



EXPLORATIONS IN KECH-MAKRAN AND EXCAVATIONS AT MIRI QALAT

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MAFM Mission, direction: Roland Besenval

Cooperation: Department of Archaeology and Museums of Pakistan

EXTENSIVE SURVEYS AND EXPLORATIONS (1986-1990 / 1990-2006)

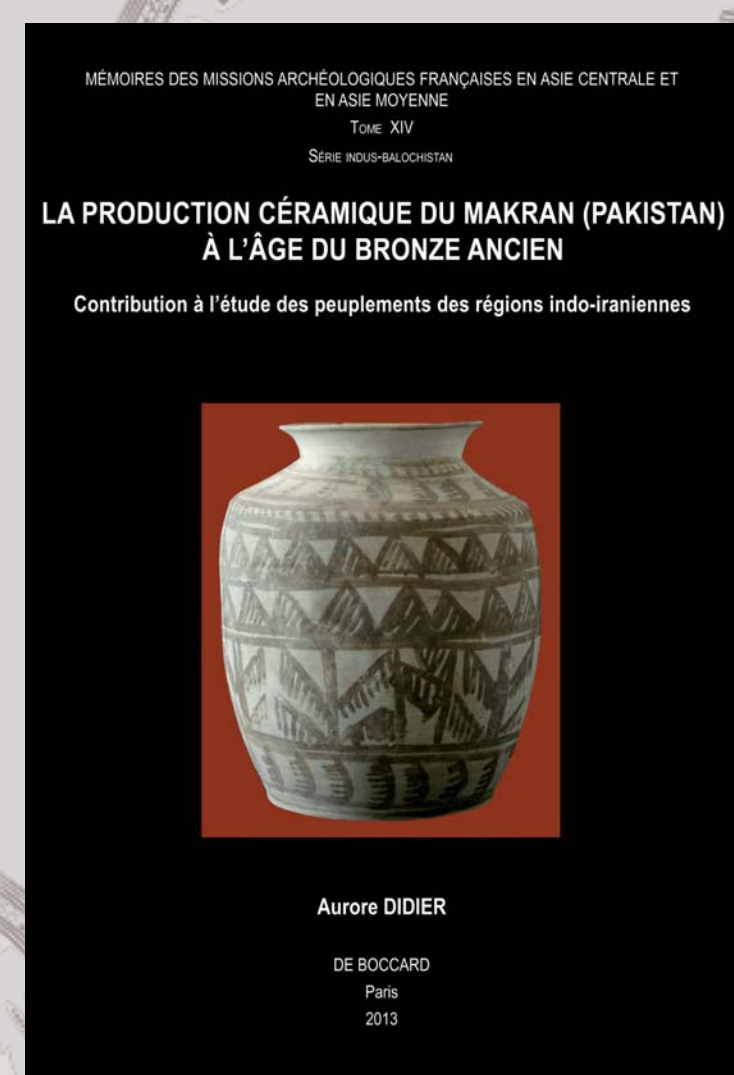
228 archaeological sites were inventoried by the MAFM Mission during an extensive survey and exploration program conducted in Kech-Makran (southwestern Balochistan). Their dating was defined from the study of collections of surface potsherds. Some areas of Makran currently very little inhabited, have shown the remains of an important occupation during the protohistoric period, particularly in the Dasht plain where dozens of 3rd millennium sites were discovered.



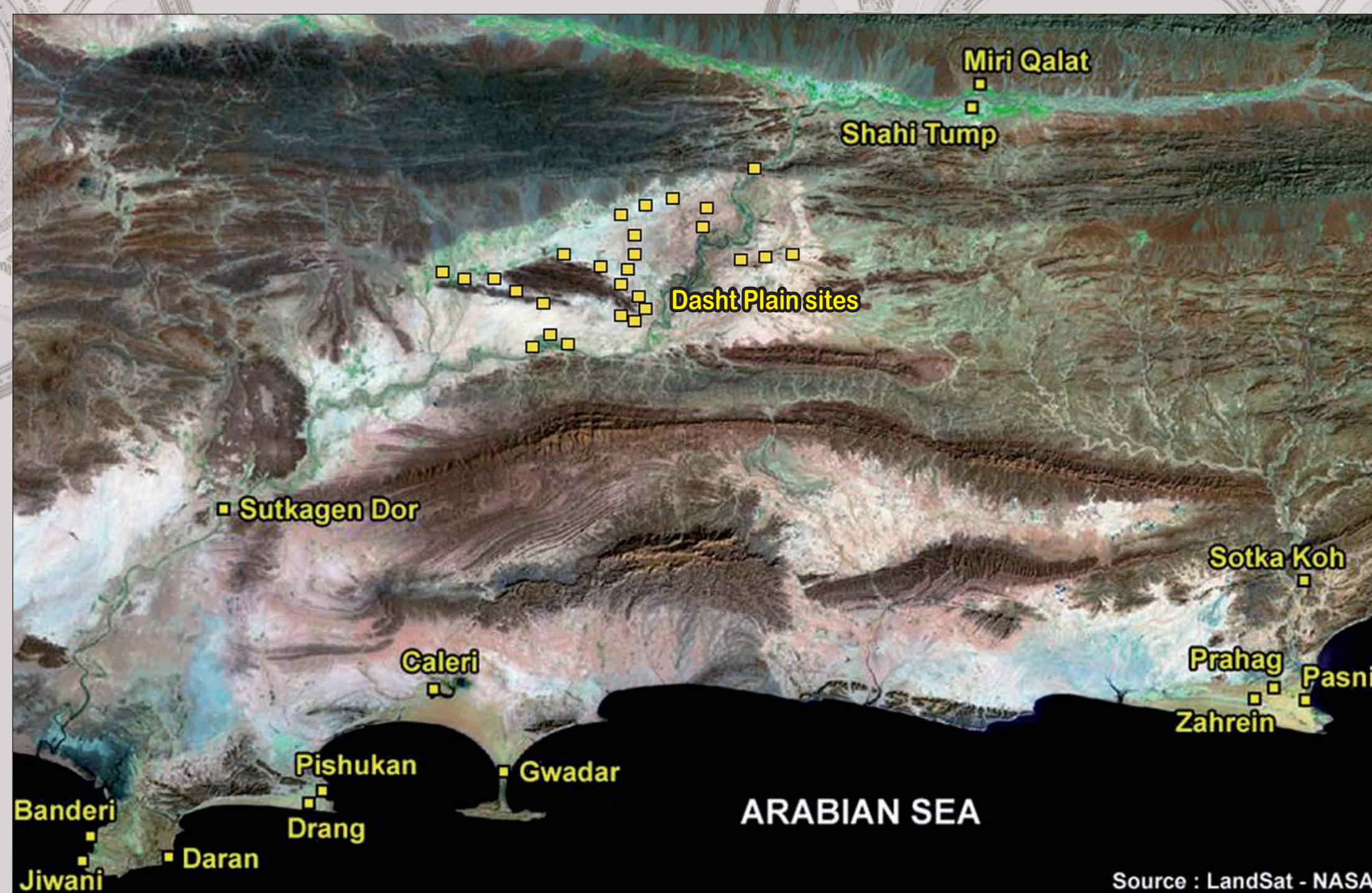
Periods IIIb-IIIc pottery from Makran (2800-2500 BC).



Durrah-i Bast: an Early Bronze Age site (1st half of the 3rd millennium BC) in the Dasht Plain. The areas in red are covered with thousands of pottery sherds.



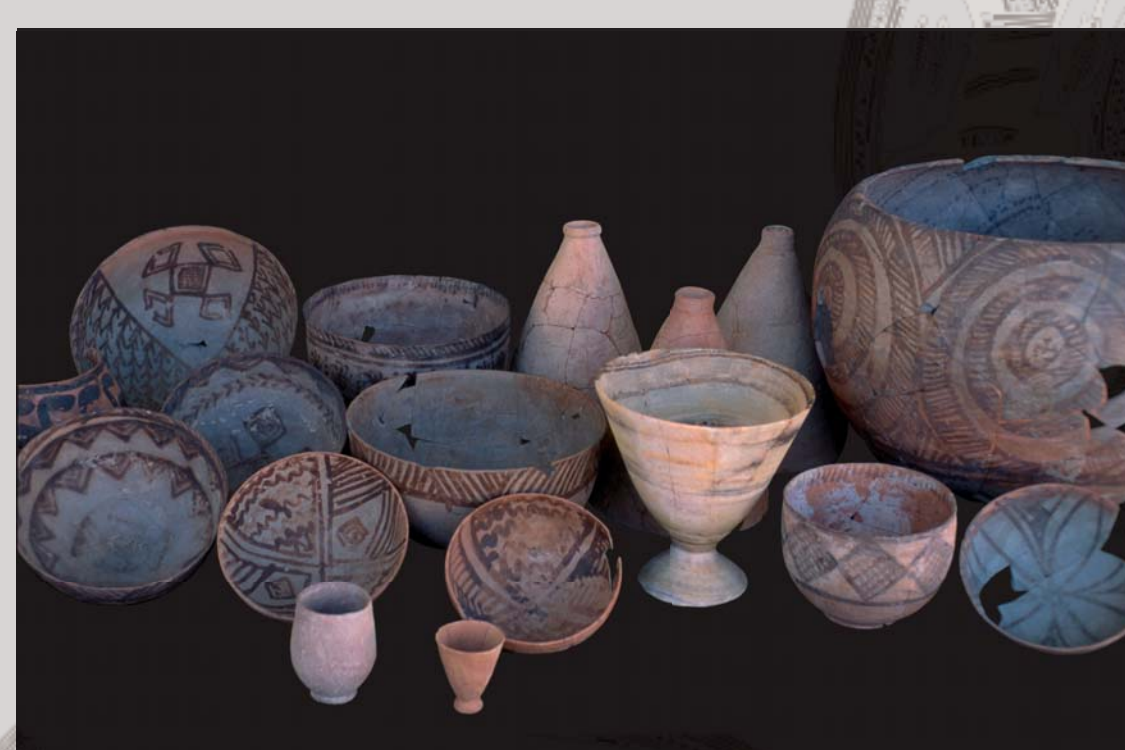
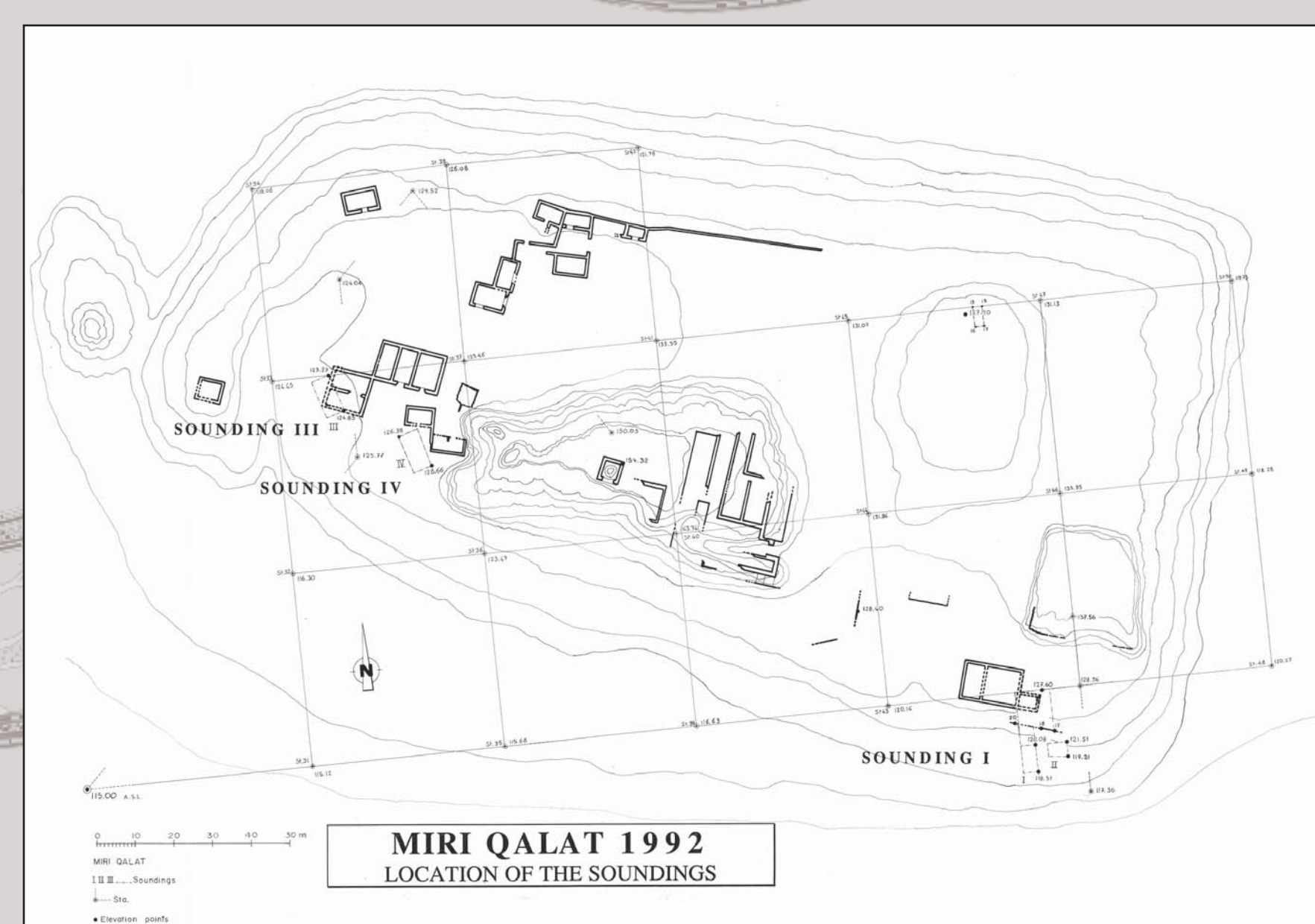
Dr. Roland Besenval. Founder of the French Archaeological Mission in Makran (Balochistan) that he directed from 1986 to 2012. Attached to the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), he conducted excavations at Miri Qalat and Shahi-Tump and an extensive archaeological exploration in Kech-Makran. Among his other achievements are excavations and survey programs in Iran, southern Yemen, Tajikistan, Afghanistan (he was the director of the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan between 2002-2009) and more recently in the Sultanate of Oman.



Satellite map of southern Kech-Makran with main archaeological sites.

MIRI QALAT EXCAVATIONS (1990-1996)

The site of Miri Qalat (300 x 125 m), topped with an Islamic fortress, is located 6 km north-west from Turbat, on the right bank of the Kech River. It was selected for excavations because of its long occupation sequence defined from the surface material. Five field-campaigns conducted on six main trenches (I-IV, VIII-X) have allowed to establish a first chrono-cultural sequence for the Kech-Makran. The oldest settlement in Miri Qalat was dated to the 5th millennium BC (period I). The period I levels were followed by occupations from the Chalcolithic period (periods II-IIIa, ca. 4th millennium/beginning of the 3rd millennium BC), the Early Bronze Age (periods IIIb-c, first half of the 3rd millennium BC) and the Indus civilization (period IV, 2nd half of the 3rd millennium BC). After a gap during the 2nd millennium BC, the site was reoccupied from the first centuries BC-AD (period VI) to the Late Islamic period (period VIII).



Funerary material (pottery and stone vessel) discovered in a period IIIa grave (end of the 4th mil./beginning of the 3rd millennium BC).



Indus Civilization material from Miri Qalat Period IV (2500-2300 BC): ivory comb, steatite stamp seal and painted pottery.

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A. DIDIER, D. SARMIENTO CASTILLO / PHOTOS: MAI -MAFM ©

