Polish excavations at the site of Tell Rijim were part of the Eski Mosul Dam Salvage Project, also called the Saddam Dam Basin Salvage Project, conducted in northern Iraq in the 1980s, in connection with the construction of a dam at the locality of Eski Mosul on the Tigris.\(^1\) Explorations, directed by Piotr Bieliński, were carried out in 1984–1985 by a team from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw. Both interim and final reports were published from this work.\(^2\)

Tell Rijim, also called Tell Rijim Omar Dalle, lays approximately 25 km to the northwest of Eski-Mosul, on the western bank of the Tigris (Fig. 1). It constituted part of the “Raffan microregion”\(^3\) between the Tigris on one side and Jebel Butmah on the other. The site, which covered about 2.5 ha in area, was situated on a flat natural hill rising about 28 m above the water level of the river. The hill extended alongside the riverbank; it was of oval shape, 250 m long and about 100 m wide. The western part of the mound was higher than the eastern one; only this part of the site was excavated.\(^4\)

Three seasons of excavations were carried out: in the fall of 1984 and in the spring and fall of 1985.\(^5\) A stratigraphic trench (C) was dug on the northern slope and the remaining trenches were situated in the central part of the tell (Fig. 2). Altogether an area of 620 m\(^2\) was investigated. The digging was encumbered by several factors, most importantly by erosion of cultural layers during intervals in site occupation. This resulted in, for example, the destruction of mud brick walls. Returning settlements saw new foundations being laid on the same level as older ones, sometimes even lower, especially on the slope.\(^6\) The stratigraphy was disturbed even further by burials of later date, dug 1.5–2 m deep into the shallow-lying cultural layers (trenches D, E, F, partly B). These factors had direct impact on the provenancing of finds, pottery included.\(^7\)

The presence of a Middle Assyrian layer had been signaled in interim reports. Following the first season of work, P. Bieliński believed that the earlier of the two “Assyrian” layers identified in trench A could be dated “by pottery to the end of the Middle Assyrian or the very beginnings of the Neo-Assyrian Period.”\(^8\) In the next

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\(^3\) For a description of the microregion, see: R. KOLIŃSKI, *Tell Rijim…*, 1–2.

\(^4\) A survey, described as "somewhat unsystematic", was carried out in the eastern part of the site – R. KOLIŃSKI, *Tell Rijim…*, X.


\(^6\) R. KOLIŃSKI, *Tell Rijim…*, X-XI.

\(^7\) Moreover, difficulties in recognizing undisturbed contexts during the exploration repeatedly caused the finds to be mixed with objects from other contexts, such as the burials themselves, cf. R. KOLIŃSKI, *Tell Rijim…*, XI.

\(^8\) P. BIELIŃSKI, *Tell Raffaan and Tell Rijim – First Season…*, 276.
report, the earlier of the two recognized Assyrian layers was assigned also to the “beginning of the Neo-Assyrian or the turn of the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian Period.” A “Middle Assyrian” attribution appeared also in field notes as a working designation of specific features and sherds. In his publication of Middle Bronze Age levels, R. Koliński proposed a site stratigraphy in which “layer 8” represented occupation in the Middle Assyrian Period, dated to 1300–1200 BC. Table 2 collates the presence of particular layers in the trenches; the Middle Assyrian layer was observed in trenches A, A1, B, G, D, F. These provisional determinations have now been verified following a study of the architectural remains and pottery for publication of the Neo-Assyrian layers of the site. Legible architectural complexes from the earlier period of Assyrian occupation on Tell Rijim have been distinguished and examples of Middle Assyrian pottery have been identified. It is worth noting at this point that Middle Assyrian remains were observed in the Raffan microregion also outside of Tell Rijim, at the site of Tell Sa‘ud excavated by Iraqi archaeologists. A brief interim report from these excavations exists, but the pottery from Tell Sa‘ud remains unpublished.

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9 P. Bieliński, Tell Rijim and Tell Raffaan 1985..., 287.
10 R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., XI, table 1. Determining the stratigraphy of the site was difficult, because trench C, in which later burials had not interfered with the deposition sequence, contained layers only from the fourth, third and second millennium BC. For later layers, the stratigraphical sequence had to be read from much more poorly preserved records in trenches A, A1, B, E, F, cf. R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., XI–XII.

11 R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., XII, table 2. See also: A. Green, The Nineteen Countryside..., 97–99 on Tell Rijim, especially the comparison of layers from particular sectors and their dating on page 98.

12 Publication prepared by the present author.
13 M. Abdelkarim, Excavations at Tell Sa‘ud, (in:) Researches on the Antiquities..., Arabic part, 125–128; R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., 3.
For the purposes of this article it will suffice to summarize in general the architectural data, the full publication of which is pending. Middle Assyrian occupation of the tell was observed practically only in trenches A, A1 in the form of severely damaged and scattered architectural remains. A pit in trench F should also be assigned a Middle Assyrian date. In trench A1 (Figs. 3, 4) the most important remains are two parallel walls, W11 (top of stone substructure at 26.93–26.97 m) and W12 (26.84–26.94 m) oriented SW-NE. Nothing but the stone foundations have survived, although in the case of wall W12 some vestiges of bricks could be observed by the southern edge of trench A1.
(preserved top of the structure at 27.06 m). The latter wall ran through the brick part of the so-called north-south wall from the Middle Bronze Age. In turn, wall W 11 was sealed by a pavement from layer 9, which was found to be Neo-Assyrian. Other remains from the Middle Assyrian Period included sections of stone pavement found in different parts of the trench A, A 1. Walls W 11 and W 12 presented a different alignment than the earlier Middle Bronze wall and the walls from layers dated to the 1st millennium BC. Taking this into consideration and the fact that walls W 11 and W 12 were cut into Middle Bronze wall and were situated below the level of Neo-Assyrian walls, the most probable interpretation is that layer 8 very likely represents the Middle Assyrian Period. The presence of ceramic forms that can be assigned to the Middle Assyrian Period only strengthens this hypothesis.

Walls W 11 and W 12 extended further to the south, into the unexplored part of the site. The salvage character of the research and the limited time available excluded further exploration of Middle Assyrian levels in this part of the tell. It would have also given a more extensive assemblage of Middle Assyrian pottery, perhaps from undisturbed contexts. For the same reasons the size and character of the settlement from this period cannot be established.

The pottery

Koliński’s publication of the work at Tell Rijim gives a count of about 58000 sherds. About 8500 were diagnostic pieces and of these 2100 were recorded. Part of the ceramic material left in Mosul for later recording was lost during the Gulf War in 1990. Koliński characterized this set as “mainly of Ninevite 5 and Neo-Assyrian dates,” but it is more than likely that Middle Assyrian material was also represented. It means that the material for study is hardly complete, limiting research possibilities and end results.

Moreover, for reasons described above, most of the pottery comes from disturbed contexts; hence the material is mixed and not easily assignable to specific periods of occupation of the site. Not the least, the author had access only to drawings and descriptions of the pottery, being able to examine personally only a limited group of pottery sherds kept temporarily in Warsaw.

The following presentation is restricted for the most part to forms from the few good contexts, supplemented by forms attributable to Middle Assyrian ceramics based on parallels from other sites. Special emphasis has been placed on examples of vessels with debatable, but probable Middle Assyrian dating.

In the case of these debatable fragments, ware and temper could be of importance in identification and dating, but were not for a couple of reasons. One had to do with the documentation standards during excavations on Tell Rijim, the other was more general in nature and concerns Middle Assyrian ceramics as a whole. Koliński’s publication leaves no doubt that the matrix composition descriptions made during excavations were partly incorrect. This “put into doubt the results of the matrix composition descriptions.” For example, part of the substances identified in the field as mineral inclusions turned out in fact to be part of the clay matrix. Consequently, determinations included in field descriptions need to be treated with caution, especially with regard to the mineral temper.

Plant temper which predominates in Middle Assyrian pottery and occurs in as much as 90% of the ware on some sites (pottery from Tell Sheikh Hamad, Tell Bderi and Tell Sabi Abyad) is not exclusive in this period. Mineral temper is also present, although much less frequent. According to S. Anastasio, the predominance of either the mineral or the plant temper group is an important chronological marker, because the share of mineral temper becomes more frequent in the Neo-Assyrian ceramics but

14 On this wall, see: R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., 12, 20–22.
15 Cf. R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., figs. 18, 19.
16 Cf. P. Bielinski, Preliminary Report..., 26, fig. 6.
17 The author would like to thank Andrzej Reiche from the Ancient Art Department of the National Museum in Warsaw for reading an early draft of this article and for his very useful comments, as well as making available to the author a manuscript of an article on Mitannian and Middle Assyrian pottery from the site of Nemrik.
19 R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., X.
20 R. Koliński, Tell Rijim..., 26, note 28.
as he notes himself, plant temper is present through the end of the Neo-Assyrian Period. Therefore, establishing the presence of plant temper does not determine attribution of a given fragment to the group of Middle Assyrian ceramics. Moreover, Anastasio points out that data on organic versus mineral temper is of importance in the case of material from excavations, homogeneous and with clear stratigraphy. The usefulness of such data diminishes in the case of material from field surveys, especially from sites with both Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian occupation. The pottery from Tell Rijim can be treated as another case of diminished importance of the data on temper. Occupation from both the Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian Periods was recorded on the site and most of the material was found to come from disturbed layers.

Moreover, the Middle Bronze Age ceramic assemblage from Tell Rijim is characterized mainly by fabrics with equal proportions of mineral and organic temper. But there are also a few (paste 3, 7, 8, 14), where plant temper predominates. Indeed, according to table 8 which gives a count of the frequency of particular fabrics (only for rim fragments), it appears to be the second most frequent group (179 examples; group of fabrics with equal proportion of mineral and organic temper – 223 examples). In effect, since many of the forms attributable to the Middle Assyrian Period came from tags with mixed content (including Middle Bronze Age ceramics), identification based on (plant) temper encounters increased difficulty.

**Vessel forms**

A limited number of vessel forms and strong standardization of the shape are usually considered among the main characteristics of Middle Assyrian ceramics. Ever since P. Pfälzner’s publication, certain types, that is, Standard Carinated Bowls and Cups as well as Standard Bottles, have been accepted as typical forms of the so-called Middle Assyrian administrative pottery.27

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24 S. Anastasio, *Das Obere Habur-Tal...,* 113. See also the author’s comments on dating vessel bases on page 116.
Tell Rijim produced a small number of carinated bowls (Ri 1078/69, Ri 224/15, Ri 3330/148, Ri 928A/64, 28 Ri 105/6, Ri 4044/229, Fig. 5:1–6; Ri 4949/279, Fig. 6:1), the shape of which recalls the Middle Assyrian Standard Carinated Bowls from Tell Sheikh Hamad.29 Other parallels come from Khirbet esh-Shenef,30 Tell Barri,31 Tell Taban,32 Ashur33 or Tell al-Naml.34 One should note, however, the bowl from Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta,35 dated to the Neo-Assyrian Period, which recalls the shape of the Tell Rijim bowls.

For a piece of smaller diameter (Ri 4954/279, diam. 10 cm, Fig. 6:2), counterparts can be found in the Middle Assyrian Standard Carinated Cups published by Pfälzner (examples from Tell Sheikh Hamad),36 also known from Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta,37 Tell Sabi Abyad,38 Tell Barri,39 Tell Taban, the Agig region and many others.40 Pfälzner’s variant of the Middle Assyrian carinated bowl, "Schale mit zwei eingeritzten Linien im oberen Wändungsabschnitt,"41 has also been recorded at Tell Rijim (bowls Ri 8062/414, Ri 8450/455, Ri 1678/90, Fig. 6:3,4). It is distinguished by a horizontal incision at the rim and just above the carination, as well as rather high straight walls between the carination and the rim. These bowls were considered by S. Anastasio as one of the most telling forms, next to Standard Bowls and Bottles, for the Middle Assyrian Period, especially as they are entirely absent as a type from Mitannian on one hand and Neo-Assyrian on the other.42 The best parallel for the Tel Rijim vessels can be found among the bowls from Tell Barri.43 A. D’Agostino discusses aspects of appearance, production and dating of such bowls, and cites parallels from Tell Brak, Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta,44 Tell Mohammed Arab, Tell Sheikh Hamad, Gircano and Üçtepe.45 The same form is represented most probably by bowls from Tell Taban, Tell Aqab and the Polish excavations on Nemrik.46 Tell Barri has also produced bowls with rounded body between the carination and

28 There was no serial number on the sherd in existing documentation, only tag number. Tag 64 included numbers Ri 836–928. An arbitrary number Ri 928A was assigned in this situation.

29 P. Pfälzner, The Late Bronze Ceramic Traditions..., 251–252; pls. XXII:259,261, XXIII:262–269.


rim, classified by D'Agostino in the type discussed above, having parallels in Neo-Assyrian material, that is, finds from Ashur from graves dated to the late 9th – early 8th c. BC; according to D'Agostino, this is proof of the continuation of the variant in the Neo-Assyrian Period. It is worth noting that Tell Rijim has also produced vessels of this kind (Ri 3155/140).

Other examples of open forms are more debatable and their dating to the Middle Assyrian Period cannot be taken as certain.

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48 A. D'AGOSTINO, Alcune osservazioni..., 14
A single example of a shallow carinated bowl with flaring rim, which narrows down slightly (Ri 7263/373, Fig. 6:5), features mineral temper (mixed with organic in small quantities) and slip. The dating based on parallels is debatable, as similar forms were present in both Middle and Neo-Assyrian ceramics. In the first millennium BC, this type occurred in the pottery from Niniveh, Ashur, Nimrud, Tell Rimah, and Tell Ahmar. The form, however, appeared already in Middle Assyrian ceramics from, for example, Tell Sheikh Hamad, Tell Rimah, and Ashur. It was even noted among Mitannian forms (Tell Rimah). This is important, considering that the sherd in question came from pit 3, trench F, which also produced a beaker Ri 7263/373 (see below). Both forms are known from the Middle Assyrian ceramic repertoire; taken in conjunction with the stratigraphic position of pit 3 (top level of pit 3 measured at 26.81 m), it means that the pit and the pottery in it was very likely of Middle Assyrian date.

Bowl Ri 232/16 (Fig. 6:6) has a straight, almost conical shape and sharply thickened lip on the inside and outside of the rim. The lip is beveled outside with a small groove just under the top edge. A similar example comes from a Middle Assyrian layer at Tell Sheikh Hamad, others were recorded from Tell Taban and Tell Sabi Abyad. Bowls with thickened rim were also found in Middle Assyrian layers at Tell Rimah. The sherd from Tell Rijim appears to be particularly close to one of the Rimah pieces which has a similar groove beneath the rim edge. Bowls with a beveled and thickened rim, albeit in a slightly different way, were known from the Old Babylonian Period: examples originate from Tell Rijim itself as well as from Tell Taban, for example. Even so, the similarity between bowls from Rijim and the vessel from Tell Rimah makes a Middle Assyrian date more than likely.

Only two of the vessels in the recorded material with possible Middle Assyrian date can be assigned to the beakers group. Vessel Ri 7263/373 (Fig. 7:1) is missing the rim, but the form was still recognizable. It is a shouldered beaker with globular body, narrowing toward a nipple base. Some of the nipple bases recorded from Rijim (see below) could have belonged to beakers of this type. The S-curved neck widens gently at the top, turning probably into a slightly flaring rim with simple unaccentuated lip. The form is attested for Middle Assyrian to Post-Assyrian Periods. The Rijim vessel falls into the type described by Pfälzner as ausladende Becher," which has been recorded for all the...
Middle Assyrian phases (Middle Assyrian I–III). Middle Assyrian parallels come from Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta,68 Tell Sheikh Hamad,69 Tell Taban,70 Tell Barri and others.71 Interestingly, examples of "goblets with tall neck, bulbous body and button or small flat base"72 recorded in the so-called House of Puzuruma at Terqa are very similar to the vessel from Rijim, demonstrating that the form was common in the Middle Euphrates region already earlier on (the

68 C. Schmidt, Die Keramik..., 76, pl. 3b:24,25 ("Bauphase 1," Middle Assyrian).
69 P. Pfalzner, Mittanische..., pl. 114:e and especially f; idem, The Late Bronze Ceramic Traditions..., 253—"common type of Middle Assyrian Fine Chaff Ware"7; pl. XXVIII:318 (probably bases and lower bodies of nos. 320–321 on the same plate).
70 K. Ohnuma, H. Numoto, Excavations at Tell Taban..., fig. 8:22.
71 A. D’Agostino, La ceramica dal pozzo..., fig. 2:37; idem, Pottery Production..., fig. 1:32,40 (nipple base).
Examples of vessels classified by P. Pfälzner as “Standard Bottles” are also known from Tell Rijim. One of them is rim Ri 2156/110 (Fig. 7:3). The shoulders of the vessel narrow toward the rim which is heavily thickened on the outside. Similar forms come from Tell Sheikh Hamad,82 Tell Barri,83 Tell Sabi Abyad.84 Neo-Assyrian examples are less numerous (Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta4 and Lower Khabur survey work85). According to Pfälzner rims like the one from Rijim, that is, elongated and rounded, were characteristic of Middle Assyrian I (Middle Jezirah II B) and later again Middle Assyrian III (Middle Jezirah III).86 The vessel from Tell Rijim is most like the Middle Assyrian parallels in form and should be assigned to this period.

Other examples of bottles have also parallels in the Middle Assyrian material from other sites: fragment Ri 1128/20 (Fig. 7:4) in material from Tell Sheikh Hamad86 and Tell Barri87 and rim Ri 1557/85 (Fig. 7:5) in material from Tell Ajaja, Tell Mohammed Arab, Tell Sabi Abyad and Tell Brak.88

From Tell Rijim comes another vessel that could be dated to the Middle Assyrian Period. This jar rim belongs to the type called sometimes “jars with folded rims”. They are large straight-walled containers with thickened S-profile rims89 which are often flared. Beside the much

71 J. CURTIS, Excavations at Qasrij Cliff and Khirbet Qasrij, British Museum Western Asiatic Excavations I, Saddam Dam Report 10, London 1989, fig. 10:41,42 (8th c. BC). Curtis mentions four “related beakers,” cf. page 17; see also page 48 on beakers from Khirbet Qasrij. This type of beaker occurs in the palace ware or the “more common fabric” ware, such as the examples from Rijim or from Qasrij Cliff.

74 J. CURTIS, A. GREEN, Excavations at Khirbet Khatuniyeh..., figs. 38:160 (level 4, 7th c. BC, see also page 89 regarding parallels), 51:269 (level 4, 7th c. BC), 58:382–384 (level 3, Post-Assyrian).

75 C. SCHMIDT, Die Keramik..., 76, pl. 3b:24,25 – “Bauphase 1,” Middle Assyrian, but form 24 occurs also in “Bauphasen 3–5,” form 25 (base) also in “Bauphasen 3, 4,” therefore, they can be dated to Middle Assyrian through Post-Assyrian Period.

78 Cf. note no. 73. See also: J. CURTIS, Excavations at Qasrij Cliff and Khirbet Qasrij..., 48 on beakers from Khirbet Qasrij and their dating.

79 J. OATES, Late Assyrian Pottery..., pl. XXXVII:72 (late 7th/early 6th c. BC).

80 E. SCHNEIDER, Die eisenzeitliche Keramik von Tell Sheikh Hassan (Syrien), (in:) A. Hausleiter, A. Reiche (eds.), Iron Age Pottery..., 329, pl. 15:11, here with handle, classified as the “Krug” type, dated to Iron Age II–III.

81 P. PFÄLZNER, The Late Bronze Ceramic Traditions..., 256, pl. XXXI:365 (example from Tell Bdeiri). See also: K. DUNSTERMAAT, The Pots and Potters of Assyria..., fig. IV.18:f (Tell Sabi Abyad) and C. BEUGER, Keramik..., pl. 55:17b (Ashur, “Schicht IIb4”).

82 P. PFÄLZNER, Mittanische..., pl. 85:f; idem, The Late Bronze Ceramic Traditions..., pl. XXV:293.

83 A. D’AGOSTINO, La ceramica dal pozzo..., fig. 2:40.

84 K. DUNSTERMAAT, The Pots and Potters of Assyria..., figs. IV.30:b, IV.85:d.

85 C. SCHMIDT, Die Keramik..., pl. 3b:9 – “Flasche, Bauphase 1” (Middle Assyrian), but occurring through “Bauphase 5” (Post-Assyrian); idem, Die Keramik..., 65.


87 P. PFÄLZNER, The Late Bronze Ceramic Traditions..., 252–253.

88 P. PFÄLZNER, Mittanische..., pl. 87:d.

89 A. D’AGOSTINO, Pottery Production..., fig. 2,2.


91 P. PFÄLZNER, The Late Bronze Ceramic Traditions..., 253.
more numerous examples of the form dated to the Neo-Assyrian Period, Tell Rijim also produced sherd Ri 497/54 (Fig. 7:7), for which parallels can be found in the Middle Assyrian material in Tell Bderi,92 Tell Sheikh Hamad,93 and Tell Taban.94

Jar Ri 3153/140 (Fig. 7:6) poses another question for debate. Koliński published it as an illustration of his type D 40.95 Without questioning the validity of distinguishing this type of jars and attributing other fragments to it, it seems advisable to reconsider the dating of sherd Ri 3153. Next to other parallels Koliński cites a vessel from Tell Aqab with possible Middle Assyrian dating.96 The vessel from Tell Aqab is similar to the example from Rijim because of the groove at the junction of the neck and shoulders.

92 P. PFALZNER, Mittanische..., pl. 156:e (“eingezogene Flaschen”).
93 P. PFALZNER, Mittanische..., pls. 91:b, 122:c, 123:a.
94 K. OHNUMA, H. NUMOTO, Excavations at Tell Taban..., fig. 9:38.
95 R. KOŁIŃSKI, Tell Rijim..., 42, 135, pl. 32:d.
96 R. KOŁIŃSKI, Tell Rijim..., 42. Parallels for the form D 40 cited in the publication indicate its date between the 17th and 12th c. BC.
There are more parallels in the Middle Assyrian material. The Rijim sherd resembles, for example, a jar from Tell Sheikh Hamad, especially with regard to the inside hollowing of the walls of the neck and a groove on the neck.\textsuperscript{87} One should note, however, the shorter neck of the Sheikh Hamad vessel and the slightly different rim. A similar form, apparently without the groove (although this may be due to the size of the surviving sherd) was noted from Tell Barri.\textsuperscript{88} Grooves at the neck to shoulder interface appear to be a common feature on vessels from layers 3–5 at Tell Sabi Abyad.\textsuperscript{89} In the light of these parallels, it seems possible to suggest a Middle Assyrian date for the sherd Ri 3153 / 140. Moreover, other fragments from tag 140 could be assigned a Middle Assyrian date: Ri 3133, Ri 3134 (see below) and Ri 3155 (Middle- or possibly even Neo-Assyrian in this case).

Reservations to the pottery presentation voiced above in the introduction are particularly valid with regard to the bases. In cases of mixed pottery assemblages, it is extremely difficult to assign the simple flat bases to particular periods, even on the basis of their fabric. Mistakes can be made in two ways: by attributing to the Middle Assyrian period material that does not belong or by failing to assign material that actually belongs. The same can be said of some other types of bases, although to a lesser degree. The nipple and button bases, on the other hand, were in turn collected and documented with extra care (A. Reiche pers. comm.), because they were distinctive.\textsuperscript{90} Thus they constituted a sizable group in the recorded and drawn assemblage and are extremely likely to be “over-represented”; the actual proportions between the flat, ring and nipple/button bases in the ceramic material from Tell Rijim may have been completely different in reality. The only certain example of a flat base from Middle Assyrian times is a slightly concave base of a small carinated bowl (Ri 928A / 64).\textsuperscript{91} It could be dated securely because the vessel was preserved complete. Concave bottoms appear to be a common feature on vessels from other Middle Assyrian sites: Tell Sheikh Hamad, Tell Bderi, Tell Mohammed Arab, Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta,\textsuperscript{92} Tell Brak,\textsuperscript{93} Tell Taban\textsuperscript{104} and Tell Fekheriye.\textsuperscript{105} Disc bases can be distinguished in the flat bases group. Their dating is more problematic. Rijim produced a number of bases of this kind, including some from tags where some of the sherds could be dated to the Middle Assyrian Period, for example Ri 526 / 56, Ri 553 / 56, Ri 1079 / 69 (Fig. 8:1–3). The type appeared in the publication of pottery from the Middle Bronze Age. R. Koliński described his form 39 as “…flat bottom… The turning of walls into bottom modeled externally to resemble a ring base.”\textsuperscript{106} Rightly he cited parallels not only from the 2nd millennium BC, but also from Ashur of the Neo-Assyrian Period.\textsuperscript{107} Koliński then concluded that the form is to be dated “from the 18th c. BC until the Neo-Assyrian Period.”\textsuperscript{108} Assemblages from the 2nd millennium BC contain numerous examples of bases of this kind (Middle Assyrian – Tell Taban, Khirbet esh-Shenef),\textsuperscript{109} equally so as Neo-Assyrian assemblages, e.g. Qasrij Cliff,\textsuperscript{110} Khirbet Qasrij,\textsuperscript{111} Khirbet Karhasan,\textsuperscript{112} Ashur,\textsuperscript{113}...
Tell Knedig,114 Tell Abu Hafur East,115 Shiukh Fawqani.116 Bases of this type from Rijim could be dated therefore quite broadly from the Old Babylonian through the end of the 7th c. BC. Some of them assuredly could be of Middle Assyrian date, but the contexts from which they derive preclude an unquestioned attribution to this time.

Similarly as in the case of flat bases, the only surely Middle Assyrian ring base belongs to a completely preserved bowl Ri 3330/148 (Fig. 5:5). The underside of the base has slight thickenings that are concentric and look like small rings. This kind of finishing of the base does not find parallels in the known ceramic material from the Middle Assyrian Period.


For reasons explained above, nipple bases (like button bases) constitute a numerous group among Assyrian pottery bases from Tell Rijim. Some differentiation among them has been noted, from barely marked nib/ nipple (Ri 244/20, Ri 1937/103, Fig. 8:4–5), through a more distinct nipple (Ri 10/1, Ri 1090/69, Ri 1470/79, Ri 2249/113, Ri 2271/113, Ri 1428/78, Fig. 8:6–10, Fig. 9:1), to nipples separated from the body by a slight constriction (Ri 2260/113, Fig. 9:2). Two bases: Ri 1615/86 (Fig. 9:3) and Ri 12/1 (Fig. 9:4), stand on the borderline between nipple and button forms.

Button bases usually have a marked constriction between the nib and the body walls. The nib itself could be slightly pointed at the bottom (Ri 346/48, Ri 9/1, Ri 2099/108, Ri 1169/16, Ri 3133/140, Ri 242/20, Fig. 9:5–10); it could also be rounded (Ri 4112/232, Ri 3134/140, Ri 2094/108, Fig. 10:1–3). One example shows an elongated button, clearly distinguished from the lower body of the vessel (Ri 271/29, Fig. 10:4); one other example has an elongated button, slightly narrowing toward the tip, with a ridge at the base (Ri 2301/114, Fig. 10:5); finally, two buttons are shaped in an entirely different manner with a hollow on the underside (Ri 1616/86, Fig. 10:6, and Ri 6781/339).117

The ambiguity of the terms “nipple” and “button” bases has been raised already.118 Button bases, according to Henrickson and Cooper, had a “pronounced, shaped, circular nib” or “button,” while nipple bases had a “less pronounced, less extended nib.” The borderline between pronounced and less pronounced is naturally not distinct and largely intuitive; hence definitions of this kind cannot resolve questions of ambiguous designations in various archaeological publications. The division into nipple and button bases proposed here is based on the above definitions with full awareness of the fact that it could be put into doubt.

Nipple/button bases appeared already on Mitannian shouldered beakers.119 Very often they are also found on the so-called Middle Assyrian administrative pottery.120 Numerous Middle Assyrian examples come from Ashur,121 Tell Taban,122 Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta,123 Tell Sabi Abyad.124 They were also common in Neo-Assyrian ceramics, having been recorded at a large number of sites including Nimrud,125 Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta,126 Tell Abu Dhabiir,127 Ashur,128 in layers 8/7–3 from Khirbet Khutaniyeh, dated from Middle Assyrian (?) through Post-Assyrian Period,129 Qasrij Cliff,130 Khirbet Qasrij131 and at Tell Yemniyeh.132 It is difficult to date with certainty bases of the nipple and button type from Tell Rijim. Ri 1169/16 (Fig. 9:8), 242/20 (Fig. 9:10), 244/20 (Fig. 8:4), 271/29 (Fig. 10:4), 346/48 (Fig. 9:5), 2094/108 (Fig. 10:3), 2099/108 (Fig. 9:7), Ri 4112/232 (Fig. 10:1) and base of beaker Ri 7263/373 (Fig. 7:1) can be considered as Middle Assyrian owing to a discovery context. Ri 2301/114 (Fig. 10:5) also finds good parallels in Middle Assyrian material (Tell Taban, Tell Sheikh Hamad).133

The next problematic group is constituted by the solid foot bases. These bases are fairly thick and small in diameter (2.8–3.2 cm) and probably belonged to beakers or goblets. Examples from Rijim (Ri 2700/129, Ri 2701/129, Ri 6306/330, Fig. 10:8–10) recall bases of the so-called Kasiste Goblets from the 2nd millennium BC. The form seems to have been continued in the early 1st millennium BC, as suggested by parallels from Tell Yemniyeh134 and Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta.135

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117 Base Ri 6781/339 was to fragmentary to be shown.
120 Tell Sheikh Hamad – P. Pätzner, Mittanische..., pls. 97:e,h,k, 114:a,b,c.
121 A. Haller, Die Gräber..., pl. 2:af,ag,ah,ao,aq.
122 K. Ohnuma, H. Numoto, M. Shimbo, Excavations at Tell Taban..., figs. 7:12–16, 8:26–32.
124 P.M.M.G. Akkermans, I. Rosseels, Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad..., figs. 9:18,19,22, 11:44.
125 J. Oates, Late Assyrian Pottery..., pl. XXXVI:40–42 (7th/6th c. BC).
126 C. Schmidt, Die Keramik..., pl. 4:16 (“Bauphase 2”), pl. 5b: 35–37 (“Bauphase 3”), pl. 6b:29,32 (“Bauphase 4” thus Neo-Assyrian and Post-Assyrian Periods).
127 A. Green, The Ninevite Countryside..., fig. 5:23.
128 A. HALLER, Die Gräber..., pls. 2:ba,bc,bp,bq,bs, 3:5;cd,fd; A. Hausleiter, Graves..., figs. 5;8,9, 6:1,2, 7:10 (end of 9th/beginning of 8th c. BC).
129 J. Curtis, A. Green, Excavations at Khirbet Khutaniyeh..., fig. 29:37, level 8–7 – “Middle Assyrian?” (see also page 87); fig. 32:78, level 6; fig. 51:271–274, level 4; fig. 58:384, level 3.
130 J. Curtis, Excavations at Qasrij Cliff and Khirbet Qasrij..., fig. 10:42 (8th c. BC).
132 R.C. Henrickson, L. Cooper, The Pottery of Yemniyeh..., fig. 14:a,d (10th–9th c. BC).
133 Tell Taban – K. Ohnuma, H. Numoto, M. Shimbo, Excavations at Tell Taban..., fig. 8:30; Tell Sheikh Hamad – P. Pätzner, Mittanische..., pl. 130:e.
134 R.C. Henrickson, L. Cooper, The Pottery of Yemniyeh..., fig. 15:61:d.
135 C. Schmidt, Die Keramik..., pl. 5b:42 (“Bauphase 3”).
Two other examples of similar bases (Ri 1635/86, Ri 4947/279) were published by R. Koliński as his form S 43.\textsuperscript{136} They are distinguished by a slightly concave bottom. Koliński cited among other references (Billa, Brak, Nuzi, Rimah) a parallel of Middle Assyrian date from Ashur and concluded with dating form S 43 to the 18th–12th c. BC. The context of fragment Ri 4947 (i.e. tag 279) encompassed material from a layer dug arbitrarily “to the top” of a Middle Bronze Age wall, hence it could also be of Middle Bronze Age date. However, since this context also produced forms referring to Middle Assyrian carinated bowls and cups (Ri 4949, \textbf{Fig. 6:1}, and Ri 4954, \textbf{Fig. 6:2}) and since a fragment of Middle Assyrian wall (W 12/A 1) was discovered on the top of the Middle Bronze Age structure, it is tenable to consider a Middle Assyrian date for the base Ri 4947/279. Middle Assyrian parallels for bases with concave bottom can be found, for example, in Tell Taban,\textsuperscript{137} Tell Barri\textsuperscript{138} and Tell Aqab.\textsuperscript{139} Pfälzner considered them typical of beakers of Younger Khabur Ware. Indeed, he described them in slightly different fashion as “ring bases...
sometimes so small that they can be designated as flat knob bases with concave bottom. The issue of whether the other solid foot bases from Tell Rijim (i.e. Ri 2700/129, Ri 2701/129, Ri 6306/330) could be dated to the Middle Assyrian Period or should rather be considered a continuation of 2nd millennium BC forms in the Neo-Assyrian Period remains debatable, especially as the tags from which these sherds derive contained mixed material. It should be remarked that the second fragment attributed by Koliński to his type S 43, Ri 1635/86 (Fig. 10:7), does not quite fit the description of the type. Moreover, it also finds parallels in Middle Assyrian material (Tell Taban) and should most probably be dated to Middle Assyrian Period.

**Dating**

Most of the parallels cited for the Middle Assyrian forms from Tell Rijim are dated to the 12th c. BC. Standing in support of the dating are examples from Tell Sheikh Hamad dated to Middle Assyrian IIa and IIb (1200–

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140 P. PFÄLZNER, *The Late Bronze Ceramic Traditions...,* 243, pl. VIII:85.

1170/60 BC), Tell Barri and Tell Sabi Abyad. Earlier forms in the Tell Rijim material are paralleled by finds from Khirbet Esh-Shenef and Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta dated to the 13th c. BC. There also occur forms which can be dated to the end 12th and early 11th c. BC (parallels with pottery from Tell Taban and Tell Sheikh Hamad, Middle Assyrian III). Considering that only one phase of occupation attributed to the Middle Assyrian Period was recorded on the site and in view of the dating of most of the ceramic parallels, it should be concluded that in all likelihood the Middle Assyrian occupation of Tell Rijim occurred in the 12th c. BC. Consequently, the dates given in Koliński’s publication, who placed Middle Assyrian occupation of Tell Rijim in 1300–1200 BC143 would stand in need of revision. On the other hand, the limited excavation area containing architectural remains which could be dated to the Middle Assyrian Period needs to be taken into consideration as well, as does the generally small assemblage of surely dated Middle Assyrian pottery identified during the excavations. The modest amount of pottery coming mostly from disturbed contexts calls for caution as far as more precise dating is concerned. One should also keep in mind S. Anastasio’s opinion that Middle Assyrian ceramics generally lacked distinctive markers of chronological development, which limits a potential of precise dating of pottery from a given site.144

The most important effect of the study of the architecture and pottery is the ultimate confirmation of the occupation of Tell Rijim in the Middle Assyrian Period.145 The presence of forms like the Standard Bowls and Cups and Standard Bottles, as well as a few others confirms this beyond any doubt. On the other hand, the debatable examples demonstrate the difficulties of dating specific fragments coming from mixed contexts, especially from site with both Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian occupation. The Rijim pottery complements to some extent the general picture of Middle Assyrian ceramics from the Eski Mosul region. About 20 sites have been found to contain layers from the Middle Assyrian Period, but knowledge of Middle Assyrian ceramics is still very limited. Assemblages published so far are limited to the pottery from Tell Mohammed Arab,146 Khirbet Haṭara147 and a study of pottery from Nemrik, which is in print.148 Tell Rijim is the fourth site from the Eski Mosul region to produce data in published form also on the Middle Assyrian ceramics from the heartland of Assyria.149

Translated by Iwona Zych
Dr Dariusz Szeląg
Institute of Archaeology
University of Warsaw
daresz@uw.edu.pl

DARIUSZ SZELĄG

CERAMIKA Z OKRESU ŚRODKOWOASYRYJSKIEGO Z POLSKICH WYKOPALISK NA STANOWISKU TELL RIJIM (IRAK). OPRACOWANIE WSTĘPNE

Prowadzone w latach 1984–1985, pod kierownictwem prof. P. Biełińskiego, polskie wykopaliska na stanowisku Tell Rijim były częścią projektu Eski Mosul Dam Salvage Project, zwanej inaczej Saddam Dam Basin Salvage Project, prowadzonego w latach 80. XX wieku w północnym Iraku, w związku z budową tamy na Tygrysie. Tell Rijim, leżący ok. 25 km na północny zachód od Eski-Mosul, na zachodnim brzegu Tygrysu, stanowił część obszaru nazwanego „mikroregionem Raffan” (Ryc. 1). Stanowisko o powierzchni ok. 2,5 ha znajdowało się na

142 S. ANASTASIO, Das Obere Habur-Tal..., 65; A. TENU, L’expansion..., 128–129.
143 R. KOLINISKI, Tell Rijim..., table 1 (on page XI), 2.
144 S. ANASTASIO, Das Obere Habur-Tal..., 35–36.
147 Middle Assyrian pottery from this site is limited to vessels from one grave – T1, see: S. ANASTASIO, Das Obere Habur-Tal..., 81–82.
148 A. REICHE, Late Bronze Age Pottery...
149 Cf. S. ANASTASIO, Das Obere Habur-Tal..., 31 on the modest data on ceramics from Assyria proper. Apart from the sites mentioned above, one should also note Khirbet Khatuniyeh, where the pottery from layer 7 is dated to the Middle Assyrian/Neo-Assyrian Period.
plaskim naturalnym wzgórzu, wyniesionym ok. 28 m ponad poziom rzeki (Ryc. 2). Łączny obszar przebadany w wyniku trzech sezonów badań wykopalskich to około 620 m². Prace były utrudnione z powodu znacznego zniszczenia warstw kulturowych, spowodowanego erozą stanowiska w okresach przerw osadniczych, a także z powodu późniejszych pochówków, wskazujących na częstszkie warstwy kulturowe. Spora część znalezisk, w tym cera-

mika, została znaleziona w warstwach zakladeńnych. Przy opracowywaniu publikacji pozostałości zabudowań oraz ceramiki z okresu nowoarsyjskiego okazało się, że na sta-

nowisku można wydzielić czytelną przykłady budowli oraz ceramiki środkowoarsyjskiej. Tym samym potwierdzone zostały formułowane w raportach i wskazujących opraco-

waniach wnioski na temat istnienia osadnictwa na stanowi-

sku Tell Rijim także w tym okresie.

Zachowane śledy zabudowy z okresu środkowo-

arsyjskiego ograniczają się do odsłoniętych w północno-

-zachodniej części badanego obszaru pozostałości dwóch równoległych względem siebie murów, z których zacho-

wały się prawie wyłącznie kamienne podbudowy i – w jed-

nym przypadku – część ceglanej nadbudowy (Ryc. 3, 4).

Prawdopodobnie do okresu środkowoarsyjskiego należy też przypisać jamę odkrytą w jednym z wykopów.

Przyporządkowanie fragmentów naczyń z Tell Rijim do okresu środkowoarsyjskiego opierało się tylko w niewielu przypadkach na konkretce znalezienia, najczę-

ście jedynie na dobrze stratyfikowanych analogiach z pół-

nocnej Mezopotamii. Osobna grupa to przykłady naczyń, których datowanie jest bardziej dyskusyjne a analogie nie-

jednoznaczné. Ograniczona rola w przypadku opracowania i datowania zespołu ceramiki z Tell Rijim przypada takim czynnikom, jak na przykład rodzaj domieszk ich, w przypadku ceramiki, w przypadku ceramiki, w przypadku ceramiki, w przypadku ceramiki, w przypadku ceramiki, w przypadku ceramiki, w przypadku ceramiki.

Z jednej strony powodem są niedokonalości opisu fragmentów ceramiki sporządzanych na stanowisku, a także możliwości ich weryfikacji. Z drugiej strony obecność do-

mieszki roślinnej, uważanej za cechę charakterystyczną dla ceramiki środkowoarsyjskiej, nie może być w pełni wyko-

rzystana w przypadku ceramiki z Tell Rijim, pochodzącej w dużej części z zaburzonych kontekstów. Domieszka ro-

ślinna jest bowiem obecna zarówno w części mas ceramicz-

nych stosowanych do wyrobu ceramiki ze środkowego okresu epoki brązu, jak również w przypadku niektórych kontekstów, wraz z innymi znaleziskami.

Ceramika z Tell Rijim wykazuje małą różnorod-

ność form naczyń. Formy otwarte reprezentowane są prze-

zde transparentnie dla okresu środkowoarsyjskiego-

go karnowane misy (Ryc. 5:1–6, 6:1) i czarki (Ryc. 6:2), spotykane praktycznie na wszystkich stanowiskach z tego czasu. Wśród nich wyróżnia się kategorię mis z podcięciem poniżej wylewu oraz bezpośrednio powyżej karynowania i o prostym przebiegu ścianek pomiędzy podcięciami (Ryc. 6:3, 4). Kolejne dwa przykłady mis (Ryc. 6:5, 6) mogą być prawdopodobnie datowane na okres środkowo-

arsyjski w oparciu o analogie z innych stanowisk oraz kon-

tekst znalezienia (mis Ra 7267/373, Ryc. 6:5).

Pucharek Ri 7263 (Ryc. 7:1), mimo że uszkodzo-

ny (nie zachował się wylew), przypomina naczynia środko-

wo- i nowoarsyjskie. Zabytek ten pochodzi z tego samego kontekstu co misa Ri 7267, co sprawia, że bardziej prawdo-

podobne jest datowanie go na okres środkowoarsyjski. Tej pewności brak w przypadku kolejnego pucharka (Ryc. 7:2), dla którego analogie znaleźć można wśród naczyń datowa-

nych zarówno na okres środkowo-, jak i nowoarsyjski.

Bardzo typową formą dla okresu środkowoarsyjs-

kiego, poza misami karnowanymi, są pozbawione szyjak flaszki z pogrubionymi wylewami. Wśród naczyń pocho-

dzających z Tell Rijim znajduje się kilka przykładów tej for-

my (Ryc. 7:3–5).

Datowanie dwóch kolejnych dzbanów jest bardziej dyskusyjne. Analogia dla wylewu dzbana Ri 497/54 (Ryc. 7:7) można znaleźć zarówno wśród naczyń z okresu środ-

kowo-, jak i nowoarsyjskiego. Dzban Ri 3315/140 (Ryc. 7:6) został ujęty w opracowaniu ceramiki z Tell Rijim ze-

kowego okresu epoki brązu. Jednak na podstawie ana-

logii można go datować na okres środkowoarsyjski.

Trudności w jednoznacznym przypisaniu fragment-

tów naczyń, zwłaszcza z niepewnych kontekstów, do okre-

su środkowoarsyjskiego objawiają się w pełni w przypadku denek (Ryc. 8–10). Nawet przy opracowywaniu bardzo charakterystycznych form, tzw. denek guzkowych/guzikow-

ych, nie zawsze możliwe jest przypisanie konkretnego fragmentu do okresu środkowoarsyjskiego, ponieważ wy-

stepują one także w okresie nowoarsyjskim. Stopki naczyń (Ryc. 10:8–10), na podstawie analogii ze stanowisk z północy Mezopotamii, można prawdopodobnie datować na okres środkowoarsyjski. Dotyczy to także tych przykładów (Ryc. 10:7), które we wcześniejszej publikacji wyni-

ków badań na stanowisku zaliczono do ceramiki ze środko-

owego okresu epoki brązu.

Bardziej precyzyjne określenie chronologii cerami-

ki z Tell Rijim jest trudne, choć większość form znajduje odpowiedniki na innych stanowiskach, datowanych na XII w. p.n.e. Może to sugerować konieczność zmiany proponowa-

nego datowania (XIII w. p.n.e.) osadnictwa asyryjskie-

ego w Tell Rijim. Ograniczony obszar, na jakim odso-

nięto pozostałości z tego okresu, i niewielka liczba pewnie-

datowanych fragmentów naczyń nakazują jednak daleko posuniętą ostrożność w formułowaniu takich wniosków.

Dość szczupłe ilościowo zespół ceramiki środko-

woarsyjskiej potwierdza przede wszystkim istnienie osad-

nictwa z tego czasu w Tell Rijim. Jest to także jedno z ni-

wiełu stanowisk w rejencji Eski-Mosul, z których ta katego-

ria zabytków została opracowana. Publikowane studium, choć wstępne, poszerza tym samym naszą wiedzę o ciągle niezbyt dobrze udokumentowanej ceramice środkowoarsy-

jskiej z terenu dziennej Asyrii. Przykłady naczyń o dys-

kusyjnym, trudnym do ustalenia datowaniu, ilustrują z ko-

lej problemy z chronologicznym przyporządkowaniem znalezisk pochodzących z niepewnych kontekstów, zwłasz-

cza na stanowiskach o długiej historii zasiedlenia, jak w przypadku Tell Rijim.