ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Urban structure and transformation of the water landscape of the Euphrates River alluvial plain: the hydraulic system of Larsa (Iraq)

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Abstract

Our fieldwork since 2019 has uncovered a dense hydraulic system that supplied water to the 200-hectare city of Larsa, capital of Lower Mesopotamia in the 2nd millennium BC. This network, extending over some 2,000 ha and comprising more than a hundred canals and numerous basins in its final state, was developed thanks to the hydraulic programs of Larsa's successive rulers, from King Gungunum (1932-1906 BC) to King Sin-iddinam (1849-1843 BC).
Our approach, combining archaeological, geophysical and geoarchaeological fieldwork and photo-interpretation of photogrammetric and geomagnetic images, also shows that the urban structure of Larsa differs from one sector to another, reflecting the uses of water and the challenges of its management (agricultural sectors, port area, storage facilities). The constraints of water circulation in intra-urban canals have structured the road network and even the design of bridges, buildings, city walls and gates. The construction of an ever-increasing number of canals and storage basins on the outskirts of the city profoundly altered the hydrological functioning and landscape of the surrounding Euphrates alluvial plain.

Keywords

Water management, canals, urban planning, landscape, geophysics

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