

## Hate Gets Under The Skin- Cohesive Identity and Stopping the Murders in Mesopotamia

### Hate Gets Under the Skin- An Introduction

Iraq and eastern Syria are referred even today as Mesopotamia, their ancient name as a region. The Shiite Arabs of Iraq are in essence the nationalistic heart of Iraq, while the other forces and factions in Iraq usually have little love for the concept of Iraq. There is a core region in Lower Mesopotamia (central to southern Iraq) that looks like a nation-state. How old is such a formation? Can we correlate Shiite Arabs in Mesopotamia to earlier peoples? Can we understand possible mechanisms of causation?

Obviously, the modern-day countries of Iraq and Syria are known for their extreme instability and tendency towards civil war and ethno-religious conflict. It is essential, therefore, to understand how the units of identity in places like Iraq and eastern Syria came to be. In this, article, an attempt is made to understand the historical origins of the divisions of identity in Iraq and to briefly propose an approach to fit the patterns of identity in Iraq. The goal is to stop the murders in Mesopotamia, particularly in modern-day Iraq.

Mesopotamia includes eastern Syria and a small part of Turkey in addition to Iraq. It is traditionally divided into two main parts- Upper Mesopotamia and Lower Mesopotamia. Upper Mesopotamia includes all of the Syrian and Turkish parts of Mesopotamia, as well as Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kirkuk area and the Nineveh Plains (essentially Northern Iraq). Lower Mesopotamia includes the Baghdad area to southern Iraq<sup>i</sup>.

If one looks at a map of ancient Mesopotamia, one notices immediately that Lower Mesopotamia roughly approximates the Shiite Arab zone in modern Iraq while Upper Mesopotamia is home to Sunni Arabs, Assyrian Christians, Shiite Turkmen, and Sunni Kurds. It

becomes obvious that the Upper Mesopotamian region is much more diverse today than is the Lower Mesopotamian region. Can we understand anything about how Upper Mesopotamia became this diverse, as well as understanding Lower Mesopotamia's relative homogeneity?

It turns out that only when one steps before the Late Bronze Age Collapse, does one's view of the origins of Shiism in Iraq become clear. The Assyria-Babylonia political split that is very largely correlated with the Upper Mesopotamia-Lower Mesopotamia regional split is largely a function of the Late Bronze Age. Assyria as a region-state originates from this period while Babylonia was consolidated into a nation-state of sorts in this period<sup>ii</sup>.

### The Four Hypotheses

My point of departure for this article is that the latest possible origin of the group identity of Shiite Arabs in Mesopotamia is the Late Bronze Age. In this period, the Middle Assyrian/Middle Babylonian Period, I hypothesize that the diverse peoples that fell to the Middle Assyrian Kingdom became the various peoples of modern-day eastern Syria, northern Iraq, and a small part of Turkey, while the Middle Babylonian Kingdom helped forge the people that now identify as Shiite Arabs.

At the same time, the Middle Assyrian/Middle Babylonian Period, Semitic-speakers were differentiated from non-Semitic speakers and these identities firmed up enough that areas that were Semitic-speaking then are today and those that were not Semitic-speaking are not today. This hypothesis does not differentiate between Kurdish and Turkish speakers in the non-Semitic group or Aramaic and Arabic-speakers in the Semitic group. These distinctions come later. What it is worth testing is whether language identity and usage back then in the dichotomous sense of

Semitic/non-Semitic is highly correlated to language identity and usage today in the same sense<sup>iii</sup>.

Going even earlier than the Late Bronze Age is hard to do for accurate language data, but for political data, it is still viable. In the Middle Bronze Age, Upper Mesopotamia was unified for the first time under Shamshi-Adad, an Amorite ruler who was a great empire builder in Mesopotamia much like his fellow Amorite, Hammurabi of Babylon. Hammurabi is much more famous than Shamshi-Adad, but not necessarily more powerful or important than him. Shamshi-Adad was for a long time considered an Assyrian king, but he was actually a foreign ruler who conquered Assur, the city-state that became Assyria. His empire did have an effect on the middle Assyrians who did forge the first real Assyrian regional kingdom/empire. He was even placed in the Assyrian King list as an Assyrian king because of his contributions to Assyrian identity as well as the Assyrians' embarrassment at being conquered by him.

I hypothesize that Shamshi-Adad's empire, which matches up with the borders of Upper Mesopotamia in ancient times almost perfectly, has an inverse relationship with Shiite Arab identity. Just as Middle Babylonia forges Shiite Arab identity, Shamshi-Adad's Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia stopped said identity from growing<sup>iv</sup>.

Going backward even further one more time, I was curious about the last period of the Early Bronze Age in Mesopotamia, the Ur III period. Ur III does not have the dichotomous effect that the other states had, I hypothesize. Being in Ur III or outside of it does not have a strong effect. However, Ur III had three zones in its political structure, vassal states, outer provinces, and inner or core provinces. The core provinces, or core Ur III were subject to a highly centralized administrative structure, bound together with an institution called the bala tax. The bala tax was essentially a levy on goods in kind from each core province (thus the actual goods

levied differed from core province to core province). The core provinces were thus bound together into a highly centralized state, forging a strong and lasting identity.

The argument here is not that the exact identity of the people of Lower Mesopotamia/Babylonia was set in any of these periods, but that the cohesion of that identity group was formed before 1200 BC. In other words, when the identity group in the area changed identities over time (multiple times) the group did so together, until eventually the group became Shiite Arabs later on.

Those outside of this core area did not adopt this identity in Mesopotamia and the identity formed depended at least in large part on the languages used in the Late Bronze Age. Semitic areas then are Semitic areas now, for the most part, while non-Semitic areas then are non-Semitic areas now<sup>v</sup>.

I have four hypotheses to test. Hypothesis 1 is that areas under Middle Assyrian control in the Late Bronze Age around 1300 BC did not become Shiite Arab areas, while those areas under Middle Babylonian control in the same period did become Shiite Arab areas. Hypothesis 2 is that Semitic-speaking areas in the same period of Late Bronze Age are Semitic-speaking now while non-Semitic speaking areas back then are non-Semitic now. Hypothesis 3 is that areas under Shamshi-Adad's control became everything except Shiite Arabs while those areas outside of his control within Mesopotamia became Shiite Arab areas. Hypothesis 4 is that the core areas of Ur III under the bala tax became Shiite Arab area while all other areas in Mesopotamia became something other than Shiite Arabs.

### The Results in General Terms

Ancient Mesopotamia had a limited number of major sites, so I used all of the most important sites, 44 in all. Thus, my sampling is very close, at least, to the exact number of cases in the real world. Among the 44 major sites, 22 were in Upper Mesopotamia and 22 in Lower Mesopotamia, which corresponded exactly to the number of cases in Shamshi-Adad's empire and those outside of it (22 and 22). The core Shiite Arab area at the center of three of my four hypotheses accounted for 20 of the 22 Lower Mesopotamian cases.

To pinpoint the locations of my cases, I used the Geographic Names Database maintained by the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency. I then cross-referenced the coordinates with known modern names for the variety of ancient sites. I thus was able to match up at 44 sites with exact, official coordinates. Then I looked up where these coordinates were within the ancient periods in terms of their locations within ancient states. Lastly, I matched up the ancient sites with the demographics of today by using Dr. Izady's excellent *Gulf/2000 Project* data. This allowed me to do the crosstabulations at the heart of this article<sup>vi</sup>.

After doing the crosstabulations, I received the following results. All 20 Shiite Arab cases moved with each other in all four crosstabulations. In other words, they remained as a coherent group at all times. All 20 cases were in the core area of Ur III, all 20 were not part of Shamshi-Adad's empire, all 20 were part of Middle Babylonia, and all 20 were and are Semitic-speaking.

Of the two other Lower Mesopotamian cases, both moved differently both from this core group and each other. Sippar, a city northwest of Baghdad, spoke a Semitic language during Middle Babylonian times and does so now, but otherwise moves in the opposite direction as does the Shiite Arab group. Sippar in Sunni despite having been in the core Ur III group, the non-Shamshi-Adad group and the Middle Babylonian group. It turns out to be the only true outlier of the entire case set.

Der, the other outlier amongst the Lower Mesopotamian group, is very illuminating. It does not move with the core Shiite Arab group in the Semitic language hypothesis, unlike Sippar. It is also problematic, like Sippar, in the Middle Babylonian and Shamshi-Adad hypotheses. However, in the core Ur III hypothesis, it was correctly predicted. Der is a Shiite Kurd area, i.e. not Shiite Arab. Thus, it is not correctly predicted by Hypotheses 1 and 3, but is correctly hypothesized by Hypothesis 4. It our side of the core Ur III region and is not Shiite Arab. This is an important point of data to show the core Ur III hypothesis as the strongest predictor of the four hypotheses<sup>vii</sup>.

In the Upper Mesopotamian group, none of the 22 cases were Shiite Arab areas. In Hypotheses 3 and 4, all of the Upper Mesopotamian cases were correctly predicted as being in category in the crosstabulation that were they were expected to be in. However, in Hypothesis 1, two of the Upper Mesopotamian cases were under Middle Babylonian control at the critical period and not Middle Assyrian control and yet did not become Shiite Arab. These results were not expected.

However, these two cases are outliers in important ways. Mari and Terqa are in eastern Syria and have long been between the border area between lower Mesopotamia and Upper Mesopotamia. While they are in Upper Mesopotamia, they have stronger ties to Lower Mesopotamia than the rest of Upper Mesopotamia. They were under Middle Babylonian control during much of the Late Bronze Age. Any middle Assyrian control would have come after when I was measuring, but more importantly, it would have been far less impactful and more transitory than the Middle Babylonian control. Al Terqa and Mari were under the control of Hammurabi soon after Shamshi-Adad controlled them. This is why I did not use the more famous Hammurabi as the measure for the Middle Bronze Age, because it would have simply replicated my Late

Bronze Age results, while Shamshi-Adad's empire was different from Middle Assyria's borders. Terqa and Mari are to some extent outliers due to their intermediate cultural ties and geographical positioning<sup>viii</sup>.

As for the other 20 cases, it is helpful to look at those in Syria and Turkey versus those in Northern Iraq. The three ancient sites with an Assyrian majority were in Northern Iraq as were the two Shiite Turkmen sites. There were no Shiite Arab or Shiite Kurd sites amongst these twenty cases. That leaves only Sunni Kurds and Sunni Arabs in the Syria and Turkey cases. My one Turkish case, Harran, was, surprisingly, Sunni Arab-majority. The Syrian cases, not including Terqa and Mari, included a fairly even mix of Sunni Arab and Sunni Kurd cases. They also had a mixture of places that were Semitic and non-Semitic in the Late Bronze Age. There was one case, Shubat-Enlil, that had been -Semitic and was now non-Semitic (Sunni Kurd). There was one case, Taidu, that had been non-Semitic (Hurrian) and now was Semitic-speaking. In Northern Iraq, the only result that went against Hypothesis 2 was Qattara, which had been Semitic was now non-Semitic (Sunni Kurdish). As for the other three hypotheses, this group of 20 cases always met the predictions for the hypothesis<sup>ix</sup>.

### The Results in Statistical Terms

To put this all in statistical terms, all four hypotheses were both statistically significant and yielded significant results. Hypothesis 1, the hypothesis that Middle Babylonian sites then are Shiite Arab now and that Middle Assyrian sites and not Semitic now, was correct 40 out of 44 times in its prediction. This means that correctly predicted the dependent variable, being Shiite Arab or not, 90.9 percent of the time. However, to figure out what this really means, I did too things. First, I ran a traditional Phi-coefficient test and I also corrected for random chance in my own percentage-based results. The Phi-coefficient results were sometimes less extreme (less

good) results, but often even a little better than by own corrected percentage results, but often were close.

To figure out how to correct my unmodified percentage results for hypothesis 1 and subsequent results, I had to figure out what a totally random distribution of the variables would look like. Since I had a simple 2-by-2 table, I placed 11 in each quadrant of the crosstabulation table. My hypothesis would predict 22 correct results if the result was entirely random, thus 22 correct results actually means that there is no correlation at all. Less than 22 correct results actually indicates a relationship opposite to that I predicted.

In Hypothesis 1's cross-tabulation, I had 40 correct results. This leaves  $(40-22)$  with 18 correct results over 22 results (subtracting 22 from both). This gave me a percentage (really a percentile) of 81.80. That means that my results were 81.80 percent more correlated than had they been totally random and independent of each other. In this scale,  $0/22$  is 0 percent correlation and  $22/22$  is 100 percent. I thus can never have an effect size more than 100 percent. Since my result is in the 81.80<sup>th</sup> percentile between no correlation and full correlation, I can say that the effect size is 81.80 percent.

My Phi-coefficient value for Hypothesis 1 is actually stronger than my own corrected percentile value. My Phi coefficient is 0.955. I actually credit my own modified results over that of the Phi, whether it is lower or higher, but it is good to know that a traditional test of correlation shows the result to strong. My statistical significance, which uses the Fisher's exact test was extremely high. It was statistically significant at the 1 percent level and had a test statistic below 0.00001.



Table 1- Hypothesis 1 (n=44)	Middle Babylonian (24)	Middle Assyrian (20)
Not Shiite Arab (24)	4	20
Shiite Arab (20)	20	0

Hypothesis 2 is the hypothesis that a site that was Semitic-speaking in the Late Bronze Age is Semitic-speaking now. It correctly predicted 40 results out of 44, so it had an unmodified prediction rate of 90.9 percent. However, after subtracting 22 from both sides of the fraction, 40/44, we get 18/22, just like in Hypothesis 1 (but with a different set of outliers). This gives us the corrected percentile of 81.80. However, the Phi coefficient value was lower, at 0.729, so I rank this effect as less strong than that of Hypothesis 1. This result was also statistically significant at the 1 percent level and had a Fisher's exact test statistic of 0, which is the perfect result in such tests.

Table 2- Hypothesis 2 (n=44)	Semitic Then (36)	Not Semitic Then (8)
Semitic Now (34)	33	1
Not Semitic Now (10)	3	7

Hypothesis 3 was the hypothesis that sites within Shamshi-Adad's empire are not Shiite Arab now, but those outside of it are Shiite Arab today. Hypothesis 3 correctly predicted 42 out of 44 cases. This means that it had an unmodified correction rate of 95.45 percent. Correcting for random chance, we get 20 out of 22 cases, or a corrected percentile of 90.9. The Phi coefficient value is 0.913, a little higher than own corrected percentile. It was also statistically significant at the 1 percent level and had a test statistic below 0.00001.

Table 3- Hypothesis 3 (n=44)	Shamsi Adad's Empire (Upper Mesopotamia) (22)	Not Shamsi Adad's (Lower Mesopotamia) Empire (22)
Not Shiite Arab (24)	22	2
Shiite Arab (20)	0	20

Hypothesis 4 was the hypothesis that sites in Mesopotamia that paid the bala tax in Ur III and thus were part of the core Ur III region are Shiite Arab now and that the rest of Mesopotamia would not be Shiite Arab now. This was my best result. 43 out of 44 cases were correctly predicted by the model. The Hypothesis had a 97.73 percent uncorrected prediction rate. When properly corrected, we get 21 out of 22 cases correctly predicted. This means that the corrected percentile of prediction is 95.46. The Phi coefficient is even a little higher at 0.955. It was also statistically significant at the 1 percent level and had a test statistic below 0.00001. This is a very strong result.

Table 4- Hypothesis 4 (n=44)	Core Ur III (21)	Not Core Ur III (23)
Not Shiite Arab (24)	1	23
Shiite Arab (20)	20	0

All four of my hypotheses are quite strong, although hypothesis 2 is the weakest one and Hypothesis 4 is the strongest one. I next wanted to see how the three hypotheses about Shiite Arabs correlated with the hypothesis about Semitic-speaking areas in the Late Bronze Age and now. Would they match up in a way that both statistically and practically significant as well as easy to explain? So I create three crosstabulation tables in which the independent variables were combinations of the two independent variables and the dependent variable outcomes were specific demographic groups. So, for the combination of Hypotheses 1 and 2, I had only three categories on the independent variable side, since one category had no cases in it. This allowed to create a three-by-three table. In fact, all three became three-by-three tables for the same reason. I had on the top of the table three groups- those that were Middle Babylonian and Semitic-speaking in the Late Bronze Age, those that were Middle Assyrian and Semitic-speaking

in the Late Bronze Age and, lastly, those that were Middle Assyrian and not Semitic-speaking during the Middle Bronze Age.

In the first comparative crosstabulation, Table 5, my dependent options were likewise divided into three groups. I had Shiite Arabs, as before, but I divided the group of those that were not Shiite Arabs into Non-Semitic and Non-Shiite Semitic. Non-Semitic included Shiite Kurds, Shiite Turkmen, and Sunni Kurds. Non-Shiite Semitic included both Sunni Arabs and Assyrian Christians/Aramaics. I found that the scale of correction was changed by it being a three-by-three instead of a two-by-two table. Therefore, I need only to subtract 14 from both sides of the uncorrected fraction to get the corrected fraction. The model here predicts that all of the Middle Babylonian, Semitic then group will be Shiite Arabs, that all of the Middle Assyrian, Not Semitic Then group will be Non-Semitic now, and that the Middle Assyrian, Semitic Then group will be all non-Shiite Semitic now.

Table 5- Hypotheses 1 and 2- Combined Results (n=44)	Middle Babylonian, Semitic Then (24)	Middle Assyrian, Semitic Then (13)	Middle Assyrian, Not Semitic Then (7)
Semitic Non-Shiite (14)	3	11	0
Shiite Arab (20)	20	0	0
Non-Semitic (10)	1	2	7

Table 5 shows the results of the crosstabulation between Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2's results. The crosstabulation had 38 observations that were as the model predicted out of 44 cases. I thus had 6 outliers, more than in the first part of the analysis, but still strong. My uncorrected percentage of prediction was only 86.36. However, the less harsh correction necessary here meant that the corrected percentile was still exactly 80 percent, which is close to the lowest such statistic in the first part of the analysis. For a 3-by-3 table, I use Cramer's V for effect size

instead of the Phi coefficient (although they are similar) and I use the Fisher's Exact Probability test which is similar to but not identical with the Fisher's exact test statistic used for 2-by-2 table. The Cramer's V value for Table 5 is 0.794 and the Fisher's Exact Probability Test value is very small ( $5.348832576392152e-12$ ). These results are statistically significant at the 1 percent level. Judging from the Fisher's Exact Probability Test.

Table 6- Hypotheses 2 and 3, Combines Results (n=44)	Shamshi-Adad, Semitic Then (15)	Shamshi-Adad, Not Semitic Then (7)	Not Shamshi-Adad, Semitic Then (22)
Semitic Non-Shiite (14)	13	0	1
Shiite Arab (20)	0	0	20
Non-Semitic (10)	2	7	1

Table 6 shows the results of the crosstabulation between Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 2's results. I use the same three dependent variable options. My independent variable options are Shamshi-Adad, Semitic Then, Shamshi-Adad, Not Semitic Then, and Not Shamshi-Adad, Semitic Then. My model is that Non-Semitic areas (from the data of the Late Bronze Age) within Shamshi-Adad's empire will produce Shiite Arabs, that areas within Shamshi'-Adad's empire that were Semitic in the Late Bronze Age will produce Non-Shiite Semitic people, and that the area outside of Shamshi-Adad's empire will produce Shiite Arabs. The uncorrected prediction percentage is 90.9. When corrected for random results, we get a percentile of 86.67. The Cramer's V is 0.851, which is very close to this percentile. The Fisher's Exact Probability test statistic is  $2.173661911202216e-14$ , thus the result is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Table 7- Hypotheses 3 and 4, Combined Results (n=44)	Core Ur III, Semitic Then (21)	Not Core Ur III, Semitic Then (16)	Not Core Ur III, Not Semitic Then (7)

Semitic Non-Shiite (14)	1	13	0
Shiite Arab (20)	20	0	0
Non-Semitic (10)	0	3	7

Table 7 shows the results of the crosstabulation between Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 2. Once again, the same three dependent variable options are used. The three independent variable options/outcomes are Core Ur III, Semitic then, Not Core Ur III, Semitic Then, and Not Core Ur II, Not Semitic Then. The model predicts that areas that were Semitic by the Late Bronze Age but had been outside of the core of Ur III will produce non-Shiite Semitic people, that areas that were not Semitic during the Late Bronze Age and not in the core of our III will produce non-Semitic people, and that areas within the core of Ur III will produce Shiite Arabs. The uncorrected prediction percentage is 90.9. The corrected percentile is 86.67. Both results are the same as those of Table 6, although the datasets are different and have different outliers. However, the Cramer's V is slightly higher here, being 0.856. The Fisher's Exact Probability Test statistic is the lowest of the three crosstabulations of the second part of the analysis at  $4.13451776116778e-15$ . The result is statistically significant at 1 percent.

The third and final part of statistical analysis were just quick 2-by-2 correlations of various hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 4 and Hypotheses 3 and 4 were equally correlated at 86.36 percent (technically the 86.36<sup>th</sup> percentile) after correction. However, Hypotheses 1 and 4 were directly-related, while Hypotheses 3 and 4 were inversely-related. In others words, Core Ur III and Middle Babylonia/Middle Assyria varied together in the same direction, while Core Ur III and Shamshi-Adad varied together in the opposite direction. These two relationships were exactly equally strong but in different directions.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 did not have a significant relationship, but Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 4 did. They had a 77.27 percentile-correlated inverse relationship. Hypothesis 1 and 2 were also inversely related, at a correlation value of 63.64 percentile. Hypotheses 1 and 3 had an inverse relationship at a correlation value of 86.36 percentile.

Table 8- Summary of Four Hypotheses' Results	Prediction Percentage	Prediction Percentile	Phi
Core Ur III Hypothesis	97.73	95.46	0.955
Middle Babylonia/Middle Assyria Hypothesis	90.9	81.80	0.833
Shamsi-Adad Hypothesis	95.45	90.90	0.913
Semitic Then/Semitic Now Hypothesis	90.9	81.80	0.729
Core Ur III Hypothesis	97.5	95	0.951
Middle Babylonia/Middle Assyria Hypothesis	95	90	0.905
Shamsi-Adad Hypothesis	95	90	0.905
Semitic Then/Semitic Now Hypothesis	92.5	85	0.757

All of this data boils down to a few important conclusions. Firstly, most of my results were both statistically and practically significant. All four of my hypotheses met strict standards of practical and statistical significance. All four independent variables have a large effect on their relevant dependent variables. Hypothesis 4 is the strongest of the four hypotheses, which is especially significant because its effect is the longest-lasting, since the independent variable, Core Ur III, was so long ago. Hypothesis 3 was the next strongest hypothesis. Hypothesis 1, my original hypothesis, is the weakest of the three state-based hypotheses, but is still strong. Hypothesis 2 is the weakest Hypothesis overall, but not by much, and it still is strong enough to

show that the language in an area in Mesopotamia in the Late Bronze Age has a large effect on the language of an area in modern eastern Syria, Iraq, and a small part of Turkey.

One would think that as we get closer in time period today, the correlation would go up, but here we have the exact opposite effect. The correlation is stronger in Ur III times and weakest in the Middle Babylonian/Middle Assyrian period. Both of the weaker hypotheses, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, were from the latest of the periods chronologically. Having looked at even later periods, the correlation goes down relative to these hypotheses.

In other words, the Core Ur III hypothesis is the most predictive model of Shiite Arabs in modern Iraq. Also, the Shamshi-Adad and Core Ur III hypotheses roughly equally predict the three dependent variable groups. There are three main groups that I am trying to analyze- Shiite Arabs, Semitic Non-Shiites and Non-Semitic people. I am not trying to distinguish between Turkmen and Kurds, within Kurds, or between Sunni Arabs and Assyrian Christians. I am trying to know two things- the relationship between the ancient past and Shiite Arabs and how to differentiate between Semitic and Non-Semitic-speaking non-Shiites.

This broadly, but does not exactly, conform to the Sunni Arab, Shiite Arab, Kurd trichotomy. There is plenty of difference between the model I use and this trichotomy but the basic contours are similar. The important points here are that Shiite Arabs are very highly directly correlated with the people living in the core Ur III area, the area not ruled by Shamshi-Adad within Mesopotamia, and the core area of Middle Babylonia (though not all of it). One case, Sippar defies all of the models except for Hypothesis 2, but Der is explained by the Core Ur III model.

The Semitic Now-Semitic Then model works very well, though not as well as the core Ur III model. Getting more exact language data before the Late Bronze Age would have been nice, but the general theory has been supported. Semitic-speaking areas in the middle Babylonian/middle Assyrian period are generally speaking still Semitic speaking now while those that were not Semitic-speaking then are generally not now.

If you were in Lower Mesopotamia, you usually became Shiite Arab. If you were in Upper Mesopotamia, what language you spoke mattered. Non-Semitic people in Upper Mesopotamia usually became Kurds or Turkmen while Semitic speakers in the same region became Sunni Arabs or Assyrian Christians. With immigration, it is impossible to know exactly how much these lines of ancestry hold true, but areas were non-Semitic seem to have not been emigrated to by Semites, with some exceptions.

#### Cohesive identities in the ancient world- a theory of causation

Correlation is all very nice and these correlations are very strong. However, causation is very hard to prove. The fact that later empires do not show these kinds of results (I did not have to prove this because the results can be analyzed just by looking at maps of periods like the Sassanid and Safavid periods) shows that no state actor was causing this effect, unless it was a state actor in the periods analyzed in this paper. Also, the actual conversion to Shiism is not the important event here, but the creation of an identity so strong that it was coherent enough to survive the transition between various identities.

In other words, Shia identity in Lower Mesopotamia, particularly Shia Arab identity is so strong because the vast majority of the already-coherent group became Shiite together. The cause



of that cohesion was found in my data. Thus, the long-term cause of the rise of Shiite Arab identity in Lower Mesopotamia was, in part, the cohesion created in these periods.

The exact causation of this phenomenon is hard to pinpoint, but seems to have begun in the Ur III period, facilitated by the centralization of politics and identity caused by the institution of the bala tax. In earlier periods, there was little cohesion in this region. After Ur III, this cohesion was not stable or even totally permanent, but changes in the level of cohesion of identity had begun. By Middle Babylonian times, this cohesion of identity had solidified to the point that Babylonian identity was so strong that it transformed into Shiite Arab identity with the cohesion of the identity group largely intact. The policies of Hammurabi and the Kassites during the Middle and Late Bronze Age periods respectively reaffirms and consolidated the identity first decisively forged during the Ur III period<sup>xi</sup>.

The story of Upper Mesopotamia is obviously more complex, since it has always been, and still is, more diverse than Lower Mesopotamia. The cohesion of identity A (which became Babylonian and eventually Shiite Arab identity) never allowed it to spread to Upper Mesopotamia, even Terqa and Mari, which were often politically aligned with Babylonia in the Middle-to-Late Bronze Age. Thus, before Shamshi-Adad, there was no corresponding identity to identity A.

There is plenty of evidence that Shamshi-Adad helped in part to spread an identity B. He first created a large kingdom in Upper Mesopotamia that was distinctly Upper Mesopotamian, and which led directly to the organization and ideology of the Middle Assyrian Kingdom, which in turn gave rise to the Neo-Assyrian Empire. He produced something close to the Assyrian regional culture of later years, such as during the Middle Assyrian period. He supported the Semitic language of Akkadian<sup>xii</sup>.

However, by the Middle Assyrian period, Upper Mesopotamia was split. Amorite speakers, Hurrian speakers, and Akkadian speakers were the three main groups. However Amorite speakers throughout Mesopotamia wrote in Akkadian. Hurrian speakers wrote in Hurrian as well as Akkadian. The Semitic-speaking world within Mesopotamia thus was unified by native written language, even if divided by native spoken language.

The Hurrians remained quite distinct throughout the Late Bronze Age and beyond, but it hard to know why their cities, which seem to have been Akkadian speaking in between, would become non-Semitic speaking once more. Most likely, the Semitic identity just was not as deeply consolidated as in cities that were Semitic-speaking in the Late Bronze Age.

Thus, Assyria develops in the Late Bronze Age and those areas that strongly Semitic then are strongly Semitic now and not Shiite. However, the areas within Assyria in the Late Bronze Age that were non-Semitic-speaking largely never were consolidated enough as Semitic-speakers to resist non-Semitic speakers later. Thus, Assyrian Semites became Sunni Arabs and Assyrian (Aramaic) Christians, while Assyrian non-Semites became Turkmen and Sunni Kurds<sup>xiii</sup>.

Thus, by looking at the formation of three main identity groups in the past, identity A, identity B, and identity C, we can understand our three main identity groups today, Shiite Arabs, non-Shiite Semitic-speakers, and Non-Semites. Identity C is Hurrian identity and led to Sunni Kurds and Shiite Turkmen. Identity B is Assyrian-Akkadian-writing identity and lead to Sunni Arabs and Aramaic-speaking Christians who call themselves Assyrian. Identity A led to Shiite Arabs, with Sippar becoming Sunni Arab and Der becoming Shiite, but Shiite Kurd<sup>xiv</sup>.

Conclusion- Stopping the Murders in Mesopotamia

Overall, the tripartite division of eastern Syria, a small part of Turkey, and Iraq into Shiite Arab, non-Shiite Semitic-speakers, and non-Semites can largely be explained through understanding two dimensions- Bronze Age states in ancient Mesopotamia and language identity groups in the late Bronze Age. This has huge consequences for the real world today. Upper Mesopotamia is diverse and hard to neatly divide into demographically-homogenous chunks of territory and people. Lower Mesopotamia, can be easily so divided.

Obviously, the national boundaries do not seem to make much sense either way. The Harran region of Turkey is more similar to neighboring areas of Iraq and eastern Syria and they are more similar to each other, than they tend to be with the areas around them within their respective countries. If we separate southeastern Syria from the rest of the group, this is especially true. Obviously, it does not look like Turkey or Syria are going to allow a union of Iraqi territories with their own, but this thought experiment does show the weakness of the border's impact on identity and demographics in this border region.

Within Iraq, Lower Mesopotamia is easily separable from Upper Mesopotamia (Northern Iraq). However, dividing these regions into independent countries does not seem practical or even desirable. Yet, this clear division shows the need for a decentralized, federal structure within Iraq. Right now, Iraq is not divided into federal regions in a symmetrical way. Instead, Iraqi Kurdistan itself is divided into lands directly ruled by a very centralized, unitary government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government area. Shiite Arabs dominate the central government and have not yet agreed to create new federal regions in addition to the KRG. However, many Shiites want federalism for themselves. This of course makes sense, but only if federal regions are created throughout the country. There are many ways to do this, but the great diversity of Northern Iraq needs to be respected. Aramaic-speaking, Assyrian Christians will

require some sort of autonomous region and the Shiite Turkmen around Kirkuk will need something as well<sup>xv</sup>.

One possibility that could reconcile appreciating the diversity of Iraq, especially Northern Iraq, as well as the need for a more thorough-going form of federalism is to have regions within regions. So for example, we could have three regions with defined powers and then regions within them (or sub-regions) to protect the local interests of minority groups et cetera. So we could keep the KRG, but make each province a sub-region, while providing minorities with sub-regions with the KRG of their own. We could divide up the Shiite homeland into sub-regions with the Shiite Region, and include a region for the Shiite Kurds around der for example. Lastly, the rest of Iraq, which includes Anbar Province and Northern Iraq outside of the KRG could have a central regional government and remain part of the Iraqi federation. While also having sub-regions to represent the various geographic and demographic identity groups within it. This kind of federalism is what it suggested by this research.

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<sup>i</sup> Michael Izady, "Iraq Ethnic Composition, 2015 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project); Michael Izady, "Iraq's Group Divisions", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project); Michael Izady, "Iraq Linguistic Composition in 2000", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project); Michael Izady, "Iraq's Religious Composition in 2015 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project); Michael Izady, "Languages of the Middle East", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000

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<sup>ii</sup> Dominique Charpin, "The History of Ancient Mesopotamia: Overview", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 807-830; Dercksen, J.G. *Old Assyrian Institutions, MOS Studies 4*. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004, in its entirety; Sabina Franke, "Kings of Akkad: Sargon and Naram-Sin", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 831-842; Michael Izady, "Iraq Ethnic Composition, 2015 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Michael Izady, "Iraq's Group Divisions", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Michael Izady, "Iraq Linguistic Composition in 2000", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Michael Izady, "Iraq's Religious Composition in 2015 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Michael Izady, "Languages of the Middle East", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Michael Izady, "Syria Ethnic Composition, 2010 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Izady, Michael. "Syria Linguistic Composition in 2010", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Michael Izady, Michael, "Syria Religious Composition in 2010 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Pierre Villard, "Shamshi-Adad and Sons: The Rise and Fall of an Upper Mesopotamian Empire", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 873-884; Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, in its entirety; and Dominique Charpin, "The History of Ancient Mesopotamia: Overview", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 807-830.

<sup>iii</sup> Michael Izady, Michael. "Languages of the Middle East", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; Michael Izady, "Middle East Religions", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/25/2019; David Kertai, "The History of the Middle Assyrian Empire", *Talanta-Proceedings of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society*, Volume XL-XLI (2008-2009): 25-52, found online at <http://www.talanta.nl/publications/previous-issues/2008-tm-201-%E2%97%8F-volume-xl-xlix/volume-xl-xli-2008-2009/> on 2/9/2019; Niels Peter Lemche, "The History of Ancient Syria and Palestine: An Overview", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 1,195-1,218; Maynard Paul Maidman, "Nuzi: Portrait Ancient Mesopotamian Provincial Town", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 931-948; Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, 225-240; Robert M. Whitting, "Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995:

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<sup>iv</sup> Robert M. Whitting, "Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995:1,231-1,242; Pierre Villard, "Shamshi-Adad and Sons: The Rise and Fall of an Upper Mesopotamian Empire", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995:873-884; and Jack M. Sasson, "King Hammurabi of Babylon", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995:901-916.

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