



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Cities of Power: Great Yamkhad and Syrian MBA Urbanism

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## Abstract

Middle Bronze Age (MBA) Aleppo remains an archaeological enigma, despite its acknowledged primacy in the MBA historical landscape as 'Great Yamkhad'. Understanding both the economic and political reach of MBA Aleppo represents a key requirement in any analysis of MBA social complexity and urban and regional development. As work in the close surrounds of Aleppo in the near future is unlikely, other means of investigation must be found.

Unstudied, legacy ceramic assemblages from survey projects within the Aleppo hinterland provide a unique and easily accessible dataset with which to examine economic and political structures in MBA north Syria. Granular ceramic analysis of select forms (cooking pots, storage jars, fine tablewares, imports) aims to facilitate economic analysis of the changing strengths of centre/hinterland interaction, and through this track the expansion and contraction of the central state's economic 'footprint' over time.

The resulting patterns enable a first assessment of Aleppo's core/periphery interactions, potential changes in social practice, modes of production, and ritual technology. Contextualising these powerful datasets through comparison with contemporary survey assemblages in the hinterlands of other major polities (eg. Qatna, Ebla, Atchana) enables the identification of zones of intensive interaction, indicative of Aleppo's economic orientation, and potential political influence.

## Keywords

urbanism, Syria, MBA, ceramics, Aleppo

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