

## EVIDENCE FOR THE SHORT CHRONOLOGY IN MESOPOTAMIA?

The chronological relationship between the texts from Emar and Ekalte<sup>1</sup>

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In the course of the Al-Assad barrage-project in Syria several rescue-excavations took place in the Middle Euphrates region within the past 30–35 years (MARGUERON [ed.] 1980). Tall Munbāqa and Tall Meskene Qadime are among the best known tells, which were excavated within this period and have also yielded rich text material dating to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC.<sup>2</sup> Based on these numerous texts, which include letters, documents, various kinds of lists, literary, religious and canonical texts, Tall Munbāqa was clearly identified with ancient Ekalte<sup>3</sup> and nearby Tall Meskene with Emar.<sup>4</sup>

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The commonly accepted view in secondary literature published so far is that the texts from Ekalte date earlier than the archives of Emar. One crucial impulse for this assumption was presumably the edition of the first known tablet from Tall Munbāqa by W. VON SODEN 1982, who dated it because of its orthography and language to the late Old Babylonian period. On the other hand MARGUERON, the first excavator of Tall Meskene Qadime, stressed that Emar, which means specifically the part of the tell from where the tablets derive, was a new foundation by the Hittites dating to the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Muršili II. Emar then was the capital of the kingdom of Aštata (situated on the west bank of the Euphrates), which was under the supremacy of Karkemiš with its sovereign Šaḫurunuwa.<sup>5</sup> According to this premise the texts, which are generally undated, were chronologically placed in the period starting with the new foundation at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> cent. BC (ca. 1310 BC)

by the excavator as well as the French field-epigraphist ARNAUD. The archaeological finds and results of the Late Bronze Age were consequently interpreted as being strongly influenced by the Hittites. Also the chronological study by ADAMTH-WAITE 2001, who believes that the texts belong entirely to the thirteenth century B.C., is based primarily on MARGUERON's results.

However, most recent excavation results by U. FINKBEINER show that Tall Meskene Qadime has a continuous occupation from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age.<sup>6</sup> Part of the material culture of Emar can now be increasingly seen in the light of a Syrian tradition.

Due to the resumption of excavations at Emar as well as the publication of approximately 100 texts from Ekalte by MAYER in 2001 the picture of the chronological setting of the Late Bronze Age tablets and their relationship to each other can be challenged anew. Certainly worth mentioning here is the study by SKAIST 1998, who separated the so-called Syrian and Syro-Hittite documents from Emar formally *and* chronologically.<sup>7</sup> In this context it should be emphasized that all the texts from Ekalte belong to the Syrian type of tablets. Syrian documents from Emar are characterized by vertical format tablets, which are impressed with cylinder-seals<sup>8</sup> and have a writing tradition which shows strong affinities with the Alalah IV, the Amurru- and Canaanite Amarna letters and with the texts of the Old Hittite period. Documents from Ugarit, where Syrian traditions remained dominant despite the Hittite sovereignty, also have a vertical format and are written across the short dimension (see lately FAIST 2002, 131).

<sup>1</sup> Basic information on these two sites can be found in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 8, 1993–1997, 83–93 and 417–419.

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<sup>2</sup> Tall Ḥadīdī (ancient Azū) will not be further considered within this study, due to the fact that its texts have not been published yet.

<sup>3</sup> In preliminary reports MAYER identified Tall Munbāqa with Uri.

<sup>4</sup> In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and in the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC this

city, which due to its geographical setting was an important center of trade, was known as Imar, as the texts from Ebla and Mari report.

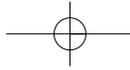
<sup>5</sup> BRYCE 1999, 201–203, KLENGEL 1999, 197–199, KLENGEL 2001, 270–271.

<sup>6</sup> FINKBEINER 2002, 5–6.

<sup>7</sup> For a differentiation see e.g. FAIST 2002, 135. For a more detailed discussion note SEMINARA 1998, 13–16.

<sup>8</sup> BEYER 2001.





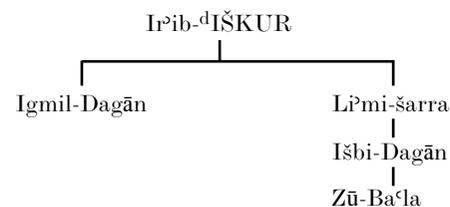
The language of the Emar tablets belongs to the so-called “peripheral” Akkadian featuring Middle Babylonian characteristics, which also comprises Westsemitic substrates<sup>9</sup> and few Assyrianisms. Hurrian lexemes are rarely attested.<sup>10</sup> WILCKE 1992 has already mentioned that less Middle Babylonian features can be found in tablets of the Syrian style than in those belonging to the Syro-Hittite one. He as well as SEMINARA have pointed out several similarities in the writing system, syllabary and language between the Syrian tablets and the texts from Ekalte. The language of Ekalte, which does not fundamentally differ from the language used at Emar, more precisely from the language of the Syrian type of texts, has been summarized by MAYER 2001, 35–38 (“Die Schreiber und ihre Sprache”).<sup>11</sup> According to MAYER the language of Ekalte belongs to the late Old Babylonian, which does not show any Middle Babylonian characteristics. The ductus can be placed between those of Alalah VII and Alalah IV. It should be pointed out that SEMINARA 1998, 19 did not exclude a chronological division of the documents of the Syrian and Syro-Hittite format when compiling the different characteristics of the Emar tablets.

Let us turn now to the known key-data of the Emar and Ekalte texts, which are partly linked to the archaeological remains. As has already been stated, only few tablets are dated (by year-name or eponym-like dating). Therefore we mostly rely on references to (possibly) determined events and on prosopographical observations.

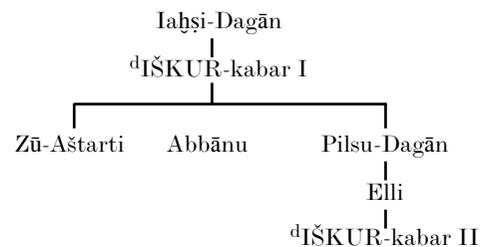
#### EMAR

According to ARNAUD the texts from Emar are to be dated to the period between ca. 1310 and 1187 BC. This dating was established by means of specific absolutely dated events. Firstly, E 26 contains

a year-name, which mentions the second year of the Kassite king Meli-Šipak, who reigned between 1188 and 1181 according to BRINKMAN 1976.<sup>12</sup> We further possess a synchronism between the well known priest (LÚ.ĤAL) of Emar Zū-Ba<sup>c</sup>la and the king of Karkemiš Šaḥurunuwa (E 201: note the critical comments by SKAIST 1998, 47), who was a contemporary of Muršili II. Muršili II is chronologically determined by an astronomical date, a solar eclipse (basically only a solar omen is mentioned in KUB 14, 4, IV 24<sup>f</sup>) in his 10<sup>th</sup> year, which is generally dated to 1308 BC. In the course of the chronological evaluation a division in time between tablets of the Syrian and those of the Syro-Hittite style was left unconsidered due to the (limits of the) excavation results proposed by MARGUERON. This task was undertaken by SKAIST 1998, who proposed the following duration for two different and subsequent local royal dynasties at Emar:<sup>13</sup> According to him the Syrian documents cover the period between ca. 1400–1220 BC and the Syro-Hittite ones date between 1275–1210 BC. The following local rulers are therefore attested at Emar:



as well as the well-known Emar dynasty, which followed the above mentioned “rulers”:<sup>14</sup>



<sup>9</sup> SEMINARA 1998; especially the personal names of Emar belong to a Westsemitic language.

<sup>10</sup> PENTIUC 2001

<sup>11</sup> It can be observed that MAYER 2001 generally dispenses from pointing out parallels in Emar (exception on p. 37 on the usage of the subjunctive-marker). Further, another feature is mentioned on p. 36: “Generell scheinen die Schreiber aus *Ekalte* mit ihren Kollegen aus *Alalah* und *Halab/Aleppo* – soweit die aus *Halab* stammenden *Māri*-Texte dies erkennen lassen – eine gewisse Geringschätzung des Tafelrandes zu teilen.” This can be observed on Emar tablets as well (see the

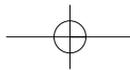
copies by ARNAUD 1985 and 1991). Almost no references can be found to the detailed grammar by SEMINARA 1998, who has differentiated between Syrian and Syro-Hittite tablets.

<sup>12</sup> Compare also the shortened dates for Meli-Šipak (1186–1179 BC) by BOESE 1982. For further notes on E 26 and its archaeological context see SKAIST 1998, 46.

<sup>13</sup> The local dynasty is subordinated to the kingdom of Karkemiš: see e.g. KLENGEL 2001, 270.

<sup>14</sup> I entertain some doubt, whether we are dealing with actual “rulers”. See below sub “The earlier ‘dynasty’ of Emar” and *bēlu*.





In view of SKAIST 1998, 62, which is based on a difficult passage in GK 6, Li<sup>2</sup>mi-šarra was a dependant of a ruler of Mittani (who is designated as LUGAL KUR *hur-ri* “Hurrian king”). Since Šuppiluliuma I, who conquered Syria, brought Mittani to an end, the aforementioned king of Mittani must have ruled before ca. 1325 BC in order to have exercised enough power and pressure on the rulers of Emar, as it is mentioned in GK 6.

1325 BC is the point of time when the ruler of the well-known royal family Iaḥši-Dagān ascended the throne (p. 64). Skaist counted back four generations containing 18 years each and obtained ca. 1400 BC for the beginning of the reign of Ir<sup>2</sup>ib-<sup>d</sup>IŠKUR, the first ruler of the newly established dynasty.<sup>15</sup>

Hurrian troops, who threatened and attacked the city of Emar, are mentioned in texts which can be dated to the reign of the local ruler Pilsu-Dagān, who was a contemporary of Tukultī-Ninurta I.<sup>16</sup> The second dynasty of Emar lasted five generations and was placed accordingly between 1325 and 1220+x years (the actual regnal length of <sup>d</sup>IŠKUR-kabar II like of all the other rulers is unknown).

Crucial here is the earlier dating of part of the tablets (documents of the Syrian style). Unfortunately the pottery sequences and stratigraphical observations of the French excavation at Emar, which could possibly yield some more information on the chronological sequence of archaeological phases, are still unpublished; the glyptic material, which was published by BEYER in 2001, does not seem to rule out an earlier dating.

Disappointingly the prosopographical data do not allow any links between Emar and Ekalte. However, it has to be stressed that the textual material from Ekalte mostly deals with private matters (family archives from private houses versus archives from the administrative building M<sub>1</sub> at Emar), in which actual contacts between both

towns with their own administrative centers (compare the local city-gods <sup>d</sup>NIN.URTA and Ba<sup>2</sup>laka) are unlikely to be expected.

#### EKALTE

In contrast to Emar no local dynasty is known to have ruled at Ekalte. All texts stem from the local Late Bronze Age phase 4, which is separated from phase 3 by a destruction layer.<sup>17</sup> In the texts an average of three to four generations is attested, which also – depending on the estimation of generation-lengths – is used for the calculation of duration of this phase: according to MAYER 2001, 14 phase 4 lasted 60–80 years. These generations are narrowed down by (reconstructed) absolute dates: On the one hand a year-name in text nr. 80 plays a crucial role for Mayer’s reconstruction. In line 32 the author reads MU BA.DU <sup>1</sup>Tu, which he translated “Jahr nachdem Tu(*thalija*) gekommen ist”. In spite of the fact that in the past this line was corrected with the more likely reading MU Ma/Ba<sup>2</sup>-da/du<sup>2</sup> 1 KAM.MA,<sup>18</sup> MAYER 2001, 15 connected the abbreviated spelling <sup>1</sup>Tu with Tuthalija I, who reigned at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> cent. BC and destroyed Ḥalab.<sup>19</sup> But KLINGER 1995, 245<sup>31</sup> has already pointed out that this spelling is only attested for Tuthalija IV. and that the historical link is therefore unlikely. Further, we do not have any evidence as to whether Tuthalija I ever crossed the Euphrates during his campaigns against Syria.<sup>20</sup> Next MAYER 2001, 18 attempted to reconstruct the time of destruction of Ekalte by scanning the political situation of this period. He concluded that the town must have been destroyed during the well known 8<sup>th</sup> campaign of Tuthmosis III (1479–1425), which took place in the latter’s 33<sup>rd</sup> regnal year.<sup>21</sup> Consequently MAYER subtracted three to four generations from 1446 BC and set the beginning of phase 4 around 1530 BC. Though the beginning of this phase is not determined by a layer of destruction, the texts imply a pauperiza-

<sup>15</sup> Practically nothing is known about the local kings and the conditions which led to their succession. Therefore a calculation of approximate generation-lengths is impossible.

<sup>16</sup> SKAIST 1998, 65–67 linked these attacks to events reported in KBo 1, 14: here, attacks by “men from Turira” on Hittite territories are mentioned, which presumably took place between 1268 and 1265 BC, when Ḥanigalbat was a vassal-state of Assyria and before an end was put to the independent rule of Ḥanigalbat by Šalmaneser I (ca. 1258 BC).

<sup>17</sup> Further occupation is attested after the destruction in phase 3 (but no texts derive from this phase).

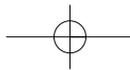
<sup>18</sup> This date formula is characteristic for Syrian-style tablets (see e.g. KLINGER 1995, 245<sup>31</sup>). The PN *Bada* is attested in the Emar onomasticon.

<sup>19</sup> This event most probably followed the campaign of Tuthmosis III (KLINGER 1995, 244).

<sup>20</sup> KLENGEL 1999, 114, BRYCE 1999, 151–154.

<sup>21</sup> Ekalte is not mentioned on the northeastern wall of the 7<sup>th</sup> pylon in Karnak, which contains a list of destroyed towns. See BUSCH 1998, 141–142





tion of the population, which MAYER attributed to the preceding continuous bellicose conflicts between the Hittites and Iamhad in Northern Syria.<sup>22</sup> Again, these are linked to the campaigns against Syria by Muršili I, who had ultimately caused the fall of the Babylon I dynasty during the reign of Samsuditana.<sup>23</sup>

Following the short chronology, which is based on the observed Venus cycles during the reign of Ammišaduqa, the fall of Babylon took place in 1531 BC. MAYER 2001, 18 concluded on behalf of his reconstruction: “Drei bis vier Generationen vor 1446 rückt aber das Ende dieser Phase in etwa auf die Zeit von 1530 – dies spräche eindeutig für die ‘Kurze Chronologie’, auf keinen Fall ließe sich dieser Befund mit der ‘Mittleren’ oder der ‘Langen Chronologie’ in Einklang bringen.” As KLINGER 1995 observed, difficulties arise also with the attested number of generations of the Hittite royal family within this period, which is the time between Muršili I and Tutḫaliya I (see below).

According to Mayer Ekalte lost its importance after 1446 BC, at the latest after Šuppiluliuma I in the 14<sup>th</sup> cent. BC, in the course of the breakdown of the Mittanian kingdom and the subsequent reorganization of Syria by the Hittites. Other than in Emar no textual evidence is known from the later phase of the Late Bronze Age. The pottery from Ekalte is still being prepared for publication, which maybe will shed further light on the dating of phase 4 to the 15<sup>th</sup> cent. BC.

As has been mentioned above no prosopographical links can be established between the materials from Emar and Ekalte, which could help to synchronize both text corpora. But, as expected, it can be noted that in the Ekalte material no Anatolian personal names are attested. Next to the majority of Westsemitic and Akkadian-Westsemitic hybrid names a number of Hurri-

an personal names are documented, which cannot be found in the Emar onomasticon.<sup>24</sup>

#### THE EARLIER “DYNASTY” OF EMAR

ADAMTHWAITE 2001, who dealt with the chronology of the Emar texts based on MARGUERON’s results, argued for an overall dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> cent. BC: p. 7: “The fact that the excavated area at Tell Meskéné belongs only to the thirteenth century B.C. since no structures earlier than the Late Bronze Age have been found, supports Margueron’s conclusion that the Late Bronze Age Emar was a newly built town, only lately relocated from elsewhere.” The author briefly referred to SKAIST’s study (1998) and concluded on p. 8: “In summary, his line of argumentation lays too much weight on suggestions in the texts and not on the archaeology of the site ...”. Hence ADAMTHWAITE calls SKAIST’s earlier dynasty “head of the city council of Emar”, which includes also the “city elders of Emar“ (LÚšībūt URUEmar) and was contemporary with the well-known royal family of Emar starting with Iaḥši-Dagān.<sup>25</sup>

Texts of the “earlier” dynasty (after Skaist), all belonging to the group of Syrian-type tablets, usually feature an eponym dating: “Year 1 (or 2) of PN”. This kind of dating, which names persons without further qualification, is not attested on tablets which mention members of the royal family of Iaḥši-Dagān.<sup>26</sup> Following YAMADA 1996 the eponym dating reflects the official dating system of the municipal administration of Emar, which is represented by the city-elders. Otherwise, the city mayor (*ḥazannu*<sup>27</sup>) functions as a representative of the public authority. The elders of Emar are already well attested in the texts of Mari and are known to have already played an important role in the administration in the region of the Middle Euphrates in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC.<sup>28</sup> Also the texts of Ekalte state the importance of

<sup>22</sup> This is indicated by many sale documents (MAYER 2002, 14). See also WESTENHOLZ 2000, xv.

<sup>23</sup> BRYCE 1999, 101–105.

<sup>24</sup> In Emar the following names are attested: *A-ki-ia*, *A-ri-im-mé*, *Eḫli-Addu*, *I-ri-ia*, *Ka-tu-we*, *Ku-ut-pa*, *Ku-ut-ra*, *Ku-ut-ti*, *Pu-ra-me* and *Ta-ki-ia*.

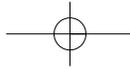
<sup>25</sup> For more prosopographical details of this “family” see pp. 18–21.

<sup>26</sup> As FLEMING 2000, 16 pointed out “many Syrian-type documents involve neither these kings of Emar nor their official scribes”.

<sup>27</sup> Mayors usually are attested with names of Westsemitic provenance. Local governors (LÚ.UGULA.KALAM.MA) usually bear Anatolian or Hurrian names. S. BECKMAN 1995, 36 and ADAMTHWAITE 2001, 192, who stresses that the latter are Hittite functionaries. On the role of the LÚ.UGULA.KALAM.MA see lately again HELTZER 2001, 219–236.

<sup>28</sup> Note that at Tuttul a coexistence of a *ḥazannum* and of *šībūtu* is attested as well. Compare also the observations by PODANY 2002, 187 ff.





the elders of the city and the mayor in the city council.<sup>29</sup> ADAMTHWAITE 2001, 191 pointed out that these structures of the local municipal administration represented by the instances mentioned above can be traced back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC.

It has been previously stated that “The elders originally enjoyed complete political and economic powers, but this control was slowly eroded over time.” (WESTENHOLZ 2000, xv). The rule of kings at Emar only starts with Iaḥṣi-Dagān and is understood to be an innovation within the administrative structure, which was most probably due to the sovereignty of the Hittites. It can therefore be assumed that during the Mittanian period in Syria, and specifically at Emar, older administrative structures with their representatives *ḥazannu* and *šībūtu* (elders) were still in use,<sup>30</sup> as it is reported in the earlier texts from Ebla and Mari.<sup>31</sup> This scenario is taken for granted at Ekalte and Azû, where no royal family was installed and whose textual evidence is traditionally dated before the one of Emar.

The autonomy of the municipal administration represented by the elders and NIN.URTA has been frequently pointed out before. It can be observed that both were massively involved in numerous transactions and dominated the economic affairs of the city, while the royal family of Emar is not mentioned at all.<sup>32</sup> Combining the evidence it may therefore be concluded that the textual evidence from Emar can be divided into an earlier phase before the Hittites and a later phase.<sup>33</sup> In this case Emar might be chronologically closer to Ekalte than has been proposed so far and the archives of both sites might be possibly brought together in the future (note the unfortu-

nate fact of missing prosopographical links). Most important for chronological considerations is that ADAMTHWAITE’s premise can now be dismissed since there is now clear evidence for a continuous occupation from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age at Tall Meskene Qadime.

Still, I entertain some doubts as to SKAIST’s terminology concerning the preceding “dynasty”: Despite the fact that SKAIST has published valuable comments on the formulary and its implications on the sociopolitical situation, I would not go as far as reconstructing another local *royal* family at Emar preceding the well-known one starting with Iaḥṣi-Dagān, who is regularly addressed as LUGAL (URU *E-mar*<sup>KI</sup>).<sup>34</sup> The sovereigns of the Hittites in Karkemiš (Ini-Teššup, Šaḥurunuwa, Šarri-Kuša and Talmi-Teššup) are designated as LUGAL (KUR/URU *Kar-ga-mis*) as well. But this title is missing with the persons who have been included to the earlier “dynasty” by SKAIST. A hint for the indirect designation of Lîmi-šarra as a king was seen in text GK 6. In this document, which contains many difficult passages (esp. lines 13 and 14 with the terms É.GAL and LUGAL, which can not be clearly attributed to a specific person in this text<sup>35</sup>), the latter may only be associated with the title *bēlu* (“lord”), which is always mentioned together with the city of Emar (URU<sup>li</sup>-šū ù *be-li-šū*, note instead in line 36 <sup>1</sup>*Li*-LUGAL ù URU *E-mar* as witnesses<sup>36</sup>),<sup>37</sup> whereas the term LUGAL (“king”) is only attested in connection with the Hurrian king (LUGAL KUR *hur-ri*; see below). In this text it is stated that Irîb-d<sup>1</sup>ISKUR (father of Lîmi-šarra?: see lines 1 and 6) is designated as SANGA (“*šangû* priest”) of the temple of “Nergal of Trade” for settling the burden of the hostages

<sup>29</sup> The documents from Emar, Ekalte as well as from Azû name a group of brothers (LÚ.MEŠ ŠEŠ.MEŠ/*ahḥē*) with a “head of the brothers” or “eldest of the brothers” (*rāb ahḥē* or ŠEŠ.GAL ŠEŠ.MEŠ): MAYER in BUSCH (ed.) 1998, 127–128, ADAMTHWAITE 2001, 191, MAYER 2001, 25 and RE 8, 16.

<sup>30</sup> For a LÚ.UGULA.KALAM.MA from Emar see ADAMTHWAITE 2001, 192 (“vestige of the earlier Emarite tradition”).

<sup>31</sup> KLENGEL 1989, 61–65. On a “more archaic society” at Emar compared to Ugarit see most recently HELTZER 2001, 236.

<sup>32</sup> They are mostly referred to in Syro-Hittite type of texts. For the use of the Dynastic Seal and the so-called NIN.URTA Seal see SKAIST 1998, 63.

<sup>33</sup> See lately D’ALFONSO 2000, 269–295.

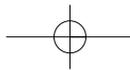
<sup>34</sup> Note that we now know of a king named Iaḥṣi-Ba’l, who ruled at Emar.

<sup>35</sup> Maybe one referred to the family of Iaḥṣi-Ba’l attested in Ekalte texts nr. 9 and 70 (see below)?

<sup>36</sup> *Li*-LUGAL= Lîmi-šarra. In line 42 Abî-Rašap, the *ḥazannu* is mentioned as well. The same *ḥazannu* acts as a witness in AuOrSI 14 and 87 as well as in E 149. SKAIST 1998, 61 compared lines 20 (LUGAL ù URU *E-mar*) and 36 (<sup>1</sup>*Li*-LUGAL ù URU *E-mar*) and concluded that *Lîmi-šarra* was a king of Emar.

<sup>37</sup> In RE 34 a certain Ikûn-Dagān committed an offense against his city (URU<sup>KI</sup>-šū) and his lord (*be-li-šū*), which resulted in confiscation of his property by dNIN.URTA. On the chronological significance of this text see FLEMING 2000, 23. Document E 1 also reports an offense against the lord.





that was on the city and its *bēlu*. Otherwise, neither Līmi-šarra<sup>38</sup> nor Irīb-dIŠKUR ever bear a title. Studying the role of the city-elders in Ebla and Mari, KLENGEL 1989, 63<sup>23</sup> mentioned that it is uncertain whether the EN of Ebla, who often is attested together with the city-elders, is to be regarded as the “king” (Archi) or rather as a “chief administrator” (Michalowski).<sup>39</sup> Discussing the evidences KLENGEL further proposed the translation “Stadtherrscher (ohne monarchische Gewalt)” or “Verwaltungschef”, which might be compared with ADAMTHWAITE’s “head of the city council” cited above.

The circle of persons around Irīb-dIŠKUR is mostly mentioned as witnesses at various transactions. It may be concluded that these persons were representatives of the city, comparable with the city-elders who were heavily involved in economic life.<sup>40</sup> It is worth mentioning that in these documents the payment of penalty usually goes to the city, which is represented by the elders of the city and dNIN.URTA. Just in one case (AuOrSI 14) also the palace receives part of the fine. It remains unclear why – in the case of the palace as the recipient – no member of the royal family is explicitly mentioned, which is why SKAIST (1998) 61 then assumed that the mentioned group of persons around Irīb-dIŠKUR acting as witnesses in this sale document represented members of a *royal* family (dynasty).<sup>41</sup>

Further and even more important, the identification of Irīb-dIŠKUR (first witness) in AuOrSI 14 (see SKAIST 1998, 61) with the one of the earlier “dynasty” is not secured yet and highly problematic. But nevertheless this text can be dated within this period of time, due to the fact that it belongs to the so-called *arana*-documents.<sup>42</sup> Based on GK 6 and the *arana*-documents SKAIST 1998 argued for an earlier Hurrian domination (Mittani) over Emar before the Hittite takeover of power in Northern Syria. GK 6 as well as the *arana*-documents report

on payments of tribute (Hurrian term *arana*) to a Hurrian king, who was most likely a Mittanian ruler. As a result of these external contacts mentioned in the Emar texts SKAIST proposed an earlier dating of the Syrian-style tablets.

Due to the statement in the starting line “in the days of Līmi-šarra, son of Irīb-dIŠKUR” of AuOrSI 87 it becomes evident that Līmi-šarra was certainly an important person at Emar (see lately also FLEMING 2000, 25). This introduction referring to a certain period is only attested in texts by the hand of the scribe Eḫli-Kuša (also E 149, AuOrSI 18 and GK 6). Interestingly, both texts GK 6 and AuOrSI 87 deal with the appointment of two different SANGA of Nergal-temples (Irīb-dIŠKUR and Pilsu-Dagān).<sup>43</sup> In both instances the city is involved; only text GK 6 further notes a LUGAL in this respect, who is to be related to the Hurrian king of line 13.

It is not fully proven whether Līmi-šarra and his family can be entirely placed chronologically before the reign of Iaḫši-Dagān or whether they overlap with the latter’s dynasty.

An indication on the concurrence of the texts from Ekalte and Emar may be found in the badly preserved text nr. 1 from Ekalte, which was written on behalf of the city-council (URU.KI GAL.GAL ù TUR.TUR ù LÚ.MEŠ *ab-bu*<sup>44</sup>): here the Ekaltean mayor Muḫra-aḫī and the Emarite king dIŠKUR-kabar (I ?) are mentioned together. It is reported that copper instead of [...] of the property of Muḫra-aḫī is to be delivered to the king. Both persons are again attested together in the sale-document nr. 24 from Ekalte.

In the case of the king (LUGAL) Iaḫši-Baḫl, who is named in the Ekalte texts nr. 9 and nr. 70 but not in the archives of Emar, no further solution can be offered here: As MAYER has already pointed out, Iaḫši-Baḫl seems very likely to represent a yet unknown king of Emar,<sup>45</sup> possibly preceding the well-known royal family of Emar.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>38</sup> SEMINARA 1996, 79–92: on the meanings of LUGAL/šarru (“governor” and “king”) in Emar and Ebla.

<sup>39</sup> See lately again PETTINATO (1995) 99–104 and PITARD 1997, 399–416.

<sup>40</sup> Referring to the Ebla evidence KLENGEL 1989, 63 states: “Es ist unklar, ob der EN selbst aus dem Ältestenrat hervorgegangen ist oder sogar von diesem bestimmt wurde.”

<sup>41</sup> One would expect that the members of this family were designated as LUGAL regularly.

<sup>42</sup> SKAIST 1998a, 169–171.

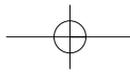
<sup>43</sup> FLEMING 2000 24<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> See MAYER 2001, 25.

<sup>45</sup> Further evidence must be awaited whether Zū-Baḫla of text nr. 9, line 35 really is to be regarded as the son of the king Iaḫši-Baḫl, and therefore as a prince of Emar.

<sup>46</sup> Note that the palace mentioned in GK 6, 13 most probably refers to the palace of Emar. It is not clear whether the LUGAL of line 14 is to be identified with the Mittanian king (see above) or possibly with Iaḫši-Baḫl known from the Ekalte texts.





Unfortunately, none of the other persons in the text can be found in the prosopographical data of Emar, which could indicate that the mentioned LUGAL preceded the family of Iaḥṣi-Dagān and somehow links to the family of Irīb-dIŠKUR. Yet, we do have to await further evidence to fit in this king chronologically; but he can be taken as a proof that in texts nr. 9 and 70 one referred to Emar's role of the late 15<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> cent. BC.

#### THE "MISSING LINK" BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND MESOPOTAMIAN CHRONOLOGY?

Despite the fact that MAYER has repeatedly published his line of argumentation stressing Ekalte's importance for Mesopotamian chronology, we are still confronted with a number of difficulties arising around the Dark Age of Mesopotamia. The link between Ekalte and the campaign of Tutmosis III is by no means proven and relies solely on doubtful as well as indirect connections (note the date-formula with <sup>I</sup>Tu). In view of the references to Hittite rulers and their campaigns against Syria one has to consider the long and assured line of Hittite kings within the mentioned period. No

matter how long each of the generations actually lasted, this succession of kings does not allow to fit the evidence of Ekalte – as understood by MAYER – within the framework of a short chronology for Mesopotamia.<sup>47</sup> Phase 4 of Ekalte cannot be correlated with known historical events for the time being; especially the beginning of this layer, which according to MAYER does not show any destruction or any other significant characteristics, can hardly be linked with the campaign of Muršili I against Babylon, despite the attempt of the recalculation of generations starting with Tutḫalija I. Regardless of the question of generation-lengths and the dating of Ekalte, one should perhaps consider a chronology for Mesopotamia which is *not* based on the observations of Venus cycles. The evaluation of astronomical data has repeatedly shown that no satisfying results can be achieved, which implies that alternative approaches should be considered in the future.

Much as we would like to find a solution for absolute chronology in Mesopotamia, one cannot do so by neglecting important sources of the Ancient Near East which cover the Dark Age.

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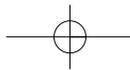
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<sup>47</sup> KLINGER 1995, 245.





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