The end of the third millennium BC in Southern Mesopotamia is characterized by a series of political events that, apparently, determined marked changes in the social structure of the area. Archaeologically, this period is still poorly represented, and a general reassessment of the available data is necessary. In the present paper, the pottery repertoire is taken as a case study for the identification of chronological markers of this period. The analysis of key pottery sequences allowed the identification of a homogenous ceramic horizon that characterized the timespan between the late Akkadian to the end of the Ur III periods. Two sub-phases are well distinguished by the presence/absence of types. The cross-dating between southern contexts and the well-know Syrian Jazirah helped in the better definition of the chronological limits of the two sub-phases and the general pottery phase as a whole. Nippur, Tell Asmar, Tell Brak and Tell Mozan have been used as key-sites.

**Keywords**

Pottery, chronology, post-Akkadian period, Ur III, Mesopotamia, Khabur region
1. The end of the third millennium BC as an interregional problem

In the last few years, a reconsideration of the much-discussed problem of the transition between third and second millennium BC generated new significant interpretations and theories, pointing to a concomitance of different anthropic and climatic factors. The historical events that characterized this period are marked by two main political phenomena, that developed starting from the second half of the third millennium BC and resulting in a widespread interconnection between Southern Mesopotamia and the neighbouring regions. On the one hand, the political and economic expansion of the Akkadian empire (2350-2200 BC) left evident traces in the archaeological record. On the other hand, the establishment of the Ur III territorial state and the development of commercial connections controlled by the Third dynasty of Ur (2120-2000 BC) is testified by a wealth of epigraphic data. It is possible that the Alluvial Plain had been affected by the gradual decline in the climate condition and agricultural productivity documented in the texts, and by the general reduction of the site area registered in the other Near Eastern regions.

Archaeological and epigraphic data across Greater Mesopotamia has suggested, in many instances, a straight connection between the different regions. Nevertheless, though Southern Mesopotamia should represent the focus of many political events, the lack of reliable archaeological data impacts the reconstruction of individual site sequences, hampering an accurate chronological reconstruction and the establishment of cross-dating elements with other regions. The high quantity of textual sources had driven historians in the reconstruction of the chain of events from the decline of the Akkadian dynasty (2200-2120 BC) to the collapse of the Ur III state. On the contrary, the archaeological contexts related to this period appear scattered on the territory, and sometime affected by issues of past excavations.

This paper focuses on the problem of the archaeological markers that can be considered the reflection of connections linking the Southern Mesopotamia and the neighbouring regions, in particular the Syrian Jazirah (fig. 1). As one of the most ubiquitous elements of material culture, pottery will be treated as a key element for recognizing interregional interactions and investigating social dynamics and changes. Such a perspective can help for understanding the historical significance of the interconnections between the different regions of the Ancient Near East. In particular, the main focus will be the identification of chronological markers that could help the correlation between the stratigraphy of sites spread in a wide territory.

2. Ceramics repertoires of southern Mesopotamia: status quaestionis

Unfortunately, the pottery sequence of Southern Mesopotamia represents an open problem. The first attempt to study the region’s pottery chronotypology was made by Delougaz, with his substantial work on the pottery from the excavation of the Oriental Institute of Chicago in the lower Diyala basin during the 1930s. This work remained isolated for a long time, and the massive catalogue of pottery presented in Woolley’s report dealing with the cemetery of Ur did not provide sufficient chrono-stratigraphic information. Only starting from the 1980s renewed attention on the southern Mesopotamian pottery provided fresh well-published...
The pottery repertoire at the end of the third millennium BC as chronological marker...

In this regard, the method proposed by Armstrong and Gasche in 2014 for the second mill. BC pottery represents a new possibility and a starting point for the future research. The book takes into consideration all excavated sites with reliable stratigraphic sequences, located in a wide area encompassing Iraq, western Iran and Syria.\(^{11}\)

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\(^{10}\) McMahon 2006.

\(^{11}\) Armstrong, Gasche 2014. Even if the main area comprehends Southern, Central and Northern Iraq, also the Susiana, the Syrian Jazirah, and the Central and Western Syria are taken as parallels in the general comment.
On the contrary, the proliferation of the archaeological activity in the Upper Khabur region and the Syrian Jazirah has provided a considerable advancement in the definition of the chrono-stratigraphic sequences and an abundant amount of materials so that the region can be considered a good case-study.

A new method of analysis has been developed by the international research project «Associated Regional Chronologies for the Ancient Near East» (ARCANE). The aim of the ARCANE project is to synchronize the chronologies, and therefore the histories, of the various regions of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean. Such perspective can help in a better definition of the historical significance of the interconnections between the different regions of the Ancient Near East.

3. The southern ceramic horizon

3.1. Methodological premise

The scope of the paper is to analyze the pottery markers dated at the end of the third mill. BC attested both in Southern Mesopotamia and in the Syrian Jazirah, to better understand the inner relative chronology of that period. This objective is part of a wider research that aims to identify the ceramic traditions that characterized the final stage of the third mill. BC and the beginning of the second mill. BC in Southern Mesopotamia, from the lower Dyiala region to the shoreline of the Gulf. Before the analysis of the data and the presentation of the results, a short description of the Southern Mesopotamian pottery repertoire and the main pottery markers is necessary. Here, a short note about the methodology employed is useful to clarify the selection of the types used in the present paper as fossils of this phase. A typological seriation of the pottery material has been arranged, in order to identify the relative chronology of the ceramic repertoire dated to the time-span between the Late Akkadian period to the end of the Ur III period. The systematic analysis of all the ceramic materials had been preceded by an accurate selection of the stratigraphic contexts reliable for the purpose, according to the availability of the pottery repertoire, the nature of the contexts, and the state of publications. Table 1 indicates sites and sequences selected in the present analysis. All the published materials from these sites have been considered in order to build a pottery typology and to elaborate a chrono-stratigraphic sequence based on the occurrence of pottery types in stratigraphic contexts. From the southern contexts, ca. 1200 published sherds have been considered in the analysis and organized according to a morphological typology. A cross-occurrence seriation table was constructed for each selected site, and then they have been correlated to each other in order to identify similar trend in the development of the ceramic repertoire. The final goal is the recognition of a precise ceramic horizon which describes the late third millennium BC Southern Mesopotamia and its inner variations. The description of the whole ceramic repertoire of this phase is far beyond the limit of the present paper. Here, only the chronological markers of such phase will be described in detail, and they will be used as parallels between Southern Mesopotamia and the Syrian Jazirah (fig. 1).

3.2. Southern chronological markers of the late third millennium BC

The timespan corresponding to the late Akkadian period to the end of the Ur III and the very beginning of the second mill. BC is characterized by a homogeneous ceramic horizon during which the new types gradually appeared and disappeared without clear breaks in the relative pottery sequences. While the

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12 http://www.arcane.uni-tuebingen.de/.
13 Lebeau, de Miroschedji 2013, p. ix.
14 I would like to thank dr. Marta D’Andrea and dr. Agnese Vacca for their reading a draft of this paper and providing fundamental methodological suggestions during the entire course of the research. They are in no way responsible for errors or omissions.
15 The problem of the definition of the chronological phase in Southern Mesopotamia is still open and, unfortunately, still marginal. The use of historical terms such as Early Dynastic, Akkadian or Neo-Sumerian impact the construction of a diachronic periodization strictly based on archaeological elements. Moreover, it is difficult to compare Southern Mesopotamia to the other regions (Sallaberger, Schrakamp 2015, p. 4).
great majority of the types recognized are attested for the entire period, a small group helps in the identification of an inner relative periodization. Two pottery sub-phases can be identified (here called A and B), each characterized by the occurrence of exclusive types. Sub-phase A is represented by the double carinated flasks (fig. 4: 10-11), the conical beakers with horizontally expanded rim (fig. 3: 4-6), the heart-shaped beakers with double ridged rim (fig. 4: 4-6), and the triangular rim, carinated jars with plain shoulder (fig. 5: 4-5). These types are attested at Nippur in area WF from level XIV to VIII, area TB from XII to XI, at Tell Asmar from level Va to IVa of the Northern quarter and at the Main Level of the Northern Palace. None of them is attested at

16 For area WF at Nippur see McMahon 2006, types C-19, O-14, C-13b, C-16a respectively. Type C-16a is described as contemporaneous of its respective C-16b – with corrugated shoulder – even if C-16a decrease significantly starting to lev. XIB (McMahon 2006, p. 73). For area TB at Nippur see McCown, Haines 1967, pl. 81:1, pl. 80: 5, 7 (type 3); pl. 80:18 (type 5). About type 3, the one cited by the authors with outward expanded and oblique rim and disk instead of flat base (from a level IV drain) in not included in this type. No sherds related to the carinated jar and plain shoulder are published in this context. For Tell Asmar see Delougaz 1952, types B.633.570a, B.064.210, B.556.540, C.466.370 respectively. The contexts are taken from the Dyiala project database

17 Bohemer 1995, pl. 5.a.

18 For the parallels from Nippur see McMahon 2006, types C-28 and C-29; McCown, Haines 1967, pl. 84: 3-4; pl. 85:16. For parallels from Tell Asmar see Delougaz 1952, types B.645.540a, C.656.340.

19 For parallels from Tell ed-Der see Dr. Meyer 1984, pl. 14:14; pl. 8: 9-11. For parallels from Uruk see Van Ess 1988,
Other specific markers are attested in both sub-phases A and B. These are tall vessels with cylindrical body and flaring rim, known also from the iconography (fig. 4: 1-3), the carinated rim jar with corrugated shoulder (fig. 5: 6-7), and the tall collared jars (fig. 5: 1-3). Finally, a series of new types start at the beginning of sub-phase A and continues after the end of sub-phase B. They are the carinated rim bowls with modelled rim, both in the smaller (fig. 3: 7-12) and larger (fig. 3: 13-17) versions, the hemispherical bowls with upturned plain rim (fig. 3: 1-3), and the deep combed decorated basins (fig. 5: 10-12).

Table 1 summarizes the relative chronological sequences at Nippur, Tell Asmar, Tell ed-Der and Uruk. The cross-occurrence of the types (fig. 2) highlights the gradual changes between the two sub-phases A and B, particularly evident in the WF sounding at Nippur.20 This fact is particularly relevant if compared to the Syrian contexts.

4. Historical chronology

There is a strong correspondence of types between level IVa of the Houses at Tell Asmar and the Main Level of the Northern Palace. Chronological elements such as the Akkadian tablets from the Main Level of the Northern Palace and the seal impression of Shudurul from the Houses level IVa allow to date these contexts to the late Akkadian period.21 If the ceramic parallels are accepted, the same date is possible for the present sub-phase A, pointing to a late/post Akkadian date for this repertoire. Moreover, textual data from Nippur suggest the same date. From level XIII of the WF sounding at Nippur, four tablets are dated by Biggs at the time of Naramsuen or Sharkalisharri.22 From the adjacent sounding WA50C, late Akkadian tablets and a brick stamp bearing the name of Narasuen were found in level X, stratigraphically related by McMahon to the levels WF XIII-XII, here dated to the same sub-phase A.23

The first change corresponds to level VIII in the TB sequence. At that time, the administrative building was built and, even though the stratigraphic location of the tablets is not precise, we can assume that the building was contemporaneous to the Ur dynasty, at least for a certain point. Looking at the year’s name of the kings written on the tablets, Amarsuen’s year 4 is the terminus post quem for levels VIII-VII, while Ibbisuen’s 2 is the terminus for level V.24 Finally, level IV1 have to be dated to the Isin-Larsa period, with tablets dated to Shuilišu, Iddin Dagan and Ishme Dagan.25 These epigraphic data suggest a late date for our sub-phase B in the Ur III period, lacking levels that clearly date to the Ur Nammu and Shulgi period, and it does not continue in Isin/Larsa levels, because of the clear break that occur at TB level IV. Looking at the comparisons with the Nippur sequence, the level 1 in the Sinkashid area at Uruk is attributed to sub-phase B and so dated at the second half of the Ur III period, as well as level IVb of the Ensemble area at Tell ed-Der.

pl. 12:102; pl. 17: 128; Boehmer 1995, pl. 6: a2, a1; pl. 9: d-f; pl. 16: b, g/h.

20 Here, the intermediate period X-IX is determined by a phase of partial abandon of the buildings (McMahon 2006, pp. 24-26). It is possible that a more precise seriation of the sherd from the other contexts will provide a better definition of the transition between the two phases here recognized.

21 Delougaz 1967, p. 144 (note 3). Unfortunately, the Akkadian tablets from the Main Level of the northern Palace were found out of context (Delougaz, Hill, Lloyd 1967, p. 196). The akkadian king Shudurul ruled immediately before the so-called Gutian period, and his reign is estimated to be 15 years long in a span of time dated to 2156-2142 ±30 (Middle Chronology) or 2148-2134 ±30 (Middle Chronology II) (see Sallaberger, Schrakamp 2015, tab. 39). Following the definition proposed by the ARCANE III group, the late Akkadian period roughly correspond to the end of the Sharkalisharri’s reign until the end of the Shudurul’s reign (Sallaberger, Schrakamp 2015, p. 110).

22 Biggs 2006, p. 165. According to the Middle Chronology, Naramsuen reigned between 2261-2206±30 BC and Sharkalisharri between 2205-2181±30 (Sallaberger, Schrakamp 2015, tab. 39).

23 McMahon 2006, fig. 5. About the tablets found in WA50C, see Gibson 1975, p. 72. For the stamp brick of Naramsuen found in the same context see ib., fig. 69.3.

24 According to Middle Chronology, the absolute chronology of the last three kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur are as follow: Amarsuen 2044-2036 BC; Shusuen 2035-2027 BC; Ibbisuen 2026-2003 BC (Sallaberger, Schrakamp 2015, tab. 39).

25 McCown, Haines 1967, pp. 74-76. On the same subject, and especially related to TB level IV date, see Zettler 2008.
Trying to date the relative sequence identified in the previous paragraph, sub-phase A begins in the late Akkadian period, probably between the reign of Naramsuen and Sharkalisharri, and continues until the reign of Shulgi, with gradual transformation that occur but without general breaks. Sub-phase B points to a short span of time dated to the second half of the Ur III reign, between Amarsuen until the very beginning of the Isin predominance.

5. Analysis of the ceramic connections

One of the elements that puts light on the interconnection between different chronological and geographical entities is the ceramic repertoire. The detection of similar technical or stylistic ceramic features in a wide territory can be interpreted as element of chronological correspondence, as well as geographical-cultural relations.

The identification of a post-Akkadian phase (EJZ 4c-5), characterized by changes in settlement patterns in the Jezirah region allowed to identify some parallels between the pottery repertoires of Northern and Southern Mesopotamia, making the Syrian Jazirah one of the best key-studies for a better definition of the period. Thanks to the well-defined sequence, it is possible to highlight the importance of the introduction of new ceramic types, both from a chronological and cultural perspective.

A particular focus on the two main sites Tell Brak and Tell Mozan will be taken as case-studies.

The carinated storage jar with high and – sometime – corrugated shoulder is a very common feature in the southern contexts (fig. 5: 4-5). This jar is rather frequent at Tell Brak only, where it is dated to the late and post-Akkadian period, phase M-N.28 On the contrary, it does not be present at other EJZ 5 sites. According to McMahon, its introduction from south to north during the Akkadian period might visually materialize southern management of agricultural products, even if its persistency after the Akkadian withdrew could signify the loss of political-symbolic meaning.29

Among the types selected in the ARCANE Interregional I volume, the carinated bowls with profiled rim (fig. 3: 7-12) represent one of the main chronological markers of this phase.30 As shown in the previous paragraph, the earliest Southern Mesopotamian contexts in which these bowls occur are dated to the late-Akkadian period, being a type attested in both sub-phases A and B, as demonstrated at Nippur and Tell Asmar.31 This type is ubiquitous in Ur III contexts in the South, and it seems to be well attested in a wider territory. This type is associated with the ARCANE type EJZ117, and it is well attested at Tell Mozan during EJZ 5, and not earlier.32 The type is also attested at Chagar Bazar (EJZ 4c), and Tell Barri (EJZ 5), while the earliest examples were found at Tell Brak, area SS (phase N, post-Akkadian period). According to Armstrong and

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26 On the subject see Hegmon 1998. In particular, the author explains the concepts of «style as function» and «technology as style» to better define the «social boundaries» between societies and he introduces the concept of «overlapping technology as style» to better define the «social boundaries» between groups (ib., p. 274). The idea of ceramic elements as social symbols for political relations is well expressed in Bunimovitz, Greenberg 2004. See also Mazzeni 2000; Orsi 2011, p. 385; D'Andrea, Vacca 2015, p. 47; VaCCA et al. 2018. The political relationship between the Southern Mesopotamia and the Syrian Jazirah during the last centuries of the third mill. BC is well documented by epigraphic data (see above, note 2 and 3). It is possible that some of the types represent the reflection of social and political dynamics between the two regions.

27 In the collective volume about pottery published in the ARCANE Interregional Series (Lebeau 2014), some types had already been detected that spread from the Southern region to the North and North West. Some other types have been indicated by McMahon (2012), as representative of a persistence of the Akkadian element at Tell Brak even after the urban collapse (EJ 4c phase).

28 This type is particularly common in both versions, with and without corrugation. See: Matthews 2003, fig. 6.55:1 (area HS3/5 level 5, late phase L, EJZ 3b), fig. 6.57: 2 (area HS3/5 level 3, phase M, EJZ 4a); maybe fig. 6.58: 18 (area HS3/5, level 2, phase M, EJZ 4b); Oates, Oates, McDon-ald 2001, fig. 425: 813-819 (areas FS levels 2-1, ER level 1, both Brak phase N/EJZ 4c-5).

29 McMahon 2012, p. 31.

30 For a general discussion about this shape see Schmidt 2014.

31 See § 3. Schmidt (2014, p. 368) highlights that this type is attested from two houses above the Main level of the Northern Palace. Nevertheless, the type is already attested in level IV of the Houses quarter of the same site (unpublished datum from the Djiala Project database. See § 2).

Gasche, this type (type 20E) is no longer predominant after the eighteenth century. 33

The heart-shaped small jars have been recently selected by the ARCANE project, and called «Akkadian» beakers and bottles. 34 They are attested across a wide geographical area that encompasses the whole area of the modern Iraq and part of the south-western Iran and the Jazirah. The first sub-type with double-ridge rim (fig. 4: 4-6) is present at Mozan in one single specimen dated to the EJZ 5 (fig. 4: 6). Another example of this type comes from the second phase of the Main Building at Tell Arbîd, dating at the midst of the post-Akkadian sequence at the site. 36 The second sub-type, characterized by a triple or multiple ridge rim (fig. 4: 7-9), is attested at Brak, but only three specimens are published, one from area HS3/5, level 3, one from area SS level 3 (fig. 4: 9) and the third one from area FS level 2. 37

The combed-decorated crater is represented by large open vessels, quite deep, with vertical or slightly everted rim sometime modelled with a series of ridges on the exterior side, more common in the South. A combed decoration on the shoulder is characterized by a wavy motive bounded by two horizontal bands. 38 Armstrong and Gasche pointed out a progressively simplification of the rim moulding, particularly visible at Ur, where this type is highly attested in funerary contexts. 39 In Southern Mesopotamia, many sherds were found in post-ED layers at Abu Salabikh and at Nippur. 40 Noteworthy is the fact that, until now, this particular type of combed decoration is completely absent in earlier southern contexts, and it seems to be characteristic of the MB I Syrian repertoire, with a higher variety of rim profiles. This form is well attested at Tell Mozan from area C2 (stratum C7) and area A (stratum 4b) both dating to EJZ5. They seem to be rare in this early phase, but their percentage growth progressively in the following phases. 41 It is less common at Tell Brak where almost only rims of this kind were found in layers related to phase N. 42

Besides these very specific types, other similarities in the repertoire can be detected, especially thanks to the great number of sherds from the WF sounding at Nippur. 43

Some types are rather identical between the northern and southern exemplars, and are dated at EJZ 4b-c and sub-phase A. They are the small globular flasks with double carinated body (WF type C-19, EJZ type 99, fig. 4: 11), the elongated rim lids (WF type O-16, EJZ type 77) and the collared jars with a globular body found at Tell Brak, even if in a very small quantity (fig. 5: 3; WF type C-20, EJZ type 102). 44 The beakers with a truncated conical shape (WF type O-14, EJZ type 84, fig. 3: 5-6) are characteristic of the EJZ 4b-c and 5. The rim can be plain or thinner than the southern version, but a small group from Tell Brak shows the identical internal expanded rim typical of the southern exemplars. 45 They firstly appeared in the late Akkadian period in both regions, but while this type is characteristic of the southern phase A only, it

33 From Chagar Bazar, parallels come from Batiment 1 in area D, phase II (Schmidt 2014, fig. 6; McMahon, Quenet 2007, pl. 3.13, figs 71-73). At Tell Mozan, parallels are attested from phase O and P (Schmidt 2014, fig. 6; Oks 2011, tav. 181: 274 – phase P; tav. 191: 442 – phase O). See also Armstrong, Gasche 2014, p. 26, pl. 33-34.
34 See Arrivabeni 2014. The beakers are described to have a sinuous/squat bodies («heart-shaped») ending in a pointed or rounded base. The bottles (shape T) have more elongated bodies ending in a rounded base, and slightly flaring necks with out-turned outside profiled or ledge rims (Arrivabeni 2014, p. 237).
35 Schmidt 2013, pl. 68: K 480, type 2-34.101. Attributed to the same type by the author is also Schmidt 2013, pl. 68: K 481.
36 Kolinski 2012, fig. 9a.
37 Matthews 2003, fig. 6.57: 12 (HS3/5 lev. 3, phase M, EJZ 4a); Oates, Oates, McDonald 2001, fig. 424: 793-794, Brak phases M and N respectively.
38 The ARCANE group had focused on the spread of combed decoration on several types of vessels as chronological marker for the last centuries of the third mill. BC (Sconzo, Bianchi 2014, p. 383).
39 Armstrong, Gasche (2014, p. 69, type 265 A3).
41 Schmidt 2013, type 40.
42 See also Oates, Oates, McDonald 2001, fig. 407.
43 For the detailed discussion of the EJ pottery and its chronological and geographical distribution, see Rova 2011. For a detailed counting of the shared types found at Tell Brak, see McMahon 2012. References of the WF types from Nippur are taken from McMahon 2006.
44 The elongated rim lid is slightly earlier in the Jazirah, dating at EJZ 3b to EJZ 4a. For the collared jar from Tell Brak see McMahon 2012, fig. 6.
45 McMahon 2012, fig. 4.
6. Interpreting the relative ceramic chronology of the late third millennium BC

This preliminary work has isolated a homogeneous ceramic horizon that characterized the late third mill. BC, and that determined a single pottery phase dated from the late Akkadian to the end of the Ur III period (ca. 2200-2000 BC according to the Middle Chronology). This phase is characterized by a gradual internal change in the pottery types, and for this reason two sub-phases can be recognized, here called A and B. Unfortunately, the transition between these two sub-phases is well documented only at Nippur, area WF, where the proper method of excavation and the accurate publication of the ceramic repertoire allow a more detailed chrono-stratigraphic analysis.

The ceramic parallels between the Southern Mesopotamian and the Syrian Jazirah sites highlight a certain level of connection between the two regions that is directly related to the Akkadian influence, since almost all the types start from phase A – in the South – and phase EJZ 4b – in the Jazirah.

According to the date proposed, a few types seem to continue on a certain degree until the end of sub-phase A and EJZ 4c, post-dating the climax of the Akkadian period, especially in the phase N at Tell Brak. As pointed out by McMahon, one could expect that typical southern Akkadian shapes do not...

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**Figure 2**

Occurrence table of the types presented in the analysis (drawings of vessels not in scale). SM: Southern Mesopotamia; EJ: Early Jazirah; N: Nippur; AS: Tell Asmar; DR: Tell ed-Der

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46 Rova 2011, 75.
47 This type is rare in the South and apparently absent at Nippur. It is attested in later contexts at Abu Salabikh, where it is characterized by wavy and geometric decoration known from the Syrian contexts (Postgate, Moon 1984, n. 29, 52, 53).
48 For a general discussion of this type see Casadei 2016, 38-40; fig. 6.
occur in post-Akkadian levels.\(^49\) As we already seen, the southern sub-phase A is chronologically related to the period immediately post-dating the Naram-suen/Sharkalisharri reigns.\(^50\) It is possible that the north-south connections visible in the ceramic repertoire reflect a persistency of the Akkadian influence at least at the site of Tell Brak.

During the following EJZ 5, until now well attested only at Tell Mozan, Tell Barri and Tell Ar-bid, the ceramic horizon testifies a range of changes that can be followed in the southern sub-phase B repertoire. Nevertheless, the appearance of new elements in concomitance with the Ur III dynasty (in the South) and the Pusham house at Tell Mozan still represents an open problem. Phase EJZ 5 is well attested in this context, and according to Volk almost certainly epigraphically dated between Shulgi and Amarsuen.\(^51\) Parallels between the core area of the Ur III dynasty and the Khabur area are less evident, and the main chronological markers of sub-phase B in the South are less attested in the EJZ 5 contexts. Nevertheless, the correspondence of the two repertoires is represented by several types that have a lower chronological significance. At Mozan C7, the carinated rim bowls represent the majority of the small open shapes, and a high variety is attested. Some examples of small bottles, hemispherical bowls with inverted bevelled rim, and the large combed decorated basins found many parallels in the late Ur III/Isin-Larsa repertoire, pointing to a closer date to the final stage of the ceramic phase here identified.\(^52\) On the other hand, a general trend in the decorations could suggest a different level of connections. This could be testified by the spread of pattern combed decoration as well as painted geometric designs that appear in the late third mill. BC horizon, both in Southern Mesopotamia and Jazirah.\(^53\)

Finally, the two sub-phases identified, A and B, are defined by exclusive types, but an intermediate transition exists where markers of the two phases coexisted for a short time. This transition is visible particularly at the WF sounding at Nippur, between levels X-IX, interpreted by the excavators as a short period of abandon.\(^54\) In area TB, the pottery parallels suggest this period correspond to levels X-IX, that immediately preceded the Amarsuen tablets. Being WF XIII dated at the late Akkadian period, this transition in the ceramic sequence could be dated between Sharkalisharri and Shulgi (ca. 2205-2045 BC). In terms of historical chronology, this period rather corresponds to the timespan between EJZ4c and the main level of the Pusham house at Tell Mozan.

Looking closer to the WF sequence, the exclusive types of the VIII-VI perfectly match to the Mozan C7 repertoire, and that could suggest the onset of the Ur III period for that context, as say between Ur Nammu and Shulgi reign.

To conclude, the strong continuity of the repertoire and the lack of extensive repertoire published determined the preliminary character of the present analysis. In the future, a greater number of pottery sherds from well stratified and well controlled contexts will help in a better clarification of chrono-typology of the Southern Mesopotamian region.

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\(^49\) According to McMahon, their presence in a wider area proves a sort of persistence of shared fashion, that lower the symbolic political-related value of these southern elements (McMahon 2012, 31). In this sense, simultaneous changes in the ceramic horizon of the two regions at the midst of the Akkadian period might suggest a trend of connections that continues through time, even if at different scale.

\(^50\) Sallaberger, Shrakamp, 2015, tab. 39.

\(^51\) The date proposed by the author is based on toponym, paleography and onomastic of the inscription in the Pusham’s seal (Volk 2004, 93). According to Sallaberger (2011, 341), the tablet found in the same context can be attributed to the Ur III or Isin period. The possibly Amarsuen year 3 as terminus for the C7 phase at Mozan depends on the absence of the toponym Urkesh from the Ur III textual source (ibid.).


\(^54\) The fact that most of the types continue until level VI could be probably related to a stronger tradition in the ceramic repertoire at domestic level in respect to a high-status building of area TB. On the other hand, it could also suggest that the entire stratigraphic range between level XI to VI has to be attributed to such transitional period. If it is correct, level VIII-VI in the WF sequence are earlier that level VII-V of area TB, as say earlier of the Amarsuen reign.
Table 2
References for vessels in figs. 3-5

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<th>Area</th>
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<td>Brak</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>EJZ 5 Oates et al. 2001, fig. 417:582 (type O-13)</td>
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<td>Chagar Bazar</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ilb</td>
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<td>Nippur</td>
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**Figure 3**

1-3: hemispherical bowls with vertical plain rim;
4-5: conical beakers with inner expanded rim;
7-12: small carinated bowls;
13-17: large bowls with profiled rim
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**Figure 4**
1-3: high vessels with flaring termination; 4-6: heart-shaped beakers with double ridge rim; 7-9: heart-shaped beakers with triple ridge rim; 10-11: double carinated flasks
Figure 5
1-3: collared jars; 4-5: carinated jars with plain shoulder; 6-7: carinated jars with corrugated shoulder; 8-9: sinuous profiled jars with out-flaring rim and shallow droop below the lip; 10-12: basins or craters with elaborated rim and combed decoration on the upper external side
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The pottery repertoire at the end of the third millennium BC as chronological marker...


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