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978-0-521-79666-8 - The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c. 16,000-300 BC)

Peter M. M. G. Akkermans and Glenn M. Schwartz

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The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c. 16,000–300 BC)

This is the first book to present a comprehensive review of the archaeology of Syria from the end of the Palaeolithic period to 300 BC. Syria has become a prime focus of field archaeology in the Middle East since the 1970s, and Peter Akkermans and Glenn Schwartz discuss the results of this intensive fieldwork, integrating them with earlier research. Alongside the major material culture types of each period, they examine important contributions of Syrian archaeology to issues like the onset of agriculture, the emergence of private property and social inequality, the rise and collapse of urban life, and the archaeology of early empires. Competing interpretations are set out and considered alongside the authors' own perspectives and conclusions.

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PREFACE

This book was written to fill the need for a synthetic discussion of the results of recent archaeological fieldwork in Syria. Because of the overwhelming abundance of data as well as their respective research strengths, the authors divided the material chronologically between them. Thus, Akkermans wrote chapters 2–5 and Schwartz wrote chapters 6–11; the introductory and concluding chapters were jointly written. The order of the authors' names on the title page is alphabetical.

Both authors wish to express their immense debt to the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, Syria, which encouraged and supported the extensive research discussed in this volume. We offer this book as a tribute to our Syrian colleagues and friends, who have been extraordinarily helpful both personally and in the cause of archaeology in Syria.

Akkermans would like to thank all those colleagues who helped in the preparation and writing of this book. Essential information or illustrations were supplied by Sytze Bottema, Eric Coqueugniot, Hans Curvers, Henri de Contenson, Kim Duistermaat, Fokke Gerritsen, Frank Hole, Tatsundo Koizumi, Bertille Lyonnet, Miquel Molist, Andrew Moore, Yoshi Nishiaki, André Numan, Bruce Schroeder, Danielle Stordeur, Ingolf Thuesen, Akira Tsuneki, Tony Wilkinson, Aslihan Yener, and Hisham E. Yazigi of Syria Shell. Marc Verhoeven and Olivier Nieuwenhuys read drafts of chapters 2–5, and offered valuable criticism and encouragement. Mikko Kriek prepared the maps in this book with his customary skill, as well as all drawings in chapters 2–5. Ans Bulles and Glenn Schwartz corrected the English in chapters 2–5. Gratitude also goes to colleagues of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, the Netherlands, for their encouragement and advice. Last but not least, Ilse van Pinxteren is thanked for all her patience and ceaseless support throughout the years of study and writing on behalf of this book.

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Both authors wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

In this book, the spellings of site names are generally those employed by the excavators.