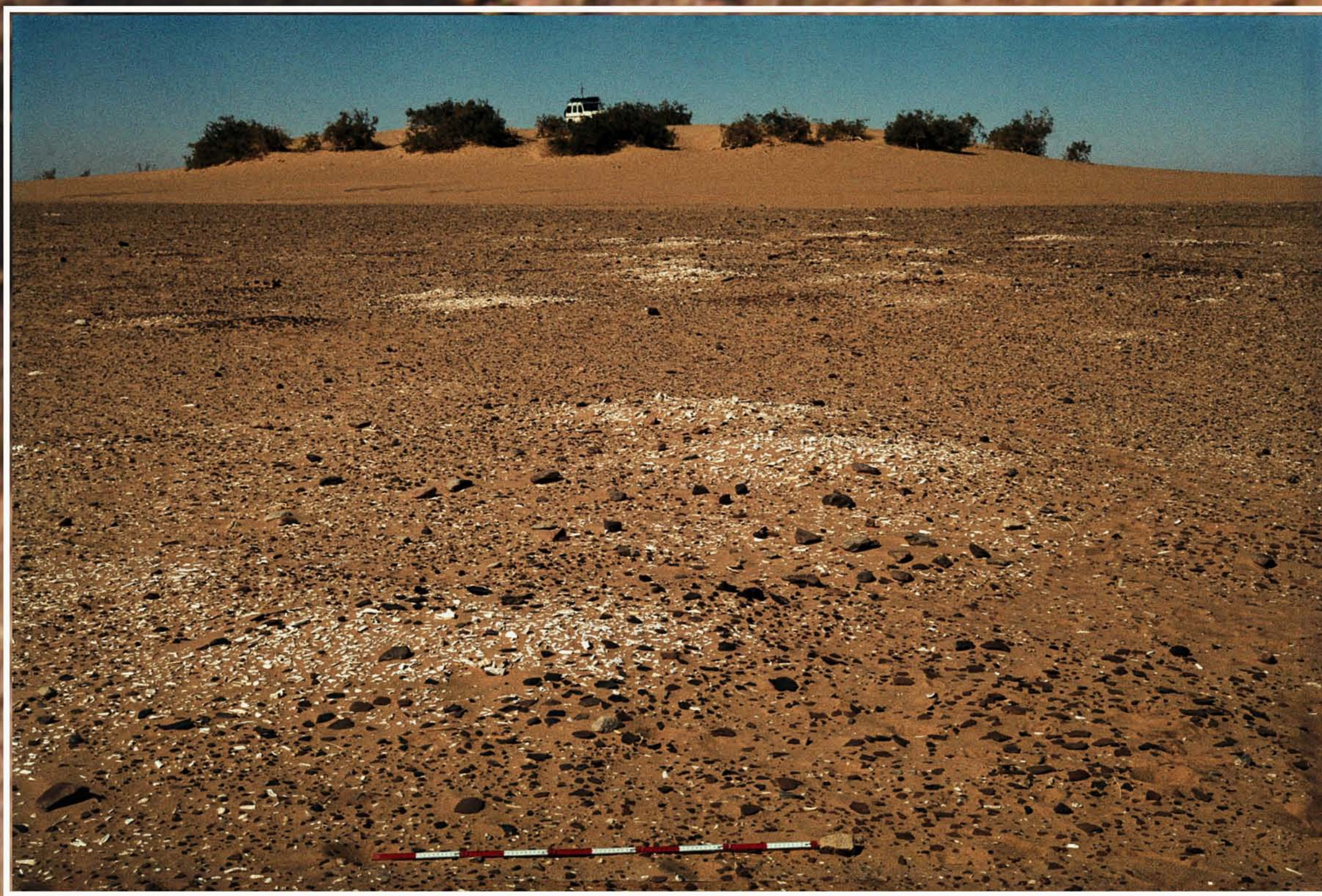


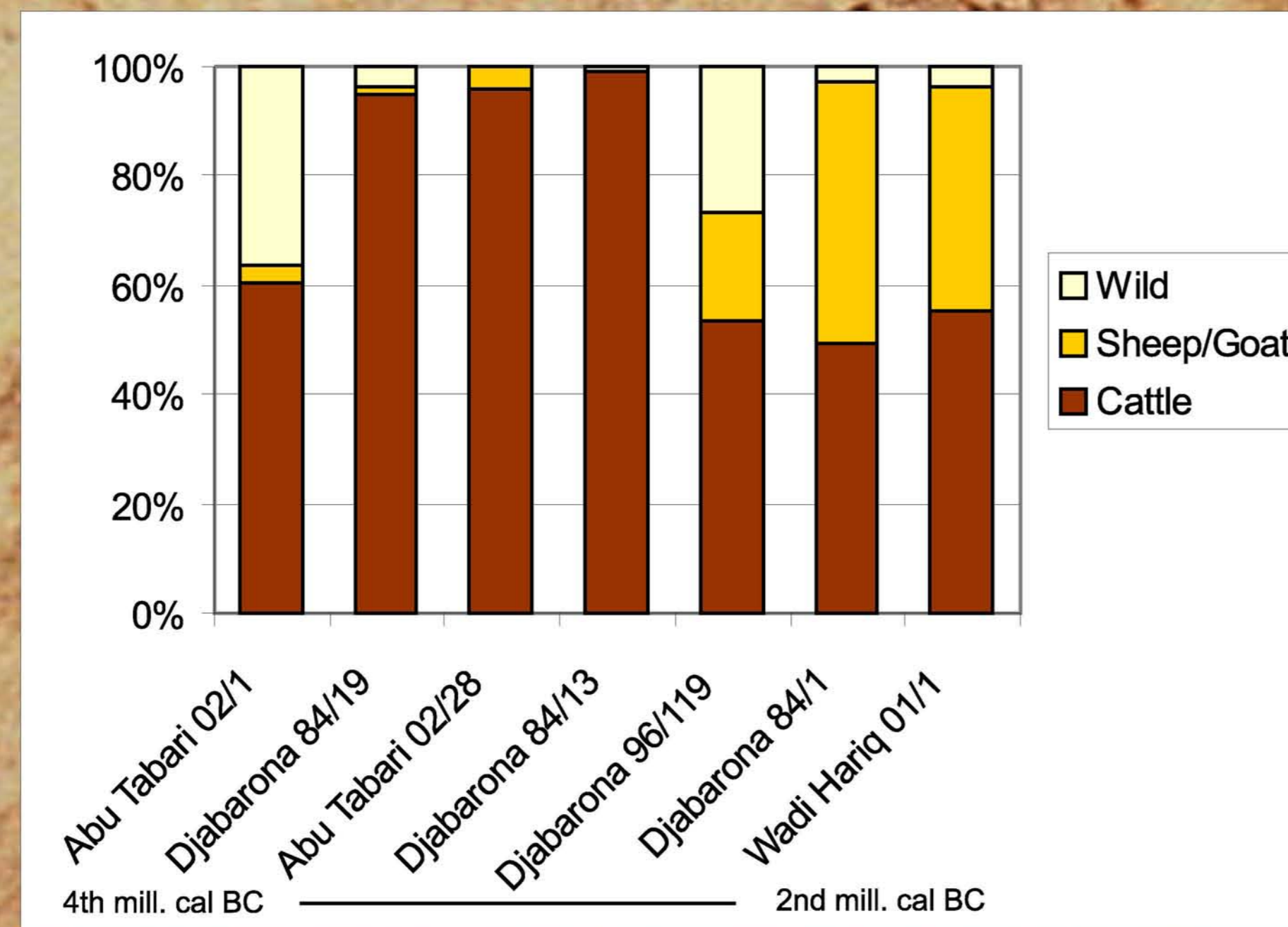
# Cattle in the Wadi Howar Region, Northern Sudan



Site Djabarona 84/13 in Middle Wadi Howar. More than 1000 concentrations of bones and / or pottery sherds represent the rest of former pits. These features are typical for the sites of the 4th and 3rd millennia cal BC in the Wadi Howar region. The more or less complete cattle carcasses are partially still in their anatomical contexts.

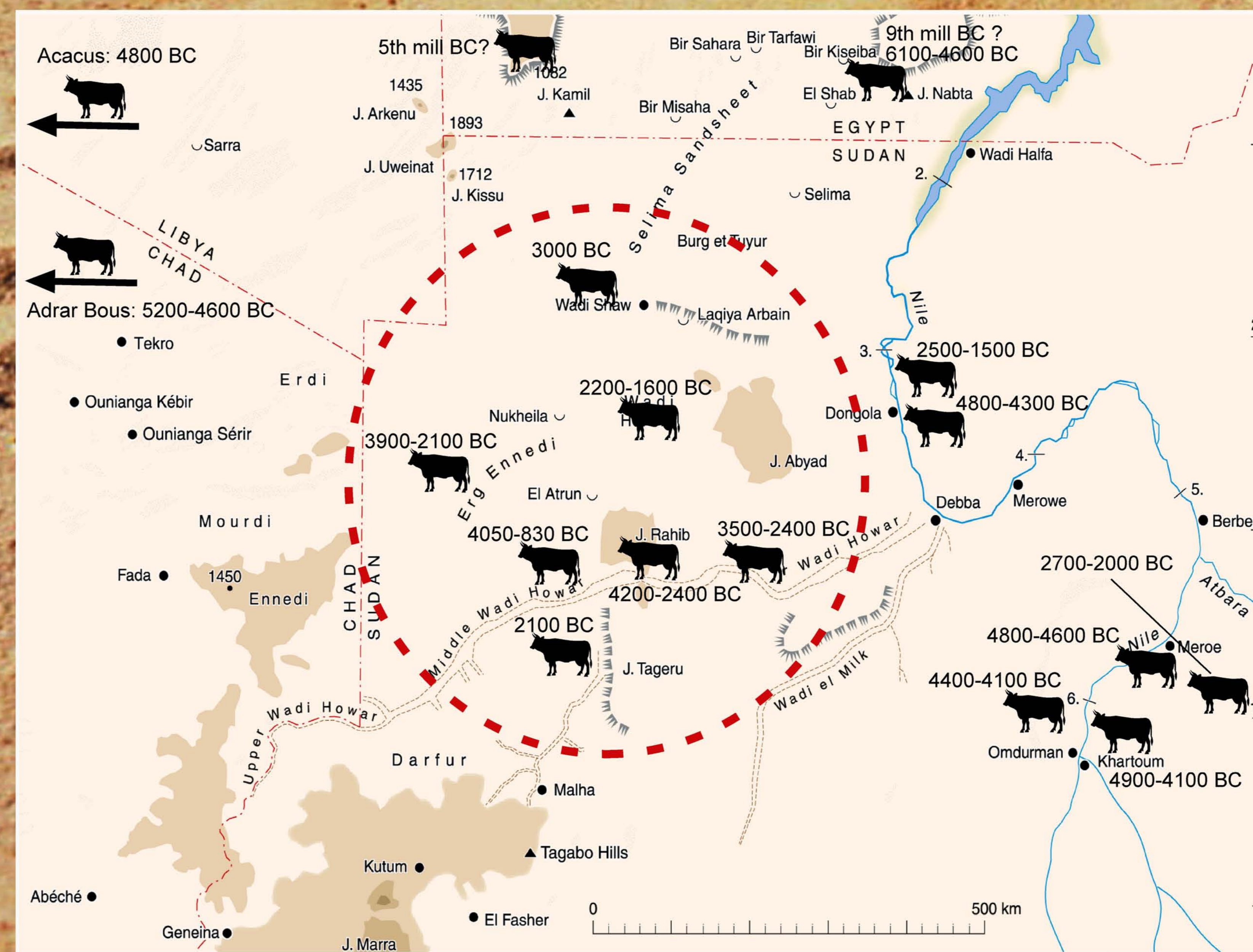


Engravings of longhorn(?) cattle at site S03/35 in Lower Wadi Howar.

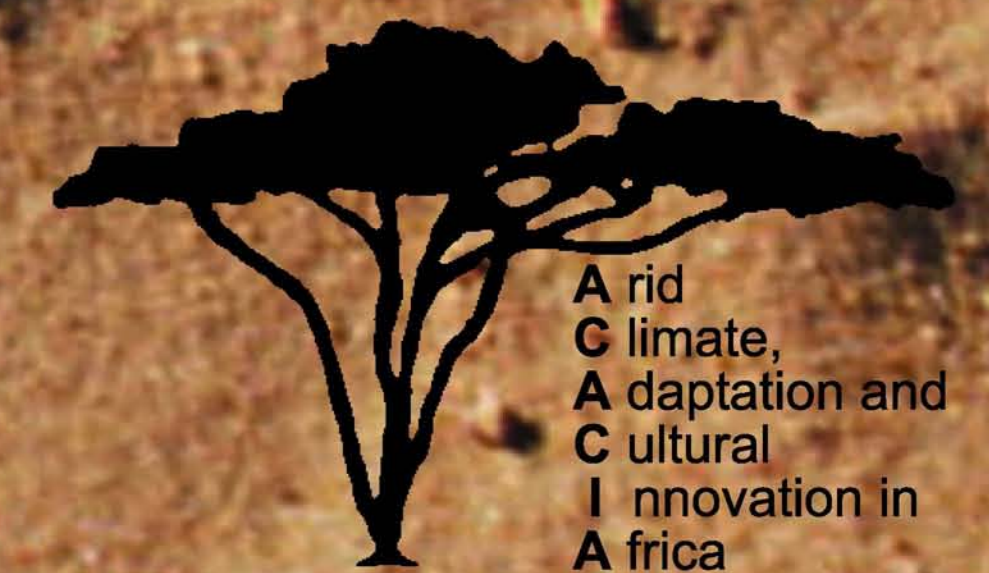


Recent fieldwork of the Cologne research project ACACIA allowed for a multitude of new data concerning cattle in the Wadi Howar region: Cattle herding played a major role for subsistence since the end of the 5th millennium cal BC. Even with increasing aridity, cattle remained the most important domestic animal. On sites of the 2nd millennium cal BC, cattle bones still make up to about 50 % of the identified faunal species (NISP). The Wadi Howar cattle were small and slender in size compared to those from the Nile Valley. This is mainly due to the more arid environmental conditions in the Wadi Howar region. Stature analyses, however, show that the cattle population was heterogenous and must have been composed by individuals of different breeds.

In the Wadi Howar region, the shift from a foraging to a producing way of life is sudden and distinct: at the end of the 5th millennium cal BC cattle appear in the region. Pastoralism becomes the dominant form of subsistence for several millennia. In prehistoric times and still today (e.g. among the cattle pastoralists of East Africa such as the Massai, Dinka and Shilluk) cattle dominate the social and ritual life of pastoralist societies. In the Wadi Howar region this is evidenced in the numerous pits filled with bones and / or pottery sherds. These are either the result of ritual activities or simple disposal areas. Cattle even were buried (large picture): at site Abu Tabari 02/28 in Lower Wadi Howar the burial of a young cow was excavated. The site is dated to about 3000 BC. Cattle also predominates in rock art.



The appearance of cattle in the Wadi Howar region (red circle) as indicated by the radiocarbon dates established during the Cologne research projects B.O.S. and ACACIA since the 1980s. The way of introduction of the producing economy to that area is still open for debate. The Nile Valley immediately comes to mind, but an introduction from the west also seems possible.



Arid climate, adaptation and cultural innovation in Africa

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