

ARCHEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE LOCALIZATION OF NARAM-SIN'S ARMANUM

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One of the proudest achievements of the Akkadian king Naram-Sin was the conquest of Armanum and Ebla.¹ These events are described in an Old Babylonian copy of an inscription on a monument erected in the city of Ur (*UET I 275* = U 7756, IM 85461):

Whereas, for all times since the creation of mankind, no king whatsoever had destroyed Armanum and Ebla, the god Nergal, by means of (his) weapons opened the way for Naram-Sin, the mighty, and gave him Armanum and Ebla. Further, he gave to him the Amanus, the Cedar Mountain, and the Upper Sea.²

Although it is clear that Naram-Sin's campaign passed through Ebla (Tall Mardikh) on its way to the Mediterranean coast and the Cedar Mountain, the exact geographical position of Armanum remains uncertain. It is now generally accepted that Armanum should be identified with Armi/Armium of the Ebla texts and not, as had previously been

suggested, with Halab (modern Aleppo).³ But Armi is also unlocalized, even though it is the most frequently mentioned place name in the Ebla texts after Mari and Emar.

The Naram-Sin inscription contains, after the description of his victories, copies of captions that record the dimensions of an unusually high and strongly defended fortification, which in all probability was Armanum itself (see below). On the one hand this representation, with its exact measurements, gives the impression of an accurate depiction of the structure, but on the other hand the fact that this fortification is described as a hill might lead one to doubt its accuracy since, until recently, no Early Bronze Age fortifications on a natural hill have been identified.

Here I discuss first the description of Armanum in this well-known text, then the evidence of the recently investigated Early Bronze Age citadel of Banat-Bazi at the Middle Euphrates and its possible identification with Armanum. I examine the information about Armi/Armium derived from the study of the Ebla texts to see if it is consistent

A short version of this paper was presented at the 52nd Rencontre in Münster, during which I had the possibility to discuss the topic with Maria Giovanna Biga and Alfonso Archi. My thanks are to them as well as to Walther Sallaberger, Manfred Krebernik, and Michael Roaf for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. Apart from the extensive passage in *UET I 175*, these achievements are mentioned in other inscriptions where Naram-Sin is described as "the conqueror of Armanum and Ebla" and as "the conqueror of Armanum, Ebla and Elam" (*RIME 2*, Naram-Sin E2.1.4.27).

2. Col. I 1-29 after *RIME 2*, Naram-Sin E2.1.4.26.

3. For the identification of Armanum with Halab, based partly on Naram-Sin's description of Armanum as having an impressive citadel, see *RGTC 1* (1977) 18; *RGTC 2* (1974) 15. The frequent occurrence of a religious center called Ḫalam/b in the texts from Ebla has shown that this suggestion was not justified (Lambert 1990b: 641-43; Bonechi 1990b). Manfred Krebernik informs me that the equation Armium = Armanum is only possible if a plural is postulated. This fits well with the Banat-Bazi cluster consisting of several parts.

with this proposal, and suggest that the archaeological and textual evidence taken together suggests that Armanum/Armi, like Ebla, was already in decline at the time of Naram-Sin's Syrian campaign.

UET I 275: The Description of Armanum in Naram-Sin's Inscription

The Old Babylonian tablet *UET I 275* with a copy of Naram-Sin's inscription was found in the Old Babylonian residential quarter of Ur in the house that Leonard Woolley named no. 7 Quiet Street, and was first published by C. J. Gadd and L. Legrain in 1928. In 1948 F. R. Kraus published a detailed study of the text in an article entitled "Ein altakkadisches Festungsbild." B. Foster undertook a new investigation in 1982. Further treatments of this text are included in the corpora of Old Akkadian royal inscriptions produced by I. J. Gelb and B. Kienast in 1990 and D. R. Frayne in 1993 (with previous literature).

After the description of the greatest extent of Naram-Sin's conquests, achieved with the help of Nergal's weapon (I 1–29), the narrative depicts how Naram-Sin, assisted by the god Dagan, conquered Armanum, Ebla, and the Euphrates region (I 30–II 23). More specifically, it describes how, again with Dagan's help, he captured king Rida-Adad of Armanum (III 2) / Rid-Adad (III 28) "in the middle of his entrance" (II 29–III 10). After the description of the construction of a diorite statue of the king, which presumably bore the inscription, there is an unusually detailed record of the dimensions of a fortification, which had a series of three walls (IV 20–VI 17; see fig. 1). Gadd and Legrain (1928) thought that the description of this fortification, whose name was written "Si-ku-ma-num" in col. V 15, was written on another monument, namely on a statue of Sin-eribam of Larsa (VI 19), an opinion followed by Sollberger and Kupper (1971: 108), and Astour (2002: 64), although Kraus (1948: 81–82) had demonstrated how unlikely it was that an Old Akkadian text should have been written on an Old Babylonian statue, and that there is no reason to doubt that it belongs to the monument of

Naram-Sin. Noting that there are various other scribal errors in the Ur copy, Kraus (1948: 89) suggested emending Si-ku-ma-num to Ar-ma-num (V 15), and this reading has been accepted by Hirsch (1963: 21), Foster (1982), Gelb-Kienast (1990) and Frayne (1993).

It is strange that the scribe (even if this text was a copy produced in the course of his education) wrote the signs in V 15 Si-ku- . . . , when he had copied the first sign of the name six times previously as Ar- Perhaps this is explained by the fact that the inscription was written on top of the representation of the fortification, and thus was more difficult to read. In the following discussion I accept the opinion of the majority of scholars that these captions belonged to a depiction of the fortified Mount Armanum.

This depiction was carved on a statue of Naram-Sin (DÙL-su *tám-si¹-l[í]*), which stood in the temple of Sin. According to notes written with Old Babylonian sign forms, the monument of Naram-Sin was flanked on one side by a great statue of the king of Larsa, Sin-eribam, and the other side was oriented towards a part of the temple known as the Ekisamma (Foster 1982). The appearance of the statue can be imagined from the surviving examples of Old Akkadian statuary.⁴ The fortress could have been depicted

4. Either this was a seated statue (similar to the one of Manišusu; Amiet 1976, no. 11+12), or more probably a standing statue of the king, showing him about lifesized, dressed in a long mantle, which let only his feet free in a window-like opening (comparable to two extant lower parts of king Manišusu, Amiet 1976, nos. 13. 15). The limestone statue Sb 48, with its socle still 1.34 m high, bears no inscription, but can be attributed to Manišusu's reign on stylistic grounds (Amiet 1976: 126–27; it is highly improbable that someone other than the king was depicted in a nearly lifesized triumphal statue). Its character as a triumphal statue is especially apparent through the socle relief, which shows four lying, defeated enemies, who are identified by captions as princes of named cities. On the basis of Old Babylonian copies, Buccellati (1993) reconstructed a triumphal statue of Rimuš with its pedestals with decorated and inscribed plaques set on them. Given the fact that Akkadian kings apparently illustrated concrete victories on their statues, it is conceivable that an especially impressive citadel could have been depicted on the Naram-Sin statue as well (a depiction to scale of a groundplan can be found on the slightly later statue of Gudea as architect, Louvre AO 2). The Naram-Sin stele shows that representations of conquered territory made use

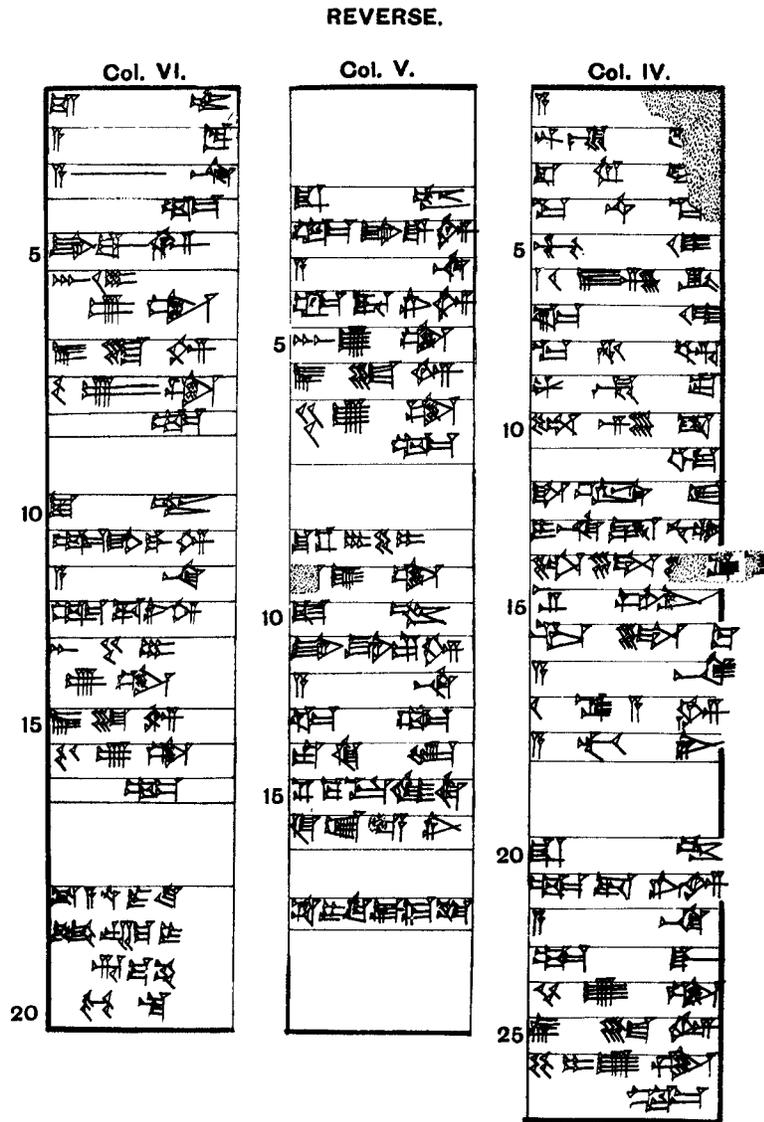


Fig. 1. The text *UET I 275*, col. IV–VI
(after Gadd and Legrain 1928).

on the massive cylindrical lower part of the statue or could have formed the pedestal at its base.

of spectacular heights. Programmatic depictions of conquered cities and defeated kings are also found on a (genuine?) mold, probably from the time of Naram-Sin. It shows the deified king on a high, stepped, architectural element near a river. The warlike Istar, sitting opposite him, holds the ropes of two defeated mountain gods and two defeated enemies standing on their buildings or walled cities (Aruz 2003: no. 133). Captions are already found on a stele of Sargon (Amiet 1976: no. 1).

The text contains many scribal errors and, although it is carefully written, it may well have been a copy, made by an apprentice scribe, of a less-than-perfect transcription of the original (“vielleicht schon fehlerhaften, von Original und Erstabschrift wahrscheinlich weit entfernten Vorlage”; Kraus 1948: 91). This is presumably the reason why the interpretation of several text passages is difficult and why the measurements do not add up to the sum given in the text (see below).

The captions are divided into two groups, one of which was written on the side of the depiction of the structure facing the statue of Sin-eribam and the other on the side facing the Ekisalamma. The reconstructions by Kraus and Foster of the appearance of the depicted structure are shown in fig. 2. The following dimensions are given for the structural elements:

1. Captions on the side of the depiction facing the É-kisal²-am-ma:

IV 20-26: *iš-tum BÀD da-ni-im ana BÀD.GAL 10+10+10 (Foster: 60¹+60¹+10; Roaf: 3×60³) KÙŠ SUKUD SA.TU-im 40, 4 KÙŠ SUKUD BÀD*

From the mighty wall to the great wall: 30(?) (Foster: 130¹, Roaf: 180¹) cubits height of the hill, 44 cubits height of the wall

V 1-7: *iš-tum BÀD kà-rí¹-im/kà-wi¹-im ana BÀD da-ni-im 3×60 KÙŠ SUKUD SA.TU-im 30 KÙŠ SUKUD BÀD*

From the *kārum* wall/outer wall to the mighty wall: 180 cubit height of the hill, 30 cubits height of the wall

V 8-13: *ŠUNÍGIN 6×60, 40, 4 [x] KÙŠ SUKUD iš-tum qá-qá-rí-im a-na SAG BÀD Total: 404 [X] cubits height from the ground to the top of the wall*

2. Captions on the side of the depiction facing the statue of Sin-eribam:

VI 1-9: *iš-tum ÍD a-na BÀD kà-rí¹-im/kà-wi¹-im 3×60, 10, 6 KÙŠ SUKUD SA.TU-im 20 KÙŠ SUKUD BÀD*

From the river to the *kārum* wall/outer wall: 196 cubits height of the hill, 20 cubits height of the wall

VI 10-17: *iš-tum BÀD kà-rí¹-im/kà-wi¹-im (see below) a-na BÀD da-ni-im 2×60, 30, 6 KÙŠ SUKUD SA.TU-im 30 KÙŠ SUKUD BÀD*

5. This proposal is due to Michael Roaf. It is in fact the easiest way to arrive at the sum of 404 cubits (180+180+44 = 404).

From the *kārum* wall/outer wall until the mighty wall: 156 cubits height of the hill, 30 cubits height of the wall

These measurements pose several problems, as follows:

1. Are they based on real, accurately measured distances?

2. The sum of 404 cubits given in V 8 is difficult to reconstruct from the numbers given in the inscription (the reason for much of the confusion with the numbers may be the transformation of the Old Akkadian numbers, written with round elements, to Old Babylonian cuneiform signs). Kraus (1948: 84) proposed that the total of 404 cubits included the sum of the “height of the hill” and the “height of the wall “from the ground to the the *kārum* wall/outer wall,” a dimension that was not recorded in the captions and that Kraus calculated to have been 120 cubits (120+180+30+30+44 = 404).⁶ Foster (1982: 34) suggested that the thirty cubits between the mighty wall and the great wall was a scribal error and that the copyist, instead of writing two verticals and one *Winkelhaken* (60+60+10 = 130), wrote three *Winkelhaken* (10+10+10) and that the originally written distance was 130 cubits. Adding up these emended distances, gives the total of 404 (20+180+30+130+44 = 404). This also appears more reasonable because otherwise the two tallest walls on this high hill would have been separated only by a height of 30 cubits. A simpler emendation would be to read 180 cubits (three vertical wedges instead of three *Winkelhaken*) for the height of the hill between the two upper walls and to add the height of the vertical wall (44 cubits), which corresponds best to “from the ground to the top of the wall” (V 8-13).

3. In Col. V 2, VI 5 and VI 11 Gelb and Kienast (1990) read: BÀD kà-wi¹-im, “outer wall,” following

6. Kraus proposed that the distance from the ground (*qaq-qarum*) to the top of the wall was measured on the side of the depiction, where the distance from the ground to the outer wall was not indicated. This would give x+180+30+30+44 = 404, and thus x (distance ground to outer wall) = 120.

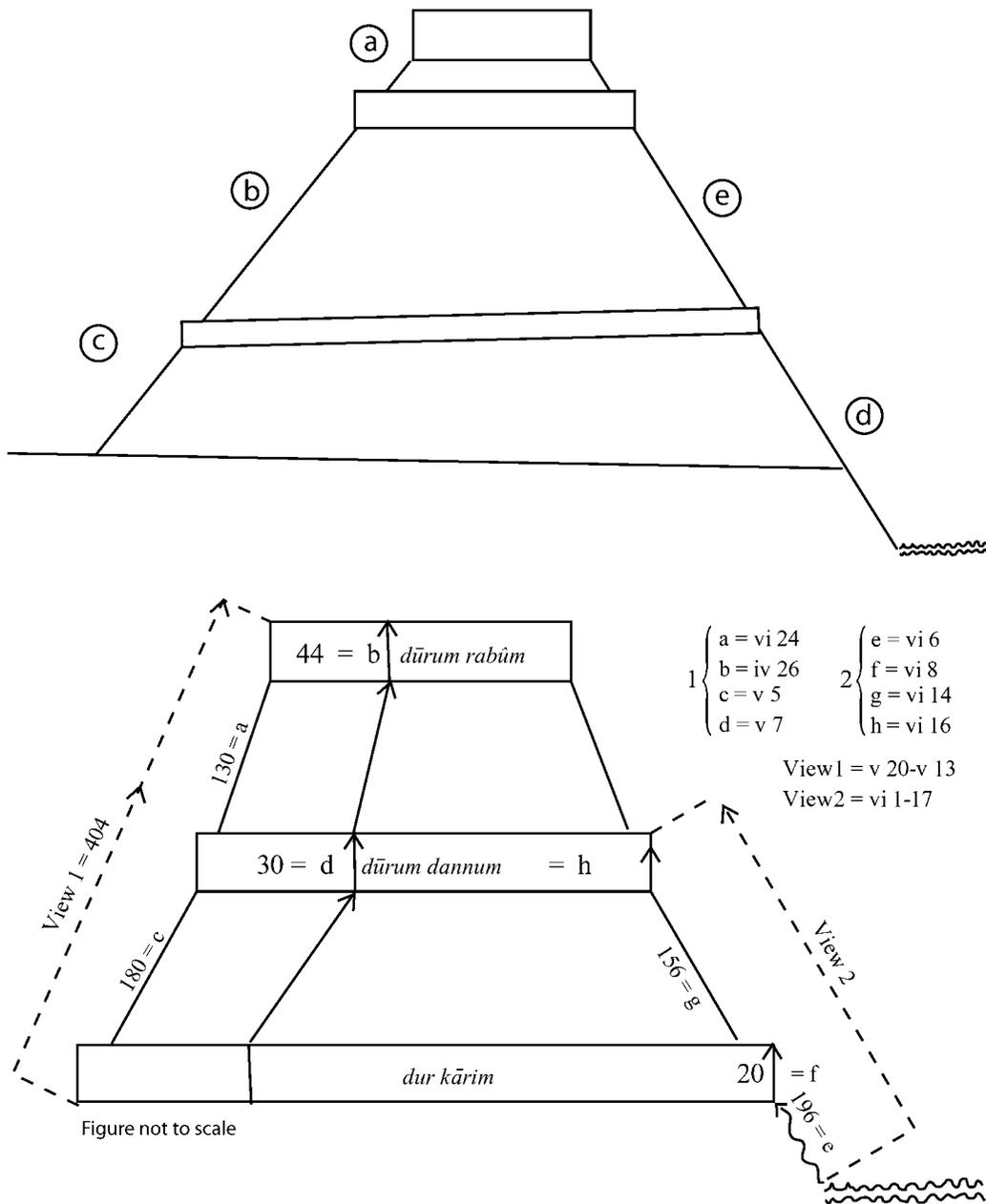


Fig. 2. The depiction of the citadel of Armanum according to Naram-Sin's description. Figures redrawn by the author after the reconstructions by Kraus (1948) and Foster (1982).

a suggestion by Klaas Veenhof. In contrast, Foster (1982) and Frayne (1993) read BÀD *kà-rí'-im* “*kārum* wall.” Neither of these readings can be accepted as certain as the sign in question is not typical of either *ri* or *wi* and indeed is written differently in VI 5 and VI 11. The existence of a *kārum* (a separate merchant’s quarter or port) in Armanum is therefore a possibility, but is not certain.

4. In the first series of measurements on the Ekisalama side (on the left in the sketches of Kraus and Foster, see fig. 2) the distances between the outer/*kārum* wall and the mighty wall and between the mighty wall and the great wall are given. In the second series of measurements (on the right) the distances from the river to the outer/*kārum* wall and from this to the mighty wall were recorded, but the distance from the mighty wall to the great wall was not given. It has been suggested that this was not necessary because it was already recorded in the first series of measurements. Another possibility is that the great wall did not extend to the side of the depiction (see below). It is, however, evident that the two sides of the fortified hill were not identical and that for this reason different measurements were given.

5. How do we interpret these measurements? At first glance one would assume that the dimensions in cubits are vertical heights, since the same word *SUKUD* (height) is used both for the *SUKUD SA.TU-im* (height of the hill/mountain) and the *SUKUD BÀD* (height of the fortification/wall). Even if the vertical height of a steep slope could have been measured in the Akkadian period, it is difficult to believe that the total height of the fortress was as much as 404 cubits (approximately two-hundred meters, reckoning one cubit as about one-half meter). To my knowledge there is no pre-Iron Age site in the Near East of anything like such a height.⁷ To solve this difficulty I suggest that

7. Omitting the 44 meters of the mighty wall gives a height of ca. 180 meters (360 cubits) or assuming that the total of 404 meters is wrong, that the other recorded heights were correct and that the height of the fortification was the sum of the “heights of the hill” between the walls gives either ca. 105 m

the *SUKUD SA.TU-im* referred to the length of a steep slope and not the horizontally or vertically measured distance. Foster (1982: 36) suggested the length of the slope was meant because the measurements record the ascent the besiegers had to make, from bottom to top (to him the illustration was not primarily of the citadel, but of how its conquest was achieved with troops attacking from two sides). This proposal, which is based on the different measurements given on the two sides, is not necessary if the sides of the hill were actually different (see below).

Archaeology: The Search for a Fortified Hill Dating to the Early Bronze Age IV

UETI 275 describes a hill of considerable height situated beside a river, defended by several fortification walls and therefore not a fortified tell or tell of the sort that is frequently found in EBA times.⁸ The fortified structure of Armanum with several BÀD (fortifications, walls) may either be called a citadel or a fortress.⁹ It is quite different from the hundreds of BÀD that are mentioned in the Ebla texts (such as the fifty-two named BÀD belonging to the city of Lu’atum^{ki}, which

(180+30 cubits) on one side or ca. 90 meters (156+30 cubits). These heights are considerably greater than the recorded heights of such important citadels and sites as those at Assur (max. 49 m), Niniveh (ca. 30 meters), Jebel Aruda (ca. 60 meters), Emar (ca. 40 meters), and Karkamiš (ca. 37 meters).

8. For an overview of fortified Early Bronze Age tells in northern Mesopotamia, see Anastasio et al., *Subartu XIII* (2004). At least twelve fortified settlements existed in the valley of the Middle Euphrates between Tuttul and Karkamiš during EB II–IVa. Some of them might have had structural similarities to the fortified hill of Armanum, although these had been transferred to a tell structure. Zettler (1997: 170) states: “By the third millennium Tell es-Sweyhat, with its outer and inner fortification walls and terraced central mound, would have come to resemble the sort of tiered city ostensibly described in Naram-Suen’s inscription commemorating his conquest of Ebla and Armanum.”

9. We define a citadel as a fortified and often elevated part of a settlement that has a special (administrative, cultic, military) function. We define a fortress as a fortified structure with a military purpose, although it may contain domestic elements.

was governed by an en).¹⁰ This type of “BÀD” cannot be a “fortress/fortezza/Festung” but is in all probability a small settlement surrounded by a wall.¹¹

Until recently no Early Bronze Age citadels or fortresses situated on high natural hills had been found in North Mesopotamia or Syria.¹² Such an unusual feature as a fortified natural hill beside a river could only occur in particular geographical situations such as along the Euphrates where the valley is flanked by limestone hills. Within the Middle Euphrates valley, which was densely settled during this period,¹³ the only fortified hill was perhaps Emar.¹⁴ Since it was frequently mentioned in the Ebla texts, it cannot be identified with Armi/Armanum.

An unexpected discovery made in the excavation campaign in 2004 was the discovery of an Early Bronze Age building on top of the citadel hill of Bazi.¹⁵ This citadel is built on a natural spur

of the plateau that rises sixty meters above the valley level. On three sides it slopes steeply down towards the valley. On the fourth side, the weak point of the defensive system, it was protected by a deep, forty-meter-wide artificial ditch cut through the rock to separate the citadel from the surrounding elevated plateau.¹⁶ This mountain spur was protected by a series of stone walls built directly on the natural rock (figs. 3, 4).

Until 2001, our investigations on the strongly fortified citadel were restricted to a trench down the east slope as well as to sondages on the top of the citadel and in the vicinity of the rock-cut cistern at the northwest corner.¹⁷ Although a few Early Bronze Age finds, such as pottery sherds and terracotta figurines, were recovered in these excavations, as well as from the surface of the mound, we thought that these had been brought to the top of the citadel together with the dirt used to make the mudbricks employed in the construction of Middle and Late Bronze Age and Roman buildings. It was only in 2004 that we uncovered Early Bronze Age levels that cast doubt on our previous belief that the hill had first been occupied in the Middle and Late Bronze Age.

The citadel of Bazi is not an isolated structure, but belongs to a much greater settlement complex (fig. 5). In the Early Bronze Age this included, in addition to the citadel of Bazi, the settlement of Banat (village) covering an area of approximately thirty hectares,¹⁸ a massive town wall, the monumental tumulus mound Tall Banat North

10. *MEE* X 34 (TM 75G.1975); see Milano and Rova (2000: 723); A. Archi, *Seb* 4 (1981) 1–17.

11. The translation of BÀD differs: “fortezza” (e.g., *ARET* 4; *ARET* 7); “fortezza; mura” (*ARET* 11), “castello” (*ARET* 13); “Festung, teilweise mit Tor (KÁ)” (Edzard, *QuSem* 18 [1992] 192); “Niederlassung” (B. Kienast, *HSAO* 2: 231); “fortress” (Milano and Rova 2000: 724); “stronghold” resp. “cities with their own territory” (Milano and Rova 2000: 723).

12. No Early Bronze Age citadel on a hill has been discovered so far in the densely settled plain around Tilmen Höyük, in the Orontes valley, in the Euphrates valley further to the north or the south, or in the Balih region or the Habur triangle. A location of Armi further to the southeast is excluded because it did not belong to Mari’s sphere. At Jerablus tahtani, immediately south of Karkamiš, a three-hundred-square-meter “fort” existed in the Early Bronze Age. Its outer wall, still preserved to a height of ca. six meters, was reinforced by a glacis; however, this “fort” was built directly in the Euphrates alluvial plain (Peltenburg 1999: 97–105).

13. The Big Bend area of the Euphrates is in the latest Early Bronze Age periods one of the most densely settled in all Upper Mesopotamia (see Anastasio et al. 2004: map 37, Period L, Akkad/EB IVa; and map 42, Period M, Ur III/EB IVb).

14. The latest excavations at Emar by U. Finkbeiner have brought to light Early Bronze Age levels, but it is still uncertain if the whole Early Bronze Age city lies below Middle and Late Bronze Age Emar (U. Finkbeiner, *BaM* 32 [2001] 41–120; *BaM* 33 [2002] 111–46; *BaM* 34 [2003] 9–100).

15. The excavations of the citadel of Bazi are conducted by the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München under the direction of Berthold Einwag and Adelheid Otto, financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. We thank the Syrian

Antiquity Service for the continuous support. The excavations are part of the salvage projects in the Tishreen dam area. Shortly after the dam was closed in 1999, Banat, Kabir, and the lower parts of Bazi were flooded.

16. A nine-meter-wide moat, cut into the river gravel conglomerate, separated Selenkahiya on one side from the surrounding area (Meijer and van Loon 2001: 3.93). Emar and Fa’us show broad ditches towards the high plateau of the Euphrates valley. In Emar this is called the “vallée artificielle” (Margueron 1982: 17–19).

17. Einwag, Kohlmeyer, and Otto (1995), Einwag and Otto (1996), Einwag and Otto (1999; in press). The focus of our 1993–1999 investigations was on the lower town, until it was flooded.

18. Porter and McClellan (1998); McClellan (1999); Akkermans and Schwartz (2003: 246–50).



Fig. 3. The Citadel of Bazi. The eastern slope with a huge wall consisting of big stone blocks halfway up the hill, and a lower wall at the foot of the hill.



Fig. 4. Detail of the huge wall built from large stone blocks laid on the worked surface of the natural rock.

(also known as the White Monument (McClellan 1998, 2004); Porter (2002a; 2002b) situated to the north of the town wall, and a further tall (Tall Kabir) lying about one kilometer northwest of

Banat, where a temple area was investigated (Porter 1995; Cooper 1998; 1999: 321–32). This constellation of exceptional Early Bronze Age structures may be called the Banat-Bazi Com-

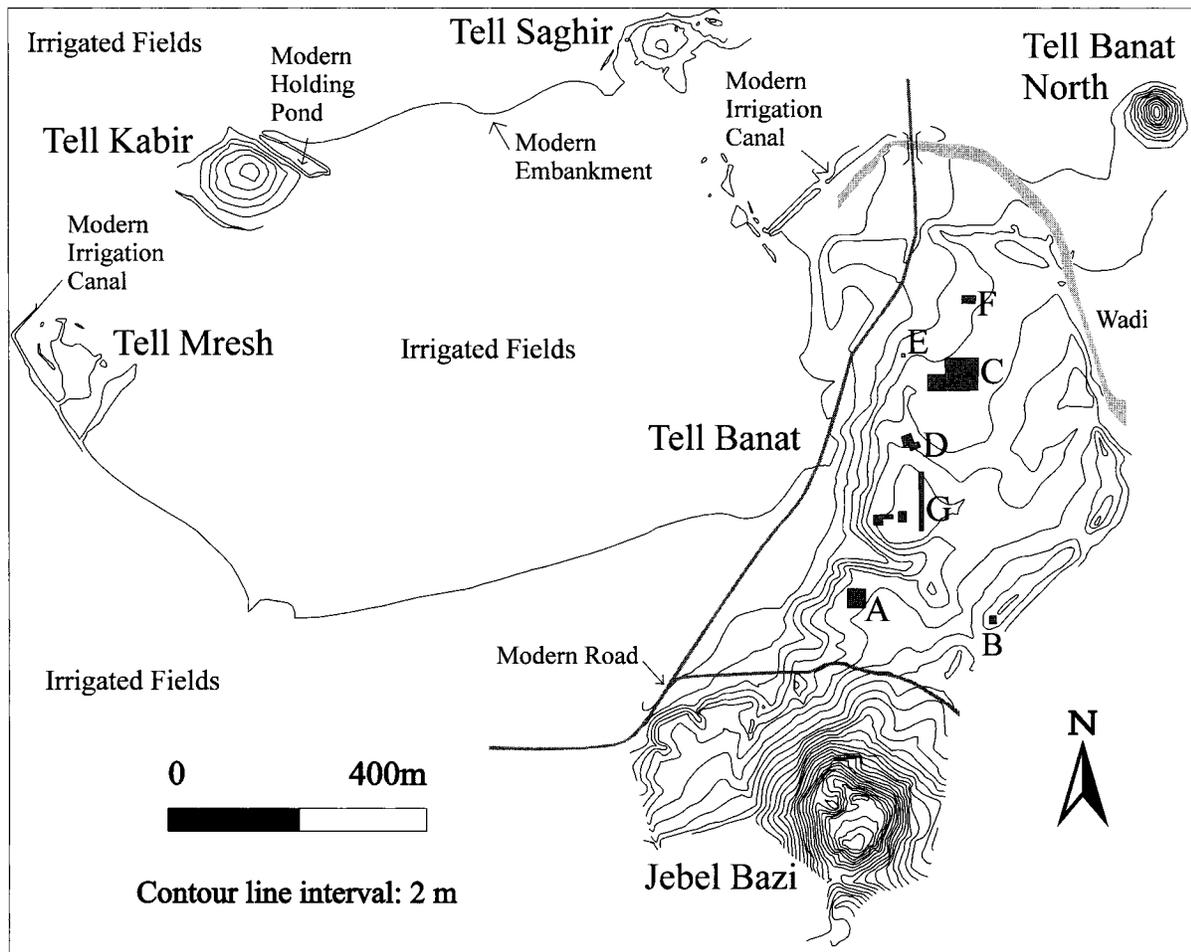


Fig. 5. The settlement cluster of Banat-Bazi, Tall Banat North, and Tall Kabir (from Porter 2002a: fig. 2).

plex¹⁹ while the name Bazi-Banat Complex refers to the Late Bronze Age remains. The Banat-Bazi Complex covers an area of about forty hectares and is thus one of the largest Early Bronze Age sites in northern Syria.²⁰

In the city quarters of Banat, public buildings as well as extensive workshop areas were uncovered.

19. A name agreed to in discussions with Tom McClellan and Anne Porter, the excavators of Banat village, Tall Banat North and Tall Kabir.

20. By comparison, Ebla measures ca. fifty hectares, and Tuttul ca. 36 hectares. For sizes of eight of the largest third-millennium sites in the Big Bend area of the Euphrates, see McClellan (1999: 413).

The period of greatest prosperity of Banat (village) and Tall Banat North was Banat period IV (dated to 2600–2450 B.C.) and period III (ca. 2450–2300 B.C.) corresponding to the Early Bronze Age III and IV (Porter 2002; for correlation with other sites and periodization schemes, see Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 236). There may have been smaller grave mounds inside the settlement similar to the exceptional White Monument outside the town wall as well as other remarkable funeral structures (Porter 1995a; 2002a; 2002b) including Tomb 7, an exceptional structure consisting of five chambers and constructed using ashlar stone blocks with bitumen mortar, a type of construction totally

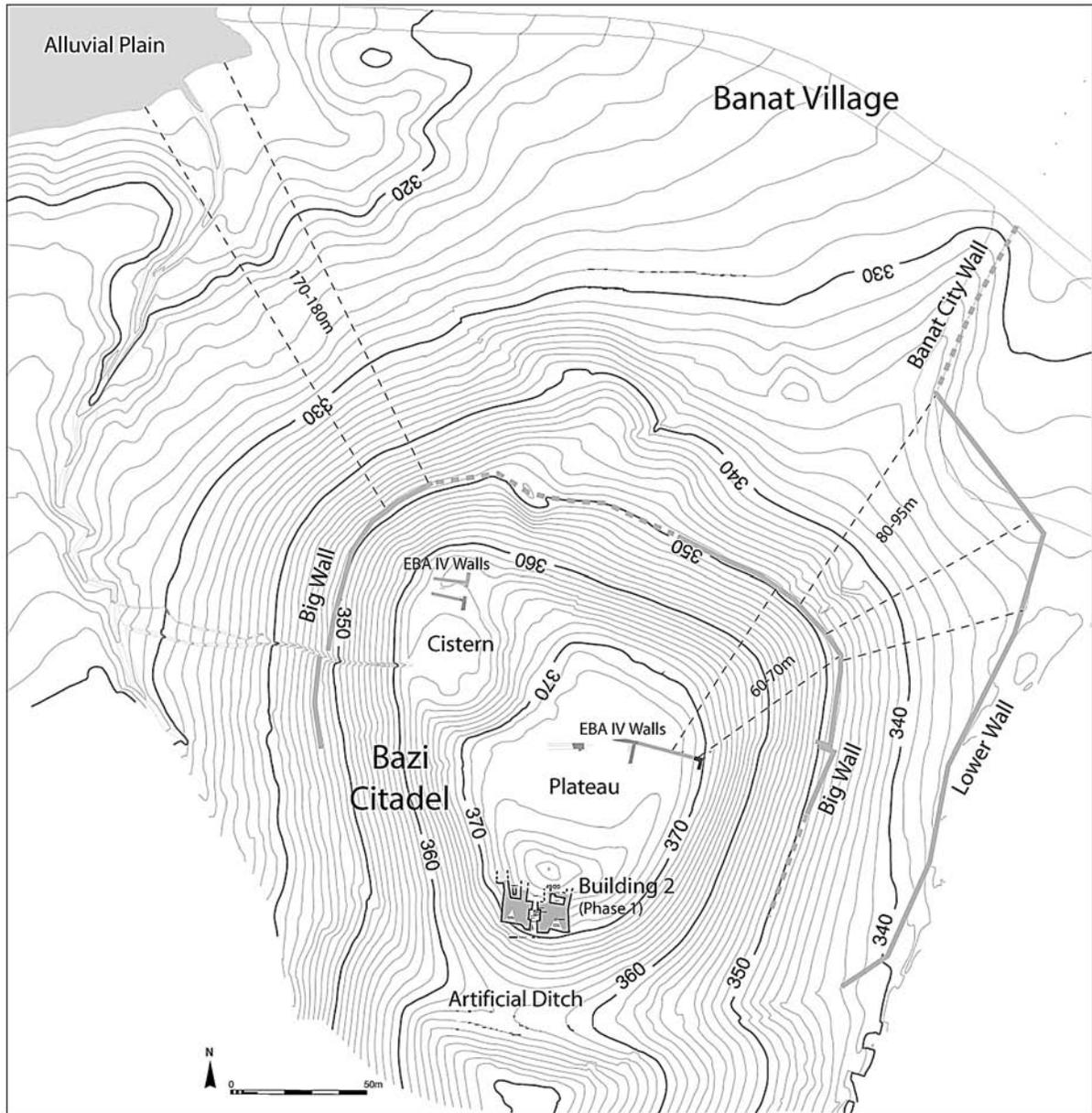


Fig. 6. The Citadel of Bazi with the partly excavated Early Bronze Age IV building remains on the top of the plateau and the encircling walls on the slopes.

unexpected at this period in Syria. This tomb, although heavily looted, still contained precious grave goods, including a miniature stone wig of a composite statuette, a decorated ostrich egg vessel, and various gold, lapis lazuli and other

stone objects that show that the Banat-Bazi Complex was an extremely wealthy city with far-reaching connections during EB IVA (Aruz 2003: nos. 109d, 122–26; McClellan and Porter 1999: 107–16).



Fig. 7. Three-dimensional model of Building 2 (EBA IVA) close to the artificial ditch of the Citadel of Bazi.

This city of Banat is encircled on the north and on the east by a wall. To the south, this wall continues as a broad elevation that runs to the foot of the Bazi Citadel, a fact that puzzled us at first. In the Spring of 2004 when we discovered the remains of a substantial Early Bronze Age building (Building 2) near the rock-cut ditch on the south side of the Citadel, we realized that the whole Citadel including its fortification walls, the artificial ditch, and most probably even the cistern, originated in the Early Bronze Age.

Building 2 (level 9) was in its earliest phase a monumental gate building, the central element of which was a chamber gate (fig. 6). In its second phase further rooms were added (fig. 7). This

second phase was thoroughly destroyed by a military event, as it was covered with thousands of sling bullets and numerous flint arrowheads (fig. 8). The heavily damaged building was filled in to a depth of three meters, repaired, and reused in a third and final phase (level 8) before it was destroyed forever. Even today Building 2 stands in places to a height of five meters.

In the following level (level 7) different buildings and alleyways were constructed above the ruins of Building 2, covering it completely (see Table 1). According to the pottery and other finds, the earliest phase of Building 2 (level 9) dates to the Early Bronze IVA (= Mardikh IIB1) and level 7, after Building 2 had been abandoned, dates



Fig. 8. The entrance to Building 2 (level 9a) covered by thousands of sling bullets.

to the early Middle Bronze period.²¹ Level 8, the final phase of occupation of Building 2, can probably be dated to the late Akkadian period.

The largest wall on the slope of the Citadel is situated at an elevation of ca. 348 m above mean sea level and consists of large, roughly worked stone blocks, some of them 1 to 1.5 meters long (figs. 3, 4). They were placed on the natural rock of the hill that in places had been cut to provide bedding for the stones. This wall is 1.8 to 2.5 meters wide, consists of two skins of stonework, and can still be traced over a large part of the circuit of the Citadel. Only a small part of it (ca. 120 m at the northeast corner) has been cleared and drawn.²² Like all the walls on the Citadel's slope, this big wall was built in separate sections, which jog in and out at their junctions. Its building technique and material correspond exactly to those of Building 2.²³

Below this big wall there is a stone wall at the foot of the Citadel close to the wadi. It runs towards the Early Bronze Age city wall of Banat at the northeast corner of the Citadel (fig. 6; Einwag, Kohlmeyer, and Otto 1995: Taf. 9b).

Evidence for a Possible Identification of the Citadel of Bazi with Armanum

The Citadel of Bazi is a fortified, astonishingly high and steep hill situated near a river, features it shares with the Armanum described in Naram-Sin's inscription. Moreover, its location to the east of Ebla matches the order of places recorded in the course of Naram-Sin's campaign: first Armanum,

then Ebla, and then further west to Amanus, the Cedar Mountain, and the Upper Sea.

A further important indication that Armanum was situated within the area of the Middle Euphrates or in the bordering zone is the mention of the god Dagan:²⁴ in *UETI* 275 the god Nergal²⁵ opened the way to the West for Naram-Sin and gave him Armanum, Ebla, the Cedar Mountain and the Upper Sea (I 11–29). By contrast, Naram-Sin conquered with the weapon of Dagan, Armanum and Ebla (I 30–II 7), but not the area further west. Dagan gave him the people from the side of the Euphrates (II 8–19), and Dagan delivered Rida-Adad, the king of Armanum, into Naram-Sin's hands (II 29–III 6). Moreover, Naram-Sin himself is reported to say, “the god Dagan gave me Armanum and Ebla” (III 23–27), but the Amanus and the Upper Sea were not mentioned in association with the activities of the god Dagan. The area ruled by Dagan—the banks of the Euphrates, Armanum, and Ebla—was clearly differentiated from the area that was conquered with Nergal's weapon—Syria west of Ebla to the Amanus and to the coast. In the third millennium, Dagan was mainly the major deity worshipped in the Middle Euphrates region, and he had his cult center at Tuttul (Tall Bi'a). His influence may have reached as far west as Ebla, but probably no further (see Feliu 2003; Otto 2006).

The Citadel of Bazi seems to be a good candidate for Armanum, but are the lengths recorded in the inscription consistent with the extant archaeological remains? As we have seen, there are problems with the numbers given in the text: some of the measurements are open to debate and others, such as 180 cubits, seem to be round numbers that do not inspire confidence in the

21. The pottery of level 8 is related, for example, to the one from the *Pfeilergebäude* at Tuttul, which is securely dated (also by seal impressions) to the late-Akkadian period (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000: 42–52; Otto 2004: 4–16).

22. Einwag, Kohlmeyer, and Otto (1995: 108–9, Abb. 5, Taf. 9–10).

23. The dating of the walls at the slope according to material and technique is more secure than the dating by finds, because the extant walls were used continuously. Many of them still stood to a height of several meters until the 1950s, when the stone blocks were used to build the socles of many houses at the foot of the citadel and a canal.

24. M. G. Biga informs me that the text TM.75.G.410 (to be published as *ARET* X 2) from Ebla does not describe a journey of the god Dagan of Tuttul to Armi, which would have been another argument for the location of Armi in the Euphrates valley (Archi 1990: 197, note 4) but the year name mentions the defeat or death (TIL) of DUDUA of Armi.

25. Nergal = Rasap was one of the most important gods at Ebla; F. Pomponio and P. Xella, *Les dieux d'Ebla*, AOAT 245 (1997) 297–315.

Table 1. Proposed correlation between historical events and archaeological remains in Banat-Bazi.

Approximate Years	Mesopotamian/ Akkadian Rulers	Ebla Levels	Banat/Kabir Archaeological Remains	Bazi Levels	Bazi Citadel Archaeological Remains	Historical events in Armanum
+ 100	Naram-Sin	Mardikh IIB2	Kabir level 6	7a-d	small buildings	
				7e-f	Building 2 covered by buildings and streets	
		Mardikh IIB2			Destruction	Destruction by Naram-Sin, Rida-Adad captured en Rida-Adad
0	Naram-Sin Manistusu Rimus Sargon Lugalzagesi	Destruction (by Mari?) Ibbi-zikir, last years	Kabir level 7	8	Building 2, phase 3 (renovated)	
					Destruction, military event	Destruction (by Mari?)
		Mardikh IIB1 until Ibbi-zikir, first years	Period Banat III	9a	Building 2, phase 2	Armanum under control of Ebla? (no en?)
		Mardikh IIB1	Period Banat III	9a	Building 2, phase 2 (enlarged)	Several en, military conflicts with Ebla
- 100		Mardikh IIB1		9b	Building 2, phase 1	Several en

precision of the survey. Furthermore it is not clear how and where the measurements were taken. Therefore, the following considerations are to be conjectural.

The largest wall situated about halfway up the slope of the Citadel, consisting of large, roughly worked stone blocks (see above), could perhaps be identified with the BÀD *da-ni-im* (the mighty wall). The distance from this wall to the lower wall, which joins with the city wall of Banat is—depending where the measurements are taken—ca. 80–95 meters, measured down the slope (fig. 6). The difference in height today is about fifteen meters, but originally was greater because the bottom of the Early Bronze Age city wall is certainly much deeper (the city wall is covered by the remains of Middle and Late Bronze Age houses). This distance suits well the distance of 180 cubits between the “outer/*kārum* wall” and the “mighty wall.” Therefore, the interpretation of the lower wall as the “outer/*kārum* wall” seems possible.

Both the height of twenty cubits for this outer wall,²⁶ and the height of thirty cubits for the larger mighty stone wall built on solid rock seem very plausible. The larger wall is on average about two meters wide. A rough rule of thumb states that a mudbrick wall can be built to a height that is ten times as much as the width of the wall foundations: in this case this rule would give a height of plus or minus thirty cubits.

What about the BÀD.GAL (“the great wall” or “the great fortification”), 44 cubits high, which should have existed at the top 30, 130 or 180 cubits away from the “mighty wall?” Several walls of different periods are visible on the surface at the edge of the plateau of the Citadel. The uppermost dates from Roman times; immediately below are walls associated with pottery of Middle and Late Bronze Age date. However, it is generally difficult to date walls constructed on a slope without detailed excavation, especially because the fortification walls were apparently reused in

different periods. Another possibility is that older walls were covered by more recent ones, or that their stone blocks were removed and reused in later structures. Without digging a trench at the top northern edge of the Citadel, this question cannot be answered. But in fact, the edge of the plateau is only about 54 meters distant from the “mighty wall.”

Sixty-five meters (130 cubits) from the “mighty wall,” about eleven meters further inside the edge of the plateau, there is a 1.5 meter-wide mudbrick wall with a stone socle. This wall turns a right angle near the eastern edge of the plateau (fig. 6). On the associated floor of white *Kalkestrich*²⁷ there was plenty of pottery indicating that this floor was inside a building and that the building was in use in Banat period III (Early Bronze Age IVA). The white floor is at an elevation of 369.52 meters above mean sea level, exactly the same height as the white *Kalkestrich* floor in the entrance of Building 2. It could therefore be conceivable that these two parts of buildings, even though they are about seventy meters away from each might belong to a single construction, but further excavations must be undertaken before this can be confirmed.

Is it possible that the “great wall” does not designate a fortification wall, but the wall of a building? Two arguments speak in favor of this: first, a sort of a *glacis* with a smooth solid sloping surface and made out of a combination of gravel and earth is attached to the wall on the north and, second, the 44-cubit height (ca. 22 meters) of the BÀD.GAL is more than one would expect for a free-standing wall, whereas for a multistorey building such a height is reasonable. According to the pottery, the building went out of use at the end of the EB IVA period, but its outer walls, strengthened by a *glacis*, could still have been standing during the time of Naram-Sin.

The side of the depiction facing the statue of Sin-eribam gives the distances from the “mighty wall” to the “outer/*kārum* wall” and from this wall to the river (fig. 2). On the northwestern part of the

26. Similar heights of city walls, up to 45 cubits, occur frequently in Old Babylonian mathematical texts, see Kraus (1948: 87, note 2).

27. *Kalkestrich* is a solid packing of limestone plaster mixed with stones that is used for hard-floor coverings.

Bazi Citadel, the big wall about half way up the slope can be recognized at approximately the same elevation as on the northeastern slope (figs. 9, 10). Further down the northwestern slope no traces of walls could be identified on the surface, because a modern house with a big garden covered the area. Either the “outer *kārum* wall,” which was recorded as being 156 cubits (78 meters) below the “mighty wall,” could have been covered by this house, or its stones might have been removed during the construction of the house. When, in 1999, the waters of the Tishreen Lake rose, a section of a 2.38-meter-wide mudbrick wall was revealed: this could be dated to the EB IVA period by a black Syrian bottle on the associated floor. Without further investigation, however, the function of this wall remains obscure.

Measuring down from the “mighty wall” 176 m (156+196 cubits), one arrives at the foot of the hill and the edge of the gravel terrace (fig. 6).²⁸ The city of Banat-village ends abruptly at this point, and the alluvial plain begins (contour line 314 meters). Strangely, along the whole western edge of the Early Bronze Age settlement of Banat-village, a distance of about eight hundred meters north to south, no traces of a city wall were found (see fig. 5). McClellan and Porter have suggested that either this was due to erosion, and the city wall was washed away by a change in the course of the Euphrates, or there had been no need for a city wall on this side, because the city was sufficiently protected by the river (McClellan 1999: 417). In either case, it is quite probable that a branch of the Euphrates flowed close to the city and the citadel during the Early Bronze Age.²⁹

In the captions on this side no measurements were recorded from the “mighty wall” to the

“great wall.” At the northwest corner of the Bazi Citadel, which must have been the closest part of the Citadel to the river, the slope does not continue above the big wall, as it does on the opposite side of the hill, but a large cistern is cut out of the side of the hill (figs. 6, 9).³⁰ It is therefore conceivable that on this side of the depiction, the distance from the “mighty wall” to the “great wall” was omitted because the “great wall” was not directly accessible, and therefore the distance could not be measured.

To summarize, the correspondence between the measurements recorded in Naram-Sin’s description of Armanum with the distances between the Early Bronze Age walls and other structures on the Citadel of Bazi does not prove that Armanum is to be identified with Bazi. There are too many uncertainties in the interpretation of the Old Babylonian copy of the text, and too many unresolved archaeological issues obscured by the reuse of the Early Bronze Citadel during later periods and by the limits of the excavations, to remove all doubt. There seem, however, to be no major obstacles to the identification of Armanum with Mount Bazi, and no more suitable candidate with a highly fortified hill beside a river has been proposed in the area in which Dagan exercised his influence.

Information on the Location of Armi/ Armium from the Ebla Archives and Comparison with the Archaeological Evidence from Banat-Bazi

Armi/Armium³¹ is, after Mari and Emar, the most frequently mentioned city in the archives

28. On this low terrace the Early Bronze Age city of Banat village and the Late Bronze Age lower town of Bazi were situated.

29. Numerous meanders indicate that the course of the Euphrates changed easily within the alluvial plain. During the last decades, the Euphrates ran close to the western edge of the valley in 2.5 kilometers distance from Banat-Bazi; one branch of the river is said to have been close to Banat three generations earlier, which is corroborated by an aerial photo of 1922: Institut Français de Damas, *Une mission de reconnaissance de l’Euphrate en 1922* (1988), feuille VI, Sandalia Zrir.

30. The cistern probably also dates originally to the Early Bronze Age. In 2004 we discovered close to it a doorway including a long staircase with mighty, carefully worked stone steps. A Syrian bottle and several clay sling bullets in front of the entrance stress the contemporaneity with Building 2, level 9.

31. According to Bonechi (1990a: 28) and A. Archi et al., *ARES* II, 167, the writing Ar-mi-um³¹ occurs only at the period of Igrīš-Halam and Irkab-Damu. Both Ar-mi and Ar-mi-um are attested in *ARET* IV 17, VIII. In the following lines I refer only to the hitherto published evidence, eagerly awaiting the detailed treatment of the case of Armi by Biga and Archi.

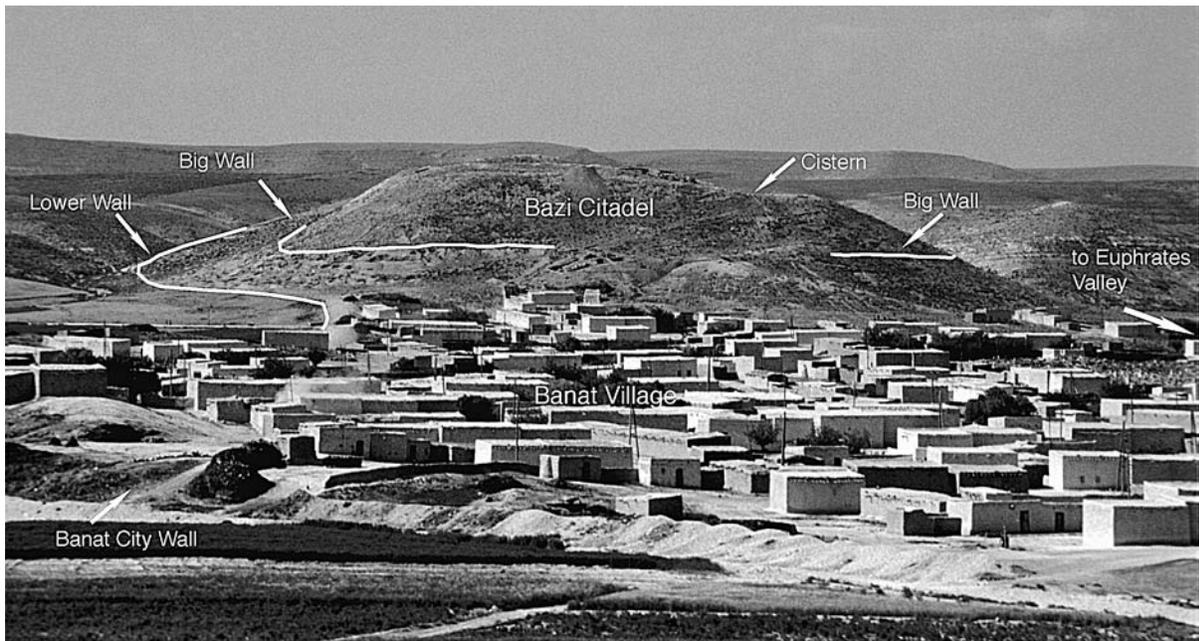


Fig. 9. Banat-Bazi, view from the north (from the Euphrates valley).

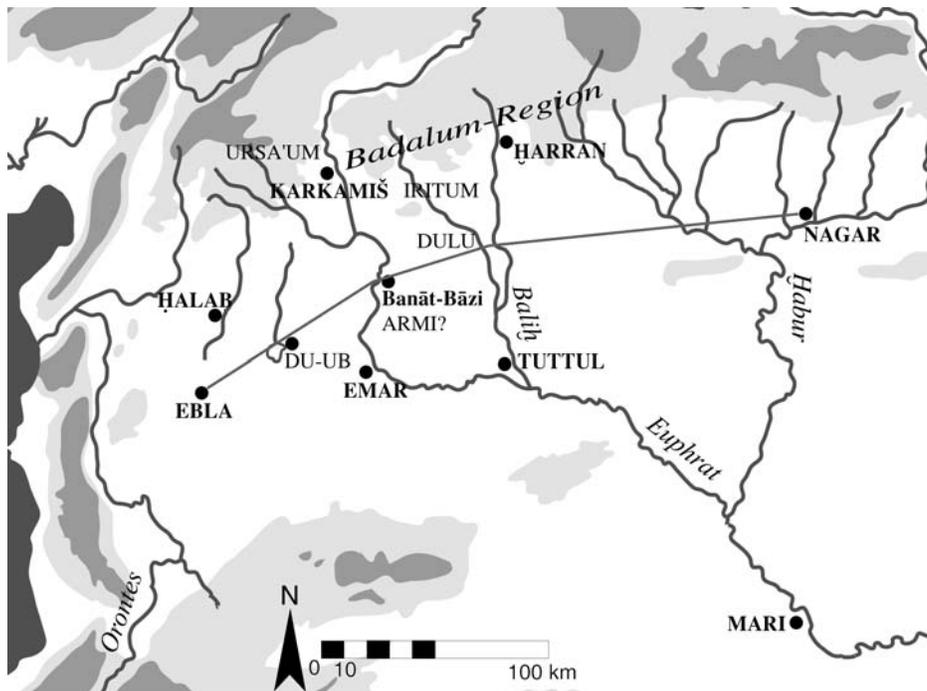


Fig. 10. Map of northern Mesopotamia and Syria in the mid- to late-third millennium B.C.

from Ebla, occurring about as often as Ra'ak (Bonechi 1993: 54). The most detailed treatments of Armium can be found in the extremely valuable works of Bonechi (1990b: 21–31; 1993: 52–55).

Fronzaroli has suggested the following possibilities for the etymological origin of the name Armanum/Armi/Armium: *armānum* “plane tree,” *arm* “steep height,” and *armān* “to throw, to take up one’s abode in a place (Fronzaroli 1977: 148–49; 1984–1986: 141). Given the character of the Citadel of Bazi, a derivation from *arm* is extremely tempting.³²

According to the Ebla archives, Armium had a ruler (en) and “Elders” (ábba).³³ In addition, the following persons’ functions are attested for people from Armium: guruš, KA.DIB, ku-li, lúkar, *maliktum*, *mazalum*, maškim, maškim-e-gi₄, *na-se*₁₁, nagar, and šeš-2-ib.³⁴ The political, economic, and cultic relations between Ebla and Armium were intensive: food ration lists from the Ebla palace archive L.2712 mention the name of Armi^{ki} among food recipients who belong to the palace of the king. L. Milano wondered if this might mean that periodically bread and beer was issued to officials from Armium resident at the Ebla palace (Milano 1987: 519–50). Common cultic activities were jointly conducted by people from Ebla and Armium, and some of these took place at Ebla itself (Bonechi 1990b: 30–31). Many LÚ.KAR (merchants) from Armium were busy in

32. Compare the Late Bronze Age etymology of the name Baširu (from semitic *bšr = to tear off, separate), which means “separated location” and thus—like the Early Bronze Age name—refers to the exceptional appearance of the steep citadel, separated by an artificial ditch (Sallaberger, Otto, and Einwag 2006).

33. *MEE* II 50 r. X: 8ss: considerable amounts of gold and silver objects as property of the elders of A; *ARET* VII 110: Rich gifts of precious metal are made by high officials (Bonechi 1990: 25–28).

34. Especially the maškim-e-gi₄ (special agents) and the *mazalum* (messengers) are typical for the area northeast of Ebla. According to *ARES* II (1993) 31–36 (“nomi di funzioni riferiti al toponimi”) maškim-e-gi resp. maškim-e-gi₄ are attested for Armi, Dulu, Dugurasu, Eden lú Ibal, EN-sar, Ḥalšum, Emar, Ibla, Manuwad, and Sanabzugum; *mazalum* for Amadu, Azan, Arḥadu, Armi/Armium, Dalazugur, Dulu, Dub, Garmu, Gudadalum, Ḥarran, Ḥarḥudu, Ibubu/Ibubib, Ilibi, Kakmium, NI-a-NE-in, Sanabzugum, Sugurlum, Utig, Ursa^{um}, Zaburum, Zuḥara.

Ebla. Numerous persons from different places in Syria and Mesopotamia lived in Armium, or went there in the course of their business (Bonechi 1990b: 28–29). A caravan of people from Armium went to the Ebla region (*ARET* IV 6, §47–49), and a caravan of people from Ebla went to Armium (*ARET* IV 6, §50–55). Could these be indications that there was indeed a *kārum* at Armium?³⁵

Despite its frequent mentions in the archives, the location of Armium is disputed.³⁶ An early view was that Armium was situated near Ebla, because of the close, direct, and intense relations between the two cities. Bonechi (1990b: 22–25), however, doubted this for various reasons, one of them being the absence of typical Eblaite elements within the personal names of Armium and suggested that the location of Armium was to the northwest of Ebla (in Cilicia, in the Amanus region or on the Syrian coast) and not in the Euphrates area.³⁷ He lists four main reasons for this proposal (Bonechi 1990: 34–37; 1993):³⁸

1. Armium is not mentioned in the Enna-Dagan letter.
2. Armium is not mentioned in the Abarsal treaty.
3. The onomasticon of Armium is not Eblaite and several names seem to have a northern, possibly Anatolian, origin.
4. Armium is not mentioned in the texts *ARET* I 1–9, which list deliveries for the rulers (en) of kingdoms situated close to Ebla.

35. In *UET* I 275 the reading *ka-ri-im* is as uncertain as *ka-wi-im* (see above).

36. In later periods, Armi/Armium/Armanum does not occur. Certainly not relevant is the mention of a Late Bronze Age village named Armi near Ugarit (*ARES* II, 168).

37. In the map of Milano and Rova (2000: 729–30, fig. 3), Armi is placed north of Ḥalab and west of Karkamiš. In general, locations on the Mediterranean coast are almost never mentioned in the Ebla archives, as noted by Archi (1987) and Klengel (1988: 245–51). The attempt of Tangberg (1994) to identify coastal settlements, was unsuccessful.

38. For Bonechi (1990a), the trade route to southern Anatolia, the fact that Ugarit is rarely mentioned in Ebla texts, and the river mentioned in Naram-Sin’s inscription (he interprets it as a tributary of the Orontes or as a river in Cilicia) are additional arguments.

Let us examine these arguments one by one.

1. The letter of Enna-Dagan of Mari to the ruler of Ebla³⁹ contains a report about the military achievements of the kings of Mari in regions quite close to Ebla, for example in Emar, Ra'aq, and Burman. Most of the places cannot be localized, but many of them seem to have been situated between Emar and Mari. Because the mountain ridge near Tall Qitar, about five kilometers downstream from Banat-Bazi, forms a natural barrier (the routes along the Euphrates valley stop there and during the Late Bronze Age it probably formed the border between the country of Aštata/Emar and the country of Karkamiš), it is possible that the military campaigns of Mari did not extend to regions north of this geographic frontier, and that for this reason, if Armium too lay north of this frontier, it would not have been mentioned in the Enna-Dagan letter.

2. The preamble of the Abarsal treaty establishes the border between Ebla and Abarsal.⁴⁰ The territory of Ebla certainly reached the Euphrates (Karkamiš), and at least in the vicinity of Karkamiš it probably also included some locations on the Jazireh (east) side of the Euphrates; for example GudadaLUM (one of the *badalum* cities) was probably situated east of the Euphrates.⁴¹ Probably only the cities and BÀD of the Ebla state, which bordered on the territory of Abarsal, are explicitly named.⁴² Within the territory of Abarsal itself no name of a city or BÀD is mentioned. Even though the localization of Abarsal is uncertain (at least a situation east of the Euphrates is generally accepted),⁴³ it is plausible that the Euphrates formed the border between Ebla und Abarsal in the region to the south of Karkamiš.

39. TM.75.G.2420: *ARET* XIII 4; Edzard (1981b); A. Archi, *MARI* 4 (1985) 63–85; M. Geller, *Eblaistica* 1 (1987) 141–45.

40. *ARET* XIII 5; Sollberger (1980: 129–55), Edzard (1992).

41. For the area between the upper Balih valley and the Gaziantep region, which is characterized by state officials called *badalum* see Milano and Rova (2000: 728–29).

42. Edzard (1992: 192).

43. Bonechi (1993: 8–10), Archi (1989: 15–19). If Abarsal is identical with Apišal, it could be situated north of Karkamiš, West or East of the Euphrates: M. V. Tonietti, *MARI* 8 (1997) 232–33; D. Charpin and N. Ziegler, *MARI* 8 (1997) 243–47.

In this case, the locations on the east bank of the river (including Banat-Bazi) would have been the property of Abarsal and thus would not have been mentioned by name.

3. A collection of personal names from Armium can be found in Bonechi's works (Bonechi 1990b: 22–24; 1991) and in *ARES* II. Bonechi (1990b: 25; 1993: 112) noted that many non-Semitic personal names from Armium have typological analogies with the onomasticon of DU-lu^{ki} (names like *a-la-lu-wa-du*, *ba-mi-a-du*, etc.; *ma-a-LUM* occurs in both cities). He therefore postulated that the two were not far distant from each other, and localized Dulu in the Syro-Cilician Mediterranean coastal region as well. Dulu is, however, one of the cities with an en that occurs in *ARET* I 1 and 3–7. Because in these texts it is listed between Ursa'um, Utigu, and Iritum, Ḫarran, the city of Dulu is thought to have been located not far from Ḫarran, perhaps near the Balih, near the present day Syrian–Turkish border (for the numerous proposals for the location of Dulu see Bonechi 1993: 112). Because Dulu does not belong to the “*badalum* cities,” it should be located to the south of the “*badalum* region” (see fig. 10). If Dulu did lie between the Euphrates and the Balih south of the Ursa'um–Ḫarran axis, the closest city to the southwest of Dulu would in fact have been Banat-Bazi (see below comments on Nagar).

4. The absence of a ruler (en) of Armi in the lists *ARET* I 1–9 is indeed a problem, because the cities listed in these documents seem to cover the area of the Euphrates bend from downstream of Emar to upstream from Karkamiš. The accounts in *ARET* I 1–9 list deliveries of goods to many rulers (called either en or *badalum*), elders, and other important people of various cities, which, although formally independent from Ebla, nevertheless entertained good neighborly relations with the state. The order of the listed cities is generally interpreted as being based either on their location or on the relative proximity of one settlement to another. In this case, Armium would have been expected to have been listed relatively close to Emar, Burman (probably somewhere near the Euphrates bend), Ra'aq (probably between the Euphrates and the Balih), Du-ub (= Ṭūb, tentatively

identified by several scholars with Umm el-Marra; see Bonechi 1993: 109), Ursa'um (Ur-sá-um; Uršum of the second millennium B.C., northwest or northeast of Karkamiš), Irritum (between the Euphrates and the Balih), and Ḫarran (fig. 10).

There are four possible explanations for the absence of an en of Armi/Armium in *ARET I* 1–9:

- Armium lies far from the Euphrates region;
- between the group of settlements situated at the bend of the Euphrates close to Emar and those to the north around Ursa'um und Ḫarran, perhaps only cities to the west of the Euphrates are mentioned, thus the list would follow a curving arc moving clockwise from Emar and Ṭūb to the north and northeast and not touching the area east of the Euphrates;
- at the time the texts *ARET I* 1–9 were written, Armi was no longer independent and had no en; or,
- relations between Ebla and Armi had deteriorated to the point that the en of Armi was no longer among the rulers benefiting from Ebla distributions.⁴⁴

If one supposes that the texts *ARET I* 1–9 date to the very last years of Ibbi-zikir, that is the years immediately before the destruction of Ebla,⁴⁵ there are, in my opinion, many arguments in favor of the third or fourth possibility:

- In *ARET I* 1–9 textile deliveries are mentioned to persons from Armium, but not to the en of Armium. This could either indicate that Armium still existed but had lost its en or that the en did not receive gifts due to unfavorable mutual relations.

44. This explanation, which at the moment seems to be the best, was pointed out to me by M. G. Biga. She observes that the behavior of Ebla towards the en of Armi would in this case be paralleled by Ebla's behavior towards the ruler of Mari, both excluded from the distribution of gifts at this time.

45. According to Biga (1996: 32) *ARET I* 1–8 and *ARET VIII* 523, 531 refer to a sequence of years, which include year Ibbi-zikir 8 or 9 (TM.75.G.2428 is related to *ARET I* 1) and therefore should date from the Ebla's very last years. For the chronology of kings and ministers of Ebla see Archi and Biga (2003).

- For the preceding period, lists of textile allocations mention the en of Armium together with other ens of the Euphrates region; e.g., in *MEE II* 37, the en of Armium appears (r. XI 5'–6') before the en of Kakmium (r. XI 17'–18') and the son of the en of Manuwat (v. I 6–7). Also, precious metal allocations (e.g., *MEE X* 27) mention, after the en of Armium (v. III:1–2), the en of Manuwat (v. V: 1–2), and the son of the en of Ra'aq (v. V: 7–8).
- Another argument in favor of the third explanation could be the fact that important cities seem to have lost their independence at the time of Ibbi-zikir; e.g., references to the en of Ḫazuwan stop with Ibrium (Milano and Rova 2000: 730). Furthermore, the existence of an en during the very last years of Ebla is not absolutely certain. At first glance it seems that Armium was governed by an en for the duration of the Ebla archives: *MEE X* 27 passim (time of the kings Igriš-Halab or Irkab-damu of Ebla), *ARES II* 168 (minister Arrukum), *MEE X* 4 r. VI: 5 (year when king Irkab-damu died). Also during the time of minister Ibrium there is evidence of an en of Armium (TM.75.G.1457). So far, thirteen references to an en of Armium have been published.⁴⁶ From the time of minister Ibbi-zikir (the last seventeen years of Ebla) three texts mention the en of Armium⁴⁷: *MEE X* 29, dated to the year Ibbi-zikir 4 or 5,⁴⁸ and *ARET VIII* 534, r. XII: 12'–13'.⁴⁹ This text (TM.76.G.534), one of the Annual Accounts

46. *ARET III* 232 r.I:4'; *ARET III* 686 v.I:3; *ARET VII* 22 r.I:5; *ARET VII* 79 v.I:3; *ARET VIII* 534 r.XII:13'; *MEE II* 37 r.XI:6; *MEE X* 4 r. VI:5; *MEE X* 27 r. VII':1–2, VIII':5–6, IX':6; v. III: 2; *MEE X* 29 r. V:12,23; *MEE X* 35 r. III:2, III:6, IV:4, V:6 (royal family of Armium: en, *maliktum*, *dumu-munus* en, *dumu-nita* en).

47. To the two texts *MEE X* 29 and *ARET VIII* 534 can be added another text (RAM 10074) of the year Ibbi-zikir 7 (information kindly provided by A. Archi).

48. For the dating of the texts, see Archi (1996: 73–99). The position of the texts within the first five years of Ibbi-zikir is certain according to the sequence of priestesses (first Tinitum-Dulum + Tarib-Damu, than Amaga + Tarib-Damu).

49. (r. XII: 11'–15'): níg-mul(AN.AN.AN.AN) en ar-mi^{ki} nígkas₄ i-ti.

of Delivery of Metals (CAM), is tentatively dated to the year Ibbi-zikir 12 (Archi and Biga 2003: 9; Archi 1996: 78–93), but Archi stressed the uncertain position of this text, because it is fragmentary and the personal names, which serve to establish the texts' sequence, are largely destroyed.

- There are several arguments in favor of the fourth explanation: The deterioration of the Ebla-Armi relations is underlined by numerous military actions against Armium, mentioned in the later administrative texts from Ebla.⁵⁰ Apparently several armed conflicts between Armium and Ebla during Ibrum's time precede the defeat of Armium at the time of Ibbi-zikir.⁵¹ *ARET* III 737 r. V 1'-11' mentions a military campaign (MĒ) of Ibrum against Armi.
- An important moment in the fate of Armium is described in *ARET* XIII 16–17 (TM.75.G.1689/TM.75.G.2320)⁵²; the text begins (§ 1): ar-mi^{ki} ì-ti si-in l šu iri^{ki} wa alġ-tuš nu-šu-ra ^dan-gub-ma nu-íl, which may possibly be interpreted as: "Armi came into the hands of the city (= Ebla) and keeps quiet without fighting, it does not set up the Angubbu gods." It continues with instructions for rites, which seem to be associated with the maintenance of the peace between Armium and Ebla. The text is dated to Ibbi-zikir and may refer to the capitulation of Armium and its incorporation into the sphere of influence of the Eblaite state. Perhaps related to this event is the reflex of a treaty between Ebla and Armium in TM.75.G.1477 (*MEE* III 66; *ARET* XIII 18): the people of Armi have to confirm their alliance with Ebla every year; in case of breach of contract they could get the death penalty. In the following § 5,

Armium's position on the route to Nagar is stressed, which could be a clue as to the background of this alliance (see below s.v. Nagar). In the text *ARET* XIII 16–18, only the inhabitants of the city of Armium are mentioned, not the en.

- *ARET* XIII 18, quoted above, as well as the frequent mention of LÚ.KAR of Armium, could indicate that Armium's special importance for Ebla lay in its position on the route from Ebla to the Habur triangle, especially to Nagar (Tell Braq). According to Archi and Biga (2003: 13), Ebla utilized two routes towards the East, the southern route, leading down the Euphrates and passing by Mari, and thus being sometimes problematic, and the northern route, controlled by Ebla up to Nagar. A route high up in the north, approximately at the height of Karkamiš and Ḫarran, or even further north, in the region of Titriš Höyük, would have required a considerable detour. Therefore, its course further to the south, but far enough away from Tuttul and the southern part of the Balih valley, which belonged to the sphere of Mari (Archi and Biga 2003: 11), seems more reasonable (fig. 10). Banat-Bazi was the starting point of the southernmost route crossing the western Jezira region between the Euphrates and the Balih.⁵³ One of the easy crossings of the Euphrates was located near Banat-Bazi and was used until 1999. The frequent mention of merchants and messengers to and from Armium in the Ebla texts may indicate the importance of Banat-Bazi as a transit station on this route.
- Several texts mention Armium connected to transactions with Nagar. Especially at the time of Ibbi-zikir, the relations between Ebla and Nagar seem to have been strengthened, probably as a reaction to the dominance of

50. Therefore Bonechi wonders if Armium actively contributed to the end of Ebla (1993: 54).

51. As M. G. Biga stated at the ARCANE-workshop in July 2006 in Munich, there were military expeditions against Armi in at least the years Ibrum 8 and Ibbi-zikir 14 (I am grateful to her for this information).

52. = *ARET* II 34; see also Krebernik (1996: 22).

53. The results of our survey conducted in this region have not yet been published. For short preliminary reports see Einwag (1993: 23–43; 1993/1994: 299–301; note that the caption to the figure has been omitted).

Mari.⁵⁴ Text TM.75.G.1248 may refer to a military expedition to Armium (níg-kaš₄ Ar-mi^{ki}), which was conducted on one side by Ib-bi-zikir of Ebla, on the other side by the kings of Nagar and Kiš (Biga 1998: 18–19).⁵⁵ Afterwards we see the king of Nagar traveling to Ebla because of the dynastic marriage between Ebla and Nagar. It seems as if Armium was violently deprived of its independence when relations between Ebla and Nagar intensified. The numerous references to Armium (but not of the end of Armium) within the final three years of Ebla (*ARET IX*), in particular point to Armium's role as a point of transit between Ebla and the Habur triangle. Merchants and messengers from Armium, Darhatu, and Dulu heading for Nagar are frequently mentioned with the same order sequence of the place names (e.g., *ARET IX* 82–84), thus perhaps referring to an itinerary from Armium towards the Balih (see above for the location of Dulu between the Euphrates and the Balih).

Further arguments for the identification of Armium with Banat-Bazi can be derived from the mentioning together with other cities in the Euphrates region and in the Jezira: In *ARET VIII* 522 (§ 15) a joint action of 120 people (*na-se₁₁*) from Armium and of 180 people from A-ba-tum heading for GudadaLUM is mentioned. We need not therefore assume a large distance between A-ba-tum and Armium. A-ba-tum should in all probability be identified with the Old Babylonian Abattum, which is to be located in the impressive Tall eth-Thaidiyain between modern Tabqa and Mansura.⁵⁶ GudadaLUM, which is mentioned in

ARET I 1–9 mostly after Sanabzugum or Ursa'um, has to be located somewhere between the Euphrates and the Balih. On the other hand, Armium is mentioned together with Ḫarran and Utigu (*ARET VIII* 527, §14; Bonechi 1990b: 27).⁵⁷ For further occurrences of Armium together with other locations of the Middle Euphrates region see above.

The Historical Situation of Armium and Ebla from their First Destruction to the Campaign of Naram-Sin

From the evidence of the texts from Ebla it is thus probable that Armium still existed in the last years before Ebla was destroyed, that is, in the second half of the period when Ib-bi-zikir was minister, but that its relations with Ebla deteriorated and it perhaps even came under the control of Ebla after a series of military campaigns in the time of Ibrum and at the beginning of the rule of Ib-bi-zikir. With the end of the Ebla archives, all information concerning Armium comes to an end as well. When, almost a century later, Naram-Sin came to destroy Armium, it was once again ruled by an independent king.

In Banat-Bazi there are several indications in the archaeological record for at least two major hostile attacks (Table 1). Banat (period III) with its monumental official building and its large funerary monuments seems to have been abandoned at the end of Early Bronze IVa and was not reoccupied until the Late Bronze Age. Building 2 (level 9) on the citadel of Bazi was partly destroyed. Its violent end is attested by the thousands of sling bullets and numerous arrowheads found in the entranceway and around the building as well as by the hurried blocking of the gateway (fig. 8). During this attack, Building 2 was so badly damaged that only after the rooms had been filled to a height of three meters could it be reused. In addition, we found the remains of a human skeleton mixed in with the sling bullets in the fill of one of the rooms. This last reuse phase of Build-

54. Archi (1998: 1–15). Several journeys of Ib-bi-zikir to Nagar are attested, e.g., *ARET IX* 93, 94, 95; Archi and Biga (2003).

55. M. G. Biga was able to reconstruct the two texts concerning this event completely: 75.G.1249+10082+4058 (= *ARET III* 937) and 75.G.1250+10081+5314 (= *ARET XII* 874).

56. Kohlmeyer (1984: 112; 1986: 52). Meyer (1996: 165 with note 110) concluded that A-ba-tum of the Ebla archives could not be identical with Old Babylonian Abattum, because he considered the location of Armium in western Syria as definite.

57. Utigu is mentioned in *ARET I* 1–4, 6, 7 between Ursa'um and Dulu or Irritum and Ḫarran.

ing 2 (level 8) was violently destroyed as well. Afterwards the area was built over with quite different structures.

How can the information derived from the texts be correlated with the archaeological remains? There are two possible candidates for the attacker who put an end to Banat period III and Bazi-Citadel level 9: either the people of Ebla, or the same enemy who was responsible for Ebla's destruction (Mardikh IIB1), which, if Archi and Biga (2003) are correct, would be Mari. Because the destructions are so massive, and because they put a complete end to the lower town of Banat, Mari is a more likely candidate than the people of Ebla who had a vivid interest in this important stage on the caravan route to the east and especially to Nagar. When Ebla lost control over this region, it was possible again for a ruler to be installed at Armiium.⁵⁸

The archaeological evidence could be interpreted as follows: Building 2 beside the rock-cut ditch, as well as any other buildings that were standing on the citadel, were repaired and re-occupied for a last time (Bazi level 8).⁵⁹ According to the excavators, the lower town of Banat experienced its floruit in the Early Bronze III (Banat Period IV) and Early Bronze IVa (Banat Period III = Mardikh IIB1) periods.⁶⁰ In the Early Bronze IVb period (= Mardikh IIB2), it seems mostly to have been abandoned, with the exception of the workshop quarter where pottery production continued in Area G, for example. The mound of Tall Kabir not far to the northwest of Bazi continued to be occupied.⁶¹

58. A parallel case is recorded from Tall Sweyhat not far to the south of Banat-Bazi: its rise occurred only when Ebla's power had ceased (Zettler 1997).

59. We are at the very beginning of the investigation of the Early Bronze Age citadel.

60. The terminology concerning these periods is a problem and the target of several current projects. In this paper, concerning mainly the relationship with Ebla, I have chosen the terminology of Ebla.

61. This period, which is attested at Tall Kabir and on the citadel of Bazi, but not very well at Banat, is named "Banat Period III"; Porter (2002), Cooper (1998), Akkermans and Schwartz (2003: 246–50). The ancient settlement of Banat was at most places directly overlain by the village of Banat, which rendered large-scale excavations impossible. Therefore it is difficult to tell if parts of the settlement continued to be used.

What sort of structure was erected on the citadel plateau apart from the gateway building (Building 2) has not yet been investigated, but it is likely that there were one or more important buildings (such as a temple or a palace) as otherwise the top of the citadel would not have been so intensively fortified. Given the presence on the citadel of a huge 38-meter-long temple, which was in use from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age,⁶² and the fact that there are many instances where sacred sites remained in use over long periods, the existence of an Early Bronze Age temple should be taken into consideration.

UET I 275 states that Naram-Sin captured Rida-Adad, the king of Armi, "in the middle of his entryway" (*qab_x-li na-ra-ab-ti-su i-ik-mi-ù-sù*) (iii 8–10). This unusual way of describing where the event took place has led scholars to speculate whether the entryway was that of a temple or of a palace.⁶³ In my view, the place described at this point in the inscription, the climax of the narrative, could not have been merely the entrance of a building that was not named but must have been a special, distinctive structure, where the final events that determined Armi's fate took place. Could it therefore be that the *narabtum* of Rida-Adad, where the decisive attack took place, was in fact Building 2, the gateway with massively thick walls that controlled the access to the citadel at the weakest point of the defences?⁶⁴ As described above, Building 2 in its latest occupation phase fell victim to a further violent destruction after which it was not repaired; it was abandoned and later buildings with a quite different character (Bazi level 7f) were erected above its ruins. The date of the pottery sherds found in this level (see above) supports the suggested chronological sequence.

62. Sallaberger, Otto, and Einwag (2006), Otto and Einwag (2005: 27–29).

63. "Jacobsen proposes that 'his entryway' refers to Dagan's temple, where the captured king was brought bound, but I see, rather, the defeated king making a futile last stand in the doorway of his own palace" (Foster 1982: 34).

64. *Narabtum* can mean not only an entrance but also a (mountain) pass and so would also describe vividly the location of an attack that went up the steep rock-cut ditch towards Building 2.

By the time of Naram-Sin, the florescence of Ebla had long been over. The all-powerful Ebla described in the archive of Palace G, one of the the most important cities of the twenty-fourth century in Syria, had been destroyed about a century earlier (Archi and Biga 2003); even if it was rebuilt soon after (Mardikh IIB2), it had lost most of its power.⁶⁵ In the words of Archi (*ARES* II [1993] 168), “All’epoca di Naram-Sin l’Ebla degli archivi era già scomparsa, ma permaneva il ricordo della sua potenza.” The decline in the power of Ebla is not contradicted by Naram-Sin’s boastful, if untrue, assertion that he was the first ruler to have destroyed Armium and Ebla (Michalowski 1993). The situation of Armium may have been

comparable to that of Ebla, with the difference that the lower town (Banat) had not been resettled after the destruction.

The fact that the statue of Naram-Sin depicts only the citadel may be attributable to the fact that the lower town (Banat) lay in ruins (at least partly), while the fortress, situated on the hill, still remained an imposing and exceptional monument. Our excavations in 2005 showed that Building 2 protecting the weakest point of the defences had been repaired following the first attack, which, I have suggested, was carried out by the forces of Mari. These measures, however, failed to provide a successful defence against the might of Naram-Sin. His attack brought about the final end of the Early Bronze Age city Armanum/Armi/Armium, whose location may have been at Banat-Bazi with its impressive fortified mountain citadel beside the river.

65. For Mardikh IIB2-levels see Matthiae (1989: 126–32: areas A, B, C, N).

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