UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID

Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

Madrid, April 3-8 2006

Edited by
Joaquín Mª Córdoba, Miquel Molist, Mª Carmen Pérez,
Isabel Rubio, Sergio Martínez
(Editores)

Madrid, 3 a 8 de abril de 2006

Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Arqueología del Oriente Próximo Antiguo

VOL. III

Centro Superior de Estudios sobre el Oriente Próximo y Egipto

Madrid 2008

UAM EDICIONES

Colección Actas

©
ISBN (Obra Completa): 978-84-8344-140-4
ISBN (Vol. III): 978-84-8344-147-3
Depósito legal: GU-129/2009

Realiza: Palop Producciones Gráficas.
Impreso en España.
Diseño de cubierta: M.A. Tejedor.

5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East
V Congreso Internacional de Arqueología del Oriente Próximo Antiguo

Scientific Committee
Comité Científico Organizador

Joaquín Mª Córdoba
Sergio Martínez
Miquel Molist
Mª Carmen Pérez
Isabel Rubio

Scientific Steering Committee
Comité Científico Permanente

Manfred Bietak
Barthel Hrouda (honorary member)
Hartmut Kühne
Jean-Claude Margueron
Wendy Matthews
Paolo Matthiae
Diederik Meijer
Ingolf Thuesen
Irene J. Winter

Executive Commission
Comisión Ejecutiva

Ana Arroyo, Carmen del Cerro, Fernando Escribano, Saúl Escuredo, Alejandro Gallego, Zahara Gharehkhani, Alessandro Grassi, José Manuel Herrero †, Rodrigo Lucía, Montserrat Mañé, Covadonga Sevilla, Elena Torres

Technical collaborators
Colaboradores técnicos

Virginia Tejedor, Pedro Bao, Roberto Peñas, Pedro Suárez, Pablo Sebastagoítia, Jesús González, Raúl Varea, Javier Lisbona, Carmen Suárez, Amanda Gómez, Carmen Úbeda, Cristina López, José Mª Pereda, Rosa Plaza, Lorenzo Manso, Juan Trapero

Congress Venue
Sede del Congreso

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Sponsorships
Apoyos y patrocinios

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia
Ministerio de Cultura
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores
Comunidad de Madrid

Themes of the Congress

Temas del Congreso

1. ***History and Method of Archaeological Research***
   La historia y la metodología de la investigación arqueológica
2. ***The Archaeology and the Environment of the Ancient Eastern Cities and Villages***
   La arqueología y el entorno de las ciudades y las aldeas antiguas
3. ***Arts and Crafts in the Ancient Near East***
   La artesanía y el arte en el Oriente Antiguo
4. ***Reports on the Results from the Latest Archaeological Seasons***
   Informes sobre los resultados de las recientes campañas de excavación

Index - Índice

VOL. I

Á. Gabilondo Pujol, *Prólogo* 17
P. Matthiae, *Opening Speech* 21
J. Mª Córdoba, M. Molist, Mª C. Pérez, I. Rubio, S. Martínez, *Bienvenida* 25

Opening Lectures to Main Themes - Apertura de las sesiones temáticas

N. Chevalier, *Considérations sur l'histoire de l'archéologie, ses origines et son développement actuel* 31
S. Mazzoni, *Arts, crafts and the state: A dialectic process* 37

Papers and posters - Comunicaciones y pósters

M. Abdulkarim, O. Olesti-Vila, *Territoire et paysage dans la province romaine de la Syrie. La centuriatio d'Emesa (Homs)* 55
G. Affani, *Astragalus bone in Ancient Near East: Ritual depositions in Iron Age in Tell Afis* 77
A. Ahrens, *Egyptian and Egyptianizing stone vessels from the royal tomb and palace at Tell Mišrife/Qaṭna (Syria): Imports and local imitations* 93
B. Ajorloo, *The neolithization process in Azerbaijan: An introduction to review* 107
C. Alvaro, C. Lemorini, G. Palumbi, P. Piccione, *From the analysis of the archaeological context to the life of a community. «Ethnographic» remarks on the Arslantepe VIB2 village* 127
Sh. N. Amirov, *Towards understanding religious character of Tell Hazna 1 oval* 137
Á. Armendáriz, L. Teira, M. Al-Maqdissi, M. Haïdar-Boustani, J. J. Ibáñez, J. González Urquijo, *The megalithic necropolises in the Homs Gap (Syria). A preliminary approach* 151
A. Arroyo, *Akpinar* 163

L. Astruc, O. Daune-Le Brun, A. L. Brun, F. Hourani, *Un atelier de fabrication de récipients en pierre à Khirokitia (Néolothique pré-céramique récent, VIIe millénaire av. JC, Chypre* 175
G. Baccelli, F. Manuelli, *Middle Bronze Khabur Ware from Tell Barri/Kahat* 187
B. Bader, *Avaris and Memphis in the Second Intermediate Period in Egypt (ca. 1770-1770-1550/40 BC)* 207
F. Baffi, *Who locked the door? Fortification walls and city gates in Middle Bronze Age inner Syria: Ebla and Tell Tuqan* 225
L. Barda, *El aporte de los mapas y descripciones antiguas en el ensayo de reconstrucción de sitios arqueológicos, periferias y rutas (con uso del SIG)* 245
C. D. Bardeschi, *A propos des installations dans la cour du Temple Ovale de Khafajah* 253
C. Bellino, A. Vallorani, *The Stele of Tell Ashara. The Neo-Syrian perspective* 273
D. Ben-Shlomo, *Iconographic representations from Early Iron Age Philistia and their ethnic implications* 285
A. I. Beneyto Lozano, *Manifestaciones artísticas desde Oriente Próximo a Al-Andalus* 305
L. Bombardieri, C. Forasassi, *The pottery from IA II-III levels of Late-Assyrian to Post-Assyrian period in Tell Barri/Kahat* 323
B. Brown, *The Kilamuwa Relief: Ethnicity, class and power in Iron Age North Syria* 339
A. Brustolon, E. Rova, *The Late Chalcolithic settlement in the Leilan region of Northeastern Syria: A preliminary assessment* 357
S. M. Cecchini, G. Affanni, A. Di Michele, *Tell Afis. The walled acropolis (Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age I). A work in progress* 383
B. Cerasetti, V. A. Girelli, G. Luglio, B. Rondelli, M. Zanfini, *From monument to town and country: Integrated techniques of surveying at Tilmen Höyük in South-East Turkey* 393
N. Chevalier, *Fouiller un palais assyrien au XIXe siècle: Victor Place à Khorsabad* 403
L. Chiocchetti, *Post-Assyrian pottery from the Italian excavations at Fort Shalmaneser, 1987-1990* 417
X. Clop García, *Estrategias de gestión de las materias primas de origen mineral en Tell Halula: primera aproximación* 441
A. Colantoni, A. Gottarelli, *A formalized approach to pottery typology: The case of some typical shapes from the Late Bronze Age in Northern Syria* 455
A. M. Conti, C. Persiani, *Arslantepe. The building sequence of the EB3 settlement* 465
C. Coppini, *Mitannian pottery from Tell Barri* 477
J. Mª Córdoba, *Informe preliminar sobre las últimas campañas en al Madam (2003-2006)* 493
F. Cruciani, *The atributes of Ishtar in Old Syrian glyptic and the Mesopotamian literary tradition* 509
A. Daems, *Alternative ways for reading some female figurines from Late Prehistoric Mesopotamia and Iran* 519

A. D'Agostino, *Between Mitannians and Middle-Assyrians: Changes and links in ceramic culture at Tell Barri and in Syrian Jazirah during the end of the 2nd millennium BC* 525
A. D'Agostino, S. Valenti, N. Laneri, *Archaeological works at Hirbemerdon Tepe (Turkey). A preliminary report or the first three seasons* 549
M. B. D'Anna, R. Laurito, A. Ricci, *Walking on the Malatya Plain (Turkey): Preliminary remarks on Chalcolithic pottery and occupation. 2003-2005 Archaeological Survey Project* 567
I. de Aloe, *A preliminary report on the 1995 Tell Leilan survey: The pottery from the Hellenistic to the Sasanian Period* 575
F. Dedeoglu, *Cultural transformation and settlement system of Southwestern Anatolia from Neolithic to LBA: A case study from Denizili/Çivril Plain* 587
K. De Langhe, *Early Christianity in Iraq and the Gulf: A view from the architectural remains* 603
T. De Schacht, W. Gheyle, R. Gossens, A. De Wulf, *Archaeological research and CORONA: On the use, misuse and full potential of historical remote sensing data* 611
C. del Cerro, *Life and society of the inhabitants of al Madam (UAE). Interdisciplinary study of an Iron Age village and its environment* 619
G. M. Di Nocera, *Settlements, population and landscape on the Upper Euphrates between V and II millennium BC. Results of the Archaeological Survey Project 2003-2005 in the Malatya Plain* 633
S. Di Paolo, *Dalle straordinarie avventure di Lady Hester Stanhope alla «Crociata» archaeologica di Butler: la politica «religiosa» dei viaggi delle esplorazioni scientifiche nella regione di Damasco tra XIX e XX secolo* 647
R. Dolce, *Considerations on the archaeological evidence from the Early Dynastic Temple of Inanna at Nippur* 661
R. H. Dornemann, *Status report on the Early Bronze Age IV Temple in Area E at Tell Qarqur in the Orontes Valley, Syria* 679
A. Egea Vivancos, *Artesanos de lo rupestre en el alto Éufrates sirio durante la época romana* .. 711
A. Egea Vivancos, *Viajeros y primeras expediciones arqueológicas en Siria. Su contribución al redescubrimiento de Hierapolis y su entorno* 731
B. Einwag, *Fortified citadels in the Early Bronze Age? New evidence from Tall Bazi (Syria)* 741
M. Erdalkiran, *The Halaf Ceramics in Şirnak area, Turkey* 755
F. Escribano Martín, *Babilonia y los españoles en el siglo XIX* 767
M. Feizkhah, *Pottery of Garrangu style in Azarbaijan (Iran)* 775
E. Felluca, *Ceramic evidences from Bampur: A key site to reconstruct the cultural development in the Bampur Valley (Iran) during the third millennium BC* 797
E. Felluca, *S. Mogliazza Under-floor burials in a Middle Bronze Age domestic quarter at Tell Mardikh – Ebla, Syria* 809

VOL. II

S. Festuccia, M. Rossi, *Recent excavations on the Ebla Acropolis (Syria)* 17
S. Festuccia, M. Rossi *Latest phases of Tell Mardikh - Ebla: Area PSouth Lower Town* 31
J.-D. Forest and R. Vallet, *Uruk architecture from abroad: Some thoughts about Hassek Höyük* 39
M. Fortin, L.-M. Loisier, J. Pouliot, *La géomatique au service des fouilles archéologiques: l'exemple de Tell 'Acharneh, en Syrie* 55
G. Gernez, *A new study of metal weapons from Byblos: Preliminary work* 73
K. T. Gibbs, *Pierced clay disks and Late Neolithic textile production* 89
J. Gil Fuensanta, P. Charvàt, E A. Crivelli, *The dawn of a city. Surtepe Höyük excavations Birecik Dam area, Eastern Turkey* 97
A. Gómez Bach, *Las producciones cerámicas del Halaf Final en Siria: Tell Halula (valle del Éufrates) y Tell Chagar Bazar (valle del Khabur)* 113
E. Grootveld, *What weeds can tell us Archaeobotanical research in the Jordan Valley* ... 123
E. Guralnick, *Khorsabad sculptured fragments* 127
H. Hameeuw, K. Vansteenhuyse, G. Jans, J. Bretschneider, K. Van Lerberghe, *Living with the dead. Tell Tweini: Middle Bronze Age tombs in an urban context* ... 143
R. Hempelmann, *Kharab Sayyar: The foundation of the Early Bronze Age settlement* 153
F. Hole, *Ritual and the collapse of Susa, ca 4000 BC* 165
D. Homès-Fredericq *The Belgian excavations at al-Lahun (biblical Moab region), Jordan. Past and future* 179
J. J. Ibáñez et al., *Archaeological survey in the Homs Gap (Syria): Campaigns of 2004 and 2005* 187
A. Invernizzi, *El testimonio de Ambrogio Bembo y Joseph Guillaume Grelot sobre los restos arqueológicos iranios* 205
K. Jakubiak, *Pelusium, still Egyptian or maybe Oriental town in the Western Synai. Results of the last excavations on the Roman city* 221
S. A. Jasim, E. Abbas, *The excavations of a Post-Hellenistic tomb at Dibba, UAE* 237
Z. A. Kafafi, *A Late Bronze Age jewelry mound from Tell Dayr 'Alla, Jordan* 255
E. Kaptijn, *Settling the steppe. Iron Age irrigation around Tell Deir 'Alla, Jordan Valley* 265
C. Kepinski, *New data from Grai Resh and Tell Khoshi (South-Sinjar, Iraq) collected in 2001 and 2002* 285
A. Klein-Franke, *The site in Jabal Qarn Wu'l near Ḥiziaz in the region of Sanḥan (Yemen)* 297
G. Kozbe, *A new archaeological survey project in the South Eastern Anatolia: Report of the Cizre and Silopi region* 323
P. Kurzawski, *Assyrian outpost at Tell Sabi Abyad: Architecture, organisation of space and social structure of the Late Bronze settlement* 341

R. Laurito, C. Lemorini, E. Cristiani, *Seal impressions on* cretulae *at Arslantepe: Improving the methodological and interpretative references* 351
A. R. Lisella, *Clay figurines from Tell Ta'anek* 361
M. Lönnqvist, *Kathleen M. Kenyon 1906-1978. A hundred years after her birth. The formative years of a female archaeologist: From socio-politics to the stratigraphical method and the radiocarbon revolution in archaeology* 379
K. O. Lorentz, *Crafting the Head: The human body as art?* 415
C. Lorre, *Jacques de Morgan et la question de l'origine de la métalurgie dans le Caucase* 433
S. Lundström, *From six to seven Royal Tombs. The documentation of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft excavation at Assur (1903-1914) – Possibilities and limits of its reexamination* 445
N. Marchetti, *A preliminary report on the 2005 and 2006 excavations at Tilmen Höyük* 465
O. Marder, I. Milevski, R. Rabinovich, O. Ackermann, R. Shahack-Gross, P. Fine, *The Lower Paleolithic site of Revadin Quarry, Israel* 481
R. Martín Galán, *An example of the survival of ancient Mesopotamian architectonical traditions in Northern Jazireh during the Hellenistic period* 491
A. C. Martins, *Oriental antiquities and international conflicts. A Portuguese episode during the 1st World War* 515
K. Matsumura, *Hellenistic human and animal sacrifices in Central Anatolia: Examples from Kaman-Kalehöyük* 523
P. Matthiae, *The Temple of the Rock of Early Bronze IV A-B at Ebla: Structure, chronology, continuity* 547
M. G. Micale, The course of the images. *Remarks on the architectural reconstructions in the 19th and 20th centuries: The case of the Ziqqurrat* 571
L. Milano, Elena Rova, *New discoveries of the Ca'Foscari University – Venice Team at Tell Beydar (Syria)* 587
I. Milevski, Y. Baumgarten, *Between Lachish and Tel Erani: Horvat Ptora, a new Late Prehistoric site in the Southern Levant* 609
O. Muñoz, S. Cleuziou, *La tombe 1 de Ra's al-Jinz RJ-1: une approche de la complexité des pratiques funéraires dans la peninsule d'Oman à l'Âge du Bronze ancien* 627
L. Nigro, *Tell es-Sultan/Jericho from village to town: A reassessment of the Early Bronze Age I settlement and necropolis* 645
L. Nigro, *Prelimiray report of the first season of excavation of Rome «La Sapienza» University at Khirbet al-Batrawy (Upper Wadi az-Zarqa, Jordan)* 663
A. T. Ökse, *Preliminary results of the salvage excavations at Salat Tepe in the Upper Tigris region* 683
V. Orsi, *Between continuity and tranformation: The late 3rd Millennium BC ceramic sequence from Tell Barri (Syria)* 699
A. Otto, *Organization of Late Bronze Age cities in the Upper Syrian Euphrates Valley* 715
M. Özbaşaran, *Musular: The special activity site in Central Anatolia, Turkey* 733
F. Pedde, T*he Assur-Project. An old excavation newly analysed* 743

C. Persiani, *Chemical analysis and time/space distribution of EB2-3 pottery at Arslantepe (Malatya, Turkey)* 753
L. P. Petit, *Late Iron Age levels at Tell Damieh: New excavations results from the Jordan Valley* 777
L. Peyronel, *Making images of humans and animals. The clay figurines from the Royal Palace G at Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Syria (EB IVA, c. 2400-2300 BC)* 787
P. Piccione, *Walking in the Malatya Plain (Turkey): The first Half of the III millennium BC (EBA I and II). Some preliminary remarks on the results of the 2003-2005 Archaeological Survey Project* 807

VOL. III

F. Pinnock, *Artistic genres in Early Syrian Syria. Image and ideology of power in a great pre-classical urban civilisation in its formative phases* 17
A. Polcaro, *EB I settlements and environment in the Wadi az-zarqa Dolmens and ideology of death* 31
M. Pucci, *The Neoassyrian residences of Tell Shekh Hamad, Syria* 49
P. Puppo, *La Tabula «Chigi»: un riflesso delle conquiste romane in Oriente* 65
S. Riehl, *Agricultural decision-making in the Bronze Age Near East: The development of archaeobotanical crop plant assemblages in relation to climate change* 71
A. Rochman-Halperin, *Technical aspects of carving Iron Age decorative cosmetic palettes in the Southern Levant* 93
M. Rossi, *Tell Deinit-Syria MEDA Project n. 15 (2002-2004). Restoration training programs* 103
M. Sala, *Khirbet Kerak Ware from Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho: A reassessment in the light of the finds of the Italian-Palestinian Expedition (1997-2000)* 111
S. G. Schmid, A. Amour, A. Barmasse, S. Duchesne, C. Huguenot, L. Wadeson, *New insights into Nabataean funerary practices* 135
S. Silvonen, P. Kouki, M. Lavento, A. Mukkala, H. Ynnilä, *Distribution of Nabataean-Roman sites around Jabal Harûn: Analysis of factors causing site patterning* 161
G. Spreafico, *The Southern Temple of Tell el-Husn/Beth-Shean: The sacred architecture of Iron Age Palestine reconsidered* 181
M. T. Starzmann, *Use of space in Shuruppak: Households on dispaly* 203
T. Steimer-Herbet, H. Criaud, *Funerary monuments of agro-pastoral populations on the Leja (Southern Syria)* 221
G. Stiehler-Alegría, *Kassitische Siegel aus stratifizierten Grabungen* 235
I. M. Swinnen, *The Early Bronze I pottery from al-Lahun in Central Jordan: Seal impressions and potter's marks* 245
H. Tekin, *The Late Neolithic pottery tradition of Southeastern Anatolia and its vicinity* 257
H. Tekin, *Hakemi Use: A newly established site dating to the Hassuna / Samarra period in Southeastern Anatolia* 271

D. Thomas, *The ebb and flow of empires – Afghanistan and neighbouring lands in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries* 285
Y. Tonoike, *Beyond style: Petrographic analysis of Dalma ceramics in two regions of Iran* 301
B. Uysal, *The technical features of the Ninevite 5 Ware in Southeastern Anatolia* 313
C. Valdés Pererio, *Qara Qûzâq and Tell Hamîs (Syrian Euphrates valley): Updating and comparing Bronze Age ceramic and archaeological data* 323
S. Valentini, *Ritual activities in the «rural shirines» at Tell Barri, in the Khabur region, during the Ninevite 5 period* 345
K. Vansteenhuyse, M. al-Maqdissi, P. Degryse, K. Van Lerberghe, *Late Helladic ceramics at Tell Tweini and in the kingdom of Ugarit* 359
F. Venturi, *The Sea People in the Levant: A North Syrian perspective* 365
V. Verardi, *The different stages of the Acropolis from the Amorite period at Tell Mohammed Diyab* 383
V. Vezzoli, *Islamic Period settlement in Tell Leilan Region (Northern Jazīra): The material evidence from the 1995 Survey* 393
O. Vicente i Campos, *La aplicación de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación en el yacimiento arqueológico de Tell Halula* 405
N. Vismara, *Lo sviluppo delle metodologie della scienza numismatica e la scoperta di una nuova area di produzione monetale: il caso dell'identificazione della emissioni della Lycia in epoca arcaica* 417
T. Watkins, *Natural environment* versus *cultural environment: The implications of creating a built environment* 427
N. Yalman, *An alternative interpretation on the relationship between the settlement layout and social organization in Çatalhöyük Neolithic site: A ethnological research in Central Anatolia* 439
E. Yanai, *Ein Assawir, Tel Magal and the peripheral settlement in the Northern Sharon from the Neolithic period until the end of the Early Bronze Age III* 449
E. Yanai, *Cemetery of the Intermediate Bronze Age at Bet Dagan* 459
E. Yanai, *The trade with Cypriot Grey Lustrous Wheel Made Ware between Cyprus, North Syrian Lebanese coast and Israel* 483

Workshops - Talleres de debate

Workshop I

Houses for the Living and a Place for the Dead

N. Balkan, M. Molist and D. Stordeur (eds.)

Introduction: House for the living and place for the dead. In memory of Jacques Cauvin 505
P. C. Edwards, *The symbolic dimensions of material culture at Wadi Hammeh 27* 507

F. R. Valla, F. Bocquentin, *Les maisons, les vivants, les morts: le cas de Mallaha (Eynan), Israël* 521
E. Guerrero, M. Molist, J. Anfruns, *Houses for the living and for the dead? The case of Tell Halula (Syria)* 547
D. Stordeur, R. Khawam, *Une place pour les morts dans les maisons de Tell Aswad (Syrie). (Horizon PPNB ancien et PPNB moyen)* 561
I. Kuijt, *What mean these bones? Considering scale and Neolithic mortuary variability* 591
B. S. Düring, *Sub-floor burials at Çatalhöyük: Exploring relations between the dead, houses, and the living* 603
P. M. M. G. Akkermans, *Burying the dead in Late Neolithic Syria* 621
T. Watkins, *Ordering time and space: Creating a cultural world* 647

Workshop III

The Origins of the Halaf and the Rise of Styles

O Niewenhuyse, P. Akkermans, W. Cruells and M. Molist (eds.)

Introduction: A workshop on the origins of the Halaf and the rise of styles 663
W. Cruells, *The Proto-Halaf: Origins, definition, regional framework and chronology* 671
O. Nieuwenhuyse, Feasting in the Steppe – *Late Neolithic ceramic change and the rise of the Halaf* 691
R. Bernbeck, *Taming time and timing the tamed* 709
M. Le Mière, M. Picon, *A contribution to the discussion on the origins of the Halaf culture from chemical analyses of pottery* 729
B. Robert, A. Lasalle, R. Chapoulie, *New insights into the ceramic technology of the Proto-Halaf («Transitional») period by using physico-chemical methods* 735
H. Tekin, *Late Neolithic ceramic traditions in Southeastern Anatolia: New insights from Hakemi Use* 753
M. Verhoeven, *Neolithic ritual in transition* 769

Programme - Programa

Taming time and timing the tamed

Reinhard Bernbeck, Binghamton

Abstract

Recent intensification of archaeological work on late Neolithic sites in the Jazira and southeastern Turkey has produced a vast amount of new data. It is long-standing academic practice, especially among historians and archaeologists, to deal with such a situation by classifying and categorizing material into internally coherent entities, with the goal of identifying new chronospatial entities. This paper calls into question the ways this process is carried out. I argue for a constructivist notion of periods. Naming periods and assumptions of cultural coherence result in distorted academic discourses that ask interesting questions of socioeconomic or political relevance but frame them inappropriately. I use the example of design grammars of Samarran pottery to illustrate my arguments.

Keywords: Historiography, periodization, Halaf, design grammar.

The praxis of periodization[1]

Textbooks on Near Eastern prehistory never miss the chance to describe at some length the «Halaf culture.» Students are given a trait list that is easily memorized: «tholos»-type buildings, fine painted pottery with *bukranion* motifs and «cream bowl» shapes, and amulet seals. The Halaf culture is furthermore described as «the first time in the Near East [when] there was a widespread cultural horizon.»[2] This sort of knowledge invites two questions. What are the origins of such a culture,[3] and what are the reasons for its demise? Both questions have recently received heightened attention, in part because of renewed field research.

When reflecting on such questions, it is sometimes worthwhile to consider deeper issues that steer our constructions of chronologies. The assertion that one

---

[1] I thank Olivier Nieuwenhuyse and Walter Cruells for inviting me to the workshop 'The Origins of the Halaf and the Rise of Styles' at the ICAANE in Madrid. Special thanks to Olivier for many inspiring email exchanges. I also thank Susan Pollock, Maresi Starzmann and Charlie Cobb for comments and critical discussions and a lively group of students for sharing the fun of Madrid evenings with me.

[2] C. Redman, 1978. *The Rise of Civilization*, p. 199. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman. Maps in other works underscore this point, e.g. M. Roaf, 1990. *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*, p. 49. New York: Facts on File; L. Copeland and F. Hours, 1987. «L'expansion de la civilisation halafienne: une interpretation de la repartition des sites.» In J.-L. Huot, ed.: *Préhistoire de la Mésopotamie*, pp. 209-220. Paris: Editions du CNRS.

[3] P.P.M.G. Akkkermans, 1997. «Old and New Perspectives on the Origins of the Halaf Culture.» In O. Rouault and M. Wäfler, eds.: *La Djéziré et l'Euphrate syriens de la Protohistoire à la fin du deuxieme millénaire av. J.C.,* pp. 55-68. Paris: Editions Recherches sur les Civilisations. S. Campbell, 1998. «Problems of Definition: the Origins of the Halaf in North Iraq.» In M. Lebeau, ed.: *About Subartu: Studies Devoted to Upper Mesopotamia*, pp. 39-52. Brussels: Brepols. W. Cruells and O. Nieuwenhuyse, 2004. «The Proto-Halaf Period in Syria. New Sites, New Data.» *Paléorient* 30 (1): 47-68.

has identified a whole new chronological horizon poses all the questions of periodization that have been of long-standing interest to philosophers of history. Do historical periods have an objective background, or are they merely the constructs of a community of researchers? Are the Proto-Halaf period, the Early Dynastic period of Mesopotamia, or the European Renaissance based on any objective reality? Such debates mirror disputes of 12th and 13th century scholasticism between nominalists and realists. In the early 20th century, Wilhelm Windelband and Theodor Lessing took the ultra-constructivist stance according to which the past is entirely *sinnlos* (meaningless).[4] Heinrich Rickert[5] and others took a realist stance against Windelband, claiming that historical time lends itself to a segregation into discrete units that have a grounding in past realities.[6] In Western societies, the task of authoritative *Sinndeutung* (meaning making) is left to historians,[7] among whom I include archaeologists. This position allows us to produce a pseudo-objective narrative which sets itself apart from other, more openly fictional renderings of the past in art, film or novel. And since all knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) depends on difference and distinction, the intellectual process of periodization involves the assessment of continuity and discontinuity. When discernible, discontinuity, or sharp difference is the most productive way to «cut up» the flow of historical time. But such an abstract notion is impractical without a referent: which principles might we use to mark incisive moments? Friedrich Schiller, in his *Antrittsvorlesung* at Jena University noted that the evident criterion for historical orientation is historical efficacy (*Wirkung*), by which he meant a universal history based on Europe's development, a Eurocentric if not racist idea that seemed unproblematic in his time. «Efficacy» was given a different, economic meaning with V.G. Childe's Marxist-inspired three revolutions in human history, the Neolithic, urban and industrial,[8] meanwhile supplemented by the digital revolution. Others, especially anthropological archaeologists, have indulged in political classifications as a way to structure and dissect history, reducing it to a series of forms of political organization.[9]

For most prehistoric archaeologists, though, the primary task of periodization seems to be patently obvious,[10] as we deal with material culture rather than highly

---

[4] W. Windelband, 1899 (2nd edition). *Die Geschichte der neueren Philosophie in ihrem Zusammenhange mit der allgemeinen Kultur und den besonderen Wissenschaften*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel. T. Lessing, 1983 (original publication 1919). *Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen*. München: C.H. Beck.

[5] H. Rickert, 1913. *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung. Eine logische Einleitung in die historischen Wissenschaften* Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr.

[6] An argument for such realism comes - unexpectedly - from I. Hodder, 1995, «Material Culture in Time». In I. Hodder, M. Shanks, A. Alexandri, V. Buchli, J. Carman, J. Last and G. Lucas, eds.: *Interpreting Archaeology. Finding Meaning in the Past,* pp. 164-168. London: Routledge.

[7] J. Rüsen (1994. *Historische Orientierung*. Bonn: Böhlau) speaks in this connection of *Geschichtskultur*.

[8] V.G. Childe, 1936. *Man Makes Himself*. London: Watts & Co. Childe had alluded to these revolutions before his 1936 book, but a visit to Moscow was likely instrumental in his sharpening of terminology. For a detailed account of Childe's ideas, see K. Green. 1999. «V.Gordon Childe and the vocabulary of revolutionary change,» *Antiquity* 73: 97-109.

[9] For a pertinent critique of these efforts, see N. Yoffee. 2005. *Myths of the Archaic State*, pp. 4-21. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

[10] E.g. K.J. Narr, 1978. «Zeitmasse in der Urgeschichte.» Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vorträge, Reihe Geisteswissenschaften, 24. Westdeutscher Verlag.

complex social systems that are documented in written texts and statements of intention by historical actors. At the most basic level, prehistorians have structured long-term history since the early days of their profession by referring to technological capabilities of working specific materials: stone, copper, bronze and iron, and their respective «ages.»[11] However, this 19th century scheme seemed too simplistic to geographers and ethnographers, who, under the influence of the classificatory mood instigated by Friedrich Ratzel, German historical ethnology, the Vienna *Kulturkreislehre*, and Clark Wissler's «culture area» concept, made an attempt to designate whole assemblages as «cultures» that could then be seriated in time and space.[12] These ideas are at the root of the «culture-historical method» which is still the mainstay of much archaeological work.

Archaeological classifications of entire cultures are infused with an objectivist attitude. We need only to recognize past reality in the «right way» in order to slice up time correctly. Rarely is there a recognition that the knowledgeable (*erkennendes*) subject may deeply influence,[13] if not entirely determine chronological and other historical order. I side with Lessing and Windelband in contending that archaeologists impose a subjective structure on past, objectively existing material forms. «Periodizing» is the production of coherent sectors of an essentially unwieldy, boundless past and its remains. The reduction of the chaotic and incoherent to the consistent and confined is characteristic of an ideologically charged procedure. Meaning in history is never an integral part of the past, but a product of present intellectual labor.[14] History and prehistory are fables, pieced together by representatives of specialized professions. What sets historians and archaeologists apart from other makers of historical meaning, such as priests, story tellers, film makers, museologists, or politicians is their «expertise,» a theoretical and practical knowledge that is created and reinforced in a community that has set up firm standards of knowledge production, a *Denkstil*,[15] including such basic ones as the refusal to invent evidence, to incorporate as much evidence into a narrative as possible, and to stay within the realm of academic rationality.

However, these self-imposed restrictions do not automatically guarantee reliable knowledge. Chronocultures such as Halaf are subjective, classificatory creations whose acceptance by a field of scholars leads to reifications. Once ossified, trait-

---

[11] This focus on working different kinds of materials includes a strong evolutionary view of history. On the social and academic conditions in which Danish researcher Thomsen developed this system in the early 19th century, see S. Hansen. 2001. «Von den Anfängen der prähistorischen Archäologie: Christian Jürgensen Thomsen und das Dreiperiodensystem». *Praehistorische Zeitschrift* 76 (1): 10-23.

[12] F. Ratzel, 1899. *Anthropogeographie*. 2nd edition. Stuttgart: J. Engelhorn.; F. Graebner, 1966 (original publication 1911). *Methode der Ethnologie*. Oosterhout: Anthropological Publications. C. Wissler, 1923. *Man and Culture*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

[13] The recognition and detailed elaboration of this phenomenon in the natural sciences reaches back to L. Fleck's *Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache*. 1935. Basel: Benno Schwabe & Co. Reprinted 1980 by Suhrkamp, Frankfurt.

[14] J.H. Van der Pot, 1999. *Sinndeutung und Periodisierung der Geschichte*, p. 59. Leiden: Brill. In art history, Riegl's essay on monuments and time argues similarly, see E. Naginski, 2001, «Riegl, Archaeology, and the Periodization of Culture.» *Res* 40: 135-152.

[15] Fleck, op.cit, p. 187.

listed and mapped, archaeologists begin to ask «secondary» questions about genesis and demise of their creations. At this point, the dialectical relationship of the periodizing process is forgotten: present prehistorians constitute sociopolitical and other complexities of the past through contemplation of the already ordered archaeological materials. More importantly, they proceed to demarcate some differences while conflating others. The outcome of periodization depends on our present senses of time, history and material similarity. All of these senses are themselves historical, so that prehistory's knowledge production is fundamentally substitutive, not cumulative. And the dialectical, dynamic nature of *Sinndeutung* (meaning making) is in the last instance based in a constantly shifting present, not a fixed past to be studied and learned.

In addition to its own dependency on historical contexts, periodization happens in stages[16]: the first one might best be called an «innovation stage» and consists of giving coherence to an ensemble of knowledges that has become unwieldy. The second stage is «investigative.» Questions of classification subside for a limited time, to be replaced by higher-order interpretive issues such as explorations of economic organization. The third stage is one of critique. The period scheme, not so new any more, has shown its weaknesses. Following the critique, the process recommences on this level and leads eventually to further dissection of the temporal scale. Because of its cyclical nature, it is very difficult to break through the whole enterprise and advance a radical critique that ruptures not just the process, but the underlying archaeological praxis of chronological knowledge production.

Period naming, growth and dissection: Near Eastern Prehistory and Halaf

In light of new archaeological work at Sabi Abyad, Tell Halula and Tell Boueid II, Chagar Bazar and Khirbet Garsour, it has been suggested that there is an entire late Neolithic chronological horizon, the «Proto-Halaf,» stretching across Northern Mesopotamia that we have failed to identify until recently. This horizon, characterized by widespread similarities in pottery painting, was first dubbed «Transitional Halaf» in publications of Sabi Abyad.[17] The term Proto-Halaf has been proposed by Cruells and Nieuwenhuyse[18] and was discussed extensively at the Madrid workshop for which this paper was originally conceived. This short period dates to 6100-5900 BCE. For some of the theoretical reasons outlined above, I want to caution against a premature definition of such a new horizon. I rather would like to deconstruct the praxis by which we identify new chronological horizons, focusing on a particularly problematic issue for prehistorians, namely period designations.

---

[16] I have to admit that my critique of periodization turns here into a meta-periodization, that of the praxis of research.

[17] P.M.M.G. Akkermans and M. Le Mière, 1992. «The 1988 Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad, a Later Neolithic Village in Northern Syria.» *American Journal of Archaeology* 96 (1): 1-22.

[18] W. Cruells and O. Nieuwenhuyse, op. cit.

Periodization problems will never be solved with new dating technologies. As precise as radiocarbon dating and other methods may become in the future, they will never relieve us of the task of creating *post hoc* historical entities, a process that is fundamentally classificatory, as it relies on the recognition of differences and similarities. How then do we arrive at a widespread acceptance of chronocultural terminologies, such as *Halaf*, *Samarra*, *Ubaid* or *Uruk*? Underlying this procedure is a truly scholastic attitude. In the realm of Near Eastern archaeology, numerous projects come to mind that try to normativize that which defies norms. In 1983, at a conference organized by the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*, archaeologists attempted to find common ground on whether the Jemdet Nasr period existed.[19] The answer to such a question should be simple: of course such a period never existed, as it was not recognized as such when lived through. As a historical construct, it is a signature of a relationship between the present and the past. By necessity, the relationship is unstable, as the present, not an increasingly well known past, is the moving reference point. Another example is the recent Santa Fe conference on the Uruk period.[20] One of the major goals was to assemble «authorities» who would devise a chronological scheme acceptable by the community of international researchers. In this case, scholasticism is coupled with cultural imperialism. Despite relativizing assertions about a restricted application, the scheme, with its terminology «Late Chalcolithic 1-5», assumes far-reaching similarities by dint of naming. Among the ten invited participants all except two were Americans. Not a single person from the Middle East took part, not to speak of researchers from other non-western countries. In this case, it is too early to predict the acceptance of the terminology. Sociopolitically, it is a process of framing, the creation of what Derrida calls a *parergon* for delimiting signs,[21] in our example discourses, the setting of outer limits of an artificial (pre)historical period. These are attempts at enforcing consensus in academia, an ideological process that tries to empower those who delimit and others who acquiesce to the framers. Of course, not all our classifications emerge from such overtly «parergic» practices. Period standardization normally follows a pace of academic discourse where mutual agreement develops slowly, sometimes taking decades. For instance, notions of a «Protoliterate» and an «Uruk» period were long used side by side until the two *Denkkollektive*[22] merged, accepting «Uruk» as a general period term.

Once a period has been generally accepted by a research community, it often displays time-space accretions around the core, a type-site. An eponymous site is often one that was excavated relatively early in the history of research. This is the case for Tell Halaf, providing the terminological anchor for a period of ca. 1000 years, despite the fact that the bulk of the material found at Tell Halaf was not

---

[19] U. Finkbeiner and W. Röllig, eds. 1986. *Gamdat Nasr: Period or Regional Style?* Wiesbaden: Dr Ludwig Reichert, TAVO Beiheft B26.

[20] M. Rothman, ed. 2001. *Uruk Mesopotamia and its Neighbors: Cross-Cultural Interactions in the Era of State Formation*. Santa Fe: School of American Research.

[21] J. Derrida, 1982. *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by A. Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[22] L. Fleck, op. cit., pp. 52-70.

even well stratified.[23] The application of the notion «Halaf» to sites such as Arpachiyah coincided with an art historical elaboration of the Halaf painted pottery style by Max Mallowan.[24] From his subjective focus on *bukrania* as a main feature of Halaf pottery, it was only a step to mobilize this easily identifiable visual element for an identification of sites as «Halafian.» Mallowan's academic, classificatory mind, further specifying tholoi, amulet seals and pottery shapes such as «cream bowls» as typically Halaf, increased the tendency among prehistorians to turn a pottery painting style into a «culture.» Single elements became sufficient, not just necessary to classify a site as «Halafian.»

The effect of this implicit choice of a way to assign excavated assemblages to «the Halaf» - as it is often called - was the construction of a vast geographical horizon with significant temporal depth as the «Halaf culture.» Mapped and incorporated into the collective consciousness of Near Eastern archaeologists, this artificial entity led to new and absurd questions in the «investigative stage»: how were these widespread «commonalities» possible at such an early time? How did people contact each other?[25] Did trade or political exchange play a role?[26] Why were the Halafians «anachronistic,» living in a developmental cul-de-sac?[27] Research on subsistence practices,[28] motif similarities[29] and chemical composition of pottery[30] has led undoubtedly to some highly interesting results, but certainly not to answering those questions.

«Halaf» not only became a vast nation *avant la lettre*, reaching from the Hamrin area with Tell Hassan in Iraq[31] to Arjoune in Lebanon[32] and Mersin in Cilicia,[33] from the Syrian Euphrates in the south to Lake Van in the North,[34] but also a cul-

---

[23] H. Schmidt, 1943. *Tell Halaf. Die prähistorischen Funde*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. The history of this truly «epoch-making» material is intriguing. Located at Baron von Oppenheim's museum in Berlin, much of it was shattered in bombing raids during the second World War, when the museum building was directly hit. The now discolored fragments of the vessels, many of them originally excavated intact, were rescued by A. Moortgat after the war and shipped from East to West Berlin, to be stored in the basement of the Institut für Vorderasiatische Altertumskunde of the Free University (N. Cholidis and L. Martin, 2002. *Der Tell Halaf und sein Ausgräber Max Freiherr von Oppenheim*, p. 56. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

[24] M.E.L. Mallowan and J.C. Rose, 1935. «Excavations at Tell Arpachiyah 1933.» *Iraq* 2: 1-178.

[25] P.J. Watson and S. LeBlanc, 1973, «A Comparative Statistical Analysis of Painted Pottery from Seven Halafian Sites.» *Paléorient* 1: 119-136.

[26] T.E. Davidson, 1977. Regional Variation within the Halaf Ceramic Tradition. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh; N. Yoffee, 1993. «Mesopotamian Interaction Spheres.» In N. Yoffee and J.J. Clark, eds.: *Early Stages in the Evolution of Mesopotamian Civilization*, pp. 257-270. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

[27] J.D. Forest, cited in J.L. Huot, 1994. *Les premiers villageois de Mésopotamie. Du village à la ville*, pp. 151-152. Paris: Armand Colin.

[28] P.M.M.G. Akkermans, 1993, op. cit., pp. 204-268 includes an excellent survey on the subject.

[29] E.g. R.V. Gut, *Das prähistorische Ninive. Zur relativen Chronologie der frühen Perioden Nordmesopotamiens*. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

[30] T.E. Davidson and H. McKerrell, 1976. «Pottery Analysis and Halaf Period Trade in the Khabur Headwaters Region». *Iraq* 38: 45-56.

[31] P. Fiorina, 1987. «Tell Hassan: les couches Halafiennes et Obeidiennes et les relations entre les deux cultures.» In J.L. Huot, ed.: *Préhistoire de la Mésopotamie*, pp. 243-255. Paris: Éditions du CNRS.

[32] P.J. Parr, ed. 2003 *Excavations at Arjoune, Syria*. BAR, International Series 1134. Oxford: Archaeopress.

[33] J. Garstang, 1953. *Prehistoric Mersin: Yumuk Tepe in Southern Turkey*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[34] M. Korfmann, 1982. *Tilkitepe : die ersten Ansätze prähistorischer Forschung in der östlichen Türkei*. Tübingen: E. Wasmuth.

ture with more and more time depth. Once it was clear that many of Mallowan's traits spread over much of the 6th millennium, concerns about subdivisions of the Halaf period were raised. As is often the case, pottery styles were used to make subdivisions. Interestingly, these were based more often on shapes of pottery than on painted designs, even though the decoration is the most striking trait of these pots. At first, a tentative «Early-Middle-Late» subdivision was proposed.[35] Work by Peter Akkermans and his team has led to a more local subdivision based on the sequence in the Balikh valley.[36] And with recent excavations, we discuss a «Pre-Halaf,» «Proto-Halaf,» «Early Halaf,» «Traditional Early Halaf», as well as «Post-Halaf» A and B.[37] Thus, the spatial growth of «Halaf» –whatever hides behind the name– is mirrored by its chronological expansion. From a point in geographic space named Tell Halaf, modern academia has constructed a vast framework, a «culture» with chronospatial divisions. Other frameworks border this «Halaf» chronoculture in time and space like a three-dimensional puzzle without any interstices. Halaf is bordered by the PNA (Pottery Neolithic A) in Palestine and Chogha Mami Transitional in Mesopotamia, and followed by Ubaid. Time-spaces without name are the white spots on the archaeological landscape, waiting to be classified, labeled and integrated into already existing frames or to be distinguished from them as something new: the «Proto-Halaf» is a good case for the dialectics of assigning similarity («Halaf») in difference («Proto»).

Naming rarely comes without evaluation. «Terminal Ubaid» has a ring of decadence,[38] if not death to it. «Proto»-Halaf sounds like an awakening, a departure into something new, an originality of a chronoculture. The values underlying this term are decidedly more positive than an equally possible «Early Lower Halaf,» a notion that might be employed by Palaeolithic archaeologists. Naming is interpretation. And name-giving demarcates the limits of the questionable: would we ask, for example, what caused the demise of the «Proto Halaf» - as has been asked for the Halaf period as a whole?[39] In a similar sense, one does not speak of the demise of Early Modernity, as the understanding is that its essence is the destiny to be followed without break by a later modernity. «Transitional Halaf,» applied by Akkermans and colleagues[40] to the same temporal entity as «Proto-Halaf,» does not lend itself to the question of an end either. Still, the impression given by this term is very different, suggesting a transition *to*

---

[35] A.L. Perkins, 1949. *The Comparative Archaeology of Early Mesopotamia.* SAOC 25. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; C. Gustavson Gaube, 1981. «Shams ed-Din Tannira III: The Halafian Pottery from Area B.» *Berytus* XXIX: 10-182.

[36] P.P.M.G. Akkermans, 1993, op. cit.

[37] W. Cruells and O. Nieuwenhuyse, op. cit., Table 2; S. Campbell, E. Carter, E. Healey, S. Anderson, A. Kennedy and S. Whitcher, 1999. «Emerging Complexity on the Kahramanmaras Plain, Turkey: The Domuztepe Project, 1995-1997,» pp. 7-9; 16-17.

[38] This term is derived from «Terminal Susa A», with similar connotations. Interestingly, both periods precede the Early Uruk period, which is present in both regions characterized by the earlier Ubaid and Susiana pottery. However, Ubaid and Susiana ceramics share only general similarities so that the «terminality» of both equals an *interpretatio per appellationem*.

[39] C. Breniquet, 1996. L*a disparition de la culture de Halaf - les origines de la culture d'Obeid dans le nord de la Mésopotamie.* Paris: Éditions Recherches sur les Civilisations.

[40] E.g. P.P.M.G. Akkermans and M. Verhoeven, 1995. «An Image of Complexity: the Burnt Village at Late Neolithic Sabi Abyad, Syria.» *American Journal of Archaeology* 99: 5-32.

Halaf, and attaching the «Transitional,» whatever else it may be, as essentially «Halafian» in character. When compared to «Proto-Halaf», it has the benefit of voicing instability and flux. However, from the perspective of a philosophy of history, all periods are transitions, so we should either bestow the attribute «transitional» on all or none.

At this point, the initial question is still without answer: is there any objectivity to the term «Halaf»? Likely, such a question is wrongly posed, and we might do better to ask *what mode of objectivity* underlies the term. In most archaeological works, chronological issues are one-dimensional. Time is thought of in the abstract, as an arrow with sectors that can be more and more refined as research progresses. A «Neolithic» or «Chalcolithic» period may include early, middle, and late manifestations, each with their subdivisions. As mentioned, the practical, stage-wise process of chronological knowledge production leads inevitably to hierarchical classifications. «Halaf» is inserted into a Late Neolithic or Early Chalcolithic, and is differentiated into smaller units. This mindset applies a dendritic logic to linearized time: large epochs include smaller chronological units down to the scale of site levels, an atomism that produces absurd terms such as «Pre-Proto-Hassuna».[41] Compared to prehistory, history based on written documents does not fare much better and has a longer, more entrenched tradition, to the point where chronocultures have fossilized into academic positions and institutions, as professorships for historians of Early Modern Germany, 20th century American history, etc., attest.

Any clarification of these issues must deal with concepts of time.[42] Recent archaeological writing[43] has focused on the difference between «experienced» or «substantial» time as distinct from abstract, linear time. This is a bourgeois distinction, a subject at the core of Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*. Marx already noted this phenomenon when he claimed in his *Elend der Philosophie* that «time is all, the human being is nothing, at best an incorporation of time.»[44] Capitalism has gone much further since then and excludes most people from substantial time –nowadays not just workers but all those consuming vast amounts of mediated experiences– by forcing on them the vacuous products of a contemptuous culture industry. The true class character of time appears in the idea of time sovereignty or *Eigenzeit*.[45] The ability to decide independently about one's «use» of time is restricted to a very small economic and political elite. If the distinction of abstract and substantial time, measured time and *Eigenzeit* is itself a historical phenomenon of capitalism, how do we deal with time in narrating the past?

Some historians have been more reflexive about this issue than archaeologists. Fernand Braudel's temporal conceptions give different time scales specific quali-

---

[41] Reported in M. Verhoeven, «The Near East in the Far East - Tokyo Symposium.» *Neo-Lithics* 1/06, 2006, 37-40.

[42] Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* marks the conceptual break from time as an effect of movements (e.g. G.W. Leibniz in his «third letter», *Philosophical Writings*, p. 200, London 1936) to time as the «a priori condition of all appearances in general.» (*Critique of Pure Reason*, trans;. P. Guyer and A. Wood, 1997, p. A34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.) On the issue of time and modernity in general: P. Osborne, 1995. *The Politics of Time*. London: Verso.

[43] E.g. R. Bradley, 1991. «Ritual, Time and History.» *World Archaeology* 23 (2): 209-219. M. Shanks and C. Tilley, 1987. *Social Theory and Archaeology*, pp. 126-136. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

[44] K. Marx, 1969. In *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 4, p. 85. Berlin: Dietz-Verlag (translation R.B.).

[45] H. Nowotny, 1989. *Eigenzeit*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

ties, the largest scale being structural-ecological, a middle range economic, and the small scale event-based.[46] Many archaeologists, when picking up his ideas, have used them as a selective toolbox and emphasized the *longue durée*, the one time archaeologists can most easily deal with.[47] But such a utilitarian approach to historiographic ideas is inappropriate. Braudel insisted on the integration of time scales. They are not for the choice of the archaeologist-shopper.

Braudel's scheme is not itself without fault.[48] First, its universalization, including any application to prehistory, would be Eurocentric, as the qualifiers of time (e.g. middle range as economic) are derived from a specific history, namely that of the Mediterranean in the 15th to 17th centuries. What if, in a particular society, the longest term scale is an economic time, the shortest a ritual one? Second, Braudel does not envisage an interdigitating of different scales.[49] Koselleck's «*Zeitschichten*» (temporal layers) provide a more complex and open concept of historical time.[50] As he elaborates, recursiveness is the frame for the singular event. Any temporal scale always includes recursive (or circular) aspects and singular (unique) moments; both together produce a flux of time that can be experienced as meaningful by humans, as repetitive in its already experienced elements and singular in its specific details. If our archaeological constructs aspire to a claim of «realism,» we need to conceptualize this dialectic relationship better.

There is no *a priori* relegation of, for instance, the ecological to a quintessentially recursive feature, or the political decision to an event in linear time. If the ecological is recursive and hence predictable in terms of seasons, its unique and worrisome history is especially evident in times of global warming. A political decision, whether third millennium BCE «reforms» or an attempt at reconciliation in modernity, has its singular aspects. But historians would be wrong to forget its precursors and its recursiveness.

An archaeology of traditions, as proposed by Timothy Pauketat,[51] goes some way toward addressing problems with recursiveness on a small scale, but neglects the sin-

---

[46] F. Braudel, 1949. *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Paris: Colin. Braudel, F. 1958. «Histoire et sciences sociales: La longue durée.» *Annales E.S.C.* 13 (4): 725-753.

[47] E.g. M. Smith, 1992. «Braudel's Temporal Rhythms and Chronology Theory in Archaeology.» In A.B. Knapp, ed.: *Archaeology, Annales, and Ethnohistory*, pp. 23-34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and other contributions in the same volume.

[48] L. Althusser and E. Balibar, 1972. *Das Kapital Lesen*, pp. 126-127. Hamburg: Rowohlt.

[49] The latter problem applies as well to strands of dogmatic Marxist prehistory, such as I. Sellnow's (1961) *Grundprinzipien einer Periodisierung der Urgeschichte*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag. This detailed and well informed work fails when the author proceeds to propose her own chronologies. Her table, opposite p. 112, reveals all the weaknesses of a hierarchical approach that is sophisticated in the multiplicity of qualitatively different times, but highly simplistic in their integration into one single scheme.

[50] R. Koselleck, 1979. *Vergangene Zukunft*. 1979, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp; and R. Koselleck, 2000. *Zeitschichten*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp.

[51] T. Pauketat, ed. 2001. *The Archaeology of Traditions. Agency and History Before and After Columbus*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. This volume takes its inspiration from Bourdieu's theoretical ideas of practice and his concept of *habitus* in the *The Logic of Practice*, 1990, Stanford: Stanford University Press. For a critique from a historical perspective, see C. Calhoun, «Habitus, Field and Capital: the Question of Historical Specificity.» In C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma and M. Postone, eds.: *Bourdieu. Critical Perspectives*, pp. 61-88. 1993, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

gular, associated with linear time. Whether we consider these entities as traditions or cultures, their identification is a claim about the duration of a basic recursiveness. So, what is it that repeats itself in a «Proto-Halaf»? As the identification of a site or layer as «Proto-Halaf» is based on pottery studies, we may say that superficially, specific ways of making and using pottery are the quintessential repetitive act. For the true objectivist, it would be important to identify not just the places where these practices occurred, but also where they did not. There is an important but underestimated difference between the unexplored space where practices may or may not have been carried out and the explored spaces where they were not found. The latter are all too often dismissed. Maps delimit a whole territory and assign it to a «culture.» This is highly misleading. A network is a more appropriate spatial metaphor, a network of sites whose interstices have a doubly unknown status. If researched through surveys, it is often assumed that interstices framed by a circumference of sites of one «culture» can be «filled» with cultural shading like a geometric shape in a computer graphics program. We imagine a presence where we have found an absence, and such regions become part of a specific culture despite evidence to the contrary.

Where no fieldwork has been done, similarly positive assumptions are made. Lack of available evidence on a regional scale is treated as negative evidence in need of cultural belonging. Here again, it is wrong to assume a continuous cultural presence rather than network nodes. And this network needs to be turned into a three-dimensional one that also includes the dimension of time. A comparative chronological table, if realistic, would consist of diachronic emptiness with a few dots and connections between them. Archaeological chronocultures need to be thought of not as seamlessly fitting, sharply delimited, substantialized time-space blocks, but as networks with fuzzy edges whose major characteristic is the «in-between.»

Finally, could we conceptualize Proto-, Early-, or Post-Halaf as empirically derived chronospatial entities that are just communicational aides, a means to ensure that we know what we talk about? Maybe. While I do not want to diminish the practical necessities of scholarly communication, I contend that essentializing appearances of past materiality into cultures does not further communication about the past but distorts it into misguided interpretive disputes. Therefore, if pottery at two sites is both similar and different (absolute sameness is excluded even in the world of industrial production), there are reasons for these effects. We cannot disregard processes underlying dissimilarities.

Archaeology, in its classificatory craze, has so much focused on the similar and later on the «systemic,» the «pattern,» that the different was sidelined. It is this disregard for the different that has produced fundamentally misconceived questions of interpretation: What was the political organization of Halaf society?[52] What do «Halaf» burials look like?[53] An entity that is historically defined by pottery styles

[52] P.J. Watson, 1983. «The Halafian Culture. A Review and Synthesis,» pp. 242-243. In T.C. Young, P.E.L.Smith and P. Mortensen, eds.: *The Hilly Flanks. Essays on the Prehistory of Southwestern Asia*, pp. 231-250. SAOC 36. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

[53] P.M.M.G. Akkermans, 1989. «Halaf Mortuary Practices: A Survey.» In O.M.C. Haex, H.H. Curvers, and P.M.M.G. Akkermans, eds., *To the Euphrates and Beyond: Archaeological Studies in Honor of Maurits N. van Loon*, pp. 75-88. Rotterdam: A.B. Balkena.

cannot be assumed to be unified in terms of burying people. The frame of reference for such a question is wrong. Similarly, utterly non-political characteristics will not coincide with political units. Parts of «Halaf» chronoculture, but also other contemporary entities may have been organized politically as emergent hierarchies. But other chronospaces identified as «Halaf» may have been politically structured in a radically different fashion. The end of «the Halaf» is not an end;[54] at best, a social, economic, material or other transition, a change in traditions imperceptible to those who enacted it, at the worst, the metaphors of life and death imposed on an archaeological artificiality.

I submit that we need to be reflexive about the relations between naming chronospatial entities and the interpretive questions we ask. First, we should restrict naming of periods as much as possible to small sections of time and space and give them idiosyncratic names, as was done in an exemplary fashion by Frank Hole and his co-workers in their various projects in the southwest Iranian Deh Luran plain.[55] Second, and related to the first point, we should abstain from the temptation of «adhesive chronocultures,» adding new ones to a known entity. Third, there is a need to explore in more detail the rhythms and scales of various kinds of historical time. It is not sufficient to write a history of tripartite houses, of Canaanean blades or other items. The dialectical move between historical questions and the objects mobilized for a historical narrative will reveal scales of time. Various «modes of production,» to return to an old but still relevant historical term, succeed each other at a pace that is different from subsistence forms, or political organizations.[56] Fourth, a multiplication of such narrative constructions from different vantage points should lead to interdigitated multiscalar chronologies, blurring the familiar and unrealistic boundaries into narratives that are less discrete and more credible in their greater incoherence.[57]

Semiosis in timespace

The following brief example, related to the question of a presumed Proto-Halaf, will serve to illustrate these ideas. I start from a dual knowledge of the

---

[54] Breniquet, op. cit.

[55] F. Hole, K.V. Flannery and J. Neely, 1969. *Prehistory and Human Ecology in the Deh Luran Plain.* Memoir No.1. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology; Hole, F., 1977. *Studies in the Archaeological History of the Deh Luran Plain. The Excavations of Chagha Sefid.* Memoir No.9. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology. Cruells and Nieuwenhuyse (op. cit. p. 48) explicitly consider this multifarious terminological possibility but reject it because of the risk of «losing out of sight what constitutes the main characteristic of this stage, which is that it happened over such a large geographical space.» Space appears as both constituting and constituted by a process of naming.

[56] R. Bernbeck, 1996. «Dörfliche Kulturen des keramischen Neolithikums in Nord- und Mittelmesopotamien: Vielfalt der Kooperationsformen,» pp. 40-41. In K. Bartl, R. Bernbeck and M. Heinz, eds.: *Zwischen Euphrat und Indus. Aktuelle Forschungsprobleme in der vorderasiatischen Archäologie.* Hildesheim: Georg Olms-Verlag

[57] On this point, see also R. Bernbeck, «The Past as Fact and Fiction: From Historical Novels to Novel Histories.» In S. Pollock and R. Bernbeck, eds.: *Archaeologies of the Middle East. Critical Perspectives*, pp. 112-117. Oxford: Blackwell.

occurrence of Samarra-like pottery at Sabi Abyad and other sites, and a period-independent interest in the social and ideological relevance of rules –or grammars– that underlie production processes of painted pottery and architecture.[58] The concept of grammar should not be mistaken as a set of rules that is relevant to a semantic dimension of material forms. I contend that design grammars underlie general *Sinn* (connotative sense) of sets of painted patterns, and have nothing to do with *Bedeutung* (denotative meaning).[59] They flow from modes of productive praxis and turn into unquestionable and unquestioned elements of pottery users' lifeworlds. They retain their particular *Sinn* as fixtures of lifeworlds exactly because they are «self-evident» and lack any *Bedeutung*. The spatiotemporal spread of such sets of rules is a gauge of the extent of one dimension of past lifeworlds. Lifeworlds, it needs to be emphasized, are not identical with cultures or traditions. The latter two notions extend from the realm of contestation and negotiation to the spheres of the unquestionable, whereas lifeworld captures only the unquestionable sphere of human societies.

The internal complexity of design grammars is highly variable,[60] and to my knowledge, there is no comparative research that would allow us to specify a characteristic temporal or spatial scale at which they occur. In practical life, design grammars need to be constantly applied in order to persist; like language, they can be mastered without ever being explicitly learned. However, there are exceptions. Design grammars can be strictly circumscribed and kept socially above the level of the self-evident in order to preserve their integrity.[61]

Pottery with affinities to Samarra from Sabi Abyad's Burnt Village levels 6 to 4 provides an ideal case to investigate chronocultural similarity and difference on a level deeper than that of appearances.[62] A grammatical analysis cannot start with

---

[58] For a study of ceramic design grammars: R. Bernbeck, «Structure Strikes Back: Intuitive Meanings of Ceramics from Qale Rostam, Iran». In J. Robb, ed. (1999): *Material Symbols. Culture and Economy in Prehistory,* pp. 90-111. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University. For an example of architectural grammar, see R. Bernbeck, «Die Vorstellung der Welt als Wille: Zur Identifikation von intentionellem Handeln in archäologischem Kontext.» In M. Heinz, M.K.H. Eggert and U. Veit, eds.: *Zwischen Erklären und Verstehen? Beiträge zu den erkenntnistheoretischen Grundlagen archäologischer Interpretation*, 2003, pp. 201-238. Münster: Waxmann.

[59] G. Frege (1892, «Über Sinn und Bedeutung». *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* 100: 25-50) makes the useful distinction between «Bedeutung» as a static meaning that can be grasped with the senses, whereas «Sinn» is the means that conveys what may be circumscribed in English as «sense.» Others have distinguished these differences as denotation and connotation. For a critique, see U. Eco, 1972. *Einführung in die Semiotik*, pp. 69-73. München: Wilhelm Fink. (original *La struttura assente*, Milano 1968.)

[60] M.A. Hardin, 1983. «Applying Linguistic Models to the Decorative Arts: A Preliminary Consideration of the Limits of Analogy.» *Semiotica* 46 (2/4): 309-322.

[61] R. Bernbeck, n.d. «Neolithic Pottery». Chapter of *Toll-e Bashi 2003,* edited by S. Pollock, R. Bernbeck and K. Abdi.

[62] In this comparison, I use the extensive corpus published by M. Le Mière and O. Nieuwenhuyse, 1996. «The Prehistoric Pottery.» In P.M.M.G. Akkermans, ed.: *Tell Sabi Abyad. The Late Neolithic Settlement*, Vol.I, pp. 119-284. Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul. Some close parallels to Samarran ware were recently published in O. Nieuwenhuyse, 2006. Plain and Painted Pottery. The Rise of Late Neolithic Ceramic Styles on the Syrian and Northern Mesopotamian Plains. Ph.D. Dissertation, Universiteit Leiden.

lumping material from several distant places, but must begin by sorting out the regular from the exceptional, the abstract rule from concrete, improvised praxis in one location. This can then form the basis for a regional comparison.

I start with an analysis of the Samarran assemblage, merging the pottery from the neighboring sites of Samarra and Tell es-Sawwan.[63] In a first step, I focus on the regularities. The second stage, the comparative analysis, accentuates the exceptions to the rules. Pottery designs from Sawwan and Samarra follow a rigid structural canon which is based on three main vessel shapes that have commonalities in decorative rules, and some shape-specific rules.[64] Almost all sherds adhere to the following four rules:

1) Designs are in registers and have to be separated by at least two horizontal lines (Figures 1-4).

2) Four types of filling motifs of registers can be distinguished: main motifs («a» in Figure 1.1 to 1.3 and 1.5), edge motifs («b» in Figures 1.1-1.5), secondary motifs («c»in Figures 1.1 to 1.5), and incised motifs (Figure 1.4d).

3) The use of three or more secondary registers, one above the other, is possible, but two adjacent registers cannot contain the same secondary motifs (Figures 1.3, 1.4; Figures 2-4).

4) No secondary or main motif may be placed on the rim of a vessel, whether inside or outside. However, all shapes require a main motif.

Three rules are shape-specific:

5) Under certain circumstances, bowls can have a large inner circular field that is filled with figural motifs with a point symmetry (Figure 1.5).

6) Incised motifs can only be used on jars, immediately below the join of neck and shoulder (Figure 1.4, Figure 4).

7) Secondary motifs above incised registers on necked jars cannot be repeated on the shoulder of jars (Figure 1.4, Figure 4).

This simple grammar could be further elaborated by taking into account the number of lines dividing registers, the secondary motifs that can be used in alternating registers etc. I limit myself to these basic rules which provide me with an effective tool of comparison to contemporary assemblages further west, at Sabi Abyad on the Balikh, a comparison that is based on an explicit assessment of dissimilarities and similarities at a level beyond appearances of material items.

I search for parallels by beginning with an all-pervasive rule of Samarran pottery, the division of registers by at least two parallel lines (rule 1). In the «Transitional» pottery from Sounding I at Sabi Abyad, only a few sherds adhere to this criterion. Most sherds to which rule 1 is applied do not follow the other rules 2 to 7 of the Samarran assemblage.[65] Rule 2 is a categorizing statement of motifs rather than a compositional rule, and this is the only one that by and large applies to

---

[63] Ideally they should have been kept separate for the analysis as well. However, the sample size from either site alone would have been too small to elaborate a grammar.

[64] For a much more detailed discussion see R. Bernbeck, 1994. *Die Auflösung der häuslichen Produktionsweise*, pp. 129-141, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.

[65] For examples that are identical or very close to Samarran rules, see Nieuwenhuyse, op. cit, Plate 83, 13; Plate 84, 2 and 5, Plate 86, 8, 15, 24;

much of the Sabi Abyad pottery. Rule 3 presents a particularly sharp difference between the two assemblages, as the avoidance of neighboring registers with similar motifs was of no visible concern to Sabi Abyad potters. Furthermore, most if not all shapes at Samarra and Sawwan require a main motif (rule 4), whereas at Sabi Abyad, it is possible to simply fill the painting space on a vessel with an edge motif and a sequence of secondary motifs. Rule 5 does not occur in any pottery from Sabi Abyad, especially not the point symmetrical, naturalistic motifs on the inside of open bowls, since bowls painted on the inside are extremely rare. While rule 6 is followed in some cases at Sabi Abyad,[66] associated rule 7 does not apply.

There are only very few sherds at Sabi Abyad that follow the grammar of Samarran pottery, and if they do, they contain simple decorations. While there are clearly structural regularities that govern the painting of Sabi Abyad pottery (Figures 5 and 6), these seem to be very different from those of Samarran pottery.[67] I list most of the parallels in Table 1. However, the dissimilarities cannot be accounted for as long as there is no all-encompassing attempt to construct a grammar for the Sabi Abyad pottery. Thus, the table vastly skews the comparison in favor of similarities.

This structural comparison can be put in a wider context. Outside the Samarra area on the Middle Tigris, substantial amounts of pottery with designs that adhere to Samarran grammar occur only at one site, Baghouz.[68] The examples found at Sabi Abyad, Chagar Bazar, Boueid II or Halula,[69] but also at Tell Hassuna, Yarim Tepe and further east at Matarrah, do not adhere to any coherent design grammar. If we want to call pottery from the Burnt Village at Sabi Abyad or from other sites «Samarran,» there is at least a need to specify the criteria that turn a sherd into a «Samarran» fragment. Is it motifs? Shapes? Whatever indices we choose, what do they tell us about their social and spatiotemporal dimensions, and consequently, what is their historical *Sinn*? Furthermore, at Samarra and Sawwan, intrusive material with non-Samarran structures of design is relatively rare. Is the perceived «intrusion» of Samarran material at Sabi Abyad possibly a product of our pre-knowledge of Samarran assemblages elsewhere? If Sabi Abyad had been excavated before Sawwan or Samarra, the classification process would surely have been different. This implies that Sabi Abyad's «Transitional» or «Proto-Halaf» assemblage could be internally more consistent than has been claimed so far. That, in turn, opens the door for the potential of other small-scale entities of grammatical rule-sets in the Upper Khabur basin, in the Ilisu Dam area and elsewhere.

---

[66] O. Nieuwenhuyse, op.cit. Plate 77, nos. 16, 21, 22; Plate 87, 13, 92, 6.

[67] O. Nieuwenhuyse op. cit. pp. 175 ff..

[68] R. Bernbeck, 1994, op.cit. pp. 182-190.

[69] The published corpus for any site other than Sabi Abyad and Boueid is too small to allow a firm assessment. From Boueid, there are three sherds that adhere to a Samarran design, see O. Nieuwenhuyse, L. Jacobs and B. van As, 2002. «The Ceramics», in A. Suleiman and O. Nieuwenhuyse, eds.: *Tell Boueid II. A Late Neolithic Village on the Middle Khabur*, Fig. 4.8, Nos. 10, 11, 13. Subartu XI. Turnhout (Belgium): Brepols. The decoration of «Samarran» pottery from Hakemi Use is subject to a starkly different set of grammatical rules (H. Tekin, 2004, «Prelinary Results of the 20001 Excavations at Hakemi Use.» In N. Tuna, J. Greenhalgh and J. Velibeyoglu, eds.: *Salvage Project of the Archaeological Heritage of the Ilisu and Carcemish Dam Reservoirs. Activities in 2001*, Ankara, p. 457-458, Fig. 10).

If the spatiotemporal spread of design grammars hints at some elements of past lifeworlds, my comparative exercise reveals only their spatial limitations. I have no room to determine a temporal scale of these rules, as this must be based on a close stratigraphic inquiry in a micro-region. Whatever the result, changes likely remained outside of problematizable spheres of social communication as well. However, such doxic elements of the past provide a basis for historical *Sinndeutung* in the present because of their generative stability. What Umberto Eco claims for language in general is even more true for grammars, whether linguistic or other: grammar is never the content of thinking, but that *within which* one thinks.[70] Their exploration is therefore more than an essential component of any understanding of the past; it is part of its preconditions.

Conclusion

I do not advocate the dissolution of all chronological entities. As historians-archaeologists, we need to «order» time as a prerequisite for any interpretation.[71] However, as Gavin Lucas notes, history and archaeology are narratives of time, and periods are our chapters.[72] Period definition and naming are processes of opening entirely new chapters, or of redefining the narrative boundaries of old ones. The academic professions of history and archaeology will surely not eschew linear time and its inherent pressures for subdivision. This should not prevent us from striving for more flexibility in dealing with different kinds and scales of times, their relational nature and their past material and social referents.

In order to raise the problems that I have discussed here, I may have silenced some of the nuances that are included in treatises on the phenomenon called «Halaf» or «Proto-Halaf.» However, academic discourse takes curious shapes: there is a constant *va et vient* between differentiated positions and implicit normative ideas that serve as springboards for new research questions. What I am addressing here are those norms that appear between the lines of our written texts. I am also aware of the fact that after 70 years of research on «the Halaf,» its «un-naming» is literally impossible. This is a typically academic problem: the unwillingness to get rid of customary standards because of the communicative inconvenience and intellectual disorientation of such changes. Our own cyclic processes of chronological *Sinndeutung*, in its stages from innovation to investigation and critique, have an inbuilt irreversibility and tendency towards atomization of linear time. What I plead for is a fundamental re-thinking of the mechanisms that underlie this process of constituting not just an artificially broken narrative about the past, but a narrow framing of possible future narratives as well. The alternative could be pasts with a more open future. We need to recognize the dialectical relations between present and past, and between researching subject and historical object. The crescendo of imposed terminologies is none other than an interminable series of impositions on past people.

---

[70] U. Eco, op. cit., p. 410.

[71] M. Gross, 1998. *Von der Antike bis zur Postmoderne. Die zeitgenössische Geschichtsschreibung und ihre Wurzeln*, pp. 447-449. Wien: Böhlau.

[72] G. Lucas, 2005. *The Archaeology of Time,* p. 50. London: Routledge.

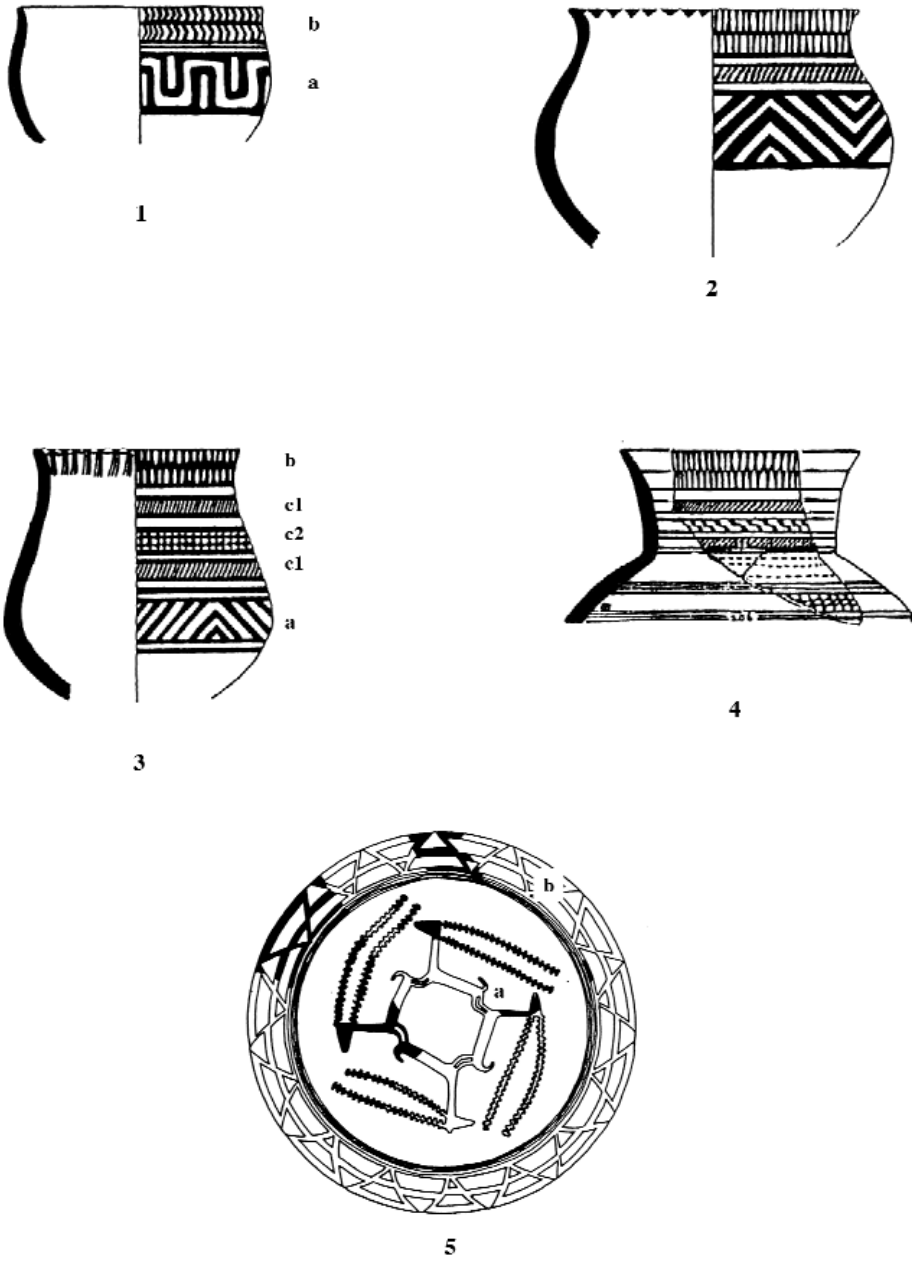

Fig. 1: Examples of Samarran pottery designs.

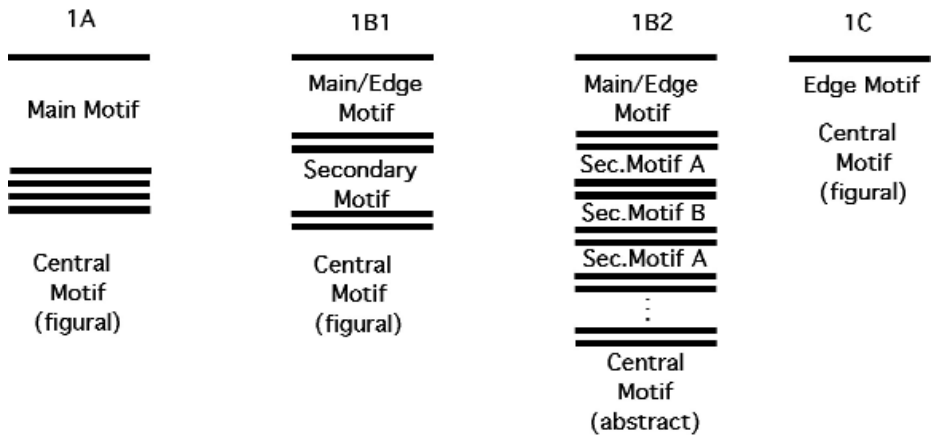

Fig. 2: Samarran design structures on open bowls (interior).

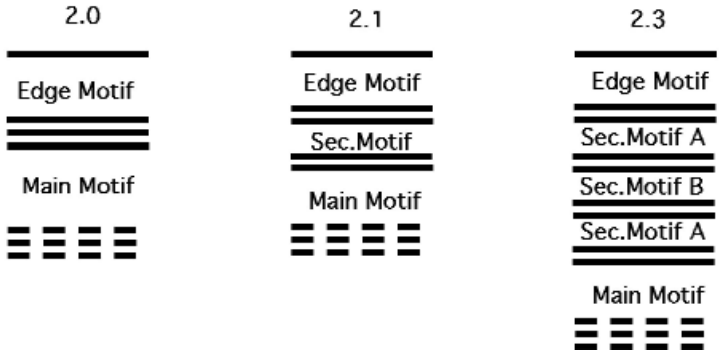

Fig. 3: Samarran design structures on sinuous-sided vessels.

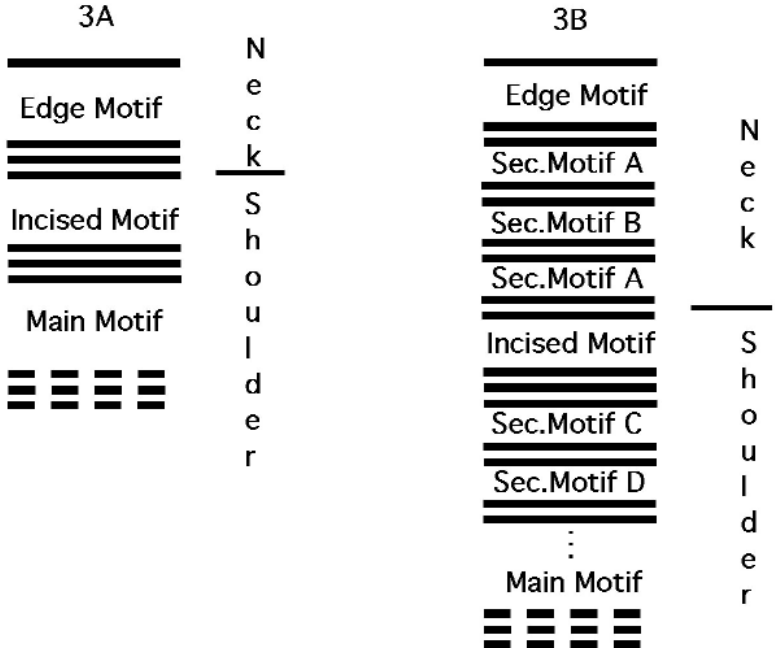

Fig. 4: Samarran design structures on necked jars.

	Samarran structure	Transitional structure
Open bowls	1A	
	1B1	
	1B2	
	1C	
Sinuous-sided/ deep bowls	2.0	2C1, 2C2
	2.3	(2A1)
	2.1	
		2A2
		2B
Necked jars	3B	(3.2)
	3A	
		3.1
		3.3
		3.4

Table 1: Structural comparison of Samarran and «Transitional» (Sabi Abyad) vessel decorations (shaded: parallels). For schematic renderings of the structures, see Figures 2-4 for Samarran pottery and 5-6 for «Transitional» pottery.

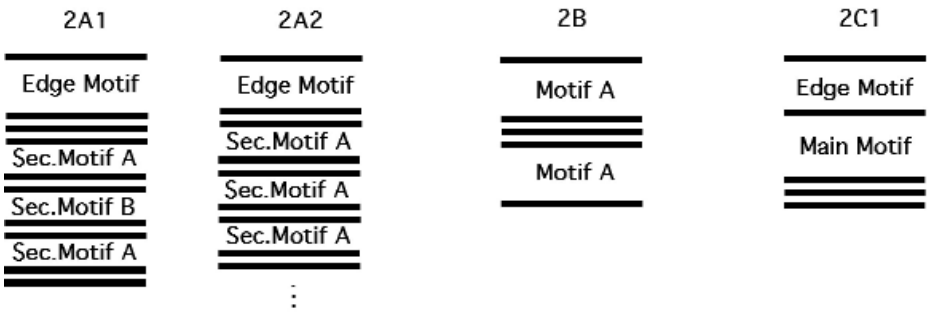

Fig. 5: Design structures on deep bowls from «Transitional» levels 6-4 at Sabi Abyad.

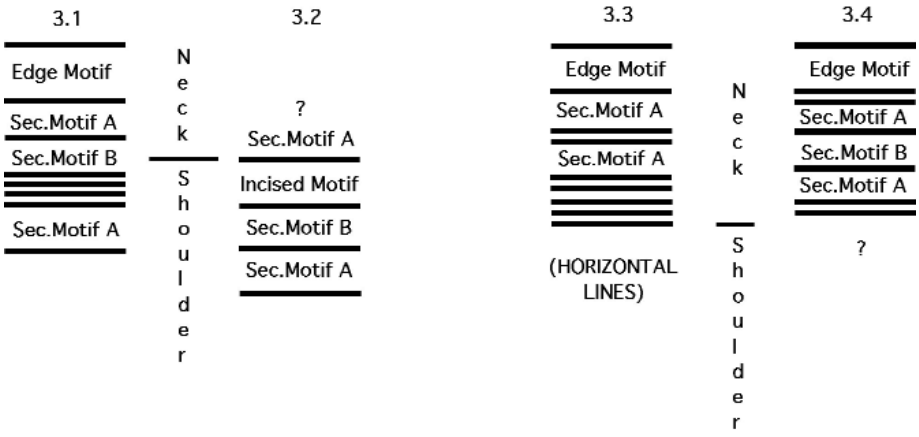

Fig. 6: Design structures on necked jars from «Transitional» levels 6-4 at Sabi Abyad.