

Chalcolithic Period in the Near East

Topic 6

'Uruk expansion' and long-distance exchange

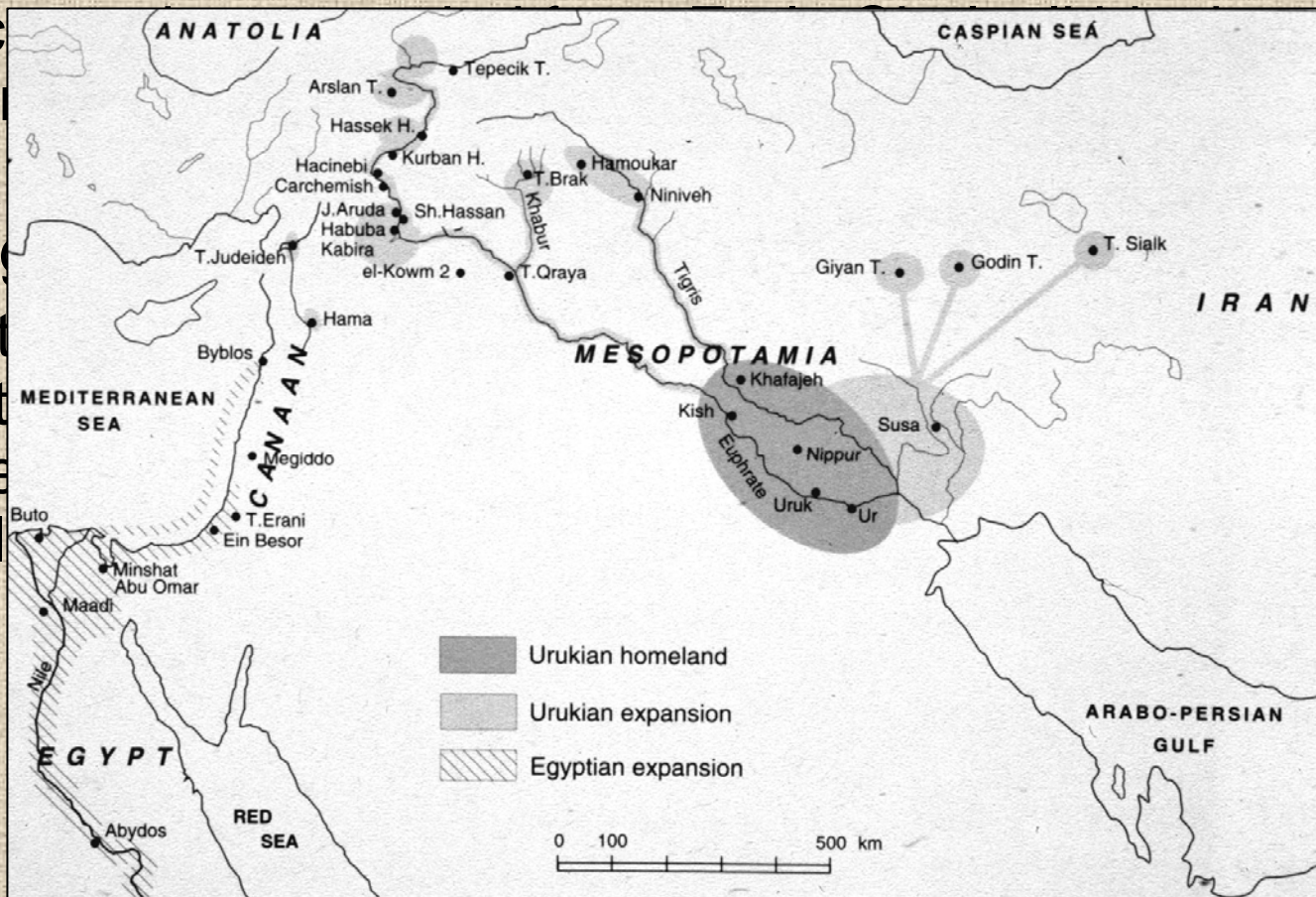
Southern Mesopotamia: Center of Uruk Developments

- Uruk period first recognized there
- Uruk itself by far the largest site, with unique architecture, most proto-cuneiform tablets, seals, etc.
- In 1957 Louis LeBreton published a comparison of the Susiana sequence to southern Mesopotamia
 - showed that there were many similarities in the prehistoric phases
 - but argued that Susiana retained enough distinct features to argue against a colonization or other takeover by people from southern Mesopotamia
 - this position disputed later by some (Algaze), but supported by others (Wright)

Godin Tepe, western Iran

- Excavations under the direction of T. Cuyler Young and Louis Levine

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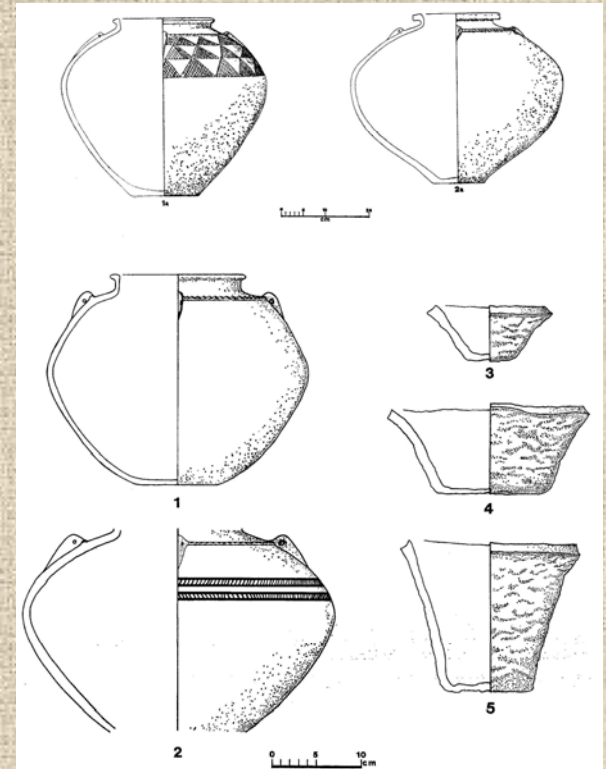
Godin V Oval enclosure



- Occupied relatively briefly
- Abandoned suddenly, but without any violent destruction
 - lots of whole vessels, buildings in good repair
 - but valuables, such as metal objects, absent

Godin

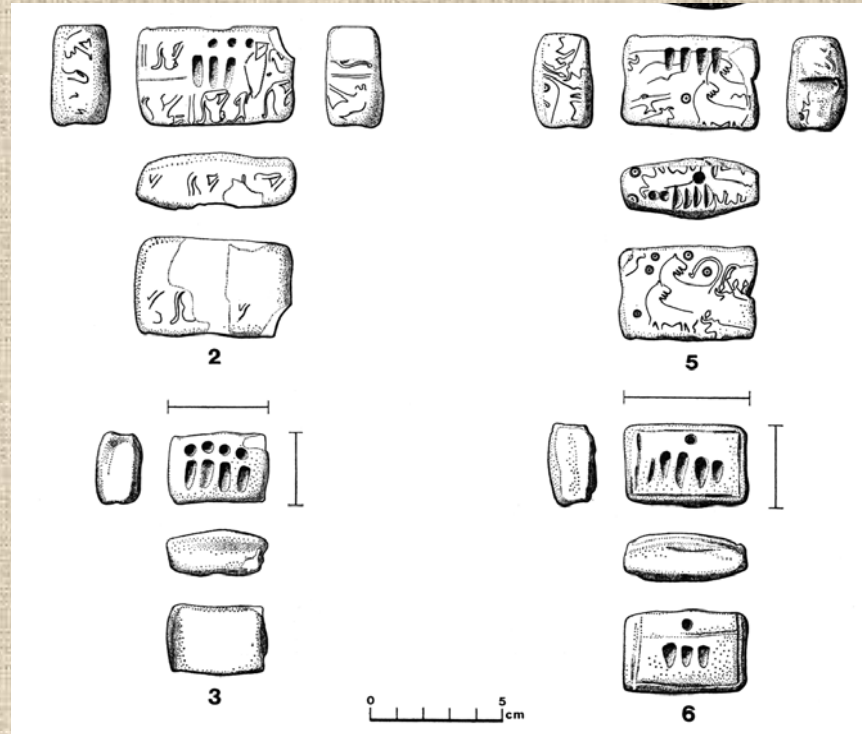
- Lower town abandoned around the same time as the Oval
- When it was reoccupied, shortly thereafter, the material culture was of different kind
- Differences between lower town and Godin Oval not just architectural
 - Uruk-style pottery much more common in association with the Oval



Godin: Pottery in Different Contexts

	Uruk Pottery	Local Pottery
Oval Level V	50 %	50 %
Lower town	20 %	80 %

Godin: Numerical Tablets



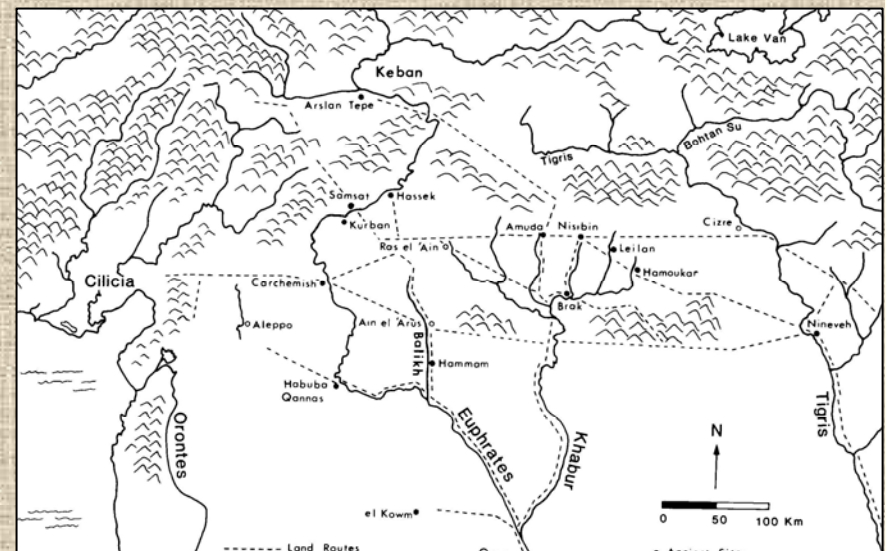
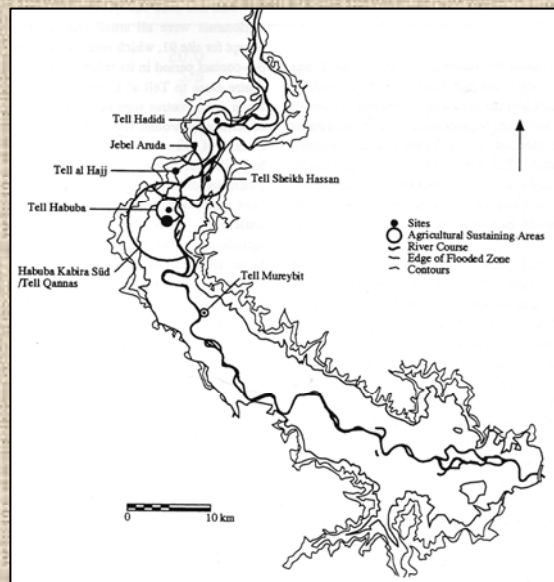
- Found only in the Oval enclosure
 - most similar to those known from Susa
- Also some tablet blanks, implying local manufacture

Godin Tepe: a merchant colony?

- On these bases, Weiss and Young (1975) argued that the Godin Oval was a trading post of merchants from Susa
 - foreign traders lived in enclave separate from the local people
- Thought to be trading colony because:
 - the site sits on an important, historically known trade route
 - use of a lowland recording system (sealed numerical tablets)
- But *what* was traded remained unclear

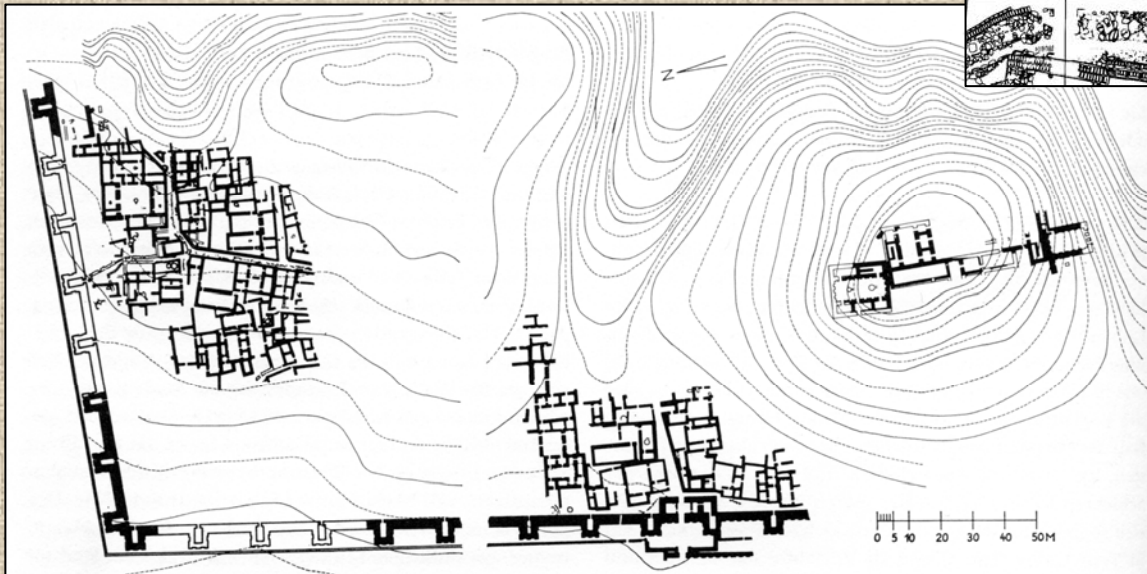
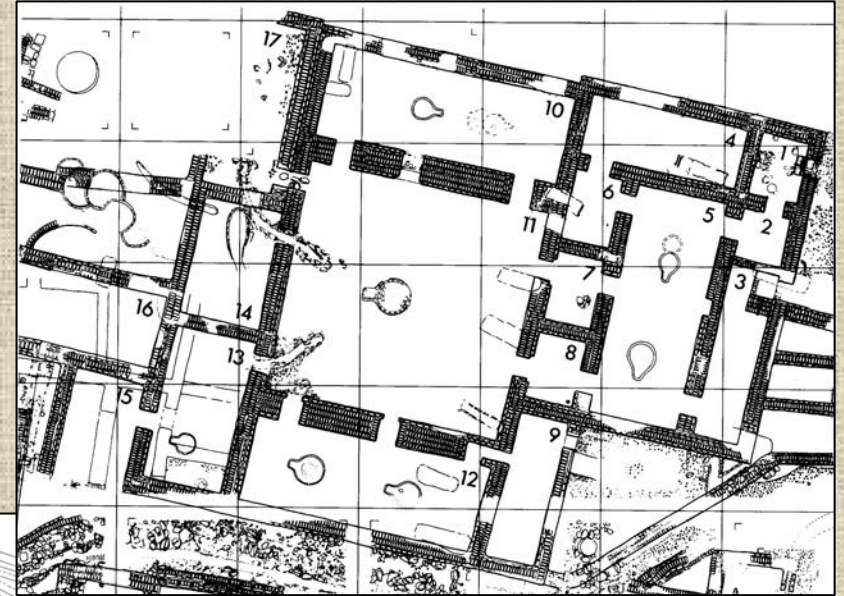
Habuba Kabira and other sites in the Middle Euphrates Valley

- With the impossibility of excavation by foreign teams in Iran and increasing difficulty of working in Iraq, focus of work shifted beginning in the 1970s to northern Mesopotamia (Syria, Turkey)
 - additional impetus were dam projects, for example the Tabqa dam on the Euphrates bend in Syria
- Excavations at Habuba Kabira South, Jebel Aruda, Tell Qannas, Tell Sheikh Hassan all uncovered Uruk-style material



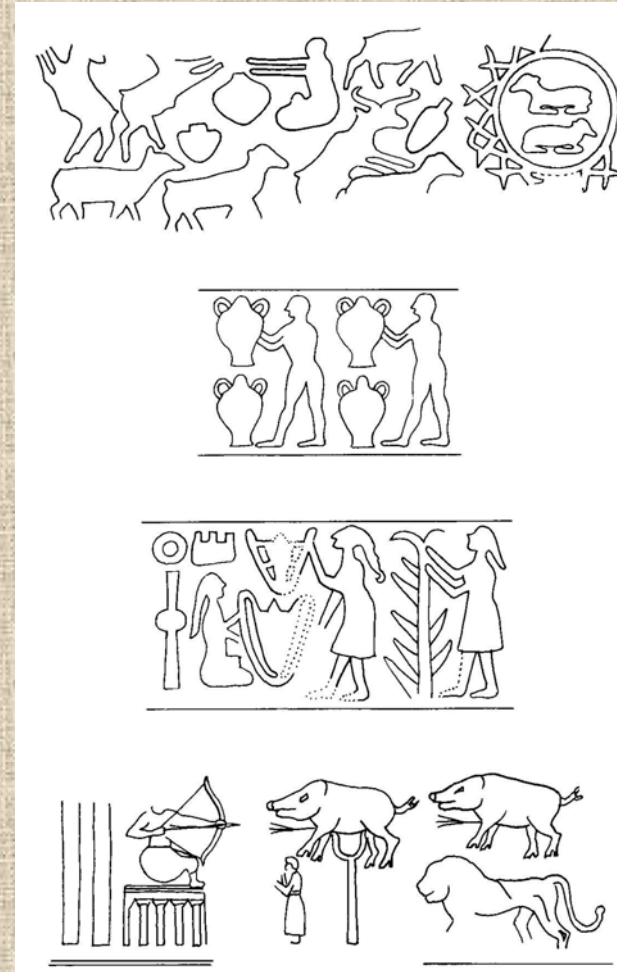
Uruk characteristics

- Architecture – *Mittelsaal* (central hall) houses
- Settlements walled or otherwise defensible
- Uruk pottery, seals and sealings



Habuba Kabira South and Tell Qannas

Uruk-style artifacts from Tabqa Dam sites



- Dated to Late Uruk; no prior occupation on these sites
 - Sites abandoned at end of Uruk period
- Conclusion: these sites were entirely Uruk in material culture and architecture

Guillermo Algaze and the “Uruk Expansion”

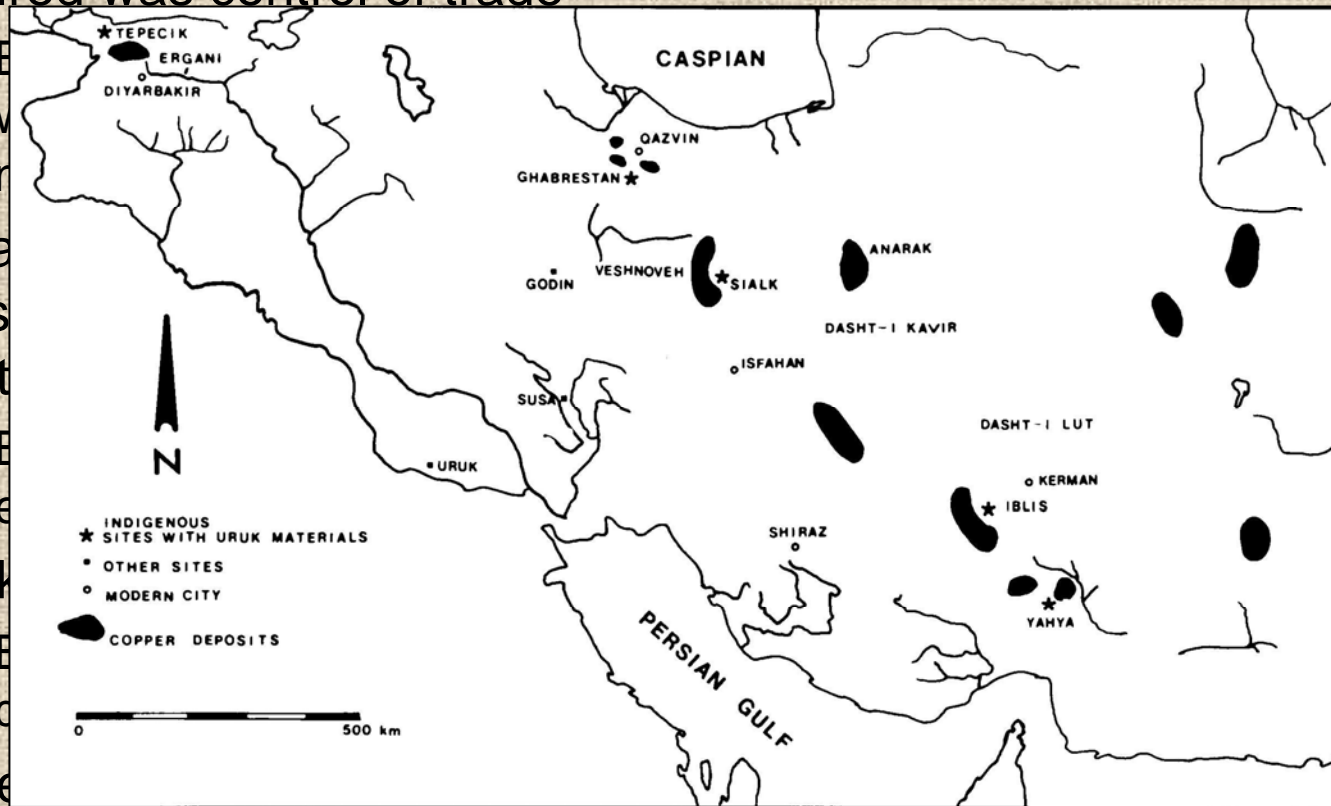
- Algaze’s original work on the subject was his PhD dissertation in 1986
 - He had worked in the Susiana Plain (Chogha Mish) as a student
 - Later in his studies he took part in a dam salvage project in southeastern Turkey
- New work was suggesting increasing evidence of Uruk material in northern Mesopotamia: Algaze formulated notion of an “Uruk expansion” and “informal empire”
 - Subsequently published a revised version of his dissertation as a book (1993: *The Uruk World System*), along with numerous papers and a recent book (2008: *Ancient Mesopotamia at the Dawn of Civilization*)

Algaze and World Systems Theory

- Influenced by ideas of Immanuel Wallerstein
- Wallerstein argued that the world system originated in 16th century
 - division into core and peripheries
 - core controls certain technologies, manufactures goods needed by peripheries
 - peripheries supply raw materials and cheap labor; lacks access to certain technologies
 - in other words peripheries are in dependent relation relative to the core
- For Wallerstein this is a modern phenomenon
- However, Algaze (among others) has argued that it is also applicable to the ancient world

Algaze: 'informal empire' and trade

- Argued that the key element that the southern Mesopotamian core desired was control of trade



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Raw-material poor Mesopotamia, surrounded by raw-material rich regions

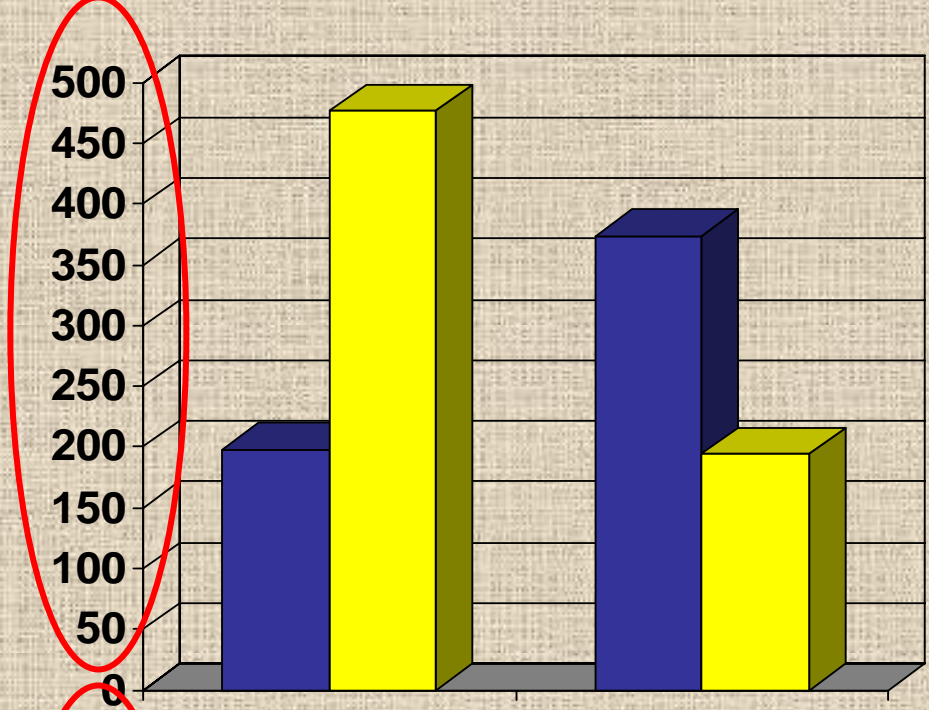


Colonies, enclaves and outposts

- Different types of settlement of Uruk traders in peripheries
 - Colony: wholesale movement of people to settle permanently in an uninhabited area (for example, Habuba Kabira South)
 - Enclave: implantation of group of traders within an existing settlement (for example, Godin)
 - Outpost: small site, with limited range of Uruk material culture
- Initially there was stark difference in technology and demand between core and peripheries
 - But over time demand increased in the peripheries, with local elites seeing possibility to enrich themselves

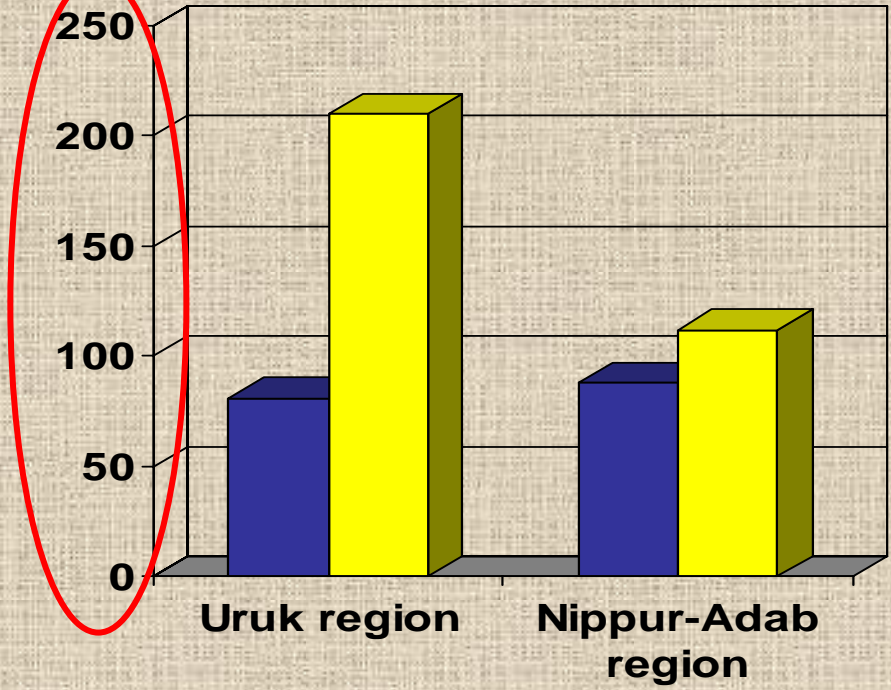
Problems and critiques

- Where are the trade goods?
 - In Godin Tepe or Habuba Kabira South, few to be found
- Which parts of southern Mesopotamia were the driving force? Uruk as a city?
The whole south?
 - Complicated by growing connections between artifacts found in the peripheries and Susa (rather than southern Mesopotamia)
 - Also the revised settlement pattern data for Uruk and Nippur-Adab regions



■ E-M Uruk
■ L Uruk

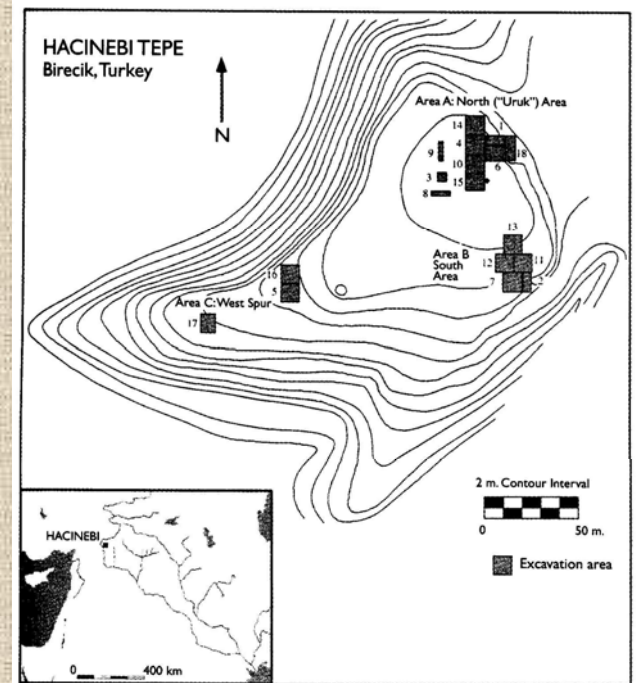
Total hectares of settlement: "uncorrected"



Total hectares of settlement: "corrected"

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- Were the peripheries so underdeveloped?
 - Excavations at Hacinebi Tepe, for example
 - Excavator (G. Stein) argues that there was considerable pre-existing social complexity



Problems and critiques

- Santa Fe chronology showed that ‘Uruk Expansion’ does not begin in Late Uruk but rather in Middle Uruk times
 - Lasted 400-500 years, not the 150-200 years originally thought
- Comparisons to Ubaid times
 - ‘Contact’ between north and south, Mesopotamia and Iran not something new
- Distance: could Uruk settlements in south exert substantial control over long distances? if so, how?

Date B.C.	South	Iran	Syria	Upper Euphrates	Tigris	Southern Mesopotamia						
3000	IVA Eanna IVB V	Nippur XV–XVII	Godin V	Early 17 SusA Acropole	Habuba Kabira Jebel Aruda	Sheikh Hassan 4	Brak TW 12	Hassek Höyük	Arslantepe VIA	Mohammad Arab Late Uruk	Nineveh (Gut) Späturuk Ninevite 4 L: 31–20 Norduruk B L: 37–31	Late Uruk
3400	Late Eanna VI LC 4 Eanna VII	Abu Salabikh XVIII	Early 18 SusA Early 18 Sharafabad	Late 18 SusA	Qraya	Sheikh Hassan 5–7	Brak TW 13	Hacinebi B2 Hacinebi IV	Arslantepe VII			Late Middle Uruk
3600	LC 3 Eanna IX–VIII	Nippur XX–XIX	Susa 19–22			Sheikh Hassan 8–10/13	Brak TW 14–17	Hacinebi B1		Tepe Gawra VIII	Norduruk A L: 45–37	Early Middle Uruk
3800	Late Eanna XI–X LC 2 Eanna XII		hiatus?		Hamman et Turkman VB		Brak TW	Hacinebi A		Tepe Gawra IX–X	Gawra B L: 59–45	Early Uruk
4000	LC 1 Eanna XVI–XIV		hiatus?				Brak TW			Tepe Gawra XI/XA		
4200	Term. Ubaid		Tepe M SusA Acropolis 23–27	Hamman et Turkman VA Hamman et Turkman IVD			Leilan late Vib	Arslantepe VIII		Tepe Gawra XII XIIA–XIII	hiatus? L: 60	Ubaid transitional Ubaid 4?

Other Possible Factors

- Emulation: by elites, of other foreign, high-status ways of life
- Movement of craftspeople (potters, seal cutters), rather than whole populations
- Refugees, rather than merchants or colonists
 - Originally proposed by Johnson, on the basis of Susiana data