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2023–2024 Excavations at Boğaziye Höyüğü: A Recently Discovered Mound Settlement in the Upper Khabur Region



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Abstract

Boğaziye Höyüğü lies at the northwestern end of the vast and fertile Upper Khabur Region, which stretches along the southern foothills of the Kaşari Mountains. Material culture remains unearthed at the mound by two seasons of excavations (2023–2024) shows significant similarities to assemblages known from other Upper Khabur sites. Our excavations in Trenches BE18–BE17 and BF18 on the northern slope of the mound focused on revealing the stratigraphic sequence in this area. Architectural remains of Building Levels I and II and finds from these contexts in Trench BE18 are dateable to the mid-3rd millennium BC. In Trench BE17, Building Level I also revealed finds that can be dated to the 3rd (especially mid-3rd) millennium BC, and in Trench BF18, ceramic sherds dateable to the 3rd millennium BC were found in Building Level III. This article presents new findings from Boğaziye Höyüğü and discusses their significance in comparison with the results of surveys and excavations in the Upper Khabur Region, which have continued increasingly since the mid-1930s. We evaluate the significance of Boğaziye Höyüğü as a regional center within the Upper Khabur basin, and we elucidate its habitation sequence and building levels in the light of our recent excavations. Based on a comparative evaluation of its material culture remains within a regional perspective, we contextualize Boğaziye Höyüğü in relationship to the cultural horizons of the early and mid-3rd millennium BC in the Upper Khabur Valley.

Keywords

Upper Khabur Region • Early Bronze Age • Early Jezirah Period • Early Dynastic III/IV • terracotta chariot models

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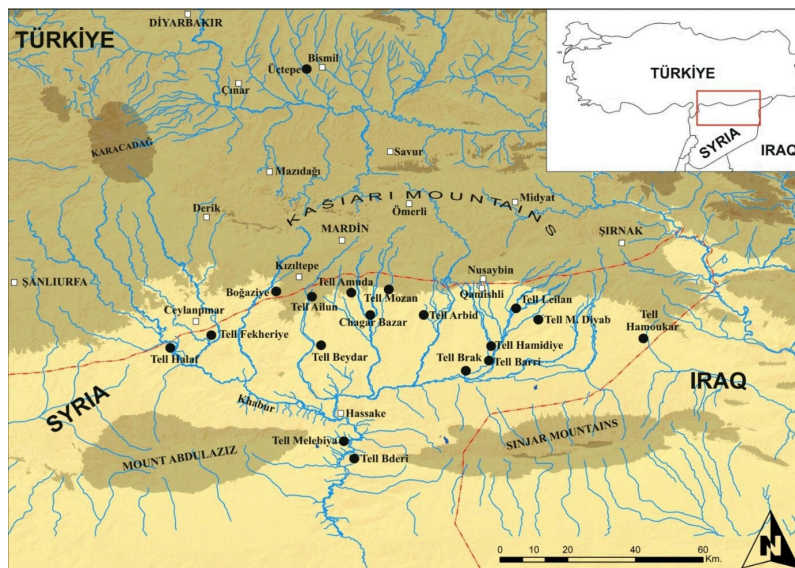


Introduction

Upper Khabur Region lies at the heart of the vast and fertile northern Mesopotamian plain bordered by the southern foothills of the Kaširi¹ Mountains in the north². The region is roughly defined by the Turkish-Syrian national border in the north, the Syrian-Iraqi national border in the east, the Jebel Sinjar and Jebel 'Abd-al-Aziz' mountains in the south, and the Khabur River in the west³. As such, the Upper Khabur Basin that is dissected by several river valleys running north to south constitutes the northeast portion of the Syrian plains. Streams flowing from the highlands to the plains have formed a series of valleys known as (from east to west) Wadi Aweij, Wadi Khanzir, Wadi Jaghjagh (River Çağ Çağ), Wadi Jarrah, Wadi Kuneizir, and Wadi Rumeilan. These streams flow into the Wadi el-Radd River, which forms a major tributary of the Khabur River. Especially since the early stages of the Early Bronze Age, very prominent and affluent settlements flourished in the fertile plains of the Upper Khabur Basin with close cultural ties to Mesopotamian societies. Tell Beydar (Bretschneider & Jans 1995: 5-27), Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1936: 1-59), Tell Mozan (Buccellati & Kelly-Buccellati, 1988: 57-64; Kelly-Buccellati, 1990: 119-132), Tell Arbid, (Mallowan, 1937: 117-118, 126; Bieliński, 1997: 203-211), Tell Brak (Mallowan, 1947: 1-80; Oates, Oates & McDonald 1997: 1-37), Tell Barri / Kahat, (Pecorella, 1982; Pecorella, 2003), Tell Hamidiya (Eichler & Wäfler 1985; Wäfler, 1990: 219-228), Gırnavaz (Erkanal, 1983: 131-135), Tell Hamoukar (Gibson, Al-Azm et al. 2002: 11-34; Ur 2010), Tell Leilan / Šubat-enlil-Šehna (Weiss, 1985: 5-34; Ristvet and Weiss 2012), Tell Halaf (Oppenheim, 1933: 1-32), and Tell Fekheriye (Bartl & Bonatz 2013: 263-292) are among the notable archaeological sites of the region, where excavations were conducted between the years 1934-35 and 2010-11 (Map 1).

Map 1

Map of the Khabur Region showing the prominent settlements dating to the mid-3rd millennium BC.



¹For further details on Kaširi Mountains, the attestation of the toponym “Kāšīri/Gāšīri” in Hittite sources, and its localization as a geographical area under Hurrian (Mittani) rule, see Radner 2006: 283; RGTC 6-1, 189 and RGTC 6-2, 70f. s.v. “Kašijara”.

²The mountain range called Kaširi Mountains in ancient texts is known as Tur Abdin Mountains today, and as a geological unit it is identified as the Mardin-Midyat Threshold, which constitutes a natural boundary between the Upper Tigris basin and the northern Mesopotamian plains. This rugged topography was referred to as Kaširi in the 2nd millennium BC texts, attested in the Middle Assyrian period annals (Grayson, 1987: 136, 184; Liverani 1992: 35-36; Genç and MacGinnis 2023: 10-13, Figure 11 - Figure 12). This mountainous region was called Masius in the Classical Period. This hilly region stretches west to east along the foothills of Mount Karacadağ and the administrative border of Mardin province, and it extends north-south from Hasankeyf to Nusaybin district.

³This region, also called the Khabur Triangle, lies in the Jezirah Region of northeast Syria, and covers an area of 37,480 km² between the Tigris and the Euphrates (Davies, et al. 2014: 143). The Upper Khabur Region roughly corresponds to the triangular area between Ras al-Ain, the eastern portion of Nusaybin, and Hasaka.

Boğaziye Höyüğü: The Mound and its Location

Boğaziye Höyüğü, situated at the southwestern end of the Kızıltepe Plain, is comparable in terms of its size and its material culture remains to the previously excavated mounds in other parts of the Upper Khabur basin listed above. Boğaziye Höyüğü lies in Mardin-Kızıltepe district, about 70 km from the city center of Mardin province, just south of Büyük Boğaziye village, and it is partially covered by the modern village settlement. The mound is about 2.5 km away from the Turkish-Syrian national border and 5 km from Cırcıp Stream, which defines the administrative border between the Şanlıurfa and Mardin provinces. Importantly, the mound appears as a large and significant ancient settlement, which was never investigated by teams of archaeologists. Due to its geographical location, the settlement at Boğaziye Höyüğü had particularly strong cultural ties with the key settlements of the southern/southwestern and eastern/southeastern portions of the Upper Khabur Basin⁴, as its archaeological assemblages from surface surveys and excavations have shown.

The high mound of Boğaziye covers 24 hectares and the settlement, together with its lower town, is estimated to have spread over about 50 hectares in the lower plain. The stream running through the village curves around the northern and eastern slopes of the mound and continues to flow south, constituting the natural boundaries of the mound in these sectors. The northern slopes of the mound are very steep, while its eastern, southern, and western slopes have a gentler incline. The Boğaziye village that the mound is named after was founded in the mid-1950s, when rural land allotments were re-organized by a national land reform. During the establishment of the village settlement, villagers drew soil from the slopes of the mound for building their houses, which caused archaeological deposits to be severely damaged and mixed. Furthermore, village houses were built trenching into archaeological strata. The northern and eastern sectors of the mound are covered by the modern village settlement (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Aerial view of Boğaziye Höyüğü from east-northeast and Boğaziye Village surrounding the northern and western slopes of the mound



⁴Notable mound settlements accessible by natural routes from Boğaziye Höyüğü include the following (distance from Boğaziye noted in parentheses): Tell Fekheriye (25 km) and Tell Halaf (28 km) to the southwest, Tell Beydar (36 km), Tell Chagar Bazar (55 km), Tell Arbid (66 km), and Tell Mozan (63 km) to the southeast and east; Tell Brak (75 km), Tell Barri (78 km), and Tell Hamidiye (80 km) from south to north along the Wadi Jaghjagh (Çağ Çağ River); and Tell Leilan (110 km) and Tell Hamoukar (150 km) further east.

Systematic archaeological surveys conducted by our team in the province center and the surrounding districts of Mardin identified numerous archaeological sites, among which Boğaziye Höyüğü was recognized as an affluent settlement of the Upper Khabur Region. Based on its promising surface survey assemblage, the Boğaziye Höyüğü was chosen for further investigation by excavations to reveal the nature of this regionally significant center. Excavations were conducted for two field seasons in 2023 and 2024, and investigations concentrated on the northern slope of the mound in an area where modern destruction of archaeological deposits was most severe. Excavation trenches were placed in a sector of the northern slope where removal of soil had exposed tall sections and had caused deposits from various archaeological strata to be mixed. The research goals of these trenches were to reveal the stratigraphy and the settlement sequence of the mound and to document the building levels and their material culture remains in a stratified sequence. To reach these objectives, Trenches BE18, BE17, and BF18 were placed horizontally at the top of the northern slope where the height of the cross-sections reached nearly 10 m (Figure 2).

Figure 2

General view of Boğaziye Höyüğü showing the excavation trenches on the northern slope.



Excavation Results

Trench Be18

Just below surface vegetation, the topsoil deposit in the area marked by Trench BE18 yielded many ceramic sherds dateable to the 3rd millennium BC, with a concentration of diagnostic finds that belong to the mid-3rd millennium BC. Pottery sherds found in this layer belong to fine wares. They are made of a well-levigated paste, hard fired, and the majority has a greenish buff fabric. Architectural remains of Building Level I were identified below the topsoil in Trench BE18, and a ‘tandoor house’ with a rectangular floor plan measuring 4.5x3.40 m was revealed in the central sector of the trench in this stratum. This is a single-room structure with a tandoor installed in a corner just left of the entrance, and its walls are built of a single row of mudbricks wall thickness is 50 cm (Figure 3). The preserved height of the tandoor is about 70 cm, and its base diameter is 60 cm. The thickness of the tandoor’s walls ranges between 3 cm and 5 cm across its body, and its outer surface is reinforced with potsherds at various spots. In size and form, this tandoor is closely similar to the tandoors found at contemporaneous levels of Tell Arbid (Ławecka, 2008: 564-567, Figs. 4, 6). In comparative perspective, we can associate the tandoor in Building Level I in Trench BE18 with the latest phase of the Early Dynastic Period. The floor of the tandoor is packed with fist-sized river pebbles and

ash (Figure 2). A nearly complete jar and another partial jar with a fragmented small vessel inside, found close to the tandoor, provide informative chronological markers for dating the tandoor context. West of the tandoor house lies a cist-like feature made up of stone slabs and arranged as two side-by-side basins⁵. Such basins associated with tandoor houses were also revealed by excavations in contemporaneous levels of Tell Brak (Emberling, Cheng et al. 1999: 9, Figure 14 - Figure 16) and Tell Arbid (Bieliński, 2007: 463, Figure 13). A small, baked clay figurine in the form of a schematized animal with a broken head and tail was found inside the eastern basin⁶ (Figure 4). Other notable finds found in topsoil include three baked clay wheels, which would have belonged to terracotta models of carts or chariots (Figure 5). Fragments and wheels from baked clay (terracotta) cart/chariot models are a frequently attested category of finds at the 3rd millennium BC sites in the Upper Khabur Valley and neighboring regions (Kelly-Buccellati, 1988: 65-67, Fig. 32; Orthmann, Hempelmann et al. 1995: Abb. 18; Pecorella & Benoit 2005: 32).

Figure 3

Tandoor house' and adjacent contexts to its west, Trench BE18, Building Level I.



⁵The entire width of this two-part feature is 125 cm. The individual basins are about 80 cm long, 55 cm wide, and 25 cm deep. Stone slabs used in its construction are about 5 cm thick.

⁶For comparable examples of zoomorphic figurines, identified as sheep/goat(?), see Makowski, 2016: 67-82.

Figure 4*Baked clay animal figurine, Trench BE18, Building Level I.***Figure 5***Baked clay model wheels, Trench BE18, Building Level I.*

After excavating out the structural remains of the tandoor house that belongs to Building Level I (which is ascribed to the final phase of the Early Dynastic Period), the outline of an inhumation burial was identified in the mudbrick fill of the outdoor area delimited by the tandoor house and the east-west-orientated wall in the southern portion of the trench. The burial pit inside the mudbrick deposit measured 55x50 cm, and the burial was that of an infant skeleton lying on its side in *hocker* position, facing north (Figure 6). Skeletal elements of the infant (aged ca. 4 or 5 years old) were poorly preserved. The skeleton was accompanied by burial gifts that consisted of two simple-rim bowls and two jugs/pitchers, one in miniature size. It is worth noting that the miniature juglet is carefully placed next to the skull (Figure 7). Among the excavated settlements of the Upper Khabur Region, such mortuary vessels consisting of simple-rimmed, hemispherical bowls and miniature jugs/juglets are found in the mid-3rd millennium BC levels at Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1936: 9-10, Figure 10), and in building levels C16 and C13 at Tell Mozan dating to the Early Jezirah IIIa (EB IVa) period (Pfälzner & Dohmann-Pfälzner 2014: 52, Abb. 30). Examples that belong in the same ceramic group as these mortuary vessels are known from Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1936: 10, 30-31, Figure 10), Tell Brak (Mallowan, 1947: 234-235, Plate LXXIV, No. 10-11; Emberling, Cheng et al. 1999: 9-15, Figs. 20-22; Oates 2001b: 182, Fig. 454; Matthews, 2003: 123-134), in Levels 39-40 dated to Early Jezirah IIIa (EB IVa)

at Tell Barri / Kahat (Pecorella & Benoit 2005: 181-186), Tell Mozan (Buccellati & Kelly-Buccellati 1988: 65-67), and Tell Chuera (Orthmann, Hempelmann et al. 1995: 18-54, Abb. 23-24).

Figure 6

Infant inhumation in hocker position accompanied by burial goods, Trench BE18, Building Level I.



Figure 7

Vessels accompanying the infant burial, Trench BE18, Building Level I.



The main architectural feature that defines the layout of the contexts revealed in the trench is a mudbrick wall with stone foundations, which runs east-west and delimits the southern sector of the trench. The width of the wall is 70 cm, and its preserved height is 1.20 cm (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Mudbrick wall with stone foundations, Trench BE18, Building Level II.



Excavations progressed towards the east balk of the Trench and contexts belonging to Building Level II were unearthed in this area. A stone-built canal, running from north to south, was revealed, defining the western limit of this context. The canal is 2.26 m long, and its stone-paved base is 72 cm wide. The drain inside the stone-built body of the canal is only 15 cm wide. Because the canal is sloped towards the south, it must be functionally associated with the mudbrick wall with stone foundations that lies in the southern sector of the trench. The archaeological deposit that the canal is dug into consists of a compact mudbrick fill, which belongs to the Early Bronze Age level. Another canal with the same orientation was identified below this canal towards the north, which we think joins the same canal system (Figure 9). This second canal below is gently curved towards the east, and it is nearly 6 m long and 55 cm wide. Its drain is 20 cm wide and 30 cm deep. Inside this drain, the front piece of a terracotta chariot model was found. The front panel of the fragment is decorated with incised lines (Figure 10). An almost identical fragment is known from Tell Chuera (Orthmann, Hempelmann et al. 1995: 128, Abb. 72, No. 60). In the area east of the canal in the eastern sector of the trench, a floor paved with small and medium river stones was unearthed. In the mixed deposit on top of this floor, ceramic sherds dateable to the mid-3rd millennium BC and a bulla were found (Figure 11). The northern limit of this floor is marked by a wall segment, which was preserved to a height of a few mudbrick courses.

Figure 9

Drainage canals found in the eastern and western portions of Trench BE18, Building Level II.



Figure 10

Fragment of a terracotta chariot model found inside the drainage canal, Trench BE18, Building Level II.



Figure 11

A bulla found on the floor associated with the drainage canal, Trench BE18, Building Level II.



In the southwestern portion of the Trench, excavations revealed a separate canal, which is oriented parallel to the first two canals described above. This canal is also stone-built, and its drain is covered by capstones. The well-preserved canal continues for 4 m north south, and it is 40 cm wide across the east-west axis. The canal's drain is 20 cm wide and 35 cm deep.

Most likely, this canal that belongs to Building Level II is associated with the mudbrick wall with stone foundations that belongs to a building in the south. As such, both canals that are situated close to the eastern and the western sections of the trench must have served as a drainage system for a building complex lying south of the excavation trenches (Figure 9). The central area of the trench that is limited on both sides by the two canals was filled with structural rubble and mudbrick detritus. During the clearing of this deposit, structural alignments of mudbrick were identified in the area between the two canals.

In the northwestern sector of the trench, a well-preserved floor, packed with small pebbles and some ceramic sherds, was unearthed. This floor covers an area of 3.50x3.30 m and it belongs to Building Level II. The floor pavement continues further south, below the canal that is in the western sector of the trench. Therefore, we think that this pebble-paved floor may be associated with the wall in the south. Joining sherds from the upper body of a storage vessel were found lying on the pebble floor, together with a small, spouted vessel found *in situ* inside it, both dateable to the mid-3rd millennium BC (Figure 12). Similar spouted vessels are known from the ED III destruction phase (Phase L) at Tell Brak (Oates, 2001b: 179, Fig. 456). During the cleaning of this floor, we observed that pottery sherds were used as construction material in addition to pebbles. Two terracotta wheels of a chariot model were found on this floor. The shaft bearing is articulated as a ring in relief at the center of these two wheels (Figure 13). Similar terracotta wheels at Chagar Bazar in the Upper Khabur are found in the 2nd millennium BC and earlier levels (Mallowan, 1936: 21, Figure 6, no.

6, 8, 17). Mallowan states that one of the wheels at Chagar Bazar (Figure 6, no. 8) resembles the wheels of the chariots depicted in the Standard of Ur, which was found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur. At Tell Brak, such terracotta wheels with articulated details of wooden fittings come from the Akkadian Period levels (Oates, 2001a: 284, Fig. 304). One of the terracotta wheels found at Boğaziye belongs to the type of chariots in which the wheel is made from three wooden planks that are clamped together with a metal ring-frame (Figure 13b). This wheel type was also found at Tell Chuera (Orthmann, Hempelmann et al. 1995: Abb. 73). The level that the pebble-packed floor and the spouted vessel and terracotta wheel are found show characteristics of the Early Bronze IVa period. Therefore, it can be stated that the wheel model in question belongs to the same type of model chariot wheels found at the Royal Cemetery of Ur (Crouwel, 2019: 32-33, Figure 8).

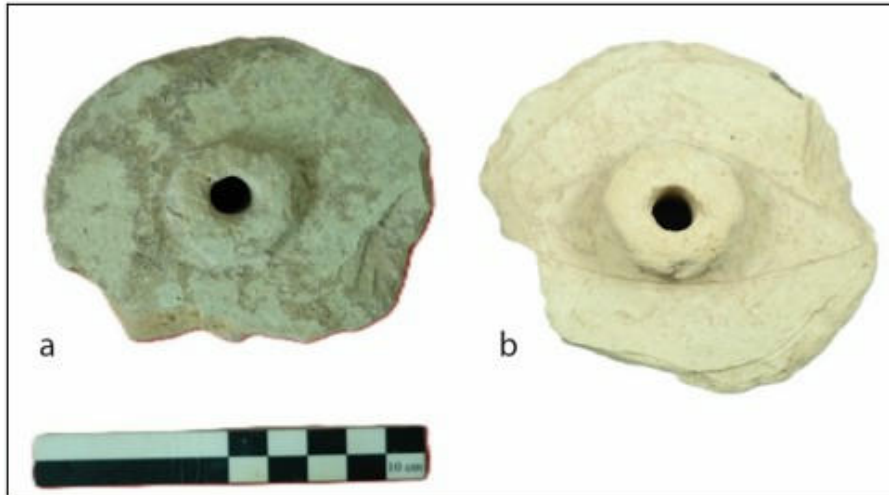
Figure 12

Storage jar and spouted vessel found on the gravel-packed floor, Trench BE18, Building Level II.



Figure 13

Terracotta wheels belonging to chariot models, found on the gravel-packed floor, Trench BE18, Building Level II.



Trench Be17

In the northern sector of the mound, the area west of Trench BE18 was targeted for excavation to investigate the stratigraphic sequence in the area where tall cross-sections of the mound are exposed due to the removal of soil by villagers. The excavation area was extended west into the area labeled Trench BE17, where baked clay objects, including fragments of seven figurines and two body fragments belonging to two-wheeled cart models, were found in the topsoil (Figure 14). One of the seven fragments belongs to an

anthropomorphic figurine (Figure 14h), one is shaped like the head of a bird (Figure 14f), and the rest belong to domestic quadrupeds like rams and sheep (Figure 14a-e). Fragments of terracotta anthropomorphic figurines are known from Tell Brak (McDonald 2001: 269-271, Fig. 286-289, 486), Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1936: 19-22, Figure 5), Tell Mozan (Kelly-Buccellati, 1988: 81, Fig. 46), and Tell Arbid (Makowski, 2016: 19-39, Pl. 1-3). Examples of zoomorphic figurines like those found at Boğaziye are frequently found at the excavated settlements of the Upper Khabur Region. Zoomorphic figurines found at the Boğaziye Höyüğü are similar to those known from the contemporaneous levels of Tell Brak (McDonald, 2001: 271-274, Fig. 489), Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1936: 20-22, Figure 5), Tell Arbid (Makowski, 2016: 41-94), Tell Barri (Pecorella & Benoit 2005: 31), and Tell Mozan (Weiss, 1991: 694, Figure 8).

Figure 14

Fragments of baked clay zoomorphic figurines and cart models found in the surface soil of Trench BE17.

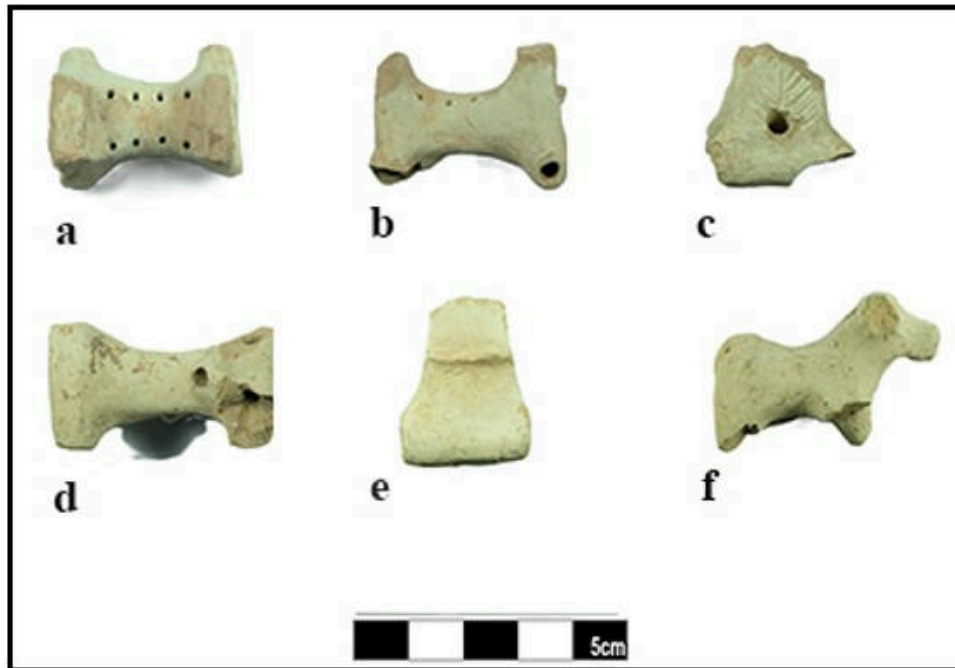


In Trench B17, just below topsoil, a nearly intact zoomorphic figurine and a terracotta chariot model were found inside the mudbrick detritus that had filled up Room 1 and Room 2, which belong to Building Level I (Figure 15). During the excavation of the rubble and mudbrick detritus of Rooms 1 and 2, a miniature vessel with dot impressions in concentric circles on its interior surface (Figure 16e), four terracotta wheels (Figure 16a-d), a terracotta figurine of a pedestalled bird (Figure 16gh), and a cylindrical object made of baked clay (Figure 16f) were found. Terracotta bird figurines (McDonald, 2001: 273-274, Fig. 489) and similar cylindrical objects (Matthews, 2003: 102, 176-177, Fig. 5.75) are known from Tell Brak and Tell Chagar Bazar excavations (Mallowan, 1937: 134, Figure 12, No. 34). The bird figurine found at Boğaziye shows close similarity to pedestalled bird figurines found at Tell Chuera and Tell Arbid⁷ (Orthmann, Hempelmann et al. 1995: 126-132, Abb. 70; Makowski, 2016: 269-270, Pl. XX).

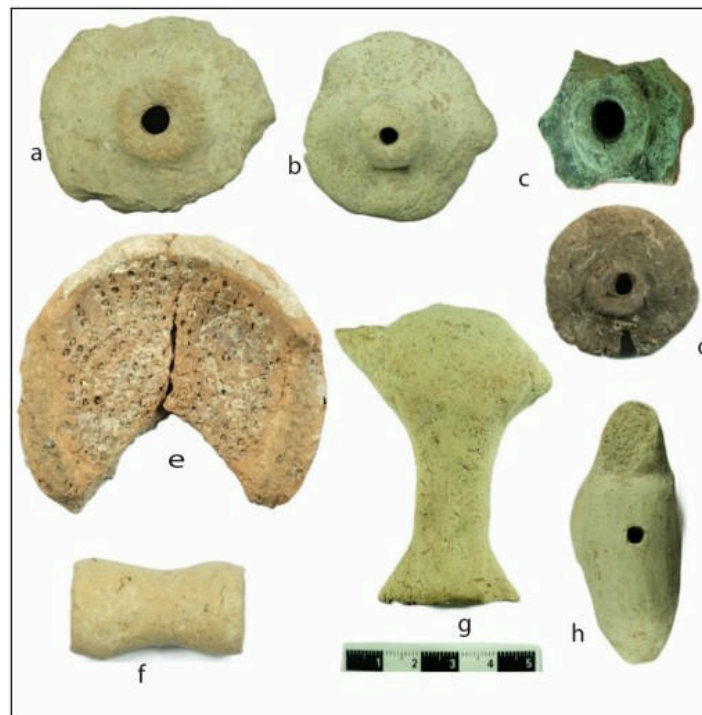
⁷Additionally, for a pedestalled bird figurine placed as a grave offering in a burial context at Tell Arbid, see Bieliński, 2004: 338-339, Figs. 4-5.

Figure 15

Fragments of baked clay zoomorphic figurines and chariot models found in the archaeological deposit of Rooms 1 and 2 in Building Level I, Trench BE17.

**Figure 16**

Small finds from the fill inside Rooms 1 and 2 in Building Level I, Trench BE17.



The zoomorphic figurine resembling a bull and the body of a chariot model were found in the same context. Very similar examples of the zoomorphic figurines found here are also known from the Upper Khabur sites, mentioned above, and terracotta cart and chariot models are frequently found at the archaeological sites of the Upper Khabur Region and Mesopotamia (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 15-47; Bollweg,

1999). This nearly complete chariot model at Boğaziye is shaped like a zoomorphic figurine with the four legs terminating in a shaft for attaching the wheels. On the dorsal surface of the object, there are eight perforations that are arranged equidistantly in two parallel rows. These holes would have been used for inserting wooden sticks to represent the wooden chariot wagon. The front panel of this chariot model is decorated with an incised figure resembling a schematized tree. A hole is placed just below this figure, which would have held the rod that connects the body of the chariot to the animal figurines, drawing it. Similar chariot models are known from the Akkadian and post-Akkadian Period levels at Tell Brak (Oates, 2001a: 279-285, Fig. 487-488). A particularly similar example of a chariot model with an incised tree/plant motif on the front panel is found in the destruction level associated with the final phase of the Early Dynastic Period at Tell Brak (Emberling, Cheng et al. 1999: 13, Fig. 23d). Considering that the decorative tree/plant figures are a diagnostic trait of the Early Dynastic Period chariot models (Oates, 2001a: 281, Fig. 487), the close similarity between the chariot model from Tell Brak and the one recently found at Boğaziye provides us a chronological comparative framework. Terracotta chariot models from Tell Arbid, Tell Barri (Raccidi, 2012: 673-682; Makowski, 2016: Pl. XXXI), and Tell Chuera (Orthmann, Hempelmann et al. 1995: 127-128, Abb. 71-72) can also be considered in the same typological category as the Boğaziye chariot.

In the southeastern sector of the trench, mudbrick alignments were observed in the detritus and further excavations revealed walls that define a room context (Locus 2024BE17-7), labeled Room 1. This room measures 5 m north-south, and 2.10 m east-west (Figure 17). The mudbrick walls of the room are 70 cm wide. Mudbricks used in the construction of this wall vary in size, and three sizes could be recorded: 40x45 cm, 35x45 cm, and 30x45 cm.

Figure 17

Rooms 1, 2, and 3 in Trench BE17, Building Level I.



Rooms 1 and 2 are separated by a shared wall: the western wall of the eastern room, Room 1 (Locus 2024BE17-5) is the eastern wall of the western room, Room 2. This wall is built using an alternating full- and half-brick technique, traditionally known as “mother-and-lamb” bond (*anali-kuzulu*) in Anatolian vernacular architecture. In this wall, the full-sized mudbricks measure 50x40 cm and 40x40 cm, and the half-bricks measure 15x35 cm. The exposed length of the eastern wall of Room 1 is 4.70 m, but the wall continues south

into the southern balk of the trench. Room 2 (Locus 2024BE17-3) is a smaller context; its unearthed portion measures 2.30x2.30 m and it continues further south than the southern limit of the trench. Chipped stone tool fragments out of flint and chert were found in the fill of this room in addition to pottery sherds. The northern wall (Locus 2024BE17-6) of the room measures 4.50 m (Figure 17).

Excavations in this building complex continued and revealed the full extent of the walls of Room 1 except for the northern wall, which may have collapsed downslope due to its location on the eroding edge of the mound. Below the northern portion of this room, a pebble-paved floor was exposed, which belongs to an earlier building level. Adjacent to the northern wall of Room 2, another room was identified and labeled Room 3. The floor surface of this room was well-articulated (Figure 17). Many scattered ceramic sherds dateable to the 3rd millennium BC and a grinding stone were found in this room. The room fill was excavated down to the floor level, and it was understood that the ceramic sherds were used here as construction fill for creating a hard-packed floor. The northern wall of Room 3 has also eroded downslope like the northern wall of Room 1.

Trench Bf18

In Trench BF18 (a partial trench just on the edge of the high slope), investigations focused on an archaeological deposit ascribed to Building Level III. Excavations of this deposit revealed ceramic sherds dateable to the 3rd millennium BC and the scattered sherds from a pithos. Disarticulated human skeletal remains were found scattered around the pithos, which led us to identify these remains as a disturbed pithos grave. Other remains found in this area include pottery sherds dateable to the 3rd millennium BC, mixed animal bones, and two pendants, one made of seashell and the other made of a semi-precious stone (Figure 18), which further supports the interpretation of these remains as a mortuary context.

Figure 18

Perforated pendants made of shell (left) and stone (right) associated with the disturbed pithos burial in Trench BF18, Building Level III.



Walking surveys were carried out on the flat top of the mound and on its southeastern, slopes where cross-sections are exposed, and deposits are mixed. A double-mouthed bottle found in this mixed deposit constitutes a significant diagnostic find (Figure 19). At Tell Brak, such double-mouthed bottles (also called double-spouted bottles in literature) date to the final phase of the Early Dynastic (Emberling, Cheng et al.

1999: 13-14, Fig. 22a) and Akkadian Period (Matthews, Matthews & McDonald 1994: 184, **Figure 7**, 4; Oates, 2001a: 181-182, Fig. 453). The double-mouthed bottle at Boğaziye, which was found inside the mixed deposits of the collapsed section in an unstratified context, is identical to the examples unearthed at Tell Brak. Therefore, we can conclude that settlement levels contemporary with Tell Brak are present at Boğaziye.

Figure 19

Double-mouthed bottle found in mixed context on the southeastern slope.



Conclusions

The Upper Khabur Region stretches as a vast, fertile plain along the southern skirts of the Tur Abdin (*Kaširi*) Mountains, irrigated by the tributaries of the Khabur River. Archaeological surveys and excavations began in the region in the early 20th century and intensified over the last few decades. Results of systematic regional surveys and stratigraphic excavations at mound sites increased our understanding of the culture-historical settlement sequences and revealed the characteristics of chronological periods based on the settlement remains of significant regional centers. Stratified archaeological assemblages also established a firm understanding of the region's interactions with contemporaneous settlements in Southern Mesopotamia. Results from recent excavations conducted at Boğaziye Höyüğü (Mound) revealed settlement levels contemporaneous with the 3rd millennium settlements of the Upper Khabur Basin. Accordingly, the site appears as a regional center at the far northwestern end of the Upper Khabur Region.

Two seasons of excavations carried out in 2023 and 2024 on the Boğaziye Höyüğü unearthed material culture remains that are significant in demonstrating the site's connectedness with the cultural horizons of the Upper Khabur Basin. Excavation Trenches BE18-BE17 and BF18 were placed at the top of the tall cross-sections on the northern slope with the objectives of salvaging the exposed archaeological deposits in this severely destroyed portion of the mound and documenting the settlement sequence by stratigraphic excavations (**Figure 20**). Building levels documented by excavations in these trenches so far show that this area was inhabited during the 3rd millennium BC with the sturdiest remains dating to the mid-3rd millennium BC.

Figure 20

General view of Builing Levels I and II in Trenches BE18, BE17, and BF18.



In Trench BE18, the context which was identified as a tandoor house, adjacent installations, and small finds from surrounding areas belonging to Building Level I date to the end of the Early Dynastic Period (ED IIIb – EJ 3b = 2500/2450-2350 BC). In Trench BE18, the stone-built drainage canals and the adjacent southern building complex belong to Building Level II. Various finds from this building level including ceramics, a spouted vessel, fragments of terracotta chariot models, and terracotta wheels show characteristic traits of ED IIIa – EJ 3a and EB IVa periods (2600-2500/2450 BC). Mudbrick walls with stone foundations and pebble-packed floors constitute the architectural remains of this period. An infant burial of the Building Level II found below the tandoor house of the Building Level I is also dateable to this phase based on the ceramic vessels interred in the grave.

In Trench BF18, ceramics dateable to the 3rd millennium BC were found in a limited area during the clearing of a deposit that belongs to Building Level III.

In Trench BE17, the stratum identified as Building Level I yielded various small finds and ceramics dateable to the mid-3rd millennium BC. Especially, the zoomorphic terracotta figurines and fragments of terracotta cart and chariot models found in the surface soil of this trench exhibit the characteristics of this period. Terracotta objects found inside the mudbrick detritus of the Rooms 1 and 2 in Building Level I show close similarities to those found at contemporaneous settlements of the Upper Khabur Region and Mesopotamia. These objects include four terracotta wheels, one zoomorphic figurine, one chariot model, a pedestalled bird figurine, and a cylindrical object (Figures 9-10). Among these, especially the chariot models and the incised decoration on the front panel of the body are nearly identical to the models known from Early Dynastic sites. Moreover, ceramics, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, and chariot models found at Boğaziye Höyüğü bear close similarities to those found in stratified contexts at many excavated

sites in the Syrian sector of the Upper Khabur Valley. In this regard, the Boğaziye Höyüğü appears as a significant site with far-reaching connections and an important regional center at the western extent of the cultural horizons of the Upper Khabur Basin. In the light of the archaeological evidence from our excavation trenches (Figure 17), we may conclude that Boğaziye Höyüğü was settled since the early 3rd millennium BC by communities with cultural ties to the excavated settlements of the Upper Khabur Basin like Tell Brak / Nagar, Tell Beydar / Nabada, Tell Mozan / Urkeş, Tell Chagar Bazar, Tell Arbid, Tell Barri / Kahat, Tell Hamidiya, Tell Hamoukar, Tell Leilan / Šubat-enlil-Šehna, and Tell Fekheriye.

Abbreviations

RGTC 6-1: G.F. Del Monte-J. Tischler 1978, Die Orts-und Gewässernamen der hethitische texte: Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes, 6/1. Wiesbaden, DR. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

RGTC 6-2: G.F. Del Monte 1992, Die Orts-und Gewässernamen der hethitische texte: Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes, 6/2. Wiesbaden, DR. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.



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