

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Prelude to Empire:

Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat and the Rise of the Aramaeans

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

by

Jeffrey Justin Szuchman

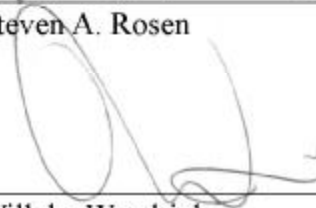
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To my parents.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAAS	Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire. Damascus.
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Boston.
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung. Berlin, Wien.
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology. Boston.
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia. Rome.
AoF	Altorientalische Forschungen (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients). Berlin.
BA	Biblical Archaeologist.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Boston.
BATSH	Berichte der Ausgrabung Tall Šeḫ Ḥamad/Dur-katlimmu
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderer Orient. Berlin.
BCSMS	Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies. Toronto.
Billa	Finkelstein, Jacob J. 1953 Cuneiform Texts from Tell Billa. JCS 7:111–176.
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis. Leiden.
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. London.

CAD	The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago.
DaM	Damaszener Mitteilungen. Mainz.
DeZ	Museum siglum Deir ez-Zor
EA	Moran, William 1992 The Amarna Letters. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.
ETCL	Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/
IstMit	Istanbul Mitteilungen. Istanbul.
JAAS	Journal of Asian and African Studies. Toronto.
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies. New Haven, Baltimore.
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient. Leiden.
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies. Chicago.
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies. Manchester.
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal. Jerusalem.
IOS	Israel Oriental Studies. Tel Aviv.
KAV	Schroeder, Otto 1920 Keilschrifttexte Aus Assur Verschiedenen Inhalts. WVDOG 35. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.
OrAnt	Oriens Antiquus. Rome.
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Freiburg.
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications. Chicago.

- OIS Oriental Institute Seminars. Chicago.
- OLA Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta. Leuven.
- Or Orientalia. Rome.
- PD Weidner, E. F.
1923 Politische Dokumente Aus Kleinasien. Leipzig.
- PDK Weidner, E. F.
1923 Politische Dokumente Aus Kleinasien. Leipzig.
- PIHANS Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul.
- RAI Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
- RGTC 2 Edzard, Dietz Otto, and Gertrude Farber
1974 Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der Zeit der 3. Dynastie von Ur. Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes (= TAVO Beihefte Reihe B Nr.7). Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert.
- RGTC 5 Nashef, Khaled
1982 Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der Zeit der Mittelbabylonischen und Mittelassyrischen Zeit. Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes (= TAVO Beihefte Reihe B Nr.7). Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert.
- RIMA 1 Grayson, A. Kirk
1987 Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115 BC). The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Assyrian Periods 1. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- RIMA 2 Grayson, A. Kirk
1991 Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114–859 BC). The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Assyrian Periods 2. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- RLA Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie

- SAAB State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin. Padua.
- TAÇDAM Center for Research and Assessment of Historic Environment, Turkey.
- TAVO Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients. Wiesbaden. Beihefte: Reihe A, Naturwissenschaften; Reihe B, Geisteswissenschaften.
- TR Saggs, H. W. F.
 1968 The Tell al Rimah Tablets, 1965. Iraq 30:154–174.
 Wiseman, D. J.
 1968 The Tell al Rimah Tablets, 1966. Iraq 30:175–205.
- VAS Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmaler
- VAT Museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung. Tontafeln)
- WVDOG Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft. Leipzig, Berlin.
- YBC Tablet siglum, Yale Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library, New Haven.

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- . "Ahlamu-Aramaeans in the Middle Assyrian Kingdom." Paper Presented at the meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Pacific Southwest Region. Tempe, Arizona. March, 2005.
- . "Revisiting Hanigalbat: Settlement in the Western Provinces of the Middle Assyrian Kingdom." Paper presented at the meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. November, 2005.
- Kayser, Sara, and Jeffrey Szuchman. "Excavations in Operation L." In "Archaeological Investigations at Ziyaret Tepe, 2003 and 2004." Edited by Timothy Matney, and Lynn Rainville. *Anatolica* 31 (2005):35-37.
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- . "Approaching Empire: Middle Assyrian Expansion and Administration." Paper presented at the meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Washington, DC. November, 2006.
- . "Mobility and Sedentarization in Late Bronze Age Syria." In *The Archaeology of Mobility: Nomads in the Old and in the New World*, edited by Hans Barnard and Willeke Wendrich. Cotsen Advanced Seminars. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA. In press.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

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Professor Elizabeth Carter, Chair

The Assyrian empire emerged from a foggy period of Mesopotamian history, which neither texts nor archaeology have illuminated. Prior to that Dark Age at the turn of the first millennium, the Middle Assyrian kingdom controlled provinces in north Syria southeast Turkey, the region they called Hanigalbat, until they withdrew in the 11th century. Recently published excavations and archives have increased our knowledge of the Middle Assyrian period considerably. However, several questions remain about the mechanisms of Middle Assyrian administration and stability, the effect of their administration on pastoral nomadic Aramaean tribes of Hanigalbat, and the transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age in north Syria.

This dissertation addresses those questions, among others, in two ways. The first part synthesizes the published excavations of fifteen Middle Assyrian sites in Hanigalbat.

Such a synthesis is long overdue, and shows that not only there was no decline during the 12th century, as has been assumed, but that many of the ideological aspects of elite culture of the Neo-Assyrian Empire were forged in the Middle Assyrian period.

The second part uses the anthropology of pastoral nomadism in the Middle East to build a model of Aramaean settlement that takes into account the political, economic, and social role of pastoral nomadism in the Late Bronze Age. The ethnographic data suggest that nomads are most likely to settle during periods of political and economic stability—precisely those conditions that prevailed during the height of the Middle Assyrian kingdom. Surveys conducted throughout the region of Middle Assyrian settlement show indications that nomads began to settle well before the Assyrian withdrawal from Hanigalbat. Those sites might contain cultural material that reflects a mobile heritage, a culture that archaeologists may be able to access. An archaeology of sedentarization may provide clues about nomad-sedentary relations during the Middle Assyrian period and beyond.

This dissertation thus generates a comprehensive model of Middle Assyrian expansion, administration, and decline, and the settlement, political consolidation, and state-formation of Aramaean tribes. The Middle Assyrian kingdom encapsulates a moment along a long continuum of cultural development, when new interactions with new peoples occurred, innovative imperial strategies were tested, and the Assyrian identity itself began to take shape.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1 ASSYRIA AND THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN PERIOD

At its height, the Assyrian Empire controlled all of the territory from the Zagros mountains in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and from the Taurus mountains in the north to Egypt and the Persian Gulf in the south. From the mid-9th through the 7th centuries,¹ a succession of powerful rulers had steered the course of Near Eastern history via an elaborate complex of administrative mechanisms, advanced communication methods, and both ruthless and innovative warfare tactics. The grand capitals built by those kings contained enormous palaces adorned with great stone reliefs that depicted brutal battle scenes, images of the king on the hunt, and idyllic images of the king at rest or in pious poses. Upon their rediscovery in the late 19th century, those imposing reliefs, colossal stone statuary, and the extensive libraries and archives of cuneiform documents kindled an enchantment with ancient Mesopotamia that swept the western world. Since those early days of Mesopotamian exploration, the Assyrian Empire, the first of its kind, has endured as a paragon of Mesopotamian civilization.

Yet the origins of this vital period in world history remain elusive. The Assyrian empire emerged from a Dark Age, a foggy period of Mesopotamian history which neither texts nor archaeology have done much to illuminate. Prior to that Dark Age at the turn of the first millennium, the Middle Assyrian kingdom had controlled a smaller territory,

¹All dates are B.C.E.

which comprised the Assyrian triangle of northern Iraq, north Syria as far west as the Balikh River, and the Upper Tigris region of southeast Turkey. They called the territory west of the Assyrian heartland Hanigalbat. As they expanded into Hanigalbat, beginning in the 14th century, they took up residence at administrative centers, agricultural manors, and small villages throughout the territory. Over the centuries, their presence in Hanigalbat withstood a number of changes to the political situation within Assyria and in the territories, until Assyria was forced to withdraw from Hanigalbat in the 11th century. To a significant degree, the aims of the earliest of Neo-Assyrian kings focused on regaining the status and territory that had been held by the Middle Assyrian kings.

Over the past several decades the Middle Assyrian period has become one of increasing interest to scholars of the ancient Near East. Recent publications of Middle Assyrian excavations and archives have dramatically increased the evidence available for evaluating the period. But although recent work on the Middle Assyrian period has added many details to the broad picture of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, several questions remain about the Middle Assyrian presence in Hanigalbat, and about the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age. For example, by what mechanisms did Assyria maintain control over its western territories for the duration of the 13th and 12th centuries? What impact did their administration have on the local populations within Hanigalbat? What role did tribal populations play in the Middle Assyrian kingdom, and how were they able to threaten the kingdom by the 11th century, when they first appear as hostile elements in the royal inscriptions? How were mobile Aramaeans able to establish sedentary dynasties and urban capitals so quickly after the Assyrian withdrawal from Hanigalbat? And if the relationship between Aramaeans and Assyrians was characterized by hostility, as the texts imply, how then can we account for the clear evidence for cultural integration between the two by the Neo-Assyrian period?

This dissertation aims to address those questions, among others, in two ways. The first will be to synthesize the published excavations of fifteen Middle Assyrian sites in Hanigalbat. The excavations that I discuss in the chapters that follow have been conducted primarily over the past twenty years. Such a synthesis is long overdue, and the result will shed additional light on the specific aims of Assyrian early expansion into Hanigalbat, and on the mechanisms of administration. As those sites show, the Middle Assyrian kingdom was no a mere flash in the pan of Mesopotamian history, but it was a significant presence in the world of the Late Bronze Age, and one whose impact is most evident in the legacy created for the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

The second approach that this dissertation takes to elucidating the Middle Assyrian period will be to explore the impact of Assyria on the pastoral nomadic populations of Hanigalbat. I will use ethnographies of Near Eastern nomads in the modern period to help analyze how early Aramaean pastoral nomads might have interacted with the world around them. Although there is a great deal of literature on the origins of the Aramaean kingdoms, for the most part, that work fails to take into account the vast body of ethnographic data that bears on pastoral nomadism, tribal structures, and nomad-sedentary interactions in the modern world. By exploring early Aramaeans in light of that ethnographic literature, I hope to achieve a more accurate and robust model of Aramaean sedentarization and state formation at the end of the Late Bronze Age. A more constructive model will take into account the political, economic, and social role of pastoral nomadism in the Late Bronze Age, rather than the purely political or military role. In the process of such a model, I will make several suggestions regarding ways that archaeologists can better appreciate the role of the sedentarization of nomads in antiquity and possibilities for identifying that process in the archaeological record.

2 THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN PERIOD IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The broad historical outline of the Middle Assyrian period has been known for some time. It began suddenly. Following the defeat of the Mitanni king Tushratta by the Hittites under Šuppiluliuma (1370-1330) in the 14th century, Aššur-uballit I (1365-1330) found himself the ruler of an independent Assyria. With a boldness that the other great powers of the Near East may have taken for audacity (Liverani 1990:72–74; EA 9), he quickly asserted his new role as a “Great King” beginning around 1352 (EA 16; Harrak 1987). He did not, however, immediately move to occupy the territory of Mitanni, though Šuppiluliuma had considered just this threat, and sought to counter it by supporting Tushratta’s son, Shatiwazza, on the throne of a weakened Mitanni (PD 1:18–19). It was not until the reign of Adad-nirari I (1307-1275) that Assyria moved to occupy the cities and towns of Hanigalbat. The first advance upon Hanigalbat followed the hostilities of Šattuara I, Shatiwazza’s successor, who was taken by Adad-nirari I to Assur, then returned to the throne of Mitanni as a vassal. Adad-nirari I did not tolerate further aggression, and after Šattuara’s son, Wasašatta, revolted, Adad-nirari I marched through Syria, and conquered eight Mitanni cities:

I captured by conquest the city Taidu, his great royal city, the cities Amasaku, Kahat, Šuru, Nabula, Hurra, Suduhu, and Waššukanu. I took and brought to my city, Aššur, the possessions of those cities, the accumulated (wealth) of his (Uasašatta’s) fathers, and the treasure of his palace. I conquered, burnt, (and) destroyed the city Irridu and sowed salty plants over it. The great gods gave me to rule from the city Taidu to the city Irridu, the city Eluhat and Mount Kašieri in its entirety, the fortress of the city Sudu, the fortress of the city Harranu, to the bank of the Euphrates. As for the remainder of his (Uasašatta’s) people, I imposed upon (them) corvée (lit. “ho, spade, and basket”). But as for him, I took out from the city Irridu his “wife of the palace” his sons, his daughters, and his people. Bound I brought them and his possessions to my city, Aššur. I conquered, burnt, and destroyed the city Irridu and the cities within the district of the city Irridu and sowed salty plants over them. (*RIMA* 1:A.0.76.3:26–51, p. 136)

A new Assyrian capital was created at Taidu,² and Assyria now ruled north Syria and southeast Turkey from the Tigris to the Euphrates including the entire Khabur triangle (Harrak 1987).

After the death of Adad-nirari I, his son Shalmaneser I (1274-1245), faced a revolt in Hanigalbat that was supported by a coalition of Hittites and Ahlamu. In a violent campaign, Shalmaneser I demonstrably reestablished his authority over the region:

When by the command of the great gods (and) with the exalted strength of Aššur my lord I marched to the land of Hanigalbat, I opened up the most difficult of paths (and) passes. Shattuara the king of Hanigalbat won the support of the army of the Hittites and the *Ahlamu*, and captured the passes and watering-places (in) my (path). When my troops were thirsty and fatigued their army made a fierce attack in strength. But I struck (back) and brought about their defeat. I slaughtered countless numbers of their extensive army. As for him (Šattuara), I chased him at arrow point until sunset. I butchered their hordes (but) 14,400 of them (who remained) alive I blinded and carried off. I conquered nine of his fortified cult centers (as well as) the city from which he ruled, and I turned 180 of his cities into ruin hills. I slaughtered like sheep the armies of the Hittites and Ahlamu his allies. At that time, I captured their cities (in the region) from Ta'idu to Irridu, all of mount Kašiiari, to the city Eluhāt, the fortress of Sudu, the fortress of Harranu to Carchemish which is on the bank of the Euphrates. I became ruler over their lands and I set fire to the remainder of their cities. (*RIMA* 1:A.0.77.1:56–87, pp. 183–184)

By the time Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208) took the throne, Assyria was firmly entrenched in Hanigalbat from the Tigris to the Balikh River, including the Khabur River and the fertile Khabur basin (Figure 2). The rein of Tukulti-Ninurta I, himself, proved to be very significant in the Assyrian memory. He was also a consummate builder, who undertook several major construction projects in Assur, and later in his reign built a new capital about three kilometers northeast of Assur. This new city, which he named Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta (modern Tulul al-‘Aqar), was built on virgin soil, “in uncultivated plains (and) meadows where there was neither house nor dwelling, where no ruin hills or rubble had accumulated, and no bricks had been laid” (*RIMA* 1:A.0.78.23:94–97, p. 273). It was

²For the ancient name of Tell Hamidiya, see below Chapter 5.1

an enormous undertaking that he began only after defeating the Kassite king of Babylon, Kashtiliash IV. This was a major battle and, although the dates of the campaign are uncertain (Brinkman 1970; HARRAK 1987:256–257), Assyria was left in control of Babylon for several years, and the statue of Marduk was brought from Babylon to Assur, where it resided for a century. The Babylonian campaign was commemorated in the “Tukulti-Ninurta Epic,” and the imagery used to describe the attacking Assyrian army is bloody and savage:

They are furious, raging, taking forms strange as Anzu.
They charge forward furiously to the fray without any armor,
They had stripped off their breastplates, discarded their clothing,
They tied up their hair and polished(?) their . . . weapons,
The fierce, heroic men danced with sharpened weapons.
They blasted at one another like struggling lions, with eyes aflash(?)
While the fray, particles drawn in a whirlwind, swirled around in combat,
Death, as if on a day of thirsting, slakes itself at the sight of the warrior.
(Foster 1995:193, ll. 325–331)

The death of Tukulti-Ninurta I, in a coup that involved his own son, left the status of Assyria in Hanigalbat diminished. His reign was followed by instability in the heartland, and the number of inscriptions detailing military campaigns and construction activities decreases. The Assyrian occupation of Hanigalbat appears to have shrunk only slightly, but the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076) corresponds to period of renewed or continued stability, despite the fact that Assyria faced threats from tribal groups in Syria. Shortly after Tiglath-pileser I, however, the kingdom descended into a period of decline, as it suffered from continuing hostilities from Aramaean tribal groups, and a warming and drying of the climate that may have led to a reduction of annual rainfall, crop failure, and widespread famine (Neumann and Parpola 1987). Assyria withdrew from Hanigalbat, and between the mid-11th and the mid-10th century, a dearth of texts offers very little information about the events of Upper Mesopotamia until the ninth century resurgence of Assyria.

3 ISSUES IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN PERIOD

That broad outline of Middle Assyrian history has been augmented and enhanced in recent years, as Assyriologists have made remarkable headway in understanding the mechanisms by which the Middle Assyrian kingdom functioned. A wealth of textual documentation, much of which has been published only in the past decade and a half, provides us with names, dates, titles, places, commodities, and events that have enriched our knowledge of the Middle Assyrian bureaucracy, economy, and social and administrative systems. However, there are some negative consequences to having such detailed records at our disposal. In the first place, the largest number of texts dates to the early part of the Middle Assyrian period, that is, during the 13th century. This has meant in some cases that later periods are simply not addressed by researchers,³ or in other cases, that an assumption is made that during periods when texts decrease in frequency, the Assyrian kingdom must have suffered a proportional decrease in power or stability. Although it may be true in some cases that a decline in royal inscriptions correlates with a decline in royal power, accidents of preservation will always make such assumptions precarious.

A second consequence of the reliance on details that the texts provide is that archaeologists have tended to accept and superimpose portraits of the kingdom derived from historical accounts onto the results of excavations and surveys. For example, in their recent overview of archaeology in Syria, Akkermans and Schwartz (2003:348–350), proceed from the implications of the texts from Tell Sheikh Hamad (ancient Dur Katlimmu), and describe the three-tiered settlement pattern of the lower Khabur valley as

³E.g., Machinist 1982, or even more recently Jakob (2003:4–14), who devotes only one paragraph to the century between Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I in his ten pages outlining the history of the period.

the “archaeological reflection” of the administrative system described in the texts. Their description of the later phases of the Middle Assyrian kingdom is confined to the following statement in a section on the general collapse of the Late Bronze Age: “Although the Middle Assyrian rulers held on to their empire in Syria for some time, they too found their dominions and power significantly reduced by the mid-eleventh century” (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003:358). Archaeologists are certainly better equipped than Assyriologists to study periods when textual productivity was low, but in the context of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, archaeologists have been content to describe the entire period based primarily on the textual record of the 13th century. A perusal of the bibliography at the end of this dissertation will show that the bulk of the literature dedicated to the Middle Assyrian kingdom has been written from a textual perspective. The focus on texts has left the field with a skewed view of 12th–11th centuries in north Syria, when texts are relatively scarce.

In the following chapters, I describe the state of our knowledge of the Middle Assyrian expansion into and administration of Hanigalbat based on the textual sources. I then point to certain problems with our current understanding that a review of the archaeological record will help to elucidate. One of the difficulties with the current model of the Middle Assyrian administration of Hanigalbat lies in the chronological development of the kingdom. The total length of the two periods of Assyrian decline between Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I, and again after the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, lasted nearly as many years as the period of consolidation under Adad-nerari I, Shalmaneser I, Tukulti-Ninurta I, and resurgence under Tiglath-pileser I combined (Figure 3). How was the kingdom able to survive the 82 years of decline after Tukulti-Ninurta I and reassert itself in Hanigalbat with an almost unchanged political and administrative system? What was

the nature of this “decline,” and how were those years felt in the hinterlands of Assyria? Did the Assyrian presence recede from Hanigalbat entirely, or did an Assyrian administrative hierarchy ruling under the authority of the king in Assur continue to survive in a weakened state?

A second difficulty with the current understanding of Middle Assyrian administration has to do with the events surrounding the final decline of Assyria and withdrawal from Hanigalbat. This event is most often attributed to resistance by nomadic Aramaeans or climate change, but where royal inscriptions like the Broken Obelisk or Kurkh Stela paint a picture of a series of violent interactions between Aramaeans and Assyrians, the archaeology of Middle Assyrian sites in Syro-Anatolia speaks to a relatively uneventful transition from the Late Bronze to Early Iron Ages. The majority of sites were abandoned with little or no evidence of destruction, between the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, and were reoccupied by Assyrians in the Iron Age. What were the precise causes of the decline of Assyria during the reign of Aššur-bel-kala (1073-1056), and why were Middle Assyrian sites abandoned?

A third difficulty with the current state of knowledge about the Middle Assyrian kingdom is that it does not account well for the role of pastoral nomadic tribes in the territories that Assyria conquered. That those tribes played a pivotal role in the later part of the Middle Assyrian kingdom is clear from the textual sources for that period. By the 9th century, these semi-nomadic tribes had established strong sedentary dynasties in the region of Assyrian-occupied Hanigalbat, and west of the Euphrates in the former Hittite kingdom. Previous research on the rise of the Iron Age Aramaean dynasties appears to have reached a consensus on the nature and chronology of early Aramaean aggression against Assyria, settlement, and consolidation of power. The consensus holds that

Aramaeans, made up largely of pastoral nomadic groups that had been active in Syria throughout the 2nd millennium, began to resist Assyrian authority during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. Subsequent kings were unable to contain sustained Aramaean aggression which, combined with other external and internal factors, eventually resulted in the withdrawal of Assyria from Hanigalbat. The absence of a strong central authority allowed Aramaeans to settle and establish urban dynasties that filled the power vacuum.

That model of settlement, however, leaves several questions unanswered and, in fact, presents several problems for understanding the precise mechanisms by which Assyrians and Aramaeans interacted. Not only does that model fail to account for the decades of ethnographic data that suggests sedentarization takes place under a strong and stable central authority, but it does not address the vital economic role of pastoral nomads or the political and social integration that takes place between nomadic and sedentary populations in all periods of Near Eastern history. One goal of this dissertation is to move beyond the outdated view of the limited role of pastoral nomadism in antiquity that continues to plague studies of early Aramaeans.

4 GOALS AND STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

For many of the questions about the Middle Assyrian period that remain, texts fail to provide adequate answers. In those cases, the archaeology of Syria and southeast Turkey sheds a great deal of light on the years of Assyrian hegemony in Hanigalbat. For other questions, texts and archaeology appear to be in conflict, and only a nuanced evaluation of each line of evidence can hint at their answers. In the following pages, I evaluate textual evidence, data provided by archaeological excavations, the results of archaeological surveys, and ethnographic data. This dissertation thus weaves together several lines of evidence in order to build a nuanced and comprehensive picture of the

various sectors of Middle Assyrian society (elite Assyrians, local Hurrians, pastoral nomadic tribes), and the ways in all sectors interacted with and exerted an influence upon each other. Ultimately, I hope that this dissertation will contribute to the ongoing discussion that centers on the history and relevance of the Middle Assyrian period to Assyrian cultural development; the specific history of the Middle Assyrian-Aramaean relationship and of the ancient nomad-sedentary interactions in general; and the techniques and prospects of the archaeology of pastoral nomadism in the Near East

This dissertation is organized into two parts. The first is devoted to the expansion of Assyria into Hanigalbat and their methods of administration in the western provinces of the kingdom. In Chapter 2, I describe the current state of our understanding of the Middle Assyrian administrative system, based primarily on the cuneiform record from Middle Assyrian archives and royal inscriptions. In Chapters 3 through 6, I synthesize the results of excavations of Middle Assyrian sites in north Syria and southeast Turkey. I proceed geographically, beginning in the western and northern borders of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, and then moving to the Khabur basin, the breadbasket of Hanigalbat, and then the Lower Khabur region, where the capital of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat was located. In the last chapter of the first part, I attempt to disentangle the textual from the archaeological data to provide a revised and more accurate picture of the Middle Assyrian occupation and administration of Hanigalbat from the 13th through the 11th centuries. To foreshadow the conclusions of Part I, I argue that the Assyrian presence in Hanigalbat was relatively stable throughout those centuries, and that the years traditionally understood as a decline that interrupted Assyrian authority in Hanigalbat, was in fact a period of continued Assyrian power. I also describe the variety of strategies that were employed to administer the expanded territory of Assyria. Finally, I discuss the notion of Assyrian

culture and identity that began to take shape in the Middle Assyrian period, and aspects of material and cultural continuity from the Middle to Neo-Assyrian periods.

Part II shifts the focus from the Middle Assyrian administration of Hanigalbat to the effects of that authority on local pastoral nomadic populations. In Chapter 8 I present the current model of Aramaean settlement and dynastic growth, and reevaluate that model in the light of recent anthropological approaches to 20th century pastoral nomadism in the Middle East. The conclusions drawn in Part I about Assyrian administration, economy, and identity formation are also used to refine the current understanding of the rise of the Aramaean power in Syria. Using those varied strands of evidence, I conclude that Aramaeans were more likely to have begun the process of taking up sedentary occupations during the long period of economic and political stability in the 13–12th centuries.

In Chapter 9, I test the results of this reanalysis against the archaeological survey record of Late Bronze Age Syria and Turkey. The outcome offers a new model of Aramaean settlement and consolidation of urban authority that is rooted in a detailed account of the economic, social, and political setting of pastoral nomads under Middle Assyrian authority in Hanigalbat. I also discuss the implications of the refined settlement history of Aramaeans for the archaeological study of pastoral nomadism in the Late Bronze Age. The most challenging aspect to archaeologists interested in the rise of Aramaean dynasties is the difficulty inherent in identifying the remains of pastoral nomadic communities. These challenges are less pronounced in the desert areas of the Levant, for example, where nomadic campsites stand out amidst the landscape. In the more fertile areas of northern Mesopotamia, by contrast, successful identification of pastoral nomadic sites has been more limited. Drawing again from the anthropology of pastoral nomadism, which suggests that even after sedentarization, pastoral nomads retain a strong cultural

connection to their tribes and nomadic heritage, I suggest that archaeologists may be able to bypass these difficulties by focusing on the sites of sedentarized pastoral nomads. Such sites might contain cultural material that reflects a mobile heritage, and provide clues relating to nomadic lifeways, and nomad-sedentary relations during the Middle Assyrian period.

The last chapter of the dissertation brings together the findings of Part I and II to generate a coherent model of Middle Assyrian expansion, administration, and decline, and the concurrent settlement, political consolidation, and state-formation that took place among Aramaean tribes. I also suggest the implications of this dissertation for the study of Neo-Assyrian period, and to other periods and regions where nomads interacted with urban and rural sedentary populations, and where tribes eventually appropriated state institutions to establish lasting kingdoms.

PART I

MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ADMINISTRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN HANIGALBAT

CHAPTER 2

THE ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMY OF MIDDLE ASSYRIAN HANIGALBAT

1 EARLY MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ADMINISTRATION

1.1 THE ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY

The most significant outcome of the reigns of Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I was the reorganization of the Assyrian administration of Hanigalbat. It is to this period that the majority of archives in Assyria and Hanigalbat date, and it is these texts that serve as the basis for the reconstruction of the Middle Assyrian administrative system. The framework for understanding the Middle Assyrian administration of its territory in Hanigalbat comes from royal inscriptions, economic and administrative texts, and letters found at Assur and other administrative sites in the heartland and the provinces. Machinist (1982), Postgate (1988; 1992; 2002), Harrak (1987), and more recently Cancik-Kirschbaum (1996; 2000) and Jakob (2003) have all treated the administrative strategies of Assyria during this early period of expansion and consolidation. Recently published texts from Tell Chuera (Kühne, C. 1995) and Tell Sheikh Hamad (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996) have only added to the wealth of sources on this topic. Foundational to the study of Middle Assyrian administration has been the work of Machinist and Postgate, based on texts from Amuda, Tell al-Rimah, Tell Billa, and Assur. According to those documents, the Assyrian kingdom consolidated its control over Hanigalbat in the 13th century by making that region a province of Assyria with its own bureaucratic hierarchy.

The highest Assyrian office within Hanigalbat was that of the *sukkallu rabi'u*, also known as the *Šar Hanigalbat*. This figure first appears in texts from the 13th century and, from the beginning had close ties to the royal family (Figure 4). Qibbi-Aššur, the first official to claim this title, was the grandson of Adad-nirari I and nephew of Shalmaneser I (Saporetti 1979:124–125; Freydank 1991:59ff; Jakob 2003:59ff). He was succeeded in turn by his son, Aššur-iddin, who appears in the correspondence from Dur Katlimmu (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996). Aššur-iddin was followed by his son Ili-ipadda, who became the *Šar Hanigalbat* at the end of the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, and who figures prominently in the texts from Sabi Abyad (Akkermans and Wiggerman 1999; Akkermans, P. M. M. G. 2006). Thus, over the course of several generations, a single family held this very high post in the Assyrian bureaucracy. Even as late as the reign of Aššur-dan I (1179-1134), an official from the line of Qibi-Aššur retained the title of *sukkallu rabi'u* (Andrae 1913:128:2; Jakob 2003:63).

There was one interruption in the line of the *sukkallu rabi'u*, when Šulmanu-mušabši succeeded Aššur-iddin, which suggests that the position was not necessarily inherited. Jakob (2003:62) proposes that the break in the line of succession may have had to do with a life-threatening illness or the youth of Ili-ipadda when the time came to assume the role of *sukkallu rabi'u*. Eventually, however, the role of the highest official in Hanigalbat returned to the family of Qibi-Aššur. Ili-ipadda's son, Ninurta-apil-Ekur would become king, finally returning the throne to the line of Adad-nerari I, after having lost it following the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I.

Machinist (1982) suggests that the title *šar Hanigalbat* may have intentionally implied the vassal-like status of the conquered territory in order to appease the local populations, though the fact that he resided at Dur Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad), well

south of the Mitanni heartland in the Upper Khabur Basin, might suggest that Assyria was marking a deliberate discontinuity from the previous power source. Whatever the reasoning behind the title itself, the *šar Hanigalbat* effectively discharged the aims of the Assyrian king in the western territories. He maintained order in the provinces, oversaw agricultural production, supervised workers, ensured the regular supply of taxes, adjudicated legal disputes, and provided hospitality for traveling dignitaries. The *šar Hanigalbat* also had policing authority, which allowed him to act against looters,⁴ missing prisoners,⁵ and to distribute military personnel⁶ (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2003:47).

Within Assyrian Hanigalbat, territory was subdivided into provinces (*pāhutu* or *halšu*), administrative units which first appear in the 13th century texts from Aššur-uballit I. The person responsible for administering each individual province was the *bēl pāhete*. From this early period, at least seven *pāhutus* are known, and each province contained a central city that functioned as the administrative center of the region: Amasakku (*RGTC* 5:28–28), Dur-Katlimmu (*RGTC* 5:92–93), Nahur (*RGTC* 5:201), Šuduhu (*RGTC* 5:251), Taidu (*RGTC* 5:257), HARbe, and Tell Sabi Abyad (Figure 5). These capital cities served as nodes in the Middle Assyrian administrative network (Liverani 1988; Postgate 1992; Röllig, W. 1997). Of these, all but HARbe and Sabi Abyad housed palaces, and Harrak understands this difference as indicative of a fundamental administrative distinction between these sites (Harrak 1987:196–197, Figure

⁴E.g., Dur Katlimmu 6:29’-31’, which describes an attack by an “enemy” on traders, and the seizure of ten donkeys, carrying oil in bronze containers (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:118).

⁵E.g., Dur Katlimmu 2:4, in which Sin-mudammeq reports to Aššur-iddin that he had chased escapees from Carchemish (ERÍN.MEŠ ša ^{URU}Kar-ga-mis ša in-na-bi-du-ni) to Dunni-Aššur (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:95). On the use of the root *nābutu*, see Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:99.

⁶E.g., Dur Katlimmu 3:25-26, in which Sin-mudammeq refers to Aššur-iddin’s request for 50 soldiers for his protection (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:107).

11). According to his scheme, only those regions with an attested *bēl pāhete* housed palaces. In other cases, when a different title was used, such as *šaknu*⁷ or *halšuhlu*⁸, there was no palace, and the function of the administrator differed, though the nature of this distinction is unclear (Harrak 1987:202). Machinist (1982), however, following Finkelstein (1953), sees the terms *bēl pāhete* and *halšuhlu* as interchangeable.

In any case, the roles of the *bēl pāhete* or *halšuhlu* appear to have been essentially interchangeable or, at the very least, their duties overlapped considerably. Within each province, these individuals collected taxes, conducted transactions, and maintained law and order both in the cities and in the manors and farmsteads around them. Other subordinate officials within each district oversaw the maintenance of the palace and its personnel, received and transported taxes, and oversaw inter-provincial transactions. Among these, the *rab ekalli* was in charge of administering the palace and personnel within it; the *rab ālāne* was responsible for coordinating activities of provincial cities with the capital of the *pāhutu*; the *hazi'ānu* was supervising officer within the capital; the *alahhinu* received, processed, and redistributed grain taxes; and the *qēpu ša šarri*, “royal agent,” supervised inter-provincial transactions including the transfer of grain between provinces to feed work gangs of captive deportees (see Machinist 1982 and, for the most current and detailed treatment, Jakob 2003).

In addition to the bureaucratic officials, the army was also a significant presence in the Assyrian periphery. The army served many functions, only one of which was as a military unit or policing force for border areas. Numerous terms are used to refer to army

⁷Translated by Jakob (2003) as “Präfekt.”

⁸Translated by Jakob (2003) as “Bezirksaufseher.”

troops or personnel, and their precise nature and function has been difficult to determine.⁹ The term most often used is *hurādu*, and Postgate (1971:499–502) discusses three particular texts that suggest three possible meanings of the term. In some contexts (TR 3005, TR 2021+2051), *hurādu* means simply army. In another context (KAV 119), the term appears to refer to individual military units, under the command of a single officer and associated with a particular town. Elsewhere (Billa 12), *hurādu* is used to describe the king's army, which was housed at a camp, rather than in a town garrison. In some cases, the *hurādu* recruits took part in civilian or perhaps public works projects, as indicated by a harvest supervisor designated *hurādu* in YBC 12862: 4-6 (Machinist 1982:8–9, 27). In each of these instances, whether *hurādu* refers to a guard, contingent, or army, it was made up, in part, by individuals fulfilling their annual *ilku* obligation, the mandatory service period owed to the king (Postgate 1971). The duties of these recruits would have been the defense of a particular city, public works projects within a city, or service in the king's army. Less often they may have taken part in royal campaigns, but Postgate (1971:501) suggests that the units called upon for royal campaigns could have been recruited by different means. On the border lands, especially the western border, military units were allocated and deployed by the regional officials or the Assyrian king. Thus, a unit was likely housed at Tell Sabi Abyad, and a line of forts may have stretched all along the Balikh, forming the de facto border between Assyria and the buffer zone along the western edge of the Hittite kingdom (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2000:6–7).

⁹For a discussion of the terms *perru*, *kaşru*, and *hurādu*, see Machinist (1982:26–27). For *kişru* and *pirru* in the Neo-Assyrian period, see Postgate (1979:210–213). For a thorough discussion of all Middle Assyrian terms for army personnel, see Jakob (2003:191–222)

1.2 MITANNI AND MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ADMINISTRATION

The carefully defined bureaucratic roles of Assyrian officials developed rapidly as a consequence of the rapid assimilation of the western territories into the Assyrian realm. Liverani (1988) first described Assyria's presence in Hanigalbat as a "network empire." According to Liverani, this was a distinctly Assyrian administrative system that comprised a network of palaces and Assyrian cities, which overlay a large area of villages and towns populated by local elements, probably Hurrians, and nomadic tribes of Ahlamu or Aramaeans. At the nodes of the network were the cities where Assyrians constructed palaces, temples, roads, garrisons, and expanded agricultural production.¹⁰

Postgate (1992) expanded upon this framework, and argued that, though individual Assyrians were concentrated in the cities, that is, at those nodes along a network of administration, their influence was not diminished in the rural areas between nodes. On the contrary, via mayors or village chiefs who oversaw the work contingents within the town, they were likely able to closely monitor the agricultural output of all of Hanigalbat (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2003:47). What was not sent to Assur was kept in the district for local supply and rations. Both within the district and in Assur, officials kept detailed accounts of annual deliveries from the individual districts. Whenever an obligation was not kept, it was added to the accounts deficit, to be repaid the following

¹⁰The Middle Assyrian organization of power differs from that of the Neo-Assyrian empire primarily in terms of the sheer scale of the latter, the extent of investment in infrastructure and defense, and the extent of colonization and exploitation of conquered territories. For this reason, Liverani (1988) regards the Neo-Assyrian empire as a "territorial empire" (Mann 1986; Santley and Alexander 1992). Parker (2001) suggests instead that the Neo-Assyrian empire defies categorization. Rather, the core exercised flexibility in exerting imperial authority in conquered territories. Thus, in some cases, Assyria exerted indirect hegemonic control; in regions that were controlled more directly, the empire exerted territorial control; and in other cases power was exerted to some degree along a continuum from hegemonic to territorial control (D'Altroy 1992). In still other cases, power was exerted via a network of administrative nodes. And in buffer zones, Assyria retained the status quo regarding the dynamics of power.

year.

The rapid consolidation of Hanigalbat, therefore, involved integrating the newly occupied territory into the existing administrative framework of the heartland. In some cases, it appears as though the previous Mitanni administrative structure was retained to some degree (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2000:7), especially in terms of the administrative geography of Syro-Anatolia. Thus, several large Mitanni administrative centers, including Tell Hamidiya and Üçtepe, retained their administrative status in the Middle Assyrian period. At the same time, other cities, like Tell Brak, and Hammam et-Turkman lost the status that they had held under the Mitanni regime. In addition, smaller Mitanni sites like Tell Chuera were rebuilt as Assyrian administrative centers.

1.3 PRIVATE ‘HOUSES’ AND THE ECONOMICS OF PROVINCIAL¹¹ ADMINISTRATION

Not only was the administrative mechanism of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat tightly controlled by a select few Assyrians, the economy of the western provinces also appears to have been controlled by a group of wealthy individuals with ties to the administration and the king. Machinist (1982:29) suggests that both in the heartland and in the provinces, economic affairs were run by “large, extended families of wealth, holding estates and involved in a web of commercial relations, who have ties with, if they are not actually part, of the government.” He stops short, however, of suggesting that administration in the western provinces was conducted by these families. On the contrary, it was the king himself who maintained absolute control over the appointment and duties of administrators in Hanigalbat. In some cases, those wealthy families did occupy positions in the official hierarchy, but Machinist maintains that in a number of cases, no such relationship existed between the provincial administrators and the “great families” of

¹¹I use this term here and throughout merely as an adjective specifying the administration of the Assyrian provinces—not in any pejorative sense.

Assur. Rather, he concludes, that “what we seem to have are local officials and their families using the opportunities afforded them to acquire private wealth” (Machinist 1982:33).

Machinist’s view of the administrative organization of Middle Assyria differs from that of Postgate (1979; 1988; 2002), who holds that in the majority of cases, both in the Assyrian heartland and its peripheral territories, administrative posts were granted by the king to a number of wealthy families. Postgate’s (1988) analysis of a single private archive from Assur¹² belonging to three generations of the family of Urad-Šerua shows that the men of this family not only fulfilled official duties, either as *bēl pāhete* or a position of equivalent status, but they also engaged in private loan transactions that increased their wealth and authority over the regions they governed. Often, the line between official duties and the private affairs of the families blurred. For example, private loans of tin and grain were given by families in official positions. Postgate concludes that, under Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I, “Middle Assyrian government was entrusted to ‘houses’ or private households” (1988:xiii), which were run along commercial lines (1979:202), and that “when ‘the House of X’ is mentioned in an administrative context it may just as well be an arm of the government as a private establishment” (1988:xxiii).

Despite their differences, what is clear from both Postgate’s and Machinist’s interpretations of the texts is that, to whatever extent the Middle Assyrian economy and government was actually run by private families, the needs of the central government in the provinces were primarily economic, and therefore similar to those of a merchant family. As Postgate (1988:xxiv) puts it, “the needs of government can have differed only in degree from those of a large private household: agricultural labour and production,

¹²The archive comprises 84 texts in Assur 14327, found in 1908 (Pedersén 1985:99–106).

acquisition and processing of raw materials, control of personnel, and transactions with other establishments.” Thus, on the one hand, private archives from both Assur and the provinces (i.e., Tell al-Rimah, Tell Billa, Giricano, and elsewhere) show that corn and barley loans, along with guarantees of produce or animals to be given when an official intercedes on behalf of someone,¹³ were common means by which affluent and influential individuals and families accumulated more wealth. On the other hand, administrative texts from Assur attest to the heavy burden that was placed upon the conquered peoples of Hanigalbat in order to increase the wealth of the temple and the palace in Assur.

1.3.1 Agricultural Intensification The labor required by the conquered peoples of Hanigalbat was primarily the result of agricultural intensification under the Middle Assyrian regime. One element of the effort to intensify agriculture in Hanigalbat may have been the implementation of a new canal irrigation system both in the upper and lower Khabur and in the Balikh valley (Kühne, H. 1990; Wiggerman 2000). Recent studies of canal systems in the Neo-Assyrian period demonstrate that canals were not only a potent ideological symbol, but also a highly effective means of agricultural intensification in the otherwise risky dry farming regions of northern Mesopotamia (Bagg 2000; Ur 2005; Wilkinson, *et al.* 2005). Wilkinson *et al.* (2005:32) suggest that canal irrigation within Assyria might have increased production there by as much as one and a half to two times pre-irrigation levels. Under the Middle Assyrian regime, H. Kühne (1990; Ergenzinger and Kühne 1991) suggests that within Hanigalbat a regional canal network might have extended from near Tell Kerma, south of Hassake, to Dur Katlimmu. If so, the agricultural potential of the lower Khabur would have increased dramatically and, by the

¹³As, for example, when a judge agrees to hear a case in exchange for a bribe. This gift is known as *šulmanu* gift. On *šulmanu* texts see, Finkelstein (1952) and Saggs (1968).

7th century, the grain output would have grown to three times the amount produced today (Kühne, H. 1990:21).

Kühne's hypothesis is based primarily on settlement density and ancient climate reconstructions, but texts from *dunnu* settlements throughout north Syria and southeast Turkey also testify to the overriding agricultural orientation of the western provinces. This type of settlement appears to have developed from the *dimtu* settlement type known from the 15th and 14th century texts from Nuzi. Although it is difficult to precisely describe what is meant by *dimtu*, the original meaning was probably close to its literal meaning, "tower," or "siege tower" (CAD 3 1959: *dimtu* 1, 114) and according to the texts, a *dimtu* can refer to an actual fortified tower construction, a settlement, perhaps initially oriented around a defensive tower, or a district (Koliński 2001). These *dimtu* constructions and settlements appear throughout southern and northern Mesopotamia during the second millennium BC.

In the Middle Assyrian period, the term *dunnu* is related to, or at least analogous to *dimtu*, and appears to refer to privately owned farmsteads in the Middle Assyrian realm. In his study of the Middle Assyrian texts from Sabi Abyad, Wiggerman (2000) describes *dunnus* as fortified agricultural production centers granted to an individual family by the Assyrian king, the owner of which had a residence both at the *dunnu* and at a city outside the *dunnu*. The sole purpose of a *dunnu* was farming, and the farmers who worked the *dunnu* fields were dependent employees of the *dunnu*-owning family. Middle Assyrian *dunnus* could be quite large. Based on the texts from Sabi Abyad, and the ecology of the Balikh valley (Wilkinson, 1998), Wiggerman (2000:180–183) calculates an area of 2076 ha of cultivated land at Sabi Abyad (Figure 6). Radner's (2004:71) analysis of the texts from Giricano (ancient Dunnu-ša-Uzibi) suggests to her that, at least in the Upper Tigris

region, *dunnus* accounted for most of the agricultural land in the Middle Assyrian kingdom. Considering the extent of agricultural production that *dunnus* accounted for, the system was clearly vital for the functioning of the Middle Assyrian economy, and must have been the essential means by which the provinces supplied offerings to the temple, palace, and the population of the Assyrian heartland, those goods that made up the “groceries for its daily menu” (Postgate 1992:251).

In contrast to this expansive agricultural production, sheep and goat herding was probably not a significant feature of the *dunnu* economic system. At Sabi Abyad, Wiggerman (2000:183) calculates an area of 1524 ha outside the cultivated land that was available for “pasture, waste, woods, etc.,” but the extent of exploitation of this land by domestic shepherds is not certain. References to herd animals, pasturage, or even wool or textiles is exceedingly rare in the Middle Assyrian archives from Hanigalbat. In fact, out of 172 published texts from the provinces, only seven mention any of these items associated with pastoralism (See Table 1). There is evidence of a yearly census of oxen, donkeys, and ovids from Assur and Dur Katlimmu, but references to animals are otherwise exceedingly rare. Wiggerman mentions two texts from Sabi Abyad that refer to the animal skins, though it is not clear whether these are from sheep, donkeys, or oxen. It is especially telling that “there is no information on the consumption of meat or milk (products) or on wool or wool industry” from Sabi Abyad (Wiggerman 2000:198). Nevertheless, Wiggerman (2000:191) assumes that the families of dependent laborers at Sabi Abyad would have owned significantly large numbers of sheep, based on a text from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta, which records a total of 918 sheep and goats owned by 25 Hurrian families of varying means (Freydank 1980). There is reason to be skeptical of this correspondence, however, as the situation of the western border of the king was quite

different than that of the metropolises in the heartland. The security of the border was always precarious (see below Chapter 3), and the function of the *dunnu* at Sabi Abyad appears to have been entirely agricultural, which was not the case for Kar Tukulti-Ninurta. The possessions of the Hurrians at Sabi Abyad, therefore, can not be calculated on the basis of a one to one correspondence with the possessions of Hurrians at Kar Tukulti-Ninurta.

In the cases where sheep do appear in the texts from the provinces, it seems that shepherds function outside the purview of the *dunnu*'s authoritative scope. A text from Sabi Abyad, for example, specifies the punishment to be meted out to the shepherd who does not return to the *dunnu* at the specified time.¹⁴ The available evidence therefore suggests that the *dunnus* were really purely agricultural enterprises (Koliński 2001:109–110), and that a large portion of the meat, dairy, and textile products required in the provinces must have either been produced in the Assyrian heartland and conveyed to Hanigalbat,¹⁵ or been acquired through exchange with pastoral nomads. Alternatively, it may be that pastoralism constituted a separate sector of the economy that was not integrated into the agricultural sector. Pastoralism may thus have been a purely local enterprise, undocumented in Assyrian bureaucratic records.

1.3.2 The Movement of Conquered Peoples Part of what enabled the success of the Middle Assyrian agricultural network was the movements of populations both within Hanigalbat and between Assyria and Hanigalbat. Not only were Assyrian officials imported into the provinces, but in an innovative move by Aššur-uballit I and his

¹⁴According to T98-34, the punishment for tardiness is “100 blows (with a rod)” (Wiggerman 2000:200).

¹⁵Though at a certain point, transporting a large number of animals across the kingdom would no longer have been profitable.

successors, local Hanigalbatean populations were deported to Assyria, or moved to new cities within Hanigalbat. The deported populations were often prisoners of war. Thus, Adad-nirari I removed Wasašatta and his family and “his people” from Irridu and brought them to Assur (*RIMA* 1:A.0.76.3:43–49, p. 136). Using somewhat more severe imagery, Shalmaneser I treats the troops of Hittites and Ahlamu who supported Šattuara’s rebellion in a similar fashion: “I butchered their hordes (but) 14,400 of them (who remained) alive I blinded (and) carried off” (*RIMA* 1:A.0.77.1, 73–75, p. 184).

Deportees came from all over Hanigalbat (see table in Harrak [1987:270]), and could be organized by their homeland or ethnicity (Harrak 1987:271). In the cities of the Assyrian heartland, prisoners of war were employed primarily as builders and, to a lesser extent, agricultural laborers. Harrak (1987:273) speculates that the construction of Kar Tukulti-Ninurta was the primary reason for the deportation of foreigners under Tukulti-Ninurta I. He cites a number of texts that document which groups contributed to the work at Kar Tukulti-Ninurta I (VAT 17999; VAT 1799=*VAS* 19/N.F.3:1; VAT 18081+; VAT18087+*VAS* 21/N.F.5:6).¹⁶ Another text (VAT 18007=*VAS* 21/N.F.5:7) documents rations given to different workers from cities in Hanigalbat (Harrak 1987:221–223).

Populations not only moved from Hanigalbat to the heartland, but even within Hanigalbat, conquered peoples were dislocated and resettled at new sites. A large portion of those deportees acted as laborers in the fields, and were provided with barley for their oxen by local palaces (Harrak 1987:191–194). What we know about the position of natives within Hanigalbat comes solely from texts from Assur and Kar Tukulti-Ninurta (Freydank 1980). From texts in the provinces, that is, from private archives of officials or wealthy individuals, Hurrian names rarely appear. Their absence from texts in

¹⁶For example, Shubrians, Nairians, Hurrians, etc.

Hanigalbat suggests that, despite the fact that the native population must have constituted the majority in the western provinces, administrative concerns were restricted to Assyrian affairs. That is, for matters that were important enough to keep a record of, Assyrians were the primary actors. Harrak (1987:204) takes this idea even further: he understands the absence of Hurrians in the texts to mean that they “were not only considered as inferiors, but were simply regarded as a source of cheap labor,” intended to work the expanded agricultural lands around the cities and *dunnus*.

2 SOME GAPS AND PROBLEMS

The picture of Hanigalbat that the 13th century texts illustrate is quite well-developed. It consists of a network of Assyrian administrative enclaves interspersed among small village and *dunnu* sites, occupied by Assyrian elite at various bureaucratic levels, and an assortment of conquered populations carrying out the bulk of the agricultural work (Figure 2). The entire area of Hanigalbat was divided into districts, and Assyrian military troops occupied camps and cities within those districts, participating in public works projects and guarding cities and the border areas against Hittites, other foreigners, and potentially hostile pastoral nomadic groups. All production in Hanigalbat was organized for the benefit of the king and the Assyrian heartland, whether in practical economic terms or in the service of the ideology of Assyrian expansion.

However, there are some outstanding problems with the above model. I have already touched on the fact that although there is clear evidence for the agricultural intensification that accompanied Middle Assyrian colonization, there is very little evidence concerning the role of pastoralism in the kingdom. Is this because sheep and goat herding responsibilities were undertaken to meet household-level subsistence only, or were there other means by which the residents of Assyrian provinces acquired necessary sheep and

goat products? I will return to this issue in Part II, where I discuss a second problem with the current model of the Assyrian administration in Hanigalbat: that aside from depicting nomadic Aramaeans as the agents of Assyria's destruction, the model does not account for the pastoral nomadic populations in the Middle Assyrian kingdom.

2.1 THE 12TH CENTURY DECLINE?

Another problem with the current reconstruction is that does not provide details for the Middle Assyrian kingdom in the 12th century. The picture sketched thus far is generally applied solely to the 13th century, during the first flourish of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, especially during the reigns of Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I. After the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I in a palace coup at the end of the 13th century, textual sources begin to decline and, according to the current historical model, Assyria entered "a period of gentle recession" (Postgate 1992:249), which accelerated after Tiglath-pileser I (Figure 3). This period of decline continued until the reign of Aššur-dan II (934-912), who began to reclaim the lands that had made up the expansive Middle Assyrian kingdom. Thus begins the third phase of Assyrian history, during which the empire expands to its second-millennium borders until Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BC) extends Assyrian control beyond the Euphrates, annexing all of the local dynasties in his path.

According to this most general outline of Assyrian history, as it has been sketched by Postgate (1992) and others, the Middle Assyrian decline following Tukulti-Ninurta I was interrupted briefly during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, who temporarily reestablished Assyrian authority in Hanigalbat. Whereas under his predecessors, the threats to Assyrian control had come from the remnant of Mitanni, backed by a powerful but wary Hittite kingdom, in the 12th century the main opposition to Assyrian rule stemmed from the pastoral nomadic populations that threatened Hanigalbat from the west and from within

the kingdom. In his campaigns to secure Hanigalbat, Tiglath-pileser I boasts of crossing the Euphrates 28 times in pursuit of the Ahlamu-Aramaeans.

This short-lived second resurgence of Assyria under Tiglath-pileser I soon ended, and between the death of Tiglath-pileser I and the reign of Aššur-dan II, over a century later, only 25 inscriptions are published in *RIMA 2*, compared with 30 inscriptions solely from the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (Roaf 2001). The campaigns recorded in the Broken Obelisk (*RIMA 2*:A.0.89.7, pp. 101–105) show just how hard Aššur-bel-kala had to work in order to maintain his hold on Hanigalbat in his 15th year. It is only a century later, under Aššur-dan II, that Assyrian kings began to recover the ground that they had lost in the century following Tiglath-pileser I.

What happened in the western provinces during the long “decline” is unclear and not often addressed in current literature dealing with the Middle Assyrian period. Generally, scholars assume that upheavals in the capital following the murder of Tukulti-Ninurta I brought an end to the reign of Assyria in Hanigalbat (e.g., Harrak 1987:263–264). In fact, describing the reign of Tiglath-pileser I as only a brief interruption in what was otherwise a long decline presents difficulties for understanding the expansionary aims of the 9th century Assyrian kings. Those rulers ostensibly returned Assyria to its earlier borders, resettling Assyrians in cities that they had previously abandoned (Liverani 2004). Roaf (2001:358) is certainly correct that “the later Assyrian kings remembered the extent of the Middle Assyrian empire and explicitly attempted to re-establish Assyrian rule in regions over which they had lost control.” But if Figure 3, which is scaled to show the relative length of the phases of Middle Assyrian occupation of Hanigalbat, is accurate, then Assyria was only really in firm control of Hanigalbat for a very short time. The combined length of the consolidation and resurgence phase of the Middle Assyrian period

is 141 years. Compared with the total period of decline in the late second and early first millennium, which amounted 122 years, Assyria was firmly in administrative control of Hanigalbat for only just over half of the entire Middle Assyrian period. Nevertheless, by the first millennium, the notion that Hanigalbat rightfully belonged to Assyria had become ingrained into the ideology of expansion that nourished the aims of the early Neo-Assyrian kings. Certainly, it was during the period that Assyria controlled Hanigalbat that the monumental art and the textual genre of the royal annals began to develop, leaving documentary and physical witness to the Assyrian presence in Syro-Anatolia. Still, if Assyria had been absent from Hanigalbat for over a century, as Figure 3 implies, then the notion of its inherent ownership of that territory is difficult to understand. This is not to suggest that a rationale for expansion would not have been exaggerated or even fabricated, but the specific program of repopulation of Assyrian cities undertaken by the early Neo-Assyrian kings seems to reflect a recent memory of occupation in those cities. In short, the chronology of Middle Assyrian expansion and decline leaves many questions and inconsistencies that must be addressed.

In subsequent chapters I explore the nature of the changes that took place in the western periphery in the era between Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I. Here it will suffice to point out that by the time of Tiglath-pileser I, the situation in Hanigalbat is changed only insofar as the western border shifted from the Balikh River to the western corner of the Khabur triangle, and the administration of the provinces appears to have been consolidated in the hand of a few autonomous Assyrian officials. This is the case at Tell Bderi, ruled by Aššur-kētti-lēšer, who calls himself “king of the Land of Mari,” but who is also clearly under the rule of Tiglath-pileser I. Otherwise, the administrative structure appears to have changed very little, if at all: the territories were now divided into

at least 26 administrative districts (*pāhutu*), though the title *bēl pāhete* may have implied more autonomy than it did in the 13th century (Postgate 1985; Cancik-Kirschbaum 2000). Indeed, after the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I, certain Assyrian officials subordinate to the king were able to increase their authority within Assyria, and among populations outside of Assyria's borders (Freydank 1991:61).

2.2 CONTINUITY IN ASSYRIA AND HANIGALBAT AT THE TURN OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

The nature of the transition from the Middle to Neo-Assyrian periods, and of what occurred during the century and half long “dark age” between Aššur-bel-kala and Aššur-dan II remains a thorny problem in modern studies of the Assyrian empire. As Roaf (2001) notes, there are no inscriptions from reigns of Aššur-nirari IV (1018-1013) and Aššur-rabi II (1012-972). Written documentation of their predecessor and the two kings who succeeded them is confined only to names inscribed in the *stelenreihe* at Assur. Thus, between 1030 and 935, there is no evidence of building activity of any kind by any king in Assur, Nineveh, or any other city.

Nevertheless, within Assur a distinctly Assyrian cultural flavor remained in place during this period. Palaces and temples remained in use, and burial of kings within the palace was common practice in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods. Other continuities in traditions regarding royal conventions in the capital include inscribing kings' names on the *stelenreihen*, and depictions of royal dress, accoutrements, and gesture. Continuities in artistic styles are clearest in the sequence of depictions of Tukulti-Ninurta I on the cult pedestal from the Ishtar Temple at Assur (Harper, *et al.* 1995:112–113)¹⁷, that of Tiglath-

¹⁷Bahrani (2003:185–201) interprets the pedestal in a cultic divinity context, not as political propaganda in the manner of the Tigris Tunnel or Kalhu reliefs. That context also finds parallels in the late Assyrian period, as do the motifs of doubling and representation that Bahrani sees as essential to interpreting the pedestal.

pileser I in the Tigris Tunnel Relief (Borger-Klähn 1982:177–178, No. 130), and that of Ashurnasirpal II from Kalhu (Borger-Klähn 1982:182–183, No. 137). The fringed robe, headdress, styles of hair and beard all correspond in both periods (Paley 1977).

As Roaf (2001:362–365) notes, pottery too shows some continuities to the Neo-Assyrian period, but several forms undergo changes that are difficult to date precisely. Middle Assyrian pottery is easily identifiable, with small, chaff-tempered carinated bowls, nipple base and thick-rimmed jars predominating (Pfälzner 1995) (Figure 7). In the Late Assyrian period, carinated bowls give way to bowls with thickened, everted rims, but again, because the early part of the Late Assyrian period is not well represented, it is very difficult to document the changes that took place during the 10th century (Hausleiter and Reiche 1999).

Other non-material aspects of ideology continue from the Middle to the Neo-Assyrian periods. I have already mentioned the notion that territory encompassed by the Assyrian heartland and the region of Hanigalbat to the west properly belonged to the “Land of Assyria,” emerged during the Middle Assyrian period (Roaf 2001; Liverani 2004). In the following chapters, several other features of the Middle Assyrian approach to their territories will be evaluated that have strong echoes in the Neo-Assyrian period. These include a flexible approach to administrative policy; a keen awareness of the local political and cultural environment of conquered regions; and a willingness to integrate and adapt to local cultures.

Despite this apparent continuity within the Assyrian heartland, and in terms of Assyrian ideology, evidence for continuity within Hanigalbat at the turn of the first millennium is very scarce. The lack of written evidence provides an especially formidable obstacle to understanding not only the historical trajectory of events within Hanigalbat,

but also the cultural and demographic shifts that took place there at the turn of the first millennium. Although these changes remain difficult to account for, they evidently had a significant effect on the reemergence of Assyria in the Iron Age. The territory that Assyria aimed to reconquer in the Iron Age had changed considerably by the tenth century, which might explain some of the difficulties that the tenth century kings met as they began to push westward.

The most conspicuous change in Hanigalbat was in the position of Aramaeans in the Middle Assyrian administrative centers. Assyrian texts primarily during the reigns of Tiglath-pileser I and Aššur-bel-kala depict Late Bronze Age Ahlamu-Aramaeans as extremely mobile agents of instability, associated with marginal environmental zones (Schwartz, G. M. 1989; Zadok 1991; Bunnens 1999; Sader 2000). But by the start of the Neo-Assyrian resurgence in the Iron Age, Aramaeans had established strong sedentary dynasties east and west of the Euphrates. It was these Aramaean dynasties that served as the targets of Assyrian campaigns aimed at resettling Assyria's western territories. By the reign of Adad-nirari II (911-891), Aramaeans were so entrenched in north Syria that they had built a capital at Gozan, modern Tell Halaf, within the core area of Middle Assyrian settlement (*RIMA 2:A.0.99.2,100*).

Lacking further written or archaeological evidence for the shift in settlement patterns in Syro-Anatolia, many conclude that Aramaeans settled *en masse* in Syria and Turkey during the dark age between the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods (Schwartz, G. M. 1989; McClellan, T. C. 1992; Sader 1992; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003:367). According to this model, by becoming sedentary farmers, Aramaeans were able to move in and fill the power vacuum in Hanigalbat that followed the demise of the Hittite kingdom and the decline of the Middle Assyrian kingdom. To some extent archaeological surveys

in the Iraqi Jazira (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995), northeast Syria (Meijer 1986), the Lower and Upper Khabur (Röllig and Kühne 1983; Lyonnet 1996a), and along the Balikh (Wilkinson 1998b; Lyon 2000) seem to bear this out. These surveys show a decrease in settlements during the Late Bronze Age, followed by a marked increase in the number of Iron Age settlements,¹⁸ and the new settlements of formerly pastoral nomadic Aramaeans probably contributed significantly to this increase in settlement density (Wilkinson and Barbanes 2000; Wilkinson 2003b).

However, our current view of Aramaean settlement remains based on assumptions that are grounded in outdated notions of nomads as barbaric agents of instability for civilized urban empires. In the following chapters, I touch briefly on this problem by attempting to clarify how Assyrians adjusted their mechanisms of administration to deal with the nomadic elements of their new territory. In Part II, I explore the situation of the pastoral nomads of Hanigalbat in more depth. In those chapters, I reexamine the traditional view of Aramaean settlement in light of the anthropology of sedentarization and a reexamination of the survey record in order to illuminate further otherwise obscure events at the turn of the millennium.

2.3 TEXTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Over the past five decades, more Middle Assyrian texts, especially from the provinces in Hanigalbat, have continued to come to light, and more and more refined analyses of those texts have allowed for a very detailed view of the society, economy, and administration of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat. In addition to these texts, in just the past two decades, new and continued excavations at over fifteen sites in north Syria and

¹⁸Wilkinson and Barbanes note that Iron Age settlements are probably under-represented in both Meijer's northeast Syria survey and Lyonnet's western Khabur survey. See Wilkinson and Barbanes (2000:417).

southeast Turkey and several archaeological surveys have contributed to our understanding of the Land of Assyria in the Late Bronze Age. These sites range from large administrative centers to small agricultural production centers to even smaller farmsteads. However, where the texts and archaeology interact, the tendency has been to fit archaeological evidence to the documentation. For example, the decline in the number of textual sources following Tukulti-Ninurta I has been cited as evidence of the Assyrian withdrawal from Hanigalbat (see above 2.1). Recently, Akkermans and Schwartz (2003:348–350) summarized the Middle Assyrian administrative system based upon the archaeology of Syria as embodying a three-tiered structure, with the main administrative center at Dur Katlimmu, and lower-level nodes at Sabi Abyad, Tell Chuera, Mohammad Diyab, and other sites in the Khabur and Balikh valleys. The highly centralized, imperial nature of the kingdom is underscored by the standard pottery repertoire that appears in all Middle Assyrian sites at all levels of the settlement hierarchy. Although they use the archaeology of Syria to add details to the reconstruction of the administrative system based on texts, it does not account for the entire span of Middle Assyrian hegemony in Syria.

In the following chapters, I explore the archaeology of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat, making reference to textual sources only as they apply to individual sites, and proceeding according to geographic region: the Balikh valley, the Upper Tigris Valley, the Upper Khabur basin, and the Lower Khabur. As those chapters will show, the occupation and administration of Assyria in the western provinces involved much more dynamic and adaptive processes than the texts imply. Alternate strategies were pursued in different locations and circumstances and, as Cancik-Kirschbaum (2000) has already pointed out, the perception of the Assyrian border underwent shifts as the importance of sites grew and

diminished. As I will show, the archaeology does not merely corroborate text-based investigations, but offers a more detailed, and sometimes contradictory, view of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, especially in the later part of the period.

CHAPTER 3

THE WESTERN EDGE: THE BALIKH VALLEY

1 TELL SABİ ABYAD: THE *DUNNU* OF THE *ŠAR HANIGALBAT*

Sabi Abyad is a 5 ha tell on the east side of the Balikh with extensive remains from the Neolithic and Late Bronze Age. The Late Bronze Age city is centered on a 60x65 meter walled fortress, the centerpiece of which is a thick-walled 20x23 meter tower. The advantage to excavating such a small site is that large exposures are possible, and since 1986, the team led by P. Akkermans has succeeded in exposing nearly the entire Middle Assyrian settlement.¹⁹ The fortress itself probably accommodated two stories, and the well-preserved lower story contains nine rooms accessible through arched doorways. The fortress appears to have functioned as a jail, storage area, and garrison. Of the six building phases of the fortress, the earliest three date to the Mitanni period, and the final three date to the reigns of Adad-nerari I, Shalmaneser I, and Tukulti-Ninurta I.

Adjacent to the west wall of the fortress was a tripartite administrative building with a paved front courtyard, a long central hall (17x4 meters), and flanking domestic rooms, workshops, baths, and toilets. Around the palace and tower, an area of workshops and domestic courtyard houses was built up to the fortress wall itself. Outside the wall lay another extensive construction consisting of pottery workshops, grain grinding

¹⁹Publications of the Late Bronze Age material is scarcer than that of the Neolithic (Akkermans, 1989; Rossmesl 1989; Akkermans and Rossmesl 1990; Akkermans, José Limpens and Richard H. Spoor 1993; Akkermans and Wiggerman 1999; Akkermans, 2006). The most up-to-date information on campaigns from 2001 is available on the Sabi Abyad website, www.sabi-abyad.nl.

installations, and bread ovens. This building was built alongside the moat that ringed the Middle Assyrian city.

The fortress with its thick tower and moat are indications of Sabi Abyad's precarious position at the edge of the Middle Assyrian kingdom. Yet nearly 400 texts from the site speak primarily to the mundane administrative and agricultural activities common throughout the Middle Assyrian sphere.²⁰ As mentioned earlier, the city was a *dunnu*, an agricultural production center owned by Ili-ipadda, a member of the Assyrian royal family, who held the title *Šar Hanigalbat*. As Wiggerman (2000) explains, Ili-ipadda maintained a residence at Sabi Abyad and outside the city, perhaps at Assur, but he regularly visited the site to ensure that the administration was running effectively, to collect taxes, and to adjudicate in legal disputes. In his absence, the steward (*abarakku*), Tamite, ran the city. He inspected incoming and outgoing caravans, organized agricultural production, distributed rations and tools to workers, levied taxes, and maintained a correspondence with Ili-ipadda in order to keep him apprised of the affairs in the city.

Sabi Abyad is the farthest site from the Middle Assyrian heartland, located on the very western edge of the Middle Assyrian kingdom. It may therefore be significant that it was owned and run by the most important Assyrian official in Syria. In addition to the agricultural potential of the *dunnu* at Sabi Abyad, there are three reasons why the site may have been significant to the Middle Assyrian kingdom: (1) the continued expansionary aims of the Assyrians; (2) the need for a base from which to arrange diplomatic interactions with the Hittite kingdom; and (3) the need for a border patrol station guarding the western border of the Assyrian Hanigalbat.

²⁰Very few texts from Sabi Abyad have been published, but descriptions of specific texts are available in various publications (Jas 1990; Akkermans and Wiggerman 1999; Lyon 2000; Wiggerman 2000) and especially from the project's website.

The efforts at expanding the kingdom beyond the Balikh might be evident at level IV of Tell Fray (ancient Yakharisha), at which a large private home or palace contained an archive dating to the reign of Shalmaneser I (Bounni and Matthiae 1980; Pedersén 1998). If, during the earliest period of Middle Assyrian expansion, Tell Fray on the Euphrates, and not Sabi Abyad on the Balikh, really constituted the western limit of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, at least in the perceptual geography of the Assyrian rulers, then the presence of the *sukkallu rabi'u* at Sabi Abyad is not so surprising. The most important Assyrian official in Hanigalbat did not occupy a remote outpost on the fringe of the kingdom, rather his own *dunnu* was located in a fertile zone well within the kingdom's borders.

However, the status of Fray as a Middle Assyrian administrative outpost along the same lines as Sabi Abyad is uncertain (Bounni and Matthiae 1980; Machinist 1982; HARRAK 1987; Akkermans and Rossmesl 1990). Pfälzner (1995:204), sees no indication of Middle Assyrian ceramics at Tell Fray. Rather, the ceramics of Level IV belong to a local West Syrian tradition also present at Tell Hadidi (Dorneman 1978; 1979; 1981; 1985; 1988), Tell Munbaqa, and El-Qitar (McCellan 1983; Culican and McClellan 1983), and not the classic Middle Assyrian types like those from Sabi Abyad. The ceramic evidence may mean that the Fray archive is merely the remnant of a short-lived Assyrian occupation at Fray, after which time, the border of the kingdom receded to the Balikh. Level IV at Fray was destroyed around 1270-1250, which further suggests that the occupation of that city resulted from the overextension of Assyrian ambition in the burst of territorial expansion that accompanied Adad-nerari I's reign. When Fray fell, the Balikh River became the de facto western border of the Assyrian kingdom, and their control of that border lasted until the abandonment of Sabi Abyad, sometime between 1200 and 1150. After the destruction

of Tell Fray, the *Šar Hanigalbat* found himself in possession of a city on the western frontier of Assyria, and therefore an important border patrol site.

The nature of Sabi Abyad as a border outpost is evidenced by recently excavated texts from that discuss interactions between Ili-ipadda and a tribe of Suteans.²¹ One text is a treaty between Ili-ipadda and the Nihasanu tribe of Suteans, which stipulates that the Nihasanu will not provide aid to the enemies of Assyria. Another text alludes to the activities of Suteans as spies for Assyria. The close relationship between tribal groups, who are otherwise portrayed as unruly (especially near the end of the Middle Assyrian kingdom), should not be surprising at a border site such as Sabi Abyad. Ili-ipadda would have had to pay close attention to the western edge of the Assyrian kingdom, as beyond the Balikh lay the buffer between Assyria and Hatti, a zone that would have been home to semi-autonomous and semi-nomadic tribes that could operate outside the authority of either kingdom. The short hiatus between the fall of Mitanni and the Middle Assyrian occupation of the Balikh valley also meant that these new sites were established in an area without an existing local power structure (Lyon 2000:104). The autonomy of tribal groups in this region would have constituted a threat to the stability of Sabi Abyad, whose agricultural output was vital to the kingdom, yet which was far removed from the Assyrian heartland. The fortifications and texts that allude to its use as a prison are also suggestive of the dangerous environment of Sabi Abyad at the border of Assyria.

Sabi Abyad presents a complicated picture of the maturing Assyrian presence in Hanigalbat. Having briefly overextended their rule to the Euphrates under Adad-nerari I, Assyria placed its highest official in Assyria in an already fortified Mitanni center on the Balikh, well east of the western edge of the kingdom. When Assyria failed to maintain

²¹The details of these texts are not yet published. However, these texts are described on the Sabi Abyad website.

their hold on the Euphrates, they retreated to the Balikh. Sabi Abyad then became a border outpost, which had to maintain its agricultural productivity while keeping an eye on the western nomadic tribes and the Hittite Kingdom.

2 KHIRBET ESH-SHENEH

Khirbet esh-Shenef is a small site just south of Sabi Abyad and just east of Hammam et-Turkman. The Late Bronze Age remains from the site are meager and, although Bartl (1990) assigns the pottery to the general Middle Assyrian repertoire from sites along the Lower and Upper Khabur and in the Assyrian heartland, Pfälzner (1995) likens the Khirbet esh-Shenef ceramics to the Area L pottery at Sheikh Hamad. Pfälzner distinguishes these two collections of *häusliche Keramik*, from the Middle Assyrian *offizielle Keramik* found at all other Middle Assyrian sites. According to this division, *häusliche Keramik* is characterized by a high proportion of wares with black mineral inclusions, medium coarse quartz temper, and wares with calcite and chaff temper (Cooking Pot Ware I). They contain more handmade forms and show a preference for small bowls over larger basins. *Häusliche Keramik* assemblages also show a conspicuous absence of the standard official Middle Assyrian forms, such as small carinated bowls and nipple base jars. If Pfälzner's analysis is correct, then Khirbet esh-Shenef would appear to have been self-sufficient, and the dependency of Khirbet esh-Shenef on nearby Sabi Abyad may therefore be called into question. Considering the short excavation and very limited exposure at Khirbet esh-Shenef, one must be careful not to overanalyze the significance of such fine differences in pottery assemblages. It is quite possible that further excavations at the site would alter the proportions of ceramic types considerably, putting the collection further in line with sites exhibiting a standard Middle Assyrian ceramic assemblage.

In connection with local pottery production, evidence from Sabi Abyad should be cited. Large pottery kilns were found at Sabi Abyad, indicating that pottery was

manufactured locally there (Akkermans and Duistermaat 2001). However, one large kiln outside the *dunnu* wall, which could have fired up to 500-1000 pots at a time, seems to have been used only rarely. A second potter's workshop was found within the *dunnu*, and production there seems to have taken place at a much more intensive scale. It is not clear, however, whether the pots produced here were destined for outlying sites like Khirbet esh-Shenef, or were intended for the local use of the inhabitants of Sabi Abyad.

3 HAMMAM ET-TURKMAN

Hammam et-Turkman lies on the left bank of the Balikh just north of Sabi Abyad and appears to have been an important center during the Mitanni occupation of the region (Period VIIIA) (Meijer 1988). A large palace with a regular east-west oriented plan was erected directly over the remains of the previous level. An administrative western wing had wide walls with large limestone orthostats, and large rooms, and an eastern domestic wing was made of cruder mud brick. A foundation deposit in the middle of a large courtyard held clay vessels and figurines. The pottery of this period has a strong Mitanni character with parallels from Late Bronze Mitanni levels at Hama, Nuzi, Hadidi, Tell Brak, Tepe Gawra, Assur, Tell Billa, Alalakh, and Ugarit (Smit 1988).

Sometime during the 14th century, the site was abandoned and the palace was emptied. A modest resettlement took place shortly thereafter (Period VIIIB), and the ceramics from this period contain chaff-tempered, undecorated carinated vessels and rounded jar rims, and nipple bases characteristic of the Middle Assyrian period (Smit 1988). The architecture of this period is scant, and the excavators link the occupation of Level VIIIB Hammam to other temporary post-Mitanni occupations at Jidle, Hama, and Hammam Ibn esh-Shehab (Smit 1988:488). Following this short period of occupation, the site was entirely abandoned, perhaps before the end of the 14th century (Smit 1988:489), and lay empty throughout the Iron Age (Figure 8).

Akkermans, *et al.* (1993:31) attribute the decline of Hammam et-Turkman to the rise of Sabi Abyad as a Middle Assyrian center, and conclude that “local institutions of power and authority, rooted in time-honored traditions, were replaced and that social and economic relations, both intra- and intersite, were seriously disturbed.” Although there seems to be a clear shift from Hammam et-Turkman to Sabi Abyad as the nexus of administrative control on the Balikh, the fact that there are Mitanni remains at Sabi Abyad (Akkermans, P. M. M. G. 2006) may argue against such a dramatic shift. Perhaps the selection of Sabi Abyad as the *dunnu* of Ili-ipadda had more to do with its easily defensible steep slope and circular form than with a deliberate break with past traditions. If the selection of Sabi Abyad was not based on ideological, but rather practical concerns, then the small period VIII B occupation at Hammam et-Turkman might be considered a satellite occupation of Sabi Abyad, and not a squatter or temporary occupation. This interpretation would fit with Wiggerman’s analysis of the catchment area for Sabi Abyad, which suggest that seven subcenters would have surrounded Sabi Abyad. Hammam et-Turkman would have been one of these subcenters of the *dunnu* of the *Šar Hanigalbat*.

4 ADVANCE AND WITHDRAWAL ON ASSYRIA’S WESTERN BORDER

Lyon (2000) notes that Middle Assyrian settlement along the Balikh appears to be determined by at least two factors: agricultural potential, and previous or existing bases of power. Middle Assyrian sites are located at the southern limit of the dry-farming region,²² which might be interpreted as evidence of an attempt at agricultural colonization and exploitation of marginal areas. However, the lack of Middle Assyrian settlement in the more easily cultivated regions north of Sabi Abyad suggests that, even if that site itself grew on the basis of its defensibility, Middle Assyrian settlement was determined by a

²²The only Middle Assyrian sites of any consequence north of Sabi Abyad are Tell Jittal and Tell Sahlan (See Lyon 2000:Figure 7).

desire to establish their authority where interference by “surviving power centers” was unlikely to be an issue (Lyon 2000:101). Certainly, one of the sources of power in the region was that of the nomadic tribes referred to in the Sabi Abyad texts. A reference to Suteans inhabiting the region of Sahlalu, possibly Tell Sahlan and the seat of the *bel pahete* of the province, also occurs in a Dur Katlimmu text (DeZ 3439) dated to Tukulti-Ninurta I (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:94 ff.).

Lyon (2000:104) also notes that “Middle Assyrian expansion seems to have followed a period of decline marked by the decline and eventual abandonment of large settlements.” The abandonment of settlements after the fall of Mitanni suggests that the region would have witnessed a fair amount of ruralization and nomadization. The western limit of the kingdom when Adad-nerari I, Shalmaneser I, and Tukulti-Ninurta I attempted to colonize it was therefore something of a no man’s land, home to social elements unaccustomed to following the regulations of urban authorities. This is likely the reason that Shalmaneser was unable to keep his hold on Tell Fray, and was forced to withdraw his border to the Balikh. This is probably also the reason that Sabi Abyad remained heavily fortified whereas Giricano, another *dunnu* site within the well-integrated Assyrian territory of the Upper Tigris, remained unfortified (Schachner, *et al.* 2002:28) (see below 3). Thus, while Sabi Abyad and Tell Sahlan²³ served as a barrier along the western border of the kingdom, they were also watchful of, while collaborating with the nomadic tribes who ranged within the Balikh valley. Agricultural considerations, the location of previous power structures such as Hammam et-Turkman, and the movements of local nomads were all factors determining the settlement of Middle Assyrians along the Balikh.

²³According to Lyon (2000:100–101), although the size of Sahlan during the Middle Assyrian period is unknown, it was probably substantial, and the central settlement of the valley.

Some time at the end of the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, texts cease to appear in this area. Sabi Abyad was probably abandoned along with the other Middle Assyrian sites in the region. There is little indication of the reason for this turn of events, but the accession of Tukulti-Ninurta I's nephews to the throne of Assyria, rather than his own sons, suggests that Assyria's presence in western Hanigalbat was weakened as a result of internal rivalries. Ili-ipadda, owner of the *dunnu* at Sabi Ayad himself rose in importance after the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Under Aššur-nirari III (1203-1198), he was referred to as "King of Assyria" in a Babylonian letter (Freydank 1991:61). If his rise to power was the result of Ili-ipadda's own ambitions, rather than a shift in the role of *šar Hanigalbat* that brought about this misattribution, the abandonment of Sabi Abyad might be explained by the fact that Ili-ipadda's attentions were focused elsewhere. As he concentrated on accumulating power in the heartland, he may have found that it was no longer worth his while to sustain the agricultural output of the *dunnu* for the welfare of the king. The abandonment of Sabi Abyad, in turn, resulted in a loss of revenue for the kingdom, and probably an influx of refugees from the Balikh into the more secure areas of Hanigalbat. Whatever the cause of the Assyrian retreat from the Balikh, its effects fed back to the heartland and the kingdom had to find a way to cope with this loss.

CHAPTER 4

THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE KINGDOM: THE UPPER TIGRIS

Recent excavations along the northern border of the Middle Assyrian kingdom show that the development of the kingdom here followed a somewhat different trajectory than it did along the Balikh. North of the Tur Abdin the Assyrian border was stronger and more densely settled than it was in the west, and the agricultural potential of the region meant that the *dunnu* system could thrive there. Excavations at Üçtepe, Ziyaret Tepe, and Giricano have shown that the northern Assyrian border was indispensable to the Assyrian heartland, and it became more so after the withdrawal from the Balikh after the reign of Tukulti Ninurta I. Although several questions remain concerning the decline of Assyrian power in southeast Anatolia, these sites, and the recently discovered texts from Giricano are beginning to shed light on the growth of Aramaean power in the region that would become the first millennium kingdom of Bit Zamani

1 ÜÇTEPE: *TA'IDU*

The 44 meter high site of Üçtepe lies on the south side of the Tigris River, about 50 km southeast of Diyarbakır. The site rises to a height of 30 meters, and has yielded thirteen occupation levels ranging from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman period (Sevin 1989; Köroğlu 1998). In a series of trenches on the east side of the main mound, (Trenches XII, X, and III), excavators found that occupation continued with little or no interruption between the “Hurri-Mitanni” period (Level 10), represented by an ephemeral building and small quantities of Nuzi Ware, and the Late Assyrian period (Levels 7 and 8)

(Köroğlu 1998:Resim 3, 4). A single construction with two Middle Assyrian floor levels (Level 9) contained a burial with jewelry, fine vessels, and standard Middle Assyrian carinated bowls and nipple-based jars.

Just above this level, a Neo-Assyrian building with thick mud brick walls, painted plaster, paved brick floors, and fine palace ware suggests, that the site was a large urban city, if not necessarily an administrative center in the Iron Age. The functional continuity of this area of the site from the Middle to Neo-Assyrian periods suggests that the city played a similar role in both periods, as a local center subordinate to the regional center of Tušhan.

1.1 The Ancient Name of Üçtepe

Üçtepe poses several problems for the historical geography of the Upper Tigris in the Middle Assyrian period. The first has to do with the ancient name of the site. In 1861, J. G. Taylor found a stela at a location called Kurkh, which describes the events of the first five years of the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859), including the destruction of cities in the area of Mount Kašiyari and the construction of a place at Tušhan (Borger-Klähn 1982:181, no. 135; *RIMA* 2:256–262: A.0.101.19). In another inscription, Ashurnasirpal writes that he erected a monument with his image in Tušhan in the year 882 (*ina li-me MU-a-ma*, “In the eponym year of my name”) (*RIMA* 2:189–223: A. 0.101.1i, 99-ii, 7). Taylor’s Kurkh Monolith was originally equated with the stela that Ashurnasirpal set up in Tušhan, and Üçtepe was consequently identified as the palatial center, Tušhan.

However, several questions about this identification have recently been raised. In the first place, the events of the Kurkh Monolith document events that took place in the years 883-879, and therefore could not have been the stela that Ashurnasirpal set up in

Tušan in 882 (Kessler 1980:117–118; Radner and Schachner 2001:756). Radner and Schachner (2001) also call into question the identification of Üçtepe with place that Taylor called Kurkh, as the geography of Üçtepe does not correspond to his description of the site of Kurkh (Taylor 1865). Faced with these inconsistencies, Kessler identified nearby Ziyaret Tepe as Tušan (see below 2), and Üçtepe as Ta'idu/Tidu, also mentioned in the same region in Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian sources. Kessler was followed more recently by others working in the region (Nashef 1982; Matney 1998; Parker 2001; Radner and Schachner 2001; Matney, *et al.* 2002a).²⁴

If Üçtepe is indeed ancient Ta'idu, then a second question concerning the location of Middle Assyrian Ta'idu naturally emerges. The Assyrian annals relate that in the 13th century, Adad-nirari I sacked the Mitanni capital of Waššukanni, and made Ta'idu the new capital of Hanigalbat. Later, Shalmaneser I claims to have recaptured Ta'idu. The Kurkh Monolith also mentions Ta'idu, a city which he says Aramaeans had retaken after Shalmaneser I captured it. In that text, Ta'idu appears in a list with the cities of Tušan, Damdammusa, and Šinamu. Thus, if Tušan is the ancient name of Ziyaret Tepe, and Šinamu is the ancient name of Pornak, a site about 30 km west of Bismil (see Kessler 1980:119), Ta'idu should be in the same region, most likely at Üçtepe, between Tušan and Šinamu.²⁵

Complicating this picture, however, is an itinerary from Dur Katlimmu (DeZ 2521 Röllig 1983; 1997; Haas and Wäfler 1985:66–67; Wäfler 1994), which suggests that Ta'idu was located in the upper Khabur region, near the river Maririte (^{id}*ma-ri-ir-te* [DeZ 2521:3]), which, according to Röllig (1997:282), must be the Jaghjagh. The Dur

²⁴Although see Koroğlu (1998), who maintains that Üçtepe is Tušan.

²⁵Kessler (1980:119) places Damdamussa at either Tauşantepe or at Aktepe.

Katlimmu itinerary suggests that there would have been two identically named cities within Hanigalbat in the Middle Assyrian period.²⁶ The first is the Ta'idu of the Upper Tigris between Tušhan and Šinamu, that is, Üçtepe. The second is the Ta'idu of DeZ 2521, which has been identified with Tell al-Hamidiya by its excavators (Haas and Wäfler 1985; see below 5).

2 ZIYARET TEPE: *TUŠHAN*

Kessler's (1980) original claim that Ziyaret Tepe was ancient Tušhan has been convincingly reiterated in recent years, although definitive textual proof of that attribution is still lacking (Matney, 1998; Radner and Schachner 2001; Parker 2001; Roaf and Schachner 2005). Excavations at Ziyaret Tepe have been focused on the Late Assyrian occupation of the site, but Middle Assyrian remains have been found throughout the surface of the Upper and Lower mounds, in Operation D and in the Operation E step trench on the east slope of the mound. The Middle Assyrian pottery indicates that Ziyaret Tepe was a small urban center at the end of the 2nd millennium (Matney, *et al.* 2002b:537)

In Operation E, Middle Assyrian surfaces and pits yielded pottery sherds, jewelry, an arrowhead, and a cylinder seal (Matney, *et al.* 2002a; Matney, *et al.* 2003). Although the stratigraphy of the Middle Assyrian floors and structures is not entirely clear from the step trench, they do constitute evidence of a significant Middle Assyrian occupation that lay atop the Mitanni occupation and preceded the more extensively excavated Late Assyrian occupation in Operation G, with little evidence of a substantial break between the two periods (Matney, *et al.* 2002a:65)

²⁶Both Wäfler (1994) and Radner and Schachner (2001:756) remain skeptical that two similarly named cities would appear so close to one another.

Middle Assyrian ceramics may also have been found in Operations A and D (Matney, *et al.* 2003), which suggests that a large portion of the 32 ha site was occupied during this period. Such a substantial occupation area fits well with the indications from the Kurkh Monolith and the texts from Giricano, that refer to a *dunnu* owner who was resident at Tušhan, suggesting that Ziyaret Tepe/Tušhan would have been a city of considerable importance in this region even before Ashurnasirpal II reclaimed the site for Assyria. No Late Assyrian or Middle Assyrian palace has been excavated at the site, although as the administrative center of the Neo-Assyrian province of Tušhan, the site would have had housed a large administrative building.²⁷ Middle Assyrian remains do indicate the presence of public buildings on the acropolis, and in this period too, Tušhan was likely to have had a palace of its own. The owner of the Giricano archive, Ahuni, may in fact have been the administrator of Tušhan. Whether a palace existed at Tušhan or whether, as Harrak (1987:198) has argued, the absence of the title *bēl pāhete* in association with Tušhan, means that there was no Middle Assyrian palace there, the site itself probably functioned on the same administrative level as Assyrian palatial sites in Syria, such as Tell Rimah and Tell al-Hamidiya. Thus, Ahuni, even if he was not the *bēl pāhete* of Tušhan in name, may have carried out the duties that the title implies in the Upper Tigris region of the Middle Assyrian kingdom.

3 GIRICANO: *DUNNU-ŠA-UZIBI*

The site of Giricano, which lies just across the Tigris from Ziyaret Tepe, was excavated by a German team from the University of Munich led by A. Schachner between 2000 and 2003 (Schachner, *et al.* 2002; Schachner, *et al.* 2002). At least two Middle Assyrian occupation levels were found in Trench 06, and four levels were found in Trench

²⁷The small archive found at the site supports other indications that this was an administrative center.

01. Although no complete building was excavated, the tell appears to have been covered with small, simple mudbrick buildings. The architecture of the buildings underwent alterations in every phase of occupation, suggesting that the use of those buildings changed at relatively short intervals. In Trench 01 excavators found a metalworking area with large amounts of ash debris, pits, fireplaces, and molds (Schachner, *et al.* 2002:27–28).

A small archive of about 15 tablets was found in a ceramic vessel in the latest phase of Trench 01, and is dated by limmu to the 5th or 6th year of Aššur-bel-kala (Radner 2004). The dating of the archive, found in what was probably the latest phase of Middle Assyrian occupation, and the ceramics from earlier Middle Assyrian phases, all indicate that the site was occupied for around 120–160 years beginning late in, or just after the reign of Shalmaneser I and ending sometime during the reign of Aššur-bel-kala (Schachner, *et al.* 2002:27–28).

The Giricano archive consists of legal documents dealing with loan repayments of corn, cattle, and silver. The most frequently mentioned individual is a man named Ahuni, son of Kidin-Sin, who comes from Dunnu-ša-Uzibi. In two texts, he is called Ahuni of Tušhan (Giricano 7:4; 10:4). In her thorough analysis of the texts Radner (2004) concludes that Giricano function as a *dunnu*, owned by and dependent upon a man who resided at nearby Tušhan, and who was probably a descendent of the original owner of the site, Uzibi (Radner 2004:71). She draws heavily on Wiggerman's (2000) work on the Sabi Abyad texts, and sees an identical economic purpose for both sites. Both sites provided their owners with wealth, and they provided Assyria with vast amounts of produce. Radner calculates that an area of over 6100 ha of agricultural land would have

been available to Giricano and the four other *dunnu* settlements around Ziyaret Tepe.²⁸ Clearly, the northern border was important to the livelihood of the kingdom, especially considering the uncertainties of the agricultural cycle in the soother region of the Assyrian heartland (Bagg 2000:4–5).

4 THE NATURE OF MIDDLE ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT ON THE NORTHERN BORDER

Despite the fact that the agricultural function of Dunnu-ša-Uzibi and the *dunnu* of the *Šar Hanigalbat* at Sabi Abyad appear to be very similar, the two sites look very different archaeologically. Although both sites are small, and there is ample evidence for craft activities, the lack of fortifications at Giricano is a notable distinction. This difference is even more intriguing considering that both sites are located along border zones. The reason for these discrepancies may lie in the fact that the northern border of Assyria in the 12th-11th centuries was much more densely settled than the Balikh valley in the 13th century. Giricano was just one of a number of *dunnu* settlements located along the both sides of the upper Tigris, and associated with the string of large urban centers such as Tušhan/Ziyaret Tepe, Ta'idu/Üçtepe, and Šinamu/Pornak (Radner 2004:113–115) (Figure 9). By contrast, the settlement system along the Balikh, though it was structured similarly, consisted primarily of Tell Sabi Abyad, along with Tell Sahlan, with outlying smaller settlements like Khirbet esh-Shenef (Lyon 2000).

Furthermore, whereas the Balikh settlements tended to avoid previously held Mitanni sites, the Upper Tigris sites are all situated atop Mitanni remains. Most significantly, both Ziyaret Tepe and Üçtepe showed very little interruption between the substantial Mitanni layers and the Middle Assyrian layers. The nature of the northern settlements, and the finds and texts that they have yielded, all highlight the fact that by the

²⁸For most of these sites the amount of available agricultural land is somewhat less than the 2000 ha that Wiggerman (2000) calculates would have been available at Sabi Abyad.

later part of the Middle Assyrian period, the northern border of Assyria was tightly integrated into the rest of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat. Thus, throughout the Middle Assyrian period, the Upper Tigris was much more securely held than the western border had been in the early part of the period.

4.1 The End of Middle Assyrian Occupation in the Upper Tigris

Considering the importance, strength, and relative stability of the northern border region for at least a century and a half, the sudden abandonment of sites along the Tigris is a matter of interest. What caused the sudden decline of the Middle Assyrian kingdom and abandonment of sites like Giricano in the 11th century? Most scholars place the blame for the decline of Assyrian authority in the Upper Tigris squarely on the Aramaeans. This conclusion is based, on the one hand, on the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II and Aššur-bel-kala, especially the Broken Obelisk (*RIMA* 2 101-105 A.0.89.7), which mention campaigns against the Aramaeans at least thirteen times, and on the other hand, Ashurnasirpal II's inscriptions, which describe the reconquest of Assyrian sites that had been dominated by Aramaeans. Yet based on the evidence of the three excavated sites in southeast Turkey, there is little to indicate that the region was abandoned because of hostilities between vicious tribes of nomads and settled Assyrian communities. There is no evidence of destruction at any of the sites, and the public area of Üçtepe appears to continue from the Middle to Neo-Assyrian periods. Nor do the texts from Giricano show any indication that Aramaean hostilities affected the daily life of the residents of Dunnu-ša-Uzibi. Radner (2004:73) intriguingly, yet perhaps romantically proposes that text 12, with a clause that ensures repayment of a debt in the event that the debtor “fled to the mountains or elsewhere” (Giricano 12:17'-19': *šúm-ma a-na ša-du-a-ni a-na a-ie-e-ša-mi-ni ih-ta-li-iq*), may indicate the weakness of Assyrian authority in the region, but there

is no clear evidence that this is the case. In fact, the only indication that anything was out of the ordinary in Dunnu-ša-Uzibi is the fact that the texts come to an abrupt end. Indeed, without any of the Assyrian textual evidence, there would be very little archaeological evidence from any of these sites to suggest why the Assyrian presence in the Upper Tigris receded at all, aside from the possibility of a climate shift (Neumann and Parpola 1987).

Certainly, the abrupt end to occupation at Giricano either during or shortly after the reign of Aššur-bel-kala, and the long hiatus before resettlement, suggest that Aramaean hostilities may have been a force that disrupted the Assyrian presence in the Upper Tigris to a significant degree. But the evidence for continuity at Üçtepe might indicate that this disruption was limited to rural settlements, and did not extend to local centers. When the evidence of the Broken Obelisk and the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II are taken into account, the continuity at Üçtepe and apparently at Ziyaret Tepe may indicate one of two things: either local Assyrian elites were able to retain control of the larger centers, even as Aramaeans occupied the countryside and drove off the rural Assyrian inhabitants; or as the Aramaeans took control of the sites of the Upper Tigris, they managed to do so without altering the mechanisms of power. Instead, they would have inherited the Assyrian power structure, slipping into positions and occupying structures already in place at Ta'idu, and perhaps also Tušhan. Both of these possibilities have important consequences for understanding the dark period during which Assyria appears to have lost control of the region.

If local elites were able to remain in place while the countryside was depopulated or replaced by Aramaean settlements prior to the campaigns of Ashurnasirpal II, then his campaigns in the 9th century must have constituted something less than a “reconquest” of the region. Rather, when Ashurnasirpal II writes that “the Aramaeans had captured by

force” the cities of Šinamu and Ta’idu (*RIMA* 2:261, A.0.101.19:93), he may be saying that the territory around Ta’idu, had become populated by an Aramaean majority who, by virtue of their control over the countryside, was able to exert influence on the non-Aramaeans rulers of Ta’idu. In that case, Ashurnasirpal’s “reconquest” would have been achieved by reexerting Assyrian control over the countryside of Ta’idu, Šinamu, and Tušhan, and repopulating the countryside with Assyrians. Surveys from throughout the Neo-Assyrian provinces show that settlement increased dramatically in all areas of Neo-Assyrian expansion, including along the Tigris at the northern border with Šubria (Algaze, *et al.* 1991; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995; Parker 2001). These settlements may be the result of Assyrian colonization of the area aimed at eliminating Aramaean control of the region.

However, based on what we know from texts about Assyrian-Aramaeans relations at the turn of the millennium, it seems unlikely that Assyrian administrators located in urban centers would act on the behalf of Aramaeans. On the contrary, as Tiglath-pileser I, Aššur-bel-kala, and their successors make clear, Aramaeans did not tolerate Assyrian rule, nor did Assyrians tolerate Aramaean aggression. It is much more likely that as Aramaean power grew, they did not merely gain influence over, but actually managed to wrest control of Ta’idu, Tušhan, and the other sites in the Upper Tigris region. Yet they were clearly able to do so without leaving any archaeological trace of destruction or violence, or any disruption in the mechanisms of administration. The apparent ease with which they took administrative control suggests that Aramaeans were already well-integrated, if not politically, then certainly socially and economically into the Assyrian administrative system in the Upper Tigris. They thus had intimate experience and knowledge of the urban administrative organization, and were able to adopt those structures as they slipped into

positions of power. That level of integration could only have been achieved after a long period during which Aramaeans were becoming sedentary and developing the hierarchical social structure required for urban centralization.

Once Aramaean settlement is understood as a long process that began much earlier in the Middle Assyrian period, the tensions between the texts and archaeology can be alleviated. Aramaean sedentarization in what would become Bit Zamani did not occur suddenly in the absence of Assyrian administration. Rather, it developed gradually until a hierarchically organized body of settled Aramaeans became established during the height of Assyrian power in Hanigalbat at least by the 12th-11th centuries. The Aramaean campaigns described by Aššur-bel-kala would not have been conducted in response to indiscriminate raids springing from the margins of civilization, but they would have been responses to the growing political and economic power of an urban Aramaean core whose gradual development within Hanigalbat had been facilitated by the long Assyrian occupation. In Part II, I return to the issue of pastoral nomadic responses to the rise of Assyria in Late Bronze Age Hanigalbat, and discuss further evidence for the sedentarization of Aramaeans during the 12th century.

4.2 The Late Bronze Age—Early Iron Age Transition

However Aramaeans took over the institutions of power in the Upper Tigris, ultimately Assyria was forced to retreat from the region to the Assyrian core, and a new culture occupied those sites. But the archaeological evidence for the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age is exceedingly difficult to interpret. What is clear is that after the Middle Assyrian retreat, new material begins to appear in sites that had been occupied by Assyrians. In Operation E of Ziyaret Tepe, Middle Assyrian surfaces are cut by pits containing handmade bowls with horizontal grooves around the rim. The

same types of “groovy pottery”²⁹ occur in post-Middle Assyrian levels at Giricano (Roaf and Schachner 2005:Appendix 2), Üçtepe (Köroğlu 1998:27–30, 37–49, Res. 5–8), and Gre Dimse (Karg 2002) (Figure 10)³⁰ They also appear at a number of sites throughout southeastern Turkey, Armenia, and northwest Iran, although the origin, dating, and implications of groovy pottery are not completely understood (Sevin 1991; Summers 1994; Bartl 2001; Roaf and Schachner 2005). Groovy pottery is especially well known from the sites of Lidar Höyük (Müller 1999) and Tille Höyük (Summers 1993; Blaylock 1999), and Bartl (2001:396–397) has shown that the style appeared in the Keban and Karababa area beginning in the 12th century at some sites, later at others, and lasting until the 8th–7th centuries at sites in the Karakaya basin, around Lake Van, and in northwest Iran. One interpretation (Sevin 1991) associates this pottery with the westward migrations from Transcaucasia of the “Muški,” known from the annals of Tiglath-pileser I (Grayson 1991:14, i 62–88; Barnett 1975). Sevin understands the Muški of this period to be an early incarnation of the Phrygian Muški, who migrated west to escape the hostilities of Urartu and Assyria (Barnett 1975). However, the chronology and geography of these grooved wares are surprisingly complex, and it is not at all clear that its appearance followed a westward trajectory emanating from Urartu. On the contrary, groovy pottery appears in pre-Urartian levels at sites in Armenia (Karmir Blur, Redkin Lager, Horom) (Bartl 2001:396) and Georgia (Sevin 1991:96), but also in 8th–7th century contexts in northwest Iran (Bartl 2001:395). Nor is Summers is convinced that the evidence for dating groovy pottery from the Caucasus earlier than that from the Euphrates is as strong

²⁹This is the term used by Roaf and Schachner (2005), but Sevin (1991), Summers (1994), and Bartl (2001) use the term “grooved pottery” or “grooved-type pottery.”

³⁰See Roaf and Schachner 2005:Appendix 3 for a list of sites in Turkey with Groovy Pottery not listed in Bartl (2001).

as Sevin would suggest (Summers 1994:246–247).

In all of the regions in which groovy pottery does appear, it seems to coincide with the end of the Late Bronze Age. However, the events surrounding the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age transition in each region occurred under vastly different political contexts. The Euphrates region, for example, fell under the authority of the independent kingdom of Carchemish after the fall of the Hittites (Hawkins 1994). The Upper Tigris region, however, was controlled by Aramaean tribes after the end of the Middle Assyrian period. It is unlikely, therefore, that groovy pottery is to be associated with either the Aramaeans who took control of the region at the turn of the millennium, or the populations in the Nairi lands north of Assyrian border (Roaf and Schachner 2005). In short, although we can speculate that the growth of urban Aramaean dynasties, perhaps aided by climate changes, were the primary causes of Assyrian withdrawal from the Upper Tigris, the identity of the people who occupied their abandoned sites remains unclear.

CHAPTER 5

THE HEARTLAND OF HANIGALBAT: THE UPPER KHABUR BASIN

Average annual rainfall in the Upper Khabur Basin (200-600mm) is well within the limits required for successful dry agriculture. Estimates of aggregate production in the Khabur triangle in the modern period highlight the remarkable fertility of this region (Weiss 1986). The agricultural potential of the region made the Khabur triangle the breadbasket of Hanigalbat. For this reason alone the heartland of Mitanni proved a valuable asset for the expanding Middle Assyrian kingdom. But in addition to its economic potential, the region also held a great deal of symbolic value, as it was the political center of Mitanni. It was here that Waššukanni, Ta'idu, and other capital cities of Mitanni were located. Assyrian kings pursued a variety of strategies to take advantage of the practical and symbolic value of central Hanigalbat. As a result, Assyria was able to cast itself as both the inheritor of Mitanni power and, by reorganizing the administrative geography of Hanigalbat, as the source of a new power in the region.

1 TELL CHUERA: *HARBE*

The circular site of Tell Chuera is one of about fifteen *Kranzhügels* that dot the steppe zone of the Syrian Jazira (Moortgat 1960a; 1960b; 1962; 1967; Moortgat and Moortgat-Correns 1975; 1976; 1978; Kühne, H. 1976; Orthmann, Klein and Lüth 1986; Moortgat-Correns 1988b; 1988a; Orthmann 1990a; 1990b; Orthmann 1994; Orthmann, Hempelmann, *et al.* 1995; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 1996). Extensive Early Dynastic remains indicate that the site was a large, well-developed city with large stone

buildings and an extensive network of roads. The site was apparently abandoned for about a millennium until the Mitanni period (Tell Chuera IIA), when occupation is evident in two levels of what may be a cultic building in Area M.

In the Middle Assyrian period (Tell Chuera IIB), occupation levels were recovered from Areas B and D, areas without previous Mitanni remains. In area B, private houses lay on top of an Akkadian (Early Jazira IIIc) stone gate structure (Steinbau 2). Area G, in the northeast part of the upper town, was reoccupied in the Middle Assyrian period after a millennium-long hiatus. The new building (Level 3) in that area was a large public structure that was originally interpreted as a governor's palace because of its archive of about 60 texts dealing with the administration of the city, and which contains the ancient name of the city, HARbe, pronounced either Harbe, or Hurbe. More recently, because of its many furnace installations, gutters, and pits, Meyer (2006) has assumed an "industrial" function for the building, and argued that the tablets must originally have been situated in an adjacent area. In the succeeding two phases of Area G occupation, private houses were constructed along either side of a north-south lane. Under the Level 2 houses, three graves were excavated, each containing a small number of ceramic and metal goods. Sometime in the 12th century, Chuera was abandoned, and there is no evidence of subsequent occupation in the Iron Age or later.

The archive, whose nearly 60 documents comprise economic texts, letters, and fragments of bullae and sealings that reflect the administrative function of Chuera in the Middle Assyrian period (Kühne, C. 1995). Three individuals figure prominently in the texts, which date to the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I. The most senior figure in the Chuera archive is Šulmanu-mušabši, the *sukkallu rabi'u* at Dur Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad).³¹

³¹Šulmanu-mušabši precedes Aššur-iddin and Ili-ipadda, the owner of Sabi Abyad, as *sukkallu rabi'u*. See Figure 4.

He writes to the *bēl pāhete* of HARbe, the *bēl pāhete* of Amimu, and the *bēl pāhete* of Saḫlalu, giving orders to prepare for the arrival of a Hittite diplomat (*ub-re KUR Ha-ta-ie-e*) (92.G.209; 92.G.211; 92.G.222). In other letters, Šulmanu-mušabši demands that preparations be made for the arrival of other foreign dignitaries (92.G.208; 92.G.212). The role of the *sukkallu rabi'u* thus appears to include ensuring the smooth running of international diplomacy. Šulmanu-mušabši passes the orders of the king to the local officials of Hanigalbat, and is therefore the conduit by which Assyria exerts its authority in the west on a broad scale. Issues of more immediate concern for the maintenance of the city of HARbe and the well-being of its inhabitants are left to subordinate Assyrian officers.

One of the men who participates in the local affairs of Chuera and who authored several of the letters in the archive is named Sin-mudammiq. He sends orders to Chuera that deal primarily with the oversight of local events: the construction of a tower (92.G.143); the dredging of a canal (92.G.138); and the transfer of people and animals (92.G.184; 92.G.143; 92.G.138). Sin-mudammiq's title is not clearly defined, but he evidently resides outside of the city, and thus may function at a hierarchical level above that of the *bēl pāhete* of HARbe. Sin-mudammiq is frequently mentioned in connection with the city Aššukani, that is the Mitanni capital Waššukanni, where he may have had his primary residence (Kühne, C. 1995:208).³²

Sin-mudammiq's letters from the Dur Katlimmu archive also highlight his important role within Hanigalbat. He refers to the site of Dumni-Aššur, possibly north of Sabi Abyad on the Balikh (Lyon 2000), as his fortress (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no.2

³²For problems with the identification ancient Waššukanni, see below, 2.1. Ristvet and Weiss (n.d.:9) suggest that the 164 ha site of Tell Farfara, east of the Jaghjagh may have been the Mitanni capital.

DeZ 3439, 94–106). His ownership of a *dunnu* is but one indication of his high status within the bureaucratic hierarchy. Elsewhere, he provides information regarding his duties. In one letter, addressed to Aššur-iddin, the *sukkallu rabi'u* who succeeded Šulmanu-mušabši, he reports on military actions against people from Carchemish and a locust infestation at Waššukanni (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no.2 DeZ 3439, 94–106). In other letters, it is clear that he is not only aware of, but in command of both the security and harvest situation at locations throughout the Upper Khabur basin, including the city of HARbe, which at one point had come under attack (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no.4 DeZ 3396+3837, 111–114). Sin-mudammiq was certainly an official of some significance within Hanigalbat, giving orders to several *bēl pāhetes* of the region, and reporting to the *sukkallu rabi'u* at Dur Katlimmu (Kühne, C. 1995:208).

The third prominent name in the Chuera archive is Suti'u. He receives letters from Sin-mudammiq and other individuals who command him to organize a range of activities at the site: entertaining and feeding visitors; constructing fortifications; maintaining canals; overseeing personnel, agricultural production, and the craft activities that must have taken place at the public building in area G; and ensuring the general welfare of the citizens of HARbe. The varied responsibilities of Suti'u suggest that he may have been the *bēl pāhete* of HARbe. If so, he not only had to balance the demands of Sin-mudammiq, his superior, and those of other regional officials (Kühne, C. 1995:209), but also those of the *sukkallu rabi'u* at Dur Katlimmu, who is the author of three letters addressed directly to the *bēl pāhete* of HARbe. To carry out his orders, Suti'u, in turn must have commanded his own local bureaucracy which resided at Chuera.

The texts from Chuera thus reveal a complex administrative hierarchy in Hanigalbat (Figure 11). At the top of the hierarchy was the king of Assyria, who sent his

orders directly to the *sukkallu rabi'u*, Šulmanu-mušabši (e.g., Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no.9 DeZ 3836+4036, 140–147). Beneath him was Sin-mudammiq, who oversaw military and agricultural operations throughout upper Hanigalbat. Whereas Šulmanu-mušabši's interests in the region of Chuera lay in the smooth running of international relations based on orders from the Assyrian king, Sin-mudammiq involved himself with local issues in several cities, such as overseeing personnel and public works projects. Sin-mudammiq, in turn, relayed orders to the *bēl pāhetes* of the various provinces within his command, including to Suti'u, *bēl pāhete* of the city of HARbe. Suti'u administered the daily routines of the city, and was in responsible for the defense, agricultural productivity, and welfare of the inhabitants of Chuera. The city thus constituted an important cog in the Middle Assyrian administrative machine; a participant in affairs both international and local in scale.

In this respect, Chuera, as the seat of a *bēl pāhete*, and an important administrative site, stands in marked contrast to *dunnu* sites, such as Sabi Abyad and Giricano, which are privately run, dedicated agricultural entities. This administrative distinction between *dunnus* and the seats of the *bēl pāhetes* is difficult to identify archaeologically. Although the public structure and evidence of craft activities in Area G were originally interpreted as evidence of the administrative function of the site, similar features are also present at the *dunnu* of Sabi Abyad. Neither is there any differentiation in the ceramic repertoire between the two sites. The same standard Middle Assyrian forms occur at Chuera and Sabi Abyad. Finally, both sites yielded archives, the contents of which overlap in some cases, such as in the concern for providing for the welfare of the city's inhabitants, but differ in others, such as in texts describing public works projects and hosting foreign dignitaries. Were it not for the textual attestations specifically referring to the *bēl pāhete*

of HARbe, it would be difficult to distinguish the administrative function of one site from the agricultural orientation of another.

One feature of Middle Assyrian settlement at Chuera may be related to the administrative function of the site. The Mitanni building in Area M shows that Chuera had been a site of some cultic importance in that period. Yet there appears to have been deliberate avoidance of the Mitanni area of settlement, and a new focus on settlement in Area G. The occupation of areas of the site that had been unoccupied in the Mitanni period may be one indication that Assyria was attempting to emphasize a break from previous administrations. Middle Assyrian appropriation of the site with occupation in previously unused areas may have been designed to emphasize Assyria's inheritance of Mitanni authority in the area, and to project the new source of power in Hanigalbat.

2 TELL FAKHARIYAH

Tell Fakhariyah is located on the westernmost edge of the Khabur triangle just south of the present-day Turkish border. In the 1940's, Middle Assyrian levels were uncovered in excavations conducted by a team from the University of Chicago (McEwan, *et al.* 1958). In 1955 and 1956, A. Moortgat's team clarified the stratigraphy of the site (Moortgat 1957; Moortgat 1959), and in 2001, A. Pruß and 'A. Bagdo reevaluated the Middle Assyrian house found by the Chicago excavations (Pruß and Bagdo 2002). In the series of nine soundings at the site conducted by the Chicago team, evidence of Middle Assyrian occupation emerged in two areas: a house in Sounding VI, and below an Iron Age palace in Sounding IX (McEwan, *et al.* 1958). The Middle Assyrian building in Sounding VI had five rooms and a large pebble courtyard (McEwan, *et al.* 1958:Plate 6A). Distinctive architectural features of the building such as a patch of baked bricks at one end of the southern room, a paved bathroom and toilet, and a long room on the west

side that gave access to three adjacent rooms, in addition to finds of clay nails, frit rosettes, beads, figurines, and jewelry found on the two floor levels of the house led the excavators to conclude that this was the private dwelling of a wealthy individual.³³ An archive found in the building contained ten tablets, and suggests that the house may have been occupied by an Assyrian official installed at the site. The archive consists of loan documents (*OIP 79 5, 6*), letters that deal with preparations for visiting dignitaries (either at Fakhariyah or elsewhere) and other events (*OIP 79 2–4*), and administrative documents that deal with distributions or receipt of bread and barley (*OIP 79 10, 11*). All of the datable tablets are from the reigns of Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I.

The pottery and small finds from the house in Sounding VI are of the standard Middle Assyrian type, and Assyrian names predominate in the texts. However, the seals and seal impressions found in the house, and a group of ivories found beneath the Iron Age palace in Sounding IX (Floor 6), are of an international character. For the most part, the Fakhariyah glyptic is in the classical Middle Assyrian styles, indicating the entrenchment of Assyrians within the administrative system, but Mitanni examples were also found in the same context as the Assyrian sealings (Kantor 1958a).³⁴ The ivories are rather poorly made in comparison with ivories from the Late Assyrian period and contemporary ivories from Assur, which suggests that they are a “provincial” artifact, not a product imported from the capital (Kantor 1958b:57).³⁵ Furthermore, the closest

³³Based on the nature of the small finds and the plan of the building, excavators initially assumed that this was a cultic building. However, elements of the building such as the plain façade, brick hearth, and toilet, do not appear in Middle Assyrian temples (McEwan, *et al.* 1958:19–20).

³⁴Moortgat found Khabur Ware and early 2nd millennium remains attributed to a cultic building beneath Middle Assyrian levels under the Sounding IX palace, and ceramic and other material from the 15th-14th centuries in a series of trenches in the east and west of the site (Moortgat 1957; Moortgat 1959). He did not, however, find evidence that Fakhariyah was indeed, the Mitanni capital, as he had hoped.

³⁵On Middle Assyrian ivory styles from Tomb 45 at Assur, see Harper, *et al.* 1995:81–97. On

stylistic comparisons come from Syria and Palestine, not from the Assyrian heartland.

The reexcavation of Tell Fakhariyah by a joint German/Syrian team in 2001 resulted in some new finds regarding the Middle Assyrian architecture of Sounding VI (Pruß and Bagdo 2002). In the first place, they found that the archive was actually probably found on a lower level of the house than the Chicago team had realized. Furthermore, the archive was probably not in its original location, because by the Chicago team's reckoning, it was found in an open court (Pruß and Bagdo 2002:322). Pruß also found the northwest corner of a second house (House II) that lay to the south of the original house (House I). This second house also had two architectural phases, the first of which corresponded to the second phase of House I (Pruß and Bagdo 2002:323, Tabelle 1). The presence of the two phases of this second house argues for the extension of the Middle Assyrian occupation of Tell Fakhariyah. Furthermore, there is no clear destruction or hiatus between the Middle Assyrian and Iron Age occupation of Fakhariyah. Iron Age ceramics were found just above Middle Assyrian ceramic levels in Moortgat's trenches (Moortgat 1959:Abb. 2, Abb. 3). In Area A of the 2001 excavation (McEwan's Sounding IX), the Iron Age *bīt hilani* sat just above a Middle Assyrian building (Pruß and Bagdo 2002:318, Abb. 3). By how far one must extend the Middle Assyrian occupation remains unclear, but it is clear that Assyrians were present at Fakhariyah after the period documented by the archives, that is, probably after Tukulti-Ninurta I.

The multicultural flavor of Tell Fakhariyah contrasts with the distinctly Assyrian nature of other provincial sites in the Khabur basin, such as Tell Chuera. Whereas the Assyrian administrative officials at Chuera evidently wished to emphasize the new power source in the region, at Fakhariyah, Assyrian cultural elements appear side by side with

changes in use and quality of ivories from the Middle to Late Assyrian period, see Herrmann and Millard 2003.

material from other cultural traditions. The same western affinities apparent in the artifacts of the Middle Assyrian period may also be connected with the distinctly Aramaean character of the Iron Age *bīt hilani*, and the site's similarity to nearby Tell Halaf, Iron Age Guzana. This multiculturalism may be a reflection of the function of the city during the Middle Assyrian period. In contrast to the administrative character of nearby Tell Chuera, the small archive and lack of public architecture argue against such a function at Tell Fakhariyah.

2.1 The Ancient Name of Tell Fakhariyah

One clue to the function of Tell Fakhariyah may be the ancient name of the site. There are indications that the site was a *dunnu*, bearing the name of the Assyrian *limmu* official, Ninu'āyu. If so, the population of Assyrian elite and Hurrian dependent workers that coexisted at *dunnus* would explain why international styles were tolerated at Fakhariyah, even when the expression of the local identity may have conflicted with the ambitions of the 13th century Assyrian administrators of Hanigalbat.

The identification of the ancient name of Tell Fakhariyah has posed a number of problems since it was initially excavated. Adad-nirari I includes Waššukanni (URU *uš-šu-ka-na* [RIMA 1:A.0.76.3:30]) in a list of eight cities he conquered in Hanigalbat, and the fact that Fakhariyah is called Sikanu in an inscription from Adad-nirari II (URU *si-ka-a-ni šá 'ina' SAG e-ni šá ÍD ha-bur GAR-nu-ni* [RIMA 2:A.0.99.2: 101–102, p. 153]), and in the Iron Age bilingual statue of Hadad-Yit'i (Abou-Assaf, *et al.* 1982), has led many to identify Fakhariyah as Waššukanni, the capital of the Mitanni kingdom. However, the derivation of Sikanu from the name Waššukanni (Middle Assyrian Uššukanni/Aššukanni) is far from certain, especially considering the appearance of the name Sigani in the area of the Upper Khabur as early as the Ur III period (*ḏha-bu-ri-tum si-ga-an^{ki}* [RGTC 2:164]).

Furthermore, neutron activation analysis conducted on texts written by Tušratta, presumably at Waššukanni, shows that the clay's chemical signature does not match that of pottery from the Khabur region (Dobel, *et al.* 1974–1977), although the validity of this evidence is questioned by Harrak (1987:106).

Evidence from Middle Assyrian Tell Fakhariyah itself is also ambiguous. Nowhere in the Middle Assyrian texts from Fakhariyah is the name Uššukanni/Aššukanni, or, for that matter, Sikani mentioned. The geographic names that do appear in those texts are Karme-ša-Ištar (^{URU}*Kar-me ša Ištar* [OIP 79, 11:7-8]), and Dunnu (^{URU}*du-ni* [OIP 79, 2:4]). The first name occurs in a poorly preserved tablet possibly dealing with a transfer or loan of barley. The second name appears in a much better preserved tablet in which a figure named Ninuayau alerts the addressee that he will be coming to Dunnu to spend X amount of days there, and expects *billu*-beer to be plentiful during his stay. If Dunnu is the name of the city in which the tablet is housed, a possibility which Güterbock (1958:88) raises, then that must be the Middle Assyrian name of Fakhariyah. Furthermore, the texts included in the archive look very similar to archives of other Middle Assyrian *dunnu*: loan documents, lists of deliveries, and letters. It therefore seems plausible that Fakhariyah functioned as a *dunnu*, rather than as an administrative center on the order of Dur Katlimmu, or even Tell Chuera.

The name Dunnu, itself, is peculiar and deserves comment. In nearly every instance of Middle Assyrian place names with the Dunnu element, the name appears in the form, Dunnu-ša-PN. In a small number of cases, Dunnu is followed by a familial relationship (e.g., Dunnu-ša-mār-šarri and Dunni-ahi), or a divine name (e.g., Dunnu-Adad). Dunnu occurs alone as a unique place name only in this Tell Fakhariyah text.³⁶

³⁶Of the two other references to Dunnu as a unique place name in *RGTC* 2, one is broken after *du-^run¹* (KAV 106, 16), and the other is ^{URU}*du-ni šá pi-ti* ^{URU}*ta-i-di*, which may be the full place name.

Güterbock (1958:87) also points out that this may be a shorthand form of a longer city name that does include the PN element. If so, it may be that that element is the name of the sender of *OIP 79, 2*, Ninu'āyu (*ni-nu-a-iu-ú*),³⁷ a name not otherwise mentioned in the archive. An official named Ninu'āyu, son of Aššur-iddin does appear as a limmu during the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I in texts from Assur and Billa (Saporetti 1979:120; Freydank 1991:156). Ninu'āyu of the Fakhariyah texts may be this same Ninu'āyu, son of Aššur-iddin, who himself was the son of the first known Middle Assyrian *sukkallu rabi'u*, Qibbi-Aššur. The fact that the name Aššur-iddin also appears in three Fakhariyah texts (*OIP 79, 9; 4; and possibly 3*), strengthens the suggestion that Fakhariyah was the *dunnu* of the son of Aššur-iddin. Indeed, the city name Dunnu-ša-Ninu'āyu occurs in KAJ 101, 10 (*RGTC 5:86; Postgate, J. N. 1988:no. 55*).³⁸ It may be, therefore, that Ninu'āyu in *OIP 79, 2* is making plans to visit his own *dunnu*, and this intent would certainly be understood by Ninu'āyu's own representatives at Fakhariyah if he used only the shorthand name of the city, Dunnu. We may therefore tentatively identify Middle Assyrian Tell Fakhariyah as Dunnu-ša-Ninu'āyu.

This identification does not, however, explain the shift in the name of the city in the Iron Age to Sikanu. It may be that the Aramaean inhabitants of Tell Fakhariyah, who built the *bīt hilani* of Sounding IX, simply wanted to distance themselves from the Assyrian occupiers of the city. By doing so, they would have been following the precedent set by the Middle Assyrian kings at sites like Sabi Abyad, and Tell Chuera. One

³⁷Güterbock interprets this name as Ninuayau (*ni-nu-a-ia-ú*) (Güterbock 1958:88).

³⁸Note that Postgate (1988:135) proposes that Dunnu-ša-Ninu'āyu lies in the vicinity of Nineveh, because of the provenience of the text at Assur. He does, however, acknowledge that another city mentioned in the same archive (1988:no. 56), Kurda, lies west of Nineveh, possibly along the Khabur in the region of Hassake, Taban, and Barri (*RGTC 5:173*). A different text, also from the archive of Urad-Šerua, deals with a loan made in the city of Taidi (Postgate, J. N. 1988:no. 36:12). Therefore, places mentioned in texts from the archive at Assur are not necessarily confined to the region around Assur.

aspect of the Aramaean policy of distancing themselves from their predecessors would have been to rename the city according to its archaic name, Sikanu, which was, in turn, adopted by Adad-nirari II when he began to colonize Hanigalbat.

Thus, like Sabi Abyad, Tell Fakhariyah appears to have functioned as an agricultural production center, owned by an important Assyrian official. It had had a significant Mitanni occupation, but its agricultural function was redirected under the Middle Assyrian regime. The apparent continuity of occupation in Sounding IX, and the fact that the archive of Sounding VI was found in the earliest of perhaps four occupation levels, even if it was brought from elsewhere, suggests that the site was occupied for some time after the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Whatever troubles were brewing in the heartland after the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I, troubles which may have caused a decline in the frequency of Assyrian inscriptions and the transfer of the throne from the family of Tukulti-Ninurta I, the occupation of Fakhariyah appears to have been only minimally affected.

3 TELL BRAK

Tell Brak has a substantial Mitanni occupation, and a somewhat diminished Middle Assyrian occupation (Oates, *et al.* 1997). The Mitanni palace and adjacent temple probably date to the 16th century. The excavators date an early ash level in Corridor 6 of the Palace to destructions during Adad-nerari's campaign against Wasašatta (ca. 1280). We know that Adad-nerari rebuilt some of the conquered Mitanni sites, including Ta'idu (*RIMA* 1:A.0.76.4, 137–138), and this was probably the case for the Mitanni palace at Brak (Oates, *et al.* 1997:153). Shortly after Adad-nerari's destruction, a second ash layer at Brak probably corresponds to Shalmaneser's campaign after the revolt of Shattuara II. Above this layer lay a small layer of collapse, and a Middle Assyrian floor (Level 1b)

above this attests to the rebuilding atop the Mitanni palace only a short time after its complete destruction by Shalmaneser. A later Middle Assyrian floor (Level 1a) suggests that the Middle Assyrian occupation must have lasted for some time.

In the Middle Assyrian levels, much of the Mitanni building was reused to build private houses. Portions of the palace were cut to expand rooms, stairs were filled in, and new entrances were created (Oates, *et al.* 1997:14–15). The pottery of the Middle Assyrian level were standard Middle Assyrian forms. On the surface of the tell, four fragments of a basalt sculpture, including a large human head, were found, but the date of these finds are insecure. Although very little of the Late Assyrian period has been found at Tell Brak, what has been recovered shows that the site was occupied in the first millennium BC, and that a building of monumental character quite possibly existed there.

The function of Brak changed substantially after the sack of the city by Shalmaneser I. Whereas the site had been a significant administrative center during the Mitanni hegemony in the Khabur basin, now it was a provincial site, home to only a few private Middle Assyrian houses. Brak is the only site in this region with a significant destruction level, which highlights the tendency of Assyria to colonize cities that had no affiliation to the previous administration. The Middle Assyrian presence at Brak, meager though it was, may have been intended as a symbolic display of Assyrian might. Brak had been a major Mitanni center and had been involved in a revolt against Assyrian rule. In response, Assyria destroyed the city and rebuilt only a small outpost at Brak, much reduced in both size and status.

The end of the occupation is not clear, but there is evidence that the site was occupied during the Late Assyrian period. Unfortunately, what took place there between the reigns of Tukulti-Ninurta I and Ashurnasirpal II is unknown, but throughout the Middle Assyrian period, the site appears to have been relatively inconsequential.

4 TELL BARRI: *KAHAT*

Situated on the Wadi Jaghjagh, 10 km north of Tell Brak, Tell Barri has been excavated by an Italian team led by M. Salvini and P. E. Pecorella since 1980 (Pecorella and Salvini 1982; Pecorella 1990a; Pecorella, 1998a; Pecorella, ed. 1998). The site is roughly 17 ha and rises to a height of 37 meters. Tell Barri, ancient Kahat, had been an important Mitanni religious site, the location of the temple of the storm god. Its significance in the middle of the second millennium BC is demonstrated by a treaty found at Boğazköy which assured Hittite support for the Mitanni king Shattiwaza. It establishes Shattiwaza as a vassal of Šuppiluliuma, and the Mitanni kingdom as a buffer between Hatti and the Assyrian kingdom of Adad-nirari I (Bryce 1998:199–201). The treaty stipulates that one copy was to be stored in the temple of the sun god Arinna and another in the temple of the storm god, Teššub, “lord of *kurinnu*” at Kahat (PDK 1:35ff, 2:7ff) (Salvini 1998b:32–33). The stipulations of the treaty were probably intended to check the Assyrian threat to Hatti after the decline of Mitanni.

Kahat was one of the first cities conquered by Adad-nerari I shortly after the Šuppiluliuma-Šattiwaza treaty was implemented. It is mentioned in a building inscription along with seven other Mitanni sites conquered by Adad-nerari I when he established himself as ruler of Hanigalbat:

After his death, Uasašatta, his son, revolted, rebelled against me, and committed hostilities. He went to the land Hatti for aid. The Hittites took his bribes but did not render him assistance. With the strong weapons of the god Aššur, my lord; with support of the gods Anu, Enlil, and Ea, Sin, Šamaš, Adad, Ištar, and Nergal, most powerful among the gods, the awesome gods, my lords; I captured by conquest the city Taidu, his great royal city, the cities Amasaku, Kahat, Šuru, Nabula, Hurra, Šuduhu, and Waššukanu. I took and brought to my city, Aššur, the possessions of those cities, the accumulated (wealth) of his (Uasašatta's) fathers, and the treasure of his palace. I conquered, burnt, (and) destroyed the city Irridu and sowed salty plants over it (*RIMA* 1:A.0.76.3:26–30).

Following the destruction and reoccupation of Kahat by Adad-nerari, Shalmaneser I

rebuilt the temple of the storm god there (*RIMA* 1:A.0.77.16, 204). The site continued to be of interest to Assyria in the first millennium, when Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884 BC) erected a palace there (Dossin 1961–1962; Postgate, J. N. 1977; Salvini 1983).

Evidence of Middle Assyrian occupation at Tell Barri comes from fourteen architectural phases in Area G, just above the Mitanni levels. Well-stratified ceramics from the primarily domestic structures show affinities to other sites in the Khabur valley and Balikh region (Pecorella, ed 1998:104–118). In each of the successive phases in Area G, small rooms and short mud brick walls alongside scattered drainage structures, *tannurs*, pits and ephemeral pavements of baked brick and ceramic fragment pavements often attest to open-air craft activities. Finds of classic Middle Assyrian pottery forms and stone grinders indicate that the area was also used for the processing of agricultural products. One remarkable find in Phase IV was a baked brick bathtub with an associated stone-lined well (Pecorella 1998b:111–112). In all, the Middle Assyrian areas of Tell Barri bear witness to a settlement of small proportions, composed of private dwellings where agricultural and craft activities took place. The excavators interpret area G as possibly a communal eating area (Pecorella 1990b:262–263).

The few texts that have been found at the site, however, are not solely agricultural or economic in nature, as the other remains in Area G would indicate. For instance, K9.T2 is a lexical list, probably a school text (Salvini 1998a:189–190), and K9.T3 is a list of soldiers (Salvini 1998a:190–191). However, K9.T1 does fit well with the archaeological evidence of grain-processing activities. It is a letter requesting news about a certain *kuiangu* barley and irrigation water. Though difficult to date,³⁹ the school text,

³⁹The only *limu* that appears on the texts is Ṭāb-šija (K9.T1:1, 17), which Salvini suggests may be a hypocoristicon for Ṭāb-šilli-Aššur, or a similar name (Salvini 1998a:188). Neither name, however appears in either Saporetti (1983) or Freydank (1991).

administrative list, and letter paint a picture of a diverse Middle Assyrian enclave at Kahat.

After only a short hiatus following Adad-nerari I's destruction of the Mitanni settlement (Pecorella 1990b:263), the Middle Assyrian settlement at Kahat continued with only a brief interruption (Phase VII [Pecorella 1998b:115]) into the Neo-Assyrian period. By rebuilding the temple at Barri, Shalmaneser chose to preserve the sacred significance of a site that had existed since at least the time of Zimri-Lim (Salvini 1998b:31). Assyria had thus appropriated a highly potent Mitanni symbol. However, the policy at Barri is different from that employed at Tell Brak, which had also been an important Mitanni site. Whereas at Brak, Assyrian might was expressed by diminishing the symbolic value of the site, at Kahat, retained and accentuated an important symbol of Hurrian culture.

The reason for pursuing this contradictory policy is unclear. Assyria may have been acting upon a traditional reverence for any religious site, or they may have consciously solicited the approval of local Hanigalbateans who may otherwise have opposed Assyrian authority. Whatever lay behind the policy, its effect must have been to propagate the expression of an explicitly Assyrian ideology of expansion. At the same time that Assyria ushered a new political and cultural infrastructure into Hanigalbat, they cast themselves as the successors to local traditions stretching back into the early second millennium BC. It is a policy that continued to serve the kingdom in the Late Assyrian period, when the Assyrian Empire was both ruthless in their policy of expansion, and open to the traditions of the cultures they conquered.

5 TELL HAMIDIYA: *TA'IDU*

Tell Hamidiya is located on the east side of the Jaghjagh River, roughly midway between Qamishly and Hassake, and well within the dry agriculture zone of Northern Mesopotamia. In the second millennium, the site occupied an important position on the

route from Assur to Harran, and further west, which included the sites of Tell Fakhariyah and Tell Chuera (Eichler, *et al.* 1985:51, Abb. 7; Wäfler 1990:219). The argument for identifying Hamidiya as Ta'idu during the Late Bronze Age is made on the basis of an itinerary from Dur-Katlimmu (DeZ 2521 Röllig 1983; 1997; Haas and Wäfler 1985:66–67; Wäfler 1994). The itinerary locates the city of Ta'idu in the Upper Khabur basin, near the Jaghjagh river (ⁱDⁱma-ri-ir-te [DeZ 2521:3]) (Röllig 1997:282). The Ta'idu near the Jaghjagh should not be confused with the identically named city at Üçtepe, along the upper Tigris river near modern day Diyarbakır (see above 1.1).

Ta'idu figures prominently in the inscriptions of Adad-nerari I. It had been a royal residence in the Mitanni period and, in the 13th century, it housed a palace of the Mitanni king, Wasašatta, effectively the puppet of the Hittite kingdom. Ta'idu was also one of the eight cities, along with Amasaku, Kahat, Šuru, Nabula, Hurra, Šuduhu, and Waššukanu, that Adad-nirari I conquered after the revolt of Wasašatta (*RIMA* 1:A.0.76.3:21–41, 136). In his inscription, Ta'idu is referred to as Wasašatta's "great royal city," though he appears to have expended more energy on utterly destroying Irridu, which had been the residence of the king's wife and children (*RIMA* 1:A.0.76.3:45-51, 136-137), and which Adad-nerari "conquered, burnt, (and) destroyed . . . and sowed salty plants over it." Nevertheless, it is clear that Ta'idu was thoroughly destroyed as well, to judge from an addition appended to a variant of this inscription:

When I saw the deserted (and) uncultivated areas of . . . the city *Ta[idu . . .]* . . . I delineated its territory (and) therein founded a palace. I built it from top to bottom and deposited my monumental inscription. (*RIMA* 1:A.0.76.4:37-41, 137; A.0.76.22:55-60, 158)

Shalmaneser also faced hostility from the Mitanni king Šattuara, aided by Hittite and Ahlamu armies (*RIMA* 2:A.0.77.1:56-87, 183-184). In response, he recaptured Ta'idu among other cities. An inscribed brick (HT 5) probably bearing the name of

Shalmaneser I was found at Hamidiya (Deller 1990:328–329). Another inscribed brick (HT 8) attributed to Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884) was also found at the site, demonstrating the continued presence of Assyria there in the 9th century (Wäfler 1990:231–232).

The excavations of the Mitanni period acropolis confirm that the site was indeed an exceptionally large palatial city occupying a total area of 245 ha with a 16.5 ha upper city. The 3.86 ha palace during this period was likewise exceedingly large, twice as large as the palace at Old Babylonian Mari, and 20 times larger than the Mitanni palace at Brak (Wäfler 2003:76, Abb. 22). The building was of an odd construction, sitting atop a stepped platform, and Wäfler (2003:77) notes the unique juxtaposition of sacred and profane architecture here, specifically the use of elements traditionally associated with temples in a palatial context. Both textual and archaeological evidence attest to the great significance of Ta'idu within the Mitanni realm.

The Middle Assyrian reconstruction of the Mitanni palace must have taken place only shortly after it was conquered. Walls reused by the Assyrians could not have remained standing for long after they fell out of use (Eichler, *et al.* 1990:250). On the southern border of the citadel, the palace was rebuilt, but only to a minimal extent: a new floor with unbaked bricks was laid, and walls were replastered and painted with white, red, yellow, blue, and black colors (Eichler, *et al.* 1990:251–252; Wäfler 1993). The Middle Assyrian itinerary from the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I already shows that the site continued to be a significant administrative outpost of the Assyrian presence in Hanigalbat. By the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, it continued to function as a provincial center, along with Šudu and Amasaki (Kessler 1980:92; Weidner 1935/1936:21). Thus, at Ta'idu, in contrast to their strategy at Chuera and Brak, Assyrians maintained the administrative

function of the city. The city, which had housed a Mitanni palace of truly monumental proportions and which, more than other sites in the region, was an unambiguous symbol of the Mitanni royal presence in Hanigalbat, was unequivocally appropriated by Assyria. By this symbolic and highly potent action, Shalmaneser secured the transfer of power over Hanigalbat from Mitanni to Assyrian hands by inscribing his name on the palace he rebuilt there.

6 TELL AMUDA/TELL SHERMOLA: *KULIŠHINAŠ*

That the city of Kulišhinaš⁴⁰ was a Middle Assyrian provincial seat is known from 12th-11th century texts from Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur (1133) and Tiglath-pileser I (Weidner 1935/1936; Machinist 1982:4). Texts from the 13th century may suggest that the city held this status even earlier during the Middle Assyrian occupation of Hanigalbat (Aynard and Durand 1980; Machinist 1982). This city had been identified as Tell Amuda based on the position of the city in a list of administrative districts, which indicates a location in the Upper Khabur near Nusaybin (Amasaki), and the appearance of the city name on a text found near modern Amuda. In fact, a preliminary reconnaissance by Bunnens and Roobaert as part of the Tell Mozan regional survey drew a distinction between this tell, called Shermola by the local inhabitants, and a different Tell Amuda on the other side of the Turkish border (Bunnens and Roobaert 1988; Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1988:36–37, 89). Thus, the texts from the *pāhete* of Kulišhinaš probably come from the site of Tell Shermola in Syria (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1988:37).

The northern and southern section visible at Tell Shermola showed only a few layers of occupation, concentrating in the late second millennium (Level II). The architecture comprised a complex of two or three buildings with walls projecting out of

⁴⁰In one text, the city is written ^{URU}*ki-li-iš-hi-na-Γaš* (YBC 12860: 7 [(Machinist 1982:3)]).

the northern side of the tell. These buildings were constructed in at least two phases, and the western walls appear to have been in use throughout this period. In the south, a vaulted structure over two meters high was visible in the lower level IIB (Bunnens and Roobaert 1988:Fig. 48). The high quantity of undecorated, chaff-tempered carinated bowls with diameters of ca. 10 and ca. 25–30 cm, and nipple based jars date the site squarely in the late second millennium (Bunnens and Roobaert 1988:91–92, Fig. 50), in accordance with the textual evidence.

Although Tell Shermola is small (ca. 1600m², though it may be smaller now than it was originally [Bunnens and Roobaert 1988:91]), it appears to have housed some sort of monumental vaulted structure. The investigators are unsure of the functions of the vaulted structure (“Temple, palais, entrepôt, caserne? Tout est possible” [Bunnens and Roobaert 1988:91]), but it may well be an administrative building. Tell Shermola/Kulišhinaš therefore is an example of a newly constructed, small Middle Assyrian provincial center. The establishment of Kulišhinaš may again be the effect of a deliberate effort to dissociate their authority from that of their predecessors. The traditional locus of power in the region had been at Urkesh, which had been a Hurrian political and religious center since the third millennium BC. Although at Tell Barri Assyrians do not seem to have been interested in interrupting the Hurrian religious tradition attached to the site, at Tell Shermola in the north of the Khabur triangle, they chose to replace the existing power center with a new one.

7 ASSYRIAN ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE HEARTLAND OF HANIGALBAT

To the Assyrians, the Khabur Basin was the political and economic heart of Hurrian Hanigalbat, and must have been the main objective of their expansion. One reason for the region’s importance to Assyria was that it was a highly fertile region,

capable of supplying both Hanigalbat itself and the heartland of Assyria to the east with reliable dry agriculture.⁴¹ Thus, the *dunnu* settlements that were established in the Khabur Triangle, and that feature in the correspondence of HARbe and Dur-Katlimmu, along with the *dunnu* site at Tell Fakhariyah, represented a novel attempt to tap the economic and agricultural potential of the region. The success of this system at the northern and western extents of the kingdom has already been addressed. The goods supplied by *dunnus* in the Khabur basin must have added a considerable amount to what was already coming into Assyria from these other regions.

The Khabur basin was also an important target because it represented the political core of Mitanni power, epitomized by the large administrative sites of Waššukanni and Ta'idu. To contend with the previous urban power centers and autonomous tribal groups within Syria, Assyria pursued diverse strategies. One of these strategies was to reorganize the administrative geography of Hanigalbat. In some cases, Assyrian authorities made it a point to distance themselves from the previous Mitanni administrative centers. This was the policy in the case of Tell Brak and Tell Mohammad Diyab (Durand 1990; Sauvage 1997), important Mitanni political centers which lost their administrative significance during the Middle Assyrian period. Though these were reoccupied, they were not rebuilt on the same scale that they had been previously.

Reoccupying and repurposing Mitanni administrative centers had two benefits for Assyria. One obvious benefit of reoccupying sites was that doing so offered copious amounts of building material for reconstruction. At Brak, for example, the new Middle Assyrian level houses used a great deal of the previous structure, adding support only

⁴¹An argument may be made that Assyria had been covetous of the fertility of this region since the Old Assyrian period, when Šamši-Adad moved his royal residence to Šubat-Enlil.

where necessary. This technique economized and expedited the Assyrian colonization of Hanigalbat.

The second benefit of resettling previous administrative sites on a smaller scale was that it reoriented the administrative centers of Hanigalbat. Just as formerly large administrative centers like Tell Brak no longer functioned as such in the Middle Assyrian period, smaller sites like Tell Chuera, which had not been administrative centers in the Mitanni period, became district capitals under the Assyrian regime. This policy effectively diminished the importance of the symbols of Mitanni power and refocused attention on the new power centers, thereby enhancing the local population's perception of Assyrian authority. Shuffling the administrative organization of Hanigalbat emphasized Assyria's ability to eliminate the power of Mitanni.

In other locations, Assyria pursued a different policy. At some of the important Mitanni palatial sites, Assyria conquered and reestablished those sites as the seat of administrative districts. At Tell Hamidiya and, judging by the implications of the Dur-Katlimmu correspondence, also at Waššukanni, the symbols of Mitanni power were preserved, though they were appropriated by Assyrian kings. Thus, the large and architecturally unique palace of Tell Hamidiya was rebuilt only shortly after the Mitanni period and, although it was no longer the central administrative site of Hanigalbat, Ta'udu retained a significant administrative status, at least within the Khabur basin, well into the first millennium (Wäfler 2003).

At Tell Barri too, Assyria did not shy from preserving the cultural symbols of Mitanni in Hanigalbat. At Kahat, however, the significance of the site lay not in its administrative function, rather it was the presence there of the temple of the storm god that made the city special to the inhabitants of Hanigalbat. Whether it was done out of

respect for the local pantheon or out of a desire to appease the Hurrian inhabitants of Hanigalbat, Shalmaneser's highly symbolic gesture of rebuilding the temple set a precedent that lasted into the first millennium. After the campaigns against Mitanni which brought their rule in Syria to an end, the kings of Assyria chose not to eradicate Mitanni cultural elements from the region. Instead, they preserved the cultic site of the conquered population. Thus, already in the late second millennium BC, Assyrian westward expansion exhibited that element of cultural integration that would become standard Assyrian colonial practice in the first millennium. The two-way cultural exchange that is characteristic of Neo-Assyrian policy towards Aramaeans, for example, as evidenced by the Assyrianization of Aramaean sites like Zincirli and Til Barsip (Nevling Porter 2000) and the "Aramaization" of Assyria (Tadmor 1982), had its roots in Shalmaneser I's second millennium policy toward conquered regions of Hanigalbat.

The Assyrian policy of cultural integration is also in evidence at Middle Assyrian Tell Fakhariyah, where classic Middle Assyrian ceramic types intermingle with seals, sealings, and ivories executed in a local style. These local elements belie the view of an insular Assyrian culture in Hanigalbat, a view which is based primarily on textual evidence. Thus Machinist (1982:19) concludes that "Our documentation, in short, appears to point to fairly self-contained Assyrian communities in the thirteenth century provinces, governing but not integrated into the native or deportee populations." The evidence of Fakhariyah speaks to the contrary: a network of perhaps exclusively Assyrian administrative centers, interspersed among smaller sites that housed both Assyrian and local populations along with their associated material culture. Although the Fakhariyah archive shows that an Assyrian *dunnu* owner conducted business transactions with other Assyrians, the population of the *dunnu* itself seems to have been a mixture of both

Hurrians and Assyrians. The presence of Mitanni glyptic shows that there may even have been a small cadre of Mitanni elite that remained in residence there or elsewhere, which interacted with the Assyrian bureaucracy at Fakhariyah.

The excavations at Fakhariyah and elsewhere also demand a revision of another traditionally accepted aspect of Middle Assyrian administration: that following the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, the kingdom suffered a decline, during which it receded into the Assyrian heartland (Figure 3). Does the cessation of written documents from Hanigalbat beginning in the 12th century in fact mean that “those who created the crisis in Assyria succeeded in ending an era of political and military supremacy in Northern Mesopotamia” (Harrak 1987:264)? Certainly, aside from an absence of texts, there seems to be very little disturbance in the archaeology of the Khabur and Upper Tigris (Table 2). There is no large scale destruction evident at the end of the 13th century. Of special interest in this regard is the new find of House 2 in Sounding VI at Tell Fakhariyah (Pruß and Bagdo 2002), which extends the Middle Assyrian occupation there past the period represented by the archive, that is, beyond the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I. And the continued Assyrian interest at sites like Kahat and Ta’idu demonstrates that, whatever was happening to the heirs of Tukulti-Ninurta I in Assyria proper, life continued with little change in the western provinces. The lack of texts in the 12th century might therefore be interpreted not as a consequence of the growing autonomy of Hanigalbat and consolidation of power there in the hands of local kings. Rather, the decline in correspondence between Assyrian provinces and Assur may be evidence of the localization of power in Hanigalbat in the hands of a few powerful Assyrian administrators. These administrators did not turn their backs on Assyria while the attention of the kings was elsewhere. It was their loyalty and continued authority there that allowed Tiglath-pileser I to reassert his personal authority

there nearly a century later. One indication that authority may have been concentrated in the hands of Assyrian officials in Hanigalbat comes from the sites of Tell Taban (Ohnuma, *et al.* 1999; Ohnuma, *et al.* 2000; Ohnuma and Numoto 2001; Maul 1999) and Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1986–1987a; 1986–1987b; 1988a; 1988b; 1990), which by the reign of Tiglath-pileser I were governed by a man named Aššur-ketti-lešer, who referred to himself as “The King of the Land of Mari” (see section 2).

CHAPTER 6

THE REALM OF THE *ŠAR HANIGALBAT*: THE LOWER KHABUR

1 TELL SHEIKH HAMAD: *DUR KATLIMMU*

Tell Sheikh Hamad is located on the east bank of the Khabur River, around 70 km northwest of modern Deir-ez-Zor (Röllig 1984; Kühne, H. 1984; 2000; Kühne and Becker 1991; Pfälzner 1995; Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996). After 30 tablets were uncovered at the site in 1977, H. Kühne began excavations there that revealed a settlement of over 120 ha. Sheikh Hamad had been occupied since the Late Uruk period, but in the Middle Assyrian period the city began to expand until it reached its maximum size in the Late Assyrian period. In a large building (Building P) on the western slope of the tell, excavators found an archive of about 600 tablets, sealings, and bullae dated to the reigns of Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I, and which identify the site as ancient Dur Katlimmu (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996). During this period, it was the residence of the *sukkallu rabi'u*, or *Šar Hanigalbat*. Estimates based on modern land use and the size of the Middle Assyrian city put the population at about 2250 (Kühne, H. 1991:32).

1.1 BUILDING P

The large building housing the archive was designated as Building P, and it is interpreted by the excavators as the governor's palace. It was composed of four parallel series of rooms running southeast to northwest. The easternmost series of rooms is the most poorly preserved, much having eroded away from the slope of the tell. The westernmost series of rooms was set apart from the rest of the complex by a double wall.

Excavators divided the building into several levels which were grouped into three phases of use. The oldest phase (Phase I), dates from the reign of Adad-nirari I to the first half of Shalmaneser I. The building was damaged by an earthquake, repaired, and reused in Phase II. It is to this second use phase that the tablets from the archive dating to Tukulti-Ninurta I belong. The archive was found in Room A, in the debris from the first floor of the building. Traditional Middle Assyrian vessels, bones, and ash debris were found in association with the tablets, which may have been housed in clay jars according to standard Middle Assyrian practice, or on shelving along one wall. In the lowest basement level of Phase II, a wood floor covered the debris of the earlier Phase I floor. Ash, carbonized grain, and an absence of other finds suggest that the area was used for grain storage. Other rooms were interpreted as production and workshop areas.

The building was destroyed possibly by another earthquake, and repaired in Phase III. Floors were rebuilt, and the presence of official Middle Assyrian ceramics indicate that the building continued to function as the governor's palace until the second half of the 12th century, when it was burned a third time, and finally fell out of use.

1.2 THE ARCHIVE

The texts from the archive all have to do with the administration of the agricultural activities around Dur Katlimmu, and throughout Hanigalbat. Like those from other sites, the administrative texts include lists of rations for personnel, assignment of herds, inventories, loan documents, receipts, harvest reports, a small number of itineraries, and 32 letters and letter fragments. The letters provide a clear picture of the role of Dur Katlimmu within greater Hanigalbat, and of the role of the *sukkallu rabi'u* who resided there. They date to a 50 year period between Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I.

1.2.1 The *sukkallu rabi'u* at Dur Katlimmu Cancik-Kirschbaum (1996:19–25)

provides a concise outline of the family that held the highest position in Hanigalbat in the 12th century. The *sukkallu rabi'u* appears as the addressee of several letters, including a letter from Tukulti-Ninurta I. This official, Aššur-iddin, was the son of Qibi-Aššur, who had been the *sukkallu rabi'u* under Shalmaneser I (Figure 4). Aššur-iddin was also the father of Ili-ipadda, who was also the *sukkallu rabi'u* at the end of the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, and was the owner of the *dunnu* at Sabi Abyad. Ili-ipadda himself was the father of three sons who all appear as *limmus*. Thus, over four generations, a single family held very high posts in the Assyrian bureaucracy. It is surely no coincidence that this family was closely related to the royal family at Assur. Qibi-Aššur, the first *sukkallu rabi'u* was the grandson of Adad-nerari I. Shalmaneser I was his uncle, and Tukulti-Ninurta I was his cousin.

An additional official who figures prominently in the Dur Katlimmu letters is Sinmudammeq, who also appears in the correspondence found at Tell Chuera, and may have held an office at or near Waššukanni (Kühne, C. 1995). He seems to have held a high position, if not that of *bēl pāhete*, then perhaps an office of equivalent rank, as he is aware of the military and administrative environment in the northwest region of the kingdom.

Many letters document the insecure position of this portion of the kingdom, the area circumscribed by the Euphrates in the west and south, and Išuwa and the Kashiari mountains in the north. Conflicts occur at a number of cities that tend to involve people from Carchemish (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no. 2:4 DeZ 3493, p. 95; no. 6:30'-36' DeZ 3320, p. 118); Hurrians (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no. 8:54'-57' DeZ 3239, p. 131); the occasional Sutean (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no. 13:19'-24' DeZ 3311+3848/9, p. 163); and several unidentified enemies (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:no. 3:10–23 DeZ 3818, p.

107; no. 4 DeZ 3396+3837, p. 112–114; no. 7 DeZ 3835, p. 123–125; no. 18 DeZ 3387/1, p. 180–18). These problems on the northwest edge of the kingdom may be indications that the borders of Hanigalbat were never very securely held by Assyria. The loss of this territory by the end of the 12th century, therefore, was probably the inevitable culmination of this series of skirmishes throughout the 13th century. The Dur Katlimmu archive shows that *sukkallu rabi'u* was aware of these problems, and it was his duty to handle them. The fact the the position remained within the family of Qibi-Aššur well into the 12th century suggests that the *sukkallu rabi'u* had succeeded in countering these threats for some time. Although the turmoil in the capital after Tukulti-Ninurta's death certainly affected Hanigalbat, for some time after his death, the role of Dur Katlimmu as the capital of Hanigalbat remained unchanged.

1.2.2 Dur Katlimmu and the Early Middle Assyrian Kingdom The choice of Dur Katlimmu as the capital of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat is an odd one. It was not a city of any significance to the Mitanni kingdom. In fact, it was quite removed from the political center of Mitanni, which had been located in the Upper Khabur. Many of the Middle Assyrian settlements in Hanigalbat were also in the north, in the Upper Khabur region, or areas to the west up to the Balikh. Nor was the area around Dur Katlimmu ideal for cultivation, as it lay just below the 200mm isohyet, and could not rely on rainfall to produce sufficient crops (Kühne, H. 1991). It is therefore highly curious that this remote spot served as the base of operations for the *sukkallu rabi'u*, whose responsibility was to oversee the administration of all of Hanigalbat.

The decision to place the seat of the *sukkallu rabi'u* at Dur Katlimmu was possibly made in order to ensure the security of Assyria in Hanigalbat. Fear of Mitanni loyalists in the Upper Khabur and Balikh basin may have caused some reluctance on the part of

Shalmaneser I and the early *sukkallu rabi'us* to place the capital of Assyrian Hanigalbat in the north. Establishing the capital in a more secure, if not a more central location meant that the Assyrian claim to Hanigalbat could be maintained, even if the land in the heart of Hanigalbat was not securely held. The fact that both Adad-nerari I and Shalmaneser I were forced to put down Hittite-supported revolts by the remnants of Mitanni suggests that the situation of Assyrian Hanigalbat in the first part of the 13th century may not have been entirely stable. The site was also much closer to Assur than any of the sites in the northern regions of Hanigalbat, which meant that information could travel more quickly between the two capitals. The establishment of the governor's palace in the south of Hanigalbat may therefore have been based on strategic considerations.

2 THE LAND OF MARI

2.1 TELL TABAN: *ṬĀBĒTU*

The 11.5 ha site of Tell Taban is roughly 19 km south of Hassake. Taban was excavated between 1997 and 1999 by a Japanese team from the Institute for Cultural Studies of Ancient Iraq of Kokushikan University (Ohnuma, *et al.* 1999; Ohnuma, *et al.* 2000; Ohnuma and Numoto 2001; Maul 1992; 1999). Excavations on the northwest side of the tell yielded five levels of a Middle Assyrian structure built directly atop a Mitanni structure. In nearly all levels, inscribed bricks attribute the construction of the building to an Assyrian named Aššur-kettī-lēšer. In the earliest Middle Assyrian levels (levels 8 and 9) a massive mud-brick wall measuring between 2 and 8 m thick was incorporated into a building, the function of which is unclear.

What is known about the history and administrative function of Taban comes from the inscribed bricks found at the site itself, in addition to texts from Tell Bderi. Inscribed bricks begin to appear in level 8a, and based on these bricks, and a second building

inscription from Tell Bderi, Maul suggests that there would have been an important temple and palace at Taban (Ohnuma and Numoto 2001:10). The massive wall of levels 8 and 9 (“Huge Walls I and II”) may have been part of one of these monumental public buildings.

2.2 TELL BDERI: *DŪR AŠŠUR-KETTĪ-LĒŠER*

Tell Bderi (Dūr-Aššur-kettī-lēšer) was excavated between 1985 and 1990 by a German team from the Freie Universität Berlin led by Pfälzner as part of the Sheikh Hamad research project. The site lies 25 km south of Hassake, and occupies an area of 4.6 ha, the largest settlement in the Lower Khabur (Maul 1992:9; Pfälzner 1986–1987a; 1986–1987b; 1988a; 1988b; 1990). A large Mitanni settlement of the 15th and 14th centuries was uncovered in Levels 5-3. During the Mitanni period, Tell Bderi appears to have been a large, densely settled city, with large private houses and extensive circular storerooms. Remains from the Middle Assyrian period (Level 2) are much more scarce. The best source for this period comes from a deep cistern on the southern slope. Along with ceramic debris, the shaft contained texts that document the role of this region during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. The texts were written by Aššur-kettī-lēšer, who calls himself “King of the Land of Mari,” and named the city Dur-Aššur-kettī-lēšer. They detail the construction of a town wall and a palace at the city, of which he claims, “not one the former kings, my fathers, who held Tābetu and its surrounding countryside had ever taken it’s tell and built a wall around it” (Maul 1992:20, 3–5). The text also gives the lineage of Aššur-kettī-lēšer, who was the heir of two previous rulers, whom he also calls “King of the Land of Mari.”

2.3 12TH CENTURY ADMINISTRATION

It is clear that the position of the lower Khabur had changed dramatically over the period between Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I. The assumption of the title King

by Aššur-kettī-lēšer is unlikely to have been tolerated by the 13th century rulers of Assyria. Yet by the end of the 12th century, Aššur-kettī-lēšer was evidently an autonomous ruler of a substantial area, capable of mobilizing large labor forces to build his monuments. But to what degree can we trust Aššur-kettī-lēšer's own claim to autonomy? The situation in the Land of Mari in the 12th century might well be analogous to that of Tell Fakhariyah in the 10th century, when Hadad-yit'i refers to himself as King (*mlk*) in the Aramaic portion of his bilingual inscription but uses the term governor (*šākin māt*) in the Akkadian portion (Abou-Assaf, *et al.* 1982). There, the ruler of Sikanu addressed two distinct audiences: the local Aramaean population to which he is known as king, and his Assyrian rulers, to whom he is the subordinate governor of a territory under Assyrian control. Aššur-kettī-lēšer also projected an image of himself as king for the benefit of his local population. To Tiglath-pileser I, however, he acknowledged his subordinate status in the final lines of his inscription: "In the time of Tiglath-pileser, king of the Land of Aššur, his lord" (*ina tarše Tukulti-apil-Ešara šar māt Aššur bēlešu* [Maul 1992:15, 21:19]).

It is also unclear whether the status of Aššur-kettī-lēšer is an anomaly restricted to this region during this short time period, or whether it reflects a more fundamental shift that altered the nature of Assyrian control in Hanigalbat. Postgate (1985) discusses texts that list commodities and provinces under Assyrian control and gifts given by client rulers (marked by the *nisbe*: PN, GN-*iu*), and Assyrian governors (EN.NAM *ša* GN). By comparing the cities on these lists with similar lists from the 13th century, he concludes that "Tiglath-pileser has lost control of the lower Habur, the lands between the Habur and Euphrates to the west, perhaps the western corner of the Habur triangle (Tell Fakhariyah), the Diyarbakır plain, Arrapha and Arzuhina" (1985:100). The main point is that although

Assyria had lost direct control over the territories, it had not lost influence. His use of the term “client states” to define areas that were ruled by an individual described only as hailing from the capital city, in contrast to those ruled by an Assyrian governor (*bēl pāhete*), indicates that Assyria was still the dominant power throughout Hanigalbat (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2000). The inscriptions from Taban and Bderi actually suggest, therefore, that Assyria had not lost power in Hanigalbat over the course of the 12th century, but that its representatives had become more autonomous. Power was no longer held solely by the king and wielded by his governor at Dur Katlimmu; now it was in the hands of local rulers who rule with a degree of independence, but whose ultimate allegiance was to the king.

CHAPTER 7

MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES IN HANIGALBAT: THE CREATION OF ASSYRIA

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the administrative structure of the Middle Assyrian kingdom based on archives and royal inscriptions from both the Assyrian heartland and its western provinces. In the chapters that followed, I focused instead on the archaeological evidence of the Middle Assyrian presence in Hanigalbat. Taken together, the archaeological evidence enhances and revises several key points concerning the Middle Assyrian expansion into Hanigalbat. The occupational history of Middle Assyrian sites in Syro-Anatolia shows that the decline in Assyrian authority between the reigns of Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I was, in fact, a period of relative stability. Furthermore, the picture of 13th century Assyrian administration that the texts reveal provides only a static picture of what were instead very much dynamic and adaptive processes of occupation and administration of the western provinces. Assyrians responded in novel ways to different conditions within Hanigalbat at different times. This adaptiveness enabled Assyria to withstand internal and external pressures that threatened their control over Hanigalbat, and surely contributed to the relative stability of Assyrian rule throughout the 13th and 12th centuries.

1 ASSYRIAN ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE HEARTLAND OF HANIGALBAT

1.1 POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The excavations in Hanigalbat provide lens through which we can better understand the strategies by which Assyria expanded into and administered the former

territory of the Mitanni kingdom. The agricultural potential of Hanigalbat, especially the Khabur basin, was a significant factor behind Assyrian expansion. This point is clear from the agricultural intensification of Hanigalbat that began under the 13th century kings. The establishment of the *dunnu* agricultural system is one indication of the agricultural focus of Assyria. Aside from the *dunnu* system that the Middle Assyrian kings implemented, they also endeavored to change the hydrologic regime within Hanigalbat, and to this end canals were constructed along the lower Khabur (Kühne, H. 1990; Ergenzinger and Kühne 1991), and canal irrigation probably intensified the amount of cultivated land along the Balikh (Wiggerman 2000). These aspects of Middle Assyrian expansion are two early indications of the major hydrologic constructions that would change the cultivated landscape of Upper Mesopotamia in the first millennium (Bagg 2000; Ur 2005; Wilkinson, *et al.* 2005).

At least as crucial to Assyria's interests in the west as its economic motive was the political prestige that accompanied the occupation of Hanigalbat. The Khabur basin had represented the political core of Mitanni power. For that reason, when Aššur-uballit established Assyria's independence during the height of the Late Bronze Age internationalism, Assyria was very eager to join the "club of great powers." After a century of vassalage to Mitanni, Aššur-uballit's overtures to Egypt (EA 9, 15, 16) show that the occupation of the administrative heartland of Hanigalbat was a potential boon to the stature of Assyria in the international arena. However, the same territory was also the source of potential threats to Assyrian authority from competing previous Mitanni power centers. The Mitanni rebellions under Adad-nerari I and Shalmaneser I show that those threats needed to be taken very seriously.

In order to develop a strong power base, Assyria pursued diverse strategies in its occupation of Syria and Turkey. In doing so, they reorganized the administrative

landscape of Hanigalbat. Assyria did not simply take over the Mitanni administrative structure, changing the source, but not the locus of power in Hanigalbat. Nor did they replace all of the previous administrative centers with new Assyrian power centers. Instead, they pursued a hybrid policy. In some cases, previous Mitanni centers were abandoned or minimally rebuilt, while other Assyrian administrative centers were established at new sites or at previously insignificant Mitanni sites. In other cases, Mitanni power centers retained their administrative status while they were occupied by Assyrians.

Abandoning Mitanni centers in favor of new administrative capitals served to underscore the new source of power in the region. For example, Tell Brak (Oates, *et al.* 1997) and Tell Mohammad Diyab (Durand 1990; Sauvage 1997) had been important Mitanni political centers, but their administrative significance waned during the Middle Assyrian period. Although the sites were reoccupied, Middle Assyrian occupations were small, and they lacked the large public structures that had characterized the Mitanni period in these cities. In a similar way, other small Mitanni settlements like Tell Chuera, became important Middle Assyrian centers. Still other sites may have been deliberately established at a distance from previous Mitanni centers. Conspicuous among these new sites is Dur Katlimmu, which became the base of operations for the *sukkallu rabi'u*. The Assyrian strategy of reoccupying and repurposing of Mitanni administrative centers, while at the same time establishing new power centers elsewhere left potent reminders throughout Hanigalbat that a new and powerful authority was in place.

Operating in tandem with the Assyrian policy of cutting off Mitanni power centers and establishing new centers away from those sites, was a policy whereby some important Mitanni palatial or cultic sites were resettled and remained the seat of administrative districts. This was the case at Tell Hamidiya and Waššukanni. By retaining the function

of important Mitanni sites, Assyria cast itself as the inheritor of the old Mitanni authority. But by reshuffling other administrative centers within Hanigalbat, they would have both diminished the strength of remnant Mitanni power symbols and, by refocusing attention on new Assyrian power centers, highlighted the strength of the new Assyrian authority. Assyria thus became the natural successor to Mitanni power in Hanigalbat, and at the same time marked a clear break with previous traditions. The effect of the combined strategies would have been to eliminate any doubt among the local populations of Hanigalbat that Assyria was now firmly in charge. This shrewd awareness and manipulation of the political climate into which they entered beginning in the 13th century is a remarkable feature of Assyrian expansion. In Part II, I will explore further the likely effects of Assyrian administration on the native inhabitants of Hanigalbat.

1.2 CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

At Tell Fakhariyah, the persistence of Mitanni style glyptic and local ivories and seals indicates that at some levels of the Assyrian settlement hierarchy, Assyrians and locals were concentrated in the same small area. The finds from Fakhariyah, which following Güterbock (1958), I have interpreted as a *dunnu*, show that at such a site, Assyrians and Hanigalbateans were culturally integrated. If the administrative centers of Hanigalbat constituted culturally isolated Assyrian enclaves (Machinist 1982:19), the finds from Fakhariyah and the texts from other agricultural centers indicate that at other sites Assyrians and Hanigalbateans were in close contact. Prisoners of war and local villagers all coexisted with Assyrian elite, farmers, and army personnel. *Dunnus*, and probably also smaller villages around the *dunnus*, were thus the locus of a vibrant cultural interchange.

This type of integration may have been impossible to avoid in some cases, as locals made up the majority of the available labor force in the agriculture-intensive realm of

Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat. However, the cultural integration of that is characteristic of the Middle Assyrian period may also have been intentionally encouraged, at least to a certain degree. For example, at Tell Barri, Assyria deliberately preserved the cultural symbols of Mitanni (Pecorella, 1990a:58–59). Shalmaneser I’s reconstruction of the temple of the storm god and Tukulti-Ninurta II’s construction of a palace there in the 9th century show a measure of Assyrian integration and sensitivity to local cultures that was unusual for its time. The term “sensitivity” is perhaps out of place in the context of Assyrian expansion, but Shalmaneser I’s actions at Kahat are especially notable when juxtaposed against the standard Hittite practice of plundering the temples of their enemies and offering its gods and booty to their cult of the sun goddess of Arinna at Hatti (Bryce 1998:74, 82, 104). The aim of the Assyrian policy at Kahat must have been to garner the affection, and thereby the loyalty of the conquered population. In this sense, the Middle Assyrian policy foreshadows a strategy that would be used with great skill centuries later by Nabonidus and Cyrus. Both rulers cast themselves as rightful inheritors of kingship over conquered territories, and rebuilt local sanctuaries in conquered lands (Kuhrt 1995:600, 659). The intent and outcome of these policies in the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian cases were the diminishment of local resistance to domination.

2 THE 12TH CENTURY “DECLINE”

One of the clear conclusions of recent work on the settlement history of Hanigalbat is that the period between Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I was one of relative stability both within the heartland and in the provinces. The assumption that the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I initiated a decline in Assyria and Hanigalbat that lasted until the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (Harrak 1987:263–264) is based on the circumstances of the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I in a palace coup, the decrease in sources after 1208, and the

fact that once texts reappear around the time of Tiglath-pileser I, Aramaeans, who did not appear in the 13th century sources, are aggressively attempting to check Assyrian authority. There are indications that some amount of instability probably did follow upon the murder of Tukulti-Ninurta I, when four different kings ruled in only the following 27 years. That particular pattern fits well with Kaufman's (1988:233) model of the collapse of states, in which "the achievements of dramatically successful leaders were undone soon after they passed from the scene," both because those very achievements were the result of unique and personal charismatic qualities, and because potential successors inevitably clashed over their right to inherit the recently expanded kingdom. Tukulti-Ninurta I was just such a leader, whose long reign and achievements in Hanigalbat and Babylon were commemorated in an epic, and who, in many ways, became the archetypal Assyrian ruler whom Neo-Assyrian kings strove to emulate both in deed⁴² and in image.⁴³

However, the preceding chapters show, as I noted in chapter 2, that the 12th century decline of Assyrian power might have been less severe than traditionally posited by Machinist (1982), Harrak (1987), and Postgate (1992). The short period of uncertainty after Tukulti-Ninurta I apparently ended under Aššur-dan I (1179-1134), who ruled for 45 years, and Aššur-reša-iši (1132-1115), who ruled for a good 17 years before Tiglath-pileser I's own long reign.⁴⁴ The power that Aššur-reša-iši brought back to the throne of Assyria is also evident in the significant increase in the number of royal inscriptions

⁴²For example, as builders of new capital cities.

⁴³Compare, for example, the image of Tukulti-Ninurta on the pedestal from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta and images of Ashurnasirpal from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud.

⁴⁴The year 1133, in which Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur and Mutakkil-Nusku both ruled Assyria, might have been one in which there was a struggle for succession similar to that witnessed after the death of Tukulti Ninurta I. If so, Aššur-reša-iši was able to put an end to any potential decline into instability.

documenting construction activities in Assur and Nimrud: twenty two texts are attributed to Aššur-reša-iši compared with only nine texts from the seven previous kings.

The relative stability of the heartland throughout the 13th and 12th centuries mirrors the stability of Hanigalbat during the same period. Recent work has indicated that there was a great deal of continuity of settlement and culture in Hanigalbat for some time after the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (Kühne, H. 1995; Pfälzner 1997; Jakob 2003). There is increasing evidence for continued Middle Assyrian presence into the second half of the 12th century both at the palace in Dur Katlimmu and at Tell Fakhariyah. A brick inscription of Aššur-dan I at Tell Hamidiya (Deller 1990:330), and continued Assyrian interest in Kahat, further demonstrate the continuity of Assyrian presence in Hanigalbat following the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Therefore, it was not until the period after Tiglath-pileser I that the authority of the Middle Assyrian kingdom in its western territories began to decline, and its influence in the whole of greater Mesopotamia began to wane. We can therefore revise the traditional chronology of the rise and fall of the Middle Assyrian kingdom of Figure 3 so that it matches more closely Figure 12.

3 WHAT HAPPENED IN HANIGALBAT DURING THE 12TH CENTURY?

The strategies by which Assyria expanded into and occupied Hanigalbat were thus nuanced and cunning responses to the prevailing conditions within Syro-Anatolia. The expansion of Assyria into the provinces took into account local loyalties to Hurrian culture and Mitanni authority, and possible resentment of and resistance to Assyrian rule. Assyrians used the same approach over the course of the 12th century, as they responded to changing conditions within Hanigalbat. It was that awareness of local conditions, and an adaptability and flexibility in response to changes in those conditions that enabled the continued stability within Hanigalbat and the heartland. However, because textual

documentation is lacking, the events of the 12th century in the western provinces remain somewhat unclear. Yet, as the preceding chapters demonstrate, the archaeological record of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat shows that at least two significant changes to the dynamics of power in the provinces did take place between the reigns of Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I: (1) the western border of the kingdom shifted from the Balikh river in the 13th century to probably the western portion of the Khabur triangle by the end of the 12th century; and (2) the personal authority of the king in Hanigalbat appears to have waned over the course of the 12th century.

3.1 THE LOSS OF THE WESTERN BORDER

In the 13th century, the Balikh River valley had been an important agricultural zone for Assyria, as Wiggerman's (2000) analysis of the Sabi Abyad texts, and Lyon's (2000) survey results have shown (Chapter 3). But the texts from Sabi Abyad also demonstrate that the site also functioned as an important border outpost. The autonomy of tribes in the buffer zone between Assyria and the Hittite kingdom might have threatened the agricultural output of Sabi Abyad. To deal with the various threats that surrounded his *dunnu*, Ili-ipadda conducted a treaty with a tribe of Suteans. There are also references to Suteans acting as spies for Assyria. A reference to Suteans inhabiting the region of Sahlalu, possibly Tell Sahlan, also occurs in a Dur Katlimmu text (DeZ 3439) dated to Tukulti-Ninurta I (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:94 ff.). And T93-7:11-12 from Sabi Abyad refers to oil-pressers in the "*dunnu* of the [Sub]araeans" (Wiggerman 2000:192). Multiple textual references to the relationship between Sabi Abyad and the Suteans, the site's fortifications, and indications that prisoners were kept in the fortress (Akkermans 2006:205), all suggest that the position of the western border of Assyria was precarious indeed. The letters from the Dur Katlimmu archive depict a similar situation around Tell

Chuera, where military skirmishes with locals, and environmental threats to crops were a common occurrence.

Ultimately, Ili-ipadda's attempts to protect the border failed. The court intrigues surrounding Tukulti-Ninurta I's death and Ili-ipadda's own ambitions in Assur probably led to the neglect of Sabi Abyad and its neighbors on the Balikh, and their subsequent abandonment. Whatever happened along the western border of the kingdom, it is clear that the Assyrian presence there was reduced. Postgate (1985:100) notes that by the time of Tiglath-pileser I, Assyria had lost control of the lower Habur, the territory between the Habur and Euphrates, and even the western corner of the Habur triangle. The results of this loss must have been significant. Not only did these territories provide a substantial profit to Assur in the form of taxes, but the *dunnu* system was a very effective method of providing food for the Assyrian and local inhabitants of Hanigalbat and of provisioning the army (Wiggerman 2000:196). Those displaced populations west of the Khabur had to be reabsorbed into the eastern portions of Hanigalbat, and Assyria would have had to find new sources of produce to accommodate the changing demographics of Hanigalbat. That shift in the concentration of population within Hanigalbat may be reflected in the increase in the number of known provinces over the 12th century from seven to twenty-six between Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I (Postgate, J. N. 1985; Cancik-Kirschbaum 2000) (Figure 13). Cancik-Kirschbaum (1996:26) interprets the increased number of districts under Tiglath-pileser I simply as evidence that not all 13th century *pāhutus* are currently known. It may also be that the redistricting of Hanigalbat in the 12th century was intended to reallocate *bēl pāhetes* and equivalent officials in a way that was proportional to the changing population of Assyrian Hanigalbat.

Assyria appears to have responded to the loss of territory on the Balikh, at least in part, by refocusing its agricultural efforts north of the Tur Abdin. Despite the similarities

in the functions of Sabi Abyad and Giricano as *dunnus*, each site participated in a regional network that looked very different (see above, page 53). The Balikh in the 13th century was sparsely settled by a string of *dunnus*, garrisons, and villages. The northern edge of the kingdom along the Upper Tigris in the 12th century, by contrast, was made up of village sites, *dunnus*, and the large regional centers of Tušhan, Ta'idu, and Šinamu (Radner 2004:113–115). The inhabitants of Giricano and the other *dunnus* and small sites of the Upper Tigris could therefore retreat to the large urban centers when threatened. The position and security of the sites in the Upper Tigris, in addition to their proximity to the heartland enabled this region to make up for the losses of the western border. The combined production of the Upper and Lower Khabur regions, and the Upper Tigris valley, was probably more than sufficient to not only sustain the population of Hanigalbat, but also to make up for the decrease in taxes supplied to Assur following the loss of the westernmost territories. By refocusing its agricultural energies to the Upper Tigris, Assyria made this region critical to the survival of the kingdom.

The growing significance of the northern border of Hanigalbat was a direct response to changes that occurred elsewhere in the kingdom. The transfer of Hanigalbat's agricultural focus from the Balikh valley to the Upper Tigris region is one example of the flexible attitude that Assyria maintained toward the administration of the provinces. For the Middle Assyrian kings, agricultural expansion was the priority in Hanigalbat, not mere territorial expansion. The changing status of the Upper Tigris region in response to the loss of the Balikh was thus a direct response to that specific priority. Assyria was willing to accept the territorial loss if it meant that the kingdom did not suffer for it economically. It is certainly no coincidence that the eventual loss of the Upper Tigris region to Aramaeans during, or shortly after Aššur-bel-kala constituted such a paralyzing blow to

the whole kingdom. The loss of the economic advantage provided by the Upper Tigris occupations finally forced the full retreat of Assyria to its heartland. The Assyrian resourcefulness and ability to adapt to changes in the status quo thus had a great deal to do with the continued stability of the Middle Assyrian kingdom throughout the 12th century.

3.2 LOCALIZATION OF AUTHORITY IN HANIGALBAT

The second significant change in Hanigalbat during the 12th century is best illustrated by the curious position of Aššur-kettī-lēšer, the king of the “Land of Mari.” Inscriptions from the sites of Tell Taban and Tell Bderi suggest that Aššur-kettī-lēšer ruled a large, semi-autonomous region, within Assyrian Hanigalbat, over which he and his predecessors had ruled as “kings.” The assumption of the title of King by Aššur-kettī-lēšer and his ancestors is striking, in view of the stringent bureaucratic hierarchy that defined the 13th century Middle Assyrian administration. How he was able to assert his autonomy over not just one city, but over a large territory centered on a capital with monumental public buildings is unclear, but he does acknowledge his subordinate status with respect to Assyria in the final lines of his inscription, which read, “In the time of Tiglath-pileser, king of the Land of Aššur, his lord” (*ina tarše Tukulti-apil-Ešara šar māt Aššur bēlešu* [Maul 1992:15, 21:19]). If indeed Aššur-kettī-lēšer had pursued a tactic similar to the one that Hadad-yit’i had pursued later at Fakhariyah, his assumption of the title of king may not have been recognized by Assyria, even if the population around Bderi saw him as such (see above, page 91).

Aššur-kettī-lēšer was only one of a line of “kings” of the region, and it may be that the initial administrators of Tābetu were *bēl pāhetes*. Later, one of the Assyrian officials there adopted the title, “King of Tābetu” (*šarri* ^{KUR}*Ta-ba-ta-ya-e* [Donbaz 1976:A

1736:2, p.18]), at least by the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta-Aššur (1133). Maul's (1992) dating of the line of rulers of Tābetu also suggests that this change may have taken place during the short unsettled period after the death of Aššur-dan I, which would have left administrators in Hanigalbat somewhat freer to strengthen their own claim to the territories over which they governed. If events in this region are indeed representative of the whole of Hanigalbat, then a more dynamic picture of the 12th century administration emerges. During the first part of the 12th century, following the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I, the administration of the provinces in Hanigalbat remained unchanged, with *bēl pāhetes* conducting the affairs of state in the name of the Assyrian king. During the second half of the 12th century, after the reign of Aššur-dan I, the situation altered slightly. The governors of the Assyrian provinces of Hanigalbat began to rule their territory with more autonomy, as though they were vassal states. Despite the fact that they may have had more local authority, ultimately they remained loyal and compliant to the will of Assyria. Whether or not Assyria had lost direct control over its territories, the inscriptions from Taban and Bderi actually suggest that it had not lost influence there.

4 APPROACHING EMPIRE: THE FORMATION OF AN ASSYRIAN IDENTITY

According to Machinist (2005:294), it is at the intersection of politics, economics, and culture that the formation of a people's unique self-identity lies:

The problem . . . is not so much to decide what is most important or primary as the agent of historical maintenance or change—politics, economy, military actions, culture, etc. It is, rather, to recognize that these elements are inevitably interwoven, and so to appreciate the complexity of the mix and how it works. Imperialism, for example, whether among the Assyrians of the Middle or Neo-Assyrian periods BC or among the British of the nineteenth century AD, seems never to have been a matter simply of naked political and economic power; it has also involved the question of self-definition: the need of the empire to find, understand, and justify a place for itself, in time and space, in the intersecting worlds of humanity, nature, and the divine. In this process, culture plays a dual role: as literature, art, and the like, it provides the pre-eminent means of formulating and promulgating imperial self-definition; but it is also part of the definition itself because one of the pre-eminent roles of the empire is to be the

possessor of culture—or, better, Culture—the one which owns and defines . . . the essential means of communication and the traditions by which they communicate.

During the Middle Assyrian period, at the same time that Assyria was exporting its culture to Hanigalbat, it was also defining that culture by the very act of inventing an administrative policy in the provinces. Thus, the Middle Assyrian ivories, glyptic, texts, reliefs, etc. are one element of its culture. We have already seen that many of these tangible cultural traits continue into the Neo-Assyrian period (see above, pages 32–33). In that sense, these material aspects of culture are as much “Assyrian” as they are “Middle Assyrian.” But non-tangible aspects of culture—imperial policy, economy, royal ideology, etc.—are forged during the Middle Assyrian period while and precisely because the kingdom is bringing other aspects of culture abroad. The Middle Assyrian kings were forced to evaluate the way that they would interact with conquered populations. Those interactions are as much a reflection of Assyrian culture as the material outcome of those interactions. The act of bringing Assyrian culture to Hanigalbat was itself part of the definition of Assyrian culture.

The intangible aspects of Assyrian culture that become evident beginning in the Middle Assyrian period, mark the beginning of a multi-generational dialog that continued to define Assyrian culture, and indeed, Assyrian self-identity. Most relevant in the context of provincial administration is the place of Hanigalbat in Assyrian conceptual geography. Despite the “static and flexible” nature of the Assyrian border (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2000:6), from the moment Adad-nerari I began to occupy the former territory of Mitanni, those regions of north Syria and southeast Anatolia became forever identified with the “Land of Assyria.” After the Assyrian withdrawal from Hanigalbat, attempts to regain the territory that was rightfully Assyrian began as early as the middle of the 10th century (Liverani 2004). Even Tiglath-pileser I’s pursuit of the Ahlamu-Aramaeans across the

Euphrates can be seen not as an attempt to reclaim lost territory, but to reassert Assyrian authority within its own territory.

In the same manner, when Aššur-dan II (934-912) reclaimed Assyrian lands, he deliberately pointed to Assyria's inherent claim to that land by repopulating it with those who had previously occupied it:

I brought back the exhausted [people] of Assyria [who] had abandoned [their cities (and) houses in the face of] want, hunger, (and) famine (and) [had gone up] to other lands. [I settled] them in cities (and) houses [which were suitable] (and) they dwelt in peace. I constructed [palaces in] the (various) districts of my land (and thereby) [piled up] more grain than ever before. I hitched up [*numerous*] teams of horses [. . . for the forces of] Assyria. (*RIMA* 2:A.0.98.1 60–67, p. 134–135)

The continued resettlement of Assyrian territory continued under Adad-nirari II (911-891), Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884), and Ashurnasirpal II (883-859). After Ashurnasirpal II renovated Tušhan (Ziyaret Tepe), he “brought back the enfeebled Assyrians who, because of hunger (and) famine, had gone up to other lands” (*RIMA* 2:A.0.101.1 ii:7–8, p. 202). Shalmaneser III's (858-824) campaigns lay outside the traditional borders of Assyria, marking a break with previous policy. That break is emphasized by the abandonment of the “itinerary” genre that previous kings had employed to record their campaigns (Liverani 2004:214–215).

Another aspect of Assyrian culture that was forged in the Middle Assyrian period is recently becoming very clear. Analysis of Neo-Assyrian texts (Bagg 2000), reliefs (Winter 2003), and satellite images showing traces of ancient canals (Ur 2005) demonstrates that Neo-Assyrian canals were constructed not merely for the lavish gardens of the Assyrian capitals, but were practical means of agricultural intensification (Wilkinson, *et al.* 2005:27). The expanded cultivation that those canals afforded also created a new agricultural landscape in Upper Mesopotamia that was modeled on the landscape of Babylonia, and which was laden with symbolic meaning. It is now clear that

the concern with irrigation in the first millennium in fact began in the late second millennium, when Assyria's interest in the agricultural colonization of Hanigalbat is evident in a network of agriculturally-oriented *dunnus*, river irrigation along the Balikh, and canal construction along the lower Khabur. The canal building and the transformation of the landscape through irrigation that was central to the royal ideology of Neo-Assyrian kings thus had its origins in the Middle Assyrian period.

To this economic correlate of Assyrian culture, can be added the ideology of administration that accounts for the sentiments of local populations and an ability to respond and adapt to social and political changes within conquered territories. In the Neo-Assyrian period this characteristic is clearest in Tiglath-pileser III's reorganization of the provincial system into provinces and client states, which facilitated the administration of the empire over a vast geographic region. In the Middle Assyrian period, the same Assyrian characteristic reveals itself in a nuanced settlement policy that accounted for local attachment to previous power structures, cultic practice, and material culture. Furthermore, Assyria's adaptive responses to fluctuations in the political and social landscape over time and space, such as the altered western border of the kingdom and the growing autonomy of provincial governors, are measures of a flexibility and adaptability that seem also to be characteristic of the Neo-Assyrian period. In the first millennium, similar qualities of administrative flexibility have been noted in reference to Neo-Assyrian approaches to the administration of the northern periphery (Parker 2001).

Nevling Porter's (2000) study of two similar stela set up by Esarhaddon in two provinces of the empire also shows that a similar flexibility accompanied the reproduction of Neo-Assyrian propaganda in its provinces. At Til Barsip, a highly Assyrianized administrative center, the stela showed that Assyria's western subjects were rewarded for

their loyalty. At Sam'al a more recently annexed and politically independent city, the stela emphasized the punishment meted out for disloyalty and rebellion. In each case the propaganda was finely tuned for a specific audience. This awareness of and tailored response to local cultures and attitudes seems to be an Assyrian characteristic that developed in the Middle Assyrian period.⁴⁵

Finally, the cultural integration that is best illustrated by the finds from Tell Fakhariyah also finds clear correlates in the Neo-Assyrian period. The effects of Assyrian artistic influence on the monuments of Neo-Hittite and Aramaean states are well-known. Also clear is the significant “Aramaization” that took place within Assyria proper (Tadmor 1982). The cross cultural exchanges that took place within greater Assyria were in part a result of the extensive movements of populations around Assyrian territories. Deportations of locals to the Assyrian heartland, movements of Assyrians to the provinces, and the resettlement of peripheral populations to new locations in the kingdom were important means of minimizing potential resistance to Assyrian authority. At the same time, the policy meant that diverse communities came into close contact where they might not have otherwise met. In the Late Bronze Age, the interactions of several cultural groups led to the growth of an “international style” of luxury goods (Feldman 2002). In the Middle Assyrian period, when similar types of interactions took place, Assyria explicitly rejected the international style (Feldman 2006), and the result was the emulation of expressly Assyrian styles outside of the heartland and the adoption of Aramaic as the *lingua franca* of the Empire.

⁴⁵Although beyond the scope of the current argument, a case might be made for the presence of a similar trait among Assyrians residing at the Old Assyrian trading colonies of Anatolia in the Middle Bronze Age. If so, the ability to easily integrate and adapt to conditions in foreign locations would mark a long-lasting cultural trait that was ingrained very early in the Assyrian identity.

Returning to Machinist's description of the simultaneous roles that culture plays as both the expression and self-definition of a people, it is clear that in the Middle Assyrian period, the expression and exportation of Assyrian culture *forced* Assyria to define its culture. An adaptive and flexible administrative strategy is as much an aspect of culture as artistic style is, but without the exportation of Assyrian artistic styles to Hanigalbat, the distinctive imperial ideology of Assyria would have no bearing on the cultures who adopted Assyrian style. The Middle Assyrian experience in Hanigalbat was a bubbling cauldron, in which economy, politics, military, artistic styles, and ideology blended and intertwined to become the recipe for Assyrian identity and cultural development. Over the course of the late second and early first millennium, as the dynamics of power in Mesopotamia shifted, this identity matured into the classic Assyrian imperial culture. But it was the expansion into and administration of Hanigalbat that shaped Assyrian culture in numerous and lasting ways. The uniquely Assyrian characteristics that were engendered as a result of that process played a crucial role in Assyrian dominance and resilience in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.

PART II

PASTORAL NOMADISM IN HANIGALBAT AND THE SETTLEMENT OF
ARAMAEANS

CHAPTER 8

PASTORAL NOMADS IN THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN KINGDOM

1 INTRODUCTION

In Part I, I noted that the Assyrian approach to the administration of their western provinces encompassed various responses to the local inhabitants of those provinces. A great number of these inhabitants were rural Hurrians who had formerly been citizens of the Mitanni kingdom. In many cases, those populations were deported to the Assyrian heartland, or moved to other parts of the expanded Assyrian kingdom. Another large portion of the local inhabitants of Hanigalbat were pastoral nomadic tribes, some of whom appear in the Middle Assyrian textual record. Since the Mari period, when Amorite tribes occupied positions of power in the regional kingdoms of Syria, tribes of mobile pastoralists continued to interact in a variety of ways with rural villagers and state authorities. Beginning in the late 12th century, a particular group, or perhaps a coalition of those tribes is referred to as Aramaeans. Their resistance to the authority of Tiglath-pileser I posed a challenge to the stability of the Assyrian kingdom. By the first millennium, after the withdrawal of Assyria from Hanigalbat and the Dark Age that followed, Aramaeans had formed strong sedentary dynasties that opposed the return of Assyria in its western territories.

2 ARAMAEAN ORIGINS

The exact nature of the Aramaean rise to power in north Mesopotamia and the Levant is one of the great question marks of Near Eastern archaeology. This problem has

as much to do with the lack of written sources documenting this transition as it does with the fact that archaeologists have been unable to identify a material culture that is unique to Aramaeans. In Chapter 4, I noted that in the Upper Tigris region, the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age is marked by a change in material terms from the standard Middle Assyrian ceramic repertoire to groovy pottery. I also noted that this change is probably unrelated to the political transition from Assyrian control to Aramaean control in that region. Although the difficulty of identifying Aramaean material culture is most acute for the Late Bronze Age, it is also a problem in later periods, when Aramaean monuments tend to blend elements of Neo-Hittite, Phoenician, and Assyrian styles. Sader (1987:286) has suggested, in fact, that “Aramaean culture” in the Neo-Assyrian period can be characterized precisely by this integration of the artistic principles of neighboring cultures. Thus, elements of Neo-Hittite architecture appear alongside reliefs depicting individuals with Phoenician facial attributes and Neo-Assyrian dress at Aramaean sites such as Tell Halaf, Zincirli, Sakçegözü, and Tell Fakhariyah.

Neither these groups of characteristics, nor any native textual records are in evidence until at least the 10th century, when Tell Halaf (Guzana), for example, begins to display reliefs that incorporate these “Aramaic” elements (see below Section 2.4.1 for the dating of the Kapara reliefs). Zincirli (ancient Sam’al) must also have been occupied by Aramaeans in the 10th century, as the earliest documentary evidence from the site was written by Kilamuwa around 830, and he was at least the fifth ruler of the city:

I am Kilamuwa, the son of Hayya. Gabbar ruled over Y[’]dy, but he achieved nothing. BNH also (ruled over Y[’]dy), but he achieved nothing. And then my father Hayya, but he achieved nothing. And then my brother Sa’il, but he achieved nothing. (COS 2.30:ll. 1-4a)

Despite the absence of Late Bronze Age Aramaeans from the archaeological record, we are left with tantalizing written clues from Assyria regarding the significant role

that they played in the withdrawal of the Middle Assyrian kingdom from their western provinces. It is not until the reign of Tiglath-pileser I that the term “Aramaeans” appears in the Middle Assyrian annals describing the campaigns of his fourth year:

With the support of the god Aššur, my lord, I took my chariots and warriors (and) set off for the desert. I marched against the *Ahlamu*-Aramaeans, enemies of the god Aššur, my lord. I plundered from the edge of the land Suhu to the city Carchemish of the land Hatti in a single day. I massacred them (and) carried back their booty, possessions, and goods without number. The rest of their troops, who had fled from the weapons of the god Aššur, my lord, crossed the Euphrates. I crossed the Euphrates after them on rafts (made of inflated) goatskin. I conquered six of their cities at the foot of Mount Bešri, burnt, razed, and destroyed (them, and) brought their booty, possessions, and goods to my city Aššur. (*RIMA* 2:A.0.87.1 v 44–63, p. 23)

In this passage, Tiglath-pileser I marries the new term Aramaean with another term that describes a pastoral nomadic population known much earlier, the Ahlamu. Although the term Ahlamu appears both as a gentilic and as a personal name element as early as the Old Babylonian period (Moscati 1959; Zadok 1991; Heimel 2003:28), the exact relationship between Ahlamu and Aramaeans is a point of contention. After a broad review of the evidence for pastoral nomadism in Late Bronze Age Syria, I will return to the question of the relationship between Ahlamu and Aramaeans.

2.1 PASTORAL NOMADIC PEOPLES OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE—EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXTS

The most general designations of the pastoral nomadic populations of Syria in the Late Bronze Age are Ahlamu, Sutu, and only later, Aramaeans. Isolated references to subgroups of these peoples do appear, such as the Yaurian Sutean from a text found at Tell al-Rimah (Saggs 1968:168, TR 2059), but these instances are too rare to have been considered in detail (Postgate, J. N. 1981:54). Sutu appear in the Mari documentation, where the term refers to a group of nomadic tribes active in the steppe west of the Middle Euphrates (Lipiński 2000:38). By the Middle Assyrian period, they are linked to the

Ahlamu as enemies of Assyria by Adad-nerari I, who calls himself “conqueror of the land Katmuhu and its entire allies, the hordes of Ahlamu, Sutu, Iūru, together with their lands, extender of the borders and boundaries” (*RIMA* 1:132: A.0.76.1, 18–21). Lipiński (2000:39) interprets this passage as increasing the specificity of the group being referred to. Thus, only one specific tribe of Sutu is meant, the Iūri, and the term Ahlamu is “a general designation of these nomadic populations.” But the use of the phrase “hordes of Ahlamu [*gu-un-nu ah-la-mi-i*], Sutu, Iūri, together with their lands” suggests, rather, that Adad-nerari considered this to have been a victory over multiple tribes of semi-nomadic groups attached to particular territories near or within Katmuhu, west of the Tigris (Postgate, J. N. 1980).

Later, Suteans appear to work closely with Assyrian officials in the area of the western Khabur and Balikh. The correspondence from Dur Katlimmu, Tell Chuera, and Sabi Abyad all indicate that Suteans acted as agents or spies for Assyria on several occasions (see Chapter 3), although periodic conflicts between Assyria and Suteans did occur (Cancik-Kirschbaum 13:19’-24’ p.163 [DeZ3311+3848/9]). The Middle Assyrian letters suggest to Cancik-Kirschbaum that the relationship between the Suteans and Assyrians was, for the most part, symbiotic. This is especially clear in one text from Dur Katlimmu, an administrative ration list, in which grain is given to Suteans at the behest of the *sukkallu rabi’u*, Aššur-iddin (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:40, DeZ 2500).

Ahlamu, by contrast, had been making trouble for the Middle Assyrian kingdom for quite some time before they are mentioned by Tiglath-pileser I. An Amarna letter describes a group of Ahlamu detaining an Egyptian messenger to Aššur-uballit I, and Ahlamu joined a coalition of Hittites and Mitanni against Assyria in the 14th and 13th centuries. Later in the Middle Assyrian period, the Ahlamu continued to be allied with

Hittites or Mitanni against Assyria (e.g., *RIMA* 1:A.0.77.1, 73–75, p. 184). Thus, by the time they appear in the Tiglath-pileser I inscriptions, Ahlamu and Assyria had already had a long history of antagonism.

The difference in the relationship of Suteans and Ahlamu with Assyria may be the reason that when Aramaeans began to resist Assyrian control under Tiglath-pileser I, they were associated with the Ahlamu, a historically hostile group with a similar socio-economic structure. Only a few years after Tiglath-pileser I, Aššur-bel-kala mentions a large number of campaigns directed against the Aramaeans. These campaigns are recorded primarily in the Broken Obelisk, but also the few other texts from his reign. Yet he also mentions Sutu, Ahlamu, and Aramaeans individually in a single passage, perhaps implying that Assyrians still viewed the three as distinct tribal groups. But the passage is not well preserved, and he may have used Aramaean as a general term describing a type of socio-economic group embodied by the specific Sutu and Ahlamu tribes:

By the command of the gods Aššur (and) Adad, [the great gods, my lords, . . . in pursuit of] the Aramaeans, which [*twice*] in one year [*I crossed the Euphrates*]. The Sutu, Naa[. . .] who [live] at the foot of Mount Lebanon [. . . in rafts] (made of inflated) goatskins [I crossed the Euphrates. I conquered the city . . . which (is) (*on the opposite bank of [the Euphrates]*), on the River Saggurru. At that time, the region of [the Ahlamu which . . .] numerous [. . .]. (*RIMA* 2:A.0.89.9 3'-10', p. 107; see also *RIMA* 2:A.0.89.6 6'-15', p. 98)

Despite the clear resemblance with which the Assyrians saw the Sutu, Ahlamu, and Aramaeans, the specific historical trajectory of each population, and the ultimate growth of sedentary Aramaean dynasties remains unclear.

2.2 AHLAMU, ARAMAEANS, AND AHLAMU-ARAMAEANS

In spite of the problems that the texts present for understanding the association between the pastoral nomadic groups of Late Bronze Age Mesopotamia, there has been a great deal of speculation regarding this topic on the part of Assyriologists. Much of this

speculation centers on the genetic relationship between Ahlamu and Aramaeans. Moscati (1959) saw no historical connection between the two groups. For him, the Ahlamu were “independent, in origin and in nature, of the Aramaeans, who can be neither identified with them nor regarded as forming part of them” (Moscati 1959:307). Brinkman (1968:277 n.1799) differs on this point and, acknowledging a lack of conclusive evidence, notes that the use of Ahlamu to refer to Aramaeans does suggest “strong historical ties between the two.” And, still careful to avoid making an explicit link between earlier Ahlamu and later Aramaeans, Brinkman notes with interest that they both occupied the same territory along the Middle and Upper Euphrates.

Zadok’s (1991) review of the Ahlamu in Late Bronze Age sources is an important contribution to the study of the emergence of Aramaeans, during the period that he refers to as “Aramaean pre-history.” Zadok (1991:105) notes that at least some elements of the Ahlamu and Sutu were the ancestors of the Aramaeans, and that these “were identical with certain—if not all—the semi-nomadic segments of the Amorites.” Thus Zadok makes a clear genetic link from a segment of the Amorite tribes to Aramaeans.

According to Zadok (1991:111), the collapse of Mitanni “opened a period of continuous, and in certain times, fairly intensive struggle between the Assyrians and the West Semitic nomads.” During this period, Zadok paints a picture of the Syrian steppe both east and west of the Euphrates as a region in which West Semitic nomadic groups roamed freely unless checked by an urban authority. Thus, while conceding that no evidence exists concerning the amount of control that Mitanni and Assyria held over the nomads, he maintains that the kingdom of Hanigalbat

practically controlled most of the vast territory where the West Semitic semi-nomads were apt to concentrate, viz., the steppes on the edge of the Syrian Desert, both east and west of the Euphrates. Therefore, the Hurrian rulers fulfilled a prerequisite for having an effective control on the nomads’ movements. Assyria, on the other hand, did not control the territory west of the Euphrates before the

second half of the eighth century, i.e., half a millennium after gaining hegemony in Upper Mesopotamia. These unstable conditions resulted not only in the abandonment of settlements in the Jezireh, but also in (semi-)nomadization of certain segments of the population. Because of deportations of Hurrians, West Semitic nomads became predominant inhabitants of the western Jezireh who were, for the most part, ethno-linguistically undifferentiated (Zadok 1991:111–112).

Thus, it fell to urban elite to “control” nomadic populations, and a lack of control is equated with “unstable conditions,” the result of which was nomadization. Zadok’s view of nomad-sedentary relations and transitions between nomadic and sedentary lifestyles stems from an outdated model of sedentary civilizations as the driving force behind nomadization, sedentarization, and regional shifts in the pastoral and agricultural sectors. Recent work in the anthropology of pastoral nomadism, discussed below, provides many more constructive models with which to evaluate the complex relationships between pastoral nomads and the sedentary elite in antiquity.

Lipiński’s (2000) view of Ahlamu and Aramaeans is similar to Zadok’s in that he is primarily interested in their nomadic quality rather than in any other cultural or ethnic attributes. He understands the term Ahlamu not as the name of a particular linguistic or ethnic group, but as deriving from the West Semitic root *gʾlm*, meaning “lad, boy” (Lipiński 2000:31–38). Ahlamu, is therefore a non-Akkadian word meaning “band of lads,” and refers to raiding parties that plundered the supplies of sedentary villages. Aramaeans would have become identified with this type of subversive activity, and therefore identified with the Ahlamu by Tiglath-pileser I. Whether or not Lipiński is correct about the linguistic derivation of the term Ahlamu, how exactly he makes the cognitive leap from “lad, boy” to “raider” is not at all clear. Like Zadok, Lipiński appears to fall prey to outmoded views of nomads as violent pillagers whose primary social distinction was their tendency to wreak havoc on sedentary society.

Lipiński further argues that Aramaeans were present in Syria in the 13th century, in the “hill countries and semi-arid regions on the fringes of the Late Bronze states.”

Following the collapse of Mitanni, they began to occupy the Jazira, and “became the new foes of the Assyrians.” (Lipiński 2000:49). Again, like Zadok, Lipiński sees the shifts in nomadic pastoralism as resulting primarily from changes in the regional urban power dynamics. The ultimate outcome of such demographic shifts is conflict between the ruling power and the sedentarizing pastoralists. Thus, by the 11th century, the Aramaeans necessarily became “a definable force threatening the political establishment of the Near East” (Lipiński 2000:49).

Recently, Heimpel (2003) has entered the debate on Aramaean origins, which he equates with the Sutu, rather than Ahlamu. Heimpel’s connection between Aramaeans and Sutu is based primarily on his suggestion that the Sutean language (visible in a small percentage of non-Akkadian and non-Amorite Sutean names) is actually Aramaean (Heimpel 2003:27–28). Proceeding from a tenuous equation of language with ethnicity (Heimpel 2003:14), he hypothesizes that Aramaeans gradually transitioned from pastoralism in arid environments to settled agriculture through originally meager contacts with agriculturalists. As settlement increased, they entered into the regional power dynamics of the 12th century.

A major failing of existing studies on the rise of the Aramaeans that are based in textual or linguistic evidence is that they fail to adequately explain how or why Aramaeans decided to, or were even able to settle at all. Indeed, Aramaean origins are so steeped in obscurity because of the very dearth of textual data composed by Aramaeans themselves. We are left only with scant references in Assyrian sources from the early period of Aramaean settlement, and the Aramaean material culture from 9th and 8th century contexts, when Aramaeans were already living under their own centralized urban rule. Faced with these interpretive obstacles, many scholars are left with the unsatisfactory

claim that sometime in the Late Bronze Age or early Iron Age, pastoral nomadic groups began to move into the settled regions from the margins of the steppe, contributed to the decline of the ruling sedentary societies, and ultimately settled in the areas left behind when those societies retreated. But it remains unclear why Aramaeans began to pursue increased agricultural enterprises at the expense of maintaining the pastoral sector. Nor is it clear whether Aramaean sedentarization was the result of the decline of Assyria in the Late Bronze Age, or indeed part of the cause of the Middle Assyrian decline.

2.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MODELS OF ARAMAEAN SETTLEMENT

2.3.1 Early Research Whereas the above studies approach the question of Aramaean origins primarily from linguistic and textual data, other studies have tried to penetrate beyond the hazy suggestions of those limited sources to achieve a more nuanced model of Aramaean settlement. These models take the nomadic aspect of early Aramaean society as the starting point for addressing questions of settlement and state-formation. In doing so, they attempt to integrate the rich literature concerning the anthropology of pastoral nomadism with the historical accounts of the Late Bronze Age semi-nomads, and the archaeology of northern Mesopotamia. The earliest accounts of Aramaean nomadism, which saw nomads as agents of destruction, jealous of the riches and benefits of sedentary lifestyle (e.g., Kupper 1957), used the vocabulary of an early 20th century anthropological paradigm that held a fundamental bias against nomads. These biased early theories of ancient nomadism took their cue from the long history of misunderstood and romanticized views of nomadism, which had roots in some of the earliest references to nomadic peoples in texts composed by sedentary cultures. For example, the “Curse of Agade,” an “admonitory history,” (Jacobsen 1987:359), the earliest copies of which date to the Ur III period, describes the devastation of that city at the hands of the Gutians, a mobile people

from the mountains, “a people who know no inhibitions, with human instincts, but canine intelligence, and monkeys’ features” (Cooper 1983:57). The description of nomads is even less favorable in the “Marriage of Martu,” a myth describing the search for a wife for Martu, the deification of the Amorites:

Their hands are destructive and their features are those of monkeys; he is one who eats what Nanna forbids and does not show reverence. They never stop roaming about, they are an abomination to the gods' dwellings. Their ideas are confused; they cause only disturbance. He is clothed in sack-leather, lives in a tent, exposed to wind and rain, and cannot properly recite prayers. He lives in the mountains and ignores the places of gods, digs up truffles in the foothills, does not know how to bend the knee, and eats raw flesh. He has no house during his life, and when he dies he will not be carried to a burial-place. (Translation Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature [ETCSL text 1.7.1: ll. 127-138)

Not all ancient depictions of nomadic life are negative, however. Reiner (1967:118) found that, alongside ancient imagery of barbarism among nomads, ran a romantic current which envied the “noble nomad,” free from the constraints of city life.

It is hardly a surprise then, that Kupper (1957; 1959) and Dossin (1959) held that waves of nomadic Semites emerged periodically from the desert to overwhelm and subdue the civilized communities that flourished along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. Kupper (1957:ix) was convinced that “une conflit permanent” existed between sedentary and nomadic societies. Thus, according to early theories, nomadic invasions from the Syrian desert in the Middle Bronze Age resulted in the destruction of the settled kingdom of the Ur III dynasty, and allowed Amorite tribesmen to take the thrones of Babylon, Mari, Larsa, Kish, and other city-states. In a similar fashion, centuries later, barbaric Aramaean nomads entered Syria and Turkey from the desert and upset the local peaceful agrarian populations.

The text-based nature of research continued to engender negative attitudes toward Aramaeans on the part of modern scholars. Thus, for example, Roux (1992 [1969]:275)

described Aramaeans as “originally uncouth bedouins “who “contributed nothing to the civilizations of the Near East.” Similarly, Hawkins (1982:375) described the development of Aramaean kingdoms as the result of “a new and intrusive population group” whose “penetration of Syria . . . must have exerted pressure on the already settled Anatolian peoples.” Large segments of Aramaean tribes have also been described as “hostile and threatening outsiders, who attempted again and again to prey upon the sedentary population and their semi-nomadic partners,” and “unruly tribes” who existed “on the fringes of established society, and at odds with princes and governors” (Dion 1995:8–9). The lack of textual or archaeological data touching on Late Bronze Age nomads only contributed to the prevailing academic bias against Aramaean kingdoms. Nor was there any attempt to explore the reasons behind nomadic “penetration” or to understand the processes by which nomads and sedentary people of the late second millennium BC interacted with one another on a social and economic level.

2.3.2 Current Research Only in the 1970’s did scholarship on ancient Mesopotamian nomadism begin to take a different approach. This change followed upon a change that had taken place in the anthropology of pastoral nomadism beginning in the 1960’s. Barth’s (1961) ground-breaking study of the Basseri tribe of the Khamseh confederacy in southern Iran showed that the nomadic tribe maintained vital political and economic links to sedentary communities, both on the level of local villages and with the urban authorities in Tehran. Political interactions were primarily mediated by tribal chiefs, whereas economic exchanges took place between individual tribe members and sedentary villagers. It is this economic aspect of the tribe that Barth (1961:97) found to be “of fundamental importance to its whole pattern of subsistence.” The Basseri’s economic interactions with villagers took the form of either cash transactions for goods or services, or credit-based

exchanges. Thus, in the case of the Basseri, the symbiosis of pastoralist and villager is clear: each group depends upon the other to acquire essential meat and grain nutrients.

In a series of articles, Rowton (1967; 1973a; 1973b; 1976a; 1976b; 1977) applied the same notions of nomad-sedentary symbiosis to his analysis of nomads in the Mari documents. He used the terms “enclosed nomadism” and “dimorphic chiefdom” to describe a type of social organization “which represents a curious blend of city-state, tribe, and nomadism” (Rowton 1973b:201). Tribes migrated within an area controlled by a central urban authority, but were not subject to that authority. The tribes themselves had some sedentary and some mobile members who interacted with the various levels of sedentary society.

Rowton’s work on the Mari nomads was rigorously expanded upon in the following years, in the contexts of both the Amorites of Mari (Liverani 1973; Matthews, V. H. 1978) and Terqa (Buccellati 1988; 1990a), and the origins of specialized pastoral nomadism (Adams 1974; Lees and Bates 1974; Sherratt 1981; Gilbert 1983; Zarins 1990). The outcome of this research was a more integrated view of the processes of nomadic and sedentary adaptations in the ancient world (Schwartz, G. 1995). By the 1980’s, the work of Rowton and his successors on the integration of the pastoral and agricultural sectors was beginning to be applied to the emergence of Aramaean nomadism.

Liverani (1987) applied Rowton’s model of enclosed nomadism to the effects of the collapse of the Late Bronze Age palace economy. During the Late Bronze Age, palaces in urban cities held the apparatus of exchange and organization of populations in the hinterlands. When those palaces were eliminated, new mechanisms of exchange and new social structures took their place. Urban settlements became smaller, more diffuse, and more numerous, and the nomads of the steppelands responded to these changes by becoming sedentary.

Schwartz (1989), also following Rowton, argued that the late second millennium nomads were, in fact, analogous to the pastoral nomadic groups of the Mari period, and could be understood according to Rowton's model of enclosed nomadism. The term Aramaean was therefore merely "a new ethnic designation for sheep/goat nomadic pastoralists operating in the Euphrates and Khabur regions in patterns comparable to the nomadic pastoralists of preceding centuries" (Schwartz, G. M. 1989:283). In the past two decades, the notion that Aramaean settlement was not the cause of, but an outcome of the decline of the Late Bronze Age powers has been convincingly demonstrated by others (Sader 1987; 1992; 2000; McClellan, T. C. 1992; Bunnens 1999; Schniedewind 2002), and is now well established.

Although the details of Aramaean sedentarization remain obscure, in general, the reasons for settlement and the general sequence of events at the end of the Late Bronze Age would appear to be settled. Aramaeans are understood as a local pastoral population already present and actively interacting in the economy and society of Late Bronze Age Syria before they formed sedentary kingdoms in the Iron Age. In contrast with the earlier models of Aramaean settlement that posited a flood of raiding nomads that overwhelmed the settled kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age, the rise of Aramaean dynasties is now seen not as "the cause but rather the result of the collapse of the urban system" (Sader 1992:162). In Syria, once the Middle Assyrian decline began in earnest after Tiglath-pileser I, and the Dark Age began to descend upon Hanigalbat, Aramaeans must have filled the power vacuum that followed the demise of the Hittite kingdom in the west and the decline of the Middle Assyrian kingdom in the east at the end of the Late Bronze Age (Schwartz 1989; McClellan 1992; Sader 1992; 2000; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003:367). In order to do so, they became sedentary farmers, and by the 10th century, Aramaeans had established independent kingdoms on both sides of the Euphrates.

Indeed, archaeological surveys along the Balikh (Wilkinson 1998b), in the Khabur Basin (Röllig and Kühne 1977–1978; Meijer 1986; Lyonnet 1996; Wilkinson 2000a), and the Iraqi Jazira (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995) seem to support this model. These surveys show a decline in settlement in the Late Bronze Age an increase in the number of settlements from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age (McClellan 1992; Wilkinson 2000:235–236; 2002:370). The new settlements of formerly pastoral nomadic Aramaeans probably contributed significantly to this increase in settlement density (Wilkinson and Barbanes 2000; Wilkinson 2003b). Iron Age settlement patterns throughout upper Mesopotamia suggest that the Neo-Assyrian Empire instituted an intensified agricultural regime in the territories that it conquered to the west (Wilkinson, *et al.* 2005). Whereas in the Late Bronze Age, settlement was often characterized by high mound occupation in the fertile zones near water sources, in the Iron Age, smaller sites scattered the landscape both in the fertile zones, and in the steppeland outside those zones. This infilling of the landscape was enabled in part by the movement of Assyrians and populations conquered by Assyria throughout the empire. Landscape infilling may also have been the result of a policy of forced settlement instituted in Neo-Assyrian period, or the remnants of the settlement of nomads during the Dark Age. Whatever the causes of the change, the dramatic increase in the number of settlements, though not necessarily population, that encroached on the former pasturelands of Syria and Turkey must have significantly altered the pastoral nomadic way of life. The end of the Middle Assyrian period, therefore marked an end to the Aramaean pastoralism of the second millennium and the beginning of Aramaean state formation.

The consensus among Assyriologists and archaeologists thus seems to be that Iron Age Aramaean kingdoms were the result of large scale sedentarization during the 11th and

10th centuries, “spreading in the void created by the collapse of the Late Bronze Age state system” (Bunnens 1999:611). In fact, the consensus is so solid that, of the 23 articles published from the 46th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Nicolle 2004), devoted to questions of nomadic and sedentary communities in the ancient Near East, not a single chapter is concerned with Aramaean nomadism, which surely reflects either a general agreement on questions of Aramaean origins, or pervasive lack of interest in the topic.

2.4 PROBLEMS IN THE STUDY OF ARAMAEAN ORIGINS

However secure archaeologists claim to be about Aramaean origins, there remain several difficulties with the model outlined above. One problem lies with the specific chronology of Aramaean settlement and the geographical region over which Aramaean kingdoms were spread. A second problem has to do with the nature of Aramaean nomadism in general and the inconsistent manner in which the anthropology of pastoral nomads has been applied to Late Bronze Age Syrian pastoral nomadism.

2.4.1 The Pace of Aramaean Settlement The Iron Age Aramaean kingdoms tend to be approached as a single entity, despite the fact that they never formed more than a loose coalition of small city-states (Figure 14). Nor did the spread of Aramaean political and cultural domination of northwest Syria take place at the same time or at the same pace in every location. East of the Euphrates, the Hittite Kingdom and the Late Bronze Age kingdoms of coastal Syria came to an end in the 12th century (McClellan, T. C. 1992; Sader 1992), many having been destroyed a few centuries earlier (McClellan, T. C. 1992). Following the collapse of the Hittite Empire, northwest Syria and southern Anatolia fragmented into a number of small kingdoms that were, in some cases, the successors to the Hittite dynasty. Thus, for several centuries, the early Iron Age landscape of northwest Syria was a jumble of Luwian speaking, Neo-Hittite, and Aramaean kingdoms. At

Carchemish, a line of Neo-Hittite kings continued to rule after the collapse of the Hittite Empire (Hawkins 1988). In southern Anatolia the rulers of Kummuh, Melid, Gurgum, and Tabal carried on the traditions of the Hittites, though they left hieroglyphic inscriptions in Luwian and were probably occupied by a mixed population of Hurrians, Aramaeans, and Phoenicians, along with the remnants of the Hittites (Bryce 1998:384–389). Further south, in the kingdom of Patina/Unqu centered at Kunulua (modern Tell Ta‘yinat), the Luwian monuments left by its Neo-Hittite rulers were replaced by elements of Aramaean culture at the end of the 9th century (Harrison 2001; Batiuk, *et al.* 2005:173–174, 178). West of the Euphrates, Aramaean presence is also evident at Arpad, the center of the Aramaean kingdom of Bit Agusi.

The region east of the Euphrates, by contrast, saw little Neo-Hittite presence after the fall of that empire around 1180. There, the Middle Assyrian kingdom remained relatively stable until the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. Only at the turn of the first millennium do the earliest indications of Aramaean dynasties begin to appear at the kingdoms of Bit Adini, Bit Bahiani, Bit Zamani, and Bit Halupe. The names of the kingdoms, which may recall their original tribal or kinship based society, along with Aramaic inscriptions, monumental carved orthostats, and *bit hilani* architecture, which begin appear at Tell Halaf and Tell Fakhariyah by the 9th and 8th centuries, all indicate the cultural homogeneity of Aramaean kingdoms of the Jazirah, and their affiliation with western Aramaean states.

The rise of Aramaeans in the east also corresponds to a shift in power in the west that favored the Aramaeans (Harrison 2001). The 9th century saw an increase in Aramaean material at Tell Ta‘yinat, the urbanization of Tell Afis (Mazzoni 1992), and the first Aramaean kings at sites like Zincirli (ancient Sam‘al) (Tropper 1993), and Tell Ahmar (ancient Til Barsip) on the big bend of the Euphrates (Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936).

Despite the fact that Aramaean language and material culture appears to be identical east and west of the Euphrates by the 9th century, Aramaean dynasties began to appear much earlier in northwest Syria than they did in the Jazira and Upper Tigris regions. The continuation of Assyrian authority in the Upper Tigris and Syrian Jazira after the fall of the Hittites meant that the rise of Aramaeans there followed a very different historical trajectory than in the west. Thus, the settlement of pastoral nomadic Aramaeans east and west of the Euphrates may be a wholly unique phenomenon. Because of the very different cultural and political circumstances surrounding the rise of Aramaean kingdoms east and west of the Euphrates, the question of Aramaean origins must be treated separately for each region.

A second problem with the model of Aramaean settlement as it currently stands is that it allows for only a short time span between the initial settlement of Aramaeans and the establishment of strong dynasties capable of mobilizing large labor forces and militias to repel Assyrian aggression. The chronology of Bunnens (1999), Sader (2000), and others allows for just over a century, perhaps two generations, in which Aramaeans must have established these powerful sedentary dynasties. The inscriptions of Kapara, son of Hadianu, from Tell Halaf, written after the earliest Aramaean cultural presence at the site, note that he had accomplished what his forefathers had not accomplished, which indicates that an inherited Aramaean dynastic line had been present at Guzana for quite some time before Kapara.

The date of the Kapara level at Halaf has been the subject of some debate over the past several decades. Von Oppenheim (1931:266) himself initially dated the Kapara period to the 12th century. Since then, scholars have dated the inscriptions of Kapara on epigraphic and stylistic grounds to the 10th century (Albright 1956), the early 9th century

(Winter 1989), the late 9th century (Opitz and Moortgat 1955:31; Hrouda 1962; Lipiński 2000:129), or the late 9th/early 8th century (Bowman 1941; Orthmann, W. 1971:160). Complicating the dating of the Aramaean occupation of Halaf is the fact that not only does Kapara indicate that he was a successor to a line of Aramaean kings of Guzana, but his inscriptions are written on reliefs carved earlier in an Aramaean style (Winter 1989). Dating the reign of Kapara to the 9th century means that the Aramaean dynasty at Halaf would likely have stretched back into the 10th century, or even earlier.

It would have taken some years for the dynasty of Guzana to have established permanence at Tell Halaf and to create the monumental art that is evident there in the 9th century. If the settlement of Aramaeans only began in earnest after Aššur-bel-kala, the current settlement chronology leaves a very short time for sites like Halaf to appear. Other sites like Tell Fakhariyah and Zincirli, with entrenched Aramaean political and cultural control by the 9th century would also have had to establish stability in only about a century. While this may have been possible, it is much more likely that the Aramaean centers reflect the culmination of a much lengthier process of settlement. But just as the evidence for sedentarization at the turn of the millennium is scarce, it is equally scarce for the centuries preceding the turn of the millennium. However, there is ample data from the ethnographic record to argue for a reappraisal of Aramaean nomadism and settlement during the Middle Assyrian period.

2.4.2 Aramaeans and Pastoral Nomadism The most recent literature on Aramaean nomadism attempts to correlate their lifestyle with the nuances of Middle Eastern nomadic-sedentary relations as detailed in a vast body of anthropological literature, rather than through the distorted lens of the urban sources. The problem with many of these studies is that their reliance on anthropological data is inconsistent. Rowton's "enclosed

nomadism” remains the primary model by which early Aramaeans are described, but recent research in other periods suggests that there is room for alternate models of ancient nomad-sedentary interactions. Recent reviews of the Mari texts, for example, and archaeological evidence argue that the division between nomad and sedentary was even more porous than Rowton had claimed (Fleming 2004; Porter 2002; 2004; McClellan, T. L. 2004:67). Although Rowton had succeeded in integrating the two elements of the tribe-state dichotomy that featured in work prior to the 1960’s, according to Fleming (2004:71), the tribe and state at Mari were one and the same. Fleming (2004:45–47) reevaluates the use of the term *hana* in the Mari texts, which he understands as a generic word for “tent-dweller” rather than the name of a separate Hannaen tribe, as Kupper (1957), Luke (1965), and Matthews (1978) had assumed. The kings of Mari, Yahdun-Lim (1810-1794) and Zimri-Lim (1774-1762), themselves were kings of the Sim’alite tribe, and identified with the tent dwellers within the Mari kingdom. Thus, under the “Lim” rulers, Mari was “a fully integrated tribal kingdom,” rather than an urban kingdom ruling over integrated sedentary and tribal elements (Fleming 2004:71). Ultimately, Fleming (2004:231) concludes that

with the texts from Zimri-Lim’s reign, we confront the undeniable integration of tribal identity into a large city-based kingdom, so that tribes, on the one hand, and their mobile pastoralist herdsmen, on the other, cannot be relegated to the periphery of ancient Mesopotamian politics or society. The tribes of the Mari archives are neither outside nor other to the regime that produced these texts.

Thus, in Mari, the model of a state integrated with the tribes both in its cities and in its hinterland, is supplanted by a model in which the tribal structure operates at all levels of sedentary and mobile society.

The interactions between the pastoral and agricultural sectors of society are important because the rise of the Aramaeans has less to do with nomadism and more to do

with the sedentarization of nomads. That is, it was the ability of Aramaeans to settle and develop a hierarchical power structure that allowed for the organizational apparatus on which their dynasties were based. The mechanisms of Ahlamu-Aramaean sedentarization are thus of real concern, and their access to or knowledge of the agricultural sector is of vital significance in this regard. Yet there has been no systematic analysis of Aramaean sedentarization in the light of ethnographic research. When scholars say that Aramaeans settled in the Dark Age between the Middle and Late Assyrian periods, they are actually bypassing the issue, making assumptions about the political, economic, and social impetus for Aramaean settlement.

One very basic assumption behind the claim that Aramaean settlement took place in the Dark Age at the turn of the millennium is that *Aramaeans were primarily nomadic before the decline of the Middle Assyrian kingdom*. Aramaean pastoral nomadism during the Middle Assyrian period is generally taken as given because of the nature of the textual evidence. However, these sources must be approached with a degree of skepticism and from a perspective that is grounded in an awareness of the varieties of pastoral nomadic economies and lifestyles. To group early Aramaeans under the umbrella term “pastoral nomads” is to ignore a great range of activities that might determine their level of mobility and multiplicity of interactions with local village and urban communities.

A second basic assumption behind the notion that Aramaeans “filled the power vacuum” left at the end of the Late Bronze Age is that *nomads would naturally prefer to be sedentary if given the opportunity*. That is, when Aramaeans were finally afforded the opportunity to settle because Assyria withdrew from Hanigalbat, they quickly seized the opportunity to become sedentary and benefit from the perceived advantages of sedentary life and the apparatuses of state authority. In fact, there is little evidence to suggest that

this type of mass settlement of pastoral nomads, undertaken without pressure or encouragement from a ruling urban elite, was common either in antiquity or in the modern era.

A final assumption of the “power vacuum” model that must be reckoned with is that *Aramaeans became sedentary during a period of political and economic chaos*. One of the most repeated conclusions to come out of decades of anthropological research on modern nomads is that there is a large variety among pastoral groups in terms of subsistence, mobility, and settlement. However, despite this variety, one feature common to many pastoralists in the Near East is that when nomads settle, the process is most likely to occur during periods of political and economic stability, conditions offered by a strong urban authority. This tendency stands in direct opposition to any model of Aramaean settlement that posits sedentarization during a power vacuum.

3 PASTORAL NOMADIC PEOPLES OF THE NEAR EAST

3.1 NOMADS, PASTORALISTS, TRIBES

Before addressing each of the assumptions behind the current model of Aramaean settlement, it is important to clarify one of the obstacles to understanding the complexities of ancient and nomadic adaptations. An ambiguity of terminology has plagued work on ancient pastoral nomadism in general, and especially Aramaean nomadism. Several terms have been employed, often interchangeably, to describe Amorites, Sutu, Ahlamu, and Aramaeans, a problem which has led to inconsistent conclusions regarding nomad-sedentary relations. Whereas the terms nomadic pastoralism and sedentary agriculture denote primarily economic activities, tribe and state refer to systems of social or political organization.

3.1.1 Pastoral Nomadic Economy and Mobility Khazanov (1994:17) defines pastoral nomadism as “a distinct form of food producing economy in which extensive mobile pastoralism is the predominant activity and in which the majority of the population is drawn into periodic pastoral migrations.” He identifies five criteria for classifying pastoral nomads (Khazanov 1994:16): (1) Pastoralism is the primary economic activity; (2) Free-range herd maintenance is practiced throughout the year; (3) The movement of herds is seasonal and within bounded territories; (4) At least the majority of the population participates in pastoralism; (5) Pastoral mobility aims at subsistence-level production. Significantly, neither tribalism nor any political distinctions are components of Khazanov’s criteria.⁴⁶ Instead, his definition embodies two main characteristics, each of which can be examined independently: the economy of pastoralism and the extent of mobility of the community.

The terms pastoral and nomadic actually denote two different ways of life that are not necessarily mutually dependent (Salzman 1971; Cribb 1991b:16–20, Fig. 2.1). That is, in the words of Salzman (1971:190), “to say ‘pastoral’ does not necessarily entail ‘nomadic,’ and to say ‘nomadic’ does not necessarily entail ‘pastoral.’” *Pastoralism* is a mode of subsistence based on the exploitation of herd animals by means of protection. Pastoralism is a distinctly economic enterprise that relies on three principal factors: herd, personnel, and pasture (Paine 1972). As an economic system, pastoral nomadism is different from both hunter-gatherer economies whose economic base is predation rather than protection of animals, and agriculturalists, who exploit domestic plants rather than

⁴⁶Khazanov’s particular interest is in the economics of nomadism as a mode of production, and his definition of nomadism reflects his theoretical approach. Nevertheless, it provides a useful starting point for separating the constituent components of “pastoral nomadism” in order to determine how this too-often overused and misappropriated phrase applies to the specific features of Late Bronze Age economy and society in Hanigalbat.

domestic sheep and goats. However, Khazanov and others note that “pure pastoralists,” that is economic systems that are solely based on animal exploitation, are rare (Salzman 1971:190; Dyson-Hudson 1972:16; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980:18–19; Khazanov 1994:19). In the Near East, pastoralists are rather semi-nomadic, changing pastures only seasonally. Nor must pastoralists rely purely on sheep/goat herding. Most often, pastoralist societies can be characterized as “multi-resource” pastoralists who engage in some form of agriculture or other activity (Salzman 1971; 1972). For example, among the Yarahmadzai tribe in Baluchistan, nomads supplement pastoral activities with date palm cultivation, hunting and gathering, small-scale grain cultivation, and raiding (Salzman 1972; 1980). Some Basseri work as hired laborers in village fields (Barth 1961). Qashqa’i nomads tend to be even more economically diverse than other pastoral nomadic groups in the Middle East (Beck 1986; 1991).

At the same time, *nomadism*, as distinct from sedentism, involves movement from one location to another, often based on the need for pasture on which herds may graze. The types of movement that a pastoral nomadic society may engage in are highly diverse. Some nomadic groups only move within a radius of a few miles; others move hundreds of kilometers along horizontal and vertical dimensions (Johnson 1969). Decisions about migration patterns and the timing of movement are similarly based on a large variety of factors that vary from one group to another. These decisions may be based on ecological conditions, changes in temperature or climate, the availability of water or other resources, political or social constraints (Bates 1971; Irons 1974), the economic relationship with sedentary communities (Bates 1972) or migrations may take place simply on the basis of an “ideology of mobility” (Spooner 1972:124).

One of the defining characteristics of the forms of pastoral nomadism is thus the overwhelming variety of economies and mobility. Recent studies demonstrate that among

groups who are principally dependent on livestock, and for whom spatial mobility is regularly employed as a subsistence strategy, there is an enormous variability in herd management strategies, social organization, land tenure, degree of dependence on agricultural products, interactions with outside groups, differentiation of tasks by sex and age, etc. Spooner (1973:3) has noted that “there are no features of culture or social organization that are common to all nomads or even that are found exclusively among nomads.” In fact, he is unsatisfied with the term nomadism itself, labeling it unuseful “except as a term to denote a trait of cultural ecology, i.e., an aspect of the adaptation of a society to its physical and social environment, and the exploitation of its resources” (Spooner 1972:130).

3.1.1.1 Nomadic Adaptations as “Fluid, Marginal, Transitional, and Unstable”

Although perhaps the only generalization that can be applied to pastoral nomadism as a whole is that its forms are highly variable, one feature which may serve to characterize Middle Eastern pastoral nomads is that “they are by nature comparatively fluid, marginal, transitional, and unstable” (Spooner 1972:130). Because pastoralists often engage in agricultural and other economic activities, and the primary mode of subsistence may fluctuate, pastoralists at all times are negotiating between the two poles of a continuum that stretches between purely pastoral and purely agricultural modes of subsistence.

A similar continuum describes the level of mobility of a nomadic group. A group’s level of mobility is also a function of the inherent fluctuations in local and regional ecological, economic, political, and social circumstances. Populations may become more or less mobile by relying to a greater or lesser extent on pastoralism as a primary mode of subsistence. Fluctuations occur in the circumstances of a tribe as a whole, based on internal and external mechanisms, and in those of a single family or individual. Thus,

whole tribes and individuals move along the spectrum from pastoral nomadic to sedentary agriculturalists at varying points over time, and those movements vary considerably between tribes and individuals (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980:18).

Cribb (1991b:Fig. 2.1) illustrates the variability of pastoral nomadic adaptations as a graph, composed of a “Mode of Subsistence” axis which ranges from Agriculture to Pastoralism, and a “Mobility” axis, which ranges from fully sedentary to fully nomadic. Individual communities may be roughly plotted at different points on the graph according to those two aspects of their lifestyles. In general, increased mobility corresponds to increased pastoralism, and increased sedentism corresponds to increased agricultural production. This is a clever way to visualize the variation between groups of pastoral nomadic populations.

The same diagram can be used to show the variability within pastoral nomadic groups. Figure 15 reflects a possible picture of the fluidity of pastoral activities and mobility both within and between pastoral nomadic groups. Just as Cribb (1991b:18) understands the accumulation of changes in seasonal migration patterns over time as “characteristically ‘nomadic,’” the accumulation of changes in mobility and subsistence patterns of tribes, tribal subunits, and families, characterizes the relationships between pastoral nomads and sedentary agriculturalists.

3.1.1.2 Interactions between Nomads and Villagers The variability and fluctuations between pastoralism and agriculture and mobility and sedentism both depend upon and influence the relationship between nomads and sedentary communities. This relationship is determined at both the local and state level. At the local level interactions between nomads and village agriculturalists can be based upon mutualism and tied to the sharing of ecological resources (Bates 1971). Pastoral nomadic groups engage in economic relations

with both villages and urban centers, when urban demand for meat, dairy products, wool, and skin outstrips the resources of subsistence economy villages (Alizadeh 2003:91). In other cases, nomad-sedentary relations may be based on the political relationship between tribes and the state (Bates 1971; Pastner 1971).

In many cases, the economic relationship between nomads and villagers is symbiotic. Clearly the one relies on the other for at least some nutritional supplement. Nomadic production systems can not survive without agricultural supplements provided by sedentary farmers. Likewise, farmers rely to some extent on the meat, dairy, and textile products provided by specialized pastoralists. As Khazanov (1994:205) puts it, “trade with the sedentary world is an indispensable attribute of any type of nomadism.” He sees nomads engaging in two types of trade: (1) direct exchange and trade with agricultural and urban societies; and (2) mediation or participation in trade between sedentary societies.⁴⁷

The first of these is best illustrated by Barth’s (1961) early work, which underscored the symbiotic nature of Basseri-village interactions. Although most multi-resource nomads engage in some limited amount of agriculture, they still rely on sedentary communities to supply vital grain resources. This is the case among the Jordanian Bedouin of the Badia, who sell their animals and animal products or labor to the towns and villages that supply them with provisions (Abu Jaber, *et al.* 1987:7). The same has been true for Turkish nomads of central southeast Anatolia (Eberhard 1953:36–37; Bates 1980). Qashqa’i nomads in Iran maintain economic ties with sedentary villagers who are known as “village friends” (Beck 1991:218, 300). Cribb (1991b:26) points out that in the

⁴⁷Khazanov sees the second type of nomadic trade as taking place primarily in the arena of caravan trade. Although Cribb (1991b) does not accept the notion of nomads as agents of long distance trade between sedentary communities, Rosen *et al.* (2005) make a convincing argument, based on eastern Anatolian obsidian found at the Camel Site in the Negev, that nomads indeed participated in down-the-line exchange of trinkets, at least in the Early Bronze Age.

modern period, both the Bakhtiari and the Qashqa'i have at different times effectively supported the urban centers of Iran with the pastoral surpluses that they have generated.

However, the trade relationship between nomads and sedentary communities is not an equal one; nomads are much more dependent on agricultural products from sedentary farmers than are farmers on pastoral nomadic products (Cribb 1991b; Khazanov 1994:203). Bates (1971) points out that the nomad-villager symbiosis can be unstable because of the competition between village and nomadic groups for limited resources. In cases where agricultural and pastoral land is shared, their exploitation by each economic sector is a function of the balance of power between those sectors. Barth (1973) also noted that the balance of nomad-sedentary relations was based on inherent limitations in the potential of agricultural expansion. Because the growth potential of the pastoralist system is greater than that of the agricultural sector, when access to resources is limited, pastoral nomads "will have the advantage over the agriculturalists, and by virtue of their mode of production become the dominant group" (Barth 1973:16).

Salzman (1978:553–555) justly criticizes Barth's overly abstract model for its failure to account for the variation and multiplicity of pastoral "modes of production" that appear under differing environmental, technological, demographic, or sociopolitical conditions. Yet it is nonetheless true that various forms of interactions between nomadic and sedentary societies often lead to the subjugation of the latter by the former. Raiding and demands of tribute are two ways in which the economic adaptations of the nomadic lifestyle (i.e., mobility and military strength) are used as political adaptations to the sedentary world (Khazanov 1994:222–227).

Interactions that involve subjugation by nomads of sedentary communities exist alongside the necessary mutualism of nomad-sedentary interactions. This juxtaposition of

antagonistic and cooperative of interaction can cause additional tension in the nomad-sedentary relationship. According to Spooner (1972:126),

Raiding is perhaps the most conspicuous element in the peasants' memory of the interaction between nomads and peasants, and therefore is the most significant factor in the general ideological polarization between nomad and peasant. Nomads and peasants hate and despise each other, and yet we know that nomads become peasants, and peasants become nomads.

Among the Rwala bedouin, the same tension is apparent in the otherwise symbiotic partnership with villagers (Lancaster 1981:124). In that case, the *khuwa* acts as a system that maintains the symbiosis between tribe and village. The *khuwa* is sum paid by villagers to the tribe in order to "opt out of the economy of raiding" (Lancaster 1981:121). In this way surplus is distributed and order is maintained at a local level, without the interference of the state. The economy of raiding is therefore central to the Rwala economy. Although the economic result is a mutually advantageous system of interactions, consistent raiding by nomadic tribes upon villages can result in an oddly juxtaposed economic and ideological relationship

The difficulties that result when nomadic tribes dominate a village is clear in the case of the Rwala (Lancaster 1981:124–125). If the Rwala begin to exercise economic and social dominance over a village, the tribal leader must settle and move into the town. As he does so, he is forced to negotiate between the needs of his own tribe and the needs of townspeople, to whom he is also responsible. Thus, if he favors one group over the other, his support by the less favored group wanes, and he ceases to be considered a good leader. If he loses favor among his tribe, they will choose a new sheikh, and he will settle permanently. As Lancaster (1981:125) puts it, "A Bedu may dominate a town, *the* Bedu can never do so."

The economic, social, and political relationship between nomads and villagers are thus highly complex and multifaceted. They can be symbiotic and competitive at the same

time, and the fact that mobile communities fluctuate between degrees of mobility and pastoralism only complicates the forms that these interactions can take. Mobile communities and families will often have members who have settled and devote the majority of their resources to agriculture. These settled tribal components may live in rural villages or in urban cities, and they will often maintain ties to their mobile counterparts. There is therefore a considerable amount of exchange between nomadic and sedentary cultural and political ideologies (Spooner 1971:205).

3.1.2 Political Organization

3.1.2.1 The Tribe Although I have defined pastoral nomadism in distinctly socioeconomic terms, the lifestyle does imply characteristic political and cultural attributes. Specifically, pastoral nomadic groups are organized tribally. Traditionally, the term tribe is used to designate a specific type of social organization, with sub-units based on lineage and kinship (e.g., Sahlins 1961). However, a vast variety of usage and preconceptions are attached to term “tribe” and to issues of tribe-state relations. The term tribal has been used to describe political and social relations, economies, mobility or all four aspects of society (van der Steen 2004:3–5). In many cases the term “tribe” is used as a synonym for “nomadic community” (Tapper 1990:54). Although the political structure of many nomadic communities is tribal, there is nothing inherent about nomadism that requires a tribal structure, and there are examples of tribal structures among settled cultivators and among various ethnic groups (Khoury and Kostiner 1990:5). In some cases, it is the state itself which imposes a tribal structure onto mobile societies which it hopes to control (Tapper 1990:54).

The tribe itself is an ideal notion which is characterized by large, culturally distinct groups whose interactions are based on lineage and kinship (Khoury and Kostiner

1990:4). This structure contrasts with the political structure of the state, which is based on exercising power over a territory regardless of the lineage of its occupants. The reality however, is more complex, and the forms that tribal organization may take are highly variable. Among tribal societies there are varying levels of social hierarchies ranging from egalitarian to stratified tribes led by a single individual.

Although tribe members are unified under the political banner of kinship, leadership of the tribe falls to a single member only in some cases (Tapper 1983:6). In those cases, the leadership role need not be inherited, as among the Yörük, whose *ağas* may be wealthy, but are neither born nor elected into office (Bates 1972; 1973). The role of the tribal leader also varies, and there is little agreement as to his primary duty. Ibn Khaldun presents a model of tribal organization in which the tribe is led by a political figure ordained by descent, and whose main duty is to keep the peace (Caton 1990). The Marxist view of tribal leadership holds that the original role of tribal leaders was to protect against the negative effects of class inequality as communal family ownership gives way to private ownership and individual control of labor emerges. Over time, the political leaders become the oppressors of the lower classes, dominating through military or ideological manipulation. The tribal elite become simultaneously advocates for, and exploiters of their dependents. Sahlins (1961) views the tribal leader as having arisen from increasing competition between tribal units over allocation of territory. In a segmentary-lineage system, territory is allocated based on patrilineal descent, and in times of conflict, family units unify to repel an aggressor. As units band together, a mediating leader emerges who serves as a compromise between tribal anarchy and statehood. In all of these systems, the tribe is defined as a system of social organization, and the political hierarchy within a tribe is based on descent and is predicated upon the diffusion of tension within the tribe.

The use of the term tribe to describe a sociopolitical structure has continued in recent decades (Khoury and Kostiner, 1990), but others approach the tribes not as political units at all. E. Marx (1977) views the tribe not in political terms, but as a “unit of subsistence,” which is the basis for exploiting the territories under its control. He argues that not all tribes exhibit a political organization or hierarchy, rather tribe members share a bond that is based on territorial control: "Unity exists primarily in the consciousness of its members to whom it is self-evident that their livelihood depends on their gaining free access to pastures and whose networks of personal relationships often help them achieve this end" (Marx 1977:348).

Cribb (1991b) combines the views of E. Marx with the notion of tribalism as a system of social organization. He argues that “the ‘tribe’ simply refers to a territorial system in which control is not vested in the state apparatus, or at least where certain areas of control are relinquished to local interests and collectives” (Cribb 1991b:54–55). Here, social organization is predicated on control of territory, not merely mediation of disputes.

3.1.2.2 Tribe and State However tribal leadership institutions developed, one of the primary duties of the position is to mediate between the tribe and the state. Political stratification among nomads may therefore vary according to its relationship with the sedentary state (Irons 1971). Tribes organized under a single leader may form parts of larger confederations of tribes, and their interactions with the state mediated via intermediate tribal leaders (Tapper 1983). Increased interaction with sedentary society therefore generally corresponds to increase in political stratification when the role of the political leader is that of intermediary between the nomads and sedentary society (Irons 1971:155).

The history of tribe-state relations is often couched in terms of the balance of power between the two. Long after Ibn Khaldun (1967:122) observed that Bedouins “are

of necessity dominated by the urban population,” scholars now agree that just as the balance of the symbiotic relationship between nomads and village agriculturalists can be in constant flux, the balance of power between tribe and state may also ebb and flow depending on a variety of factors. According to Irons (1971:156), when the balance of power between tribe and state is equal, political leaders of both sides are better able to leverage their mediating roles. The opposite is the true when either side holds a monopoly of power.

The need for mechanisms of mediation between tribe and state entities stems from the fact that the nomadic lifestyle necessitates a certain amount of freedom outside of the structures of state control—freedom to migrate with their flocks to usable pastures; freedom to organize migration groups; freedom to resolve disputes quickly between members of mobile groups (Goldschmidt 1971). Thus, “nomads, by virtue of their shifting residence, and tribespeople, by virtue of their personal allegiances to each other or to chiefs, have always posed problems of control to officials of sedentary states” (Tapper 1990:54). The state must control the pastoral nomadic tribes who operate within its territorial borders, and the tribes must counter the restrictions placed upon them by the state. In this sense, pastoral nomadism as an economic adaptation can be seen as a response to the relationship between the tribe and state (Bates 1971:127). The political response of nomads influences patterns of migration and residence, and possibly social and political organization of the tribe.

States have pursued a vast variety of strategies aimed at maintaining power over pastoral nomadic tribes. For the most part these policies are intended to encourage or force nomads to become sedentary. Following World War I in Iran, the policies of Reza Shah toward the Qashqa’i and Khamseh tribal confederacies were aimed at eliminating the

nomads as military, political, and cultural threat to a modern, culturally unified Iran. These policies included disarming the tribes, enforcing a European-style dress code, taxation, conscripting tribal youth, imprisoning tribal leaders and appointing military governors in their place, ending migrations, and forcibly settling nomads (Beck 1986:129–142). For a time, the flexing of the urban authority's muscle served to unify the tribes politically and strengthened their hierarchical structures. By the end of the 1930's, however, the tribes of Iran were no longer a military threat, and they had suffered enormous economic hardship as a result of the restrictions that the state had placed on their livelihood.

In Syria, nomads became sedentary only under the strong central authority of the Ottoman pashas of the late 19th century, and similar centralized authority during the Mandate period. In the 19th century, the pacification of the Syrian tribes was achieved in large part by equipping Ottoman soldiers with modern rifles (Lewis 1955). Government support for agricultural expansion and for settlement decreased the pasture available to Bedouin, and made agricultural cultivation an attractive option for economically deprived nomads (Lewis 1955:54).

In a similar way, the sedentarization of the Yörük was primarily the outcome of government land policies following World Wars I and II (Bates 1980). As the Turkish government encouraged large scale cotton, wheat, and rice farming, and Armenian, Greek, and Ottoman lands were redistributed, irrigation and cultivation expanded in rural Turkey, and the pasturage available to nomads decreased. Increasing pasture fees, combined with increased land productivity and inter-ethnic rivalries in eastern Turkey led to group settlement and exploitation of government farming, so that individual Yörük within a non-Yörük community would not be as susceptible to the antagonism of other ethnic groups.

In one village, Yörük settlement began in the late 1940's as they took up residence on the outskirts of an established sedentary community. The forced sedentarization of Yörük had consequences for their political structure. Although they continued to identify themselves as distinct from the non-Yörük community, permanent residence led to factionalism among tribe members. Whereas in a mobile setting, hostile families can easily increase their physical distance from one another, in sedentary villages, this conflict resolution mechanism is impractical. Ideological distinctions among the Yörük morphed into political categories, which, to Bates (1980:138), appear similar to those of non-tribal Turkish villages.

Thus, just like the relationship between nomads and sedentary villagers, the relationship between tribes and states can take a variety of forms. Interactions take place in terms of both mutualism and competition. Changes in the balance of these competing forces can result in animosity and conflict, and the strengthening of tribal political structures. The ultimate outcome of these conflicts can be the restriction of migration routes and forced sedentarization.

3.2 SEDENTARIZATION

Sedentarization can take place for a variety of reasons in addition to pressure from the urban authority. The fact that Near Eastern pastoral nomads practice a diversity of economic pursuits and interact with settled communities via a diversity of mechanisms means that they often have some connection to the agricultural sector even as they migrate with their flocks. In many cases, families are forced to become sedentary because of changes in their economic fortunes. Among the Basseri, personal wealth is the primary determinant in a family's decision to sedentarize (Barth 1961). Large herd owners face increased economic risk as their herd size grows and they are forced to hire shepherds to

oversee their flocks. The herd owner must not only pay additional capital to hired shepherds, but he must also entrust his livestock to shepherds who are not personally invested in maintaining a healthy herd. As an alternative, wealthy tribe members will convert capital that is held in livestock into land. Land rented to farmers can yield a considerable amount of interest, and the landholder is no longer required to purchase agricultural produce from villagers. Barth describes a pattern in which land ownership continues to increase wealth, and the tribesman becomes more and more concerned with the control and oversight of his property. As a result of this process, the wealthy Basseri settles in a village as a wealthy landlord with high status among both the Basseri and among the settled population.

In a second scenario, the poorest of the tribe may also become sedentary (Eberhard 1953:41–42; Barth 1961:108–109). When a nomad's herds are decimated by disease or drought, he may sink into the debt of a sedentary trading partner. Debts can carry over from one year to the next, and continue to increase as the tribesman is forced to sell more and more productive animals. Finally, he is forced to settle and seek employment as a hired laborer in a sedentary community. According to this scenario, as the tribesman begins to spend more and more time in his encampment near the village, the encampment probably begins to take on permanent fixtures, and ultimately becomes a permanent dwelling.

Similar processes are at work among Luri pastoralists, where agricultural production is a much more vibrant economic sector than it is among the Basseri (Black-Michaud 1986). The decision to settle is not made in the face of dire economic circumstances. Rather, it is a gradual and natural process that involves decision making by the whole family. Sedentarization may occur in cases where families already divide their

resources between pastoralism and agriculture. As some members of such a family become wealthier than others, as a result of ecological or market forces, the unsuccessful members will take up the activities of the successful members. Eventually, “a decision is finally taken by remaining members to stake all on a tentative removal to the sphere which bodes a more promising future” (Black-Michaud 1986:192–193).

Changes in the economic fortunes of pastoral nomads can also take place suddenly. The pastoral system of production is naturally more inclined to extreme variability in yearly output than the agricultural system is (Cribb 1991b:23–24). Whereas changes in levels of agricultural output have little effect on agricultural capital, land, or labor from year to year, a pastoralist’s investment in production varies with changes in output. Because requirement for pastoralists’ capital investment (i.e., sheep and goats), labor, and land are intricately tied to the level of production, in a bad year, a pastoralist must spend a great deal more energy and capital than an agriculturalist would in order to ensure success in the following years. Therefore, pastoral economies are generally less stable than agricultural economies, and “tends to oscillate between upward spirals of accumulation and a vicious circle of decline” (Cribb 1991b:24).

Pastoralism is thus a risky venture, and any number of environmental disasters such as drought, frosts, or epidemic, may result in enormous losses. These disaster years can occur as often as two out of every five years (Cribb 1991b:31). The advantage to the pastoralist system however, is that sheep and goats can recover much more rapidly from catastrophes than larger livestock can, which leads to dramatic fluctuations in herd size and production from year to year.

Despite the fact that quick recovery tends to follow dramatic losses of livestock, the immediate result of herd loss may include temporary or permanent settlement. For example,

The poor rains in the decade 1969-1979 for example, led to the abandonment of large parts of the traditional areas of pasture and the establishment of the *Badu* in the hills and wadis from Jerash down to Karak. Many of these tribesmen would find jobs in the towns and villages nearby and a certain fraction were unlikely to ever return to their previous mode of living (Abu Jaber, *et al.* 1987:12).

Even when the forces that determine sedentarization are couched in other terms, the basis often remains environmental and economic. For the Rwala, economics is intertwined with morality—a person with a reputation for morality is one who is generous, and generosity can be displayed only if one is not absolutely destitute. Thus, by virtue of their poverty, poor Rwala also lack morality. Their lack of morality damages their reputation in the tribe, and they are forced to remove themselves from the social group. By the same token, wealthy Rwala are viewed as ungenerous, and their reputation suffers accordingly. They too often become sedentary (Lancaster 1981:150). Although Barth's dictum that the poorest and the wealthiest nomads tend to settle does not apply precisely to the Rwala, the practicalities of their social interactions lead to the same outcome, and Lancaster notes as the Syrian social landscape continues to change, sedentarization is becoming a viable economic option that is not tied to cultural definitions of morality.

The risks and economy of pastoralism are not the only factors that may encourage settlement, especially in tribes with social mechanisms that help to minimize the most adverse economic conditions. Among the Qashqa'i, socioeconomic differences among tribe members are much greater than they are among the Basseri, for example. The greater number of levels of wealth means that wealthy families with labor needs and poor families short of animals and income were mutually dependent. Poorer tribe members could thus remain nomadic pastoralists and dependent upon wealthier nomadic families, and sedentarization was not a necessary outcome of great or minimal wealth (Beck 1986:236–237).

Thus, when Qashqa'i do settle, they may do so for reasons other than economic necessity. Because the Qashqa'i have mechanisms for keeping members at extreme ends of the economic spectrum mobile, sedentarization is more often the result of political disagreement, or lack of commitment to tribal cultural identity (Beck 1986:243) or simply personal preference. For example, Beck (1991) describes the sedentarization of one family that had broken with the tribal leader. After settling in an unoccupied area, the recently settled family encouraged other related families to settle in the same village over the next several years, until it became a fully functioning agricultural village dominated by Qashqa'i tribe members. It is significant, however, that Qashqa'i who settle as a result of personal disagreements disassociate themselves politically and culturally from the tribe (Beck 1986:243). Under other conditions of settlement, including forced settlement, tribal identity and political connections remain strong (Beck 1986:185; 2003:292–293).

The economic motivation for sedentarization among Luri pastoralists, is also scarce because economic failure in that sector is never devastating. It is only in the most dire circumstances that nomads will settle for financial reasons. Otherwise, settlement is undertaken for multiple reasons often having to do with individual desires, such as the need for a wife or to send children to village schools (Black-Michaud 1986:196).

Nor is economy a factor in the mobility of some Yomut Turkmen, who adhere to a pastoral nomadic lifestyle, even though it is not an economic necessity (Irons 1974:635). Instead, nomadism is practiced because it provides a distinct political advantage as a means of resistance to an urban Persian administration. Furthermore, those social mechanisms that lead to economic failure of poor Basseri are absent from the Yomut nomadic system, which is in part based on extensive assistance from close kin and greater opportunities for employment as shepherds (Irons 1972). Sedentarization is therefore

looked upon as a mechanism of subjugation that involves high taxes and little security (Irons 1974).

Just as the economics, politics, and mobility of pastoral nomadic systems entail a great deal of variation, causes and mechanisms of sedentarization are equally diverse. Settlement depends on any number of variables and can occur under any single or combination of conditions. An individual family may settle in an existing town, or they may settle in a new town. Entire tribes may settle at once, or they may settle gradually over a number of years or generations. Notwithstanding such diversity, it is clear that in a large number of cases, sedentarization depends upon a strong central administration capable of maintaining peaceful conditions and a robust economy. For example, a strong administration that invests resources in agriculture is necessary for wealthy or poor Basseri to benefit from sedentarization. A strong central government is also essential in cases when nomadic groups are pressured to sedentarize by the central administration in order to expand agricultural production, as in the case of the Yörük in Turkey (Bates 1980), or to reduce the autonomy of the tribes, . Thus, although the presence of a stable urban regime will not lead to sedentarization in all cases, the process is more likely to take place against a backdrop of political and economic stability.

3.3 THE NOMADIC CHOICE

The fact that a stable sedentary authority is more likely to pave the way for sedentarization than a weak central government does not suggest that nomads will always prefer to settle when presented with the opportunity. On the contrary, Spooner (1972:127) identifies a distinct “nomadic ideology” that is rooted in “pride and efficiency in the use of the unimproved environment, the protection of the individual traveler irrespective of identity or status, and contempt of everything characteristic of peasants.”

Goldschmidt (1979:26) also recognizes a distinct “pastoral ethos,” characterized by “a pride, a hauteur, a strong sense of individual worth and a strong sense of the nobility of pastoralism as a calling.” A Bedouin poem in which a father gives advice to his newborn son evokes the same sentiment that derides city living and the sedentary lifestyle as a path to selfishness and dishonesty:

Though governed by your brother’s son, don’t settle in a town;
If you should need but five *dīnārs*, he too would turn you down.
(Bailey 2002:147)

In addition to first-hand statements by informants about the elements of their nomadic ideology, the events of history also serve as evidence that, in many cases, pastoralists will choose to migrate over becoming or remaining sedentary. After Reza Shah abdicated in 1941, the nomads whom he had forcibly settled returned to a mobile lifestyle. Barth (1961:148–149) saw in the Basseri return to nomadism an expression of the value they place on independence, more than on the requirements of their economy. Tapper (1979:179) also interprets the return of the Shahsevan to migrations in the same period as the adherence to a cultural value above economic rationality.

Other anthropologists have contested that a general “nomadic ideology” exists at all. Bates (1972:49) argues that “there is no ‘nomad’ or even Yörük ideology operative at the discernible level that transcends rational economic motivation or stark necessity in determining whether a household remains nomadic or takes up sedentary specializations.” Nor do the Yörük have a negative attitude toward agriculture, though they do take a great deal of pride in their cultural and ethnic heritage. In other words, Yörük do not migrate simply because they have a passion for the nomadic lifestyle. They simply choose the system of production that is most economically feasible under a given set of circumstances.

A similar attitude toward production is held by the nomads of Luristan. Black-Michaud (1986:93) sees the return to migrations in 1941 as simply the rational economic response to the absence of a strong central authority. Faced with administrative instability and the possibility of crop depletion, Luri nomads began migrating after the fall of Reza Shah because it seemed a safer option. As a result, they were able to maintain their wealth in the form of flocks when agriculturalists lost capital when their crops suffered during the political vacuum. Their wealth translated to power, and by the time the government resumed control at the end of the decade, they were able to use their new status to manipulate pastoral and agricultural land claims in their favor (Black-Michaud 1986:93–94). Among other aspects of sedentarization and nomadization of mobile pastoralists in the modern period, this process of power consolidation by the Luri nomads in the 1940's may be useful for understanding the changes that occurred in the Aramaean lifestyle of the Middle Assyrian period. Armed with a much more comprehensive understanding of pastoral nomadic economies, lifestyles, and politics, and the intricacies and varieties of nomad-sedentary interactions, we can return to some of the unresolved questions surrounding Aramaean settlement.

4 ARAMAEAN PASTORAL NOMADISM REVISITED

4.1 THE EXTENT OF MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ARAMAEAN MOBILITY

In Section 2.4.2, I pointed out three questionable assumptions that lie behind the approaches to Late Bronze Age Aramaean nomadism. The first of these is the assumption that Aramaeans were primarily nomadic before the decline of the Middle Assyrian kingdom. That assumption is based in large part on the description of Ahlamu and Ahlamu-Aramaeans in the Middle Assyrian texts. What is most evident from the above review of Near Eastern pastoral nomadism in the modern period is that the pastoral

nomadic lifestyle embodies a vast diversity of economies, subsistence strategies, and mobility. Pure pastoralists are exceedingly rare. More often, pastoral nomadic groups engage in both agricultural and pastoral pursuits. Sometimes, as among the Yomut Turkmen, whole tribal segments are sedentary while others remain mobile. And often individual families or groups will settle either temporarily or permanently for any number of reasons. Moreover, as Figure 15 shows, within pastoral nomadic communities there may be constant movement between the pastoral nomadic and sedentary agricultural spheres. The label “nomadic” seems therefore a very imprecise attribution for Aramaeans during the Late Bronze Age.

In order to better describe the nature of early Aramaeans we must apply the ethnographic sources to the sources for Aramaean pastoral nomadism. As I pointed out above, the data for Aramaean pastoral nomadism is entirely epigraphic. To be sure, a common element of the names of Iron Age Aramaean kingdoms east of the Euphrates is *bit* (i.e., Bit Zamani, Bit Agusi, Bit Adini, etc.), which suggests a social or political structure based on kinship or tribal affiliation. But, as Tapper (Tapper 1990) demonstrates, tribal structure is not necessarily an indicator of nomadism, nor is mobility always an indicator of a tribal sociopolitical structure. Thus, although it may be fair to take the name *bit Zamani*, for example, as evidence of the tribal heritage of Aramaeans, it does not necessarily follow that those tribes were nomadic.

The inscription of Tiglath-pileser I’s fourth year that marks the first reference to Ahlamu-Aramaeans (see above page 113) contains three elements that are significant with respect to Ahlamu-Aramaean mobility. The first is the geographical aim of Tiglath-pileser’s campaign, the “desert,” which is Grayson’s translation of the Akkadian *mudbaru* (l. v 45). Indeed Jebel Bešri lies outside of the agricultural centers along the Syrian

Euphrates, but desert may not be the most precise definition of *mudbaru*. The same word is also used to refer to the steppe in contrast to the cultivated country (*māt*) (CAD *madbaru* c, 12). Either way, the term seems to imply that the force at which Tiglath-pileser aimed was located outside the agricultural zone. Schniedewind (2002:277–278) has already made this point, and noted that the implication is not that Aramaeans are pure nomads, but that they are “semi-nomadic pastoralists who lived on the fringes of and sometimes even in settled areas.” This is exactly the type of nomadic activity that would be expected in that region based on modern analogues. It is also apparently the type of pastoral semi-nomadism practiced by the Sutu, who were in close contact with, and even received rations from Assyrians. Thus, although the use of the term *mudbaru* does indicate that some degree of pastoral production was practiced by Ahlamu-Aramaeans, it does not rule out the possibility that there may have been related components of the population that were already sedentary or semi-sedentary.

The second element of the passage that scholars have understood as indicative of a high degree of mobility among early Aramaeans is the fact that Tiglath-pileser I was forced to chase them across the Euphrates (e.g., Sader 1992; 2000). In another text (*RIMA* II A.0.87.4 34, p. 43) Tiglath-pileser I mentions that he crossed the Euphrates 28 times “in pursuit of the *ahlamû*-Aramaeans.” Certainly this passage may imply that Aramaeans were well organized and able to mobilize and retreat quickly, but it does not necessarily mean that they were heavily tied to nomadism. Rather, it may reflect the difficulty that Tiglath-pileser I encountered when he tried to extend his control to such a distance from the Assyrian heartland. The history of the Middle Assyrian administration of Hanigalbat outlined in Part I, concluded that Assyria never had firm control over the territory between the Balikh and the Euphrates. Instead, they sometimes relied on Sutu as

proxies to police the border and report on the activities of the Hittites. Even after the fall of the Hittite kingdom, Assyria redirected its focus in Hanigalbat toward the Upper Tigris, not to the western territory of the Balikh and beyond. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Tiglath-pileser I was unable to secure the westernmost portion of the kingdom with any degree of permanence.

Rather than reflecting the mobile nature of Aramaean society, the fact that Aramaeans exhibited such determination and tenacity might suggest a fundamental attachment to that territory, an attachment which may have led to or been generated by the establishment of permanent settlements. The sedentary aspect of Ahlamu-Aramaean society is indicated by the fact that Tiglath-pileser I attacked “six of their cities” (6 URU.MEŠ-š^u-nu [l. v 59]). Sader (1987:271–272) has understood these cities as nothing more than simple nomadic campsites. Yet the language that Tiglath-pileser I uses is standard in texts that describe the conquest of permanent fortified cities within an established kingdom. For example, in his account of the conquest of the lands of Katmuhhu and Nairi, to the northwest of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser I uses very similar phrasing: “I brought out their booty, property, (and possessions). Their cities, I burnt, razed, (and) destroyed” (*RIMA* 2:A.0.87.1.i 93-ii 1, p. 14; v 1–3, p. 43).

It is also noteworthy that Tiglath-pileser I emphasizes the plunder and booty that was taken from the Aramaean cities and brought to Assur. A mobile population could only amass and store goods that were attractive to Assyria if they maintained power centers in locations of sedentary settlement. In these passages, therefore, he seems to describe a sedentary population, or at least a semi-sedentary group with centers of gathering, storage, or authority with assets rich enough to take back to the capital, rather than a primarily mobile people.

A final aspect of the Tiglath-pileser I inscription that has been interpreted as a reference to a mobile pastoral nomadic group is the association between Aramaeans and Ahlamu, discussed above (Section 2.2). The genetic relationship between Ahlamu and Aramaeans remains unclear, but whatever their actual affiliation, Assyrians clearly thought of them as one and the same. That is, although there is no evidence that reveals the self-identify of an individual Ahlamu, Aramaean, or Ahlamu-Aramaean, from the Assyrian point of view, their social, economic, and political structures were similar enough to identify the two from the Assyrian perspective.

Whatever the extent to which Ahlamu and Aramaeans were associated, the Tiglath-pileser I text contains some clues regarding the semi-sedentary aspect of Aramaeans. Schniedewind (2002:278) suggests that the phrase Ahlamu-Aramaean (*ah-la-mi-i KUR ar-ma-ia.MEŠ* [ll. v 46-47]) in fact should be translated as “the *pastoral nomads*, in the land of the Aramaeans” (italics in original). Tiglath-pileser I refers therefore to Ahlamu pastoral nomads who come from the land called Aram in the steppe zone surrounding the Euphrates. Translated in this way, the territorial attachment of Aramaeans is again apparent. The KUR designation that precedes the Aramaean gentilic marks the connection between Aramaeans and a geographical location.

By the 11th century, the geographical context of Aramaeans has changed, and during the time of Aššur-bel-kala, they are found at a number of places in the Khabur and Upper Tigris regions. The Broken Obelisk locates Assyrian campaigns against the Aramaeans at Pauza, which is at the foot of Mount Kašiiari; the city Šuppu (or Rupu) of the land Harran; the city *Murarrir* of the land Šubru; the city Magrisu of the land Iaru; Dur-Katlimmu; and other locations in the heartland of Hanigalbat. Only a few short decades after the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser I, Aramaeans—or better, those

communities that Assyrians identified as tribal groups that were probably rooted in a multi-resource pastoral nomadic system of production—were establishing their independence from Assyria in the entire area of Middle Assyrian conquest.

In light of the fact that the Aramaeans seem to exhibit a tribal organization and a pastoral nomadic economic base that was rooted in control of territory, it may be that Cribb's (1991b) approach to tribal organization is most apt. Aramaean power was based on local territorial control outside of the power of the state. Within Aramaean territory, members practiced agriculture in addition to pastoral nomadism, and those agricultural centers were the locus of Aramaean power and wealth. Perhaps then, Late Bronze Age Aramaeans are best described as tribes with pastoral nomadic components, rather than nomads, which does not convey the range of economic and political activities in which they likely engaged.

4.2 WHEN AND WHY DID ARAMAEANS SETTLE?

Thus, when read in the light of the anthropology of pastoral nomadism, the same text that has been interpreted as indicating a high degree of mobility among Aramaean society, in fact suggests that Aramaeans already comprised a substantial sedentary population by the time of Tiglath-pileser I. This alternative reading reveals an Ahlamu-Aramaean society that is much more in line with pastoral nomadic groups that occupied the Middle East in the 20th century. Aramaeans were probably a multi-resource tribal groups with some members in engaging various sedentary activities. Given the extreme diversity in economies and mobility among tribal groups of the Middle East today, Late Bronze Age Aramaeans surely exhibited the same multiplicity of lifestyles that is reflected in Figure 15. The distribution and variation of these activities within and among tribes would have been based on many of the same factors that determine the economic activities

of modern nomads: ecological conditions, variations in temperature or climate, the availability of water or other resources, financial necessity, or personal preference (Table 3).

In terms of the political structure of early Aramaeans, archaeologists must rely solely on later periods of Aramaean history and evidence from modern nomadic tribes. It is important to keep in mind the sweeping changes that mechanization and modern forms of government have brought to the lives of pastoral nomads in the Middle East. For that reason, the use of ethnographic analogy as a retrojection of present-day practices directly to the ancient past is, of course, fraught with peril. That type of analogy is especially dangerous in discussions of specific behavior patterns, or a specific spatial association of sites or artifacts. The following analysis, however, deals only in the most general terms with the range of possible forms of organization that Aramaean tribes might have taken. The comparison of modern tribal organization with ancient Aramaeans in such general terms is therefore justified. At the very least, this approach is a useful way to open the door to new approaches to ancient Arameans tribalism in order to move away from a false tribe-state dichotomy that has thus far steered the discussion.

The multiplicity of economic and mobility patterns of pastoral nomadic peoples allows for a variety of options in responding to changes in internal and external circumstances. As Salzman (2000:361–362) points out, in order to account for the multiplicity of nomadic adaptations, it is important to understand why certain differences appear under different circumstances. This reasoning leads him to suggest tentative generalizations concerning differences in nomadic societies. Perhaps the most appropriate of these generalizations, as it relates to external circumstances that can be applied to Late Bronze Age Aramaean pastoral nomadism, is that “tribesmen have multiple economic

strategies, political stances, and identities and shift among them according to the circumstances.”

Table 4 outlines more specific ideas about nomadic variation that may apply to Aramaeans. It is, of course important to keep the tentative nature of Salzman’s statements in mind, and to be aware of the pitfalls associated with ethnographic analogy. Nevertheless, the correspondences between the specific circumstances of the Late Bronze Age pastoral nomads of Hanigalbat and Salzman’s explanations of tribal variation may be informative. Those correspondences predict that the pastoral tribes under Middle Assyrian authority would be centralized and hierarchically organized, specialized, and likely to produce for market exchange. Indeed, those are the circumstances under which tribal leaders, whose power was vested in control of pastoral territory and control of pastoral resources, might accumulate wealth from new and enlarged urban markets and state-sponsored expansion of agricultural specialization. As Section 3.2 showed, the result of wealth accumulation and increased centralization of tribal authority, is often a prerequisite for sedentarization.

A number of other factors, both internal and external to a pastoral society, act as forces that push and pull a community toward sedentarization. According to the ethnographies surveyed in Section 3.2, other factors that might lead to sedentarization include catastrophic livestock depletion as a result of epidemic or ecologic disasters, tribal disputes, and pressure from a strong state authority. Most often however, modern mobile communities tend to settle when the external political and economic conditions are stable. That is, in many cases the mobile elements of 20th century pastoral nomadic societies prefer mobility to sedentism, whether because of a distinct “pastoral ethos” or simply because pastoralism is often the most practical system of production. Only when the

transition to sedentism becomes a political or economic necessity, as when state authorities force nomads to settle or encourage agriculture and the appropriation of pastoral land, do large numbers of pastoral nomads settle. The control over agricultural resources exercised by a strong state authority may also make agriculture a more attractive economic option than it would be in the absence of such authority.

As Part I demonstrated, the Middle Assyrian kingdom was economically successful and politically stable for several centuries at the end of the second millennium. Thus the conditions that prevailed in north Syria at the end of the Late Bronze Age are precisely those conditions that would have encouraged settlement. Part I outlined the extent and stability of Middle Assyrian rule in Hanigalbat from the 14th through the 11th century. During those centuries, Assyria instituted a tiered administrative hierarchy in Hanigalbat, the top level of which was the *sukkallu rabi'u*, a member of the royal family who answered directly to the king of Assyria. District administrators (*bēl pahetes*) supervised a team of officials who kept order in the provinces and ensured that the province's responsibilities to the capital were met. Assyria consolidated its administrative control over Hanigalbat by both maintaining previous power centers and constructing new ones, while they increased their authority over local populations. At the same time, Assyria was as interested in the agricultural potential of Hanigalbat as it was in the international cachet that occupying the region brought. Texts from the administrative centers, the focus of the *dunnu* system, and evidence of canal building activities attest to the agricultural aims of Assyria in the Late Bronze Age. Maintaining order and ensuring the agricultural output of the province surely involved keeping a close eye on mobile peoples, as the correspondence that deals with Sutu shows.

The consequences of these combined policies for the pastoral nomadic population of Hanigalbat would have been profound and multifold. One consequence of the Assyrian

administrative policies would have been to directly alter the mobile patterns of nomadic groups. New administrative centers and local agricultural production centers might have altered migration routes or provided new bases for seasonal settlement. Other consequences of the Middle Assyrian regime would have put new economic pressures on pastoral nomadic tribes. The military presence of Assyria at garrisons along the Balikh and Upper Tigris borders would have reduced the pastoral income provided by raiding. Increased enforcement of taxation and conscription policies would also have imposed an additional financial burden on mobile pastoralists. Finally, the intensified cultivation surrounding *dunnu* sites—over 2000 ha in the case of Sabi Abyad—and the expansion of irrigation agriculture would certainly have pushed cultivated land into the previously marginal steppeland that had been exploited by pastoralists. Thus, the Assyrian administrative and economic policies in Hanigalbat would have both pressured and encouraged sedentarization and the supplementation of pastoral activities with agricultural ventures.

At the same time that Assyria was consolidating political control and intensifying agriculture in Hanigalbat, Assyrian urban and rural centers became better integrated with the local populations. The best indicator of this integration is the site of Tell Fakhariyah, with its international style ivories and glyptic mixed with Assyrian ceramics and glyptic. Integration at both village and city levels would have tied the village-dwelling tribal elements and their mobile kinsmen more closely to Assyrian markets. Certainly, the agricultural specialization of the Middle Assyrian economy may have increased the demand by *dunnu* dwellers and urban inhabitants alike for pastoral products: dairy, wool, and meat that they were not equipped to produce in sufficient quantities. The broadening of the market for pastoral products may have provided unprecedented opportunities for

the pastoral elite to accumulate wealth. As Barth and others have shown, in many cases, as pastoral resources approach carrying capacity, maintaining large herds ceases to be profitable, and excess capital is reinvested in land holdings. Wealthy tribal leaders may therefore have reinvested excess wealth in agricultural land, a maneuver that was likely encouraged and made easier by the Assyrian provincial administrators.

The conclusion drawn from the evidence for sedentarization among modern pastoral nomads, combined with the evaluation of Middle Assyrian administration and economy in Hanigalbat is that Aramaeans were much more likely to have become sedentary during the centuries when Middle Assyrian authority was at its height. This conclusion stands in opposition to previous studies of the rise of Aramaean dynasties, which held that Aramaean nomads seized the opportunity to become sedentary when Assyria withdrew in the 11–10th centuries. This contradiction should not be surprising, as the ethnographic record suggests that nomads are unlikely to settle in the absence of a strong central authority. Moreover, those pastoralists who had previously settled are likely to return to nomadism when the favorable agricultural conditions are no longer maintained by the urban power. It stands to reason, therefore, that the political chaos in Syria and southeast Turkey at the end of the Late Bronze Age was not conducive to mass sedentarization and the rapid establishment of centralized sedentary dynasties.

In fact, the Iron Age Aramaean dynasties were the culmination of a much longer, gradual process that began with multi-resource nomads at various stages of mobility or sedentism. The process of sedentarization involved the accumulation of wealth under the expanded markets provided by Middle Assyrian authority, consolidation of tribal power, and the transitioning from pastoral to agricultural activities as the economic and political circumstances pressured nomads to settle. Thus, by the time Aramaeans began to assert

their independence under Tiglath-pileser I, the mechanisms that would enable them to take over Assyrian power structures were already in place.

4.3 A HYPOTHETICAL MODEL OF ARAMAEAN STATE FORMATION IN HANIGALBAT

It is still unclear what happened in the midst of the Dark Age, during which already sedentary, powerful Aramaeans appear to have consolidated their leadership and taken control of the urban mechanisms of power. What is clear is that at some point in the 11th-10th centuries BC, the Middle Assyrian kingdom suffered considerable setbacks. There were probably a number of factors, including the hostility of Aramaeans, that resulted in the withdrawal of Assyria from Hanigalbat. Another factor was likely the result of a warming and drying of the climate of Mesopotamia at the end of the second millennium BC (Neumann and Parpola 1987). An average change in winter temperatures of as little 1°C would reduce annual rainfall by 30mm (Neumann and Parpola 1987:162), which, in the Northern Mesopotamian “zone of uncertainty” (Wilkinson 2000c), would have had a drastic effect on both agricultural yield and nomadic herd size. Famine would have been widespread in the agricultural centers. Indeed, an Assyrian Chronicle fragment from the end of Tiglath-Pileser I’s reign (around 1080 BC) mentions the ravaging of the harvest of Assur and even cannibalism (Grayson 1972:189). The effects of climate change on pastoralists would have included the depletion of herd sizes that only the wealthiest tribesmen, that is those with the largest proportion of breeding stock, would have been able to tolerate (Cribb 1991b:33).

Here, the case of Luri settlement in the 1940’s may be instructive (Black-Michaud 1986:93–94) (See above, p 150). During that period, as agriculturalists suffered during a political vacuum, pastoralist wealth and power that had accumulated during the stable years under Reza Shah, were maintained. The situation at the end of the Late Bronze Age

may have been analogous. As the Middle Assyrian elite withdrew to the Assyrian heartland, the administrative structures that enabled the success of the *dunnu* system would have broken down, leaving Hanigalbat in the hands of rural farmers, themselves less able to cope with the decreased agricultural yield, and more vulnerable to the raids of equally destitute nomads. The ruralization of the economy during this period is demonstrated by the changes in language and form of economic texts (Postgate, J. N. 1997). Those best able to survive the famine years would have been those tribal heads who already held power in a system based on reliable pasture and who were in close contact with urban centers (Table 4). During the boom years of Middle Assyrian *dunnu*, they would have reinvested their capital in land that was easily exploited for agriculture under Assyrian management and hydrological regimes. As the most economically diversified inhabitants of the region, they would have been in a unique position to withstand the change in climate. Furthermore, in their position as tribal leaders, they would have organized the tribe members into the military forces which the royal inscriptions of the late second millennium demonize, and thereby further increased their authority over their tribes.

Those wealthy large herd- and land-owning nomadic elite, who had survived the climate fluctuations, would also have been the first to recover when the warming trend came to an end around the mid-10th century.⁴⁸ In the intervening period, their status and authority would have increased over their tribe and over the rural sedentary populations who they had been able to subjugate in the absence of Assyrian authority. As the

⁴⁸Neumann and Parpola (1987) cite several texts that directly mention famine, or imply severe droughts until 1000. Though they conclude that dry conditions prevailed until 900, Between 980 and 900, only two texts are cited, from 940 and 954 that mention famine. This pattern suggests that the warming trend in fact ended around 950. Alternatively, the warming might have ended around 1000, but the years between 954 and 940 witnessed another famine unrelated to the earlier climate change.

wealthiest and most economically stable producers of the region, they became the de facto military, administrative, and economic rulers of the territory that they controlled. As stratified rural communities were subjugated, the social differentiation among the tribes themselves would have increased, and the preconditions for nomadic statehood would have been satisfied (Khazanov 1994:232–233). According to Khazanov, these types of nomadic states tended to develop rather rapidly, so that when the light of texts shines again on this region, Aramaean society was already well stratified, with the wealthy elites established in urban centers like Tell Halaf and Tell Fakhariyah, and in control of an integrated and productive agricultural and pastoral population.

Thus far, the evidence for early sedentarization and power consolidation of Aramaeans has been entirely circumstantial and drawn from ethnographic analogy and a reconstruction of the economy and administration of the urban sector. Nevertheless, the ethnographic, textual, and ecological evidence serves as a solid basis for a hypothesis that not only avoids the basic false assumptions on which many current theories are based, but also solves several problems with the understanding of Aramaean sedentarization as it currently stands.

Still, without definitive archaeological evidence, the model must remain hypothetical. It only remains, then, to identify what type of evidence might be used to evaluate the hypothesis, and then to examine the archaeological record in that context. Naturally, the conspicuous absence of early nomadic Aramaean remains is the cause of the speculative nature of the literature on early Aramaeans. This is primarily a consequence of the naturally ephemeral nature of nomadic material culture, which makes identifying campsites in northern Mesopotamia difficult. However, there may be indications in the survey record of north Syria and southeast Turkey that offers hints that the sedentarization of pastoral nomads did indeed begin in the Middle Assyrian period.

CHAPTER 9

IDENTIFYING SEDENTARIZATION IN THE LANDSCAPE OF HANIGALBAT

1 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF PASTORAL NOMADISM IN MESOPOTAMIA

The model of Aramaean settlement during the Middle Assyrian period presented in the preceding chapter must remain hypothetical without explicit archaeological evidence for Aramaeans nomadism or sedentarization. Archaeologists have struggled to identify pastoral nomadic sites in the Near East, and in Mesopotamia particularly. In some cases, archaeologists have resigned themselves to the fact that the mobility of nomads often makes their remains so ephemeral as to be archaeologically invisible (Finkelstein and Perevolotsky 1990; Frendo 1996). But ethnoarchaeological work shows that nomads do leave distinct traces based on domestic patterns that are both unique to a nomadic lifestyle and relatively universal among nomads of different tribes (Cribb 1991a; 1991b; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1992; Rosen 1992). Early archaeological approaches to pastoral nomadism constituted a collection of suggestions based on ethnographic and ethnohistoric data (Hole 1979; 1980; LaBianca 1985) or methodological propositions (Kamp and Yoffee 1980), rather than excavations of nomadic sites that clarified nomadic behavior or nomad-sedentary interactions. Thus, Chang and Koster (1986) advocated a number of procedures aimed at identifying pastoral nomadic sites, including systematic sampling of soil to provide organic material (botanical remains, coprolites) suggestive of animal or human diets, and site catchment analysis to determine areas where the environment would have been suitable for the practice of extensive pastoralism.

More practical programs for the analysis of archaeological remains of nomadism followed. Notable among those is Cribb's (1991b) exhaustive ethnoarchaeological study of primarily Anatolian nomadism, which continues to offer a number of useful observations for the archaeology of nomadism. Among other findings, his work suggests that families within nomadic encampments are organized around what he calls the "domestic complex" (Cribb 1991b:170–173). The domestic complex is generally organized along two axes, one of which is aligned according to the slope of the terrain. This long axis stretches from the "living zone" within a tent to the "discard zone" outside the tent. The short axis bisects the "living zone." According to Cribb, awareness of the spatial organization common to most campsites will help predict the location and orientation of ancient tent sites, and to identify artifact distribution patterns that are likely to have been left by nomads.

More recently, there has been tangible success in identifying and excavating pastoral sites, especially in the Negev, where vegetation and erosion is unlikely to affect the visibility of archaeological sites (Rosen and Avni 1989; Rosen 1992; 2003). Identification of sites such as Nahal 'Oded and Har 'Oded (Rosen and Avni 1989; 1997) and the Camel Site (Rosen 2003) as pastoral nomadic remains rests primarily on the location of the sites outside the zone of agriculture, the absence of grains or grain processing equipment, limited and characteristic architecture, a predominance of sheep and goat bones, and ethnographic analogy.

A distinctive pottery assemblage may also be indicative of pastoral nomadism. Rosen and Avni (1997:65) use the high proportion of cooking wares in comparison to storage vessels at the 'Oded sites to support their interpretation of the sites as pastoral encampments. Cribb (1991b:76) suggests that nomads did not use pottery as extensively

as did settled populations, and that nomadic archaeological contexts are likely to yield only a small range of vessel types, primarily large vessels that are not easily transported. Indeed, Saidel (2002) found that excavated and surveyed nomadic sites in the Negev Highlands showed only a limited number of ceramic types, mostly holemouth vessels, compared to two towns north and south of the Negev Highlands which had a much greater variety of vessel types. However, Saidel also found that vessel function (e.g. cooking as opposed to storage vessels) was not in every case a valid indicator of pastoral occupations.

In Mesopotamia, where alluviation, vegetation, erosion, and modern plowing affect archaeological visibility to a much greater degree, identifying pastoral nomadic sites has proven difficult. Only a small number of excavated sites in Iran such as Tepe Tula'i (Hole 1974) and Tepe Guran (Mortensen 1972), have been interpreted as mobile pastoralist sites, although the interpretation of each is controversial. Tepe Tula'i was accidentally found during a rescue excavation of a Sassanian period site. The site itself consists of lines of stones and stone platforms in association with prehistoric sherds. The interpretation of the site as nomadic was based on the suggestion by local Luri nomads that these stone features were the remains of tentsites (Hole 1974; 1980:121; Cribb 1991b:214). Although the collaboration of local nomads and archaeologists in the case of Tepe Tula'i is intriguing, the analysis of the faunal remains concluded that the site may have been a village campsite that housed a separate fallow adult herd (Wheeler Pires-Ferreira 1975). Although Cribb (1991b:215) maintains that the site is significant for the archaeology of pastoral nomadism even if the campsite was not technically nomadic, the accidental discovery of the site and the conflicting interpretation of its excavator and faunal analyst diminishes the site's contribution to the discussion of methods for identifying pastoral nomadic sites.

Tepe Tula'i, and Tepe Guran are only two examples of early evidence of pastoral nomadism in the Central Zagros. Surveys aimed at identifying pastoral encampments in the same region and elsewhere have been relatively successful (Zagarell 1989; Abdi 2003; Alizadeh 2003). Identification of pastoral sites in those surveys was based to a large extent on the conjectural models of Hole (Hole 1979; 1980), Chang and Koster (Chang and Koster 1986), and others. The excavation of two pastoral sites in Abdi's (2003) survey served as a check on the identification of nomadic sites in the survey. At those excavated sites, limited pottery forms, lithics, and faunal remains support the conclusion that they were used seasonally by mobile pastoralists in the Middle Chalcolithic.

Archaeological surveys elsewhere have also been approached from a perspective that accounts for the possible role of nomadism, nomadization and sedentarization. In the Khabur basin Lyonnet (1996a; 2000a; 2001) has suggested that the western Khabur in the early second millennium was occupied by nomads. She finds distinctive patternings of sites with Ninevite V sherds and Kranzhügel sites in the Khabur basin, and posits that nomads had been important actors in the region since the early third millennium (Lyonnet 1998).

Over the past decades, a number of archaeological surveys of varying degrees of intensiveness have been conducted throughout the region of the Middle and Neo-Assyrian kingdoms, including the region of Aramaean activity (Figure 16). These surveys, especially those by Wilkinson and others (e.g., Wilkinson 1998a; 1998b; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2003b; 2003a; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995; Wilkinson and Barbanes 2000), point to the diverse ecology of northern Mesopotamia, and show that most sites of the Bronze Age had access to a zone of potential cultivation, either rain fed or irrigated, in addition to an extended area of pastoral steppeland. Bronze Age tells are ringed by an area of

intensive cultivation, then another ring of less intensive cultivation, an area of smaller satellite tells with their own agricultural regions, and finally steppe and pasture lands.⁴⁹

The northern agro-pastoral regime was therefore more extensive and well-integrated than that of the south, and the result was the social and economic integration of pastoral nomads and urban and village farmers detailed in Chapter 8.

The survey record also shows that the Iron Age saw a significant increase in settlement density in all regions of Assyrian control. This changed pattern of settlement is often identified with Aramaean sedentarization during the Dark Age between the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods (McClellan 1992; Sader 1992; 2000; Wilkinson and Barbanes 2000; Wilkinson 2003b). However, the appearance of new settlements located in previously uncultivated areas and steppeland indicates that these settlement changes were accompanied by the “extensification” of agricultural strategies. That is, the increase in settlement can not be explained solely or even primarily by the settlement of pastoral nomads (Wilkinson, *et al.* 2005:41–44).

Thus far, the analysis of survey data has tended to focus on broad trends in settlement and the archaeological landscape. However, a closer look at each period of settlement may also reveal smaller-scale changes that were taking place within shorter time frames. Several settlement maps show some indications that new settlements were being occupied in the Middle Assyrian period in areas that would have been best suited to exploitation by pastoral nomads. The following sections are devoted to an examination of existing survey data for the Late Bronze Age/Middle Assyrian period. The existence of new, small settlements, in areas suggestive of multi-resource pastoralism suggests that

⁴⁹This is not very different from Buccellati’s (1990a; 1990b) reconstruction of the perceptual geography of agriculturalists and agro-pastoralists of the Middle Euphrates.

during this period, nomadic families were indeed beginning the process of sedentarization described in Chapter 8.

2 EXAMINING SEDENTARIZATION IN THE SURVEY DATA

2.1 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY DATA

The analytical value of archaeological surveys is often limited because of a variety of factors that can influence the quality of data collected (Schiffer, *et al.* 1978; Cherry 1983). Furthermore, different problem-oriented projects require different survey techniques, and surveys by different archaeologists working in different regions rarely follow the same methods, which makes comparisons of data collected from multiple surveys difficult (Alcock and Cherry 2004). Because the surveys under consideration here cover a very large area, they present a number of general problems for the analyst. Nearly all of the surveys were conducted based on visual scanning of the survey area and interviews with local residents. This method of site identification and the non-systematic nature of sherd collection at each site means that quantitative comparisons within and between survey regions are impossible. In addition, because our understanding of the pottery sequence for some periods, including the Late Bronze Age, remains problematic, attributing an individual site to a particular historical period is difficult. Finally, the problematic issue of site size determination for a given period prohibits any rank-size correlation.

In addition to these problems of a general nature, the current discussion adds additional difficulties related to issues that are specific to the study of Late Bronze Age Hanigalbat. That is, although the Late Bronze Age encompasses the rise and fall of two significant political entities, the Mitanni and Middle Assyrian kingdoms, distinguish between the ceramic remains of these two entities is not at all straightforward. Some

surveys examined here solve this problem by treating the period as one chronological unit. For example, although Wilkinson and Tucker (1995) subdivide the second millennium in the Iraqi Jazira into three historical periods, they divide the ceramics into types that correspond only to the first and second halves of the second millennium: Khabur wares and Middle Assyrian wares respectively. Thus, the periodization of political history and archaeological classification do not coincide, and the resulting maps of settlement in the Middle Assyrian period may incorporate the effects of the fall of the Mitanni kingdom. Therefore, the settlement decrease apparent in the Middle Assyrian period might just as well reflect the ruralization, or even nomadization, that followed the collapse of the Mitanni kingdom, rather than settlement decline or ruralization that is to be associated with Middle Assyrian occupation.

Finally, the particular emphasis of this study on pastoral nomadism in the Late Bronze Age hampers even further the utility of surveys. The larger the survey area, and the less intensive the field methodology, the greater the chances are that a small site of nomadic or tribal occupation will be missed. Yet it is precisely these types of sites that are likely to yield information about temporary or incipient sedentary occupations. This issue may diminish especially the utility of Lyonnet's (1996a; 2000a; 2000b) survey to this study, which encompasses an extremely large area, and Meijer's (1986) survey, which lacks the benefit of three decades of refinements in survey methodology and ceramic chronology. Despite these problems, because I am interested in the traces of a culture that is ephemeral to begin with, the general overview of settlement that these surveys provide can be extremely useful. At the very least, survey data can suggest a direction in which further research might proceed.

The surveys discussed below cover the territory west of the Assyrian heartland from the Tigris to the Khabur Triangle (Figure 16). All of these areas are well within the

dry farming zone of Upper Mesopotamia, and in most years can sustain both agriculture and pastoralism. They are therefore regions in which mobile pastoralists and sedentary farmers would have come into contact. It is here where one would expect of sedentarization, as nomads took up permanent residence in areas of agricultural potential and in relative proximity to urban resources, but also with access to the steppe zone, and perhaps at some distance from potentially hostile urban power centers.

2.2 NORTH JAZIRA SURVEY

In four seasons from 1986 to 1990, 497 km² in northwest Iraq was surveyed by Wilkinson and Tucker (1995). The survey region comprises a shallow basin in the North Jazira drained by small wadis in the north and south that empty into the Wadi al-Mur, which itself flows southeast to empty into the Tigris. The basin is flanked by rolling hills to the west, northeast and southeast. In most years dry farming is possible on the North Jazira plain, though the flat wadi basin has a higher agricultural yield than the surrounding hills (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995:7).

Wilkinson and Tucker (1995:iv, 59) divide the second millennium in the North Jazira into three historical periods: the Khabur period (2000-1500), identified by a range of Khabur wares; the Mitanni period (1500 to 1300), identified by Nuzi ware; and the Middle Assyrian period (1300-1000), based on characteristic Middle Assyrian pottery. To address the difficulties identifying Nuzi ware and distinguishing between Middle and Late Assyrian wares, Wilkinson and Tucker (1995:59) take Khabur wares as generally representative of the first half of the second millennium and Middle Assyrian wares as generally representative of the second half of the second millennium. Thus, they effectively collapse the tripartite historical division of the second millennium into two broad archaeological periods based on ceramic indicators: a “Khabur period” and a

“Middle Assyrian period.”⁵⁰ Though not entirely satisfactory, this may be the best solution to the problem, as Khabur ware has since been found in later Mitanni levels at Rimah and Brak (Postgate, C., *et al.* 1997:54; Oates, *et al.* 1997). Moreover, Pfälzner (1995) has confirmed that Mitanni wares give way to Middle Assyrian types at Seikh Hamad beginning in the 13th century. However, as mentioned above, one consequence of this scheme is that maps of the second half of the Late Bronze Age may conflate the effects on settlement patterns of two significant political developments: the decline of the Mitanni kingdom beginning in the 14th century, and the subsequent growth of the Middle Assyrian kingdom. Thus, the overall thinning of the number of settlements in this period probably reflects the ruralization, perhaps accompanied by an increase in pastoral nomadism that followed the collapse of the Mitanni kingdom, and not the expansion of Middle Assyrian control. Further complicating the settlement picture in this period is the fact that any increase in settlement that may have occurred during the Middle Assyrian period is dwarfed in comparison with the dramatic settlement growth that took place in the first millennium (32 new settlements [Wilkinson and Tucker 1995:Fig. 41]). Wilkinson and Tucker (1995:62) conclude that at least some of these new Late Assyrian settlements may have been occupied by sedentarized tribesmen, who they suggest turned to agriculture in this period. Certainly, much of the extended settlement in the Iron Age also reflected the Assyrian concern with agricultural extensification and colonization of previously uncultivated land (Radner 2000; Wilkinson, *et al.* 2005).

However, the changes in settlement between the earlier Khabur and Middle Assyrian periods indicates that sedentarization may also have been taking place during the

⁵⁰Wilkinson and Tucker (1995:60) acknowledge that “because of their lack of distinction compared with the Khabur and later 3rd millennium ceramics, the Middle Assyrian wares might be under-represented, a factor that may account for part of the decline in site numbers.”

Middle Assyrian period. In the Khabur period twenty five new sites appear along wadis or around large centers like Tell el-Hawa, locations that are optimal for agricultural production (Figure 17a). These new sites may indicate a general trend toward urbanization in the first part of the second millennium. In the Middle Assyrian period, the rate of settlement and abandonment had changed: sixteen sites are abandoned, and only eight new sites are established (Figure 17b). Although the high rate of site abandonment might reflect ruralization, the point has already been made above that the map may conflate the effects of the turbulent political history of the Late Bronze Age. There is an additional reason to suggest that the trend is not simply the result of nomadization or ruralization during the Middle Assyrian period. Three Middle Assyrian sites⁵¹ are established in the middle of the survey area—two along the less cultivable slopes of the wadi basin (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995:7), and the third within the basin in the very center of the survey area. Together these three small sites, each about one hectare, occupy what appears to have been a no-man's land in the preceding period, when settlements were clustered in the northern or southern poles of the survey area. Though limited, this type of infilling of the otherwise crowded landscape may point to the early sedentarization of pastoral nomadic elements. The fact that two of those sites were settled along the slopes of the basin, where rainfall runoff makes agriculture more unstable than it is within the basin, supports the suggestion that these may be settlements of sedentarizing nomads, who retained easy access to pasturage while increasing agricultural activities as they took up a sedentary lifestyle.

2.3 HAMOUKAR SURVEY

In 2000 and 2001, a 125 km² area around Tell Hamoukar, on the eastern edge of the Khabur basin and just west of the North Jazira survey region, was surveyed using

CORONA satellite images to identify sites and the same sampling strategy used by the North Jazira project (Ur 2002). The method of dating diagnostic sherds also followed the system used by Wilkinson and Tucker (1995), and Ur (2002:74, n. 11) therefore distinguishes between early second millennium occupation, based on the presence of Khabur ware, and Middle Assyrian occupation, based on Middle Assyrian wares, but does not discuss Mitanni settlement.

The results of the Hamoukar survey are somewhat more difficult to interpret than the much larger North Jazira survey because several large Khabur period settlements lay just outside the survey area, and the lack of settlement during this period within the survey region may reflect a shift in settlement away from the Hamoukar region, rather than an actual decline in settlement. The apparent slight increase in settlement in the Middle Assyrian period may therefore be artificial. The new sites that do appear, notably the small sites THS 1, THS 10, THS 27, THS 42, are located some kilometers from the largest site of the period, Khirbet al-‘Abd (THS 16) (Figure 18a). Of those new sites, THS 9, THS 42, and THS 48 are also occupied in the Iron Age (Figure 18b). Thus, the pattern at Hamoukar seems to conform to the pattern in the North Jazira, that is, of new small sites that may have been occupied by sedentarizing groups in the Middle Assyrian period. Unfortunately, the coarseness of the pottery chronology and the possible effects of the limited survey region on interpretations of the settlement pattern make it difficult to accept this conclusion with any degree of certainty.

2.4 NORTHEASTERN SYRIA SURVEY

East of the North Jazira survey, Meijer (1986) surveyed a large portion of northeast Syria in 1976, 1977, and 1979. Like Wilkinson and Tucker, Meijer does not

⁵¹Sites 69, 105, and 157.

divide the Late Bronze Age ceramics into Mitanni and Middle Assyrian types, but he does distinguish between sites with Middle Bronze Age ceramics and sites that specifically contain Khabur Ware. Settlement in northeast Syria declined dramatically in the second millennium between the Khabur Ware period and the Late Bronze Age (Figure 19). Whereas 91 sites had Khabur ware, 38 sites in the region had Late Bronze Age ceramics. But the rate of site abandonment and settlement continuity indicates that a relatively complex process may have been underway. Of the 38 Late Bronze Age sites, only 21 (55%) were occupied in the previous period. This means that a total of 70 sites were abandoned between the first and second halves of the second millennium, and nearly half of the Late Bronze Age sites (17 sites [44%]) were new occupations. Again, because of the poor pottery chronology and lack of distinction between the Mitanni and Middle Assyrian periods, the implications of these statistics are open to interpretation. It is worth noting, however that five of these new Late Bronze Age sites were located away from the water sources or between two wadis (Figure 19).⁵²

Although many of these sites were abandoned in the Iron Age, the fact that some of the new Iron Age settlements are located next to the Late Bronze Age sites may indicate the successful occupation of those previously unsettled zones, especially the sites in the southwest region of the survey. Again, in the northeast Syria survey, we see a very small number of occupations in the Late Bronze Age in environmental zones that may have been exploited by sedentarizing nomads.

2.5 KHABUR SURVEY

Lyonnet's (1996a; 2000a; 2000b) survey of the western part of the Khabur triangle picks up in the west where Meijer's survey left off (Figure 20). Her team surveyed 64

⁵²Sites 262, 219, 90, 95, and 268.

tells, and collected sherds according to a random, non-systematic sampling procedure (Lyonnet 1996b). Lyonnet identifies sites of the first half of the second millennium, the Mitanni period, and combined Middle/Late Assyrian occupations. She notes that in the Middle Bronze Age, settlement was primarily concentrated in the eastern portion of the survey area, and suggests that the lack of settlement in the west means that the western Khabur itself was under the control of nomadic tribes.

From the first half of the second millennium to the Mitanni period, the number of sites decreases by 13.3%, from 45 sites to 39 sites, a trend toward a rural settlement pattern that is mirrored in the North Jazira and Northeastern Syria surveys. Some new sites partially fill the void in the western region of the Khabur during the Mitanni period, which might indicate either the sedentarization of nomadic tribes, or new occupations of Mitanni. For the most part, in the eastern portion of the survey sites continue in the same location as sites from the preceding period. The Mitanni period, then, witnesses both abandonment and the establishment of new sites in the west, alongside settlement continuity in the east. This pattern suggests that the nomads who may have been active along the western portion of the Khabur triangle settled in this period and occupied new sites unaffiliated with previous inhabitants.

In the Middle and Late Assyrian period, the number of settlements increases by 76% to 69 sites. These new sites can probably be explained both by the settlement of nomadic tribes and the new occupations of urban Assyrians and relocated Hanigalbateans, a trend seen in a number of surveys of the Neo-Assyrian sphere (Wilkinson, *et al.* 2005; Wilkinson, *et al.* 2004; Wilkinson 2003b; Wilkinson 2003a; Wilkinson and Barbanes 2000). Unfortunately, because there is no distinction between Middle and Late Assyrian ceramics, there is no way to tell whether the new sites are established in the Late Bronze

Age or Early Iron Age. Furthermore, as with Meijer's survey, the very large survey region, and tell-based method of site identification means that the smallest sites, those most likely to have been the location where nomads transitioned to sedentism, are likely to have been missed.

2.6 UPPER TIGRIS SURVEY

Beginning in 1988, a series of surveys was undertaken in discrete areas along the Upper Tigris and its tributaries: the Cizre plain, the Bohtan River, the Garzan River, and the Tigris-Batman confluence (Algaze, *et al.* 1991; Algaze 1989; Parker 2001). Sites were identified based on local informant interviews, visual scanning by vehicle and, rarely, walked transits. There was no systematic sampling method; instead each site was divided into "morphological areas," and diagnostic sherds were collected from each area. Results of the survey published in preliminary reports remain preliminary, and since the detailed work of Parker (2001) on the Iron Age material from all surveys, there has been no additional examination of the sherds, which remain in the Diyarbakır Museum.⁵³ Because the identification of ceramics other than those from the Iron Age was preliminary for all regions except the Cizre plain, that is the only survey region that can be applied to the current study with confidence in the identification of the Late Bronze Age/Middle Assyrian ceramics. In that region, there are seven Late Bronze Age/Middle Assyrian sites, and possibly three additional sites (Figure 21). Of the seven securely identified Late Bronze Age/Middle Assyrian sites, only one was unoccupied in the preceding Early

⁵³In the summer of 2005, I was able to examine these sherds. Unfortunately, I had not anticipated the extent of the water damage from an earlier flood to the tags and bags which contained the sherds. As a result, I spent the majority of my time in Diyarbakır sorting and relabeling the material. Nevertheless, I am indebted to the UCLA Friends of Archaeology and the George Franklin Dales foundation for funding, Guillermo Algaze and Necdet Inal, director of the Diyarbakır Museum, for granting me permission to view the sherds, and to Tim Matney for additional assistance during that summer.

Second Millennium (Khabur Ware) phase. That site, Gre Musto (Site 40), was among the largest of the Cizre sites (maximum size=6 ha; minimum size=1.5 ha; average between maximum and minimum=3.75 ha),⁵⁴ and had been unoccupied since the Ninevite V period.

Of the three sites with ephemeral Middle Assyrian ceramics, only one, Kütnüz Höyük (Site 65) had been occupied in the immediately preceding period. The two other previously unoccupied Late Bronze Age sites⁵⁵ were relatively small and located in somewhat isolated positions relative to the other sites in the survey area. Site 18 is close to the confluence of the Tigris and the Lesser Khabur River, which forms the southern boundary of the survey region. Site 34, however, is in an unexpected location. It is not near any current perennial or seasonal stream, nor was it located in proximity to other sites of the Middle Assyrian period. This small site of Kopek Höyük (maximum size=5.65 ha; minimum size=0.5 ha; average between maximum and minimum=3.0 ha)⁵⁶ is thus precisely the type of site we would expect to find occupied by sedentarized/sedentarizing nomads. Therefore, the Middle Assyrian period saw the establishment of at least three new sites: the large site of Gre Musto; a small site near two water sources; and a second small site isolated from the other settlements of the period, which may have been occupied by settling nomads. All ten of the Middle Assyrian sites were also occupied in the Late Assyrian period, along with 27 other newly established sites.

2.7 BALIKH SURVEY

Lyon's (2000) reassessment and resurvey of Akkermans's (1984; 1993) Balikh survey in light of the Middle Assyrian evidence from Sabi Abyad has resulted in a new

⁵⁴Parker (2001:272) recognizes that his maximum settlement size may be exaggerated.

⁵⁵Site 18, Yanakale Höyük and Site 34, Köpik Höyük, each with ephemeral Middle Assyrian remains.

⁵⁶See note 54 regarding settlement size calculations.

understanding of the nature of Middle Assyrian settlement along the Balikh (see Section 1, Figure 22). Lyon identifies six Middle Assyrian (Balikh VIII B) sites, with another six possible minor occupations, containing one or two Middle Assyrian sherds. These sites represent a decline from the 41 sites of the previous period (Balikh VIII A), and a marked shift in settlement southward.

Because this region was abandoned after Tukulti-Ninurta I, and was not, therefore, under effective Middle Assyrian control throughout the period, sedentarization would not have occurred on the same scale as it would elsewhere in the kingdom, where the long stability of Middle Assyrian authority provided consistent incentive for Aramaeans and other nomads to settle. Indeed, of the Middle Assyrian sites, only four sites were reoccupied in the following period (Balikh IX), though because Balikh IX encompasses a long period of time, it is impossible to determine if all sites were occupied at the same time (Lyon 2000:102). That discontinuity of settlement from the Late Bronze to Iron Ages stands in sharp contrast to the overwhelming continuity of settlement in other regions of the Assyrian kingdom.

2.8 SUMMARY

While far from definitive, the detailed look at the above surveys shows that there is indeed an intriguing pattern to the settlements of the Late Bronze Age/Middle Assyrian Period (Table 5). In nearly every survey in the portions of the Middle Assyrian kingdom that remained under the control of a stable Assyrian authority throughout the 13th and 12th centuries, a small number of new sites appear in locations amenable to combined pastoral and agricultural economies. In most cases, the rate of abandonment is greater than the rate of new site establishment. One exception to this trend is the Hamoukar survey, the very circumscribed nature of which may account for the difference. The other

exceptions is the Khabur survey, where the fact that sites of Middle and Late Assyrian occupations are grouped together means that any site that might have been abandoned in the Middle Assyrian period and then resettled in the Late Assyrian period won't be apparent.

In general, however, the rates of site abandonment and establishment in the Middle Assyrian period fit well with two features of Middle Assyrian settlement already discussed. The first is the widespread effort by the Assyria to both sever and retain associations with the Mitanni authority. Assyria could therefore present itself as both the inherited authority in Hanigalbat, and as a source of power that was distinct from previous kingdoms. The rate of newly established sites in the Middle Assyrian period may also reflect, at least in part, the sedentarization of early Aramaean nomads in Hanigalbat. That is, of the newly settled sites, the few in each region that are either in a marginal environmental zone or relatively distant from an urban center may be the location where nomads turned to a sedentary lifestyle. These are all very small sites, generally under one hectare, and the small number of these sites is certainly a factor of the overwhelmingly tell-based approach to survey methodologies. It is likely that more intensive and systematic surveys would likely yield a larger number of small sites that might be found in locations that are distant from either perennial water sources or urban centers. In fact, the sites found in the relatively small Hamoukar region, primarily identified from CORONA satellite images, show that a very detailed analysis of a small region is indeed likely to result in the identification of more small sites than extensive survey of a large region.

In the context of sedentarization, it is important to note the difference in the settlement pattern of the Balikh region, where there was a very high rate of abandonment, and where the newly established sites were larger than one hectare, or located very close

to the large urban centers of Sabi Abyad and Tell es-Seman. This difference is probably a result of the withdrawal of Assyria from this region much earlier than the withdrawal from the rest of Hanigalbat. Nomadic families in the Balikh region had less time than those elsewhere to establish permanent sedentary communities under the incentives, economic and otherwise, from a strong Assyrian authority.

It is impossible to say definitively, without either more detailed surveys or intensive excavations of these sites, that they were occupations of sedentarizing Aramaeans, rather than simple sedentary village sites. However, the data accumulated from the surveys throughout Hanigalbat do fit the pattern suggested by other aspects of the Middle Assyrian period which indicate that sedentarization of nomadic Aramaean tribes would have been underway at the height of Middle Assyrian authority, rather than after the Assyrian withdrawal from Hanigalbat. An additional indicator that the relative stability of Middle Assyrian authority influenced sedentarization comes from the contrast between the surveys of the Middle Assyrian region with Whallon's (1979) survey of the Keban dam area of the Upper Euphrates, a region outside the sphere of Middle Assyrian control. There, the level of settlement continuity from the Late Bronze to Iron Age is much lower, and demonstrates a different pattern of settlement among the nomadic populations of Anatolia.

3 EXAMINING NOMADIZATION IN THE SURVEY DATA

3.1 KEBAN SURVEY

At the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, the central Anatolian land known as Išuwa served as a relatively independent buffer between the great powers of Mitanni and Hatti (Klengel 1976–1980). The Hittite king Šuppiluliuma I adopted Išuwa into the Hittite realm in the 14th century, and it remained part of the Hittite empire until the demise

of the Hittites around 1180. Thus, as in Hanigalbat, this region came under stable political control in the 14th century, but unlike the north Syrian region, which remained under Middle Assyrian control until the 11th century, the upper Euphrates shows signs of a series of violent destructions accompanying the fall of the Hittites beginning in the 12th century.⁵⁷ After these destructions, the region became part of a small Neo-Hittite kingdom, and then a peripheral territory of the Neo-Assyrian Empire that bordered Urartu. In short, after the Hittite collapse, the Keban region never regained its previous political independence and stability, while north Syria continued under the firm control of the Middle Assyrian kings.

Whallon's (1979) survey of this area shows that if sedentarization increased under the stable Hittite rule, in the chaos following the Late Bronze Age destructions, many of these sedentarized settlements disappeared (Figure 23). Based on ceramic indicators, Whallon (1979:58–59) divides the second millennium into two periods: the Middle Bronze Age from 2000 to around 1500, and the Late Bronze Age, or Hittite period from 1500 to 1200, which corresponds to the period of Hittite control in Išuwa. Settlement continuity is a defining feature of the Keban region in the Late Bronze Age, as it is in the Middle Assyrian realm (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995:62), but in the Keban region no sites are abandoned between the Middle Bronze Age and the Hittite period, and thirteen new sites are established. As a percentage of the total number of sites in the period, the rate of site establishment is similar to that in the Middle Assyrian region. Like the sites further east, some of new Keban sites are located near water sources or larger settlements, while other new sites are quite small (all but one under 1.5 ha) and located in more isolated areas.⁵⁸

⁵⁷For example, Norşuntepe Level 3 (Hauptmann 1979) and Korucutepe Phase J (Van Loon 1975–1980).

⁵⁸For example, O54/18, O55/6, O55/10.

These sites may be indicative of the sedentarization of nomads, and if they are, the abandonment of every one of these new sites in the Iron Age suggests that sedentarization followed a very different course in central Anatolia than it did in northeast Syria. Where the grand experiment in sedentarization succeeded for the nomads of the north Syria, since the majority of Late Bronze Age sites continued to be occupied in the Iron Age, the sedentarizing pastoralists of the Keban region were forced to pull up their stakes when conditions became unstable after the fall of the Hittites and no strong authority stepped in to succeed them in the final centuries of the second millennium. By contrast, the stability of the Middle Assyrian kingdom and the renewal of Assyrian power in the Iron Age allowed pastoralists who had become sedentary to make the full switch to agriculture. Though some trace of Hittite rule continued in the west (Hawkins 1994), in the Iron Age Išuwa served as a buffer between Assyria and Urartu, and never fell firmly under the authority of either. Without the stability that is so often a precondition for sedentarization, the urge to settle never resurfaced after the Hittite kingdom collapsed.

4 TOWARDS AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF SEDENTARIZATION

Several lines of circumstantial evidence thus point to the sedentarization of some segment of the nomadic society of Syria during the height of Middle Assyrian power in Hanigalbat. The archaeological and textual records show that the Middle Assyrian presence in Hanigalbat was relatively stable throughout the 13th and 12th centuries, and that the economic focus of the kingdom relied on agricultural colonization and intensification. The vast literature on modern nomads suggests that those are the very conditions which provide an incentive for multi-resource nomads to become sedentary farmers. Finally, the indications of the survey record in the Middle Assyrian provinces show that small, isolated sites in relatively marginal areas do begin to appear in the Late

Bronze Age/Middle Assyrian period, and continue into the Iron Age. Although compelling and highly suggestive, none the evidence adduced thus far constitutes definitive archaeological proof that Aramaeans settled earlier than the period of Assyrian withdrawal in the mid-11th through the 10th century. Although a conclusive demonstration of sedentarization is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is worth discussing the types of evidence that one would seek to find definitive proof. How would the transition to sedentarism appear in the archaeological record? Are there material correlates of sedentarization that archaeologists might be able to access? Some clues about how sedentarization may be manifest in the material record can be suggested by consideration of the mechanisms of settlement in the modern period.

4.1 SEDENTARIZATION AND THE LINK TO A NOMADIC PAST

Several aspects of nomadism and the shift to sedentary lifestyle have already been touched upon (Chapter 8). Just as nomadism itself is characterized by a multiplicity of forms of production, political forms, and other adaptations, the mechanism of sedentarization are likewise diverse. Furthermore, when presented with a choice, nomads generally prefer a mobile lifestyle over a sedentary existence, not only because of the lower risk involved in pastoralism, but often because of a visceral attachment to the nomadic way of life. Despite the fact that sedentarization can take place in a variety of ways under a variety of conditions, the attachment to a mobile heritage is clear from a large number of ethnographic examples. The attachment to mobility even after sedentarization is visually evoked by Beck's (2003:293) description of the home of a sedentarized Qashqa'i family: "a black goat-hair tent was pitched by one house, where a newly married son and his bride resided and where guests were entertained, as if to celebrate the past nostalgically." That kind of material display of one's nomadic past is

only one element of a broader cultural connection to pastoral nomadism that Beck noted among settled Qashqa'i. Tribal connections were retained, and a unique sense of identity was reinforced by intermarriage and social contact that was limited to members of settled families' own tribes and subtribes (Beck 1986:185; 2003:292). The same retention of associations with tribal kin, politics, and culture is evident among settled Bedouin in Jordan and Israel (Katakura 1977:167; Abu Jaber, *et al.* 1987). Among settled Yörük, Bates found that despite an increase in factionalism and political divisions that sedentarization engendered, those new adaptations were economic and political, rather than a "massive change in formal institutions or social rules" (Bates 1973:222). Among the Rwala, settling had once meant that a member would be cut off from the tribe, because the mobility was equated with morality, and the need or desire to become sedentary meant that an individual or family either lacked money, or was rich, and therefore not generous; both cases implied a lack of morality (Lancaster 1981:150). However, as contacts between nomads and towns and villages became closer, sedentarization came to be seen as a viable option that did not involve leaving the tribe.

Beck's description of a tent alongside a permanent structure captures the sense of dual lifestyles that a settled nomad may experience. It is a common scene among sedentarizing or semi-sedentary nomads (Watson 1979:243; Layne 1987:347; van der Steen 2004:4; Humphrey and Sneath 1999), and the difficult choice that sedentarization sometimes entails is evident in Abu Jaber *et al.*'s (1987:v) reflection concerning the same image in some Bedouin village settlements in Jordan, and in their reflection on what degree of "mental agony took place in the psyche of the individual that made the transition from the mobile tent to the permanent home." In general, when a tribe member settles, that person retains an attachment not only to a unique tribal identity distinct from other sedentary social elements, but also to a mobile heritage.

4.2 NOMADIC MATERIAL CULTURE IN SEDENTARY CONTEXTS

Because settled nomads continue to retain a link to their nomadic past, one way that archaeologists may be able to access nomadic culture is by excavating those sites at which they began the transition to sedentism (Szuchman in press). Those sites might exhibit material reflections of recent nomadic activity. Although, in theory, archaeologists have become increasingly conscious of the continuum that exists between mobile and sedentary lifestyles, and between pastoral and agricultural mechanisms of production, in practice, archaeological excavation still seems tethered to a two-part site typology that distinguishes between *either* nomadic campsites *or* sedentary village or urban sites. The ethnographic data that bear on sedentarization suggest that there may be room for an archaeology of pastoral nomadism that accounts for more nuance in the existing binary site typology. Sites occupied by recently settled nomads, or by nomads undergoing a process of sedentarization, may be distinguished from other sedentary sites by the presence of unique material correlates of a recent tribal or nomadic heritage. Such correlates might consist of characteristic details in dwelling architecture, the organization of domestic space, or settlement layout.

Cribb (1991b:96–97) notes that in some cases, nomads will construct temporary dwellings alongside, and exploiting the construction material of abandoned permanent dwellings. These “composite dwellings” occur in a number of contexts and often comprise individual elements of a larger “composite settlement.” For Cribb (1991b:154–155), these type of dwellings or settlements are a “fuzzy area,” neither house nor tent, village nor encampment. A composite settlement type may indicate the presence of a tribal community with fully integrated pastoral and agricultural sectors (Cribb 1991b:155). Alternatively, composite types may indicate one stage of the transition from nomadic to sedentary dwellings or communities (Cribb 1991b:160–161). Because of their reliance on

permanent architectural features, composite dwellings are more likely to survive archaeologically, and a large amalgamation of composite dwellings within a defined space may indicate the sedentarization of an entire community. Therefore, they are very significant archaeologically, and an awareness of the configuration of composite dwellings and settlements is potentially of use for identifying transitional sites.

In addition to the use of composite dwelling forms, settling nomads may construct permanent dwellings that are modeled on tent architecture. The idea that distinctive architecture may be derived from tent forms is not new, and has been discussed especially, though not without controversy, in association with the four-room house characteristic of Iron Age Israel (Kempinski 1978; Fritz 1981; Stager 1985). In this context, Rosen () has correctly cautioned against placing too much emphasis on modern parallels between the architecture and spatial organization of tents and permanent dwellings. Caution is particularly warranted because many features that are characteristic of the modern nomadic lifestyle can not be assumed to have existed in antiquity (Saidel in press). For example, specific parallels between tents and permanent dwellings among sedentarized populations in the ethnographic literature are factors of modern religious habits, rather than customs peculiar to a nomadic existence. Thus, practices associated with coffee making, the division of domestic space according to gender, and even the iconic form of the Bedouin black tent itself are relatively modern constructs, and were unlikely to have existed among ancient nomadic societies. Archaeologists must therefore be very careful about how they apply ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological data to dwelling forms of sedentarized nomads to the antiquity.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there are elements of tent and house architecture and spatial organization that share culturally determined features of nomadism

and tribal attachments. Among the Bedouin of Wadi Fatima in Saudi Arabia, the sedentarization process involves the increasing use of durable materials in dwelling construction, as wool tents give way to clay, mud brick, or cement houses (Katakura 1977:73). Even as construction materials change, the layout of permanent dwellings often mirrors that of the tent. In Wadi Fatima, the permanent houses retain divided interior quarters for the men and women, just as in tents and, as is also the case for tent dwellings, most of the domestic activity takes place outside (Katakura 1977:73). Layne (1987:351–355) has found that the architecture of the houses of settled Abbad tribe members also mirrors the domestic layout of the tents of mobile tribe members. In the case of each structure, rooms are added on as necessary, in tents by adding tent poles and in houses by adding additional walls. The clearest difference between tent and house layout is apparent only in very large houses, where the presence of solid walls means that a single room can not be used for the large meetings and celebrations that a tent could accommodate. In those cases, separate long halls may be built for meetings and gatherings, away from the living quarters, and sometimes on a second floor. But these changes in the structural design of the dwelling are merely a function of a conflict between architectural expediencies and the tribe member's desire to retain familiar cultural patterns.

Beyond similarities in architectural form, recently settled nomads may make use of space within permanent dwellings in ways that mirror use of space in tentsites. Table 6 summarizes some of the continuities in architecture, activity space, and furnishings that appear in both temporary and permanent dwellings among the Bedouin in Jordan (Abu Jaber, *et al.* 1987:16–17). Men's and women's areas remain distinct in both dwellings, and storage and cooking areas remain in similar locations. The furnishings within the house—those accoutrements of daily life—also remain the same in temporary and

permanent dwellings: mattresses and rugs are used for seating and entertaining, and were bundled and stored when not in use, and the houses of wealthy families took on only minimal heavy furnishings, such as steel bedsteads, chairs and small tables.

The same phenomenon occurs among the Bedouin of Wadi Fatima, where the floor plans of tents and houses display remarkable similarities (Katakura 1977:Figs. 11–12). Two-room dwellings are divided into men’s and women’s quarters, with cushions and storage boxes furnishing each. In the permanent houses, built-in shelves and ventilation openings appear to be the primary difference (Katakura 1977:75–76). Bedouin who settle will often do so together, clustering in groups according to subtribe, except in cases where marriage or other relationships dictate otherwise (Katakura 1977:142).

Numerous additional ethnographic examples illustrate the continuities in dwelling architecture and layout, and ethnoarchaeological studies also show that the material record of dwellings and settlements may reflect the transition from nomadic to sedentary life. For example the layout of the houses of ‘Abbad tibe members in the Jordan Valley is similar to their tents, as are the dimensions and fixtures of the house (Layne 1987:351). However, the spatial organization of domestic areas does indeed change as a consequence of sedentarization. Yet those changes are not merely the practical effects of sedentarization, rather they reflect an increasing participation in the world capitalist system (Layne 1987:355). Layne (1987:345–346) notes, therefore, that “sedentism, in and of itself, has little predictive value for changes in a group’s use of space and that the consequences of sedentism are conditioned by other factors such as the dominant mode of production and the idiosyncrasies of the indigenous social organization and system of cultural conventions regarding the use of space.” Thus, for example, one particular characteristic of the capitalist mode of production is the separation of productive labor from the home, which

contrasts with the self-sufficient private pastoral economies. That change in the pattern of production is reflected in increased use of monofunctional space in permanent dwellings, as opposed to the multifunctional organization of the domestic space around and inside tents (Layne 1987:364). However, this is purely an outcome of an economic, not cultural shift. Despite these changes, many activities that do take place in the home remain “distinctively Bedouin,” and encompass unique cultural conventions, such as the characteristic care, maintenance, storage, and use associated with mattresses (Layne 1987:369).

In addition to similarities in individual family dwellings of mobile and settled tribes, analysis on the level of the entire settlement can shed light on the sedentarization process (Cribb 1991b:156–161). Proceeding from Sumner’s (1979) analysis of the role of cultural preference in determining settlement layout, Cribb suggests that open settlement plans and composite villages may often be characteristic of sedentarizing communities. Over time, infilling of empty space and additions to existing dwellings leads to a denser, organically agglomerated village plan (Cribb 1991b:Fig. 8.10). Cribb argues that sedentarization is therefore not only visible at the level of a single household, but that household data, examined alongside settlement layout and regional settlement trends together may be used to identify sedentarization in the archaeological record.

The implications of the ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological studies pertaining to nomadism are clear: sedentarization may indeed be visible archaeologically as a collection of distinctive architectural features or aspects of spatial organization that reflect an attachment to cultural practices rooted in a mobile past. Changes in these features must be expected, of course, but these are more likely to result from alterations in the social and economic spheres of interaction that are byproducts of sedentarization, rather than simply

changes in lifestyle that are due solely to permanent residence. Archaeologists therefore need to remain aware of both the continuities that persist after sedentarization and to the behavioral shifts that may accompany the various changes in economic and social organization that accompany the transition to a sedentary existence.

In the region of Middle Assyrian expansion, excavations of those sites identified in Section 1 as possible occupations of sedentarizing or sedentarized nomads may well offer archaeological evidence of the settlement of Ahlamu-Aramaeans. The decades of research into the textual and archaeological record of the Middle Assyrian kingdom have generated a highly detailed picture of the economic and administrative world of the Middle Assyrian provinces. Those details have permitted a number of inferences to be made about the place of pastoral nomads in the provinces governed by Assyria. Because the hypotheses developed here make use of several mutually supporting lines of evidence, and because Aramaeans played a pivotal role in the resurgence of Assyria in the Iron Age, the Middle Assyrian period offers a remarkably fertile and exciting avenue by which to explore the potential of an archaeology of sedentarization. However, in order to pursue an archaeology of sedentarization, archaeologists must begin to move away from focusing solely on the tent or campsite as measures of ancient pastoral nomadism. The multiplicity of nomadic social and economic habits and settlement forms, in addition to the potential material correlates of the cultural connections to mobility that are retained during and after sedentarization means that many different types of settlements housed nomads at varying stages of settlement. Archaeologists can only recover these settlements if we know what to look for.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

1 TEXTS, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN PERIOD

The aim of this dissertation has been to explore in detail the westward expansion of the Middle Assyrian kingdom in order to understand the administrative mechanisms that enabled its longevity, and to explore the effects of administrative stability on local pastoral nomadic populations, specifically in terms of the settlement and subsequent state-formation of Aramaean tribes. I began by identifying several problems with the current model of the Middle Assyrian period. Many of those problems stem from the fact that to date, the Middle Assyrian period has been analyzed based on the evidence from royal inscriptions and private archives. Despite the vast quantity of archaeological evidence bearing on the Middle Assyrian kingdom, those data have been adduced largely to sanction the results of a historically text-based approach to the period. This situation in the scholarship on the Middle Assyrian period is, in fact, just one example of a broader pattern of poor integration of texts and archaeology in the study of the ancient Near East. Several scholars have discussed the difficult relationship between texts and archaeology, which is in large part the result of the increasing specialization of the fields of archaeology and Assyriology, and fears of toe-stepping and turf wars that might come about from crossing the imaginary fence that divides the two. Postgate (1994:176) uses vivid imagery to paint a rather bleak scenario:

There has been a general reluctance on the part of archaeologists to engage with the written evidence, and those who read the texts have been equally reluctant to

cross this barrier. With rare exceptions, when one side decides to make a foray into strange territory, it is just that—a foray, almost a commando raid, which takes some booty, wrenches it from its background and then proceeds to exploit it in their home territory according to their own priorities.

Others have a more optimistic outlook, and either urge better cooperation between researchers, or point to those cases where texts and archaeology have been interpreted judiciously and to the advantage of both fields (Van de Mieroop 1999; Liverani 1999; Eidem 2002; Matthews, R. 2003). In his recent appraisal of the situation, Zimansky (2005:323) concludes that “there is no inherent conflict between these disciplines.” But the instances that he cites of the successful integration of texts and archaeology are those where the evidence from excavations corresponds directly to the contents of particular documents, or where tablets are found *in situ* in the course of excavation, and can thus be incorporated into a broad understanding of how the site worked. More often, however, scholars are faced with situations where two sources of evidence are in conflict, or where the evidence that is available from one source vastly outweighs the evidence that is available from the other. It is vital that archaeologists acknowledge and address those imbalances and conflicts, not merely to avoid methodological problems of analysis and interpretation that are skewed to a single data set, but also because “negative correspondences” between texts and artifacts force scholars to penetrate beyond the impressions given by each source and to “create new and different images of the past.” (Andrén 1998:171–175).

In this study of the Middle Assyrian period, I have been forced to confront many of tensions between texts and other material culture. One point for which the sources are particularly unbalanced regards the nature of the kingdom during the 12th century, when documentation declines, but the archaeology of Hanigalbat suggests continuity of the Assyrian presence there. Archaeologists have also had to contend with the lack of written

sources dating to the turn of the first millennium and pertaining to the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. Much of the debate about that transition centers on the role played by semi-nomadic Aramaeans, and the large-scale settlement that had taken place by the 10th century. With regard to the rise of the Aramaeans, the textual evidence, meager though it is, is far greater than the archaeological evidence, as the occupations of Late Bronze Age pastoral nomads have yet to be identified on the ground. The case of Assyrian-Aramaean relations in the Neo-Assyrian period is also one of conflicting data. Tiglath-pileser I and Aššur-bel-kala initiated a tradition of demonizing Aramaeans as agents of barbarism and instability, a tradition that was perpetuated by Neo-Assyrian kings. Yet the Iron Age archaeological record of this relationship shows a great deal of integration and adaptation, with evidence of Aramaean emulation of Assyrian royal iconography on the one hand,⁵⁹ and the adoption by Assyria of the Aramaic alphabet and language on the other (Tadmor 1982; 1991). This archaeological evidence of affinity conflicts with the epigraphic evidence of hostility.

My approach to these problems of inconsistent or conflicting data has been, where possible, to examine each source individually, and to draw together the various sources only after isolating and exploring the implications of each. This, of course, is neither a radical nor even a new approach to the study of the ancient Near East, but it is one that has not previously been applied with any rigor to the Middle Assyrian period. As I have struggled to achieve a better integration of the two types of sources, I have considered the economic basis of the kingdom, the administrative structure of the territories in Hanigalbat, the cultural development of Assyria, the relationship between the Assyrian kingdom and pastoral nomads in Syria, and the factors that led to the decline of kingdom

⁵⁹As, for example, in the reliefs of Kilamuwa and Bar Rakib of Sam'al, modern Zincirili (von Luschan 1902).

and the withdrawal from Hanigalbat. Although over the course of this study, I have considered the complex interplay of diverse lines of evidence, I have endeavored to maintain the disciplinary autonomy that Brinkman (1984:179–180) advocated decades ago:

Research within a single discipline should be structured according to concepts and models that fit its own data; it can be misleading as well as ahistorical to take over the conceptual framework of another discipline and adjust one's own data to fit preconceived patterns. . . . It is essential first to look for meaningful patterns in one's own data and to trace cultural developments in their own terms and according to their own temporal rhythms, not as tortuously adapted to an alien political or archeological chronology.

2 MIDDLE ASSYRIAN HANIGALBAT

Two key conclusions came out of the survey of Middle Assyrian occupations in Hanigalbat. The first was that, in addition to material culture, many ideological elements of the Middle Assyrian kingdom are echoed in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. For example, the texts from the archives of Sabi Abyad and Giricano clearly show that agricultural intensification was a primary concern behind the expansion of the kingdom. While new sources of manpower were exploited to increase production at *dunnus*, canals were used to push agriculture into what had previously been marginal land, suitable for pasture. At Dur Katlimmu, the capital of Hanigalbat, well south of the most fertile areas of the Khabur basin, and along the newly viable route that led directly east to Assur, the success of these efforts were on prominent display. The persistence of these agricultural concerns into the Neo-Assyrian period is evident in the first millennium extensification of agricultural land and the agricultural colonization of the margins. And again, the success of Assyria's hydrologic regime was displayed in monumental inscriptions, and in the lavish parks of the capitals (Jacobsen and Lloyd 1935; Dalley 1994; Bagg 2000; Ur 2005).

Other elements of imperial ideology are apparent in the choices that Assyria made in the location and type of settlements that they occupied in Hanigalbat. What may have

seemed an arbitrary grouping of administrative centers, *dunnus*, and small villages in Hanigalbat actually constituted a settlement pattern skillfully aimed at increasing the visibility and proximity of Assyrian authority. Some Mitanni power centers were decapitated, while others were rebuilt along with new centers to house Assyrian administrators. This policy symbolically transported the very presence of the king himself directly into the heart of Hanigalbat. In this way, the Middle Assyrian settlement structure mirrored the Middle Assyrian administrative structure, which allowed the king to closely supervise and actively participate in the day-to-day administration of Hanigalbat.

The prominent display of Assyrian power in Hanigalbat, however, was tempered by its sensitivity to and integration with the local Hurrian culture. The rebuilding of the Hurrian temple at Kahat, and the integration of styles at Tell Fakhariyah are two examples of the Assyrian tolerance of the expression of local identity. Assyrians and Hanigalbateans probably also interacted with one another on a daily basis at the agricultural centers in the provinces. There, a mixture of populations carried out the labor that was overseen by Assyrian administrators.

The same juxtaposition of the conspicuous display of Assyrian might alongside an acute awareness of local politics, religion, and culture was also characteristic of the Late Assyrian empire, so much so that it was acknowledged even by its enemies. The biblical account of the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem, for example, contains the speech of an Assyrian official who urges the surrender of the city (2 Kings 18:19-35 // Isaiah 36:4-20). His speech at the gates of Hezekiah's Jerusalem shows a remarkable familiarity with the local Judean culture: it is addressed to the general population of the city, not directly to Hezekiah's representatives; it is delivered in the local Judean language, not in Aramaic, the standard language of diplomacy; and it expresses an awareness of the local god of

Jerusalem, and of the gods of neighboring kingdoms.⁶⁰

The changes that occurred in Assyria's administrative policy toward Hanigalbat over the course of the 12th century were possible only because Assyria was so attuned to the social and political conditions within Hanigalbat. The support of the residents of Hanigalbat had been ensured by the movement of populations, the guarded tolerance of Hurrian culture, and the integration of locals with Assyrians at *dunnus*, and probably also at urban centers. The awareness of local conditions in conquered territories was thus a prerequisite for the adaptiveness and flexibility in response to changes in local conditions. Assyria displayed this same characteristic feature through the duration of its ascendancy over Hanigalbat. We have already seen the same flexibility in aspects of Neo-Assyrian imperial control and propaganda (page 107). And it is this very flexibility that allowed for the stability of the kingdom even after the events that ended the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, and through the 12th century.

That the Middle Assyrian period was one of continuity in the heartland and the provinces, rather than a very long and slow decline is the second significant conclusion of Part I. In that context, texts and archaeology are not in conflict. The death of Tukulti-Ninurta I was followed by a quick succession of four kings over three decades, each contributing relatively little or nothing to the epigraphic record of the kingdom. Beginning around 1179, under Aššur-dan I, however, this changes, and with the exception of one year, the kings' tenures on the throne and the number of inscriptions increases. Thus, the historical evidence points to a very short period of instability following the consolidation of the kingdom, and then a return to stable conditions. Archaeological excavations also indicate stability in Assur and the provinces. With the exception of the Balikh valley

⁶⁰On the authorship of this speech, and its historical reliability, see Weinfeld (1964); Childs (1967:81); Cohen (1979); Ben Zvi (1990).

settlements, which were abandoned shortly after the turn of the 12th century, occupation in Hanigalbat endured with relatively little disruption. The stability of Assyrian power meant that, even if the autonomy of the individual governors of Hanigalbat increased, their power was still ultimately vested in the authority of the king at Assur. It was the continuity of the power of the king for over two centuries prior to the Assyrian withdrawal that had distinct implications for the inhabitants of Hanigalbat, especially the pastoral nomadic tribes, upon whom Assyria's strong economic and political authority had a transformative effect.

3 THE RISE OF THE ARAMAEANS

I used the same approach of separating the textual from the archaeological evidence to analyze the problem of the pastoral nomadic "proto"-Aramaeans during the Middle Assyrian period. In order to study the archaeology of pastoral nomads in the Middle Assyrian period on its own terms, however, I had to confront the fact that there was no archaeology to speak of. That absence of evidence explains the historical tendency to rely solely on Assyrian texts to account for the prehistory of Aramaeans. To deal with this problem, and to remain true to my goal of disentangling the archaeology from the texts, I turned to the vast body of literature on the anthropology of Near Eastern pastoral nomadism. In light of the conclusions of Part I, which suggested that the Middle Assyrian period was relatively stable over the 13th and 12th centuries, it was clear that conditions that prevailed in Hanigalbat throughout that period were precisely those conditions that often lead to the sedentarization of nomads in the modern period. Specifically, the strong and stable authority of Assyria, and her particular economic interests in Hanigalbat, combined with the willingness to integrate with and assimilate local cultures meant that pastoral nomads were presented with a number of incentives to settle. I therefore

abandoned the model of Aramaean settlement which posited that sedentarization took place during a political vacuum left in the wake of the Assyrian withdrawal from Hanigalbat. The absence of a strong central authority generally leads to decreased political and economic disorder, which encourages nomadization, not settlement. Instead, the ethnographic data suggest that the sedentarization of Aramaeans would have begun well before the Assyrian withdrawal, while the political authority of the Assyrian king was strong, agricultural production was steady, and the pastoralists of Hanigalbat were a well-integrated and vital social and economic force. Sedentarization of Aramaeans would thus have been taking place throughout the centuries of Middle Assyrian stability, and would have constituted a very long and gradual transformation.

Without direct archaeological evidence for Aramaean nomadism or settlement, the model of settlement developed in Chapter 8 must remain hypothetical. Nevertheless, in the absence excavations of mobile Aramaeans campsites or other evidence of Late Bronze Age nomads, I turned to the survey record to see if there were other indications that sedentarization was taking place during the height of the Middle Assyrian period. That study of the rates of site abandonment and settlement in the early second millennium, the Middle Assyrian period, and the Neo-Assyrian period showed that during the Middle Assyrian period / Late Bronze Age, a small number of new sites were indeed established throughout Hanigalbat. The presence of those sites, sometimes in relatively isolated locations, or distant from reliable water sources does not fit the pattern of general Late Bronze Age decline in Syria (Wilkinson, 2002). It is therefore a distinct possibility that at least some of those sites were occupied by sedentarizing nomads. If so, the distinct cultural and material connections to the nomadic and tribal lifestyle that remain after modern nomads settle suggest that it may be possible to identify those ancient nomadic

inhabitants based on a unique spatial patterning or architectural tradition that retains aspects of their own nomadic past. This is an avenue of future research that, if successful, would provide an entirely new source for studying the cultural development of Aramaean kingdoms.

The archaeology of sedentarization that I propose is constructive not only constructive in the study of Aramaean settlement, but it can also be used in approaches to other nomadic groups in other regions. Nomadization and sedentarization were both ongoing processes, each dependent upon a range of both external factors, and the specific circumstances of tribe, family, or individual. For archaeologists, the flexibility and multiplicity of nomadic lifestyles and adaptations means that we can not simply assume that large-scale nomadization or sedentarization was taking place at particular historical moments. External factors alone can only suggest that sedentarization may or may not have presented an enticing economic opportunity for pastoral nomads. Hypotheses regarding nomadic activity must therefore be checked against the survey record, and ideally against excavations of those sites where the shift to sedentism may have been taking place. I hope that as archaeologists become more and more attuned to the forms that sites of sedentarizing nomads can take, the identification of settlement in antiquity will prove less of a challenge.

Returning to the textual sources for Mesopotamian nomadism in general, and Aramaean nomadism and settlement in particular, it was necessary to review those sources in the new light provided by the anthropology of pastoral nomadism. As it turns out, not only is the textual evidence for Aramaean mobility in the late Middle Assyrian period ambiguous at best, but the model of gradual sedentarization over the long period of Middle Assyrian stability in fact solves a number of problems with the text-based model of

settlement. In the first place, the new model allows several centuries for Aramaeans to develop the sedentary political structure that would enable them to found hereditary dynasties and to mobilize the labor force required to build urban capitals. If Aramaean settlement began during the Dark Age, perhaps sometime during the reign of Aššur-bel-kala, and culminated perhaps sometime during the reign of Aššur-dan II, then the whole process of sedentarization, political centralization, and the construction of urban capitals would have taken place in just over one century. If instead, as the new model posits, sedentarization began as early as the consolidation phase of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, then the process would have progressed over three long centuries.

The model presented here is also constructive because it accounts for the strategic potential of the economic specialization of pastoral nomads. The clear agricultural focus of Assyria explains, in part, why Aramaeans do not appear in the textual record prior to Tiglath-pileser I. While Assyria provided the grain resources for its citizens, pastoral products may have been produced at the local level, or via trade with pastoral nomads. The role of modern and ancient nomadism in economic exchanges and trade of all types is clear from both ethnographic and archaeological contexts (Rosen, *et al.* 2005). Thus, while Assyrian elite officials profited from the ownership of *dunnus*, tribal elite took advantage of their specialized niche to profit from their control over the market for pastoral goods. Ultimately, it was the accumulation of wealth and political centralization that accompanied the economic integration of Aramaeans into the Middle Assyrian kingdom that actually led to state-formation. Although confirmation of the details regarding the economic factor in the rise of the Aramaeans must wait for more data, this study shows that it is certainly worthwhile to begin to consider the economic role along with the political role of pastoral nomadism that contributed to the rise of the Aramaean kingdoms.

Finally, understanding the rise of the Aramaeans as a long and gradual process helps to alleviate some of the tensions between texts and archaeology that bear on the relationship between Assyrians and Aramaeans in the Iron Age. The mutual influence that each culture exerted on the other, despite the seemingly bellicose nature of their relationship, can now be clarified. The Iron Age clashes between Aramaean kingdoms and the resurgent Assyrian empire was actually the latest phase of a much longer and multilayered relationship. During the Late Bronze Age, the social and economic integration of Assyrians and Aramaeans was probably facilitated by Assyria's tolerance of other cultures. As they settled in the Middle Assyrian period, Aramaeans lived side by side with Assyrians, and they had ample opportunity to adapt to and adopt Assyrian culture. In fact, given the great cultural continuities between the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, the Assyrianizing elements of Aramaean culture, especially in reliefs depicting royalty, may be as much an emulation of Middle Assyrian styles as they are of Neo-Assyrian styles.

The model that I have developed here has implications for the study of pastoral nomadic/tribal groups in other periods and regions of the ancient Near East. Cuneiform sources overflow with references to tribal peoples. Amorites, Chaldeans, Kassites, Gutians, Arabs, Lybians, Hapiru, and a host of other named tribal groups all interact with, and at certain time threaten or dominate sedentary states. Often, we are aware of those groups because of inscriptions by urban centers unaffiliated with them, or from scattered personal names. Although a modern reading of the sources sometimes suggests that these groups appeared suddenly from outside the zone of cultivation, this dissertation has demonstrated that such forms of interaction were unlikely in Mesopotamia. Much more common were long-term, symbiotic, integrated, and nuanced interactions on economic,

social, and political levels between pastoral nomadic tribal people and sedentary cultivators. In many cases, the records of the eventual conflicts between tribe and state must date to a period long after those flexible and variable interactions began. If so, it is likely that it was the very strength of those states that was a key factor behind the economic, military, and political consolidation that led to the success of the tribes.

4 PRELUDE TO EMPIRE

The point made above about the continuity of Assyrian culture from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age speaks to one of the central aims of this study, which has been to bring the Middle Assyrian period out from under the shadow of the Neo-Assyrian Empire period. The Neo-Assyrian period offers a richer and perhaps more vivid artistic, textual, and archaeological record than the Middle Assyrian period. For that reason, among others, it is the more prominent and better studied of the two periods. For some time, scholars have been aware of several continuities in material culture between the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, but this dissertation has brought to light the overwhelming ideological continuity between the two periods.

One aspect of continuity is apparent in Assyria's claim to the land of Hanigalbat. The campaigns of the early Neo-Assyrian kings were aimed merely at regaining the territory that had been held by Assyria in the Late Bronze Age. The expansion of the concept of the "Land of Assyria," that territory which rightfully belonged to the kingdom, to include Hanigalbat reflects the survival of a perspective that was developed in the Middle Assyrian period. For the Assyrian kings of the 9th century, the occupation of that territory was no distant memory. Rather, Assyria had only recently lost that land which had been a vital part of its economy and of the self-identity of the kingdom for over two centuries.

As Chapter 7 showed, the distinctive Assyrian imperial policy that took into account the cultural idiosyncrasies of conquered populations, and was characterized by flexibility and adaptiveness to the differing circumstances in the provinces was also forged in the Middle Assyrian period. In that chapter, I noted that the same adaptiveness of Assyrian policy is characteristic of Neo-Assyrian policy. Emphasis on agricultural expansion, canal building, and the exploitation of marginal lands is another persistent focus of Assyrian administration. Finally, the cultural integration that is apparent at a site like Tell Fakhariyah is mirrored by the integration between Assyrians and Aramaeans in the Neo-Assyrian period. In fact, the relationship between Assyrians and Aramaeans itself is one that developed over the many centuries in which Aramaeans interacted with both the Middle and the Neo-Assyrian kingdoms. The integration that is apparent in the Neo-Assyrian period is the outcome of a series of multilayered associations that began in the Middle Assyrian period. That extended relationship too, then, is an aspect of continuity between the two periods.

The events and developments of the Middle Assyrian period were thus the result of a unique amalgamation of peoples and circumstances. The early contacts between the urban and rural Hurrian populations, the pastoral nomads of Late Bronze Age Hanigalbat, and the nascent, but ambitious Assyrian kingdom, constituted the initial blend of ingredients that would ultimately produce the Assyrian Empire. In large part, it was Assyria's responses to the unique challenges that they encountered in their occupation of Hanigalbat that helped to shape its identity and culture. By the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian period, those distinctively Assyrian traits that would enable it to effectively conquer and administer the largest empire the world had ever seen were already embedded in the ideological fabric of Assyria.

The historically text-based approach to the Middle Assyrian kingdom is no longer tenable. Strictly delimited regnal dates and the presence or absence of texts define the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, but those aspects of the historical trajectory of the Assyria kingdom are not relevant to the study of Assyrian cultural development as a whole. The Middle Assyrian period encompassed much more than the static picture of 13th century expansion and consolidation, followed by a long slow decline until the withdrawal of Assyria to its heartland in the 11th century. Instead, the period was a dynamic one, during which administrative policy was adjusted according to the sweeping changes that took place among the settled and nomadic populations of Hanigalbat. As Assyria navigated the social, economic, and political ramifications of its policies, unique aspects of its culture, both material and ideological, began to take shape. Taken together, those features show that the Middle Assyrian kingdom was much more than a discrete historical period that preceded, but was independent of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. On the contrary, the Middle Assyrian kingdom encapsulates a moment along a long continuum of cultural development—a moment during which new types of interactions occurred with new peoples at all ranks of society, innovative imperial strategies were tested, and the Assyrian identity itself began to take shape. The Middle Assyrian kingdom did not just lay the foundation for the Assyrian Empire, it took a crucial part in the cross-generational dialog that took place between the Assyrian kings of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. For it was only in the Neo-Assyrian period that the true promise of the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic was finally and fully realized:

Your exalted power has been set over the whole world, the seas and the mountains.
With the wrath of your scepter you have made to submit all regions, in all quarters,
You spread the might of your land to territories beyond count, you established
(their) boundaries.
Kings know your valor and live in fear of battle with you.

(Foster 1995:189, ll. 296–299)

FIGURES



Figure 1: Map of northern Mesopotamia showing sites mentioned in the text

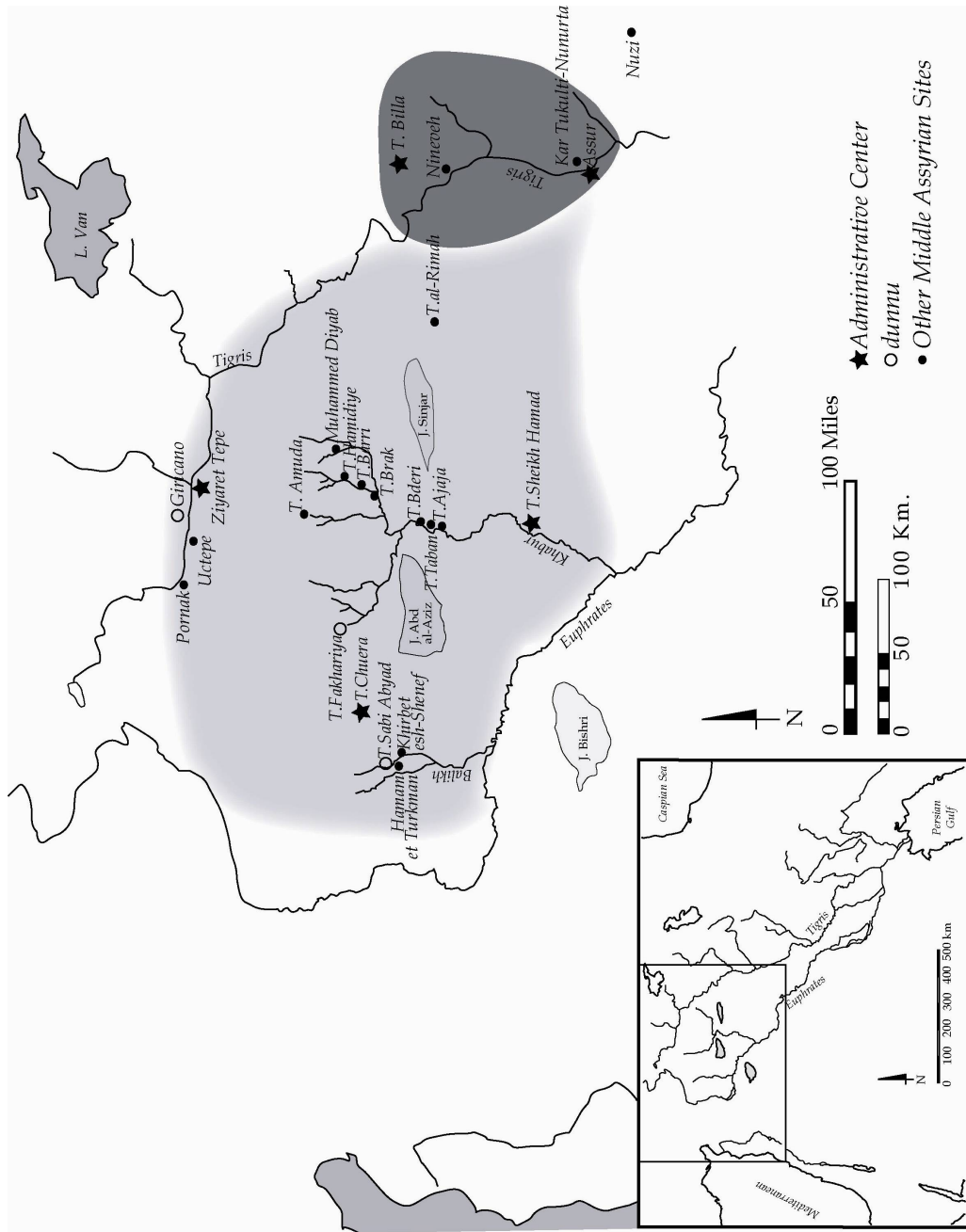


Figure 2: Map of the Middle Assyrian Kingdom

	Aššur-uballit I Enlil-nirari Arik-den-ili	(1365-1330) (1329-1320) (1319-1308)	Independence
1300	Adad-nirari I	(1307-1275)	Consolidation
	Shalmaneser I	(1274-1245)	
	Tukulti-Ninurta I	(1244-1208)	
1200	Aššur-nadin-apli Aššur-nirari III Enlil-kudurri-usur Ninurta-apil-Ekur	(1207-1204) (1203-1198) (1197-1193) (1192-1180)	"Decline"
	Aššur-dan I	(1179-1134)	
	Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur Mutakkil-Nusku	(1133) (1133)	
	Aššur-reša-iši I	(1132-1115)	
1100	Tiglath-pileser I	(1114-1076)	Resurgence
	Ašared-apil-Ekur Aššur-bel-kala Eriša-Adad II Šamši-Adad IV Aššurnasirpal I Shalmaneser II Aššur-nirari IV Aššur-rabi II Aššur-reša-iši II Tiglath-pileser II	(1075-1074) (1073-1056) (1055-1054) (1053-1050) (1049-1030) (1030-1019) (1018-1013) (1012-972) (971-967) (966-935)	Decline
1000			

Figure 3: Standard chronology of the Middle Assyrian period

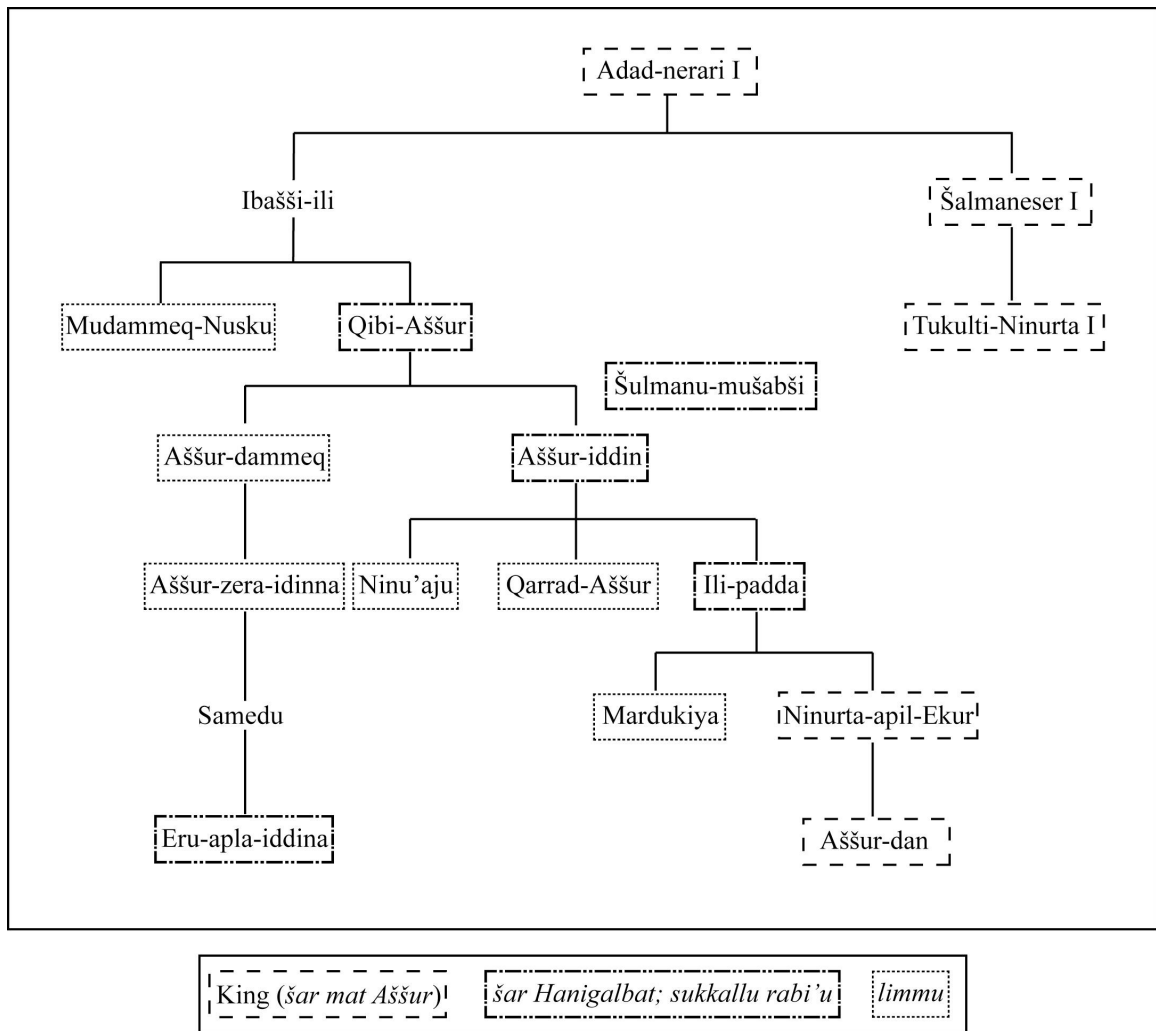


Figure 4: Genealogy of the 13-12th century kings of Assyria, showing relationship with the line of *sukkallu rabi'u* at Dur Katlimmu (after Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996:22, Abb. 5; Jakob 2003:64, Abb. 2)

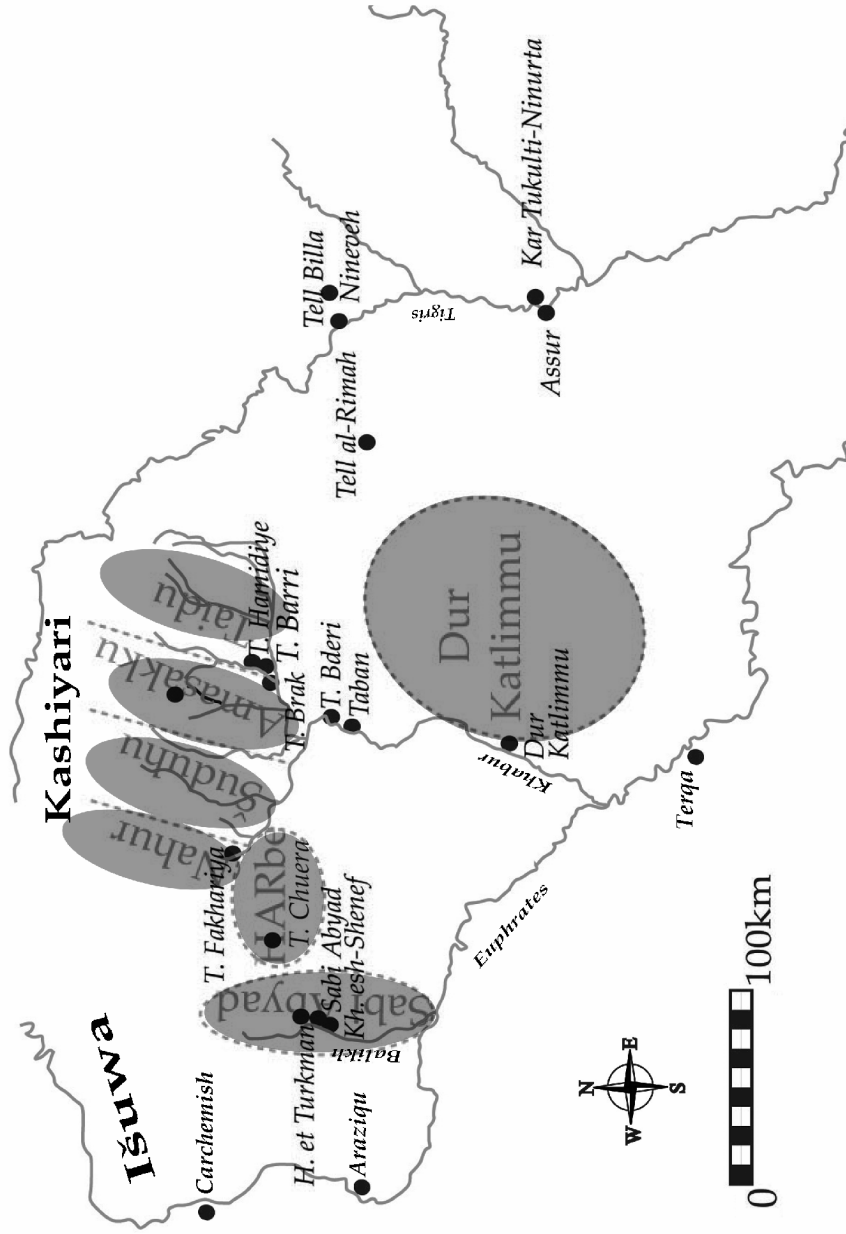


Figure 5: Map of Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat in the 13th century showing Middle Assyrian sites and *pāhutus*. (after Kühne 2000: Figure 2)

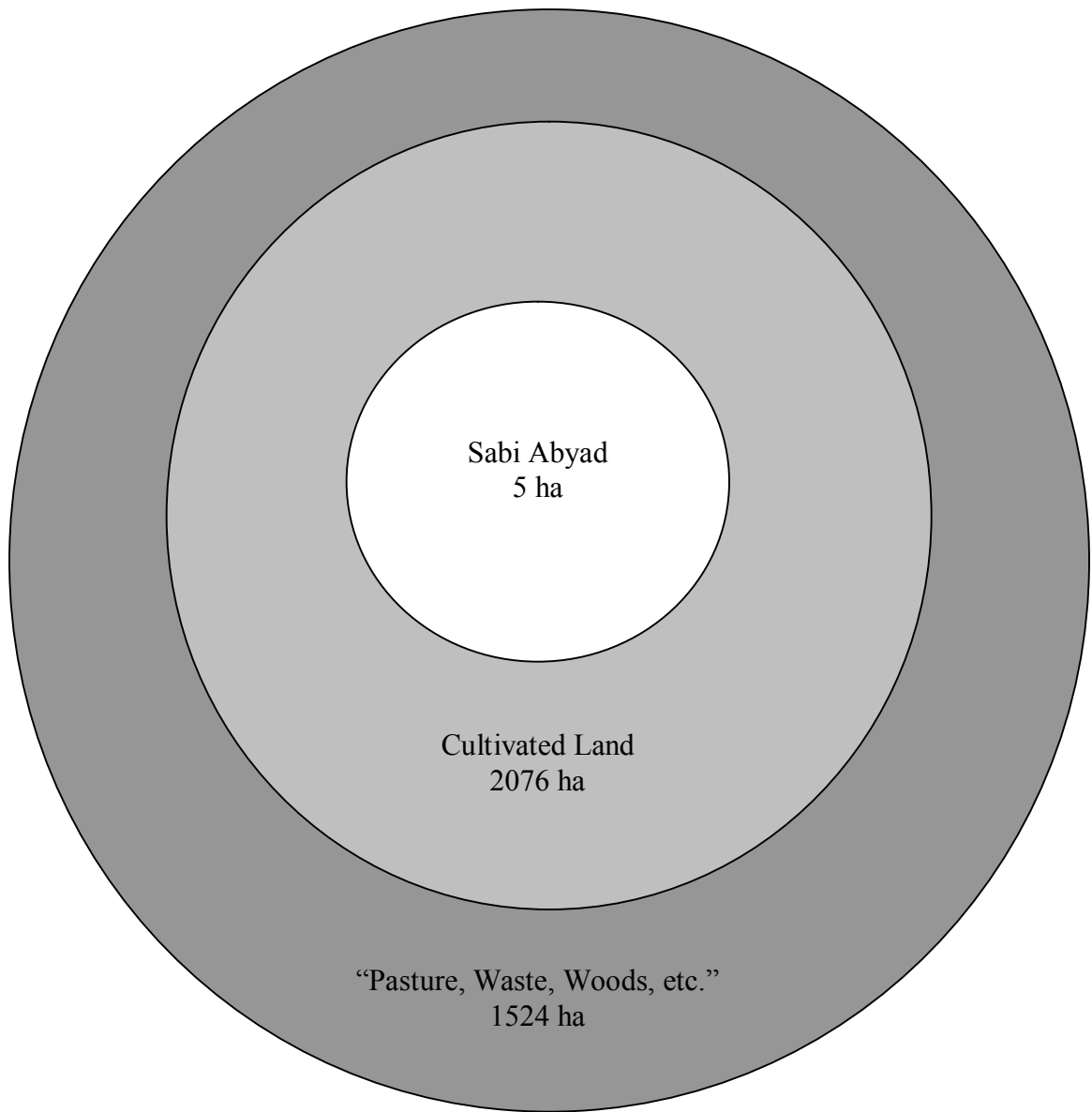


Figure 6: Land use at Sabi Abyad (after Wiggerman 2000)

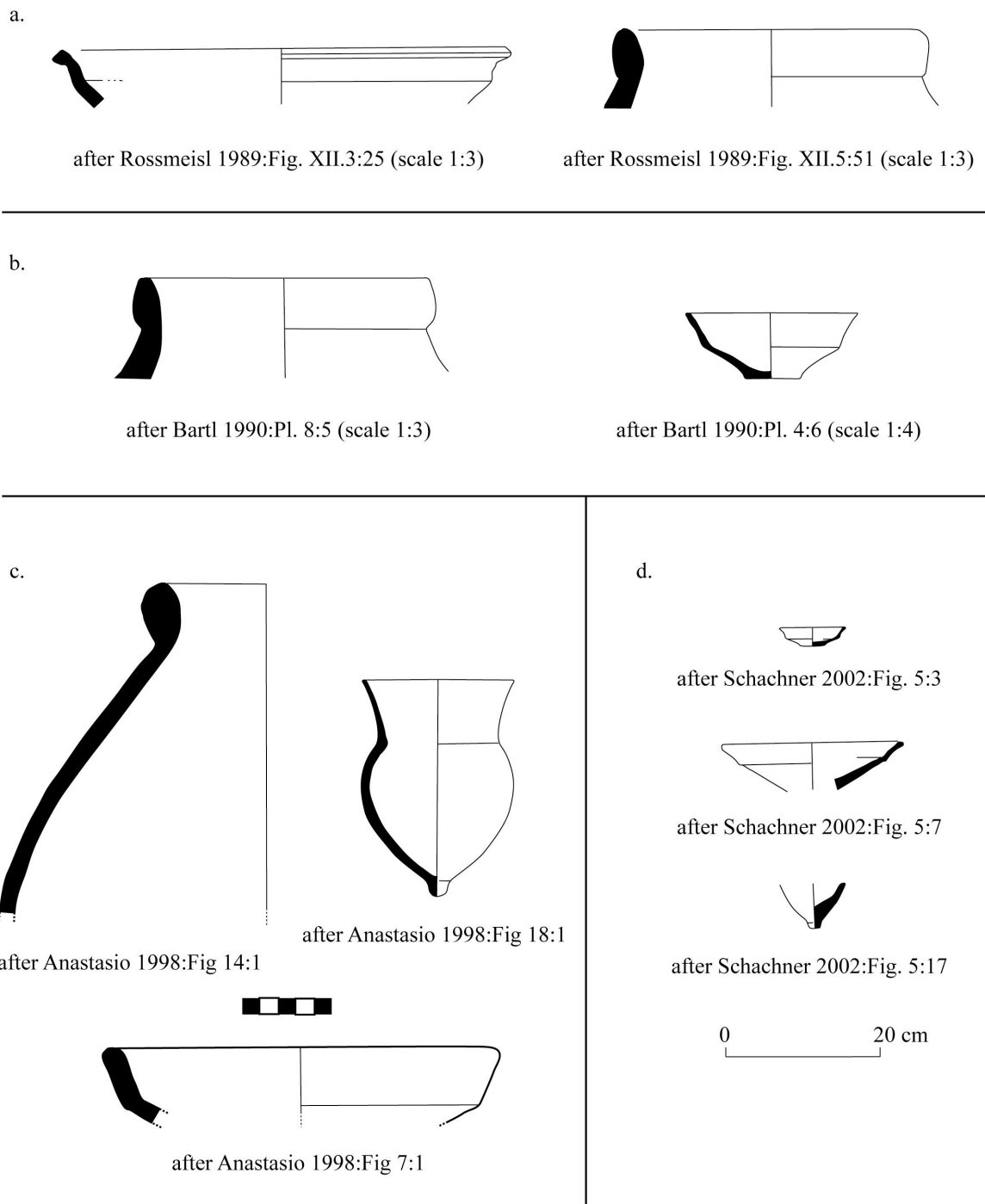


Figure 7: Middle Assyrian pottery
a. Sabi Abyad b. Khirbet esh-Shenef c. Tell Barri d. Giricano

Balikh Phasing	Sabi Abyad Fortress	Hammam et-Turkman	Khirbet esh-Shenef	Ceramic phasing according to Pfälzner (1995)
Balikh VIIIA	Mitanni	VIIIA	—	Mitannische
Balikh VIIIB	—	VIIIB	—	mA I (13th C)
	Middle Assyrian	—	Stratum 2 (<i>häusliche Keramik</i>)	mA II
	—		—	mA III (early 11th C)

Figure 8: Phasing of Balikh Valley sites (following Lyon 2000:Table 1)

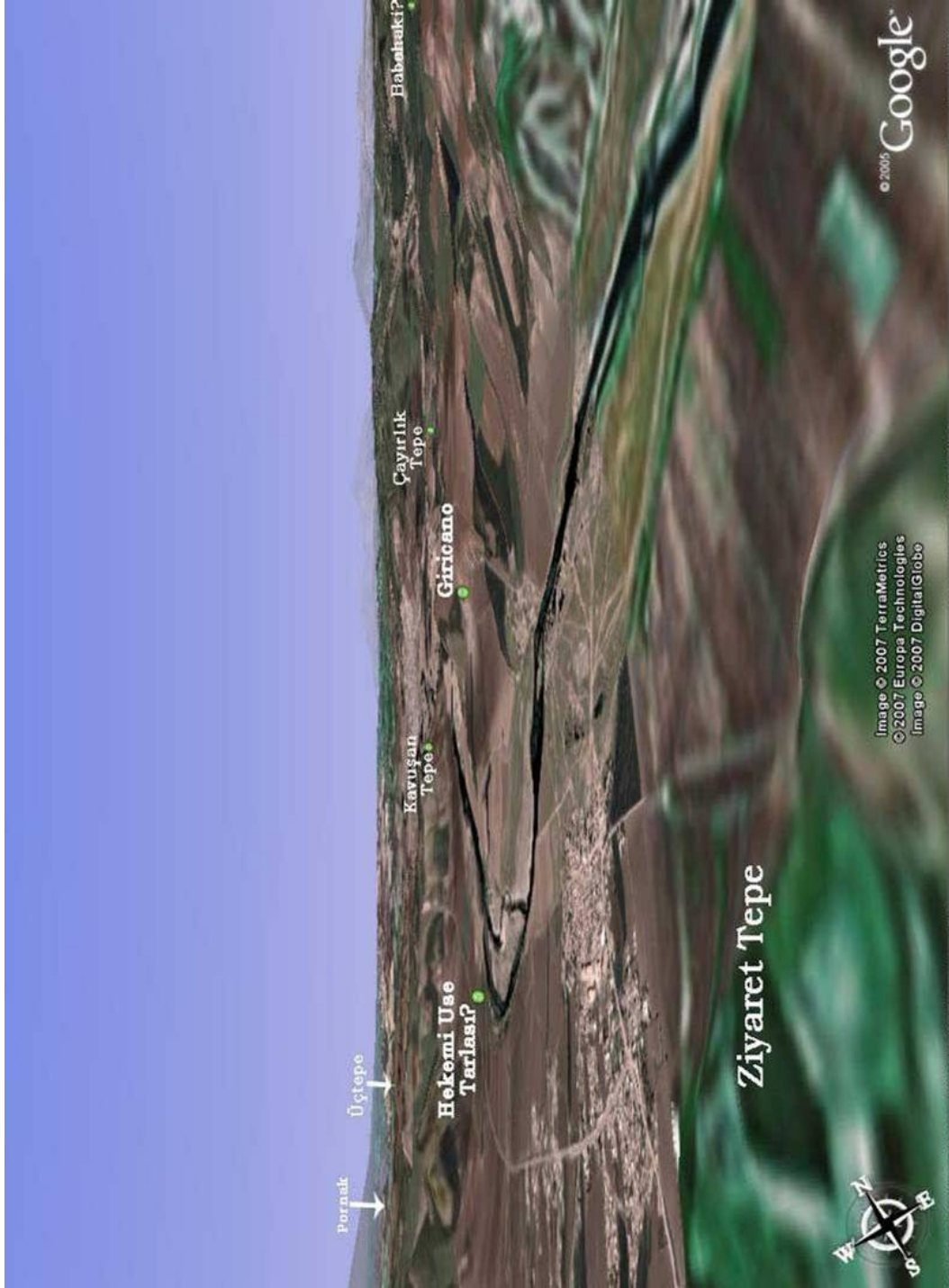


Figure 9: The view from Ziyaret Tepe

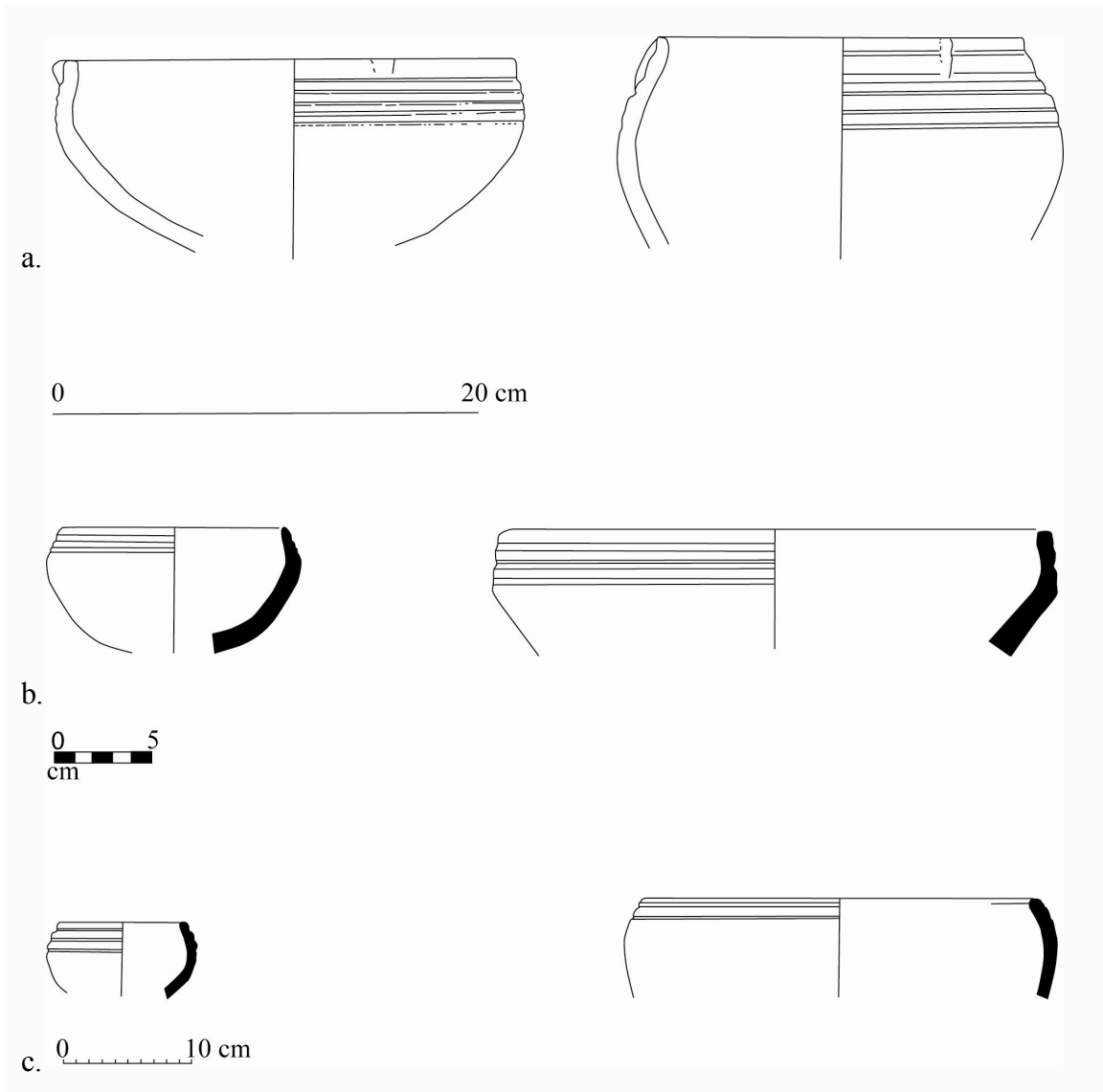


Figure 10: Early Iron Age “groovy pottery.”
 a. From Norşuntepe (after Bartl 200:Fig. 2:2, 4)
 b. From Ziyaret Tepe (after Matney *et al.* 2005:Fig 4:2,3)
 c. From Giricano (after Schachner 2002:Abb 15:b,c)

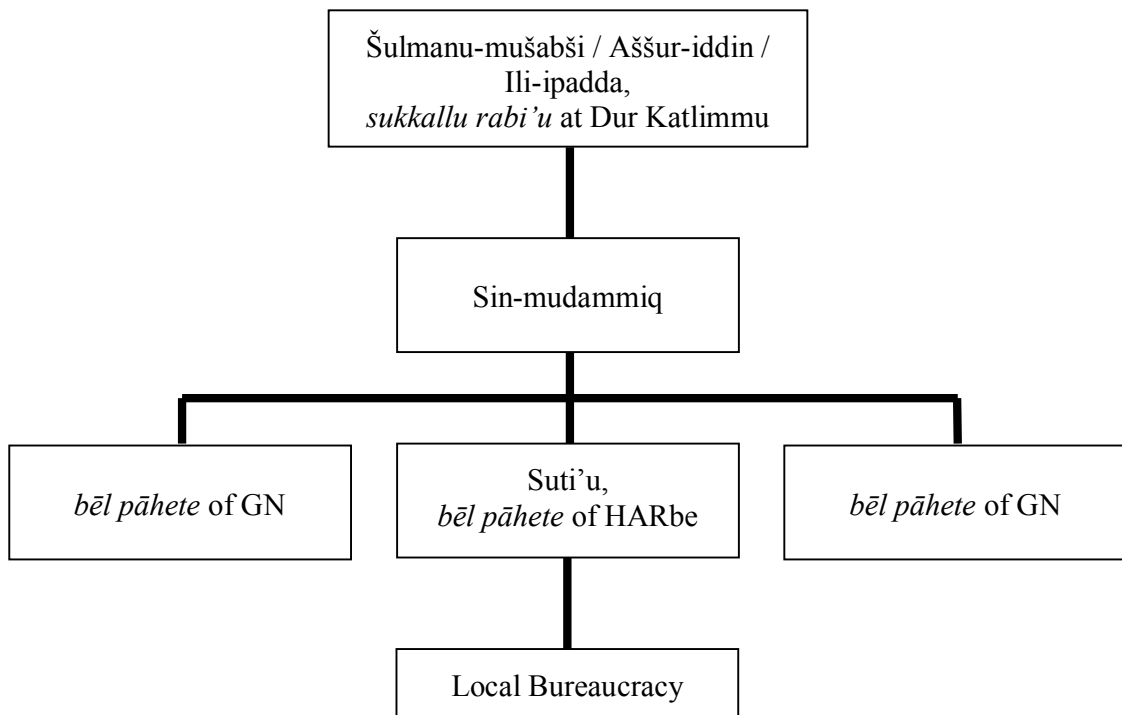


Figure 11: The administrative hierarchy of central Hanigalbat

	Aššur-uballit I Enlil-nirari Arik-den-ili	(1365-1330) (1329-1320) (1319-1308)	Independence
1300	Adad-nirari I	(1307-1275)	Consolidation
	Shalmaneser I	(1274-1245)	
	Tukulti-Ninurta I	(1244-1208)	
1200	Aššur-nadin-apli Aššur-nirari III Enlil-kudurri-usur Ninurta-apil-Ekur	(1207-1204) (1203-1198) (1197-1193) (1192-1180)	Decline
	Aššur-dan I	(1179-1134)	Stability
	Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur Mutakkil-Nusku	(1133) (1133)	
	Aššur-reša-iši I	(1132-1115)	
1100	Tiglath-pileser I	(1114-1076)	
1000	Ašared-apil-Ekur Aššur-bel-kala Eriba-Adad II Šamši-Adad IV Aššurnasirpal I Shalmaneser II Aššur-nirari IV Aššur-rabi II Aššur-reša-iši II Tiglath-pileser II	(1075-1074) (1073-1056) (1055-1054) (1053-1050) (1049-1030) (1030-1019) (1018-1013) (1012-972) (971-967) (966-935)	Decline

Figure 12: Revised chronology of the Middle Assyrian period showing stability through 12th century

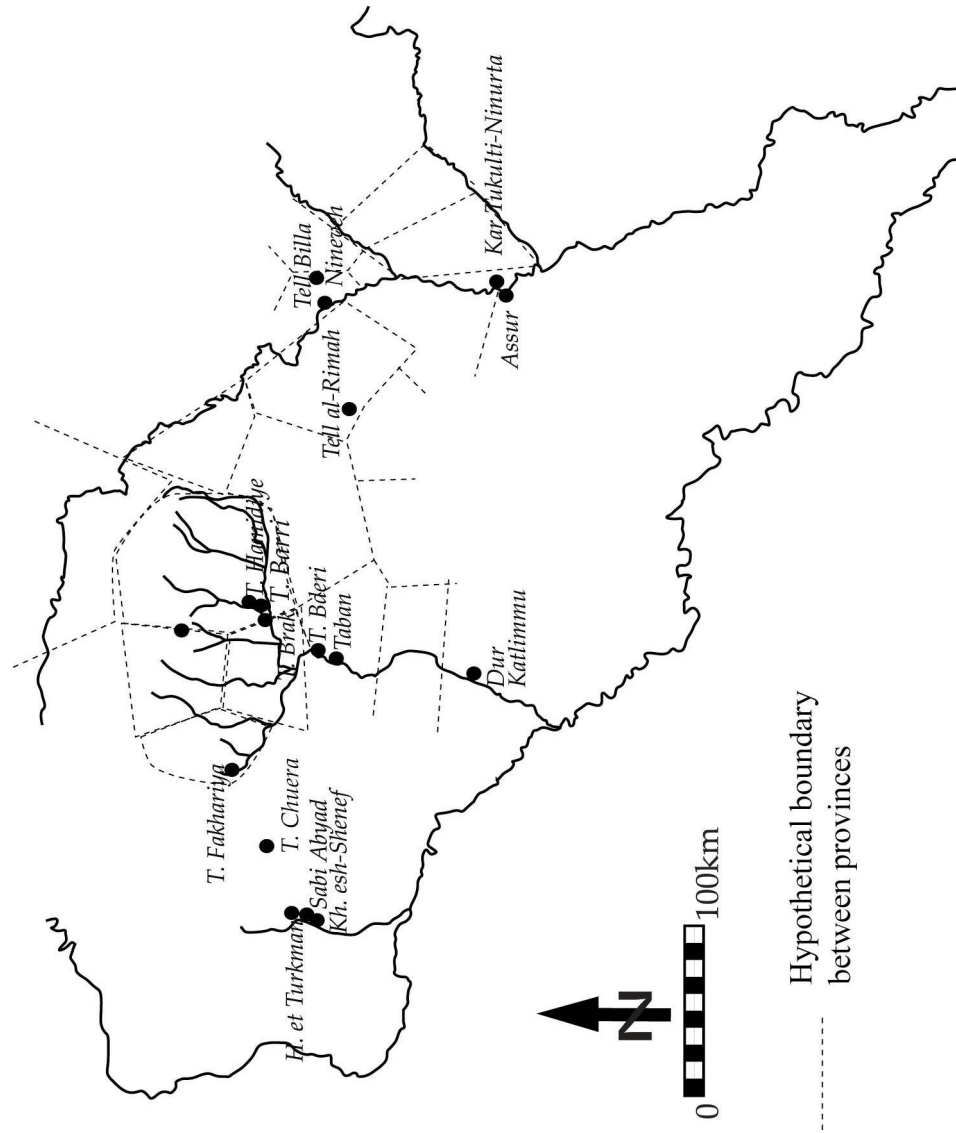


Figure 13: The Middle Assyrian kingdom in the time of Tiglath-pileser I (adapted from Postgate 1985)

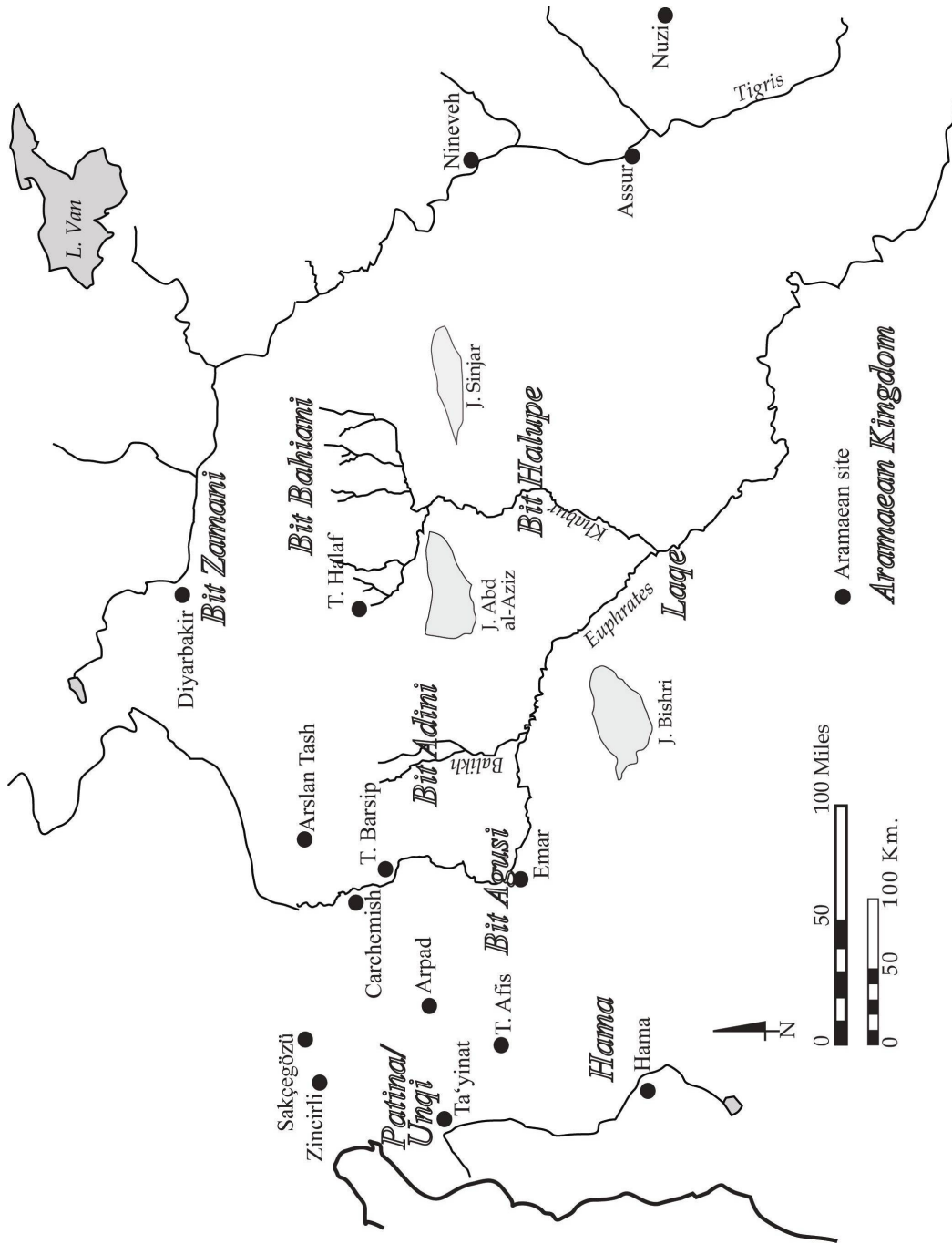
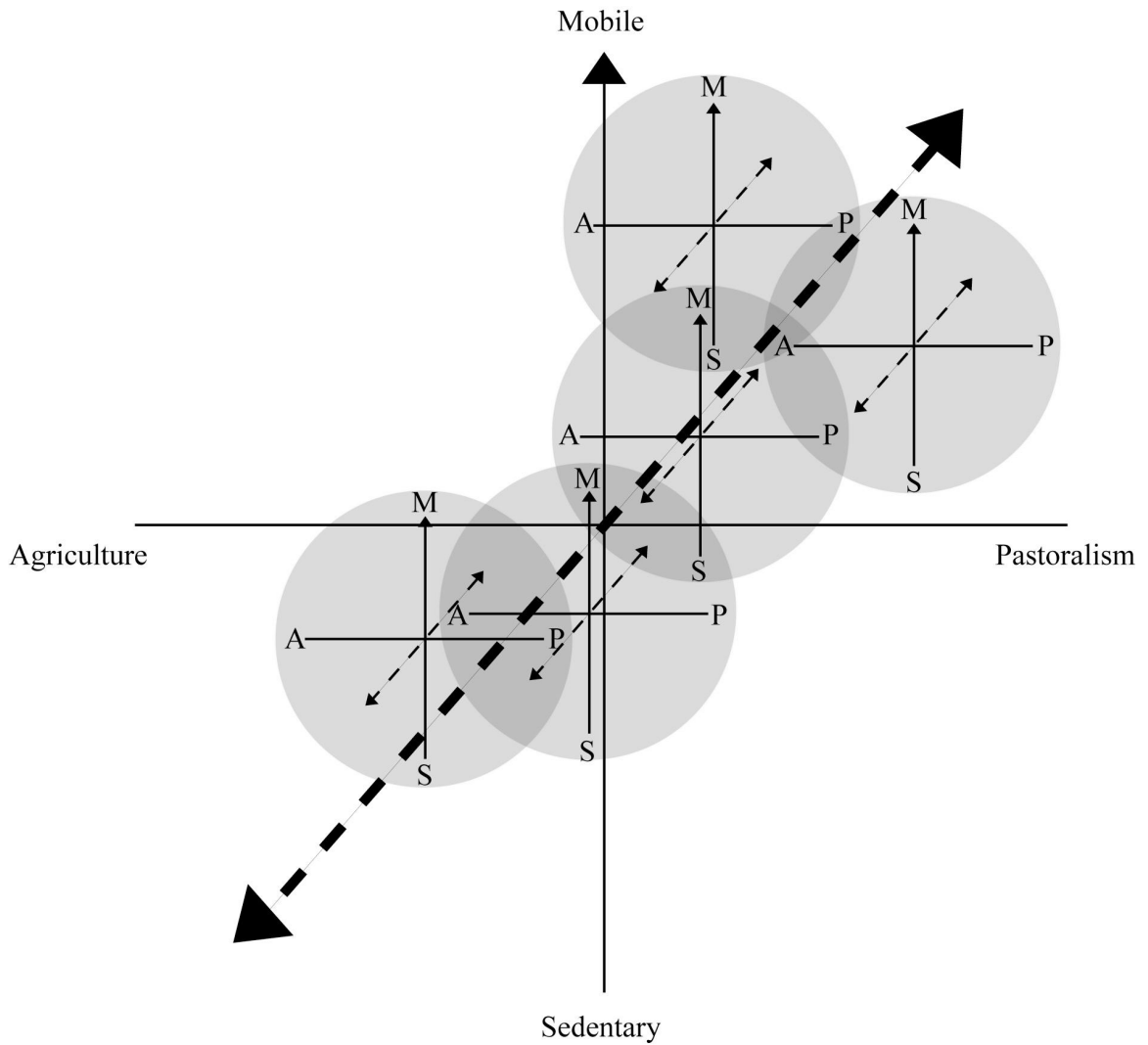


Figure 14: Map of Aramaean settlement in the Iron Age



● Pastoral Nomadic Community

Figure 15: Diagram showing movement of nomadic communities between pastoral and agricultural spheres, correlated with mobile and sedentary lifestyles. In general, the greater the reliance on pastoralism, the greater the degree of mobility. (adapted from Cribb 1991:Fig. 2.1)

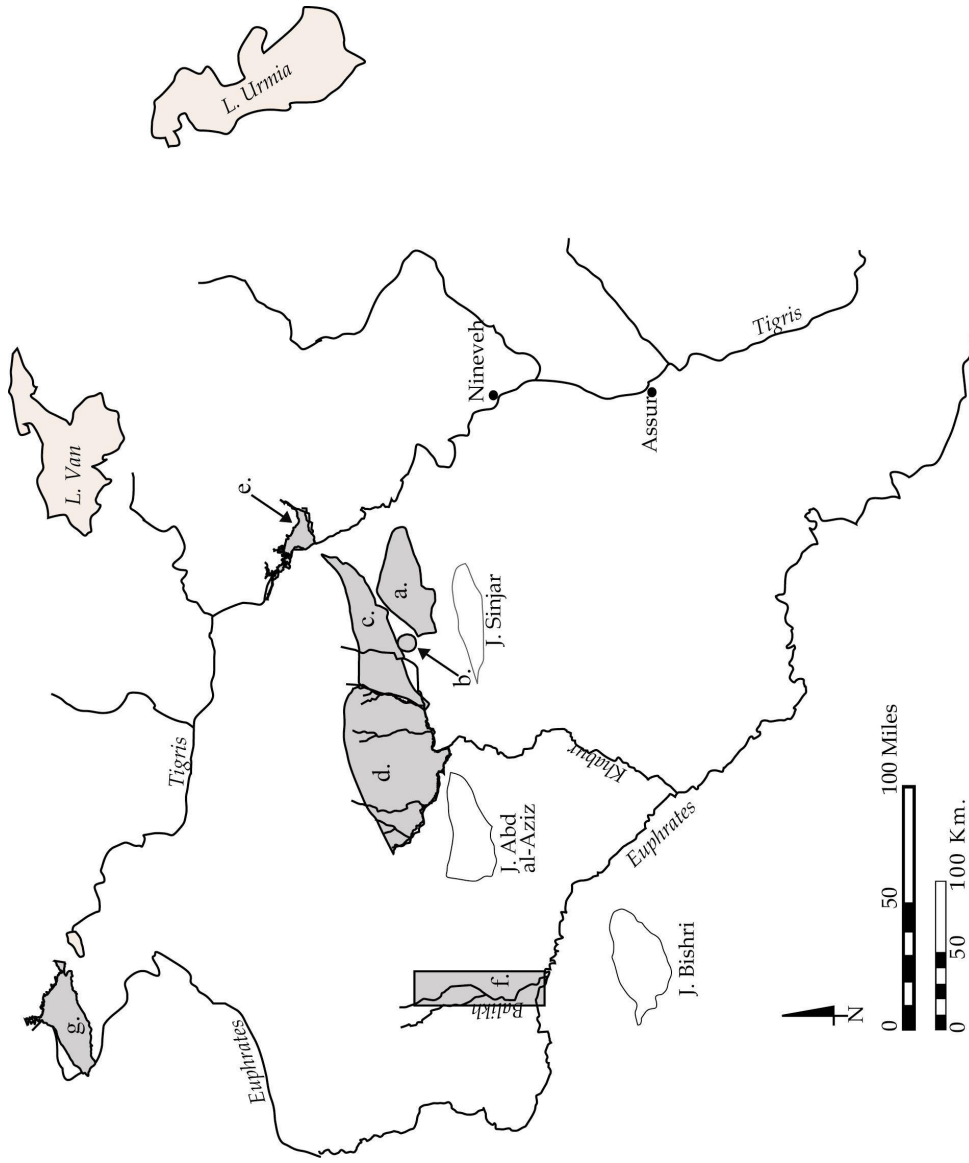
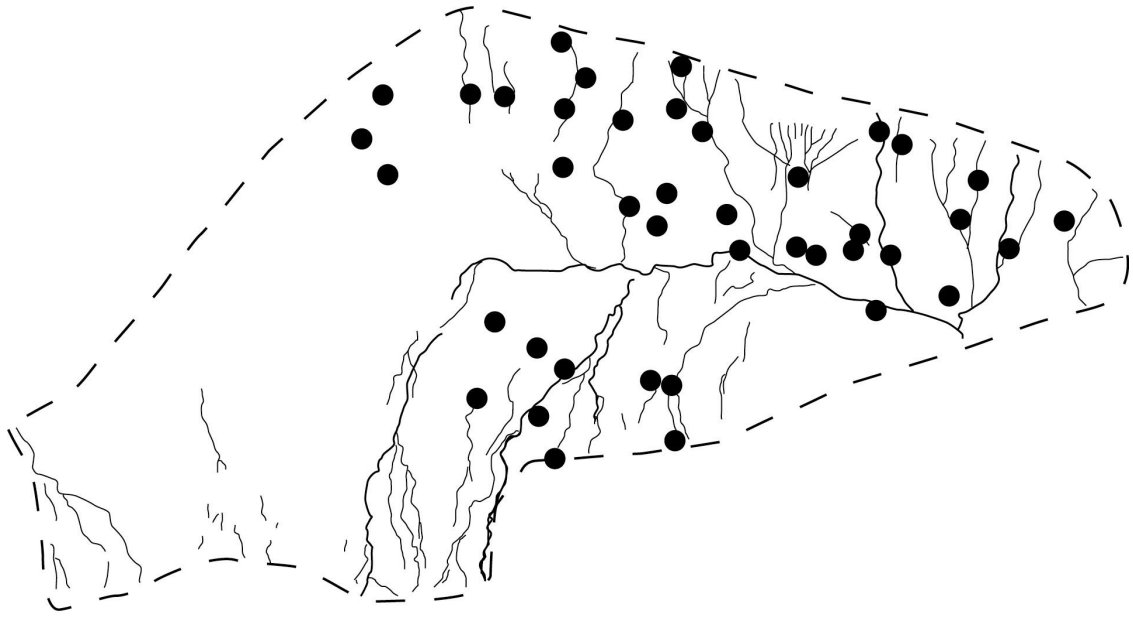
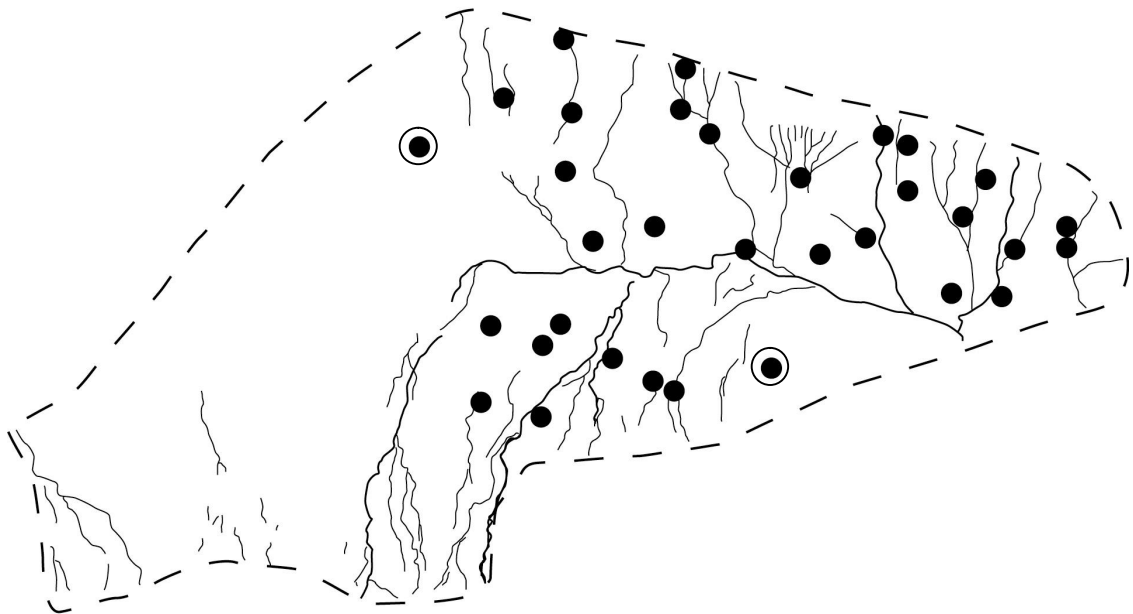
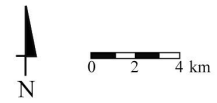


Figure 16: Map of surveys conducted in the region of Middle Assyrian occupation
 a. North Jazira b. Hamoukar c. Northeastern Syria d. Khabur e. Upper Tigris (Cizre)
 f. Balikh g. Keban



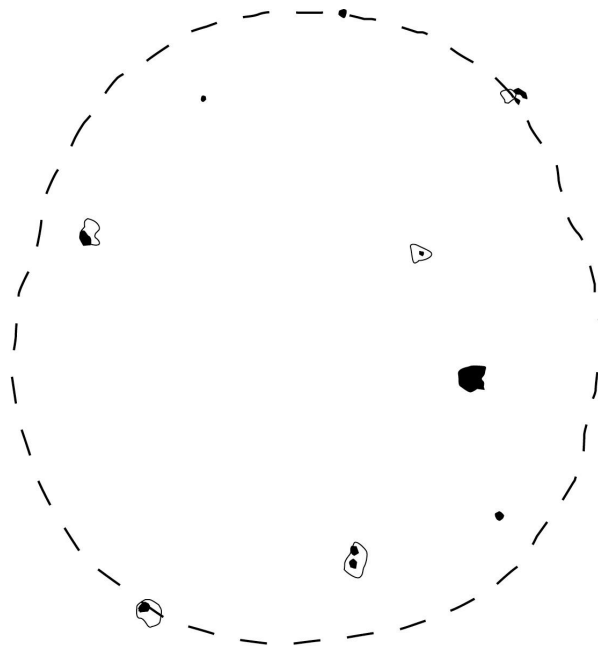
a.



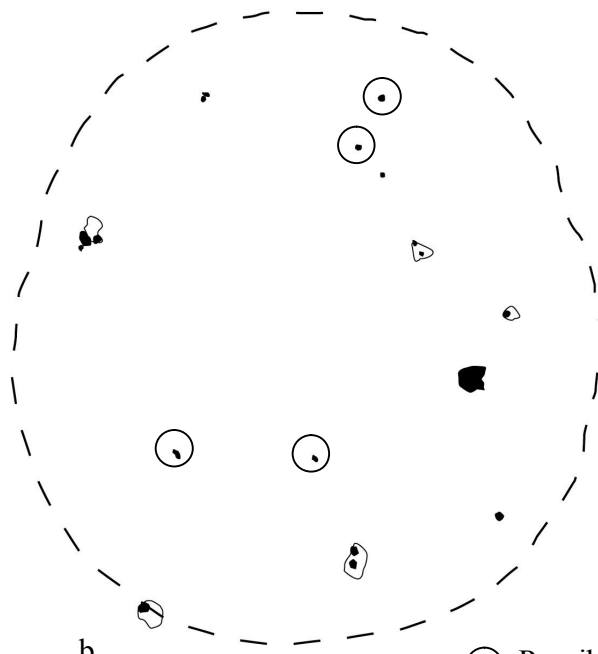
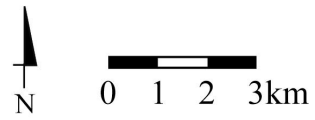
b.

○ Possible site of sedentarization

Figure 17: The North Jazira Survey (after Wilkinson and Tucker 1995)
 a. Khabur Period b. Middle Assyrian period



a.



b.

○ Possible site of sedentarization

Figure 18: The Hamoukar Survey (after Ur 2002)
 a. Khabur Period b. Middle Assyrian Period



Figure 19: The Northeastern Syria Survey (after Meijer 1986)
 a. Khabur Period b. Late Bronze Age

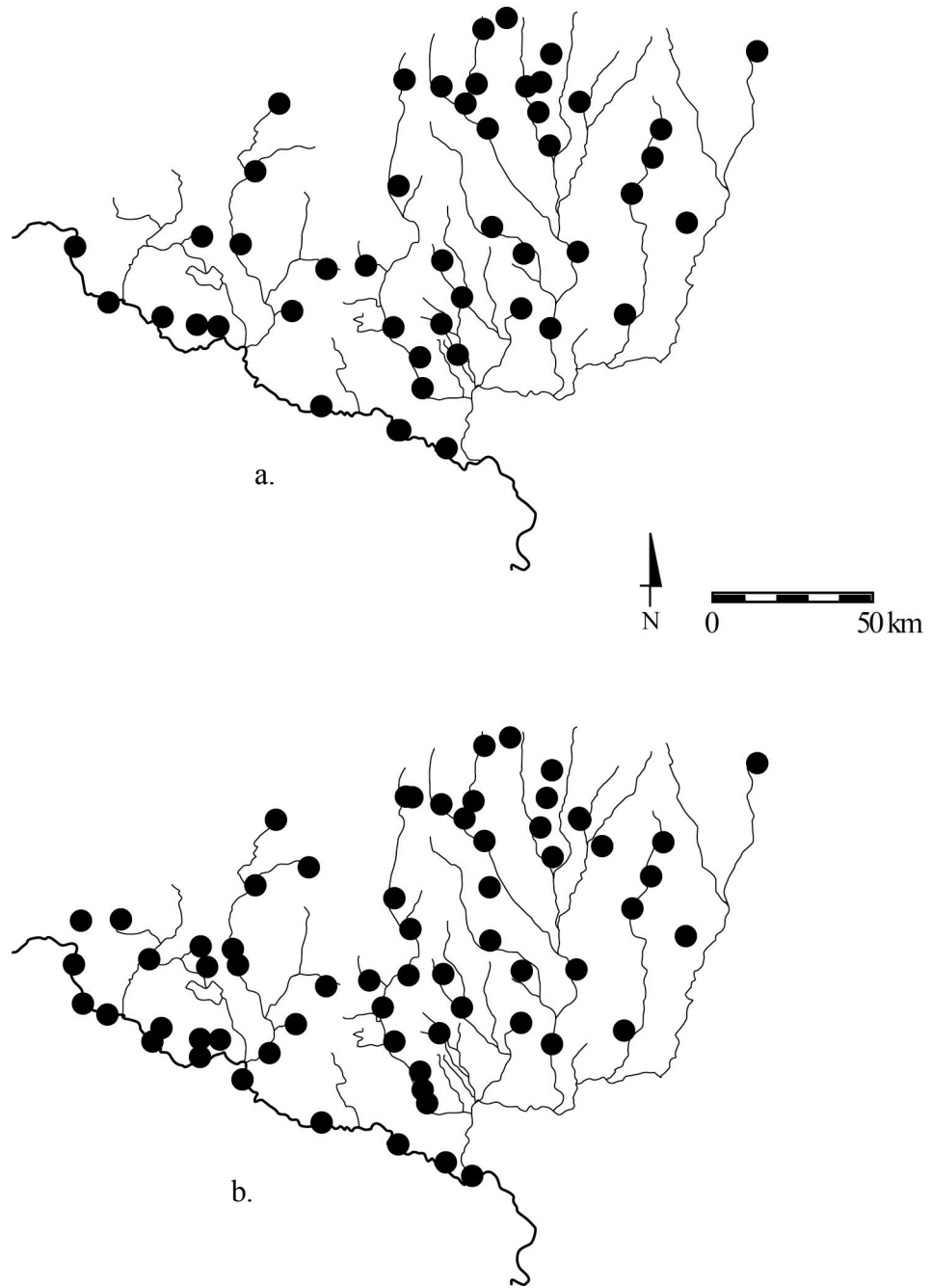


Figure 20: The Khabur Survey (after Lyonnet 2000)
a. Mitanni b. Middle and Late Assyrian

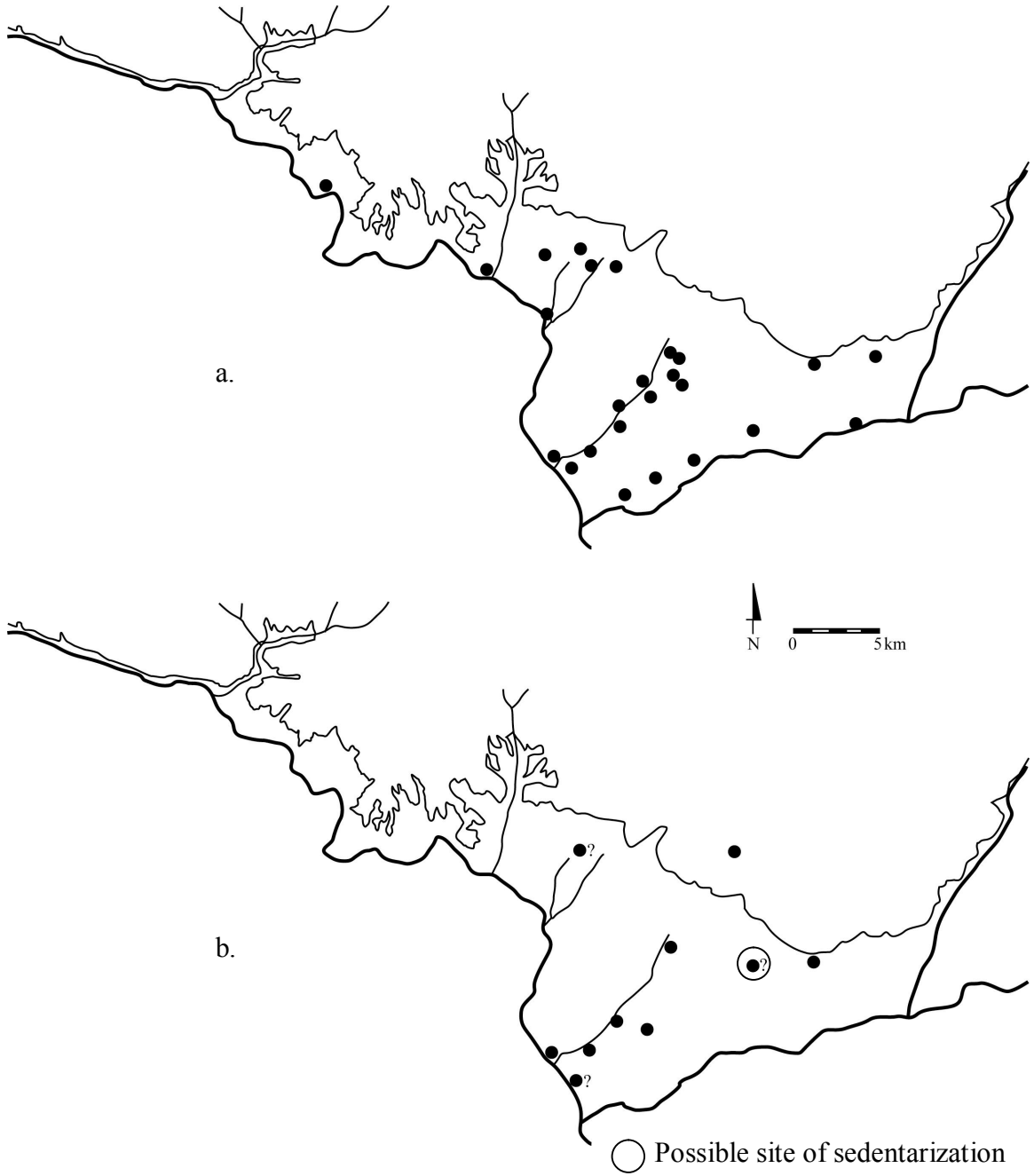


Figure 21: The Upper Tigris Survey, Cizre Plain (after Parker 2001)
 a. Early Second Millennium b. LBA/MA

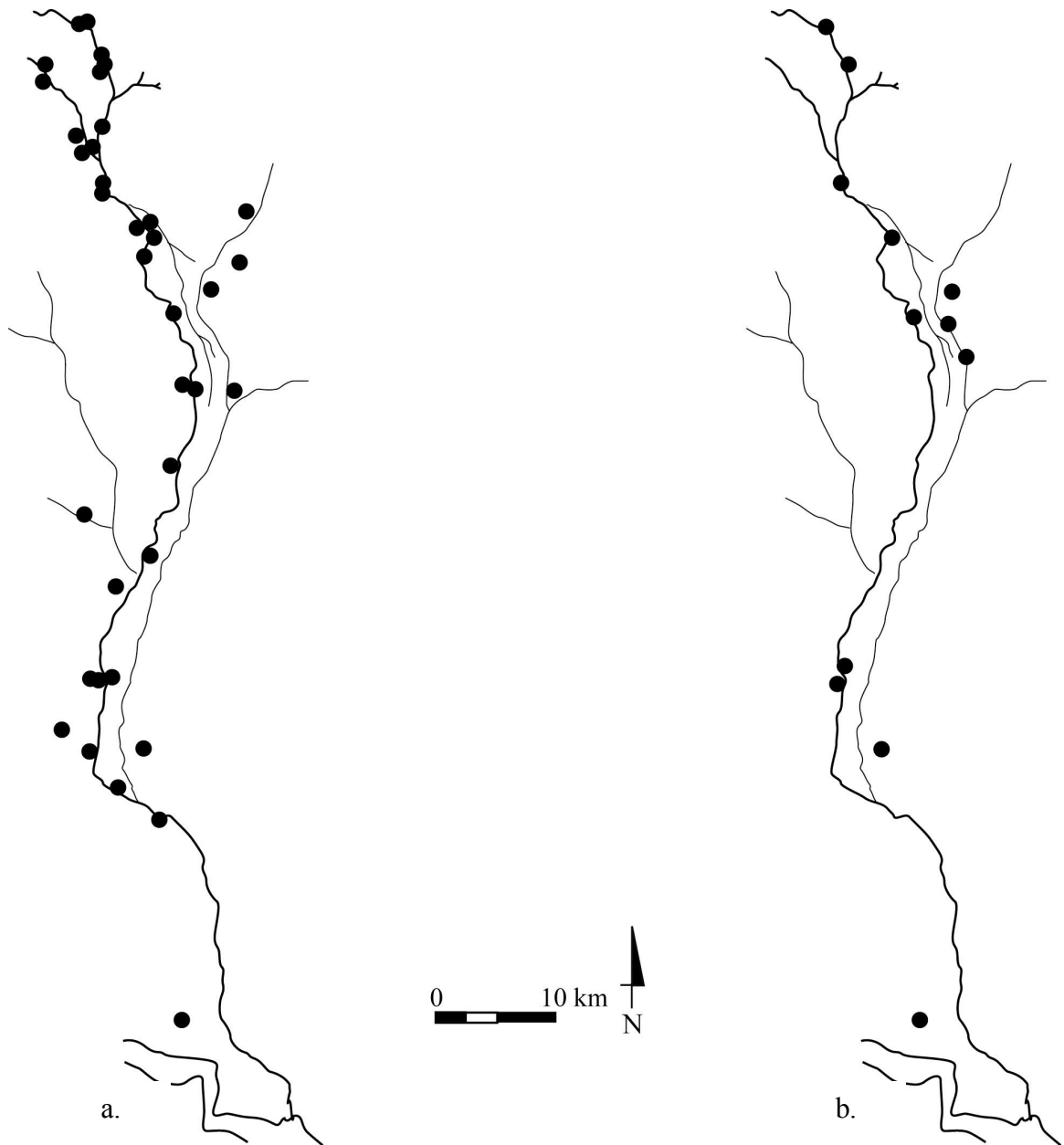


Figure 22: The Balikh Survey (after Lyon 2000)
 a. Balikh VIIIA (14th century—Mitanni)
 b. Balikh VIIIB (13-12th century—Middle Assyria)

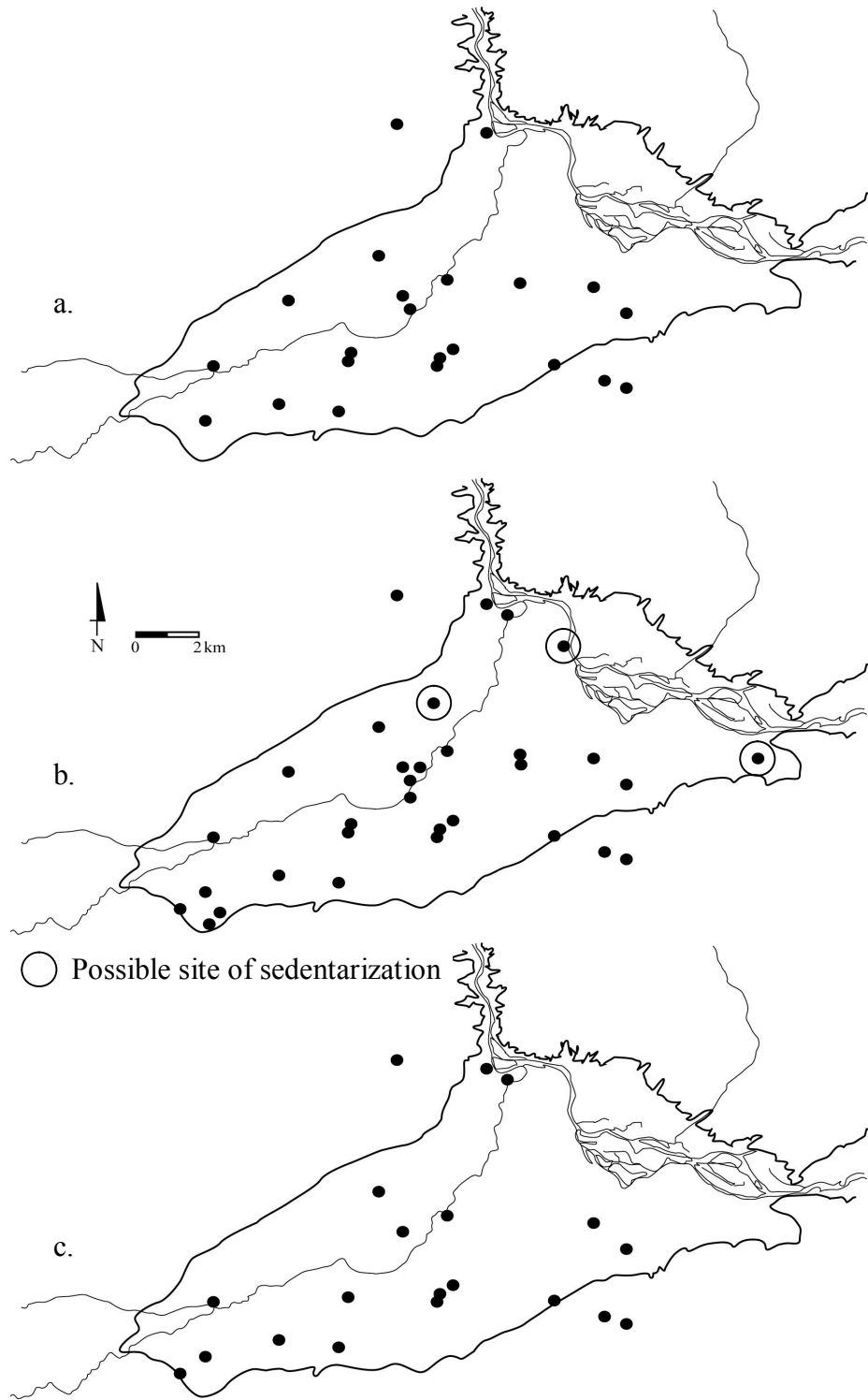


Figure 23: The Kaban Survey (after Whallon 1979)
 a. MBA b. LBA c. IA

TABLES

Archive	No. of Published Texts	References to Pastoral Products
Amuda (Machinist 1982)	5	—
Giricano (Radner 2004)	15	—
Sabi Abyad (Wiggerman 2000)	3	1
Rimah (Saggs 1968; Wiseman 1968)	97	4
Chuera (C. Kühne 1995)	11	2
Fakhariyah (Güterbock 1958)	7	—
Barri (Salvini 1998)	3	—
Sheikh Hamad (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996)	31	—
Total	172	7

Table 1: References to pastoral products in published texts from Hanigalbat

Date / Period	Kings	Tell Chuera		Tell Fakhariyah				Tell Brak		Tell Barri		Tell Hamidiya	Tell Shermola	
		Area	Level	Area	Level			Area	Level	Area	Level	Area	Level	
Mitanni		Area M	Level IIA	IX	I, IA	Scattered Sherds Below Floor 6				Mitanni Palace Levels 6-2	Area G		Zentral-Palast	—
1300	Adad-nerari I	Area B/D/G	Level IIB	IX	VI	House 1	Phase 1	—	Area HH	Adad-nerari I Destruction	Hiatus		Zentral Palast	IIB
Middle Assyrian	Shalmaneser I									Rebuilding				
										Shalmaneser I Destruction	14 phases			
										Level 1ab				
										Level 1a				
1200	Aššur-nadin-apli Aššur-nirari III Enlil-kudurri-usur Ninurta-apil-Ekur Aššur-dan I	—	—	—	—	House 2	Phase 1	—	—	—		—	—	—
1100	Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur Mutakkil-Nusku Aššur-reša-iši Tiglath-pileser I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Table 2: Chronology of Middle Assyrian settlement in the Khabur basin

Economy		Mobility		Interactions		Leadership		Sedentarization	
Modern	Aramaean	Modern	Aramaean	Modern	Aramaean	Modern	Aramaean	Modern	Aramaean
Multi-resource nomads engage in pastoralism and other economies	Middle Assyrian economic focus on agriculture indicates pastoral production was local or left to pastoral nomadic sector	Movement along continuum between fully nomadic and fully sedentary	Tiglath-pileser I campaigns in Jebel Bišri Attacks “6 of their cities” Brings booty to Assur Probably a sedentary and a mobile component	State: balance of power is in flux, state attempts to maintain control via various incentives and pressures to settle Local: symbiosis, trade, raiding	State: hostilities begin under Tiglath-pileser I, continue into reign of Aššur-bel-kala	Role of tribal leader is to mediate with state Wealth and status force leader to settle	Dynasty at Guzana (T. Halaf) probably stretches back to 10th century	Forced by via military or economic incentives Excessive wealth forces reinvestment of capital in land Flock depletion forces settlement as an alternative to herding Personal preference	Stable Assyrian authority with rigid administrative hierarchy Stable economy based on intensified agriculture and colonization of marginal steppe

Table 3: Chart comparing features of pastoral nomadism based on ethnographic data with features of Aramaean pastoral nomadism based on textual and archaeological sources

External / Internal Categories	Generalization from Salzman (2000:361–362)	Circumstances of Late Bronze Age Pastoral Nomads in Hanigalbat
Ecology	“Reliable resources, such as highland summer pasture and lowland winter pasture, are more accessible to control and more commonly subject to individual ownership or hierarchical allocation.”	Pasture located in reliable steppelands of Syria (nearly 50% of the total land area of Syria today).
Location	“Nomadic tribes spatially close to urban markets are more likely to produce for market exchange”	Texts referring to dealings with Sutu suggest nomads were located close to urban markets.
Economic Interactions	“Market-oriented producers are more likely to be specialized.”	Middle Assyrian economy specialized and focused on agriculture, possibly leaving niche for providers of pastoral products.
Political Interactions	“Centralized tribes with strong hierarchies are found close to centers of power.”	Aramaeans located close to Assyrian <i>pahutus</i> , such as Tuššhan, Chuera.

Table 4: Correspondence between circumstances of Late Bronze Age pastoral nomadic tribes in Hanigalbat and generalizations concerning differences among nomadic tribes from Salzman (2000:361–362)

	Total Sites (LBA/ MA)	Abandoned Sites		New Sites		Possible Sites of Sedentarization ¹	
		#	% of total of previous period	#	% of all LBA/MA sites	#	% of all LBA/MA sites
North Jazira (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995)	33	16	39	8	24.2	2	6
Hamoukar² (Ur 2002)	15	2	22	8	53.3	4?	26?
Northeastern Syria (Meijer 1986)	38	70	76	17	44	3	7.8
Khabur (Lyonnet 1996; 2000a; 2000b)	69	1	2.5	18	26	? ³	? ²
Upper Tigris⁴ (Algaze, <i>et al.</i> 1991; Algaze 1989; Parker 2001)	10 ⁵	19	73	3	30	1	10
Balikh (Lyon 2000)	12 ⁶	33	82	6	50	0	0
Total (Middle Assyrian region)	177	141	55	60	33.8	11	6.2
Keban⁷ (Whallon 1979)	41	0	0	13	31	3	7.3

Table 5: Site settlement and abandonment in the Late Bronze Age (LBA)/Middle Assyrian period (MA)

¹Isolated sites <1ha²Includes sites just outside survey region.³Because sites in this survey include both Middle Assyrian and Late Assyrian occupations, it is difficult to make a determination concerning sites that may have been occupied by sedentarizing nomads in the Middle Assyrian period.⁴Cizre region only.⁵Includes seven securely dated sites, and three additional possible sites.⁶Includes six securely dated sites, and six with very low frequency of Middle Assyrian sherds.⁷Calculations based on sites occupied during Whallon's Hittite Period and the preceding Middle Bronze Age.

	Tent	Permanent Dwelling
Architecture	Generally, the tent was walled at the back and sides, and divided by a screen into two quarters, one for men and one for women.	The typical house was comprised of two rooms with a front yard surrounded, in many instances, by heaped up stone.
Activities	<p>Cooking was generally done in the open in front of the tent on a fire fuelled by brush-wood and dried animal dung</p> <p>Coffee was prepared on the fireplace, a pit in the front center, and coffee pots, cups and a drinking bowl were lined up within reach of the host.</p>	<p>Cooking was done in the front yard either in the open or in a separate room in one corner</p> <p>The floor was used for practically every function such as sleeping, sitting, eating, kneading dough, spinning wool and hair, and cooking.</p>
Furnishings	<p>Guests sat on mattresses covered with rugs and spread out on the floor alongside the three walls of the tent and cushions for arm rests.</p> <p>Mattresses, quilts, rugs and bundles of clothing were heaped up against the dividing curtain. In the back could be seen goat-skin bags and various sacks containing provisions such as <i>samneh</i> (rendered ghee), <i>burghull</i> (cracked wheat), flour, salt, coffee beans, sugar.</p>	<p>The floor by and large, was covered by woven mats made of goat hair. Wool mattresses were spread out along the room walls with cushions serving as arm rests.</p> <p>Mattresses when not in use were rolled up and stacked in a niche in the wall.</p> <p>Clothes were hung on nails, pegs and wooded hooks on the wall, and spare pieces of clothing were kept in bundles.</p> <p>A wooden chest or a cupboard, a small table, a radio and a few other items were all the furnishings found.</p> <p>A few modern pieces of furniture in the form of steel bedsteads, chairs and small tables appeared in the houses of income families.</p>

Table 6: Material and spatial organization in tent and permanent dwelling (Adapted from Abu Jaber, Gharaibeh and Hill 1987:16–17)

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