Archaeological Manifestations of Empire: Assyria's Imprint on Southeastern Anatolia

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Abstract

One of the most enduring problems for the study of ancient empires is the fact that material correlates indicative of imperial integration are often difficult to define in the archaeological record. This situation results in part from two factors that distinguish empires from other less complex political formations. First, the military and administrative structures that integrate otherwise diverse areas into a single imperial system vary considerably in their nature and intensity, and second, such systems are often superimposed over existing political, economic, and social structures, thus altering existing systems in ways which may or may not be visible in the archaeological record. Thus the archaeological manifestations of empire may be far more diverse than those of less complex polities. This article explores how the material correlates of Assyrian imperialism are manifest in the archaeological record by analyzing and combining archaeological and textual data from the Mesopotamian Iron Age (ca. 1100–600 B.C.) in southeastern Anatolia. It suggests that imperial integration affects the archaeological record in significant and identifiable ways by illuminating three overarching themes that are characteristic of Assyrian imperialism: the establishment of agricultural colonies in newly annexed regions; the use or enforcement of buffer zones between frontier provinces and hostile neighbors; and the discontiguous nature of Assyrian imperial control.*

Empires are without a doubt the most complex political formations of the ancient world. They are expansionist states that hold dominion over diverse subject polities of varying scope and complexity. Such states extend their control over less powerful polities through conquest, coercion, and/or diplomacy to form large incorporative political and economic systems that transcend local political, social, and ethnic boundaries. Empires differ from state-level polities in scale, complexity, and internal diversity; thus the political systems that administer empires must work to both integrate and exploit the diversity inherent in supra-local expansion.[1] Three fundamental traits are characteristic of empires. First, most scholars would agree that imperial systems are largely concerned with channeling resources from subject territories to the imperial core for the economic benefit and political perpetuation of a limited segment of the population.[2] Second, empires are characterized by rapid growth, often under the direction of a single charismatic leader, and equally rapid decline.[3] Third, for an expansionist state to retain the gains made during the initial stage of its development, it must embark on a process of consolidation to create an overarching political and economic structure to unite otherwise autonomous regions under the imperial umbrella.[4]

Recent scholarship has emphasized the diversity of strategies utilized by imperial authorities in administering subject territories.[5] Such strategies can vary from invasive measures that might include the complete restructuring of social, demographic, and economic systems,[6] to coercive means that

* This article represents a refinement and continuation of ideas that were conceived during the composition of *The Mechanics of Empire* (Parker 2001). I owe a great debt to all those who assisted me during the many years it took to research and write that book. Chief among them are Elizabeth Carter, Guillermo Algaze, Simo Parpola, and Robert Whiting. Some of the data analyzed here were recovered as part of the Upper Tigris Archaeological Research Project (UTARP). Without the support of the participants and staff of UTARP, this article would not have been possible. Research for this article conducted as part of UTARP was funded by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. I would also like to thank Bruce Hitchner and Marni Walter for their assistance and careful editing. Had it not been for their encouragement this article might never have come to fruition. The final changes, and indeed, some of best ideas, were written during a brief stay in Gerlesborg, Sweden. Thanks, and congratulations, to Linda Sjöström and Svante Holm for their friendship and hospitality, and for the crayfish. Finally, Janet Theiss continues to be my strongest supporter. Professor Theiss carefully edited this manuscript and provided numerous valuable comments and observations at various stages of its completion. This article is dedicated to the 10 happy years we have spent together.

[1] Barfield 2001, 29; see also Pagden 1995, 13–4.

[2] Adams 1979, 59; Ekholm and Friedman 1979, 43; Hodge 1996, 19; Liverani 1979, 297; Sinopoli 1994, 165; 2001, 445, 457.

[3] Hodge 1996, 19; Sinopoli 1994, 163.

[4] Hodge 1996, 19; Sinopoli 1994, 163–4; 2001, 440–6.

[5] Doyle 1986, 123–38. Also see D'Altroy 1992, 9–24; Sinopoli 2001, 445–7.

[6] Doyle 1986, 257–75; Schreiber 1987a, 278–81; 2001, 89–91.

American Journal of Archaeology 107 (2003) 525–57

might exploit preexisting political, administrative, and social systems without fundamentally altering them.[7]

A recurring problem for the archaeological study of empire is that such fluctuations of political boundaries, although occasionally documented in texts, are not always detectable in the archaeological record. Furthermore, since the administrative and military apparatuses that integrate otherwise diverse areas into one imperial system are often superimposed over existing structures, material remains indicative of imperial integration can be elusive in the archaeological record.

In spite of these difficulties, over the past two decades scholars have made great strides toward documenting archaeological manifestations of empire. Most of these researchers have been guided by the historical or ethnohistorical record.[8] Not all empires are documented in texts, however, and thus some archaeologists can only approach the study of empire from a purely archaeological standpoint. Schreiber, for example, has long argued for the existence of the Wari empire in Peru, based solely on archaeological data.[9] Recently, scholars working on other empires, such as the Aztec and Inca, have successfully integrated texts and archaeology to produce an impressively nuanced understanding of how imperialism affected communities and households.[10] In her latest assessment of the state of research on ancient empires, Carla Sinopoli suggests that the integration and comparison of macro- and microlevel data from several regions of an empire can illuminate the ways in which imperial hegemony differentially affected territories on both a regional and a local scale.[11]

In this article, I evaluate the material consequences of imperialism through an in-depth study of three regions along the Upper Tigris River in southeastern Anatolia between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C. In a sense, Mesopotamianists studying the Assyrian empire have an advantage over many scholars interested in the study of ancient empires: the Assyrians left an extensive textual record with which to compare, contrast, and correlate archaeological discoveries. In fact, it is precisely because of this vast corpus of textual material that we know exactly when the Assyrians expanded into southeastern Anatolia, how they established and maintained provinces there,[12] and in many cases, who was responsible for implementing imperial policy.[13] This being the case, is the potential for integrating archaeology and texts from the Mesopotamian Iron Age (ca. 1100–600 B.C.) of any merit to those archaeologists who seek to develop an archaeology of empire but who lack a rich and detailed historical record?

To answer this question I focus on three overarching themes that I believe are characteristic of the Neo-Assyrian model of imperialism: The establishment of "agricultural colonies" in newly conquered regions; the use or enforcement of buffer zones between frontier provinces and hostile neighbors; and the discontiguous nature of imperial control. I will refer to the results of regional and intensive surveys from three discrete areas along the Upper Tigris River in southeastern Anatolia: the first in the Upper Tigris River Valley between the modern towns of Bismil and Batman; the second in the Cizre Plain, the modern border between Turkey, Iraq, and Syria; and the third in the valleys of two of the main tributaries of the Tigris (figs. 1–2).[14] Supplementing these data with data from recent excavations and surveys and combining that with the textual record, I argue that some aspects of Assyrian imperial policy affected the archaeological record in significant and identifiable ways.[15]

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[7] Berden and Smith 1996, 209–17; Blanton 1996, 80–4; D'Altroy 2001, 325; Hassig 1985, 92–103, 262–7;1988, 17–26, 256–61; Schreiber 2001, 74.

[8] Carla Sinopoli has recently argued that the renewed interest in the study of empires is at least partly a result of the reintegration of history and archaeology (Sinopoli 2001, 439–40).

[9] Schrieber 1987, 1992, 2001. Also see Smith and Montiel 2001.

[10] Brumfiel 1991 (Aztecs); D'Altroy and Hastorf 2001 (Inca); Wells 1998 (Rome).

[11] Sinopoli 2001, 448.

[12] Parker 2001, 80–3, 99–102, 206–12, 246–62.

[13] Radner 1998, 1999; Baker 2000, 2001, 2002.

[14] Preliminary reports of these regional surveys are published in Algaze 1989 and Algaze et al. 1991. These data are analyzed in Parker 1997a and 2001. Since the original surveys, one of the areas under discussion here has been the subject of intense archaeological research. The emerging data are helping to refine, clarify, and even change data from, and interpretations based on, the original surveys. This article is meant as a corrective for some of the lacuna of these earlier publications.

[15] For recent regional surveys, see Ay 2001 and Velibeyğolu et al. 2002. Intensive survey data from two sites discussed here were recently published in Parker and Creekmore 2002. Also see Parker et al. 2001a, 2001b. Further intensive survey data appear in Karg 1999; Ökse 1999; Matney 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003; Matney and Bauer 2000; Matney and Somer 2001. Also see Ay 2001. In recent years several excavations have begun in one of the areas under discussion here. These include: Ay 2002; Karg 2001, 2002; Matney et al. 2002, 2003; Ökse 2001; Ökse and Alp 2002; Parker et al. 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Schachner 2002. The textual data pertinent to this study are published in Grayson 1991, 1996; Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990; Parker 1997b; Tadmor 1994.

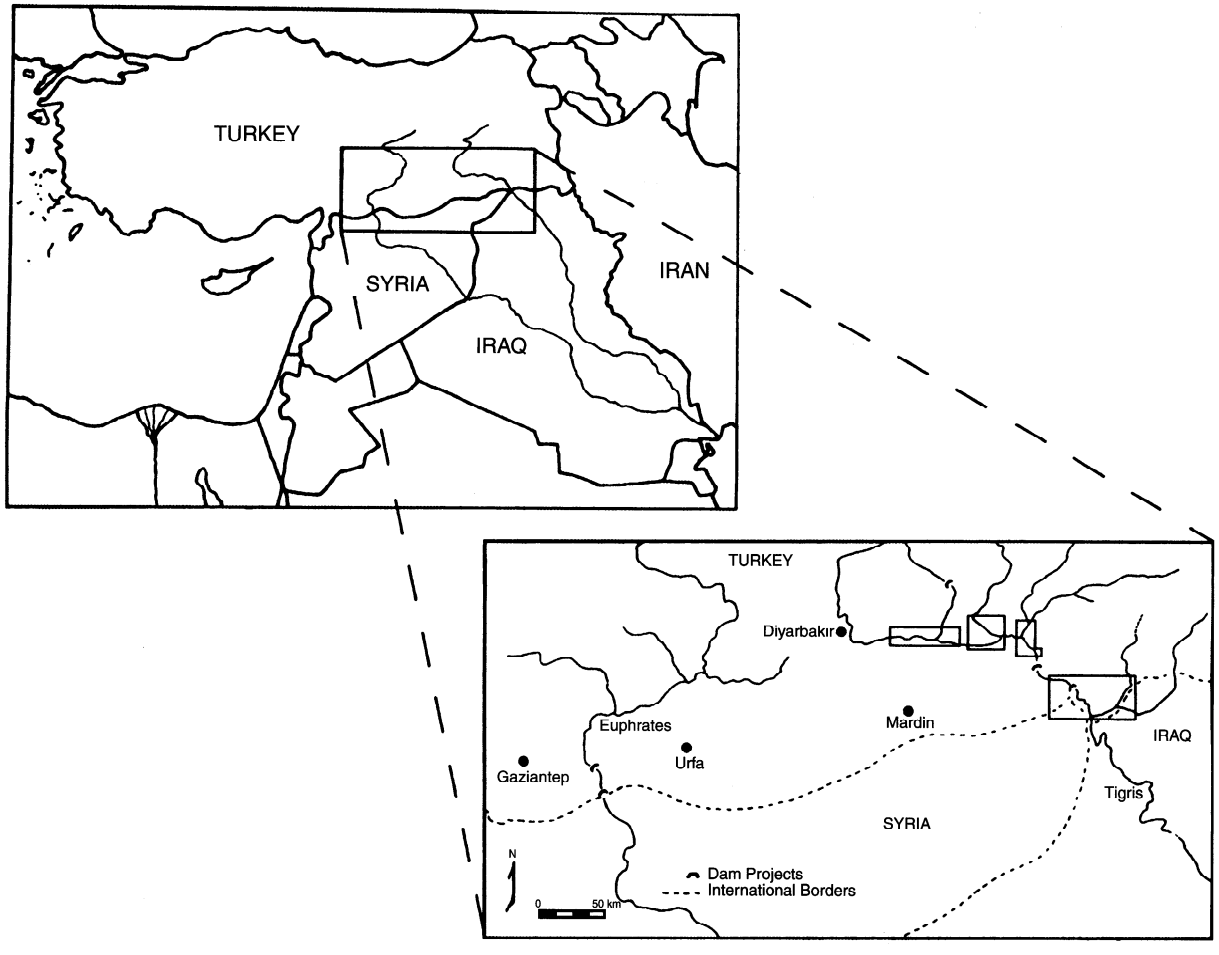

Fig. 1. Map of the Middle East with an enlargement of southeastern Anatolia. The areas discussed in this article are shown as boxes on the Tigris River.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Assyrian empire is well known from references in the Bible. Perhaps the most famous of these references is to the Assyrian king Sennacherib who attacked Judah and besieged Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah in 701 B.C.[16] Excavations that took place in northern Iraq during the mid to late 19th century not only awakened the general public to the archaeological reality behind the Biblical stories, but filled the museums of Europe with countless Assyrian treasures.[17] Perhaps the most famous of these Assyrian artifacts are the carved stone wall panels that once adorned the Assyrian palaces. With the discovery of the library of the Assyrian monarch Ashurbanipal (ca. 668–627) at Nineveh, the importance of the Assyrian empire in the development of civilization in the ancient Near East became evident. For much of the Mesopotamian Iron Age, from about 900 to 600 B.C., the Assyrian empire dominated the entire region. The Assyrians played a major role in the history of ancient Israel, and exerted political, military, and cultural influence over other peoples of the Near East. The Assyrians overran Egypt twice, Babylon was made a vassal of the empire, and the peripheral cultures of Anatolia, Iran, and Syria were either incorporated into the empire or forced to pay tribute to the Assyrian king.

Whatever the factors that caused Assyria to make the transition from state to empire (these were complex and have been discussed extensively elsewhere), the final outcome was impressive indeed, for Assyria was the first state to unite the diverse cultures of the ancient Near East into a single polit-

[16] Isaiah 36; 37. Also see Ussishkin 1982 and Machinist 1983.

[17] For an excellent narrative history of the formative years of Assyriology and Near Eastern archaeology, see Larsen 1996.

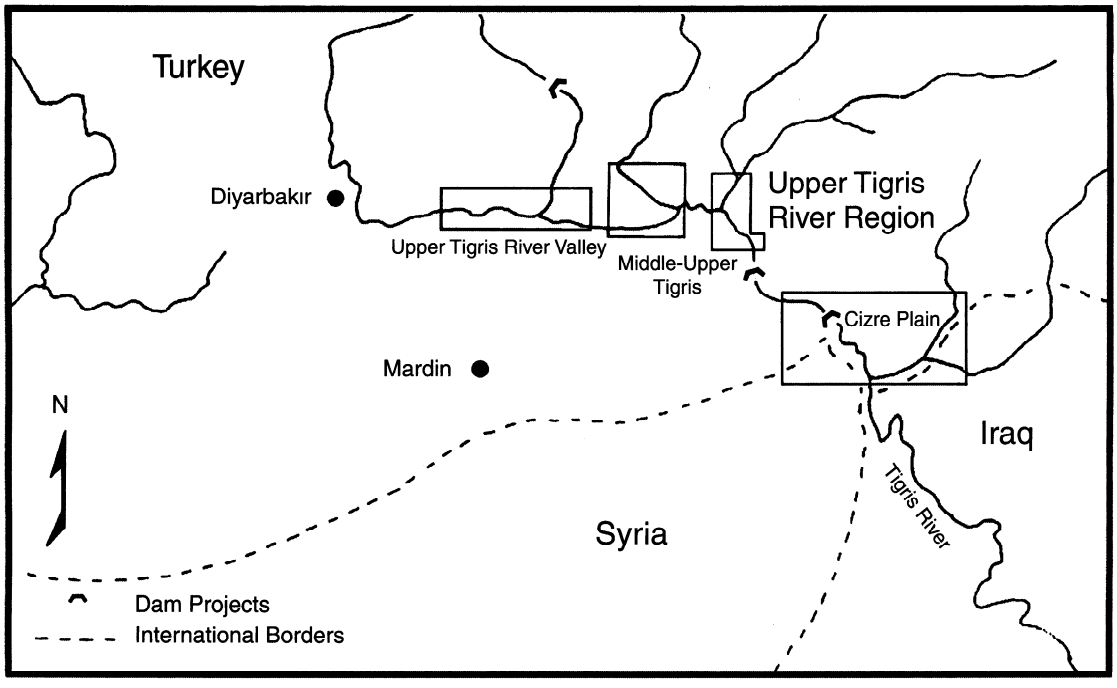

Fig. 2. Close-up of southeastern Anatolia showing the location of the survey areas discussed in this article

ical unit. At its greatest extent the empire stretched from the Zagros Mountains in the east to the Mediterranean and Egypt in the west, and from the Persian Gulf in the south to the Taurus Mountains in the north (fig. 3). The broadest historical significance of the Assyrian empire lies neither in modern perceptions of the empire, nor in the influence of the Assyrians on the creation of the early Judeo-Christian world. Rather, Assyria's importance lies in the fact that the Assyrian state that emerged during the Mesopotamian Iron Age represented an entirely new level of political development in Near Eastern, and, indeed, world history.

Several exhaustive studies of the vast textual corpus from the Assyrian Imperial period (ca. 900–600 B.C.) have decisively shown that two of the survey areas discussed in this article formed the core of two key frontier provinces during the Assyrian Imperial period (fig. 4).[18] The region of the Upper Tigris survey area became the center of the province of Tushhan during the reign of Ashurnasirpal (in 881 B.C.) and the Cizre Plain was annexed to the province of the Meshennu during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (in 729 B.C.). The textual data also suggest that the third area (the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys) was left largely deserted as a buffer between the river corridor that linked the Upper Tigris River region with the Assyrian heartland and the southern provinces of the empire of Urartu. This article shows how the changing archaeological profile of these three regions across the Late Bronze and Iron Ages both illustrates the process of imperial expansion and augments our understanding of its modes and impact in southeastern Anatolia.

ASSYRIAN OCCUPATION OF THE UPPER TIGRIS RIVER VALLEY

Assyria's annexation of the Upper Tigris River Valley took place during the reign of the Assyrian monarch Ashurnasirpal (883–859 B.C.). The history of this period is well known through Ashurnasirpal's detailed military annals, which come down to us in a number of copies.[19] These texts reveal that the Upper Tigris River Valley was the target of Ashurnasirpal's second and fifth campaigns.[20] The sec-

[18] Kessler 1980, 99–105, 122–49; Liverani 1992, 29–33, 57–62; Karg 1999, 271–83; Parker 2001, 41–3, 106–9, 162–4. For complete maps of the historical geography of the region, see Parpola and Porter 2001, 3, 4, 19. See also Radner and Schachner 2001.

[19] The extant copies are translated in Grayson 1991, 189–262.

[20] For a discussion of the route of these campaigns, see Liverani 1992, 29–44, 57–62. Also see Parker 2001, 44–54, 148–53, 165–73.

ond campaign, which took place in 882 B.C., began at the source of the river Shubnat near the modern border between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, where Ashurnasirpal set up a statue of himself to mark the occasion.[21] From this point Ashurnasirpal's annals narrate step by step his campaign through the Tur Abdin Mountains into the Upper Tigris River Valley in what is today southeastern Turkey.

The Upper Tigris River Valley before Assyrian Annexation

During the Early Iron Age, the period immediately prior to Assyrian imperial penetration into the region (ca. 1050–882 B.C.), the local settlement system in the Upper Tigris River Valley was characterized by a total of 19 sites with an estimated total of 32.54 occupied hectares. The survey identified 10 villages, measuring between 1 and 4 ha, and 9 hamlets measuring less than 1 ha each (table 1, fig. 5).[22] These sites were identified by the presence of a corpus of ceramics known as Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares (fig. 6).[23] The Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares are handmade, low-fired, and consist largely of bag-shaped jars with deep corrugations around the shoulder. Although this group is geographically widespread, stretching from the Keban Dam area in central Anatolia down the Euphrates and east to the Tigris basin, there is considerable variation within and among local assemblages. The variation in clay preparation, surface treatment, and shape suggests that these ceramics were produced in local workshops rather than in centralized pro-

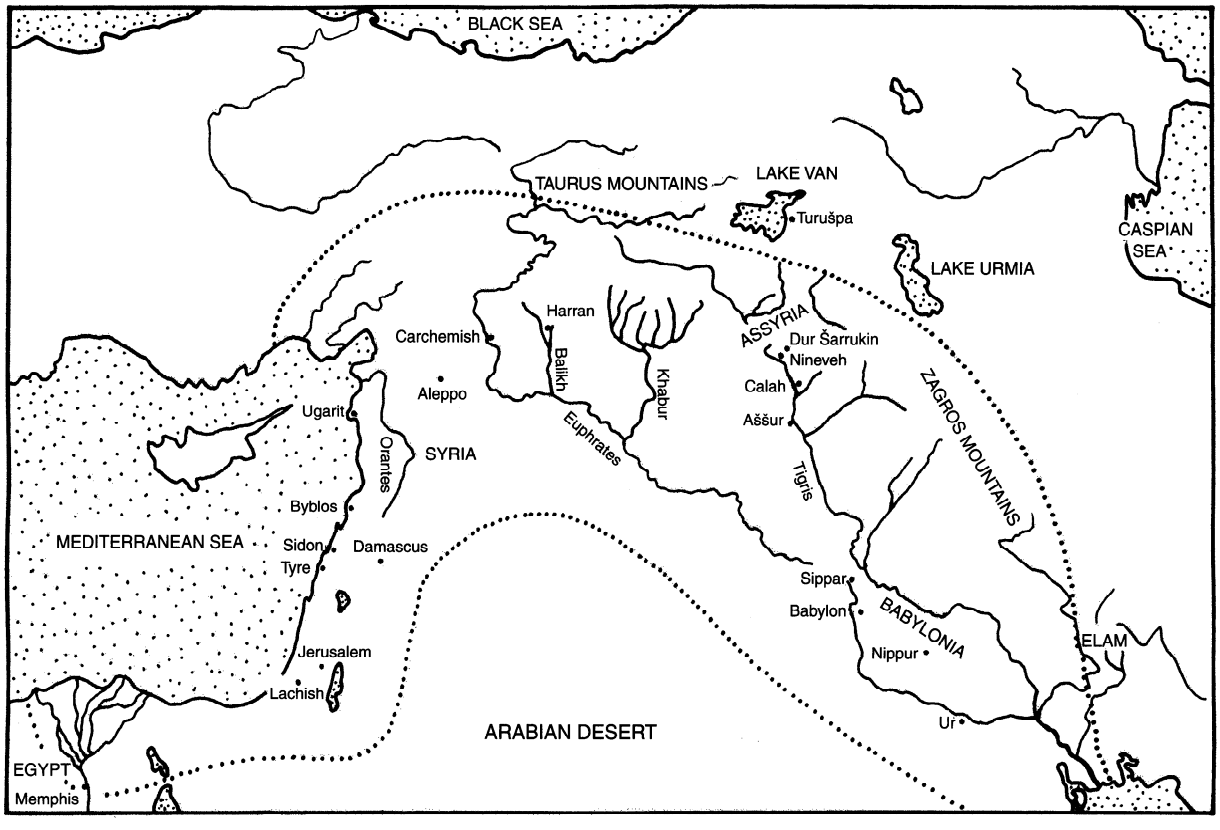

Fig. 3. Map of the Assyrian empire at its largest extent

[21] Hawkins 1969. This stele, which is mentioned in Ashurnasirpal's annals, not only attests to the reliability of these texts, suggesting that the Assyrian scribes of this period were concerned with topographic accuracy, but also provides a concrete location for the beginning of the campaign and the reconstruction of the historical geography of the region.

[22] Note that the numbers given here vary slightly from those presented in the original publication of these data (Parker 1997a, 232–3; 2001, 174–86, 317). Since the original surveys of the valley, a number of Iron Age sites have been the subject of further archaeological research (see table 1).

[23] Parker 2001, 174–7. This corpus is known throughout southeastern Anatolia, where it appears at sites like Değirmentepe (Duru 1979), Korucutepe (van Loon 1980), Norşuntepe (Hauptman 1972; Bartl 1994), İmikşağı (Sevin 1995b), Köşkerbaba (Bilgi 1987), and Tepicik (Esin 1970). For a discussion of these ceramics, see Bartl 1994; Karg 2001, 678–80; Müller 2003; Parker 2001, 174–7.

Table 1. Settlement Pattern Data for the Early Iron Age (ca. 1050–880 B.C.) in the Upper Tigris River Valley

Site Number	Site Name	Measured Total Site Size (ha)	Estimated Maximum Total Site Size (ha)	Measured EIA Settlement Size (ha)	Estimated Maximum EIA Settlement Size (ha)	Site Type	References
T.5	Kavuşan Tepe	1.3	–	–	1	Hamlet	Kozbe et al. 2003
T.9	Hakemi Tepesi	1	–	–	0.5	Hamlet	Tekin 2003
T.10	Ziyaret Tepe	32	–	3	–	Village	Matney 1998, 2001, 2003
T.22	Karacik Tepe	–	1.75	–	1.75	Village	
T.28	Çayirlik Tepe	–	4.85	–	1	Hamlet	
T.32	Giricano Tepe	2	–	–	1.25	Village	Ay 2001; Schachner 2002a, 2002b; Schachner and Schachner 2002a
T.35	Babahaki Tepe	–	3.3	–	3.3	Village	
T.42	Kenan Tepe	6	–	1.1	–	Village	Parker et al. 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003
T.51	Talavash Tepe	3.14	–	3.14	–	Village	Parker et al. 2001a, 2001b; Parker and Creekmore 2002
T.56	Salat Tepe	1.2	–	1.2	–	Village	Ökse et al. 2001; Ökse and Alp 2002
T.62	Gre Dimse Tepe	4	–	–	4	Village	Karg 2001; 2002
T.67	Haci Reşik Tepe	–	3.6	–	1	Hamlet	
T.68	Koyun Tepe	–	3.3	–	0.95	Hamlet	
T.69	Gre Heyde	–	0.7	–	0.7	Hamlet	
T.71	Hirbemerdan Tepe	–	4.2	–	1	Hamlet	
T.73	Kalearno Tepe	–	1.4	–	0.95	Hamlet	
T.80	Güngeçti Tepe	–	1.4	–	0.95	Hamlet	
T.83	Raşik Tepe	–	3.3	–	3.3	Village	
T.197	Şimşi Tepe	–	2.45	–	2.45	Village	

duction centers. Recent archaeological work in the Upper Tigris River region has shown that this assemblage dates to ca. 1050–850 B.C.[24]

Even at their maximum possible extent, all but one of the Iron Age sites in the Upper Tigris River Valley could only have been villages during the period in question, because 14 of the 15 sites are under 5 ha in total size (table 1). The exception to this is T.10 (Ziyaret Tepe), which yielded Early Iron Age ceramics on the 3 ha central mound only, rather than across the entire site.[25] The villages are more or less evenly spaced through the valley about 5 km apart, appearing on both the low flat plains around the river and in the surrounding hills (fig. 5). There was little or no settlement hierarchy in the valley during the Early Iron Age. These data suggest that during this period the Upper Tigris River Valley was home to a number of loosely integrated villages. The lack of settlement hierarchy and site clustering indicates that these villages were not part of a complex polity.

In the narration of his initial campaign into the Upper Tigris River region, Ashurnasirpal mentions several commodities that he took as booty from the local inhabitants. Although such lists are by no means comprehensive statements about the nature of the local economy before Assyrian colonization, they do give us some indication of what products were available. After conquering the city of Damdamusa, which is likely located south or southeast of

[24] Schachner 2003, 158; Müller 2003, 139.

[25] Matney 1998, 18–9.

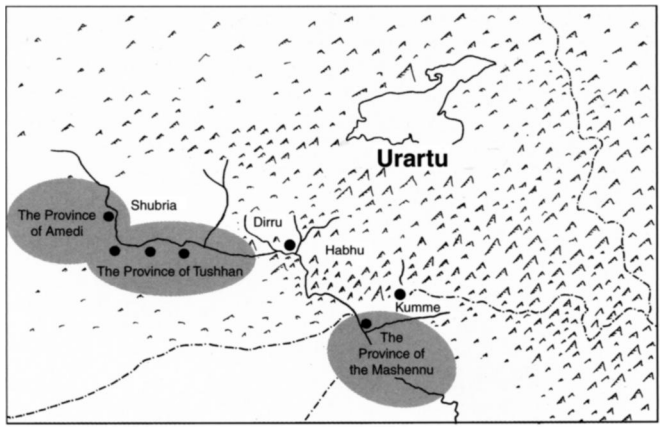

Fig. 4. Map showing the historical geography of the Upper Tigris River region. The dots mark the locations of Assyrian forts. From left to right these forts are: Amedi, Sinabu, Tidu, Tushhan, the fort mentioned in Nimrud Letter 67, Shabireshu, and a fort known to exist in Kumme.

Diyarbakır,[26] Ashurnasirpal besieged two sites south of the Upper Tigris River before reaching the town of Tushhan (fig. 4). From the first, the village of Mariru,[27] the Assyrians carried off oxen and sheep, and from the second, the town of Tela, the Assyrians received oxen and cattle.[28] Interestingly, Ashurnasirpal also left a visual representation of the inhabitants of the region in the form of a stone monument known as the Rassam Obelisk. This obelisk shows people from various parts of the empire bringing tribute to the Assyrian king (fig. 7). The depiction includes elegantly dressed emissaries, identified by the accompanying text as being from the Upper Tigris River region, carrying tribute in the form of luxuriant textiles, bronze cauldrons, and logs.[29]

These sources suggest that most of the wealth accumulated in this area was in the form of livestock. When confronted by the Assyrians, the societies of the Upper Tigris River region chose either resistance or appeasement. According to Ashurnasirpal, when the Assyrians attacked the town of Tela, 3,000 men, undoubtedly gathered from the surrounding villages, helped defend the town. Thus although it is unlikely that this region formed a single political unit, there was intervillage cooperation in times of crisis. The depiction of emissaries said to be representatives from large regions rather than specific towns supports this view of interregional cooperation to appease the Assyrians.

These textual glimpses of the nature of the pre-Assyrian population of the Upper Tigris River Valley are now being augmented by excavations and intensive surveys at four sites in the valley: Kenan Tepe (T.42), Gre Dimse (T.61), Ziyaret Tepe (T.10), and Talavash Tepe (T.51, fig. 5).

Kenan Tepe is located on a natural terrace on the north bank of the Tigris River about 20 km west of the Tigris-Batman confluence. Its position allows natural protection from three sides while at the same time offering access to local springs and land suitable for intensive agriculture along the banks of the nearby Tigris River.

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[26] Kessler 1990, 66, 97; Liverani 1992, 36.

[27] Ashurnasirpal says that Mariru was located near Damdamusa and, judging from the text, this was probably a subsidiary settlement of that site. The number of casualties (50) and captives (200) suggests that this was a small and relatively insignificant village. For a recent translation of the passage of Ashurnasirpal's annals containing this toponym, see Grayson 1991, 201. For the location of Mariru, see Liverani 1992, 37; Kessler 1980, 113. For the use of numbers in Assyrian texts, see De Odorico 1995.

[28] Ashurnasirpal's description of Tela indicates that this was a much more significant site than Mariru. According to the text, three walls surrounded the site. The population available to defend this site was apparently also larger: Ashurnasirpal claims to have felled 3,000 enemy soldiers there. The relevant passage of Ashurnasirpal's annals is contained in Grayson 1991, 201. For the location of Tela, see Liverani 1992, 38.

[29] The inscription above the pertinent panels of the obelisk lists three toponyms: Nirdun, which lies on the south bank of the Upper Tigris River; Shubria, which lies on the north bank of the Upper Tigris River; and Habhu, which should be located in the area of the Garzan and Bohtan Rivers (for discussion, see Parker 2001, 162–4; Liverani 1992, 34–44). These toponyms are listed together, and thus it is not entirely clear which of the persons represented is from which particular area. Nevertheless, it can be said with some certainty that the individuals depicted these panels of the obelisk are from the general region under discussion here and in the following section.

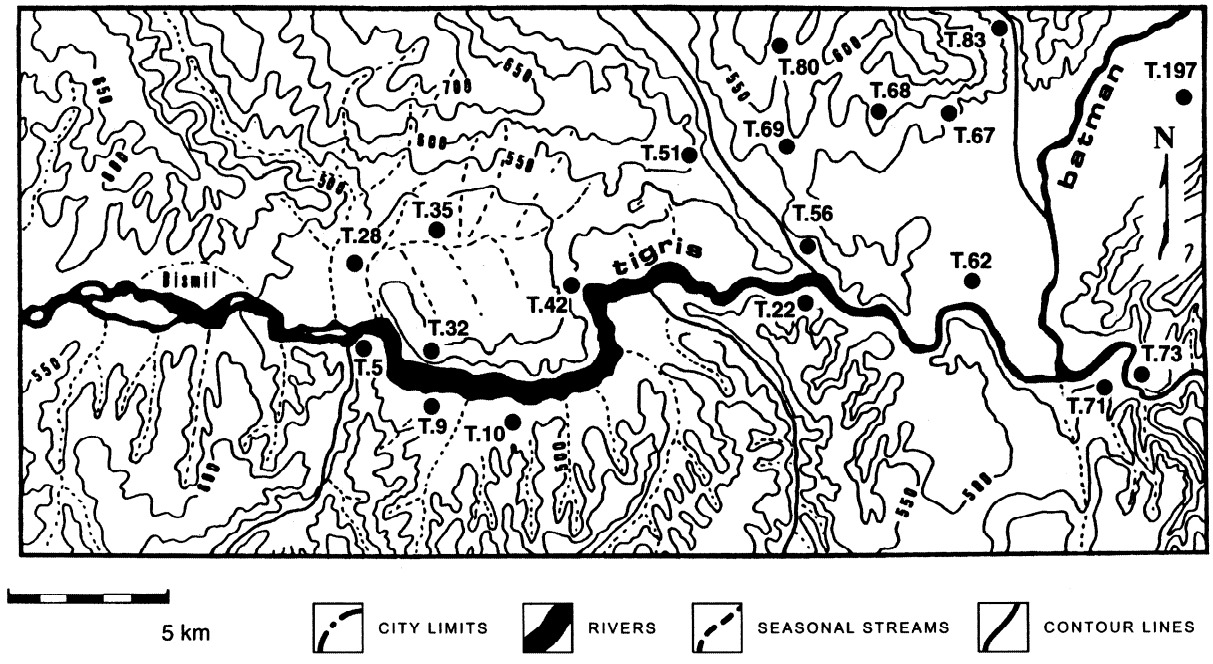

Fig. 5. Map of the Upper Tigris River Valley showing the location of Early Iron Age sites

Although many of the contexts dating to the Early Iron Age at Kenan Tepe are disturbed because they are close to the ground surface, we can nevertheless make some generalizations about the nature of occupation there during the Early Iron Age.[30] The data show that Kenan Tepe was home to an indigenous Anatolian village. The ceramic assemblage includes types belonging to the Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares (see above) as well as types previously defined as "Indigenous Iron Age" based on survey material from the Upper Tigris River region.[31] Thus far, no Assyrian Imperial period ceramics have been discovered. Excavations have also shown that settlement was restricted to the 1.1 ha high mound during this period, putting the site in the category of small village or hamlet.[32]

The site does not appear to have had a defensive wall during the Early Iron Age, although the discovery of the remains of a large stone structure at the top of the mound (in trench B4, see fig. 8) leaves open the possibility that some type of stronghold may have existed there. The settlement, which was probably terraced into the gently sloping western side of the mound, consists of several types of structures interspersed with outdoor work areas. A wall with stone foundations of approximately 75 cm in width and 9 m in length stretched across one 10 × 10 m trench (trench C3, see fig. 8). This wall probably represents the eastern bearing wall of a large building, the dimensions of which are still unknown. To the east of this wall the excavators encountered several ephemeral outdoor work surfaces and a number of ovens.

Twenty meters to the north, the corner of another large structure was discovered in trench C4 (fig. 8). This structure was made entirely of mudbrick. Again, outside surfaces containing several ovens were associated with this structure. Another probably domestic structure was unearthed in trench B2. Associated collapse levels were discovered on both sides of the wall, while parts of a surface and oven residue were discovered on the north side. Part of another, round, mudbrick structure was discovered in trench C2. Although its function is still unknown, this structure was associated with a large hearth area and several slag pits.

[30] Because the Early Iron Age data from Kenan Tepe have been unearthed very recently (excavations at the site have taken place during the summer of 2000, 2001, and 2002) much of the data remains to be completely analyzed, and thus the conclusions offered here must be considered preliminary.

[31] Parker 1997, 238; 2001, 26–7, 285–7.

[32] There is no indication of Iron Age remains either in the lower town or on the eastern slopes of the high mound at Kenan Tepe although remains from this period have been discovered in two areas on the western slopes of the high mound (Areas B and C, fig. 8). Since parts of Kenan Tepe show signs of severe erosion, it is difficult to give a precise estimate of the size of the Early Iron Age settlement. We can be certain, however, that at its maximum extent Kenan Tepe's Early Iron Age occupation did not exceed the total size of the main mound (ca. 1.1 ha; table 1). If erosion did not play a significant role in disturbing the Early Iron Age remains at Kenan Tepe, then the size of the site during this period could be slightly smaller.

Only 40 cm below ground surface in trench B1, excavators discovered a well preserved collapse layer covering nearly the entire 5 × 5 m trench (fig. 8). This layer contained various domestic artifacts including five mortars, one pestle, and several broken storage jars. There was no evidence of burning. This layer also contained four rounded stone artifacts pierced by a central hole. The relatively large size and weight of these artifacts excludes the possibility that they are loom weights. Instead, these artifacts are probably weights for fishing nets. The collapse layer sealed an earthen surface that was associated with an area of oven debris, underscoring the domestic character of these levels.

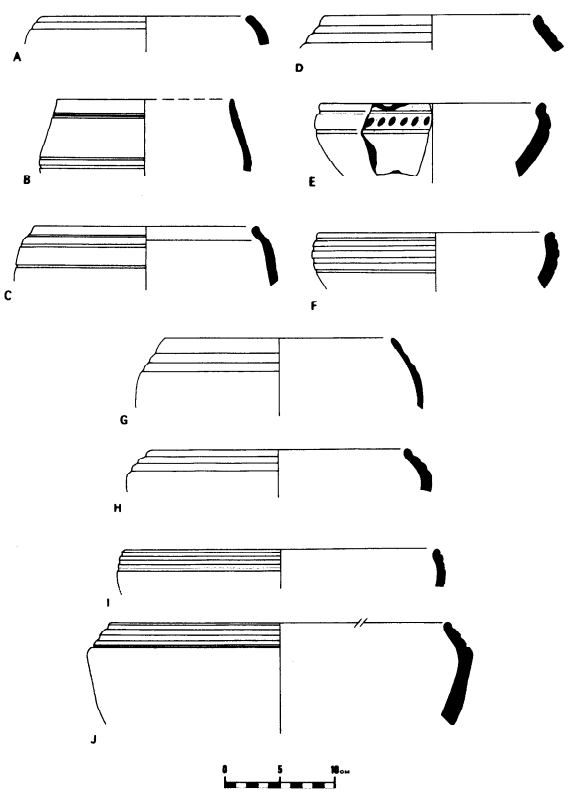

Fig. 6. Early Iron Age ceramics from various sites in the Upper Tigris River region. *A,* Corrugated Bowl from Gre Dimse (T. 62); orange-brown surfaces grading to gray at core; low density of small white and brown inclusions; lightly burnished on exterior surface. *B,* Corrugated Bowl from Koyun Tepe (T.68); brown clay; occasional scattered medium sized angular white grits; lightly burnished on exterior surface; cmd uncertain. *C,* Corrugated Bowl from Koyun Tepe (T.68); brown clay grading to gray at core; external and internal surfaces burnished; chaff temper with some scattered white grits. *D,* Corrugated Bowl from Cayirlik (T.28); gray surfaces; black core; white grit temper. *E,* Corrugated Bowl with fingernail impressed decoration from Babahaki (T.35); reddish-brown surfaces grading to brown at core; chaff temper with some white grits. *F,* Corrugated Bowl from Talavash Tepe (T.51); brown surfaces grading to blackish-gray at core; low density small white grits; lightly burnished on exterior surface. *G,* Corrugated Bowl from Gre Migro (T.212); blackened exterior surfaces; soft fabric; white grit temper; lightly burnished on exterior surface. *H,* Corrugated Bowl from Ziyaret Tepe (T.10); orange surfaces; burnished exterior surface; small white grit temper with some fine chaff. *I,* Corrugated Bowl from Ziyaret Tepe (T.10); orange surfaces; burnished exterior surface; small white grit temper. *J,* Corrugated Bowl from Ziyaret Tepe (T.10); porous orange clay; light gray core; fine chaff temper with scattered white grits; burnished exterior surface.

During the summer of 2001, 25 samples from 22 different Early Iron Age contexts (a total of 73.45 l) were subjected to archaeobotanical analysis.[33] Indeterminate cereals were recovered from all of the trenches discussed above, and a handful of grape seeds were discovered. No legumes have yet been identified. Wood charcoal was rare or nonexistent, and ash deposits contain a great diversity of field weeds. These data suggest that animal dung was the primary source of fuel.

Faunal studies from Early Iron Age contexts at Kenan Tepe show a predominance of domesticated animals (up to 99% of the total sample of 939 specimens), especially sheep, goat, and cattle. Adult sheep formed by far the largest category of remains, outnumbering goat by nearly two to one. Adult cattle were the second most represented species in the sample. Although pigs were present, they formed a relatively small percentage of the sample. Wild species identified include deer, fox, hare, several species of fish, and, surprisingly, eagle.

The data excavated thus far at Kenan Tepe reveal a picture of a small village or hamlet that contained a few relatively large domestic structures interspersed with outdoor work areas. The archaeobotanical and faunal data show that although wild resources played a significant role in the local subsistence system, the village economy was centered on animal husbandry and cereal cultivation. Animal husbandry emphasized secondary products such as wool, milk products, and dung. More research is necessary in order to determine whether wool production and grape cultivation increased in reaction to Assyria's tribute demands.

Excavations at Kenan Tepe also have produced evidence of iron- and copperworking during the Early Iron Age.[34] A slag sample from fill above the collapse layer in trench B4 was found to be made up almost entirely of Fe2O3 and Fe3O4. EDX analysis of a second slag sample, excavated from an ash layer sealed below an Early Iron Age oven in the

[33] Parker et al. 2003c.

[34] Analysis of the metals from Kenan Tepe was conducted at Oxford University, Department of Materials, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Conservation Department and at the University of Southern California, Center for Electron Microscopy and Microanalysis. I would like to thank the staff at all of these institutions for their assistance to the UTARP project.

same excavation unit, revealed a nearly 90% iron content. PIXE analysis of a small wire excavated from Early Iron Age fill in trench C2 showed an overall concentration of 71% iron, with areas as rich as 89%. Another piece of mineralized iron was found directly above an ash pit. And finally, a bent copper wire was discovered in an ash pit in trench C2.[35]

Further evidence of metalworking has been unearthed at the site of Gre Dimse (T.62, see fig. 5) where, during the summer of 1999, a team from Bilkent University uncovered two Early Iron Age burials.[36] One of these burials consisted of a male individual interred with an iron sword measuring 69.5 cm in length, an iron ring, and six iron arrowheads. The burial is securely dated by the presence of a ceramic jar belonging to the "indigenous painted" type fossil group capped by an Early Iron Age Corrugated Bowl.[37] This individual appears to have been buried with a dog. Thus although metal production appears to have been small-scale and locally administered, the Early Iron Age inhabitants of the Upper Tigris River region experimented with various high temperature processes and were able to produce high quality products.

The Early Iron Age settlement at Gre Dimse lies atop an ancient tell that was, even during the Iron Age, more than 20 m above the surrounding plain. Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares were discovered in all of the Bilkent University excavation units, suggesting that settlement during this period may have stretched across the entire 4 ha mound. The lack of architecture in several trenches and the discovery of the burials discussed above suggest that, like Kenan Tepe, the Early Iron Age village at Gre Dimse had a loose internal organization with significant space between structures.

Although excavations at Ziyaret Tepe (T.10, see fig. 5) have yet to yield coherent levels dating to the Early Iron Age, survey and excavation have shown that remains dating to this period are also restricted to the upper levels on the tall central mound.[38]

Intensive surveys at Talavash Tepe (T.51, see fig. 5) suggest a similar cultural and ecological pattern to that discovered at Kenan Tepe and Gre Dimse. Talavash Tepe is positioned on a natural hill overlooking a tributary of the Tigris River. This location allows ready access to a small tract of land suitable for intensive agriculture while offering natural protection from three sides. The intensive survey data show that Talavash Tepe was home to a small village or hamlet during the Early Iron Age. Survey transects show that the absolute maximum occupied area at Talavash Tepe is 3.14 ha (table 1). Furthermore, like Kenan Tepe and Gre Dimse, the Iron Age ceramics recovered at the site consist of Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares as well as several examples belonging to the indigenous assemblage of the region.[39]

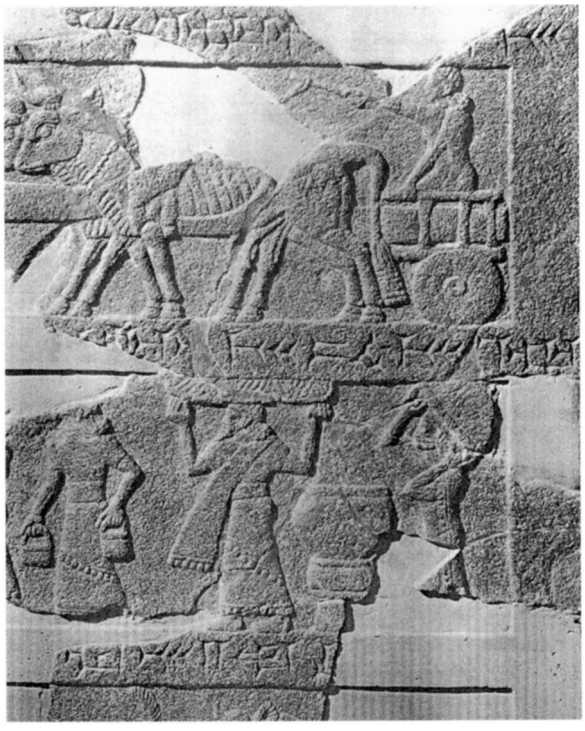

Fig. 7. Close-up of part of the Rassam Obelisk showing emissaries from the Upper Tigris River region bringing tribute to the Assyrian king. (Reproduced from Reade 1980)

The archaeological record thus supports the conclusion that during the Early Iron Age the Upper Tigris River Valley was home to a number of loosely integrated villages. The lack of settlement hierarchy in the valley and the image of this region gleaned from the texts indicate that these villages were not part of a complex regional polity. Sites were usually located in naturally defensible positions and had loose internal organization. Production, at least in the realms of ceramics and metals, was small-scale and locally administered. The local

[35] Parker et al. 2003a. These samples are B.4.400.4046; B.4.4013.4242; C.2.2004.2035, C.2.2041.2290, and C.2.2028.2231 respectively.

[36] Karg 2001, 676–80. Almost no information is known about the second burial because only the legs were contained within the excavation unit.

[37] Parker 1997a, 241; 2001, 288.

[38] Matney 1998, 17–8.

[39] Parker and Creekmore 2002, 61–6.

economy was mixed, with cereal cultivation, animal husbandry, and the procurement of wild resources all playing significant roles.

The Upper Tigris River Valley during the Assyrian Imperial Period

Assyrian military annals show that the purpose of Ashurnasirpal's 882 invasion of the Upper Tigris River region was to prepare for Assyria's annexation of this and other parts of the Tigris basin. His intentions are made clear by the fact that before leaving the valley, Ashurnasirpal embarked on an ambitious development project that included the establishment of a provincial capital at the site of Tushhan and the construction of several other strongholds along the south bank of the Tigris. Ashurnasirpal informs us that he surrounded his new provincial capital with a defensive wall, constructed a palace and storehouses, and connected the city with the north bank of the Tigris via a bridge of rafts.[40] He also put down a rebellion in the mountains south of the Tigris, thus ensuring his access to the region via one or more roads linking his provinces in north Syria with the Upper Tigris region.[41] Three years later, during his fifth campaign, he returned to the Upper Tigris for the consecration of the palace at Tushhan, and after the celebration, used the site as a staging point for further campaigns to the northeast and northwest (see below).

During Assyrian occupation of the valley (ca. 882–612 B.C.) a number of changes occurred in the local settlement pattern. These changes are identified in the archaeological record by the (gradual?) disappearance of the Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares and the introduction and widespread use of a new ceramic assemblage consisting of mass-produced Assyrian imperial ceramics (figs. 9–10).[42] Assyrian Imperial period ceramics differ from the local Early

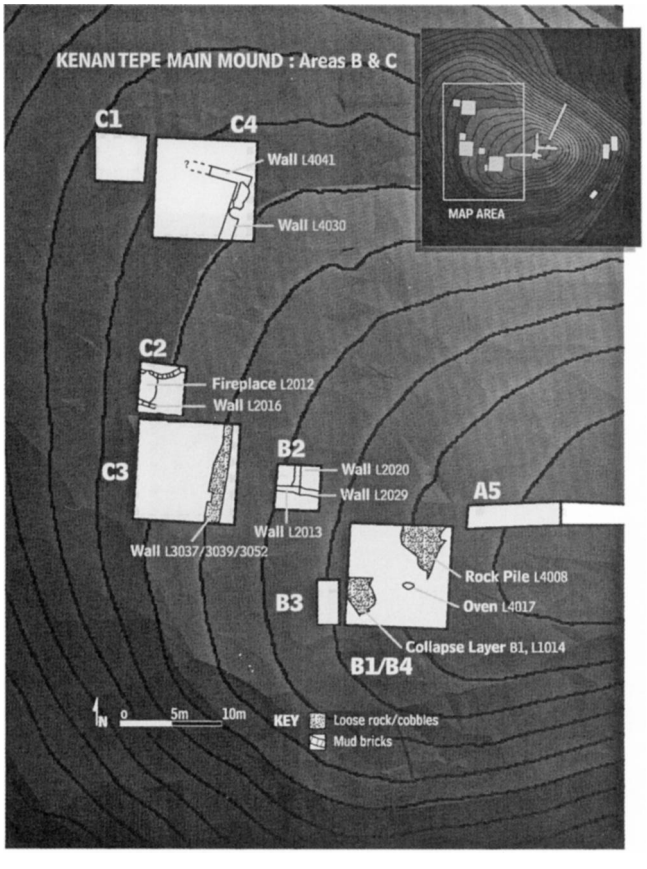

Fig. 8. Map of the main mound at Kenan Tepe (T.42) showing the location of Early Iron Age remains. For the location of Kenan Tepe, see fig. 5.

[40] Grayson 1991, 202.
[41] Grayson 1991, 203. Also see Parker 2001, 170.
[42] Parker 1997a, 222, 237–40; 2001, 267, 283–4.

Iron Age Corrugated Wares in several ways. To begin with, the quality of these ceramics is much higher. Vessels are evenly fired and thrown on a fast wheel. There is also less variation in the size and thickness of vessels in specific functional categories. These characteristics suggest that the imperial ceramics were made in a few centralized production facilities rather than in dispersed village workshops.

Intensive surveys at the Assyrian provincial capital as well as regional surveys and excavations in the surrounding valley have documented the abandonment of many of the villages occupied during the Early Iron Age and the establishment of a new and significantly more intensive Imperial period settlement pattern. The total number of occupied sites in the Upper Tigris River Valley between Bismil and the Tigris-Batman confluence increases from 19 in the Early Iron Age to 29 in the Assyrian Imperial period. The estimated total occupied hectares also increases dramatically from 32.54 in the Early Iron Age to 89.27 in the Imperial period (compare tables 1 and 2 and figs. 5 and 11).[43] Although some sites occupied during the Early Iron Age continue to be inhabited during the Imperial period (nine sites), much of the growth during this period comes in the form of 20 newly founded settlements. This increase is accompanied by an apparent reorientation of the settlement system from one focused on the more easily defensible terraces surrounding the valley during the Early Iron Age, to one concentrated in the agricultural land on the valley floor in the Assyrian Imperial period.

A comparison of site sizes in the two periods also reveals a change in the settlement hierarchy. During the Early Iron Age there is no evidence for a hierarchical settlement system based on site size; the archaeological landscape is made up only of villages and hamlets. During the Imperial period the emergence of a three-tiered settlement pattern is clearly visible in the data, wherein Ziyaret Tepe occupies the highest rung at 32 ha. Interestingly, no sites can be shown to fit into an intermediate category of over 10 ha. Instead, the next largest settlements are probably around 5 ha,[44] while the majority of the sites cluster around 1 ha.

The rapidity with which the settlement pattern is altered after Assyrian annexation of the region combined with the "unnatural" polarization of the settlement pattern, which almost completely lacks intermediate sized sites, suggests that the observed pattern is the result of Assyrian colonialism rather than the product of natural growth cycles.

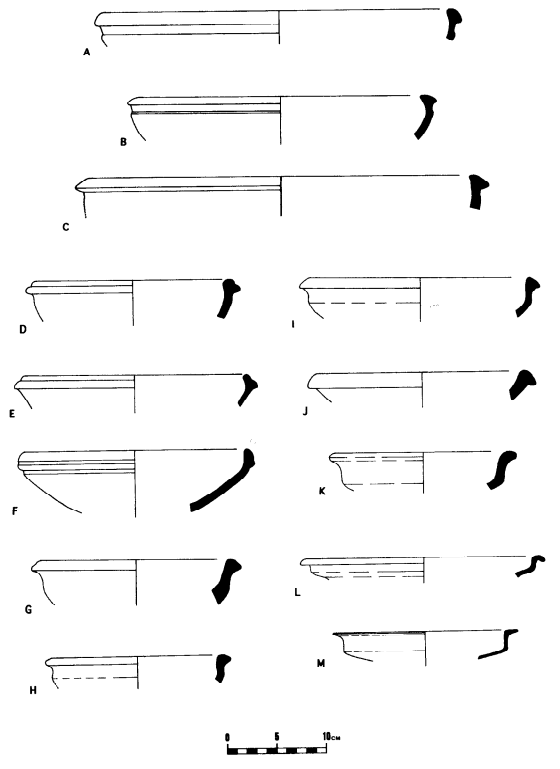

Fig. 9. Imperial period ceramics from various sites in the Cizre Plain. *A*, Hammerhead Bowl from Takyan Tepe (C.49); orange clay throughout with small grit temper. *B*, Hammerhead Bowl from Silope Höyük (C.30); brown buff surfaces grading to gray at core; fine chaff and scattered medium to large sized white grit temper. *C*, Hammerhead Bowl from Takyan Höyük (C.49); orange clay grading to gray at core; chaff temper with occasional white grits. *D*, Indented Rim Bowl from Yankale Höyük (C.18); tan wash on red-brown clay with chaff impressions on interior surface. *E*, Indented Rim Bowl from Takyan Höyük (C.49); brown surfaces grading to gray at core; dense clay with chaff temper and occasional scattered white grits. *F*, Indented Rim Bowl from Yankale Höyük (C.18); dense orange clay; no visible temper; external chaff impressions suggest vegetable temper. *G*, Open Bowl from Mehmetçik Höyük (C.9); red-brown exterior with chaff impressions grading to gray at core; chaff temper with some fine white grits. *H*, Open Bowl from Takyan Tepe (C. 49); dense brown clay; chaff temper with a few small with grits. *I*, Hammerhead Bowl from Yankale Höyük (C.18); orange buff clay throughout; chaff temper with a few white grits. *J*, Open Bowl from Mehmeçik Höyük (C. 9); tan slip on reddish-brown clay with some chaff impressions; chaff and grit temper. *K*, Open Bowl from Amarsava Höyük (C.54); orange-brown clay with some chaff impressions on exterior surface; chaff temper. *L*, Fine Ware from near Shurik Dere #1 (C.59); reddish clay throughout with no visible temper; buff slip on exterior surface. *M*, Fine Ware from Silope Höyük (C. 30); light brown buff surfaces; no visible temper.

[43] These figures are significantly different from those offered in Parker 1997a, 233; 2001, 210–11. In spite of the fact that the overall numbers and estimated site sizes for both the Early Iron Age and the Imperial period have been refined, the overall conclusions offered in these two initial reports still stand. It should also be noted that we might expect similar alterations to the data from the other two survey areas (discussed below) if and when archaeological work is allowed to resume.

[44] These sites are Yukarıdarlı Tepe at ca. 5.55 ha; Çayırlık Tepe at ca. 4.85 ha, and Gre Dimse at ca. 4 ha; see table 2.

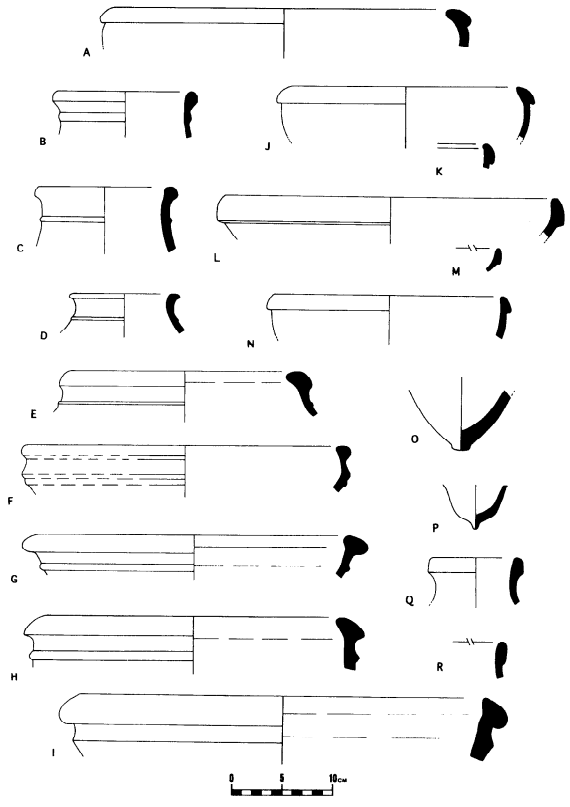

Fig. 10. Imperial period ceramics from various sites in the Cizre Plain. *A,* Incurved Bowl from Takyan Höyük (C.49); brown clay throughout with small white grits; chaff and grit temper. *B,* Ring Collar Jar from Yankale Höyük (C. 18); orange clay with buff slip on exterior surface; dense chaff and white grit temper. *C,* Ring Collar Jar from Silopi Höyük (C. 30); brown clay with buff exterior surface; chaff temper with some scattered white grits. *D,* Ring Collar Jar from Kopik Höyük (C.62); brown clay with buff exterior surface; large to medium sized white grit temper. *E,* Shouldered Jar from Takyan Höyük (C.49); dense light gray clay with burnished exterior surface; chaff temper. *F,* Ribbed Bowl from Takyan Höyük (C.49); dense brown clay; buff external surface with wheel striations. *G,* Ribbed Bowl from Gre Hazale (C.56); brownish clay with buff exterior surface; small white grit temper. *H,* Shouldered Jar from Takyan Höyük (C.49); brown clay grading to gray at core; chaff temper. *I,* Ribbed Bowl from Silope Höyük (C.30); brown clay throughout; chaff temper with some fine white grits. *J,* Incurved Bowl from Girik Tahti (C.37); dense brown clay with brownish-buff exterior surface; occasional scattered white grits. *K,* Incurved Bowl from Girge Mera (C.38); orange clay throughout; no visible temper; 24 cm diam. from outside edge. *L,* Incurved Bowl from Kopik Höyük (C.62); light brown porous clay with buff exterior surfaces; chaff and grit temper. *M,* Incurved Bowl from Girge Mera (C.38); tan clay; no visible temper; diam. uncertain. *N,* Incurved Bowl from Girge Mera; dense gray clay with brown surfaces; chaff temper. *O,* nipple base from Girge Miçuero (C.35); pinkish clay with buff exterior surface; medium sized angular white grit temper. *P,* nipple base from Yankale Höyük (C.18); dense greenish ware with no visible temper; warped during firing. *Q,* Simple Jar from Girge Miçuero (C.35); brown clay with small white grit temper. *R,* Simple Jar from Silope Höyük (C. 30); brown clay with medium sized white grit temper; diam. uncertain.

Information about the nature of settlement during the Assyrian Imperial period is now becoming available from excavations at several sites in the valley, including Ziyaret Tepe (T.10), Boztepe (T.37), Gre Dimse (T.62), and Giricano Tepe (T.32) (for locations, see fig. 11).

Recent work at Ziyaret Tepe (Assyrian Tushhan),[45] the Assyrian provincial capital in the valley, has shown that Early Iron Age occupation there was restricted to the high mound, the maximum extent of which was 3 ha (see above). This figure increases dramatically in the Assyrian Imperial period when Tushhan expanded to more than 32 ha.[46] Magnetometry surveys of portions of the lower town at Ziyaret Tepe have revealed what appear to be substantial fortifications in the form of walls, towers, and several other monumental structures.[47] Archaeological excavations conducted between 2000 and 2002 have confirmed that the structures visible in the magnetometry data do indeed belong to the Assyrian Imperial period.[48]

Excavations at Ziyaret Tepe have uncovered parts of two monumental buildings. The first, located on the eastern edge of the lower town, is almost certainly the remains of a monumental gateway.[49] The second, located on top of the high mound, appears to be the remains of a palatial structure. It consists of a large mudbrick pavement, the excavated portion of which measures over 11 × 5 m, and associated monumental walls measuring 2–5 m in width. Kilns, probably for copper and bronzeworking, and various artifacts including 13 complete bronze vessels, three bronze rings, and fragments of burnt ivory were discovered in association with this building.[50] Such luxury products, made with imported materials, clearly attest to the presence of Assyrian elites.

Part of at least one large mudbrick building has been excavated in Ziyaret Tepe's lower town. This structure is composed of a series of rooms and magazines surrounding two courtyards decorated with elaborate checkerboard mosaic designs. Evidence suggests that this building was constructed atop a mudbrick platform. The surrounding rooms include one that may have been roofed with the aid of two, presumably wooden, pillars and two other rooms containing large pithoi sunk into the floors. These rooms contained clay tokens that may have served as accounting aids and a small group of cu-

[45] Kessler 1980, 99–105. Also see Parker 1998 and now Matney et al. 2002.

[46] Matney 1998, 17–18.

[47] Matney and Somers 1999.

[48] Matney 2001; Matney et al. 2002, 2003.

[49] Matney 2001, 544–5.

[50] Matney 2002, 540; 2003, 235.

Table 2. Settlement Pattern Data for the Assyrian Imperial period (ca. 882–612 B.C.) in the Upper Tigris River Valley

Site Number	Site Name	Measured Total Site Size	Estimated Total Site Size	Measured IP Settlement Size	Estimated Maximum IP Settlement Size	Site Type	References
T.1	Doğruç Tepe	–	2.4	–	2.4	Village	
T.5	Kavuşan Tepe	1.3	–	–	1.3	Village	Kozbe et al. 2003
T.8	Susam Tepe	–	–	–	4	Village	
T.9	Hakemı Use	1	–	–	1	Hamlet	Tekin 2003
T.10	Ziyaret Tepe	32	–	32	–	Large town	Matney 1998, 2001, 2003; Matney and Bauer 2000; Matney and Somers 1999; Matney et al. 2002; Parker 2001, 1998
T.19	Simak Tepe	–	1.35	–	1.35	Village	
T.23	Musüman Tepe (Şahin Tepe)	4.5	4.85	–	4.5	Village	Ay 2001, 2002
T.26	Yukarıdarlı Tepe	–	5.0	–	5.0	Village	
T.28	Çayırlık Tepe	–	4.85	–	4.85	Village	
T.31	Kayalı Tepe	–	0.8	–	0.8	Hamlet	
T.32	Giricano Tepe	2	–	–	1.25	Village	Ay 2001; Schachner 2002
T.34	Kuyumcu Edip Tarlası	–	1.25	–	1.25	Village	
T.35	Babahaki Tepe	–	3.3	–	3.3	Village	
T.37	Boztepe	3.14	–	–	1.57	Village	Parker et al. 2001a, 2001b; Parker and Creekmore 2002
T.38	Görmez Tepe	–	0.7	–	0.7	Hamlet	
T.40	Eski Sarı Köy #1	–	–	–	0.3	Hamlet	
T.50	Çift Göller Tepe	–	0.6	–	0.6	Hamlet	
T.54	Yukarıgül Tepe	–	0.85	–	0.5	Hamlet	Ay 2001
T.56	Salat Tepe	1.85	–	1.85		Village	Ökse et al. 2001
T.61	Goladanna Tarlası	–	1.8	–	1.8	Village	
T.62	Gre Dimse Tepe	4	–	–	4	Village	Karg 2001
T.67	Haci Raşik Tepe	–	–	–	2.55	Village	
T.68	Koyunlu Tepe	–	–	–	3.3	Village	
T.76	Kürik Tepe	–	2.3	–	2.3	Village	
T.78	Değırmenüstü Tarlası	–	0.4	–	0.4	Hamlet	
T.79	Değırmenüstü Tarlası #1	–	1.1	–	1.1	Village	
T.83	Raşik Tepe	–	3.3	–	3.3	Village	
T.202	Şeh Çoban Tepe	–	2	–	2	Village	
T.205	Kurik Tepe	–	–	–	–	Uncertain	

Note: The data offered in this table are significantly different from those published in Parker 2001, 175–86, 317.

neiform tablets. A preliminary reading of the tablets combined with an evaluation of the associated artifacts and architecture has led to the conclusion that this structure functioned as the office of a tax collector.[51] A thin layer of ash may indicate that this structure was eventually destroyed by fire.[52]

Excavations at Ziyaret Tepe have thus shown that the process of Assyrian colonialism in the Upper

[51] Matney et al. 2003.

[52] Matney et al. 2003.

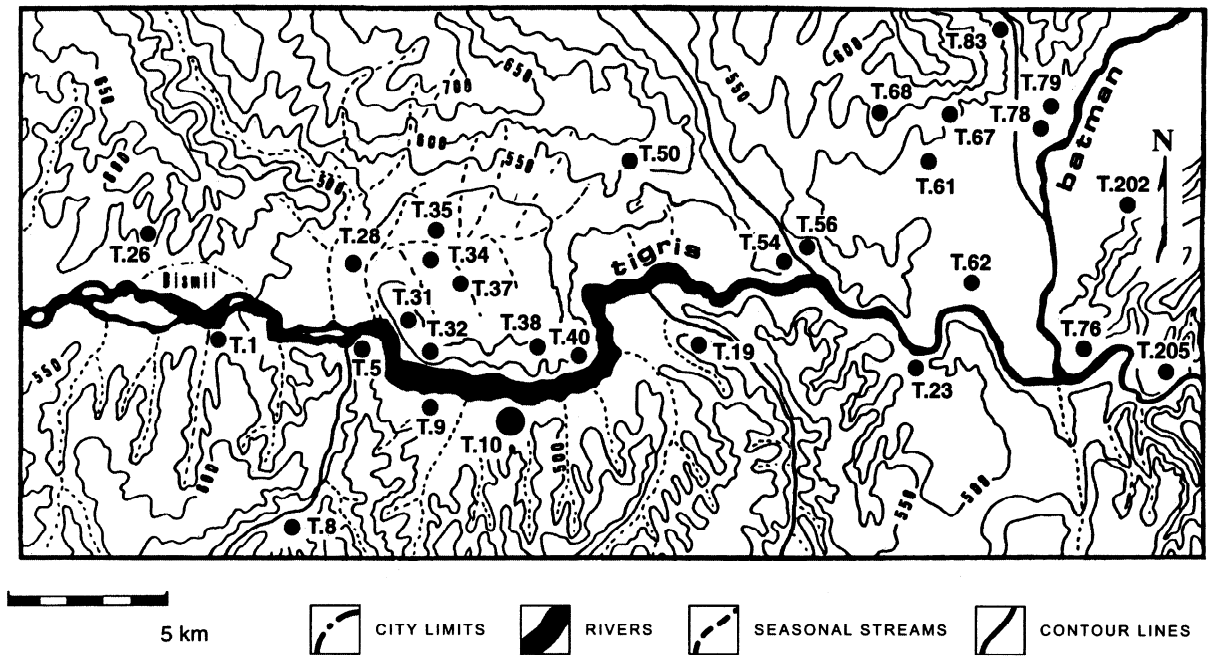

Fig. 11. Map showing the location of Imperial period sites in the Upper Tigris River Valley. The small dots represent sites that are estimated to have been 5 ha or less during the Assyrian Imperial period. The large dot shows the location of the Assyrian provincial capital at Tushhan (T.10), which measured approximately 32 ha during the same period.

Tigris River region included considerable investment in imperial infrastructure. As part of this process, the Assyrians chose a previously existing, centrally located site to act as their military and administrative headquarters in the newly annexed region. The chosen site, Ziyaret Tepe, was converted from a village to a city within a very short span of time. The artifacts and architecture of the new provincial capital emulate those of the Assyrian heartland. The end result was the creation of a military and administrative center from which to govern and protect Assyria's interests in this and neighboring regions. The site probably also acted as a "center of ideological diffusion" where Assyrian culture and propaganda could be disseminated into the surrounding countryside.[53]

In sharp contrast to the size and monumentality of the Assyrian provincial capital at Ziyaret Tepe, Boztepe is a small low mound located only a few kilometers northwest of Ziyaret Tepe in a flat plain on the north bank of the Tigris River (T.37, fig. 11). Excavations at Boztepe uncovered part of a domestic structure securely dated to the Assyrian Imperial period by ceramics and four carbon dates.[54] This house, which was constructed of mudbrick without stone foundations, consisted of several rooms that were probably arranged around a central courtyard. The structure had been destroyed in a catastrophic fire that brought debris, probably from a second story, crashing down onto the ground floor. One room contained an oven and the remains of numerous domestic artifacts, including several mortars, one pestle, and several smashed cooking pots. An adjacent room contained the remains of two enigmatic pedestalled vessels that may be paralleled by a small fragment of a similar vessel from Ziyaret Tepe.[55]

The chronology of the Iron Age settlement at Boztepe supports the hypothesis that the Assyrians established this site as part of an effort to colonize the valley after its integration into the Assyrian provincial system. No Early Iron Age ceramics were discovered at Boztepe; instead, the corpus is composed of Neo-Assyrian Imperial period and standard Iron Age ceramics (similar to those in figs. 9 and 10). This corpus, combined with four carbon dates, confirms that Boztepe was established sometime after Assyrian annexation of the valley and the construction of the provincial capital at Tushhan.

Faunal remains from Boztepe allow some assessment of the lifeways of the inhabitants of the village. Although the sample is admittedly small, there

[53] Liverani 1979, 299.

[54] Parker and Creekmore 2002, 72.

[55] For a complete description, see Parker and Creekmore 2002, 33, figs. 18–21.

is nevertheless a clear predominance of domesticated pig in the Imperial period levels, where pigs make up 52% of the identifiable animals. The second most common animals are cattle (22%) followed by sheep and goat, which make up only 19% of the sample. One domesticated chicken bone was discovered. Unlike the sheep and cattle, the pigs from Boztepe are mostly young or very young animals. In addition, pigs are represented by a large number of post-cranial fragments, which together suggests that the sample reflects the results of food consumption rather than butchering activities.[56]

The Imperial period faunal data from Boztepe contrast sharply with the Early Iron Age faunal remains from Kenan Tepe. These data show that the colonial population did not rely on wild resources. Although we are lacking archaeobotanical data from Boztepe, we can assume that villages such as this were focused on agricultural production, which was largely bound for imperial storage facilities. Pigs were raised for local consumption. Herding sheep and goat was not nearly as important as it was at Kenan Tepe. The creation of imperial monopolies for the production of wool and other products probably narrowed the scope of economic activities at the village level.

Not all of the sites occupied during the Assyrian Imperial period were newly founded settlements. Several of the larger and more strategic sites like Ziyaret Tepe, Gre Dimse, and Giricano, all of which were occupied during the Early Iron Age, became important settlements during the Imperial period. Whether the inhabitants of these sites were indigenous peoples living under Assyrian rule or colonists brought into the valley to reoccupy sites in strategic positions is impossible to say. Finds from Gre Dimse suggest that the inhabitants of some sites imported or imitated Assyrian ceramic and architectural forms. Although no building plans are yet available from Gre Dimse, a terracotta "hand" commonly used as decorative ends for wooden beams, was discovered in secondary context.[57] This artifact is paralleled by several examples from Ziyaret Tepe. In contrast, Schachner believes that the Imperial period settlement at Giricano is purely an indigenous development that, at least in terms of material culture, shows little direct influence from Assyria.[58]

Assyrian letters and economic documents augment our understanding of both the administration of the Assyrian provincial system and the nature of the provincial economy in southeastern Anatolia. Of the large corpus of Assyrian letters, about 85 letters either originate in, or pertain directly to, the Upper Tigris River region. Another 75 or so documents contain indirectly relevant information. To this we can add the group of 21 texts recently unearthed at Ziyaret Tepe.

I have argued elsewhere that economics was an important motivation for Assyrian imperial penetration into southeastern Anatolia.[59] We have seen from the Assyrian royal inscriptions that the Upper Tigris was incorporated into the Assyrian empire during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, who established several Assyrian strongholds in the region. In subsequent years these strongholds acted not only as jumping-off points for military strikes further into the periphery,[60] but perhaps more importantly, as bases for the economic exploitation of the mountainous areas north of the Tigris.

Letters from Tushhan and Amedi (modern Diyarbakır) indicate that lumber was one of the most important commodities extracted from this region by the Assyrians. These texts document literally thousands of logs being felled and floated down the Tigris River to the Assyrian heartland in huge log drives that presumably occurred on a regular basis. Log drives were possible only when there was sufficient water in the rivers, namely in spring when melting snow in the high mountains provided ample water for a successful drive.[61] Once the logs reached Assyrian territory they were reorganized into flotillas for the long trip down the Tigris to Assyria. Several relief carvings from the reign of Sennacherib show groups of large logs tied together into rafts guided down the river by oarsmen.

The Assyrian authorities monopolized some aspects of the local economy. In one letter, a governor of Tushhan reveals that, owing to the possibility of an enemy attack, he has moved all of the oxen and sheep to the south side of the river.[62] The reference to oxen is very telling because these animals were primarily used to pull plows and to produce

[56] Parker and Creekmore 2002, 58.

[57] Karg 2002, 731. For parallels, see Curtis and Reade 1995, 104; Frame 1991, 335–81.

[58] A. Schachner, pers. comm.

[59] Parker 2001, 227–30, 247.

[60] D'Altroy has argued that Inca forts served a similar function (D'Altroy 2001, 209–10).

[61] See, e.g., Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990, no. 26, where 3,000 door beams lay waiting on the river bank, owing to insufficient water levels. Other letters on this topic include, e.g., Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990, nos. 6, 7, 39, 117.

[62] Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990, no. 21.

fuel for cooking fires, and were therefore essential to the continued agricultural production of the small villages recognized in the survey data. In another fragmentary letter, the same governor mentions that the king has ordered him to "send red wool."[63] Together these references imply that the provincial administration was in charge of state-owned herds and that the provincial capital was equipped with industrial facilities for the processing of wool and possibly leather.

The same letter contains a reference to straw. Officials in the capital apparently had inquired as to the amount of straw available in the Upper Tigris. Whether this inquiry was in response to a shortfall in regular shipments from Tushhan, or whether the officials in the capital were planning a campaign in the region for which large quantities of fodder for the horses and pack animals of the Assyrian army would be necessary, is impossible to say. But the empire's strategic interest in large-scale straw and grain supply is clear and has now been confirmed by texts recently unearthed at Ziyaret Tepe, the Assyrian provincial capital in the valley. The majority of these texts are receipts documenting loans or allocations of grain. There are also a number of lists documenting the state's movement of various regional products. One of these lists mentions textiles, while another mentions 200 horses, 180 mules, and 40 donkeys. A third list, of people in various occupations, including tanner, fuller, oil-presser, and baker, suggests the extent of complexity and specialization in the provincial economy. These texts, along with those presented above, provide solid evidence for the extensive and transformative nature of state involvement in agricultural development in this region.

Two of the texts found at Ziyaret are letters, one of which appears to deal with deportation. Several references in the textual record support the argument that after the Assyrians established military control in newly conquered regions, the regions were populated through the mass deportation of hostile or otherwise vanquished peoples from other parts of the empire onto agricultural land around or between Assyrian strongholds. Deportation and resettlement thus had the dual function of diminishing the possibility of rebellion and ensuring an ample and steady grain supply for the imperial cities in the heartland.[64] The archaeological record from the Upper Tigris River Valley not only confirms its full integration into the Assyrian provincial system, but also suggests some of the local social, economic, and political effects of imperial strategies of conquest and consolidation. Assyrianization of conquered regions involved the construction of imperial infrastructure in the form of a provincial capital that served as a military center and reflected imperial architectural and material cultural styles. Incorporation of the valley also saw a significant increase in the number of archaeological sites, specifically, agricultural villages in the flat fertile land along the banks of the Tigris River. There is a significant difference between the village economy before and after Assyrian colonization of the region. The sites established as part of Assyria's effort to colonize the valley are significantly more specialized than their Early Iron Age counterparts. In contrast to earlier periods, villages do not appear to have been deeply involved in the maintenance of large herds of sheep and goat. Instead the local economy is based on agriculture and domesticated pigs. The imperial authorities monopolized some parts of the local economy including ceramic, metal, and wool production, while radically reorienting others, like grain production, to fulfill imperial political and economic needs.

ASSYRIAN OCCUPATION OF THE CIZRE PLAIN

Assyria's intervention in the region around the Cizre Plain took a very different historical course than that in the Upper Tigris River Valley. Unlike the latter, the Cizre region was strategically important to the Assyrians because it is located only about 110 km north of the Assyrian capital. In the earliest phase of the Neo-Assyrian empire (between 934 and 823 B.C.), the Assyrians saw little military threat from the inhabitants of the northern highlands and thus concentrated their military efforts on more pressing problems in the south and west.[65] At this stage the most efficient method of keeping the northern periphery secure was through the manipulation of the neighboring state of Kumme, which was located in the far northeastern corner of the Mesopotamian lowlands directly between Assyria and the highlands of southeastern Anatolia.[66] Early in the 10th century B.C., Assyria and Kumme ap-

[63] Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990, no. 28.

[64] The information about the Ziyaret Tepe texts presented here is courtesy of Timothy Matney, who generously gave me a summary of the content of these texts for consideration in this article.

[65] Grayson 1982, 248.

[66] For location, see Parker 2001, 41–4. Also see Parpola and Porter 2001, 4, 28.

pear to have entered into a mutual protection pact, suggested by the fact that the Assyrians came to the aid of the Kummeans when they were attacked by an invading seminomadic tribe (probably the Ahlameans discussed below). This cooperation cemented the military obligations between these two states. This *modus operandi* continued through the first half of the Imperial period with no significant problems.

This balance of power came to an abrupt end with the accession of a series of weak and ineffective monarchs in Assyria between 823 and 744 B.C. The kingdom of Urartu, centered on Lake Van, saw this lull in Assyrian power as an opportunity to expand its interests and make a bid for hegemony over much of Assyria's sphere of influence.[67] The textual record suggests that Urartian expansion included the creation of garrison centers in the mountains north of the Cizre Plain, what is known today as the Cudi Dağı. Urartian foreign policy also involved the manipulation of existing states by persuading them to join Urartu in its opposition to Assyria. Thus the period between 823 and 744 saw a fundamental shift in the geopolitical configuration of the northern frontier.

This was the situation that Tiglath-Pileser III faced when he took the throne in 744 B.C. With Urartian garrisons now stationed within striking distance of the Assyrian capital, and with the local inhabitants of the mountains north of the Cizre Plain in revolt, the northern periphery constituted a real threat to the Assyrian heartland.

The Cizre Plain before Assyrian Annexation

The chronological profile of the material culture of the Cizre region is very different from that of the Upper Tigris River Valley or the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys (see below) where the well known corpus of Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares allows a relatively precise division of the Mesopotamian Iron Age into pre- and post-conquest phases. In the absence of the Early Iron Age corpus, we are forced to compare the distribution of sites dating to the Late Bronze Age with those dating to the Assyrian Imperial period in order to illuminate the pre- and post-conquest settlement patterns. This situation is further complicated by the fact that, because of its proximity to northern Iraq, no archaeological teams have been allowed into the Cizre region since the original reconnaissance surveys conducted between 1988 and 1990.[68] Thus, unlike the situation for the Upper Tigris River Valley, no new archaeological data are available with which to correct and augment the regional survey data.[69]

Sites dating to the Late Bronze Age were recognized in the survey collections through the identification of several ceramic types that are known to belong to the "Middle Assyrian" or "Mitannian" assemblages (fig. 12).[70] Wilkinson and Tucker have tentatively dated these ceramics to between 1400 and 1000 B.C.[71] Although it is likely that further archaeological work will eventually supplement this corpus and add chronological refinement to the Early Bronze and Iron Ages in this region, the distribution of the known ceramic types suggests that during the Late Bronze Age a maximum total of 10 sites with 29.69 estimated occupied hectares were in use (fig. 13 and table 3). It is very difficult to estimate settlement size during the Late Bronze Age from the existing data. However, the estimated total site size for four of the 10 sites identified is well below 5 ha while three more sites are estimated to have been less than 1 ha. The three remaining sites could have been larger, although the fact that the distribution of Late Bronze Age ceramics was limited to specific parts of these sites suggests that the settlement size in this period is far lower than site maximum.

The data thus suggest that during the Late Bronze Age the Cizre Plain was home to a handful of villages and hamlets that were scattered relatively evenly across the plain. The estimated site sizes, although rough, suggest that there is no settlement hierarchy based on site size. Furthermore, the fact that there is no indication of site clustering suggests that none of the identified sites played a dominant role in the settlement system.

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[67] Barnett 1982, 333–56. Also see Burney and Lang 1972, 143–8.

[68] Preliminary reports of the original surveys are published in Algaze 1989 and Algaze et al. 1991. Also see Parker 2001, 275–81.

[69] It should be noted that because the data presented here and in the coming sections on the Garzan and Bahtan River Valleys is based only on low-intensity survey, many aspects of these data are likely to change after more intensive research is carried out. Nevertheless, I feel it is important to propose interpretations based on the available data for two reasons. First, the region is volatile, so we cannot be sure if or when new data will be forthcoming. And second, right or wrong, theories generated from the existing data should help to guide future research questions.

[70] Pfälzner 1995. Also see Wilkinson and Tucker 1995, 98–100, figs. 72, 73.

[71] Wilkinson and Tucker 1995, 99.

Several inscriptions provide an indication of the ethnic make-up of the Cizre region before Assyrian intervention. Tiglath-Pileser III states in a rock inscription left at Mila Mergi in northern Iraq that the people of this region were Arameans of the Ahlamu tribe.[72] The Ahlameans are known from inscriptions of the Middle Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076), where they appear as seminomadic herdsmen who were infiltrating the settled lands of the Upper Euphrates.[73] During the course of the upheaval at the end of the Late Bronze Age,[74] it appears that the Ahlameans penetrated deep into Mesopotamia and became a military threat during the reign of Adad-nerari II (911–891), when they battled the Assyrian army on at least one occasion.[75] Unfortunately, in this context the Ahlameans are only mentioned in a summary inscription, and it is not clear if they were the same foes that Adad-nerari II fought in defending the vassal state Kumme several generations before, although this probably was the case. Tiglath-Pileser III's inscriptions indicate that by the middle of the eighth century B.C., some members of this group had settled in the Cizre region. The seminomadic background of the Ahlameans is supported by a fragmentary line in the Mila Mergi inscription, in which Tiglath-Pileser III derisively states that they "roamed about in the mountains like deer and wild goats."[76]

The Cizre Plain during the Assyrian Imperial Period

The Assyrian monarch Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) writes in his annals that he invaded the Cizre region and annexed it to the empire during

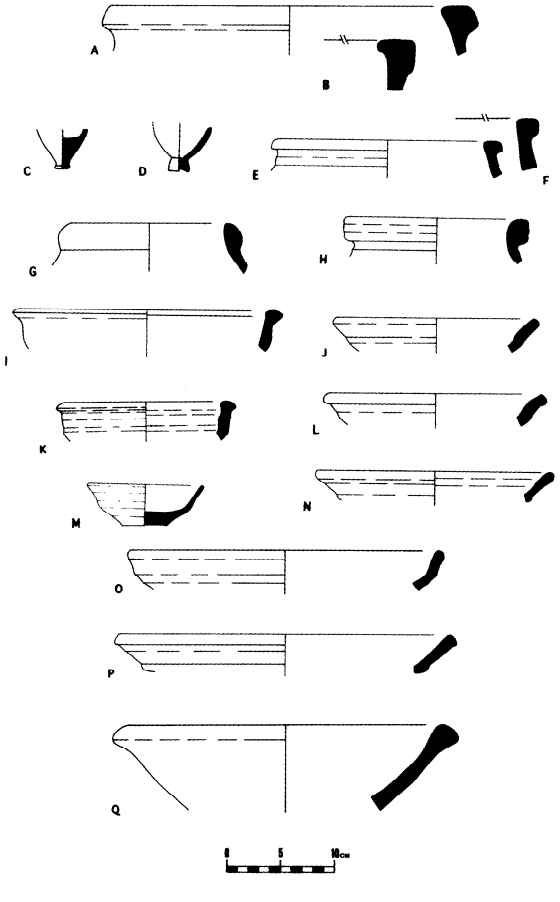

Fig. 12. Late Bronze Age ceramics from various sites in the Cizre Plain. *A*, Square Rimmed Jar from Nerwan Höyük (C.46); reddish exterior surface, brown clay with many visible white grits; grit temper. *B*, Square Rimmed Jar from Kopik Höyük (C.34); orange exterior grading to black at core with many chaff impressions; grit and chaff temper; diam. uncertain. *C*, button base from Basorin Höyük (C.16); dense orange clay with small white grits; buff slip on exterior surface; grit temper. *D*, button base from Basorin Höyük (C.16); orange clay with very small grits; traces of fast wheel marks at base; grit temper. *E*, Square Rimmed Jar from Gre Hazele (C.56); yellowish buff clay with dense small white grits; grit temper. *F*, Square Rimmed Jar from Silope Höyük (C.30); buff brown clay with white grit temper; diam. uncertain. *G*, Collared Rim Jar from Gre Hazale (C.56); reddish clay with medium sized white grits; buff slip on exterior surface; grit and chaff temper. *H*, variant of the Square Rimmed Jar from Ali Şama (C.60); gray throughout with fine white grit temper. *I*, Grit Tempered Open Bowl from Nerwan Höyük (C.46); brown clay throughout with grit temper. *J*, Chaff Tempered Bowl/Platter from Gre Hazale (C.56); yellowish exterior with chaff impressions; reddish-brown at core; chaff temper. *K*, Chaff Tempered Bowl from Gre Musto (C.40); red-brown clay with many chaff impressions on exterior surface; chaff temper with some grit. *L*, Chaff Tempered Bowl/Platter from Gre Hazale (C.56); yellowish exterior surface with chaff impressions grading to yellowish-brown at core; chaff temper. *M*, Chaff Tempered Bowl from Basorin Höyük (C.16); dense fine vegetable temper; light buff. *N*, Grit Tempered Bowl/Platter from Gre Musto (C.40); cream colored with sand temper and scattered white grits. *O*, Chaff Tempered Bowl from Basorin Höyük (C. 16); dense chaff temper with some small white grits; orange-brown surface grading to gray at core. *P*, Chaff Tempered Bowl/Platter from Gre Hazele (C.56); yellowish buff porous chaff tempered clay with some white grits; chaff temper. *Q*, Grit Tempered Bowl from Basorin Höyük (C.16); tan slip on red-brown clay with very fine grit temper.

[72] Tadmor 1994, 113.

[73] Grayson 1991a, 23.

[74] See esp. Drews 1993; Gitin et al. 1998; Nuemann and Parpola 1987; Sanders 1978; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995, 85–6. Also see Wiseman 1975, 443–77.

[75] Grayson 1991a, 149. Also see Grayson 1982, 248ff.

[76] Tadmor 1994, 112–3.

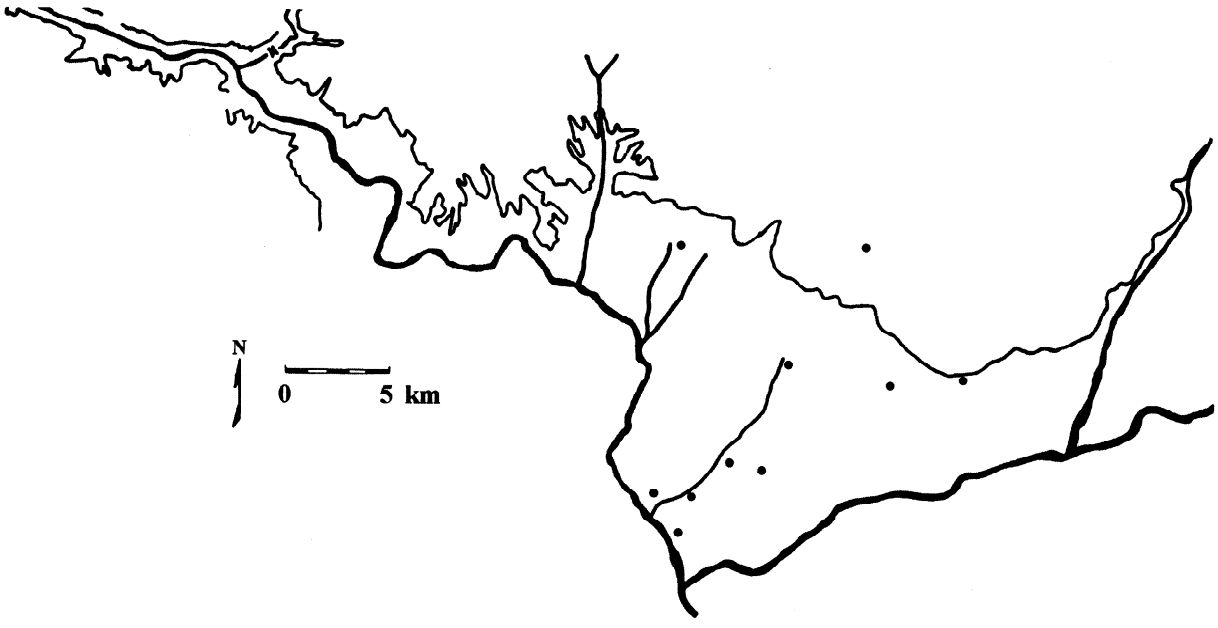

Fig. 13. Map of the Cizre Plain showing the location of Late Bronze Age sites. The small dots represent sites that are estimated to have been less than 5 ha in size during the Late Bronze Age.

his seventh campaign. Tiglath-Pileser III consolidated his gains in the Cizre region. His decisive actions are reminiscent of Ashurnasirpal's policies in the Upper Tigris River Valley. First, Tiglath-Pileser III constructed a city called Ashur-iqisha to serve as the administrative center in the region. This city is said to have contained a royal residence[77] in which he "set up the weapon of Ashur."[78] He then repopulated the fertile valleys of the region, which had obviously suffered greatly during Assyria's invasion, with deported peoples from various parts of the empire.[79] Unfortunately, the Mila Mergi inscription gives no other details on this matter. Tiglath-Pileser III mentions in his annals, however, that he settled 1,223 people in Ulluba.[80] Although the pertinent passage is fragmentary, the context appears to indicate that the people settled in Ulluba were deported from the Phoenician coast and north Syria.[81]

Assyrian occupation of the Cizre Plain induced dramatic changes in the archaeological landscape of the region. The regional survey data indicate that a maximum of 10 sites were in use during the Late Bronze Age. This figure increases to a total of 38 sites and 107.55 estimated occupied hectares during the Iron Age (fig. 14 and table 4). The fact that all of the sites occupied during the Late Bronze Age were also active during the Iron Age attests to complete settlement continuity between these periods. The high number of settlements newly founded during the Iron Age (a total of 28) suggests that there was also a significant amount of infilling of the previous settlement pattern. Settlement size calculations indicate that all but one of the newly founded sites were small farmsteads or villages. As in the Upper Tigris River Valley, there is a distinct lack of intermediate sized sites. The distribution of settlements in the survey area during the Iron Age suggests that the plain was divided into distinct catchment areas around three or four major centers (Nerwan Höyük, Takyan Hüyök, Basorin Höyük, and possibly Silope Höyük). Although we

[77] Reference to a royal residence in the Cizre Plain is not contained in the Mila Mergi inscription but rather in a later summary inscription (Tadmor 1994, 166–7). The delayed recording of this construction makes sense because it would have taken some years to build such an edifice. Unfortunately, the name of the city in which this royal residence was constructed is lost in the break (at the end of line 43 in Tadmor 1994, 166–7). Thus it is not certain that this provincial palace was located in Ashur-iqisha, although this is highly likely.

[78] Tadmor 1994, 166–7. The meaning of this phrase is not entirely clear. It probably refers to the posting of an Assyrian garrison in the city.

[79] Tadmor 1994, 62–3; 114–5; 134–5; 182–3.

[80] Tadmor 1994, 62–3.

[81] Tadmor 1994, 62–3. This interpretation is asserted by, e.g., Oded (1979). Note, however, that Oded's assumptions based on this text are not followed by Grayson (1991b).

Table 3. Settlement Pattern Data for the Late Bronze Age in the Cizre Plain

Site Number	Site Name	LBA Occupation	Measured Total Site Size	Estimated Total Site Size	Estimated LBA Settlement Size	Site Type
C.16	Bosorim Höyük	Yes	–	12	5	Village
C.18	Yankale Höyük	Uncertain	–	2.5	2.5	Village
C.26	Tilkabin Höyük	Yes	0.5	–	0.5	Hamlet
C.30	Silopi Höyük	Yes	–	10	5	Village
C.31	Pituna Höyük	Yes	–	3.8	3.8	Village
C.34	Kopik Höyük	Uncertain	–	3	3	Village
C.40	Gre Musto	Yes	–	3.75	3.75	Village
C.46	Nerwan Höyük	Yes	12.1	–	5	Village
C.57	Gre Hazale	Yes	–	0.24	0.24	Hamlet
C.60	Ali Şama Höyük	Yes	–	0.9	0.9	Hamlet

Note: The information offered in this and tables 4–6 is derived from reconnaissance survey data only. Further archaeological work could alter the number, distribution, and size of sites.

are lacking intensive survey and geophysical data from the Cizre Plain, the morphology of these centers suggests that each contained a walled central citadel.

Both the textual and archaeological data from the Cizre Plain thus suggest that during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III the Cizre region, like the Upper Tigris region, was incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system. This process brought about considerable shifts in the regional settlement patterns. At least three sites grew into large provincial centers during the Assyrian Imperial period, and the surrounding landscape between these sites was filled in with numerous small villages or hamlets. The textual record indicates that at least some of this increase in population was the result of Assyrian resettlement policies.

ASSYRIAN COLONIALISM IN SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA

The Assyrian textual sources show that during the Assyrian Imperial period (ca. 900–600 B.C.) two of the regions considered in this study were brought under the direct administration of the empire: The Upper Tigris River Valley was converted into the province of Tushhan during the reign of Ashurnasirpal; and the Cizre Plain was annexed to the Province of the Mashennu during the reign of Tiglath-Pilesar III. In both cases the extant texts narrate how these areas were seized through ideologically charged military campaigns and describe the construction of Assyrian military and administrative centers and the colonization of the surrounding countryside by people forcibly resettled from various parts of the empire.

The effects of Assyria's conquest are clearly visible in the archaeological record. The regional survey data provide a macrolevel picture of Assyrian colonialism in both areas. In the Upper Tigris River Valley, where our chronological control of the ceramic sequence is somewhat tighter than it is for the Cizre Plain, excavations and intensive surveys at several sites in the valley as well as regional surveys in the surrounding area testify both to the collapse of the pre-Assyrian indigenous settlement system, and to a massive increase in the number of sites and the total occupied hectares from the Early Iron Age to the Assyrian Imperial period (ca. 1050–900 and 900–600 B.C. respectively). In the Cizre Plain a clear increase in the number and size of sites is also visible, although across a broader stretch of time.

The resulting settlement patterns in these two regions have several characteristics in common. In both regions the Assyrians located their military and administrative centers at previously existing settlements that were located close to the Tigris River and the large tracts of productive agricultural land along its banks. In both cases the textual and archaeological records show that these centers were the focus of large building projects that included the construction of fortifications and provincial palaces. An additional site size category was needed in the regional settlement pattern to account for this infrastructural investment.

Recent research at Ziyaret Tepe (Assyrian Tushhan) in the Upper Tigris River Valley allows the evaluation of this policy on a small scale. The growth that took place at Ziyaret Tepe during the Assyrian Imperial period is unprecedented in the history of the valley. Excavation and magnetometry surveys have demonstrated a direct correlation between the Assyrian textual sources, which mention the construction of a palace and other imperial facilities, and the archaeological record, which has yielded a

Table 4. Settlement Pattern Data for the Assyrian Imperial Period in the Cizre Plain

Site Number	Site Name	Estimated Total Site Size	Estimated IP Settlement Size	Site Type
C.9	Mehmetçik Höyük	3.6	2.5	Village
C.16	Basorim Höyük	12	12	Town
C.18	Yankale Höyük	2.5	1.5	Village
C.19	Near Korova #2	0.5	0.5	Hamlet
C.20	Near Korova #1	0.5	0.5	Hamlet
C.21	Ilıcalar Höyük	6.4	3.95	Village
C.23	Gimribimrim Höyük	8.6	5.3	Large village
C.24	Aktepe Höyük	1.5	1	Village
C.26	Tilkabin Höyük	0.9	0.9	Hamlet
C.27	Hasan Tartar Höyük	3.1	1.8	Village
C.30	Silopi Höyük	10	10	Town
C.31	Pituna Höyük	6.6	3.8	Village
C.34	Kopik Höyük	5.6	3	Village
C.35	Girge Miçuero	5.1	3	Village
C.37	Girik Tahti	5.4	2.9	Village
C.38	Girge Mera	2	1.25	Village
C.39	Near Girge Mera #1	4	2.25	Village
C.40	Gre Musto	6	3.75	Village
C.41	Girik Bedro	5.7	3.35	Village
C.42	Near Girik Bedro #1	0.84	0.67	Hamlet
C.44	Near Girik Bedro #3	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
C.45	Near Girik Bedro #4	0.3	0.3	Hamlet
C.46	Nerwan Höyük	12.1	12.1	Town
C.48	Ali Husseynoğlu	4.3	2.4	Village
C.49	Takyan Höyük	12.7	12.7	Town
C.50	Near Takyan #1	0.3	0.3	Hamlet
C.52	Near Takyan #3	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
C.54	Amarsava Höyük	3.48	2.24	Village
C.56	Gre Hazale	4.2	2.35	Village
C.57	Near Şurik Dere #3	0.24	0.24	Hamlet
C.59	Near Şurik Dere #1	3	1.75	Village
C.60	Ali Şama Höyük	1.3	0.9	Hamlet
C.62	Kortik Höyük	6	3.75	Village
C.63	Hurusya Höyük	1.65	1	Village
C.65	Kütnüz Höyük	2.5	1.5	Village
C.69	Kerpiç Höyük	0.5	0.5	Hamlet
C.70	Hazayi Höyük	1.7	1.1	Village
C.75	Near Gre Miçuero #1	0.5	0.5	Hamlet

palatial building, gates, other imperial facilities, and the textual vestiges of colonial administrative activities.[82]

Other growth in the regional settlement pattern was restricted to small rural settlements. The pre-Assyrian settlement patterns in the Upper Tigris River Valley are characterized by a number of small sites with a rather loose internal organization evenly distributed on naturally defensible terraces. This pattern is replaced by one in which a large number of new villages and hamlets were established on flat agricultural land around the banks of the river.[83] In the Cizre Plain, newly established sites fall clearly within the catchment area of three or four larger sites evenly spaced through the center of the plain.

Assyria's policy of strategic deportation and resettlement, which is well documented in the textual record, is also manifested in the archaeological remains of these regions. Data from both the Upper Tigris River Valley and the Cizre Plain show not only that there was a huge increase in the to-

[82] DeMarrais (2001, 142–51) has documented a similar pattern of the internal restructuring of strategic settlements in the Upper Mantaro valley in Peru after their integration into the Inca empire. Note, however, that Jennings and Álverez (2001) have argued that the construction of regional centers in the Catahuasi valley of Peru was undertaken by local elites rather than Wari imperial authorities.

[83] D'Altroy (1992, 188–95) has noted a similar shift after the Inca integration of the Upper Mantaro valley in Peru. Also see DeMarrais 2001 and Umberger 1996.

tal number of small agricultural villages in the survey areas during the Assyrian Imperial period,[84] but also that the resulting settlement pattern included no intermediate sized sites. Various authors have argued that the intensification of production or the reorganization of the local economy is one of the possible consequences of imperial integration.[85] The unnaturally skewed settlement pattern, is, I argue, indicative of an Assyrian policy of "agricultural colonization" in which large numbers of people were forcibly relocated to newly annexed regions for the purpose of increasing production on underdeveloped land.[86] By moving people to an unfamiliar area that was under the strict military control of a network of Assyrian fortresses and garrisons, and assigning marginal or underutilized land to them, the Assyrians imposed a tense political stability on the newly colonized region. The resulting immobility of the agricultural population forced them into the Assyrian socioeconomic mold in which they were much more readily subject to Assyrian tax collectors, census takers, and corvée officers.[87] The end result was to increase both the economic output and the stability of newly conquered territories.

Recent archaeological work in the Upper Tigris River Valley has enriched this overview of Assyrian colonialism with detailed data about social and economic life. Excavations at Kenan Tepe suggest that the Early Iron Age inhabitants of the valley practiced a mixed agropastoral economy. Sheep and goat were raised largely for secondary products such as wool and milk, while cereals were cultivated in the surrounding fields. The diet was probably supplemented by a variety of wild species. Excavations at Boztepe show that this pattern shifted in the Imperial period when the village economy increasingly specialized in agricultural production rather than animal husbandry. Pig becomes the most common domesticate and the relative proportion of sheep declines sharply.[88] According to the textual

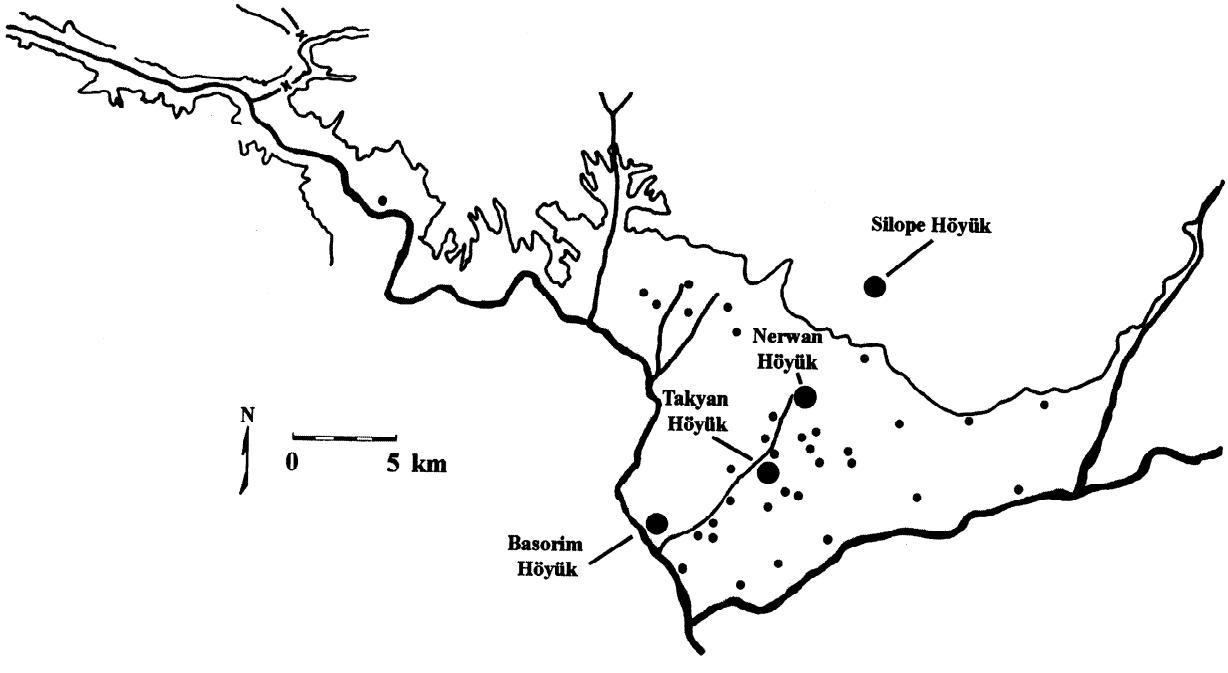

Fig. 14. Map of the Cizre Plain showing the location of Imperial period sites. The small dots represent sites that are estimated to have been less than 5 ha during the Assyrian Imperial period. The large dots represent sites that are estimated to have been over 10 ha during the same period.

[84] A similar trend has been observed in the Khabur region (Bonacossi 2000) and in the Iraqi Jezira (Wikinson and Barbanes 2000; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995, 60–2) during the Mesopotamian Iron Age, and in the region around Persepolis during the Persian period (Sumner 1986).

[85] E.g., Brumfiel 1995, 230–46; D'Altroy 1992, 207–14; Hastorf 2001, 160; Schreiber 2001, 74; Smith 2001, 140.

[86] In addition to minimizing resistance and rebellion, deportation and resettlement probably served a similar purpose for the Inca (D'Altroy 2002, 248–9), the Aztec (Umberger 1996, 154–9), and the Persians (Briant 2002, 505–6).

[87] Note the similarities between the interpretations offered here and the impact of Wari imperialism reported by Schreiber (2001, 89–91).

[88] Hastorf and others have noted similar shifts during Inca imperial incorporation of the Mantaro Valley (see Hastorf 2001, 160–1, 177–8, and other studies in D'Altroy and Hastorf 2001) and by Schreiber during the expansion of the Wari empire (Schreiber 2001, 89–91).

record, the imperial authorities maintained large state-owned flocks, so the lack of faunal remains of sheep and goat at sites like Boztepe may be a result of the empire's control over certain aspects of the regional economy. The imperial authorities also engaged in the large-scale extraction of natural resources from the area. The textual and art historical records show that timber resources were heavily exploited, while references to straw imply that the imperial authorities oversaw the production and storage of agricultural surpluses. The discovery of what might be the office of a tax collector at Ziyaret Tepe supports this hypothesis.

Although there is very little data with which to evaluate pre- and post-conquest metallurgy in the region, some generalizations can be proposed. Excavations at Gre Dimse show that the Early Iron Age inhabitants were capable of producing high quality iron. The production facilities unearthed at Kenan Tepe during the same period suggest that metal production was small-scale and local.[89] In contrast, metal artifacts discovered at Ziyaret Tepe are not only made of various materials, including silver and bronze, but are luxury goods produced for an imperial elite.[90] The size and location of the metallurgical facilities at Ziyaret Tepe further suggest that the production of such goods here was both large-scale and centrally administered.

ASSYRIAN INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE-UPPER TIGRIS

Unlike the Upper Tigris River Valley and the Cizre Plain, the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys were never annexed to the Assyrian empire. In fact, only one Assyrian monarch is known to have conducted a military campaign in this region. As noted above, during his second campaign, in the year 882 B.C., Ashurnasirpal conquered the Upper Tigris River Valley and established the city of Tushhan as the provincial capital of this newly annexed region. On his return to the Upper Tigris some three years later, he made a foray to the east.[91]

After consecrating his new palace at Tushhan, Ashurnasirpal selected an elite force of heavy chariots, cavalry, and specially trained troops for a swift strike into the Middle-Upper Tigris. This campaign was probably meant to secure the river corridor between the Upper Tigris River Valley and the Cizre Plain, an important route for downstream traffic. Several pieces of textual evidence suggest that the Assyrians did not encounter any state-level polities in this area and had little interest in controlling it directly. First, the Assyrian scribes do not mention any "cities" (*alu*) or "kings" (*sharru*) on this leg of their journey. Second, the Assyrians did not impose tribute obligations on any polities in this area. Third, Ashurnasirpal made no effort to consolidate his military gains in this region. During this campaign, Ashurnasirpal encountered only minimal resistance from what appears to have been a few loosely organized chiefdoms centered on the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys.

Settlement Patterns in the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys during the Iron Age

The Bohtan and Garzan River region has seen little archaeological work since the original surveys in 1988 and 1989. Only very recently have archaeologists been allowed back into the area,[92] and in the summer of 2003 most of these data were still being processed.

A total of 37 sites in the Bohtan River Valley and 42 sites in the Garzan River Valley were discovered during the original reconnaissance surveys.[93] Of these, 9 sites in the Bohtan River Valley and 14 sites in the Garzan River Valley, occupying an estimated 8.39 and 26.57 ha respectively, were shown to date to the Iron Age through the presence of Standard Iron Age ceramic types (tables 5–6). Researchers revisited only a few of these sites in the recent survey of the region.[94] None of the "Mitannian" or "Middle Assyrian" ceramics was recognized either during the original survey or during the more recent exploration of the region, making the Late Bronze Age extremely difficult to define.[95] Early Iron Age Corrugated Wares are also only rarely attested here.[96] All of the sites in the Bohtan survey area dating to the Iron Age yielded ceramics that belong to the assemblage I have previously referred to as the "indigenous assemblage" (fig. 15).[97] Since

[89] Parker et al. 2003a.

[90] Matney 2003, 235.

[91] The detailed style of the Assyrian scholars who composed Ashurnasirpal's annals allows a relatively precise reconstruction of the campaign and makes this narration invaluable for the reconstruction of the historical and political geography of this region. For a detailed discussion, see Parker 2001, 106–9; contra Radner and Schachner 2001, 762–5.

[92] One preliminary report of this research has been published: Velibeyoğlu et al. 2002.

[93] Algaze 1989a; Algaze et al. 1991.

[94] Velibeyoğlu et al. 2002, 840–1.

[95] Parker 2001, 114; Velibeyoğlu et al. 2002, 840–1.

[96] Parker 2001, 114; Velibeyoğlu et al. 2002, 840–1.

[97] Parker 1997a, 223–4; 110–4.

Table 5. Settlement Pattern Data for the Iron Age in the Garzan River Valley

Site Number	Site Name	Estimated Total Site Size	Site Type
G.2	Yumrukya Hirbesi	0.25	Hamlet
G.4	Yumrukya Hirbesi #3	0.5	Hamlet
G.5	Gündik Tepe	0.42	Hamlet
G.6	Nakaval Tepe	0.03	Hamlet
G.11	Redwan Höyük	9.5	Large village
G.15	Ortaalan Höyük	5.95	Large village
G.20	Şeyh Rumiya Hirbesi	1.37	Village
G.24	Pederman Tepe	2.2	Village
G.28	Kervanlar Höyük	0.85	Hamlet
G.32	Gre Kelekc	0.25	Hamlet
G.36	Gre Mare	0.8	Hamlet
G.37	Della Tarlası	0.55	Hamlet
G.41	Banke Sefer	0.65	Hamlet
G.42	Holkan Hirbesi	3.25	Village

I first proposed that this group of ceramics may be representative of the indigenous Iron Age culture of the Upper Tigris River region, excavations at Gre Dimse and Kenan Tepe have unearthed indigenous ceramics in various contexts. In the case of Kenan Tepe, several types belonging to this group have been discovered in an Early Iron Age context,[98] while at Gre Dimse these ceramics have been excavated in Early Iron Age and Imperial period contexts.[99] These data both support my original theory that this ceramic corpus is indicative of the indigenous Iron Age population of the region and furthermore, they suggest that the chronology of this corpus stretches through the Early Iron Age and into the Imperial period.

Settlement size and site distribution in the Garzan and Bohtan survey areas differ completely from those of the Cizre Plain and the Upper Tigris River Valley. Although the extent of occupation in any given period is very difficult to estimate without more intensive research, most of the sites in the Bohtan River Valley are under 1 ha in total size. Only one site is slightly larger than 1 ha,[100] and one site measures approximately 4.5 ha.[101] All of the Iron Age sites identified are situated on naturally defensible terraces overlooking the river.[102] Settlement size and site distribution in the Garzan region mirrors that found in the Bohtan. Again, even at their maximum possible extent, most of the sites are less than 1 ha, only three sites are in the 1–5 ha range, and no more than two sites are larger than 5 ha. Iron Age sites were invariably located on the defensible terraces overlooking the river. Thus the settlement size data suggest that there was little or no settlement hierarchy in the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys during the Iron Age.

Table 6. Settlement Pattern Data for the Iron Age in the Bohtan River Valley

Site Number	Site Name	Estimated Total Site Size	Site Type
Bo.3	Benepareza Tepe	0.67	Hamlet
Bo.6	Çamper Tepe	Uncertain	Uncertain
Bo.7	Eski Çamper #1	0.1	Hamlet
Bo.15	Near Çiçekyurdu #3	0.25	Hamlet
Bo.16	Near Çiçekyurdu #1	0.9	Hamlet
Bo.18	Near Çattepe #1	0.2	Hamlet
Bo.20	Çattepe	4.5	Village
Bo.25	Near Yazlıca #1	0.52	Hamlet
Bo.35	Konicik Hirbe	1.25	Village

[98] Parker et al. 2002a, 2002b.
[99] Karg 2002, 729, fig. 3 a, b, d.
[100] Konacik Hirbe (Bo.35).
[101] Çattepe (Bo.20).
[102] Algaze 1989a, 253.

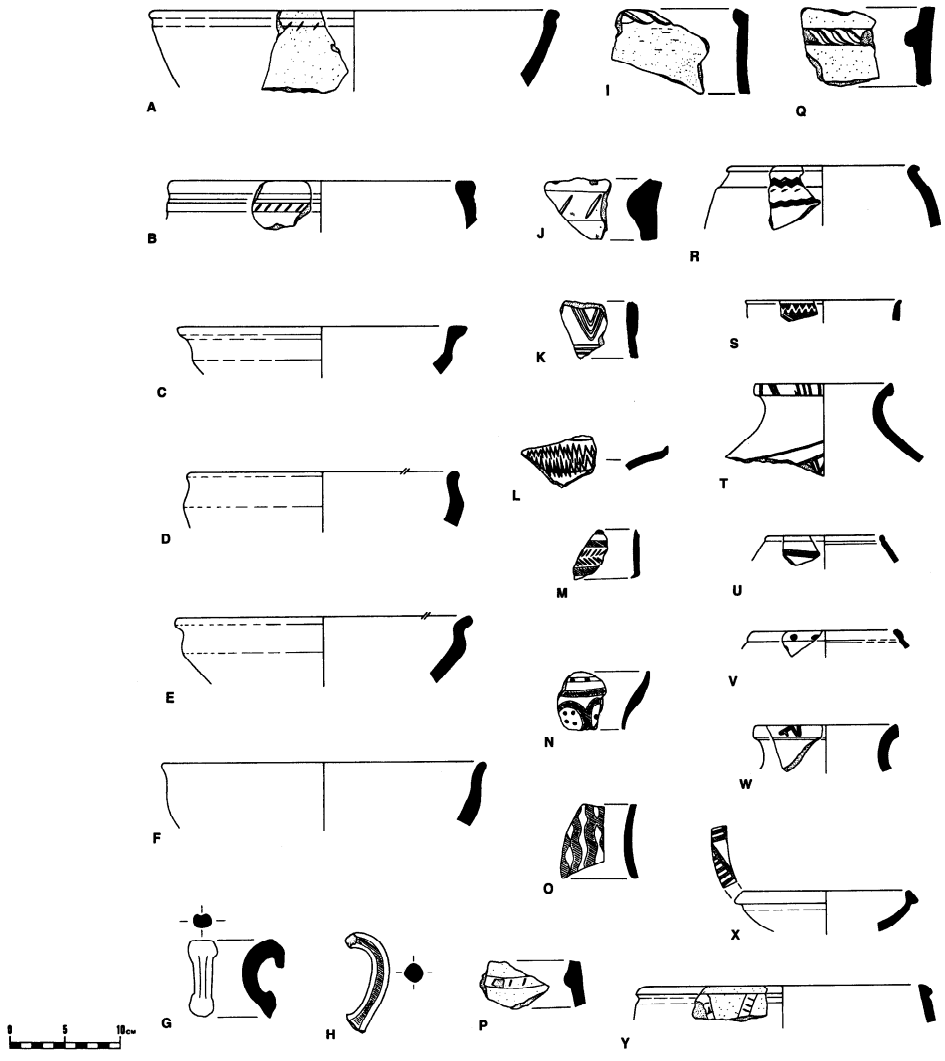

Fig. 15. Early Iron Age to Imperial period ceramics from the Upper Tigris River region. *A*, fingernail impressed band from Kepo (B.128 [Parker 2001]); tan-brown smoothed surfaces with black core; chaff temper with some white grit inclusions; many chaff impressions on exterior surface; fingernail impressions on exterior surface. *B*, fingernail impressed band from Kepo (B.128 [Parker 2001]); orange-brown clay with black core; gray wash on exterior surface; chaff temper with some grit inclusions. *C*, bowl from Banke Sater (G.41); brownish clay with cream slip on exterior surface; fine grit temper. *D*, bowl from Günduk Tepe (G.5); rough ware with orange surfaces; orange fabric grading to black at core; chaff temper with air pockets and a few scattered white grits; many chaff impressions on exterior surface. *E*, bowl from Gre Mare (G.36); buff tan-brown surfaces grading to black at core; fine chaff temper. *F*, bowl from Günduk Tepe (G.5); roughly made of chalky orange fabric; orange surfaces grading to black at core; chaff temper with large grit inclusions. *G*, indented handle from near Gre Migro #5 (B.164 ([Parker 2001]); orange fugitive fabric grading to black at core; grit temper. *H*, handle from Talavaş Tepe (T.51); brown-tan slip on orange clay with fine grit temper. *I*, Rope Imitation Band from Talavaş Tepe (T.51); brown-tan slip on orange clay with fine grit temper; painted purple stripe. *J*, incised decoration from Talavaş Tepe (T.51); brown exterior; black core; chaff and grit temper with some large grit inclusions; large incisions on raised band. *K*, incised decoration from Talavaş Tepe (T.51); brown clay with large grit temper. *L*, incised decoration from Talavaş Tepe (T.51); brown wash on tan clay; fine grit temper; incised decoration on exterior surface. *M*, Indigenous Painted Ware from near Yazılıca #1 (Bo.25); orange-brown fabric with tan slip; very fine grit temper; fugitive reddish purple paint with fingernail impressions. *N*, Indigenous Painted Ware from Talavaş Tepe (T.51); orange clay with brown slip; fine grit temper; purple painted decoration. *O*, Indigenous Painted Ware from Salat Tepe (T.56); tan slip on brown clay; fine white grit temper; purple painted wavy bands. *P*, applied decoration from near Gre Migro #5 (B.164 [Parker 2001]); fugitive orange fabric; chaff temper with grit inclusions; chaff impressions on exterior surface. *Q*, Rope Imitation Band from Kepo (B.128 [Parker 2001]); smoothed brown surfaces; black core; chaff and grit temper with scattered fine white grits. *R*, incised decoration from near Çeçik Yordu #3 (Bo.15); fugitive orange fabric; fine grit temper. *S*, Indigenous Painted Ware from Çattepe (Bo.20); tan-orange fabric; red paint; very fine grit temper. *T*, Indigenous Painted Ware from Gre Mare (G.36); smooth orange fabric; very fine grit temper with some large grit inclusions. *U*, Indigenous Painted Ware from near Çeçik Yordu #1 (Bo.16); orange fabric with buff orange surfaces; reddish purple paint; grit temper. *V*, Indigenous Painted Ware from near Yazılıca #1 (Bo.25); fine orange fabric with tan slip; very fine grit temper; reddish purple paint. *W*, Indigenous Painted Ware from Gre Mare (G.36); reddish purple paint on orange fabric; fine grit temper. *X*, Indigenous Painted Ware from near Gre Migro #4 (B.163); cream slip on light brown fabric; fine grit temper; reddish purple paint. *Y*, applied decoration from near Gre Migro #5; fugitive orange fabric; gray core; chaff and grit temper.

The textual record offers little to illuminate the economic and social make-up of these valleys. However, during a battle that probably took place in or around the Garzan River Valley, Ashurnasirpal claims to have killed 1,000 enemy soldiers and captured 200. Interestingly, the only booty taken is said to consist of 200 captives and a number of sheep and oxen.[103]

The Middle-Upper Tigris during the Assyrian Imperial Period

The lack of references in the textual sources to the Middle-Upper Tigris region suggests that the Assyrians had little interest in it during the first 150 years or so of the Imperial period (from ca. 882 to some time around 728 B.C.). This situation appears to have changed during the reign of the Assyrian monarch Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.). Some time during Tiglath-Pileser's reign the Assyrian governor of Tushhan was assigned the task of constructing at least one fort on the Tigris River east of the Tigris-Batman confluence. Nimrud Letter 67, which was sent from the governor of the city of Tushhan to the king at the Assyrian capital of Nimrud, reports in great detail various aspects of the construction of this fort.[104] Although it would be nearly impossible to determine its precise location, a likely place for the location of this fort is the site of Çattepe at the confluence of the Tigris and Bohtan Rivers.[105] Çattepe was the only site in the Bohtan at which Assyrian ceramics were recovered. In the case of the Garzan, only a few examples of Assyrian ceramics were recovered at two sites.

These data, combined with the textual evidence discussed above, support the hypothesis that the Assyrians never incorporated the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys into the imperial domain. Yet at the beginning of Tiglath-Pilesar III's reign, the Assyrians established at least one isolated fort on the Middle-Upper Tigris, which, unlike the imperial facilities constructed in the Upper Tigris River Valley and the Cizre Plain, was not the center of a provincial colonial system. Its size and location indicate that it was meant instead to protect downstream river traffic through this important transportation and communication corridor.

BUFFER ZONES

The regional archaeological survey data from the Bohtan and Garzan River Valleys reveals surprisingly little evidence of Assyrian involvement there. In fact, the only settlement that appears to have been overtaken by the Assyrians is on the Tigris River. There is no evidence of settlements on the Tigris tributaries. Instead the Garzan and Bohtan surveys yielded only a handful of small village or hamlet sized sites, which were recognized by the presence of ceramics belonging to the Indigenous ceramic assemblage. There is no evidence of a collapse of this system after the beginning of the Assyrian Imperial period, nor is there any evidence of an abrupt change in the size, orientation, or number of settlements in these valleys in the transition between the Early Iron Age and the Assyrian Imperial period (ca. 1100–900 and 900–600 B.C. respectively).

Only one Assyrian king campaigned in this area, and this took place early in the history of Assyrian imperialism (in 879 B.C.). Textual and regional survey data suggest that these valleys were home to small loosely organized sub-state political formations.[106] The Assyrians easily routed these indigenous peoples and carried off what little wealth, in the form of sheep and goat, they possessed.

It is absolutely clear that the Assyrians had the means to colonize these valleys, but they chose not to. The reasons for the apparent neglect of this area by the Assyrians remain elusive, although the history and archaeology offer several possible explanations. First and foremost is the geopolitical configuration of this region during the Neo-Assyrian Imperial period. Both of these valleys were in close proximity to the southern provinces of Assyria's fiercest rival, Urartu. The rough mountain terrain surrounding these valleys insulated them from the Assyrian provinces to the west and southeast, and it would have been logistically difficult for the Assyrians to maintain a permanent presence there. Moreover, colonizing the valleys north of the Tigris River might have provoked Urartian retribution. After Ashurnasirpal's initial foray into the Bohtan and Garzan River Valleys, it became apparent to Assyrian officials that the sub-state political formations there constituted no real threat to Assyrian sovereignty in the adjacent provinces. Furthermore, if the list of booty (see above) taken during Ashurnasirpal's campaign is any indication, the Assyrians may have judged the possible economic benefits of annexation to be well below the cost of the colonization, maintenance, and defense of a new province in this remote area. For Assyrian military plan-

[103] Grayson 1991a, 260.

[104] Nimrud Letter 67 was originally published in Saggs 1963, 73 and pl. 12. For a detailed discussion and analysis of this text, see Parker 1997b, 2001, 137–48.

[105] Parker (2001, 137–8) states the logic behind this argument.

[106] For discussion, see Liverani 1992, 107; Parker 2001, 131–6, 148–54.

ners, the only part of this region that was of vital strategic importance was the Tigris River corridor itself, which directly linked the economically productive and strategically important provinces of the Upper Tigris to the Assyrian heartland. They also must have realized the importance of keeping the area just north of this important corridor out of the hands of their enemies. I suggest, therefore, that the Assyrians intentionally left the sub-state political structures in the Bohtan and Garzan River Valleys intact, effectively creating a buffer zone between their northern frontier and the rival state of Urartu in the highlands of eastern Anatolia.

If this hypothesis is correct, it suggests that the creation and maintenance of buffer zones was an integral part of Assyrian imperial policy. Buffer zones may be the most archaeologically elusive components of imperial systems since they are, by definition, areas where there is little or no intervention by the imperial authorities.[107] Yet a comparison of these lightly affected regions with the areas that were more thoroughly integrated through invasive policies reveals a spectrum of possible imprints of imperial expansion, including the deliberate stunting of the development of complexity in strategic buffer zones. The identification of the buffer zone as an important imperial component should make archaeologists reconsider the significance of areas at the periphery of ancient empires whose lack of archaeological remains may be the artificial product of imperial influence.

The buffer zone that existed on Assyria's frontier in the Middle-Upper Tigris is manifested in the archaeological record in several ways. First, a string of fortresses was constructed along the southern boundary of this zone. Although these fortresses were probably meant to be self-sufficient, the lack of dependent settlements indicates that their purpose was not the administration of a rural population, as was the case with the fortresses discovered in the Cizre Plain and the Upper Tigris River Valley, but rather the protection of downstream river traffic from Assyrian provinces in the Upper Tigris.[108] These fortifications were located at the southern extremity of a large area that contained a relatively low number of archaeological sites, an extremely low number of total occupied hectares, and almost no Assyrian remains. Despite the geographic similarity of the Garzan and Bohtan River Valleys to the other two areas discussed above, the Assyrians chose a policy of underdevelopment rather than colonization. The efficient maintenance of an effective buffer zone between a strategic but remote river corridor and powerful rival states precluded the development of complex political formations that could potentially fall under the influence of Assyria's enemies.

GENERALIZATIONS BASED ON THE ASSYRIAN MODEL OF IMPERIALISM

This examination of three regions affected by the encroachment of the Assyrian empire in southeastern Anatolia has highlighted three ways in which the expansion of an imperialistic state potentially is manifest in the archaeological record. First, in the case of the annexation of a previously peripheral region into a provincial system, the construction of an imperial military and administrative infrastructure and the deliberate colonization of the new province can work to produce a new, unique, and recognizable settlement system. In such cases newly annexed regions lose their indigenous character as pre-imperial settlement systems are replaced by imperial ones. Such areas become dominated by a few strategically located fortified imperial centers that are usually built over the destroyed remains of smaller, previously existing indigenous sites.[109] Imperial centers are usually situated on transportation and communication corridors in areas with enough potentially exploitable natural wealth to make annexation financially viable.[110] Such centers are the focus of substantial imperial investment, which may include the construction of fortifications and administrative buildings in an imperial style, mirroring architectural and material cultural patterning characteristic of the imperial core.

Imperial centers become the core of an otherwise rural settlement system made up of a large number of small newly founded agricultural villages established in the hinterland around and between these sites. In the Assyrian empire, such settlements were almost certainly inhabited by non-Assyrian imperial subjects resettled in new provinces from various parts of the empire as part of a concerted effort by the imperial authorities to bring underutilized and/or newly annexed land into agricultural production. Given the dependant status of the colonists and the fact that the financial well-being of the province ulti-

[107] For discussion, see Chay and Ross 1986. Also see Maila 1986.

[108] Parker 1997b, 83.

[109] For parallels, see, e.g., D'Altroy 1992, 95–127. Also see Barfiel 2001, 30; DeMarrais 2001, 142; Schreiber 2001, 82–5, among others.

[110] Barfiel 2001, 30; D'Altroy 1994, 95–127; Schreiber 2001, 82–5.

mately depended on agricultural output from these colonies, imperial demands in terms of taxation and conscription were probably relatively severe. For this reason, these rural settlements should appear, in comparison to both the previous indigenous settlements and to the imperial administrative centers, to be relatively impoverished. In an attempt to increase revenues and control access to key raw materials, imperial authorities may also monopolize certain segments of the local economy such as mining and herding.[111] Thus imperial colonies should be significantly more specialized than pre-imperial settlements. Since the colonists belonged neither to the Assyrian nor the indigenous population, the material culture of these colonies, although dominated by goods available at markets in the imperial centers, should contain some conspicuously intrusive artifacts. Because these colonies are not the product of natural growth cycles, but are instead the result of a rapid influx of population forcibly dispersed to take advantage of available agricultural land, these settlements should be small, often newly founded sites. And finally, such sites should above all not be fortified. The imperial centers should, on the other hand, be large, imposing fortified sites. The resulting settlement system is for these reasons distinct. It is characterized by a few large, strategically located fortified centers and a multitude of small, unfortified rural sites.

The second way in which the archaeological record is potentially altered by the expansion of an imperialistic state is in the creation and maintenance of buffer areas. Buffer areas insulate important frontier provinces from enemy states; thus imperial involvement there is limited to the enforcement of the neutrality of the zone. Imperial investment should be limited to fortified imperial centers at the edge of such areas. These centers should not be part of a settlement hierarchy, but should instead be isolated imperial installations with few or no dependent settlements in the surrounding countryside. Because buffer areas are not subject to imperial control, no archaeological indications of direct imperial involvement should be evident. Furthermore, for a buffer zone to be effective it should contain no state level polities. Thus the deliberate imperial policy of creating and maintaining buffer zones may create "blank spots" in the archaeological landscape that might be overlooked or understudied because they are considered to be archaeologically empty. Such areas that are created as a direct consequence of imperial expansion, however, are important archaeological signatures of imperial policy.

Finally, the archaeological and textual evidence from the Upper Tigris River region of southeastern Turkey suggests that large components of the Neo-Assyrian provincial system were physically separated from the rest of the empire by vast expanses of territory that were not subject to direct imperial control. Instead of consolidating their gains in the area south and southeast of the province of Tushhan, the Assyrian authorities concentrated their efforts on a few major arteries that crossed this region and linked the Upper Tigris River region with the rest of the empire. Although we have direct evidence for only one major fort on the Tigris River corridor, Assyrian campaign itineraries, circumstantial evidence from Assyrian letters, and archaeological data, make it virtually certain that the fort discussed in Nimrud Letter 67 was one part of a much larger system of fortifications and outposts that guarded the Tigris River corridor.

Although an imperial core would almost certainly be made up of a series of adjoining provinces, as an empire expands into its periphery, transportation costs increase dramatically.[112] If we abandon the idea that an empire must be territorially unified and instead agree that imperial control is feasible outside of the imperial core, but only in limited pockets that offer enough political, military, economic, or ideological advantage to offset the cost of annexation, then the picture of the empire is not one of a contiguous territory, but one in which the landscape beyond the imperial core is dotted with "islands" of imperial control. For this reason, some provinces might be physically separated from the rest of the empire by vast areas where the empire holds little or no control. Instead of directly adjoining neighboring provinces, these islands in the imperial periphery can be linked to the imperial core by a network of fortified communication and transportation corridors. This discontiguous pattern of imperial control should be manifested through a diversity of archaeological imprints on the various landscapes that make up the empire.

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[111] Note the parallel observed by D'Altroy for the Inca empire (D'Altroy 2001, 325–6).

[112] Hassig 1985, 11–40.

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