

Karduniaš. Babylonia Under the Kassites

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18 Isin in the Kassite Period

Introduction

The city of Isin was first identified in 1924, when Stephen Langdon (1924, 110–111) sounded Ishan Bahriyat for a day, discovering bricks of Išme-Dagān (1953–1935) and Enlil-bāni (1860–1837).¹ Two years later, Raymond Dougherty (1926, 26) carried out a two-day survey and found additional evidence in the form of further stamped bricks of Būr-Sîn (1895–1874) and of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562). Regular excavations lasting from 1973 until 1989 were then conducted by the Munich Institute for Near Eastern Archaeology under the direction of Barthel Hrouda, and the data gathered during these eleven field campaigns underlies much of what we know to date about the site. The results of the Munich expedition have been reported in four volumes (Hrouda [ed.] 1977; 1981; 1987; 1992; henceforth Isin I–IV). While sizeable, these preliminary reports do not exhaustively deal with the data gathered at the time, and a re-study project is currently under way at the Munich Institute for Near Eastern Archaeology which aims at producing a full inventory of finds, a re-evaluation of the stratigraphic evidence, and a synthesis of all available lines of evidence, including textual, to develop an integrated picture of the city and its history.² The current synopsis dealing with Isin in the Kassite period will start by summarising the published information before discussing newly available data from pottery studies, stratigraphic observations, and burial evidence. These are preliminary results drawn from our steadily expanding database which will be followed up by more detailed assessments in the future.

Ishan Bahriyat covers an area of approximately 150 ha, rising no more than 10 m above the surrounding plain (Fig. 18.01). The excavators divided the site into four quadrants, with the Gula Temple area (GT/GN: for Gula-Tempel/Gula Nord-Bereich) close to the centre, and the remaining trenches named according to their geographic position relative to this “zero point” using abbreviations of the German terms for the cardinal directions (i.e., S, SO [Südosten], W, N, NO, each comprising up to four soundings numbered consecutively with Roman numerals).

The settlement history of Isin goes back to the fifth millennium, as surface finds of Ubaid pottery (IB 288, IB 304; Isin I, pl. 12 [mislabelled IB 298] and 26) demonstrate. From the early to mid-third millennium, we possess archaeological contexts from the Gula Temple and the S area, and an intensive building programme in the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur is suggested by the large number of Amar-Suena (2046–2038) bricks found on the surface of the site (Sommerfeld in Isin IV, 144–150). The best-preserved remains date to the first quarter of the second millennium, when a local dynasty controlled large parts of Babylonia and the region prospered economically (Charpin 2004; Van De Mierop 1987). By the 18th century, the rivalry with Larsa, the submission to Babylonian rule under Hammurabi (1792–1750) and the rebellion of southern Babylonia and its subsequent defeat at the hands of Samsu-iluna (1749–1712), all combined with an environmentally induced recession in large parts of southern and central Babylonia, led to a weakening of the community, culminating in the wide scale abandonment of the site following the later years of Samsu-iluna (Charpin 1992).³ The cult of Gula may at this time have been transferred to Sippar (Pientka 1998, 189–196).

¹ All Old Babylonian dates follow the Middle Chronology (MC). Other dates are understood as “BC”.

² The conversion of the Isin excavation archive to digital form was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) under the project number KA/2288/21. All the contexts and stratigraphic attributions in this paper (unless otherwise stated) are those of the excavators, as published in the preliminary reports.

³ The latest Old Babylonian text excavated at Isin dates to Samsu-iluna’s 27th year (IB 1670). Later contexts from the site may shed some light on the post-revolt occupation.

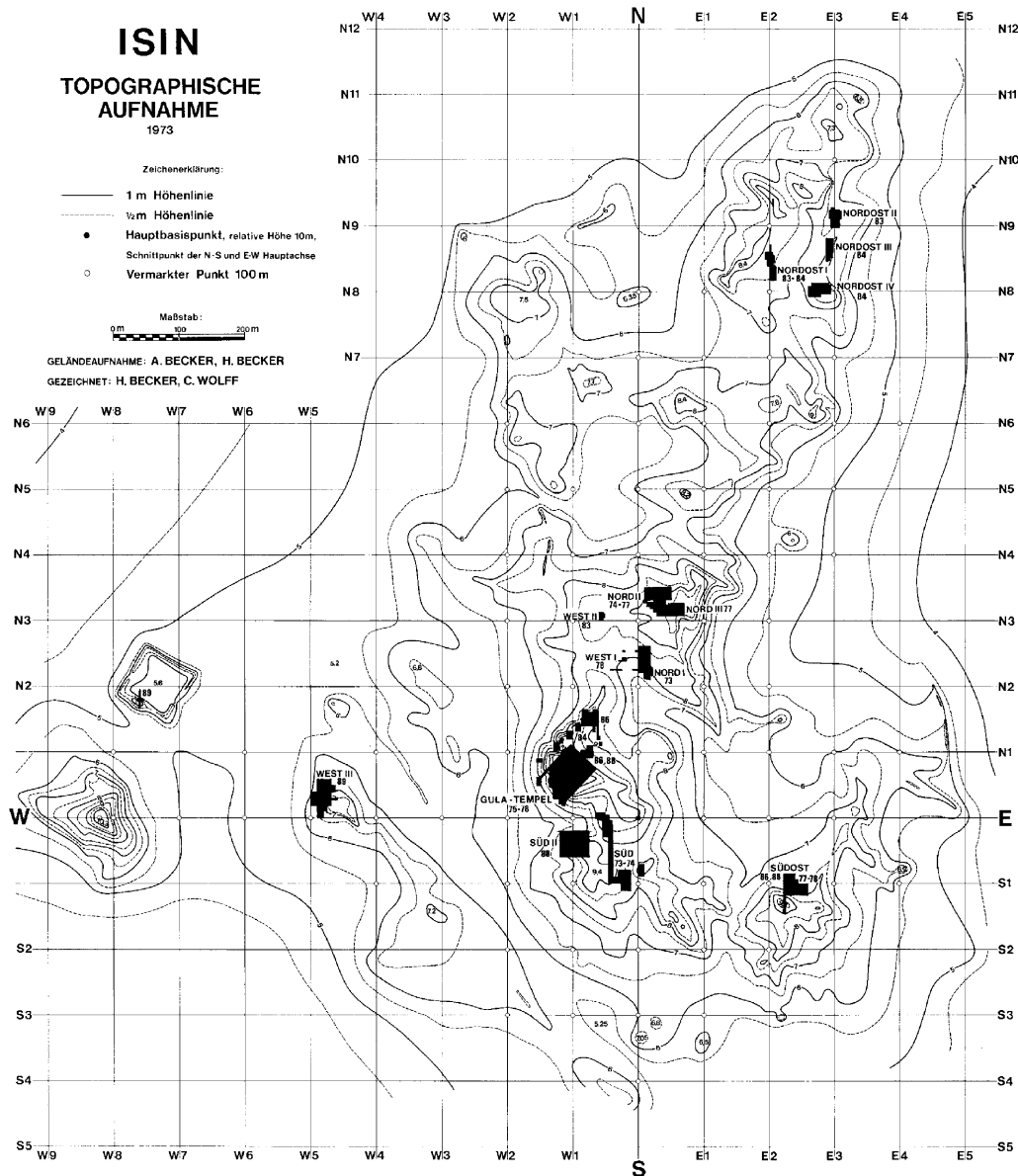


Fig. 18.01: Site plan of Isin (Isin IV, plan 1). The numbers next to the trench names indicate the season in which they were excavated.

Next, we learn that Isin was included in an ambitious rebuilding programme undertaken by Kuri-galzu I (Brinkman 1976; Clayden 1989; 1996; Bartelmus 2010). Royal patronage was continued by his successor Kadašman-Enlil I (c. 1374–1360), who built a retaining wall surrounding the temenos (Bartelmus 2010, 160), but it waned over the next century and a half, until Adad-šuma-ušur (1216–1187) and Meli-Šipak (1186–1172) commissioned further substantial work in the Gula Temple. Another burst of activity is then noticeable under Adad-apla-iddina (1068–1047).

Published Kassite material from Isin

The most conspicuous building of the ancient city, the Gula Temple, whose ancient name was *é-gal-maḥ*, was the focus of archaeological research at the site and was excavated almost completely. The well-known plan of the *Hauptbauphase* (Fig. 18.02) actually reproduces the building of Kurigalzu I, with minor additions attributable to Meli-Šipak and Adad-apla-iddina. It therefore represents the temple as it stood for most of the Kassite period. The plan is typically Babylonian and in all probability closely follows the Old Babylonian layout, as soundings in several rooms, the probable entrance through the NW wall,⁴ and Kurigalzu's explicit reference to "restoration work" imply. By this time, we may certainly expect the cult to have returned to Isin and the temple to have been staffed by a sizeable priesthood.

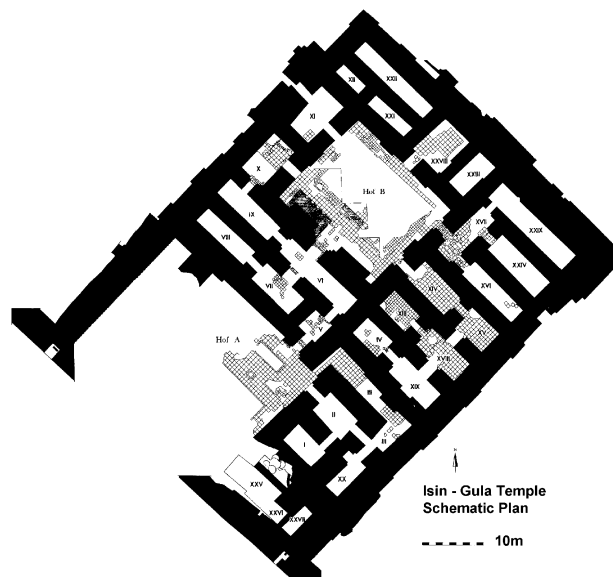


Fig. 18.02: Plan of the Gula Temple (from Isin II, pl. 2).

The temple was, according to the preliminary reports, organized around two courtyards, A and B (Isin II, 9–13)⁵, with precious little information available on the former. The main entrance to the building was probably located in the east through Room XXVIII (but see above), and the two cellae of Gula (Room VII) and Ninurta (Room XIX) were accessed from Court B. It is impossible to say, whether Kurigalzu actually completed all of the building work that he had planned: of the two platforms constructed on either side of the entrance to the Gula cella (Figs. 18.02 and 18.03), only the north-western one was built in baked brick of the type used by Kurigalzu. While we do not share Hrouda's doubts regarding the dating of the two platforms (Isin II, 13–14; Isin III, 10–11) and would prefer to see both of them as part of Kurigalzu's building project, the identical structure on the south-east side of the entrance (not marked on Fig. 18.02), even though planned by Kurigalzu, was only executed in mud-brick, possibly as late as the reign of Meli-Šipak, when two small staircases were added to give access to these platforms.⁶ So there remains the possibility that the *é-gal-maḥ*

⁴ A Kurigalzu door socket was found above the eastern flight of the stairs giving access through the NE side (Isin IV, 13). The photographic documentation of the south-western wall is, however, equivocal, so a bent-axis approach through a main entrance in the north-western wall of Court B remains a possibility.

⁵ Miglus (2001, 324 and fig. 9) considered Court A a large roofed hall. This proposal is not unreasonable given the evidence from other buildings, such as the Kititum Temple at Iščali. A roof span of 9.5 m, while considerable, is entirely within the possibilities of Mesopotamian builders since the Uruk period.

⁶ The construction of platforms flanking temple entrances is a regular feature of Kassite period temples that appears, for example, in Ur and Larsa.

was still under construction towards the end of Kurigalzu's reign. There is hardly any data available about possible Kassite occupation in the immediate vicinity of the Gula Temple.



Fig. 18.03: Photograph from the east of the Kassite period mud-brick and baked brick platforms flanking the entrance from Court B to the Gula cella VI/VII (Isin Archive slide IB-GT-MF_0965).

Elsewhere on the site only isolated remains of a Kassite period occupation were published: In N-II, a storage pit dug into an Old Babylonian building (the “Kassite” storage pit in Room 6, between 7.15 and 8.60 m) contained some late second millennium pottery (Isin I, 21–22), and a structure labelled “Vorratsraum” (Isin II, 83–84; pls. 13, 1 and 31, 18–29) contained Kassite Wavy-sided Bowls, Small Jars, and Storage Jars, but no Kassite Goblets (Fig. 18.04). The absence of such vessels may either reflect the room's function or, as Hrouda suggested, a slightly later date in the Isin II period. Whatever its precise date in the 13th to 11th centuries, this structure is important for stratigraphic reasons as will be seen later.

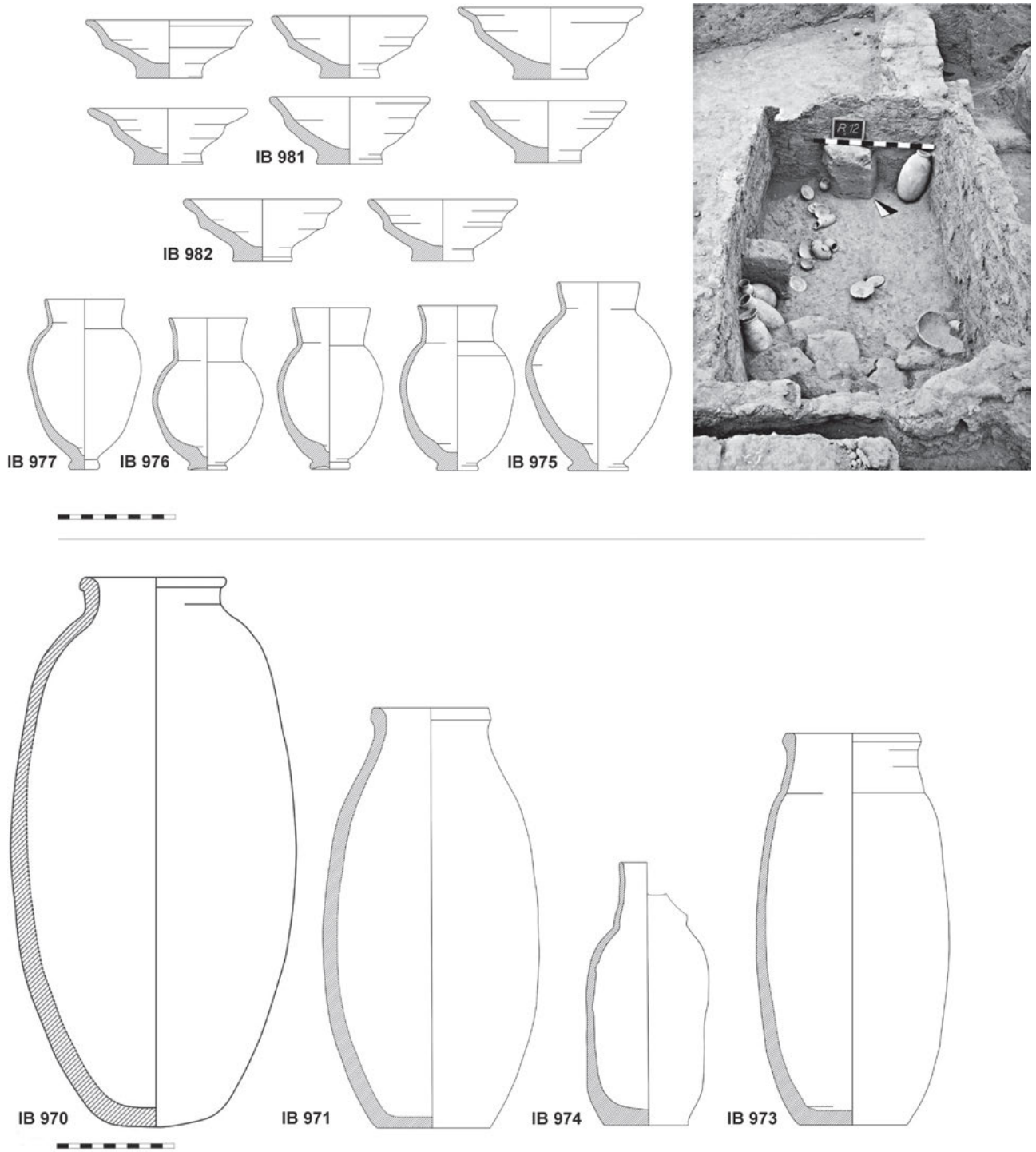


Fig. 18.04: Typical late 2nd millennium pottery from the *Vorratsraum* in Trench N-II. Including from top to bottom Wavy-sided Bowls, Small Jars, and large storage vessels. Inset is a view of the room after excavation.



Fig. 18.05: Kassite Goblets from the deep sounding in Trench N-II.

The deep sounding in N-III, Court 4 produced a most remarkable collection of Kassite period pottery (Fig. 18.05) (see also Isin II, 52; pl. 18, 2), but again without associated structural remains. In W-III, Area VI, the fill surrounding the shaft of a drain dug into Old Babylonian houses almost entirely consisted of Kassite pottery (Isin IV, pl. 55, 20). In all instances, the contemporary occupational levels of the period were thought to have been eroded away (Isin IV, 44; pl. 30, 2).

Turning to mortuary remains, only three graves were dated by the excavators to the Kassite period: S 41 (Isin I, 21) and S 53a (Isin II, 42, with the associated Kassite Goblet IB 788c) in N-II and S 114 in NO-I (Isin III, 19, 129; pl. 8, 2), but the latter is in fact Old Babylonian, leaving us with only two published Kassite burials.⁷

The only seal of First Kassite Style from Isin (IB 961) was found in the Gula Temple (Fig. 18.06a)⁸, as was the non-descript frit seal (IB 997), which at least came from a clear Late Kassite context, the Meli-Šipak asphalt layer in Court B (Fig. 18.06b). The sealing IB 401 (Isin I, 81; pl. 20; from N-II) was classified as Middle Elamite on the basis of cross-hatched triangles on the seal's edge and a frieze of rhomboids below. It was discovered not far from seal IB 379 (Fig. 18.06c). Also from N-II is the Third Kassite Style seal IB 717 (Fig. 18.06d).

⁷ See below for further burials that can be dated to the Kassite period.

⁸ This piece is inscribed as a “gift to Gašan-Eanna” by the purification priest of Nanna, Šumman-lā-Sîn, son of Huzālum. If the deposition in the Gula Temple was not fortuitous, a situation could be imagined like the one in Assur, where Nin-Eanna was revered also in the Gula Temple (Cavigneaux/Krebernik 1998–2001, 341 with references).

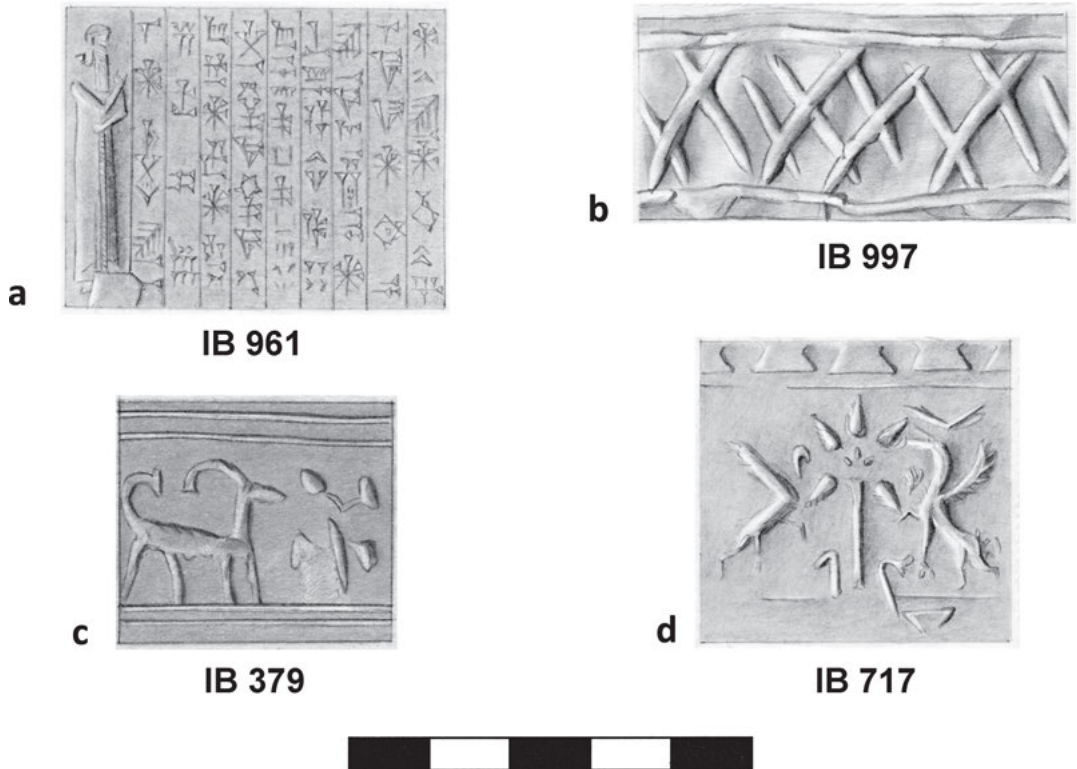


Fig. 18.06: Late Bronze Age seals and seal impressions from Isin (IB 961, IB 997 and IB 717 from Isin II, pl. 30; IB 379 from Isin I, pl. 22).

A cache of small finds and pottery vessels (Fig. 18.07) brings us back to the *é-gal-maḥ*. The pieces were found during the 6th season (1978) in Room XXIV, just below the base of the “Kassite Period” walls (Isin II, 16–18). Most noteworthy but also most difficult to date is the well-known terracotta of a kneeling man (IB 1260). This piece was discussed at length by E. Braun-Holzinger (Isin II, 62–65) who opted for a Kassite date largely because of the context and associated finds, while a third millennium date was favoured by Hrouda (Isin II, 17). It was found together with several more terracottas (IB 1254–1256, 1258–1259), two bowls (IB 1263 and IB 1253b), one of which covered a pot (IB 1253a) filled with sand, a terracotta plaque (IB 1261), and a frit mask (IB 1257).

Also attributed to the “Kassite Period” but from doubtful contexts within the temple are a number of other small finds, such as a glazed clay wall plaque (IB 1264; GT Room XXIX; Isin II, 82; pl. 28), a unique find for second millennium Babylonia,⁹ a terracotta, attributed to the Kassite period on the basis of comparisons with the Aqar Quf paintings by Agnes Spycket (IB 1859; Isin IV, 57; pls. 45 and 47), a small bronze figurine from the temple (IB 1040; Isin II, 65; pls. 27 and 29), and a bronze “Kassite cross” (IB 1826; Isin IV, 55; pl. 41).

From the published evidence, it would therefore appear justified to say that in the Kassite period Isin was not a flourishing city but would be better described as an “old site respected for [her] religious traditions” (Brinkman 1976, 41, n. 45). This situation is puzzling, particularly since neighbouring Nippur, a mere 16 miles north, provides ample evidence for extensive Kassite period settlement remains (Armstrong 1989; Zettler 1993). In 14th and 13th century texts found in Nippur, Isin appears as a destination for shipments of food and other goods (some of which were intended for offerings). The highest official known bears the title *šangû* – the chief administrator of the

⁹ For this group see now Tourtet (2010).

temple – and there is no indication that the city was a provincial capital, as it was later under the Isin II dynasty.¹⁰

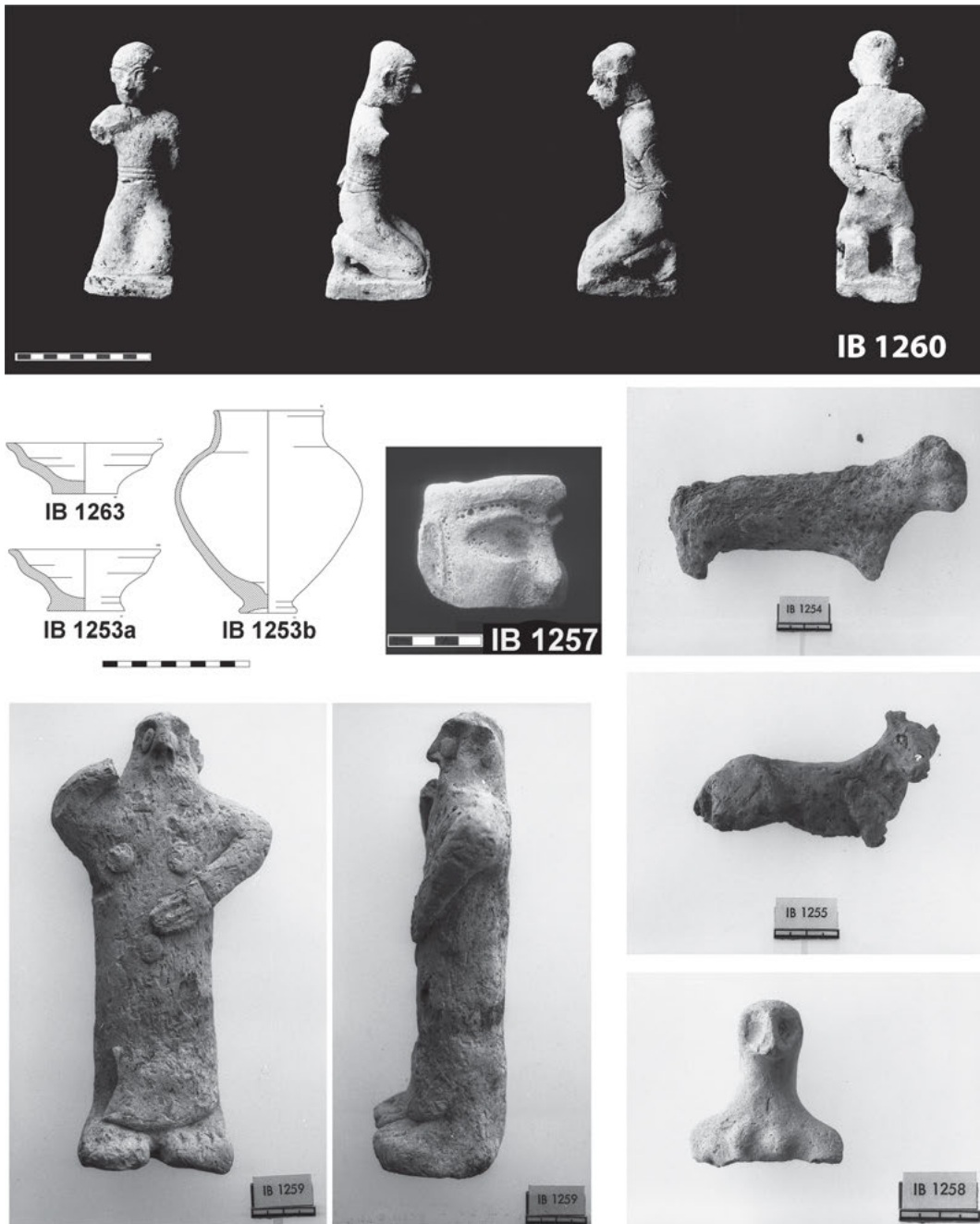


Fig. 18.07: Small finds from the Egalmaḥ hoard found in Room XXIV of the Gula Temple.

¹⁰ I am grateful to John Brinkman for providing this information.

The distribution of Kassite pottery

Contrary to the impression created by the absence of discussion and publication of the ceramics in Isin I–IV, pottery was by no means neglected during the excavation. There are drawings of several thousand diagnostic forms for the seasons 1973–1978, and for the resumption of excavations in 1983 a reference typology comprising 1400 types and variants was devised to speed up ceramic processing.¹¹ For the purposes of this paper, I will concentrate on the distribution of a small number of *Leitformen* to estimate the extent of the Kassite period occupation (Tables 18.01 and 18.02). The types were selected for purely pragmatic reasons: Kassite Goblets, Footed Cups, Small Jars, and Wavy-sided Bowls can be considered diagnostic for the period in question. While for some of them a case could be made to extend the chronological limits of their production beyond 1150 BC, they do have the advantage of showing up clearly in our records by either type or verbal description.

The most characteristic Kassite ceramic form is the so-called Kassite Goblet, a slender conical vessel with a pronounced shoulder and straight neck with slightly tapering rim (see also Figs. 18.05, 18.08, and 18.12). They average between 25 and 30 cm in height and have a volume of 1.5 to 2.0 l. The term Kassite Goblet follows the Nippur publications (Armstrong 1993, now referred to simply as Goblet, see Armstrong in this volume), while German reports refer to them as either “hohe, schlanke Flaschen” (Eichmann 1987, Isin I. IV) or “Kassitenflaschen” (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985). The form evolved from Old Babylonian goblets (Gasche et al. 1998, esp. pl. 1) and would appear to develop more compact bases during the course of the Late Bronze Age. In Isin, a division between earlier and later examples is not feasible, since the distinction between them was not made in the typology used to record the pottery. The Footed Cups (previously referred to in Nippur as “Button-based cups” – Armstrong 1993 – in Zubeidi and Warka as “Langhalsflaschen” – Boehmer/Dämmer 1985; Eichmann 1987 – and in Yelkhi as “Calici” – Valtz 2003) and Small Footed Jars (related to the Button-based jars in Armstrong 1993) are likewise derived from older prototypes (Gasche et al. 1997, pls. 2 and 3). Lastly, Wavy-sided bowls (so in Nippur – Armstrong 1993) – elsewhere “Schalen mit Umbruch” (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985; Eichmann 1987) or “coppe emisferiche” (Valtz 2003) – are other good indicators for a Kassite period date.

When tabulated the following distribution emerges (Table 18.01):

¹¹ For an overview of Kassite pottery studies see Armstrong (in this volume). For a detailed study of second millennium pottery in Babylonia see Armstrong/Gasche (2014).

Table 18.01: Kassite period *Leitformen* from Isin. Frequency in the excavations at Isin. Presence is indicated by grey shading, individual occurrences are indicated by numbers.

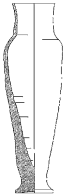

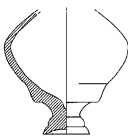
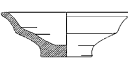

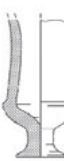
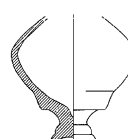
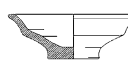
Type		GT/GN	N-I	N-II	N-III	NO-I	NO-II	NO-III	NO-IV	S-I	S-II	SE	W-I	W-II	W-III
Kassite Goblet			1			1	2			2		1			
Footed Cup															
Small pedestalled Jar						1	1	1	1						
Wavy-sided Bowl						3		1						1	

Table 18.02: Kassite period *Leitformen* from Isin. Comparanda at other sites.

Type		Comparanda
Kassite Goblet		Nippur WC1-III/II (Armstrong 1993, pl. 79) Zubeidi II (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985, Taf. 109, 75–77) – Zubeidi I (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985, Taf. 128; 129, 351–356) Yelkhi 1C (Valtz 2003, Taf. 151, 7–8)
Footed Cup		Nippur WC1-III (Armstrong 1993, pl. 80a–d. f) Nippur WC1-II (Armstrong 1993, pl. 80h) Zubeidi II (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985, Taf. 109, 86. 86A) Zubeidi I (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985, Taf. 131, 407. 408. 416) Yelkhi 1B (Valtz 2003, Taf. 151, 4) Der 1c (Minsaer 1991, Taf. 12) Warka (Eichmann 1987, Taf. 54)
Small pedestalled Jar		Nippur WC1-III (Armstrong 1993, pl. 82a–d) Zubeidi I (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985, Taf. 131, 430–431)
Wavy-sided Bowl		Nippur WC1-III/II (Armstrong 1993, pl. 72–74) Zubeidi II (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985, Taf. 105, 1–6) Zubeidi I (Boehmer/Dämmer 1985, Taf. 115, 160–175) Yelkhi 1C (Valtz 2003, Taf. 142, 10–12) Der 1c (Minsaer 1991, Taf. 7)

In and around the Gula Temple (areas GT and GN), all the above-mentioned Kassite forms are present. As substantial Kassite period remains have been referred to above, this comes as no surprise. A considerable percentage of the complete vessels was found within the Room XXIV hoard (Fig. 18.07). In Trench W-I, several Kassite Goblets were found, as were Footed Cups, Wavy-sided Bowls and cylindrical pot stands. The contexts were most probably disturbed, as these pottery vessels were highly fragmented and associated with stamped ceramics of later first millennium date. W-II, a smaller trench, produced only one Wavy-sided Bowl. In W-III considerable quantities of Kassite pottery were found (Fig. 18.08), primarily from Areas II, VI and XIII. Apart from the afore-mentioned drain, no architectural features can be connected with this pottery.



Fig. 18.08: Kassite pottery surrounding a drain shaft in W-III (Isin Neg. 05064).

The evidence from the north-eastern trenches (NO) remains slim, only two trenches having produced small quantities of Wavy-sided Bowls. Admittedly, there is in this case a degree of uncertainty due to ambiguities in the typology. Again, possible Kassite pieces were found close to the surface and not associated with any architectural remains. From N-I, the area of the Adad-aplaidina ramp (Isin I, 17–20), came a single fragment of a Kassite Goblet (IB 513), while nipple-based Isin II-cups were more frequent. Only in a deep sounding (Isin I, 19–20) were older layers encountered, among them a Kassite one. In the neighbouring trenches, N-II and N-III, again all four Kassite vessel types are present in large numbers, while the southern (S) and south-eastern (SO) trenches have only produced random pieces of Kassite date. This distribution suggests that the settled area of Isin had contracted severely since Old Babylonian times to approximately 25 ha and that less than a quarter of the surface of the Old Babylonian city was inhabited (Fig. 18.09).

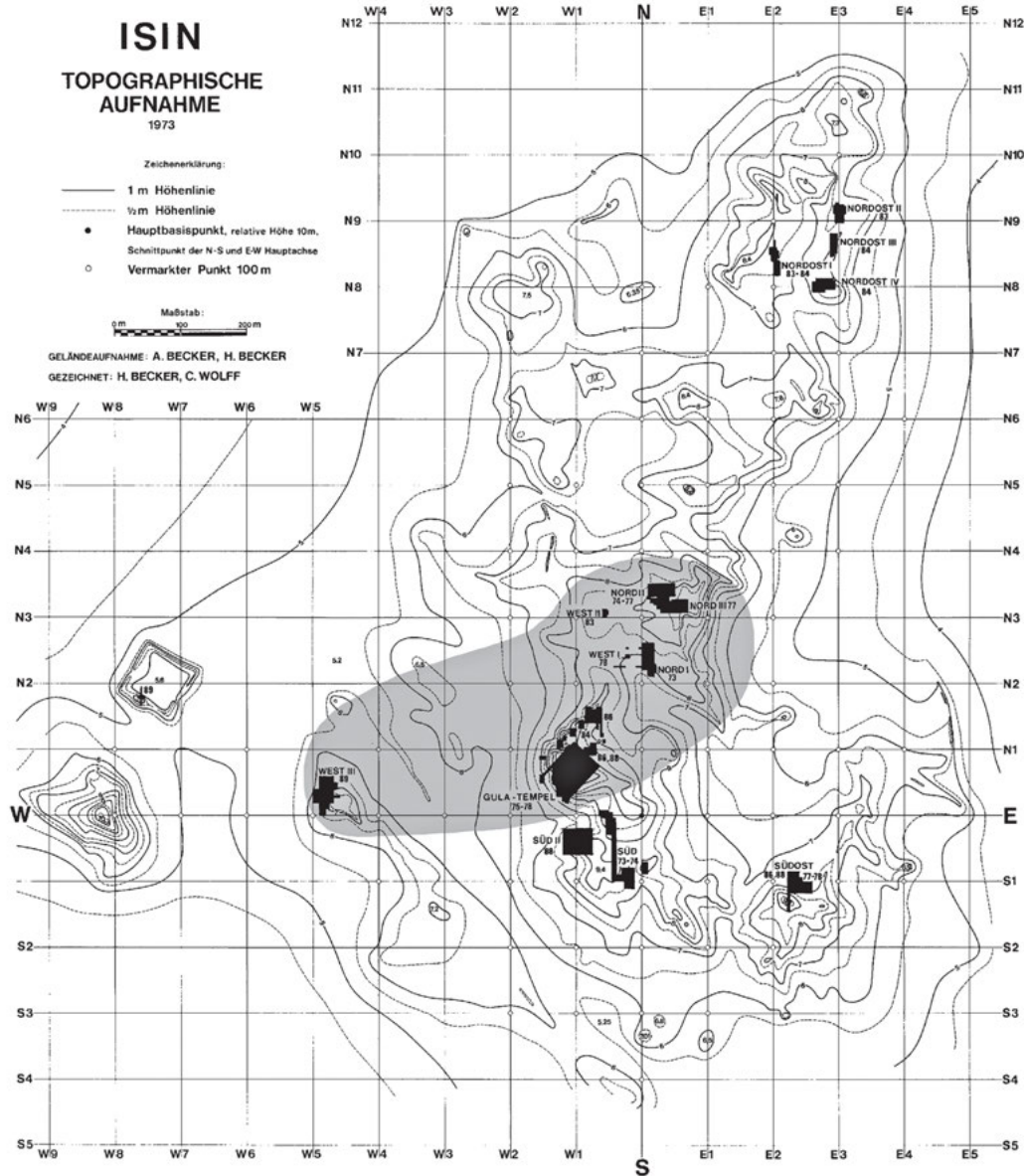


Fig. 18.09: Approximate extent of Kassite period occupation based on the distribution of typical Kassite pottery forms found in the excavated trenches.

The Kassite occupation levels in N-II

In N-II, the Old Babylonian Level 3 architecture was destroyed late in the reign of Samsu-iluna. Above it were found buildings dated to the Isin II period (Fig. 18.10). Supporting this date were the size of the mud-bricks which were comparable to those used in the Adad-apla-iddina ramp in neighbouring N-I and five tablets from the reign of Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē (1099–1082) discovered close to a wall at a height of 7.90 m (IB 1017a, IB 1018; Isin II, 34). The context of the tablets is described variously as floor and as refuse in the available documentation. The recorded height of the finds, however, corresponds to the foundation level of a wall built against the original post-Old Babylonian construction; the original floor associated with that building was some 70–80 cm lower. In other words: the date of deposition of the Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē tablets is connected to

a second post-Old Babylonian constructional phase. The earlier of the two would then probably date to the Kassite period (Fig. 18.10).¹² As the surface level of the Old Babylonian structures was higher in the southern part, the respective floors were also at ca. 8.00 m, making them level with the bottom of the foundation trench of the post-Marduk-nādin-aḫḫē renovation phase to the north. The walls were partially dug into the destruction debris of the Old Babylonian buildings, which is visible as a thick ashy band on the photos and clearly indicated on the drawn sections (Isin I, plan 11A.13.15).

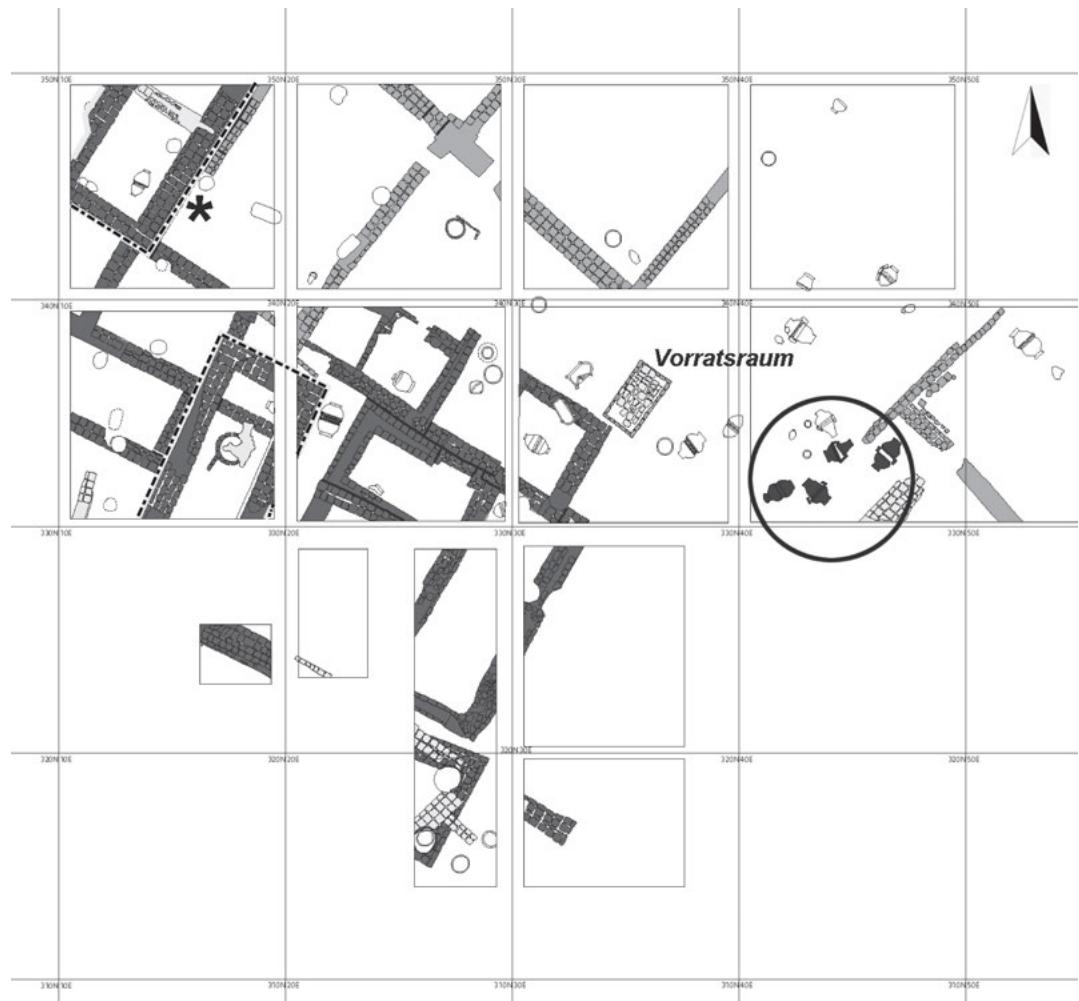


Fig. 18.10: Plan of N-II level 2 (after Isin II, plan 5).

The location of the tablets is marked by an asterisk. Kassite period walls are shaded in dark grey, Isin II walls in medium grey, and Neo-Babylonian walls are without shading. The stratigraphic position of the two rooms in the north-western squares marked with dashed lines is not certain: they may date to the first millennium as originally suggested by B. Hrouda. The Kassite burials discussed in the text are shaded dark grey and encircled. The grid squares measure 10 by 10 m.

¹² There will remain a question mark concerning two well-built rooms (345N 15E3 and 315N 15E1) in the NW squares which the excavators believed to be intrusive from first-millennium levels (Isin II, fig. 4).

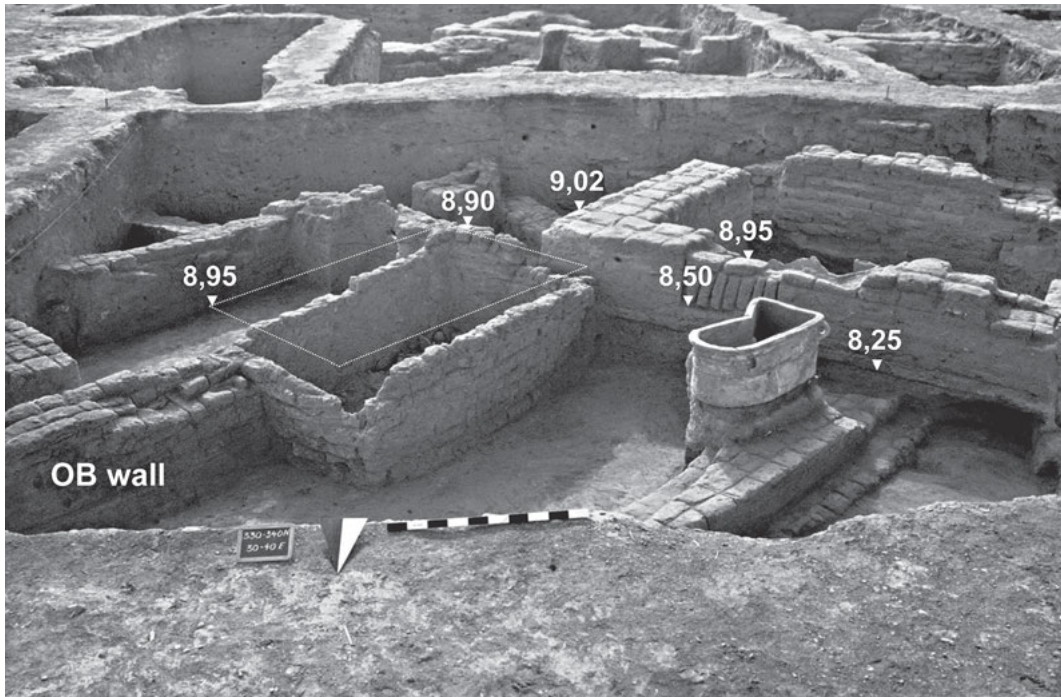


Fig. 18.11: N-II. Stratigraphic situation of the *Vorratsraum*. See text for detailed description and discussion.

The pottery recovered from heights of 8.00–8.40 m in the southern buildings is in agreement with a Kassite date. Also, a structure just to the north-east supports our higher date for the adjoining buildings: The above-mentioned *Vorratsraum* consisted of a closed rectangle of mud-brick which must have been accessed from above, that is from a height of at least 8.95 m. This elevation corresponds to a secondary phase of the neighbouring walls, visible, for example, in the form of a raised door-sill (Fig. 18.11). The original threshold stood at 8.50 m, with the wall foundations at 8.25 m. As can be seen, all these structures were dug substantially into Old Babylonian levels. Even if Hrouda's Isin II-date for the ceramic inventory of the *Vorratsraum* (see Fig. 18.04) should be upheld and not raised to the Kassite period, it must be connected with a later constructional phase, again leading to the conclusion that the original post-Old Babylonian constructions were erected in the time of the Kassite dynasty.

The rooms thus delineated (Fig. 18.10) are, of course, not very impressive, belonging probably to two or more small compounds, but if our estimate of the Kassite settled area (Fig. 18.09) is correct, they were not in the city centre, where one would expect the more substantial buildings to have been situated.

Following this line of argument, it will be necessary to check the dating of "Isin II" contexts elsewhere: it would appear that Old Babylonian levels are sealed in different parts of the site by thick deposits of ashy soil and that Kassite period builders often sank their foundations into the conspicuous remains of the city's devastation centuries earlier. This pattern is clearest in N-II, W-III, and possibly W-II.

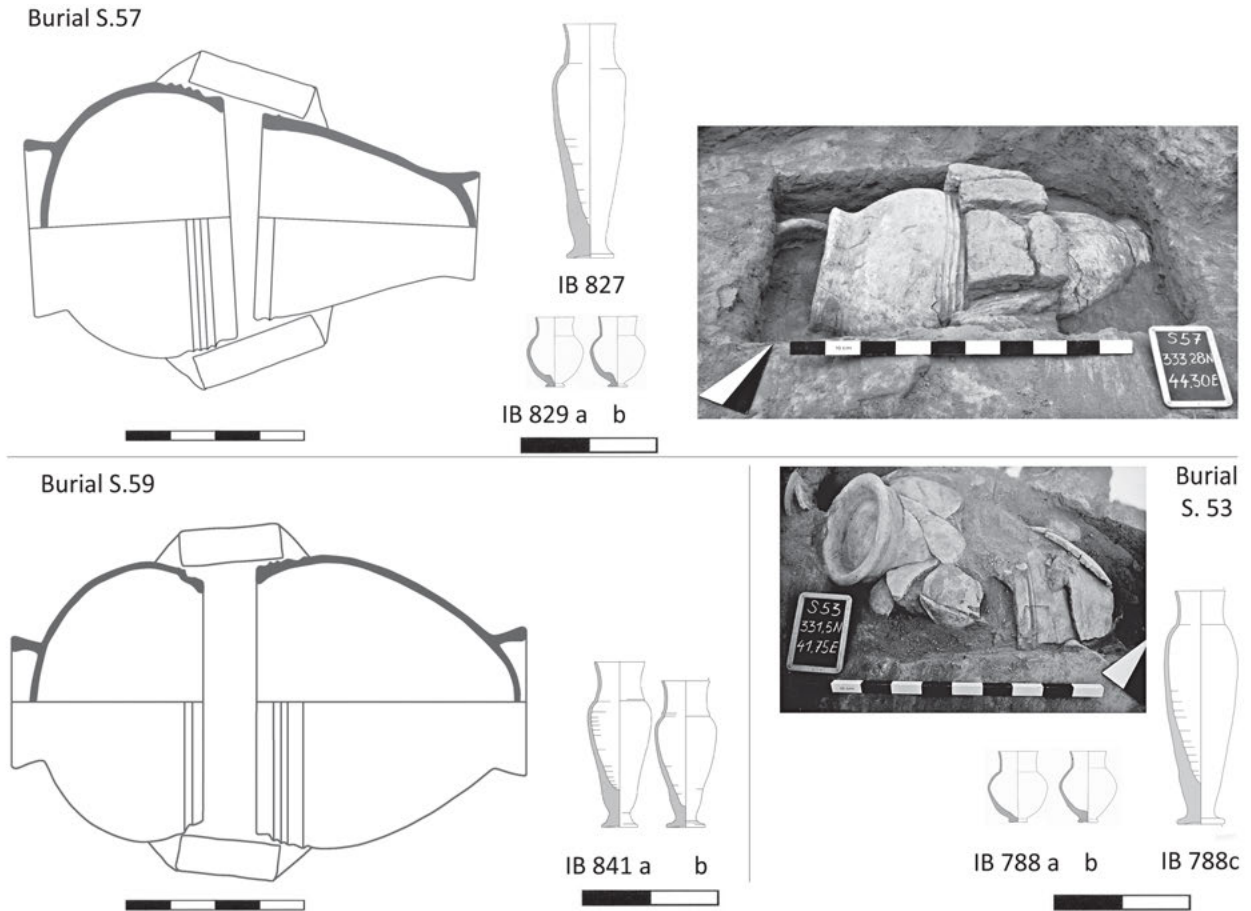


Fig. 18.12: Burials S. 53, S. 57 and S. 59 with their inventories. IB 829a, IB 829b, IB 788a and IB 788b from Isin II, pl. 34.

Kassite period burials

In addition to the two examples referred to above, the dating of several burials must be revised to the Kassite period, mainly because associations with vessels discovered outside the burial containers themselves were not considered in the original publications.¹³ Several pithos burials from the N-II area (Isin II, plan 5, in the 330 N / 40 E-quadrant) can be grouped not only locally and by overall height, but also through specific depositional features (Fig. 18.12): The burials S. 49 and S. 56 to S. 59 (Isin II, 40–48), for example, share a very distinctive grave construction whereby the gap between the mouths of the two pithoi was covered by a clay or mud-brick ring. The pithoi contained one or two small jars, beads, toggle pins and frit vessels. While the pottery published as belonging to these burials may be dated either late Kassite or Isin II, there is in addition a close association in several instances with Kassite forms deposited nearby: both S. 53 and S. 59 had Kassite Goblets just outside the pithoi; two further pieces (IB 753 and 754) found at a height corresponding to the uppermost elevations recorded for this grave group (8.5/8.8 m) may originally have been associated with

¹³ For the Isin burials see also Sternitzke (in this volume). The chronology of the Isin burials has been discussed with similar results by Baker (1995).

the disturbed grave S. 53a.¹⁴ Parallels for both the use of mud-brick and the external deposition of Kassite Goblets are found at Ur.¹⁵

Conclusion

This preliminary survey of the Kassite finds from Isin has demonstrated the existence of a substantial, if not very large, settlement during the Kassite period. The city had been completely abandoned after the reign of Samsu-iluna, and full recovery was not even achieved by the Isin II period. With a better grasp of the Isin pottery corpus, it may be possible to refine our picture chronologically, but millennia of erosion have done their part in obliterating many post-Old Babylonian contexts.

While there are no spectacular Kassite finds from Isin, there is every reason for correcting the picture presented in the previously published reports of a site mostly denuded in the interval between the Old Babylonian and Isin II periods (i.e. between Samsu-iluna and Adad-apla-iddina). During the second half of the second millennium, the core of Isin (the W and N areas) around the sacred precinct was settled, but there remains a clear reduction in size compared to the early second millennium BC.¹⁶

14 The association of S. 53a with IB 788c (Isin II, 42) must be rejected, since the vessel was found 30 cm below the rest of the grave. IB 788c is here grouped with Burial S. 53 instead.

15 Woolley (1965, 85–86, fig. 4 [KG 9] and fig. 5 [KG 49]). The late date of the Isin burials within the Kassite period would call into question the contention that the brick covering should be understood to mark a transitional form from Old Babylonian brick vaults (cf. Baker 1995, 210). For further examples see Sternitzke (in this volume).

16 This is a general trend in Babylonia according to Adams (1981, fig. 25), who notes a steep decline in the settled area of larger sites (i.e. those with an area of more than 40 ha): none of the sites dating to the second half of the second millennium investigated in his surveys had a surface area of more than 200 ha.

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