



# ÜÇTEPE

## I



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TÜRK TARİH KURUMU



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# ÜÇTEPE I

Yeni Kazı ve Yüzey Bulguları Işığında  
Diyarbakır / Üçtepe ve Çevresinin  
Yeni Assur Dönemi Tarihi Coğrafyası

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## İÇİNDEKİLER

Sunuş.....	IX
Önsöz.....	XIII
<b>I - GİRİŞ</b> .....	1
Coğrafi Konum ve Sınırlar.....	1
Araştırmaların Tarihçesi.....	2
Amaç ve Metod.....	5
<b>II - TARİHİ COĞRAFYA</b> .....	7
A - Yazılı Kaynaklara Göre Kentler.....	7
1 - Tuşhan.....	10
2 - Sinabu.....	18
3 - Tidu.....	20
4 - Damdammusa.....	22
5 - Amedi.....	23
B - Arkeolojik Verilere Göre Kentler.....	25
1 - Üçtepe Kazıları ve Araştırmaları.....	25
a) Kazı Uygulaması.....	25
b) Orta Assur Dönemi (9. Yapı Katı).....	27
c) Yeni Assur Dönemi (7. - 8. Yapı Katı).....	30
d) Çanak çömlek.....	37
2 - Yüzey Araştırmaları Işığında Yeni Assur Dönemi Yerleşme Merkezleri.....	54
a) Dicle'nin güneyindekiler.....	57
b) Dicle'nin kuzeyindekiler ve doğusundakiler.....	61
C - Yollar.....	75
1 - Savur Yolu.....	75
2 - Mardin Eşiği Yolu.....	78
3 - Demirci Yolu.....	81
4 - Lice - Genç Geçidi.....	85
5 - Ergani - Maden Geçidi.....	86

<b>III - LOKALİZASYON SORUNLARI VE YENİ ÖNERİLER .....</b>	<b>91</b>
1 - Assur Krallığı'nın Yeniden Kurduğu Kentler .....	92
2 - Fethedilen Ülke ve Kentler .....	95
3 - Yollar .....	96
<b>IV - SONUÇ .....</b>	<b>99</b>
Summary .....	101
Conclusion .....	109
Bibliyografya ve Kısaltmalar .....	111
Yeni Assur Kronolojisi .....	123
<b>DİZİN .....</b>	<b>125</b>
Levhalar .....	131

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## SUMMARY

### **Problems of Location and New Suggestions on the Historical Geography of the Diyarbakır Region in the First Millennium B.C.**

Before entering upon a discussion of the problems relating to the historical geography of the Upper Tigris basin in the Neo-Assyrian period and of various suggestions for the location of place names, it would be helpful to review those identifications of place names which have found general acceptance and which are taken as an established basis from which to work.

They are as follows:	Kashjâru =	The Tur 'Abdin
	Diglat =	The Tigris
	Res eni sa Idiqlat =	(The source of Tigris) = Birklinçay
	Amedi =	Amid, Diyarbakır
	Madara =	Matar
	Arqania =	Ergani
	Amadani =	Maden

There is virtually no doubt about Kashjaru (Kaşiyari, Kashiari) being Tur 'Abdin. Two roads approach the Upper Tigris region from the south and south east respectively and pass over Tur 'Abdin. We know that Kashjaru spreads eastwards towards northern Iraq and probably has Karaca dağ to its west. To the south is the Mardin, Cizre, Nusaybin region whilst it seems that its northern limit comprises the highlands which continue into the area of our present discussion.

The river Tigris which was called Diglat in Assyrian has two sources in the Upper Tigris region. Of these the Hazar (Gölcük) lake is nowadays accepted as the

primary source. Texts from the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods however show that the Birkliñay was seen as the source of the Tigris.

According to Assyrian inscriptions Amedi was originally the capital city of an Aramaic tribe known as Bit-Zamani. Amedi was captured by Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.) and during the reign of Adad-nerari III (810-783 B.C.) its first regional governor was appointed. As well as the similarity between the names Amedi and Amid (Diyarbakır) descriptions in the Calah text and on the Kurkh Monolith of the surrounding gardens support this equation. Because this region is in a military zone it has not been possible to undertake personal research - the only and insufficient archaeological evidence comes from the Diyarbakır İçkale mound which is situated at the place where the roads crossing the region meet.

The equations which researchers have made between names such as Matar/ Matra and Madara by merely looking at a map are on the same level as that of Amedi. The basis for this is a resemblance between the names, the suitability of the geography as outlined in Ashur-nasir-pal II's campaign of 879 and the existence of a convenient mound. In the course of a land survey of the region we found evidence that Matar (Pınarbaşı) -which is of medium size (200 X 150 X 25 m) - was inhabited during the Neo-Assyrian period. This adds some weight to this proposal.

The names Arqania and Amadani, which were given to two important passes over the Taurus mountains used in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods during campaigns into the Upper Tigris region and further northwards, have a connection with the Ergani - Maden region. It is accepted that Ergani and Maden are a present day continuation of these Assyrian names. Iron Age settlements recently found in this region add weight to this argument.

It is virtually impossible to attempt to place the other cities of the Neo-Assyrian period in the Upper Tigris region simply by considering information supplied in the written texts and trying to establish connections with one or more of the above mentioned places. In a situation such as this, equations made simply on the similarity of the name - for example Taidu = Tidu, Tushhan = Tavşantepe, Pitura = Batrik, when there is no supporting archaeological evidence, should in general be regarded with suspicion.

In the light of new archaeological finds from the Üçtepe excavations and land surveys which we have carried out in the locality of Üçtepe, the cities in the Upper Tigris region whose names are mentioned in written texts that we hope to locate and the related problems of historical geography can be grouped under the following headings:

1. Cities rebuilt by Assyrian kings: Tushhan, Sinabu, Damdammusa, and Tidu.
2. Conquered countries and cities: Nirdun, Uda, Nirbu, Tela, Ishpilibria, Kinabu, Dirria and Pitura.
3. Roads.

## 1 - Cities rebuilt by Assyrian kings

In the land surveys which we carried out in the region, of the approximately sixty mounds the three largest mounds of over 200 metres in diameter were located on the right (south) bank of the Tigris (Ziyaret Tepe, Üçtepe/Kurkh, Murattaşı/Pornak). These mounds which resemble one another in their topography are also notable for their surface finds. Whilst pottery of the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods is spread throughout the region, local pottery is more evident to the south of the Tigris and grooved pottery in the mounds to the north. On the other hand pieces of goblets with nipples which we have classified as Assyrian and which are known to be of a special (diagnostic) form were only found to the south of the Tigris in the mounds under discussion and in the other places. There is even doubt as to whether the nipple based goblets were made in the area. These results, namely that the concentration of the Neo-Assyrian local pottery and especially the goblets with nipples bases come from the southern side of the Tigris suggest that we should expect to locate Neo Assyrian cities on the right bank.

As will be mentioned later, the texts make it clear that of these cities Tidu and Sinabu were built in the time of Shalmaneser I (1274-1245) near to the border with the country of Nairi; Tushhan was built also in the Middle Assyrian period on the banks of the Tigris and Damdammusa was built to the north of the Tur 'Abdin prior to the reign of Ashur-nasir-pal II (883-859).

Bearing in mind the fact that boundaries of countries today are drawn along geographical features such as mountains and rivers it would thus seem that the archaeological evidence from the Middle Assyrian period supports "the Border of the countries of Nairi" along which the towns were built as being between the Tur 'Abdin and the Tigris. As mentioned above the large Assyrian settlements which have surface finds of fragments of Middle and Neo-Assyrian local pottery and especially of goblets with nipples bases, are to be found in this strip.

Tushhan, which up until now has been equated with Üçtepe where the Kurkh monoliths were found, is one of the main sites in the Upper Tigris basin. However the proposal of Kessler that Taidu/Tidu = Üçtepe, Tushhan = Tepe which we have discussed in the section on Historical Geography, adds a new dimension to this problem. In fact both the locating of Tushhan at Üçtepe based on the descriptions in the written documents, and the transference of the location, in line with Kessler's view, to Tepe, glosses over some major problems and leaves several questions unanswered.

Although some clues to the location of the town in the written documents are obtained from the mention of such basic geographical features as Kashjaru, Madara and Diglat, these are not a sufficient basis for setting forward a definite location. From the documents it can be understood that Tur 'Abdin (Kashjaru) mountain is to the south of, that Matar (Madara) is one day's journey away from, and that the river Tigris (Diglat) is to the north of Tushhan. If no other factors are taken into account this description fits at

least five mounds on the banks of the Tigris. From east to west these are: Tepe, Usotepesi, Aralık, Türkmenhacı and Üçtepe. Even if we put aside Usotepesi, Aralık and Türkmenhacı on the grounds that their dimensions would not be sufficient for a regional centre containing such buildings as a palace, temple and provincial government buildings the two major mounds of Tepe and Üçtepe still remain. The question is which of these could be Tushhan? Those who place Tushhan at Üçtepe take note of the fact that two Assyrian stelae were found there; Kessler who places Tushhan at Tepe emphasises the proximity of Tepe (Tushhan?) to Matar (Madara). Although the finding of two stelae at Üçtepe, which is the basis of the first view, is important, it does not definitely mean that Üçtepe is Tushhan. As for the second argument this also holds for Üçtepe. That is, the fact that one day's journeying distance lies between Matar (Madara) and Tushhan could be used equally to argue that Tushhan is to be located at Üçtepe, as was mentioned above. Furthermore it should be remembered that Kessler's proposal has been weakened since the accepted equation of the Assyrian city Taidu with Tidu has been rendered invalid by the finds at Tell Brak in the upper Habur region.

The evidence which is missing from either of these views and which is needed to prepare a basis for a location proposal may come to light from archaeological finds. The excavations at Üçtepe have shown that this mound contains important remains of settlements from the Colony Period, and the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods during which the name Tushhan is to be found in written documents. In particular in late Neo-Assyrian period the settlement shows a number of features which would be fitting for a regional centre: the main such feature, in what is today a 200 X 210 m conical mound, is the remains of structures with sun baked brick walls of between 3.10 and 5.40 m in thickness, with some of their buildings decorated with wall paintings, and with some of their buildings having brick-paved floors. Along with this architectural style, which as we have pointed out, partially resembles that of the regional centres of northern Syria, the fact that the finest examples of goblets which Neo-Assyrian potters could produce a type known as "palace ware" has been found in the relevant building level, brings us to a similar evaluation.

The land surveys which we did in the region produced finds which provide additional evidence to that given by the texts. In these texts Tushhan is situated at a central site for inspecting the surrounding countries of Nirbu, Nirdun, Bit-Zamani, Dirria and Shubria, and is at a crossing point on the Tigris. As was mentioned in the section on roads, Ashur-nasir-pal II in his campaign of 879 and probably also Shalmaneser III in his seventh year (859) crossed to the north side at this point. The distribution of finds which we have ascertained on the north side suggests that this crossing point could be at Üçtepe. In particular the sites of Beşiktepe (Mollacebbar) which is situated immediately across from Üçtepe in the valley of the Anbar çay, a tributary of the Tigris, and of Pir Hüseyin 25 km to the north, can be interpreted as being two overnight stops on the road which runs towards the source of the Tigris. There must also have been various preventative measures taken to protect the Neo-



Assyrian regional centre Tushhan from attacks from the north, particularly in the summer months when the Tigris is easy to cross. If Üçtepe is taken as being Tushhan then Beşiktepe, five km north of the Tigris can be taken to be a defensive guard post in line with this theory. It is hardly possible to interpret the site of Z.Tepe in the same way as a crossing point. Furthermore in the mounds to the north of the Tigris it is Early Iron Age ridged (grooved) ware and local ware rather than Neo-Assyrian ware which is more common. For example in mounds which we studied in the valley of the Pamukçay a left tributary of the Tigris which joins it to the north of Z.Tepe, such as Çavuşlu, Tatlıçay and Karahan, we found no Neo-Assyrian pottery. Moreover Tepe is situated at the eastern edge of the region and a long way away from the central point of the countries which we listed above. In addition to the geographic structure of the region, the fact that the bed of the Tigris becomes wide and shallow in front of Üçtepe and that sources from the Middle Ages and various travellers mention that the Tigris can be crossed at this point, encourages us to interpret the surface finds in this way.

The location of the city of Sinabu is given in the written documents as being to the north of the Kashjaru mountain, near to Amedi and in a position related to Tushhan. But there is no clue as to whether it is near the Tigris. From the section of the Kurkh Monolith that refers to the Bit-Zamani uprising it seems that in the year 879 this city was walled. Of the three large mounds on the banks of the Tigris the site of Murattaşı (Pornak), between Üçtepe and Diyarbakır, as Kessler proposed, fits the location of the city of Sinabu as it is described in the texts. Furthermore as our land survey showed the existence of Neo-Assyrian type of pottery and of the foundations of basalt city walls encircling all but the sheer northern face of the mound, the equating of Sinabu with Murattaşı becomes increasingly likely.

As far as Damdammusa is concerned there is little doubt from the records of the campaigns of 882 and 866 that it lies between the Tur 'Abdin (Kashjaru) and Diyarbakır (Amedi) and at a maximum distance of one days journey from Amedi. There are at least three mounds that make a suitable site for Damdammusa which in written documents is referred to as a "royal city" and a "fortified city". These are: Tavşantepe which lies 27 km southeast of Diyarbakır, to which Damdammusa has generally been equated; Kazıktepe which is 15 km south and Murattaşı (Pornak) on the banks of the Tigris, which we have accepted as being the site of Sinabu. So if we leave Sinabu to one side this leaves us with two mounds to be discussed-Tavşantepe and Kazıktepe

Kazıktepe, which up until now is little known and which lies on the approach road to Diyarbakır and to the south of the bend in the Tigris, with its diameter of 180 m, covers a greater area than Tavşantepe. The terraces on the east and south can be seen as being traces of probable walls encircling the citadel whilst the concentration of basalt stones on the flanks of the mound strengthens this view. Furthermore, although local ware of the Neo-Assyrian period is to be found on both mounds, certain forms at Kazıktepe which show Middle Assyrian characteristics fit statements in the written documents which point to an early founding date for the city.

Of all the cities of the Neo-Assyrian period, Tidu is the one with the least evidence for its position. In fact the note on the Kurkh Monolith which says that the city is in the Upper Tigris region, and built on the border with the country of Nairi is the only important reference. As we mentioned above, of the three large mounds in the region under discussion, once Üçtepe has been equated with Tushhan, and Murattaşı with Sinabu there only remains Ziyaret Tepe in the east, to be Tidu. The Middle and Neo-Assyrian pottery found there does not contradict the evidence of the written documents.

## **2 - Conquered countries and cities**

The towns of the country of Nirdun which were ruled by Lapturi son of Tupusu were to be located in the early part of the Neo-Assyrian period, on the section of the present day Savur road, as it approaches the Upper Tigris region having passed over the Tur 'Abdin. According to the records of the 879 campaign of Ashur-nasir-pal II, of the 60 cities attached to this country, Madara (Matar) which is to be located on this road, was the royal city. In the year 866 Ashur-nasir-pal II, this time on his return journey, mentions the existence also of a fortified city of the name Uda, belonging to the same country. But because the information concerning the site of this latter city is insufficient, we can say nothing beyond that it is in an area through which Ashur-nasir-pal II passed.

The country of Nirbu and the cities of Tela, Ishpilibria, Nirbu, Mariru and Kinabu are to be located in the region to the north of the Mardin Eşiği which passes over the Tur 'Abdin. In the records of the campaign of 882 after crossing Kashjaru (Tur 'Abdin), Kinabu and Mariru are the first cities reached in the locality of Damdammusa. If it is assumed that the campaign under discussion followed the modern Mardin-Diyarbakır road then, the sites of the İncirtepe (Tilarap) and Tavşantepe mounds fit Kinabu and Mariru respectively. On these mounds which are of sufficient size to fit the description of a fortified city, was found pottery which confirms the existence of a contemporary settlement. The uncertainty regarding the other cities makes a proposal as to their location impossible. The city of Nirbu which was taken on the same campaign before Tushhan was reached may also be one of the mounds to the north of where the road crosses the Tur 'Abdin.

Two countries named Shubria and Dirria are found in the region, to the north of the Tigris. Shubria is to be located in an area which extends from the east of the region northwards as far as lake Van. The country of Dirria along with its capital city Pitura is in the west, in an area extending towards the source of the Tigris. From the report of the campaign of 879 we stated that it is possible to assign a site for Pitura to the northeast of and one day's journey from Tushhan and the Tigris. In the text it states that in order to take this city which was protected by a double wall and whose citadel was founded on a mountain summit, Ashur-nasir-pal had to fight for two days. Yet in historical geographical literature Pitura has been located at Batrik (Yukarı Kılıçtaşı) on the Tigris,

which has no surface finds of Iron Age pottery, and which at 65 m diameter and 15 - 20 m in height is a rather small mound. If one takes into account the descriptions in the texts then it is necessary rather, to choose one of Karaçalı (Tilalo), Yukarı Bağpınar (Zoğzunç), Yabancı or Yarımca as being a suitable site for Pitura. Of these mounds Yarımca and Yukarı Bağpınar are smaller than the others and so should be put at the bottom of the list of possibilities. As for Yabancı, it has no pottery which can be assigned to the Neo-Assyrian period. In our opinion Karaçalı with a diameter of 200 m and a height of 40 m is the largest mound on the northern side of the Tigris. With its pointed summit and terraces it is the mound that best fit the description. The surface finds support our view. In addition to Early Iron Age type ridged ware, local Neo-Assyrian ware has been found too.

### **3 - Roads**

Our final proposal for the historical geography of the Neo-Assyrian period is on the subject of roads. The most important source on this subject is the records of Ashurnasir-pal II referring to his three campaigns into the region of the Upper Tigris (the campaigns of 882, 879 and 866) which indicates the existence of at least three separate roads entering the region from the south. In the literature on historical geography, the modern road network is taken as a basic guide. So it is accepted that of these campaigns, the one of 882 followed the Mardin Eşiği road, the one of 877 followed the Savur road and the one of 866 followed the Urfa - Siverek - Diyarbakır road from the west. Of these, there is little doubt about the first two which are described in detail in the texts. But the same thing cannot be said about the accepted route of the third campaign, where detailed discussion of the written documents in the light of archaeological discoveries is necessary.

The problem with the written documents arises from the unclarity of the position of such places as Adani, Umalia, Hiranu and Karania which lie between the banks of the Euphrates and Amadani (Maden) in the Upper Tigris region and through which, according to the records of the campaign of 866, the Assyrian army passed after going through Huzirina (Sultantepe). From the archaeological standpoint the problem is that because the Karacadağ section of the region, which is the section under discussion, had not been researched until recently there is insufficient information on both its geography and on its old roads.