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Terracotta Equid Figurines from Tell Arbid
New Evidence on Equids, their Equipment and Exploitation
in North Mesopotamia During Third and First Half
of Second Millennium BC

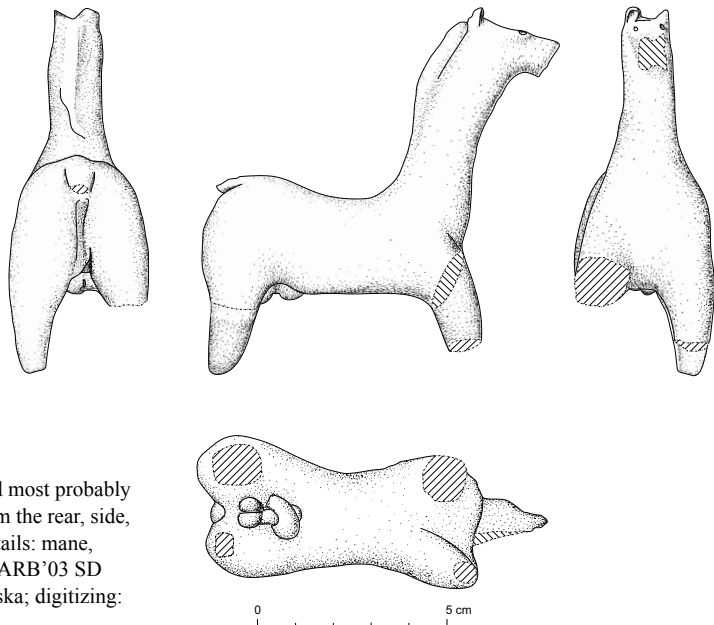
Terracotta figurines are among the most frequent class of small finds on sites located in the Khabur River basin, in north Mesopotamia. Despite this, their role in studies on the society, economy and culture of the region has been negligible. Only rarely are they the subject of systematic, comprehensive studies and publications.¹ Terracotta figurines are also a popular category of finds at Tell Arbid, a site excavated by a Polish-Syrian archaeological expedition between 1996 and 2010. They are especially common in layers dated to the third millennium BC, starting with the Ninevite 5/Early Jazirah I–II period (~2900–2500 BC), through the Early Dynastic III/Early Jazirah III (ED III, ~2500–2350 BC), Akkadian/Early Jazirah IV (~2350–2200 BC) and Post-Akkadian/Early Jazirah V periods (~2200–2000 BC) as well as in the those dated to the first half of the second millennium BC – the Khabur ware period/Old Jazirah I–III (~2000–1500 BC). The c. 650 figurines from Tell Arbid studied by the author of this article are but a part of all the objects of this kind excavated at the site.² Zoomorphic figurines constitute a vast majority of the assemblage (~90%). The most commonly represented animals are equids (~44%), a feature shared by assemblages from at least some of the neighboring sites.³ At the same time, in the third and the first half of the second millennium BC, equid depictions in other media are very rare in the Khabur region, and for some periods the terracottas are the only kind of pictorial evidence for this animal family.⁴

¹ With the exception of an assemblage from Tell Mozan and – to some extent – from Tell Brak; see: R. HAUSER, Reading Figurines. Animal Representations in Terra Cotta from Royal Building AK at Urkesh (Tell Mozan), *Aids and Research Tools in Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 6, *Bibliotheca Mesopotamica* 28, *Urkesh/Mozan Studies* 5, Malibu 2007 [= Reading Figurines]; A. WISSING, Die Tonobjekte, [in:] A. BIANCHI, A. WISSING, Die Kleinfunde. Ausgrabungen 1998–2001 in der Zentralen Oberstadt von Tall Mozan/Urkeš 2, *Studien zur Urbanisierung Nordmesopotamiens* Serie A, Wiesbaden 2009 [= Die Tonobjekte], pp. 13–192; H. McDONALD, The Clay Objects, [in:] D. OATES *et al.*, The Mitanni and Old Babylonian periods, *Excavations at Tell Brak* 1, London–Cambridge 1997 [= Clay Objects], pp. 131, 134; H. McDONALD, Third-millennium Clay Objects, [in:] D. OATES *et al.*, Nagar in the third millennium BC, *Excavations at Tell Brak* 2, London–Cambridge 2001 [= Third-millennium Clay Objects], pp. 269–274; J. OATES, Equid Figurines and ‘Chariot’ Models, [in:] D. OATES *et al.*, Nagar in the third millennium BC, *Excavations at Tell Brak* 2, London–Cambridge 2001 [= Equid Figurines], pp. 286–289.

² The research project aiming at analyzing and publication of terracotta figurines from PCMA excavations at Tell Arbid (both from sectors excavated by a University of Warsaw team and that investigated by an Adam Mickiewicz University team) is financed from the funds of the National Science Centre, granted on the basis of decision DEC-2011/01/N/HS3/06191. I wish to thank Professors Piotr Bieliński and Rafał Koliński, for making my study possible.

³ Equid figurines are also the most numerous group among the zoomorphic figurines from Tell Mozan, Tell Brak and Tell Leilan; see: WISSING, Die Tonobjekte, pp. 37–38; McDONALD, Clay Objects, p. 131; EAD., Third-millennium Clay Objects, pp. 271–272; OATES, Equid Figurines, p. 287; A. MCCARTHY, Figuring out Figurines: A Sealed Zoomorphic Clay Figurine from 3rd Millennium Tell Leilan, [in:] R. Matthews *et al.* (Eds), Proceedings of the 7th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 12 April–16 April 2010, the British Museum and UCL, London, Vol. 1, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 464, Fig. 3. They seem to be less prominent among finds from Chagar Bazar, and even less frequent at Tell Beydar; see: A. McMAHON, The Material World: Objects from Areas A and G, [in:] A. McMAHON *et al.*, Once There Was a Place. Settlement Archaeology at Chagar Bazar, 1999–2002, London 2009 [= Material World], pp. 200, 202; A. PRUß, W. SALLABERGER, Tierhaltung in Nabada / Tell Beydar und die Bilderwelt der Terrakotten als Spiegel von Wirtschaft und Umwelt, *AfO* 50 (2003/2004), 2004, p. 301, Tab. 6.

⁴ Equid representations are known from glyptics, mainly from the ED III and Akkadian periods; see for instance: G. JANS, J. BRETSCHNEIDER, Wagon and Chariot Representations in the Early Dynastic Glyptic, [in:]



1. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid most probably of Post-Akkadian date; view from the rear, side, front, and bottom; distinctive details: mane, strapped male genitalia; inv. no. ARB'03 SD 36/65-36-2 (Drawing: M. Ozdarska; digitizing: M. Momot).

The present article, based on hitherto-unpublished objects from Tell Arbid, aims at investigating the potential role of this category of finds in broadening our knowledge on equids and their exploitation in northern Mesopotamia.

EQUIDS IN MESOPOTAMIA

In the third and first half of the second millennium BC equid species known in Mesopotamia included: donkeys, undomesticated onagers, horses and hybrids of these species.⁵ Texts and iconography prove that they were used as ridden and pack animals but their main role was as draught animals, for ploughing and for drawing of two- or four-wheeled vehicles.⁶

M. Lebeau (Ed.), *About Subartu. Studies devoted to Upper Mesopotamia, Subartu IV/2*, Turnhout 1998 [= *Wagon and Chariot Representations*], pp. 155–194; OATES, *Equid Figurines*, pp. 289–292.

⁵ M.A. LITTAUER, J.H. CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles and Ridden Animals in the Ancient Near East, HbOr VII/1/2/B1*, Leiden-Köln 1979 [= *Wheeled Vehicles*], pp. 23–25; J.N. POSTGATE, *The equids of Sumer, Again*, [in:] H. Uerpmann, R.H. Meadow (Eds), *Equids in the Ancient World*, Wiesbaden 1986 [= *Equids of Sumer*], pp. 199–201; OATES, *Equid Figurines*, p. 286; EAD., *A Note on the Early Evidence for Horse and the Riding of Equids in Western Asia*, [in:] M. Levine, C. Renfrew, K. Boyle (Eds), *Prehistoric steppe adaptation and the horse*, Cambridge 2001 [= *Early Evidence for Horse*], pp. 115–125; D.I. OWEN, *The “First” Equestrian: An Ur III Glyptic Scene*, *Acta Sumerologica* 13, 1991, pp. 259–274.

⁶ LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, pp. 22–28, 35, 41–43, 45–46, 56–59, 65–68; POSTGATE, *Equids of Sumer*, pp. 199–201; OATES, *Early Evidence for Horse*; PRÜß, SALLABERGER, *AfO* 50 (2003/2004), 2004, pp. 302–304. Donkeys are particularly well attested as pack animals, see, e.g. J.G. DERCKSEN, *Old Assyrian Institutions, PIHANS* 98, Leiden 2004 [= *Old Assyrian Institutions*], pp. 255–266. For representations of draught, pack and ridden equids, see *infra*.

Donkeys were the most popular species and also the first in the Equidae family to be used in Mesopotamia. In the second half of the third millennium BC, hybrids, most probably a donkey and onager cross, were preferred animals for the pulling of wheeled vehicles.⁷ Horses were known and used in Mesopotamia since the end of the third millennium BC, at first at a small scale. In south Mesopotamian texts they are attested since what is the Post-Akkadian period in north-Mesopotamian terms, and in osteological material from the Khabur region – even earlier, since the Akkadian period.⁸

EQUIDS AND TERRACOTTA FIGURINES

Did the makers of figurines from the Khabur region try to depict distinctions between the various equid species and differences in the ways of their exploitation? Previous research indicated that characteristics of individual species or kinds of equids – if at all marked – were marked inconsistently. It is even often impossible to tell, if the small (c. 3–11 cm high) and rather schematic figurines represent domesticated or wild animals.⁹ Moreover, the fragmentary state of preservation of many figurines makes it difficult to distinguish representations of equids from those of other animals. To counter this difficulty, the author has decided to base his identifications on certain distinctive details that, in the material from this region, are present only on representations of a given species or animal family.¹⁰ The method is, therefore, based on analysis of details that were important enough for the figurine makers in this particular cultural circle to mark them on the figurines.¹¹

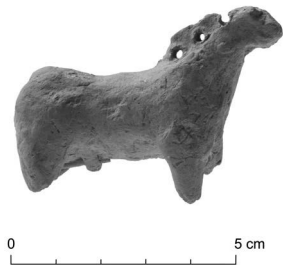
⁷ POSTGATE, *Equids of Sumer*, pp. 199–200. Texts indicate that a specialized breeding center was located in Nagar, identified with the site of Tell Brak; see: OATES, *Equid Figurines*, p. 286; EAD., *Early Evidence for Horse*, pp. 115–117.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117; OWEN, *Acta Sumerologica* 13, 1991, *pass.*; POSTGATE, *Equids of Sumer*, p. 198; WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, p. 39, n. 82.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38; A. PRUß, *Figurines and Model Vehicles*, [*in:*] M. Lebeau (Ed.), *Associated Regional Chronologies for the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean I. Jazirah, Turnhout 2011* [= *Figurines and Model Vehicles*], p. 243; OATES, *Equid Figurines*, pp. 286–293.

¹⁰ At Tell Arbid, distinctive details limited to equid figurines include: mane, horizontal piercing through the mane or diagonal through the rump, strapped male genitalia, wide band coming down from below the tail to genitalia, headstall, neck strap with fringe, and some variants of torso decoration. These features will be discussed in detail below.

¹¹ Rick Hauser, in his study of zoomorphic figurines from American excavations at Tell Mozan, proposed a method of species identification based on analyzing the shape of particular body parts and their proportions (HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, pp. 5–10, 12–20 and *pass.*). This method, according to the present author, has led Hauser to numerous mistaken identifications (see also: F. SAKAL, *rev. Hauser, R. – Reading Figurines. Animal Representations in Terra Cotta from Royal Building AK. (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica, Vol. 28; Urkesh/Mozan Studies 5)*. Undena Publications, Malibu, 2007. (27,5 cm, XXVIII, 623). ISBN 978-0-9798937-0-4. \$ 60.00., *BiOr* LXIX/5–6, 2012, cols 639–644; A. PRUSS, *rev. Hauser, Rick: Reading Figurines. Animal Representations in Terra Cotta from Royal Building AK. (Urkesh/Mozan Studies 5. Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 28)*. Malibu: Undena Publications, 2007, xxviii, 625 S. 20,5 x 27,5 cm. ISBN 978-0-9798937-0-4. Preis \$ 60,00., *ZA* 102, 2012, pp. 354–358). It is especially obvious in the case of figurines identified as felids. Many of them feature details – such as strapped male genitalia, diagonal perforation of rump or a specific manner of torso decoration (see *infra*) – that seem to be reserved for equid representations, both among figurines from Tell Mozan excavated by the German mission (WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, pp. 37–39), and in those from other sites of the region,



2. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian or possibly early Khabur ware period date; distinctive details: perforated mane, strapped male genitalia; inv. no. ARB'08 P 37/60 – stray find (Phot. T. Tam).

On the other hand, the present state of research on figurines from the Khabur region allows for the conclusion that, at least in some cases, their manufacturers tried to represent certain features related to the breeding of equids or elements of their equipment, indirectly showing how the animals were exploited. In the author's opinion, this aspect of research on equid figurines has potential that has not been fully tapped.

DETAILS MARKED ON EQUID FIGURINES – CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

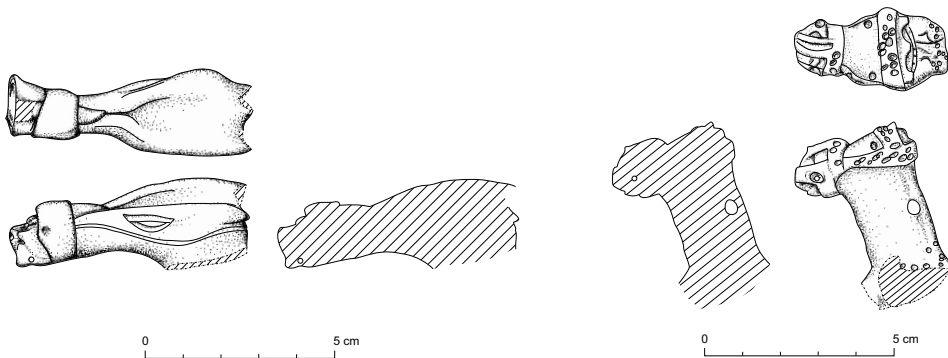
The manufacturers of equid figurines from the Khabur region paid much attention to distinctive details characteristic for this animal family. One such feature is a clearly marked mane (**Fig. 1**), often perforated (49 figurines from Tell Arbid; **Fig. 2**).¹² The rump is also occasionally perforated (at least 9 specimens from Tell Arbid).¹³ The mane and rump perforations have probably been used for fastening on tassels imitating the mane and tail of the animal. Tail imitations could have also been fastened using rounded cavities in the rump of figurines, especially the relatively deep ones.¹⁴

including Tell Arbid. It should be noted that terracotta figurines representing felids are very rare in the Khabur region. Of the few well-preserved ones, which can be definitely attributed to the Felidae family, none featured the abovementioned details.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 38, Pls 8/56–58, 9/62, 64–65, 10/70, 12/80, 82, 13/94, 96, 15/113, 117, 124, 16/120, 128, 17/145–146, 21/220; McDONALD, *Clay Objects*, Fig. 239/16; EAD., *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, p. 272, Figs 290–291, 489/54, 58–59, 63; OATES, *Equid Figurines*, pp. 287–288, Figs 308–310; H. McDONALD, N. JACKSON, *The Hill. Second-millennium Investigations: the Middle Bronze Age*, [in:] R. Matthews (Ed.), *Exploring Upper Mesopotamia regional centre, 1994–1996, Excavations at Tell Brak 4*, Cambridge-London 2003 [= *The Hill*], p. 294, Fig. 7.34:23; P.E. PECORELLA *et al.*, *Tell Barri / Kahat. La campagna del 2002. Relazione preliminare, Ricerche e materiali del vicino Oriente Antico* 3, Firenze 2005 [= *Tell Barri 2002*], p. 31, Fig. b; HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, pp. 382, 388, 393, 412, 417, 419, 438, 441, *Equus* 9–10, 15, 36–37, 106, 111, 215, 300, Pls XXXVI/Felis 37, LII/Equus 10, LV/Equus 106, LVI/Equus 38; on the identification of the abovementioned felis figurine from Tell Mozan as an equid, see *supra*, n. 11. See also: PRUß, *Figurines and Model Vehicles*, p. 243, type Z 03–04.

¹³ McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, p. 272; EAD., JACKSON, *The Hill*, p. 294; WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, Pl. 13/94 and no. 228; HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, p. 272, Pl. XXXI/Felis 31 and Fig. 21/A7.320. On the identification of the abovementioned felis figurine from Tell Mozan as an equid, see *supra*, n. 11.

¹⁴ See *infra*, **Fig. 16**. In the Tell Arbid assemblage, the cavities in the figurines' rumps, unlike rump perforations, are also present in some representations of other animals; the same is true of the Tell Brak assemblage (R. MATTHEWS, *A Chiefdom on the Northern Plains Early Third-millennium Investigations: the Ninevite 5 Period*, [in:] R. Matthews (Ed.), *Exploring Upper Mesopotamia regional centre, 1994–1996, Excavations at Tell*



3. Head of equid figurine from Tell Arbid, most probably of Post-Akkadian date; view from the top, side and sketch illustrating the position of perforation; distinctive details: headstall; inv. no. ARB'98 SD 36/65-4 (Drawing: A. Oleksiak; digitizing: M. Momot).

4. Head and neck of equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Akkadian or Post-Akkadian date; view from the top, side and sketch illustrating the position of perforations; distinctive details: perforated mane, headstall; inv. no. ARB'00 J 47/15-2 (Drawing: A. Oleksiak; digitizing: M. Momot).

Among very popular details of equid figurines (marked on at least 79 specimens from Tell Arbid), but present also on representations of other animals, are genitals (mostly male).¹⁵ A trait restricted to equid representations (present on at least 40 figurines from Tell Arbid) are strapped male genitalia (**Fig. 1**).¹⁶ This practice was used to prevent stallions from mating, and indicates that the animals were part of a controlled breeding program. A wide band coming down from below the tail or from the anus to the genitalia, marked on some equid figurines may be a trace of a similar practice.¹⁷

A more rarely marked detail was the equids' equipment. It included foremost the headstall (28 figurines from Tell Arbid), which appears on figurines dating from the ED III period through the Khabur ware period (**Figs 3–4**).¹⁸ In its simplest form, the headstall consists of cheekstraps and a noseband (**Fig. 3**), while its most complex forms include also

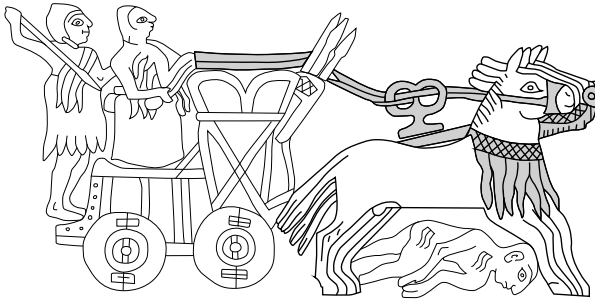
Brak 4, Cambridge-London 2003, p. 100, Fig. 5.74:4–5, 8), but not of the one from Tell Mozan (WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, p. 37).

¹⁵ Female genitals are marked on just two equid figurines from Tell Arbid; they are equally rarely represented on equid figurines from other sites in the region: McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, p. 272; HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, pp. 389, 392, 394, *Equus* 12, 14, 17, Fig. 21.

¹⁶ This feature has also been regarded as distinctive for equids by other scholars: WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, pp. 37, 39; McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, pp. 272–273; OATES, *Equid Figurines*, p. 288.

¹⁷ See *infra*, **Fig. 11**; see also: WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, Pl. 14/97; HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, pp. 245, 282, 286–288, 291–292, *Felis* 35–37, 205, 208–210, 302, Pls XXXV–XXXVII, XL, Comparative Table 9a-c; on the identification of the abovementioned felid figurines from Tell Mozan as equid representations, see *supra*, n. 11.

¹⁸ OATES, *Equid Figurines*, pp. 287–288, Figs 308–309, 489/53–55; M.E.L. MALLOWAN, *The Excavations at Tall Chagar Bazar and an Archaeological Survey of the Habur Region, Second Campaign, 1936, Iraq* IV/2, 1937, p. 130, Fig. 10/18, 22–24, 29, 32; McMAHON, *Material World*, Pl. 70/3; WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, pp. 38–39, Pls 17/145, 151–152; 18/161, 163–164, 167, 176; HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, pp. 416–418, 433–436, *Equus* 36, 37, 39, 209, 212, Pls LXV, LXVII; PECORELLA *et al.*, *Tell Barri* 2002, p. 31, Figs a-b.



5. Detail from the 'standard' of Ur dated to the ED III period (Drawing based on: LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, Fig. 3; not to scale).

a crownpiece, browband and strap running from the noseband towards the muzzle, where it connects with the cheekstraps (Fig. 4).¹⁹ Since the ED III period, headstalls were also marked on two-dimensional representations from southern Mesopotamia of equids pulling wheeled vehicles (Fig. 5).²⁰ It is, however, difficult to ascertain if headstalls were also used for ridden and pack equids, as such animals were very rarely depicted in Mesopotamia in the third and first half of the second millennium BC. On the few known images of ridden equids headstall is not marked.²¹ However, it features on several figurines from northern Mesopotamia, interpreted as representations of pack equids.²²

Initially, headstalls were not used in Mesopotamia for controlling equids. In M.A. Littauer's and J.H. Crouwel's words: ... *in the third millennium BC, equids are often shown as*

¹⁹ On the definitions of terms used in the present article for the elements of equid equipment, see: LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, pp. 3–7; M.A. LITTAUER, J.H. CROUWEL, *Selected Writings on Chariots and Other Early Vehicles, Riding and Harness*, Ed. P. Rauwling, *Culture and history of the ancient Near East* 6, Leiden 2002, pp. xv–xx.

²⁰ See, e.g. LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, Figs 3, 6, 12a-b; M.A. LITTAUER, J.H. CROUWEL, The earliest evidence for metal bits, *OJA* 20, 2001, Fig. 6.

²¹ For representation of ridden equids in general, see: P.R.S. MOOREY, Clay models and overland mobility in Syria, c. 2350–1800 B.C., [in:] J.-W. Meyer, M. Novák, A. Pruß (Eds), *Beiträge zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie, Winfried Orthmann gewidmet*, Frankfurt a/Main 2001 [= Clay models], pp. 345–346. Judging by iconography, the animals were ridden bareback and astride (LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, pp. 34–35, 45–46, 65–68, Fig. 37; P.R.S. MOOREY, Pictorial Evidence for the history of horse-riding in Iraq before the Kassite Period, *Iraq* XXXII, 1970, pp. 36–50; OATES, *Early Evidence for Horse*, pp. 119–120, Figs 9.3–5, 7; OWEN, *Acta Sumerologica* 13, 1991, pp. 261–263, Fig. 1, Pl. I; J. CLUTTON-BROCK, *Animals as domesticated. A world view through History*, Michigan 2012 [= *Animals as domesticated*], Figs 12–13) or sideways, sometimes using a rigid-framed packsaddle to which a low backrest and a footrest were attached (LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, pp. 46, 65–68, Figs 23, 38; OATES, *Early Evidence for Horse*, pp. 119–120, Fig. 9.6; A. PRUß, CH. LINK, *Zoomorphen Terrakotten*, [in:] J.-W. MEYER *et al.*, *Die Kleinfunde von Tell Halawa A, Ausgrabungen in Halawa 2, Schriften zur vorderasiatische Archäologie* 6, Saarbrücken 1994 [= *Zoomorphen Terrakotten*], p. 115, and for example Fig. 39/145). In the third and the first half of the second millennium BC, in both riding techniques, the equids were controlled by lines to noserings (see *infra*).

²² For representation of pack equids in general, see: MOOREY, *Clay models*, p. 345. Figurines of pack equids with marked headstalls: OATES, *Equid Figurines*, p. 289, Fig. 489/61; E. HEINRICH *et al.*, Bericht über die von der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft mit Mitteln der Stiftung Volkswagenwerk im Euphrattal bei Aleppo begonnenen archäologischen Untersuchungen, erstattet von Mitgliedern der Expedition, *MDOG* 101, 1969, pp. 61–62, Fig. 24; PRUß, LINK, *Zoomorphen Terrakotten*, pp. 115, 127, Fig. 38/119.

*primitively controlled by the single lines to noserings inherited from bovid control. Although a nosering does not require a headstall to hold it, the combination is repeatedly illustrated with equids. The headstall includes a basket muzzle and/or a tight-fitting noseband so placed as to press on the sensitive tissue below the equids' nasal bones. Such arrangements may well have been to discourage the draught teams [...] from bickering among themselves, and to protect the grooms when harnessing them.*²³ The advent of the headstall as means of control was probably a much later development, no later than the introduction of the bit. Artifacts, such as metal bits, prove that at least in some parts of the Near East, the latter took place in the seventeenth century BC at the latest.²⁴ According to some scholars, in the Khabur region it could have occurred even earlier, in the Akkadian period.²⁵

Indirect evidence for the early use of bit can be seen, i.a. in terracotta equid figurines with piercing through the head²⁶ known from the ED III period onwards from Tell Arbid (13 specimens, **Figs 3–4**) and other sites in the Khabur region.²⁷ Not only might such perforation indicate that these figurines were combined with terracotta models of wheeled vehicles, but its position can be treated as a hint as to the applied method of equid control.²⁸

²³ LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *OJA* 20, 2001, p. 335. For north Mesopotamian representation of draught equids controlled by lines to noserings, see: JANS, BRETSCHNEIDER, *Wagon and Chariot Representations*, pp. 158, 169, Fig. 11, Pls I, IV, Bey. 1, cat. 16; OATES, *Early Evidence for Horse*, Fig. 9.1.

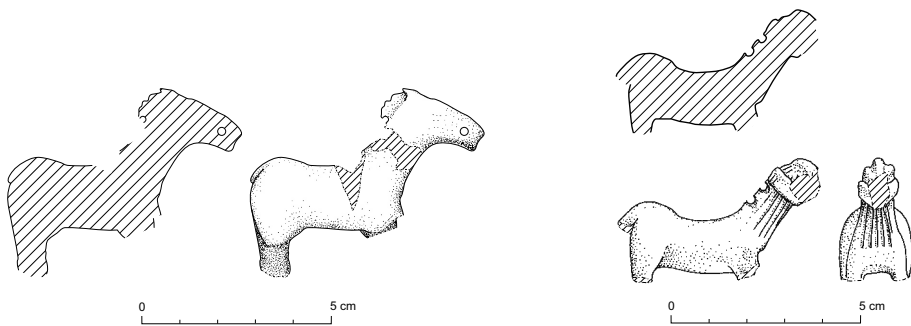
²⁴ LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *OJA* 20, 2001, especially p. 329.

²⁵ According to J. Clutton-Brock, wear on the teeth of donkeys, found in Akkadian layers at Tell Brak, indicates that the animals could have been bridled with bits (perhaps made of bone) or hard rope (J. CLUTTON-BROCK, *Ritual Burials of a Dog and Six Domestic Donkeys*, [in:] D. OATES *et al.*, *Nagar in the third millennium BC, Excavations at Tell Brak 2*, London-Cambridge 2001, pp. 327–338; EAD., *Were the Donkeys at Tell Brak (Syria) Harnessed with a Bit?*, [in:] M. Levine, C. Renfrew, K. Boyle (Eds), *Prehistoric steppe adaptation and the horse*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 126–127). For reservations on the possibility of tracing the use of the bit based on the analysis of equid teeth, see: M.A. LEVINE, *Domestication and early history of the horse*, [in:] D.S. Mills, S.M. McDonnell (Eds), *The Domestic Horse: The Evolution, Development, and Management of its Behaviour*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 7–11.

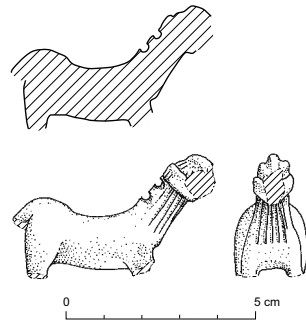
²⁶ OATES, *Equid Figurines*, p. 288; LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *OJA* 20, 2001, p. 332.

²⁷ McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, p. 272, Figs 308–310, 489/53–55; C. STEELE *et al.*, *Impact of Empire. Later Third-millennium Investigations: the Late Early Dynastic and Akkadian Periods*, [in:] R. Matthews (Ed.), *Exploring Upper Mesopotamia regional centre, 1994–1996, Excavations at Tell Brak 4*, Cambridge-London 2003, p. 197, Fig. 6.61:6–7; WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, p. 38, Pls 10/67, 18/161; HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, pp. 411–412, 433, *Equus* 111, 209, 212; M. LEBEAU, A. SULEIMAN, *The City of the Early Jezirah IIIb Period*, [in:] M. LEBEAU *et al.*, *Tell Beydar / Nabada. An Early Bronze Age City in the Syrian Jezirah: 10 Years of Research (1992–2002)*, *Documents d'Archéologie Syrienne* VI, Damascus 2005, p. 87, Fig. 128; PECORELLA *et al.*, *Tell Barri 2002*, p. 31, Figs a-b.

²⁸ The perforation in the head could have also been meant for a thread to pull the figurine. This would imply that the figurine could be mounted on wheels, whereas all wheeled quadruped figurines known from the Khabur region represent rams; see for example: P. BIELIŃSKI, *Tell Arbid – the sixth campaign of excavations. Preliminary report, PAM XIII (Reports 2001)*, 2002, p. 294, Fig. 12; WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, p. 44, Pls 25/284, 29/326, 30/327–328, 31/333–334, 32/336; McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, p. 272, Figs 291/51, 488/51–52; M. DEBRUYNE, G. JANS, V. VAN DER STEDE, *Small Finds from the Acropolis (F Field)*, [in:] M. Lebeau, A. Suleiman (Eds), *Tell Beydar, the 1995 to 1999 Seasons of Excavations. A Preliminary Report, Subartu X*, Turnhout 2003, Pl. II/6832-M-3; see also: PRUß, *Figurines and Model Vehicles*, p. 244, type Z 06; N. CHOLIDIS, *Tiere und Tierförmige Gefäße auf Rädern – Gedanken zum Spielzeug im Alten Orient*, *MDOG* 121, 1989, pp. 200–202. Nonetheless, wheeled equid figurines have occasionally been found in other parts of Mesopotamia (D. RITTING, *Theriomorphen Figuren*, [in:] E. STROMENGER *et al.*, *Ausgrabungen in Tall Bi'a/Tuttul V: Altorientalische Klein-*



6. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid of late ED III date; side view and sketch illustrating the position of perforations; distinctive details: perforated mane; inv. no. ARB'03 SD 35/65-20A-2 (Digitizing: M. Momot).



7. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid, probably of Khabur ware period; view from side, front and sketch illustrating the position of perforations; distinctive details: perforated mane, neck strap with fringe; inv. no. ARB'09 P 36/60-105 (Drawing and digitizing: M. Puzkarski).

However, the position of the perforation in the heads of the equid figurines does not always reflect the position of a bit, but is in some cases analogous to the perforation in the heads of bovid figurines – animals that were controlled by lines to noserings.²⁹ In practice, in some instances the position of the perforation alone is not sufficient an indication as to the method of the equid's control (**Fig. 6**).

Apart from the headstall, the equid figurines from the Khabur region also bore the markings of a neck strap with fringe hanging down over the animal's neck, breast and shoulders (4 figurines from Tell Arbid; **Fig. 7**).³⁰ Apart from decorative purposes, the fringe could have served to keep flies off the animal's parts it was touching.³¹ At Tell Arbid, equid figurines with this type of harness accessory were recovered from contexts dated to the Post-Akkadian and Khabur ware periods, but at other sites in the region they are known already from the ED III period. Since approximately that time, neck straps with fringe are also present on two-dimensional representations of equids pulling wheeled vehicles (**Fig. 5**).³²

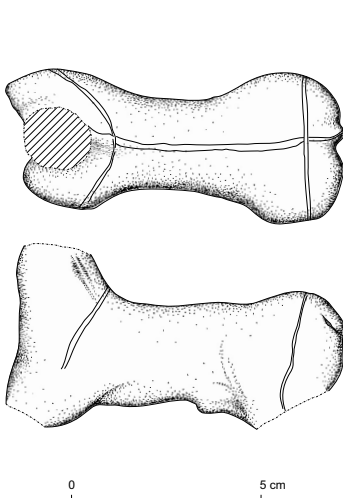
funden, *WVDOG* 126, Wiesbaden 2010, pp. 64–65, Pl. 61/1–3), though most from much later periods (PRÜß, *Figurines and Model Vehicles*, p. 244, n. 50; CHOLIDIS, *MDOG* 121, 1989, pp. 200, 213–214, nos 18–20).

²⁹ Unpublished bovid figurines from Tell Arbid; see also: McDONALD, *Clay Objects*, p. 278, Fig. 239/19; EAD., *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, pp. 273, 594, Figs 292, 489/67.

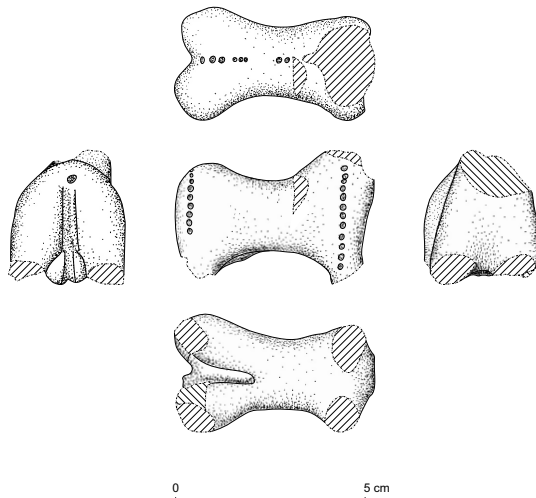
³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 272, Fig. 309/TB 4048; WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, Pl. 11/78 and no. 156; MALLOWAN, *Iraq* IV/2, 1937, p. 130, Fig. 10/24.

³¹ LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, p. 30.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 30, Figs 3, 6, 8; JANS, BRETSCHNEIDER, *Wagon and Chariot Representations*, pp. 157–158, Fig. 11, Pl. I, Bey. 1; IJD., *Seals and Sealings from Tell Beydar/Nabada (Seasons 1995–2001)*, A progress report, *Beydar Monographs* I, *Subratu* XXVII, Turnhout 2011, pp. 76–77, 80–81, Wagon 01, 12; OATES, *Equid Figurines*, p. 288, Fig. 313: 1, 2, 6; EAD., *Early Evidence for Horse*, Fig. 9.1.



8. Corpus of equid figurine from Tell Arbid, probably of Post-Akkadian date; side and top view; distinctive details: mane, torso decoration; inv. no. ARB'96 A 29/19-120 (Drawing: A. Oleksiak; digitizing: M. Momot).



9. Corpus of equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian or Khabur ware period date; view from rear, side, front, top and bottom; distinctive details: torso decoration; inv. no. ARB'08 W 53/57-4 (Drawing: S. Betcher; digitizing: M. Momot).

OTHER DETAILS MARKED ON EQUID FIGURINES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

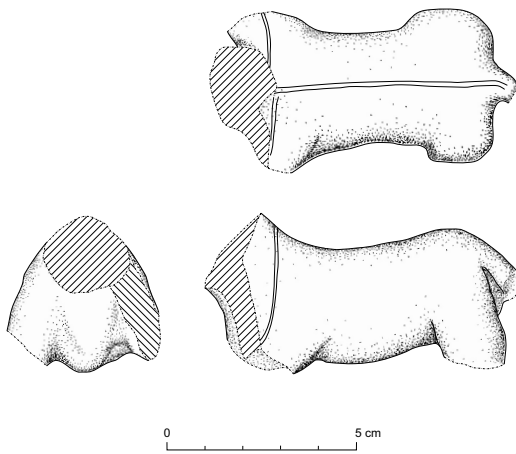
The features described in the previous chapter are not the only ones marked on the equid figurines from the Khabur region. However, the remaining details did not draw much attention of scholars, although – judging by the results of analyses presented above, they can also be expected to provide us with information on equids, their breeding and exploitation.

Of special interest are figurines with decorated back and/or sides of torso, that occur quite frequently in the Khabur region. This decoration usually consists of one or a few lines either incised or formed by rows of impressed circles or punctuations. With respect to the number of these lines and their location on the body, this decoration can be divided into three basic variants. The fourth variant has so far been attested only on figurines from Tell Arbid, so it will be discussed separately.

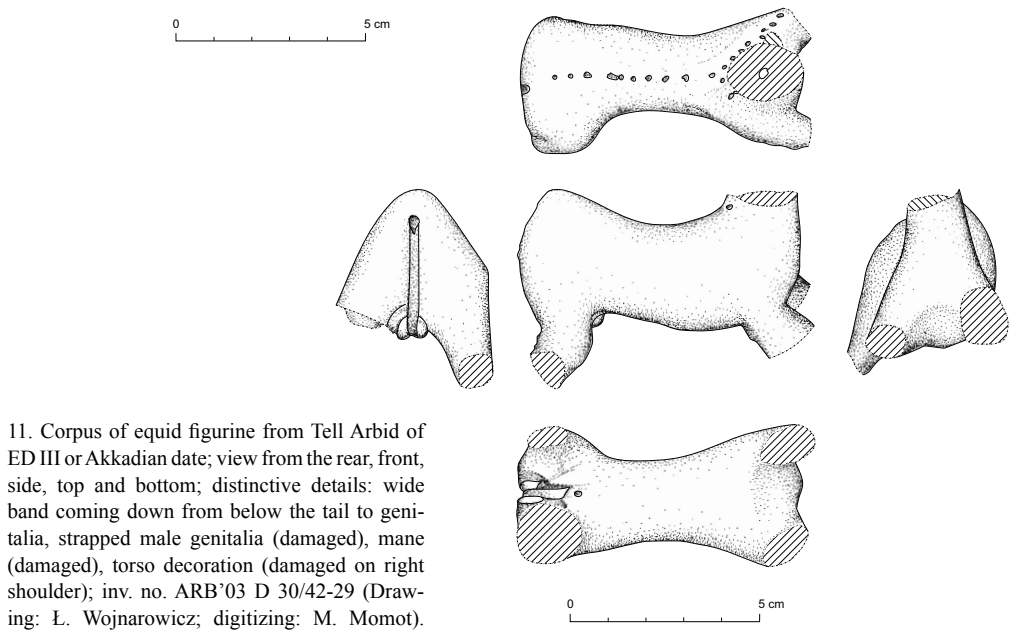
The first variant (3 figurines from Tell Arbid; **Figs 8–9**) consists of a line on the back, along the spine, with roughly perpendicular lines descending from it towards the fore- (on shoulders) and hind legs (on hips) of the animal.³³ The second variant (3 figurines from Tell Arbid; **Figs 10–11**) differs from the first by the lack of the lines on the hips.³⁴ The third variant (2 figurines from Tell Arbid; **Fig. 12**) features only the single line along the spine.

³³ WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, Pls 11/78, 19/198.

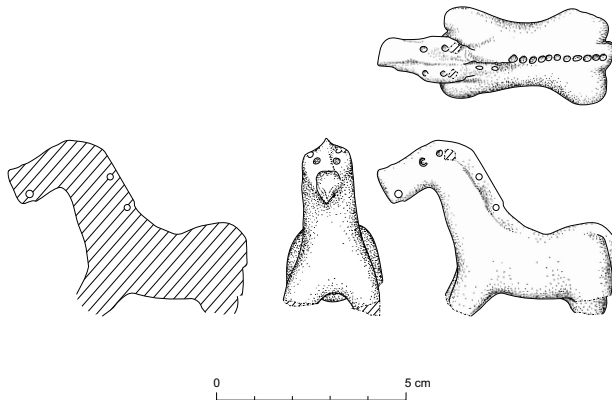
³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38, Pl. 8/58; McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, pp. 272, 288, Fig. 489/64; HAUSER, *Reading Figurines*, p. 272, Pl. XXXI/Felis 31; on the identification of the abovementioned felis figurine from Tell Mozan as equid representation, see *supra*, n. 11.



10. Corpus of equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian date; view from front, side and top; distinctive details: torso decoration; inv. no. ARB'99 SS ext. 36/54-61 (Drawing: A. Oleksiak; digitizing: M. Momot).



11. Corpus of equid figurine from Tell Arbid of ED III or Akkadian date; view from the rear, front, side, top and bottom; distinctive details: wide band coming down from below the tail to genitalia, strapped male genitalia (damaged), mane (damaged), torso decoration (damaged on right shoulder); inv. no. ARB'03 D 30/42-29 (Drawing: L. Wojnarowicz; digitizing: M. Momot).



12. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian date; view from front, side, top and scheme illustrating the position of perforations; distinctive details: perforated mane, torso decoration; inv. no. ARB'00 SL 37/55-24C (Drawing: A. Oleksiak, digitizing: M. Momot).



13. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian date; distinctive details: perforated mane, headstall; inv. no. ARB'09 P 37/60-140-3(?) (Phot. M. Szablowski).

The state of preservation of many figurines (7 in the case of Tell Arbid) makes it impossible to ascertain which of the variants is represented.³⁵

These variants of decoration have different chronological frames: the first and the third seem to be associated with the Post-Akkadian, and perhaps also the Khabur ware periods, while the second one is attested in late ED III period and continues into the Post-Akkadian period.

This type of decoration has been regarded by scholars as representing some undefined elements of harness or reins.³⁶ However, though the line along the backbone could have been a schematic depiction of reins, there still remains the question as to the meaning of the vertical lines on shoulders and hips. Their location, on the axes of the fore- and hind legs, precludes their function as straps of harness (such as girth, neckstrap, breastband) because they do not encircle the thorax, neck or breast as would be expected in the case of such straps.

TRAPPER

Interpretation of the first variant is aided by a unique, albeit badly damaged, equid figurine from Tell Arbid, dated to the Post-Akkadian period (**Figs 13–14**). Incisions on its right side mark a rectangular field divided into smaller ones by three vertical and one horizontal line. A similar decoration was also incised on the left side of the figurine, but it has been almost completely obliterated and can barely be traced. The rectangles must have represented a trapper or a large saddle cloth. Its front and rear borders are located at the same spots as the vertical lines marked on figurines bearing the first variant of decoration (**Figs 8–9**). By analogy, it seems reasonable to assume that the first variant of decoration can be a simplified depiction of the same element of equid equipment.

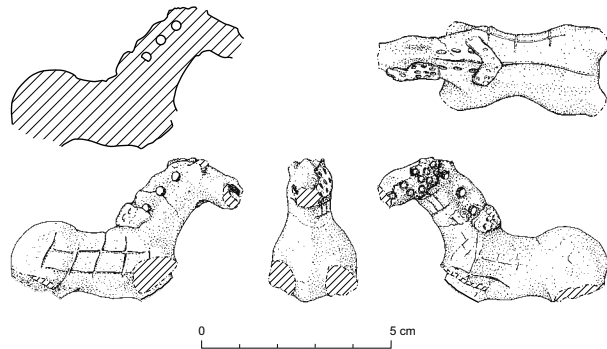
The line along the spine, present on both the abovementioned figurine and on those with the first variant of decoration, does not seem to be a part of the trapper or saddle cloth depiction. Probably, its meaning was the same as that of an analogous detail featuring on figurines with the third variant of decoration (see *infra*).

In Near Eastern and Egyptian iconography large saddle cloths are depicted on pack equids, while trappers occur on draught equids and, in the first millennium BC, also on

³⁵ McMAHON, *Material World*, p. 203, Pl. 70/1; WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, Pls 14/108, 15/119, 121, 16/128, 19/194–195, 20/217.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39; McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, p. 288.

14. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian date; view from both sides, front, top and scheme illustrating the position of perforations; distinctive details: perforated mane, headstall; inv. no. ARB'09 P 37/60-140-3(?) (Drawing: S. Al-Hussein, M. Puzkarski; digitizing: M. Puzkarski).



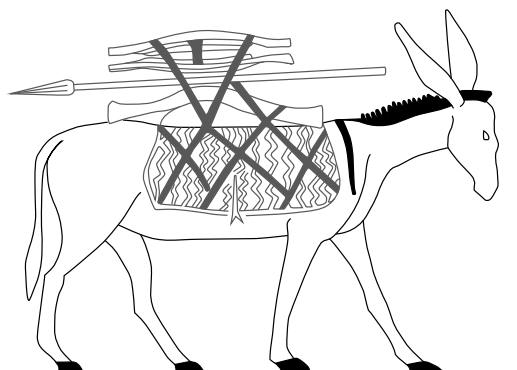
ridden equids.³⁷ In the case of the Tell Arbid figurine, it is undoubtedly the image of a draught equid, as attested by the marked details. Prominent among them is an applied strip of clay, damaged at both ends, but clearly located just in front of the animal's withers (**Figs 13–14**). On equid figurines from the Khabur region decoration of this type marked neck straps that held a yoke on,³⁸ or the yoke itself.³⁹ Therefore, such an applied strip, regardless of which of the two elements it represented, allows for the equid's identification as a draught animal. This implies that the incised lines on the body of abovementioned figurine from Tell Arbid represent a trapper rather than a saddle cloth. There is also a headstall marked on the figurine, which, according to the data presented above, in third millennium BC Mesopotamia was depicted almost exclusively on draught animals. The pattern of incised lines covering the figurine's neck, just under its head, seems to have represented a decorative nape strap.⁴⁰

³⁷ Decorative trappers are particularly well attested in the second half of the second millennium BC in Egyptian iconography (New Kingdom), on horses pulling royal chariots (see, for instance: C. HEINZ, *Die Feldzugsdarstellungen des Neuen Reiches. Eine Bildanalyse, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie XVIII, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes XVII*, Wien 2001, pp. 235–323; R. JANSSEN, J. JANSSEN, *Egyptian household animals*, Aylesbury 1989 [= Household animals], Fig. 12). They can also be encountered on images of draught and ridden horses from Syria and northern Mesopotamia in the first millennium BC: LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, Figs 56, 58, 78; B. HROUDA, *Die Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes, SBA 2*, Bonn 1965 [= Flachbildes], pp. 99, 101, Pls 63/4, 64/2–3. For depictions of pack equids with saddle cloth, see *infra*, n. 48 and **Fig. 15**.

³⁸ McDONALD, *Third-millennium Clay Objects*, p. 288, Figs 308, 489/53, 56.

³⁹ WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, Pl. 16/134. On this figurine, the applied strap on the withers clearly ended on both sides of the neck. This suggests that we are dealing here with the depiction of a yoke rather than that of a neck strap holding it, which would be expected to encircle the neck. On all of the abovementioned figurines from the Khabur region, positioning the applied straps on the withers and the fact that – at least in some of the figurines – it does not run across the animal's chest, preclude its identification as a breastband designed to hold a saddle cloth or pack saddle in position; compare: U. FINKENBEINER *et al.*, *Tell el Abd, Vorläufiger Bericht über die Grabungen 1992–1993, DamMitt 8*, 1995, p. 76, Pl. 4g, j; HEINRICH *et al.*, *MDOG 101*, 1969, pp. 61–62, Fig. 24; and also: J. CLUTTON-BROCK, *A Natural History of Domesticated Mammals*, Cambridge 1999² [= Domesticated Mammals], Fig. 10.10; JANSSEN, JANSSEN, *Household animals*, Fig. 28.

⁴⁰ Compare neo-Assyrian reliefs from the first millennium BC: LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, p. 127, Figs 53, 55–56, 62, 76, 78; HROUDA, *Flachbildes*, pp. 97, 100, Pls 26/3–4, 27/4, 29/1–2, 8–9; 30/6, 8;



15. Detail of wall painting from Beni Hassan, approx. first half of nineteenth century BC (Drawing based on: STROMMINGER, BOLLWEG, *Onager und Esel*, Fig. 10; not to scale).

SHOULDER AND DORSAL STRIPES

The second (Figs 10–11) and third variant (Fig. 12) of equid figurines' body decoration ought to be interpreted differently. Lack of vertical lines on the hips and, in some cases, also on the shoulders (third variant) precludes their interpretation as trappers or saddle cloth depictions. As mentioned above, they could not have represented straps of harness.⁴¹ In the author's opinion, this was a way of recording a characteristic of some equid species: a dark dorsal stripe or dorsal and shoulder stripes. Dorsal stripes are quite common in various equid species, while long and well-defined shoulder stripes are typical for asses and donkeys,⁴² although they can also be encountered on donkey/onager and, rarely, donkey/horse hybrids.⁴³ So far, shoulder straps have not been identified on any Mesopotamian depictions.⁴⁴ They are, however, quite frequent on representations of donkeys from Egypt (Fig. 15).⁴⁵

46/4; 61/2–3, 62/4; 63/1, 3; 64/1–3; 65/1–4. See also strap with tassel (or bell?) around throat on equids' representations from the beginning of the second millennium BC: LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, p. 67, Fig. 37; MOOREY, *Iraq XXXII*, 1970, pp. 38–39, Pl. XIIIa–b.

⁴¹ Moreover, figurines bearing the second and the third variant of decoration seem to consistently lack in any kind of headstall or elements of harness (yoke, neck straps, neck straps with fringe) that can be encountered on representations of equids wearing trappers, both from Tell Arbid (see *supra*) and other sites in the region (see *supra*, n. 34).

⁴² J. CLUTTON-BROCK, *Horse Power. A History of the Horse and the Donkey in Human Societies*, Cambridge, Mass. 1992 [= *Horse Power*], pp. 33–34, Figs 2.6–10, 2.18; EAD., *Domesticated Mammals*, pp. 116–117, Fig. 10.6; EAD., *Animals as domesticated*, p. 49; E. STROMMINGER, J. BOLLWEG, *Onager und Esel im alten Zentralvorderasien*, [in:] H. Gasche, B. Hrouda (Eds), *Collectanea Orientalia. Histoire, arts de l'espace et industrie de la terre. Études offertes en hommage à Agnès Spycket, Civilisations du Proche-Orient Serie 1, Archéologie et Environnement 3*, Paris 1996 [= *Onager und Esel*], p. 358.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 358, Fig. 9; CLUTTON-BROCK, *Horse Power*, p. 62, Fig. 3.1–2.

⁴⁴ J. Clutton-Brock suggested that they were marked on the so-called 'standard' of Ur (EAD., *Domesticated Mammals*, p. 124, Fig. 10.12). However, Stromminger and Bollweg proved this interpretation to be wrong (STROMMINGER, BOLLWEG, *Onager und Esel*, p. 358).

⁴⁵ CLUTTON-BROCK, *Horse Power*, p. 36, Fig. 2.10; EAD., *Domesticated Mammals*, pp. 114–115, 123, Fig. 10.3; see also: EAD., *Animals as domesticated*, p. 29; STROMMINGER, BOLLWEG, *Onager und Esel*, p. 358, Fig. 10; JANSSEN, JANSSEN, *Household animals*, Figs 28–29.

Equid species with a dorsal stripe but without long and well-defined shoulder stripes are onagers⁴⁶ and horses.⁴⁷ The line along the back of the figurines with trappers was probably also meant to represent the dorsal stripe, even though, it would, for the most part, be hidden from view by the back covering.

HALF-PACKS

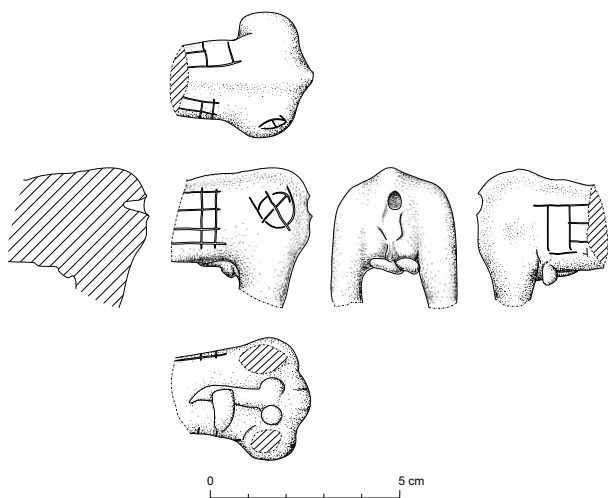
Three further figurines from Tell Arbid, dated to the Khabur ware period, or possibly to the Post-Akkadian period, have a different kind of decoration. Lines incised on their sides form a different pattern on each of the specimens (**Figs 16–17**). The position of the decorative fields is similar to that of a trapper on the figurine discussed above (**Figs 13–14**), but they are much smaller. The fact that the decoration does not reach the equid's back seems to indicate that it was not meant as a trapper or a saddle cloth. The figurine manufacturers may have intended to mark elements of pack equid equipment or load carried by the animals. This hypothesis is difficult to verify based on other figured documents, because – as mentioned above – only a few representations of pack equids dated to the third and first half of the second millennium BC are known from Mesopotamia.⁴⁸ Written sources inform us, however, that a standard element of pack donkey equipment used at the beginning of the second millennium BC in northern Mesopotamia were half-packs, of which a donkey carried one on each side. These half-packs did not constitute a fixed part of the pack saddle, but could be used separately, as convenient containers.⁴⁹ The ornamental fields on the sides of the Tell Arbid figurines do not join at the animals' back, so they seem to provide a good illustration of half-packs fixed separately on each side of the animal. The patterns reach neither the shoulders nor the hips – something that would be expected in representations of saddlebags – since, unlike a pack saddle or saddle cloth, this element of pack equid equipment could not lie close to the animal's shoulders as it would hinder movement and cause sores.

⁴⁶ For Mesopotamian representations of onagers, see for example: CLUTTON-BROCK, *Domesticated Mammals*, p. 125, Figs 10.13–14; STROMMINGER, BOLLWEG, *Onager und Esel*, pp. 355, 358, Figs 1, 6. Compare also modern images: *ibid.*, Fig. 3; CLUTTON-BROCK, *Horse Power*, Figs 2.13–14. According to J. Clutton-Brock, onagers – unlike donkeys, lack shoulder stripes: EAD., *Horse Power*, pp. 37, 88; EAD., *Animals as domesticated*, p. 63; EAD., *Domesticated Mammals*, p. 121; see however: *ibid.*, p. 118.

⁴⁷ EAD., *Horse Power*, p. 47; EAD., *Domesticated Mammals*, Fig. 9.1.

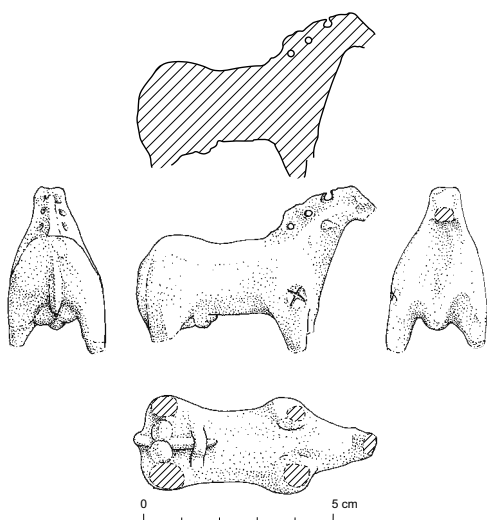
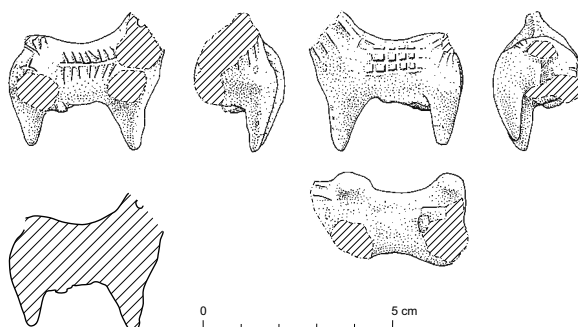
⁴⁸ See *supra*, n. 22. In these figurines, the pack saddle or load carried by the animal are marked on its back rather than on its sides; the same is true of later depictions on neo-Assyrian reliefs: EAD., *Domesticated Mammals*, Fig. 10.10. Compare also images of pack donkeys from Egypt, for instance: JANSSEN, JANSSEN, *Household animals*, p. 36, Fig. 29; STROMMINGER, BOLLWEG, *Onager und Esel*, Fig. 9; see also *supra*, **Fig. 15**.

⁴⁹ DERCKSEN, *Old Assyrian Institutions*, pp. 277–278; for other parts of donkey equipment see there, pp. 270–277.



16. Hindquarters of equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian/Khabur ware period date; view from both sides, rear, top, bottom and scheme illustrating depth of cavity in the rump; distinctive details: strapped male genitalia; inv. no. ARB'07 W 52/55-139 (Drawing: W.Ejsmond; digitizing: M.Momot).

17. Broken equid figurine from Tell Arbid of Post-Akkadian date; view from both sides, front, rear, bottom and scheme illustrating the position of perforation; distinctive details: perforated mane (damaged), strapped male genitalia (damaged), neck strap with fringe (damaged); inv. no. ARB'09 P 37/61-134-1 (Drawing and digitizing: M. PuszkarSKI).



18. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid of post-Akkadian or possibly early Khabur ware period date; view from the rear, side, front, bottom and scheme illustrating the position of perforations; distinctive details: perforated mane, strapped male genitalia; inv. no. ARB'08 P 37/60 – stray find (Drawing and digitizing: M. PuszkarSKI).

X MARK AND CIRCLE WITH X MARK

The three figurines discussed above have one more trait in common – an x mark on hip or rump (**Fig. 17**), in one case enclosed in a circle (**Fig. 16**). A circle with x mark was marked on yet another equid figurine from Tell Arbid, presumably dating from the Post-Akkadian period (**Fig. 18**; see also **Fig. 2**). However, the occurrence of this mark is not limited to equid figurines. It was found on at least six more figurines from Tell Arbid, dating from the Khabur ware and, possibly, the Post-Akkadian periods, and representing sheep and goats. On sheep and goat figurines the marks appear on the forehead, sides of the trunk and on the back. Figurines with similar decoration do not feature among the published material from other sites in the region.

A fundamental question regarding the interpretation of this type of decoration is: did these marks represent some detail of the depicted animals' appearance, or were they a means of marking the figurines themselves? Simple marks, some of a similar or even identical shape, have been encountered on various artifacts from Mesopotamia, foremost on pottery, but also on, for instance, metal tools.⁵⁰ The aim of placing marks on these objects remains unclear. In the case of ceramics, it seems more probable that the marks were connected with the vessels' manufacturing process rather than serving, for instance, as means of identification for a particular workshop or owner.⁵¹ As for terracottas, the function must have been different; otherwise it would be difficult to explain their complete absence on anthropomorphic figurines and model vehicles from Tell Arbid.⁵² At this site the production of terracottas – unlike that of pottery vessels – seems not to have been widespread enough to necessitate the usage of production marks. According to the present author, it is much more likely, that this kind of decoration on figurines mirrored marks visible on actual animals. The practice of putting identifying marks on cattle, sheep and donkeys is attested in southern Mesopotamian written sources at least since the Akkadian period.⁵³

⁵⁰ On marks on pottery from northern Mesopotamia in general, see: T. HOLLAND, M. GOODWAY, M. ROAF, *Archaeology of the Bronze Age, Hellenistic, and Roman Remains at an Ancient Town on the Euphrat River, Excavations at Tell es-Sweyhat, Syria 2, OIP 125*, Chicago 2006 [= *Tell es-Sweyhat 2*], pp. 296–299; R. KOLIŃSKI, *Early Dynastic potter's marks from Polish excavations in northern Syria, Berytus XLI*, 1994, pp. 13–15; compare especially x mark, circle with x mark, rectangle with x mark and star: HOLLAND, GOODWAY, ROAF, *Tell es-Sweyhat 2*, pp. 312–314 (type C.14, D.5); KOLIŃSKI, *Berytus XLI*, 1994, pp. 6–7, 9, Figs 1a-e, 4a-d, 5i, n, signs nos 1–2, 18, 22; see also: J. OATES, *The Third-millennium Pottery*, [in:] D. OATES *et al.*, *Nagar in the third millennium BC, Excavations at Tell Brak 2*, London-Cambridge 2001, Figs 426/828, 460/1568, 461/1587 and 1585. For marks on metal implements, see for example a sickle from a Post-Akkadian level at Tell Arbid: R. KOLIŃSKI, *Adam Mickiewicz University excavations in Sector P at Tell Arbid (spring 2009)*, *PAM XXI (Research 2009)*, 2012, pp. 550–551, Fig. 10; on further analogies, see: *ibid.*, n. 5.

⁵¹ For discussion see: KOLIŃSKI, *Berytus XLI*, 1994, pp. 13–15.

⁵² On anthropomorphic figurines and models of vehicles from Tell Arbid, see: M. MAKOWSKI, *Anthropomorphic figurines of the third millennium BC from Tell Arbid. Preliminary report*, *PAM XVII (Reports 2005)*, 2007, pp. 472–482; *Id.*, *Anthropomorphic figurines of the second millennium BC from Tell Arbid – preliminary report*, *PAM XXII (Research 2010)*, 2013, pp. 617–626; M. RACCIDI, *Chariot terracotta models from Tell Arbid*, *PAM XXI (Research 2009)*, 2012, pp. 605–623.

⁵³ R. DE MAAIJER, *Late Third Millennium Identifying Marks*, [in:] W.H. v. Soldt *et al.* (Eds), *Studies Presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, *PIHANS 89*, Leiden 2001, pp. 301–324;

Its primary purpose was to indicate ownership. We do not know if the marks were made by branding or by dyeing. Nonetheless, in Egypt, where branding animals has been practiced already in the second half of the second millennium BC (New Kingdom), the marks were placed on the same body parts as the x mark on figurines from Tell Arbid – hips, rumps or foreheads.⁵⁴

What is more, it cannot be precluded that also the form of these marks is identical with that of the actual marks on animals. Such a hypothesis can be brought forward based on similarities between these marks and those found on much later Mesopotamian depictions of domesticated animals.⁵⁵

ORNAMENTS?

Among the terracotta renderings of equids from the Khabur region, there are also figurines with a patterned surface that seems to have been nothing more than a mere ornament. One specimen from Tell Arbid falls into this category; it is covered in relatively evenly-spaced lines of impressed circles (**Fig. 19**).⁵⁶ However, if we compare this figurine with those discussed above, it becomes clear that even in this case we cannot be quite certain that we are not dealing here with the representation of some kind of equid equipment. The individual lines seem to correspond with the location of a headstall, decorative nape strap (encircling the neck), neck strap that held a yoke on, and a trapper (**Figs 13–14**). A line passing around the animal's haunches and another one, encircling the thorax may have depicted breeching and girth – straps holding trapper in position.

A practical function can be assigned even to a line running from the girth beneath the equid's belly, up between its forelegs, to the neck strap. According to M.A. Littauer and J.H. Crowel, a similar contraption could have been used for harnessing horses in northern Mesopotamia in the first millennium BC. Its form has been reconstructed based on images of draught horses in neo-Assyrian reliefs.⁵⁷ One of them (**Fig. 20**) features a horse with elements of equipment that are located in comparable places as the lines at the Tell Arbid figurine in question:⁵⁸ ox-hide trapper extending all the way up the neck, breeching passing around haunch, belly strap (instead of the girth rendered on the figurine from Tell Arbid),

D. FOXVOG, Sumerian Brands and Branding-Irons, *ZA* 85, 1995, pp. 1–7; see also: H. SCHNEIDER-LUDORFF, Mit einem "Sonnensymbol" auf die Weide? Bemerkungen zu den Eigentumsmarkierungen von Tieren, [in:] D.I. Owen, G. Wilhelm (Eds), *Studies on the Civilisation and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians* 12, *General Studies and Excavations at Nuzi* 10/3, Bethesda, Md. 2002, pp. 151–157.

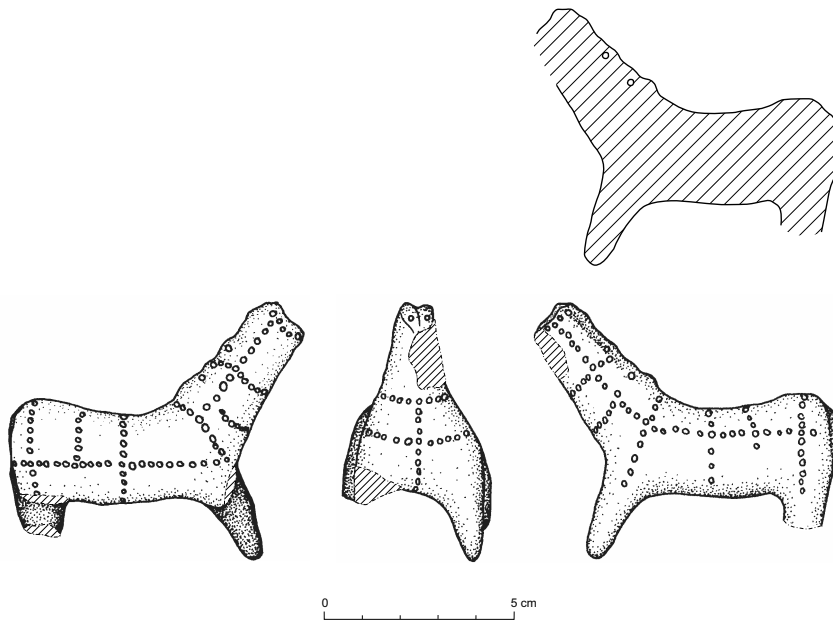
⁵⁴ See for example: JANSSEN, JANSSEN, Household animals, p. 27, Fig. 21.

⁵⁵ See for example: CH. ZIEGLER, Die Terrakotten von Warka, *Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka* 6, Berlin 1962, pp. 89, 174, Pl. 21/309–310; HROUDA, Flachbildes, *Pls* 30/7, 42/1.

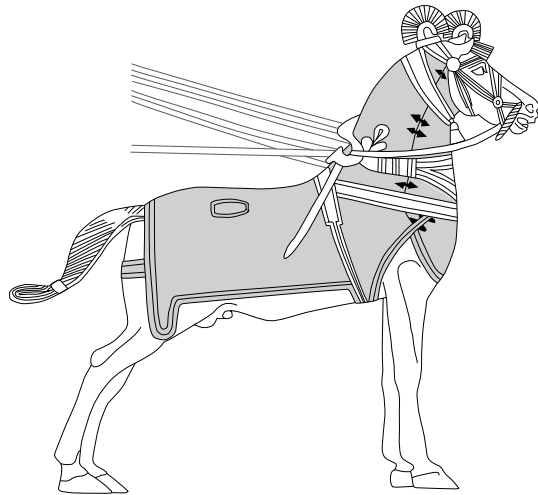
⁵⁶ Compare: McDONALD, Third-millennium Clay Objects, Fig. 489/73; WISSING, Die Tonobjekte, Pl. 21/243; HAUSER, Reading Figurines, p. 292, Felis 211; on the identification of the abovementioned felis figurine from Tell Mozan as equid representations, see *supra*, n. 11.

⁵⁷ LITTAUER, CROUWEL, Wheeled Vehicles, p. 117, Fig. 56. According to M.A. Littauer and J.H. Crowel such a system of straps could have been a backing element of harness that transmits backward movement of draught animals to the vehicle, at the same time preventing them from backing out of harness.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117, 131, Fig. 56.



19. Equid figurine from Tell Arbid of late ED III date; view from front, both sides and sketch illustrating the position of perforations; distinctive details: perforated mane, headstall(?), torso decoration(?); inv. no. ARB'03 SD 36/65-31A (Digitizing: M. Momot).



20. Detail of stone relief of Ashurbanipal, approx. half of seventh century BC, Niniveh (Drawing based on: LITTAUER, CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles*, Fig. 56; not to scale).

neckstrap that held a yoke on, decorative nape strap and headstall. Moreover, in the above-mentioned relief, edges of a covering, fastened by toggles, are visible along the horse's neck. They form a line corresponding to that on the Tell Arbid figurine's neck.⁵⁹ If the figurine does indeed represent an equid wearing a trapper that covers not just its trunk but also its neck, then the line running from under its belly between its forelegs could have also marked another edge of the trapper. At the present stage of research into equid figurines from the Khabur region, the proposed interpretation must remain speculative. Similarity between the figurine from Tell Arbid and the depictions of draught horses from neo-Assyrian reliefs is considerable, but it might also be accidental. What is more, the figurine was recovered from a context dated to a late phase of the ED III period, and is therefore at least two centuries older than other equid figurines from the Khabur region with marked trappers.

EQUIDS IN THE LIGHT OF THE TELL ARBID FIGURINES

Equid figurines from the Khabur region, despite being rather schematic depictions of these animals, seem to offer important insights into certain aspects of their breeding (strapped genitals, identifying marks) and elements of their equipment (headstall, neck strap with fringe, yoke/neck straps holding a yoke on, trapper, saddlebags), providing, indirectly, data on the exploitation of equids in antiquity. Analyzing the very rich assemblage from Tell Arbid against the backdrop of analogies from other iconographic sources enabled the identification and interpretation of particular details featuring on equid figurines, such as shoulder and dorsal stripes, trappers, saddlebags or identifying marks. Many of the analogies are quite remote, both chronologically and geographically. Lack of closer parallels can result from several factors. The most important one is the paucity in the Khabur region in the third and second half of the second millennium BC of representations of equids in other media than terracottas. Notably, some of the abovementioned details can hardly be rendered on two-dimensional representations, especially small-sized ones, and, in the discussed periods, zoomorphic figures in the round are almost exclusively represented by terracottas. It is also of importance that terracotta figurines, belonging to the sphere of popular culture, would be less standardized and limited by conventions of style than representations derived from elite culture. They can thus be expected to render details of equid appearance and equipment schematically but more faithfully⁶⁰ than other types of figured documents.

Terracottas are therefore a priceless source for the study of equids exploitation in northern Mesopotamia in general, and they provide a particular abundance of data regarding

⁵⁹ It is also possible that the lines on the Tell Arbid figurine were meant to represent reins (compare: MALLOWAN, *Iraq* IV/2, 1937, p. 130, Fig. 10/29) or a parted mane (compare: M.A. LITTAUER, J.H. CROUWEL, 'The Trundholm horse's trappings: a chamfrein?' Reasons for doubting, *Antiquity* 65, 1991, p. 121, Figs 1, 3).

⁶⁰ Probably, due to a combination of the abovementioned reasons a detail so characteristic for the equid figurines from the Khabur region – the strapped male genitals – is absent on other types of equid representations in Mesopotamia, even though it reflected a real-life breeding practice.

the equipment of draught equids. For instance, they prove that the practice of using trappers on draught equids is at least a few hundred years older in this region than could be surmised from other types of figured documents. Moreover, according to some scholars, the appearance of figurines with perforated muzzles in the second half of the third millennium BC is an indication of usage of bits in northern Mesopotamia of that age, although, as mentioned above, finds of actual bits in the archaeological record are much later, dating from the seventeenth century BC.

The terracottas from Tell Arbid seem to provide an exceptional illustration for certain elements of pack equids equipment used in the early second millennium BC by merchants from northern Mesopotamia, which have so far been known only from contemporaneous texts. The appearance of figurines with (conjectured) saddlebags at Tell Arbid in the Post-Akkadian and Khabur ware periods coincides with an intensification of caravan trade in northern Mesopotamia. This phenomenon encompassed also the Khabur region, which was then regularly traversed by merchants from Ashur engaged in large-scale trade exchange between northern Mesopotamia and Anatolia.⁶¹ The figurines from Tell Arbid prove also that the practice of marking animals, which played an important part in everyday management and administration in southern Mesopotamia, was known and used also in this part of northern Mesopotamia.

Based on the analysis of details marked on equid figurines from the Khabur region presented above, some hypotheses could be formulated. The first one concerns the possibility of distinguishing various equid species attested in Mesopotamian osteological material and textual sources among the equid representations in terracotta. As mentioned above, shoulder stripes, marked on figurines since the ED III period (**Figs 10–11**), are typical for donkeys or donkey/onager or donkey/horse hybrids. Figurines with marked dorsal stripes, but lacking the shoulder stripes (**Fig. 12**), should be identified either as horses or as onagers. Their appearance at the turn of the third millennium BC coincides with the first mentions of horses in written documents and osteological material, and with a decline in the importance of onagers, kept primarily for breeding hybrids.⁶² This speaks in favor of these figurines' interpretation as horses. A further, independent, confirmation of this identification is the presence in some of these figurines' muzzles (**Fig. 12**) of perforations suggestive of bridled equids and onagers were never bridled or harnessed.⁶³

Representations of equids with dorsal stripes begin to appear approximately at the same time as figurines with depictions of both trappers and dorsal stripes (**Figs 8–9, 13–14**),

⁶¹ For general introduction about Old Assyrian trade system, see: K.R. VEENHOF, J. EIDEM, *Mesopotamia. The Old Assyrian Period*, *OBO* 160/5, Fribourg-Göttingen 2008. It is hard to judge if the fact that the number of figurines depicting pack equids in the Tell Arbid assemblage is higher than at any other site in the region is merely accidental or if it results from Tell Arbid's presumed adhesion to the Old Assyrian system of trading posts (J. EIDEM, *Old Assyrian trade in Northern Syria. The Evidence from Tell Leilan*, [in:] J.G. Dercksen (Ed.), *Anatolia and the Jazira during the Old Assyrian Period*, *OAS* 3, *PIHANS* 111, Leiden 2008, p. 40, addendum).

⁶² POSTGATE, *Equids of Sumer*, p. 198.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 194, 197, 199; CLUTTON-BROCK, *Animals as domesticated*, pp. 62–63; EAD., *Domesticated Mammals*, pp. 124–126; EAD., *Horse Power*, pp. 36–37, 87–90.

most probably representing draught equids. Notably, all known Near Eastern and Egyptian depictions of draught equids with trappers show horses.⁶⁴ Therefore, the figurines with marked trappers should perhaps also be interpreted as representing the same species.

The second hypothesis concerns the possibility of using the figurines to find out which equid species was subjected to the practice of strapping male genitals.⁶⁵ It is based on the premise, presented above, that shoulder stripes were marked on representations of donkeys and donkey/onager or donkey/horse hybrids, while dorsal stripes and trappers featured on figurines of horses. If this assumption is correct, it follows that male genital strapping was marked both on donkey (or donkey hybrids)⁶⁶ figurines and on those that represented horses.⁶⁷ Furthermore, it seems that strapping of genitalia was practiced both on pack (**Fig. 16**) and draught equids.⁶⁸ These hypotheses can hopefully be verified in time, with systematic publishing and thorough analysis of terracotta figurines from other sites in the Khabur region.

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⁶⁴ See *supra*, n. 37.

⁶⁵ J. Oates suggested that strapped equids should probably be identified as onagers (OATES, *Equid Figurines*, p. 288).

⁶⁶ See *supra*, equid figurine from Tell Arbid with damaged strapped male genitalia – **Fig. 11**; see also: WISSING, *Die Tonobjekte*, Pl. 8/58.

⁶⁷ Compare equid figurine with a marked trapper and a dorsal stripe, which may therefore be the image of a draught horse: *ibid.*, Pl. 11/78.

⁶⁸ See *supra*, n. 67.