The location of these institutions inside an urban settlement already shows a lot about how that particular society functioned. But those institutions could not work without people, and like today, ancient cities housed many different groups of people, who were all connected through power relations.

Considered equally important are the economic relationships between human groups in those ancient societies. This is a topic that at times is easier to investigate than other social relationships, because it is easier to recognize material of economic origin during archaeological excavations than those of religious or social character. Also the first textual materials that have been found on the sites that are of interest in this thesis are also almost exclusively of economic origin. On the basis of the written evidence we can for the first time, get an idea of how, under whose leadership and what kind of tools were used for the economical activities that occurred in ancient urban settlements. What was grown on the fields, what type of animals were used for work. By the end of this thesis and on the basis of all this, the author tries to analyse and get a better idea about the following questions:

- Is the origin of urbanism in Upper Mesopotamia indigenous or is it imported from somewhere else?
- What could have been the reasons why urbanism took hold in Upper Mesopotamia?
- What do settlement patterns, architecture and urban planning as a whole, tell us about the nature of the settlements and the people who lived in them?
- Where does the specific layout of the *Kranzhügel* settlement originate from and what can be said about its heritage and was it different from the more conventional settlements?
- How did temple and palace relate to each other in Upper Mesopotamia and what significance did they have in society?
- Who had control over economy?
- Who were involved in economical activity and how?
- What different branches of economical activities can be seen in those early settlements?
- How authority and status was related to different people and different classes/ranks in Upper Mesopotamian society?

Analysis of historiography

Increased interest in Mesopotamia began in the 19th century, when Western colonial forces arrived in the corresponding region. The first so called “archaeologists” who made the first digs there, were not actually archaeologists at all, but diplomats, sent there to establish relations with local tribes. While in the end of 19th century the main archaeological activity had moved to southern Mesopotamia, in the early 20th century a renewed interest arose for the Upper Mesopotamia. Max Freiherr von Oppenheim was the first, who before the start of the World War I described the mounds in Upper Mesopotamia, which he called *Kranzhügel*. After the World War I in the late 20s a British expedition under the leadership of Max Mallowan conducted the first excavation at Tell Brak⁶. A site on which many different universities from different countries have carried out several seasons of excavations to this decade. At the moment all excavations in Syria are stopped similarly to Iraq, most likely because of the civil war in the country. Nevertheless, research does not stop and new studies and articles are published on the basis of already existing materials.

Over the past two decades and especially during the last decade there has been an intensification of research done on the subject of Upper Mesopotamia. Peter Akkermans and Glenn Schwartz published the first long-awaited monograph in 2003: *The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c.16,000-300 BC)*. This can now be considered as a manual for researchers interested in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria as a whole.

It is not enough to use the materials belonging into one scientific field alone to study the patterns of human relations in an ancient urban society. This is why additional articles and research from archaeology, history, philology also anthropology were used in preparation of this thesis. Furthermore, some interesting materials stem from the pens of geographers and mathematicians. In Estonia no other research on this topic or even similar subject has been written.

⁶ See Appendix: Figure 1.

1. Settlement developments in Upper Mesopotamia

To get a notion of historical and geographical background of a region, it is useful to understand the patterns of human settlement in that particular area. The mechanics of how settlements developed and evolved. In this thesis the emphasis is on the settlements that evolved into large urban centres. Some of which may have even been called “states” in the final phases of their development. In this evolution, also a new type of settlement emerged, which can be said to have been purpose built and had a distinct and planned layout.

In the research of very early Upper Mesopotamian settlements (4000-3000 BC), where no written sources have been found, we can predominantly rely on the works of archaeologists and anthropologists. Luckily, in addition to archaeological material stemming from settlements that originate from the mid of third millennium BC we have access to first written sources. And from then on, it is important, if possible to compare the archaeological finds with textual ones. A great support comes from a separate science within archaeology, the settlement pattern studies⁷, which deals with the investigation of the surrounding areas rather than the individual site itself. Settlement pattern studies are mostly conducted through regional surveys. And thanks to these regional surveys, we can have a better understanding of the surrounding area, of the villages, fields and canals that help us better understand the general human relations in ancient societies.⁸ Harvey Weiss has noted that geographers have long observed, “Cities do not grow up of themselves. Countrysides set them up to do tasks that must be performed in central places”.⁹

And Scholars have recently begun to use exactly these methods, they have attempted to not only compare archaeologically recognized sites with textually attested ones, but also tie in the nearby landscapes with textually attested ones. Lauren Ristvet has pointed out that

⁷ Settlement pattern studies as a separate science involves investigations not only in a specific site, but also into geographical regions and areas. „Settlement pattern analysis utilises techniques developed by human geographers in order to explain modern conditions. In the past twenty-five years, these models have become both historically sensitive as well as explicitly concerned with explaining “the geography of societal change”, by exploring how social change is articulated both historically and geographically“ (Ristvet 2005: 27). „Settlement pattern analysis is mostly used in landscape archaeology which employs a range of techniques to locate and describe human interaction with the landscape that seek to complement excavations in analysing ancient societies“ (Ristvet 2005: 23).

⁸ Ristvet 2005: 23.

⁹ Weiss 1985: 22.

„Wilkinson [Tony] has compared landscape terminology from the Nuzi texts¹⁰, which describe the area around a small provincial centre located on the margins of the dry-farming plain of Eastern Iraq, with features recorded from landscape surveys in Syria and Iraq“.¹¹

Walther Sallaberger and Jason Ur have similarly compared the information stemming from the mid-third millennium „archive“¹² of Tell Beydar¹³ with the findings of the Tell Beydar regional survey, which has been conducted in the nearby region. The information from the archive, especially concerning the personnel lists of the workforce belonging to the central institution of Tell Beydar, was compared with the size of agricultural lands of the nearby regions. Consequently they have concluded that according to these results, Tell Beydar itself and also nearby smaller settlements must have been densely populated. This has also been affirmed by other studies, for example the investigation of private houses and other structures inside the settlement.¹⁴

Before we can go ahead with more chapters, it is necessary to take a quick look at the chronology used in this thesis. According to Rafal Koliński, the first true chronological frame for the Khabur area was proposed by Max Mallowan. Mallowan's excavations at sites like Tell Chagar Bazar and Tell Brak were the first that yielded findings that provided us with cultural and historical parallels to southern Mesopotamian sites. It was Mallowan who introduced the term „Early Dynastic“, to describe the third millennium layers that pre-date Akkadian or to be more precise, the Naram-Su'en layers¹⁵. A term which is still used today and only recently has started to be replaced by the term „Early Jezirah“.¹⁶

The excavations that have been carried out in the Khabur region in the last decades, and the publication of the ceramic sequence from Tell Brak have finally given scholars the means to re-assess the outdated chronological framework of the area with a new one, that is now generally accepted.¹⁷ A short overview is given below (Table 1.).

¹⁰ A set of legal, economic and administrative texts (between 6500 and 7000 documents) belonging to second millennium BC, found from Yorghān Tepe in northeastern Iraq.

¹¹ Ristvet 2005: 26.

¹² See subchapter 3.1. Cuneiform sources.

¹³ Tell Beydar is a *Kranzhügel* settlement originating from the third millennium, established c. 2850 BC. The archaeological site is located 35 km from the modern town of Hassake in north-eastern Syria.

¹⁴ Ristvet 2005: 26

¹⁵ The first link related to the third millennium, was found at Tell Brak, a large mud brick structure stamped with the name of Naram-Su'en of Agade. (Koliński 2007: 343)

¹⁶ Koliński 2007: 343.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 345

Table 1: Chronological frame for the period ca. 2900-2150

<i>Lower Mesopotamia (historic)</i>	<i>Syrian Jezirah (cultural/historic)</i>	<i>Syrian Jezirah (archaeological)</i>	<i>Date B.C.</i>
Early Dynastic (ED) I	Early Ninevite 5?	Early Jezirah (EJ) I	2900/2800- 2700/2650
Early Dynastic (ED) II	Ninevite 5/ED II	Early Jezirah (EJ) II	2700/2650- 2600/2550
Early Dynastic (ED) IIIA	Late Ninevite 5/ED III	Early Jezirah (EJ) IIIa	2600/2550- 2475/2425
Early Dynastic (ED) IIIB	Late ED III	Early Jezirah (EJ) IIIb	2475/2425- 2325/2275
Akkadian	Akkadian	Early Jezirah (EJ) IV	2325/2275- 2200/2150

Based on Jans and Bretschneider 2011: 23 and Ur 2010: 392

1.1. Early urbanism in Upper Mesopotamia

During the period from 4000-2000 BC, two similar, but at the same time different cycles in development of urbanization in Upper Mesopotamia can be seen. Jason Ur has pointed out that during these two millennia, Upper Mesopotamia witnessed the emergence and development of complex urban societies, their sudden collapse and even more powerful rebirth, which, however, was followed by a sharp decline once more.¹⁸ Although the main focus in this thesis is placed on the second phase of urban development in the period of c. 2900-2200 BC, we should also take a brief look at the developments in the previous periods.

The results of the research of the decade preceding the present, new discoveries and finds have given us better and clearer overview of the past developments in Upper Mesopotamia. What was previously thought to be the so-called “periphery” of early urbanism is at the present time in some cases more thoroughly researched than southern Mesopotamia.¹⁹ This has been made possible by the forced departure of archaeologists from Iraq, due to the tense internal situation there. Also, modern countries which are situated in the Near East today, have

¹⁸ Ur 2010: 387.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 388.

undertaken dam constructions on the areas major rivers and that has played its part in the number of urgent archaeological projects, which took place prior to the flooding of the countryside, and according to Ur: „many [archaeological projects] of which are now reaching advanced stages of publication“.²⁰

These projects have given us a lot of new information on the evolution of Upper Mesopotamia and its earlier development. Ur has pointed out that from the beginning of fifth millennium BC until the middle of the millennium, Upper Mesopotamian society can be characterized by small communities which were egalitarian in nature and cooperation oriented, there were no central management or leadership and there are few signs of any differences in status, although, some architectural differences were emerging at the end of the relevant period in Tepe Gawra²¹. It is well known that a similar material culture was at the time, represented in the whole of Mesopotamia. This is evident from the structure of buildings, and very similarly styled painted ceramics.²²

Ur has underlined that until the last decade it was thought that a similar situation existed in the fourth millennium, until people arrived from southern Mesopotamia and brought with them new elements from a higher level culture. Recent findings, however, suggest that northern Mesopotamian society had in fact by this time already acquired the characteristics of a corresponding culture. In the earlier phase c. 4400-3800 BC, monumental architecture was already represented, long-distance trade was organized, specialized craft production and new forms of social concentration is also attested. In the subsequent periods of c. 3800-3300 BC there are evidence of large-scale feasts taking place, religious institutions are found in the settlements, mass production of ceramics can be attested, settlements had obtained high-density populations and evidence of organized violence have been found.²³

While prior knowledge of corresponding periods of Upper Mesopotamian history originate from the settlement of Tepe Gawra, recent evidence particularly in regards to the period c. 4100-3800 BC stem from a settlement by the name of Tell Hammam et-Turkman²⁴ near the river Balikh, from which excavations brought to daylight a complex structure with niches and

²⁰ Ur 2010: 390.

²¹ Tepe Gawra is an archaeological site in northwestern Iraq, east of river Tigris and near Nineveh and the modern city of Mosul.

²² Ur 2010: 393.

²³ *Ibid.* 393-394.

²⁴ Tell Hamman et-Turkman is an archaeological site, and is located about 75 km north of the modern town of Raqqa, on the east bank of river Balikh in northern Syria.

buttresses and with walls that are almost two meters thick.²⁵ Oates et al. have pointed out that from the corresponding layers of Tell Brak, excavations unearthed a north-western corner of a clearly important building with walls of similar thickness as that of Tell Hammam et-Turkman with a large basalt doorstep (doorsill), but the purpose of this building is completely unknown.²⁶ Near this monumental building a structure was also unearthed from which an abundance of evidence of craft production was discovered.²⁷ Whatever the function of this monumental building might have been, Oates et al. have an opinion that it probably was of secular nature, because the ground plan of the structure is not similar to the ground plans of religious structures of the same period.²⁸

These new indicators which demonstrate the complexity of society, emerge at a time when Tell Brak was going through a significant expansion. But it is not yet in a form which is later known in the Upper Mesopotamian region. Ur calls it a „proto-urban“ settlement with a population density which was not yet substantial enough and could vary, around the main mound there were also smaller clusters of what Ur calls the so-called „suburban“ areas, which were basically small village complexes. The whole human populated area covered approximately 55 ha.²⁹

In the following phase, from the beginning up to the middle of the fourth millennium BC, we see further social developments, and it is still before the time when people and ideas were coming from southern Mesopotamia. Ur stresses that prior to the start of the Uruk expansion³⁰, the “proto-urban settlements at Tell Brak had grown into spatially extensive and demographically large urban centre”, its central mound and the “suburbs” surrounding it, had already taken up an area of 130 ha.³¹

Majority of archaeologists consider Uruk in the end of the fourth millennium BC as a „state“, but can the same be said about the urban formations in northern Mesopotamia? At least for the same time period the excavators on Arslantepe³² interpret complex property control systems

²⁵ Ur 2010: 394.

²⁶ Oates et al. 2007: 588.

²⁷ Ur 2010: 394.; Oates et al. 2007: 591.

²⁸ Oates et al. 2007: 589.

²⁹ Ur 2010: 394.

³⁰ The Uruk expansion was an expansion of material culture originating from southern Mesopotamia, which expanded to nearby and far-off regions and started around 3700 BC. It has also been theorized that the southern cities formed colonies in northern Mesopotamia and Anatolia, which had close ties with their original home towns. The system collapsed about 500 years later.

³¹ Ur 2010: 395.; Oates et al. 2007: 590.

³² Arslantepe is an archaeological site in Turkey near the modern town of Malatya. See Appendix: Figure 2.

by clay sealing's³³ as an evidence from a central bureaucracy, which redistributed rations to dependents. On the other hand, the widespread distribution of clay sealing technology seems to show a decentralized economic control. If an elite or administrative building can be distinguished, it still has the same ground plan as a residential building. It can therefore be assumed that these urban settlements were likely managed by powerful households rather than discrete state apparatuses, some of which might also have been secular in nature, while others might have been the households of gods i.e. temples.³⁴

Ur speculates that this new evidence indicates that urbanization in Upper Mesopotamia might have been of indigenous origin, without the influence of Uruk or its other southern neighbours, and started significantly earlier than previously thought. The Mesopotamian city should therefore be considered a phenomenon which occurred independently in several locations. Ur even raises the possibility that it has now been found that urbanization might have started earlier in northern Mesopotamia than in the south.³⁵

In contrast to southern Mesopotamia, writing is not known in the north. Development of pictograms, which later evolved into cuneiform writing, is considered to have played a very important part in the development of urbanization. However, Ur points out that writing itself is actually rather new invention, which probably evolved in the urban institutions of southern Mesopotamia around c. 3200-3100 BC. And was only later adopted and made use of in the surrounding regions and it looks like writing didn't play any particular role in the urbanization of northern Mesopotamia.³⁶

Something strange happens at the end of the fourth millennium BC in Upper Mesopotamia, a period of decline took over the entire region. At the beginning of the third millennium BC, when southern Mesopotamian urban societies were approaching the peak of their urbanization, Uruk colonies that had emerged there at the end of the last millennium disappeared from the north and with them; all communication with the south seems to have been lost. Ur draws attention to the fact that the "lower town" of Tell Brak is deserted, on the plains and river valleys the remaining settlements can be generically called tell based villages. Single ceramic style, which characterized the whole of the fourth millennium, gives way to

³³ Clay sealing is considered to be an archetypical form of administrative control to ensure that only rightful and authorized personnel could have access to sealed items. The idea behind sealing items and containers was similar to sealing of letters, doors or goods in customs in modern times.

³⁴ Ur 2010: 397,400.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 400.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 397.

local ceramics and styles.³⁷

Archaeological material from the beginning of the third millennium is sparse because former buildings were knocked down and destroyed before rebuilding started some centuries later when a new wave of urbanization began. But according to Ur, some careful generalizations of the contemporary society can be made. In all likelihood from c. 2900-2600 BC the countryside could have consisted of scattered settlements among which also may have been some smaller 15-25 ha city-like formations. Excavations suggest that the complexity in society decreased, and the use of tokens and sealed bullae³⁸ as an administrative technology disappeared, only cylinder sealing³⁹ remained. As mentioned before, writing was not used. From grave goods, some social stratification can be seen, but in general, there is little evidence of economic specialization or powerful political institutions. Based on this information, a number of scholars have appointed this kind of society to be a form of chiefdom^{40 41}.

³⁷ Ur 2010: 401.

³⁸ Clay bullae are a form of sealing technology in which wet clay was formed into a hollow lump to put something inside it, a form of clay „envelope“ which was sealed so that unwanted persons could not see what was inside without breaking the seal.

³⁹ A cylinder seal is small round cylinder. Cylinder seals were important administrative tools, which were used to seal containers to protect their integrity and to prove their veracity. According to Harvey Weiss Ancient Near Eastern officials sealed tablets as well as containers and even storerooms with cylinders bearing their names and titles, much the same way post offices stamp telegrams, or customs officials bind and seal international shipments (Weiss 1985: 14). The sealing was done, by rolling the cylinder on a wet clay surface to make an impression.

⁴⁰ „Chiefdom, in anthropology, a notional form of sociopolitical organization in which political and economic power is exercised by a single person (or group of persons) over many communities. The term was given this technical meaning by scholars who espoused cultural evolution, a theory that was popular during the late 19th and early 20th century but which has since been discredited. The theory suggested that cultures evolve through a continuum based on economic and political organization, beginning with the most “primitive” form, the band, and developing through the stages of tribe and chiefdom before arriving at the final form, the state“. (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1365949/chiefdom>)

⁴¹ Ur 2010: 403.

1.2. Urbanism and „state“ emergence in the third millennium BC

Syria and especially the part of Syria which is considered as Upper Mesopotamia, experienced one of the most significant developments in its history in the middle of the third millennium BC - the adaption of urban life with the implementation of all its associated institutions. According to Peter Akkermans and Glenn Schwartz, within a few centuries, complex urban societies complete with all the necessary characteristics, appeared throughout the entire region. Among these were fortified cities, which related hierarchically to their rural communities, also extensive hierarchical and political organizations or "states" emerged with monumental construction projects, sponsored by the powerful elite⁴². Rich funerary which indicated a high social status, and probably the most important attribute, the introduction of writing. The phenomenon is observed not only in Syria but also in the neighbouring areas in the east of Upper Mesopotamia (such as the settlement sites like Tell Khoshi, Tell Taya, and Tell al-Hawa in Iraq) and to the north, the plains of south-eastern Anatolia (e.g. Titris Höyük, Kazane Höyük in Turkey). Current evidence suggests that this broad region saw the emergence of city states in different capacities. These early complex societies flourished c. 2600-2000 BC in middle and late Early Bronze Age.⁴³

If we take a closer look at a specific Upper Mesopotamian urban society, then Lisa Cooper has pointed out that the site of Tell Leilan⁴⁴ highlights the tremendous strides in urbanism and state formation which northern Mesopotamian settlements could experience. "Around 2600 BC, a remarkable transformation from a 15-hectare town to a massive 90 hectare urban complex surrounded by a high fortification outer wall can be seen. Even more impressive is that the site possessed a central high place - the Acropolis - which dominated the surrounding 65 hectare Lower town, and which contained remnants of an elite public complex, characterized by several grain storerooms covering an area of about 300 square meters, a cultic platform and industrial installations. An abundance of cylinder seal impressions within the storerooms attest to the administrative nature of this area. It seems clear that by 2600 BC, there had emerged a ruling stratum at Tell Leilan which appears to have controlled ritual

⁴² See the definition of the „elite“ in the chapter 3.2.1. The activities of the elite.

⁴³ Akkermans, Schwarz 2003: 233.

⁴⁴ Tell Leilan is an archaeological site in north-eastern Syria in the Al-Hasakah province. See appendix: Figure 1.

activities at the site, as well as presided over vast quantities of surplus grain at the centre of what was probably a complex distributive economy”.⁴⁵

Before we can move further, it is necessary to take a look at how and why urbanization and the development of urban features might have taken hold in Upper Mesopotamia in the first place. Akkermans and Schwarz have pointed out three main possibilities as to why urban societies might have evolved in Upper Mesopotamia in the third millennium BC:

1. Upper Mesopotamian complex societies evolved independently, but their elites emulated basic authoritarian symbols and technology of Lower Mesopotamia, in order to justify and strengthen their own positions. Emerging elites often mimic the symbols and style of its peers elsewhere, by using „the prestige of the exotic“. This kind of imitation indicates that northern elites were familiar with the material culture of the foreign elite, but it does not have to include political or economical connections with the south. However it is very probable they existed.

2. A widespread interest in international trade may have started around the mid-third millennium due to the demand of raw materials in Lower Mesopotamia. Enriched by the involvement in this trade, Upper Mesopotamian authorities developed wealthy finance systems, their hierarchical, political and social structures intensified and culminated in the emergence of states and cities. Thus southern models were emulated by the elites in the north and thereby strengthened their power and authority.

3. Southern Mesopotamian rulers intervened directly in the affairs of their northern neighbours, taking military campaigns north to gain control over the trade routes to western sources of metal, stone and wood. Local chiefs banded together to stand against the external threat and developed large-scale political systems to counter that threat. The new elite then copied southern Mesopotamian models.

Currently, the third model seems the least likely, because Lower Mesopotamian textual references to military campaigns in Upper Mesopotamia, appear only in Eannatum's and Lugalzagesi's time c. 24th century BC.⁴⁶

Marco Goldhausen and Andrea Ricci point out in their study about the political centralization

⁴⁵ Cooper 2010: 182.

⁴⁶ Akkermans, Schwarz 2003: 277.

of Syrian Jazirah⁴⁷, that from EJ III (2600 BC) onward, in Upper Mesopotamia, and especially in the Khabur region on the background of complex societies the first formations that can be called „states“ started to emerge. In their research they divide the social organization of Upper Mesopotamia into four tier hierarchy, from which the lowest tier is the village; the three other tiers are divided into centres. The lowest centre is a local centre, followed by a slightly larger settlement, a regional centre and the highest tier is a major regional centre. All these tiers are interrelated into a pyramid scheme, on top is the major regional centre, to which one or more regional centres are subjugated to, and the regional centres in turn had control over number of local centres.⁴⁸ They classified the settlements by taking into account the size of the settlements in hectares. In their settlement hierarchy they also took into account cuneiform tablets found on the acropolis of Tell Beydar, from where we know that Nabada⁴⁹ (Tell Beydar) was a subject of the EN (lord) of Nagar⁵⁰, which probably could be Tell Brak.⁵¹ In this case we can assume that Nagar was a major regional centre to which Nabada was subjugated as a regional centre.

Thus, as seen from Goldhausen's and Ricci's four tier hierarchical relationships between settlements (that could perhaps even be considered as political hierarchy), we can start to talk about the emergence of early „state“ like formations in Upper Mesopotamia and in the Khabur region to be more exact.

The question remains, what kind of complex societies can be considered as "states" in the middle of the third millennium BC in Upper Mesopotamia? We can't adapt ancient settlements to the standards of modern states, it is therefore necessary to define the characteristics of third millennium settlements or regions, which made them "states". According to Diederik J.W. Meijer an early state must have specific features and he has pointed out seven of these features:

1. "The territories are divided into districts/divisions/regions".
2. "There is a clear centre".
3. "There is long-distance trade, which provides income for the elite" (E.g. donkey hybrids

⁴⁷ Jazirah or Jezirah (Arabic Al-Jazira) is the geographical name of north-eastern Syria, which also corresponds with the region called Upper Mesopotamia in this thesis.

⁴⁸ Goldhausen and Ricci 2005: 144.

⁴⁹ Nabada is being considered to be the ancient name of Tell Beydar according to the Tell Beydar archive.

⁵⁰ Nagar is known as an ancient major regional centre in the Khabur area through different archives, but no archaeological site has yielded any proof of ever being called that. It is assumed by scholars, that Tell Brak is the most likely candidate to be Nagar, but not everybody agrees with this.

⁵¹ Goldhausen and Ricci 2005: 145.

sold from Tell Beydar to Ebla).

4. "There are workers that can be considered full-time professionals".
5. "Surplus is produced".
6. "At least two classes of society can be differentiated" and
7. "Taxes are imposed".

Textual and archaeological material provide ample testimony to the fact that all of these features could be found in northern Mesopotamia at least at the end of the third millennium and the beginning of the second millennium.⁵²

What stands out is that in northern Euphrates (Middle Syria) we don't see similar levels of centralized authority as we could see in sites such as Tell Leilan or Tell Brak, or any other sites in north-eastern Syria for that matter. Although large scale secular structures can be found, which have probably belonged to elite families or individuals, but the structures are rarely situated in a central elevated position as was the case in Tell Leilan. The lack of centrally located elite complexes and political or economic centralization is also reflected in the settlement patterns of the surrounding countryside. Cooper points out that in the northern Euphrates region it is difficult to confirm any type of three or four-tier hierarchies not to mention higher ones, as has been confirmed in the north-eastern part of Syria, where smaller towns and villages became tributaries to larger cities in the mid third millennium BC.⁵³

Before we can move on to further chapters, it would be fitting to take a quick look into population figures. Estimates of population densities in Near Eastern sites based on contemporary and historical settlements provides values varying between 100 and 200 persons per hectare. Deckers and Riehl have pointed out that Peter Pfälzner however, argues that, based on ethnographical demography for prevailing house types and sizes, population density values between 300 and 400 person per hectare are more realistic, for example, in the case of Early Bronze Age archaeological sites like Tell Selenkahiye, Tell Halawi and Tell Chuera.⁵⁴

Magnus Widell has ended up with similar results, but he came to his conclusion through researching the available arable land. He examined the relations between ploughed and

⁵² Meijer 2000: 221.

⁵³ Cooper 2010: 182-183.

⁵⁴ Deckers, Riehl 2008: 176.

unploughed fields and how that may have related to population.⁵⁵

On a more general level, we can make some broad statements about the region of Tell Beydar, thanks to the cuneiform tablets found there. Sallaberger and Ur have pointed out that demographically, the area had probably a relatively low population density: c. 6,000 to 13,000 people, and certainly in the low range of about 1,000 to 2,000 inhabitants in Tell Beydar itself. Tell Beydar labour lists are too fragmented to allow for a more accurate assessment of the demographic. The correlation between the Tell Beydar texts from the central institution and the estimates based by archaeology about the size of the urban population is remarkably close. Sallaberger and Ur conclude that a central institution to some extent is compatible with most if not all Tell Beydar's population, although there are still great uncertainties about the extent to which it managed their economic and social life.⁵⁶

1.3. City-planning in Upper Mesopotamia

As indicated above, in Khabur region by far the largest settlements and greatest settled population was during the mid-third millennium and sites of later periods were both sparser and smaller.⁵⁷ A distinction can be made between two separate archaeological cultures that developed in the north as pointed out by Goldhausen and Ricci: „The so-called *Nineveh V*⁵⁸ culture in the eastern part from the basin of the River Tigris to upper Khabour and the so-called *Kranzhügelkultur* (circular walled site culture⁵⁹) in the west, from Wadi Zergan in the upper Khabur to Wadi Hammar in the upper Balikh basin and in the plains north and south of hebel `Abd al-`Aziz“.⁶⁰

Michel Al-Maqdisi has proposed that the circular foundations for settlements were particular

⁵⁵ Widell 2003: 721-723.

⁵⁶ Sallaberger, Ur 2004: 66.

⁵⁷ Wright, Rupley, Ur, Oates, Ganem 2002-2003: 14.

⁵⁸ Nineveh V culture – named after the pottery found in Nineveh V layers.

⁵⁹ See Appendix Figure 3. for a map of Kranzhügel sites and see Appendix: Figure 4. for a topography of a typical *Kranzhügel* site.

⁶⁰ Goldhausen, Ricci 2005: 132.

attributes to the cities which laid the foundation to what is known as the Second Urban „Revolution“⁶¹. He pointed out that Mari⁶², Tell Chuera⁶³ and Tell 'Ashara⁶⁴ became new circular foundations already around the beginning of the third millennium, while at Tell Beydar, which is together with Tell Chuera considered to be an archetype of a *Kranzhügel*, this process only started in 2700 BC (during the Early Dynastic/Early Jezira III period).⁶⁵ In any case, it must be pointed out that Tell Chuera and Mari seem to be resolved in similar manner and they also seem to have analogical inner planning. Meyer and Hempelmann note that if Mari actually is a settlement type that belongs to the *Kranzhügel* culture, then it is the southernmost terminus of these kind of settlements.⁶⁶

The accumulation of the *Kranzhügel* in one particular region, and their very similar basic ground plan indicates for the first time of city planning in Upper Mesopotamia. We can of course assume that some form of planning was done in all kinds of settlements, but most of them probably evolved more naturally. But in the case of the *Kranzhügel*, it is hard not to see them as planned and purpose built settlements. Jason Ur has also concluded that the internal structure of Tell Chuera for example may have been a result of preconceived central planning^{67, 68}.

Thus in Khabur region we can see this circular foundation in the form of *Kranzhügel* settlements. The best known of this type of settlements are the above-mentioned Tell Chuera and Tell Beydar. However, it should be noted that in the mid third millennium at least in the case of Tell Beydar, the settlement was not a regional centre but only of local importance. The authority in the region had concentrated within the north-eastern cities like Tell Leilan, Tell Brak and Tell Mozan⁶⁹, which however were not *Kranzhügel*.

⁶¹ Second Urban „Revolution“ or "SUR" is a term that Corinne Castel and Edgar Peltenburg have used to explain a phenomenon of emerging urban life with indigenous roots and with all its associated institutions, that took place in Syria around the mid-third millennium BC (Castle, Peltenburg 2007: 601).

⁶² Mari modern Tell Hariri is an ancient city and archaeological site in south-eastern Syria near the modern city of Abu Kamal. See Appendix: Figure 2.

⁶³ Tell Chuera is a *Kranzhügel* settlement in north-eastern Syria, situated in the plains between the rivers of Balikh and Khabur near the border of Turkey and Syria.

⁶⁴ Tell 'Ashara is an archaeological site in south-eastern Syria near Mari.

⁶⁵ Al-Maqdissi 2010: 136, 138.

⁶⁶ Meyer, Hempelmann 2006: 31.

⁶⁷ See Appendix: Figure 4., and Figure 5.

⁶⁸ Ur 2010: 410.

⁶⁹ Tell Mozan the archaeological site of the ancient city of Urkesh, which is situated in north-eastern Syria in the foothills of the Taurus mountains near the Turkish Syrian border. See Appendix: Figure 1.

1.3.1. *Kranzhügel* - leading the Second Urban „Revolution“?

As was pointed out in the previous chapters, one of the "urbanizing" forces in the Khabur region seems to have been the settlement type called the *Kranzhügel*. In this chapter it will be discussed more thoroughly about this special settlement type, about its origin, purpose and legacy.

Max Freiherr von Oppenheim studied a number of Early Bronze Age ruins and cities in northern Syria on his research trips undertaken in 1911-1913, he called these sites due to their circular or polygonal shape as the "crown hill" or the original German term „*Kranzhügel*", which has remained as the scientific name for these kind of settlements.

Joachim Bretschneider describes the *Kranzhügel* sites as consisting of an inner and an outer rampart/embankment, remnants of the former city walls that often divide the mound into an upper and lower town, which Oppenheim described as "castle" and "urban area". Characteristic for Tell Chuera as an example, and for some other *Kranzhügel* is a wide valley⁷⁰ that divides the city into two halves. Oppenheim had already mentioned an exposed monumental access route in the central city area at Tell Chuera, which was recently described as a "sacred way". In contrast to Tell Chuera, Tell Beydar⁷¹ lacks such a hollow depression. The centre of the mound of Tell Beydar is dominated by a dome-shaped elevation (remnant of a former citadel) in diameter from about 100 meters, dominating the surrounding countryside at its highest point at nearly 30 meters.⁷²

This citadel of Tell Beydar, which was built from the south on a monumental scale, rising steadily to the north and was accessed through the entrance area which had cobbled stone streets, courtyards and staircases and were segmented and controlled by gates. This entrance, known generally as the main road, forms the main traffic route within what Bretschneider calls the "Temple-Palace"⁷³, the secondary paths branch off from East and West and open up to temple on the citadel. In its southern extension, it should stand in conjunction with the not yet excavated southern gates of the inner and outer city walls. A monumental staircase or ramp was constructed to bridge the over twenty meters between the south valley/depression in

⁷⁰ See Appendix: Figure 7.

⁷¹ See Appendix: Figure 4.

⁷² Bretschneider 2003: 103.

⁷³ For the explanation of „temple-palace“ see subchapter 2.2.

the outer ring of walls and the floor of the palace courtyard, that was already exposed in the upper part. Thus the street system insures the "Temple-Palace" as the centre of the settlement.⁷⁴

Corinne Castel and Edgar Peltenburg emphasize that although the origin of the *Kranzhügel* concept is still elusive, therefore, once it was established, it was widely emulated. Whether for political or other reasons, this planned spatial order symbolized a world view of the planners and resident communities.⁷⁵ There are many theories about, how and why this kind of settlements developed. Simona Bracci has pointed out that the radial street system of a *Kranzhügel* for example, was particular aspect of inner space division. It can plausibly be seen to have originated from an ancient village layout.⁷⁶ Goldhausen and Ricci have an opinion that, the extraordinary systematic site plan of the circular walled settlements is possibly due to spontaneous urban development on "virgin soil" without any essential previous occupation.⁷⁷ Given the size of the *Kranzhügel* sites, it appears that none of them were the so-called major regional centres (Goldhausen and Ricci hierarchy). Whether it can be concluded as Goldhausen and Ricci have suggested, that these cities were purpose built settlements on the „virgin soil“ from the outset, which only had the goal and purpose to be a regional centre under the influence of a major regional centre and to act as a controlling mechanism in a geographical region or area, which itself was perhaps too far away from the major regional centre, to be efficiently controlled, remains to be seen. Because Bertille Lyonnet has pointed out that in Tell Beydar a previous occupation is attested, so it can't be categorized under the „virgin soil“ concept.⁷⁸ And according to Castel and Peltenburg these planned „de novo“ settlements, could only be built in the context of empires. Because only an empire or at least a large state can put up a corresponding workforce which was needed to build such a settlement.⁷⁹ But it is well known that in the time of the appearance of the *Kranzhügel* cities, there weren't any empire like formations in Upper Mesopotamia.

So far, the results from excavated *Kranzhügel* have only shown that, at least in the cases of Tell Chuera and Tell Beydar, these settlements were densely populated communities of urban character. The locations of these sites in agriculturally marginal areas is still difficult to

⁷⁴ Bretschneider 2003: 103.

⁷⁵ Castel, Peltenburg 2007: 612.

⁷⁶ Bracci 2009: 12.

⁷⁷ Goldhausen, Ricci 2005: 143.

⁷⁸ Lyonnet 2009: 186.

⁷⁹ Castel, Peltenburg 2007: 602.

explain, some have pointed out that perhaps the economic focus was on livestock breeding rather than agriculture, while others have interpreted the cities moats as water reservoirs, and there are also claims that the middle of third millennium might have had a higher rainfall. Akkermans and Schwartz have pointed out that perhaps these areas reflect the spread of urbanization from the core areas like the upper Khabur into marginal regions, which may have resulted from population growth, or the growing need of local resources.⁸⁰

Al-Maqdissi on the other hand has speculated that all these cities with circular foundation: „were intended to create a network of settlements with both political and economic links between them. The cities may have managed caravan trade with the Mediterranean ports and were meant to be important stopovers on the way to Lower Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau, these in turn being part of a world system going from Egypt to Bactria and Central Asia“.⁸¹

A round ground plan for a settlement spread in later times also well beyond that of the Khabur region. Indeed in western Syria a settlement called Al-Rawda⁸² has been found, which has noticeably similar ground plan to the *Kranzhügel* sites in the Khabur area. Although Lyonnet stresses that Al-Rawda is not a *Kranzhügel*, the only difference the author of this thesis sees, however, is that Al-Rawda was founded only just in c. 2400 BC, which was at the developmental peak period or perhaps even final phase of development of the *Kranzhügel* settlements in the northeast.⁸³ Castel and Peltenburg point out that Al-Rawda fits as an example of a „de novo“ planned settlement, built on a virgin soil, in a place where there was no significant population before it. Unlike the *Kranzhügel* settlements in the Khabur region, Al-Rawda was built in an arid steppe region, which was outside the 200mm isohyet line.⁸⁴ Which means that in the case of Al-Rawda rain fed agriculture which was characteristic to the Khabur region was not possible.

Nevertheless, the density of buildings show that dense population must have existed in Al-Rawda in former times. Besides monumental fortifications and planned spatial organization, some specialized structures occur in the settlement. At least two, possibly three buildings have

⁸⁰ Akkermans, Schwarz 2003: 259.

⁸¹ Al-Maqdissi 2010: 138.

⁸² See Appendix: Figure 7.

⁸³ Lyonnet 2009: 188.

⁸⁴ Castel, Peltenburg 2007:602-603.

been recognized as religious because of their *in antis*⁸⁵ ground plan.⁸⁶

How was this settlement able to exist in the arid steppe zone, where rain fed agriculture was not possible and even the wadis⁸⁷ would dry out in the hot periods? Castel and Peltenburg note, that excavations have brought to light materials on which the Al-Rawda culture could be linked to the Orontes valley⁸⁸ settlements and even to settlements in West Syria, like Qatna and Ebla. Ur has noted, that Al-Rawda may have been installed by some external power, possibly Ebla, according to a pre-formulated town plan that may have been based on Tell Chuera.⁸⁹ Evidence of long distance trade have also been found, seashells as offerings from both the Mediterranean sea and Persian gulf are attested. Semi-precious stones like agate of probably Indian origin and Lapis-lazuli from Afghanistan have been unearthed. It must also be noted that at least in the end of the third millennium BC there was a dense micro-region of smaller settlements surrounding Al-Rawda, smaller villages in which both sedentary and pastoral people lived.⁹⁰

Thus, Castel and Peltenburg propose the idea for Al-Rawda to have had a mixed agro-pastoral economy with heavy drought management. For this the people of Al-Rawda took full advantage of the regions natural topography, and other features that nature provided them, and of course man-made features were used. Pastoralism was still probably the most important branch of economy, because Al-Rawda was situated in the steppe region, which has always been the natural domain of pastoralists.⁹¹

⁸⁵ *Anta* is an architectural term, which means that a building has pillars or door posts in either side of the entrance. Temples *in antis* are a form of ancient Syrian temples, that had these pillars near the entrances.

⁸⁶ Castel, Peltenburg 2007: 606.

⁸⁷ Wadi is the Arabian word for valley. Sometimes it is used also to describe empty riverbeds.

⁸⁸ Orontes Valley is the Orontes river valley in Western Syria in which a string of city-states emerged.

⁸⁹ Ur 2010: 410.

⁹⁰ Castel, Peltenburg 2007: 609.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 610.

2. Socio-religious relations in ancient urban societies in Upper Mesopotamia

In this thesis the author has tried to analyze the socio-religious and economic relations in ancient urban societies in Upper Mesopotamia. John F. Robertson has described urban societies or ancient cities in this case, as: „the pre-eminent centres of political authority and hubs for social and economic activities, their populations were large, dense, diverse and internally differentiated into socioeconomic classes. They were places where internal social tension festered. And social tension thanks to social stratification in a society is one of the main aspects that sociology studies. Cities and their inhabitants were resented from the outside, by villagers and nomads alike, as intruders who demanded the products of their labours or tried to control their movements. At the same time, though, the wealth and opportunities that cities represented had a strong attraction for people of the countryside“.⁹²

Similarly to modern times, in the third millennium BC, one of the main reasons of social stratification was the economic level of people or the wealth of people in simple terms. The wealthy and the elite have always had greater rights and held the power also in ancient societies. But to achieve their position in those early times, the wealthy people needed to somehow legalize those privileged rights and power, not in the strict juridical sense (but perhaps even in a juridical sense), but certainly in a social and religious sense. And in this chapter the author has attempted to analyze how this „legalization“ might have been accomplished.

For this purpose the author examines the relationship between power and architecture. How building monumental structures might have reinforced the authority of city dwellers over the people in the countryside and how the building process might have influenced the people living inside the city. Furthermore, a deeper examination of temple and palace, the elite institutions of those early urban societies. Although temple and palace represented different aspects of society, they were still closely connected to each other. And lastly a deeper look into different groups of people that lived in and near the early cities, and how they related to each-other through status and authority.

⁹² Robertson 2007: 219.

As previously discussed, the social behaviour was similarly to modern days also in the third millennium based on the economic level of people. The social stratification was probably also the basis for different groups of people to have different social and religious behaviour.

Based on the theme of the thesis, the author wants to elaborate the function of social activities. The author considers it as necessary to explain different functions and institutions of social activities which are mainly represented by economic and socio-religious relations. That is why the author wants to separate those two aspects of society and why the author would start with socio-religious relations and divide economic relations under a different chapter.

2.1. Power and architecture

One of the most important feature of Mesopotamian urbanism is the monumentality of the elite buildings, but apart from that, the city walls were also considered as indicators of wealth and power. Unlike palace and temple, which generally symbolized the power of the elite or the power of the gods, the city wall had slightly wider and subtle meaning. Of course, the construction of a city wall is often attributed to kings and the elite and many of them also stressed it themselves in their period in power. At the same time, the city wall was associated with both the cities themselves, as well as with all the people living inside their walls. Lauren Ristvet has pointed out that neighbourhoods inside the cities got their names after city gates, the area near the city wall was a public space in which markets were located and trials were held, and it was also the place where the boundaries of elite's authority was determined.⁹³

From the Tell Beydar tablets which stem from the middle of third millennium BC, originates a phrase, which illustrates nicely what was said in the previous paragraph about the importance of city walls: „*ki šu bàd še al gur₁₀ gur₁₀* – „those of the fortress, who are harvesting the grain“, it shows the workers who hailed from the city. The Sumerian word *bàd*⁹⁴ represents

⁹³ Ristvet 2007: 184.

⁹⁴ Confer the later tradition of using Akkadian word *Durum* (fortress) as element of city names like *Dur-Šarrukin*.

the city wall or the fortress which in turn represented the whole ancient city of Tell Beydar. This is a special example of the symbolic power of the city walls.⁹⁵ But in addition to the powerful and strong city wall, monumental buildings of secular and religious nature in the heart of the city were also important, both of which demonstrated the power and authority of the particular institution.

Susan Pollock emphasizes that: „there were two different audiences for two different aspects of monumental architecture. Exterior features – size, facade, and placement of structures – were visible to the whole community, to visitors, and even to some who might never set foot in the community. The interiors, however, were seen by a limited number of people, principally those who were part of a political or religious elite. The symbolism of the internal layout and design of the monumental buildings was a form of intralite communication, designed to reinforce the elite’s self-image“.⁹⁶

In the case of Tell Beydar, in which we have a different spatial order concerning the palace and temples than other sites which are considered to be *Kranzhügel*. In Tell Beydar arose - similarly to Lower Mesopotamian cities - in the spatial and functional centre of the city a religious and administrative centre. As visible from far away, its size dominated the city and the surrounding area. The public buildings were concentrated on the hilltop of the mound. As seen in the previous chapter the whole complex can be broken down into different functional areas that are accessible through a monumental central gateway system, which is axially south oriented.⁹⁷ As Bretschneider has pointed out the construction of the whole complex can be seen as politically and religiously motivated, because of how the gateway flows from the temples all the way to the palace. It depicts the legitimization of the power of the ruler (palace) which comes through the city-gods (Temple BD) and by the ancestors (Temple A)^{98, 99}.

The concept of defensible monumental architecture itself in the centre of the settlement is however already developed on a large scale in the Uruk period (c. 4000 to 3100 BC) in northern Mesopotamian-Anatolian region.

Scholars examined the link between the rise of monumental architecture and the emergence of urban formations, which have been labelled as early „states“. To understand that relationship,

⁹⁵ Ristvet 2007: 185.

⁹⁶ Pollock 1999: 178.

⁹⁷ Bretschneider 2003: 103.

⁹⁸ See appendix: Figure 9.

⁹⁹ Bretschneider 2009: 633.

scholars have investigated how much human resource was required to build those monumental structures. According to Ristvet the overall capability of a „state“ to insure and maintain control over population can therefore be observed by how much human resource the state was able to mobilize from their daily activities such as agricultural work away to state service.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it can plausibly be seen as the elites will to demonstrate the capabilities of their city and state, and with that raise and maintain their own authority over the nearby region. The larger and more powerful were the buildings and structures, the more powerful was the city. It was certainly useful for the common inhabitants of the city also, who could similarly to the elite be proud of their city, and probably even their own authority was enhanced by it in the nearby regions. Susan Pollock adds: „also religious beliefs and practices could have been drawn upon for labour projects as part of the necessary service of people to their gods. This could have been a way of hiding the fact that monumental architecture served to establish and maintain social, political, and economic inequalities among people“.¹⁰¹

2.2. Temple and palace, one a place of ritual and symbolism, the fabric of society, the other a place of power and control, as a result of the social development at the beginning of the third millennium.

Mesopotamian temple and palace were the symbols of the ancient worldview, which represented the ruling class, the builders or the gods. The monumentality of the buildings is an expression of political, ideological, social and economic will of the respective owners. The concept of the palace as a "house of the ruler" in this case compared to that of temple as a "house of god". However, as Bretschneider points out that a sharp distinction between sacred

¹⁰⁰ Ristvet 2007: 198.

¹⁰¹ Pollock 1999: 194.

and profane is often not understandable for the ancient Near Eastern architecture.¹⁰² In the case of both concepts we must presume that they have been established for the purpose of control. The palace may have regulated political and economic behaviour. However, temple as a place of ritual and religion, regulates social behaviour and sanctifies the social structure. According to Verhoven: „it's a symbolic communication“. ¹⁰³ In opposite to forth millennium, where it was the temple which maintained both concepts in itself.

In Tell Chuera we can see that the temples are within the city separately, in Tell Beydar on the other hand they are integrated into palace system, the so-called "Temple-Palace", we can also see something similar in later times in Mari, in Zimri Lin's Palace, where a whole wing of the palace building is considered to be a temple, or at least a place of ritual.

2.2.1. Palace the seat of political and economical relations and its importance in society

The residential and administrative headquarters of political authorities have been excavated in the palaces of Ebla, Tell Chuera, Mari and Tell Beydar, they have revealed large complexes, which represent an important economic power and political authority.¹⁰⁴

The cuneiform tablets found at Ebla, Mari and Tell Beydar demonstrate that the Upper Mesopotamian royal/state institutions used Lower Mesopotamian writing system for bureaucratic purposes and adapted it to local languages. The texts verify the size and wealth of these royal/state establishments, which controlled vast resources of labour, as well as agricultural, pastoral and craft products. Details of the state political organization, religion and inter-regional relations are also represented. The language and the personal names in the texts indicate that the western and north-eastern Syrian population in the third millennium was

¹⁰² Bretschneider 2005: 9-10.

¹⁰³ Verhoven 2002: 9.

¹⁰⁴ Akkermans, Schwarz 2003: 269.

almost exclusively Semitic speaking.¹⁰⁵

The early dynastic palaces of Tell Beydar, Tell Chuera and Tell Bi'a¹⁰⁶ follow a standard layout scheme. From a central courtyard, a representative group of rooms can be reached. In this room complex, each is dominated by a large hall with a pedestal-like installation. Connected to these rooms are smaller bath - or restrooms with elaborately crafted waste disposal installations. Another characteristic is the terraced arrangement of the rooms on two levels, the topography of the area seems not to be decisive. The standardized layout scheme of the central room complex of the late early dynastic palace buildings is basically the same for the Khabur region (Tell Beydar, Tell Chuera) as well as the Euphrates region (Tell Bi'a). The pedestal-shaped fixtures in the large halls do speak of a prominent feature of the rooms.¹⁰⁷

According to Bretschneider: "Tell Beydar and Ebla provide interesting discoveries from 25th-24th century BC of monumental grave systems within or in the immediate vicinity of the palace complex. It is the first time in northern Mesopotamia that in two sites a visible building tradition has been discovered, which has an integration (Ebla) or direct connection (Tell Beydar) to a grave complex and the palace as its basis. The room units above the tombs, addressed as multi-room temple at Tell Beydar, must be interpreted as rooms where rituals and celebrations in association with the (royal) ancestor worship had taken place. In later times, in the Syrian palaces of the second millennium BC, the crypt under the palace is already an integral part of the building program" (authors translation from German).¹⁰⁸

Bretschneider also stresses that: "Ancestral figures of the deceased rulers of Tell Beydar may have been erected on the podium before the niche decorated east wall. A similar finding is reconstructed for the little temple in antis at Tell Chuera, the Ninni-Zaza temple in Mari and the Ištar temple in Assur. The preserved "praying statuettes" are interpreted as ancestral figures, to which libations were offered. Also the monumental statues of the Djebelet el-Beda¹⁰⁹ have been mentioned recently as ancestral figure of a political elite" (authors translation from German).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Akkermans, Schwarz 2003: 269

¹⁰⁶ Tell Bi'a is an archaeological site in northern Syria, which is identified with the ancient city of Tuttul. It is situated near the modern town of Ar-Raqqa.

¹⁰⁷ Bretschneider 2003: 104.

¹⁰⁸ Bretschneider 2009: 640.

¹⁰⁹ See Appendix: Figure 13. For a photo of one of the statues.

¹¹⁰ Bretschneider 2009: 638.

Bretschneider also writes: “The combination of ancestor worship with the architectural ostentation represented the power and governing rights of the ruling dynasty and thus their political, religious and social entitlement. The obligation of the heirs to take care of their ancestral spirits plays an important role in the Bronze Age palace culture of Syria, and can thus be understood as a legitimation of the ruling elite. Opposite the temple-economy based social systems of southern Mesopotamia, the north had fundamental differences, where the palace-economy systems, bound by dynastic succession were dominant. The integration of shrines and temples of ancestor worship in the palace buildings is to be seen as part of its political program, one must assumed that divine status were given to the dynastic ancestors” (authors translation from German).¹¹¹ Schwartz adds that: „Presumably the immediate purpose of ancestor veneration was to appease the ghosts of the deceased so they would assist their living descendants and refrain from harming them. In Mesopotamia and second-millennium Syria, it was understood that a failure to perform proper rituals for the dead could result in angry ghosts haunting the living and causing misfortune. Conversely, proper care of the dead could result in blessing conferred by ancestors upon the living. Such blessings would, in the case of ruler, insure not only the well-being of the ruling individuals but also of the dynastic succession and polity itself ... The past is used to legitimize the social order of the present, whose inequalities are presented as natural and inevitable. Just as there were powerful leaders in the past, so the same should continue to apply in the present“.¹¹²

2.2.2. Temple the seat of religious relations and its importance in society

In ancient Mesopotamia, the temples were in the beginning the spiritual and even economical centres. They were also the places where the many gods of Mesopotamia „lived“ on earth, and where only well educated priests or priestesses (religious specialists) served their needs. Contrary to modern customs in some Christian confessions, the ancient Mesopotamian

¹¹¹ Bretschneider 2009: 638.

¹¹² Schwartz 2007: 45.

temples were not places where community members gathered to worship god respectively deities. Pollock also points out that similarly even the insides of royal palaces may have been only seen by a limited audience.¹¹³

Temples can be proved mainly since as early as the Ubaid period. Over time, the extent and size of the temples got bigger, although the construction of smaller temples also continued alongside the larger ones. In Lower Mesopotamia during the late Ubaid, some larger temples were raised on to platforms. As time passed, those platforms were elaborated into the ziggurats, that are so characteristic to Lower Mesopotamia. Earliest of which originate from the third millennium.¹¹⁴ The Upper Mesopotamian temples in the third millennium never reach such magnitudes, nevertheless their importance as religious and ritual institutions cannot be underestimated.

The distinct buildings with three sectioned ground plan, that appeared in the Ubaid period are likely to be the prototypes of the original temples i.e. the houses of gods. A classic example of this form of temple are the famous prehistoric temples of Eridu. In the case of temple architecture, we can talk about it as a building with a social function. In the beginning of the third millennium, however, there was a cultic turn, when people distanced from the deities. But temples were still important parts of urban centres, which exhibited regional particularity. Of which were multi-room plan temples at Mari, and the temples *in antis* in middle Euphrates. Given the peculiarities of these two groups, it can be demonstrated by archaeological research that the Syrian temple architecture has not had the same meaning that was characteristic of southern Mesopotamian temple architecture.¹¹⁵

Bretschneider emphasizes that the temple architecture of Tell Beydar displays strong (North) Mesopotamian influences. The otherwise widespread scheme of the temple *in antis* in Early Bronze Age Syria is there, however unknown.¹¹⁶

Even though the temples of ancient times may not have been the places of worship by common believers¹¹⁷, they were still places of religion and ritual. But the social meaning of

¹¹³ Pollock 1999: 178.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 176.

¹¹⁵ Akkermans, Schwarz 2003: 269.

¹¹⁶ Bretschneider 2003: 105.

¹¹⁷ It is known from artistic representations on sealings that a special form of introduction was conducted by priests or priestesses, so that people who were not involved in temples daily life could visit the statues of the deities. It is also thought that similar „introduction“ may have taken place when a person wanted to meet the ruler. See Appendix: Figure 10. For an example of glyptic introduction scene.

religion in ancient Mesopotamia was different to today in general, where nowadays secular communities are maintained. In ancient Mesopotamia (in all likelihood, this was the situation in the whole Near East) secularised societies were neither established nor developed. Religion affected all life's domains, it influenced political and economical decisions, which in turn shaped religious beliefs and customs. This binding worldview was based on the belief that the forces of nature, human and divine actions, all were intimately tied together. Pollock claims that even though this cohesion existed between the religious and social world, the political systems were not theocracy.¹¹⁸ Which however is not quite true, because we know from history that at least some Mesopotamian kings deified themselves. As an example we can bring out the Akkadian king Naram-Su'en, Sumerian king Shulgi and from later times Cassite king Kadašman-Enlil.

Pollock also emphasizes that although most kings ruled through divine right, at the same time, they themselves were in the service of the gods. Kings were expected to build or rebuild temples, and often they did, either by building new ones, or further elaborating¹¹⁹ the old temples.¹²⁰

With regard to the study of ancient Mesopotamian religions, the available source material varies in quantity and quality through different eras and cultures. In the case of Upper Mesopotamia and the third millennium, we have nothing more than artistic representations of religious activity on seals and stelae. In written sources some information about cultic payments and animals for sacrifices are attested in economic archives.¹²¹

As the religions in ancient Mesopotamia were polytheistic, a large number of different deities were recognized by different groups of people in different geographic regions. The flexibility in how different gods and goddesses were able to come and go through time, change their names, their main features and attributes, and also their power, makes it very difficult and even misleading to talk about a specific Mesopotamian pantheon.¹²² Ancient Near East is also striking in a sense, that religious tension was there almost absent. Indeed, the sources reflect a general tolerance and inclusiveness of the gods and cults related to foreigners and newly

¹¹⁸ Pollock 1999: 186.

¹¹⁹ Nebukadnezar II for example declared himself the one who rebuilt the ziggurat of Babylon E₂-temen-an-ki.

¹²⁰ Pollock 1999: 188.

¹²¹ Beckman 2007:366.

¹²² Pollock 1999: 186.

arrived people. What is remarkable in the Near Eastern religions is the syncretism¹²³, i.e. the process how the characteristics and attributes of one deity was transferred and melded with those of another.¹²⁴

According to Pollock: “Temple-based religion was concerned especially with the performance of ritual at festivals and the care of the cult statue of the goddess or god to whom the temple belonged. The deity was considered to be present in the cult statue once it had been properly fashioned and consecrated. No cult statue have been preserved, probably because the gold was melted down and reused and the wood decomposed, but according to descriptions in texts they were made out of wood plated with gold and had eyes of semi-precious stones. The statue underwent mouth- and eye-opening rituals in order to make it animate. After these rituals were performed, it was clothed in luxurious garments and jewellery, fed, and brought into the temple, where it was placed on a pedestal in the inner sanctuary. At various times, especially during festivals, the statue was taken out of the temple and paraded through city and countryside“.¹²⁵

In opposite to other Upper Mesopotamian sites, one has found especially in the site of Tell Beydar some evidence of a local pantheon: a „calendar“. The evidence concerning the pantheon, strongly suggests that the calendar of Tell Beydar (from where we know the names of the deities) was of only local importance. There exists parallels with the pantheon of Ebla, especially regarding the roles of Šamagan¹²⁶, UTU and Išhara¹²⁷, but the data are still too meagre for a detailed comparison with Ebla, Mari, or the evidence of other sites and periods.¹²⁸ According to Sallaberger: „UTU, the sun-god, probably to be read Šamaš, played a prominent role in the cult of Tell Beydar, as not only is a month and a gate named after him, but also his cult is attested (6 iii 4, 138 ii 2’)“.¹²⁹

¹²³ Confer the syncretism between Inanna, Ištar and Astarte.

¹²⁴ Robertson 2007: 225.

¹²⁵ Pollock 1999: 187.

¹²⁶ Šamagan is the god of wild animals.

¹²⁷ Išhara often identified with Ištar, in Semitic tradition, she was a love goddess.

¹²⁸ Sallaberger 1996: 87.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 86.

2.2.2.1. Graves and associated rituals

In archaeology burials are very important sources, they can be viewed in many ways. Besides simple descriptions what was inside a grave, scholars strive to unlock and describe on the basis of burial evidence the social world from which the burial and buried person might have hailed from. This information can give scholars new ideas and views about past societies. In addition to social aspects like the status and authority of the buried person, graves also reveal burial rituals and symbols from which beliefs and practices about death, life and the afterlife and sometimes even the character of the divine can be derived.¹³⁰

Within the burial rite in the ancient Near East one must distinguish between burial ritual and ancestors cult. The burial ritual reflects the ritual actions that accompany the transition of the deceased from this life into the afterlife. The burial sequence is often reconstructed in several stages. The funeral ritual can be a precursor of the ancestral ritual. In ancestor worship ritual, a possible permanent worship of deceased ancestors were sought. The cultic acts must therefore be repeated at the grave or in a grave cult complex in regularity. The provision for the deceased after the funeral with water and food is an important part of the funeral custom in Mesopotamia and Syria. This care ritual for the dead - known from various cuneiform sources as *kispum* (ritual) - is mainly used for residential buildings.¹³¹

As an example of a Khabur region elite grave. During the 2000 excavation season a built tomb comprising three chambers and a passageway was uncovered below the floor in the main room of late Early Dynastic/Early Jezirah IIIb Temple A (“Haupttempel”)¹³², on the acropolis of Tell Beydar. Remarkable about this tomb are not the grave findings themselves, which are not unusual, however they indicate of elite status and certainly to some extent of wealth (21 bronze, 2 silver and 65 ceramic items), the lack of more jewellery and gold items is perhaps significant, but most important are the signs of ritual actions undertaken in conjunction with the burial, that provide important clues to the identity of the deceased. An adze was carefully broken and put under the head of the deceased. However, a broken staff was put in the dead man's hand. The largest dagger (probably an actual and used weapon) was stabbed into a carefully constructed pile of stones. A large animal, probably equid was

¹³⁰ Schwartz 2012: 60.

¹³¹ Bretschneider 2009: 637-38.

¹³² See Appendix: Figure 8.

slaughtered and placed under a similar heap of stones.¹³³ A male figurine, which may have represented the dead man's "spirit" was cut in two. With the exception of the latter, which meaning is uncertain, these measures are not simply related to the termination of a life but a cessation of the role or even office. The adze is a symbol of power, a dagger and equid are warrior's tools. Personal jewellery, though silver, were simple - a diadem, that may indicate high status, bracelets and even the beads found, did not come from the necklace worn by the deceased. However, the diadem and the bracelets can also be expected to have a functional purpose - with particular reference to a title or rank of some sort, not to the general wealth.¹³⁴

Since the identity of the buried person is not known, and even his position in society can't be accurately determined, we have to remember as Schwartz has remarked: „When considering the question of social identity, it is fitting to recall that it is often difficult to ascertain the role and affiliation of individuals in elite burials even with the availability of written materials. In the case of royal cemetery of Ur in southern Mesopotamia, the wealthiest elite cemetery of the third-millennium Near East, debate has continued for decades on the identity of the tomb occupants, with royalty, religious specialists, and representatives of public households among the posited options“.¹³⁵

2.3. Relationships and statuses between different groups of people

In this thesis we encounter mainly three types of human groups. They are the people that resided in the cities, the people who can be considered rural villagers and lastly a different rural group, the pastoralists. Of course they can be divided into more categories based on their occupation, their social status and so on. What is more important, is to recognize, that different social groups existed together in the third millennium BC, and the relationships

¹³³ Equidae are animals that belong to the family of horses. In this context it can be assumed that the slaughtered equid was either a donkey or onager, or a cross breed of the two species.

¹³⁴ Bretschneider, Cunningham 2007: 7.

¹³⁵ Schwartz 2007: 44.

between those groups was the basis of their societies.

Cities were probably the places where these groups all came together either for social or economical or for other reasons. But it is clear that for a city to survive, it needed the resources that people who lived outside its walls produced.¹³⁶ Robertson remarks that the development of cities and even states relied heavily on their ability to reign over the surrounding landscape. It was done either by forcing the rural people into the service of a city or in later times the „state“, or buying out their land, in doing so, forcing the previous owners into renting the land. Whatever mode or system was used, the idea was to control the land and by doing it, forcing the rural population to pay tribute. Villagers who now found themselves under the control of a city had to feed themselves and also had to give away part of their harvest as a tax to the city. They probably also had to provide other services, like constructing public buildings like temples inside the city as a forced labour, in a time of need the male segment of the population had to take part in war campaigns etc. Similar fate would have befallen to the pastoralists, but they were probably harder to control, because they could just stand up and move away. It is known from the palace records of Ebla that the royal family and officials related to the royal establishment were assigned lands in the surrounding area of the city. The personnel from Ebla palace were regularly sent out to nearby villages to gather taxes. The villagers also had to provide the palace with livestock and even the cultivation on the cities fields were done by forced labourers from the nearby villages.¹³⁷

Since written material from the third millennium comes from the elite establishments that were located inside the cities, we don't have a clear picture what rural people and also pastoralists really thought of the people that lived in the cities. We can assume that there was animosity between the rural population and the city dwellers, it is probably safe to assume that the city dwellers considered themselves to have higher statuses and authority than those who lived outside the city. We can get some ideas from ethnographic studies from later times. According to Robertson the general idea is that: „the social values of villagers were dominated by kinship ties, they also had a strong attachment to land. Ancient texts from Mesopotamia, Syria and Israel reflect the importance of village elders in regulating disputes within the village, and their importance as representatives before the state authority“. ¹³⁸

¹³⁶ In opposite to this type confer the citystate of Uruk where most of the fields were inside the city walls.

¹³⁷ Robertson 2007: 215.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 212.

Even harder is to discover what pastoralists and other nomadic groups thought about rural people and the people from the cities. Robertson points out that modern studies of traditional nomadic groups have demonstrated that their organization and social values are mostly based on blood and kinship ties. Almost as important are the values of tribal solidarity and consensus based decision making. From this, we can draw some parallels with the pastoralist society of the third millennium but in doing so we must be careful not to carry these features over as absolutely equivalent, we have to regard them as more like guidelines. What probably is more likely to be true and is also stressed by Robertson is that nomadic people tend to resist the control and authority of the city and state. It is known from later eras that in a time of weakened central control nomadic people tend to revolt against the states and affirm their autonomy on the countryside. Robertson also points out that at least the traditional nomads tend to detest the rural villagers and consider them to be weak and submissive, and their attachment to land as embarrassing. Similar views is noted of the city population, whom they consider corrupt, soft and cowardly. In return, the rural villagers and city people consider nomads as irresponsible, uprooted people who are prone to raiding and stealing.¹³⁹

All this could be true, but there are also some other newer views on the social situation in the third millennium, especially concerning the pastoralists. Robertson has used in his article the age-old stereotypic picture of the “evil and ignorant nomad”, who preys on defenceless villages and “the fearful and unwitting country folk”. But the real situation might have been a bit different, in later chapters¹⁴⁰ it will be discussed more on this subject.

¹³⁹ Robertson 2007: 218.

¹⁴⁰ See subchapter 3.2.2.2. Pastoralism.

3. Economic relations in ancient urban settlements in Upper Mesopotamia

To better understand a society, and the relationships between the people living in it, we should in addition to the social and religious relations, take a deeper look into how that dense population, which had concentrated into towns and cities by the middle of the third millennium BC earned their living and subsisted in general.

To compare the possibilities of research on an ancient society, then it is always somewhat easier to investigate economy and economical relations than to explore the socio-religious aspects of society. Archaeology after all, first unearths buildings and objects which are often used to exercise some activity or craft. From the mid of third millennium also first written materials¹⁴¹ appear in Upper Mesopotamia, and even those mostly list economic activities.

According to Ur, if these findings are incorporated into models that take into account the settlement landscape (soils and the amount of and variations of rainfall), agro-pastoral data compared with traditional Near Eastern agricultural data, etc. and to contribute it with historical and anthropological data, scholars can get a decent idea of the society of that time and their daily activities and everyday life in general.¹⁴²

The economic activities of the centralized institutions such as the palace and temple are best known to us, thanks to earlier archaeological interest and activity which was mostly concerned with the high mounds of the ancient settlements. Nowadays more and more interest is also concentrated on the neighbouring areas near the high mounds, the so-called „suburban“ areas, which have yielded new findings and presented scholars with better understanding of life and daily activities of the people considered to be the „non-elite“¹⁴³.

Gil Stein and James Blackman propose therefore that in northern Mesopotamia, there existed essentially a “dual” economy in the city-states such as Tell Leilan or Tell Brak, in which the centralized institutions like palace and temple existed together with the above-mentioned non-elite economic sector. Central institutions controlled what Stein and Blackman describe as attached specialists who produced high-quality products that are deemed necessary for the

¹⁴¹ The royal/state archives have been unearthed in the acropolises of Tell Beydar, Mari and Ebla.

¹⁴² Ur 2010: 406.

¹⁴³ For the meaning of non-elite see subchapter 3.2.2. Activities of the non-elite.

elite to remain in power, to maintain their wealth and to legitimate their rule, and of course also to raise the authority of their city and/or state. At the same time there also existed independent specialists, who produced wide-ranging and practical goods and services. This dual economy naturally extended to other areas, it is well known that palaces and in some cases temples had specialists in agriculture and it is quite certain that both institutions owned herds of animals, as is evidenced by the textual material from Tell Beydar.¹⁴⁴

However, as already outlined above, next to palace and temple there existed a non-elite economical sector, under which we can also add the people who lived outside the city gates, people who lived nearby in rural communities, but who without a doubt had interactions with the people living inside the city. It is difficult to believe that a city could produce all the goods necessary for its own survival all by itself. It is also quite certain that in the rural community itself were different societies, for example, it is relatively certain that together with farmers there existed an independent pastoral-society, who were engaged in animal husbandry and herding in the vicinity of the city and certainly beyond it, in the steppe.

3.1. Cuneiform sources

Cuneiform tablets are among the most important evidence which help scholars better understand ancient societies. Written sources that in this context can be considered as the first historical evidence provide archaeological findings with numeric values, and presents scholars with better ideas about the aspects of ancient societies, which on the basis of archaeology alone, could only be speculated about. Written sources from Upper Mesopotamia are scarce, the first substantial evidence comes from the middle of third millennium, and is found at Tell Beydar. The Tell Beydar corpus consists of a single large archive of economic tablets stemming from the palace administration and a number of dispersed texts, some of which originate from another small archive. Written sources have also been found at other Upper Mesopotamian sites, but in marginally smaller numbers. At Tell Mozan three tablets and some

¹⁴⁴ Stein, Blackman 1993: 53.

inscribed bullae have been found and published, at Tell Chagar Bazar only two tablets, and at Tell Brak some 46 texts among which some school texts have been published.¹⁴⁵

There exists two other archives that are of Syrian origins, but are not found in the region of our interest, although both of them provide some information about Upper Mesopotamia and especially the Khabur region. The most important of these archives is the royal archive from the palace of Ebla, which is contemporary to the Beydar archive. In these texts, numerous cities that are located in Upper Mesopotamia and also persons going to or coming from them are mentioned. The other archive originates from Mari, but is lacking in information, because only around 40 texts are related to the Khabur area, and are mostly of administrative nature.¹⁴⁶

The historical evidence from the southern archives of Sumer and Akkad are also scarce, it seems, that the elite from this region was not concerned with the north. Sumerian military campaigns to the north are basically unknown and after the rise of the Akkadian empire, even the kings of Akkad rarely raided the north, and were more concerned with the cities in the west, that were situated on or near the region's main rivers.¹⁴⁷

Some 240 clay tablets from Tell Beydar show that during the second half of third millennium BC. literacy expanded to distant regions of Upper Khabur basin and it is explicitly clear that the administrative institutions in the region were comparable to those of southern Mesopotamia. For the first time we get an idea not only of language, calendar, metrology and pantheon of Upper Mesopotamia, but also of its cultic and political institutions.¹⁴⁸ Relatively little can be said about the language itself. At least it can be noted that the texts are written in Pre-Sargonic Akkadian dialect.¹⁴⁹

According to van Lerberghe the archive provides only a narrow perspective of the population segment in Tell Beydar. It represents the behaviour and activities of people in certain class: people who were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, the skilled workers necessary for production and some of the officials who supervised them. Thus, the archive describes the activities of sedentary or semi-mobile communities, that were engaged in cultivating the land and cattle farming (agro-pastoralists).¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Koliński 2007: 346.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ van Lerberghe 1996: 119.

¹⁴⁹ Ismail, Sallaberger, Talon, Van Lerberghe 1996: 31.

¹⁵⁰ Van Lerberghe 1996: 120.

Most tablets of Tell Beydar originated from residential quarters, on the northern slope of the hill, a few meters below its top. Most of the tablets were found in a residential unit that consisted of three interconnected rooms. The pottery associated with tablets comes from the Early Dynastic IIIB period from about 2400 BC. This dating is confirmed by palaeography, the shape of the tablets and by how the cuneiform signs are divided into columns and cases. It also marks the ordering of the signs within the cases.¹⁵¹

The investigation of palaeography has proven that the writing of Tell Beydar clearly differs from that of Ebla. It may be associated more with Mari writing. Unexpectedly, the best comparison can be found from tablets that come from urban locations such as Adab, Isin and Nippur in Lower Mesopotamia.¹⁵² This development actually seems strange, because as seen above, according to the southern archives, there wasn't much interest in the north by the southerners.

3.2. Division of economical activity

As previously stated, the economic activity in the third millennium city can roughly be divided into two categories. The business activities of a higher class or the elite and the activities of the lower classes or the non-elite. As also previously mentioned, only the economical activities of the elite are unfortunately better known, because they were the ones who left behind written records and also bulk of archaeological material comes from the habitats and workspaces considered to be elite in nature.¹⁵³ At the same time, it is actually not known how much the elite themselves were directly involved in economic activities, and that is why their involvement in such activities can be mostly followed through control mechanisms i.e. it can be seen how many of those attached specialists they controlled, what

¹⁵¹ Ismail, Sallaberger, Talon, Van Lerberghe 1996: 31.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ In the third millennium the private houses and structures that were built out of clay bricks are mostly considered to be the habitats of more wealthy people.

craft seemed to be more important to them and so on.

Craft specialization is considered by scholars to be one of the key factors in the political economy of complex societies. According to Stein and Blackman the economical specialization is defined as labour and capital investment in the production of a specific goods or services, so that the person produces more goods than he himself utilizes. Specialized production is therefore production of surplus for purpose of exchange.¹⁵⁴

Existing findings¹⁵⁵ indicate that there was a systematic variation in specialized production. This variety is defined by two types of craft specialists, the independent non-elite specialists and attached specialists. Stein and Blackman point out that independent specialists operate independently, producing goods and services according to economic, social or political demand and that from variety of sources. The organization of production and decision making strategies of these independent producers are oriented on efficiency based production models. In contrast, however, the attached specialists are dependent on the elite, or some form of central institution, which supplies them with raw materials, workspaces and supports them in any other way. And all this in exchange for exclusive control over their products and services.¹⁵⁶

Stein and Blackman stress that as a consequence the products and services these two specialists produce and provide have different characteristics as well as difference in quality. Attached specialists generally engage in the production of high prestige and high value products, which distribution is carefully controlled by the elite, as they are considered as “politically charged items” and of crucial importance for the maintenance of the city or state. They are used in tax collection, military, public rituals and of course for the legitimation of the authority of the central institution. Independent specialists on the other hand are producing widespread and practical goods. Given this relationship between the function of the product and the organization of the producers, it can be assumed that both type of specialists existed in most if not in all the early complex societies.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Stein, Blackman 1993: 29.

¹⁵⁵ It can be seen in the quality of pottery and ceramics for example. As high quality ceramics tend to be higher and slimmer and more decorative in the same time lower quality pottery is all about its practicality.

¹⁵⁶ Stein, Blackman 1993: 30.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

3.2.1. Activities of the elite

The economic activity of the elite is the easiest one to follow, and this is mainly due to the existing written material. However, we need to be thorough of whom we can categorize as the elite. The author of this thesis understands as the elite: the royal family and/or the controlling officials of the central institution and officials (priests) of temples. Question remains, can these attached specialists, who were mentioned above, who also were dependent on some form of higher authority, be considered amongst the elite of the city or state is unsure at this stage. In this thesis they are considered part of the elite, as they belong to the elite-controlled palace economy.

The palace economy was a specific type of redistribution economy, in which the economic activity of the society was managed by a central administrative institution or institutions. In most cases these institutions were incorporated or located in the royal palace complex. Its main purpose was to increase economic profit and to grow capital. To achieve this, the palace owned and controlled the bulk of the raw materials, which in turn were distributed to the attached producers for the finished products which were essential for the wealth of the palace. Capital and product surplus however was used for construction of additional workshops and defence structures. It was also used to fund war campaigns, or to create favourable alliances with neighbouring countries and used in various other economical actions that produced profit.

By the 24th century BC in which state and people were obliged to submit to hegemonic rule. Elites of for example Ebla palace possessed also widespread rural lands as was discussed above.¹⁵⁸ Barley gained a preeminent role with state emergence, the business of its cultivation, and perhaps the cultivation of other cereals, came under direct control of a central administration.¹⁵⁹ Inscribed tablets from Ebla archives provide useful information about the organization of production. Careful records were kept, for example, of the raw materials collected by the palace and then stored in their storehouses. In the case of metals, the tablets record that the tribute from one city alone amounted to 15000 standardized ingots of bronze – around 1,125 ton. In addition 100 gold bars (around 8 kg) and 840 silver bars (64 kg).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Castel, Peltenburg 2007: 613.

¹⁵⁹ Weiss 2002-2003: 65.

¹⁶⁰ Stein, Blackman 1993: 52.

According to van Lerberghe another indication of a leading household controlling for example Tell Beydar's society and economy emerges from the uncovered clay tablets and is in a text¹⁶¹, which tells that the same officials, whose names come up several times in these archives, distributed metal tools (copper adzes - *gin uruda*, and copper drills - *bulug₄ uruda*) to the workers. This seems similar to the evidence of southern Mesopotamian archives, indicating that all the metal tools that were necessary for production process, were owned by the administrative authority, because their price was too expensive for the common labourer.¹⁶²

Sallaberger and Ur point out that the administration of agricultural hinterlands of Tell Beydar were certainly an integral part of a political organization. Although central designation and the scope of the institution of Tell Beydar which had political and economic control, is unknown, at this point some thoughts can be given. The archive originates from the area near the city block, the institution which is reflected in this archive is engaged in various parts of the economy, it controlled several hundred employees, distributed draught animals and people who were needed in agriculture even in several smaller settlements.¹⁶³

Sallaberger and Ur also point out that according to these administrative lists, Tell Beydar organized agricultural labour and workforce in twelve different smaller settlements, which we can therefore consider as Tell Beydar's "provinces" (Tell Beydar at the time, however, was itself under the rule of the state of Nagar). Due to the fragmented state of the preserved texts, only a limited range of activities are shown, and thus the absolute minimum number of settlements, which were dependent on Tell Beydar are represented.¹⁶⁴

The highest administration represented in the texts consists of five chief officials: *Arrum*, *Arši-aḫu*, *Ḫal-ti*, *Tabla'alim* and *Kur-ilum*. They are responsible for 75 to 235 employees who are all originating from different professions, they also control draught animals, control female and male workers, are responsible for the distribution of cereals (grain), flour, or distributing of copper tools, and provide animals for offerings. Titles of these men and their rank is not known, and it is also not known whether they are acting under the direction of the palace or the local provincial governor, or under the authority of the city or temple. For

¹⁶¹ Text number 5.

¹⁶² Van Lerberghe 1996: 121.

¹⁶³ Sallaberger, Ur 2004: 57.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 56.

reasons of clarity it should be noted that ownership of arable land is not documented in the archives, although centralized organization in agriculture suggests that a substantial part of it was probably institutionally owned.¹⁶⁵

It is interesting to note, that all of these occupations, which are outlined in the Tell Beydar archive, belong to a labour sphere that Stein and Blackman have concluded to be non-elite in origin, or in the sphere of the independent specialists, but it seems that in Tell Beydar they were entirely under the control of a central institution. Does this mean that at this point only a segment of a greater archive has been preserved. A small part of a bigger royal archive that dealt with lower grade economical activities? Tell Beydar could have also been a city that was specialized in a certain way and had the purpose to produce certain products and services for the major regional centre (we know that at the time of the archive, Tell Beydar was under the rule of Nagar). And perhaps there only lived people who were specialists of a certain craft, and all of them belonged to the palace?

In any case, even if textual material from a temple or a palace are available, we cannot jump to conclusions and it must be kept in mind that these documents only reflect or represent a specialized, shortened data from very specific transactions which took place within a limited sphere of administration. Thus, a lack of an object or relevant craft from a respective document does not mean that these actions or objects were missing from a corresponding Mesopotamian society. It only shows that the institution from where these documents originate, didn't manage relevant activities or objects.¹⁶⁶ In this context, even if such objects or activities were represented in the documents of the institution, it does not yet again mean that this institution had a monopoly over said objects or crafts. Just the crafts or objects were among the things administered by that institution.

¹⁶⁵ Sallaberger, Ur 2004: 57.

¹⁶⁶ Stein, Blackman 1993: 49.

3.2.1.1. Trade

It has often been stated that Mesopotamia¹⁶⁷ completely lacks raw materials and the need to organize long-distance trade to obtain these materials was one of the major factors why complex political and economical forms began to take shape so early there. The development of trade networks¹⁶⁸ has been seen as a very important part in the rising social complexity, particularly with regard of rising bureaucratic control mechanisms, which were developed to record, regulate and redistribute local production as well as the raw materials originating from elsewhere.¹⁶⁹

It is certain that in southern Mesopotamian alluvium there was shortage of wood, metals and also exotic stones, but it certainly didn't mean that the lack of these resources affected in any way the day to day survivability in that region. It is likely that with the possession of these raw materials and other resources from elsewhere the elite expressed and as well, secured their power and authority in southern society. In addition, this kind of status display was present in Mesopotamia already in the Neolithic era (7th century BC), already from that time period archaeologists have found copper trinkets and exotic stones made out of material which are not found in Mesopotamia.¹⁷⁰

In addition to incoming raw materials and foreign goods, internal trade inside Mesopotamia between cities and city-states must have been as important, if not more important. There were also goods and products that must have gone out of Mesopotamia as export trade.

Crawford stresses that it is difficult to put together a constructive picture of the export out of Mesopotamia, because evidence from a corresponding periods are very insignificant, although internal trade and export trade must have existed in Mesopotamia, its lack of existence would have been impossible, because the amount of imported goods were too high to be just bounty of war campaigns. Of course this was also one way goods were received, but as stated before, the amount of it was too high to be just bounty alone.¹⁷¹

The scarcity of evidence of export trade or even total lack of it, have been give a variety of

¹⁶⁷ In this case the whole region.

¹⁶⁸ See Appendix: Figure 11. For a map of ancient trade routes.

¹⁶⁹ Oates, 1993: 407.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 408.

¹⁷¹ Crawford 1973: 232.

explanations. An important factor here is that in the study of Mesopotamia, it has been very hard to investigate what presumably may have been produced there for export. It doesn't help that outside of Mesopotamia very few objects of Mesopotamian origin have been found. The reason for this has been theorised of being that all the products that were produced inside Mesopotamia for export, were of highly perishable in nature. The studies of written materials tend to support this theory, but unfortunately archaeologically it is almost unprovable.¹⁷²

It is known that clothing made out of wool and other fabrics played a significant role in export trade and also grain was exported in quantity. It is now possible to get a slightly clearer picture of things, although archaeological evidence is still modest. By unluck not only were the goods themselves perishable in nature, but also the equipment and apparatus that was used to produce relevant products was also of perishable nature. Therefore, in these issues we must rely on linguists and historians, if texts have shown us the way, archaeology can add confirming details.¹⁷³

Although archaeologists are unable to supplement the textual data to a full extent, due to the perishable nature of the materials, there are evidence to support previous claims, for instance spindle whorls are very well known in archaeological material. Spindle whorls have been demonstrated from very early times, and their widespread use indicates that to some extent at least spinning was a domestic industry throughout the whole third millennium BC. There is also evidence of large-scale wool industry belonging to a central institution. For example a scene originating from a Dagan temple from Mari depicts some priestesses spinning wool. Also textual evidence has been found that suggests that spinning and weaving was carried out on a large-scale at temple complexes.¹⁷⁴

Palace and temple had a central role in trading and no doubt organized and financed large amounts of commercial activity. However, it is almost impossible to know with the present evidence if also private enterprise was involved in commercial activities. There are some hints that private trading might have taken place, the reasoning behind it is the growing evidence that land, real estate i.e. property, and hence capital was privately owned.¹⁷⁵

On the basis of textual evidence from later periods, it appears that specialists of different

¹⁷² Crawford 1973: 232.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* 232-233.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 236.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 237.

importance and wealth took up trading. Some of them are noted as „a powerful merchant“, others only as „a merchant“. Transport was carried out if possible by boats or ships and on land, donkeys were used to pull caravans.¹⁷⁶

Thus as stated previously, trade can roughly be divided into inter-city trading and export/import trading. All Mesopotamian cities lacked more or less the same raw materials, so in trading with each other they had to either specialize, or act as intermediators of import goods.¹⁷⁷

With the status drop of pottery in the middle of third millennium, textile, metal and semi-precious stone (such as lapis lazuli) started to raise in value, and they became the new items of value and prestige in Mesopotamia. With it, palaces and temples started to control access to precious metals like gold and silver, to high quality textiles and precious stone and all that due to their control over raw materials. This is demonstrated in grave goods, as well as textual material, which date to contemporary periods.¹⁷⁸

Stein and Blackman point out that in the middle of third millennium BC, metal objects and textile were not only important as signs of prestige, but they were also among the most important trading items and gifts between the elite of different cities and states in upper Mesopotamia and in Mesopotamia as a whole.¹⁷⁹

3.2.2. Activities of the non-elite

Who were these human groups in the third millennium, who could be regarded as non-elite in their contemporary environments and who are regarded as non-elite in this thesis. In this context, it is a difficult matter to answer. The simple answer would be that all groups or people who did not belong among the elite were the non-elite, but even the matter of who

¹⁷⁶ Crawford 1973: 238.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Stein, Blackman 1993: 51.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

were the elite is difficult to define in that particular era. But somehow, after all, they should be categorized. As seen previously in the chapter about the elite and their economical activities, it is not known with certainty of how much and if at all, the elite themselves participated in those activities. It is therefore necessary to refer this subject to some form of simplified classification into categories. Therefore in this thesis the people who are classified as the non-elite are the people who did not belong to the class of “attached”¹⁸⁰ specialists that Stein and Blackman have proposed. The “independent” specialists are people whose scope of work does not belong to the sphere of high quality crafts and services. In some ways they can be called the ordinary people, in their respective time and environment of course. They are the farmers, the animal herders, the hunters, the fishermen, and among them, some lower quality craft artisans, like potters, weavers, carpenters and so on can be considered.

Here, however, must be noted the special nature of Tell Beydar, because in Tell Beydar even the lowest form of specialists are under the control of the central institution, the texts indicate that their work was strongly regulated, and they were assigned to overseers, just like the people considered as “workers”¹⁸¹. Van Lerberghe points out that a glimpse at various personnel lists show that they mainly demonstrate the listing of craftsmen, who received food rations. Among the craftsmen are basket weavers, potters, leather manufacturers, carpenters, cartwrights, male and female ushers, guards, messengers supervisors, housekeepers, gardeners, millers, and scribes. But there were no highly specialized artisans, who probably belonged to an entirely different sector of economy, which depended directly on the Royal palace (which however was not in Tell Beydar, but in Nagar instead).¹⁸²

It can therefore be assumed, that agricultural work and the work related to animal husbandry, was done by the people who likely can be considered of being part of the non-elite sector of the society. Although, as is known, and will be seen in further chapters¹⁸³, the cities thus the ruling elite in the city also owned large herds of cattle and were in possession of a significant amount of arable land around the city.

¹⁸⁰ For the explanation of attached specialists see subchapter 3.2. Division of economical activity.

¹⁸¹ Since it is not known how people exactly related to higher authority in Tell Beydar then „workers“ are probably the lowest rank in the workforce and are probably meant as forced labourers or perhaps even slaves.

¹⁸² Van Lerberghe 1996: 121.

¹⁸³ The specific subchapter 3.2.2.1.1. Animal husbandry in Tell Beydar.

3.2.2.1. Agriculture

In the ancient Near East and even today, agriculture can be roughly divided into two categories, the work related to land use e.g. cultivating and growing crops on the land and the work related to animals e.g. animal husbandry.

Regarding land use, the information from northern Mesopotamian cuneiform texts are far less informative than those of southern Mesopotamia. Scholars are however in consensus that southern Mesopotamian sites produced generally higher yields of crops than northern sites.¹⁸⁴

What plants were cultivated in Upper Mesopotamian fields in the corresponding era? Written evidence on which agricultural products were grown comes once again from the archives of Tell Beydar and Ebla. Barley (grain) which was written as *ŠE* (*Še 'um uttatum/uttetum*) occurs frequently in the texts of Tell Beydar. It was distributed to various employees and officials and it was also used as additional fodder for the animals. Emmer (wheat) called *ZIZ₂*, *zizum* is attested in three texts in the case of Tell Beydar. Widell notes that a recent study by S. Colledge on the carbonized plants remains from Tell Brak suggests that at the end of the fourth millennium there was shift from growing emmer to growing barley instead. This may have been due barley's higher tolerance for drought. Tell Brak was, after all, situated in a rain-fed agriculture's border region.¹⁸⁵

Animals were kept in the ancient Near East for similar reasons they are kept today. They provide people with meat and dairy products as food and their wool and hides are used to make different kinds of fabrics which then can be used to make clothing or used in other ways (sails for boats, carpets and other covering materials etc). But there are also some other aspects of herding, that may not be so clear in the modern times for people to understand. For this reason, we should take a deeper look into the goals of ancient herding.¹⁸⁶

It is clear that mostly four species of animals were herded with the purpose of food production. They were sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. According to Koliński only pigs were probably raised as animals that had solely the purpose of being consumed by people as food. Cattle, sheep and goats on the other hand were used also in other ways besides of being

¹⁸⁴ Koliński 2003: 89.

¹⁸⁵ Widell 2003: 724-25.

¹⁸⁶ Koliński 2003: 91.

consumed as food. Cattle were the main working animals besides equids¹⁸⁷ that were used for cultivation and ploughing the fields. Sheep were the main source of wool and goats the main source of hides.¹⁸⁸

According to Widell a rough idea of an Upper Mesopotamian settlements tillage resources can be obtained by taking a look at Tell Beydar once again, from where originates a text¹⁸⁹, on which the number of plough animals in the settlement is attested (represented by the well-known five main officials of the archive), and also some figures from villages from the surrounding area. He points out, that if it is assumed, that a plough „team“ consisted of two animals, then in Tell Beydar there would have been 33.5-38.5 teams of bulls, and 44 teams of donkeys, all of which were directly controlled by Tell Beydars officials. Remaining 22-25.5 bull teams and 13 donkey teams were divided between the neighbouring satellites of Tell Beydar.¹⁹⁰

To point out that, in addition to archaeological material, from which it can be difficult to obtain a clear picture, the textual material can also be understood in many different ways. Widell points out in his article, that Sallaberger in his study of numbers and metrology in Tell Beydars's texts, has found that one so-called animal plough „team“ (*eren₂*) consisted of four animals. Either four oxen or four donkeys. And since ploughing was carried out in Tell Beydar by two types of donkeys (*anše, anše-igi*) and oxen (*gud*), it's logical to conclude that a typical ploughing team *eren₂* in Tell Beydar consisted of four animals. But Widell quickly notes that if ethnographic evidence has been taken into account, it is highly unlikely that this was so, because evidence from other settlements shows the use of two animals for ploughing. And he also mentions that C. Palmer, who has conducted a research on ploughing teams, has pointed out that four animal „teams“ were only used when a totally new field was founded on virgin soil, or when an old field was used again after not being ploughed for a long time.¹⁹¹

Widell himself reckons that four animals in *eren₂* may have originally meant a war chariot, because a number of seal impressions from Tell Beydar and Tell Brak show four-wheeled chariots carrying two men, being pulled by four animals. Similar four-wheeled chariots are

¹⁸⁷ In the third millennium equids that were used as working animals were donkeys and onagers, or a cross breed between those two species.

¹⁸⁸ Kolinski 2003: 92.

¹⁸⁹ Text 3.

¹⁹⁰ Widell 2003: 720.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* 718-719.

depicted on the royal standard of Ur.¹⁹²

3.2.2.1.1. Animal husbandry in Tell Beydar

This chapter will be very specific and thoroughly describes the activities and animal herds belonging directly to the central institution of Tell Beydar. The purpose of so specific chapter is to show how important written evidence can be, and how much information can be acquired from cuneiform tablets. Unfortunately the author did not have access to the source material and is forced to use secondary literature to give an overview.

Although bulk of the information comes from the archive of Tell Beydar, the author has cautiously put this chapter under the activities of the non-elite. The reason for this is, although the activities were controlled by the central institution and not by independent specialists, the work itself was likely done by people from a lower class i.e. the non-elite and the information originating from the archive can be categorized under animal husbandry, which has been considered as an activity of the non-elite in this thesis.

Sallaberger notes that texts and bullae show that the flocks of sheep and goats belonging to the central government of Tell Beydar were herded by at least 30 persons. More information about the status and living conditions are difficult to obtain. Tell Beydar texts usually do not use the common word *sipa* for "shepherd," but in Subartu 2, p. 94 it is argued that the term *ba-ri udu*, "The one who supervises the sheep", is most likely the designation of the shepherd.¹⁹³

The Beydar texts present detailed and specific overview of how and what the animal flocks of the city looked like. For example Sallaberger notes that the relations between pasture lambs to ewes were 1:2,6 (**166**)¹⁹⁴, 1:3,3 (**155**), 1:3,5 (**153**), 1:4,3 (**158**). This corresponds to a very low

¹⁹² Widell 2003: 718-719.

¹⁹³ Sallaberger 2004: 18.

¹⁹⁴ The numbers written in bold corresponds to a number of a respective cuneiform tablet (text), from where the information originates.

lambing rate of 23% to 38% when compared to the norm of Old Babylonia, which was 80% or other ancient Mesopotamian rates, which in turn were 50% to 78%. Sallaberger has speculated that perhaps it could mean therefore, that a large number of lambs were deducted for meat consumption? Perhaps these were the animals that were fed grain and kept in stables? Or only a certain number of animals were ready for the first plucking, while others are shorn for the first time in the forthcoming year, and then counted with the "ewes" and "rams"?¹⁹⁵ According to Sallaberger the relations between rams and ewes was between 1:1,6 and 1:2,3. High quantities of male animals show that the sheep were primarily kept for wool, less for milk or lambing. Real wool herds contain only wethers (castrated male sheep), but the ancient Upper Mesopotamian herds seem to combine both procreation and wool production. Wool is the only product besides hides, which is registered by the institution as far as Tell Beydar tablets are concerned.¹⁹⁶

The texts indicate that sheep were fattened prior to slaughter and ewes were given extra fodder before lambing. In the winter - which in the Syrian Jezirah corresponds to months of December, January and February - the donkeys and oxen were hand-fed. According to Tell Beydar texts the extra fodder consisted almost exclusively of barley, although wheat (emmer) was also added from time to time. These crops are grown there in the same area even today.¹⁹⁷

According to Sallaberger, shepherds had under their supervision from 90 to 300+ animals. Goat herds consisted of 210 to 374 exclusively female animals. Male animals were slaughtered in larger numbers, as evidenced by the large number of skins from he-goats in texts 4 and 70.¹⁹⁸

The whole number of animal flocks that can be registered from the Tell Beydar archive is according to Sallaberger: "the total of numbers preserved in the herd inspection documents are as follows:

11 sheep flocks = 2347+x sheep, average size of one flock: 213 animals

grown-up sheep = 1875 sheep, average number per flock: 170 animals

7 goat flocks = 2072 goats, average size of one flock: 296 goats".¹⁹⁹

A smaller proportion of sheep and goats were held separately and fattened by grain. They

¹⁹⁵ Sallaberger 2004: 19.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Van Lerberghe 1996: 120-121.

¹⁹⁸ Sallaberger 2004: 20.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

were subsequently slaughtered for their meat. The sheep fattening is certified in Tell Beydar texts: in particular texts **7**, **199** and **211**; **33** and **34** have references of grain-fed sheep for sacrifices. It is very likely that the sheep and goats intended for slaughter were kept in stables, which were located on a slope north of the "Official Block".²⁰⁰

The texts indicate that Tell Beydar also served as a resting place, where wagons could be repaired by specialized craftsmen (*nagar^{gis} gígir*) and where donkeys received grain as (additional) fodder. The most prominent were the donkeys of the ruler (EN) from Nagar, his visits to Tell Beydar were in most cases related to his religious duties there.²⁰¹

As seen from this chapter, cuneiform sources provide scholars with invaluable information, that could have never been deduced from archaeological research alone. The information of large number of herds in Tell Beydar has brought about many new ideas and theories about the nature of Tell Beydar as a settlement. The fact that the central institution owned such large herds of animals and the orientation for animal husbandry has given scholars reasons to consider that in Upper Mesopotamia and especially in the *Kranzhügel* culture the emphasize was much more on animal husbandry than farming. More on that in the following chapters.

3.2.2.1.2. Hollow ways

A typical phenomenon of northern Syrian and northern Iraq landscape, is the existence of dark lines that radiate from over one hundred Bronze Age settlement sites. These features have remained unexplored and unmentioned until recently, when their existence was reconfirmed by SPOT²⁰² satellite images that were made of the Khabur basin.²⁰³

According to McClellan, Grayson and Ogleby the renewed interest in radial lines have led to two competing interpretations of their formation and functions. According to one view, they

²⁰⁰ Sallaberger 2004: 21.

²⁰¹ Ismail, Sallaberger, Talon, Van Lerberghe 1996: 32.

²⁰² SPOT (Système Pour l'Observation de la Terre) (lit. "System for Earth Observation") is a high-resolution, optical imaging Earth observation satellite system operating from space.

²⁰³ McClellan, Grayson, Ogleby 2000: 137.

are seen to be related to water management, serving as channels for collection, storage, or distribution of water. Another view, however, confirmed the initial interpretation of the van Liere - Lauffray view, which was, that these could be ancient roads or pathways, that they began to call the "hollow ways", and which had formed thanks to heavy and prolonged human and animal traffic.²⁰⁴ It has been counted a total of 573 lines for 106 sites, about 5 lines per site. Commonly these hollows stretch from a minimum of 0,6 km to a maximum of 20 km, for an average length of 3.8 km, and they can cover over 100 m across and 2m in depth.²⁰⁵

If the "hollow ways" as ancient roads concept is correct, then these lines will give a direct estimation of the size of arable land around many Khabur settlements.²⁰⁶ Such radial roads would also illustrate fragmented and isolated polities and economies, where there were strong links between the higher order settlements and villages in remote areas, but the centres themselves were relatively isolated from one another.²⁰⁷

McClellan, Grayson and Ogleby point out that if these radial lines are remnants of a hydraulic system, three modes of operation are possible: 1. The lines led excess water away from urban locations, perhaps as part of marsh or the flood control measure. 2. The lines transported water from one city to another over a relatively long distance, as part of a canal network like in Lower Mesopotamia. 3. The lines collected rainwater runoff - a water collection system.²⁰⁸

To bring in a different view, but also from a different region, Jan-Waalke Meyer reckons, that in the case of Tell Chuera, agriculture by irrigation is to be expected, at least to a certain extent, an expectation that has now been confirmed by excavations at Tell Chuera itself. Especially for periods ID and IC (2500-2400 BC), numerous drainage canals were ascertained, some of them of quite large dimensions and obviously meant to carry off excess water.²⁰⁹ Thus if we take to account the idea of the hollow ways in Khabur region being a hydraulic system, we can see some parallels with Tell Chuera, where the canals have been recently considered as hydraulic system. Apparently the care of the fields as well as the maintenance of canals came mainly under the responsibility of people living out of town. During harvest-time, large portions of the town's population could be summoned as helpers.

²⁰⁴ McClellan, Grayson, Ogleby 2000: 137.

²⁰⁵ Goldhausen, Ricci 2005: 138.

²⁰⁶ See Appendix: Figure 12. For a map of Hollow ways and Hollow way related agricultural land in the region of Tell Beydar.

²⁰⁷ McClellan, Grayson, Ogleby 2000: 140.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Meyer 2010: 210.

Sickles and other pertinent tools were found in almost every house.²¹⁰ But all this suggests that a lot more water must have been available in the mid third millennium, in both Tell Chuera and probably in the whole Khabur basin.

Deckers and Riehl have analyzed and identified 1823 hollow ways to determine whether they were leading to a topographic depression or whether they disregarded topography in ways that it would be impossible for water to be transported over long distances. In 44,1% of the cases, watersheds were crossed, indicating that these radial lines were unlikely to be related to water harvesting. They also point out that Wilkinson and Tucker have also observed that hollow ways cross watersheds. Therefore, if they were canals, complex engineering work would be required. In 30,82% of the cases, however, the radial lines lead to a topographic depression, while in 25,1% of the cases, it was impossible to decide this with the use of 3D-data. It is well-known that some hollow ways are occupied by wadis or gullies for long distances, whereas other accommodate wadis for a short interval. They do not, however, appear as natural wadis but have become adopted by wadis at low points. Therefore, the hydraulic aspect of some hollow ways is more likely a secondary effect.²¹¹

While McClellan highlighted the problem of interpreting the fade-out points of some of the radial features as hollow ways, Wilkinson and Ur argue convincingly that their discontinuation indicate the limits of cultivation for a site and therefore provides the interface between the arable and pasture zone. More precisely, animals and people could not walk freely through fields that were under cultivation and therefore they always used the same tracks at the boundaries of fields. Where the fields discontinued, the flocks could disperse.²¹²

²¹⁰ Meyer 2010: 210

²¹¹ Deckers, Riehl 2008: 181.

²¹² *Ibid.*

3.2.2.2. Pastoralism

Contrary to what might be happening today, pastoralism was and is a way of life in the Near East, and a very important one which had a high position in society. Simone Riehl has pointed out that even in the Bible, pastoralists are placed higher in social ranking than sedentary people. This is represented by Gods favour of meat offering. On the basis of research, it has been concluded that pastoralism also played an important role during the Bronze Age, being an important part of the system of mutual exchange.²¹³

Information about nomads and pastoralists are found in significant numbers in written sources, but archaeological data is still lacking in many ways. Cuneiform sources, especially the material from the archive of Mari, shows peaceful dealings with respective groups of people, but provides also some indications of conflicts that took place between farmers and pastoralists, mostly in the border regions and near waterholes. If traditional approach has made it look like the relation between farmers and pastoralists were hostile, then modern views have taken a different direction. In this context the phrase „dimorphic zone“ describes an area where grazing and cultivation were both carried out.²¹⁴

However, our knowledge is still hampered, because cuneiform sources mostly come from one social stratum and because of this the relationship between pastoralists and sedentary people is known from a state or an administrative level. Thus, no detailed knowledge of the internal life of these groups of people and their true interactions with the city environment and urban society is known.²¹⁵

Riehl notes that under conditions of intense exchange some part of pastoralists might have lived at least a period (usually summer and autumn months) of a year in villages, taking up cultivation, processing cereals, fruits and vegetables. And those who were a majority of time away with the animals in steppe, could have come back for the time of harvest to help out. So in a way, he proposes that pure pastoralism didn't exist, at least not in the vicinity of cities, and the villages were some form of mixed settlements, which also were not directly under the authority of a city. The area which was under direct control of the city was the immediate

²¹³ Riehl 2006: 105.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.* 106.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

surrounding area, where mostly farming took place.²¹⁶

However, this is only one possible approach, Riehl himself points out that most likely in the area that was under the direct control of the city, people living there also had animal herds, probably not as large as the pastoralists in the steppe, but still, animals were present.²¹⁷ And that is actually attested in the archive of Beydar.

Lyonnet takes this idea even further and reaches the conclusion that the round cities of the *Kranzhügel* culture, may have been built and maintained by pastoral people. The idea that moving people could build large settlements and structures is actually not that extraordinary if stereotype of an ignorant and illiterate Bedouin, who lives only in tents and engaged solely in animal husbandry is left aside.²¹⁸

Lyonnet writes: „In my proposal, these people are considered as integrated into a complex socioeconomic system and would have moved seasonally from the best suited areas for the cultivation of barley (mostly the river valleys) to the steppe plateau where their flocks could have pastured. In this system, villages are mainly used as storage places with numerous silos, and only a few of them offered houses not necessarily used all the year around, while most of the population – numerous according to the number of cemeteries found in the area – probably lived in light shelters or tents, traces of which have not yet been discovered. Finally, the largest circular settlements are considered not as „cities“ for sedentary population, since only a few families could have lived there, but rather as places of gathering for these pastoral groups. They could have been used for different purposes: political/justice/protection because of the possible residence for the sheikh of the tribe; religious because of the temples for rituals; economic because of silos and empty places for the exchange of products“.²¹⁹

The idea Lyonnet proposes should be taken seriously, because there are many features in the *Kranzhügel* culture that suggests that these were settlements where mostly pastoral people lived. The main problem that some scholars have with this idea is going back to the old way of thinking of pastoral people, that those cities were too sophisticatedly built for the likes of mobile groups.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Riehl 2006: 107.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Lyonnet 2009: 180.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.* 181.

4. Models for society

The final chapter will be dedicated to analyzing possible models of society and it will attempt to give a synthesis on the previous chapters. The author will represent his own view and understanding on the patterns of socio-religious and economic relations, and on the Upper Mesopotamian societies in general. We must at this point keep in mind that the author has relied heavily on one Upper Mesopotamian urban society in particular, the urban settlement of Tell Beydar. And it must be pointed out that Tell Beydar in no way can be equalled with all the other dozens of settlements that are considered urban in nature. But if the subject matter is Upper Mesopotamian society and the Khabur region in general it should be kept in mind, that it is at least possible that people who lived in that particular region can be considered to be belonging to an uniform and probably even integrated society. By this, the author means that people who lived in urban and rural communities in the third millennium Khabur area, in all likelihood considered themselves to be a part of some sort of regional ethnos. The author does not try to claim that it could have been a sense of ethnic or national cohesion, but rather a regional cohesion (similarly to Sumerians²²¹, who lived in different city-states, but still considered themselves to belong together based on the geographic region they lived at and the language they spoke, both factors contributing to a uniform background).

Scholars have pointed out that the major regional centres emerged as early as the forth millennium BC, such sites like Tell Brak which bore in itself indigenous Syrian features and due to Uruk expansion also the features of another culture. It is probable that those features carried on to the third millennium. Stein and Blackmani consider Tell Brak in the third millennium to have the same attributes and features that cities in Lowers Mesopotamia had. Cooper has similar opinion about Tell Leilan.

What can be told by looking at one specific area in third millennium Upper Mesopotamian urban society, taking Tell Beydar as an example. We can see on the basis of written evidence that originate from that specific settlement, that at least by around 2400 BC a quite a large part of Tell Beydar's population was strictly controlled by a central institution. As seen in previous chapters, the officials working for the central institution in Tell Beydar are governing even the lowest classes of specialists and controlling their work. Although the Tell Beydar

²²¹ Sumerians have been called: saĝ gíg-ga, which means black headed people. Even a feature like hair, can be a determinative of how a group of people can be seen.

archive itself could only be a segment of a larger archive and does not reveal the whole picture. Scholars have calculated on the basis of other findings and surveys conducted in the same region, and of course by taking into account the Tell Beydar tablets, that the population figures shown in the tablets approximately corresponds to the figures of what could have been the true size of the settlements population. It must also be noted here, that it can not be stated with certainty that similar situation was present in other settlements in Khabur region, or in Upper Mesopotamia in general because there is no fundamental evidence to support that. What is known however, is that in western Syria, and in Ebla in particular, the situation was very much similar to that of Tell Beydar. This would suggest that by at least around 2400 BC a segment of Upper Mesopotamian society was at least economically under a strict control of a centralized political institution. How the relations were on a social and religious level, is not unfortunately known for certain. It can be noted that according to the written material, the ruler of Nagar had only religious obligations in Tell Beydar. It can then be assumed, that this was perhaps related more to social status, as the ruler had to reinforce the relations between people and the elite who were in control of Tell Beydar on his name. And as suggested in chapters above, religion and ritual could have been the social adhesive to keep the society together.

What makes the third millennium and Khabur region even more special is that this particular region saw the rapid growth of several *Kranzhügel* settlements, which also includes Tell Beydar. The *Kranzhügel* settlements have even been considered as part of a separate culture by some scholars. The emergence of this particular city type could have happened due to three anthropological developments:

1. Cultural or social change in the society, economical reasons cannot be dismissed. This would mean, that from somewhere people came up with a totally new concept of building settlements and someone or a group had attained enough political and material (economical) power that they could afford to build a city basically from scratch. And as it seems that all the *Kranzhügel* settlements followed a similar if not the same layout or plan, it would seem that someone had at least some sort of an idea how an effective (in that time and environment) settlement or city would have to look like and how it should be planned. Where the typical radial street network and the circular shape of the *Kranzhügel* originates from is still not known, in all likelihood it will remain on a theoretical level also in foreseeable future. Even if this kind of inner space division inside the settlement comes from an already existing

settlement at the time, like Mari or Tell Chuera.

2. Natural evolution of the existing society, with new technologies and new sources of livelihood that came along with time, new ideas were formed etc. This would suggest that *Kranzhügel* culture was founded by the same people who were living in the cities that already existed in Khabur region. There are many reasons why people who lived in the region might have started to build these new settlements, one could be that population growth escalated in ways that had not happened before and all the „new“ people needed to live somewhere. Other reason might have been that new resources became available to the population and that escalated long distance and short distance trading, and for this reason trading outposts were built. But all this happened inside the already present society. From later times c. 2400 BC from the time of the Tell Beydar archive we know that those settlements were integrated into regional states and were a big part of the Upper Mesopotamian societies. But there are some flaws with these theories, as Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 602 point out, to build a totally new settlement to empty place without any previous occupation would require considerable manpower and large economical resources and could probably only be achieved in a context of empires or at least a large territorial state. Such power however did not exist in Upper Mesopotamia in that time, the only possible candidates could have been the cities that already existed in the region, but as above mentioned scholars point out, they were nowhere near in size and resources at the time of the emergence of the *Kranzhügel*.²²²

3. New groups of people arrived in the region, or, people already present, like pastoralists started to build fortified urban settlements for themselves. This is the theory which at this moment is supported the most by the author of this thesis, is that new people arrived to Upper Mesopotamia, or people who were already in the region, but did not build large urban settlements, such as pastoralists, who now suddenly for some unknown reason chose or perhaps were forced to start building settlements for themselves. And why not build a settlement that looked and worked like a settlement they knew were effective (the theories of Mari or Tell Chuera being the basis). The scholars who support this concept rely heavily on the Tell Beydar archive, from where it can be seen that major emphasis in economy was on animal husbandry. Some new findings of animal tracks and large sheepfolds inside the settlements have been found in Tell Beydar, that suggest heavy animal traffic inside the cities which has been the basis of Lyonnet's theory of pastoralist as the builders of *Kranzhügel*

²²² Castel, Peltenburg 2007: 602.

settlements.²²³ Ur and Wilkinson point out that Tell Beydar according to the tablets and the size of arable land near it, could have been self sufficient according to the 100 persons per hectare formula for population size, but it is known, that Tell Beydar also controlled the work in nearby smaller settlements, which means that it could have produced quite large surpluses of agricultural products. Since it is not known why surplus was needed, some scholars have proposed the idea, that it might have been used to maintain the large herds of animals that we know the central institution owned.²²⁴ Counterarguments to the theories of pastoralists building cities are mostly based on aging views on pastoralists as ignorant savages who would not be able to build sophisticated structures.

Whatever the original idea behind the *Kranzhügel* settlements was, it remains hidden at this moment. What can be done, however, is to try and conciliate all the different ideas and theories together to get at least a slight understanding of what lies behind the *Kranzhügel* concept. In any case, it should be accepted that a society with a common concept of a planned urban settlements in the third millennium is something innovative and unique.²²⁵ Because before that and even later on, no such uniformity in urban planning was achieved.

²²³ Lyonnet 2009: 180-181.

²²⁴ Ur, Wilkinson 2008: 313.

²²⁵ The concept of singular planned settlements existed already in southern Mesopotamia of the third millennium, confer e.g. Nippur.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to study and get a better idea and perhaps even clarity on the patterns of socio-religious and economic relations in ancient urban societies in Upper Mesopotamia. In order to better manage the wide range of topics the author has divided the thesis into four major chapters. In the first chapter the author examined urbanization in general, in order to do this, it was necessary to analyze if the origin of urbanism in Upper Mesopotamia was indigenous or imported from somewhere else. And on the basis of the outcome, the author tried to understand what could have been the reason why urbanism took hold in Upper Mesopotamia in the first place.

Urbanization in itself is already a large and broad field, which can be examined and analyzed in many different ways. In the course of this thesis, the author sought to understand what do settlement patterns, architecture and urban planning as a whole, tell us about the nature of the settlements and the people who lived in them? A special Upper Mesopotamian settlement type, the *Kranzhügel* is discussed on many occasions, and as seen, it played a vital part in the development of urbanization in Upper Mesopotamia. In regard to the fact, the author tried to investigate where does the specific layout of the *Kranzhügel* settlement originate and what can be said about its heritage and if it was different from the more conventional settlements?

In the second chapter, social and religious relations in ancient Upper Mesopotamian societies were discussed more thoroughly. The author was especially fascinated with how the temple and palace related to each other in Upper Mesopotamia and what significance might they have had in the society? Also the relations between different human groups was of interest to the author and especially how authority and status related to different people and different classes/ranks and how might they have gotten along with each other. Accordingly the third chapter is about economy. Who were in control of the economy in the ancient urban societies of the third millennium? And who or which human groups were involved in economical activity and how? In addition to who might be involved in economical activity the author wanted to find out what different branches of economical activities can be seen in those early settlements? On the basis of these three chapter in the final and fourth chapter the author tries to analyse, give a synthesis and his own thoughts on the possible models of Upper Mesopotamian society which could have existed there in the third millennium.

To date, many excavations and other scientific studies have been carried out in Upper Mesopotamia and on the basis of these studies, scholars have dared to argue that urbanization as a concept was not imported into the area from somewhere else, as it was presumed few decades ago. New research results have shown that urbanization in Upper Mesopotamia was of local origin. In this context the age old anachronistic perception that southern Mesopotamia alone was the cradle of urbanization and civilization has been refuted. At the present time it is concluded that the urban structures of Upper Mesopotamia are at least as old, if not older than those of their southern neighbours. Thus, the Mesopotamian city as a concept, rose in the Near East independently in several geographic areas.

Associated with this, is the search to find answers to a matter that has eluded scholars for many years. Why did urbanization on such a large scale start in Upper Mesopotamia in the third millennium, where in reality the natural conditions were not perfect and probably not even suited for urban societies to emerge. We have to remember that after the first rise of urbanization in the north in the fourth millennium BC, there was a couple of centuries long “dark age” when the earlier urbanism declined. But in the early part of the third millennium a new urbanization wave began in the area and many theories have come forth to answer that new wave of urbanism. Three main possibilities that Akkermans and Schwartz have pointed out in their monograph have also been highlighted in this thesis. The first of which emphasises the fact that Upper Mesopotamian elite might have tried to emulate their developed southern neighbours and their example was used to establish their own central institutions. Second idea is similar to the one that was considered for the forth millennium urbanization, and for urbanization in general. The idea that developments in trade, especially the long distance trade might have helped the Upper Mesopotamian elite to assert themselves. Third theory which is considered the least likely one, is that southern Mesopotamian rulers intervened in the north directly and to counter that intrusion the local leaders joined forces and established corresponding institutions.

On the basis of settlement patterns, architecture and urban planning as a whole, it can be seen that Upper Mesopotamian urban societies in the third millennium BC were in development nearly equivalent to those of southern Mesopotamian societies. Although it must be pointed out that some differences can be observed, namely, it appears that in Upper Mesopotamia, at least in urban architecture, temples never achieved such magnitudes as was the case in southern Mesopotamia. On the other hand, it can plausibly be seen that palace culture and

with it also the secular power arrived to the south from the north.

The high level of Upper Mesopotamian societies are demonstrated by the fact that in this geographic area, developed for the first time in history a common concept of a planned urban settlement. This was the *Kranzhügel*, which by the middle of third millennium was widely diffused in the Khabur region which lies in the centre of Upper Mesopotamia. Many scholars have struggled to pinpoint where the specific layout of the *Kranzhügel* settlement originates from and what can be said about its heritage. A number of different ideas and theories have been proposed. One idea is that the structure of the settlement is copied from an existing settlement, Mari and Tell Chuera are mostly considered as the original concept. If that theory is true, it must be pointed out that those two settlements must have been very effective or in some other way special in that era, because it is likely that people only copy good and working concepts. In addition it has been proposed that the radial street network in *Kranzhügel* culture mimics ancient village layouts. Whatever the real reason was, most scholars are in agreement that *Kranzhügel* settlements were purpose built and planned settlements, which means that the concept must have been very effective, since its distribution was quite extensive.

It is not easy to understand the relations between the palace and temple in Upper Mesopotamia. It can be safely assumed that both institutions played a role in the lives of the people and groups who lived in urban societies in Upper Mesopotamia. It can also be assumed that both institutions were at least in the beginning established for the purpose of control. But later developed more into the institutions that can be differentiated. Most written information in the case of Upper Mesopotamia originates from political and central institutions, in the case of Tell Beydar scholars are not exactly sure if the archive comes from a royal or state institution or from a temple, but since the Ebla archive is definitely from a royal institution and consists of similar information, it is assumed in the case of Tell Beydar that it probably comes from a royal or state institution also. However, from the archive of Tell Beydar we know that the lord of Nagar to whom Tell Beydar was subjugated to, at the time of the archive, had mostly only religious responsibilities there, so we cannot reduce the importance of temple. It can be seen that it is possible that the elite in Upper Mesopotamia used temples to strengthen their own power and authority in the city and nearby region, by integrating temples into palace systems and using ancestors to legitimize their own reign. How common people related to temple is however again unclear, and assumptions must be based on the

models that have been developed for regions of Near East that have more information available on the subject.

It can be argued quite convincingly on the basis of written evidence, that economy and economical activity was by the middle of the third millennium BC in Upper Mesopotamia under the control of the state or elite institution and therefore under the control of the wealthy elite. It is demonstrated in the archive of Tell Beydar that the central institution controlled almost all forms of economical activity in that settlement. It has been calculated on the basis of this archive that the number of people who are represented there, corresponds to the population numbers that scholars have calculated for Tell Beydar and the area surrounding it. All classes of society had probably some part in the economical activity of the time, some more than others. High quality crafts and craftsmen were probably directly dependant on royal/or state establishments, because they provided the elite with high-grade luxury items, lower grade and skilled craftsmen probably produced products and services that everybody could use, but even the lower grade artisans could have been directly controlled by a central institution as demonstrated by the Tell Beydar archive. The lower classes, or people sometimes considered “workers” who probably were the largest segment of population could have even been used as forced labourers by the central institution. It is probable that almost every able person could have been called upon working duties when it came to building important structures like the city wall or even the elite buildings like temples or palaces.

In Upper Mesopotamian societies like in other contemporary societies, all branches of economical activity existed. In this thesis the emphasis was on agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. Interestingly it seems on the basis of written evidence that at least in the case of Tell Beydar, that its economy was more related to animal husbandry than farming. On the basis of that information, some scholars have even proposed the idea that the *Kranzhügel* culture itself was established by pastoral groups.

Unfortunately it is very difficult to get a clear picture of how different groups of people lived and could have communicated with each other in so-distant past. Written evidence are indeed helpful to us, but in the case of economical material we only can get a slight idea of how different groups might have related to each other in economical context, we can see who is in charge, and how was work done, but even that isn't proof enough to make solid assessments. And economical evidence, even if it is written, does not give us much if any information about the relations between different people and different groups, and even less if we want to

know aspects of peoples social and religious life. In order to answer to these aspects of society we have to turn to later periods from where we do have the needed information. To truly reflect the social and religious aspects of the Upper Mesopotamian societies in the third millennium, we need a lot more fundamental information in every area of scientific study. Only then can we start to describe people's daily life in more detail.

Lastly the author analyzed and attempted to propose models for Upper Mesopotamian societies in the third millennium. The appearance of the *Kranzhügel* culture in Upper Mesopotamia probably played a vital role in how the societies changed and eventually looked like. On the basis of this the author proposed three possible models or developments of why this special settlement appeared in Upper Mesopotamia:

1. Cultural and social change in the society. New ideas and concepts might have been developed on the basis of social or cultural changes, and even economical reasons could have been possible.
2. Natural evolution of the existing society. There could have been a raise in population numbers, and people needed new environments to live in. New resources might have become available and that meant new trading outposts were needed etc.
3. The arrival of new groups of people, or, people who were present in the area already like pastoralists started to build protected settlements. Mobile groups chose to or were forced to start building protected settlements for themselves. Supporting evidence to the theory that pastoralists might have built those settlements comes from the archive of Tell Beydar, where it is demonstrated that the settlement was heavily invested in animal husbandry.

On the relevant subject, especially concerning the *Kranzhügel* settlements the possibilities for further research are extensive. It is, however, wiser to concentrate more on one particular aspect of society. The research conducted in the field of socio-religious relations in an Upper Mesopotamian society has probably the highest chances to yield new discoveries, because as seen on the basis of this research, this field is still relatively unexplored and based on traditional models, which in practice may not apply at all to the relevant societies. If new discoveries are to be made, a lot more archaeological excavations and work are to be carried out in Upper Mesopotamia, because the lack of evidence - particularly in relation to written sources - inhibits the current research in this area. It is, of course, another question, when

Western scholars are free to return to Syria and Iraq to conduct research there.

Investigations into economic activities and relations does not suffer that much due to existing materials and also due to the extensive regional and other surveys conducted in the relevant region. New findings would of course compliment already existing ones. Written evidence also supports greatly the research in the field of economy.

Even if scholars are not able to return to neither Syria nor Iraq in the forthcoming years, research does not stop. New discoveries are made every day on the basis of already existing evidence, scholars just have to put in more effort to solve the problems that haven't been solved yet.

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Ühiskondlik-religioosete ja majanduslike suhete mustrid Ülem-Mesopotaamia varastes linnaühiskondades

Resümee

Magistritöö „Ühiskondlik-religioosete ja majanduslike suhete mustrid Ülem-Mesopotaamia varastes linnaühiskondades“ eesmärk on vaadelda Ülem-Mesopotaamia (alad tänapäeva kagu Türgis, kirde Süürias ja põhja Iraagis) vanasid linnaühiskondi ja neis elanud inimgruppe ning seda ühiskondlik-religioosete ja majanduslike suhete põhjal, ning vastavalt sellele üritada anda mingisugune ülevaade tolleaegsetest võimalikest ühiskonnamudelitest. Aluseks on võetud sellel geograafilisel alal põhiliselt kolmandal eelkristlikul aastatuhandel (u 2900-2200 e.m.a) esile kerkinud linnalised struktuurid, kuid lisa materjalina ja järjepidevuse eesmärgil on kohati toodud võrdluseks sisse ka varasemat ja hilisemat aega.

Kolmas eelkristlik aastatuhat oli eriline aeg Ülem-Mesopotaamia ajaloos, sest esmakordselt võib täheldada seal ühtset regionaalset linnakultuuri teket. Sellele pani aluse *Kranzhügel* tüüpi, ehk nõ. plaani järgi ehitatud „ringlinnade“ esile kerkimine vastaval ala.

Autor üritab käesoleva töö lõpuks jõuda selgemale arusaamisele Ülem-Mesopotaamia ühiskondadest ja selleks proovida anda vastus küsimustele, kas urbaniseerumine Ülem-Mesopotaamias oli kohalikku päritolu, või toodi see kuskilt sisse? Mis võisid olla need põhjused, miks linnastumine üldse vastaval alal alguse sai? Mida ütlevad meile asustustihedus, arhitektuur ja linnaplaneerimine nende vanade asulate ja seal elanud inimgruppide kohta? Kust pärines *Kranzhügeli* spetsiifiline plaan ja mida võib selle päritolu kohta öelda ning kas need asulad olid juba oma konseptsioonilt erinevad teistest nõ. tavalistest asulatest? Linnastumisest järgmisena on oluline vaadelda faktoreid, mis mõjutasid vanasid linnaühiskondi sisemiselt ja selleks on uuritud kuidas tempel ja valitsejapalee omavahel Ülem-Mesopotaamias suhestusid, ning mis rolli nad ühiskonnas mängisid? Sellest lähtuvalt on oluline mõista ka suhteid erinevate inimgruppide vahel, kuidas suhestusid erinevad klassid omavahel. Lisaks sotsiaalsele poolele on oluline teada ka majanduslikku poolt ja selleks on uuritud, kes kontrollisid nendes vanades ühiskondades majandustegevust? Mis inimgrupid üldse osalesid majandustegevuses ja kuidas? Oluline on teada ka, mis majandusharud üldse

olid esindatud Ülem-Mesopotaamias kolmandal eelkristlikul aastatuhandel.

Käesoleva magistritöö puhul on kasutatud empiirilist kvalitatiivset uurimismeetodit. Selleks on vaadeldud ja analüüsitud vanade Ülem-Mesopotaamia linnaühiskondade aspekte nagu ühiskondlik-religioossed sidemed eraldi majanduslikest sidemetest, et leida need mustrid, mis neid ühiskonnas seob.

Allikatenä on kasutatud põhiliselt arheoloogia, antropoloogia ja ajaloo ning ka keeleteaduse valdkonda kuuluvat kirjandust ja artikleid.

Käesolev magistritöö koosneb neljast peamisest peatükist, millest esimeses „Asulate arengud Ülem Mesopotaamias“ on põhiliselt vaatluse all erinevad asulate arengud. Esmalt on vaadeldud varasemast ajast kui kolmas aastatuhat e.m.a pärit asulad ja asustus. Järgmisena on vaatluse all kolmas aastatuhat e.m.a ja sellel ajastul esile kerkinud asulad, ning moodustised, mida on ettevaatlikult kutsutud juba ka „riikideks“. Järgmisena on vaatluse all linna planeerimine Ülem-Mesopotaamias ja sellest tulenevalt on eraldi välja toodud ka *Kranzhügel* kui võib-olla nn teise linnastumise „revolutsiooni“ edasiviija.

Linnastumist võib Ülem-Mesopotaamias täheldada juba neljandal eelkristlikul aastatuhandel, kust väljakaevamistel on ilmsiks tulnud monumentaalne arhitektuur. Arheoloogilise leiumaterjali põhjal on kindlaks tehtud, et toimus kaugmaa kaubandus, samuti on tõestatud kõrgelt arenenud käsitöö olemaolu, ning neljanda eelkristliku aastatuhande lõpu perioodidel on täheldatud asulates kõrget rahvastiku tihedust ning leidub isegi märke vägivallast. Kõik see oli toimunud varem, kui on näha esmaseid märke sellest, et lõuna poolt oleks toimunud kultuuriline sissetung. Sellest tulenevalt on teadlased pakkunud välja idee, mis aina rohkem kõlapinda leiab, et linnastumine algas Ülem-Mesopotaamias iseseisvalt ilma kõrvaliste mõjudeta.

Paljud teadlased, kes Ülem-Mesopotaamiaga tegelevad toovad välja, et just kolmas eelkristlik aastatuhat on selle ala ajaloos üks olulisemaid, sest just sellel perioodil tõuseb linnastumine seal ennenägematule tasemele. Miks see juhtus on praeguseks hetkeks veel täpselt teadmata, kuid välja on toodud kolm põhilist teooriat, mis on ära toodud ka käesolevas magistri töös. Nendeks on 1. Ülem Mesopotaamia kompleksed ühiskonnad arenesid küll iseseisvalt, kuid nendes elav eliit emulleeris oma lõunanaabreid ja nende institutsioone, et sellega enda autoriteeti ja õigusi ühiskonnas tõsta. 2. Kasvav huvi kaubanduse vastu, mille põhjustas

põhiliselt lõuna Mesopotaamias kasvav vajadus toormaterjalide järele. Sellest kaubandusest rikastunud eliit oli sunnitud looma kõrgemad institutsioonid ja jällegi võeti eeskujuks kõrgealt arenenud lõunanaabrid. 3. Viimane mudel, mida peetakse kõige vähem tõenäoliseks on see, et tugevad lõuna Mesopotaamia valitsejad sekkusid põhjapool otseselt, käies seal sõjakäikudel jne. Sellest tulenevalt oli Ülem-Mesopotaamia kohalikud liidrid sunnitud jõud ühendama ja ohule vastu astumiseks moodustati vastavad institutsioonid.

Mingisugust planeeringut võib kohata iga asula puhul. Kuid kolmas eelkristlik aastatuhat Ülem-Mesopotaamias, eriti Khaburi jõe piirkonnas esile kerkinud *Kranzhügel* tüüpi asulate puhul võib esmakordselt täheldada, mingisuguse ühtse regionaalse planeeritud linnade kultuuri teket. Nimelt on *Kranzhügel* tüüpi asulad niivõrd sarnaste põhiplaanidega, et praeguseks hetkeks ei kahtle enam pea ükski teadlane nende planeerituses. Sellest tulenevalt on käesoleva töö järgmisena vaadeldud *Kranzhügel* asulaid täpsemalt ning selle põhjal on näha, et peale selle, et *Kranzhügel*'id olid planeeritud asulad, tundub suur osa neist olevat ka ehitatud täiesti tühjale kohale ilma eelneva suurema asustuse olemasoluta. Sellepõhjal on välja pakutud mitmed teooriad, et kes, mis eesmärkidel selliseid asulaid ehitas. Konsensust teadlaste vahel selles küsimuses praeguseks hetkeks ei ole. Kaks põhilist teooriat on: 1. *Kranzhügel* tüüpi asulad ehitasid põllumajandusega tegelevad inimesed võib-olla kultuurilise või ka sotsiaalse muutuse pärast. On pakutud ka hüppelist rahva arvu kasvu regioonis, mille tulemusel oli vaja „uued“ inimesed kuskile elama paigutada. 2. Need asulad loodi liikuvate karjakasvatajatest inimgruppide poolt. Sellele teooriale toetutakse põhiliselt Tell Beydarist - mida peetakse *Kranzhügeli* arhetüüpseks näiteks - pärineva kiilkirja arhiivi põhjal, kust tuleb välja, et seal oli väga suur majanduslik rõhk just loomakasvatusel.

Teine peatükk „Ühiskondlik-religioosed suhted Ülem-Mesopotaamia vanades linnaühiskondades“ keskendub põhiliselt sotsiaalsetele ja religioossetele aspektidele ühiskonnas. Et mõista linnade ja linnaühiskonna teket, on vaja aru saada ka inimsuhetest, mis sellele protsessile aluse panid. Inimeste sotsiaalne, religioosne ja majanduslik käitumine nagu ka tänapäeval, on ühiskonna põhilised alustalad. Selleks on esmalt vaatluse all Võimu ja arhitektuuri seos. Järgmisena keskendutakse varaste linnade eliitasutustele, ehk templitele ja valitsejapaleele ja nende asutuste olulisusele ühiskonnas. Viimasena on vaatluse all ka inimeste ja inimgruppide vahelised sidemed ühiskonnas.

Võimu ja arhitektuuri suhet, mille puhul on oluline näha kuidas nendes varastes linnaühiskondades Ülem-Mesopotaamias võidi arhitektuuri kasutada kui veenmis vahendit.

Üks oluline arhitektuuriline element vanade linnade puhul oli ka linnamüür, selle kõrgus ja pikkus näitas juba kaugelt ära linna võimu ja tugevust. Linnamüüri tähendus oli niivõrd oluline, et kirjalikes allikates tähendabki müür või kindlus linna. Lisaks linnamüürile olid tempel ja valitseja palee olulised arhitektuurilised objektid. Mis kujutasid ja kajastasid kolmandal eelkristlikul aastatuhandel erinevaid aspekte ühiskonnas, kus üks oli nõ jumala maja ja teine valitseja maja, kuid tegelikkuses olid nad Ülem-Mesopotaamias vägagi tihedalt omavahel seotud. Tell Beydari puhul on näha, et templid on linnasiseselt ühendatud paleega ühtseks kompleksiks. Teadlased on selles näinud eliidi tahet või vajadust enda võimu kinnitada ka läbi rituaali, mida peetakse templi üheks olulisemaks komponendiks. On välja pakutud, et Ülem-Mesopotaamias kasutas eliit esivanema kultust, et enda võimu kindlustada, selleks võidi anda esivanematele jumalikud võimed, mitte otseselt jumalikustamine, nagu on näha kolmanda aastatuhande lõpupoolel Akkadi valitsejate puhul, vaid pigem üritati enda pärimisõigust läbi religiooni ja jumalate heakskiidu õigustada, millele andis siis aluse kauged ja tugevad esivanemad.

Inimeste ja erinevate inimgruppide staatused ja nende eeldatavad suhted ühiskonnas on kolmandast aastatuhandest e.m.a väga raske midagi teada, sest kahjuks puudub piisav tõestusmaterjal, et selles valdkonnas mingisugust põhjanevat analüüsi teha. Vastavate kirjalike materjalide puudumine ja ka vähene antropoloogiline leiutmaterjal on sundinud teadlasi kasutama traditsiooniliste inimgruppide põhjal tehtud uurimistulemusi. Selle põhjal võib eeldada, et maa ja linnarahva vaheline läbisaamine ei pruukinud olla kõige parem, sest mängu võisid ka sellisel varajasel ajal tulla stereotüüpid, kus üks osa populatsioonist, arvatavasti linnas elanud inimesed pidasid ennast paremateks ja kõrgema staatusega olevaiks, kui need, kes elasid linnast väljaspool. Kõige vähem informatsiooni on meil aga liikuvate inimeste kohta. Nende puhul on samuti kasutatud traditsiooniliste rändrahvaste nagu beduiinide ühiskonna mudeleid. Kuid nende paikapidavust kolmanda eelkristliku aastatuhandel võib kindlasti kahtluse alla seada.

Kolmas peatükk „Majanduslikud suhted Ülem-Mesopotaamia vanades linnaühiskondades“ keskendub aga majanduslikele suhetele, sest mitte vähemoluline pole ka vanade linnaühiskondade majanduslikud suhted inimgruppide vahel. Esmalt on ära toodud kiilkirja materjalid, mis vastavas töös põhirõhu all oleva ajastu asulatest on esmakordselt ilmsiks tulnud. Järgmisena on vaatluse all majandustegevuse jaotus. Majandus tegevus on käesolevas töös jaotatud nn eliidi tegevuse ja mitte eliidi tegevuste vahel. Mõlema alapeatüki juures on

eraldi väljatoodud nende põhilisemad töövaldkonnad. Eliidi puhul on eraldi väljatoodud kaubandus, mitte eliidi puhul aga süüvitakse sügavamalt põllumajandustegevusse ja loomakasvatusega seotud tegevusse.

Majandus teema, mida on kohati kergem uurida kui sotsiaalseid ja religioosseid suhteid, sest arheoloogiliste väljakaevamiste käigus tulevad esile kõige rohkem just majandustegevusega seotud materjalid, samuti tulevad esimest korda mängu ka kirjalikud allikad. Kirjalike materjalide põhjal saame esimest korda kindlama ettekujutuse sellest, kuidas, kelle juhtimisel ja mis vahenditega toimus Ülem-Mesopotaamia varajaste linnade majandustegevus. Mida kasvatati linna ümbruses põldudel, mis tüüpi loomi kasutati töö tegemisel jne.

Kiilkirja allikaid, mis eriti selle peatüki juures on väga olulised on vastavast ajastust Ülem-Mesopotaamiast leitud kaks nn arhiivi. Tell Beydari ja Ebla arhiivid, mis tegelikkuses on suuremalt osalt lihtsalt majanduslikud nimekirjad on juhuse tahtel isegi kaasaegsed. Kuigi Ebla asus tänapäeva lääne Süürias ja mitte otseselt vaatluse all asunud regioonis, on sealses arhiivis ära toodud ka asulad ja nimetused, mis pärinesid käesolevas töös arutuse all olevast regioonist. Tell Beydari arhiiv aga on otseselt töös esineva geograafilise alaga seotud ja seda materjali on töös ka tihedalt kasutatud.

Varastes linnaühiskondades võis majandus tegevuse jagada põhimõtteliselt kaheks. 1. Eliidi tegevus ja 2. Mitte eliidi tegevus. See tähendab põhimõtteliselt seda, et vastava ajastu kirjalikest materjalidest näeme me põhiliselt majandustegevust läbi kindla institutsiooni vaatevinkli ja tänu sellele näeme põhiliselt kontrollmehhanismide tööd. Sellepõhjal saab mingisuguseid ettevaatlikke järeldused teha. Me näeme mis valdkonnad ja oskustööd olid eliidi jaoks olulised. Sest kesksed poliitilised institutsioonid olid suuretõenäosusega tolleaegse kõrgklassi ehk eliidi võimuorganid. Me näeme ka kui suurt osa elanikkonnast mingisugune keskne institutsioon kontrollis. Eliidi puhul tuleb ära märkida ka veel seda, et me ei tea täpselt, kas need inimesed ise otseselt mingi töö tegemisega ka tegelesid, või piirdus nende kontributsioon ainult nõ käskija rolliga. Eeldada võib, et kaubandusega pidid nad ise tegelema, sest nii tulutoovat ettevõtlust vaevalt alamate klasside hallata jäeti.

Mitte eliidi, või siis ka võib-olla nõ lihtrahva puhul saame aga rääkida töö tegemisest täpsemalt. Sest nemad kui suurim osa rahvastikust olid suure tõenäosusega just need, kes suurema osa füüsilisest tööst ära tegid. Nende puhul saab rääkida põhiliselt põllumajanduslikest ettevõtmistest. Kuid põllumajandust võib ise veel jagada kaheks, otseselt

põllundusega seotud teemad nagu taimekasvatus, ning natuke eraldi seisev teema looma- ja karjakasvatusest. Põlluharimisega tegeles suure tõenäosusega kolmandal eelkristlikul aastatuhandel suurem osa Lähis-Idas eksisteerinud ühiskondi. Kes tegeles sellega kõrgemal või madalamal tasemel polegi siinkohal oluline. Oluline on, et see oli tollel ajal üks põhiline elatusallikas. Mis aga Ülem-Mesopotaamia puhul eriline paistab olema, on see, et nii arheoloogilise leiumaterjali põhjal, kui ka kirjalike materjalide põhjal, tundub, et sealne ühiskond oli palju suuremal määral segu nii maa harijatest kui karjakasvatajatest. Osad teadlased on *Kranzhügel* tüüpi asulaid pidanud lausa karjakasvatajate poolt looduks. Sellele tõeoriale annavad alust kirjalikud materjalid, mis leitud Tell Beydarist. Selle kohta on ka alapeatükis „Loomakasvatus Tell Beydaris“ arvulised näited kiilkirja arhiivi põhjal väljatoodud, kui suured olid Tell Beydari keskse institutsiooni looma karjad, kui palju inimesi tegeles nende karjatamisega jne. Samuti on teistelt *Kranzhügel* asulatelt pärit arheoloogiline ja antropoloogiline leiumaterjal näidanud nende asulate kõrget loomakasvatusele orienteeritust. Huvitav fenomen Ülem-Mesopotaamias on nn „õõnes teed“. Need asulakohtade juurest eemale minevad tumedad jooned, mis on näha vaid õhust vaadates ja mida osad teadlased on pidanud vanadeks jalgradadeks, mida mööda inimesed aastasadu käisid, või teine võimalus, neid on peetud irrigatsiooni kanaliteks, millega juhiti vett vanadesse asulatesse ja sealt välja. Kui esimene teooria radadest osutub tõseks, siis saab nende „õõnes teede“ põhjal näha ja ka välja arvutada asulate ümberkaudsed põllumaad, sest teadlased on arvamisel, et nii inimesed kui ka nende juhitud loomad, ei kõndinud üle põldude, vaid pidi minema mööda põlluääri kulgevaid radasid, et jõuda aladele, kus enam midagi ei kasvatatud ja võis loomi karjatada. Kui teine teooria osutub tõseks, et need jooned olid veemajandussüsteem, siis saame kindlat kinnitust faktile, mida paljud teadlased on pakkunud, et kolmandal aastatuhandel e.m.a leidis Ülem-Mesopotaamias palju suuremal määral vett, kui praegu. Ning maaharimine ei olnud seal sõltuv vaid vihmadest, vaid irrigatsiooni kasutati sarnaselt Lõuna-Mesopotaamiale.

Viimane, neljas peatükk „Ühiskonna mudelid“ on eelnevate peatükkide põhjal autori poolne analüüs ja süntees sellest, milliseid ühiskonna mudeleid võis siis kolmandal eelkristlikul aastatuhandel Ülem-Mesopotaamias esineda. Autor jõuab järeldustele, et *Kranzhügel* kultuuri esiletõus selles regioonis kolmanda aastatuhande jooksul, võis näidata kolme erinevate ühiskonna arengut. Millest 1. Võis põhjustada sotsiaalsed ja kultuurilised muutused, samuti ei saa kõrvale jätta ka võimalust, et põhjused olid majanduslikud. 2. Toimus juba olemas oleva rahvastiku ja ühiskonna loomulik evolutsioon, kasutusele võeti uued tehnoloogiad, uued looduslikud ressursid võisid saada inimestele kättesaadavaks, üldine elatustase kasvas, mis

tingis ka rahvastiku kasvu jne. 3. Alale tulid uued inimgrupid, või linnalisi asulaid hakkasid ehitama juba alal olevad liikuvad inimgrupid, nagu rändkarjakasvatajad.

Kokkuvõtteks võiks välja tuua, et vastaval teemal, eriti seoses *Kranzhügel* asulatega on edasise uurimistöö võimalused laiad. Kuid kindlasti on targem kontsentreeruda mingisugusele kindlale valdkonnale. Ühiskondlik-religioosete suhete uurimisel on arvatavasti kõige suuremad võimalused uusi avastusi teha, sest nagu näha ka selle uurimistöö põhjal on see valdkond Ülem-Mesopotaamia puhul veel küllaltki uurimata ja baseerub põhiliselt traditsioonilistel mudelitel, mis tegelikkuses aga ei pruugi üldsegi vastavatele ühiskondadele kohalduda. Kuid uute avastuste jaoks on kindlasti vaja Ülem-Mesopotaamias ka edasipidi läbi viia väljakaevamisi, sest vähene tõestusmaterjal, eriti seoses kirjalike allikatega pidurdab praegu selles valdkonnas uurimistööd. Iseasi on muidugi see, millal jälle Lääne teadlased võivad vabalt Süürias ja Iraagi teadustööd teha.

Majandusliku tegevuse uurimine tänu olemasolevatele materjalidele ja ka vastaval alal läbiviidud regionaalsetele uuringutele, niipalju ei kannata, kuid uued leiud loomulikult komplimenteeriks ka juba selles valdkonnas olemasolevat. Abi on ka sellest, et olemas olev kirjalik materjal on majanduse uurimisel eriliselt otstarvekas. Ja loomulikult on ka juba olemas oleva materjali põhjal võimalik teha uusi avastusi, ning eeldada võib, et lähitulevikus neid ka tehakse

Appendix

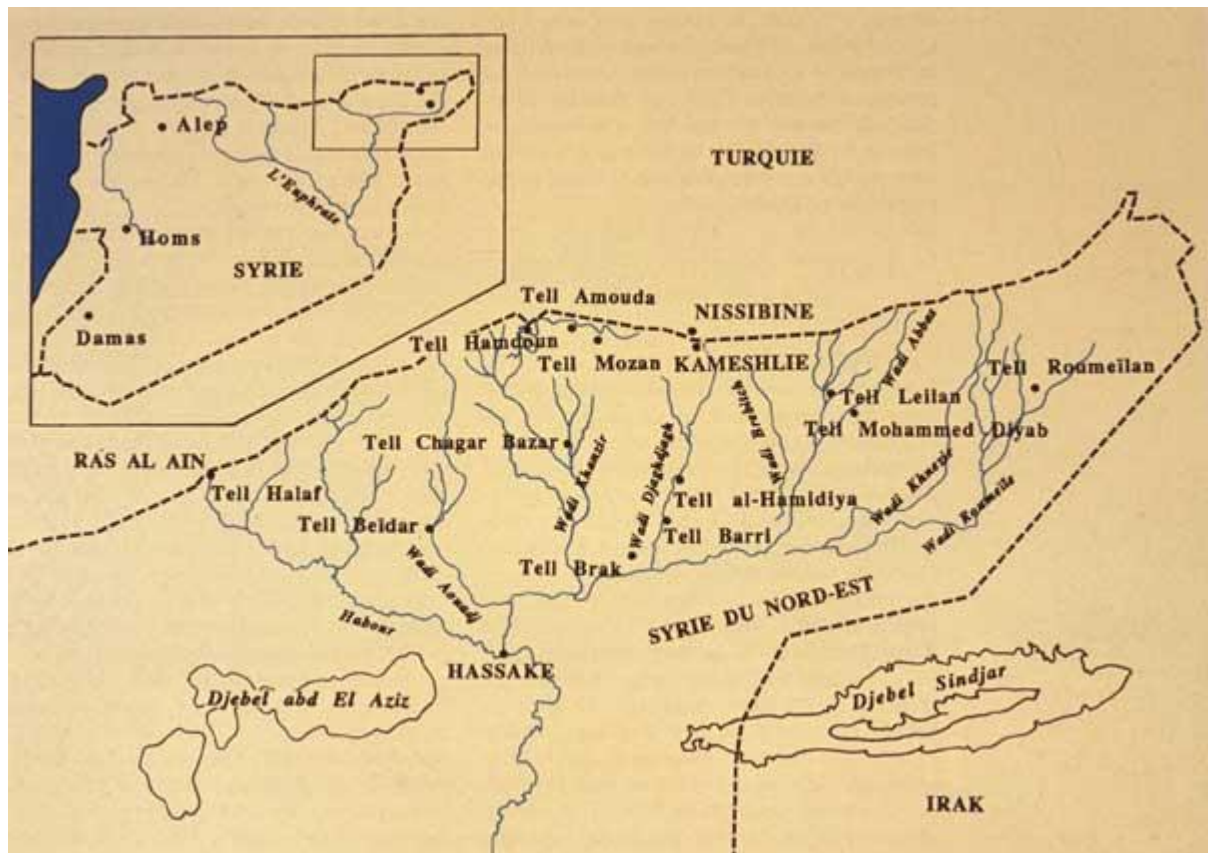


Figure 1. The Khabur region in Upper Mesopotamia. (www.beydar.com)

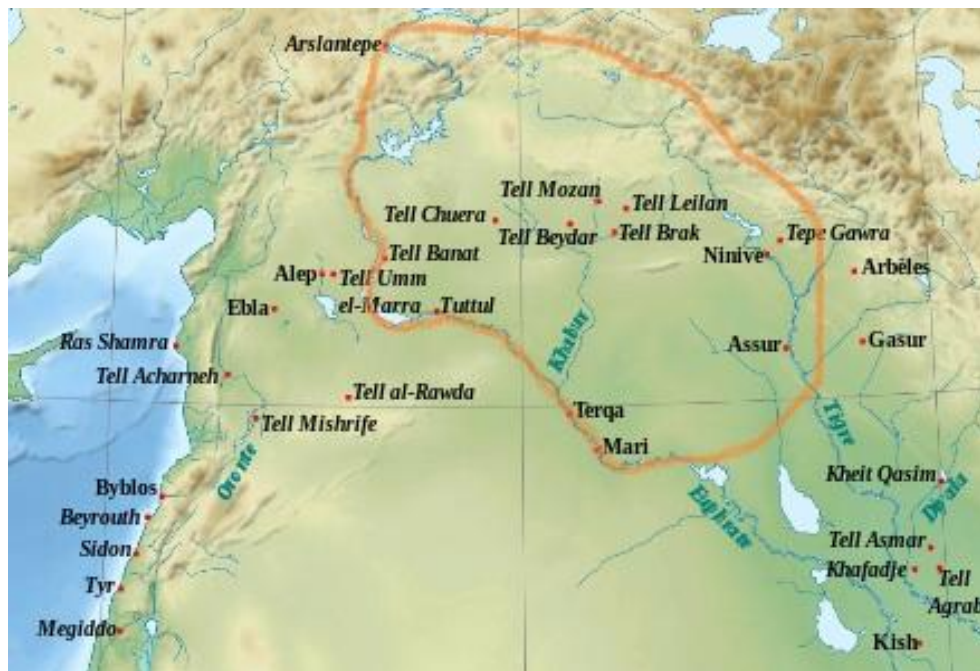


Figure 2. Map of Upper Mesopotamia. (area inside the dark line)

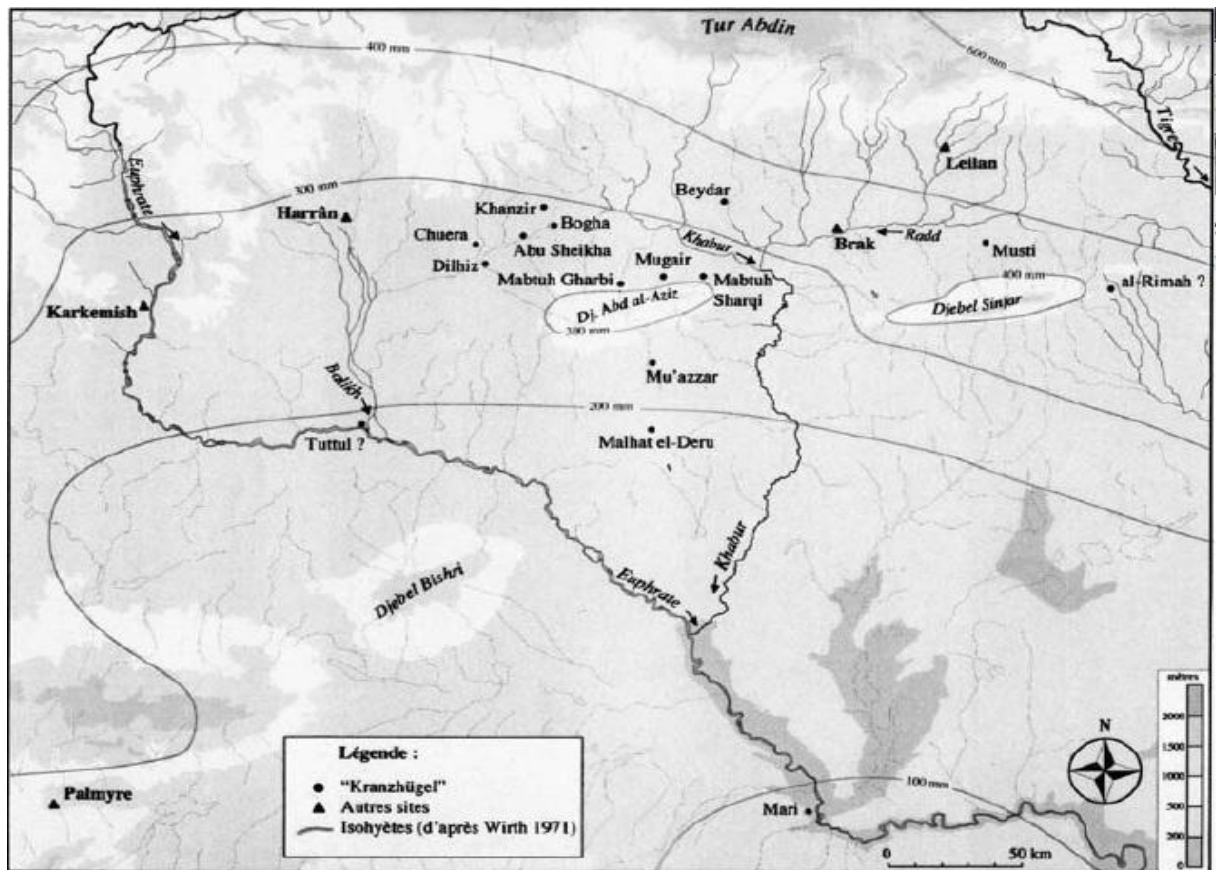


Figure 3. Map of *Kranzhügel* sites in Khabur region. (Lyonnet 2009: 193)



Figure 4. A typical round topographic layout of a *Kranzhügel* site. (aero photo of Tell Beydar) [www.beydar.com]

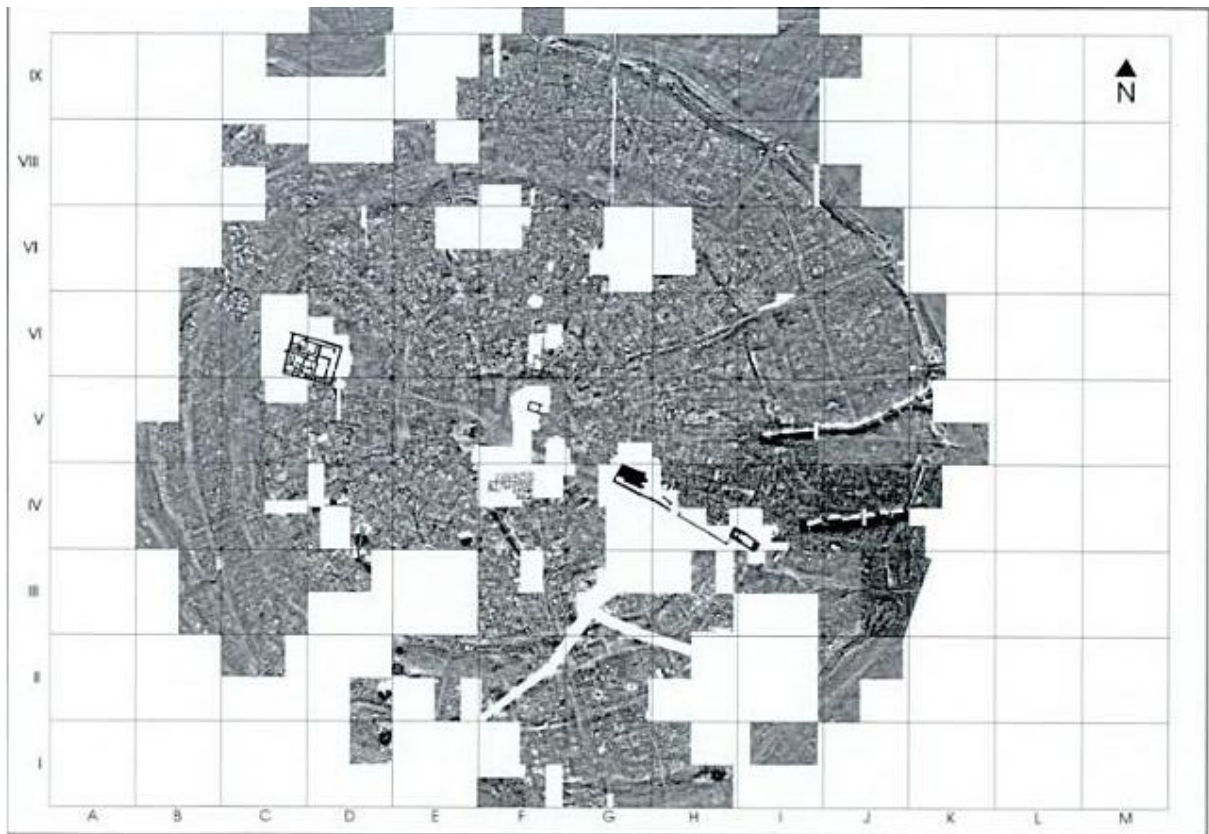


Figure 5. Topography of Tell Chuera, picture taken by magnetic survey. (Meyer 2007: 133)

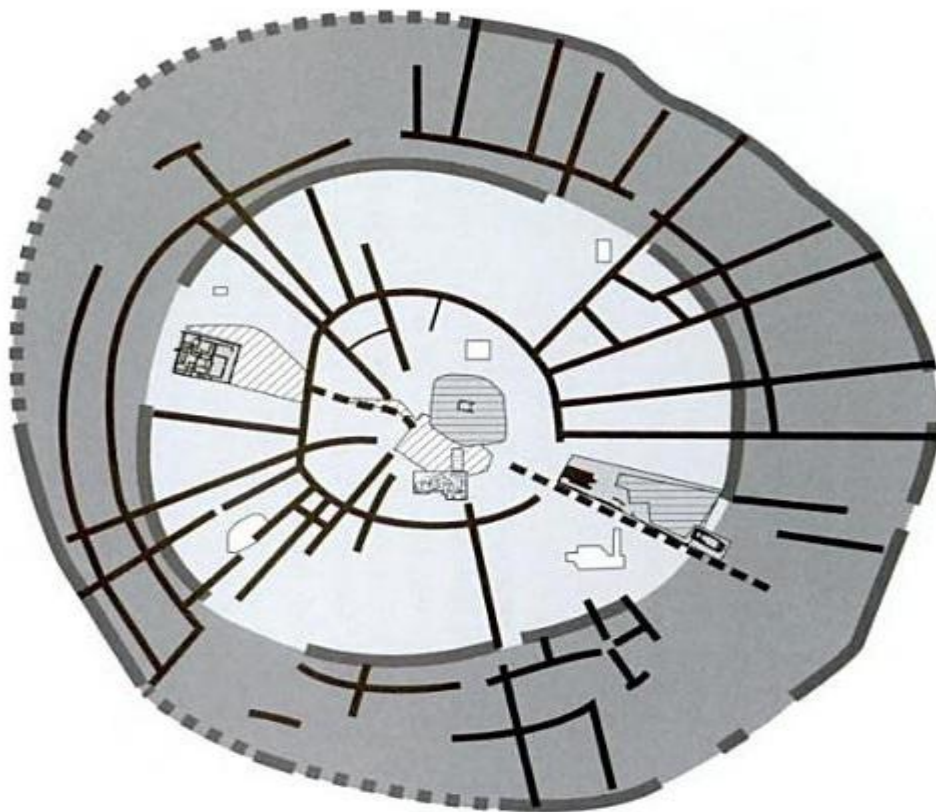


Figure 6. Street network of Tell Chuera. (Meyer 2007: 140)

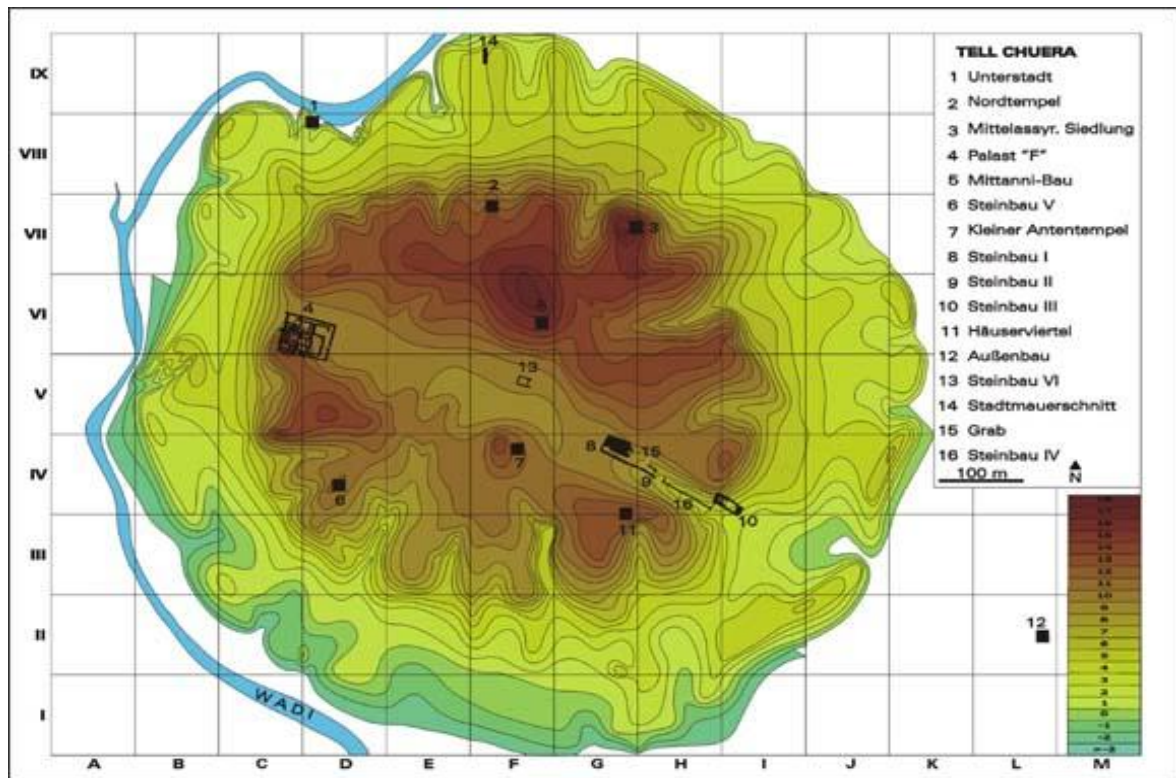


Figure 7. Geographical elevation map of Tell Chuera. (<http://web.uni-frankfurt.de/fb09/vorderasarch/tch.htm>)

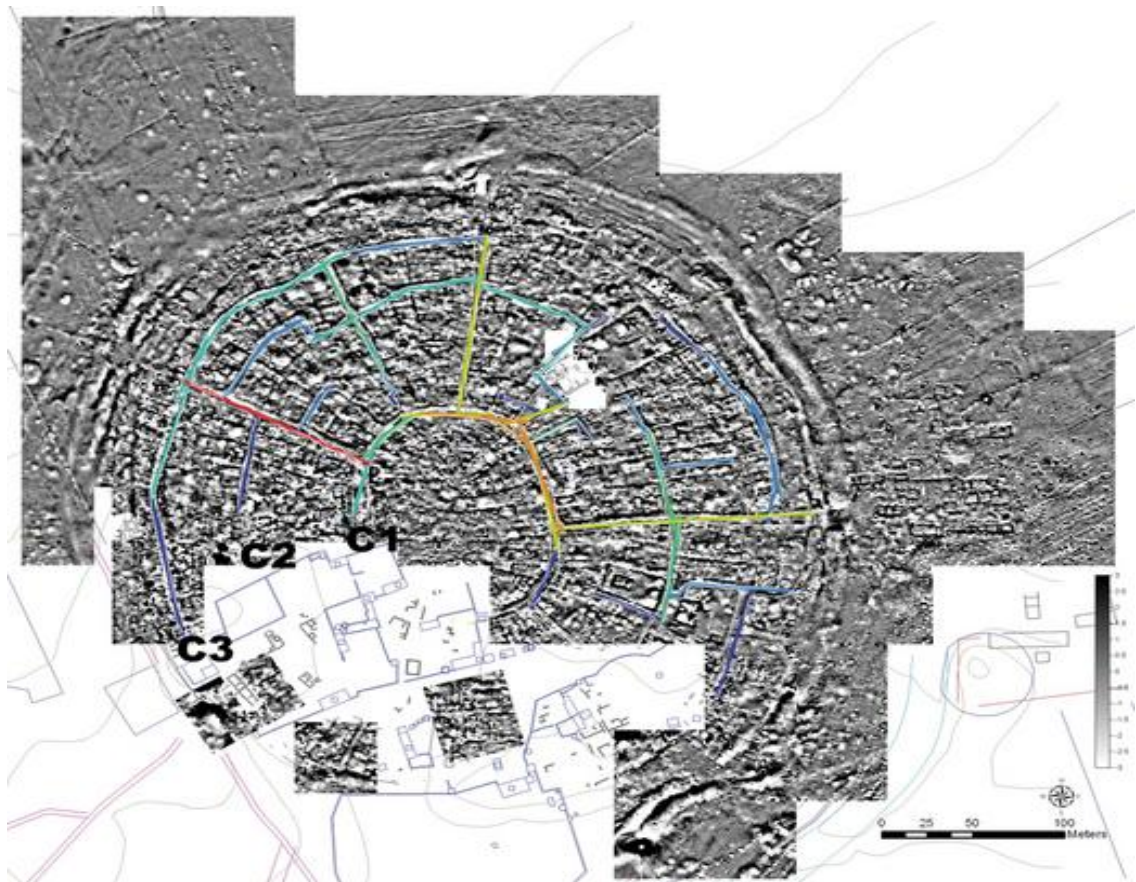


Figure 8. Magnetic map of Al-Rawda street networks. (Gondet, Benech 2009: 219)



Figure 9. Map of Tell Beydar's citadel. (www.beydar.com)



Figure 10. A glyptic introduction scene from c. 2100 BC.
(<http://www.crystalinks.com/sumergods1.html>)

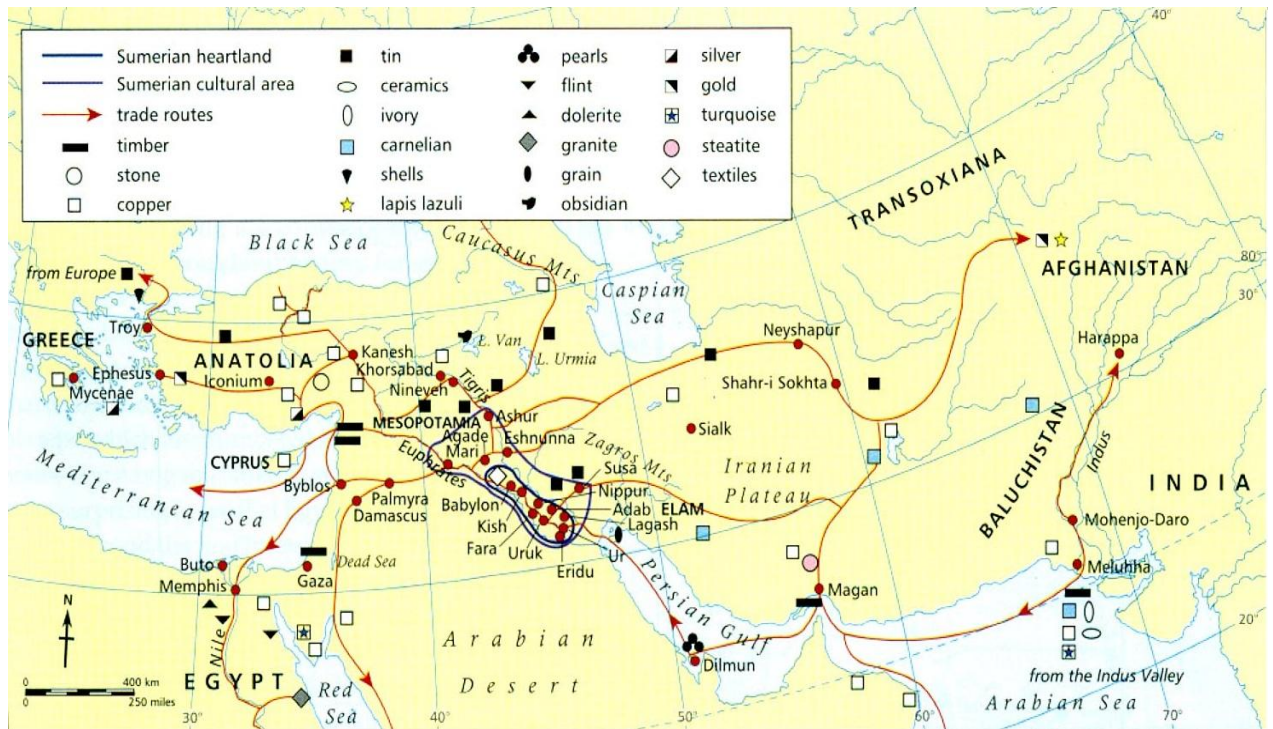


Figure 11. The ancient trade routes.

(http://powayusd.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/teachers/bfitzpatrick/fertile_crescent.htm)

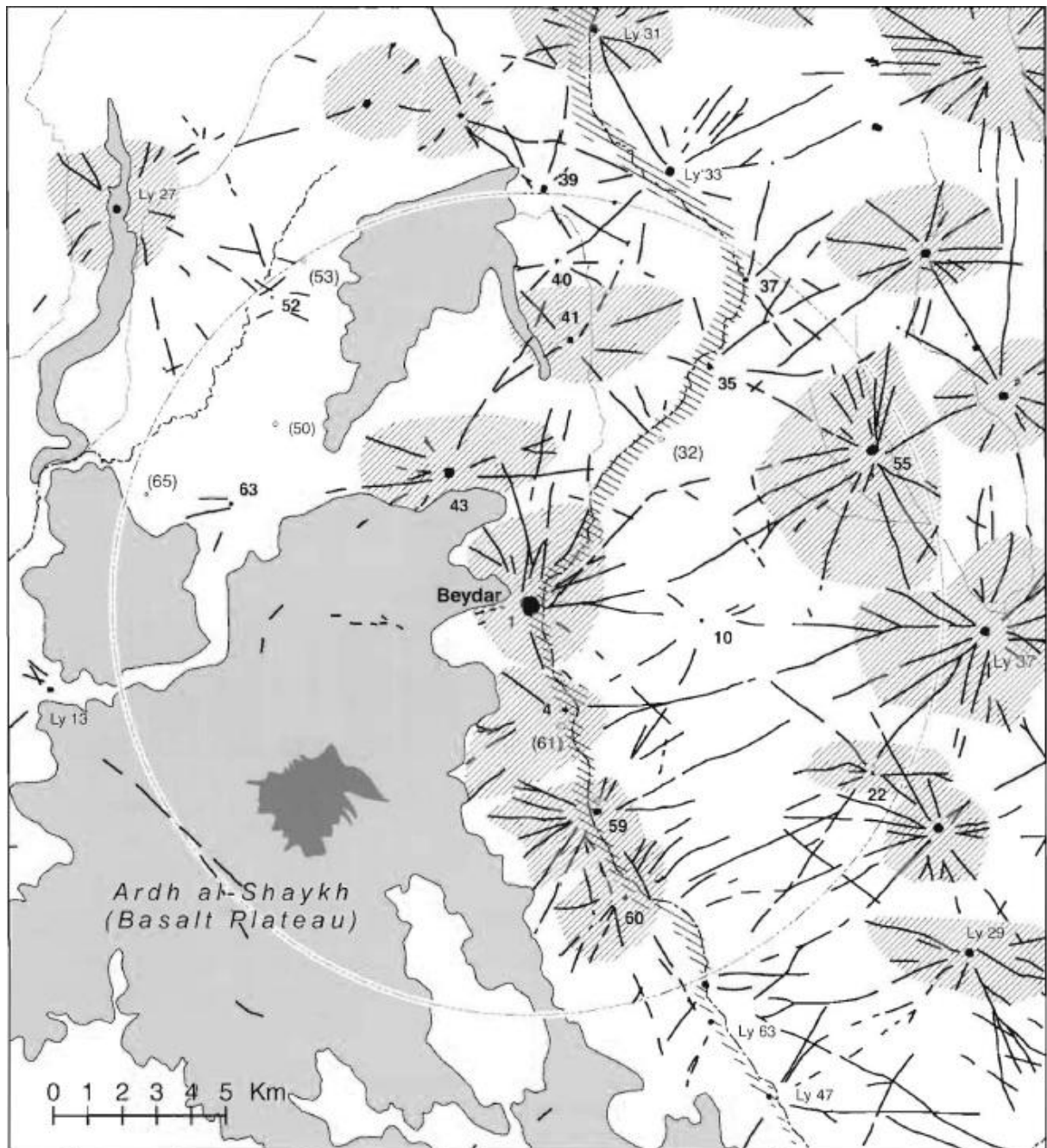


Figure 12. Hollow ways and Hollow way-defined agricultural areas in the region of Tell Beydar. (Ur, Wilkinson 2008: 326)



Figure 13. Photo of one of the statues from Djebel el-Beda. (<http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/680953>)

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