

The importance and role of roads in the emergence and development of the civilizations of the Syrian Jazirah during the Iron Age



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ABSTRACT

The study aims to shed light on the road network and its importance in the Syrian Jazirah region during the Iron Age, Being one of the archaeologically rich periods, which was characterized by the emergence of many cultural and artistic features of this era in general, The Syrian Jazirah region was particularly distinguished, and roads were the main reason that distinguished this period and a reason for importing and exporting the cultures of other civilizations. To be used during this period on a large scale, and to clarify their role and the difference of their networks (land and water) as in Mesopotamia due to the scarcity of waterways and channels, Land roads were used in rolling, mountainous and desert areas, and in general they were shortened, similar to the Syrian Jazirah region, In general, it was shortened, similar to the Syrian Jazirah region, and there are also long overland routes that connected Mesopotamia. With neighboring territories, Especially those that were linked to the Syrian Jazirah region. In addition to highlighting the role of rivers as a basic pillar for the emergence and development of civilization, as they provided important transport routes, The study relied on a descriptive and analytical approach, such as texts that illustrate those paths and roads used by the population, and maps that highlight the path of land and river roads, In addition to clarifying its role in linking through the analytical side, within the scope of the Syrian Jazirah region and Mesopotamia, and the paths that used to connect it to other civilizations, Accordingly, the study ended with a conclusion that lists the results of the study on the importance of these roads as a main artery for all activities, and their role in linking the Jazirah region internally and externally.

Keywords:

iron age; transportation; road transport; river transport; installation

Article info:

Received: 05 January 2021
Accepted: 31 January 2021
DOI: 10.12816/KAN.2021.222760

Citation:

Ribar Khalaf, "The importance and role of roads in the emergence and development of the civilizations of the Syrian Jazirah during the Iron Age".- Historical kan Periodical. - Vol. (14) Issue (51); March 2021. Pp. 209 – 214.

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نشرت هذه الدراسة في دورية كان التاريخية للأغراض العلمية والبحثية فقط، وغير مسموح بإعادة النسخ والنشر والتوزيع للأغراض تجارية أو ربحية.

Introduction

This required kings and rulers since ancient times to construct internal and external roads and paths, and to set up geographical lists to define their paths and stages between cities that pass through or are located on them, and a number of Land roads, riverbeds and their tributaries were natural waterways and pathways that facilitated movement and navigation on them. The inhabitants of the region have been famous since ancient times for their commercial activity with neighboring peoples, and they have influenced their methods and commercial dealings in these peoples. These roads and their means were the most important pillars of trade (Abu Al-Mahasen, 1979: 235-36). And in view of the strategic importance of the Syrian Jazirah site during the Iron Age and before it, by virtue of its location between Mesopotamia in the east and eastern Asia Minor to the north and the Levant to the west (Zyada 2002: 157). cuneiform texts were mentioned that clarify those paths and roads that the inhabitants used at that time in their internal and external transportation. Some of these roads were land as well as others watery (Hashem 2002: 18). For example: It is noticed that Assyria was during the Iron Age, on the days of the king, "Teglat Blaser III" 745-727 BC. Do not see that its ownership of Syria and Palestine is the basic condition for the success of its empire (Mahran 1999: 13), which developed a highly developed road system, through which they crossed the island for military and administrative purposes (Map. 1) (Russel 1985: 57). In addition, the Jazira region, in some of its locations, used to form major phases between the major centers (Luciani 2002: 199), These included Tell Barri / Kahat, and Tell Ajaja / Shadikani, all of which highlighted the importance of the region as a whole (Liri 1963: 214).

Road lanes (land) towards cities

The road routes in the northern and eastern provinces of Mesopotamia, especially the Syrian Jazirah region, were generally difficult due to the nature of the rugged mountainous region in which the Zagros mountain range extends, and the road was land, starting from the city of Nineveh and heading towards the Jazirah region from east to west, Passing through several settlements and important cities such as the city called Shubat "Enlil" "Tell Shaghar bazar" and "gozana" "Tell Halaf" and the city of Maskanah " Emar", then it approaches the city of Aleppo and ends at the Orontes River, and from the Orontes River, several roads diverge from it leading to Central From Syria, other roads travel to

the coast of the Mediterranean, There were also two other land roads heading to the north, and they were used permanently for transportation, as the convoys crossed them towards the center of "Kanish" in Anatolia. As for the first road, it can be divided into the following stages:

- From Assyria to Khabur.
- B. From Khabur to Admum.
- C. From Adam to the Euphrates.
- D. From the Euphrates to Kanish.

That is, this road crossed the Jazirah plateau north of the Euphrates Valley, while the second road used to start from Nineveh to Harran to meet the first road, and it went towards Kanish in Anatolia (Map. 1).

The commercial caravans relied on passing these roads on the water of the eyes and the wells available in the Jezirah region. As for the land roads heading to the mountainous region in the northern regions, they were rugged, especially in the winter season, and despite their ruggedness, they were sometimes used in the conduct of commercial caravans (Hashem 2002: 21-22). During the 1998 comprehensive survey of Wadi Awajj, one of the branches of the Khabur River, thirty kilometers from the city of Hasaka, northeastern Syria, to obtain a record of the history of human settlement during 8,000 years, and a complete description of the roads and canals was done. (Fig 1) (Wilkinson 1997-1998: 19-21).

Formation of land roads

The formation of the roads accompanied the organization of the city, being a link between all internal and external regions, and the study showed the roads in two distinct ways: either in the form of a wide and cloudy dark galaxy, or in the form of standing lines, but they are accurate and clearer. The first lines are always in contact with the great fortified hills towards the smaller attached hills, which are the lines that were used in the Iron Age and before it (Liri & Lovre 1954-1955: 154). These lines appear hollow / sunken, and are believed to have been formed by the continuous passage of human and animal movement over them (Ur 2003: 102). Also, all of these roads / main and secondary, appear to be placed for the local needs of the population, moving from one region to another, and the streets played a major role in determining the character of the city, as they appeared in various forms, reflecting the communication pattern in the city and the population, and provided the link between the different places for them. . The road

network usually varied as it served one or more houses, and was used as a pathway or an exit to the alley (Baker 2010: 67). In addition to roads paved with paved stones, used by the Assyrians (Al-Attar 1952: 102) (Fig. 2).

Organizing roads within the city streets Road planning

The street network is the planning basis for the master city plan. The streets provide transportation within the city, and under it the infrastructure network, and it was built according to an organized planning between the houses of the residence (Kamal 2001: 521). And it varied between dirt paths and stone roads, and was divided as follows:

Highways: These roads were divided according to their organization into degrees, as there were main streets, and they were usually wide, and public streets were usually narrow, in addition to very narrow streets that were used for the population, and they usually served one or more houses and used as a corridor or exit For the alley (Baker 2010: 67) (Fig. 3).

Main streets: It was usually used in big cities, and it was usually used for commercial purposes. There are rural roads that lie outside the cities in the surrounding villages and towns (Fig. 2) (Idlibi 2005: 558).

Road construction installation according to its functions

The inhabitants of Mesopotamia and the Levant began to pave the roads or corridors for the movement of vehicles with stone blocks (Fig. 2). Or a bear, and this can be seen in the city of Babylon and in the Syrian Jazeera, as the streets are parallel and perpendicular to the river (Fig. 4).

The organization and installation of these roads in the Khabur region¹ The importance of the region is illustrated in two main ways: the first is that it constitutes an important strategic point between the East and the West, through which commerce and transportation used to pass through the ancient world, and the second is that it is a border point, and two aspects that make the region a special character that distinguishes it from the rest of the ancient East sites.

This study on the region indicates its historical importance, especially the upper region / Hasakah Governorate, which was an important strategic point

on the vital road between East and West, And this is what made the Jagjehg-Khabur triangle the richest and most important monuments, as it used to form a complex of transportation, as for the road that starts from Ras al-Ain and ends in Sinjar, and these roads still remain until now. And you see in it the paved stones despite the weeds that cover them, and the Assyrians used them as defensive lines. These mounds are no longer easily found (Map 1) (Al-Attar 1952: 101-105) It is also noted that this network / roads and canals are coordinated with the places of ancient cities, and rivers were taken as markers and intersections of roads (Poidebard 1927: 55.). They generally used to lead to the city gates at the walls, or the access point to the city itself / in the center, and these paths generally connected cities (Ur 2003: 107-108).

Road (riverine) paths towards cities

What confirms the frequent use of river roads in the region over successive eras is the construction of most important cities to be commercial centers and stations on the banks of the major rivers and their tributaries, as their establishment is on the course of a river or one of its branches or a main channel that draws from it, It necessarily puts it in close contact through the network of rivers and their branches with the rest of the cities and settlement centers. As in the case of land roads, as it was an encouraging factor in the prosperity and development of trade (Al-Hashemi 1985: 218). Because of the size of the network of these canals, rivers and large irrigation channels, and the large size of agricultural lands, emphasis was placed on river transport, because it is much easier than land roads, as these cities were connected to each other through the paths of large rivers (Khabur, for example) (Al-Hashemi 1981: 37). As for the cities far from the banks of the rivers, they were connected with the rest of the commercial centers through a number of water channels that branched from the rivers to facilitate the various transportation operations on them (Map. 1) (Hashem 2002: 23). It is also noted in the study that the main rivers in the Syrian Jazirah and their tributaries and water channels branching from them formed a network of river communication routes that linked the country's sections internally to each other, and at the same time contributed to direct contact externally with some neighboring cities and countries, as was These rivers and tributaries are also important in shortening distances with other areas, especially from all directions. It had a role in the commercial flourishing and cultural development during the Iron Age. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers still maintain a very important

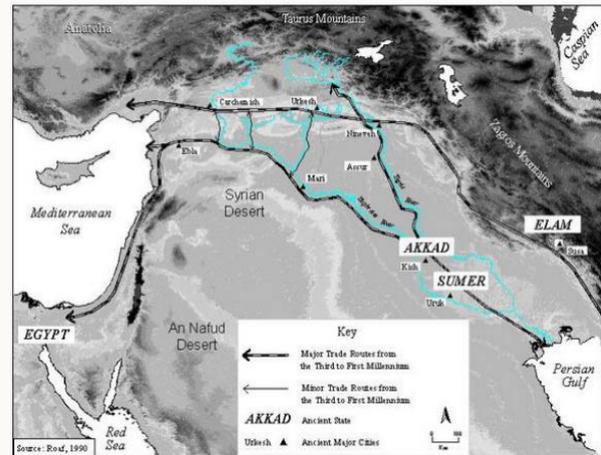
¹. The Khabur region means the Syrian island here.

economic role, and they hope for a renewed start to large areas in Turkey, Syria and Iraq, It is also noted that most of the capitals were built on the banks of rivers, which increased the importance (El-Khund 1994: 27). of using riverine roads, and was the main reason for transferring the culture of the regions adjacent to the Syrian Jazirah region to it, including materials and patterns of architecture, art, etc., and transferring it to them via these river roads (El-Khund 1994: 27). Inside the city, there were regularly intersecting streets interspersed with alleys. The street width could reach 12 meters, and under the streets sewage canals were dug (Bahansi 1993: 126).

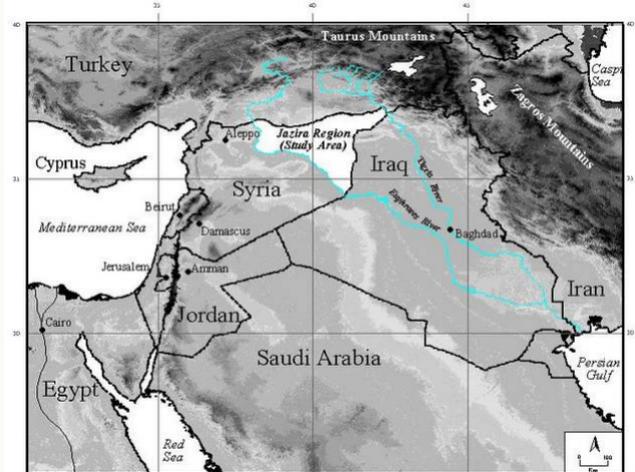
Conclusion

The road network was one of the most important components concerned with civilizations in the Iron Age, as it is the arteries through which a continuum of commercial, social and cultural activities passes that enhance the economic process. Therefore, the construction of roads occupied the first option in the development programs and projects of the ancient civilizations in the Syrian Jazirah, The completion of the main, secondary and subsidiary road network to serve the population centers and the sites of economic and agricultural activities, taking into account the volume of traffic movement, as well as the completion of the traffic movement axes and raising their efficiency according to the requirements of the traffic, and continuing to raise the level of linking methods between the Syrian island and the neighboring regions, while improving methods The implementation of dirt and river roads was the main reason for achieving a balance between them and those areas, taking into account the size of the economic activities in each region and its population density on the Syrian island during the Iron Age.

Appendices (maps and figures)



Map. 1 Important trade routes, cities, and states in the vicinity of the Syrian Jazirah from the third to the first millennium B.C. (Mathys 2007: 103).



Map. 2 The Syrian Jazira and current political boundaries and major physical features in the Near East (Mathys 2007: 6).

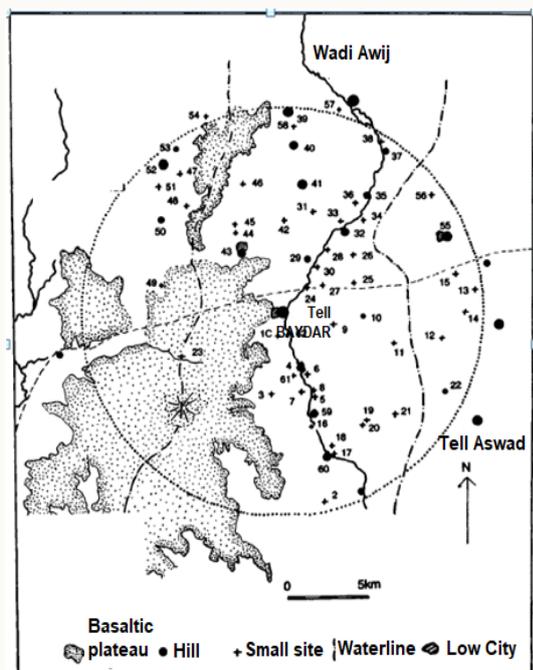


Fig. 1 Survey of study sites, with major topographic features. A complete description of the roads and canals (Wilkinson 1997-1998: 20)

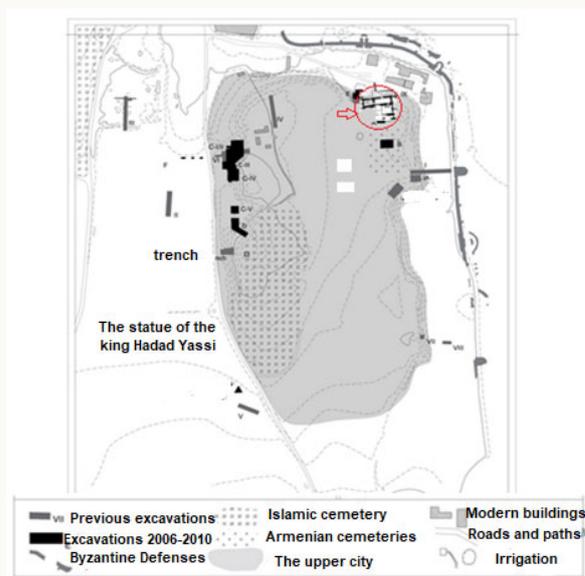


Fig. 3 Tell Fakhriya: a topographical plan of the site, indicating the Iron Age Palace and the network of roads and canals branching out at the site (*Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, Syria*). <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php>

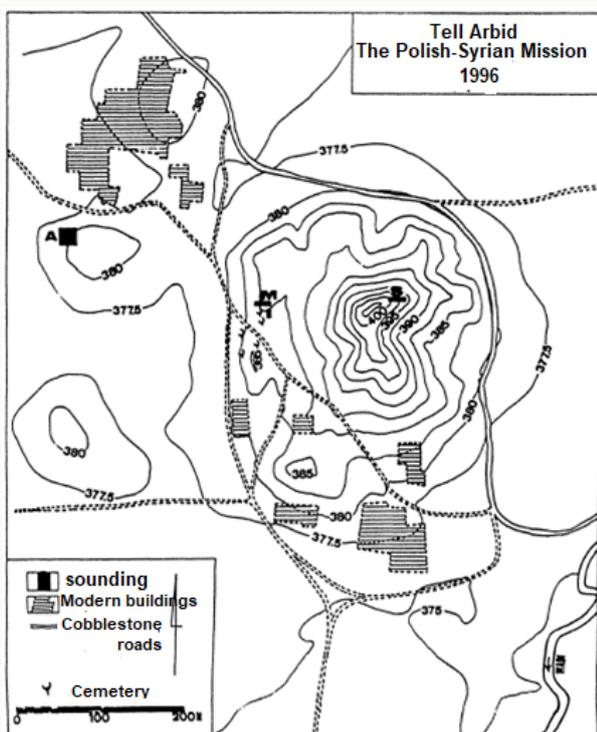


Fig. 2 Tell Arbid- a topographical plan of Tell Arbid and the paved and branching roads at the site (Bieliński 1996, p. 204).

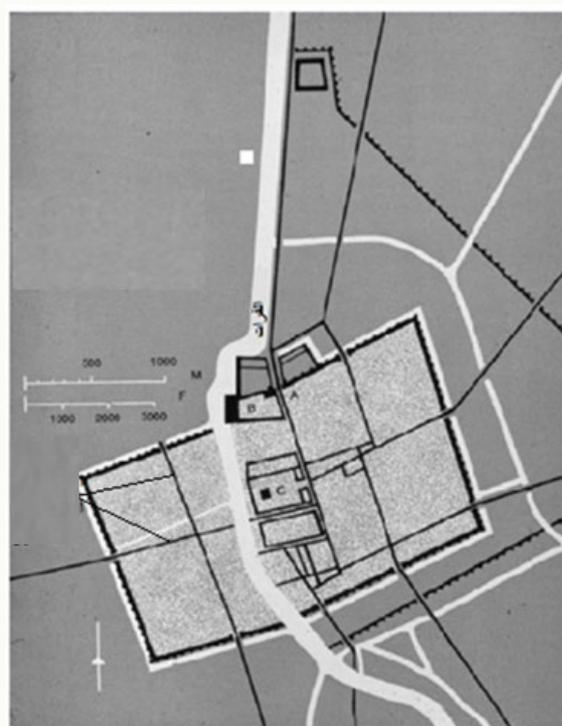


Fig. 4 Scheme of rebuilding Babylon during the Iron Age / 1st millennium BC. M (Sallaberger 2010: 266)

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ملخص المقال:

أهمية ودور الطرق في نشوء وتطور حضارات الجزيرة السورية خلال العصر الحديدي

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تهدف الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على شبكة الطرق وأهميتها في منطقة الجزيرة السورية خلال العصر الحديدي كونها من الفترات الغنية أثرياً والتي تميزت بظهور العديد من السمات الحضارية والفنية هذا العصر بشكل عام، وميّزت منطقة الجزيرة السورية بشكل خاص، وكانت الطرق السبب الرئيس التي ميزت هذه الفترة وسبباً لاستيراد وتصدير ثقافات الحضارات الأخرى، لاستخدامها خلال هذه الفترة على نطاق واسع، وإيضاح دورها واختلاف شبكاتها (البرية والمائية) كما في بلاد الرافدين نظراً لقلة المجاري والقنوات المائية، استخدمت الطرق البرية في المناطق المتموجة والجبلية والصحراوية، وهي بشكل عام كانت مختصرة أسوأ بمنطقة الجزيرة السورية، وهناك أيضاً طرق برية طويلة كانت تربط بلاد الرافدين مع الأقاليم المجاورة، وخاصة تلك التي كانت تربطها بمنطقة الجزيرة السورية. بالإضافة إلى إبراز دور الأنهار كعمامة أساسية لنشوء الحضارة وتطورها، حيث وفرت طرقاً مهمة للنقل؛ وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي، كالنصوص التي توضح تلك المسالك والطرق التي استخدمها السكان، والخرائط التي تبرز مسار الطرق البرية والنهرية، بالإضافة إلى إيضاح دورها في الربط من خلال الجانب التحليلي، ضمن نطاق منطقة الجزيرة السورية وبلاد ما بين النهرين، والمسارات التي كانت توصلها إلى الحضارات الأخرى، وعليه انتهت الدراسة بخاتمة تسرد فيها نتائج الدراسة حول أهمية هذه الطرق كشرائح رئيسة لجميع الأنشطة، ودورها في ربط منطقة الجزيرة داخلياً وخارجياً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عصر حديدي؛ مواصلات؛ نقل بري؛ نقل نهري