



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Negative spaces? Towards an architectural approach of streets in Bronze and Iron Age Mesopotamian urbanism

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Abstract

Recent research has underscored the critical importance of streets in understanding the ancient urban infrastructure of Mesopotamian cities. Historically viewed by scholars as “negative spaces” between buildings, streets have long been overlooked in historiography, resulting in a significant gap in the overall study of Bronze and Iron Age urbanism. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the roles and functions of streets within the urban landscape, with a particular focus on their architectural and morphological aspects. A brief diachronic overview will thus illustrate how streets were built to respond to two primary challenges: traffic and hydraulic management. Is there any evolution in the construction methods of these streets through millennia? What are the different structures built on it and for what purposes? By employing a systematic methodology from stratigraphic analysis to 3D simulation, this study intends to provide deeper insights into the social, political, and economic dimensions of daily life in these spaces. Ultimately, this paper seeks to reconceptualise streets as intentionally designed, constructed, and dynamic elements, shedding new light on the comprehension of a part of the Mesopotamian urban planning.

Keywords

Streets, Urbanism, Bronze and Iron Age, Mesopotamia, Urban infrastructure

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