Exploring the Rural Landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire:

Settlement Increase in the Iron Age Near East

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I, Parthiban Yahambaram, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would never have been written without the guidance, teaching and support given to me by my supervisor, Dr. Rachael Sparks.

I would also like to thank my beloved wife Sophie for her love and support, and especially for being patient with me.

ABSTRACT

The Neo-Assyrian Empire was a complex political entity that controlled most of the Near East from the 9th to the 7th centuries BCE. This empire has been described in recent scholarship as having made a unique imprint on the regional landscape. This thesis is a re-examination of the archaeological evidence that explores the changes in settlement patterns that have been noted in surveys carried out in various parts of the Near East. It also examines excavation evidence from a number of sites in former Assyrian provinces in order to obtain a clearer picture of the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and to consider whether the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis provides a valid interpretative framework for the survey and excavation evidence.

The thesis will reconsider the survey data from the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project, which was used to support the 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis proposed by Bradley Parker, and compare this with evidence obtained from other surveys conducted in Syro-Mesopotamia and the southern Levant. It will then examine excavation evidence from a series of sites – a medium-sized tell in the upper Euphrates region, four small sites in the Upper Tigris valley, four other small sites in Syro-Mesopotamia and two small sites in the southern Levant. These sites have been selected to provide a sample of the different kinds of settlements that were established in the Assyrian countryside.

The examined evidence will show that there was a definite increase in settlement in the Neo-Assyrian period, which means that these changes are likely to have been the result of Assyrian policy. The thesis will then conclude with a discussion of the different roles (either agricultural or military) played by these sites, and of the potential function of the larger buildings discovered in some of them. These findings will provide a better understanding of the countryside during this period, and a more elaborate picture of the landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

IMPACT STATEMENT

The archaeological evidence considered in this thesis shows that there was an increase in settlement across the Near East during the Iron Age and broadly substantiates the arguments put forward by those scholars who have suggested that there was a kind of *Pax Assyriaca* in the Near East during the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. This model is at variance with the traditional perception of the Assyrian Empire as a brutal and destructive polity, which derives partly from its overwhelmingly negative portrayal in the Old Testament. This thesis will therefore contribute to the development of a more nuanced perception of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which regards it as a complex political entity that impacted its neighbouring regions in a variety of ways. Such a shift in our perception can benefit investigations about the Assyrian Empire by providing a more comprehensive understanding of this polity and a more realistic context for future studies of regional patterns.

The evidence considered in this dissertation also raises a number of interesting questions that further investigation (including both surveys and excavations) might be able to resolve. First, the evidence from some of the smaller sites examined in this thesis demonstrates a pattern in which a number of smaller structures are dominated by a single large building, which may imply that the increase in settlement detected in this region by surveys could have been driven by wealthy families (or individuals). This highlights the need for further excavations of smaller sites in this region in order to explore whether this might be a recurring pattern, as well as for excavations of small sites in the Assyrian heartland itself, to investigate whether the same pattern is present there. In addition, the evidence discussed in this thesis also suggests that there is a need for more controlled stratigraphic excavations of larger mounds (like Tille Höyük), which can help to refine our understanding of the ceramic corpus of the Early Iron period in both the Upper Tigris and the Middle Euphrates regions.

The research methodology used in this thesis, which involves examining settlement patterns and then correlating these with excavation evidence from small- and medium-sized sites, also demonstrates the benefit of exploring the impact of Assyrian expansion across a number of different regions, as it shows that the response to imperial expansion can vary according to the nature of the interaction between conquered and conquering peoples. This approach could also be usefully applied to the study of other ancient empires, in order to provide us with a more thorough understanding of the nature of ancient imperialism, which appears to have differed quite substantially from its modern counterpart.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Neo-Assyrian Empire as it existed from the 9th to the 7th centuries BCE was a large and complex polity that extended at its zenith from the Elamite foothills in the east to the Anatolian plateau in the west and the Nile delta in the south (Parpola 2003: 99). This empire was not just made up of provinces that were directly ruled by Assyrian governors, but also of indirectly ruled areas that were controlled by a variety of methods. These included city-states that recognised the king of Assyria as their sovereign, territorial states ruled by client kings who recognised him as their overlord and semi-nomadic tribes that functioned as his proxies in less hospitable regions (Thareani 2016: 93-95, also *cf*. Bagg 2013: 125, Postgate 1992: 251-255).

Recent scholarship has proposed that the Assyrian Empire instituted a deliberate programme of resettlement that was designed to increase agricultural production in its subject provinces during the Iron Age (Parker 2001, Wilkinson *et. al.* 2005; also *cf*. Gitin 1995, 1997). This view is based primarily on survey evidence from regions that had come under Assyrian control at this time. These surveys have shown that there was an increase in the number of settlements in these areas, as compared to the preceding Late Bronze Age, and this increase has been interpreted as the result of Assyrian policy. This picture of a planned policy to increase productivity on the part of the Assyrians has contributed to the development of the notion of a *Pax Assyriaca* during the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, at which time there was thought to have been an efflorescence of trade, cultural exchange and artistic production throughout the Eastern Mediterranean region (Gitin 1995: 61).

The concept of a *Pax Assyriaca*, however, is quite different from the traditional perception of the Assyrians as a highly aggressive and militaristic nation, and has not been universally accepted (Faust and Weiss 2005, *cf*. Frahm 2006: 93-94). It is therefore worth examining some of the assumptions on which this model is based. It is not possible to be certain, for example, whether the observed increase in settlements represents a concurrent increase in the total number of people living in them, as suggested by some scholars (*cf*. Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62), or merely

a redistribution of their population. It is also difficult to establish from the survey data alone whether this increase in settlement only took place after Assyrian rule had been imposed on these regions or at an earlier point in the Iron Age, because the ceramic corpus for the Early Iron period in these regions is not properly understood (Wilkinson *et al.* 2005: 40). This thesis will attempt to resolve these uncertainties by examining evidence from surveys and excavations that have been conducted in these areas and correlating this evidence with the available textual sources, in order to provide a more elaborate picture of the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. In addition, it will also consider whether the *Pax Assyriaca* model provides a plausible explanation for the changes that have been noted in settlement patterns.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The principal research questions addressed in this thesis will be the following: -

1) To explore changes in settlement patterns in the Near East during the Iron Age.

2) To obtain a clearer picture of the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

3) To consider whether the *Pax Assyriaca* model provides a valid interpretative framework for the observed changes in settlement.

To answer the first question, I will examine the survey evidence used to support the 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis proposed by Bradley Parker (Parker 2001), which was obtained from the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project. I will also look at several surveys from other parts of the Middle East, including one from the southern Levant, where survey evidence can be used to distinguish between the earlier and later sub-phases of the Iron Age. This part of the study will look to test whether the survey data does in fact show an increase in settlement during the period of Assyrian control, and if this increase is seen in different parts of the Assyrian Empire. It will also examine critically the interpretations offered by other scholars, and consider whether the increase in settlement numbers could have been the result of the resettlement of deportees from other parts of the Assyrian Empire.

The second part of the study will go on to look at the archaeological evidence from a number of excavations that have been conducted within the relevant survey regions. This evidence will be explored in correlation with the textual sources with a view to testing some of the conclusions arrived at from the survey data, and to elucidating the nature of the rural landscape in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The study will conclude by discussing the roles played by newly established settlements in the Assyrian countryside and considering whether the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis fits the available data.

1.2 THE *PAX ASSYRIACA* MODEL

The *Pax Assyriaca* model has been developed over the last three decades, and is far removed from the traditional perception of the Assyrians, which viewed them as a particularly destructive people (Fales 2008: 18, Frahm 2006: 93-94). This model postulates that the Neo-Assyrian Empire imposed in the Near East by force of arms a system similar to the *Pax Romana* that was established several centuries later throughout the Mediterranean world by the Romans. Although this model has been put forward as an explanation for the findings from surveys, it is also based to some extent on the self-representation of a number of Assyrian kings (*cf.* Parker 2001: 83).

1.2.1 ANTECEDENTS

The original impetus for the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis did not come from those disciplines traditionally associated with the study of Assyria, but from Classical scholarship. While it has long been accepted that cultural connections had existed between Greece and the Near East in antiquity, it is only in the last three decades that the case for a sustained literary and artistic transmission into Greece from the Near East has been convincingly put forward. It was the publication in 1984 by Walter Burkert of *The Orientalizing Revolution*, which has been called 'a superb work' with a 'seismic' effect (Bernal 1996: 146), that first catalogued the numerous cultural borrowings into ancient Greece from the Near East. Burkert attributed the bulk of these to the Early Archaic Period (750-650 BCE), and linked them to the expansion

of the Assyrian Empire, which he described as a 'change of world-historical proportions' (Burkert 1992: 11-14).

There was at the same time a growing realisation among biblical scholars that there had been something extraordinary about the 8th century BCE, which culminated in an address in 1988 to the Society of Biblical Literature titled "The Eighth, the Greatest of Centuries?" by its president, Philip King. Citing the work of both biblical scholars and Assyriologists, as well as the findings from excavations in Lachish and Tel Miqne-Ekron, King suggested that 'the eighth was the century of resurgence', although his own interest as a biblical scholar was focused primarily on the appearance of the first classical prophets - Isaiah, Hosea, Amos and Micah (King 1989: 13-15).

This was followed by the work of Simo Parpola, who published a number of articles on Assyria's contribution to the cultural and intellectual development of the territories that came under its control (Parpola 1993, 2003, 2004). Among other things, Parpola tried to trace the concept of the Sephirotic Tree of Life, which is a fundamental idea in Jewish mysticism, to an Assyrian antecedent (Parpola 1993: 184-190), and even suggested that the Jewish concept of a single God had been 'heavily indebted' to Assyrian religion and royal ideology (Parpola 2003: 104-105; *cf*. Halpern 2003: 74-76).

1.2.2 'AGRICULTURAL COLONISATION'?

It was only a matter of time before these two propositions, that there had been a cultural and intellectual transmission from Assyria to other territories and that dramatic changes had taken place during the period of the Assyrian Empire's most rapid expansion, were brought together to formulate the hypothesis that Assyrian expansion had not only been concurrent, but had also served as the *cause* of the efflorescence of cultural and intellectual energy that occurred at this time. The excavations at Tel Miqne (which has since been identified as the ancient city of Ekron) had unearthed a large number of olive oil producing installations in Stratum IC in the lower city, which had been assigned to the first half of the 7th century BCE. These findings were interpreted as the result of an expansion in the olive oil industry, and it was suggested that this expansion must have been the result of the incorporation of this site into an 'Assyrian international trading network', which was part of a so-called *Pax Assyriaca* (Gitin 1995: 61, 1997: 77-85). It must be noted,

however, that the dating of Stratum IC to the Neo-Assyrian period has been challenged by some scholars (Stager 1996: 70-71, *cf.* Na'aman 2003: 87-88).

This postulated 'trading network' was conceived of as a regional system in which the Assyrian core exploited a periphery consisting of its subject provinces and client states by intimidation and, when required, by military intervention (Gitin 1997: 77-79). This model was expanded upon by Bradley Parker in his study of the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project, which consisted of five separate surveys in the Upper Tigris and Upper Euphrates regions. Using textual evidence that the Assyrians had conducted resettlement programmes that had transferred large numbers of people from one part of their empire to another to support his argument, Parker suggested that the increase in settlement shown in the data from these surveys had been the result of a policy of 'agricultural colonisation' that had been carried out by the Assyrians in order to achieve an 'agricultural surplus' as a means of adding to their own wealth (Parker 2001: 263). To support this argument, Parker cited the claim made by Adad-Nirari II that he had 'piled up more grain than ever before' (Parker 2001: 83; *cf.* Grayson 1991 A.0.99.2 ll.120-121). However, it is worth noting that Parker did not envisage a uniform imperial policy that was implemented throughout the Assyrian Empire, but recognised that the Assyrians utilised different strategies of control in different subject territories (Parker 2003: 552-553).

Further support for the ideas put forward by Parker was provided by the work of Tony Wilkinson. The results of the North Jazira Survey, which had been carried out in north-western Iraq from 1986 to 1989, had shown a similar increase in the number of settlements during the Iron Age, and it was suggested that a potential explanation for this phenomenon may have been a 'programme of resettlement' conducted by the Neo-Assyrian Empire (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62). Similar increases in settlement had also been noted in a number of other surveys that had been carried out in Syria, and it was observed that many of the new settlements that had been established in the Iron Age were located in areas that had not been settled during the preceding Late Bronze period, a pattern that was later described as 'infilling' (Wilkinson *et. al.* 2005: 40-41). It was proposed that Assyrian expansion had led to the 'deliberate resettlement' of entire communities, resulting in the reorganisation of the 'landscape of a vast region' (Wilkinson *et. al.* 2005: 50).

1.2.3 QUESTIONING THE MODEL

The suggestion that the extraordinary changes that occurred in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE were not just related to, but had been directly caused by, Assyrian expansion has been most strongly resisted by biblical scholars, some of whom have argued that the Assyrians were 'not interested in maximising productivity' in their subject provinces (Faust 2011: 70-71, *cf.* Faust and Weiss 2005, Faust and Weiss 2011). This is not surprising, since the traditional conception of the Assyrian Empire as a destructive entity, which had previously been accepted as accurate by most scholars, was based largely on their overwhelmingly negative portrayal in the Old Testament.

It is important to point out at this stage that there is no logical reason why cultural and economic development should necessarily be associated with imperial domination. The argument that incorporation into a supranational entity should automatically lead to an increase in trade and accelerate economic development has always been presented in the propaganda of imperial powers, but never been proved empirically. The rapid economic development experienced by former colonies like Singapore *after* they had gained independence belies this claim, and there is similarly no reason why any increase in the production of olive oil in Ekron must have been due to its relations with Assyria. An alternative explanation for the increased prosperity of Ekron (and indeed of all Philistia) at this time has been proposed by Avraham Faust and Ehud Weiss, who suggest that it was not due to increased trade with Assyria, but with other polities across the whole of the Mediterranean world, and in particular, with Egypt (Faust and Weiss 2005: 85, Faust and Weiss 2011: 194-195).

1.2.4 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

The archaeological evidence on which the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis is based was derived from a number of surveys conducted in various Middle Eastern countries, and the interpretations of the results of these surveys by the original investigators will be critically examined in this thesis. It is therefore necessary to briefly discuss the methodological issues involved with arriving at conclusions based on survey data at this point.

Survey data is typically presented as a series of distribution maps that show the varying location and distribution of sites within a specific region at different periods. Such site distribution maps are based on the presence of chronologically diagnostic artefacts collected at the time of the survey, and may therefore be subject to modification if more detailed information should be made available in the future (typically from a thorough stratigraphic excavation of the relevant sites). This process of data collection in survey is subject to a variety of confounding factors, including the survey methodology used, the presence of modern settlements and the visibility (or lack thereof) of the ceramic markers used to define different periods (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988: 506-507, *cf*. Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 59).

In addition, it must be remembered that the archaeological landscape is not a straightforward reflection of the ancient reality, but the result of complex formational processes that can affect the presence of the data that is actually available for collection (Wandsnider 2004: 53-56). The presence or absence of sites, for example, is not necessarily an accurate reflection of land use (Brück 1999: 68-70). Survey evidence should therefore be interpreted with a degree of caution and, although it does provide useful information, it is difficult to make definite conclusions about the past based on this kind of evidence alone. The excavation evidence that will be examined in the second half of this thesis can therefore also serve as a useful check on the interpretations derived from the survey evidence considered in the first half.

1.3 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This chapter has outlined the basic premises of the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis, raised questions about whether the increase in settlement numbers observed in surveys represents an actual increase in population and discussed some of the methodological issues involved with the use of survey data to arrive at historical conclusions.

Chapter 2 will present the historical background to this study. It will offer an outline of Assyrian history, from its beginnings in the Bronze Age and through the period of its expansion into a powerful empire, up to its collapse at the end of the 7th century BCE. It will then consider the relevant historical sources and discuss their reliability, with a focus on the use of some of these to look at the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

Chapter 3 will go on to discuss the relevant ceramic types that will be considered in Chapters 4 to 12, and present a summary of the system of classification proposed by Stefano Anastasio for Neo-Assyrian pottery (Anastasio 2010). This will be done to provide a basic framework for the discussion of the survey and excavation evidence presented in this thesis.

Chapter 4 will consider the evidence from the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project, which consisted of four surveys in the Upper Tigris region, and a fifth one in the Upper Euphrates region. It will also discuss the 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis put forward by Bradley Parker in greater detail, and consider the role played by the cuneiform sources in the formulation of his arguments.

The next four chapters will extend this analysis to a number of other archaeological surveys. Chapter 5 will look at the evidence from the Land of Carchemish Project. Chapter 6 will then re-examine the evidence from the North Jazira Survey, the results of which have been used in support of the 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis, and Chapter 7 will consider the Tell Beydar Survey. Finally, Chapter 8 will look at the evidence from the South Samaria Survey, which has yielded results that raise some questions about the 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis.

The four subsequent chapters will then move on to examine the archaeological evidence from a series of excavations located in different peripheral regions of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The aim of these chapters will be to provide us with a more elaborate picture of the rural landscape of this empire. Chapter 9 will start off by considering the evidence from Tille Höyük, which is a medium-sized site located in the Upper Euphrates region, and Chapter 10 will follow with a consideration of four small sites in the Upper Tigris region, Zeviya Tivilki, Kilokki Rabiseki, Boztepe and Hirbemerdon Tepe. Chapter 11 will then look at the evidence from four sites in Syro-Mesopotamia, Bir el-Haddad, Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, Khirbet al-Qasr and Tell Boueid, before Chapter 12 goes on to examine two sites in the southern Levant, Tell Qudadi and Tel Hadid.

Finally, Chapter 13 will draw together both the survey and the excavation data presented in the preceding chapters and consider whether this evidence fits into the interpretative framework provided by the *Pax Assyriaca* model, before presenting a final synthesis.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL ISSUES

This chapter will address the historical and chronological issues relating to this thesis, in order to provide a framework for assessing the changes in settlement patterns over the course of the Iron Age. Section 2.1 will outline the history of the Assyrian Empire, with a special focus on the expansion of Assyrian influence in the Levant during the Iron Age. This was a complicated process, with different regions coming under the control of the Assyrians at different points in time. This section will illustrate the gradual expansion of Assyrian power.

Section 2.2 will then go on to discuss the issues involved in reconstructing the history of Assyria and the Levant in the Iron Age, and on the reliability of the textual sources. This is an important issue because these sources have been used in a rather uncritical manner in the interpretation of some of the archaeological data that will be discussed in later chapters, in which a more objective interpretation based on the archaeological evidence will be suggested.

2.1 HISTORICAL OUTLINE

The history of Assyria begins with the founding of the city of Assur at the beginning of the second millennium BCE. The name of this city was also used for the chief deity worshipped by its inhabitants (Lambert 1982: 83). It was located on the west bank of the Tigris, about 100 kilometres to the south of Mosul (Kuhrt 1995: 81). A variety of sources are available for understanding the history of Assyria, and these will be discussed in further detail in Section 2.2.1.

2.1.1 THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN KINGDOM

In the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, the city of Assur is known to have been at the centre of a trading network that extended from northern Mesopotamia into central Anatolia (Garelli 1977: 99). It was briefly incorporated into the short-lived kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia that was established by Shamshi-Adad I (Fales 2010: 76, Saggs 1995: 98), but by the beginning of the Late Bronze period, the city had fallen under Mitannian control (Kuhrt 1995: 293).

From the 15th century onwards the Mitannian Empire came under increasing pressure from the Hittites to their north (Bryce 2014: 38). Repeated incursions into the northern Levant by the Hittites led inevitably to the destruction of Mitannian power, and it was only after this that the Assyrians were able, under the rule of Ashur-uballit, to become independent and establish their control over a stretch of territory that extended from Assur to Nineveh (Kuhrt 1995: 350). The growing importance of Assyria at this time is attested to by the tone adopted by Ashur-uballit in one of the Amarna tablets (EA16), in which he arrogates to himself the title of 'Great King' and addresses the Egyptian Pharaoh as a 'brother' (Moran 1992: 38-40).

Assyria's place among the major powers was firmly established by Tukulti-Ninurta I. This warrior-king campaigned extensively against the hill-tribes to the north and east of the Assyrian heartland, and won a decisive victory against the Hittites in the region of Nihiriya in northern Mesopotamia, after which he claimed to have captured 28,000 prisoners (Singer 2000: 22, 1985: 104). His most signal achievement, however, was the capture of Babylon, after which he carried off the statue of Marduk to Assyria (Saggs 1995: 119, Yamada 2003: 153). Although there was a period of relative instability after his death, the core of Assyrian territory in Upper Mesopotamia was retained by his successors.

A further period of expansion followed under Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE), who led an expedition to the shores of the Mediterranean (Grayson 1991 A.0.87.3 ll.16-25, Parker 2001: 83). It was during the reign of this king that the first 'royal annals', which later became the standard form for recording the achievements of Assyrian kings, were produced (Parker 2001: 30). These annals would typically present the king as being in possession of all the qualities of an ideal ruler. A recurring theme in these annals was the claim that the king was a provider of peace and plenty, who had 'piled up more grain than ever before' (Kuhrt 1995: 359, *cf.* Grayson 1991

A.0.87.1 vi 101-104). This claim is also found in the annals of Adad-Nirari II and has been used to support the 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis (Parker 2001: 83, *cf.* Grayson 1991 A.0.99.2 ll.120-121).

2.1.2 THE LATE BRONZE COLLAPSE

The end of the Late Bronze period witnessed a general disintegration of the social and economic framework of the Eastern Mediterranean region. In the Aegean, this period saw the abandonment of the Late Bronze Age palaces and the end of the Mycenaean civilisation (Betancourt 1976: 40). At around the same time, the Hittite Empire, which had controlled the northern Levant from its central Anatolian base, collapsed after the fall of its capital Hattusas (Singer 2000: 25). In the southern Levant, which had been controlled by the Egyptians for most of the Late Bronze period, there appears to have been widespread disorder associated with attacks made by wandering groups that are generally referred to as the 'Sea Peoples' following their description in the Medinet Habu inscription of Ramesses III (Drake 2012: 1862; but *cf.* Cline 2014: 114-123 for an alternative view). The end of Egyptian control in the southern Levant and of Hittite control in the north resulted in the emergence of new power centres, and led to the formation of a collection of smaller states that extended across the region, including the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the southern Levant and the Aramean and Neo-Hittite kingdoms in the north (Bryce 2014: 100-112).

Assyria itself did manage to survive the upheavals that took place during this period, but its authority was seriously undermined by repeated Aramean incursions (Younger 2014: 863-864). By the end of the 11th century BCE, the Assyrians appear to have lost a great deal of territory to Aramean invaders (Szuchman 2009: 58), although it has been argued that they did manage to retain control over the lower Khabur Valley (Kühne 2009: 46). The traditions of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, however, were kept intact in the Assyrian heartland (Fales 2010: 77-78). The kings of the subsequent Neo-Assyrian period, for example, did not just adopt the names of their Middle Assyrian predecessors but also strove to emulate their achievements by adding to the territory under Assyrian control.

2.1.3 THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

The Neo-Assyrian Empire is generally considered to have begun with the accession of Ashur-dan II in 934 BCE (Postgate 1992: 249). His reign, and those of his two immediate successors Adad-Nirari II and Tukulti-Ninurta II, represent a period of recovery and consolidation. The repeated military campaigns of these rulers gradually re-established Assyrian control in northern Mesopotamia, and extended Assyrian influence beyond the Khabur Valley to areas that include the Tell Beydar survey region in the west (Millard and Bordreuil 1982: 136), and into the territory of the state of Bit Zamani including some of the areas of the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project to the north (Szuchman 2009: 57, also *cf.* Younger 2014: 866, Kuhrt 1995: 478-482).

The following sections will explore the historical trajectory of the expansion of the Assyrian Empire, in order to assess the degree to which it may or may not have been responsible for the changes in settlement patterns in the different areas that will be considered in this thesis.

2.1.3.1 ASHURNASIRPAL II (883-859 BCE)

Although he is not as well-known as those of his successors who are mentioned in the Old Testament, Ashurnasirpal II was the Assyrian king who did the most to establish Assyrian hegemony in the Iron Age. Ashurnasirpal II is best remembered for having constructed a new administrative capital at the site of Nimrud (known in the Assyrian language as Kalhu), in which he built a palace decorated with a magnificent series of sculptured bas-reliefs (Reade 1982: 102). His most significant achievement, however, was not the building of a new capital, but the establishment of a network of tributary relations that bound the petty kingdoms of neighbouring regions to Assyria.

Ashurnasirpal campaigned relentlessly to secure the northern and eastern frontiers of his realm. He intervened forcefully in the affairs of the state of Bit Zamani, where he established a centre for tribute collection in the city of Tushan, which is thought to be the site of modern Ziyarat Tepe (Szuchman 2009: 57). Then, like Tiglath-pileser I before him, he led a military expedition beyond the Euphrates and to the Mediterranean, where he ceremonially washed his weapons in the sea (Grayson 1991 A.0.101.1 iii 84-89). Many of the smaller states to the west of the Euphrates

(including Carchemish and the coastal state of Pattina) are known to have provided him with gifts of homage, and he even claims to have ordered levies in some (Bryce 2014: 117-118; *cf.* Grayson 1991 A.0.101.1 iii 65-77). It is therefore from this time that Assyrian influence should be considered to have appeared in northern Syria.

2.1.3.2 SHALMANASER III (858-824 BCE)

By the time of Ashurnasirpal's death, Assyrian control had become so firmly entrenched in northern Syria that a coalition of minor kingdoms (including both Carchemish and Pattina) was formed almost immediately after the accession of his son Shalmanaser III in an attempt to throw off the Assyrian yoke. The leader of this coalition was Ahuni, the ruler of the state of Bit Adini, who had as his capital the city of Til Barsip (Bryce 2014: 120). Shalmanaser campaigned repeatedly against this northern coalition, finally managing to storm Til Barsip in 856 BCE (after which he converted it into a royal city and renamed it Kar-Shalmanaser), and capturing Ahuni's stronghold at Shittamrat the following year (Sader 1987: 90-92; *cf.* Grayson 1991 A.0.102.2 ii 66-75).

The subjugation of northern Syria led to the formation of a second coalition against Assyria, formed by the rulers of the more southerly kingdoms. The most important of these were Hadadezer of Damascus and Urhilina of Hamath, but they were also joined by Ahab of Israel, who contributed a force of 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers (Grayson 1991 A.0.102.2 ii 89-95). Shalmanaser did manage to defeat this coalition at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE, but for some reason all the rulers who had taken up arms against him were allowed to remain in power afterwards as his vassals, and it is possible that the outcome of this battle may not have been as decisive as the annals of Shalmanaser make it out to be (Bryce 2014: 124-125, Lipinski 2000: 376).

In any case, the campaigns of Shalmanaser do appear to have established Assyria as the paramount power in the Levant. Assyrian influence extended from the Anatolian states of Tabal and Que in the north to the Phoenician cities and the kingdom of Israel in the south (Kuhrt 1995: 488). These petty kingdoms were obliged to pay an annual tribute to the Assyrian king, which would usually consist of precious metals or luxury items of some other kind. Any failure to make a payment would have been considered an act of rebellion and used by the Assyrians as a justification for reprisals against the vassal state (Postgate 1992: 254-5).

The requirement to make such payments would certainly have been a burden on these petty kingdoms. It is possible that the increase in economic activity seen in sites like Tel Miqne and Tel Batash in Philistia, which show evidence for the establishment of an olive-oil industry in the Assyrian period (Gitin 1997: 87-92) and Khirbat al-Mudayna in Moab, where a building complex devoted to textile production was constructed in the same period (Daviau and Klassen 2014: 118), might have been due to the need to make expensive tribute payments, rather than an increase in trade caused by their incorporation into an Assyrian 'world-system', as has been suggested by the proponents of the *Pax Assyriaca* model.

2.1.3.3 TIGLATH-PILESER III

The death of Shalmanaser III was followed by a period of relative instability, with the accession of a series of less capable rulers. Most of the territory conquered by him and his father Ashurnasirpal did remain under Assyrian control, but there was a significant loss of Assyrian prestige among their Syrian and Anatolian vassals (Fales 2010: 156). This was largely a result of the growing influence of the powerful kingdom of Urartu, which was centred around Lake Van in eastern Anatolia, and whose inhabitants spoke a language related to Hurrian. The Neo-Hittite kingdom of Kummuh, which the site of Tille Höyük is thought to have been part of, came under Urartian control at this time (Astour 1979: 6-7).

It was only with the accession to the throne of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BCE) that the balance of power shifted in Assyria's favour. This capable ruler, who is thought to have been a usurper (Zawadzki 1994: 54), launched a massive campaign against the combined forces of the Urartian king, Sarduri, and of his north Syrian and Anatolian vassals in 743 BCE. Tiglath-pileser won a decisive victory against the Urartians, after which Assyrian control was re-established in the region (Bryce 2014: 132). This was followed up with an invasion of Urartu itself eight years later (Kuhrt 1995: 557). The reign of Tiglath-pileser also witnessed a reassertion of the practice of deportation and resettlement (Oded 1979: 33, Garelli 1991: 50; *cf*. Tadmor and Yamada 2011 Tiglath-pileser III 13 l.12, 14 ll.3-10). It has been proposed that this practice was used to increase settlement in the provinces of the Assyrian Empire (Parker 2001: 16).

2.1.3.4 SARGON II AND SENNACHERIB

The military initiatives undertaken by Tiglath-pileser were brought to fruition during the reign of his son Sargon II (721-705 BCE), whose accession was marked by the formation of yet another anti-Assyrian coalition, this time under the leadership of the ruler of Hamath, Yaubidi. Sargon reacted promptly to this challenge to his authority, defeating the coalition armies in a second battle at Qarqar, and then capturing Hamath and having Yaubidi flayed alive (Frahm 2013: 50). It was also around this time that the northern kingdom of Israel, whose king Hosea may have conspired with the ruler of Hamath against the Assyrians, was conquered (Beecher 1892: 213). Sargon did not allow those rulers who had taken up arms against him to remain in power as his vassals, as Shalmanaser III had. Instead, both Hamath and Israel, as well as a number of other kingdoms like Carchemish and Kummuh, were turned into provinces that were ruled directly by a governor appointed by the Assyrian king (Bryce 2014: 135).

Sargon was succeeded in turn by his son Sennacherib, who is probably the most well-known of all the Assyrian kings, as a result of his campaign against the smaller states of the southern Levant, including the kingdom of Judah. The brutality of his conquest of the city of Lachish was recorded in the bas-reliefs from his palace at Nineveh, which are now displayed in the British Museum (Reade 1983: 65-67).

2.1.3.5 ESARHADDON AND ASHURBANIPAL

With Urartian power neutralised in the north, the last remaining obstacle to Assyrian domination of the entire Near East was Egypt, which was ruled at this time by the Napatan dynasty. Egypt had consistently opposed the expansion of Assyrian influence in the Levant over the latter half of the 8th century BCE, and had even sent an army to participate in the coalition organised against Sargon by Yaubidi (Morkot 2000: 125).

There was continued meddling in the Levant by successive Napatan rulers in the first few decades of the 7th century, and it has been suggested that the rebellion of the king of Sidon against Esarhaddon in 677 BCE may have been instigated by the Egyptians (Morkot 2000: 263). These repeated problems led to the invasion of Egypt itself. Although an initial military expedition in 674 BCE appears to have been repelled, Esarhaddon attacked with a second army three years later, and captured

the royal city of Memphis (Morkot 2000: 268; *cf.* Grayson 1975 ABC no. 1 iv 26-27). The Egyptian ruler Taharqo, however, escaped and fled to Thebes, from where he continued to resist the Assyrians. Taharqo even managed to recapture Memphis after Esarhaddon had left Egypt, and the Napatans only appear to have been neutralised after Esarhaddon's son Ashurbanipal carried out two further campaigns into Egypt, and sacked their capital Thebes (Kuhrt 1995: 499, Morkot 2000: 296; *cf.* Nahum 3:8-10).

2.1.3.6 THE FALL OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

The conquest of Egypt saw the Assyrian Empire reach its greatest extent, but it seems also to have led to imperial overreach. The death of Ashurbanipal in 627 BCE led to infighting between his two sons Ashur-etel-ilani and Sin-shar-ishkun, with the latter eventually gaining the upper hand around 622 BCE (Reade 1970: 5).

The unintended consequence of this struggle over the succession, however, was the rise to power of Nabo-polassar, which effectively sealed the fate of the empire. Nabo-polassar was not of royal descent, and may have started out as a general in the service of Sin-shar-ishkun. In 626 BCE, he seized the throne of Babylon. After consolidating his hold over Babylonia, Nabo-polassar invaded Assyria itself (Fales 2010: 161). His first invasion in 615 BCE was beaten back, but he returned a few years later and, with the assistance of the Median king Cyaxares, captured and sacked Nineveh in 612 BCE (Kuhrt 1995: 545; Grayson 1975 ABC no. 4 43-44). After the fall of Nineveh, a small group of Assyrians continued to resist Nabo-polassar from their stronghold in Harran, and it was only after they were defeated by his successor Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BCE that the Assyrian Empire came to an end. The fall of Assyria led to disruption in many of the territories that had previously been under their control, with the Babylonians attempting to supplant the Assyrians in their role as the paramount power in the Near East and causing a lot of destruction in the process (Faust and Weiss 2005: 72). The most notorious example of this, of course, was their capture of the Judahite capital of Jerusalem (Moyal and Faust 2015: 284; *cf.* 2 Kings 25:9-21, Jeremiah 52:12-23), an event so destructive that the memory of the despair of its inhabitants has survived to the present day both in prayer and in song (Lamentations 1:1-11 and of course, Psalm 137).

2.2 HISTORICAL SOURCES

This section will address some of the issues arising from the use of textual sources in the kind of historical reconstructions that have been outlined above. Section 2.2.1 will consider some of the issues involved in the use of Assyrian textual sources, and Section 2.2.2 will then go on to discuss the nature of the Hebrew Bible, and its use in reconstructing the history of the Levant.

2.2.1 THE ASSYRIAN SOURCES

Modern scholarly reconstructions of Assyrian history are based on a variety of different sources, of which the most important are the 'royal annals' that describe the achievements of individual Assyrian kings (Kuhrt 1995: 473-476). Other important sources are the inscriptions discovered in the Assyrian palaces and on stelae, statues, obelisks and other monuments across the Assyrian Empire (*cf*. Luckenbill 1926, Grayson 1991, Tadmor and Yamada 2011). Important information can also be obtained from the visual record, as seen in the numerous palace reliefs, many of which have been of use in the interpretation of archaeological evidence (Reade 1983: 32-33, Reade 1972, Reade 1976). For the later years of the empire, a degree of balance is provided by the *Babylonian Chronicle* (ABC No.1), which provides a year-by-year narrative of political events during the years 744-668 BCE from a Babylonian point of view, as opposed to an Assyrian one (Oppert 1887, Grayson 1975: 69-87). A non-Assyrian perspective of a somewhat different nature is also to be found in certain books of the Old Testament, although the use of this source is not without its own problems, which will be discussed further in Section 2.2.2 below. A vast number of everyday documents, which have been of particular value for achieving a closer understanding of the rural landscape, are also available for the purposes of historical reconstruction. These include both legal and administrative documents, as well as the many letters written to the king of Assyria by minor officials (Fales 1990: 84-90, 2010: 55-57).

It is important, when using ancient texts in historical reconstruction, that these sources should be carefully interrogated. This should include an examination of the motives of the authors of each source, as well as a consideration of the audience to which it would have been addressed (Liverani 1973: 179). It should always be borne in mind that these texts were originally intended for the people who were ruled by

the Assyrian king, and not for modern historians. Assertions that were made in these sources, like the claim made by Adad-Nirari II to have 'piled up more grain than ever before' (Grayson 1991 A.0.99.2 ll.120-121) are more likely to have been an attempt to present a positive image of the Assyrian king to his subjects than to provide an accurate description of the objective ancient reality (Liverani 1988: 82). This is exactly why the traditional depiction of the Assyrian Empire as a 'bloodthirsty military machine' with 'quasi-Hitlerian connotations' (Fales 2008: 17), which was derived largely from a simplistic reading of the major royal inscriptions, has been called into question in recent years, and replaced by a more positive perception of the empire (*cf*. Gitin 1997, Parker 2001, Wilkinson *et al*. 2005).

In contrast to these royal inscriptions and annals, which are filled with claims about the actions and achievements of the Assyrian king that were designed to buttress his position in the eyes of his own subjects and can therefore be problematic (*cf*. Laato 1995: 200), the administrative, legal and epistolary texts that are available to us provide evidence of an unwitting nature that can be used to reconstruct a synchronic picture (or 'snapshot') of the nature of a society at the time at which they were produced (Fales 2010: 237, *cf*. Halpern 1988: 20-21). Administrative and epistolary texts dating to the late 13th and 12th centuries BCE from the site of Tell Sabi Abyad, for example, along with contemporaneous texts from Tell Sheikh Hamad as well as a number of other Middle Assyrian sites, have been used to examine different aspects of Late Bronze society in the Balikh River Valley (Fales 2000: 229-234). Similarly, it has also been possible to look at the nature of Neo-Assyrian society in the same region by interrogating the texts of the so-called 'Harran Census', which is a collection of mostly fragmentary documents that list the holdings that belonged to different landowners in the Harran region during this period (Fales 1990: 88, 2000: 234-237; also *cf*. Morandi Bonacossi 1996: 22-27). The evidence provided in these documents has made it possible to distinguish between different kinds of settlements. Larger settlements that would have been equivalent in size to a small village or a hamlet appear to have been designated by the term *ālu*, while smaller settlements that would have been equivalent in size to a single farmstead (and were probably the holding of a single patriarchal family unit) seem to have been referred to by the term *kapru* (Fales 1990: 99-105). It has been suggested that some smaller sites dating to the Neo-Assyrian period may have corresponded to these *kapru*, an example of this being the site of Hirbemerdon Tepe in the Upper Tigris valley (Laneri 2016: 128, Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 22).

2.2.2 THE BIBLICAL TEXT

As pointed out above, a degree of balance to the historical claims made in the Assyrian royal inscriptions is also provided by certain books of the Old Testament, most notably by the book of Kings, but also by the Chronicles and by the prophetic writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah. It has been argued, for example, that the account of Sennacherib's campaign against Judah in 701 BCE that is presented in the Assyrian sources is propagandistic, and that the Hebrew account of this campaign that is given in 2 Kings 18:13-19:36 and echoed in Isaiah 36:1-37:37 should not be dismissed as wholly unreliable but regarded as a necessary corrective to the hyperbole and exaggeration of the Assyrian sources (Laato 1995: 223-226). The book of Kings is also an important source for the relative chronology of the southern Levant, with the names of several of the rulers of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah also being mentioned in Assyrian sources.

However, although many of the personages who are mentioned in the Old Testament (like Ahab of Israel and Hezekiah of Judah) are also attested to in other sources, a degree of caution has to be exercised when using these texts for the purposes of historical reconstruction. In the first place, there is uncertainty over their exact date of composition. While many scholars argue that these texts can be dated to the late 7th century BCE (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 23-24, 46-47), others contend that they should not be dated to before the Persian, or perhaps even the Hellenistic, period (Thompson 1999: *xv*; but *cf.* Dever 2001: 28-40). This makes it difficult to use the Hebrew texts in the same way that the legal, administrative and epistolary documents discussed above in Section 2.2.1 (whose date of composition is not in any doubt) have been.

A further problem is presented by the presence of a great deal of fanciful material in these texts. An example of this is the story of the prophet Elijah going up to heaven in a 'chariot of fire' (2 Kings 2:11-12), which should surely be dismissed by any impartial observer as a fiction. It has been argued that it would be a serious error in historical method to use the biblical narrative as though it could be somehow stripped of its supernatural components and treated as though it were only a collection of royal inscriptions (Thompson 1999: 44; Whitelam 1996: 33-36). This is because the primary function of the biblical text is didactic, and not documentary. Its intended audience was not limited to the people who lived at the same time as its authors, and its function was more than mere propaganda. Instead, it was meant to hammer home a metaphysical point, which is that the Almighty will always bless 'the righteous' and compass him (or her) with his favour (*cf.* Psalms 1:1, 5:12). Removing

the supernatural components of this narrative would therefore only serve to make it unfit for its original purpose, which is to illustrate God's love and protection for those who obey his commandments, without making the narrative itself historical.

The historical claims made in the biblical text should therefore not be accepted without question. While it has been argued that the authors of the biblical text did have some historiographical intent, such an intent alone is not a guarantee of the accuracy and reliability of a text (Halpern 1988: *xxiii*). It is impossible, for example, to deny the historiographical *intent* of a Herodotus, even if his writings may be riddled with inaccuracies and exaggerations.

Nevertheless, it is still possible to derive much useful information from the Hebrew sources. The references to the Assyrian practice of deportation found in them, for example, would only have seemed plausible to the readers of these texts if such deportations had in fact been carried out, and can therefore be used as evidence of the reality of this practice, even if the exact numbers mentioned in them may have been exaggerated (*cf.* 2 Kings 16:9, 17:6). More importantly, the role of these texts in providing a counterbalancing perspective to the dominant narrative of the Assyrian sources is invaluable (Laato 1995: 226, *cf.* Thum 2011: 30).

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a brief outline of Assyrian expansion in the Levant which will help to contextualise the archaeological evidence that will be presented in the rest of this thesis. It has also discussed the reliability of the textual sources relevant to these sites and looked at some of the problems involved with the use of these sources. The next chapter will consider the various ceramic types that will be discussed in this study, before the remaining chapters go on to discuss the survey and the excavation evidence.

CHAPTER 3

POTTERY

This chapter will discuss the main ceramic assemblages that are relevant to the discussion of the archaeological evidence from the various surveys and excavations that will be considered in the following chapters. The most important of these is the Neo-Assyrian assemblage. This is a distinctive assemblage that is characteristic of the sites located in the Assyrian 'core region'. It will be considered in some detail in Section 3.1, because it is relevant to the discussions of most of the surveys and excavations considered in this thesis.

The remaining sections in this chapter will then go on to consider a number of other important pottery types. Section 3.2 will look at the Middle Assyrian assemblage, which was described by Wilkinson and Tucker and has been used as an indicator of occupation during the Late Bronze period in the North Jazira Survey and in the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project. Section 3.3 will go on to discuss the distinctive pottery known as Grooved Ware, which is characteristic of the Early Iron Age in south-eastern Anatolia. Finally, Section 3.4 will consider the pottery of the Iron Age in the southern Levant, with a focus on those ceramic types that are of most use for identifying different archaeological periods in this region.

3.1 THE NEO-ASSYRIAN ASSEMBLAGE

This is an assemblage that is known to us from the pottery discovered in the major sites of the Assyrian 'core region', which consists of the area around the important sites of Assur, Nineveh and Nimrud. However, although this region has been the subject of archaeological investigation since the mid-19th century CE, only a limited

number of assemblages are known from it, with publication still in a preliminary stage in many cases (Anastasio 2010: 7, Hausleiter 2008: 216). The most important sites on which this assemblage is based are Nimrud, Assur and Nineveh, and to a lesser extent, Kar-Tukulti Ninurta and Khirbet Khatuniyeh (Anastasio 2010: 3).

It is especially important to note the role of the excavations carried out at Nimrud between 1948 and 1963 by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq (first under the direction of Max Mallowan and later, of David Oates and of Julian Orchard), which have been variously described as 'pivotal' and 'fundamental' (Anastasio 2010: 7, Blaylock 2016: 53). The pottery from these excavations, and particularly that from Room 19 in Building T.W. 53 and the destruction level and subsequent 'squatter' occupation of Fort Shalmaneser, were the subject of very prompt publication, with the express purpose of providing dating criteria for other excavations (Lines 1954, Oates 1959).

Two different systems of classification have been put forward for this assemblage in relatively recent publications. The first, developed by Stefano Anastasio, is based on the classification system developed by Mazar and Panitz-Cohen for the pottery from Tel Batash, in which broad morphological groups are denoted by two capital letters (Anastasio 2010: 31, *cf*. Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001). This system distinguishes between ceramic types discovered in Assyria itself (which is defined as 'Region 1') and those that are mostly encountered in areas that were added to the Assyrian Empire by force, of which Anastasio defines six, including the Western Jazira (Region 2), the Upper Tigris (Region 3), and the southern Levant (Region 6). The second system is that suggested by Arnulf Hausleiter, which is more narrowly focussed on the pottery of the 'core territory' (*Kerngebiet*) of Assyria (Hausleiter 2010). This typology is more elaborate in some ways (it defines 26 different types of shallow bowl and 15 types of deep bowl), but does not consider some vessel types that are commonly encountered in more peripheral regions (like kraters) as separate morphological groups.

The classification system that will be used as a reference point in this thesis is that developed by Anastasio, of which a summary is presented in the following section. This system is based purely on vessel morphology (Anastasio 2010: 29), and also has the advantage of giving equal consideration to the pottery from sites that are located outside of the Assyrian core region, like Tille Höyük. However, significant differences between this typology and the one suggested by Hausleiter, especially when these could lead to confusion in the identification of specific ceramic types, will be highlighted in the text as necessary.

3.1.1 BOWLS

Anastasio describes a large number of types of bowls, which can for convenience sake be divided into four broad categories (shallow, deep, carinated and small-sized), as well as a miscellaneous group to include unusual examples.

3.1.1.1 SHALLOW BOWLS

These are vessels characterised by a shallow body with a depth that is less than its diameter. Anastasio places all of these into a single type (BW_01), but distinguishes them into a number of variants according to the shape of their rims.

- The basic variant (BW_01.a) has a simple rim without any embellishments (Fig. 3.1a).

- A second variant (BW_01.b) has a simple, thickened rim (Fig. 3.1b).

- Two other variants (BW_01.c and BW_01.d) are described as having moulded, ribbon-like rims (Figs. 3.1c and 3.1d).

- A fifth variant (BW_01.e) is characterised by a hammer-like rim (Fig. 3.1e).

- Finally, a sixth variant (BW_01.f) is described, which resembles the 'hammer-like' variant but has a particular closure to the inside of the rim that appears to be intended to keep the contents of the vessel from spilling out (Fig. 3.1f).

3.1.1.2 DEEP BOWLS

These vessels are deeper versions of the shallow bowls. Anastasio divides them into a smaller (BW_02.a) and a larger (BW_02.b) variant Most of these vessels have a thickened rim and a ring base (Anastasio 2010: 36; Figs. 3.2a, b).

3.1.1.3 CARINATED BOWLS

Anastasio describes six different types of carinated bowl, which are distinguished on the basis of their profiles and the shape of their rims.

- The first type is the carinated bowl of a 'Middle Assyrian' style (BW_03), which is a flared shallow bowl with a soft carination (Fig. 3.3). This is a characteristic shape in Middle Assyrian assemblages, although it has also been discovered in Iron Age contexts, and is therefore thought to have continued in production during the Neo-Assyrian period (Anastasio 2010: 36-37).

- A second type is the carinated deep bowl with an undercut lip (BW_04). These vessels are distinguished by a carination on the external part of the wall, which produces the effect of a 'clear-cut step' (Anastasio 2010: 37; Fig. 3.4a).

- The third type is the carinated bowl with a flaring lip (BW_05), which is a very characteristic Neo-Assyrian shape. This type can be divided into an 'elegant' variant (BW_05.a), which is smaller and thin-walled, and a less elegant, common variant (BW_05.b). These vessels have a shallow body and a carination that is just below the rim, which gives them a 'sinuous' profile (Anastasio 2010: 37). Figure 3.4b shows an example of the 'elegant' variant of this type (BW_05.a).

- A fourth type is the carinated bowl with a straight, slanting lip (BW_06). These vessels are also differentiated into elegant (BW_06.a) and common (BW_06.b) variants by Anastasio, who also distinguishes three other variants, one with a thickened rim (BW_06.c), one with a decorated edge (BW_06.d), and one which is slightly deeper in shape (BW_06.e). These vessels are very commonly found in Iron Age contexts, both in Assyria proper as well as in the more peripheral regions (Anastasio 2010: 38). Figure 3.4c shows an example of the 'common' variant of this type (BW_06.b).

- Another type is the carinated bowl with a sharp-cut lip (BW_07). Anastasio also distinguishes a number of different variants within this type on the basis of their rims, one with a thickened out rim (BW_07.a), one with an extremely short neck and a bulge beneath

the top of the rim (BW_07.b), one with a 'skullcap-like' rim (BW_07.c), one with a bulge in the neck, but not involving the rim (BW_07.d) and finally, a group for especially large examples of this type (BW_07.e). Oates described these vessels as 'bowls with an everted lip and a carinated shoulder' and noted that they were the most common type in the assemblage from Fort Shalmaneser (Oates 1959: 132, Anastasio 2010: 39-40). Figure 3.4d shows an example of the variant with a 'skullcap-like' rim (BW_07.c).

- A sixth type is the carinated bowl with a simple round base and an accentuated, everted lip (BW_30). These vessels are distinguished by a convex base that is occasionally pointed, a distinct carination and an everted rim (Anastasio 2010: 41; Fig. 3.4e). Oates described an example of this type as an 'open bowl with a ribbed shoulder', and proposed that it must have been derived from a metal prototype (Oates 1959: 132).

3.1.1.4 SMALLER-SIZED BOWLS

This category includes a number of types that are essentially just smaller versions of the types that have already been described. Anastasio justifies placing these vessels in a separate group on the grounds that they would have been 'intended for different uses' (Anastasio 2010: 40). The different types described for this category are: -

- Small, shallow bowls without any carination (BW_21), with variants as for the shallow bowls of type BW_01.

- Small carinated bowls of a 'Middle Assyrian' style (BW_23), which are similar in shape to type BW_03.

- Small carinated bowls with a straight, slanting lip (BW_26), with variants as for type BW_06.

- Small carinated bowls with a sharp-cut lip (BW_27) with variants as for type BW_07.

- Small carinated bowls with a simple round base and an everted lip (BW_28).

3.1.1.5 MISCELLANEOUS TYPES

This type (BW_99) includes a few unusual items that cannot be placed into any of the categories described above. These include the bowl with 'trumpet lug' decorations and another with a high ring-base, both from Nimrud (Anastasio 2010: 42, *cf*. Oates 1959: 132; Fig. 3.5).

3.1.2 CHALICES

These are footed open vessels that were designed to hold and serve drinks. They are classified as 'footed beakers' by Hausleiter, who places them in the same overall category as one variant of the beakers discussed in Section 3.1.7 below (Hausleiter 2010: 299).

The types known from Assyria proper are a type with a globular body (CH_01) and another with a carinated body (CH_02), which have been described as 'distinctive seventh century Assyrian' types (Oates 1959: 133). Examples of both types were discovered in the excavations conducted by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq at Nimrud (Figs. 3.6a, 3.6b). Anastasio describes two additional types, one with a flaring-out rim (CH_03) and another with a carinated body and a tall trumpeted base (CH_04), both from outside of Assyria (Anastasio 2010: 42-43; Figs. 3.6c, 3.6d).

3.1.3 TRIPODS

These are open vessels with three feet, either straight or conical. Hausleiter classifies them as a special kind of bowl (*Schalen auf Standfüßen*) rather than as a distinct morphological category (Hausleiter 2010: 293-294). The most common type is the one with a carinated body (TR_02), which is well known from the British excavations at Nimrud (Anastasio 2010: 43; Fig. 3.7a). A second type is the tripod with a hemispherical body (TR_01), which is known from the site of Humaidat (Fig. 3.7b).

3.1.4 COOKING POTS

These are typically closed vessels with either no or very little neck, and round or flat bottoms. They are usually made of a fabric that contains a large amount of calcite or quartz, to provide resistance to higher temperatures. Those from the Assyrian core region are globular or squat in shape, and lack variation. These vessels are labelled as type PT_01 in Anastasio's system of classification (Anastasio 2010: 45; Fig. 3.8).

3.1.5 KRATERS

These are large vessels that are named for their similarity in form to the kraters of Classical Greece, which were used to mix wine with water at symposia (Whitley 2001: 205-9). Although these vessels are frequently referred to in the scholarly literature, the criteria by which they can be differentiated from large bowls or jars are not clear. Anastasio distinguishes between kraters with a neck (KR_03) and those without a neck, which can be open (KR_01) or closed (KR_02) in shape (Anastasio 2010: 44; Figs. 3.9a-c). These vessels are not classified as a separate category in the typology proposed by Hausleiter.

3.1.6 STORAGE JARS

This group includes all those vessels, invariably with closed shapes, that were used for storage and for the transportation of both solid and liquid substances. Anastasio distinguishes seven different types of these vessels (Anastasio 2010: 45-46, pls. 22-26).

The first type is the storage jar without a neck (SJ_01). This type is uncommon in Assyria itself, but more frequently encountered in the more peripheral regions (Fig. 3.10a). This type of vessel is sometimes referred to as a pithos (Anastasio 2010: 45).

The six other types described by Anastasio are necked. These are the type with a globular body (SJ_02), the type with an ovoid body and a rounded base (SJ_03), the type with an ovoid body and a petal motif on its shoulder (SJ_04), the type with a

narrow, elongated body (SJ_05), the type with an ovoid body and a tapered base (SJ_06) and finally, the 'pear-shaped' type (SJ_07), which has a tall neck and a sharply pointed base (Anastasio 2010: 46; Figs. 3.10b, 3.10c, 3.11a-d). This last type (SJ_07) has been described by Blaylock as an 'amphora with a pointed base', and it has been suggested that these vessels would have been used in an upright position, with their base set into a hole in the ground (Blaylock 2016: 40, Anastasio 2010: 46).

3.1.7 BEAKERS

These are deep, open vessels with straight profiles that are either of a small or a medium size. (Anastasio 2010: 47). Three variants can be distinguished.

- The first is the so-called *istikan* (BK_01), which is thought to have been a 'small drinking vesel' and is said to resemble the small glasses used to serve tea in Iraq and other Arab countries (Anastasio 2010: 47, Oates 1959: 132-133; Figs. 3.12a, 3.12b).

- A second variant (BK_02) has upright sides and has been described as '*situla*-shaped' (Anastasio 2010: 47; Fig. 3.12c).

- A third variant (BK_03) is characterised by the presence of a distinct base (Fig. 3.12d). This is the type placed in the category of 'footed beakers' by Hausleiter, along with the chalices described in Section 3.1.2 (Hausleiter 2010: 299-300).

3.1.8 BOTTLES

These are defined by Anastasio, who distinguishes fourteen types, as vessels with closed forms that have necks and bases that are narrower than their bodies (Anastasio 2010: 48-52). These can be divided for convenience into three broad categories – goblets, bottles with a globular or ovoid shape, and bottles with an elongated shape, although there is one type (BT_12) that does not fall readily into any of these groups and can perhaps best be described as a bottle with a squat body.

In the typology proposed by Hausleiter the first group (goblets) are classified as 'funnel-necked beakers' (Hausleiter 2010: 303-307, Taf. 81-82), and only the other two are regarded as 'bottles' (Hausleiter 2010: 310-313, 317-323, Taf. 88-91, 95-107). While this may seem more organised at first, close inspection of these vessels would show that Hausleiter's 'funnel-necked beakers' are similar in form to his 'wide-necked funnel-shaped bottles', which they appear to be smaller versions of (*cf.* some of the 'beakers' in Hausleiter 2010, Taf. 84-85 to the 'bottles' in Hausleiter 2010, Taf. 88-89). This strengthens Anastasio's case for placing all these vessels in the same overall category.

3.1.8.1 GOBLETS

This group includes those types that were originally described by Joan Oates as 'Palace Ware beakers', which is confusing because she then described the beakers with a base distinguished by Anastasio (BK_03), as 'low-footed goblets' (Oates 1959: 133). Three types are distinguished by Anastasio, which are the goblets with a globular body (BT_01), goblets with a tapered body (BT_02), and goblets with an elongated, tapered body and a high neck (BT_03). These vessels are often decorated with fingertip marks made by the potter that are referred to as 'indentations' (Anastasio 2010: 48; Figs. 3.13a-c). Hausleiter regards these decorated vessels as a separate category, which he describes as 'funnel-necked beakers with indented decorations' (Hausleiter 2010: 308-310, Taf. 86-87).

3.1.8.2 BOTTLES WITH GLOBULAR OR OVOID BODIES

Five of the types distinguished by Anastasio can be included in this group. These are the type with a button base (BT_04), the type with a globular body (BT_05), which can have either a rounded or a ring base, the type with an ovoid body and a tapered base (BT_06), the type with an ovoid body and a simple base (BT_07) and finally, an unusual type (BT_09) characterised by a constricted neck and a ring base (Anastasio 2010: 49-50; Figs. 3.14a-f).

3.1.8.3 BOTTLES WITH ELONGATED BODIES

This group includes five of the types distinguished by Anastasio. These are the type with a wide neck and an elongated body (BT_08), the type with two handles (BT_10), the type with a wide base and a 'teardrop' profile (BT_11), the type with a narrow neck and a pointed base (BT_13) and another unusual type with a constricted neck and a pronounced shoulder (BT_14) that has a violin-shaped profile (Anastasio 2010: 50; Figs. 3.15a-f)

3.1.8.4 BOTTLE WITH SQUAT BODY

This vessel type (BT_12) does not fit into any of the three broad categories described above (Fig. 3.15d). Lines originally described an example of this type as a 'vase' (Lines 1954: 166). It is very similar to Anastasio's elongated type with a wide neck (BT_08), but has a squat body instead of an elongated one (*cf.* Fig. 3.15a).

3.1.9 SPOUTED VESSELS

This category includes any vessel with a spout. Two types, the first with a narrow neck (SV_01) and the second with a wider, krater-like neck (SV_02) can be distinguished (Anastasio 2010: 52). An example of this category is the so-called 'teapot' discovered in Fort Shalmaneser (Fig. 3.16).

3.1.10 MINIATURE VESSELS

This is a special category that is defined by the size of its vessels and includes those less than 10 centimetres in both their height and their diameter. Anastasio distinguishes between squat (MV_01), globular (MV_02) and ovoid (MV_03) miniature vessels, and also defines three types (MV_04, MV_05 and MV_06) of elongated miniature vessels (Anastasio 2010: 52; Figs. 3.17a-f). Hausleiter classifies the globular and ovoid types (MV_02 and MV_03) as well as one of the elongated types (MV_06) as 'phials' (*Fläschchen*), but regards the other categories as miniature versions of their larger counterparts (Hausleiter 2010: 313-317).

3.1.11 STANDS

These are cylindrically shaped objects that were used to support pots and other vessels. These objects usually have either a cylindrical (ST_01) or a carinated (ST_02) profile (Figs. 3.18a-b). A more unusual variant is the so-called 'gigantic' stand (ST_03), which is characterised by being much taller than the other two. This variant was first described by Oates from the 'Late Assyrian Shrine' at Tell ar-Rimah and is typically cylindrical in shape with a flared base (Anastasio 2010: 53, Oates 1974: 179-180; Fig. 3.18c).

3.1.12 LAMPS

Two types of lamp are known from Assyria proper. The first is the 'double-saucer' type (LM_01), which consists of two saucers joined by a hollow pedestal. The second is the pipe-like lamp (LM_02), which has a globular or squat body joined to a long, curved spout (Anastasio 2010: 54; Figs. 3.19a-b). Outside of Assyria, a third type (LM_99) is commonly found, which consists of an open bowl with a rim pinched to form a spout (Anastasio 2010: 54).

3.1.13 PALACE WARE

This is a general term that is used to refer to highly specialised ceramics with delicate walls that are typically made of a fine-grained fabric. Oates described this ware as being of an 'eggshell delicacy' and qualifies it as 'the luxury ware of the Assyrians' (Oates 1959: 135-136). Anastasio expresses a sense of personal discomfort with this term (and in fact, the use of the term 'ware' in any context) on the grounds that it can be misleading (Anastasio 2010: 31-32). However, he does acknowledge that it is so deeply embedded in the literature that it cannot be ignored.

The most distinctive vessels made of this ware are the goblets (types BT_01, BT_02 and BT_03 that are discussed in Section 3.1.8.1 above) but other types, like the 'elegant' versions of the carinated bowl with a flaring lip (BW_05.a) and the carinated bowl with a straight, slanting lip (BW_06.a), are also frequently found to be made of

it. Such vessels are thought to have been used in feasting, and may have been given to dignitaries at the Assyrian court as luxury gifts (Hunt 2012: 37-38, 366-370).

3.2 THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ASSEMBLAGE

This assemblage is typical of the Middle Assyrian period and has been tentatively assigned to between 1400 and 1000 BCE (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 99). It was used as an indicator for occupation during this period in the analysis of the survey evidence from both the North Jazira Survey as well as the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Project (discussed in Chapters 4 and 6). The assemblage was based on material from the investigations that were carried out at the site of Tell al-Hawa in north-western Iraq between October 1986 and April 1987 (Ball *et. al.* 1989, fig. 25). The range of types described in it was based mostly on unpublished parallels because the state of publication of ceramics from this period is very limited (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 98).

The ceramic types included in this assemblage are mostly chaff-tempered and readily abraded. They are also typically either greenish-brown or buff in colour, which makes them less visible and therefore not so likely to be noticed in a rapidly conducted survey (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 59).

Wilkinson and Tucker have described the following types: -

- **Collared Rim Jars** were thought to belong to tall, narrow jars (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 99; Fig. 3.20a). Examples of this type have been discovered at Tell Sabi Abyad in the Balikh valley (Rossmeissl 1989: 338, fig. XII.5.49-55).

- **Square Rim Jars** are a distinctive type with a strong rectangular profile (Fig. 3.20b). This type has also been found in the Cizre-Silopi region (Parker 2001: 55-58; *cf.* Fig. 4.2a).

- **Plates or Dishes** are distinctive shallow vessels made of a pinkish or orange fabric significantly different from that of the majority of Middle Assyrian pottery types (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 99; Fig.

3.20c, *cf.* Figs. 4.2c, 4.2d). Similar examples have been discovered at Tell Mohammed 'Arab (Roaf 1983, fig. 5.3-5).

- **Small Bowls** can be distinguished from the above variety because they do not have a thickening of the rim interior (Fig. 3.20d). Parallel examples are known from Tell Sabi Abyad (Rossmeissl 1989 fig. XII.1.1-6).

- **Nipple Based Vessels** are a distinctive type (Fig. 3.20e; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 99). Parallels are known from Tell Mohammed 'Arab (Roaf 1983 figs. 5.1 and 5.2). It is possible, however, that related forms can sometimes also occur in Neo-Assyrian contexts (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 99).

- **Coarse Ring Bases** are typically made from a greenish chaff-tempered fabric and have a gradually sloping underside (Fig. 3.20f). These bases are thought to have belonged to the Collared Rim Jars (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 99). Parallels are known from Tell Sabi Abyad (Rossmeissl 1989, figs. XII.11.121, 122).

- **Pie-Crust Pot Stands** are also made from a similarly greenish chaff-tempered fabric (Fig. 3.20g). A parallel is known from Tell Mohammed 'Arab (Roaf 1983, fig. 5.6).

- **Fine Beakers** are made of a greenish buff coloured fabric. This ceramic type is thin-walled and has been described as being 'difficult to recognise' in survey collection because of a tendency to shatter into small sherds (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 99; Fig. 3.20h).

- **Sherds with Wavy Grooved Lines** are a distinct type that bear decorations in the form of broad impressed grooves on a coarse greenish white-gritted fabric. These sherds are thought to be fragments of storage vessels (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 100; Fig. 3.20i).

3.3 GROOVED WARE

This is a distinctive kind of pottery that is characterised by decorations in the form of regularly spaced incised lines that circumvent the upper part of the vessel, typically confined to the rim and the shoulder. It is made by hand, and of a coarse clay with fine or medium grit inclusions (Blaylock 2016: 15, Guarducci 2011: 34). Vessels made of this ware are generally those with more open forms, like bowls or open jars (Fig. 3.21). The distribution of this kind of pottery was used by Bradley Parker as a marker for occupation during the Early Iron period, and compared with the distribution pattern of the Neo-Assyrian assemblage in his analysis of the settlement pattern in the Upper Tigris Valley (discussed in Chapter 4 Section 4.3).

Grooved Ware has been referred to by a number of different names. Bradley Parker employed the term 'Early Iron Age Corrugated Ware' (Parker 2003: 529), while Stuart Blaylock preferred the term 'Ribbed Ware' (Blaylock 2016: 14-15). Michael Roaf and Andreas Schachner coined the term 'Groovy Ware' (Roaf and Schachner 2005: 116), which has been used by some scholars (Macginnis 2012: 134, Ponchia 2006: 203) but criticised by Blaylock as 'perverse and slangy' (Blaylock 2016: 15).

This kind of pottery was first encountered in rescue excavations conducted at sites around the Keban Dam area in eastern Anatolia like Korucutepe, where it was discovered in Iron Age strata lying immediately above the Late Bronze layers (Winn 1980: 155, *cf.* van Loon 1980 pl. 52 nos. 3, 4). This led to its being assigned to the Early Iron period. It has also since been encountered at other sites in both the Upper Euphrates and Upper Tigris regions, but not further south in the Khabur and Balikh valleys (Blaylock 2016: 17; Fig. 3.22). Similar vessels have been discovered in the region around Lake Van, although these are distinguished by being wheel-made (Köroğlu and Konyar 2008: 129). It must also be noted that, in a few cases, examples of Grooved Ware have been discovered in the same archaeological context as pottery typical of the Neo-Assyrian period (D'Agostino 2016: 114, Guarducci 2011: 113), which suggests that this ware continued to be used for some time after the end of the Early Iron Age.

3.4 IRON AGE POTTERY OF THE SOUTHERN LEVANT

In contrast to Neo-Assyrian pottery, for which only a limited number of assemblages are known due to the lack of comprehensive publication, the ceramic corpus of the southern Levant has been extensively studied. The pottery of this region shows a gradual process of evolution from the Late Bronze Age up to the end of the Iron Age, which is especially evident in certain ceramic types (Amiran 1969: 79-80, 191-2). The chronological classification of pottery for this region is therefore usually made with reference to this gradual process.

This section will consider those pottery types that are of most use in dating archaeological strata in this region, which are the carinated bowls, kraters, cooking pots, storage jars and jugs. It will illustrate the changes in these pottery types from the Late Bronze to the Iron II periods, which are the periods considered in the discussion in Chapter 8 of the Southern Samaria Survey.

3.4.1 CARINATED BOWLS

The standard carinated bowl of the Late Bronze period in this region has an S-shaped carination and a flaring upper body (Fig. 3.23a). This type can be traced to a Middle Bronze antecedent (Amiran 1969: 95, pl. 27). Towards the end of the Late Bronze, the carination degenerates into a slight vestigial fold (Amiran 1969: 129; Fig. 3.23b). This 'degenerate' form continues into the Iron I period, with the bases becoming flatter and more ring-like. The workmanship of this period is coarser, and there is less ornamentation (Amiran 1969: 192; Fig. 3.23c).

Workmanship improves in the Iron II period, with the use of well-fired clay and of a red burnished slip. The carinated bowls of the earlier part of this period have a carination placed higher up on the wall, which results in a relatively short upper part (Amiran 1969: 195; Fig. 3.23d). In the later part of the Iron II period, the carination is once again located lower down on the wall, resulting in more flaring of the upper part of the vessel (Amiran 1969: 200-206: Fig. 3.23e).

3.4.2 KRATERS

The standard krater from this region was a large vessel with a well-defined neck and a height roughly equal to its diameter (Amiran 1969: 99). In the Late Bronze, these vessels began to be made with horizontal handles and to bear painted decorations in the metope style, often with a naturalistic motif in the intervening triglyphs (Amiran 1969: 134; Fig. 3.24a). The kraters of the Iron I period continue in this tradition, but with some differences, including the use of multiple handles and of a thick, ledge-shaped rim (Amiran 1969: 216; Fig. 3.24b). In the Iron II period, more distinctive features appear. These include a ridge in the zone of the handles, a more pronounced carination and a forked rim in some vessels (Amiran 1969: 217; Fig. 3.24c).

3.4.3 COOKING POTS

The standard cooking pot of the Late Bronze Age in this region has a rounded, carinated profile and an everted triangular rim (Amiran 1969: 135-140; Fig. 3.25a). In the Iron I period, the body of this vessel type remains carinated, while the rim gradually becomes more elongated (Amiran 1969: 227, *cf.* Dever 1995: 205; Fig. 3.25b). In the Iron II period, the placement of the carination is lower, with the upper part of the vessel appearing longer. The rim remains triangular, but is a little shorter than that of the Iron I period (Amiran 1969: 227; Fig. 3.25c).

The cooking pots of the later part of the Iron II period develop a set of distinctive characteristics. The body of the vessel becomes squatter with very little carination, and always has two handles. The rim of the vessel becomes stepped or ridged (Amiran 1969: 227; Fig. 3.25d).

3.4.4 STORAGE JARS

Two types of storage jar are known in the Late Bronze period. The first has an elongated ovoid body and two handles that are usually attached just below the shoulder of the vessel. This kind of jar was referred to by Ruth Amiran as the 'Canaanite Commercial Jar', and has been found all over the Eastern Mediterranean

region (Amiran 1969: 141; Fig. 3.26a). The second type is a larger vessel with a gradually tapering body and a thickened rim that is known as the pithos (Amiran 1969: 143). This type develops a narrower neck, a more elliptical body and a thick ring-like rim in the subsequent Iron I period. Some of these vessels, which have a ridge at the base of the neck, have been referred to as 'Collared-Rim Jars' (Amiran 1969: 232; Fig. 3.26b). This type was once considered to be a reliable marker of Israelite ethnicity and some scholars are still of this opinion. However, it must be noted that examples of this type of jar have also been found at a few Jordanian sites (Ibrahim 1978: 122), and it has been argued that the identification of this type of jar as 'Israelite' may be an example of a circular argument (Wengrow 1996: 308, *cf.* Finkelstein 1996: 204).

Ovoid storage jars continue to be made in the Iron I period, although a new feature in this period (as with the kraters of the Iron I period) is the introduction of multiple handles (Amiran 1969: 233; Fig. 3.26c). In the Iron II period, ovoid jars continue to be made with ridged necks becoming a predominant feature (Amiran 1969: 238; Fig. 3.26d). Two further types, the sausage-shaped jar and the holemouth jar, also make their first appearance in this period (Figs. 3.26e, 3.26f). These types become more popular in the later part of the Iron II period, although ovoid storage jars with a ridged neck continue to be present (Amiran 1969: 241-242).

3.4.5 JUGS

Two kinds of jug are commonly found in the Late Bronze period. The first has a gently swelling, funnel-shaped neck and a flattened base (Fig. 3.27a). The second is the biconical jug, which has a symmetrical body with upper and lower parts of the same height (Amiran 1969: 146-147; Fig. 3.27b). The biconical jug continues to be made in the Iron I period when another type with a piriform body and a long neck also first appears (Amiran 1969: 147; Fig. 3.27c).

These types continue to be made into the Iron II period (Amiran 1969: 256). Another distinctive type appears in the later part of the Iron II period. This is the so-called 'decanter' jug, which has a double, deeply-grooved, splayed rim, and often also a set of grooves on the shoulder (Amiran 1969: 259; Fig. 3.27d).

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided a brief discussion of the important pottery types that will be looked at in this thesis. It has considered the pottery characteristic of the Neo-Assyrian period in detail, as this pottery will be referred to in the discussions of most of the surveys and excavations that will be examined in later chapters, and offered a brief summary of the system of classification developed for it by Stefano Anastasio. It has also discussed the Middle Assyrian assemblage described by Wilkinson and Tucker, the distinctive eastern Anatolian pottery known as Grooved Ware, and a number of important pottery types from the southern Levant.

The next few chapters will consider the survey evidence on which the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis was originally based. Chapter 4 will look at the data from the Upper Tigris and Upper Euphrates regions in south-eastern Anatolia, while Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 will go on to consider the data from a number of other surveys in the Near East.

CHAPTER 4

THE TIGRIS-EUPHRATES ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE PROJECT

This chapter begins the consideration of settlement patterns by reviewing the findings from the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project (TEARP), which was carried out from 1988 to 1991. The project consisted of a series of archaeological surveys in five separate areas – four in the Upper Tigris region, and one in the Upper Euphrates region. The survey areas in the Upper Tigris region were the Cizre-Silopi Plain, the Upper Tigris-Batman confluence, and the Bohtan and Garzan river valleys (Fig. 4.1). In the Upper Euphrates region, the areas that were surveyed were those affected by the construction of the Birecik and Carchemish dams. Most of this project was carried out under the direction of Guillermo Algaze, with the exception of the survey of the Batman area, which was conducted instead under the direction of Michael Rosenberg (Algaze *et. al.* 1991, Rosenberg and Togul 1991). This chapter will provide a critical reassessment of the four surveys conducted in the Upper Tigris region.

The results of these surveys were used by Bradley Parker as the primary evidence for his study of Assyrian imperialism, in which he first put forward the proposition that the Assyrians pursued a deliberate policy of 'agricultural colonisation' that was designed to create wealth (Parker 2001: 261-3). This chapter will offer a critical analysis of the survey evidence obtained in the TEARP, and examine whether the hypothesis put forward by Parker is justifiable. Section 4.1 will briefly discuss the survey methodology used in the TEARP. Sections 4.2 to 4.4 will then consider the different survey regions included in the project. Finally, Section 4.5 will examine the hypothesis of agricultural colonisation put forward by Parker and the textual and inscriptional evidence on which it is based.

4.1 BACKGROUND

The TEARP was necessitated by the initiation of the *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi* (South-eastern Anatolian Development Project) by the Turkish government. The aim of this project was to raise both the income and the living standards of the people who live in this region. This involved the construction of a series of dams along the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which were intended to generate electricity and to supply water for large-scale irrigation projects (Algaze *et. al.* 1991: 175, Parker 2001: 20-21). The TEARP itself consisted of a series of archaeological surveys covering those areas that were to be flooded by the reservoirs that would build up behind these dams. Geographically, this region is made up of a mountainous plateau, with land suitable for agriculture being limited to the river valleys that run across it. The most important crops cultivated in this region in the present day are wheat and barley, while tobacco is also frequently grown as a cash crop in some areas (Dewdney 1971: 202-204).

4.1.1 SURVEY AND PROCESSING METHODOLOGY

The TEARP was conducted as a salvage project because only a limited amount of time was available for archaeological research before the construction of these dams. The methodology used in these surveys was therefore not quite as rigorous as it might have been under more ideal circumstances. Systematic field-walking could only be employed in a few areas (Algaze *et. al.* 1991: 178). Site identification was based on informal methods, including inquiring about the location of ceramic scatters, driving around the countryside on those roads that were readily available, and scanning the rest of the region with a pair of binoculars. Artefacts that were not regarded as 'diagnostic', like plain body sherds, were not picked up during the survey collection (Parker 2001: 22). Analysis of the survey material was conducted between 1993 and 1998 in the Mardin and the Diyarbakir museums, where the survey material had been stored.

The main advantage of this approach, which had to be adopted because of time and resource constraints, was that it was faster and less labour intensive than systematic sampling, which would have required the laying out of grids and the collection of

large numbers of non-diagnostic artefacts. However, this methodology is not without its weaknesses, as data collection would have been dependent on a number of confounding variables.

The main shortcomings of this methodology were as follows: -

- A failure to identify some sites because not all of the region was surveyed, with field-walking only conducted in the vicinity of major tells.

- A failure to identify and collect all the 'diagnostic' artefacts, because not all the relevant assemblages had been properly described in publication at the time of the survey collection.

- A failure to identify many of the archaeological sites in the region, because the survey area was restricted only to those areas that were going to be flooded by the construction of the dams. Sites that were located in areas that were not going to be submerged might therefore have been missed.

The most important of these factors was the use of different methodologies for the identification of smaller sites in different areas. In more remote areas only random inquiries were made with local residents, while field-walking was carried out closer to the larger sites and in the main river valleys. Sites in these areas are therefore more likely to have been identified during the survey, which means that more sites would have been identified for those periods when settlement was concentrated in low-lying areas.

Parker himself pointed out in his analysis that, because of these methodological weaknesses, his interpretations can only be regarded as preliminary (Parker 2001: 23). As the survey area has since been submerged, further systematic investigation is no longer possible in it.

4.1.2 CERAMICS

Before going on to consider the individual survey regions in greater detail, it is necessary to briefly discuss the various assemblages that were used as markers of occupation for specific periods in the analysis of the survey material collected during

the TEARP. It must also be observed that some of the terms used by Parker are of his own invention, and vary from those conventionally used in the scholarly literature.

4.1.2.1 THE NEO-ASSYRIAN ASSEMBLAGE

This assemblage, which was considered in more detail in Chapter 3 Section 3.1, was encountered in all of the regions investigated by the TEARP surveys. It has been used by Parker as an indicator of occupation during the Neo-Assyrian (or Middle Iron) period in his study of the survey material from this project. For the Cizre-Silopi Plain, this period can only be considered to have begun from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III, in the mid-8th century BCE. Although several Assyrian military expeditions were made to this region during the late 10th and the early 9th centuries, these only appear to have been punitive expeditions, which did not lead to outright annexation of the region and would therefore not have had much impact on its material culture (Parker 2001: 44-48). The Upper Tigris Valley, on the other hand, was annexed to the Assyrian Empire during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II in the early 9th century (Parker 2001: 168-169, 2003: 535). Parker proposed that the presence of elements of this assemblage should be regarded only as an indicator of a 'cultural affiliation' with the Assyrian Empire, which he defined as a presumed cultural link, rather than as the presence of 'ethnic' Assyrians at the site (Parker 2001: 24-25).

The most important components of this assemblage encountered in the TEARP survey material were as follows: -

- **Hammerhead Bowls** are bowls with a distinctive protruding rim that are similar to the bowls with a 'hammer-like' rim classified as Type BW_01.e by Anastasio (Fig. 4.2a, *cf*. Fig. 3.1e).

- **Indented Rim Bowls** are similar to the bowls classified as Type BW_01.b by Anastasio, which have a thickened rim (Fig. 4.2b, *cf*. Fig. 3.1b).

- **Incurved Bowls** are bowls with a lip that is folded over on the outside and are similar to those bowls with a particular closure to the rim classified by Anastasio as Type BW_01.e (Fig. 4.2c *cf*. Fig. 3.1f).

- **Ring Collared Jar** is a term used by Parker to describe a jar rim characterised by a rounded lip and a raised band around the neck (Fig. 4.3a).

- **Shouldered Jar** is a term used by Parker to describe a larger and more heavily chaff-tempered jar rim (Fig. 4.3b).

- **Nipple Base** is the term used by Parker to describe the typically pointed bases of those vessels classified by Anastasio as goblets (Types BT_01, BT_02 and BT_03) and some variants of those vessels classified by Anastasio as beakers (Type BK_01). These are thought to have been imitations of metal vessels (*cf.* Oates 1959 Plate XXXIV, which illustrates a beaker made of silver from Fort Shalmanaser). This form can vary from a small thin point to a larger base (Fig. 4.3c, *cf.* Figs. 3.12b and 3.13).

- **Assyrian Fine Ware** is the term used by Parker to refer to Palace Ware, which was discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.1.13. These vessels are characterised by their fabric, which is fine-grained and of an 'eggshell delicacy' (Parker 2001: 60-61, *cf.* Oates 1959: 135-136; Fig. 4.3d).

(Parker 2001: 60-61, *cf.* Ball *et. al.* 1989, fig. 26 nos. 1-31)

4.1.2.2 THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ASSEMBLAGE

This assemblage, which was discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.2, was used as an indicator for Late Bronze occupation by Parker in his discussion of the survey material from the TEARP. It is worth noting that it had not yet been recognised at the time when fieldwork was carried out for these surveys between 1988 and 1991.

The elements of this assemblage that were most commonly encountered in the TEARP survey material were as follows: -

- **Square Rim Jars**, which are an easily recognisable marker for the Late Bronze period (Fig. 4.4a, *cf.* Fig. 3.20b).

- **Collared Rim Jars**, which are not as easily distinguishable as the Square Rim Jars (Fig. 4.4b, *cf.* Fig. 3.20a).

- **Middle Assyrian Plates**, which can be either chaff-tempered or grit-tempered (Figs. 4.2c, 4.4d, *cf.* Fig. 3.20c).

- **Button Base** is the term used by Parker to refer to the type described as Nipple Based Vessels by Wilkinson and Tucker (Fig. 4.4e, *cf.* Fig. 3.20e).

(Parker 2001: 55-58)

4.1.2.3 Grooved Ware

In contrast to the Late Bronze Age and the Middle Iron periods, which could be identified by the Middle Assyrian and the Neo-Assyrian assemblages respectively, the Early Iron period can only be identified by the pottery type known as Grooved Ware, which was discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.3. This kind of pottery was referred to by Parker as 'Early Iron Age Corrugated Ware' (Parker 2003: 529; Fig. 4.5). The distribution of this ware was used as a marker for occupation during the Early Iron period by Parker, and compared with the Neo-Assyrian distribution pattern in his analysis of the settlement pattern in the Upper Tigris Valley (Parker 2001: 174). However, it must be remembered that some examples of this ware have also been encountered in the same context as Neo-Assyrian pottery, which means that this ware may have continued in use into the Neo-Assyrian period (*cf.* D'Agostino 2016: 114, Guarducci 2011: 113).

4.1.2.4 'Indigenous' Ceramic Forms

A further group of ceramic forms were encountered in the Upper Tigris surveys, primarily in the Bohtan, Garzan and Batman valleys. These were characterised by Parker, who was the first to describe them, as an 'Indigenous' (as opposed to an 'Assyrian') assemblage (Parker 2001: 110).

The most distinctive of these ceramic forms were as follows: -

- **Indigenous Painted Ware**, which consists mostly of vessels made of a chalky orange fabric, and bearing painted decorations. The decorative patterns used include polka dots, blotches, wavy bands, interlocking circles and free-form stripes, but no human or animal

figures. The colour of the paint used varied from dark red to purple (Fig. 4.6a).

- **Indented Handles**, which have an outward-facing indentation that follows the length of the handle, giving it a 'heart' shape in cross-section.

- **S-Curved Bowls** have rims that resemble the letter S when viewed in profile.

- **Rope Imitation Bands**, which typically appear on bowls. This pattern consists of a raised band that has been flattened with a finger, which gives it the appearance of a rope.

- **Fingernail Impressed Bands**, in which vessels are decorated with a raised band that has been impressed with a fingernail (Fig. 4.6b).

- **Incised Decoration** types consist of vessels bearing an incised decoration, which can vary from large to fine incisions.

- **Snake Decoration** vessels have a raised band with slit incisions that give the appearance of a snake wrapped around the vessel.

(Parker 2001: 110-114, fig. 4.5)

The presence of these ceramic forms has been taken as an indication of occupation during the Iron Age, as two of them (Indigenous Painted Wares and Fingernail Impressed Bands) have been discovered in Early Iron contexts at the sites of Norşun Tepe and Girnavaz (Parker 2001: 111, Bartl 1994: 501, Abb.15). In his discussion of the survey evidence from the Batman valley, Parker suggested that the presence of these forms could be used to indicate occupation by an 'indigenous' population (as opposed to people with a cultural link to the Assyrians). Parker also proposed, based on the fact that some of these forms had been identified in 'single period sites' in the TEARP that also yielded Neo-Assyrian pottery, that they would also have been present during the rest of the Iron Age (Parker 2001: 114). Thus, while the presence of these ceramic forms can be taken as an indication that there was occupation at some point in the Iron Age, it is possible that many of these sites had already been occupied in the Early Iron Age, and then continued to be occupied during the subsequent Neo-Assyrian period.

4.2 THE CIZRE-SILOPI PLAIN

The following sections will consider the survey areas of the TEARP in greater detail, beginning with the Cizre-Silopi Plain. This is a roughly triangular area that lies at the frontier between the modern states of Turkey, Syria and Iraq. It is bordered to the southwest by the Tigris, to the southeast by the Lesser Khabur (which also serves as the border between Turkey and Iraq) and to the north by the foothills of the Taurus mountains (known in Turkish as the Cudi Daği). This area has been identified by Postgate as the region referred to by the Assyrians as 'Ulluba', and this identification has also been accepted as correct by Parker (Postgate 1973: 57, Parker 2001: 43).

4.2.1 GEOGRAPHY

The Cizre-Silopi Plain is frequently crossed by seasonal streams that flow southwest from the Cudi Daği foothills into the Tigris river. It receives a relatively high annual rainfall of 400 to 500 millimetres a year, and is used for intensive irrigation agriculture. Geographically, this region can be considered to be the most north-eastern part of the Mesopotamian plain. It lies just to the north of the Assyrian core region (to which it is directly linked by the Tigris), and only around 110 kilometres away from Nineveh, which would have made it of great strategic importance to the Assyrian Empire (Parker 2001: 37-39).

4.2.2 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The survey evidence from the Cizre-Silopi Plain indicates that settlement was relatively sparse here in the Late Bronze Age. Although a total of 78 sites were identified in this region, diagnostic ceramics for the Late Bronze Age were only discovered in 10. In 3 of these sites (C.18, C.34 and C.65), this identification was said to be 'questionable' (Parker 2001: 59). This represents a significant decrease from the Middle Bronze Age, when a total of 26 sites were occupied. Parker described this Late Bronze pattern of settlement as a 'decayed version' of the preceding Middle Bronze Age pattern (Fig. 4.7; Parker 2001: 58-59).

There then appears to have been a substantial increase in the number of sites in the Iron Age. A total of 38 sites showed evidence for occupation during this period, with elements of either the 'Indigenous' or the Neo-Assyrian assemblage discovered in them. Grooved Ware does not appear to have been encountered in this area, but this could be because it lies much further south than the Upper Tigris-Batman confluence and is geographically part of the Mesopotamian Plain, even if it does lie within the borders of modern Turkey.

Elements of the Neo-Assyrian assemblage discussed above were found in 26 of these sites. The commonest Neo-Assyrian pottery type to be discovered was the Ring Collared Jar, which was discovered in 14 sites. This was followed by the Hammerhead Bowl, which was found in 10 sites, and by the Indented Rim Bowl, which was discovered in 9 (Parker 2001: 61).

The Iron Age settlement pattern in the Cizre-Silopi Plain has been described as a 'truncated settlement hierarchy' (Parker 2001: 72). It consisted of three sites of a larger size – Nerwan Höyük (C.46), Takyan Höyük (C.49) and Basorin Höyük (C.16) – that were surrounded by many smaller ones, with no medium sized settlements. These three larger sites had estimated surface areas of around 12 hectares each and were evenly dispersed through the centre of the plain. A fourth large site, Silope Höyük (C.30), was located at the northern edge of the survey area and closest to the Cudi Daği foothills. Its surface area could only be roughly estimated at around 10 hectares because most of it had been cut into by modern buildings (Parker 2001: 68-71). Silope Höyük and Nerwan Höyük were conical mounds associated with lower terraces, while Takyan Höyük had a steep central mound on its northern side and Basorin Höyük had a main mound in the south-western corner (Parker 2001: 68). It was suggested by Parker that these mounds may have represented the remains of walled central citadels that served a defensive purpose and protected the region from attacks from the mountainous region to its north (Parker 2001: 71). The remaining Iron Age settlements were significantly smaller, with all of them having estimated surface areas of less than 4 hectares, except for Gimribimrim Höyük (C.23), which had an estimated surface area of around 5.3 hectares.

Figure 4.8 is a scatter diagram that depicts this information graphically. All the sites that showed Iron Age occupation are plotted along the horizontal axis in descending size order, with their estimated surface areas in hectares shown on the vertical axis. The three sites with estimated surface areas of over 12 hectares are shown to the left of the diagram, followed by Silope Höyük (C.30), which had an estimated surface area of around 10 hectares, then by Gimribimrim Höyük (C.23) with a surface area

of around 5.3 hectares, and finally by the rest of the sites, all of which had surface areas of less than 4 hectares.

This information can also be depicted using a logarithmic scale, which is especially useful in situations, like this, where a relatively small number of examples have a large value, but most cases have a much smaller value. In Figure 4.9, the natural logarithm of the rank of each site (in descending size order) is plotted along the horizontal axis, with the natural logarithm of their estimated surface areas in hectares shown on the vertical axis. A corresponding curve for settlements with occupation during the Late Bronze Age is also shown in this diagram as a comparison.

4.2.3 DISCUSSION

In his analysis of the survey evidence from the Cizre-Silopi Plain, Parker places great emphasis on the increase in the total number of occupied sites from only 10 in the Late Bronze Age to 38 in the Iron Age (Parker 2001: 99). While this is certainly a significant change, an increase in the number of sites alone does not necessarily mean that there must also have been a concomitant increase in population.

However, the comparison of the two logarithmic curves in Figure 4.9 suggests that this was in fact likely to have been the case. In this diagram, the curve depicting settlement during the Late Bronze period lies below and to the left of the curve that depicts settlement during the Iron Age. This rightward and upward shift of the settlement curve indicates that there was not only an increase in the number of sites identified in this region (as shown by the extension of the Iron Age settlement curve further to the right), but also an overall increase in the estimated surface areas of these Iron Age sites (as indicated by the upward shift of the Iron Age curve). It should be noted that the upward and rightward shift seen in these two curves represent exponential increases, as the curves have been depicted using a logarithmic scale.

Parker suggested that the most plausible explanation for the increase in the number of sites between the Late Bronze and the Iron Ages was the resettlement of foreign populations in the region by the Assyrian Empire, and the consequent opening up of previously under-utilised land for agricultural production (Parker 2001: 99). However, it must be noted that the exact dating of this increase cannot be determined with certainty. While there clearly was an increase in settlement that had occurred by the Middle Iron period, it is not certain when the process first began. There is always the

possibility that many of these settlements had first been established during the Early Iron period and continued in existence into the later period of Assyrian control.

If the identification of the Cizre-Silopi Plain as the region known to the Assyrians as Ulluba by Postgate is indeed correct, then this area would not have been annexed to the Assyrian Empire until the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BCE), which means that there would have been a gap of several centuries between the end of the Late Bronze period and the time at which this region first came under Assyrian control. In his annals, Tiglath-pileser III identifies the people who lived in this region as Ahlamu Arameans (Tadmor and Yamada 2011 Tiglath-pileser III 37 l.12). Tiglath-pileser III also claims to have captured 29 'cities' that belonged to these people (Tadmor and Yamada 2011 Tiglath-pileser III 37 ll.33-34). While it is possible that such claims may have been an exaggeration, it does seem to be the case that there may already have been a significant number of settlements in this region at the time that it was conquered by Tiglath-pileser III.

In conclusion, the survey evidence from the Cizre-Silopi Plain shows that there was an increase in settlement during the Iron Age, as compared to the preceding Late Bronze. As shown by the settlement curves in Figure 4.9, this increase also seems to have led to an increase in the total estimated surface area occupied in the region, which suggests that there may have been a concomitant increase in its population.

4.3 THE UPPER TIGRIS-BATMAN REGION

The second area surveyed in the TEARP was the Upper Tigris-Batman region, which consisted of the Upper Tigris and the Batman valleys. The site of Ziyarat Tepe in the Upper Tigris valley has been identified as the city referred to by the Assyrians as Tushan (Parker 2001: 182), and the area to the west of it has been identified as part of the state of Bit Zamani that is mentioned in the annals of both Ashurnasirpal II and of his father, Tukulti-Ninurta II (Szuchman 2009: 58, Parker 2001: 164; *cf.* Grayson 1991 A.0.100.5 ll.27-29, A.0.101.1 ii 12-15, 118-125).

4.3.1 GEOGRAPHY

The Upper Tigris valley begins to the south of the town of Diyarbakir, and is a flood plain with deep silt and clay deposits. It has several tracts of land that are suitable for intensive agriculture, and is divided from the Syrian steppe to its south by an arid and rocky tract of mountains known as the Tur Abdin (Parker 2001: 159). It flows for around 60 kilometres from the west to the east before it is joined by the Batman river.

The Batman originates in the Taurus mountains by the confluence of three tributaries (the Hiyan Çay, the Sason Çay, and the Ramdenka Çay) after which it runs to the south through a broad flood plain for about 45 kilometres before joining the Upper Tigris. The Batman valley is used in the present day for the cultivation of both wheat and of some cash crops (Rosenberg and Togul 1991: 242). It is separated from the Garzan Valley to its east by a range of hills (Parker 2001: 160; Fig. 4.1).

4.3.2 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

In his discussion of the Upper Tigris valley, Parker focused on comparing the Early Iron period to the subsequent Middle Iron period, when this region came under the control of the Assyrian Empire. Occupation in the Early Iron period was recognised by the presence of Grooved Ware at a site. A total of 19 sites appear to have been occupied in this period, all of which had an estimated surface area of less than 4 hectares (Parker 2003: 529). These appear to have been evenly dispersed, at a distance of around 5 kilometres from one another, with no apparent settlement hierarchy (Parker 2003: 536; Fig. 4.10). For the subsequent Neo-Assyrian period, a much larger number of sites were identified in this region. A total of 29 sites yielded evidence for occupation in the Upper Tigris valley in this period (Parker 2001: 180, 2003: 536; Fig. 4.11). This represents a significant increase when compared to the number of sites for the Early Iron Age.

The largest site in this region was Ziyarat Tepe (T.10). In the Early Iron period, occupation at this site appears to have been limited to the mound itself, which had an estimated surface area of approximately 3 hectares. In the subsequent period of Assyrian control, however, the site appears to have expanded dramatically in size to a total surface area of about 32 hectares (Parker 2003: 537). This is followed in size order by a handful of sites with estimated surface areas of around 4 to 5 hectares, and then by the rest of the sites.

This information is depicted graphically in Figure 4.12, which shows all of the sites in the Upper Tigris valley that were occupied during the Middle Iron period in descending size order, plotted against their estimated surface areas. Figure 4.13 depicts this using a logarithmic scale, which allows for a clearer illustration of the differences in size between the smaller sites. A corresponding curve for settlements that showed evidence for occupation during the Early Iron period in the Upper Tigris valley is also given in Figure 4.13 for comparison purposes.

There was an important difference between the pottery types discovered in the Upper Tigris and Batman Valleys. In the Upper Tigris area, elements of the Neo-Assyrian assemblage were predominant, with the most prevalent types being the Ring Collared Jars, the Indented Rim Bowls and the Nipple Based Vessels (Parker 2001: 175). In the Batman Valley, in contrast, it was the 'Indigenous' ceramic forms that were predominant, with the most prevalent being the Indented Handles and examples of Indigenous Painted Ware (Parker 2001: 175-178). A further important difference between the settlement patterns of these two areas was that in the Upper Tigris Valley, those sites that yielded only Neo-Assyrian ceramic types lay in good agricultural land near the Tigris River, while those which only yielded 'Indigenous' forms were located far away from good arable land. In the Batman Valley, where the 'Indigenous' ceramic forms were predominant, most sites were also located at a distance from the flood plain (Parker 2001: 180-182).

4.3.3 DISCUSSION

As with his discussion of the survey evidence from the Cizre-Silopi Plain, Parker emphasises the increase in the total number of occupied sites in the Upper Tigris valley from 19 in the Early Iron period to 29 in the subsequent period of Assyrian control (Parker 2003: 536). The increase in the number of settlements appears to be accompanied by a concomitant increase in the total estimated surface area of the occupied sites, which increases from 32.54 hectares in the Early Iron period to 89.27 hectares during the period of Assyrian control.

A significant proportion of this increase is due to the increase in the estimated surface area of the site of Ziyarat Tepe from only 3 hectares in the Early Iron period to 32 hectares during the period of Assyrian control. This site has been identified as the place referred to in Assyrian texts as Tushan, where Ashurnasirpal is known to have undertaken extensive building activities, including the renovation of its city walls

and the construction of a new royal residence (Parker 2001: 168). Ashurnasirpal also claims in his royal annals to have resettled a group of 'enfeebled Assyrians' who had previously fled to the 'land of Subru' in Tushan (Grayson 1991 A.0.101.1 ii 3-8), and the resulting increase in population may also have accounted for the increase in the occupied surface area in this site.

This information is clearly illustrated by the settlement curves given in Figure 4.12, which shows exactly the same kind of upward and rightward shift seen between the earlier and later periods in the Cizre-Silopi region. The shape of the settlement curve for the Middle Iron period is skewed by the enormous surface area of Ziyarat Tepe at this time, which is around eight times the size of Gre Dimse (T.62), which was the largest site during the Early Iron period. However, even if the figures for Ziyarat Tepe are left out of the analysis, there would still be an increase in the occupied surface area for this region from around 29.54 hectares to 57.27 hectares. This would still result in a shift of the settlement curve upwards and to the right for the Middle Iron period, which indicates that there was a generalised increase in settlement in this region in this period that was due to an overall increase in the occupied surface area in this region, and not just at the site of Ziyarat Tepe.

4.4 THE BOHTAN AND GARZAN VALLEYS

Two other areas surveyed in the TEARP were the Bohtan and the Garzan valleys, which are located 80 and 120 kilometres to the northwest of the Cizre-Silopi Plain respectively. This region as a whole can be referred to as the Middle Upper Tigris. It is dominated by the Taurus foothills, and cut off from the Syrian steppes and the Cizre-Silopi Plain by mountainous terrain (Parker 2001: 103). Parker has identified these two areas as the regions known to the Assyrians as 'the land of the Dirru' and the region of 'inner Habhu', both of which Ashurnasirpal II claims to have 'devastated' (Parker 2001: 106-109; *cf.* Grayson 1991 A.0.101.1 iii 103-118)

4.4.1 GEOGRAPHY

The Bohtan and Garzan Valleys are geographically very similar. Both cut across the Taurus foothills to form isolated river valleys in rough mountainous terrain, and both contain very little agricultural land. The Bohtan River is formed by the convergence of the Ulu Çay and the Bitlis Çay just south of the town of Siirt and flows southwards to merge with the Tigris. The Garzan flows out of the Aydinlik Dağlari range further west and flows to the southeast to join the Tigris about 15 kilometres to the west of the Bohtan-Tigris confluence (Parker 2001: 103-105). Tobacco is cultivated in those areas where agriculture is possible in the present day (Parker 2001: 105).

4.4.2 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The most significant characteristic of the pottery found in these two regions was the prevalence of 'Indigenous' ceramic forms (of which the most commonly encountered was the Indigenous Painted Ware) and the relative lack of elements of the Neo-Assyrian assemblage, which were only found in a single site (Bo.20) in the Bohtan Valley and in two (G.20 and G.24) in the Garzan Valley. Elements of the Middle Assyrian assemblage were not encountered at all in these two regions, but this is hardly surprising as this region never came under the control of the Middle Assyrian kingdom (Parker 2003: 548).

4.4.2.1 THE BOHTAN VALLEY

A total of 37 sites were identified in this area (Fig. 4.14). Iron Age ceramics were encountered in 9 of these, with examples of Indigenous Painted Ware discovered in all of them. Grooved Ware was only encountered in 2 of these sites (Parker 2001: 115, 2003: 548). The largest site in this area was Çattepe (Bo.20), which had an estimated surface area of around 4.5 hectares. This site was located on a hill at the confluence of the Bohtan and the Tigris rivers. It is worth noting that this was the only site in which elements of the Neo-Assyrian assemblage were found. The rest of the sites were all less than 1 hectare in size, with the sole exception of Konicik Hirbe (Bo.35), which had an estimated surface area of 1.25 hectares. All of these smaller sites were located on naturally defensible terraces that overlooked the valley, rather

than on flat land that would have been suitable for intensive agriculture (Parker 2001: 116).

4.4.2.2 THE GARZAN VALLEY

There were 14 sites showing evidence for occupation during the Iron Age in the Garzan Valley (Parker 2003: 548). One of these was a relatively large site, Redwan Höyük (G.11), which had an estimated surface area of 9.5 hectares. There was also a medium sized site, Ortaalan Höyük (G.15), which had an estimated surface area of 5.95 hectares (Parker 2003: 549). The rest of the sites were smaller with estimated surface areas of less than 4 hectares. The majority of these were less than 1 hectare in size. All of these sites were located on defensible terraces overlooking the river rather than on good agricultural land (Parker 2001: 126-127). Of particular interest was the site of Nakaval Tepe (G.6), which had an estimated surface area of only 0.03 hectares and was thought to represent the remains of a lone building, that may have been a defensive structure of some kind used by the inhabitants of this valley (Parker 2001: 127).

4.4.3 DISCUSSION

Much of Parker's discussion of this region consisted of speculations on the nature of the society that inhabited it. Of note was the prevalence of the so-called 'Indigenous' ceramic forms in these areas, and the relative infrequency of elements of the Neo-Assyrian assemblage, which led to the suggestion that the Bohtan, Garzan and Batman valleys may all have been part of the same cultural area (Parker 2001: 175). The absence of Middle Assyrian pottery makes it difficult to come to any definite conclusions about the Late Bronze period in these areas, but it is possible that they would only have been inhabited by nomadic tribes that did not establish permanent settlements at this time.

Parker also asserted that there was 'little or no settlement hierarchy' in the Bohtan and Garzan valleys during the Iron Age (Parker 2003: 549). However, it is difficult to agree with this. In both of these areas, there was a single site that was noticeably larger than the others. These were Çattepe (Bo.20) in the Bohtan Valley, which had an estimated surface area of approximately 4.5 hectares and Redwan Höyük (G.11) in the Garzan Valley with an estimated surface area of 9.5 hectares. This is illustrated

graphically in Figures 4.16 and 4.17. These are scatter diagrams that show all sites that yielded evidence for an Iron Age occupation in these two areas plotted against their estimated surface areas. The resulting settlement pattern is not that different from the pattern seen in the Upper Tigris Valley, where there is a single large site surrounded by a number of smaller sites. There does therefore appear to have been at least some degree of political centralisation in these areas (*contra* Parker 2001: 156).

4.5 Discussion

In his concluding discussion about the TEARP, Parker suggested that the Cizre-Silopi Plain and the Upper Tigris valley had been subjected to a 'planned policy' of 'agricultural colonisation' in order to 'bring underutilised land into production' and create an 'agricultural surplus' (Parker 2001: 263). These are significant conclusions because they have subsequently been used by other scholars to support the hypothesis that the Assyrians instituted a deliberate programme of resettlement that was designed to reorganise the landscape of a vast region (Wilkinson *et. al.* 2005; also *cf.* Fales 2010).

4.5.1 Evidence for Resettlement

The Assyrian practice of forcibly resettling populations from one part of the empire to another is probably beyond dispute. This practice is referred to in the annals of a number of Assyrian rulers, as well as in the private correspondence of Assyrian officials (Fales 2010: 212-219, Fales 2006). Oded recorded a total of 157 cases of the practice in an important study (Oded 1979: 26). Depictions of resettlement are also known from palace reliefs (Reade 1979: 334, 1983 fig. 76).

There is also a specific claim made in a commemorative inscription discovered in the palace of Tiglath-Pileser III at Kalhu (Nimrud) in 1854 that there was resettlement in the place referred to as 'Ulluba', which is thought to be the name used by the Assyrians to refer to the Cizre-Silopi Plain (Parker 2001: 43):

'I built [a city] in the land of Ullu[ba (and) I] nam[ed it] Aššur-iqiša. I brou[ght the people of (foreign) lands conquered by] me [the]rein…'

(Tadmor and Yamada 2011 Tiglath-pileser III 41 ll.30-31).

The same claim is also made in the Mila Mergi Rock Relief, which provides an account of the campaign conducted by Tiglath-Pileser III against Ulluba:

'I [re]organised those cities in their entirety (and) settled therein the people of (foreign) lands conquered by me…'

(Tadmor and Yamada 2011 Tiglath-pileser III 37 ll.43-44)

and on a section of the Calah Annals that was discovered on a fragment of a colossal carved orthostat:

'I settled 1,223 people in the province of the land of Ulluba.'

(Tadmor and Yamada 2011 Tiglath-pileser III 13 l.12).

It can be difficult to be certain of the reality of the picture obtained from the Assyrian sources, as it is possible that the scribes who recorded these cases of resettlement may have been guilty of exaggeration or distortion (*cf.* Oded 1979: 18). It is worth noting, however, that there is also an independent source that mentions the practice of resettlement by the Assyrians. This is the Book of Kings, which describes two such instances (Fales 2006: 48). The first is the so-called Deportation of the Israelites, in which the people of Israel were said to have been 'carried away' after the fall of Samaria and settled in Halah, Habor and the 'cities of the Medes' (2 Kings 17:6). The other is the supposed deportation of the people of the city of Damascus, which was said to have been carried out after the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III against 'Rezin, king of Syria' (2 Kings 16:9). As there is really no reason to suppose that the authors of the biblical text would have had any interest in propagating the ideology of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, it does seem reasonable to accept these accounts as corroboration that the practices of deportation and resettlement described in the Assyrian sources were real.

4.5.2 THE PROCESS OF 'AGRICULTURAL COLONISATION'

The suggestion that the Assyrians carried out a deliberate policy that was designed to increase the area under cultivation in their provinces in order to increase the prosperity of the empire is not a new one. In his study of the process of Assyrian deportation and resettlement, Oded did suggest that the Assyrians had exactly such a policy, and even used the establishment of the city of Aššur-iqiša in Ulluba as a specific example of this (Oded 1979: 67-68). However, Oded did also point out the movement of people in these cases was primarily from the conquered provinces into Assyria proper, and especially to the cities of Assur, Nimrud, Nineveh and Dur-Sharrukin. In the limited number of cases where deportees were settled outside Assyria itself, Oded proposed that the process would have been a two-way one that involved settling people in areas that had previously been devastated by the Assyrians and whose original inhabitants had already been deported elsewhere. Examples of such cases included the cities of Nikkur, Samaria, Hamath, Ashdod and Kummuh (Oded 1979: 28-29, Na'aman 1993: 108-112). There is also a parallel to this in the Book of Kings, which describes the resettlement of people from Babylon, Cuthah and Hamath in 'the cities of Samaria' by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:24). Such cases may not necessarily have led to the founding of new settlements nor to the opening up new agricultural land, as the incoming deportees could conveniently have been settled in those areas that had previously been occupied by the original inhabitants of the resettled areas.

The model of 'agricultural colonisation' proposed by Parker, however, is subtly different. It did not just consist of the movement of people into previously depopulated areas, but also involved the establishment of new settlements and the opening up of new agricultural land. Parker also proposed that the Akkadian verb *sabātu* may not have held the same negative connotations as the English verbs 'to deport' or 'to resettle', by which it is usually translated (Parker 2001: 262). This suggests that the deportees who were resettled by the Assyrians may have been willing participants in the process of resettlement. In this context, it may be worth noting that the term 'agricultural colonisation' itself was originally coined to refer to the establishment of *kibbutzim* by the Zionist Organisation in the early 20th century (Ruppin 1926: 4). This was a process that was not characterised by compulsion, but relied instead on enthusiasm. There are a great many difficulties involved in the opening up of new agricultural land, which can only be achieved by cooperation with the settlers involved (Ruppin 1926: 33). This appears to have been understood by

the Assyrians, who took pains to ensure the well-being of the people they resettled. This included provisioning them during the journey, ensuring that family groups were kept together and resettled in the same area, and allocating them with a dwelling-place when they arrived at their destination (Parker 2001: 263; *cf.* Fales 2006: 49-56).

Parker also tried to substantiate his hypothesis by citing a line from the annals of Adad-Nirari II, in which the king claimed to have 'hitched up ploughs' in the various districts of his realm and 'piled up more grain than ever before' (Grayson 1991 A.0.99.2 ll.120-121, Parker 2001: 83). However, such evidence should be used with caution. To begin with, it is somewhat far-fetched to use claims made in the annals of Adad-Nirari II (who reigned from 911-891 BCE) as evidence for events that only took place during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III, in the mid-8th century BCE. More importantly, however, assertions such as these were part of an ideology that deliberately presented the Assyrian king as a provider of peace and plenty. The claim to have 'piled up more grain than before' is a stock phrase that had been used in the annals of Assyrian kings from as early as the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. It is present in the annals of Assur-dan II (Grayson 1991 A.0.98.1 ll.64-67) as well as of Tukulti-Ninurta II (Grayson 1991 A.0.100.5 ll.132-133). Such propagandistic proclamations may not necessarily have provided an accurate description of the ancient reality.

4.5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis as proposed by Parker therefore appears to rely to a certain extent on textual and inscriptional evidence. While this evidence clearly indicates that the Assyrians did resettle people from one part of their empire to another, it is possible that this process might only have involved the transfer of settlers to regions from which the inhabitants had already been deported, which may not necessarily have involved the establishment of new settlements.

However, the evidence from archaeological surveys does suggest that there was an increase in settlement in the Cizre-Silopi Plain as well as in the Upper Tigris Valley. In both areas, the settlement curve for the Middle Iron period shows an upward and rightward shift. This shows that there was not only an increase in the total number of sites in these two regions, as pointed out by Parker, but also an overall increase in the size of these sites. As this coincides with the period when Assyrian control was established in these regions, and there is textual evidence to suggest that the Assyrians resettled people in these areas, it is likely to have been the case that this

increase was caused by an increase in the population of these areas, possibly as a result of the influx of new settlers as proposed by Parker.

The next few chapters will go on to consider archaeological data from a number of other surveys that have been conducted in former provinces of the Assyrian Empire. The settlement curves from these surveys will also be scrutinised to see if there is a similar shift upwards and to the right, as was the case in the Cizre-Silopi Plain and in the Upper Tigris valley.

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CHAPTER 5

THE LAND OF

CARCHEMISH PROJECT

This chapter continues with the consideration of settlement patterns by reviewing the findings from the Land of Carchemish Project (LCP). This project originally began as an extension of the excavations carried out by the University of Edinburgh from 1992 to 2004 at the site of Tell Jerablus Tahtani (LCP22) under the directorship of Edgar Peltenburg (Wilkinson and Peltenburg 2016: 5). Funding for the project was provided by the British Academy, the Council for British Research in the Levant and the Global Heritage Fund (Wilkinson and Peltenburg 2016: 7).

5.1 BACKGROUND

The Land of Carchemish Project was centred around the iconic site of Carchemish, which has been characterised as one of the most important urban centres in the ancient Levant (Wilkinson and Peltenburg 2016: 3). This site was excavated by D.G. Hogarth, C. Leonard Woolley and T.E. Lawrence from 1911 to 1914, and again in 1920 (Hogarth 1914: 1, Woolley 1921: 33-34).

Carchemish served during the Late Bronze period as the seat of the Hittite viceroy in the Levant (Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 9). Following the collapse of the Hittite Empire at the beginning of the 12th century BCE, it appears to have become an independent city-state that was ruled by a line of rulers who arrogated to themselves the designation of 'Great King' and controlled a vast swathe of territory along the western bank of the Euphrates River (Brown and Smith 2016: 23). This state first appears to have come into contact with the Assyrian Empire during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I in the 11th century BCE, but was able to maintain itself as an independent kingdom until the end of the 8th century, when it was finally annexed by Sargon II (Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 16). Its last independent ruler, Pisiri, was

then taken to Assyria as a prisoner along with his family members, and from 717 to 605 BCE, Carchemish and its surrounding territories were annexed to the empire and ruled by an Assyrian governor (Wilkinson 2016: 77).

The site of Carchemish lies on the Syrian-Turkish border, which means that it has not been possible to conduct surveys to both the north and the south of the site within the framework of a single project for political reasons (Lawrence and Ricci 2016: 38). The Land of Carchemish Project only surveyed the territory to the south of the site, within the boundaries of the Syrian Arab Republic. The survey area was roughly triangular in shape, and bordered by the Syrian-Turkish border to the northwest, the Sajur River to the south and the Euphrates to the east (Lawrence and Ricci 2016: 38; Fig. 5.1). It might be worth noting that these boundaries are entirely arbitrary, and exclude a number of important settlements that lie just beyond them. These include the sites of Tell al-Qana, which is located just outside the survey area on the southern bank of the Sajur River, as well as the sites of Tell Ahmar and Tell Shiukh Fawqani on the east bank of the Euphrates, which have respectively been identified as the ancient cities of Til Barsip and Burmarina.

Fieldwork for the Land of Carchemish Project began with an initial visit by Wilkinson in 2004, followed by formal surveys in 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010, after which it had to be stopped due to the civil unrest in Syria (Wilkinson and Peltenburg 2016: 5). Fieldwalking was only carried out within a very limited part of the project area, mostly along the valleys of the Euphrates and Sajur rivers and that of the Nahr al-Amarna (Fig. 5.2). It should be noted that this is bound to have biased site identification in favour of these areas.

5.2 GEOGRAPHY

The Land of Carchemish Project covered a total surface area of around 375 square kilometres (Wilkinson 2016: 79). The survey area has a mean annual precipitation that ranges from around 300 mm along the Sajur River at its southern edge to 340-400 mm around Carchemish in the north, which places it within the area where rain-fed cultivation is possible (Wilkinson 2016: 68). The natural vegetation of this area appears to have consisted primarily of a wooded steppe, containing pistachio and oak trees (Wilkinson 2016: 69-70).

In geomorphological terms, the survey area could be divided into four zones: -

- **The Euphrates Floodplain,** which consisted of a low terrace running along the course of the Euphrates River along the eastern part of the survey area.

- **The Lower Euphrates Terraces**, made up of outcrops some 3-4 metres above the main floodplain itself.

- **The Limestone Slopes**, that stretch across the centre of the survey area and are dissected by a number of river valleys, the two most significant of which are that of the Nahr al-Amarna that cuts across the survey area from west to east and that of the Sajur River that runs along its southern edge.

- **The Upland Plains**, which stretch towards the western part of the survey area and are covered in red *terra rossa* type soils.

(Wilkinson 2016: 71-72).

5.3 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The survey evidence from the Land of Carchemish Project shows relatively limited settlement in this area during the Late Bronze period. A grand total of 80 sites were identified for all periods (including Carchemish itself). However, diagnostic ceramics for the Late Bronze period were only discovered in 9 of these (including Carchemish), although in one site (LCP10) this identification was questionable. As in the Cizre-Silopi region (*cf*. Chapter 4 Section 4.2), this represents a significant decrease from the preceding Middle Bronze Age, for which a total of 17 sites yielded evidence of occupation (Lawrence and Ricci 2016: 52-53; Fig. 5.3).

There then appears to have been a substantial increase in the number of sites during the Iron Age, with diagnostic ceramics for this period having been discovered at a total of 23 sites (Fig. 5.4). It is important to note that this increase in settlement is for the Iron Age as a whole, which includes both the Neo-Hittite period as well as the period of Assyrian control (from 717 to 605 BCE). The site of Carchemish, which only covered a total surface area of around 44 hectares in the Late Bronze Age, also

seems to have expanded during the Iron Age into what is known as the Outer Town, which led to an increase in its total surface area by a further 55 hectares (Wilkinson and Ricci 2016: 134; Fig. 5.5). This expansion is thought to have taken place during the Neo-Hittite period (Wilkinson and Wilkinson 2016: 221-222, Wilkinson and Ricci 2016, Table 8.1).

This information is depicted graphically in Figures 5.6 and 5.7. Figure 5.6 is a scatter diagram that shows all the sites in the Land of Carchemish Project survey area that yielded evidence for an Iron Age occupation in descending size order, plotted against their estimated surface areas. Figure 5.7 depicts this using a logarithmic scale, with the addition of a corresponding curve for those settlements that yielded evidence for a Late Bronze occupation. These curves appear a little skewed when compared to the corresponding curves for the Cizre-Silopi Plain (Figs. 4.8 and 4.9), but this may partly be due to the large size of the site of Carchemish (which is represented by the point furthest to the left in Figs. 5.6 and 5.7) and partly because of the bias introduced by the arbitrary exclusion of a number of medium-sized sites (like Tell al-Qana, Tell Shiukh Fawqani and Tell Ahmar) from the survey area.

Most of the Late Bronze and Iron Age sites in the survey region were located within river valleys, primarily in the Euphrates and Sajur river valleys, but also in that of the Nahr al-Amarna. 3 sites were located close to smaller wadis (LCP5, LCP47 and LCP 55). The increase in settlement that occurred during the Iron Age therefore seems to have been mostly due to the establishment of new settlements along the main waterways of this region (*cf*. Figs. 5.3, 5.4). However, it is worth noting that it was precisely in these areas that fieldwalking was carried out (Fig. 5.2). It is therefore possible that the preponderance of identified sites here may partly be due to the bias in site identification in favour of this area.

Two of the newly established Iron Age sites were not located near the valley of a river or a wadi. The first of these was al-Hajalliya (LCP54). This site was thought to represent the remains of a fortification because it was located on the summit of a conical limestone hill, and because traces of a stone wall foundation were discovered in it. The second was Tell Dabas (LCP24), which was a roughly square-shaped mound. This site was also interpreted as an Iron Age fort based on its morphology, although no clear evidence of a fortification wall was discovered in it (Wilkinson 2016: 81-83).

5.4 DISCUSSION

As was also the case in the Cizre-Silopi Plain, there was an increase in the number of occupied sites in the Land of Carchemish Project survey area from only 9 in the Late Bronze Age to 23 in the Iron Age. This increase is accompanied by a substantial increase in the size of the site of Carchemish, from around 44 hectares in the Late Bronze period to 99 hectares in the Iron Age. However, in contrast to the site of Ziyarat Tepe in the Upper Tigris valley, which expanded in size from 3 to 32 hectares during the period of Assyrian control, the expansion of Carchemish to include an additional 55 hectares appears to have taken place during the Neo-Hittite period, which means that it took place before the period of Assyrian control.

It is also worth noting that most of the increase in settlement during the Iron Age seems to have taken place along the main waterways, and little 'infilling' of the kind that has been observed in other survey regions seems to have taken place in this area. Only two newly-established Iron Age sites were not located close to either the Euphrates and Sajur rivers, or to one of the many wadis that run across the region. Both of these were thought to have been forts that overlooked the main trade routes leading out of Carchemish. The first, al-Hajalliya (LCP54), was located on a hill just to the south of the western trade route that ran from the West Gate of Carchemish to Tell al-Qana, and then towards Tell Rifa'at and the Amuq plain (Wilkinson 2016: 87-88). The second, Tell Dabas (LCP24), was located on the southern trade route that ran from the South Gate of Carchemish to the site of Dadate (LCP37) and on to the site of Membij (Wilkinson 2016: 87).

A comparison of the two logarithmic curves in Figure 5.7 shows a similar pattern to that noted for the Cizre-Silopi region, with the curve depicting settlement during the Late Bronze period lying below and to the left of the curve that depicts settlement during the Iron Age (*cf.* Fig. 4.9). This rightward and upward shift indicates that there was both an increase in the number of sites as well as an increase in the overall occupied surface area in this region.

The survey evidence from the Land of Carchemish Project therefore indicates that there was clearly an increase in settlement in this area during the Iron Age, as compared to the preceding Late Bronze period. There is no way to determine, based on survey evidence alone, whether this increase occurred during the Neo-Hittite period or in the subsequent period of Assyrian control. However, we do know that the site of Carchemish itself expanded into the Outer Town during the Neo-Hittite

period, with an increase of around 55 hectares in its surface area. This expansion occurred in the period after the collapse of the Hittite Empire, when Carchemish was established as the seat of a new line of rulers who controlled a substantial amount of territory, and are likely to have wanted to increase the grandeur of their capital. It is therefore possible that the increase in settlement in the surrounding area may also have taken place at around the same time.

The next two chapters will consider survey evidence from two projects that were conducted closer to the Assyrian heartland itself. Chapter 6 will look at the data from the North Jazira Survey and Chapter 7 will examine that from the Tell Beydar Survey. Chapter 8 will then consider the survey evidence from a project that was carried out in the southern Levant.

CHAPTER 6
THE NORTH JAZIRA SURVEY

This chapter moves on to consider the evidence from the North Jazira Survey. Funding for this project was provided by a number of institutions, including the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, the British Academy, the National Geographic Society and the Society of Antiquaries of London (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: *viii*). Fieldwork was carried out over four seasons from 1986 to 1990. Unfortunately, the final season, which was scheduled to be conducted in the autumn of 1990, had to be cancelled as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 1).

6.1 BACKGROUND

The North Jazira Survey was originally planned as an intensive survey. However, this was not feasible because it was impossible to survey the whole of the area in a rigorous manner due to a lack of manpower. The survey was conducted by a small team, with only two participants in the first season of work (Tucker and Wilkinson themselves), and the addition of only one or two other members in the following three seasons. As a result of this, only the area around Tell al-Hawa could be surveyed intensively, with field-walking carried out in a large number of off-site transects. In other areas, there was only limited off-site sampling (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 17). It is therefore important to bear in mind that some of the smaller settlements might have been overlooked in some parts of the survey region, and especially in its southern and western sections.

The area covered by the North Jazira Survey is thought to lie to the south and to the east of the region that is referred to in the Assyrian sources as Katmuhu. This region was probably part of the Mitannian Empire at the beginning of the Late Bronze period, but is thought to have come under the control of the Middle Assyrian kingdom

after 1300 BCE. It then appears to have been overrun by Aramean tribes at the beginning of the Iron Age, and was only returned to Assyrian control during the reign of Adad-nirari II at the beginning of the 9th century BCE (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 58-59). If it is reasonable to assume that the North Jazira survey area, which was located adjacent to Katmuhu, would also have been returned to Assyrian control at around the same time, then this area would have come under the control of the Neo-Assyrian Empire well before the Cizre-Silopi Plain and the Land of Carchemish Project area, which were not annexed to the empire until the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II respectively (*cf*. Chapter 4 Section 4.2.3 and Chapter 5 Section 5.1).

6.2 GEOGRAPHY

The North Jazira Plain is a roughly triangular area located in the north-western corner of Iraq. It is bordered to the south by the Sinjar Hills, to the northeast by the Tigris and to the northwest by the Syrian border (Ball *et al*. 1989: 2). Beyond this it merges with the plains of northern Syria (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 3). The survey region covered a total surface area of around 475 square kilometres (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 1).

Geomorphologically, the plain consists of a broad tract of slightly rolling terrain that is made up of a surface layer of clays and silts between 5 to 10 metres in depth, which overlies a moderately consolidated layer of sand, silt and clay about 200-300 metres deep. The predominant soil type in this region is the Calcic Xerosol, which is regarded as fertile, and only requires the application of nitrogen and phosphorus and the presence of adequate rainfall to produce sustained high crop yields (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 5). The region enjoys a mean annual precipitation ranging from 300 to 500 millimetres (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 9).

This region was described in the 19th century by one traveller as an 'uninterrupted greensward', which provided grazing for herds of sheep and camels. Its native fauna at the time included onagers, ibex, gazelle, wolves, jackals, cheetah and even the Asiatic lion (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 9-10). During the second half of the 20th century, however, the region was transformed by the sedentarization of the nomadic communities that inhabited it, and by the late 1980s it had been turned into ploughed farmland (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 12-13).

6.3 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

A total of 184 sites were identified for all periods in this region. Of these, only 30 appear to have been occupied during the Late Bronze Age. This pattern of settlement seems to have been less dense than that for the preceding Khabur (Old Assyrian) period, for which there was evidence for occupation in 43 sites (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 59, figs. 37, 41).

Some parts of the region appear to have been devoid of settlement during the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 6.1). This is most apparent in an irregularly shaped area to the southeast of Tell al-Hawa, as well as in a large tract of rolling terrain in the western part of the project area (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 61). However, this lack of settlement does not necessarily mean that the region was not *occupied* in this period. One possibility is that the apparent lack of settlement might be a result of the low visibility and lack of distinctiveness of the dull coloured pottery types of this period (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 59-60). A second possibility is that the region was inhabited at this time by a nomadic population, much like the communities that were living in it until the latter half of the 20th century CE.

There then seems to have been a tremendous increase in the number of settlements in the Iron Age. Of the 184 sites that were identified in this region, 78 provided evidence for occupation in this period. These Iron Age settlements appear to have been distributed across the project area in a relatively even pattern, lying around 2 to 4 kilometres apart from one another (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 60; Fig. 6.2). Many of these were located in areas that had been devoid of settlement in the Late Bronze Age, a pattern that has been described as 'infilling' (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62, Wilkinson *et. al.* 2005: 40-41). An example of this is the site of Khirbet 'Aloki, which was occupied during the Ubaid period, and then left abandoned until the Iron Age, when it was re-occupied (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 66-67).

Figure 6.3 is a scatter diagram showing all the sites in the North Jazira survey area that yielded evidence for an Iron Age occupation in descending size order, plotted against their estimated surface areas. The site of Tell al-Hawa is represented by the point that is furthest to the left on the curve shown here, and was estimated to have had a surface area of around 7 hectares in this period. This site is followed in size order by three sites (Sites 3, 99 and 138) with surface areas of around 4 hectares,

and four others (Sites 42, 94, 108 and 140) with surface areas of around 3 hectares each. Four of these medium-sized sites (99, 108, 138 and 140) are clustered together in the south-western part of the survey region (Fig. 6.2). It may also be worth noting that these four sites (as well as Site 42) also yielded evidence for occupation during the Late Bronze Age (*cf.* Fig. 6.1).

Figure 6.4 shows the same information using a logarithmic scale. In addition, those settlements that yielded evidence for a Late Bronze occupation are also shown in an additional curve. Tell al-Hawa, with an estimated surface area of around 15 hectares, was also the largest site in this area during the Late Bronze Age (Ball *et. al.* 1989: 35).

6.4 DISCUSSION

In their discussion of the settlement patterns of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, Wilkinson and Tucker argued that the increase in the number of settlements during the latter period 'can best be explained' as the result of a 'programme of resettlement' that had been carried out by the Assyrian Empire (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62). They pointed out that there is documentary evidence for the establishment of new settlements from the reign of Ashur-dan II onwards, and suggested that the appearance of new settlements in areas that had not been occupied during the Late Bronze Age was due to the forced resettlement of people from regions that had recently been conquered by the Assyrians to previously under-utilised lands.

However, it is worth noting that this argument is based upon the assumption that all these new Iron Age settlements were not established during the Early Iron period, but only later on in the Iron Age. This is similar to the assumption made by Parker in his interpretation of the survey evidence from the Cizre-Silopi Plain (*cf.* Chapter 4 Section 4.2.3). An alternate possibility is that these new settlements had actually been established during the Early Iron period, and had then continued to be occupied later into the Iron Age. In this case, the increase in settlement noted in this area should not be attributed to the policies of the Assyrian Empire, as this region would not have been under Assyrian control at the time, and would have been inhabited by Aramean tribes.

The comparison of the two curves depicted in Fig. 6.4 for settlements from the Late Bronze and from the Iron Age shows a somewhat different picture from the one seen in the Cizre-Silopi Plain (*cf.* Fig. 4.9). In contrast to the pattern for that region, where the settlement curve for the Iron Age showed an upward and a rightward shift as compared to that for the Late Bronze, in the North Jazira region there is instead a flattening of this curve.

This effect is the result of the decrease in the occupied surface areas of the largest sites in this region. Tell al-Hawa, for example, would be represented by the point furthest to the left in both of the logarithmic curves in Fig. 6.4. The point representing this site during the Late Bronze Age lies higher up than the point representing it for the Iron Age. This is because there was a decrease in the occupied surface area of this site, from approximately 15 hectares in the Late Bronze Age to only around 7 hectares in the Iron Age. There is also a decrease in the surface areas of the next tier of medium-sized sites in the Iron Age, as is clearly depicted in Fig. 6.4.

On the other hand, there is a corresponding increase in the occupied surface areas of many of the smaller sites in the region during the Iron Age. This is depicted by the part of the curve for the Iron Age that lies to the right, which lies further up than that for the preceding Late Bronze period. These curves show that the decrease in the size of some of the larger sites in this region during the Iron Age was accompanied by both an increase in the size of many of the smaller sites in the region, as well as the establishment of many new small sites. As many of the newly established sites were founded in areas in which there had not been any settlement during the preceding Late Bronze Age, it is possible that these sites were established in order to expand agricultural activity into areas that had not previously been cultivated (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62). The concomitant decrease in the surface area of the larger sites in this region also suggests that there may also have been some movement of people from these larger sites into the newly established settlements.

The next chapter will look at the survey evidence from a second survey that was carried out in an area close to the Assyrian heartland itself, the Tell Beydar Survey, before Chapter 8 goes on to examine a survey from the Southern Levant.

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CHAPTER 7
THE TELL BEYDAR SURVEY

This survey was conducted in conjunction with excavations at the site of Tell Beydar, which is located on the western bank of the Wadi 'Awaidj in north-eastern Syria, approximately 35 kilometres to the northwest of the modern town of Hassake (Wilkinson 2000: 1). Tell Beydar was investigated by a joint Syrian-European team under the directorship of Marc Lebeau and Antoine Suleiman from 1992 to 2010 (Lebeau 1997: 7). The survey itself was carried out by a separate team led by Tony Wilkinson over two seasons, in 1997 and 1998 (Wilkinson 2000: 1, Ur and Wilkinson 2008: 305).

7.1 BACKGROUND

The Tell Beydar Survey was conducted over a circular area that extended for a distance of 12 kilometres from the Beydar excavation house. Satellite generated images were used to identify potential sites, which were then visited and surveyed by the team. In addition, sites that were recognisable on the ground from the rural road system were also included (Wilkinson 2000: 2). All of the identified sites were on agricultural land, and care was taken to conduct surveys only after grain had been harvested and straw grazed, to ensure good visibility (Wilkinson 2000: 32). Ceramics were dated according to the sequences published for the North Jazira Survey (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 89-109).

Like the North Jazira Survey (discussed in Chapter 6) the Tell Beydar Survey was conducted by a small three-person team, and not by a large team of field-walkers (Wilkinson 2000: 1). It is therefore possible that many smaller sites could have been overlooked in this survey. Indeed, a number of new sites, notably that of Khisham, in which 98 examples of rock art were discovered, have been identified in the Beydar

region since the conclusion of the survey (Ur and Wilkinson 2008: 308, van Berg and Picalause 2003: 558).

7.2 GEOGRAPHY

The Wadi 'Awaidj arises a few kilometres north of the modern Syrian-Turkish border and runs a meandering course to the south (Lebeau 1997: 7). The area around Tell Beydar itself consists of three basic landforms (Fig. 7.1). The valleys of the Wadis 'Awaidj and Zerqan, with their associated alluvial plains, lie in the central part of the survey area. To the west of the valley of the 'Awaidj extends a low basalt plateau known as the Hemma, that has limited water resources and is thought to have served as an upland grazing area in antiquity, while to the east extends a stretch of undulating steppe-land made up of loam-covered gravel terraces (Wilkinson 2000: 3, Ur and Wilkinson 2008: 305-6).

The Beydar area lies in the climatically marginal zone of rain-fed farming steppe. At present, most of this region is used for cereal cultivation, although the relatively low annual rainfall of 250-300 mm can occasionally result in crop failures (Ur and Wilkinson 2008: 305). Cotton is also grown in some areas (Wilkinson 2000: 4). In the first millennium BCE, however, it is likely that the western basalt plateau and much of the steppe-land extending to the east would not have been cultivated (Wilkinson 2000: 4).

7.3 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The following discussion of settlement patterns only considers those sites that were identified during the survey season of 1997, and catalogued in the preliminary report (Wilkinson 2000). Although the findings of the 1998 season have been referred to in a follow-up report (Ur and Wilkinson 2008), they have not been published in full. A total of 62 sites, including Tell Beydar itself, were identified in the 1997 season. These ranged from mounds that had a height of 1-1.5 metres and a surface area of just 1 hectare to tells with extensive lower towns surrounding them (Wilkinson 2000: 8-9).

Settlement in this region appears to have been sparse during the Late Bronze Age, with only 8 of these 62 sites yielding pottery datable to this period (Wilkinson 2000: 32-37). Most of these sites were situated in the central alluvial plain, with only one (TBS 50) lying in the basalt plateau.

There is then a dramatic increase in the number of occupied sites during the Iron Age, for which evidence for occupation was discovered in 31 sites, including Tell Beydar itself. The majority of these sites were also located in the central plain, but a significant number of new settlements also seem to have been established in both the western basalt plateau and the steppe-lands to the east. There therefore appears to have been an extension of settlement into more marginal areas at this time (Fig. 7.2).

The catalogue of sites included in the preliminary report published by Wilkinson did not provide estimates for the surface area of each individual site. It was therefore not possible to produce logarithmic settlement curves similar to those provided for the surveys discussed in previous chapters, as depicted in diagrams like Figs. 4.9 and 6.4.

Instead, all 62 sites identified in the survey were categorised into three morphological groups, based on their sizes. These were as follows: -

- **Class 1** sites consisted of low mounds with surface areas of less than 3 hectares, with the typical site in this group having a surface area of around 1 hectare.
- **Class 2** sites were tells that were significantly larger and of a greater height than the low mounds in Class 1, with the typical site in this group having a surface area of around 5 hectares.
- **Class 3** sites consisted of tells that were associated with lower towns, some of which spread quite extensively.

7.4 DISCUSSION

Figure 7.3 is a bar chart that shows the numbers of Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 sites in the Beydar survey area for which there is evidence for a Late Bronze

occupation. Figure 7.4 is a bar chart showing the Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 sites that yielded evidence for an Iron Age occupation in the survey area. A comparison of these two diagrams shows a relative increase in the length of the column furthest to the left, which represents the smaller Class 1 sites. There is also a small increase in the number of Class 2 sites, which are represented by the column in the middle of the chart. The rise in the number of occupied sites in the Iron Age, which has been described as 'precipitous' (Wilkinson 2000: 15), was therefore primarily due to an increase in the smaller sites, with a moderate increase in the medium-sized Class 2 sites. Many of these new settlements were established in areas that had previously been devoid of settlement during the Late Bronze period.

It is also interesting to note that the increase in settlement that occurred during the Iron Age is followed by a gradual decline in the number of occupied sites during the subsequent Hellenistic, Parthian and Sasanian periods (Wilkinson 2000: 12). The long-term peak in settlement for this area is therefore during the Iron Age, rather than in the Hellenistic period, when this area would have been located very close to the centre of the Seleucid Empire.

In his original report on the Beydar survey published in 2000, Wilkinson did conclude that it was difficult to relate this long-term peak in settlement to 'any political entity', because the Iron Age pottery could not be distinguished into earlier and later phases (Wilkinson 2000: 15). It is worth noting, however, that in discussing the possible causes behind this increase, Wilkinson stated that, while it may be tempting to attribute this process to the Assyrian Empire, a 'spontaneous settlement' of either 'nomadic pastoralists' or 'Arameans' might also be a possibility (Wilkinson 2000: 15).

The following chapter will discuss the findings from a survey carried out in the southern Levant, the Southern Samaria Survey, where there was also an increase in settlement during the Iron Age that has been attributed to the sedentarization of nomadic groups. Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12 will then go on to look at the evidence from a number of sites in former Assyrian provinces.

CHAPTER 8

THE SOUTHERN SAMARIA SURVEY

The Southern Samaria Survey was conducted in conjunction with the excavations at the site of Khirbet Seilun, which is thought to be the city of Shiloh mentioned in the Bible. It was originally planned as an investigation into the process of settlement of the Israelite tribe of Ephraim, and referred to as the 'Land of Ephraim Survey' (Finkelstein 1988-89). Fieldwork was carried out from 1980 to the end of 1987, when it had to be stopped because of growing political tensions (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 1). Both the survey and the excavations were carried out under the joint directorship of Israel Finkelstein, Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1993, Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997).

8.1 BACKGROUND

The survey area extends across the central highlands of Palestine, including its western slopes and its eastern desert fringes (Horowitz 1997: 73). It has a surface area of around 1,050 square kilometres. Its boundary to the west corresponds roughly to the pre-1967 Israeli-Jordanian border, so that the area lies mostly in the territory known as the West Bank. The survey area is bounded by the Modiin-Ramallah-Deir Dibwan road in the south, the western margins of the Sahl Makhna and the northern margins of the Beit Dajan valley in the north, and a line beyond the outermost permanent settlements to the east (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 1).

Unlike the North Jazira and Tell Beydar Surveys, which were carried out by two to three-person teams, the Southern Samaria Survey was conducted by a large team that included students from Bar-Ilan University (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 1). Its objective was to complete a systematic pedestrian survey of the entire survey area,

although this could not be achieved because work was interrupted by political tensions.

The project was undertaken in stages. The first was a full pedestrian survey of the area around Khirbet Seilun, which was carried out from 1980 to 1981. The next stage was carried out from 1981 to 1983, and involved field-walking of all sites marked on maps of the survey area, as well as of the 113 Arab villages in the area. The third stage of the project had been intended to be a systematic survey of the entire area by field-walking, but only about 70% of the territory could eventually be surveyed before work had to be stopped in 1987 (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 11).

Each identified site was surveyed by a team of 5-7 individuals. As the objective of the project was the production of a settlement history of this region, the focus of the survey was primarily on the collection of pottery, with less emphasis being placed on the description of architectural remains (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 12-13). Pottery identification was carried out with reference to standard publications of type-corpora groups (e.g. Amiran 1969), as well as to the results of the excavations at the sites of 'Izbet Sartah and of Khirbet Seilun (Finkelstein 1986, Finkelstein *et. al.* 1993). The important ceramic types relevant to this survey have already been discussed in detail in Chapter 3 Section 3.4.

8.2 GEOGRAPHY

The survey region can be divided into four sub-units. These are, from east to west, the Desert Fringe, the Central Range, the Western Slopes and the Foothills (Fig. 8.1).

The Desert Fringe only covers about 103 square kilometres and is the smallest of the four sub-units. It forms a narrow strip of barren territory that contains a few tracts of land suitable for dry farming cultivation. This area has an annual rainfall of 350-400 millimetres (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 104).

The Central Range declines gently from south to north and can be divided into: -

- **The Northern Central Range**, which is characterised by a number of small mountainous valleys, many of which contain ancient sites, and a considerable number of springs.

- **The Southern Central Range**, which is formed by a limestone plateau, and only contains a limited number of springs.

(Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 104-5)

The Western Slopes are characterised by a series of ridges and wadis running from east to west. This area is separated from the foothills to the west by an escarpment, and it too can be divided into two sub-units: -

- **The Northern Slopes,** which have relatively moderate terrain.

- **The Southern Slopes**, which are characterised by long narrow ridges and form the most rugged sector of the region.

(Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 107-8)

The Foothills are the westernmost strip of territory. This area slopes downwards from about 300-400 metres above sea level in the east to about 200 metres in the west. The landscape in this area consists of low, moderate hills, but the terrain is rocky, and not suited for agriculture (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 108).

The Southern Samaria Survey region has been described as a 'highland ecological frontier zone' (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 109). Census data collected by the former British Mandatorial Government indicate that in the early 20th century, the eastern parts of the Central Range, the Desert Fringe and most of the Foothills were mostly used for cereal cultivation and pasturage, whereas the Southern Slopes were used for olive cultivation. In the rest of the region, cereal cultivation and horticulture appear to have been fairly balanced (Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 118).

8.3 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

A total of 582 sites were identified in the Southern Samaria Survey. The majority of these were only occupied in later periods, with most having been founded during the Roman and Byzantine periods.

Evidence for occupation during the Late Bronze Age was only encountered in 9 sites, including Khirbet Seilun itself, which continued to be occupied into the Iron I and Iron II periods. These were all located in the Central Range and the Desert Fringe, in the eastern part of the region (Fig. 8.2).

This was followed by a significant increase in the number of settlements during the subsequent Iron I period, for which there is evidence for occupation at a total of 131 sites. This represents a 14-fold increase in the number of sites (Fig. 8.3; Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 893-896). There is an expansion of occupation into the Western Slopes and the Foothills in the western part of the survey region in this period. It may also be worth noting that 19 of these sites were situated in the Desert Fringe, which suggests that there may have been an expansion into more marginal areas at this time.

Settlement then appears to have continued to increase during the Iron II period, with a total of 237 sites yielding evidence for occupation (Fig. 8.4; Finkelstein *et. al.* 1997: 896-902). There is an increase in the density of settlement at this time that is reminiscent of the 'infilling' noted by Wilkinson in the North Jazira Survey region (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62). However, the increase in settlement appears to have tapered off in the Desert Fringe, where evidence for occupation in this period was only found at 22 sites.

This information is depicted graphically in Figures 8.5 to 8.8. Figure 8.5 is a scatter diagram that shows all the sites in the survey area that yielded evidence for a Late Bronze occupation in descending size order, plotted against their estimated surface areas. Figure 8.6 shows all the sites that yielded evidence for occupation in the Iron I period and Figure 8.7 shows the sites that were occupied in the Iron II period.

Finally, Figure 8.8 is a comparison of settlement for all three periods that depicts a series of logarithmic settlement curves for the Late Bronze, Iron I and Iron II periods. These curves show a shift upwards and to the right from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron I period, which is followed by a further upwards and rightward shift in the

subsequent Iron II period. This shows that there was an increase, not just in the total number of sites, but also in the total occupied surface area in the Iron I period. This increase in settlement then continued into the Iron II period.

8.4 DISCUSSION

There are both similarities and differences between the results of this survey and those of the surveys that have been discussed in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. All these surveys showed a definite increase in the number of settlements during the Iron Age, as compared to the preceding Late Bronze period. However, there is an important difference that is worth noting.

In the Southern Samaria Survey area, it was possible to differentiate between Iron I and Iron II periods, because the Iron Age pottery of the southern Levant has been extensively described. The increase in settlement in this region seems to have begun in the Iron I period. This is illustrated in Figure 8.8 which compares the logarithmic settlement curves for the Late Bronze, Iron I and Iron II periods. The initial increase in settlement in the Iron I period is shown by the upwards and rightwards shift of the Iron I curve, as compared to the curve for the Late Bronze Age. As Assyrian control was not established in this region until the Iron II period, it is fairly certain that this increase in settlement cannot be linked to the policies of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

The reasons for an increase in settlement in the Iron I period have been extensively debated. There is a scholarly consensus that this process related to the appearance of the Israelites in this region, and three main hypotheses have been advanced to explain this phenomenon: -

- The 'military-conquest' theory originally put forward by W.F. Albright argued that the Israelites invaded the region as described in the book of Joshua, and subsequently settled there (Wright 1962: 78-84).

- The 'peaceful-infiltration' theory argued that the Israelites were a pre-existing nomadic population that had coexisted with the Canaanites of the Late Bronze cities for some time before developing a separate ethnic identity (Noth 1958: 141-153).

- The 'peasant-revolt' theory proposed that the Israelites were inhabitants of the Late Bronze cities who grew disaffected and left their homes to establish new communities, where they developed a separate ethnic identity (Mendenhall 1962; Gottwald 1979: 210-219).

It is therefore possible to put forward three mechanisms by which the settlement increase that occurred in this region at the beginning of the Iron Age might have taken place.

1) The new settlements were founded by a nomadic population that was already present in the region and was gradually shifting to a sedentary lifestyle (Finkelstein 1988: 339-348, Finkelstein 1996: 206-209).

2) Social instability in the Late Bronze Age cities may have led to a substantial proportion of the people who lived in them leaving in order to establish new, smaller settlements in the surrounding countryside (Dever 1995: 211, 2003: 182-189).

3) While the 'military-conquest' theory proposed by Albright is no longer accepted, it is still possible that the increase in the number of settlements, as well as the increase in the overall occupied surface area, could have been due to an influx of new settlers (whatever their ethnicity) from outside the region.

It is the first of these explanations, which involved the sedentarization of a previously nomadic population, that was favoured by the organisers of the Southern Samaria Survey. Finkelstein has argued that this would have been part of a gradual process, in which the population of the region oscillated between nomadic and sedentary lifestyles. These repeated shifts are thought to have resulted in three waves of settlement. The first wave was thought to have begun in the Chalcolithic period and peaked during the Early Bronze, before being followed by a shift back to a nomadic lifestyle (Finkelstein 1991). The second was thought to have taken place in the Middle Bronze Age, and the third and final wave was suggested to have caused the increase in settlement that took place in the Iron I period (Finkelstein 1996: 207-209). This third wave was suggested to have led eventually to the formation of the northern kingdom of Israel (Finkelstein 1996: 207).

8.5 CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from the Southern Samaria Survey presents an interesting contrast to the results of the surveys from further north that were examined in earlier chapters. There is a clear increase in settlement during the Iron Age in this region, but this increase can be assigned to the Iron I period. As Assyrian involvement in this region did not begin until later in the Iron Age, the increase in settlement that took place in this region cannot be related to the policies of the Assyrian Empire. The standard explanation for this increase is that it was related to the establishment of new ethnic identities that is known to have occurred in this region around this time. This raises the question as to whether a similar process might also have been responsible for the settlement increase observed in the survey regions discussed in earlier chapters.

The next few chapters will discuss the evidence from a series of sites located in former Assyrian provinces, that will allow us to establish a clearer understanding of the rural landscape during the Assyrian period.

*   *   *   *

CHAPTER 9

TILLE HÖYÜK

The increase in settlement that took place in the Near East during the Iron Age appears to have been due primarily to the establishment of a large number of smaller sized settlements. This is most immediately obvious in the North Jazira Survey, where the logarithmic curve for the Iron Age (Fig. 6.4) is 'flattened' when compared to that for the preceding Late Bronze period. However, an overall increase was also noted in the number of smaller sized settlements, as well as of medium-sized ones, in the other surveys discussed in Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8 above (as illustrated, for example, by a comparison of Figs. 7.3 and 7.4).

The next two chapters will examine excavation evidence from a series of sites located in former Assyrian provinces. The aim of looking at these sites would be to obtain a more elaborate idea of the exact nature of the many small- and medium-sized sites that existed in this region during the Assyrian period. It is one thing to simply document an increase in the number of settlements in this region, but a more detailed appreciation of these sites based on excavated evidence can allow us to develop a clearer understanding of the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

Chapter 9 will begin by examining a medium-sized tell, Tille Höyük, that has been interpreted as a kind of local administrative centre, and is located around 150 kilometres to the north of the Land of Carchemish Project survey area. This site is especially useful for the purposes of this study because it has been extensively excavated, with almost complete clearance of the top of the mound for the Assyrian as well as for the preceding Early and Middle Iron periods. Chapters 10, 11 and 12 will then go on to consider evidence from a number of smaller-sized settlements in former Assyrian provinces, in order to look at how they might have differed (if at all) in function from a settlement like Tille Höyük. Finally, Chapter 13 will consider the relationship that might have existed between such smaller- and medium-sized settlements in the context of what is known about the Assyrian Empire.

9.1 BACKGROUND

Tille Höyük was located on the western bank of the Euphrates, approximately 130 kilometres upstream from the site of Carchemish, in the province of Adiyaman in south-eastern Turkey (Blaylock 2009: 1; Fig. 9.1). It was investigated in a salvage excavation carried out from 1979 to 1990 by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara (BIAA).

The site itself consisted of a conical mound that had a diameter of 120-160 metres at its base, and a height of 20-25 metres before excavation. In topographical terms, the site lies in the 'hilly flanks' of the Mesopotamian plain, an area of rolling hills dissected by river valleys. It was limited to the north by a ravine, while to the south and east there was a flat terrace that was covered partly by a modern village and partly by land that was used for agricultural purposes (Blaylock 2009: 3). The site has been submerged since the summer of 1991 due to the flooding caused by the construction of the Atatürk Dam, which lies around 60 kilometres downstream (Summers 1993: 1, Blaylock 2009: 1).

Only limited sampling of archaeobotanical remains was carried out during these excavations. 19 distinct deposits were analysed, 11 of which were from Level VIIIa, the stratum dated to the Neo-Assyrian period. These samples indicated that the most important crop cultivated in this area in the past was barley, although significant amounts of wheat also appear to have been grown. Other crops identified in these samples include bitter vetch, horse bean, grass pea, grapes, lentils and millet (Nesbitt 2016: 369-380). A large amount of foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*) was collected from a burnt deposit in Level VIIIa (Nesbitt and Summers 1988: 86, Nesbitt 2016: 385). The significance of this find is that millet is typically grown as a summer crop, in contrast to other cereals and pulses that are sown in the autumn or early spring and harvested in early summer. Millet can therefore be used to make the summer season productive, and could have been part of a strategy designed to increase agricultural production.

The aim of the excavation was to examine the architecture of the site over as great an area as possible by clearing the whole of the top of the mound (Blaylock 1999: 263). It is unfortunate that excavations were only extended down to the Late Bronze-Iron Age transitional level, and could not be continued further due to a lack of time and resources. Excavation was carried out using a 10-metre square grid. Each square was numbered according to a notional grid that had its point of origin 730

metres to the west and 550 metres to the south of the south-western edge of the site. The trenches on the site were therefore numbered 73 to 79 from west to east, and 55 to 60 from south to north (Blaylock 2009: 55).

9.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Tille Höyük is thought to have been located on the eastern border of the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Kummuh, which was established after the fall of the Hittite Empire. This kingdom was centred on the city of the same name, which is thought to have been located at the mound of Samsat (Blaylock 2009: 21). The first definite reference to Kummuh in the Assyrian sources is from the annals of Ashurnasirpal II, when one Qatazilu of Kummuh is recorded as having paid a tribute of 'cedar logs, silver, (and) gold' to the king (Grayson 1991 A.0.101.1 ll.95-96, Blaylock 2009: 27). The kingdom seems to have continued to exist as an independent state (and had tributary payments to the Assyrians recorded from time to time) until 746 BCE, when it took part in an anti-Assyrian coalition forged by Sarduri II, king of Urartu. Assyrian control over Kummuh was re-established after the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III against Sarduri in 743 BCE (Bryce 2014: 132, Blaylock 2009: 27). Kummuh remained a tributary state until the reign of Sargon II, when it allied itself with Urartu for a second time and was again defeated. It was then annexed to the Assyrian Empire in 708 BCE (Blaylock 2009: 30).

9.3 STRATIGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE

The site is thought to have been occupied from the Neolithic period onwards, on the basis of sherds discovered on its surface. However, good exposure was only achieved in the excavation down to the Late Bronze-Iron Transition period. This stratum was referred to as the 'Burnt Level' because it had been destroyed by fire (Summers 1993: 31). Earlier Late Bronze levels were only explored in a sounding at

the north-western edge of the tell. For the Iron Age, ten levels, numbered I-X from the bottom upwards, were discerned (Blaylock 2009: *xviii*).

- **The 'Burnt' Level** was assigned to the Late Bronze-Iron Age transition period, based on a dendrochronological analysis of burnt timbers found within it, which suggested a date of 1150-1090 BCE (Blaylock 2016: *xix*).

- **Levels I-III** were dated to the Early Iron period, during the 11th and 10th centuries BCE.

- **Levels IV-VII** were dated to the Neo-Hittite period, from the late 10th century to *c.*700 BCE.

- **Level VIII** was dated to the Neo-Assyrian period. This stratum was divided into two distinct phases, Levels VIIIa and VIIIb.

- **Level IX** was a rebuilding after the destruction of Level VIII, and may have dated to either the Neo-Babylonian or early Achaemenid period.

Good exposure was achieved for levels IV-X, with most of the surface of the mound having been uncovered. However, for the lower levels dating to the Early Iron period, only the western half of the mound could be excavated due to time and resource constraints, while the eastern half was left untouched.

9.3.1 LATE BRONZE-IRON TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

This stratum, labelled the 'Burnt Level' by the excavators, was exposed over the whole of the western edge of the mound, as well as in two additional 10 by 10 metre squares. In sum, a total of about 650 square metres were uncovered. This level contained the remains of a monumental gateway at the western end, with a three-room structure appended to its southern side. Two rooms were also uncovered to the north of this gateway. In the two additional squares, the walls of domestic structures extending into the unexcavated parts of the site were exposed (Fig. 9.2). Ten storage pithoi were discovered in this layer, of which five were found *in situ* in a small room that had been built into the northern side of the gateway, which was labelled by the excavators as 'the Magazine' (Fig. 9.3).

9.3.2 EARLY IRON AGE

Levels I-III followed on without a hiatus from the preceding Late Bronze level, and were thought by the excavators to represent the formative stages of the kingdom of Kummuh. These levels would therefore have represented the period immediately following the collapse of the Hittite Empire, when new political entities were being established in the northern Levant (*cf.* Chapter 2 Section 2.1.2)

Level I contained the remains of one complete building (Building I) in the north-western part of the mound, with parts of four other buildings (Buildings II, III, IV and V) lying on the margins of the excavated area. These buildings were interpreted by the excavators as residential units of a 'village-type' that had been put up using a 'vernacular' type of construction (Blaylock 2009: 81). They were built with stone footings made of limestone blocks that supported a mud-brick superstructure and separated by open areas that were surfaced with gravel (Blaylock 2009: 68; Figs. 9.4 and 9.5).

Building I accounted for most of the built-up area in this level. It consisted of a core structure of 3 larger rooms (Rooms 1-3), and 4 smaller rooms (4-7) that had floors that were at a lower level than those of the core rooms. This building contained a rectangular storage bin made of mud plaster and brick that had been built up against the southern wall of Room 1 (Fig. 9.5). The remains of a clay-lined oven (referred to in the site report by the Turkish term *tandir*, and which corresponds to the Arabic *tannur*) were found placed against the northern wall of this room, which was therefore thought to have been used as a food preparation area (Blaylock 2009: 69).

Level II was excavated over the same area as Level I. This layer was not considered at first to be a separate level, but only reconstructed on paper at a later stage, after the excavations were over. It is therefore possible that not all of the features assigned to this stratum may have been in existence at the same time.

Most of this level consisted of open surfaces. There was a band of truncation that ran across the centre of the site, in which later building activity had removed all Level II remains (Blaylock 2009: 73). The architectural remains for this layer consisted of the edges of three buildings (I, II and III) clustered around an open courtyard to the north, and the north-western corner of a fourth building (IV) to the south. These buildings seem to have been less firmly built than those in Level I. This stratum contained two clusters of storage pits, with six of these close to Building IV in the

south (Fig. 9.7), and seven others in the open courtyard next to Buildings I, II and III in the north (Fig. 9.6). Most of these pits were lined with chaff, which is typically used to prolong the period of useful storage by reducing the amount of moisture that seeps into the pit from the ground (Abdalla *et al.* 2001). It was suggested by the excavators that the focus of domestic occupation during this period might have been in the eastern part of the site that had been left unexcavated, with the western half of the mound serving primarily as a storage zone (Blaylock 2009: 72-78).

Level III too, like the two earlier levels, was only excavated over the western half of the mound. The south-western sector was dominated by Building I, which consisted of five rooms laid out in a plan two rooms deep. This building was thought by the excavators to have been domestic in nature (Fig. 9.9). Rooms 1 and 2 were located to the south, and contained a central mud-brick hearth each. Room 1 also contained a basalt quern set in the floor and a clay oven, while Room 2 contained a small mud-brick storage bin. Room 3 lay just to the south of Room 2 with two pithos settings discovered in it. These settings were features from which the excavators had inferred the presence of a storage jar. They typically consisted of a depression in a corner of a room, usually revetted with stone, but sometimes of a vessel that had been dug into the ground with its opening flush with ground level (Blaylock 2009: 140). Rooms 4 and 5 lay to the north of Room 2, with a single pithos setting discovered in Room 4.

Much of the north-western sector had been truncated by later building activity, but it was possible to distinguish fragmentary remains of a second structure (Building III) in this area (Blaylock 2009: 81). The open area to the north of this structure contained two large stone-lined storage pits, which had been dug deeply into the two earlier strata below them (Blaylock 2009: 78-81, Fig. 9.8).

9.3.3 MIDDLE IRON AGE

Levels IV-VII were assigned to the Neo-Hittite period by the excavators. These levels represent the period when the kingdom of Kummuh would have been independent, although it is not really possible to determine which one of these levels might have been in existence at the time that Qatazilu of Kummuh was recorded as having paid tribute to Ashurnasirpal II. Level V may have continued in existence until the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III against Sarduri in 743 BCE, in which case this stratum would represent a time when Kummuh had allied itself with Urartu, and was not cooperating with the Assyrian Empire.

Most of the top of the mound was exposed for these levels, with both the eastern and western halves of the mound being excavated. However, good architectural remains were only present in Levels IV and V.

Level IV contained some of the best-preserved buildings of the pre-Assyrian sequence at Tille Höyük. The mound was sub-divided into three terraces during this period, by two terrace walls that ran across it from the northwest to the southeast (Figs. 9.10, 9.11 and 9.12).

Terrace 1 extended across the southern edge of the site, and contained the remains of three domestic structures (I, II and III). Building I consisted of four rooms (1-4) and extended across the central part of this terrace. Room 2 of this building contained a basalt quern and a pithos setting (Fig. 9.11). Building II lay to the east of Building I, and was divided from it by an open area. This building contained two deep pits made of mud-brick that had been dug into one of its rooms in a secondary phase (Blaylock 2009: 87). Only fragmentary remains of Building III were discovered.

Terrace 2 ran across the middle of the site, with an axial street along its northern edge that allowed access to the buildings in Terrace 3 to its north. The centre of this terrace was occupied by the remains of a structure (Building IV) that had been damaged by later building activity. A second structure to the west of this (Building V) appears to have been replaced in a secondary phase by two large storage pits (Blaylock 2009: 92; Fig. 9.10).

Terrace 3 covered almost the whole of the northern half of the site. The buildings on this terrace (VI-XII) seem to have formed a continuous range of domestic structures. Much of the western edge of this terrace was left unexcavated. Building VII consisted of a back room (21) fronted by a columned room to its south (Room 20) that was entered from an open courtyard (23) to the east (Fig. 9.10). Building VIII was a rectangular room that also opened into Courtyard 23, which contained two storage pits (Fig. 9.12).

Level V contained a number of buildings that were built within individual terraces. The summit of the mound to the southwest was occupied by Buildings I and II. Building I was a structure with a plan that resembled a double trapezium (Fig. 9.14). The core of this building was a long rectangular room (Room 1) that contained a central hearth and a pithos setting. Two open areas (Areas 4 and 5) lay to the east and southeast of Room 1, with two subsidiary open-fronted rooms (2 and 3) that opened on to each of these areas. These two rooms contained a number of hearths,

mortars, pithos settings and querns, which led the excavators to interpret this group of structures as a living and food preparation area (Blaylock 2009: 103).

Building II lay to the west of Building I, from which it was separated by a street. This structure consisted of two rooms, 9 and 10. The main function of Room 10 seems to have been to accommodate a number of storage pits, including one very large rectangular pit that was lined with mud-brick and lime-washed, which may have been done to protect its contents by keeping out moisture and deterring insects.

Building III (Fig. 9.13) was located to the north of Building I and made up of three rooms, two of which, Rooms 12 and 13, had pithoi set in a corner. Room 13 also had an oven in its north-eastern corner. Another large, stone-lined pit was found in the area to the west of this building (Fig. 9.14). This structure was thought by the excavators to have been unlikely to be some kind of cellar because it did not have any means of access, and was interpreted as a facility used for 'large-scale' storage (Blaylock 2009: 110).

Three storage pits were discovered in Rooms 22 and 24 of Building VI, which opened into a paved, L-shaped courtyard (25). Two of these (one each in Rooms 22 and 24) were described as 'distinctive' because they both contained a secondary cut that extended for about half the depth of the pit itself on one side (Fig. 9.13). The eastern part of the mound was badly eroded in this level, and only contained scattered architectural remains.

Levels VI and VII, like the earlier Level II, were both not appreciated as distinct levels during the excavation, but only reconstructed afterwards. Because these two levels were both patchily preserved, the excavators were unable to assign many of the features found in them 'to one or the other with confidence' (Blaylock 2009: 111).

Level VI was characterised by very patchy survival of the deposits. Much of the centre and the south-eastern part of the mound had been truncated by later building activity, and specifically by the construction of the monumental building of Level VIIIa. The remains of a few buildings that were thought to be domestic in nature were assigned to this layer. This stratum contained three storage pits that lay along the northern edge of the mound, among the remains of Building V. A stone mortar and clay ovens were also discovered in this area, which would therefore appear to have served as a food preparation area (Blaylock 2009: 116; Fig. 9.18).

Level VII was similarly characterised by only fragmentary remains. This was largely the result of later terracing for the construction of the structures of Level VIII, which

resulted in a band of truncation across the centre of the site (Blaylock 2009: 117). Only traces of two buildings, Building I, which was located at the highest point on the southwest sector of the mound, and Building II at the north-west corner of the site, were present. The rest of the site was characterised by rough exterior surfaces, which contained a total of 59 storage pits scattered all across the mound (Figs. 9.19, 9.20). It was noted by the excavators that the distribution of these pits did not follow any overall pattern, and suggested that the mound might have been used at this time as an area for crop storage by people who did not actually live on the mound itself (Blaylock 2009: 122). There were no signs of a destruction at the end of this level, which appears to have ended peacefully as a result of the rebuilding of the following Level VIIIa.

9.3.4 NEO-ASSYRIAN PERIOD

Level VIII consisted of two distinct phases divided by a destruction level. This level was dated to the Neo-Assyrian period. The layout of this stratum represented a complete rebuilding of the site, with no relation to that of the previous Neo-Hittite layers. Level VIII is distinguished by the presence of a large building that covered the southern half of the mound, which was interpreted as a monumental structure because of its large dimensions as well as its dominant position at the highest part of the mound (Blaylock 2009: 132). The layout of this building was thought to be comparable to that of other Neo-Assyrian buildings, and in particular to that of the *Bâtiment aux Ivoires* at Arslan Tash (Blaylock 2009: 157; *cf*. Turner 1968: 66-67). It was therefore thought by the excavators that Level VIIIa had probably been built at some point after the annexation of Kummuh by the Assyrians in 708 BCE (Blaylock 2009: 162).

Level VIIIa was more complex than any previous stratum. The site was bisected by a street running across it from the east to the west. In contrast to the previous layers, the structures of this stratum could not be identified as distinct numbered buildings, because the entire northern half of the mound was covered by a large number of interconnected rooms (Figs. 9.21, 9.23).

The southern half was occupied by the monumental structure mentioned above (Fig. 9.22). This structure was built around a central courtyard that was adorned with a geometric pebble mosaic arranged in a pattern of 17 by 14 squares. Access to it was via two other rooms (Rooms 5 and 6) to its east. The remains of three other rooms to the north of this courtyard were also uncovered. Although the western and

southern edges of the structure could not be excavated because this part of the mound had been lost to erosion, it was assumed that the structure as a whole was most likely to have been symmetrical, with a series of rooms along the southern side to parallel those along the north. It is significant that, in contrast to the structures of a more domestic nature discovered in the Early and Middle Iron Age strata discussed in Sections 9.3.2 and 9.3.3 above, no facilities relating to the preparation and storage of food were found in this monumental building, although it is possible that facilities of this nature may have existed in its unexcavated western and southern edges, or alternatively (as the walls of this building were nearly a full metre in thickness), that the building might have had an upper level that was used for storage purposes.

The northern half of the site was covered by a continuous series of buildings ranged around the inner side of the perimeter wall (Figs. 9.21, 9.23). These structures consisted of small rooms with narrower walls, which all seem to have been centred around four 'core' units (Rooms 11, 21, 31 and 39), which had walls that appear to have been built as free-standing, around which other smaller rooms were built. Each of these 'core' units was linked to one of four courtyards, and the rest of the rooms appear to have been added on to these 'core' rooms. Eleven of these rooms (14, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 34, 37, and 40) contained either pithoi or pithos settings. These are thought to have been used as storage facilities for grain, oil or other foodstuffs, although it is possible that they could also have been used to hold drinking water, or even fuel. Five other rooms contained mortars, while two contained basalt tripod bowls which could have been used, like the mortars, for pounding and crushing cereal grains. Several ovens were also discovered in these rooms (Blaylock 2009: 139-141). It was suggested by the excavators that each of the four 'core' rooms could have served as the central component in a group of rooms that housed an extended family unit.

Level VIIIb represents a later phase of the Assyrian settlement, after some of the Level VIIIa buildings had been destroyed in a fire. This stratum retained many of the elements of the Level VIIIa plan, including the perimeter wall and the axial street. In the northern half of the site, many of the smaller rooms from Level VIIIa had now been destroyed, leaving a large open space surrounded by a series of small rooms opening into it (Figs. 9.24 and 9.26). The monumental building in the southern half of the site continued to be used in Level VIIIb, although it had undergone some modifications. This included the building of a two-roomed enclosure in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard of this building that contained two ovens as well as a number of storage pits (Blaylock 2009: 149; Fig. 9.25).

Level VIIIb was eventually destroyed in a second fire, this time centred on Rooms 39 and 40 on the eastern edge of the mound, after which it appears to have fallen into a state of disrepair. The following layer, Level IX, represented a complete rebuilding of the site, and was assigned to the Neo-Babylonian period (Blaylock 2009: 162).

9.4 DISCUSSION

The most important development to be observed at this site during the Neo-Assyrian period is the striking change that takes place in its overall layout. Throughout both the Early Iron Age, as well as the later Middle Iron period (when this region would have been part of an independent Neo-Hittite kingdom), the mound was occupied by buildings that appear to have been domestic in nature. This is readily apparent in the large number of installations related to the preparation and storage of food that were found in them. Some of these, in particular the large stone-lined pit outside Building III in Level V and the lime-washed rectangular pit in Building II of the same level (Fig. 9.14), were of impressive dimensions. Many clay ovens, mortars, querns and pithos settings were also found in association with these buildings, which suggest that they are likely to have been used as living areas by the inhabitants of the site.

9.4.1 A SEPARATION OF FUNCTION?

Interestingly, there is a striking absence of installations associated with the preparation of food in the monumental building of the Assyrian stratum. In contrast, a substantial number of such facilities were discovered in the continuous series of small rooms that covered the northern half of the mound (although no large-scale storage pits were found here). This points to a separation of function, with those people who lived in the smaller rooms being responsible for the everyday activities necessary to sustain human life like the preparation of food, while those who lived in the monumental building might have been engaged in more sophisticated pursuits.

One suggestion has been that this monumental building was more likely to have been a temple than a palace or residence of some kind. This was based on the observation that entry into this building through Rooms 5 and 6 to its east appears

to be by way of two doorways that lie along an axis that runs through the middle of the central courtyard, and presumably divides the entire structure into symmetrical halves (Bunnens 2016: 66). However, a closer inspection of the site diagrams of this structure (as opposed to speculative reconstructions that depict a symmetrical structure) casts doubt on the reality of such an axis (Fig. 9.22). The doorway that leads out of Room 6, for example, is purely conjectural because the southern half of this room has been entirely lost to erosion. Furthermore, no significant discoveries of a cultic nature seem to have been made in relation to this building, with the few moulded ceramic figurines found at the site (interpreted as 'Astarte plaques') having been discovered only in Level IX and Level X contexts (Blaylock 2016: 225-228). There is therefore no concrete evidence, at present, to identify this structure as a temple (*cf.* Coogan 1987: 2-3).

A more plausible interpretation of this building is the one originally proposed by the excavators of the site themselves, which is that it was simply a local administrative centre of some kind. In this context, the architectural layout of the series of rooms in the northern half of the mound, in which mundane activities like food preparation appear to have been carried out, is possibly of significance. The domestic structures of the earlier Middle and Early Iron strata are demarcated quite clearly from one another, with each building presumably serving as the residence of an extended family unit. Even the storage facilities associated with these buildings appear to have been designed for the use of separate families, with each installation appearing to have served a particular nearby structure. Hence, the lime-washed storage pit in Building II of Level V would have served as a food storage facility for the inhabitants of that structure, while the stone-lined pit outside Building III would presumably have been used by the inhabitants of this other structure (*cf.* Figures 9.13 and 9.14).

In contrast, the inhabitants of the Level VIIIa settlement do not seem to have lived in dwellings that were clearly demarcated from one another. While some attempt has been made to define specific 'core' rooms around which a number of smaller rooms may all be considered to belong to distinct family units, it is difficult to see why separate families should choose to live in such poorly demarcated dwellings, which would be certain in practice to lead to conflict over personal space. A more plausible explanation for this architectural layout could be that the inhabitants of the site in this period might not actually have belonged to individual family units in the first place.

One potential explanation might be that the site could have been resettled in the Assyrian period by deportees who had been forcibly removed from their homelands, as is known to have been the case in many former Assyrian provinces. In this situation, there may have been a blurring of the usual boundaries that exist between

different family units over the time that these people were transported to their new homes, with the deportees gradually developing a deeper sense of kinship with other deportees who were also being resettled in the same place. In this context, the monumental building in the southern half of the site may have served to house the Assyrian official who would have been responsible for overseeing the process of resettlement, as well as any military personnel who had been assigned to assist him.

9.4.2 AN AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENT?

An alternative possibility is that the site as a whole might have been converted in the Assyrian period into some kind of agricultural establishment, which functioned in a way similar to a Middle Assyrian *dunnu*. The *dunnu* was typically a fortified farmstead that had been allocated to a high-ranking individual by the Assyrian king. The existence and function of this kind of establishment is known to us from textual sources, with the best known such example being from the site of Tell Sabi Abyad.

Tell Sabi Abyad is located in the Upper Balikh Valley and has been the subject of investigations by an expedition from Leiden University under the direction of Peter Akkermans since 1986. It was occupied primarily during the Neolithic period, but also in the Late Bronze Age (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 89-90). Seven strata dating to the 12th and 13th centuries BCE have been excavated, of which two (Levels 5 and 6), were found to contain the remains of a Middle Assyrian *dunnu*.

This *dunnu* was a strongly fortified structure that appears to have been built during the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, with an approximate date of 1225 BCE suggested for its establishment by the excavators (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 117). It consisted of an enclosure measuring around 60 metres by 60 metres that was surrounded by a defensive mud-brick wall (Fig. 9.27). There was also, as an additional security measure, a dry moat with a width of 4 metres that circumscribed the entire structure (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 94).

The centre of this enclosure contained two monumental buildings. The first was a rectangular structure with mud-brick walls that were about 2 metres in thickness, which was labelled as the 'Tower' by the excavators (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 91). This structure was thought to have been built in the Mitannian period and later taken into use by the Assyrians (Akkermans 2006: 205). Immediately to the west of this Tower stood another large building, labelled by the excavators as the 'Residence'. This structure was tripartite in plan. It consisted of a long central hall

measuring 15 metres by 4 metres flanked by two rows of smaller rooms that were identical in layout (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 92-93). It has been suggested by the excavators that this 'Residence' might have been used as the living quarters of the individual who owned the *dunnu* (Akkermans and Wiggerman 1999: 58-60).

The southern and eastern parts of the enclosure were occupied by a number of small, irregular structures with walls that consisted of only a single row of mud-bricks. These buildings were all built abutting their neighbours, and have been described by the excavators as 'an aggregation of contiguous rooms' (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 95). Scattered among these structures were spaces that appear to have been gravelled yards, containing clay ovens and storage bins (Akkermans 2006: 207). The finds from these buildings included a substantial number of ground-stone tools, including pestles and basalt grinders that would have been used to grind cereals and other food products (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 113). It is therefore likely that these buildings would have been used as living quarters by the inhabitants of the *dunnu*. Of particular interest was the area just to the east of the Tower, which was interpreted as a potter's workshop due to the discovery here of a number of pottery kilns (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 96). The area to the north of the enclosure was also occupied by structures containing clay ovens, mud-brick storage bins and grinding stones (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 94).

The architectural layout of this Level 6 fortress, consisting of the two monumental structures in the centre of the enclosure surrounded by a number of ancillary buildings, was retained into the Level 5 settlement, which represented a partial reconstruction of the older structure, along with the addition of some new buildings (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 97). However, while the architectural remains from these two strata may be of significant interest in themselves, it is the discovery of a large archive of cuneiform records at this site that makes it truly exceptional.

Up to 400 cuneiform documents have been unearthed at Tell Sabi Abyad, of which the majority are of unbaked clay (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 116). We know from these documents that the *dunnu* here was owned and operated by the members of a single high-ranking Assyrian family, which may have been related to the royal house. It first seems to have been granted to one Aššur-iddin, who carried the title of *sukkallu rabû* (grand vizier), during the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, and then passed on to his heirs Šulmānu-mušabši and later on, Ilī-padā. (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2016: 89).

The agricultural lands that belonged to this *dunnu* appear to have been worked by both unfree serfs (*šiluhlu*), most of whom had Hurrian names, and freeborn villagers

(*ālāhlu*), most of whom were Assyrians (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 119). The owners of the *dunnu* themselves, however, do not seem to have lived in it, and left its management to a steward (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 89, Fales 2014: 232).

Many of the cuneiform texts discovered at Tell Sabi Abyad relate to the agricultural functions of this establishment. We know from these that the main crops cultivated in the lands around the site were barley, cress and sesame seeds. In addition, the inhabitants of this site also seem to have herded sheep and goats, and hunted for wild boar, fallow deer and gazelles (Fales 2014: 232-233). As recompense for their work, the people who lived here seem to have been provided with rations (Fales 2014: 232).

Another group of 15 cuneiform texts discovered at the site of Giricano in the Upper Tigris region have been identified as an archive that belonged to an individual called Ahuni, who is described as coming from both a *dunnu* linked to a person named Uzibi (*dunnu-ša-Uzibi*) as well as the city of Tušhu. These texts record the sales of slaves and loans of barley, cattle and silver, and have been dated to the reign of Aššur-bel-kala in the 11th century BCE (Schachner 2003: 153-156, Roaf and Schachner 2005: 117-119). The *dunnu* mentioned in these texts is presumed to be the site of Giricano itself. The person called Ahuni could have been a steward who managed this *dunnu* for an absentee owner (perhaps the Uzibi for whom this establishment was named).

The interpretation of the Level VIIIa settlement at Tille Höyük as an agricultural establishment of this kind is compelling. Younger has pointed out that agricultural estates of the Neo-Assyrian period appear to have functioned along the lines of this earlier model (Younger 2015: 183). This interpretation would explain the unusual architectural layout of the northern half of the mound, with its lack of any clear demarcation between individual domestic structures. This layout is not that different from that of the domestic quarter of the Tell Sabi Abyad *dunnu*, which consisted of an 'aggregation of contiguous rooms' (Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 95). Living quarters of this kind would hardly be surprising if the inhabitants of the site in this period did not belong to distinct family units, but were all serfs (*šiluhlu*) in the service of a single individual. Some of these workers might have been prisoners of war who had been separated from their families, while others might have been deportees from newly-conquered provinces. The introduction of foxtail millet, which is typically grown as an additional crop, could have been an attempt to increase the productivity of this establishment, whether for increased financial gain or simply for the greater glory of the Assyrian Empire.

9.4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the excavated evidence from a single medium-sized mound, that may be typical of many of the medium-sized mounds that have been identified for the Assyrian period in surveys across the Near East. It has compared the architectural layout of the northern half of the Level VIIIa settlement there to the domestic quarter of the Middle Assyrian enclosure at Tell Sabi Abyad, and made the suggestion that these two settlements may both have functioned in a similar way.

In the next three chapters, the evidence from a series of smaller sites will be considered, before a final discussion is presented in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 10
SMALLER SITES IN THE UPPER TIGRIS REGION

The next three chapters will look at the excavated evidence from a series of smaller settlements, in order to further clarify our understanding of the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This chapter looks at four sites in the Upper Tigris region. The first two, Zeviya Tivilki and Kilokki Rabiseki, are situated in the region of the Ilisu Dam just to the north of the Cizre-Silopi Plain, which was discussed in Chapter 4 Section 4.2. The other two, Hirbemerdon Tepe and Boztepe, are located within the Upper Tigris-Batman survey area (discussed in Chapter 4 Section 4.3). Chapters 11 and 12 will then go on to consider a number of sites in Syro-Mesopotamia and in the southern Levant, respectively.

10.1 ZEVIYA TIVILKI

Zeviya Tivilki is located approximately 120 kilometres northeast of the modern city of Mardin, and around 12 kilometres to the east of the town of Dargecit. The site lies on an outcrop of rock that slopes down from the southwest to the northeast, about 2 kilometres from the western bank of the Tigris (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 31; Fig. 10.1). The built-up surface area at this site was estimated to be 2,565 square metres, or around 0.25 hectares (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 32). The surface area of the entire site is presented in the final site report as 1.5 hectares (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 18). The site is referred to in Standard Turkish as Kumru Tarlasi.

10.1.1 BACKGROUND

The site was investigated during a single season of excavations in 2009 by a team from the Turkish General Directorate of Monuments and Museums (*Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü*) under the direction of Tuba Ökse and Nihat Erdoğan (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 13). All the architectural remains at this site were thought to belong to a single archaeological stratum. This stratum was assigned to the Neo-Assyrian period on the basis of the ceramics found in it, which included standard Neo-Assyrian types like the bowl with a 'hammer-like' rim and the bottle with a globular body and a flat or ring base (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 135-136). This dating was supported by the discovery of two cylinder seals (one broken and one intact) 'carved in…Assyrian style' in the cemetery located to the east of the building complex (Ökse and Eroğlu 2013: 166, Ökse *et al.* 2014: 245-246). However, it should be noted that examples of Grooved Ware were also discovered at this site, sometimes within the same archaeological context as examples of Neo-Assyrian pottery, which suggests that this kind of pottery probably continued to be used in the Neo-Assyrian period (as discussed in Chapter 2 Section 2.3). The site was thought to have come to a sudden end at some time during this period, as the remains of three human skeletons were discovered lying in a 'disordered' fashion in the rubble surrounding three of the buildings (A, B and C) at this site (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 103).

10.1.2 FINDINGS

An architectural complex, made up of six buildings (labelled A to F), was discovered at this site (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 31; Fig. 10.2). The walls of these structures, which were about a metre thick, appear to have been built entirely of stone (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 48). A narrow canal and a large oven were also unearthed to the south of these buildings, and a group of burials was discovered to their east (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 32).

10.1.2.1 BUILDING A

This was the largest single structure excavated at this site. It consisted of 11 rooms built around an open space (Courtyard 8) bordered to the west by Building B and to the south by Building D (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 33; Fig. 10.3). Access into Building A was through Room 6, which lay to the north of this courtyard, and could be entered from

the outside through a doorway in its northern wall. This room contained a pit that had been carved into the bedrock, which served as its floor. A jar and a cup, both containing bitter vetch seeds, were also discovered in this room (Dönbez 2014: 263-265). A second door in the southern wall of Room 6 opened into Courtyard 8, which then gave access to the rest of the rooms in the building. A small pit was also discovered in this courtyard (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 33-34).

Access into Room 7 was through a door in the north-eastern corner of Courtyard 8. This was a single room that did not communicate with the rest of the building. It was found to contain a few flattened, oval stones measuring 70-80 centimetres in size. It was suggested by the excavators that these stones might have served as pedestals for wooden posts that held up the roof of this room (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 34). An adult skeleton was discovered in this room, lying with its face down and its legs crossed in the midst of the rubble covering the floor, which led the excavators to suggest that this individual is likely to have been killed at the time of the destruction of this building (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 104-105).

Another doorway in the eastern wall of Courtyard 8 gave access to the eastern wing of Building A. This doorway opened into Room 10, which appears to have served as a kind of anteroom to the rest of this wing. The walls of this wing were made of two parallel rows of large stone blocks, with a fill of smaller stones in the middle (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 35). The finds from Room 10 included a basalt grinding stone (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 246). Room 9 was accessed through a doorway in the northern wall of Room 10. This too was a single room that was not connected to the rest of the building. A number of flattened oval stones, similar in size to those found in Room 7, were discovered in this room.

Room 19 was accessed through a doorway in the eastern wall of Room 10. The finds from this room included another basalt grinding stone and an oval stone pendant (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 35-36). A door in the northern wall of Room 19 then provided access to Room 17 to its north (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 36). Set into the middle of the northern wall of Room 17 was a short flight of stairs that led to a doorway giving access to Room 16, which contained two smoothened limestone blocks that seem to have served as a raised platform. The finds from this room included an iron dagger. A narrow opening in the north-western corner of Room 16 then gave access to Room 15, which contained another pit that had been carved into the bedrock (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 36).

Room 14 to the north of Building A does not seem to have been connected to the other rooms in the building. It was entered through a door in its eastern wall, and

may have functioned as a separate unit (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 36). Rooms 18 and 20 in the south-eastern part of Building A also do not appear to have communicated with any of the other rooms (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 35).

10.1.2.2 BURIALS

A small cemetery was located just to the east of Rooms 18 and 20 in Building A. 21 burial jars containing cremated human remains were discovered in this area. These were all dated to the Neo-Assyrian period (Ökse and Eroğlu 2013: 163). The majority of these burials also contained grave goods, including iron weapons and tools (Ökse and Eroğlu 2013: 165, Ökse *et al.* 2014: 107). The two Assyrian-style cylinder seals discovered at this site were both found in this area, each associated with a separate burial (Ökse and Eroğlu 2013: 166, Ökse *et al.* 2014: 245-246).

10.1.2.3 BUILDING B

Building B was located to the west of Building A. Entry into this building was through a door in the northern wall of Room 1. Just outside this entrance was a square-shaped structure with low walls that was thought to have been used for storage purposes. Room 1 also contained a stone-covered bench built up against its northern wall (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 37; Fig. 10.4). A doorway in the southern wall of this room gave access to an inner room (2), which contained another stone bench and a small storage pit (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 38). A second skeleton was discovered just to the west of this building, lying among a heap of collapsed stones (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 104).

10.1.2.4 BUILDING C

This building was located just to the south of Building B. Access to this building was through a door in the north-western corner of Room 3. This room contained a rectangular structure made of low stone walls that was thought to have been used for storage purposes in its south-western corner (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 39; Fig. 10.5). Another door in its south-eastern corner gave access to Room 5. This room contained a clay oven and a storage pit. A badly damaged skeleton was also

discovered in this room (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 104). A doorway in the western wall of Room 5 opened into Room 4, which also contained an oven (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 40).

10.1.2.5 BUILDING D

Building D was located to the south of Building A and to the east of Building C. Access to this building was through Area 21, which was a large open space stretching to its east. The largest room in this building was Room 11, which was accessed from Area 21 through a doorway in its southern wall. This room was subdivided into four sections by low stone walls. The finds from this room included a broken mortar and an oval pendant (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 42; Fig. 10.6).

Room 13 in the south-eastern part of this building was also entered from Area 21. This room contained a stone-lined depression that was thought to have been used as a base for a wooden post supporting its roof. Finally, Room 12 to the west of Room 13 appears to have been a single room that was accessed separately from its southern side (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 43).

10.1.2.6 BUILDING E

This building was located to the south of Buildings C and D, from which it was separated by a narrow path. It consisted of four rooms (22-25), oriented in a southwest to northeast direction (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 43; Fig. 10.7). Access into the largest of these, Room 23, was through a door in its northern wall. This room contained a few stone benches and a stone-lined pit (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 44). A second doorway in the south-eastern corner of Room 23 gave access to Room 25 to its east, which contained another pit (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 45). Another small unit (Room 24), to which no obvious access was apparent, was located just to the north of Room 25.

Room 22 was located to the west of Room 23, but does not appear to have been connected to it. Access to this room, which may have functioned as a separate unit, may have been through an opening in its western wall, which was in a partially ruined state (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 44).

10.1.2.7 BUILDING F

This was a small structure lying to the southwest of the other buildings. Access to the larger of its two rooms (27) seems to have been from its east. This room contained two pits and a small storage bin built against its north-western corner. Room 26 to its north was smaller and appears to have been accessed by way of a narrow corridor running between it and Room 27 to its south (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 47; Fig. 10.8).

10.1.2.8 CANAL AND OVEN

A waterway that ran from the southwest to the northeast was discovered just to the south of the architectural complex described in the previous sections. This canal was around 2 metres wide, and 80 to 100 centimetres in depth. It was excavated along a length of around 11 metres (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 47; Fig. 10.9).

To the south of this canal were found the remains of a large circular oven measuring about 70 centimetres in width. This installation was lined with two rows of stones, and contained ash and burnt mud (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 48). It was interpreted by the excavators as a kind of communal oven that would have been used by the whole community (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 51).

10.1.3 DISCUSSION

Zeviya Tivilki is of particular interest because it is a single period site that has been extensively excavated. It was interpreted by its excavators as an Iron Age settlement housing a community of 8 'nuclear families' (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 285-287). In addition, it was also suggested, based on similarities in construction techniques between the buildings at this site and modern structures that are used as winter shelters by nearby semi-nomadic communities, that the site might only have functioned as 'seasonal accommodation' for people who used it on a temporary basis, but usually lived at a different site (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 69, 287-288).

This is an inference based on analogy, and should therefore be regarded as a little conjectural. While it is reasonable to suggest that the site might have been used by

a semi-nomadic group during the Iron Age, the evidence for this interpretation is not compelling, and there is no reason why it could not have functioned instead as a more permanent settlement.

The architectural layout of this settlement was not one comprised of buildings that were all the same size, but one in which a single large building dominated a number of smaller ones. Building A was distinguished from the other structures in this settlement, not only by its size but also by its internal layout, which was highly asymmetrical (*cf.* Hillier and Hanson 1984: 143-148). The eastern wing of this building, for example, was only accessible from the outside by first going through an outer chamber (Room 6) before entering Courtyard 8. From there, an outsider would have had to traverse a kind of anteroom (Room 10), before being able to enter the eastern wing proper in Room 19 (*cf.* Fig. 10.2). Entry into the deeper rooms of this wing would therefore only have been possible for someone who had already crossed through four or five other spaces.

It has been suggested by the excavators that the occupants of Building A probably belonged to a single 'large family' that was itself made up of 'three nuclear families' (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 50). However, the internal layout of this building suggests that there may have been some difference in status between the inhabitants of its eastern wing and those of Rooms 6 and 7. These rooms both opened directly into the inner courtyard of Building A, whereas the eastern wing contained living areas that were set away from this courtyard. Such an arrangement seems more likely to have served the needs of a 'large family' that was comprised of a single dominant family, along with a number of servants or slaves, rather than those of an extended family whose members were related by blood, and therefore presumably all of a similar social standing.

It has also been suggested that the similar nature of the burials discovered at this site indicate that the community that used this site was 'not stratified' and likely to have been 'egalitarian' in nature (Ökse and Eroğlu 2013: 175, Ökse *et al.* 2014: 287). However, this proposal too is worth questioning. While the burials discovered at this site did all consist of cremated bones that had been deposited in jars, there does also appear to have been some attempt at differentiation, with iron weapons being included in some jars and only tools or beads in others (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 110). The cylinder seals discovered with these burials have been dismissed as ornaments by the excavators because they were either broken or worn (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 287), but a close inspection of the sealings produced from them does show some distinctive imagery (Fig. 10.10). While such seals may not have been regarded as fit for purpose by a high ranking official, they could have been used by a minor functionary who

may have been responsible for the running of a small settlement, or for overseeing a small group of deportees.

In summary, Zeviya Tivilki appears to have been a small settlement dating to the Neo-Assyrian period, with a layout that consisted of a few small buildings along with a single larger structure, which was interpreted by the excavators as the home of an extended family unit. The layout of this structure, however, suggests that it could also have been used by a single dominant family (or perhaps an individual) along with their (or his) slaves or servants. While the nature of this settlement is quite different from that of the Level VIIIa settlement at Tille Höyük with its lack of demarcation between individual domestic buildings, or indeed from that of the Middle Assyrian *dunnu* at Tell Sabi Abyad with its 'aggregation of contiguous rooms', it is not difficult to see how it too could have functioned in a similarly hierarchical manner, with its differentiation between the individuals who lived in Building A and those who inhabited the smaller, humbler dwellings around it.

10.2 KILOKKI RABISEKI

Kilokki Rabiseki is located on a sandy ridge, about 2 kilometres to the east of Zeviya Tivilki and just next to the Tigris River (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 60; Fig. 10.1). The total surface area of this site was estimated at around 2 hectares (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 18), which would make it slightly larger than Zeviya Tivilki. The site is referred to as Kilokki Tarlasi in Standard Turkish.

10.2.1 BACKGROUND

This site was investigated during a single season in 2011 by the same team that excavated Zeviya Tivilki (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 19). Excavations were carried out on both the southern slope of the ridge as well as its summit (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 60; Fig. 10.11). The pottery discovered at this site consisted mostly of Neo-Assyrian types, although some parallels with the pottery from Neo-Babylonian contexts at Tell Sheikh Hamad have been observed, which led to the site being dated to the 7th-6th centuries BCE (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 143). It must be noted that a few examples of Grooved Ware have also been discovered at this site (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 139).

10.2.2 FINDINGS

Five trenches (labelled A1 to A5) were excavated on the southern slope of this site (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 60; Fig. 10.11). The architectural remains discovered in this area consisted of a series of stone walls built out of large stone blocks, with a fill of smaller stones (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 62; Fig. 10.12). These walls were mostly oriented in a north-south direction, except for the one in Trench A5, which was oriented instead in an east-west direction. Trench A4 also contained seven pits that had been dug into the bedrock.

A few isolated trenches were also opened at the top of the ridge. Architectural remains dating to the Iron Age were only discovered in two of these (A6 and A8). In Trench A6, a wall oriented in an east-west direction was unearthed. The finds from this trench included a loom weight and a stone mortar (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 66; Fig. 10.13).

Trench A8 was a smaller trench, situated to the northeast of Trench A6, in which another wall running in a north-south direction was unearthed. Next to this wall were found the remains of a large furnace measuring 2.5 by 3 metres. This installation was interpreted by the excavators as a pottery kiln (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 19), although it is possible that it was just a large oven that was used communally, like the circular oven at Zeviya Tivilki discussed in Section 10.1.2.8.

10.2.3 DISCUSSION

The evidence from Kilokki Rabiseki suggests that this site too is likely to have been a settlement that was first established during the Neo-Assyrian period. The walls discovered at this site were built using the same construction technique that was employed for the eastern wing of Building A at Zeviya Tivilki, which led the excavators to suggest that Kilokki Rabiseki too was probably only used on a temporary basis by people who lived at a different site (Ökse *et al.* 2014: 288). However, as discussed in Section 10.1.3.3 above, this is not a particularly compelling argument, and an alternative possibility is that the architectural remains discovered at this site are simply those of domestic structures that were part of a more permanent settlement.

10.3 BOZTEPE

Boztepe was located within the Upper Tigris-Batman survey region, approximately 8 kilometres to the east of the modern town of Bismil. The site itself was a small mound that was so low as to be almost indistinguishable from the rolling terrain that surrounded it (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 21). The surface area of this mound was estimated to be approximately 3 hectares, with the Iron Age occupation covering about half of this (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 61).

10.3.1 BACKGROUND

The site was investigated in the summer of 1999 by a team consisting of members of the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project. Two excavation areas (labelled A and B) were opened on the mound, along with two other soundings (C and D) to the north and south of the site (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 22; Fig. 10.14). The evidence from this site shows that it was first occupied during the Halaf period, then abandoned and reoccupied during the Iron Age, after which it was abandoned again briefly before being occupied for a third time during the Hellenistic period.

A radial transect survey of the site was also conducted during this season. This was carried out by laying out six transect lines (four radiating out from the centre of the mound and two others in the fields to the south of the mound), and then excavating circular lots with a 1 metre radius to a depth of 15 centimetres, at 10 metre intervals along each transect. The pottery from each of these lots was then collected, counted and weighed (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 59; Fig. 10.14). This data was then collated to estimate the extent of occupation at the site.

10.3.2 FINDINGS

The most significant findings at this site were from Area A, which was situated at the centre of the mound. Seven excavation trenches were opened in this area, labelled A-1 to A-7. Trench A-1 on the western edge of the highest part of the mound was

initiated as a 5 by 5 metre square and expanded when it was found to contain a number of burials (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 22). These burials were all assigned to the Halaf period, and are therefore not discussed in further detail here.

The remaining trenches in Area A were clustered together approximately 15 metres northeast of Trench A-1 (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 22; Fig. 10.14). These trenches were oriented in a northwest to southeast direction. Most of these were 5 by 5 metre squares, except for Trenches A-4 and A-6, which were smaller trenches measuring only 2 by 5 metres that adjoined Trench A-2 to its west and to its north (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 32-44; Fig. 10.15).

The Iron Age findings in this area consisted of the remains of a domestic structure. This building was thought to have consisted of two rooms (Room 1 in Trench A-2 and Room 2 in Trench A-3), both of which had plastered floors, and an adjoining courtyard with a cobbled surface to their east in Trench A-5 (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 48). There may also have been a third room in Trench A-4 to their west, although it is difficult to be certain about this because the Iron Age remains in this area had been disturbed by a later Hellenistic burial (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 41). The sizes of these rooms could not be accurately estimated because they were not completely exposed. The walls of this structure were of mud-brick, without stone foundations of any kind.

This building seems to have come to a violent end, as it was covered by a destruction layer that consisted of ash mixed with mud-brick debris (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 40). Radiocarbon samples taken from this layer (in Trenches A-2 and A-3) yielded an overlap of calibrated carbon ages between 880 to 820 BCE, which indicates that this structure should be assigned to the 9th century BCE (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 33). The pottery discovered in association with this structure consisted of standard Neo-Assyrian types, including hammerhead bowls and indented rim bowls (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 32; *cf.* Figs. 4.3a, 4.3b), which provides further support for these dates. Of particular interest was the discovery of fragments of two four-footed vessels, which were described by the excavators as 'enigmatic', in Room 1 in Trench A-2. These vessels appear to have each been made of nine shallow bowls whose rims were interconnected (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 33; Fig. 10.16).

Room 2 in Trench A-3 was found to contain several artefacts associated with food processing. These consisted of a pestle, two mortars and several smashed cooking pots. Two ovens (L3011 and L3022) were also discovered near the eastern baulk of Trench A-3 (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 41). This room was therefore thought by

the excavators to have served as a kitchen for the whole building (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 47).

Area B was located on the south-eastern part of the mound. Four trenches, measuring 5 by 5 metres each, were excavated in this area, with Trenches B-1 and B-4 lying to the north and Trenches B-2 and B-3 located in the south (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 49). The ceramics from this area indicate that it too was occupied during the Halaf period, and later during the Iron Age and the Hellenistic period. However, no architectural remains were discovered in this area. Most of the artefacts discovered in this area, including grinding stones and fragments of storage jars and cooking pots, dated to the Hellenistic period, during which it seems to have been used as an outdoor food processing area. It was suggested by the excavators that the area may also have been used for a similar purpose in the Iron Age (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 53).

A relatively small amount of faunal remains were collected from Iron Age contexts during these excavations. Of the 120 fragments studied, pigs were the most commonly represented species, which suggests that the inhabitants of this settlement probably pursued a sedentary lifestyle based on farming in this period (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 58-59).

10.3.3 DISCUSSION

The investigations at Boztepe indicate that this site was first occupied during the Halaf period, followed by a period of abandonment, and then re-occupied in the Iron Age and in the Hellenistic period. Excavations in Area A at the centre of the mound unearthed the remains of a domestic building, which was dated to the 9th century BCE. This was the time that the Upper Tigris Valley, which is thought to have been part of the Aramean state of Bit Zamani, was incorporated into the Assyrian Empire (Parker 2001: 168-169, 2003: 535). The poorly constructed nature of this structure (made of mud-brick walls, but without any stone foundations) has led to the suggestion that the people who lived in it were probably not particularly prosperous (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 67), although this absence of stone building materials may simply have been due either to the building having been constructed rapidly, or perhaps to the use of a different building tradition.

Parker and Creekmore have proposed that the establishment of a new settlement at this site at this time is probably the result of the policy of 'agricultural colonisation' suggested to have been pursued by the Neo-Assyrian Empire (Parker and Creekmore 2002: 67, *cf.* Chapter 4 Section 4.5.2 above). According to this interpretation, the inhabitants of this settlement would have been deportees who had been resettled in this region. However, the identification of these people as deportees must be regarded as somewhat speculative. While the findings from Areas A and B do suggest that the establishment of this settlement was probably related to the annexation of the Upper Tigris region by Ashurnasirpal II, no artefacts to suggest that its inhabitants were not of Assyrian origin have been discovered in these strata.

10.4 HIRBEMERDON TEPE

Hirbemerdon Tepe is located approximately 100 kilometres to the southeast of the modern city of Diyarbakir, and about 40 kilometres to the east of the town of Bismil (Laneri *et al.* 2008: 178). The site is strategically located at the confluence of the Tigris and Batman rivers, and consists of an acropolis (labelled as the 'High Mound' by its excavators) and a lower town on its eastern slope. The acropolis rises on a limestone bluff and covers a surface area of around one hectare, while the lower town covers a further 2 hectares (Laneri *et al.* 2016: 11, Laneri *et al.* 2008: 178, Fig. 10.17). It was previously thought that the lower town extended to the western slope of the mound, but a sounding there did not show any architectural remains and the estimated extent of occupation at the site has therefore been revised downwards (Laneri *et al.* 2016: 13).

10.4.1 BACKGROUND

The site was the subject of investigation by a collaborative project established by the University of Catania, the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO) and the Archaeological Museum of Diyarbakir from 2003 to 2013 (Laneri 2016: 9). Excavations were carried out in six separate areas (labelled Areas A to F), as well as in a long step trench (AB-AC) that extended south from Area A towards Area D (Laneri *et al.* 2016: 13; Fig. 10.17). Seven occupational phases were identified, from

the Late Chalcolithic to the Ottoman periods. Of these, Phase IVA represented the Early Iron Age, while Phase IVB represented the Neo-Assyrian period (Laneri *et al*. 2016: 14-15). Phase V, which was labelled as a 'Late Iron Age' stratum, only consisted of a few pits and poorly preserved walls and was dated to the Achaemenid period on the basis of its pottery (Brancato 2016: 103).

10.4.2 FINDINGS

Architectural remains dating to Phase IVA were discovered in two areas on the High Mound (A and D), and in Step Trench AB-AC (Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 22-23). Phase IVB remains were found in Area B, which was located in the lower town to the northeast of the acropolis (Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 24; Fig. 10.17).

10.4.2.1 AREA A AND STEP TRENCH AC

Area A was the largest excavation area at this site, and covered a surface area of around 1200 square metres (Laneri *et al*. 2016: 13). It was here that the most impressive discovery from Hirbemerdon Tepe, an architectural complex dating to the Middle Bronze Age (Phase IIIB), was unearthed (Laneri *et al*. 2008: 181-187). The Phase IVA remains in this area were relatively unimpressive, and only consisted of three wall segments built of medium-sized stones that intersected to form a T-shaped structure (Guarducci 2016: 95, Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 23; Fig. 10.18). This was thought to have been part of a domestic building by the excavators, who proposed that it may have belonged to a structure that was built partly of perishable materials, in the manner of some contemporary structures used by semi-nomadic groups in south-eastern Turkey (Guarducci 2011: 95-99; Fig. 10.19). The remains from this area were dated to the Early Iron Age because of the many examples of Grooved Ware that were discovered in association with them. However, it must be noted that 'noticeable' amounts of Neo-Assyrian pottery were also discovered in this area (Guarducci 2016: 95, Guarducci 2011: 30).

Step Trench AB-AC cuts across Area A and extends south from it towards Area D (Fig. 10.12). The Phase IV remains here consisted of two walls, also built of medium-sized stones, that met to form a corner. There was also a small arched enclosure made of stones on the inner side of this corner that was thought by the excavators to have served as a borehole, which would have been used to extract groundwater

(Guarducci 2016: 96; Fig.10.18). These structures were also assigned to the Early Iron Age on the basis of their associated ceramic finds (Guarducci 2016: 96, Guarducci 2011: 31).

10.4.2.2 AREA D

This was a smaller excavation area lying on the southern slope of the High Mound that covered a surface area of only 400 square metres (Laneri *et al.* 2016: 14). The Phase IV remains in this area consisted of a large, open-ended room that was aligned along an east-west axis. Two clay ovens were discovered in this room next to its western wall, along with two mortars, a grinding stone and several pestles. The room has consequently been interpreted as a food preparation area by the excavators, and labelled as a 'bakery' (Guarducci 2016: 96, Guarducci 2011: 31-32; Fig. 10.20). The pottery from this room included many examples of Grooved Ware, and this structure too has been assigned to the Early Iron Age, although it must be noted that fragments of a Neo-Assyrian style storage jar were also discovered in it (Guarducci 2016: 96). A small number of archaeobotanical samples were also collected from this area, and analysis of four of these has demonstrated the presence of barley, wheat and grape seeds (Guarducci 2016: 97).

10.4.2.3 AREA B

This area consisted of a 10 by 10 metre sounding located to the northeast of the acropolis, in the lower town (Fig. 10.17). The Phase IVB remains here consisted of two walls (one of which included a large stone that appears to have been used as a threshold) that form a corner and enclose a floor surface (Guarducci 2016: 95; Fig. 10.21). This structure was interpreted as a food preparation area on the basis of its finds, which included a pair of cleft grinding stones and a basalt bowl. The pottery discovered in this area consisted of sherds of common Neo-Assyrian types, and the remains in this area were consequently assigned to this period (Guarducci 2011: 32, Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 24).

10.4.3 DISCUSSION

In summary, the Phase IV remains at Hirbemerdon Tepe consisted of parts of three structures on the acropolis, and a fourth in the lower town. The three structures on the acropolis were all assigned to the Early Iron Age. Of these, the two structures in Area A and Step Trench AB-AC, both of which were built of medium-sized stones, were interpreted as part of a 'residential' area, while the building in Area D was interpreted as a 'bakery' (Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 34). The fourth structure in Area B in the lower town, on the other hand, was dated to the Neo-Assyrian period.

The excavators of Hirbemerdon Tepe have suggested that it was probably a farmstead of some kind, that may have corresponded to the small settlements that are referred to by the term *kapru* in the texts of the Harran Census (Laneri 2016: 128, Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 22; *cf.* Fales 1990: 99-105). In addition, they also suggested that the acropolis, where the three Early Iron structures were discovered, might have been abandoned during the Neo-Assyrian period and 'transformed into temporary encampments' by nomadic groups, while the main settlement was moved to the lower town, which lies closer to the Tigris (Guarducci and Laneri 2010: 34).

However, as discussed in Sections 10.1.1 and 10.2.1 above, examples of Grooved Ware have been found in the same archaeological contexts as Neo-Assyrian pottery at Zeviya Tivilki and Kilokki Rabiseki. This suggests that Grooved Ware would have continued in use into the Neo-Assyrian period. It is therefore possible that the three structures on the acropolis might not have been abandoned after this region was incorporated into the Assyrian Empire, but continued to be occupied. The Phase IV remains from Hirbemerdon Tepe are therefore those of a settlement that appears to have first been established in the Early Iron Age, when the Upper Tigris Valley was under the control of the Aramean state of Bit Zamani, and which seems to have continued to be occupied after the region had been taken over by the Assyrians.

10.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has looked at the evidence from four smaller sites in the Upper Tigris region. All of these sites yielded Neo-Assyrian pottery types, and would therefore seem to have been occupied during the Neo-Assyrian period. Three of these (Zeviya

Tivilki, Kilokki Rabiseki and Hirbemerdon Tepe) also contained examples of Grooved Ware that has traditionally been associated with Early Iron occupation. However, as discussed in Section 10.1.1 above, the presence of Grooved Ware in the same archaeological context as standard Neo-Assyrian types at Zeviya Tivilki and Kilokki Rabiseki suggests that this dating may be too narrow, and that this kind of pottery actually continued to be used during the Neo-Assyrian period.

The only site that was exposed over an extensive area was Zeviya Tivilki, which had a layout consisting of a number of smaller domestic structures clustered around a single larger building. This larger building was interpreted by the excavators as the dwelling place of an extended family unit that was made up in turn of three nuclear families. However, it has been proposed in this chapter that it could instead have been the home of a single dominant individual (or family), along with his (or their) servants or slaves. In this case, the settlement at Zeviya Tivilki might be regarded as a smaller and more rustic version of the Level VIIIa settlement at Tille Höyük (*cf.* Section 10.3.3).

The suggestion that the Phase IV settlement at Hirbemerdon Tepe may be correlated with the settlements referred to by the term *kapru* in the Assyrian texts might also be extended to the three other sites discussed in this chapter, which are all around the size that these settlements would be expected to be. In addition, the *kapru* is often associated in the textual sources with a specific named individual (Fales 1990: 102-104, Fales 2014: 236), which makes it possible to speculate that a settlement like Zeviya Tivilki, with its highly asymmetrical layout, could also have been related in some way to a single dominant person, who may either have owned the settlement or been in the service of someone who did.

The next chapter will consider the evidence from four sites in Syro-Mesopotamia, before Chapter 12 goes on to look at two more sites in the southern Levant. Chapter 13 will then draw together all the evidence that has been discussed in this thesis, and discuss what conclusions might be drawn from it.

*   *   *   *

CHAPTER 11

SMALLER SITES IN SYRO-MESOPOTAMIA

This chapter follows on from the last by looking at four sites in Syro-Mesopotamia. The first two, Bir el-Haddad and Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, are both located in the Middle Euphrates region, which came under Aramean control during the Early Iron period and was reconquered by the Assyrians in the 9th century BCE. The third, Khirbet al-Qasr, lies within the North Jazira Survey area, and would therefore have been situated to the west of the region known to the Assyrians as Katmuhu. The fourth, Tell Boueid, is located just to the south of the confluence of the Khabur River with its main tributary, the Jaghjagh.

11.1 BIR EL-HADDAD

Bir el-Haddad is located in the steppe-lands of the Syrian Jazira, approximately 15 kilometres east of the Khabur River. It lies about 70 kilometres to the northeast of Tell Masaikh, which has been identified as the site of the Assyrian settlement of Kar-Assurnasirpal, and approximately halfway between that site and Tell Sheikh Hamad, which is thought to represent the remains of ancient Dur-Katlimmu (Masetti-Rouault and Rouault 2012: 466, Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 243; Fig. 11.1). The site would therefore have been situated in the region that is referred to in Assyrian texts as the 'land of Laqê' (Masetti-Rouault 2016: 199-202). This is an area that does not receive sufficient rainfall to make dryland farming practicable (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 245).

11.1.1 BACKGROUND

Bir el-Haddad was first investigated in 2008 by a preliminary surface survey carried out by the same team that was excavating Tell Masaikh at the time. The results of this survey showed that the site had been occupied during the Iron II period, as well as in the Late Roman, Parthian and Early Islamic periods (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 244). This was followed in 2010 by a geomagnetic survey, and a few limited soundings. These projects were funded by the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and supported by the French Ministry for European and Foreign Affairs (Masetti-Rouault and Rouault, in press). Although it had been intended to conduct further investigations at this site in 2011 and in future years, work could not be carried out because of the onset of civil disorder in Syria. The site has since been 'severely damaged', and is now 'beyond recognition' (Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault, pers. com. 13th February 2018).

11.1.2 FINDINGS

Bir el-Haddad appears to have been a relatively large site, and covered a surface area of up to 15 hectares. It was marked by the presence of a well, which is still used in the present day by hunters, shepherds and other pastoralists (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 244). Two large mudbrick buildings, located on a ridge about 70 metres to the east of the well, were detected in the initial surface survey. These buildings were labelled by the investigators as 'Grand Bâtiment 1' and 'Grand Bâtiment 2' (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 248-249; Fig. 11.2). They seem to have been connected by a large mudbrick wall, which ran for a length of about 100 metres.

Stretching to the east of this line were a group of smaller structures, which were interpreted as 'houses'. Most of these were made up of one to three rooms organised around a central open space, which occasionally contained either a well or a cistern (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 250). A modern road (labelled *Route Moderne* in Fig. 11.2) runs through this group of structures. Another small structure (labelled *Chapelle* in Fig. 11.2), which was thought by the investigators to have been a temple, was identified near the main well.

Of the two larger structures, only Grand Bâtiment 1 has been published in detail. This structure was determined to have measured about 36 metres by 40 metres. It

seems to have been made up of a series of rooms organised around a large central courtyard, with a single long room lying along its northern side, and a double layer of rooms along the other three (Fig. 11.3). There seem to have been two entrances to this structure, one on the western side facing the well, and the other on the eastern side facing towards the group of domestic structures to its east (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 249-250). Two soundings were made in this building, one measuring 2 by 2 metres and the other measuring 3 by 2 metres, which indicated that there were two phases of construction. A fragment of a cuneiform tablet was discovered in the initial building phase of the first sounding. This was a document containing a list of names, which allowed this structure to be assigned to the Neo-Assyrian period. The second building phase was covered by ashes, which was interpreted as possible evidence of a final destruction (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 250, Masetti-Rouault and Rouault, in press).

Grand Bâtiment 2 was determined to have measured about 30 by 30 metres. Much of this structure had already been destroyed by illegal excavations at the time of the initial survey. A single sounding measuring 4 by 4 metres was made here, which showed two building phases, as was also the case with Grand Bâtiment 1 (Masetti-Rouault and Rouault, in press). A docket with an Aramean inscription and a sealing with classic Assyrian iconography were discovered in the earlier of these two phases (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 250; Fig. 11.4).

Two further soundings were made in relation to one of the smaller structures located to the east of Grands Bâtiments 1 and 2 (known as Maison 2). The first sounding, measuring 2 metres by 2 metres, was made in one of the rooms of this structure. The second, measuring only 1 metre by 2 metres, was made just outside it. Only a small number of sherds were discovered in these soundings (Masetti-Rouault and Rouault, in press). This pottery is still awaiting a more thorough analysis at present, and until this is done, it is not possible to determine if this building was contemporary with the two Grands Bâtiments (Olivier Rouault, pers. com. 20th February 2018).

11.1.3 DISCUSSION

It has been suggested that the Grands Bâtiments at Bir el-Haddad were probably established as part of a 'station post' along the road connecting Tell Masaikh to the area around Tell Sheikh Hamad in the Lower Khabur Valley around the beginning of the 8th century BCE (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 252-253, Masetti-Rouault 2016: 207). This was also around the time that the citadel at Tell Masaikh was rebuilt

according to an ambitious planning project, presumably under the direction of the powerful provincial governor named Nergal-eriš, who was in control of this region during the reign of Adad-Nirari III (Masetti-Rouault 2016: 207). According to this interpretation, these Grands Bâtiments would have functioned like caravanserais, which served primarily to protect those people who were travelling between the two settlements mentioned above, and any goods they may have been carrying (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 253).

An alternative suggestion, based on the perceived similarities between the layout of the Middle Assyrian *dunnu* from Tell Sabi Abyad (discussed in Chapter 9 Section 9.4.2) and that of Grand Bâtiment 1, was that this latter building might also have functioned in a similar manner (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault 2014: 250). However, a close examination of these two sites shows that the layout of Grand Bâtiment 1 can only be compared to that of the 'Residence' in the Tell Sabi Abyad *dunnu*, which is thought to have served as the living quarters of the person who owned the *dunnu*, and not to that of the *dunnu* as a whole (*cf.* Figs. 9.27 and 11.3). Grand Bâtiment 1 should therefore only be proposed to have served as a residence for a high-ranking individual, although it could have been part of an establishment that functioned like a *dunnu*, with the people who worked for its owner living in the smaller structures surrounding it. If this were in fact the case, these people are more likely to have been involved in pastoral activities (like those carried out in this area today) rather than the kind of agricultural work performed by the inhabitants of the *dunnu* from Tell Sabi Abyad. The cuneiform tablet found in this building may have been a list of the people who lived at this site, perhaps as part of a ration list.

It is unfortunate that this site could not have been more thoroughly investigated, as originally intended. More extensive excavations of these buildings, including the evaluation of both floral and faunal evidence, might have provided a more elaborate picture of the exact nature of this settlement in the Iron Age.

11.2 KHIRBET ED-DINIYEH (HARADU)

Khirbet ed-Diniyeh is also situated in the Middle Euphrates region but further downstream, in the Haditha region in Iraq, approximately 60 kilometres to the east of the Syrian-Iraqi border (Kepinski 2012: 11; Fig. 11.1). This region is thought to have been part of the 'land of Suhu' that is mentioned in the Assyrian sources, and

which was under the control of the Assyrians during the 12th and 11th centuries BCE. The region was then overrun by Aramean tribes during the Early Iron period, and reconquered by Ashurnasirpal II in the 9th century (Tenu 2006: 228-231, Clancier 2006: 249-254). The site itself lies only around 200 metres from the Euphrates, and covers a surface area of about 1.5 to 2 hectares (Kepinski 2012: 13, 265; Fig. 11.5). It was first occupied in the 18th century BCE and is referred to in cuneiform tablets discovered there by the name *Harradum* (Tenu 2006: 222). The site is thought to be identical with the ancient city of Haradu, which is described as the site of an important military engagement in the annals of Ashurnasirpal II (Clancier 2006: 253, Grayson 1991 A.0.101.1 iii 34).

11.2.1 BACKGROUND

Khirbet ed-Diniyeh was investigated over six seasons between 1981 and 1988 by an expedition from the Délégation Archéologique Francaise en Iraq under the direction of Christine Kepinski and Olivier Lecomte (Kepinski 2012: 9). Excavations were conducted in ten areas (Chantiers A to J), although in-depth clearance only appears to have been carried out in the eastern corner (Chantiers A, B and J) and, to a limited extent, the southern corner (Chantier I). Only superficial clearance was achieved in the remaining excavation areas (Kepinski 2012: 15-17; Fig. 11.6).

These excavations unearthed the remains of a quadrangular fortress with its corners oriented to the four cardinal points of the compass. The site was first occupied during the Middle Bronze Age. It was initially under the control of the kingdom of Ešnunna, and later on, of Babylon. The site was abandoned towards the end of the 17th century BCE, and reoccupied in the 12th century by the Assyrians. This second occupation led to three phases of construction (2D, 2C and 2B), followed by a final phase (2A) during which the site seems to have been used as a burial ground (Kepinski 2006: 331-332, Kepinski 2012: 18-21). No buildings were discovered in the interior of this fortress, except for a well in its eastern corner (Kepinski 2009: 150).

11.2.2 FINDINGS

The first phase of construction of the Assyrian fortress (2D) was assigned to the 12th and 11th centuries BCE. The architectural remains from this phase consisted of a casemate wall with a thickness of 15 to 16 metres, surrounded by a buttressing wall

(Kepinski 2012: 28, Kepinski 2009: 151; Figs. 11.7, 11.9 and 11.12). The inner wall of this casemate appears to have been anchored in the ruins of the defensive wall of the Middle Bronze settlement (Kepinski 2012: 28). Several poorly preserved walls were discovered in Chantier B, with their foundations supported by the casemate walls (Fig. 11.10). These were interpreted by the excavators as the remains of a domestic building that had been built on top of the casemate structure, and assigned to the same building phase as the casemate wall on the basis of the pottery found in association with them (Kepinski 2012: 40).

The second building phase (2C) was assigned to the 11th and 10th centuries BCE, which would have been when this region had fallen under Aramean control. A series of irregularly shaped casemates were constructed along the north-eastern side of the eastern corner of the fortress during this phase (Kepinski 2012: 33-34; Fig. 11.8). However, this new structure does not seem to have extended along the full length of the north-eastern wall, as the excavations in Chantier C near the northern corner of the fortress did not unearth any casemates that belonged to this second phase (Kepinski 2012: 49-50; Fig. 11.11).

Two of these irregular casemates (A31 and A32) were found to contain, respectively, a tomb and a vaulted staircase leading into it (Kepinski 2012: 63; Fig. 11.13). The tomb (labelled by its excavators as the 'Warrior's Tomb') contained the cremated remains of an individual and a rich assortment of grave goods (Kepinski 2012: 66, 2009: 151). Of particular interest was the discovery of a bronze *rhyton* with a base shaped like a ram's head, which was dated to the 10th-9th centuries BCE on stylistic grounds (Huot 2006: 321-22; Fig. 11.14). Other interesting finds from this tomb included a bronze goblet, a bronze strainer and a clutch of 28 iron arrowheads (Kepinski 2012: 188-192). It was proposed by the excavators that this may have been the tomb of an Aramean chieftain, who had gained control over this fortress (Kepinski 2012: 66).

The third and final building phase (2B) was assigned to the 9th century BCE, which would have been the period after this region had been reconquered by the Assyrians. This building phase consisted of the remains of a further buttressing wall, which circumscribed the entire structure (Kepinski 2012: 18). The ruins of a second small structure built on top of the Phase 2D casemate walls were also encountered in Chantier A (Fig. 11.7). This structure was dated to the same period as the buttressing wall of Phase 2B on the basis of its associated ceramic finds (Kepinski 2012: 25-26).

Finally, Phase 2A was assigned to the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. No architectural remains were included among the findings for this phase, which consisted mostly of

burials, as well as a large pit (F5) that contained 33 complete vessels and had been dug into one of the casemates of the Phase 2D structure in Chantier A (Kepinski 2012: 22-24; Fig. 11.7).

11.2.3 DISCUSSION

The Assyrian fortress at Khirbet ed-Diniyeh appears to have first been established towards the end of the Late Bronze Age, at least as early as the reign of Ashur-dan I. A further building phase led to the construction of a series of irregular casemates along the eastern corner of this fortress. This second building phase was thought by the excavators to have been the work of the Arameans, who are known to have gained control of this region in the 11th century BCE (Kepinski 2012: 266). Finally, a buttressing wall was built around the fortress in the 9th century BCE, which would have been after this region had been reconquered by the Assyrians during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II.

The evidence from this site indicates that it was primarily a military installation that would have served to protect this region against external threats, and to control the trade routes to the south and possibly also navigation along the Euphrates (Kepinski 2006: 331, Kepinski 2012: 265-266). The absence of buildings in the area enclosed by the fortification walls has led to the suggestion that the fortress might have been garrisoned under normal circumstances only by a 'skeleton force' that lived in the small buildings on the casemate wall, with the enclosure being used to house a larger army if the need should arise (Kepinski 2009: 150). However, it is difficult to see the strategic point of such an arrangement, as a small garrison would have been unable to hold this fortress if assaulted in force. This would only have served to present a hostile force with a defensive stronghold against a future counterattack. An alternate possibility is that the fortress was in fact manned by a proper garrison, which could have been housed within the enclosure in structures built of perishable materials, while the small structures on the casemate walls could have been used either to house their lookouts, or perhaps even as the living quarters of the commander of the garrison.

Whatever the exact nature of its manpower arrangements, the reasons behind the construction of this fortress appear to have been political and military, rather than economic. It is therefore worth bearing in mind, especially when interpreting survey data that shows that there was an increase in the number of occupied sites in a region after it had been conquered by a foreign power, that some newly established

sites could have functioned in a manner similar to the fortress discovered at Khirbet ed-Diniyeh.

11.3 KHIRBET AL-QASR

Khirbet al-Qasr is situated in the Jazira region in north-western Iraq, to the west of Tell al-Hawa and north of the Sinjar Hills. It lies next to a small canal, approximately 3 kilometres northeast of the modern village of 'Algana (Altaweel 2006: 164; Fig. 11.15; this village is referred to as 'al-Gana' in the text and diagrams in Wilkinson and Tucker 1995).

11.3.1 BACKGROUND

The site consists of a small tell with a height of only 2 metres and a surface area of less than one hectare (Fig. 11.16). It lies within the North Jazira Survey region (discussed in Chapter 6), and probably close to Site 141 of this survey, although it appears not to have been identified by the surveyors (Altaweel 2006: 165, also *cf*. Wilkinson and Tucker 1995, fig. 2). The site was investigated in the summer of 1992 as part of the Jazirah Salvage Project, which consisted of a series of salvage excavations carried out by Iraqi archaeologists from 1987 to 1994 (Altaweel 2006: 165, Altaweel 2007: 117).

11.3.2 FINDINGS

Four squares (labelled 1 to 4), each measuring 5 by 5 metres, were excavated at this site with only one level of occupation demonstrated in them. Squares 1 and 2 were located next to each other and yielded the remains of a mud-brick wall that was around one metre in thickness. The other two squares (3 and 4) lay to the east of Squares 1 and 2, but no architectural remains were discovered in them (Altaweel 2006: 165). The site was assigned by the excavators to the Neo-Assyrian period on the basis of its ceramic finds. Analysis of these finds showed parallels with Neo-Assyrian pottery types from Nimrud, Assur and Tell al-Hawa, but also suggested

some parallels with post-Assyrian types from the Eski-Mosul region (Altaweel 2006: 165-166).

11.3.3 DISCUSSION

The evidence from this site indicates that it must have been newly established during the Neo-Assyrian period, perhaps as part of a 'programme of resettlement' as suggested by Wilkinson and Tucker (*cf.* Chapter 6 Section 6.4). The parallels that have been observed with post-Assyrian pottery types are not unique to this site, but have also been noted in several other Neo-Assyrian sites in this region, including Tell al-Shied Hajim, Tell 'Algana (which is distinct from the village of 'Algana), Tell Samir 5 and Tell Khan Jedal (Altaweel 2006: 167, 171, 179-180, Altaweel 2007: 131-132). This suggests that there must have been continuity of settlement from the Neo-Assyrian to the post-Assyrian periods in this area, with many sites continuing to be occupied after the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

11.4 TELL BOUEID

Tell Boueid lies on the western bank of the Khabur, approximately 18 kilometres to the south of the modern town of Hassakeh, which is where the Jaghjagh runs into the Khabur (Maqdissi 1995: 164; Figs. 11.17 and 11.18). The site would therefore have been situated to the north of the 'land of Laqê' (discussed in Section 11.1 above) and to the west of the Sinjar Hills, probably within the territory controlled by the Aramean state of Bit-Bahiani during the Early Iron period.

11.4.1 BACKGROUND

The site was investigated during a single season of excavations in 1992 by an expedition from the Directorate-General for Antiquities and Museums of Syria, under the direction of Antoine Suleiman. These excavations were part of an international salvage operation (Maqdissi 1995: 164). The mound itself has been described as 'somewhat oval' in shape. It measured about 80 by 60 metres, and occupied a

surface area of about 4800 square metres, or approximately 0.5 hectares (Maqdissi 1995: 164; Fig. 11.19). The site should not be confused with the nearby site of Tell Boueid II, which was occupied during the Neolithic period, but not in the Iron Age.

11.4.2 FINDINGS

Tell Boueid was distinguished by the presence of a large building on its summit. This structure was dated to around 750 to 650 BCE and consisted of a series of rooms of varying dimensions that were organised around a central space (Room 4), which contained two clay ovens (*tannur*) and might therefore have been an open courtyard. Several ceramic bowls were also discovered in this central space (Maqdissi 1995: 164; Fig. 11.20).

Room 5 was a relatively narrow room directly to the east of Room 4, which was connected to it by a doorway (Fig. 11.20). The finds from this room included an altar made of calcareous stone and an anthropomorphic terracotta vase (Maqdissi 1995: 165). It is possible that this room could have served some sort of cultic purpose, perhaps functioning as a communal worshipping area, like a family prayer room (*cf.* Coogan 1987: 2-3).

The rest of the rooms appear to have been arranged in distinct groups around Rooms 4 and 5. To the north of Room 4 was a group of three rooms (1, 2 and 3). Room 3, which had a plastered floor, lay to the north of Room 4, with which it was connected by a doorway in its southern wall. The finds in this room included several fragments of a grinding stone. A second doorway in the northern wall of Room 3 connected it to Room 1, which also had a plastered floor. A zoomorphic terracotta figure was discovered in this room. Finally, a doorway in the western wall of Room 1 connected it to Room 2, which was located in the north-western corner of the building. Room 2 contained the remains of 5 large storage jars. Some of these jars had been incised with potter's marks, and their insides contained traces of a blackened organic substance (Maqdissi 1995: 164; Fig. 11.20).

To the west of Room 4 lay a second group of interconnected rooms (9, 10, 11 and 12, leading on to 13 and 14). The first of these was Room 9, which lay to the west of Room 4, with which it was connected by a doorway. Room 9 communicated with Room 10 to its south by a second door in its southern wall, and Room 10 was connected to Room 11 to its south by another door. Room 11 then appears to have

communicated with another narrow room to its east, Room 12, to which it seems to have been connected by a doorway in its western wall (Fig. 11.19).

Two further square-shaped rooms (13 and 14) to the south of Room 11 also appear to have been connected to it. These two rooms each contained a large central pillar constructed of baked bricks. The more southerly room (14) contained a large jar in which two skeletons (an adult and a child) had been interred, along with five bronze bracelets and a bronze ring (Maqdissi 1995: 170; Fig. 11.19).

Room 8 lay to the east of Rooms 4 and 5. It is difficult to discern the nature of its relationship to the rest of the rooms in the building because it was only partially excavated, although it does appear to have communicated directly with Room 5 to its west. There also seems to have been a doorway connecting this room to Room 7 to its north, under the floor of which was discovered another tomb containing two burial jars, along with funerary offerings consisting of a number of bronze bowls and platters, a bronze ring and a cylinder seal made of faience (Maqdissi 1995: 167).

Just to the north of Room 7 lay Room 6, in which were discovered a large terracotta basin and a furnace. There do not appear to have been any doorways connecting this room to either Room 7 to its south or Room 1 to its west, and it is possible that Room 6 may have been functionally separate from the other rooms in this building. This room was interpreted by the excavators as a potter's workshop (Maqdissi 1995: 164).

To the south of Room 4 was Room 17, which also appears to have opened into Room 4 through a doorway. Room 17 too appears to have only been partially excavated, and it is not possible to be certain about how it may have been related to the two rooms to its south (15 and 16). Finally, in the southern part of the building, were two other rooms (18 and 19), connected to each other by a large doorway. These last two rooms were too far away from Rooms 4 and 5 to have been connected to them, and appear to have opened instead into the open space lying to their west (Maqdissi 1995: 167; Fig. 11.19).

11.4.3 DISCUSSION

The architectural layout of the Tell Boueid building has some parallels with Building A at Zeviya Tivilki, which was discussed in Chapter 10 Section 10.1.2.1 above. Both structures consisted of a series of rooms that were divided into several distinct

interconnected groups, and organised around a single central open space. In each building, one of these groups of rooms presents a highly asymmetrical layout, where access to one or more of the inner rooms is only available if a number of outer rooms have already been traversed. This is the case with the eastern wing at Zeviya Tivilki, where Rooms 15 and 16 are only accessible after crossing five other internal spaces. In the Tell Boueid building, the group of rooms to the west of Rooms 4 and 5 present a similarly asymmetrical layout, with access to Rooms 12, 13 and 14 only available after Rooms 9, 10 and 11 had already been crossed.

The finds from this building point towards it having a domestic function. These include the clay ovens in Room 4, the grinding stone fragments in Room 3 and the stone altar in Room 5, which may have served as a family altar for an exceptionally large (and wealthy) household. It is therefore possible that this building could have functioned (as has been suggested for Building A at Zeviya Tivilki) as the dwelling-place of an extended family unit that was made up in turn of several smaller 'nuclear families', with each smaller family unit occupying one group of rooms (*cf*. Ökse *et al*. 2014: 50). The large group of rooms to the west of the central space, including the two inner rooms equipped with a central brick pillar (Rooms 13 and 14), may have housed a dominant group (or individual), while the remaining groups of rooms may have been used by people who were related, but perhaps in some way subservient, to this group (or person). The two rooms to the south (18 and 19), on the other hand, may have been used by a separate group of people, who were not related to the extended family unit that used the rest of the building.

11.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has examined the evidence from four sites in Syro-Mesopotamia, all of which were located in areas that were within the Aramean cultural sphere during the Early Iron Age. Three of these (Bir el-Haddad, Khirbet al-Qasr and Tell Boueid) seem to have been newly established in the Neo-Assyrian period, which lends credence to the theory that there was a substantial increase in settlement at this time (*cf*. Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62, Wilkinson *et. al.* 2005: 50).

A large building discovered at one of these sites (Grand Bâtiment 1 at Bir el-Haddad) has been proposed, based on architectural parallels, to have functioned in a manner similar to that of the Middle Assyrian *dunnu* at Tell Sabi Abyad (Rouault and Masetti-

Rouault 2014: 250). Another building from Tell Boueid has been compared to Building A at Zeviya Tivilki, and could have functioned, like this building, as the dwelling-place of a group of families, with one perhaps being dominant over the others. The settlement at Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, in contrast, seems to have functioned as a military installation that protected the region against external threats and controlled the trade routes leading south, as well as navigation along the Euphrates (Kepinski 2006: 331, Kepinski 2012: 265-266).

The next chapter will consider the evidence from two sites in the southern Levant (including one that seems to have served a similar military purpose) followed by a final chapter, which will discuss any conclusions arising from the evidence presented in this thesis.

*   *   *   *

CHAPTER 12

SMALLER SITES IN THE SOUTHERN LEVANT

This chapter considers the evidence from two small sites in the southern Levant. The first, Tell Qudadi, is located on the Mediterranean coast of Israel and seems to have functioned as a military installation (like Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, which was discussed in Chapter 11 Section 11.2). It is also of significance because the evidence from this site has been used to support the argument that the pottery typical of the latter half of the Iron II period in this region (which is referred to in many publications as belonging to the '8th century') is unlikely to have gone out of use after the region was conquered by the Assyrians, and probably continued in use during the first half of the 7th century. The second site, Tel Hadid, is located in the northern Shephelah region, further inland and to the southeast of the first, and is likely to have been a small agricultural settlement similar to most of the smaller sites that have been discussed in Chapters 10 and 11. It is also of interest due to the discovery of two cuneiform tablets in a nearby salvage excavation, which have been proposed as evidence of a potential Assyrian administrative presence at this site (Aster 2015: 286-287).

12.1 TELL QUDADI

Tell Qudadi is situated at the mouth of the Yarkon river (referred to in the Arabic language as the Nahr el-'Auja), on its northern bank, and lies within the city limits of Tel Aviv (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 1; Fig. 12.1). It was the site of a minor military engagement known as the Battle of Auja during the First World War, in which it was damaged by shelling (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 22-27). The site was identified as an ancient mound in a survey conducted by the Department of Antiquities of the Mandatory Government of Palestine in 1934 (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 36). The name

of this site is alternatively transcribed in older publications as either 'Kudadi' or 'Kudady' (Amiran and Dunayevsky 1958: 28 and Yeivin 1960: 205, respectively).

12.1.1 BACKGROUND

This site was first investigated in a preliminary trial excavation carried out in October 1937 by a team from the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem under the direction of P.L.O. Guy, which uncovered the remains of a wall dating to the Persian period (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 6). This was followed by a more extensive excavation carried out from November 1937 to March 1938, by an expedition from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem under the direction of Eliezer Sukenik and Shmuel Yeivin. This project was financed by the Palestine Electricity Corporation, which was in the process at that time of building a power station next to the site (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 36-42). However, the results of this excavation were not published and a final report, based on their excavation records and also on an analysis of the finds from this site, has only recently been produced (Fantalkin and Tal 2015). The authors of this report have emphasised that both the original excavation records as well as the finds from the site have been very well preserved (Fantalkin and Tal 2010: 3).

12.1.2 FINDINGS

The excavations carried out by Sukenik and Yeivin exposed the remains of the north-eastern corner of an Iron Age fortress, along with a length of both its northern and eastern walls (Fig. 12.3). The rest of this structure, which stretches into the Mediterranean, appears to have been destroyed by erosion, although additional damage is also likely to have been caused during the Battle of Auja, and again later on during the construction of the nearby power station (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 28). The fortress was assigned to the latter half of the Iron II period, on the basis of its pottery (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 187).

Five strata (I to V) were distinguished by Sukenik and Yeivin, of which only Strata III, IV and V were assigned to the Iron Age. Although Stratum V was described as a distinct level by Sukenik and Yeivin, it was thought to only represent the stone foundations of the fortress, which is likely to have been built of mud-brick walls that were supported by these foundations (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 46). Strata IV and III represent two occupation layers that lie on top of the Stratum V foundations. These

two strata were each sealed by a destruction layer (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 53; Fig. 12.2). There were therefore two occupational phases of the fortress at Tell Qudadi, with Strata V and IV representing the first phase, and Strata III representing the second, which was rebuilt on the stone foundations of the first fortress.

The remains from the first phase (labelled as 'Fortress, First Period' in Fig. 12.3) consisted of a northern and an eastern wall that met to form a right angle. These walls were built of roughly hewn stones of a type known as *kurkar*, which is a kind of fossilised sandstone. The northern wall had been preserved for a distance of around 14 metres, while the eastern wall had been preserved for approximately 33 metres (Fantalkin and Tall 2015: 50; Figs. 12.3 and 12.4). Six casemate rooms, with their walls also built of *kurkar* stones, were built on top of the foundations. These rooms appear to have served a purely structural purpose, as they were found filled with beach sand and completely devoid of artefacts (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 8). The entrance to the fortress, which was paved with fieldstones, was located between two of the eastern casemate rooms (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 50). The fortress of the first occupation period would therefore appear to have been a quadrangular structure with an inner courtyard surrounded by a series of casemate rooms, and an entrance on its eastern, landward side.

This was followed by a second occupation phase (represented by Stratum III), during which an additional wall was built roughly (but not strictly) parallel to the casemate wall of the first fortress along its eastern façade. This second wall had a thickness of around 2.5 metres, and had also been built out of roughly hewn *kurkar* stones (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 8). It was provided with a gateway approximately 4 metres wide and protected on either side by a buttress, which was roughly in line with the entrance through the earlier casemate wall of the first fortress (Fantalkin and Tal 2010: 3, Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 56; Fig. 12.4).

Although there were two distinct occupation phases at this site separated by a destruction layer, the pottery from these two phases was quite similar, and judged to belong to the same ceramic horizon. Parallels were observed with the pottery of Strata VI and V at Hazor to the north and Stratum III at Tel Batash to the south, but also to that of Stratum 5 at Tell Keisan and Strata II and IC at Tel Miqne, which suggests that both occupational phases should be assigned to the late 8th to the early 7th centuries BCE (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 187).

Of especial interest was the discovery of two examples of Aegean pottery in secure Stratum III contexts. One was a fragment of an Eastern Greek *oenochoe* attributed to the Subgeometric period, which was assigned on stylistic grounds to the first third

of the 7th century BCE (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 100). The other consisted of several fragments belonging to a single amphora from the Lesbian Grey Series. This type of amphora has been discovered in late 7th century BCE contexts in several different sites around the Mediterranean region (including Kommos in Crete and Tocra in Cyrenaica) and also in the Black Sea region (Fantalkin and Tal 2010: 1). An example from the southern Levant is known from the single period site of Mesad Hashavyahu, which has been dated to the last third of the 7th century (Fantalkin 2001: 94).

12.1.3 DISCUSSION

The fortress at Tell Qudadi was recognised long ago as bearing some resemblance to a type of building that was not native to the southern Levant but had been introduced by the Assyrians, with the layout of its remains being compared to those of Buildings 1052 and 1369 from Stratum III at Megiddo, as well as to the 'Assyrian Palaces' from Til Barsib and from Arslan Tash (Amiran and Dunayevsky 1958: 27-29, figs. 1 and 2; *cf*. Fig. 12.5). However, the site was assigned to the Israelite period by its excavators because of its pottery, which (as mentioned above) shows parallels with that of Stratum V at Hazor and hence, with that of Stratum IVA at Megiddo, which pre-dates the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel (*cf*. Finkelstein 1998: 63-65). One of the excavators even proposed that the fortress had been built by King Solomon, in order to control the maritime approach to the Yarkon valley and to defend against 'sea raiders' (Yeivin 1960: 204-205).

More recently, however, there has been a growing realisation among scholars that the pottery of Stratum V at Hazor would not necessarily have gone out of use after the city was taken over by the Assyrians, but is likely to have continued in use for some time thereafter (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 188). Certainly, the pottery of Stratum IV at Hazor, which was thought to represent a reoccupation after the Assyrian conquest, was noted to be highly similar to that of Strata VI and V, and judged to be part of the same ceramic horizon (Yadin *et al*. 1958: 19-21). It is therefore illogical to assume that every destruction layer in the southern Levant containing pottery similar to that discovered in Stratum V at Hazor must be dated to the campaign conducted by Tiglath-pileser III in 732 BCE.

The two examples of Aegean pottery discovered at Tell Qudadi also suggest a 7th, rather than an 8th century date, at least for the second occupational phase represented by Stratum III. This is especially the case for the fragments of the imported Lesbian amphora. The earliest known securely dated examples of Lesbian

Grey Series amphorae were discovered in a context dating to the third quarter of the 7th century BCE in the Athenian Agora, and this type of pottery has conventionally been considered to have been in use from the 7th to the 4th centuries BCE (Clinkenbeard 1982: 248-249). The authors of the final report on Tell Qudadi have proposed in a separate publication that the upper end of this range should now be extended to the very late 8th or very early 7th century, based on the discovery of these fragments (Fantalkin and Tal 2010: 8).

The attribution of the fortress at Tell Qudadi to the late 8th to the mid-7th centuries BCE would therefore appear to be broadly correct (*cf*. Fantalkin and Tal 2009: 199, Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 187-191). This would be in keeping with the similarities noted between the layout of this fortress and those of other large buildings assigned to the Neo-Assyrian period, including the fortress at Khirbet ed-Diniyeh (discussed in Chapter 11 Section 11.2), which also consisted of an inner casemate structure circumscribed by an outer strengthening wall. It would also account for the presence of Aegean pottery types that are typically assigned to the mid- to late 7th century BCE in the second occupational phase of this fortress, without any need for special pleading.

The authors of the final report have invoked the model of a 'network empire' proposed by Mario Liverani to suggest that the fortress at Tell Qudadi may have been part of a network of Assyrian military installations that was designed to protect and control trade routes, which resulted in the creation of an 'imperial landscape' that projected Assyrian power towards the western margins of the empire (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 201-202, Fantalkin and Tal 2009: 199, *cf*. Liverani 1988: 90-92). It is therefore possible that the fortress at Tell Qudadi may have functioned in a manner similar to that suggested for its counterpart at Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, possibly manned by a small garrison under normal circumstances, and serving as a staging post for the main Assyrian army in the event of an emergency. An alternative possibility is that fortresses of this kind may have housed a full garrison, which would have been used to repel hostile incursions and to enforce the will of the Assyrian king in this region.

12.2 TEL HADID

Tel Hadid (referred to as el-Haditha in Arabic) is an isolated hill lying in the northern Shephelah region, approximately 4.5 kilometres to the northeast of the modern city of Lod (Torge 2016: 23, Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 159; Fig. 12.6). This section will consider the evidence from the rescue excavation conducted in 2008 along the planned route for an underground cable on the southern edge of the mound (Torge 2016). The site is also of interest because of the discovery of two cuneiform tablets in a separate excavation necessitated by the construction of a motorway a short distance to the northwest of the mound (Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 159; Aster 2015: 282-287). The report for this earlier excavation has only been published in Hebrew (Brand 1996; *cf.* Beit-Arieh 2006).

12.2.1 BACKGROUND

The excavation on the southern edge of the mound was carried out by a team from the Israel Antiquities Authority, under the direction of Hagit Torge. A series of eight half-squares (labelled 1 to 6, 8 and 10) were excavated on a northwest to southeast axis along the intended route for the cable (Fig. 12.7). Square 4, in which the remains of an Iron Age building were encountered, was later extended to the east and to the west in order to more fully expose this structure (Torge 2016: 23; Fig. 12.8).

12.2.2 FINDINGS

Significant architectural findings were only encountered in Square 4 and its extensions, labelled as Squares 4A to 4C (Fig. 12.8). These consisted of the remains of a small building that contained three rooms. The walls of this structure were made of large stones placed directly onto bedrock, and its floors were made of a layer of tamped earth mixed in with chalk (Torge 2016: 23).

The largest room in this building was Unit 1 to the north. The exact size of this room could not be determined because the excavation did not extend to include its western wall. The room was divided into two sections by a partition wall built of smaller stones (Torge 2016: 23; Fig. 12.8). Of note was the discovery on the floor of this room of a

fragment of a jar handle bearing a *lmlk* seal impression of the type depicting a four-winged scarab (Torge 2016: 4-5; Fig. 12.9). To the south of Unit 1 lay a smaller room (Unit 2) that seems to have used the natural bedrock as part of its western wall. A third room (Unit 3) lay to the south of Unit 2, and appears to have been built directly against the bedrock, with only its northern and eastern walls having been built out of stones (Torge 2016: 23).

The pottery discovered in this structure was typical of the later part of the Iron II period, including an example of a cooking pot with a pinched or ridged rim (Fig. 12.10), which was discovered in the same archaeological context as the *lmlk* jar handle. A few examples of pottery dating to the Persian period were also discovered in and around this building, which led the excavators to propose that it would have continued in use up to this time (Torge 2016: 23).

Mention should also be made of the two cuneiform tablets discovered in the earlier excavation to the northwest of the mound. These were both Neo-Assyrian contracts discovered in contexts assigned to the later part of the Iron II period (Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 159). The first was a contract for the sale of a plot of land, purchased by one Marduk-bela-usur from a group of four men, two of whom also had Mesopotamian names rather than Hebrew or Canaanite ones. This document was dated to the year when Šulmu-šarri held the office of *limmu* (698/697 BCE). The second was a debt note, in which the borrower (whose name is not preserved) pledges his wife Hammaya and his sister Munahima to his creditor in lieu of paying interest. Two of the witnesses named in this document also had Mesopotamian names (Silimu and Silli-bel). This contract was dated to 664/663 BCE, the *limmu*-year of Šarru-ludari (Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 159-171, *cf.* Aster 2015: 285-286).

12.2.3 DISCUSSION

The excavators of the three-roomed building discovered at Tel Hadid have declined to suggest a function for it due to its 'poor state of preservation' (Torge 2016: 23). The pottery discovered in and around this structure was identified by the excavators as belonging to the 9th-8th centuries BCE, which led them to suggest that the structure must have been used for a prolonged period, as some pottery dating to the Persian period was also discovered in it. However, as discussed in Section 12.1.3 above, the pottery that has been thought of as belonging to the '8th century' in this region did not necessarily disappear at the point of the Assyrian conquest, but probably continued to be used at least into the first half of the 7th century.

The architectural remains discovered in the excavation on the southern edge of Tel Hadid are therefore those of a small building that might have been domestic in nature. The discovery in it of a jar handle with a *lmlk* seal impression suggests that it would have been occupied at around the time of the campaign of Sennacherib against Judah, as the largest known corpus of these comes from Stratum III at Lachish, which is widely accepted as having been destroyed by him in 701 BCE (Lipschits *et al.* 2010: 3-4, *cf.* Barkay and Vaughn 1996: 61), although it has been argued that these impressions would probably have continued to be produced in Judah during the first half, and possibly even up to the last third, of the 7th century BCE (Na'aman 2016: 122). This structure is therefore likely to have continued to be occupied for at least a generation after the fall of Samaria around 720 BCE.

It has previously been proposed that the presence of so many Mesopotamian names in the two cuneiform tablets discovered nearby indicates that this region had been resettled by deportees of Babylonian origin (Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 180), which would be in keeping with the claim in the Book of Kings that the Assyrian king 'brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah...and placed them in the cities of Samaria' (2 Kings 17:24, *cf.* Na'aman and Zadok 2000: 177-178). The nature of the first contract certainly suggests that the people mentioned in it were ordinary civilians rather than military commanders or personnel, although there is nothing in these two documents to indicate that the persons named in them were deportees who had been forcibly resettled rather than settlers who had come to this region of their own free will. It has also been suggested (perhaps somewhat speculatively) that these tablets would have been produced by people who were directly responsible to the Assyrian central administration rather than to a local provincial governor, and were engaged in agriculture in order to staff a *bīt mardīte*, which was a kind of provisioning centre similar to an 18th century posting-house, where travellers who needed to get to their destination quickly could change horses (Aster 2015: 282-287).

It is difficult to arrive at definite conclusions about the three-room building discovered in this excavation based on these two cuneiform tablets, which were found in a separate investigation conducted some distance away. Nevertheless, the evidence in them does indicate that there were people of Mesopotamian origin living in the vicinity of this structure at the beginning of the 7th century BCE, who were writing contracts in Akkadian (instead of in Hebrew or Aramaic) and who were dating these documents according to Assyrian conventions. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that this building, whatever the ethnic identity of its inhabitants, was probably part of a settlement that included individuals of Mesopotamian origin, who may have been resettled in this area by the Assyrians.

12.3 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has examined the evidence from two smaller sites in the southern Levant, both of which were located to the west of the area of the Southern Samaria Survey. At both sites, the pottery found in association with the main architectural remains was identified by the excavators as belonging to the 8th century BCE. It is only the discovery of supplementary evidence at these sites (the examples of Aegean pottery at Tell Qudadi, and the cuneiform tablets at the nearby salvage excavation at Tel Hadid) that led to their being dated instead to the 7th century, which means that they would have been in existence after this region had been conquered by the Assyrians. This also raises questions about other sites in this region that have been assigned to the 8th century, with a presumed destruction dating to the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III in 732 BCE, because of the presence of this kind of pottery. An example of this would be the site of Horbat Rosh Zayit in the Lower Galilee, which was given a terminal date of 732 BCE based on parallels with the pottery of Stratum V at Hazor (Gal and Alexandre 2000: 199-201). Many such sites, which are thought to have been occupied only until the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel, could therefore have continued to be occupied during the subsequent Neo-Assyrian period.

The two cuneiform documents discovered near Tel Hadid indicate that there were individuals of Mesopotamian origin who were already living in this area in the early 7th century BCE. The one that was a contract for the sale of a plot of land shows that these people were engaged in agricultural activity. The picture that emerges from the evidence discovered at these two sites is therefore one that is not so different from what is known for northern Mesopotamia and for the Upper Tigris valley, with agricultural establishments that were populated by people who had been resettled in the region (whether willingly or not) and military installations that were strategically located in order to protect and control important trade routes and to project the power of the Assyrian Empire towards its margins. The next, and final, chapter will discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from the evidence discussed in the previous nine, and offer an interpretation of the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire that is based primarily on the archaeological evidence, and not biased by the partisan interpretations presented by either the Hebrew or the Assyrian texts.

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CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSIONS

The aims of this thesis were to examine settlement changes in the Near East during the Iron Age, to explore the nature of these changes in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the rural landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and to consider whether the *Pax Assyriaca* model provides a suitable explanation for them. Chapters 4 to 12 have presented a series of case studies, designed to examine the increases in settlement observed in surveys carried out in former Assyrian provinces and to obtain a clearer picture of these areas. This chapter will summarise the evidence discussed in these chapters and discuss whether the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis fits the available data, before going on to present an overall synthesis and to discuss the value of this research in relation to wider debates about the nature of the Assyrian Empire.

13.1 SURVEY EVIDENCE

Five survey projects have been considered in this thesis - the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project and the Land of Carchemish Project in the Upper Tigris and Euphrates regions, the North Jazira and the Tell Beydar Surveys in Syro-Mesopotamia, and the Southern Samaria Survey in the southern Levant. These projects were selected in order to provide broad spatial coverage over several different regions of the Assyrian Empire, and also because they provided sufficient data about estimated site surface areas to allow site-size comparisons to be made between the Neo-Assyrian and earlier periods (either the Late Bronze or Early Iron Age, or both).

13.1.1 THE TIGRIS-EUPHRATES ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE PROJECT

This project included four surveys in the Cizre-Silopi Plain, the Upper Tigris-Batman confluence and the Bohtan and the Garzan Valleys. It was chosen because the 'agricultural colonisation' hypothesis first proposed by Parker was based on the data from these surveys (Parker 2001). This evidence showed that there was an increase in settlement in two of these areas. For the Cizre-Silopi Plain, there was an increase in the number of sites from 10 in the Late Bronze Age to 38 in the Iron Age. In the Upper Tigris region, the number of occupied sites appears to have increased from 19 in the Early Iron Age to 29 in the subsequent Neo-Assyrian period (*cf*. Chapter 4 Sections 4.2 and 4.3). A comparison of the settlement curves for these two regions (obtained by plotting the estimated surface areas of the occupied sites on a logarithmic scale against their size order) showed an upward and a rightward shift of the curve for the Neo-Assyrian period, which indicates that there was not only an increase in the total number of settlements in these areas, but also an increase in the total occupied surface area for each region (*cf*. Figs. 4.9 and 4.13).

13.1.2 THE LAND OF CARCHEMISH PROJECT

This project was conducted as an extension of the excavation of the site of Tell Jerablus Tahtani (Wilkinson and Peltenburg 2016: 5). The evidence from this project suggested a settlement change similar to that observed for the Cizre-Silopi Plain, with an increase in the total number of occupied sites from 9 in the Late Bronze Age to 23 in the Iron Age (*cf*. Chapter 5 Section 5.3). This is illustrated by the comparison of the settlement curves for these periods (Fig. 5.7), which shows an upward and a rightward shift of the curve for the Iron Age parallel to the shift observed for the Cizre-Silopi Plain (*cf*. Fig. 4.9).

13.1.3 THE NORTH JAZIRA AND TELL BEYDAR SURVEYS

The evidence from these two surveys shows a significant increase in the number of settlements during the Iron Age. In the North Jazira Survey, there was an increase

from 30 sites during the Late Bronze Age to 78 in the Iron Age. In the Tell Beydar Survey, there was an increase from 8 sites during the Late Bronze Age to 31 in the Iron Age (*cf*. Chapter 6 Section 6.3 and Chapter 7 Section 7.3).

The logarithmic settlement curves for the North Jazira Survey show a 'flattening' of this curve for the Iron Age, as opposed to the upward and rightward shift of the settlement curves for the Iron Age seen in the Tigris-Euphrates and Land of Carchemish Projects (as discussed in Sections 13.1.1 and 13.1.2 above). This 'flattening' of the curve is the result of a decrease in the occupied surface area of the larger sites in this region, in contrast to the pattern in the Tigris-Euphrates and Land of Carchemish regions, where there was a generalised increase in the size of all the occupied sites during the Iron Age. For the Tell Beydar Survey, it was not possible to provide a logarithmic settlement curve because only rough estimates of the surface area for the individual sites in this area were provided by the surveyors (*cf*. Chapter 7 Section 7.3). The pattern in this region, however, does show that the rise in the number of sites observed was primarily due to an increase in the number of small sites (*cf*. Chapter 7 Section 7.4).

13.1.4 THE SOUTHERN SAMARIA SURVEY

This project was carried out in conjunction with the excavation of the site of Khirbet Seilun, by a large team that included student volunteers from Bar-Ilan University. The evidence from this survey showed a sustained increase in settlement, that began in the Early Iron period and continued into the Iron Age. Only 9 sites appeared to have been occupied in this region during the Late Bronze Age, but this number increased to 131 for the Iron I period, and to 237 for the Iron II period (*cf*. Chapter 8 Section 8.3). The logarithmic settlement curves for this region show a pattern similar to that seen for the Tigris-Euphrates Archaeological Reconnaissance Project and the Land of Carchemish Project - an upward and a rightward shift in the settlement curve for the Iron I period, followed by a further upward and rightward shift in the settlement curve for the Iron II period (*cf*. Fig. 8.8).

13.1.5 CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from the various survey regions that have been considered in this thesis supports the suggestion that there was an expansion in settlement in the Near

East during the Iron Age. This is in keeping with the conclusions previously arrived at by other scholars, who have noted a 'dramatic increase in…settlement' (*cf.* Wilkinson *et al.* 2005: 38). The logarithmic settlement curves for most of the regions that have been discussed show an upward and rightward shift, which suggests that there was a generalised increase in both the number of sites in each region as well as in the total occupied surface area. However, there is an exception to this pattern in the North Jazira Survey area, for which there is a flattening of the curve due to a decrease in the size of the larger sites concurrent with an increase in the number of smaller sites in the region.

13.2 EXCAVATION EVIDENCE

Excavation evidence from eleven sites has been discussed. These were selected to provide a sample of the different kinds of sites established in the Assyrian countryside, including two that appear to have served a military function. Most of these were smaller sites with surface areas below 5 hectares, although one, Tille Höyük, was a medium-sized mound located in the Upper Euphrates region. The smaller sites were selected to provide broad spatial coverage, with four situated in the Upper Tigris region, four in Syro-Mesopotamia and two in the southern Levant.

13.2.1 TILLE HÖYÜK

This site was located on the Euphrates bend, approximately 100 kilometres upstream from the site of Carchemish. It is therefore located to the north of the Land of Carchemish Project survey area and to the west of the Upper Tigris Valley. The most important development noted at this site was that there was a striking change in its layout during the Neo-Assyrian period, in which the discrete domestic structures of the preceding Neo-Hittite period were replaced by a series of contiguous rooms, which were interpreted by the excavators of the site as poorly demarcated domestic structures built around a handful of 'core' rooms. However, as suggested in Chapter 9 Section 9.4.1, an alternative explanation might be that the site was not inhabited in this period by separate family units but by a group of people who may all have been in the service of a single high-ranking individual, perhaps as part of an

agricultural establishment that was similar in nature to the Middle Assyrian *dunnu* known to us from textual sources (*cf*. Chapter 9 Section 9.4.2).

13.2.2 SITES IN THE UPPER TIGRIS REGION

Chapter 10 considered the evidence from four smaller sites in the Upper Tigris region – Zeviya Tivilki, Kilokki Rabiseki, Boztepe and Hirbemerdon Tepe. All of these sites show evidence for occupation during the Neo-Assyrian period, with three of them appearing to have been newly established at this time. The fourth site, Hirbemerdon Tepe, was thought to have been established in the Early Iron Age, but seems to have continued to be occupied into the Neo-Assyrian period. The evidence from these sites would therefore support the picture of a generalised increase in settlement in this region as suggested by the survey evidence (*cf*. Sections 13.1.1 and 13.1.2), and there is a possibility that these settlements may correspond to the *kapru* that are mentioned in Assyrian texts. In addition, the layout of Zeviya Tivilki, which is the only one of these sites to have been extensively excavated, is one in which a number of smaller buildings are dominated by a single larger structure that appears to have housed a dominant family or person, which led to the suggestion that this site might have been a more rustic version of the settlement at Tille Höyük (*cf*. Chapter 10 Section 10.5).

13.2.3 SITES IN SYRO-MESOPOTAMIA

Chapter 11 looked at the evidence from four smaller sites in Syro-Mesopotamia (Bir el-Haddad, Khirbet al-Qasr, Tell Boueid and Khirbet ed-Diniyeh) all of which were occupied during the Neo-Assyrian period. The first three appear to have been newly established agricultural settlements that were similar in size to the sites in the Upper Tigris region that were discussed in Chapter 10. Two of these, Bir el-Haddad and Tell Boueid, contained large buildings that can be compared to the larger building in Zeviya Tivilki, and may have been inhabited by a dominant family or individual (*cf*. Chapter 11 Section 11.5). Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, on the other hand, appears to have served a purely military, rather than an agricultural, function (*cf*. Chapter 11 Section 11.2.3).

13.2.4 TELL QUDADI AND TEL HADID

Chapter 12 looked at the evidence from two smaller sites in the southern Levant. The first site, Tell Qudadi, also appears to have functioned, like Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, as a military installation (*cf.* Chapter 12 Section 12.1.3). The second, Tel Hadid, appears to have been an agricultural settlement that was established towards the end of the 8th century BCE at the earliest, and therefore probably after this region had been conquered by the Assyrians (*cf.* Chapter 12 Section 12.2.3).

13.2.5 CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from the sites discussed in Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12 therefore supports the conclusion drawn from the survey data that there was a generalised increase in settlement in the Near East during the Neo-Assyrian period. Most of the sites that were considered in these chapters appear to have been settlements that were newly established at this time, although a few, like Tille Höyük and Hirbemerdon Tepe, had already been occupied in the Early Iron Age and continued to be occupied into the Neo-Assyrian period. This evidence therefore supports the picture of a settlement expansion that took place during the Neo-Assyrian period.

13.3 THE RURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

The survey evidence that has been presented in this thesis has shown that there was a marked increase in settlement across the Neo-Assyrian Empire. In most regions, this increase appears to have consisted of an increase in both the total number of settlements, and the total occupied surface area. The only exception to this is the North Jazira Survey region, in which there was a decrease in the size of the larger sites, accompanied by an increase in both the size as well as in the total number of the smaller sites (*cf.* Chapter 6 Section 6.3).

The excavation evidence presented in this thesis also supports the suggestion that many new settlements were established in the Neo-Assyrian period. Both the survey and the excavation evidence would therefore appear to justify the *Pax Assyriaca* model, according to which these changes are thought to have been the result of Assyrian policy (*cf*. Wilkinson and Tucker 1995: 62, Wilkinson *et al*. 2005: 50, Parker 2001: 263). In addition, the consideration of this excavation evidence has also allowed a couple of interesting observations to be made about the nature of these new settlements, and the role they may have played in the Assyrian countryside, as will be discussed in the following section.

13.3.1 COUNTRY ESTATES…

Of note is the presence in some of these sites of large structures that were domestic in nature, but appear to have been occupied by more than a single nuclear family. The most emphatic example of this is Building A at Zeviya Tivilki, which consisted of 11 rooms constructed around a courtyard according to a highly asymmetrical internal layout (Ökse *et al*. 2014: 33; Fig. 10.3). This building was thought by its excavators to have been inhabited by a 'large family' that was itself made up of three 'nuclear families' (Ökse *et al*. 2014: 50). However, as pointed out in Chapter 10 Section 10.1.3, the asymmetrical layout of this structure suggests that there was probably a difference in status between the people who lived in its inner rooms and those who inhabited the rest of the building. A more convincing interpretation of this structure might be that it was occupied by a dominant individual (or family) of higher status along with his (or their) servants or slaves. This interpretation would also be favoured by the architectural layout of the rest of the settlement, which was made up of a number of smaller domestic structures, each of which would probably have been occupied by a single nuclear family.

Larger buildings of a similar nature are also known from other sites. Grand Bâtiment 1 at Bir el-Haddad, for example, also consisted of a series of rooms constructed around a courtyard, and can be compared to the 'Residence' of the Middle Assyrian *dunnu* at Tell Sabi Abyad (*cf*. Figs. 9.27 and 11.3), which is thought to have been the living quarters of the high-ranking individual to whom the lands around the settlement had been allocated by the Assyrian king. Similarly, the large structure excavated at Tell Boueid, which also consisted of a series of rooms organised into a number of interconnected groups, may also have functioned in a manner very similar to Building A at Zeviya Tivilki (*cf*. Chapter 11 Section 11.4).

The exact nature of these larger buildings is difficult to determine with certainty without further investigation. However, the most likely interpretation would appear to be that these were agricultural establishments owned by high-ranking individuals, and worked by others who were in their service (*cf.* Younger 2015: 183). Recent work has suggested that the Assyrian conquest of the southern Levant resulted in a shift from the breeding of goats to that of sheep, presumably in an attempt to increase the production of wool, which could have been used as a trade item, or perhaps as tribute payments to the Assyrians (Sapir-Hen 2017: 343-345). The establishment of agricultural establishments belonging to high-ranking individuals in the Assyrian Empire might therefore have been part of a process similar to that witnessed in the Scottish Highlands in the 18th and 19th centuries, when commercial sheep farms were established by landlords who did not work the land themselves, but employed local farmers to do this work in their stead (Hunter 1972: 199-200).

Another possible historical parallel for this phenomenon might be the establishment of *latifundia* in some Roman provinces during the Early Imperial Period. These *latifundia* were agricultural estates owned by wealthy landowners and manned by slaves, of which some were used for the cultivation of olives and other agricultural products, while others were involved in the breeding of sheep and cattle (Wells 1984: 183-184, *cf.* Goodman 1997: 195). As discussed in Chapter 9 Section 9.4.2, a possible explanation for the unusual architectural layout of the northern half of the mound at Tille Höyük might be that it was inhabited by unfree persons, similar to the *šiluhlu* mentioned in the cuneiform documents discovered at Tell Sabi Abyad (*cf.* Akkermans and Wiggerman 2015: 119). According to this interpretation, the Level VIIIa settlement at Tille Höyük may have functioned as an agricultural establishment comparable to the Roman *latifundia*, with the people who inhabited the series of contiguous rooms in the northern half of the mound working in the service of a high-ranking person (or family) who lived in the monumental structure that occupied its southern half. It is also possible that smaller sites like Zeviya Tivilki, in which a large building that may have been occupied by a person or family of high status dominated smaller structures, could have functioned in a similar manner (*cf.* Chapter 10 Section 10.5).

13.3.2 …AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

While most of the settlements that were newly established in the Neo-Assyrian period seem to have been agricultural in nature, there were also some that served a military, rather than an agricultural, purpose. Two examples of such sites have been

discussed in this thesis, Khirbet ed-Diniyeh in the Middle Euphrates region and Tell Qudadi on the Mediterranean coast of Israel (*cf*. Chapter 11 Section 11.2 and Chapter 12 Section 12.1). These examples are not unique, as a significant number of such sites have been excavated in recent years (Younger 2015: 183). Examples include Rishon le-Ziyyon West and Ashdod-Yam in the southern Levant, and Yemniyeh in the Middle Euphrates region (Thareani 2016: 90-91, *cf*. Fantalkin 2014, Henrickson and Cooper 2006).

These military installations are thought to have served to protect and maintain important trade and communication routes (Kepinski 2012: 265-266, *cf*. Younger 2015: 184). Such installations would also have helped to defend the surrounding countryside against threats from hostile tribes and, if required, have functioned as springboards from which the Assyrian army could launch military expeditions into neighbouring regions. Further investigation is required to clarify the nature of these sites, including whether they were manned by large garrisons and functioned like the permanent legionary camps established along the Rhine frontier by the Romans (*cf*. Wells 1984: 72-73).

13.3.3 A 'WORLD EMPIRE'?

The Neo-Assyrian Empire has recently been described as the first real world empire in history, because it fulfilled the twin criteria of controlling a substantial proportion of the world as known to its rulers, and of demonstrating resilience in the face of adversity and an ability to regenerate itself (Bagg 2013: 129-131). The constituent regions of this empire included both provinces that were directly ruled by Assyrian governors as well as indirectly ruled areas that were controlled by a variety of different methods (Thareani 2016: 93-95, Postgate 1992: 251-255). In this way, the Assyrian Empire bore some similarity to the Roman, which was also made up of both directly ruled provinces as well as client kingdoms that retained some measure of autonomy (Goodman 1997: 15-16).

The traditional view of the Assyrians was influenced by their depiction in the Old Testament as the archetypal example of 'the ungodly' who are defined primarily by their opposition to the will of God (*cf*. 2 Kings 19:35, Isaiah 37:36), and regarded them as an aggressive militaristic nation (Fales 2008: 18, *cf*. Frahm 2006: 93-94). Although such perceptions have been challenged by the proponents of the *Pax Assyriaca* model, some scholars have continued to maintain that the economic prosperity that was experienced in the Near East in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE

was achieved, not as a result of Assyrian policy, but in spite of it (Faust 2011: 77-78, *cf.* Faust and Weiss 2011: 195-199). It must be pointed out, however, that this argument is based on the premise that there was widespread devastation in the territory of the northern kingdom of Israel after the Assyrian conquest, which also led to the complete demise of the olive oil industry there (Faust 2011: 72-74, *cf.* Gitin 1997: 82).

However, as discussed in Chapter 12 Section 12.3, this interpretation is based on a misreading of the evidence. There is no logical reason to assume that a site that contains pottery comparable to that of Stratum V at Hazor must also have come to an end during the campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 BCE. The evidence from Tell Qudadi, for example, indicates that this kind of pottery continued to be used into the 7th century BCE (*cf.* Chapter 12 Section 12.1.3). Sites like Horvat Rosh Zayit, which has been offered as an example of a centre for the production of olive oil that 'went out of use in the late 8th century…probably during the campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III' (Faust 2011: 66), are therefore likely to have continued to be occupied during the Neo-Assyrian period.

In his study of the expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire into the Khabur and Middle Euphrates regions in the 9th century BCE, Mario Liverani advanced the concept of a 'network empire'. This is in contrast to the traditional paradigm of a 'territorial empire' that expands in a systematic and uniform fashion into neighbouring regions, like a slowly spreading oil stain (Liverani 1988: 84). The 'network empire' paradigm, on the other hand, visualises Assyrian control to be spreading along a network of settlements (some of which might already have been occupied) that were 'embedded in a native world' (Liverani 1988: 90-92). According to this paradigm, the processes that led to the changes manifest in the survey and excavation evidence considered in this thesis – agricultural colonisation and military occupation - could be visualised as a gradual 'thickening of the mesh' of this network (Thareani 2016: 96, *cf.* Liverani 1988: 91). These processes would have been driven by a desire on the part of the Assyrians to solidify their grip on their provinces, their aim being to convert the 'network empire' of the 9th and 8th centuries BCE into a 'territorial empire' in which these subject provinces had been thoroughly assimilated into the social fabric of the Assyrian Empire (*cf.* Liverani 1988: 92).

13.4 Final Thoughts

The archaeological evidence presented in this thesis has broadly substantiated the arguments put forward by the proponents of the *Pax Assyriaca* hypothesis. The results of the surveys that have been discussed have shown that there was a definite increase in settlement right across the Near East during the Iron Age, and the logarithmic settlement curves derived from this survey data provide a convincing illustration of this process. The excavation evidence from the sample of sites that have been looked at supports the view that a significant number of sites, of which many were agricultural in nature, were established during the Neo-Assyrian period.

The rural landscape of the Near East during the Neo-Assyrian period therefore appears to have been complex. The settlement change observed for this period consisted of an increase in both agricultural settlements and military installations. Further excavations are needed to investigate the exact nature of both kinds of sites. While some of the sites discussed in this thesis, like Bir el-Haddad, may have been so severely damaged as to preclude the possibility of more detailed investigations, others, like Tell Boueid, could probably yield more useful information.

Renewed investigation of such sites would therefore appear to be a fruitful avenue for further research. Excavation of more small settlements like those that were conducted at Zeviya Tivilki, where there was extensive exposure over much of the settlement, could help to confirm if there was in fact a pattern in which a single large structure dominated several smaller buildings. Excavation of smaller sites within the Assyrian heartland itself could provide a comparison that may show if there were any differences between the rural landscape of the Assyrian heartland and the more peripheral regions of their empire. There is also a need for more stratigraphic excavations of larger mounds with a long occupational history, like Tille Höyük, to improve our understanding of the ceramic corpus of both the Early Iron and the post-Assyrian periods. Such investigations would improve our understanding of the settlement changes that occurred in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and help to elucidate the nature of imperialism in the ancient world, which was clearly quite different from its more modern version.

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