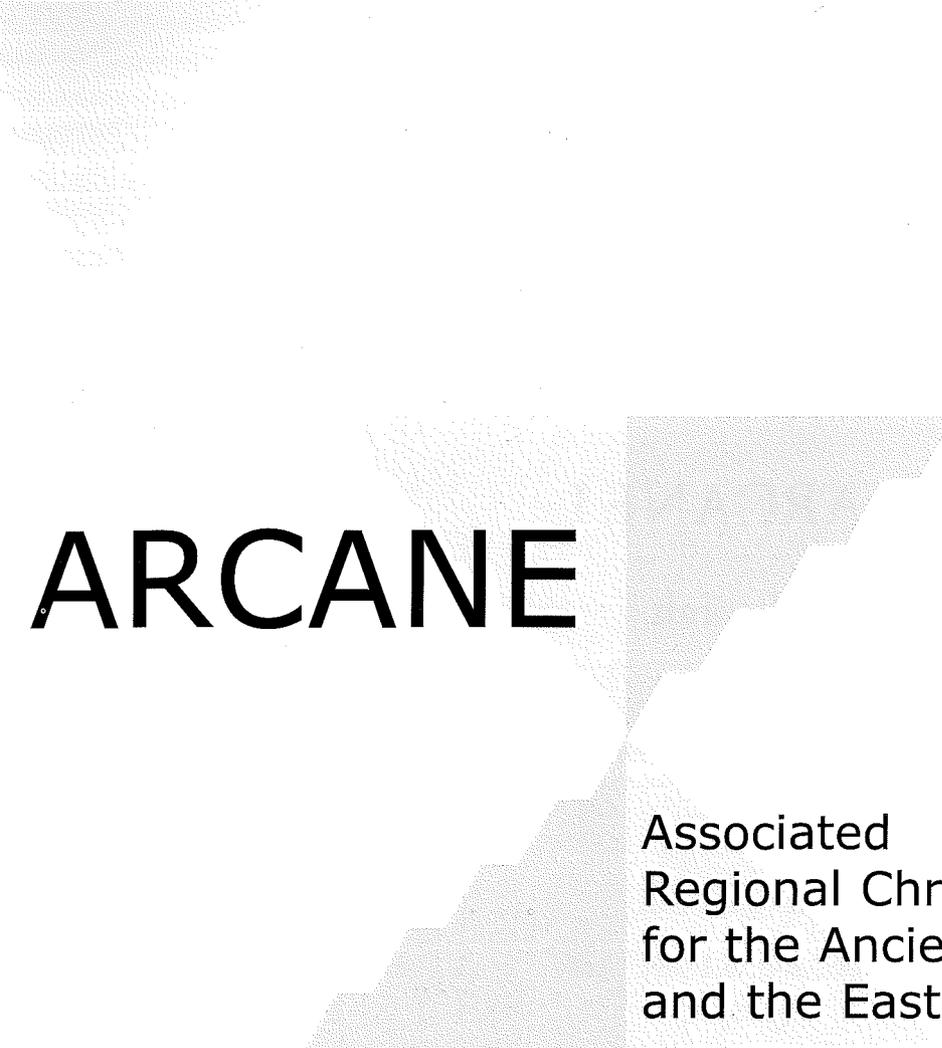


ARCANE I

Jezirah



ARCANE

Associated
Regional Chronologies
for the Ancient Near East
and the Eastern Mediterranean

Jezirah

Marc Lebeau (ed.)

with contributions by A. Bianchi, K. A. Franke, A. P. McCarthy, J.-W. Meyer,
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12. History and Philology

Walther Sallaberger

12.1. A Concise Political History of the Jezirah in the Late Third Millennium

Traditionally the appearance of writing marks the beginning of history, in the narrow sense of the word. A generation ago, the history of our region began with the kings of Akkad, with Sargon and Naramsuen's reports on their expeditions to the West and with Naramsuen's building at Brak/Nagar, excavated by M. Mallowan. The discovery of archives in the royal Palace G at Mardikh/Ebla in 1975–76 opened a window into the earlier history of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia in the period before the Sargonic Empire. Furthermore, various Jezirah sites have contributed finds of cuneiform tablets from Periods EJZ 3 to EJZ 5, covering a time span of four centuries from the time of the early city-states through the Sargonic period to the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur.

The following survey summarises the principal results of previous extensive research on the history of Upper Mesopotamia, which has been based on a broad review of the available textual material and its critical discussion.¹ The political history is reflected in the settlement patterns detected by excavations and surveys. The Jezirah was a densely inhabited region with urban centres during the period of early city-states (EJZ 3). A drastic reduction in settlement numbers, especially West of the Khabur occurred during the period when the dynasty of Akkad ruled in the East (EJZ 4), and by the end of the 3rd millennium (EJZ 5) only few settlements still survived. A major resettlement took place in the early 2nd millennium, the Old Babylonian or Amorite period, especially in the eastern part of the Khabur triangle.

This contribution focuses on the relative sequence of events and objects, but refers only sporadically to year dates in one of the possible chronologies because of the manifold problems involved (see below 12.2.5). The year dates are indicated as MC = Middle Chronology.

12.1.1 The Early City States (EJZ 3)

The urbanisation of the Jezirah is a fascinating process that marks the earliest phases of the EBA (EJZ 1-2), but is not documented by any textual evidence. In the earlier Uruk period administrative devices such as tokens enclosed in clay bullae and sealed and unsealed numerical tablets were used also in the Euphrates valley at Habuba Kabira, Djebel Aruda and in the Jezirah at Brak;² a numerical tablet from Mari found in an ED context seems to belong to this group as well.³ But this Uruk tradition was not continued in Upper Mesopotamia. In Southern Mesopotamia, the use of such administrative devices eventually contributed to the invention of cuneiform script. In the Jezirah, the first administrative documents from the EBA are numerical tablets impressed with groups of dots from the "Ninivite 5" sites of Kashkashok III and Atij, and a slightly later similar tablet from Bderi.⁴ A sealed numerical tablet derives from a Period EJZ 3b context at Beydar.⁵ Numerical bullae, some with simple symbolic marks, were found in large numbers in contemporary layers at Brak,⁶ along with other counting devices⁷. By that time however writing had been used in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria for some time.

The first cuneiform texts from the Jezirah are administrative documents from Beydar (Field I, see 12.2.2.1 below), including ration lists similar to those from the main archive (12.2.2 below). The Beydar documents provide insights into the internal economy and society of the city: Agricultural work was organised as collective labour using the population of the city and dependent smaller settlements.⁸ Craftsmen and agricultural workers received rations from the central institution, which controlled the large animal flocks of sheep and goats that were handed over to herdsmen.⁹ In the period of the early city-states, a major part of the population must have been organised in a similar way, although other institutions existed as well. The socio-economic role of the temples

¹ Sallaberger 2007.

² Michalowski 2003a: 56, no. 79, on numerical tablets; Finkel 1985: 187–189, pictographic tablets.

³ Parrot 1965: 12 Fig. 10, Tb. 84.

⁴ See Sallaberger in: Talon & Van Lerberghe eds. 1997: 214–5, nos. 128–130.

⁵ Van Lerberghe in Milano et al. 2004: no. 169.

⁶ Oates 2001b: 133–134.

⁷ Ibid. 138–140.

⁸ Sallaberger & Ur 2004: 58–59.

⁹ Sallaberger 2004.

however remains practically unknown, although the Ebla archives do give some hints regarding the personnel directly dependent on the royal palace (metal and textile production, royal court).

The first historical figure from the JZ is Mara'il (*ma-ra-AN*), ruler of Nagar (Brak), who is known from Ebla (*ARET* 7, 16 (19)), and who may confidently be identified with the person from Nagar (written *AMAR-AN/mara₂-AN*), who dedicated a statue to 'NinIZAZA' at Mari on behalf of king Iblul'il of Mari.¹⁰ This dedication at Mari points to the leading role of the Middle Euphratian town during the reign of Iblul'il, which must have ended ca. 50 years before the destruction of Ebla.¹¹ The supremacy of Mari in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria at this early period emerges more clearly from the Ebla documents.¹²

After the death of Enna-Dagan of Mari, Ebla acted more independently and gained more influence in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia. A testimony of Ebla's foreign policy are the gifts sent to the ruler (*EN, mal(i)kum*) of Nagar and the representatives of the 17 cities that formed Nagar's kingdom, among them Nabada (Beydar), and the formal conclusion of a treaty with Nagar.¹³ This eventually led to a diplomatic marriage between a prince of Nagar and a princess of Ebla.¹⁴ Using the textual information from Ebla and Beydar and the information on settlement patterns obtained from archaeological surveys, the layout of the kingdom of Nagar, situated in the Khabur triangle, has been reconstructed.¹⁵ Nagar was only one of several states that must have existed in the Jezirah at the time of the Ebla archives,¹⁶ but with the exception of Harran none of the 3rd millennium towns have been identified with any of the tells that have been investigated archaeologically (the most prominent example being Khuera). Harran belonged to a region that was characterised by the high office of the *badulum*, placed directly under the king or queen of the city-state.¹⁷ Other cities characterised by this office were Abarsal,¹⁸ Gud(a)danum, Ḫaldum, Ir'idum, Šan(n)abzugu(m), and Urša'um.¹⁹ Whereas the identification of Abarsal remains disputed (Khuera being one of the candidates), Urša'um apparently corresponds to the late 3rd millennium Uršum, which is sought for near Gaziantep, at Kazane or at Samsat in the Karababa region.²⁰

The Jezirah thus formed part of a cultural continuum, defined most prominently by the use of cuneiform writing, which reached from lowland Mesopotamia and the large cities of Sumer across Northern Mesopotamia along the hilly flanks to Ebla and Syria and included the Middle Euphrates region as well. The exchange of goods and persons and diplomatic contacts among the cities are well attested, as are the city-state's numerous military campaigns from Lagash and Umma to Mari, Ebla and Armi.

12.1.2 The end of Ebla and the rise of Sargon (EJZ 4a?)

The rise of Ebla in her last years went hand in hand with the transformation of the political landscape. This period saw international relations that spanned the ancient Orient from Syria to Lower Mesopotamia, with the most dominant kingdoms concluding treaties and alliances: Ebla's allies were Nagar (Brak) and Kish, that is Babylonia, and it opposed mighty Mari and Armi.²¹ After some military triumphs, Ebla was destroyed, the royal palace G was burnt and not rebuilt, and as Archi and Biga have argued, it is very probable that Mari was the victorious aggressor.²² Another ten years later, Mari itself was destroyed,²³ and in this case we should assume that this was a military success of Sargon of Akkad (MC 2353-2314/2313-2274), whose destruction of Mari was reported in a year name.

If we accept that the final destruction of Mari's *ville II* is attributed to Sargon, a tentative correlation of the chronology of Mesopotamia, which depends on the Sumerian King List, and the Ebla archives, which determines the history of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, is possible. The destruction of Mari can most plausibly be placed 10 to 15 years before the end of Sargon's reign; Ebla was destroyed another 10 years earlier. And with the 40 years of rule attributed to Sargon by the Ur III version of the Sumerian King List, Sargon would have started his rule at about the same time as Urukagina of Lagash and Lugalzagesi of Umma, later of Uruk.²⁴

¹⁰ Sallaberger 1998b: 35; Tonietti 1998: 92-93.

¹¹ Archi & Biga 2003: 6-7.

¹² Archi & Biga 2003: 1-5.

¹³ Archi 1998.

¹⁴ Biga 1998.

¹⁵ Sallaberger & Ur 2004.

¹⁶ See Milano & Roa 2000a.

¹⁷ See Archi 1988, Tonietti 2010: 75-85 with lit.

¹⁸ *a-BAR-SAL₄*; cf. Archi 1989.

¹⁹ Archi *et al.* 1993, Bonechi 1993.

²⁰ Sallaberger 2007: 437.

²¹ Identification with Tall Bazi/Tall Banat proposed by Otto 2006a.

²² Archi & Biga 2003: 29-35.

²³ Charpin 2005.

²⁴ A detailed argument is presented in Sallaberger & Schrakamp in prep.

Table 1: Tentative tabulation of reigns and events at the period of the Ebla archives.²⁵ The dates are given according to regnal years (e.g. Hidar 1 = first regnal year of Hidar of Mari). The “Ebla years” are calculations before and after the destruction of Palace G of Ebla (= year 0)²⁶

Ebla years	Ebla rulers	Mari rulers	Sargon	Mesopotamia
until -43	Igrishhalab	Iblul'il		
-42 to -36	Irkabdamu 1-7			
-35	Ibrium 1/ Ish'ardamu 1	Ikun'ishar		
	Ibrium 2(?)	Hidar 1		
-17	Ibbizikir 1/ Ish'ardamu 19			
(ca. -15 to -20)			ca. Sargon 1	ca. Urukagina 1, Lugalzagesi 1
0	Ebla destroyed	ca. Hidar 35	ca. Sargon 15-20	
		Ishqimari 1 to 9 attested at Mari		
ca. +10		Mari destroyed	ca. Sargon 25-30	Lugalzagesi defeated
(ca. +20 to +25)			Sargon 40 (final year)	

Besides the year date on the destruction of Mari and the statements in his inscriptions that a) Mari stood “before” him and that b) the god Dagan gave him the Upper Land, Mari, Yarmuti, and Ebla, Sargon left no trace of his presence in the Jezirah.²⁷ Therefore, it is *not* appropriate to call the 40 years of Sargon’s reign the “Sargonic” or “Akkadian” period in the Jezirah. However, in a political sense, the concentration of power in the hands of a few mighty centres or charismatic rulers and the alliances over wide distances signal substantial changes in politics: The system of city states, which probably acknowledged one dominant centre like Mari or Kish, slowly developed into a world of various inter-regional hegemonic powers like Mari, Uruk, Ebla, or Akkad. Ish'ardamu of Ebla, Enshakushana of Uruk, Lugalzagesi of Umma or Sargon of Akkad were rulers of regional states that extended beyond the traditional confines of a city-state. This period, which may more or less be correlated with the reign of Sargon (see Tb. 1 above), i.e. ca. 20 years before and 20 years after the destruction of Ebla, corresponds to the “Proto-imperial” period as (re-)defined recently by Marchetti.²⁸ Since his periodisation is based on the representation of the ruler, the political leader, a direct link between art history and political history can be justified.

Only the destruction layers at Ebla and Mari allow a correlation of archaeological phases with political history, since these should be dated around the middle of the reign of Sargon (see Tb. 1 above). The destruction layer ending Phase L at Brak,²⁹ ancient Nagar, must have occurred close to or after the end of Ebla, since the relations between the two cities remained stable until the end of the archives. It is hard to see, however, how the beginning of Period EJZ 4a can be bound into the historical scheme. Is it an echo of the “Proto-imperial” period, which runs parallel to Sargon’s reign although he himself was not yet visible on the stage of international politics?

12.1.3 The Sargonic Period (EJZ 4)

The first signs of Akkadian rulers in Upper Mesopotamia stem from Manishtushu (in Assur and Ninive) and Rimush (in Nagar/Brak).³⁰ The earliest Sargonic texts from the Jezirah, those of Phase IIB3 Leilan (see below 12.2.2.1) may provide evidence for this early period as well. The scarcity of textual sources from this period can be correlated to the general decline of the Jezirah before the modest revival in the Eastern Khabur under Naramsuen.

King Naramsuen of Akkade (MC 2291-2236/2251-2196, often spelled ‘Naramsin’) showed considerable interest in the region. This interest becomes more plausible considering the probable localisation of Akkade near the confluence of the river Adhem in the Tigris. The ‘Upper Land’ (*mātum alitum*), as the Jezirah was designated in Naramsuen’s inscriptions, remained loyal during the ‘Great Revolt’ against Naramsuen, which had almost ended

²⁵ Based for the Ebla–Mari synchronisms on Archi & Biga 2003 and for the chronology of Sargon on Sallaberger & Schrakamp in prep.

²⁶ Based on the evidence presented by Archi & Biga 2003: 6-9.

²⁷ Sallaberger 2007: 424.

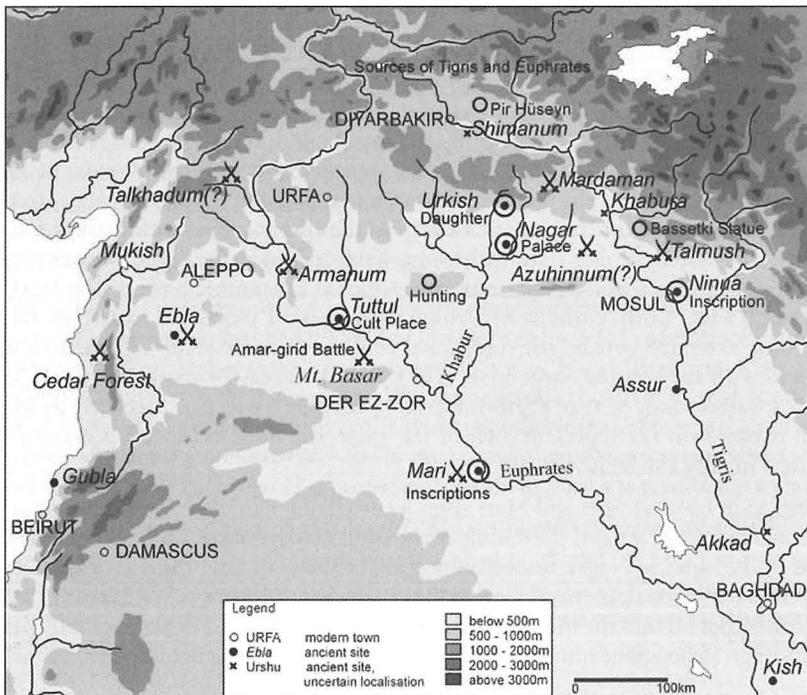
²⁸ Marchetti 2006.

²⁹ Oates & Oates 2001: 382.

³⁰ See Sallaberger 2007: 424f.

Akkade's rule. One of these loyal rulers was apparently the Hurrian *endan* of Urkesh/Mozan, whose son married a daughter of Naramsuen named Tar'am'akkade, a sign of strong political ties between the local ruler and the mighty king of Akkad.³¹ The building of the so-called Naramsuen palace at Brak/Nagar apparently also dates to the period after the Great Revolt when the empire's NW border was consolidated, since the bricks similarly show Naramsuen's name written with the divine determinative.³² The monumental "Unfinished Building" at Leilan/Shehna IIB2³³ may well belong to the same project of Naramsuen. If so, both Brak/Nagar and Leilan/Shehna would have belonged to the Akkadian empire and marked its NW border, whereas Mozan/Urkesh was an independent ally. Monuments of Naramsuen were found at Pir Hüseyin and at Bassetki, which underlines the extent of this king's zone of influence in the Northern realm of the empire. On the other hand, Mari was only of secondary importance in the Sargonic period, since this place is hardly mentioned in documents of the period, although documents of Naramsuen's presence come from this former centre.³⁴ The Middle Euphrates valley (with the partial exception of Mari), Syria and the western Jezirah including the western part of the Khabur triangle were apparently not part of the dense network of contacts within the Akkadian empire and its closest allies (as Mozan/Urkesh).

After Naramsuen, historical sources for the Akkadian rulers become rare for Upper Mesopotamia. Sharkalisharri (MC 2235-2211/2195-2171) fought against the Amorites at Mt. Basar/Jebel Bishri.³⁵ After some serious perturbations, the Late Akkad state seems to have consolidated its power to a certain extent under Shudur'ul (MC 2186-2172/2146-2132), since references to this king have been found from Adab in the South to Brak³⁶ and Tiritis³⁷ in the northwest.³⁸ The "Late Akkadian" tablets from Area FS at Brak, from Mozan and those from Phase IIB1 at Leilan (see below) may well belong to the period between Sharkalisharri and Shudur'ul of Akkade.



Map 1: Upper Mesopotamia and adjacent regions during the reign of Naramsuen of Akkade.³⁹ The findspots of Naramsuen's monuments and places of his activities are indicated by small circles; the two crossed rapiers mark the battles of Naramsuen as mentioned in his inscriptions and year dates. Note that the localisation of Azuhinnum is highly doubtful⁴⁰ and that the "Unfinished Building" at Leilan is not reflected in the map.

³¹ Sallaberger 2007: 426f.

³² Eidem *et al.* 2001: 102 fig. 136, 105.

³³ See de Lillis *et al.* 2007.

³⁴ Sallaberger 2007: 429.

³⁵ Sallaberger 2007: 431.

³⁶ Matthews 1997a: no. 313, pl. XXVI, LI, information Karin Rohn.

³⁷ Stone weight, Frayne 1993: 214.

³⁸ See Sallaberger & Schrakamp in prep.

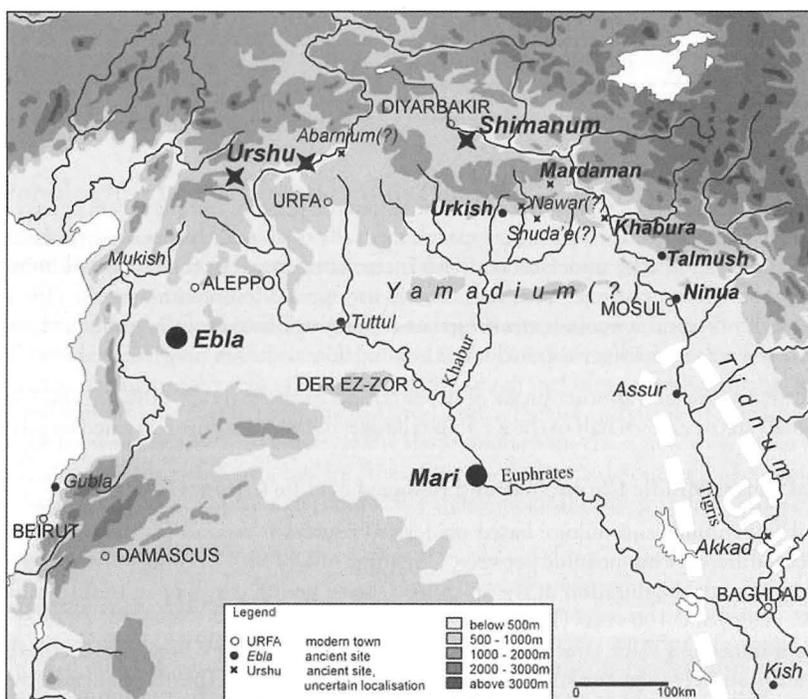
³⁹ From Sallaberger 2007: 430; map drawn by A. Pruß.

⁴⁰ Probably to be located to the east of the Tigris, Sallaberger 2007: 428f.

But at the same time, Brak clearly lost its influence, and after the Akkadian rulers, only one independent ruler named Talpushatili is attested here. Apparently northern Mozan/Urkesh had slowly replaced Nagar as the most important centre in the region; and here a few rulers are attested from Tukkish, who must have ruled around Manishtushu–Rimush–early Naramsuen, down to Atalshen, “king of Urkish and Nawar”.⁴¹

12.1.4 The Emergence of the Amorites and Contacts with the Third Dynasty of Ur (EJZ 5)

Although the time that must have elapsed between Sharkalisharri of Akkad (MC 2235-2211/2195-2171) and the 43rd year of Shulgi of the Third Dynasty of Ur (MC 2050) is only something like 120 years (or 100 or 160 depending on the chronology, see below 12.1.5), the political landscape had changed completely by the time of the kings of Ur (until Ibbisuen 1, MC 2026). The intensity of diplomatic contacts indicates that Mari, now controlled by the *šakkanakkū* (the “generals”), had become the dominant centre to the West of Ur; other primary centres were Ebla in Syria, Urshu on the Upper Euphrates, and Shimanum, probably located on the Upper Tigris (see below Map 2). In the Jezirah, hardly any important urban centres were left, only Urkesh kept diplomatic contacts with the royal court of Ur, until it disappeared from the record rather early, namely in Amarsuena year 3 (MC 2042).⁴² And there is only one tablet fragment, deriving from Mozan/Urkesh, that may confidently be placed in the Ur III period (or even later) based on palaeographic criteria (see below). The cities along the Upper Tigris, however, remained as important as during the Sargonic period; there, a similar decline cannot be observed.⁴³



Map 2: The relations of the court of the Third Dynasty of Ur with Upper Mesopotamia.⁴⁴ The font size indicates their relative importance⁴⁵:

1. Mari, Ebla, Urshu, and Shimanum (the two latter of uncertain location within the region indicated) are of first rank (more than 10 attestations in the Ur III corpus)
2. The Tigris line cities Khabura, Ninua, Mardaman, Talmush, and Urkesh and Yamadium in the Jezirah are second rank (5 to 10 attestations). The country of the Amorite Yamadium can probably be located in the Khabur triangle and the region around Jebel Sinjar.
3. Abarnium (localisation very speculative), Gubla (at the Mediterranean), Mukish (Amuq), Tuttul, Nawar, and Shuda'e are rarely attested because of their minor importance or the great distance from Ur (e.g. Gubla).

Note that it is not clear if Nawar and Shuda'e are to be located in the northern Jezirah at all.

⁴¹ Sallaberger 2007: 431f.

⁴² Sallaberger 2007: 441.

⁴³ See for details Sallaberger 2007: 433-444.

⁴⁴ After Sallaberger 2007: 440, map drawn by A. Pruß.

⁴⁵ See Sallaberger 2007: 450; *ibid.* p. 438f.

Table 2: Middle chronology (MC) dates of late 3rd millennium dynasties and rulers. On the correlation with Ebla see above Tb. 1

Iblul' il of Mari		until ca. 2385	until ca. 2345
Ish'ardamu of Ebla		ca. 2377-2340	ca. 2337-2300
Sargon	40 years	2353-2314	2313-2274
<i>Destruction of Ebla</i>		ca. 2340	ca. 2300
<i>Destruction of Mari</i>		ca. 2330	ca. 2290
Manishtushu and Rimush	22 years	2313-2292	2273-2252
Naramsuen	56 years	2291-2236	2251-2196
Sharkalisharri	25 years	2235-2211	2195-2171
Shudur'ul	15 years	2186-2172	2146-2132
Gutian Period	100/60 yrs	2210-2111	2170-2111
		max. 100 years	min. 60 years
Urnamma of Ur	18 years	2110-2093	
Shulgi	48 years	2092-2045	
Amarsuena	9 years	2044-2036	
Shusuena	9 years	2035-2027	
Ibbisuen	24 years	2026-2003	
Hammurapi of Babylon		1792-1750	

Instead of the former urban centres, Amorite tribes inhabited the Jezirah, and they seem to have extended their influence over the whole Khabur triangle. The disappearance of the cities and the presence of the Amorites, especially the Yamadium tribe, should be understood as two interrelated facets of the change of living conditions.⁴⁶ "The general process of the disappearance of urban centres in Upper Mesopotamia in the late 3rd millennium suggests an ethnogenesis of Amorite nomads meaning that a changing lifestyle of the former urban inhabitants of Upper Mesopotamia towards nomadism also included the adoption of the language of the nomads, Amorite".⁴⁷

The nomadic Jezirah witnessed another phase of urbanisation in the early 2nd millennium, when settlements were founded especially in the eastern half of the Khabur triangle; the western part remained largely nomadic land.

12.1.5 Historical Dates: Middle Chronology and Reduced Middle Chronology

The relative 3rd millennium chronology based on textual sources is treated in Sallaberger & Schrakamp.⁴⁸ Only one or two years difference are possible between Urnamma of Ur (MC 2110-2093) and the end of Babylon I (in MC 1595 or 1597), but the duration of the so-called Gutian period is still open to discussion; the extreme values are 40 (W.W. Hallo) and 100 years (P. Steinkeller), 60 years seems to be a plausible guess at the lower side, and this is taken as a minimum value (but 40 years still cannot be excluded). Based on the traditional Middle Chronology and the duration of reigns as noted in the Sumerian King List (and partly confirmed by contemporary data) this results in the scheme of Tb. 2.

The current understanding of the historical chronology favours a lowering of the Middle Chronology. The lower chronology, based on a number of arguments, can be fixed according to a solar eclipse noted in the Mari eponym chronicle, which is assumed to have occurred in 1795 BC. This leads to the reduction of the Middle Chronology by 50 years.⁴⁹

The uncertainties add up to almost one century of difference in the Sargonic period or before. The destruction of Ebla, which has served as the reference point for the Pre-Sargonic history in sections 1.1 and 1.2 above, is thus dated to around MC 2340 (100 years Gutian period), MC 2300 (60 years Gutian period), rMC₅₀ 2290 (100 years Gutian period), or rMC⁵⁰ 2250 (60 years Gutian period). Historical calculations of mid 2nd millennium chronology and the Mari solar eclipse favour a lower date, i.e. (depending on the Gutian period) between ca. rMC₅₀ 2290 and 2230, which would allow for a co-ordination with Egyptian chronology, since an inscription of Pepi I (after 2303) was found at Ebla.

⁴⁶ Sallaberger 2007: 444-449.

⁴⁷ Sallaberger 2007: 450.

⁴⁸ Sallaberger & Schrakamp in prep. See there for details and further bibliographical references.

⁴⁹ See Sallaberger & Schrakamp in prep. for the argumentation.

Table 3: Reduced Middle chronology (rMC₅₀) dates of late 3rd millennium dynasties and rulers

Iblul' il of Mari		until ca. 2335	until ca. 2295
Ish'ardamu of Ebla		ca. 2327-2290	ca. 2287-2250
Sargon	40 years	2303-2264	2263-2224
<i>destruction of Ebla</i>		ca. 2290	ca. 2250
<i>destruction of Mari</i>		ca. 2280	ca. 2240
Manishtushu and Rimush	22 years	2263-2242	2223-2202
Naramsuen	56 years	2241-2186	2201-2146
Sharkalisharri	25 years	2185-2161	2145-2121
Shudur'ul	15 years	2136-2122	2096-2082
Gutian Period	100/60 yrs	2160-2061	2120-2061
		max. 100 years	min. 60 years
Urnamma of Ur	18 years	2060-2043	
Shulgi	48 years	2042-1995	
Amarsuena	9 years	1994-1986	
Shusuen	9 years	1985-1977	
Ibbisuen	24 years	1976-1953	
Hammurapi of Babylon		1742-1700	

12.2. A Chronological List of Textual Finds from the Jezirah

The intensive archaeological research in the Jezirah has led to the discovery of 3rd millennium cuneiform tablets from various sites, namely at Beydar/Nabada (EJZ 3), Brak/Nagar (EJZ 3-4), Mozan/Urkeshe (EJZ 4-5), Leilan/Shehna (EJZ 4), and at each site at least two different phases are concerned. Those textual finds that stem from a relevant archaeological context are listed here in roughly chronological order. It has to be emphasised that the dating of the tablets is always circumstantial and is never based on a year date or the attestation of a royal name. Therefore, the dating usually relies on palaeography, which includes an evaluation of the form and format of the tablet, of the layout of the text in columns and lines, and of the use and shape of cuneiform signs. The dating of the text groups discussed here is thus based on the shape and layout, the sign forms, the orthography, the language and the contents of the cuneiform tablets. Therefore the traditional Southern Mesopotamian labels “Pre-Sargonic” and “Sargonic” are used, although the specific archaeological context is observed (see below section 4.).

12.2.1 Pre-Sargonic Period

12.2.1.1 Beydar/Nabada, Early Texts from Field I (I)

At Beydar, a group of tablets was discovered in 2002 and 2005, that is without any doubt of earlier date than the main, relatively homogenous text group (12.2.1.2 below); it consists of 17 tablets, *Subartu* 12, 216⁵⁰ and the still unpublished texts 87535-T-1 to 16 = Beydar Texts nos. 221 to 236.⁵¹ Although of the same administrative character as the later texts, the texts from Field I are distinguished by the following features:⁵² different writings of a few words (e.g. EME₃ for later EME₆), different expressions (SIPA EME₃ vs. šu EME₆ for the herdsman of she-asses), and higher rations for persons. Palaeographically, one notes only the older sign form for LÚ, and perhaps 𒀭 written in the standard form (and not like RI; 87535-T-8).

These differences suggest a time gap between the Field I texts and the main text group. Since the Field I texts show two other names in the characteristic position of the “main official” (87535-T-3 and 6), this gap may have lasted (at least) one generation, but a more exact determination is impossible by palaeographic or other criteria. So philology allows only an estimated relative date of the Field I texts as between 20 and perhaps as much as 100 years before the Field B texts. The similarity of some text types would make a difference of ca. 20 to 50 years more plausible. The archaeological context can be defined as Beydar IIIa/IIIb transitional phase, estimated at 25 to 40 years before the main archive.⁵³

⁵⁰ W. Sallaberger in Milano *et al.* 2004: 121.

⁵¹ Courtesy L. Milano.

⁵² Sallaberger *l.c.*

⁵³ Marc Lebeau, p.c.; Elena Rova tends to label the archaeological context as final Beydar IIIa.



Fig. 1: Fragment of ration list from Beydar/Nabada, field I (*Subartu* 12, no. 216).

12.2.1.2 *Beydar/Nabada, Main Archive (2)*

At Beydar, more than 200 tablets and fragments have been found since 1993 at various places on the acropolis. The most relevant text group was found in a secondary context in Field B, but tablets derive equally from the palace (Field F) and the storage facilities (Field E).⁵⁴ Although the tablets were found at different places they can be defined as the scattered remains of one administrative unit and therefore of an “archive”: The same persons appear time and again in various text groups in the same or similar functions; the most prominent examples are the five main officials⁵⁵ or the shepherds.⁵⁶ The bullae found from Field B pertain to the same administrative unit⁵⁷ and thus provide a link between administration and glyptic style; sealings of the same seals, however, were not found in other parts of the palace.⁵⁸ Excluding the early tablets from Field I (12.3.1.1 above), these 220 tablets (as of 2010) are labelled as the remains of the “main archive” at Beydar.

The dating of the Beydar tablets is discussed by Sallaberger,⁵⁹ who bases his argumentation on palaeography and on the possible mention of Paba, queen of Mari. The palaeographical evaluation considers tablet format, layout and sign forms. This points to a date before the time of the more or less contemporary rulers Enshakushana – Lugalzagesi – Sargon. The similarity in style suggests a proximity to the archaic tablets of Ebla. Such a relative dating could be expressed in historical terms as a time before Sargon year 1 or around the time of Enmetena to Enentarzi of Lagash.

Furthermore, Sallaberger⁶⁰ has proposed that Paba (*pa₄-ba₄*) listed in the Beydar document *Subartu* 2, 23 as owner of donkeys, can be identified with the wife of king Iblul’il of Mari: her name appears not only in the same writing at Mari, Ebla and Beydar, but she is also listed before the ruler of Nagar (labeled EN). Iblul’il’s rule ended ca. 45–50 years before the end of Ebla,⁶¹ a period when Mari exerted a supremacy in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, acknowledged not only by Ebla, but also by Nagar, as testified by the votive inscription of Mara’il of Nagar (see above 12.1.1). Archi and Biga⁶² suggested that the Beydar reference of Paba may equally refer to Baba (*ba-ba₄*), the wife of Hidar of Mari, who ruled at the time of the destruction of Ebla. This option seems less plausible, however, because of the different spelling of the names, the palaeography of the Beydar tablets which fits better with an earlier date, and the changed political situation close to the end of the Ebla archives, when Mari had lost its former supremacy.

The dating of the Beydar tablets ca. 50 years before the end of Ebla leads to chronological problems, if the tablets are taken as testimony of the last use of the monumental complex at the acropolis, since later contacts of a “person from Nabada” (*na-ba-ti-um*) with Ebla are known from Ebla documents.⁶³ Thanks to a better understanding of the internal chronology of the acropolis palace and to a more refined stratigraphy, it has become clear that the phase of the tablets does not represent the final phase of the Beydar IIIb period. Tb. 4 excerpted from Pruß⁶⁴ may illustrate the situation. Phase 5a-b of Field P is directly linked to the acropolis phases by impressions from the same seals found at both places.⁶⁵

⁵⁴ The various find spots have been described by Lebeau 1996b & 2004b.

⁵⁵ Sallaberger 1996: 90-92.

⁵⁶ Sallaberger 2004: 15-19.

⁵⁷ Milano 2004c: 29f.

⁵⁸ Jans 2004: 34.

⁵⁹ Sallaberger 1998

⁶⁰ Sallaberger 1998: 36-37.

⁶¹ Archi & Biga 2003: 6.

⁶² Archi & Biga 2003: 3 fn. 15.

⁶³ As noted by Sallaberger in Milano *et al.* 2004: 70f.

⁶⁴ Pruß in print.

⁶⁵ Pruß in print, section 2.3.2.8.

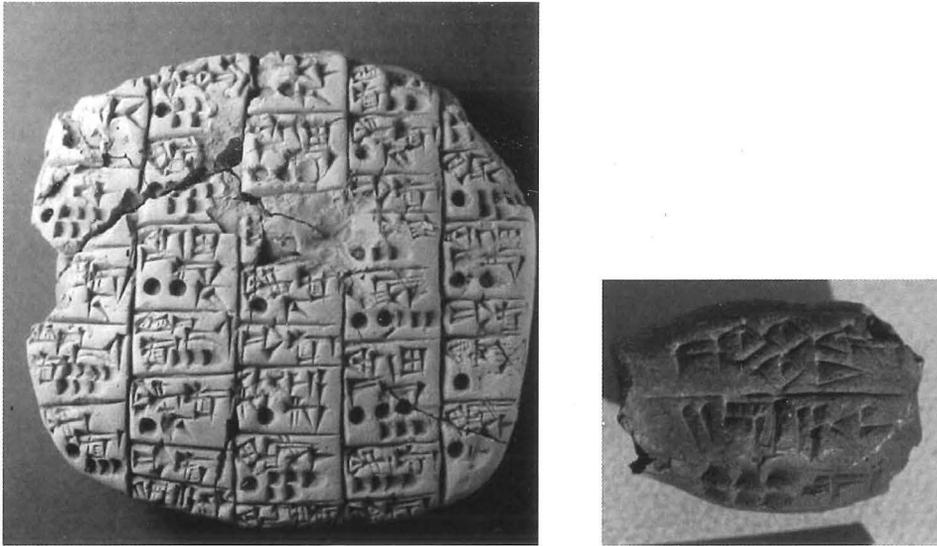


Fig. 2: Administrative document *Subartu 2*, no. 3 (obv.) about personnel and animals for agriculture from Beydar, main archive and inscribed bulla *Subartu 12*, no. 202, broken on the right side; illustrations at different scale.

Table 4: Placement of the main archive in the stratigraphy of Beydar

EJZ Period	Beydar Period	Acropolis	Field P	
4a	IVa	“Early Akkadian”	3	
3b	IIIb	“Post-palatial”	4a-b	
		3b	4c-d	
			5a-b	Beydar tablets
		3a	5c	
		2	6	
			7	

The dating at “50 years” before the end of Ebla has to be taken as an educated guess; the Paba synchronism, if valid, would allow a time span between ca. 80/70 and 45 years.

12.2.1.3 *Bullae from Brak/Nagar, Area FS and SS*

Among the textual finds from the monumental complexes in Areas FS and SS at Brak are a few inscribed bullae⁶⁶ which differ markedly from the major group of inscribed tablets from FS Level 4⁶⁷ and SS Level 3⁶⁸: the shape of the stylus, the layout of the writing and the sign forms (ŠU and DA with vertical leading upwards, the RA sign) clearly place these bullae in the Pre-Sargonic or in the Early Sargonic period.

Milano⁶⁹ has compared the format of the Brak bullae to those from Beydar, which come from a clearly defined context (see 12.2.1.2 above). The strongest argument for a chronological difference is the different format: elongated bullae at Beydar, but “relatively chunky” forms at Brak, a chronological development that has been observed at Brak itself.⁷⁰ Although the relative position between the Beydar main archive (“50 years” before end of Ebla) and the Classical Sargonic tablets (time of Naramsuen) is not to be doubted, it seems impossible to ascribe the Brak bullae more precisely to a certain historical period, i.e. to an administration under the last rulers of Nagar or under the early Sargonic kings.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Nos. 64, 77 to 79, Eidem *et al.* 2001: 104, Fig. 38; 114, 118-119.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 114-118, nos. 66-76.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 112-114, nos. 52 to 59.

⁶⁹ Milano 2004c: 28-29.

⁷⁰ Oates 2001b: 128-134.

⁷¹ Pace Milano 2004c: 29, Oates 2001b: 138.

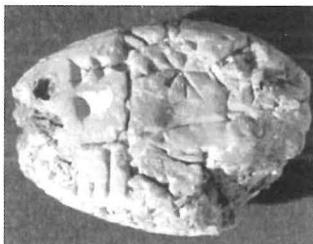


Fig. 3: Bulla no. 77 from Brak, Area FS after Eidem *et al.* 2001: 104 Fig. 138 b.

12.2.1.4 Seal Inscriptions

Seal inscriptions provide further testimonies of cuneiform writing from Brak/Nagar at this early period, although they do not deserve special treatment in this general overview;⁷² contemporary seal inscriptions also derive from Beydar/Nabada⁷³ and Mozan/Urkes.⁷⁴

12.2.2 Sargonic Period

Various finds of single tablets or smaller text groups dating to the Sargonic period derive from Brak, Mozan and Leilan. The development of Sargonic palaeography has been dealt with in several instances. Foster⁷⁵ describes phases of tablet shape and sign forms for tablets from South Mesopotamian Umma. His group A is characterised by tablets which are round or with rounded corners “such that the over-all impression of the tablet is one of roundness”; the writing shows some specific features, but note that ŠU and DA already have the vertical pointing downwards, whereas other groups still show the vertical pointing upwards as in Pre-Sargonic texts (e.g. in the Adab “Early Sargonic” texts).⁷⁶ Foster dated Group A of Umma to the time of Rimush,⁷⁷ whereas Steinkeller⁷⁸ proposed a Sargon date. A “Middle Sargonic” style (Foster’s group B) can be defined by the format, which is more rectangular and with rounded sides, whereas the writing is larger and the sign forms are more elongated; this style belongs to the earlier time of Naramsuen. The “Classic Sargonic” style (Foster’s group C) features tablets with sharper corners and a very careful writing in lines; typically this style seems to date to the time of late Naramsuen and of his successor Sharkalisharri.

This rough division into three styles has been applied successfully to larger corpora when further evidence as prosopography and subject matter help to define various groups.⁷⁹ However, with smaller corpora, and even more so with single texts, an exact dating by palaeography alone is hardly possible. Although for the Adab corpus, for example, the existence of a “Middle Sargonic” group has been corroborated by linguistic and prosopographical investigations,⁸⁰ more often a simple division in “Early” and “Classic” Sargonic seems advisable. Finally, Sommerfeld⁸¹ has pointed to the fact that various styles (*Duktus*), which would suggest chronological differences, can be used in contemporary tablets.

Concerning the Sargonic texts from the Jezirah, tablets stem from different archaeological phases at Leilan and Mozan (see below). There, the criteria for defining styles developed for Mesopotamian tablets apply as well, and therefore palaeographic phases can equally be attributed to the periods of rulers of Akkad. Whereas the Pre-Sargonic period was characterised by a plethora of local palaeographic styles, writing appears to have been comparatively uniform in the Sargonic period.

The school texts and lexical lists found at Mozan,⁸² Brak⁸³ and Leilan⁸⁴ are ample evidence for the training of scribes at these sites, a feature relevant for all environments where writing was used; similarly scribal exercises stem from earlier Beydar, for example.

⁷² Cf. Eidem *et al.* 2001.

⁷³ K. Van Lerberghe in: Milano *et al.* 2004: nos. 170-172.

⁷⁴ Volk, 2004: 99-100, reads pu_3 -^dDUMU.ZI / DUB.SAR.

⁷⁵ Foster 1982: 3-7.

⁷⁶ Pomponio *et al.* 2006.

⁷⁷ Foster 1982: 50-51.

⁷⁸ Steinkeller 1987: 183.

⁷⁹ Cf. Foster 1982 for Umma, Pomponio *et al.* 2006 and Maiocchi 2009 for Adab.

⁸⁰ Schrakamp 2008: 666-668.

⁸¹ Sommerfeld 1999: 7-17.

⁸² Buccellati 2003; Maiocchi in preparation b.

⁸³ Eidem *et al.* 2001: nos. 17?, 18?, 34, 37, 40, 47, 57?; Michalowski 2003b.

⁸⁴ Milano 2007.

The use of the Sargonic script and syllabary is combined with an Old Akkadian rendering of the personal names. This reminds one of the later situation at Mari, when the standard Old Babylonian writing in the Eshnuna style replaced the earlier shakkanakku orthography. At this moment not only the tablet format, the sign forms and the syllabary changed, but also personal names were written in a standard Akkadian form.⁸⁵ The same seems to apply to Old Akkadian in Southern Babylonia, when the Old Akkadian standard form *iš-ma₂*- replaced Southern *iš-me*.⁸⁶ Since the style of writing and orthography are inextricably connected, the appearance of Old Akkadian personal names consequently does not by itself prove the presence of officials from the centre of the Akkadian empire in the Jezirah.

12.2.2.1 *Leilan/Shebna, Akkadian building Ib3 (3)*

When a massive Akkadian building, the “Unfinished Building”, of Level Leilan IIB2, was built, remains of a scribal room with some tablets were levelled. Most tablets found on the upper floor 1 are round school tablets, often however without traces of writing.

A dating of the few textual fragments can only be achieved by palaeography, which is exceptionally clear in this regard. The oblong and round shape of the two documentary texts L.02-16 and 17⁸⁷ dates them to the Early Sargonic period, but excludes a Pre-Sargonic dating as early as, for example, Beydar or Mari.⁸⁸

The sign DA in text L.02-16 obv. 3⁸⁹ shows the vertical leading upwards, a typical feature of “Early Sargonic” writing, which excludes a later, Naramsuen date.⁹⁰

Sargonic presence in Upper Mesopotamia can be documented from the reigns of Manishtushu (Nineveh) and Rimush (Nagar/Brak; see above section 2), and therefore a dating to these years would appear most probable, allowing an extension into the last years of Sargon or perhaps even the early years of Naramsuen.

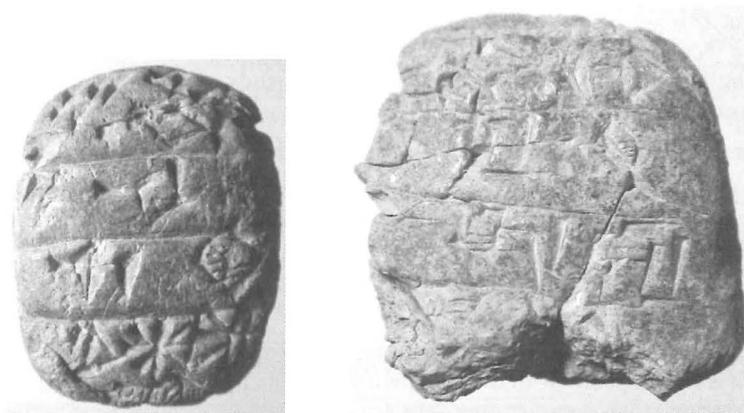


Fig. 4: L.02-17 obv.⁹¹ and L.02-16 obv.⁹² from Leilan IIB3.

12.2.2.2 *Mozan/Urkesb, Tupkish Palace (4)*

Excavations at the royal palace AP at Mozan, ancient Urkesb, directed by Giorgio and Marilyn Buccellati, led in July 1992 to the discovery of various tablets found in the floor accumulation A1f113, now Room B2: two complete small tablets, one of them a lexical text (ED Lu E, A1j1), “an inscribed docket, and more than forty fragments of tablets, have been found within the building, and also just outside it to the West”.⁹³ A historical dating of the building phase is possible: “Following the discovery of impressions of the seal of Tar’am-Agade, a daughter of Naram-Sin, our dating of king Tupkish to the Akkadian period, and specifically to early Naram-Sin or possibly even slightly earlier, has been confirmed. The accumulation A1f113, in which our tablet A1j1 was found, is the earliest one within the palace built by Tupkish, and the nature of its emplacement makes it clear that its period of

⁸⁵ Milano 2007: 55 nos. 2-3.

⁸⁶ Charpin 1987, 1990; Horioka 2009.

⁸⁷ Milano 2007: 55 no. 2/

⁸⁸ Cf. similarly Milano 2007: 53.

⁸⁹ Buccellati 2003: 45.

⁹⁰ Left, after Milano 2007: 55 Fig. 11.

⁹¹ Cf. the examples of Durand 1985: 161

⁹² Walter Sommerfeld, p.c. [see now in CRAI 53, 146-148].

⁹³ Right; *ibid.* 55 Fig. 9.



Fig. 5: School tablet (ED Lu E) A1j1 obv., from Mozan, Tupkish palace.⁹⁴

use was fully contemporary with the reign of Tupkish. The majority of the seal impressions of Tupkish himself, his wife Uqnitum and their courtiers, come from the same or equivalent accumulations throughout the service wing of the Palace.⁹⁵

Format, layout and sign forms would point to the Early to Middle Sargonic text groups defined above and nothing would suggest a Pre-Sargonic or a Classic Sargonic dating.

The other complete tablet mentioned is A7.341, a document on the distribution of copper. In his detailed discussion of shape, layout and sign forms of the document, Maiocchi⁹⁶ compares the shape and the sign forms of this document to “Middle Sargonic” texts from Adab, i.e. texts dated mainly to the earlier part of Naramsuen’s reign. This agrees with the fact that Naramsuen was already deified when Tar’am-Akkade’s seal was cut (see above section 12.1.3) and that documents or school tablets most often belong to the very latest phase of use of a building before its closure or destruction. A study of the radiocarbon date samples from the Tupkish palace is expected.⁹⁷

The other tablets from this context⁹⁸ apparently agree with this dating.⁹⁹

12.2.2.3 *Lexical Text and Administrative Documents from Brak/Nagar, Area TC (5)*

Two tablets from Locus TCJ 1674, a lexical text and an administrative document, were singled out among the textual finds from Brak because related radiocarbon dates from the excavations of G. Emberling seem to be available.¹⁰⁰ The lexical text is a fragmentary copy of the widely distributed list of professions Early Dynastic Lu A,¹⁰¹ which is attested from the Uruk period down to the Old Babylonian period. Michalowski,¹⁰² based on textual variants, suggests it is contemporary with the Ebla archives (although he calls it an “ED IIIa” text). Although little of the text is preserved and the obverse is rather damaged, palaeography allows a more precise dating. The GAL sign has (at least) 8 horizontals; the archaic lexical texts of Ebla (e.g. *MEE* 3 50) show only 4 to 6 (as do the Fara texts), a narrow GAL with ca. 8 horizontals can be found only in the younger phase (*MEE* 3 2).¹⁰³ But the pronounced differentiation between the main wedges and the very fine parallel ones rather favours a Sargonic date of the Brak ED Lu A fragment.

The administrative text TB 21030 from the same findspot¹⁰⁴ can be described as a “Classic Sargonic” text (note ŠU with vertical downwards, ŠU+NIGIN₂ written as ligature), perhaps belonging to the (latter half of the) reign of Naramsuen. Therefore it cannot be excluded that despite the different format (dictated by the respective text types) the two tablets are roughly contemporary.

⁹⁴ Buccellati 2003: 46.

⁹⁵ Buccellati 2003: 47.

⁹⁶ Maiocchi in preparation a.

⁹⁷ Giorgio Buccellati, pers comm.

⁹⁸ Prepared for publication by Massimo Maiocchi.

⁹⁹ M. Maiocchi, pers. comm.

¹⁰⁰ See the contribution of L. Ristvet in this volume.

¹⁰¹ Michalowski 2003a, 2003b.

¹⁰² Michalowski 2003a: 58, 2003b: §4.

¹⁰³ On the phases of Ebla script see Sallaberger 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Michalowski 2003a: 57 fig. 62, 59, no. 82.

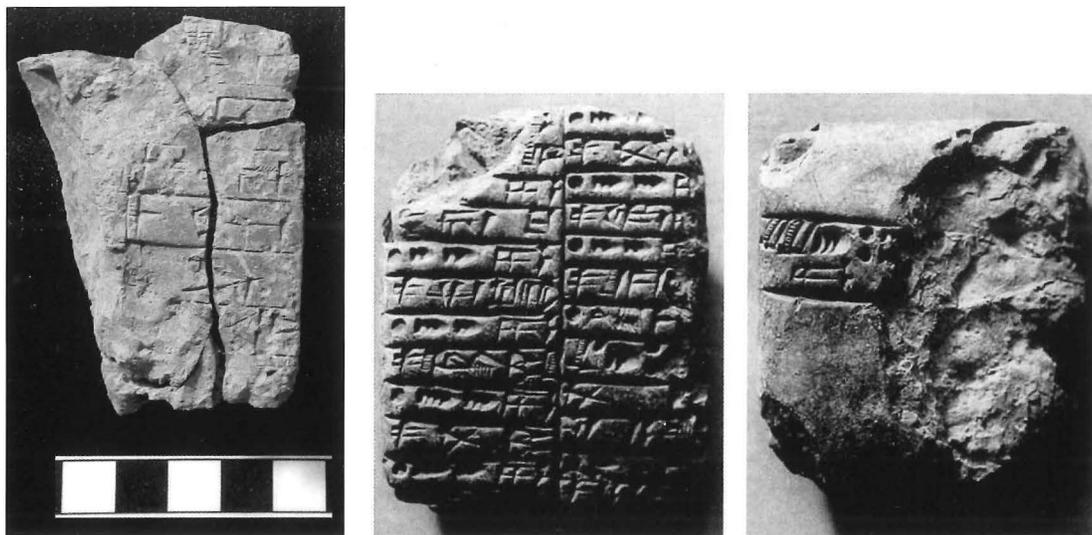


Fig. 6: Lexical (TB 21029) and administrative text (TB 21030) from Brak, Area TC, Locus TCJ-1674.¹⁰⁵

12.2.2.4 Brak/Nagar, phase M: Area FS Level 4 (6) and Texts from the 'Naramsuen Palace'

From Area FS Level 4 comes a group of Classical Sargonic administrative tablets.¹⁰⁶ This archaeological level corresponds to Brak Phase M (ca. EJZ 4) and dates after the Akkadian closure of the FS shrines in Level 5.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, administrative tablets often belong to a building's last period of use, shortly before the rooms were given up; the construction of the Level 4 buildings may thus have happened one or more generations earlier. The shape and layout of the tablets as well as the shape and distribution of the signs allow an attribution to the 'Classical Sargonic' group of the later reign of Naramsuen and of his successor Sharkalisharri. The tablets from the 'Naramsuen Palace' at Brak¹⁰⁸ seem to belong to the same chronological horizon.

Whereas in the FS Level 4 texts the round stylus was generally used to impress numbers, one text¹⁰⁹ has 'pointed' numbers written with the normal stylus, as the editors repeatedly point out¹¹⁰. 'Pointed' numbers appear regularly in Classical Sargonic texts, e.g. at Adab with tablets dated to the time of Sharkalisharri,¹¹¹ among the 43 Akkadian texts from Nippur that date to the time of Sharkalisharri,¹¹² 11 texts have pointed numbers (*OSP* 2 nos. 2, 10, 11, 13, 19, 21, 22, 27–30), 15 round numbers,¹¹³ 5 texts both pointed and round ones¹¹⁴. The tablets from Brak, FS Level 4, show fairly the same distribution: 2 texts with pointed numbers (nos. 66, 74), 4 with round numbers (nos. 67, 70, 72, 75). So palaeography leads to a (late Naramsuen to) Sharkalisharri (MC 2235-2211/2195-2171) dating of the FS Level 4 tablets.

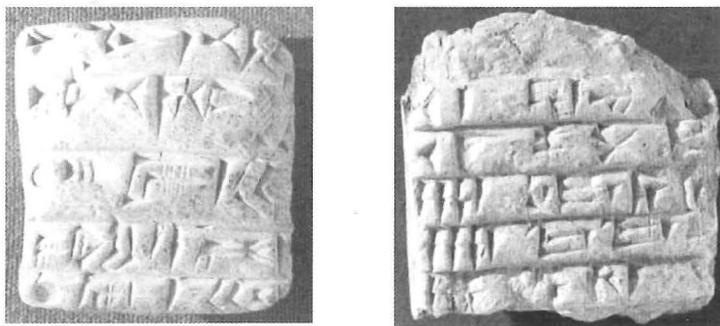


Fig. 7: Administrative tablets no. 67 (left, round numbers) and no. 74 (right, pointed numbers) from Brak FS Level 4.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁵ After Michalowski 2003b and 2003a: 57 fig. 57.

¹⁰⁶ Eidem *et al.* 2001: 114-8, nos. 67-76, published by Illingworth 1988.

¹⁰⁷ See Ristvet this volume: "earlier than expected".

¹⁰⁸ Eidem *et al.* 2001: nos. 106-11, nos. 14-30.

¹⁰⁹ Eidem *et al.* 2001: 116 no. 74, see 105 fig. 139.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Oates & Oates 2001: 384.

¹¹¹ In Pomponio *et al.* 2006: nos. 214, 222, 235, 252; cf. Schrakamp 2008: 665-670 on the dating.

¹¹² Westenholz 1987: 29.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* nos. 1, 3-9, 12, 14-16, 23-25, not counting the *SILA*₃ with pointed numbers.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* nos. 17, 18, 26, 31, 32.

¹¹⁵ After Eidem *et al.* 2001: 115, 105 fig. 139.

The buildings of FS Level 4 precede the more substantial rebuilding of the area in Level 3. FS Levels 1 to 2 belong to a phase called ‘Post-Akkadian’, which may then date to the period that corresponds to the time of Dudu and Shudur’ul (MC 2210-2172/2170–2132), whereby a few more decades may be added. Among the published tablets from Brak none appear to be of the same date as the Ur III type tablet from the Pusham House at Mozan (below 12.2.2.7). This decline of Brak after the Sargonic period agrees with the historical situation¹¹⁶.

12.2.2.5 Leilan/Shebna, Akkadian Building IIb1 (7)

The tablets from the younger phase at Leilan/Shebna published by L. Milano¹¹⁷ are in format, layout and palaeography good examples of Late Sargonic texts (i.e. the time following Sharkalisharri), similar to early, i.e. late 3rd millennium *šakkanakkū* texts from Mari (information courtesy Laurent Colonna d’Istria). The fragmentary state prevents a more exact dating, but the difference between these and the earlier tablets from Leilan (see 12.2.2.1) is noteworthy.

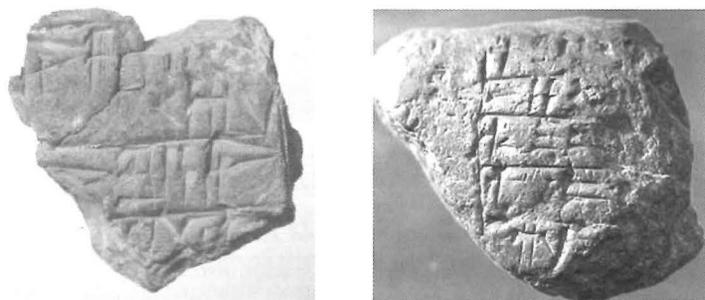


Fig. 8: Administrative tablets from Leilan, Akkadian building IIb1. (note the pointed numbers for capacity measures)¹¹⁸

12.2.2.6 Mozan/Urkes, Late Sargonic Tablets

The two Late Sargonic tablets (M2 1 and 2) on workers published by Milano¹¹⁹ are documents of the Sargonic tradition: the relative determinative pronoun *šu* (M2 1 ii 6’), the preposition *in* (M2 2 iv–vi), the use of the syllables *šē* and *šu* (SU, in the personal name *ik-šu-dum*). The tablet format, the narrow lines, the writing of *ŠU+NIGIN₂* as ligature and the pointed numbers suggest a Late Sargonic date, which would more or less correspond to the time between Sharkalisharri and Shudur’ul.

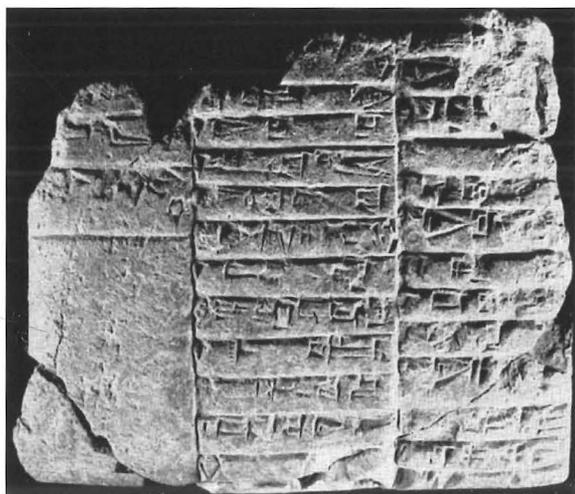


Fig. 9: Late Sargonic list of workers M2 2 reverse from Mozan.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Sallaberger 2007 and cf. above 12.1.4.
¹¹⁷ Milano 2007: 61-64, nos. 17-22.
¹¹⁸ Left: Milano 2007: 61 no. 17; right: *ibid.* 62 no. 19.
¹¹⁹ Milano 1991.
¹²⁰ After Milano 1991: Pl. III.

12.2.2.7 *Mozan/Urkesh, House of Pusham (8)*

The 'House of Pusham' at Mozan was thus labeled after his seal inscription found there.¹²¹ Besides more seal inscriptions of a merchant and a "king" (LUGAL) Rimush (Volk 2004: 94–98), in the same Layer 7 a tablet fragment was found (MZ00C2-i 1055).¹²² The layout of the tablet and the sign forms correspond to Ur III tablets (note LA in obv. 1'). The broad stylus used and the shorter wedges contrasting with the Classical Sargonic style indicate the tablet's younger date compared to the Late Sargonic tablets from Leilan IIB1 with their long, straight lines (12.3.2.5).

It is noteworthy that the style of the tablet resembles Ur III (or Isin period?) tablets from Babylonia so closely, since Urkesh definitely did not belong to the Ur III empire: Assur was the northernmost province. Similarly, Sargonic style tablets from the Jezirah do not indicate the political relationship, as the documents from Mozan itself have confirmed. At Mozan/Urkesh, this may have been the period of a ruler like Atalshen, who left a building inscription concerning the Nergal temple.¹²³

Unfortunately, no radiocarbon dates, which could help to define the chronology more exactly, are available from the same context: this is the only archaeological context with tablets from the Jezirah after the problematic Gutian period, and furthermore the Ur III evidence with the end of Urkesh in Amarsuena year 3 suggests a date not too late in the Ur III period (see above 12.1.4; a later date of the Pušam tablet cannot be excluded).



Fig. 10: Ur III type tablet from the Pusham House at Mozan/Urkesh.¹²⁴

12.3. Cuneiform Tablets, Archaeological Phases and Chronologies

The dates established, mostly by palaeography, however inexact they may be, nevertheless allow a determination in the historical chronology. The following overview of the text groups listed above gives an estimate for the historical date (Middle Chronology, MC, and reduced Middle Chronology, rMC₅₀; see above 12.1.5), a last column indicates the corresponding EJZ phase. This allows a comparison with the radiocarbon dates.

Table 5: An overview of selected 3rd millennium text groups from archaeological contexts

Text group	Date	maximum date: MC + 100 years Gutium	minimum date: rMC ₅₀ + 60 years Gutium	EJZ phase
(1) Beydar, early texts from field I	One generation, perhaps 50–20 years before main archive	MC 2470-2410?	rMC ₅₀ 2380–2320?	EJZ 3a end
(2) Beydar, main archive	Ca. 50 (or 80/70–45) years before end of Ebla (MC 2340, rMC ₅₀ 2250)	MC 2390 (2420/10–2385)	rMC ₅₀ 2300 (2330/20–2295)	EJZ 3b
(3) Leilan/ Shehna, Akkadian building IIB3	Early Sargonic [i.e. Rimush-Manishtushu]	MC 2320-2290	rMC ₅₀ 2230-2200	EJZ 4a
(4) Mozan, Tupkish palace	Early Naramsuen or before	MC 2300-2270	rMC ₅₀ 2210-2180	EJZ 4a
Brak, 'Naramsuen palace'		MC 2270-2236	rMC ₅₀ 2180-2146	
(5) Brak/Nagar, Area TC	Classical Sargonic (late Naramsuen, Sharkalisharri)	MC 2260-2210	rMC ₅₀ 2170-2120	EJZ 4b

¹²¹ Volk 2004: 87-94.

¹²² Volk 2004: 98-99.

¹²³ Frayne 1993: 461 E3/2.7.2.1, cf. Sallaberger 2007: 432 for a summary on the rulers of Urkesh.

¹²⁴ After Volk 2004: 98.

Table 5: (Continued)

Text group	Date	maximum date: MC + 100 years Gutium	minimum date: rMC ₅₀ + 60 years Gutium	EJZ phase
(6) Brak, FS level 4	Classical Sargonic, Sharkalisharri	MC 2240–2210	rMC ₅₀ 2150–2120	
(7) Leilan/Shehna, Akkadian Building IIb1	Late Sargonic (after Sharkalisharri)	MC 2210–2170	rMC ₅₀ 2120–2080	EJZ 4b-c
(8) Mozan/Urkesh, House of Pusham	Ur III (Shulgi/ Amarsuena (?))	MC 2060–2030	rMC ₅₀ 1970–1940	EJZ 5

The dates given in the MC and rMC₅₀ column constitute very rough approximations that usually can be adapted for one or perhaps even two decades without significant problems. Furthermore, the absolute dates depend on problems with the Middle Chronology and for all text groups except (8) on the still uncertain duration of the Gutian period (see 12.1.5 above). The MC date poses the absolute maximum that can plausibly be given (whereby generally a Middle Chronology is hard to defend historically); and although stronger arguments can be adduced for the rMC₅₀ chronology, we can easily add another 20 years or even 40 (or subtract 20 years) for groups (1) to (7) depending on the duration of the Gutian period. So the main value of this table is to give an overview of the 3rd millennium epigraphic finds from the Jezirah and to indicate relative distances and durations.