CAENL 8

Manfred Bietak, Paolo Matthiae and Silvia Prell (Eds.)

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PALACES VOLUME II

Harrassowitz

Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Palaces
Volume II

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant

CAENL

Edited by Manfred Bietak

Volume 8

2019
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Palaces

Volume II

Proceedings of a workshop held at the 10th ICAANE in Vienna, 25–26 April 2016

Edited by
Manfred Bietak, Paolo Matthiae and Silvia Prell

2019
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Cover illustration: Hall A of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna with hypothesis for roofing.
© Landesmuseum Württemberg and FaberCourtial.

The project was funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): P 25945

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.dnb.de abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de

For further information about our publishing program consult our website http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de

Printed on permanent/durable paper.
Typesetting and layout: u.ni medienservice, Hönze
Printing and binding: Hubert & Co., Göttingen
Printed in Germany
ISSN 2627-8022
ISBN 978-3-447-11183-6
e-ISBN 978-3-447-19851-6

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Table of Contents

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Palaces in Egypt and Nubia

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Preface

This collection of studies on Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian palaces is the result of a workshop organised by Manfred Bietak (Austrian Academy of Sciences) and Paolo Matthiae (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei) for the 10th ICAANE held in Vienna from the 25th to the 26th of April 2016.

The workshop follows the most successful conference on Ancient Egyptian palaces organised by the Austrian Academy, the University of Würzburg and the Egypt Exploration Society in June 2013 in London, and now published in the volume "Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Palaces I" (Vienna 2018). Its objective was especially to present and increase our knowledge about Ancient Near Eastern palaces in Mesopotamia and the Levant in comparison to those in Egypt. In the process of the workshop, it became clear that while concepts of axial plans and symmetry in Egyptian palaces reflect the pharaonic mind, Ancient Near Eastern architects were more flexible in planning. Besides the canonical principles exhibited by the core of palaces as witnessed in Mesopotamia in the times of the great empires, the additive construction process, as particularly found in Syria, allowed the adaptation of architecture to the needs of a growing palatial household.

This, and other observations, are expressed in the papers collated in the current volume. The keynote lecture was presented by Jean-Claude Margueron (École Pratique des Hautes Études) who, after years of excavation work in Mari (Syria), is a highly respected authority on Mesopotamian palaces with an extensive publication list on the subject. His paper here addresses more general aspects of Mesopotamian palaces, discussing our present state of knowledge as well as future research objectives on certain aspects of Mesopotamian palaces and their development from the 5th to the 1st millennium BC. It is followed by a number of essays on palaces in Mesopotamia, the Northern and Southern Levant, as well as Egypt and Nubia.

In his contribution about the AP palace at Tell Mozan/Urkesh, Federico Buccellati (Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin) explores how the archaeological record can be better understood by the analysis of sensory perception in relation to ancient architecture and environment. David Kertai (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) analyses the monumental Assyrian Throne Rooms, their layout, setting, included installations and their distinct features.

In the next section concerning palaces in the Northern Levant, Alexander Tamm (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg) shows that the Early Bronze Age palace F in Tell Chuera is a monumental building with distinct architectural elements that are comparable with palaces in other centres of the northern Syrian plains, namely Ebla, Tell Beydar, Tell Bi`a and Tell Brak. Frances Pinnock (La Sapienza University of Rome) introduces the only partly investigated Early Syrian Palace G at Ebla, presenting recent results as well as the layout of the complex as far as excavated. Staying at Ebla, Paolo Matthiae (Accademia dei Lincei) examines the architectural culture of its Middle Bronze Age Palaces in detail, and explains how three architectural principles are a mutual feature.

Nathalie Kallas (FU Berlin) discusses local traditions and foreign influences in Middle Bronze Age palatial architecture, focusing on building materials, technique and particular elements of the layout, including those of the Southern Levant. In his contribution about modularisation of palatial architecture in the 2nd millennium BC, Peter Pfälzner (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen) uses the royal palace at Qatna as an example to show that the construction of a palace mirrors the construction of power. Also exploring palaces at Qatna, Luigi Turri (University of Verona) demonstrates that at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age a decentralised palace model came into use, with ceremonial, administrative, residential and production activities shared among more than one edifice that one can address as palace.

The next section discusses palaces in the Southern Levant. In his contribution about Early Bronze Age palaces, Pierre de Miroschedji (CNRS, UMR 7041, Nanterre) reflects about the theoretical and archaeological definition of a palace in general before he presents the archaeological evidence according to his defined criteria. For the Middle Bronze Age, Assaf Yasur-Landau (University of Haifa) and Eric H. Cline (George Washington University) present an updated picture of their new assessment of the last phase of occupation of the palace at Tell Kabri. Ann E. Killebrew (Pennsylvania State University) explores the plan, function and architectural lineage of Iron Age structures often identified as palaces (bīt-ḫilāni), revealing after examination their multi-functional use and regional character.

The final section deals with palaces in Egypt and Nubia. Manfred Bietak (Austrian Academy of Sciences) explores the palace at Bubastis, which was most probably constructed before the time of Amenemhat III and was used throughout the 13th Dynasty. This complex was utilised by the local administration and mayors of Bubastis, but both its second approach from the north and related epigraphic evidence make it highly likely that it also accommodated the king for temporary stays. Charles Bonnet (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres) introduces a unique assemblage of buildings in Nubia's Doukki Gel-Kerma that incorporates palaces of important early New Kingdom pharaohs with a very particular layout, most likely of ceremonial character. It seems that after the destruction of the Kingdom of Kush, the pharaohs transformed the circular multi-columned

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

ceremonial buildings of the Nubians into an orthogonal system but kept the Nubian character of the architecture. In his second contribution, Charles Bonnet presents a palace within the mnnw (temple town), built by Thutmosis I at the same site.

Overall, the collections of papers in this volume present important insights into palaces of the Ancient Near East and Egypt. It is intended that this approach to palace research continues with more workshops that would highlight both the differences in architecture and function, and the mutual influences and similarities between the regions. Another of our aims is to identify the regionality of palace features – one of the objectives taken up i.a. by the ERC Advanced Grant "The Hyksos Enigma" in connection with the Hyksos Palace at Avaris/Tell el-Dab'a.

This workshop and publication of this volume took place as part of a project on Ancient Egyptian Palaces, granted to Manfred Bietak by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF Grant P 25945-G21), to which the participants are most grateful. We would also like to thank all colleagues who participated in the workshop. Our thanks go as well to our colleagues who helped with their expertise in producing this volume. For technical support, we would like to thank Kim-Denise Uhe, Rosa Matic, Inbal Samet, and Patrick Aprendt.

Vienna, 6th of October 2018

Manfred Bietak Paolo Matthiae Silvia Prell

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Palais 'mésopotamiens': *status questionis*

par Jean-Claude Margueron

Introduction

La présentation de l'ensemble des palais mésopotamiens en une trentaine de minutes était une gageure que je ne voulais pas tenir: je ne peux offrir ici qu'un *status questionis* accompagné de pistes de réflexion, fruit d'une vie consacrée à leur étude, depuis le premier article que j'ai écrit sur ce sujet il y a une soixantaine d'années[1] dans la publication, par la XIX[e] RAI (Paris 1972), consacrée au palais et à la royauté et qui a précédé d'une dizaine d'années la première synthèse sur l'architecture palatiale, écrite par E. Heinrich.[2]

Une mise au point préalable. Puisque les effets de la destruction et du temps font disparaître la plus grande partie du volume des édifices et ne restituent le plus souvent que le plan (souvent partiel seulement) avec une très faible hauteur de murs, voire de fondations, il est un impératif absolu pour approcher une réelle compréhension de ceux-ci: engager une restitution volumétrique, non par l'imaginaire, mais par la logique architecturale et l'analyse archéologique. L'opération est difficile mais, sans elle, il est impossible de voir dans une construction un tout cohérent et fonctionnel ayant servi à la vie d'hommes en société.[3]

Une telle méthode doit s'accompagner de démarches technologiques qui, jointes aux concepts définissant l'œuvre architecturale, font de l'architecture la plus parfaite manifestation à la fois de l'essence et du savoir d'une époque.

I – Problème et définitions

Précisons le sens, l'emploi et les limites du mot palais:[4] dans la pratique scientifique des archéologues orientalistes, qu'appelle-t-on « palais » ?

- Des édifices qui formaient certainement à l'origine un tout cohérent et fonctionnel, mais que nous visualisons seulement à partir de restes incomplets. Le terme, très généralement, désigne le plus grand édifice d'une agglomération.
- Mais ce critère de dimension est-il satisfaisant ? Non, car la taille ne définit en rien la fonction et il convient de réserver le terme de « palais », selon sa fonction fondamentale, au bâtiment qui contient *la demeure du roi*;[5] tout autre emploi du mot palais, pour n'importe quel grand bâtiment dont on ne sait pas s'il a servi à abriter le roi, est à bannir.
- Alors qu'est-ce qui permet de dire qu'un édifice retrouvé est ou n'est pas un palais ? Ce n'est en tout cas jamais un problème de taille. Il faut retrouver à partir de l'architecture elle-même ou des objets recueillis dans l'établissement (tablettes par exemple) la preuve que celui-ci est le lieu du séjour du roi; ce sont donc des caractéristiques spécifiques que l'on doit utiliser comme critères.
- Le terme ne devrait être employé que si l'institution royale est certaine, c'est-à-dire s'il existe au sommet de la hiérarchie sociale un homme qui exerce le pouvoir et le transmet à son fils. Aux époques documentées par des textes, un tel pouvoir existe bien en Mésopotamie et il forme la clé de voûte de l'organisation de la société: mais quand est-il apparu ? On ignore encore le moment et les modalités de son émergence dans le Proche-Orient. Ce qui rend le problème difficile, c'est qu'il y a, à l'issue de l'époque néolithique, de grands bâtiments, de « prestige » selon certains, mais dont rien ne prouve qu'il s'agit de demeures royales, et qu'en l'absence de textes on ne peut sortir du dilemme par un tour de passe-passe en assimilant, comme il a été fait, le roi à un prêtre (le fameux « roi-prêtre » protohistorique).
- Cependant, dans le cas d'une royauté élective, le bâtiment qui abrite le roi élu, s'il est permanent, doit pouvoir être qualifié de palais.
- Qu'est-ce qui peut alors prouver que l'édifice concerné est une demeure « royale » ? Une seule particularité architecturale peut l'assurer: la présence d'une pièce spécifiquement liée à la fonction royale, comme la salle du trône, avec des aménagements qui ne laissent pas de doute (dais, présence du trône ou d'une base déterminant sa place…); en l'absence d'une telle particularité architecturale, l'existence d'archives mettant en évidence la présence d'un roi dans le bâtiment permet évidemment d'identifier ce dernier avec un palais; mais méfions-nous: une ou deux tablettes, même si elles mentionnent un roi, ne suffisent pas à prouver qu'il s'agit de sa demeure.

J'ai suggéré qu'en l'absence de certitude, et dans l'ignorance où l'on se trouve très souvent concernant la nature du pouvoir, pour éviter qu'une confusion des termes n'entraîne une imprécision des fonctions, plutôt que de palais on parle de *la Maison du Pouvoir***.** Cependant si l'on tient à conserver le mot, parce qu'il apparaît intrinsèquement lié à la notion de pouvoir, on pourrait peut-être simplement envisager d'associer au

1 Margueron 1974.
2 Heinrich 1984.
3 Margueron 1999; 2009.
4 Margueron 1982.
5 Tout comme le temple est la demeure du dieu.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

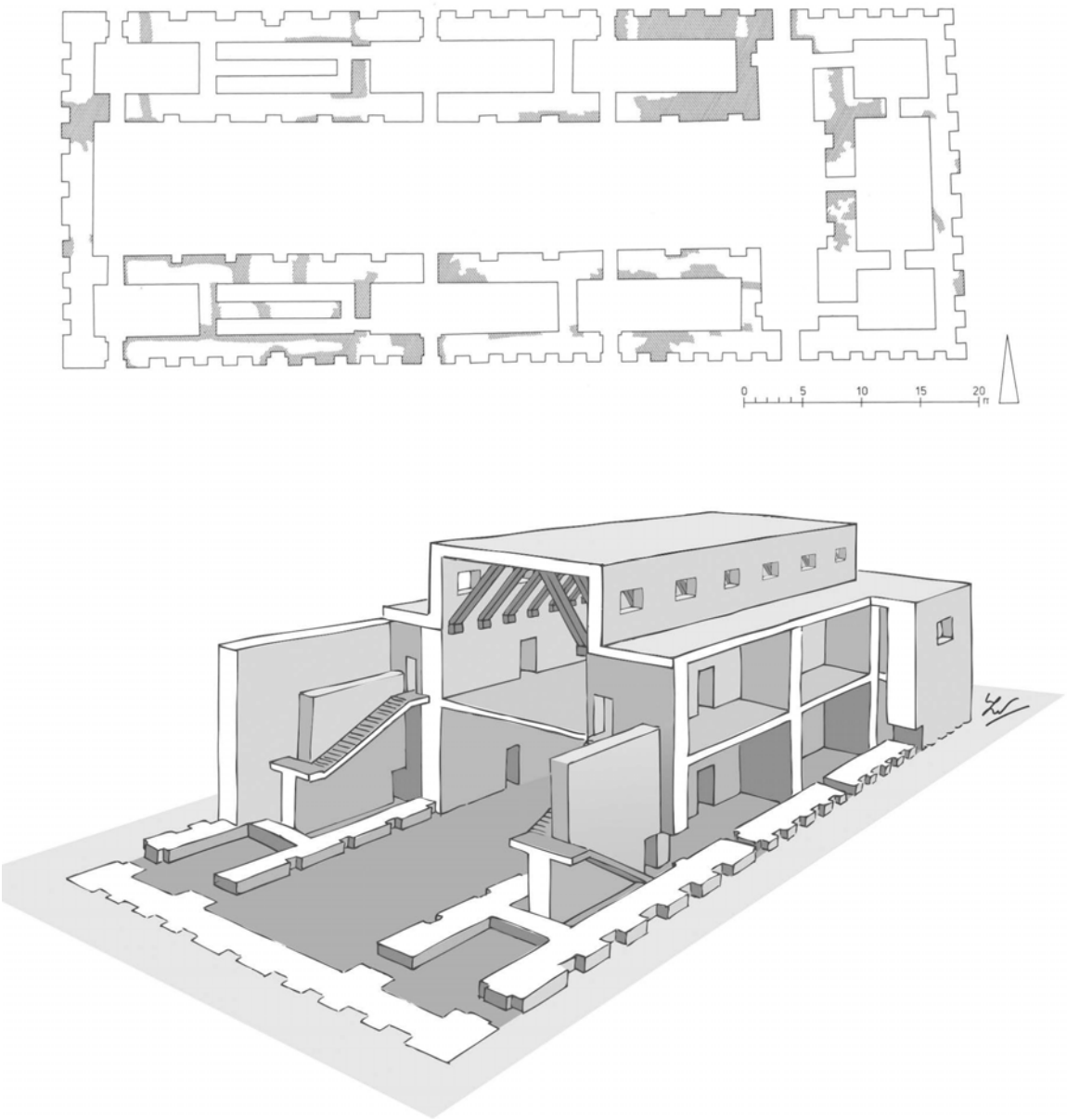


Fig. 1 Exemple d'édifice tripartite: le temple calcaire d'Uruk (milieu du IVe millénaire). Plan (Heinrich 1984, fig. 114) et restitution (© J.-Cl. Margueron)

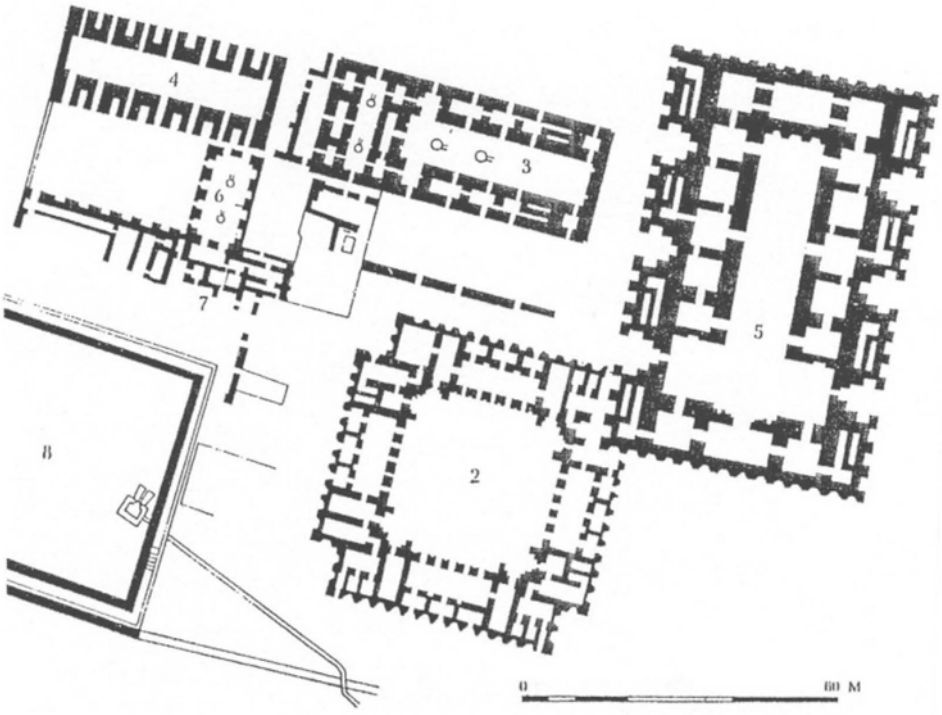
terme palais (comme synonyme de grande maison), la fonction spécifique du détenteur du pouvoir qui habite ce bâtiment: on parlerait ainsi systématiquement du *palais du roi* (ou royal), du *palais de l'évêque* (ou épiscopal), du *palais du grand prêtre…* Mais il faut bien voir que rien ne prouve *a priori* que la composition et l'organisation de ces édifices soient de même nature et donc interchangeables.

Une exception toutefois doit être prise en compte ici pour la civilisation orientale antique: le palais peut aussi désigner la demeure d'un *empereur* car, *de facto,* la fonction impériale n'est rien d'autre que l'extension du pouvoir royal qui s'exerçait sur un royaume, à un ensemble formé de plusieurs royaumes: l'élargissement du territoire dominé n'a pas changé la nature du pouvoir exercé dans le cadre de l'institution royale.

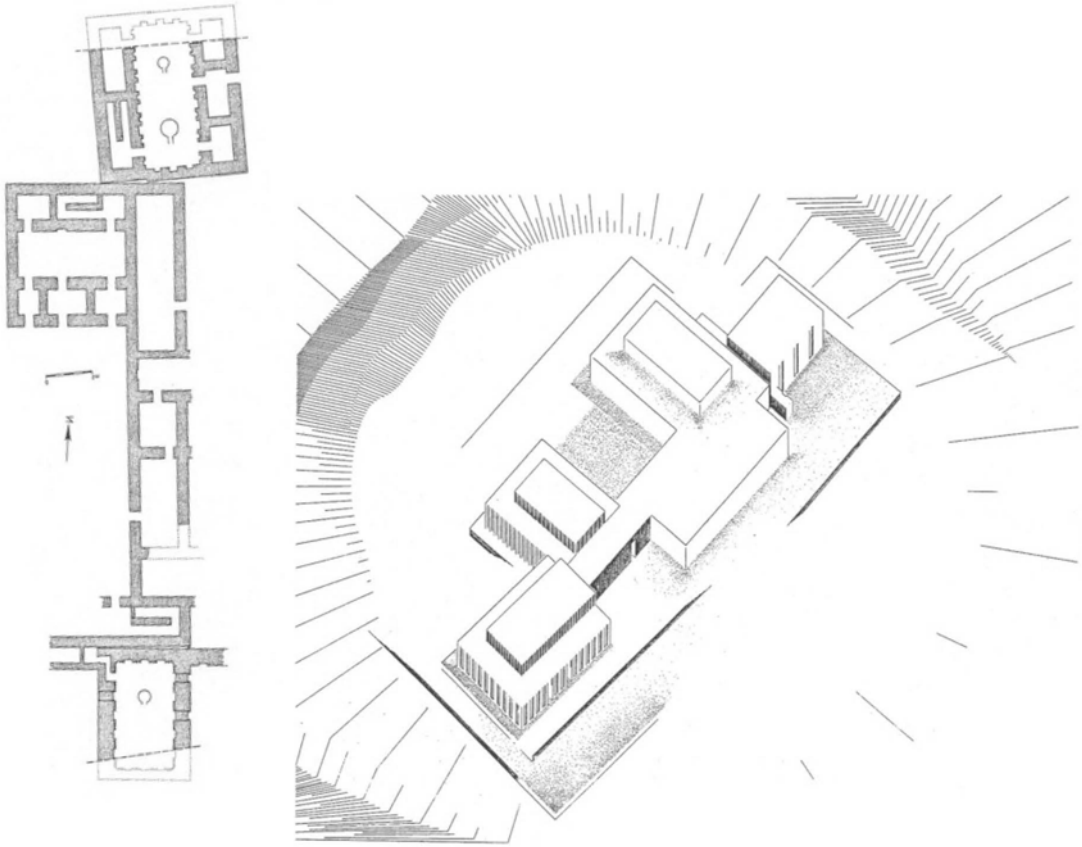
Ainsi, il serait bon de réserver le terme de « palais » à l'édifice qui abrite le roi ou l'empereur (ainsi que leur famille) avec les services qu'ils choisissent d'avoir directement à leurs côtés.

On notera que, dans cette optique, la notion de « grande maison » qui reprend d'ailleurs les termes sumériens et akkadiens, n'est nullement essentielle, en revanche il faut pouvoir définir avec précision les fonctions des différentes unités qui composent la demeure royale car elle est un reflet de ce qui forme la base du pouvoir royal.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516



Eanna



Habuba Kabira

Fig. 2 Monuments de l’époque d’Uruk: l’Eanna d’Uruk et Habuba Kabira (Margueron 2007, pl. 3)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

II – Inventaire des palais mésopotamiens par grandes phases historiques

Proposons d'abord un inventaire des palais connus selon un classement typologique par forme et par période, en faisant appel aux indices concernant la fonction régalienne quand c'est possible. Pour garder une certaine homogénéité, et parce qu'il est impossible de tout étudier, nous laisserons de côté l'Anatolie, l'Iran et le Levant Sud: en effet, ces régions, plus éloignées du monde mésopotamien, présentent des caractères propres; pour des raisons diverses[6] certains édifices, souvent considérés comme des palais par la littérature archéologique, ne seront pas pris en considération.

A – Epoque d'Obeid: naissance du plan tripartite: le plus ancien palais ?

L'époque d'Obeid avait mis au point un édifice monumental appelé « *édifice tripartite* »,[7] qui entre dans la catégorie des « unités structurales autonomes »:[8] il s'agit d'édifices dont la structure forme un tout, qui se suffit à elle-même, et dont on ne peut ajouter ou retrancher un élément[9] sans en provoquer la ruine. Dans ces édifices tripartites, l'habitat se situait à l'étage, tandis que le rez-de-chaussée était voué aux activités économiques et aux réserves.

S'agit-il de la demeure du chef d'une petite communauté villageoise, donc l'ancêtre des palais ? Ou d'un bâtiment clanique ? On peut souligner l'existence des deux longues salles superposées assez majestueuses qui constituent le cœur de l'édifice, mais on doit noter qu'aucun aménagement ne les singularise, sauf lorsqu'il s'agit d'un temple comme à Eridu.

B – Epoque d'Uruk (milieu et fin du IV^{e} mill.): maintien et développement de l'édifice tripartite obeidien (Fig. 1 et 2)

Si le plan tripartite domine sur l'Eanna, pour la première fois émerge une formule l'associant à une grande dépendance: c'est le premier pas vers la formation d'une architecture complexe urbaine: ainsi, tout en respectant la tradition architecturale obeidienne, l'époque d'Uruk, sous les contraintes ressenties de l'espace urbain naissant, amorce la création des modèles nouveaux.

1 – Principaux sites:

Uruk, Habuba Kabira, Aruda: pas de 'palais' définis par les fouilleurs; laissons de côté Aruda qui est un centre religieux pourvu d'un temple double.

Uruk avec deux centres connus: *le temple Blanc,* qui est bien un temple, et le secteur de l'*Eanna* considéré habituellement comme une zone de sanctuaires; cependant l'analyse de la documentation ne décèle, dans les différents édifices tripartites qui l'occupent, aucun signe de sacralité:[10] alors, ne doit-on pas y reconnaître plutôt, en raison de leur morphologie, les héritiers des « Maisons de pouvoir » de la fin de l'époque d'Obeid ? Le *temple Calcaire* peut représenter presque tous les édifices de l'Eanna: seul son gigantisme[11] le distingue des autres. Notons la présence de nombreux escaliers qui attestent l'existence d'un étage, ainsi que l'absence de crapaudines, ce qui pose le problème des relations entre l'intérieur et l'extérieur et donc du fonctionnement d'ensemble.

Habuba Kabira est particulièrement intéressant pour deux raisons: si la maison urbaine connaît une notable évolution par l'adjonction à un édifice tripartite d'une grande dépendance, c'est le bâtiment principal de la petite cité qui attire l'attention.

Trois édifices de plan tripartite sont réunis par un corps de bâtiment étroit et allongé, on a voulu y voir des temples. En réalité le corps de bâtiment assure une jonction entre les édifices et permet à une galerie au niveau supérieur de joindre leurs étages: la présence d'escaliers aux deux extrémités du corps de bâtiment montre clairement le fonctionnement de l'ensemble puisque les trois plans tripartites différents sont ainsi réunis; cet ensemble délimite un espace ouvert, bordé sur trois côtés de bâtiments pourvus d'un étage: y avait-il une limite sur le quatrième côté ? L'érosion ne permet plus de le dire.

6 En dehors des régions susdites seront exclus de la présente enquête:
- certaines catégories d'édifice: forteresses militaires: Gubba, Razuk, Fort Salmanasar, les *Dunu* assyriens comme tell Sabi Abyad,
- des palais provinciaux (Arslan tash, Til Barsip…),
- des édifices considérés comme des palais, mais par trop incomplets,
- des édifices désignés (à tort) comme des palais, mais qui sont occupés par de grands serviteurs, et non par le roi lui-même: par exemple ceux qui sont au pied de la terrasse royale de Dur Sharrukin.
- tous les palais qui font l'objet d'une intervention spécifique au cours de cet Icaane.

7 Margueron 1986a.

8 Margueron 1985; 1995.

9 Cependant une extension possible peut être réalisée par la juxtaposition latérale d'une formule tripartite identique, procédé qui a rarement été utilisé sauf à Abada.

10 L'identification de l'Eanna avec des *maisons divines* ne définit aucune réalité par ailleurs connue; elle s'est appuyée sur la thèse d'un pouvoir exercé par un roi-prêtre que rien n'a jamais prouvée.

11 Salle centrale 12 m de large; largeur totale avec les bas-côtés 30 m; longueur totale 75 m.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Une telle organisation de l’espace se retrouve à Gawra XIII[12] et à Uruk au niveau IV-c de l’Eanna. A Gawra, il s’agit d’un groupement de trois bâtiments tripartites, autour d’un espace à ciel ouvert: un ensemble composé par simple adjonction d’unités presque identiques (le module élémentaire reste le même), mais l’espace du monument a plus que triplé; les étages sont en relation directe d’un bâtiment à l’autre.

C’est donc là une caractéristique de trois sites connus du IV^e^ millénaire, qui montrent l’introduction d’un espace central à ciel ouvert entouré de bâtiments tripartites à étage qui s’associent pour former une unité homogène: il n’y a aucun signe régalien évident, pas plus que de signes de sacralité: il se pourrait bien que l’on ait affaire à une forme particulière des premières « maisons de pouvoir ».

L’architecture domestique s’appuie sur un autre concept: une partie de la maison reproduit le plan tripartite, mais on y ajoute un grand espace couvert et bordé sur deux côtés, en vis-à-vis, d’une grande salle sans division intérieure; organisation qui fait songer à un entrepôt à côté de la maison d’habitation, comme s’il s’agissait de la maison d’un « commerçant », mais certainement pas d’une « maison du pouvoir ».

2 – Caractéristiques principales de l’architecture d’Uruk

À l’époque d’Uruk le plan tripartite, souvent sous forme d’un T, reste le type habituel des grands édifices; de dimensions assez variables, les édifices monumentaux sont parfois organisés à angle droit; parfois la combinaison de quatre formules de base identiques fondées sur un plan tripartite, complet ou incomplet, permet d’obtenir un édifice de plan carré dont tous les côtés sont semblables. Mais des associations apparaissent qui dénotent une nouvelle utilisation de l’espace, et marquent aussi les contraintes spatiales de la civilisation urbaine naissante en même temps que la transformation des activités économiques.

C – Au III^e^ millénaire: naissance des édifices monumentaux à architecture complexe (Fig. 3)

Dans les deux premiers tiers du III^e^ millénaire (Dyn. arch. et Agadé), apparaissent, en même temps, un nouveau modèle de maison et des *monuments d’architecture complexe*, caractéristique nouvelle de la sphère du pouvoir trouvant place dans le nouveau milieu urbain: une dizaine d’édifices réunis indistinctement sous l’appellation de « palais » à Uruk, Mari (quatre phases), Kish (deux édifices), Brak, Eridu, Ishnun (deux phases), Khafadjé (?).[13]

1 – Principaux sites:

tous les édifices de cette série sont incomplets; ils sont également répartis entre le Nord, le Sud et le centre de la Mésopotamie.

Uruk: le *Stampflehmgebäude*, quoique partiellement retrouvé, est sans doute le plus ancien bâtiment complexe attesté avec les traits caractéristiques suivants:

association de plusieurs blocs autonomes;
séparation des blocs par des couloirs de circulation et d’éclairage;
présence d’escaliers pour rejoindre le niveau supérieur;
utilisation de salles étroites et allongées (parallèles), certainement comme magasins au rez-de-chaussée et pour supporter une grande salle à l’étage.

Mari: un monument majestueux appelé palais par son inventeur apparaît plutôt comme un « temple manufacture » (v. plus loin); la fouille a établi l’existence de quatre phases de reconstruction dénommées, de la plus ancienne à la plus récente, PP3, PP2, PP1, PP0 ou P-3, etc.[14]

Kish A: les deux unités subsistantes, dont les façades sont organisées devant un espace à ciel ouvert, sont de taille différente et sans doute pas strictement contemporaines; elles montrent clairement l’existence d’un étage, équipé de grandes salles bien assises sur l’infrastructure du rez-de-chaussée; la colonnade de façade, l’emplacement des escaliers et le grand portail exaltent la majesté de cet édifice où l’on ne peut définir aucune salle du trône.

Kish PCB: partiellement retrouvé et de conception plus confuse que le palais A, on y retrouve les mêmes blocs séparés par des couloirs et l’existence assurée d’un étage; aucun signe régalien ne s’impose.

Tell Brak: le **palais de Naram Sin**, partiellement retrouvé, a été mal restitué dans son plan originel par les fouilleurs; la conception planimétrique fait appel à des concepts nouveaux (organisation par rapport à une grande cour centrale).

Eridu: deux unités identiques et juxtaposées constituent seulement une partie d’un édifice d’une conception curieuse, sans signe régalien évident, mais doté d’un étage.[15]

Ishnun - palais nord: deux édifices superposés de taille différente, pourvus d’un étage mais sans caractéristique royale, apparaissent plutôt comme des centres manufacturiers.

12 Margueron 2006.
13 Margueron 1982.
14 Margueron 2004; 2014a + b.
15 Margueron 1983.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

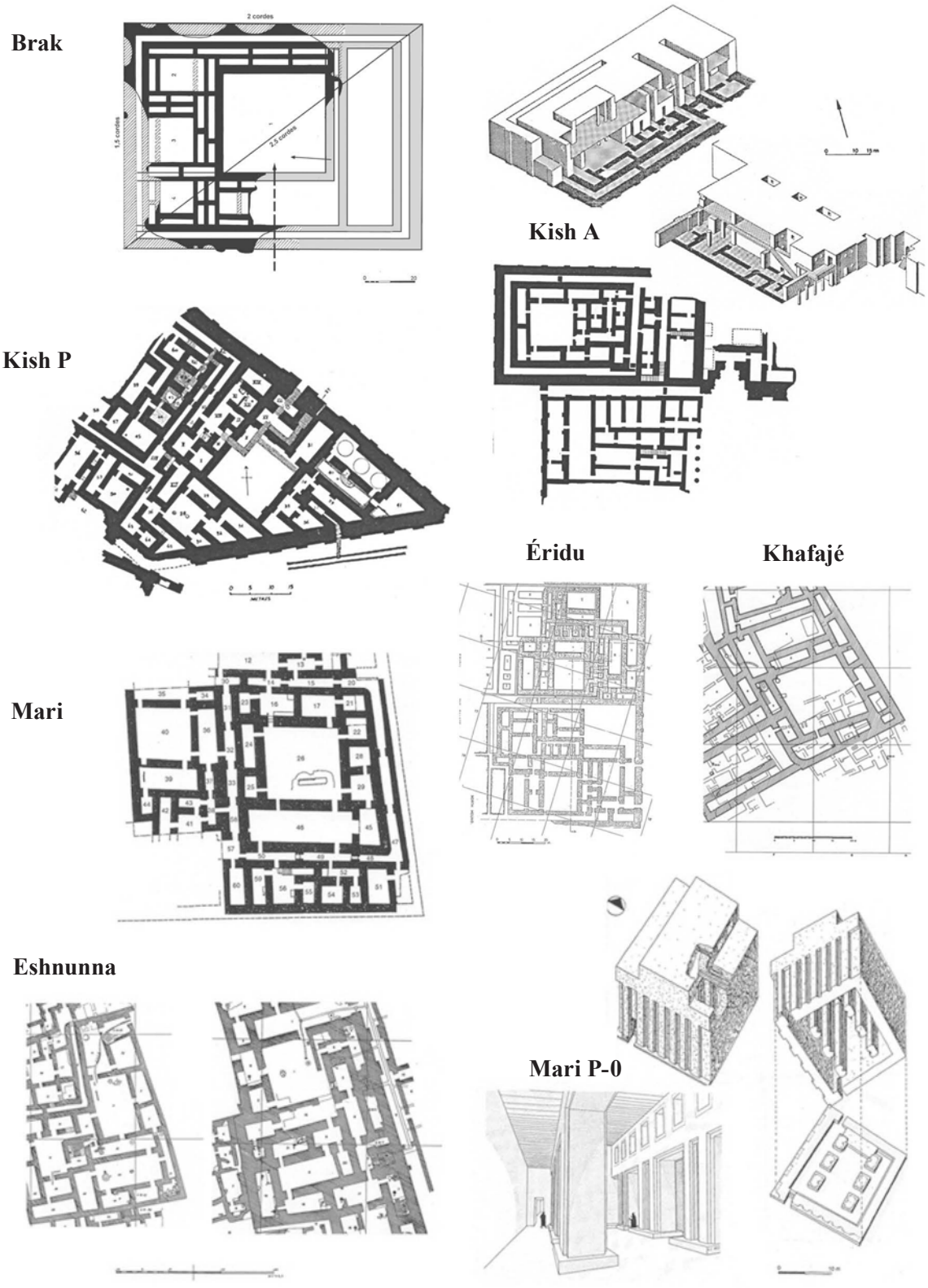


Fig. 3 Monuments d'architecture complexe de l'époque des dynasties archaïques (Margueron 2007, pl. 4)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

2 – Caractéristiques principales de l’époque des Dynasties archaïque et d’Agadé

Toutes les caractéristiques architecturales des monuments complexes marquent la disparition de la formule du plan tripartite (comme unité structurale autonome et autosuffisante) et sont nouvelles par rapport à la pratique de l’époque d’Uruk; elles dénotent une ingéniosité remarquable des architectes, qui ont cherché à résoudre les problèmes d’aménagement d’une architecture à deux niveaux dans laquelle l’éclairage et la sécurité contre les eaux soient assurées. Le rez-de-chaussée est dépourvu de salles pouvant représenter une salle du trône; cependant d’abondants indices montrent que de telles salles, qui auraient pu servir de salles du trône, ont existé à l’étage.

Parmi quelques principes nouveaux mis en œuvre, retenons:

- des unités autonomes juxtaposées, réunies par des couloirs qui servent aussi à éclairer l’intérieur des blocs;
- la généralisation de l’unité à espace central couvert;
- les portées directes: avec une expérience réussie à 16 m à Mari, Kish P, Kish A;
- le développement de l’édifice sur deux niveaux avec espace central potentiellement entresolé.

D – L’époque de la III^e^ dynastie d’Ur et des dynasties amorites: un bâtiment complexe organiquement lié à une salle du trône

Avec la fin du III^e^ millénaire, une étape nouvelle dans les édifices complexes est franchie avec, en particulier, l’apparition d’une unité que l’on peut en toute certitude appeler salle du trône; elle assure définitivement la notion de palais pour toute une série de bâtiments. Cette salle structure le bâtiment royal selon diverses modalités: positionnement central ou au contraire latéral.[16]

1 – Principaux sites (Fig. 4):

ils sont également répartis entre le Nord et le Sud, mais peu représentés au centre de la Mésopotamie. Plusieurs sont complets, ce qui permet d’évaluer les parties manquantes de ceux qui ne le sont pas.

Ur: lacunaire; une analyse stricte permet de retrouver des unités identiques à celles des autres palais, parmi lesquelles le groupe de la salle du trône.

Assur: seul le tracé des fondations a été mis au jour, mais il dénote une organisation très géométrique du plan où l’on peut reconnaître des unités définissables dans les édifices dont les superstructures ont été partiellement conservées.

Mari, Grand Palais Royal: une conservation exceptionnelle, sauf à son angle SO, en a fait l’édifice de référence pour toute l’architecture et les palais de cette époque, malgré une durée supérieure à deux siècles et de nombreuses transformations au cours de son existence.[17]

Mari, Petit Palais Oriental: palais qui contient sous la salle du trône la tombe royale, mais qui a hébergé la famille royale à l’occasion.

Larsa: partiellement dégagé, on y retrouve le bloc officiel habituel; édifié par Nur Adad, il n’a jamais été achevé.

Uruk: palais construit par Sinkashid dont le plan, complet, est fondé sur le principe de la séparation et de la juxtaposition du bloc officiel et des autres unités composant l’édifice royal.

Eshnunna, le palais des rois: le bloc officiel, étroitement associé à un temple voué à Shu Sin (lu anciennement Gimil Sin), roi d’Ur, forme l’essentiel du bâtiment et laisse bien peu de place pour les unités nécessaires à la vie quotidienne et aux fonctions administratives. Il a subi de nombreuses modifications.

Eshnunna, **édifice sud**: reproduit dans ses traits globaux le plan du « palais des rois » mais, à cause sans doute de l’érosion, seules les fondations ont été repérées.

Tuttul: édifice modeste dont le plan est réduit pratiquement au seul bloc officiel.

2 – Caractéristiques principales de l’époque d’Ur III et des royaumes amorites

- le groupe officiel avec la salle du trône: cœur du palais;
- les différents secteurs: les appartements du roi, les appartements de la reine et des femmes, les cuisines du roi, l’administration, les réserves économiques, les logements des serviteurs du roi et de la reine, les remises à chars et chariots, le quartier de l’intendant du palais, le temple et les chapelles du palais;
- organisation centrée (Mari, Assur…) ou juxtaposée (Uruk, Tell Asmar…) des unités.

E – Fin de l’âge du Bronze mésopotamien (seconde moitié du II^e^ millénaire: la salle hypostyle)

1 – Principaux sites (Fig. 5):

peu d’exemples connus, période difficile à estimer.[18]

Palais de Nuzi: avatar de l’époque des royaumes amorites en moins bien structuré: le secteur officiel est encore,

16 Margueron 1982; 2007.

17 Margueron 1982; 1987; 1990a; 2004.

18 Margueron 1982; 2001.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

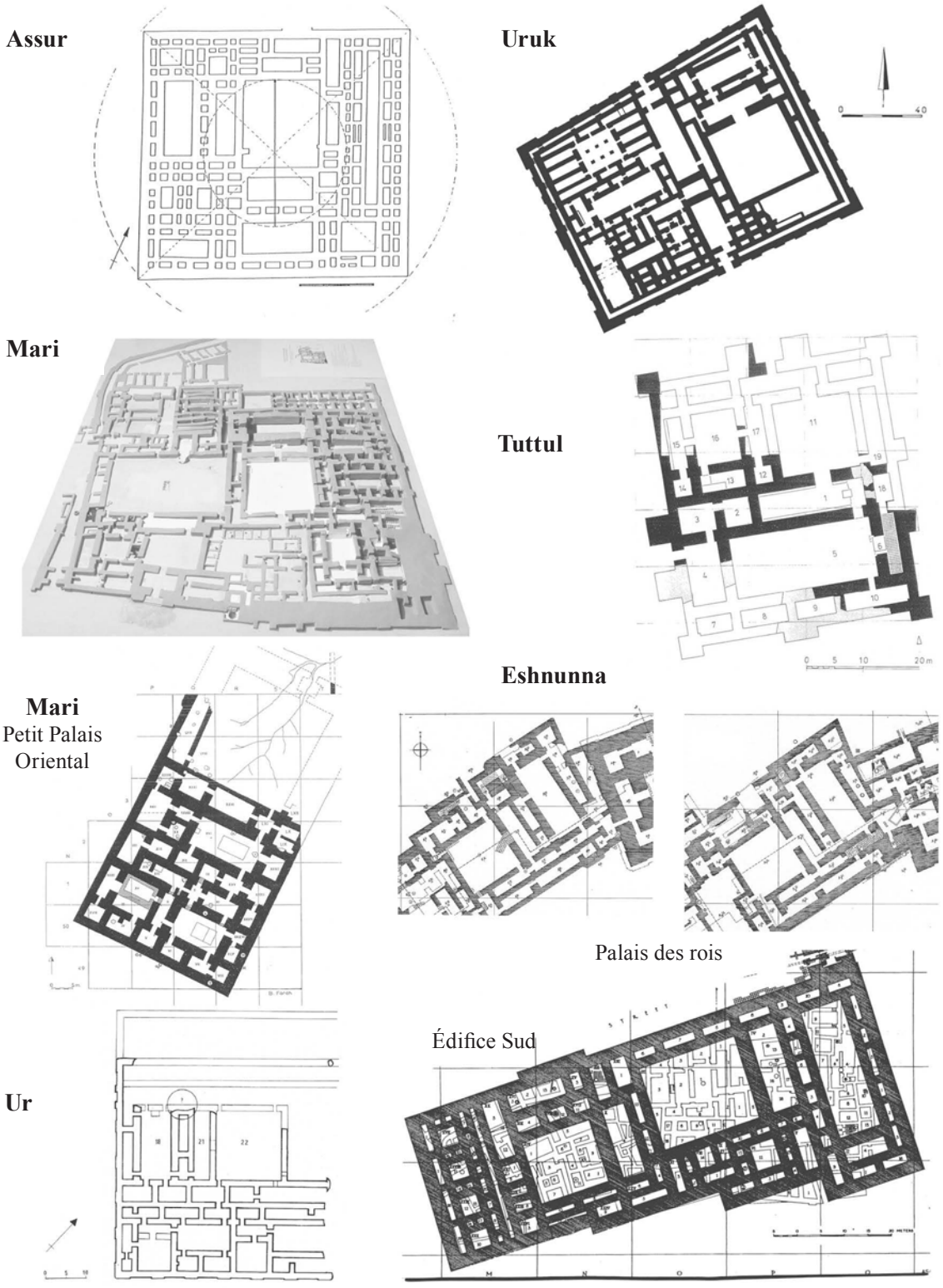


Fig. 4 Palais de l'époque des dynasties amorites (Margueron 2007; 1984; 1982; 2004; Frankfort et al. 1940, Margueron 2007)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

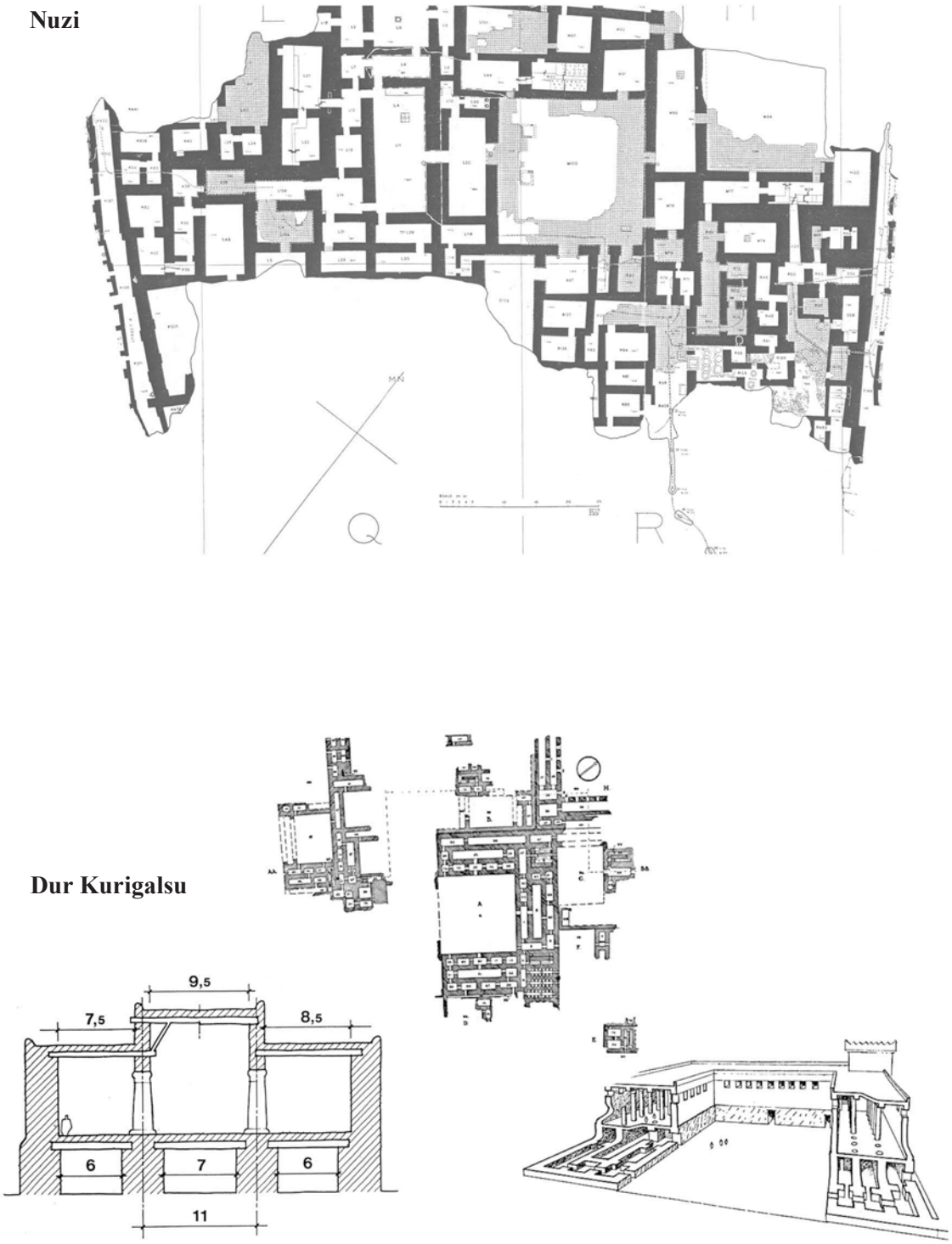


Fig. 5 Le palais de Nuzi (Starr 1937) et le palais cassite de Dur Kurigalsu avec ses salles hypostyles à l’étage (Margueron 2001; 2007)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

semble-t-il, dans la tradition amorite; pour le reste du palais, l'agencement des unités est plutôt anarchique.

Palais de Dur Kurigalsu: le plus monumental des palais du II^e^ millénaire, un type nouveau avec de grandes salles hypostyles à l'étage; groupement d'unités de taille variée, mais toujours construites selon le même principe: des bâtiments à division tripartite organisés dans le sens de la longueur, disposés autour d'une grande cour orthogonale; trop d'éléments du plan sont mal reliés, ce qui rend l'organisation d'ensemble et les fonctions des bâtiments peu explicites.

2 – Caractéristiques principales
- La salle hypostyle, quoiqu'existant antérieurement en Mésopotamie, s'installe comme le principe directeur de l'architecture royale; l'usage en devient systématique; il s'agit sans doute d'une formule extérieure à la Mésopotamie (Iran? Anatolie?), peut-être introduite, dans son systématisme, par les Cassites;
- aucune fonction ne peut être proposée pour ces salles hypostyles qui sont des espaces modulables à volonté dans leur longueur;
- à Nuzi: une salle du trône vraisemblable sur le modèle amorite, même si la place du trône n'est pas clairement indiquée.

F – L'âge du Bronze syrien: diversité des formules
En fait, pas de formule spécifiquement syrienne, mais une grande ingéniosité accompagnée d'une grande diversité de formules.[19]

1 – Principaux sites proprement syriens[20] (III^e^ et II^e^ millénaires) (Fig. 6)
Ebla: très incomplet, mais des traits nouveaux avec une grande cour intérieure oblongue, un portique devant un escalier qui escalade la pente du tell pour rejoindre l'étage supérieur, un autre portique devant une base du trône au milieu du petit côté de la cour.

Alalakh VII: un curieux édifice du XVIII^e^ siècle tout en longueur (plus de 75 m sur 25 m) formé au moins de trois unités successives mais de structure différente, pourvu d'un étage.

Qatna: la fouille, reprise récemment, de cet édifice du Bronze Récent met l'accent sur ses caractères très originaux avec la découverte d'une tombe royale particulièrement riche, et de l'affinité planimétriques avec les palais amorites.[21]

Alalakh IV: une nouvelle formule, au Bronze Récent, s'appuie sur le parti du *Hilani* pour une unité, mais double la superficie grâce à une seconde unité et à des dépendances.

Emar: un bâtiment de type *Hilani* sur le promontoire NO de la cité (peut-être le plus ancien de la série) dominait la vallée de l'Euphrate.[22]

Ugarit: dans son état final, le palais d'Ugarit est le produit d'une extension par étapes qui s'étale certainement sur plusieurs siècles: on retrouve, à l'intérieur du plan final, l'unité originelle, la première étape qui appartient au même type que le palais de Niqmépa d'Alalakh IV.[23]

2 – Caractéristiques principales
- Pas de formule commune pour l'ensemble de la Syrie, mais au contraire des solutions très différentes d'un édifice à l'autre: doit-on parler de traditions locales ou d'influences diverses?
- Des édifices d'assez petite taille sauf à Ebla (malgré son état très lacunaire) et à Ugarit, toujours pourvus d'un étage au moins, peut-être plusieurs;
- une organisation qui fait souvent appel au mode de la juxtaposition d'unités pas toujours identiques;
- une « cour du trône » pourrait exister à Ebla, mais à Ugarit le palais s'est doté assez tardivement d'une salle du trône en relation avec l'entrée; dans les autres palais, rien de spécifique n'apparaît sur cette question.

G – Première moitié du I^er^ millénaire:
du fait de l'existence de l'empire, une formule assyrienne dominante caractérise les débuts de l'âge du fer; on ne mentionnera ici que les édifices suffisamment dégagés pour permettre une étude assez précise; on ne prendra pas non plus en considération, malgré des similitudes morphologiques, les grandes résidences princières installées au pied du Palais royal de Khorsabad.[24]

1 – Principaux sites (Fig. 7)
Le palais NO de Kalhu: incomplètement retrouvé, il est composé d'au moins deux unités (la partie publique et la partie privée), réunies par la salle du trône.

Kalhu, Fort Salmanasar: ouvrage militaire associé au mur de la cité; formé de quatre grandes unités étroitement associées; la présence d'une réelle salle du trône a conduit à s'interroger sur une fonction palatiale éventuelle.

Le palais SO de Ninive: incomplètement défini par la fouille, on y reconnaît un savant assemblage de plusieurs unités autour d'une cour carrée avec de

19 Margueron 1985b.
20 En laissant de côté ceux qui sont plutôt dans la sphère de l'Anatolie, comme Tilmen Hüyük.
21 Cf. Pfälzner dans ce tome.
22 Margueron 1979a.
23 Margueron 1995c.
24 Margueron 1994; 1995a + b; 2001; 2005.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

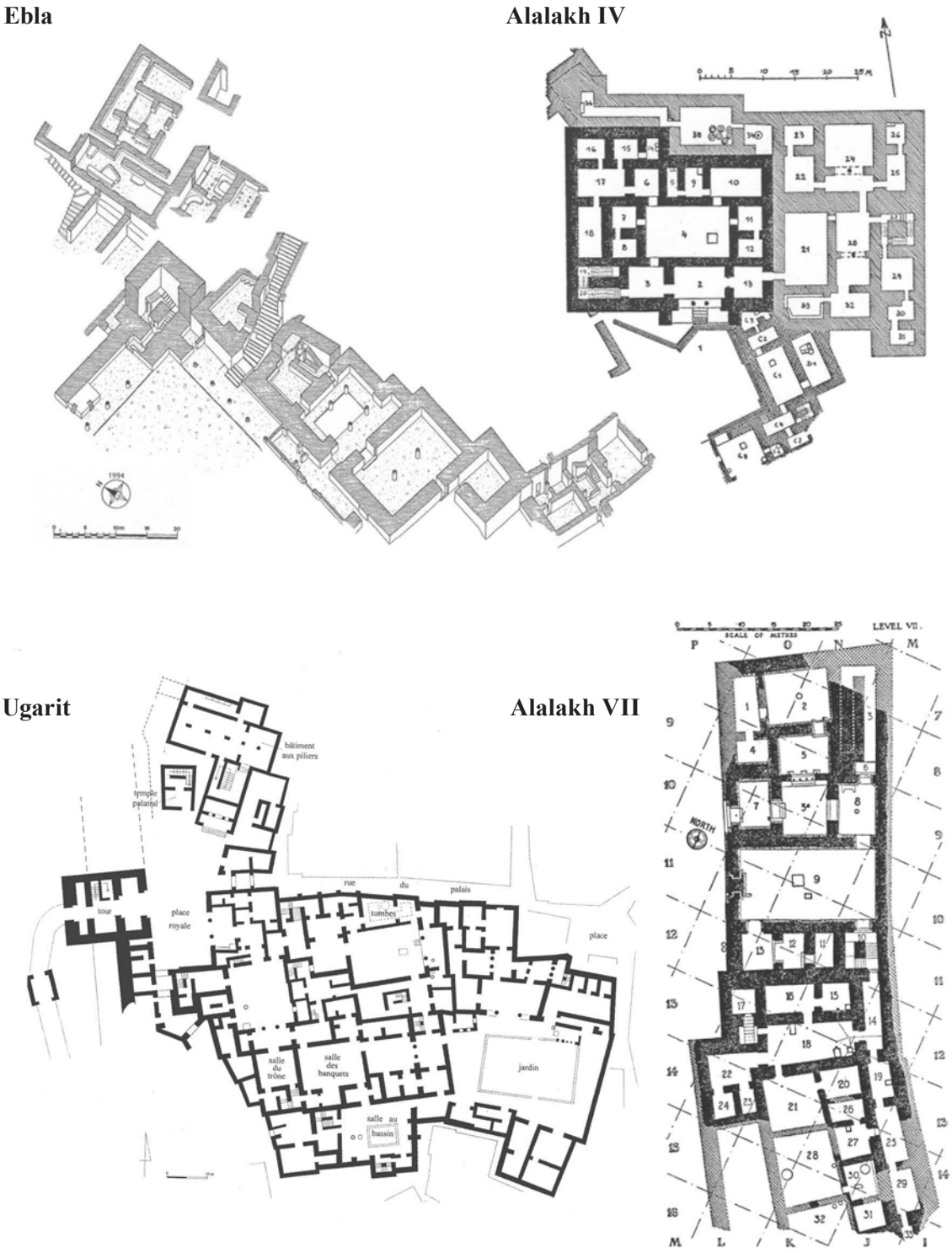


Fig. 6 Palais syriens: IIIe et IIe millénaires (Margueron 2007, pl. 12)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

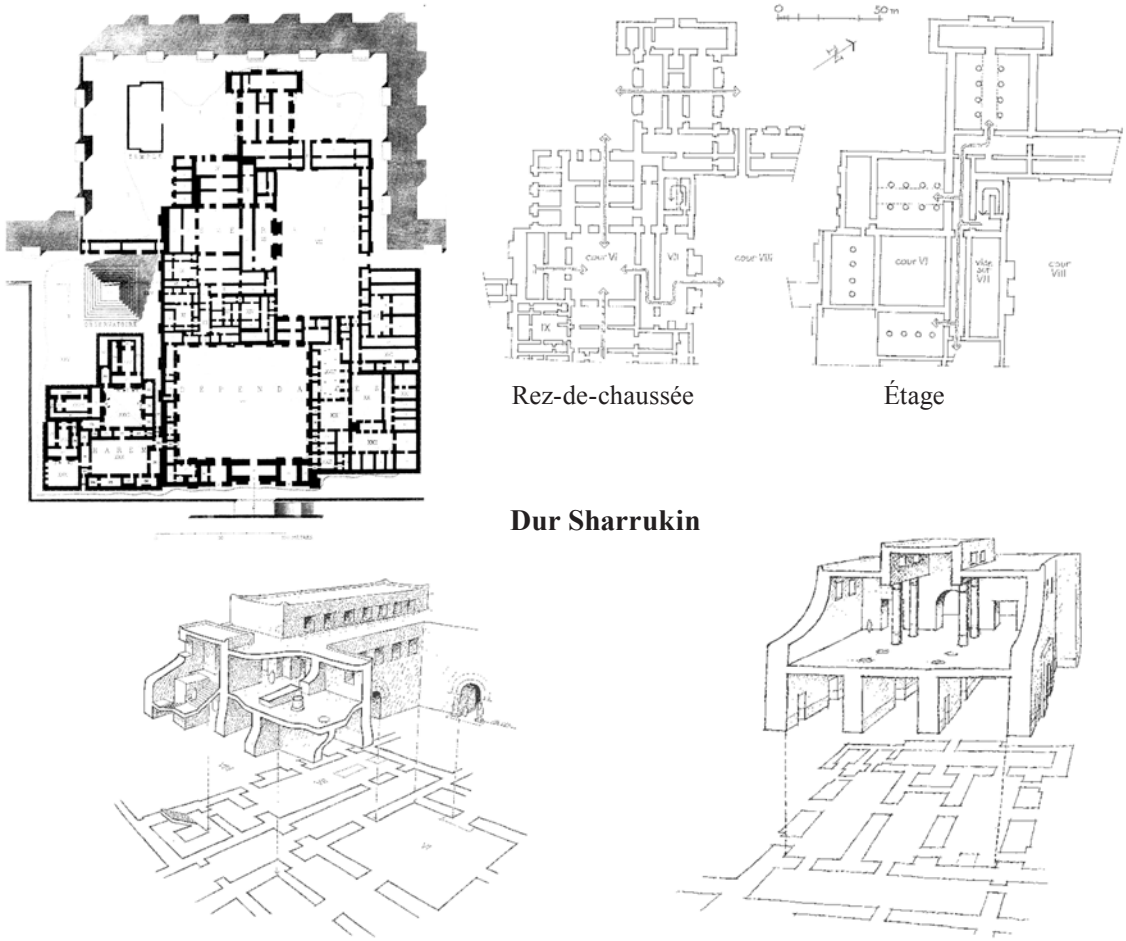


Fig. 7 Palais assyriens, première moitié du I^er millénaire (Place et Thomas 1867–1870; Margueron 2005b)

grandes salles oblongues; l'économie générale est assez difficile à cerner.

Dur Sharrukin, le palais royal: le premier palais mésopotamien fouillé au milieu du XIX^e siècle; une simplification du relevé a conduit à redresser tous les angles de l'édifice et à rendre celui-ci inexact; l'édifice est juché sur une haute terrasse, un *babanu* de très grande taille en deux unités donne sur la façade de la salle du trône qui introduit le *bîtanu;* la partie SO de la terrasse abrite un groupe de trois temples et une ziggurat.

Dur Sharrukin, le palais F: une seconde résidence royale associée au flanc SO du rempart de la cité, incomplètement dégagée.

Til Barsip: petit palais provincial incomplet, une salle du trône incomplète séparant un *bababu* (en deux parties) et le *bîtanu*.

Arslan Tash/Hadatu: petit palais provincial comprenant une salle du trône entre le *bababu* et le *bîtanu*.

2 – Caractéristiques principales

- Les bases architecturales sont faites pour soutenir de grandes salles hypostyles à l'étage;
- la division de la demeure royale entre une partie publique (*babanu*) où se trouve l'administration, et une partie privée (*bîtanu*) où réside le roi, séparées par la salle du trône qui articule l'ensemble,[25] est une règle quasiment générale.

H – Empire babylonien[26]

une formule « babylonienne » semble caractériser les palais de l'empire néo-babylonien, pourtant d'assez courte durée (VI^e siècle): seule Babylone a donné des palais, car l'édifice connu à Ur sous le nom de palais de Bel Shalti Nannar n'est pas un palais royal, mais celui d'une prêtresse du dieu Sin.

25 Cf. Kertai dans ce tome.
26 Margueron 2013.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

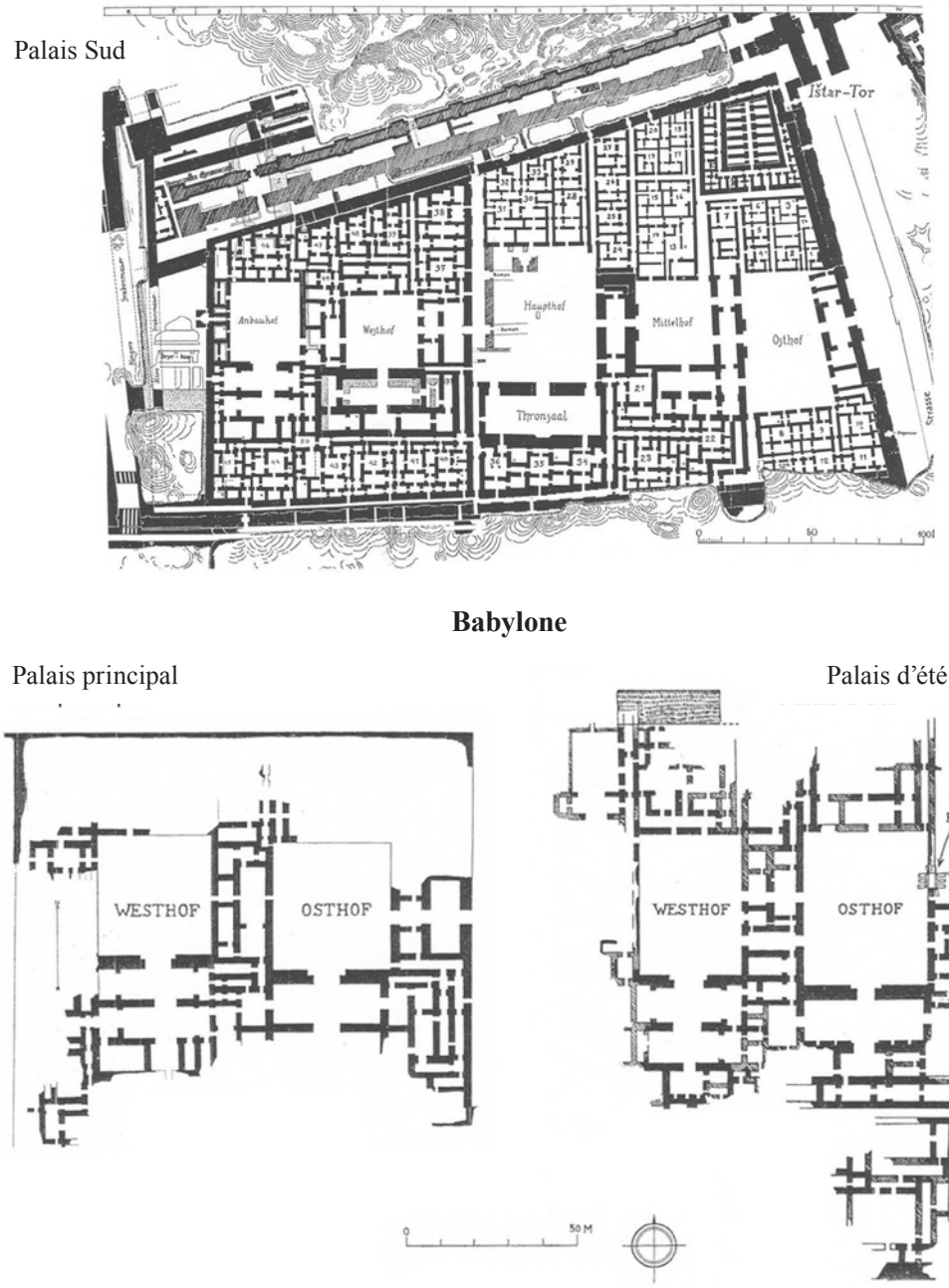


Fig. 8 Les palais de Babylone (Koldewey 1990; Margueron 2007, pl. 11)

1 – Principal site (Fig. 8)
Babylone, le palais Sud:
le plus imposant, installé contre l’enceinte nord de la ville et entre la voie processionnelle à l’est et le *Vorwerk im Fluss* à l’ouest en bordure de l’Euphrate; sur plan trapézoïdal (env. 130 et 180 m N-S et plus de 300 m E-O), cinq unités se succèdent d’E en O, de plan pratiquement identique (un espace central bordé au N de petits appartements et au S d’une grande salle associée à de petites dépendances). Dans l’angle NE une unité particulière a été identifiée, mais de façon erronée, avec les « jardins suspendus »; l’unité centrale est interprétée comme étant celle de la salle du trône.

Babylone, le palais septentrional:
au nord de la ligne des remparts, il est composé de deux grandes unités organisées selon le même principe que dans le palais Sud.

Babylone, le palais d’été:
sur le tell Babil au N de Babylone, il est formé aussi d’au moins deux unités successives.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

2 – Caractéristiques principales

- Hormis le principe apparent de la juxtaposition d'unités de structure assez voisine, il est très difficile d'intégrer cette série de bâtiments dans l'architecture mésopotamienne, car aucun des principes habituels d'organisation des unités et des circulations ne s'y retrouve;
- le plan publié du palais Sud ne met pas en évidence l'existence d'une ligne de rupture N-S dans les altitudes entre la troisième et la quatrième unité; par conséquent, en se fiant au nivellement on peut se demander s'il n'y a pas deux niveaux d'occupation superposés ou si le palais final n'était pas constitué seulement par trois unités.
- Unité de base formée
  - d'une cour presque carrée;
  - d'une salle barlongue;
  - de dépendances sur le côté opposé;
  - d'une couronne de pièces allongées.

Cette unité élémentaire avec ses appartements, de nature différente au N et au S d'une grande cour centrale, répond à un principe de juxtaposition cumulatif qui est contraire à toutes les règles de l'architecture palatiale mésopotamienne.

III – Quelques problèmes spécifiques touchant aux palais

Un palais est *un bâtiment qui remplit une fonction spécifique:* les problèmes qui le concernent sont donc:

- d'une part de l'ordre de l'architecture,
- d'autre part de celui de l'expression du pouvoir royal dans ce bâtiment.

Ici je veux seulement évoquer ces questions, sans les traiter dans le détail lorsque des réponses ont déjà été apportées ailleurs, et à la seule fin de souligner ce qui reste encore à rechercher concernant cette catégorie d'édifices.

Comme je l'ai déjà signalé au début de ce *status questionis,* c'est parce que l'étage a toujours disparu que la situation exacte a été mal estimée. Car il existe toujours un rapport architectural précis entre le rez-de-chaussée et l'étage, rapport que, en général, l'archéologue ne cherche pas à définir du fait de la disparition de cet étage. Par exemple, on observe toujours l'existence au sol d'unités formées d'une batterie de salles parallèles très étroites et allongées: on l'interprète, à juste titre, comme remplissant une fonction économique de type « réserves ». Mais on ne s'interroge pas sur la situation structurale que ce dispositif de rez-de-chaussée induit pour l'étage: en particulier sur le fait que les très faibles portées de chaque pièce permettent d'établir, au niveau supérieur, le sol d'une grande salle capable de contenir un grand nombre de personnes, c'est-à-dire éventuellement une vaste salle de réception: une fois établie cette relation, induite par le jeu des forces, c'est une compréhension plus précise de l'ensemble du bâtiment que nous pouvons avoir. C'est une voie à suivre systématiquement.

A – Problèmes d'architecture: structure et fonctionnement

Structure et fonctionnement sont deux questions fondamentales si l'on veut comprendre les caractéristiques du palais repéré. La présence de la famille royale, d'une administration qui doit assurer la gestion du pays, d'un centre économique – toutes fonctions essentielles pour la vie du palais, auxquelles s'allie la recherche d'une certaine majesté, naturelle dans un bâtiment royal – conduisent vers une monumentalité qui doit s'accompagner d'une rationalisation de l'organisation de l'espace construit.

Il faut garder présent à l'esprit que deux questions technologiques dominent les solutions de pérennité d'un grand édifice réalisé en terre:

- renforcement des lignes structurales, donc épaississement des murs, avec une assise suffisante pour recevoir et asseoir sans risque de déformation ou de glissement les charges descendantes; il faut savoir que la charge au sol d'un monument comme le temple Calcaire d'Uruk est de quelque 86.000 t, ce qui nécessite l'aménagement d'une très dense et très homogène infrastructure si l'on veut éviter les fissurations et les effondrements;
- pour l'aménagement de grandes salles, il faut maîtriser les questions de portée et d'éclairage:
  a – la portée directe de 12 m, avec des poutres venant de la périphérie montagneuse, a été atteinte au milieu du IV^{e} millénaire; elle n'a été dépassée qu'au milieu du III^{e} millénaire, pour atteindre 16 m, grâce à un système de diminution de longueurs sur des supports intermédiaires (Mari Enceinte Sacrée, Kish P…); cette dernière technique est restée une tentative isolée du milieu du III^{e} millénaire;[27]
  b – une autre solution a été la mise en œuvre de salles hypostyles installées à l'étage, systématiquement à partir de la seconde moitié du II^{e} millénaire (palais de Dur Kurigalsu); son utilisation est devenue systématique dans les palais assyriens et babyloniens.[28]

Ce sont de tels aménagements qui ont donné aux palais la monumentalité désirée par les souverains. Il est clair que l'analyse des situations architecturales passe nécessairement par une approche technologique très précise, ainsi que par une analyse métrique très soignée des restes dégagés, suivie d'une étude des possibilités de restitution des parties disparues.[29]

27 Margueron 1993.
28 Margueron 2001; 2005.
29 Margueron 1986b; 2006.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

B – L’évolution des formules palatiales

L’architecture monumentale s’est développée selon des lignes directrices dont on peut comprendre à l’heure actuelle certaines composantes. Une typologie des solutions architecturales successives met en évidence une évolution de la morphologie palatiale dominée par les solutions apportées aux problèmes de circulation et d’éclairage.

1 – Le plan tripartite simple est né avec les débuts de l’époque d’Obeid: dans une pratique architecturale encore très peu différenciée, il représente la première manifestation dans la voie de la monumentalité et une réussite remarquable dans la constitution d’un édifice qui forme une unité structuralement autonome.

2 – Le plan tripartite avec adjonction de dépendances (Habuba Kabira au IV^{e} millénaire) est la première tentative actuellement connue pour sortir du système autobloquant du plan tripartite.

3 – A l’époque des dynasties archaïques (première moitié du III^{e} millénaire), on assiste à la disparition du plan tripartite, sauf pour des salles très particulières, et à l’apparition d’une « architecture complexe » composée d’unités juxtaposées, structuralement chaque fois autonomes, séparées par des couloirs qui assurent les circulations et l’éclairage; des passages transversaux au niveau supérieur permettent de relier entre eux les étages des différentes unités; selon le but poursuivi, l’organisation de chaque unité est fondée sur le principe de l’espace central, ou sur celui de la juxtaposition de petits appartements autonomes permettant de soutenir un étage.

4 – A l’époque des dynasties amorites, le développement de l’architecture complexe donne naissance à un monument dont les différentes unités sont davantage soudées les unes aux autres, avec moins de couloirs de séparation: de nouvelles solutions ont été mises en œuvre pour assurer les communications et l’éclairage; on est en présence d’une planimétrie fondée sur l’association ordonnée d’unités fonctionnelles, organisées et disposées selon un jeu subtil d’articulations intérieures: un exemple est fourni par le lien qui unit, à Mari, l’unité de l’intendant du palais avec les appartements du roi et ceux des femmes. On assiste aussi à une organisation des unités fondamentales (Fig. 9):

a – sectorisation du palais d’Assur: les différentes unités sont organisées très strictement autour du bloc officiel situé en position centrale selon un tracé régulateur;

b – sectorisation du palais de Mari: le roi et son pouvoir (secteur officiel) sont au centre tandis que la Maison du Roi, ses bureaux et les appartements des Femmes sont organisés autour; le temple, les dépendances, les services économiques et le contrôle de l’accès au palais sont, rejetés vers l’est, sont dans un troisième cercle.

c – la sectorisation du palais de Sinkashid à Uruk a été opérée selon un autre principe: la moitié orientale est occupée par le bloc officiel et des bureaux administratifs tandis que la partie occidentale est divisée en trois sous-unités qui abritent les réserves et les locaux d’habitation.

5 – A l’époque kassite (Dur Kurgalsu), l’utilisation systématique de longues salles hypostyles à l’étage tout autour d’une cour orthogonale apparaît à la fois comme une conquête et une régression: conquête parce ce qu’il semble que la salle hypostyle apparaît là, pour la première fois en Mésopotamie, utilisée comme principe premier et moteur de l’ensemble du palais; mais aussi comme une régression puisqu’aucune autre recherche que cette formule unique n’a été engagée pour diversifier les solutions architecturales.

6 – Les palais assyriens ont mis en œuvre une organisation nouvelle: l’édifice royal est divisé en deux parties, l’une, *babanu,* associée à la porte (*bab*) forme la partie publique où se trouvent les bureaux administratifs, l’autre, *bîtanu* liée à la Maison du roi (*bît*) renferme le domaine de la vie privée du roi et des siens, la salle du trône jouant le rôle de trait d’union entre les deux secteurs. Il en découle une sectorisation parfaitement organisée de la terrasse qui supporte les installations religieuses et l’ensemble du palais de Dur Sharrukin où l’on définit:

- la maison du Roi plus ou moins au centre de la terrasse;
- l’ensemble du service public (l’administration);
- le domaine du sacré qui déborde du palais proprement dit.

7 – Le modèle du palais babylonien n’a été retrouvé qu’à Babylone, en trois exemplaires seulement; malgré son caractère monumental, c’est certainement, sur le plan conceptuel, le modèle le moins intéressant de tous ceux fournis par la Mésopotamie, car il se réduit à une seule formule répétitive.

Conclusions: au cours des trois premiers millénaires du développement de l’architecture monumentale spécifique aux palais, les Mésopotamiens ont fait preuve d’une remarquable capacité d’invention de formes et de solutions.

C – Les fonctions palatiales[30]

Une réflexion doit être systématiquement conduite sur les fonctions mises en évidence dans les bâtiments identifiés comme des palais. Comme il n’existe pas d’analyse textuelle ancienne portant sur la constitution des palais, seule la composition des édifices retrouvés par la fouille peut permettre de définir la vocation fonctionnelle des différentes parties, décelable à la fois sur des indices architecturaux et sur des traces et objets

30 Margueron 1979; 1982; 1996; Margueron et Durand 1980.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

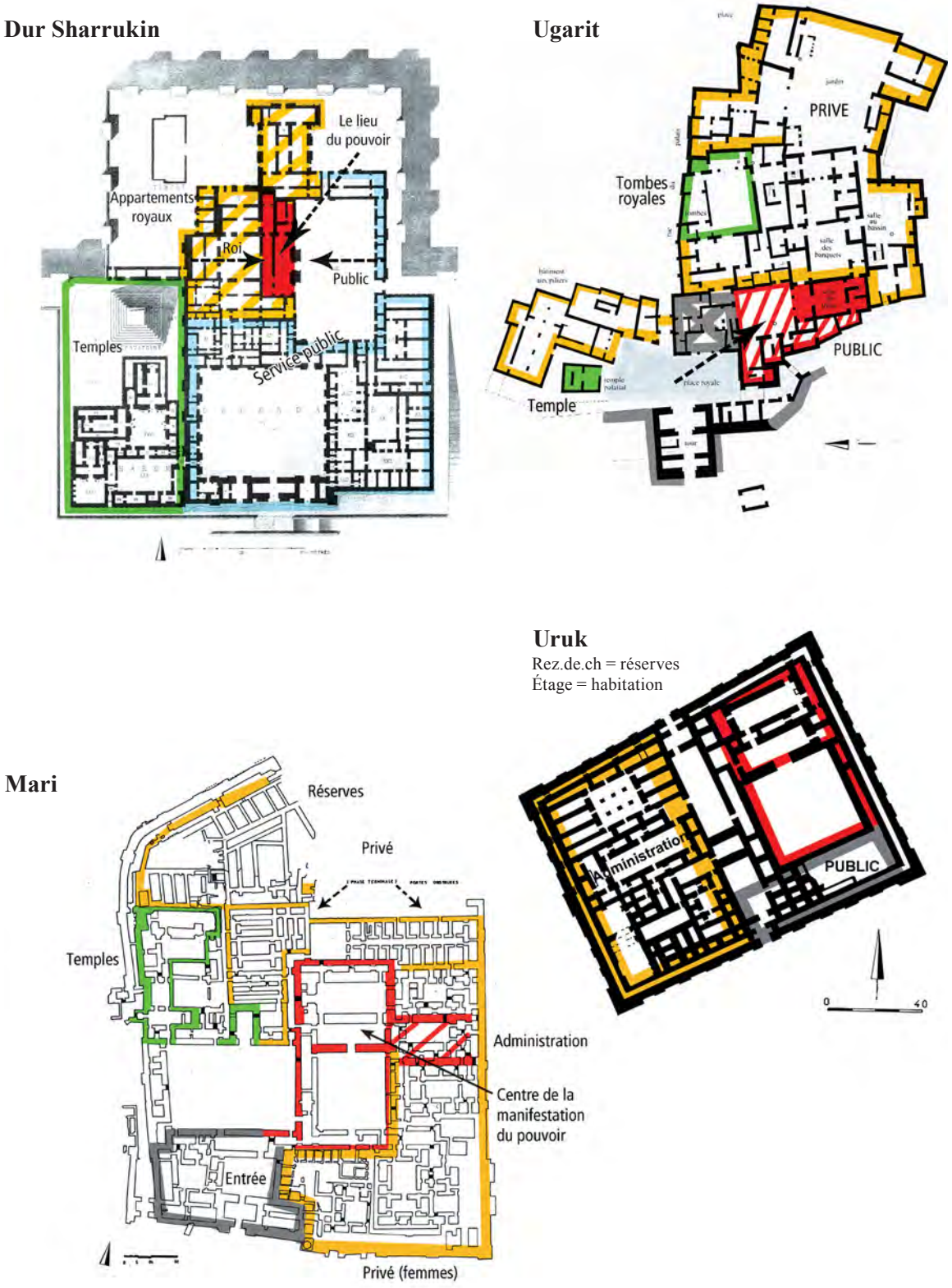


Fig. 9 Sectorisation des palais de Mari, d'Uruk, d'Ugarit et de Khorsabad (© J.-Cl. Margueron, à partir de Parrot 1958; Lenzen 1966; Place et Thomas 1867–1870)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

archéologiques. C’est l’image même du roi et de son pouvoir à un moment précis que l’on doit rechercher, en passant par une stricte analyse du bâtiment qui l’abrite, lui, sa famille, les grands du royaume, les intendants et serviteurs, l’administration; on voit bien l’intérêt qu’il y a à mener de telles analyses qui doivent conduire à préciser l’évolution des fonctions régaliennes au cours de l’histoire de la Mésopotamie.

Ici, un simple inventaire de certaines des fonctions palatiales que l’on peut définir suffit à mettre en évidence leur diversité. Bien entendu, une telle approche ne peut se faire que par une analyse très précise des indices que l’on peut utiliser, par une critique très poussée de la signification exacte de ces indices et par l’évaluation des arguments contraires qui pourraient être avancés, en n’oubliant pas que les indices peuvent être éventuellement faiblement significatifs compte tenu de l’ampleur des parties disparues de l’édifice.

Quelles fonctions ou zones spécialisées peut-on retrouver?[31] On peut penser, en particulier, aux zones suivantes:

- appartements du roi,
- appartements des femmes,
- zones d’agrément (jardins, terrasses…),
- logements des serviteurs du roi et de la reine,
- quartier de l’intendant du palais,
- bureaux et secrétariats,
- zone d’archives,
- cuisines du roi,
- secteur des banquets,
- réserves économiques,[32]
- temples ou chapelles du palais.

Bien entendu, cette enquête doit tenir compte de la présence d’un étage qui peut contenir, en totalité ou partiellement, les zones dévolues à ces activités.

D – La question de la salle du trône[33] (Fig. 10)

On l’a dit, parler de palais, c’est attribuer au roi un édifice spécifique et non pas n’importe quel bâtiment de grande taille; il s’agit donc de savoir si un critère permet de le distinguer des autres édifices retrouvés par les fouilles. Le souverain étant symbolisé particulièrement par son trône, identifier une salle du trône revient à reconnaître un édifice royal, tout en sachant que d’autres fonctions peuvent aussi faire usage d’une salle du trône: le critère est donc indicatif mais pas absolu, et il conviendra de rechercher si d’autres critères ne seront pas nécessaires.

Un constat

De l’époque d’Uruk à la fin des dynasties Archaïques, les premiers monuments des débuts de l’époque urbaine, connus il est vrai en assez petit nombre, n’ont donné au rez-de-chaussée aucune salle identifiable avec une salle du trône; à l’étage, évidemment disparu, de nombreux indices signalent que de grandes salles ont pu exister: rien ne prouve qu’il puisse s’agir de salles du trône, mais la présence d’un escalier majestueux (par exemple Kish A) ou de tracés régulateurs attestant la qualité du monument conduisent à souligner la noblesse de l’étage, susceptible d’abriter de grandes salles: mais s’agit-il de salles de réception, de réunions, de festins, de cérémonies ou de rites, royaux ou non, spécifiques? Comment le savoir?

L’apparition de la salle du trône

C’est à Mari dans le Temple-manufacture du niveau P-0 que l’on trouve sans doute la première salle du trône assurée: belle salle à piliers installée au rez-de-chaussée, avec deux entrées, une pour les hôtes et une pour le roi, un socle bas pour poser le trône. C’est Naram Sin qui semble avoir fait construire cette salle et c’est lui aussi qui apparaît avec les signes de la divinisation (la tiare à cornes) sur la fameuse stèle où il gravit la montagne: ce n’est certainement pas une rencontre fortuite.

L’époque des royaumes amorites

Dans tous les palais, à l’extrémité d’un bloc officiel composé d’une grande cour rectangulaire qui donne accès à un vestibule (*papahum*) se trouve une salle monumentale pourvue d’une base de trône qui la rend parfaitement identifiable. Ce bloc officiel apparaît selon la même formule dans tous les palais mésopotamiens de cette époque: il s’agit en réalité d’un temple du roi divinisé qui reproduit le Lieu Très Saint d’un sanctuaire avec le siège du dieu et l’emplacement de la table d’offrande: le signe de reconnaissance d’un palais est maintenant en place. Il faut souligner que la salle du trône se trouve au contact du sol tout comme le Lieu Très Saint d’un temple. Ceci permet de penser que la salle du trône ne pouvait pas se trouver à l’étage, et que son apparition à la fin du III^{e} millénaire est directement liée à la divinisation du roi, la sacralisation du lieu de culte se faisant par la terre.

La salle du Trône des palais assyriens

Avec l’époque assyrienne, un autre concept préside à la mise en place d’une salle de trône très allongée qui sépare le *bitanu* du *babanu*. Il ne s’agit plus d’un temple du roi divinisé comme à l’époque amorite, mais de la « porte d’apparition » de l’empereur devant sa résidence privée;[34] c’est le lieu où il se présente à ses sujets dans des circonstances exceptionnelles et dans toute sa splendeur. Toute l’organisation du palais insiste sur cette mise en scène.

31 Margueron 1982; 2004.
32 Margueron 1979b; 1996; 2005.
33 Margueron 2007; Margueron *et al*. 1990.
34 Cf. Kertai dans ce tome.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

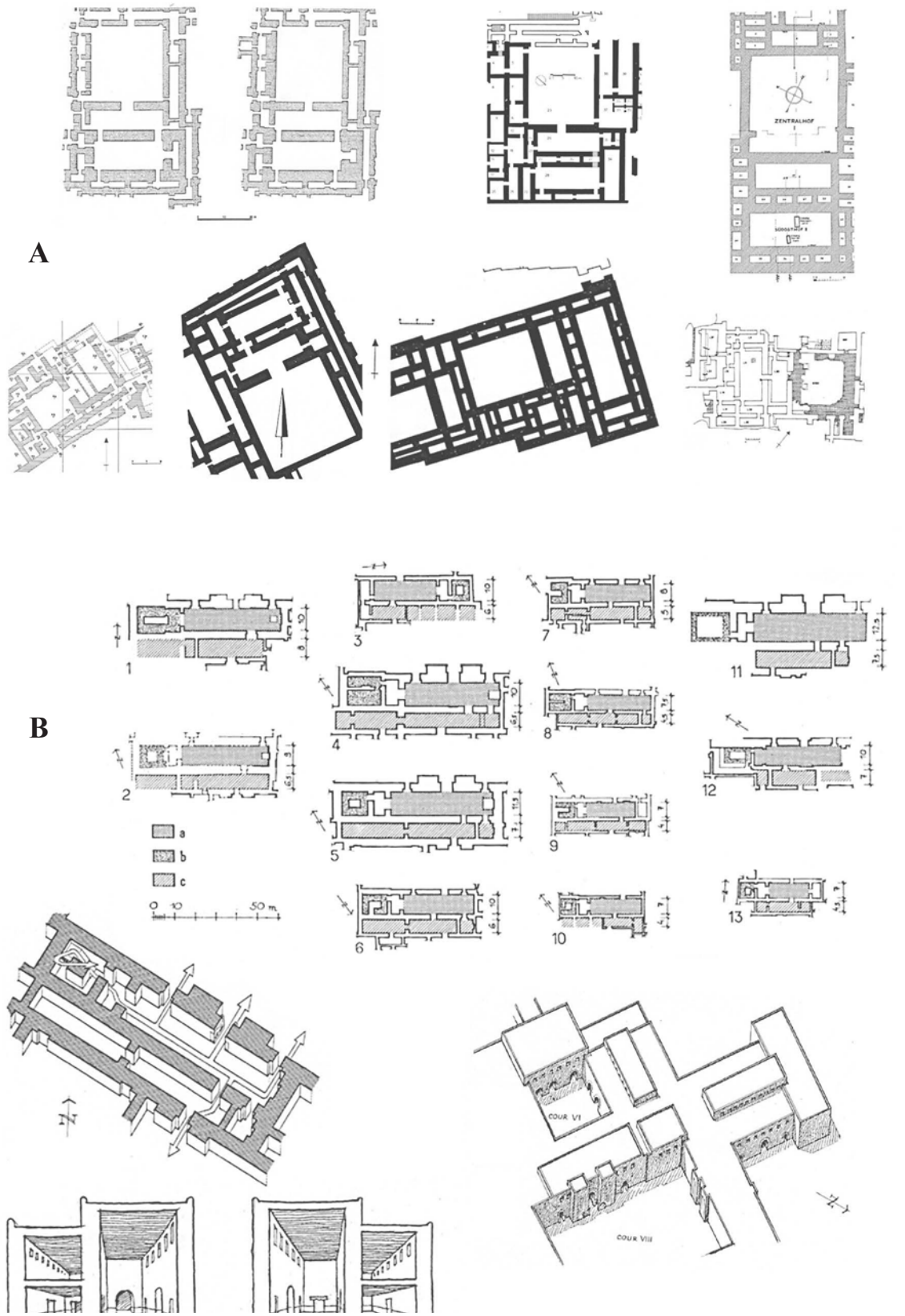


Fig. 10 Les salles du trône (pour rappel: la première salle du trône (?): époque d'Agadé à Mari P-0 début du 3e tiers du IIIe millénaire, cf. Fig. 3). A – les salles du trône des palais amorites (début IIe millénaire), B – les salles du trône des palais assyriens (1ère moitié du Ier millénaire) (Margueron 2007, pl. 7 et 10).

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Conclusion

Si l’on commence à entrevoir l’évolution de la morphologie et de la signification de la salle du trône, il reste encore beaucoup à explorer pour comprendre, par exemple, comment le premier millénaire de l’histoire des palais dans les premières villes n’a pas, apparemment, magnifié la personne royale, pourquoi l’empire babylonien a donné une forme totalement irrationnelle à la salle du trône – à moins que l’identification qui en a été faite dans le Palais Sud ne soit complètement erronée.

E – Le problème de l’eau: approvisionnement et élimination

Une question importante qui, à ma connaissance, n’a jamais été réellement explorée, ni même définie, concerne la relation existant entre un palais et l’eau. Ce sont les aspects monumentaux des bâtiments palatiaux qui imposent de s’interroger sur une affaire qui touche à la vie quotidienne et qu’il faut aborder selon trois approches différentes, mais complémentaires:

- la protection contre la pluie et son évacuation sont des impératifs absolus si l’on ne veut pas que le palais, construit en briques de terre crues, s’effondre scié à la base de ses murs par de l’eau stagnante;
- l’approvisionnement quotidien en eau pour assurer les besoins d’une population de plusieurs centaines, voire d’un ou deux milliers de personnes, réunies sous le même toit, est un autre impératif absolu pour assurer la boisson et la cuisson de la nourriture, le nettoyage et les soins d’hygiène;
- l’évacuation des eaux usées, tout particulièrement celles des bains et toilettes, est un troisième impératif absolu pour éviter la propagation des maladies et des épidémies.

Seul le palais de Mari[35] a fourni à ce jour quelques éléments de réponse. On sait que l’eau de pluie récupérée sur les terrasses était dirigée par des conduites vers des réservoirs de stockage souterrains (*iggum*) et réservée pour le roi en raison de sa pureté: trois d’entre eux ont été repérés. On sait aussi que les besoins quotidiens du palais était assurés par un service de porteuses d’eau qui remplissaient à longueur de journée un grand réservoir de 25 m^3 situé au milieu de la cour 131 à partir de l’eau puisée dans le canal qui traversait la ville: de ce point central partaient d’autres porteuses qui distribuaient l’eau dans des cuves situées en tête des différents appartements, parfois à l’intérieur de ceux-ci, dans les salles d’eau. Enfin l’évacuation des eaux vannes était assurée par des puisards verticaux qui allaient rejoindre la nappe phréatique.

Si l’on comprend le système mis en œuvre dans le palais de Mari, on ignore tout de ce qui se passe dans les autres: il serait temps d’engager des recherches dans ce sens pour évaluer jusqu’à quel point on peut généraliser le niveau de la pratique et des connaissances établis à partir de l’un des palais amorites au XVIII[e] siècle. C’est toute la question de la maîtrise de l’eau en milieu urbain et de son évolution qui est en jeu.

F – Édifices monumentaux qui ne sont pas des résidences royales

Les fouilles ont parfois mis au jour de grands bâtiments définis comme palais par leurs inventeurs, et dont la fonction n’a pratiquement pas été critiquée. Or, lorsqu’une analyse sérieuse et précise des ruines est conduite, il arrive qu’on ne voie plus ce qui permet d’y reconnaître un palais, c’est-à-dire la demeure du roi, le bâtiment étant d’une tout autre nature. Il faut alors admettre qu’une simplification outrancière, source de confusion, fausse l’identification des caractéristiques de la civilisation mésopotamienne.

Un exemple significatif est donné par le grand monument de la Ville II de Mari, connu comme palais et que j’ai moi-même longtemps désigné par ce vocable. Or, une stricte analyse de ses caractéristiques et des trouvailles qui y ont été réalisées montrent l’inexistence de tout caractère régalien manifeste; en revanche on y retrouve une unité qui est un très grand temple (sans doute le temple majeur, celui du dieu de la cité) et des ateliers en très grand nombre, au moins six, pour fabriquer des objets sans doute sacrés. C’est pourquoi il faut y reconnaître un temple-manufacture dont l’appartenance à la sphère royale, malgré la découverte d’une tablette qui mentionne un roi, n’est nullement assurée, sans être impossible.[36]

On peut évoquer aussi le pseudo-Palais Nord de tell Asmar qui, à la même époque que l’édifice de Mari (deuxième moitié du III[e] millénaire), apparaît comme un centre manufacturier avec plusieurs postes de travail reliés à un réseau d’élimination des eaux usées. Or le bâtiment présente des caractéristiques architecturales très proches de celles de Mari, mais n’est pas associé à un temple, et ne présente pas non plus de traits régaliens, ce qui indique la variété des formules et des fonctions possibles de l’architecture monumentale.

Conclusion

Les palais en Mésopotamie forment une riche documentation depuis les origines de la civilisation urbaine au IV[e] millénaire. On peut, jusqu’à la ruine de Babylone, suivre les étapes du développement tant de l’architecture que de l’entité palatiale et, grâce à cette série, mieux comprendre et l’institution royale et la technologie mise en œuvre par les architectes et les entrepreneurs,[37] dont il faudrait dans l’avenir mieux cerner les traits essentiels. Il y a encore beaucoup à découvrir dans cette voie.

35 Margueron 1982; 2004, Muller *et al*. 2014.

36 Margueron 2014a.

37 Margueron 1984.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliographie

Heinrich, E.
1984 *Die Paläste im alten Mesopotamien*, Denkmäler Antiker Architektur 15, Berlin.

Margueron, J.-Cl.
1974 *Les palais de l'âge du Bronze en Mésopotamie, bilan de nos connaissances et problèmes*, in: P. Garelli (ed.), *Le palais et la royauté*, *Actes de la XIX^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Paris 1971*, Paris, 11–26.
1979a Un *Hilani* à Emar, *Annual of the American School of Oriental Research* 44, 153–176.
1979b Existe-t-il des ateliers dans les palais orientaux de l'âge du Bronze?, *Ktèma* 4, 3–25.
1982 *Recherches sur les palais mésopotamiens de l'âge du Bronze,* Bibliothèque archéologique et historique de l'Institut d'Archéologie de Beyrouth 107 (2 vols.), Paris.
1983 NAAO 3. Du nouveau concernant le palais d'Eridu?, *Syria* 60, 225–231.
1984 *Y a-t-il un tracé régulateur dans les palais mésopotamiens du II^e millénaire?*, in: *Le dessin d'architecte dans les sociétés antiques*, *Actes du colloque du CRPOGA, Strasbourg 26–28 janvier 1984*, Leyde, 29–45.
1985a *L'architecture de la fin du III^e millénaire à Mari: les premières leçons tirées de l'étude du palais des Shakkanakku du chantier A*, in: J.-M. Durand et J.-R. Kupper (eds.), *Miscellanea Babylonica, Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot*, Paris, 211–222.
1985b *L'apparition du palais au Proche-Orient*, in: E. Lévy (ed.), *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome*, *Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 19–22 juin 1985*, Leyde, 9–38.
1985c *Les palais syriens à l'âge du bronze*, in: E. Lévy (ed.), *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome*, *Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 19–22 juin 1985*, Leyde, 127–158.
1986a *Quelques remarques concernant l'architecture monumentale à l'époque d'Obeid*, in: J.-L. Huot (ed.), *Préhistoire de la Mésopotamie*, Paris, 349–377.
1986b *Note complémentaire sur la question de l'étage*, in: J.-L. Huot (ed.), *Préhistoire de la Mésopotamie*, Paris, 447–458.
1987 Du nouveau sur la Cour du Palmier, *Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 5, 463–482.
1990 La salle aux piliers du palais de Mari de l'époque agadéenne, *Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 6, 385–400.
1993 Une couverture pour l'Enceinte Sacrée, *Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 7, 281–313.
1994 *Les palais assyriens*, in: E. Fontan (ed.), *De Khorsabad à Paris, la découverte des Assyriens*, Paris, 144–153.
1995a *Mari, a Portrait in Art*, in: J.M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 4 vols., New York, 885–900.
1995b *L'organisation architecturale du temple oriental: les modalités de la rencontre du profane et du sacré*, in: *Le temple, lieu de conflit*, *Actes du Colloque de Cartigny, 1991, CEPOA Genève*, Louvain, 35–59.
1995c *Quelques directions de recherche pour mieux comprendre le palais néo-assyrien*, in: A. Vivante (ed.), *Assiri, l'arte, la guerra, il potere*, Milan, 94–116.
1995d *Le palais de Sargon: réflexions préliminaires à une étude architecturale*, in: A. Caubet (ed.), *Khorsabad, le palais de Sargon II, roi d'Assyrie*, *Actes du Colloque organisé au Musée du Louvre les 21 et 22 janvier 1994*, Paris, 181–212.
1995e *Le palais royal d'Ugarit: premiers résultats d'une analyse systématique*, in: M. Yon, M. Sznycer et P. Bordreuil (eds.), *Le pays d'Ougarit aux environs de 1200 av. J.-C.*, *Actes du colloque International, Paris 28 juin-1^er juillet 1993,* Ras Shamra-Ougarit XI, Paris, 183–202.
1996 Détermination des magasins à vivres dans l'architecture orientale, *Topoi* 6, 99–111.
1999 *Du plan au volume: les bases méthodologiques de la restitution architecturale*, in: H. Kühne, R. Bernbeck et K. Bartl (eds.), *Fluchtpunkt Uruk, Archäologische Einheit aus methodischer Vielfalt*, Rahden/Westf., 191–200.
2001 *Salles à piliers dans l'architecture mésopotamienne, anatolienne et iranienne (fin 2^e et début 1^er millénaire)*, in: R. Eichmann et H. Parzinger (ed.), *Migration und Kulturtransfer. Der Wandel vorder- und zentralasiatischer Kulturen im Umbruch vom 2. zum 1. vorchristlichen Jahrtausend*, *Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums, Berlin 23 bis 26 November 1999*, Bonn, 451–470.
2004 *Mari, métropole de l'Euphrate, au III^e et au début du II^e millénaire av. J.-C.*, Paris.
2005a *Le palais de Mari et l'économie palatiale: le point de vue de l'archéologue*, in: *L'economia palaziale e la nascita della moneta: dalla Mesopotamia all'Egeo*, *Actes du Colloque de l' Accademia dei Lincei, Rome, 12–13 février 2002*, Roma, 87–119.
2005b Du bitanu, de l'étage et des salles hypostyles dans les palais néo-assyriens, NAAO 12, *Syria* 82, 93–138.
2006 Le Bâtiment Nord de Tepe Gawra XIII, NAAO 13, *Syria* 83, 195–228.
2007 La salle du trône d'Uruk à Babylone. Genèse, fonctionnement, signification, NAAO 14, *Syria* 84, 69–106.
2009 *A propos de la Maison Ronde de Tepe Gawra: approche méthodologique de la restitution architecturale*, in: P. Butterlin (ed.), *A propos de Tepe Gawra, le monde proto-urbain de Mésopotamie*, Subartu 23, Turnhout, 103–119.
2013 *Le palais «de Nabuchodonosor» à Babylone: un réexamen*, in: B. André-Salvini (ed.), *La tour de Babylone. Études et recherches sur les monuments de Babylone*, *Actes du colloque du 19 avril 2008 au musée du Louvre*, Rome et Paris, 77–117.
2014a *Mari Ville II: Palais ou temple-manufacture?*, in: P. Butterlin, J.-Cl. Margueron, B. Muller, M. Al-Maqdissi, D. Beyer et A. Cavigneaux (eds.), *Mari, ni Est, ni Ouest, Syria* suppl. II, vol. 1, Beyrouth, 265–290.
2014b *Le temple manufacture de Ville II: questions d'architecture et de stratigraphie*, in: P. Butterlin, J.-Cl. Margueron, B. Muller, M. Al-Maqdissi, D. Beyer et A. Cavigneaux (eds.), *Mari, ni Est, ni Ouest, Syria* suppl. II, vol. 1, Beyrouth, 463–482.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

2014c *Mari, Capital of Northern Mesopotamia in the Third Millenium. The Archaeology of Tell Hariri on the Euphrates*, Oxford et Philadelphia.

Margueron, J. et Durand, J.-M.
1980 La question du harem royal dans le palais de Mari, *Journal des Savants*, oct-déc. 1980, 253–280.

Margueron, J., Muller B. et Renisio, M.
1990 Les appartements royaux situés à l’étage du Grand Palais Royal de Mari, *Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 6, 433–451.

Muller B., Margueron, J. et Cavigneaux, A.
2014 *Avant les bains collectifs: eau, hygiène et rites au Proche-Orient ancien (IV^e^-I^er^ millénaire av. J.-C.)*, in: M.-F. Boussac, S. Denoix, Th. Fournet et B. Redon (eds.), *25 siècles de bain collectif en Orient – Proche-Orient, Égypte et péninsule Arabique*, *Actes du 3^e^ colloque international Balnéorient, organisé par l’Institut du Proche-Orient et la Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées de Syrie (Damas-Syrie/ 2–6 novembre 2009)*, Le Caire, 45–65.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Perception in Palatial Architecture: The Case of the AP Palace at Urkesh

by Federico Buccellati

1. Introduction

The AP Palace at Tell Mozan, ancient Urkesh, was uncovered by a team from IIMAS (International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies) between 1990 and 2004. Work at the site began in 1984, with several of the early seasons focused on uncovering Temple BA. The blueprint of the palace (see Fig. 1) shows a building with several sectors (indicated on the plan by large letters) with diverse functions that could be identified based on the installations and finds in them. The plan of the palace indicates that the building was planned uniformly by one specialist or more who could control the design, construction, and results. The archaeological record shows that the building was constructed in a single phase: note how the four Sectors A–D are in mirror plan across the central vertical axis.

Within the palace two groups of seal impressions were found that were of fundamental importance for understanding the site and its position in the region. In the first group are seal impressions of King Tupkish and his court, which proved that the ancient name of the city was indeed Urkesh, as had been hypothesised; the second group (from a slightly later stratum) comprises the cache of seal impressions of Tar′am-Agade, the daughter of Naram-Sin, and her court.

The architecture and finds from the palace have been published elsewhere;[1] the aim of this paper is to explore how evidence from the archaeological record can support conclusions about sensory perception as it relates to ancient architecture.[2] It will focus on the haptic, auditory, and olfactory senses; the sense of taste is left out for obvious reasons, while sight has been covered in another article.[3]

2. Haptic sense: storage

In order to discuss the sense of touch a consideration of room size is necessary. During research on the AP Palace, an interesting corollary could be seen between room function (as we understand it) and the ratio between the area of the room (floor space excluding doorways) and its perimeter (understood here as the length of the walls measured inside the room). To explain, an abstract example can be of help: consider (see Tab. 1) a square room with sides of 5.5 m. The area of such a room is 30.25 sq.m, while its perimeter is 22 m; the ratio between these two measurements is 1.38. The second example is of a corridor 1 m wide and 10 m long. Its area is 10 sq.m, while the perimeter is 22 m; the ratio between these two is 0.45. The third example is of a corridor 1 m wide and 30.25 m long. Here the area is 30.25 sq.m, while the perimeter is 62.5 m; the ratio between the two is 0.48.

What makes these measurements interesting is the similarity between the two corridors (examples 4 and 5 in Tab. 1) when looking at the ratio between area and perimeter. Consider first the contrast between examples 2 and 5, which have the same area (30.25 sq.m), yet quite a different ratio between area and perimeter (1.38 vs. 0.48). Another contrast can be seen between examples 2 and 4: both have the same perimeter, yet the ratio between area and perimeter is quite different (1.38 vs. 0.45). Going back to the two corridors (examples 4 and 5), while they differ from one another quite a bit in terms of both area and perimeter, they share similar ratios between area and perimeter: 0.45 and 0.48 respectively. While both corridors are quite large, the ratio between area and perimeter for both is still smaller than that of a small square room (example 1 with a ratio of 0.5).

While these examples have been chosen to emphasise the point being made here, the ratio between area and perimeter is a discerning value for a very wide range of room sizes. Thus, this ratio can be used as an indicator of function when applied to building plans. Clearly, other indicators, such as the presence of installations or certain categories of ceramics on the original floors of the building, are more telling of function. However, often such material is not present in the archaeological record or tied to secondary uses of the built space and as such does not necessarily reflect the original planned use of the space.

To explore the potential usefulness of this tool and its relevance to the sense of touch, the AP Palace at Mozan lends itself particularly well as a case study.

Table 2 shows how the ratio between area and perimeter can serve to examine the function of the rooms of the service wing of the AP Palace; the definitions of room function (store-room, room, *iwan*, courtyard, workroom) has been determined by

1 For a complete bibliography see the project website: www.urkesh.org.

2 The research for this paper was carried out during an Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices Fellowship at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, during which I had the pleasure of having office space at the Vorderasiatisches Museum (SMB). My thanks go in particular to H. Baader, M. Hilgert, L. Martin, and G. Wolf for their support, advice, and enthusiasm for my project.

3 Buccellati 2014; see also Buccellati 2010 for an examination of space in regard to the temple terrace at Tell Mozan.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

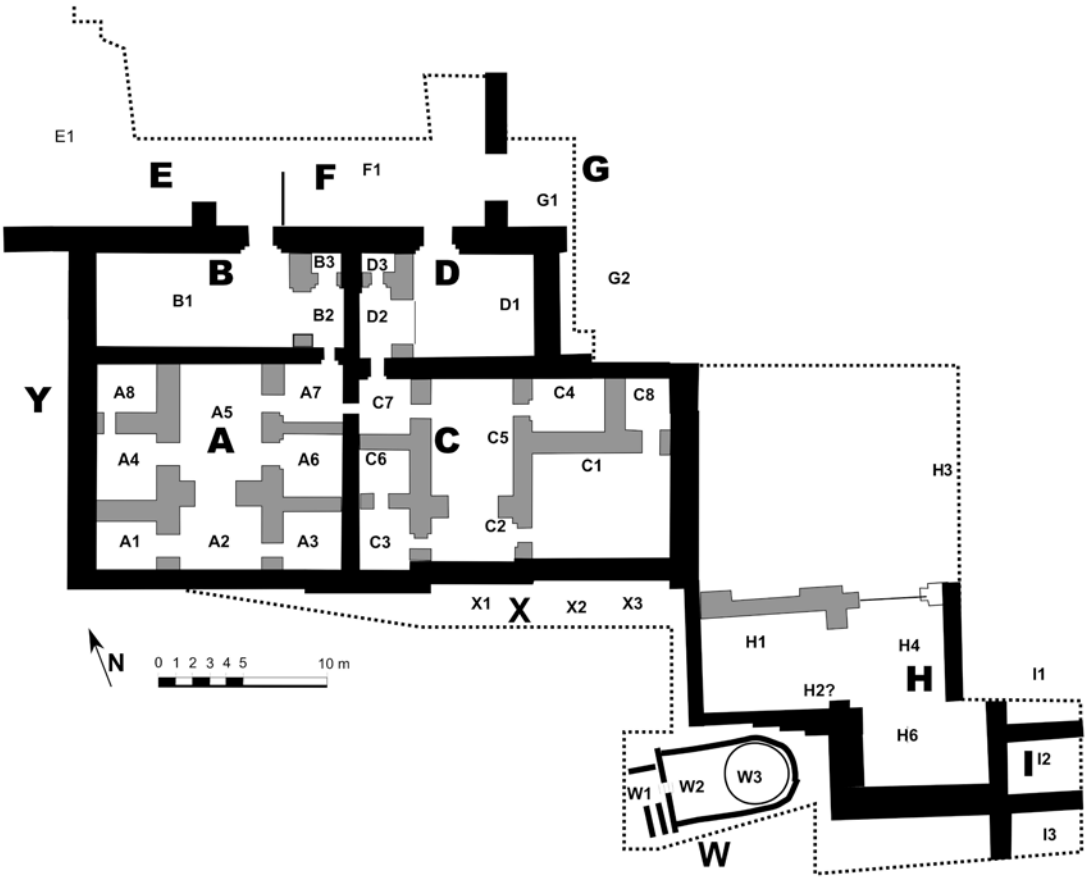


Fig. 1 Excavated portion of AP Palace with room numbers

Example	Room size (in meters)	Area (in m2)	Perimeter (in meters)	Ratio Area: Perimeter
1 (small room)	2 x 2	4	8	0,5
2 (medium room)	5.5 x 5.5	30,25	22	1,38
3 (large room)	15.625 x 15.625	244,14	62,5	3,91
4 (medium corridor)	10 x 1	10	22	0,45
5 (long corridor)	30.25 x 1	10	62,5	0,48

Tab. 1 Examples showing relationship between area and perimeter

architectural features (e.g. a wide opening along the long side of a rectangular room for an *iwan*) and the archaeological record, rather than by the ratio described here, and thus these definitions can serve as a way to test this tool (and avoid a circular argument).[4] The X and Y columns present the measurements of the room in metres, while the Area and Perimeter columns show the measurements for each room. The Area/Perimeter Ratio is calculated by dividing the values from the two previous columns. The 'Change on Previous' column gives the difference in that ratio with the previous room's value, a calculation useful in grouping the rooms. By calculating the change on the previous room (when the rooms are sorted by the area/perimeter ratio) certain groupings can be seen by noting where the difference is greater than 0.2, as marked by the dotted lines. These groupings can be seen clearly when displayed as a chart (Fig. 2). These measurements can, ideally, in conjunction with the architectural configuration of the building, the finds from the rooms, and the installations

4 For an analysis of the architecture in the AP Palace see Buccellati 2016.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Room	Room Function	X (in m)	Y (in m)	Area (in m²)	Perimeter (in m)	Ratio Area: Perimeter	Change on Previous
D3	storeroom	1,73	1,49	2,6	6,4	0,400	-
B3	storeroom	1,91	1,56	3,0	6,9	0,429	0,029
B2	iwan	1,91	3,79	7,2	11,4	0,635	0,206
C6	room	3,34	2,21	7,4	11,1	0,665	0,030
C8	room	2,37	3,16	7,5	11,1	0,677	0,012
D2	iwan	2,17	4,26	9,2	12,9	0,719	0,042
C2	iwan	5,22	2,10	11,0	14,6	0,749	0,030
A3	room	3,24	3,03	9,8	12,5	0,783	0,034
A1	room	3,48	2,91	10,1	12,8	0,792	0,010
A6	room	2,94	3,65	10,7	13,2	0,814	0,022
C7	room	3,18	3,34	10,6	13,0	0,815	0,000
A7	room	3,09	3,45	10,7	13,1	0,815	0,001
C4	room	3,42	3,25	11,1	13,3	0,833	0,018
A8	room	3,38	3,34	11,3	13,4	0,840	0,007
A4	room	3,42	3,35	11,5	13,5	0,846	0,006
C3	room	3,36	4,09	13,7	14,9	0,922	0,076
C5	courtyard	5,08	5,28	26,8	20,7	1,295	0,372
A2	iwan	5,42	5,48	29,7	21,8	1,362	0,068
C1	room	7,05	4,75	33,5	23,6	1,419	0,057
A5	courtyard	5,25	6,97	36,6	24,4	1,497	0,078
D1	workroom	8,20	6,29	51,6	29,0	1,780	0,283
B1	workroom	11,52	6,10	70,3	35,2	1,994	0,214

Tab. 2 Rooms of the service wing of the AP Palace, sorted by A/P proportion

present, aid us in understanding the function of rooms within an architectural space.

How does this tool relate to the sense of touch? To Table 2 one can add information relating to the area possibly used for storage. Assuming that storage would have been located along the walls of a room, be it in portable storage containers or on shelves or benches, the storage area in a room would have taken up a 75 cm wide[5] strip along each wall, excluding the space in front of door and/or *iwan* openings. In order to perform this calculation, one multiplies the perimeter by 0.75 to arrive at the total area along the walls potentially used for storage. From this number we must subtract the overlapping areas in the four corners of the room, as well as the space in front of doorways and wider *iwan* apertures.

The penultimate column in Table 3 shows the total area used for storage, while the last column shows the percentage of room space that would have been dedicated for storage along the walls. One should note, however, that some rooms would have been large enough to accommodate storage also in their centre; while such a practice was not evident in the AP Palace (the larger rooms were used as kitchens or as places where containers were inspected), it should be considered when applying this method to other buildings.

Notably, when sorted by percentage of area used for storage, the rooms can be divided into two groups, as indicated by the dotted line in Table 3. The rooms above the line would have been primarily suitable for storage due to their relatively large potential storage area, while those below may not have been used for storage at all, or would have had limited space for it. The distribution of rooms can be seen in Figure 3, with the rooms above the dotted line in Table 3 marked with a shaded X. The dotted line in the table was placed between Rooms A4 and A8, between which there is the largest jump in percentages of available storage space – a 7 % difference.

5 A width of 75 cm would include space for pots, cloth bags, and boxes; of course, in specific cases a more precise number can be given, but this figure serves as a general depth for storage elements.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

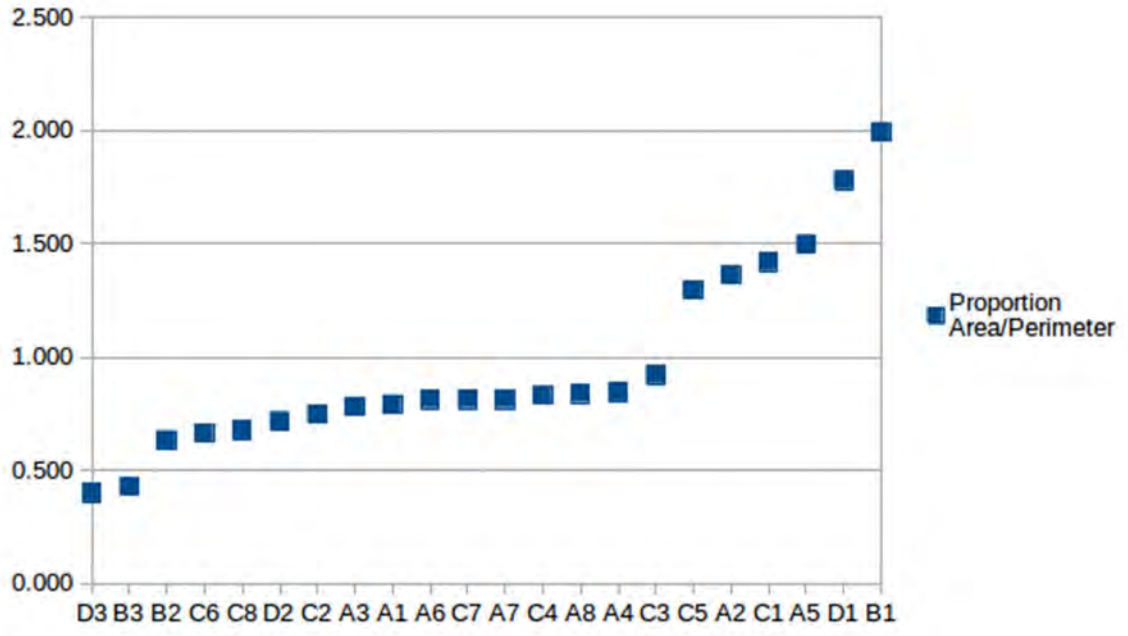


Fig. 2 Chart showing groupings of proportion between area and perimeter

Room	Room Function	X (in m)	Y (in m)	Area (in m^2)	Perimeter (in m)	Ratio Area: Perimeter	Change on Previous	Doors	Iwan Apertures	Area for Storage	% of Room Not Storage	% of Room For Storage
D3	storeroom	1,73	1,49	2,6	6,4	0,400	-	1	-	1,7	35%	65%
B3	storeroom	1,91	1,56	3,0	6,9	0,429	0,029	1	-	1,9	38%	62%
C6	room	3,34	2,21	7,4	11,1	0,665	0,236	1	-	3,4	54%	46%
C8	room	2,37	3,16	7,5	11,1	0,677	0,012	1	-	3,4	55%	45%
A3	room	3,24	3,03	9,8	12,5	0,783	0,106	1	-	4,0	60%	40%
A1	room	3,48	2,91	10,1	12,8	0,792	0,010	1	-	4,0	60%	40%
A6	room	2,94	3,65	10,7	13,2	0,814	0,022	1	-	4,2	61%	39%
C4	room	3,42	3,25	11,1	13,3	0,833	0,019	1	-	4,3	62%	38%
A8	room	3,38	3,34	11,3	13,4	0,840	0,007	1	-	4,3	62%	38%
A4	room	3,42	3,35	11,5	13,5	0,846	0,006	2	-	3,6	69%	31%
C3	room	3,36	4,09	13,7	14,9	0,922	0,076	2	-	4,1	70%	30%
A7	room	3,09	3,45	10,7	13,1	0,815	-0107	3	-	2,7	75%	25%
C7	room	3,18	3,34	10,6	13,0	0,815	-0,001	3	-	2,6	75%	25%
C2	iwan	5,22	2,10	11,0	14,6	0,749	-0,066	2	1	2,5	77%	23%
C1	room	7,05	4,75	33,5	23,6	1,419	0,670	2	-	7,4	78%	22%
D2	iwan	2,17	4,26	9,2	12,9	0,719	-0,700	2	1	1,8	80%	20%
C5	courtyard	5,08	5,28	26,8	20,7	1,295	0,576	2	1	4,8	82%	18%
B2	iwan	1,91	3,79	7,2	11,4	0,635	-0,660	2	1	1,3	82%	18%
A2	iwan	5,42	5,48	29,7	21,8	1,362	0,727	2	1	5,2	83%	17%
D1	workroom	8,20	6,29	51,6	29,0	1,780	0,417	1	1	8,6	83%	17%
B1	workroom	11,52	6,10	70,3	35,2	1,994	0,214	1	1	11,0	84%	16%
A5	courtyard	5,25	6,97	36,6	24,4	1,497	-4,97	3	1	5,4	85%	15%

Tab. 3 Rooms of the AP Palace with area for storage calculation (sorted by last column)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

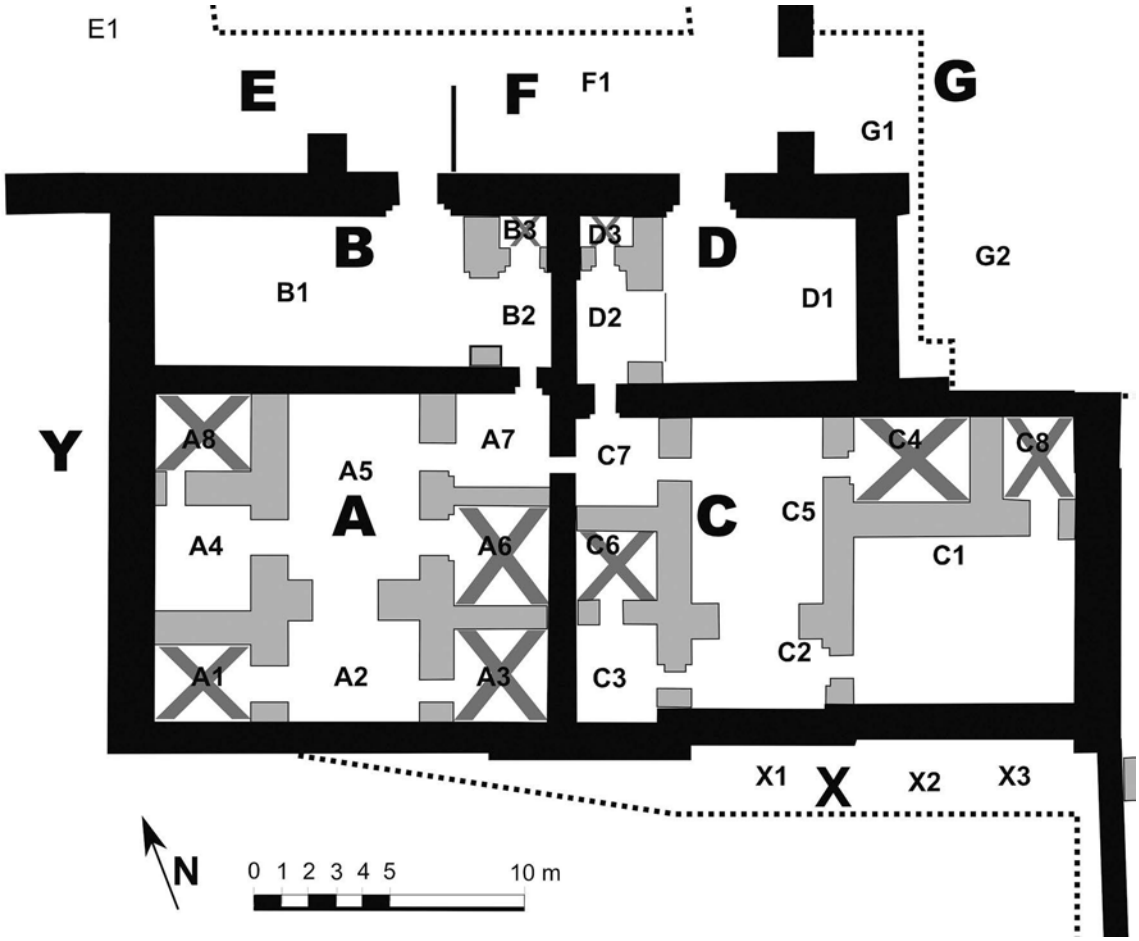


Fig. 3 Detail of service wing of AP Palace with rooms suitable for storage shown with shaded X

This division, however, must be understood only as a point of departure for a study of storage and space. Note the difference in Table 3 between Rooms A4 and A6 (31% and 39% of room available for storage), which seems odd as, looking at the floor plan, they are nearly identical – the primary difference being the presence of a second door leading to another room. It may be posited that A4 was a workroom with an attached storage space, but such a difference can only be determined on the basis of additional information from the archaeological record. In general, the content of the rooms and/or the installations present must also be taken into account and they sometimes contradict this mathematical division. One example is Room C6, which appears like a room for storage, but due to the presence of installations connected to water (drain, brick-lined shaft) was more likely a water closet. Room B1 is also of interest, since it is the room where most of the seal impressions mentioned before were found: this was likely not a storage area, given the uniform distribution of these seal impressions throughout the room, but may have rather been a place where items brought from the storage areas in Sectors A or C were opened.

3. Haptic sense: temperature

Since it is our skin that has receptors for perceiving heat and cold, considerations of the perception of temperature can be examined together with the haptic sense.[6] Temperature as it relates to the archaeological record can best be seen in the exposure to sunlight in architectural spaces and the materials chosen for construction.

With regard to the AP Palace, a consideration of sunlight and its thermal properties can best be seen in the two complete courtyards so far uncovered, A5 and C5. Neither of these two have a doorway on the northern side, meaning that access to the rooms to their north was possible only through a circuitous route passing through A7 and B2 (when moving from A5 to B1) or C7 and D2 (when moving from C5 to D1). This may have been intended to avoid a south exposure for Rooms B1 and D1, which would have let in a great deal of heat in the summer months.

The walls of the AP Palace are made of mudbricks, the standard material used in virtually all construction in the ancient Near East. A 40 cm thick mudbrick

6 McMahon 2016a, 337.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

wall can help maintain the temperature difference between interior and exterior spaces for up to twelve hours, after which no difference in temperature can be felt.[7] Considering this, it is not a surprise that mudbricks were the primary material for construction in the ancient Near East and are still in use today.[8] The fact that mudbricks remain a common material in local construction helps archaeologists understand many aspects relating to their use, but may also be a hindrance, as archaeologists' relationship with this material is conditioned by the modern social framework in which the architecture plays a role.[9]

4. Auditory sense: intimacy and disorientation

The second sense is that of sound; absolute acoustic values[10] are perhaps the most difficult to determine, as many relevant factors remain unknown in the vast majority of cases. The height of the rooms and the materials used for roofing would have affected how sounds were carried; the presence or absence of furniture and textiles would impact the ability of sound to propagate; even the materials from which footwear would have been made impact the sounds footsteps would have made. Most of these variables cannot be determined through the evidence present in the archaeological record, as they leave no trace or are most likely to be removed. McMahon's study of acoustics, based on reverberation times in the principal rooms at Neo-Assyrian Khorsabad, is one of few studies on acoustics in our field that looks closely at materials of construction and room spaces to determine acoustic properties.[11] The study considers diverse acoustic conditions (reverberation times) for different numbers of people, as well as the effect of echo on the audience's ability to hear (or better understand) the proclamations of the king in the throne room. However, the aforementioned lack of information from the archaeological record makes such a study difficult to apply to other, earlier contexts or contexts where less extensive excavation programs have been carried out. For example, reverberation times in cathedrals pose some of the same problems of acoustics that McMahon demonstrates for the throne room at Khorsabad. In the case of cathedrals, the problem can be solved by the use of a canopy, the type of element that would not have left traces in the archaeological record.[12]

In cases where acoustic properties are difficult to measure on a numeric scale, a more emic approach can prove fruitful. The AP Palace at Tell Mozan can be considered in terms of intimacy and disorientation, criteria that depend on the room size in relation to the distance that sound can carry.

A space with acoustic intimacy is defined as such in which the time between the arrival of direct sound and the arrival of the first reverberation of that sound from the surrounding environment (Initial Time Delay Gap; ITDG) is under 20 milliseconds.[13] While the archaeological record does not provide enough data to enable calculating precise values related to sound, knowing the materials and room sizes does enable one to calculate a maximum ITDG value for a room. As a rule of thumb, when the distance from the reflecting surface is more than 7 m, the room no longer has the acoustic properties necessary to be considered intimate. (Note that the 7 m distance is calculated by adding the distance from both the source and the recipient to the reflecting surface). Thus the rooms of the service wing of the AP Palace are intimate spaces, acoustically speaking, as opposed to the larger rooms that would have presumably existed in the formal wing of the palace or to comparable rooms in other palaces of the period. People working in these rooms would have been constantly aware (in terms of sound) of others in the same space, even if they were not seen, and the noises from movement and actions would have been perceived in addition to speech.

The many small rooms of the service wing (Sectors A, B, C, and D) tend to be quite maze-like, which had a marked effect on auditory perception. This sense of disorientation became apparent after installing the conservation wireframes and burlap covering the walls and raising the wall height to above eye level.[14] Suddenly, one could not see from one room to another over the tops of the walls as they had been preserved in the archaeological record, and people calling to each other had to say exactly where they were. When limited to auditory perception, the division of space into a number of small rooms meant that the speaker could be in several different areas, and with the walls as reflective surfaces, the direction from which the sound came was either not indicative of where the speaker was situated, or was indistinct. This sense of disorientation would have been amplified in ancient times, as all the walls would have been of solid mudbrick material and the roof would have been in place. Since mudbrick material is so dense and has such a low ability to transmit sound waves, structure-borne sound would have been virtually absent, meaning that all sound would have been carried through the air. Thus all sound would have been perceived by someone in a room as coming from the doorways (assuming it was heard at all), with no

7 Aurenche 1981, 46; Doat et al. 1979.
8 Oates 1990.
9 Hurcombe 2007.
10 Here I use 'auditory' as referring to the sense of hearing but when speaking of sounds themselves I use the term 'acoustic'; I have explicitly avoided using 'aural' so as not to use an overabundance of overlapping terms.
11 McMahon 2016b.
12 Berg 2011.
13 Cavanaugh, Tocci and Wilkes 2010, 215.
14 Buccellati 2004.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

indication as to the exact point of origin from inside the room (apart from a sense of intensity, which would have been an indicator of how far the sound had travelled).

5. Auditory sense: upstairs – downstairs

The second example of sound relates to the roof. The formal wing, Sector H, was raised through terracing over 2 m above the service wing of Sectors A, B, C, and D. Thus the floor elevation of the stone courtyard would most likely have been at the same level as the roof of the service wing, and it is possible that one could access the roof of the service wing from the rooms of the formal wing. This means that the sounds from a courtyard (particularly C5) would have been heard by those on the roof, and might also have been heard in the rooms of the formal wing.

This configuration is particularly interesting because, as we understand the architecture and function of these spaces, there would have been little contact between people working in these two areas, and to go from one space to the other, one would have had to walk quite a distance.[15] Sector C was, to our best hypothesis, involved in the administration of goods and perhaps the working of textiles, while the formal wing would have been limited to members of the royal court and their visitors. Someone on the roof (coming from the formal wing) may have heard sounds of those working in the courtyard and adjacent rooms, but would have seen little unless they approached the edge of the roof, and even then they would have seen only the courtyard itself and not into the rooms. Someone in the courtyard, on the other hand, might have heard sounds from the roof above, but would likely only have glanced up on the basis of an auditory cue.

6. Olfactory sense: cooking

The third sphere of perception is the sense of smell. Like sound, smell can be difficult to calculate on an etic level; in fact, both senses are often both set aside in favour of a focus on touch and sight.[16] However, as with sound, an emic approach can provide insight into contexts from which an understanding of the sensibilities of ancient city dwellers can be hypothesised. Smell is a particularly interesting example, as the archaeological record seems to show a marked difference between modern and ancient sensibilities in how certain smells are avoided.

In the AP Palace, the kitchen was located in Room D1. Here the presence of cooking installations (a *tannur* and an *andiron*) would have produced quite a bit of smoke when in use. While this was most likely a roofed space, there would still have been openings

Fig. 4 Open drain exiting AP Palace (MZ V16d1167)

(perhaps a raised roof with windows along one or more sides) allowing the smoke and other smells associated with cooking to escape. What makes this particularly interesting is the fact that today the wind often comes from the west, and this was most likely the case in antiquity as well. This is curious, as it means that these smells would have been carried from the kitchen area towards the formal wing, specifically to the open area of the stone courtyard, which lay directly to the east. As this courtyard lay (as far as we know from the excavated portions of the palace) at the centre of the formal wing, and since the stone paving indicates that it was a prestigious space,[17] it seems odd that the plan of the palace did not place the kitchen in a position farther from it, or at least downwind of it.

7. Olfactory sense: sewage

The second example of smell relates to waste water, in particular sewage. The situation in the 3rd millennium is often in contrast to later sensibilities, though techniques of water transport were in use in some settlements already in the 4th millennium;[18] extensive use of sewer systems in an urban context appears first in Roman times.[19] In the ancient Near East there

15 See the discussion on stairways and Sector G in Buccellati 2016.

16 See, for example, Howes' criticism of Ingold's *The Perception of the Environment* (Ingold 2000; Pink and Howes 2010).

17 For an analysis of the stone courtyard in terms of energetics see Buccellati 2016.

18 Hemker 1993; Sievertsen 2014.

19 Koloski-Ostrow 2016.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

is extensive archaeological evidence of waste water being transported outside the house, but it was then released into public spaces, normally along streets. In fact, a common form of toilets in the 3rd millennium was the sloped-drain toilet, which carried the waste water along a channel or pipe, only to release it beyond the external wall of the house.[20]

This is the situation with the waste water coming from the AP Palace as well, which was dumped into the open area to the south of the palace (Fig. 4). It is striking that immediately adjacent to the drain opening one finds Platform X, an installation that predates the AP Palace and was considered important enough during the planning for the south wall of the palace to be accommodated by a sort of niche. This is a very good indication of the insignificance attributed to smells: while a pre-existing structure was significant enough to condition the highly symmetrical plan of the AP Palace, the drain exit was not moved farther south or kept in a closed channel to distance the smells from the building.

8. The question of context

While the focus of this article is on exploring how one can understand the impact of the architecture of the AP Palace on the ancients' haptic, auditory, and olfactory senses, the theoretical presuppositions on which the approach rests should be made explicit. The postulate at the heart of my discussion is a continuity of human sensory perception between the people of the past and us. This is not an assumption but rather a postulate for which a case can be made. It is a debate paralleled in other fields, for example, in geology, where comparable theoretical approaches are collected under the term 'uniformitarianism',[21] or in anthropology in the debate between Watson, Gould, and Wylie.[22] Perhaps the best framing of the criticism and a reply can be found in Arnheim's *The Dynamics of Architectural Form*: "… some readers might maintain that my descriptions are adrift in space because they do not specify who is doing the looking under what historical, social, and individual conditions. In fact, they will say, I am talking about things existing only in my own mind, since they are bound to be viewed differently by the next person. I reply that my appraoch [sic.] seems to me indispensable because one must establish what people are looking at before one can hope to understand why, under the conditions peculiar to them, they see what they see."[23]

A point in favour of this approach is in the discussion above of the olfactory sense relating to the kitchen and the drain in the AP Palace. As the palace was a planned building (some of the indications lie in the mirrored architecture and the complex drain system) there was a choice made as to where to place the kitchen and drain openings. The choice made by the architect is different from what one would expect in a modern context, thus it is precisely its contrast with our own *habitus* that aids our analysis. The reason for the ancient architect's choice is not evident in the archaeological record, nor could it be, yet a pattern of such decisions (such as the prevalence of slope-drain toilets that discharge sewage into the street) can lead to a hypothesis about ancient sensibilities.

The three senses considered in this article were examined individually, but clearly our interaction with the world around us is a multi-sensory experience. One might question the validity of an approach that considers the senses in a serial manner rather than a parallel one, and such criticism has been voiced in other research contexts.[24] While the whole is certainly greater than the sum of its parts, studies of perception in the context of the ancient Near East are still in their infancy, and to begin with the whole without understanding the parts would not lead to a complete understanding. Additionally, the aim here is to consider perception through the evidence of the archaeological record, where evidence relating to the diverse senses can be found in separate, distinct contexts. It is only by first identifying specific contexts, determining a pattern and explaining potential exceptions, and, finally, proposing a general explanation that one can base an understanding of one or more senses on archaeological data.

9. Conclusion

There remains the question of how (or even if) this type of perceptual analysis can help us as archaeologists. In my view, it is through such analyses that we can better understand the archaeological record, by considering a building's blueprint not only through the lens of its planning and the human activity within the space, but also by how the senses would have played a role in both the architects' construction of space and in the way that this space might have conditioned its users.

A consideration of perception during fieldwork can also aid excavation strategy, proposing avenues of research and data collection that might not have arisen otherwise. As an example, one might follow drains out of buildings to determine where their outlets are in order to check the hypothesis that dirty water was carried only as far as the street, meaning that the smell of sewage would have been present directly next to the house it came from.

It is through perceptual analysis that we can better understand the people of the past and the decisions

20 McMahon 2015.
21 Gould 1987.
22 Watson and Gould 1982; Wylie 1982.
23 Arnheim 1977, 4.
24 Ingold 2000; Cytowic 2010; Pink and Howes 2010; Pink 2015; McMahon 2016.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

they made in creating their environment and how our sensibilities may differ. It is through such an analysis that we can understand the sensorial impact that the ancient world would have had, in order to communicate this understanding to contemporary society, bringing the past closer to our audience, while firmly adhering to the evidence provided by the archaeological record.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Arnheim, R.
1977 *The Dynamics of Architectural Form*, Berkeley.

Aurenche, O.
1981 *La maison orientale: l'architecture du Proche Orient ancien des origines au milieu du quatrième millénaire*, Paris.

Berg, R.
2011 Acoustics – Acoustic Criteria, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/science/acoustics/Acoustic-criteria, access date: September 04, 2018.

Buccellati, F.
2010 *The Monumental Temple Terrace at Urkesh and Its Setting*, in: J. Becker, R. Hempelmann and E. Rehm (eds.), *Kulturlandschaft Syrien: Zentrum und Peripherie. Festschrift für Jan-Waalke Meyer*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 371, Münster, 71–86.
2014 *Diachronic Developments at the Central Monumental Complex of Ancient Urkesh (Tell Mozan)*, in: H. Kühne, R.M. Czichon and F.J. Kreppner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East: 10 April–4 May, 2012 University of Warsaw*, Wiesbaden, 313–322.
2016 *Three-dimensional Volumetric Analysis in an Archaeological Context: The Palace of Tupkish at Urkesh and Its Representation*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica, Malibu, CA.

Buccellati, G.
2004 *Conservation qua Archaeology at Tell Mozan/Urkesh*, in: N. Agnew and J. Bridgland (eds.), *Of the Past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation*, Los Angeles, 73–81.

Cavanaugh, W., Tocci, G. and Wilkes, J.
2010 *Architectural Acoustics: Principles and Practice*, New York.

Cytowic, R.
2010 Our Hidden Superpowers, *New Scientist* 206, 3–65.

Doat, P., Hays, A., Houben, H., Matuk, S. and Vitoux, F.
1979 *Construire en terre*, Paris.

Gould, S.J.
1987 *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time*, Cambridge, MA.

Hemker, C.
1993 *Altorientalische Kanalisation*, Abhandlungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft. Agenda, Münster.

Hurcombe, L.
2007 A Sense of Materials and Sensory Perception in Concepts of Materiality, *World Archaeology* 39, 532–545.

Ingold, T.
2000 *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, London.

Koloski-Ostrow, A.O.
2016 *The Archaeology of Sanitation in Roman Italy: Toilets, Sewers, and Water Systems*, Chapel Hill, NC.

McMahon, A.
2015 *Waste Management in Early Urban Southern Mesopotamia*, in: P. Mitchell (ed.), *Sanitation, Latrines and Intestinal Parasites in Past Populations*, Burlington, VT, 19–39.
2016a *Reframing the Ziggurat*, in: M. Bille and T.F. Sørensen (eds.), *Elements of Architecture: Assembling Archaeology, Atmosphere and the Performance of Building Spaces*, London, 321–339.
2016b *A Feast for the Ears: Neo-Assyrian Royal Architecture and Acoustics*, in: J. MacGinnis, D. Wicke and T. Greenfield (eds.), *Assyrian Provinces Conference Proceedings*, Cambridge, 129–139.

Oates, D.
1990 Innovations in Mud-brick: Decorative and Structural Techniques in Ancient Mesopotamia, *World Archaeology* 21, 388–406.

Pink, S.
2015 *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, London.

Pink, S. and Howes, D.
2010 The Future of Sensory Anthropology/The Anthropology of the Senses, *Social Anthropology* 18, 331–333.

Sievertsen, U.
2014 *Bauwissen im Alten Orient*, in: J. Renn, W. Osthues and H. Schlimme (eds.), *Wissensgeschichte der Architektur*, Berlin, 131–280.

Watson, P.J. and Gould, R.
1982 A Dialogue on the Meaning and Use of Analogy in Ethnoarchaeological Reasoning, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 1, 355–381.

Wylie, A.
1982 An Analogy by Any Other Name Is Just as Analogical, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 1, 382–401.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The Throne Rooms of Assyria

by David Kertai

There are nations where the grandeur of the kings lies in not allowing oneself to be seen, and there could be a reason for this among minds accustomed to servitude ruled only by fear and terror; but this is not our French spirit and, as far back as our history can inform us, if there is any singular characteristic of this monarchy, it is the free and easy access of its subjects to the sovereign (Louis XIV).[1]

Introduction

The throne room is a quintessential royal space. Defined as 'a formal audience room containing the throne of a sovereign', all royal palaces can be expected to have included a version, if only because the king has to sit somewhere. However, as with all terms, no English word can hope to encompass all the historical and cultural nuances. Throne rooms are moreover not a prerequisite of kingship. Royal palaces frequently organised meetings with the king in other architectural settings. The Assyrian palaces, the focus of this article, did possess rooms with a throne, but even they did not have a name that translates as throne room.[2]

Most studies on the Assyrian throne room have focused on the stone reliefs that decorated the room. The topics depicted on these reliefs can, to simplify things, be separated into narrative and apotropaic scenes. The narrative scenes showed, amongst others, the Assyrian court, military campaigns, and cultic scenes. The apotropaic reliefs depicted different creatures that protected the palace, with a special emphasis on its doorways where larger statues of winged human-headed bulls or lions were sometimes stationed.[3]

Reliefs influenced the ways these spaces were used and experienced, and were the main mode of communication with visitors. Reliefs were not, however, specific to the throne room, but decorated all monumental rooms within the royal palaces of Assyria. This article aims to highlight features that made the throne room a unique architectural setting of kingship within Assyria.

This article focuses on the period from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC) until the end of the Assyrian Empire in c. 612 BC. The royal court had several palaces at their disposal spread over the different cities of Assyria, including a primary royal palace. Three of these palaces existed consecutively during this period, all of which have seen substantial excavations, even if their floorplans remain incomplete or uncertain in their details.[4]

The start of the period coincides with the transformation of Kalḫu into Assyria's new royal centre. Its main palace, located on the city's citadel, is nowadays called the Northwest Palace (named for its location on the citadel by Austen Henry Layard, its first excavator). The palace remained Assyria's primary palace for c. 150 years. The Old Palace in Assur, the cultic centre of Assyria, was constructed during the same period. The south-east corner of Kalḫu was occupied by a large military complex, which was built during the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC) and included its own monumental palace,[5] which can be described as the Military Palace (Fort Shalmaneser).[6]

The royal court left Kalḫu at the end of Sargon II's reign (722–705 BC) to the newly founded city of Dur-Sharruken. The city contained a new primary palace, which will be described as the Royal Palace, and a Military Palace (Palace F). The royal court abandoned the city almost immediately after Sargon's untimely death on the battlefield, condemning the city.[7]

The royal court moved to Nineveh, one of the most ancient centres in northern Iraq, during the subsequent reign of Sennacherib (704–681 BC). A similar pair of royal palaces was constructed, with a new royal palace on the citadel, nowadays called the Southwest Palace,[8] and a Military Palace on Nebi Yunus, the second mound within the city's confines.[9]

Size matters

The Late Assyrian royal throne rooms were enormous in size (Fig. 1). The first known throne rooms date to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC). The throne room (22) in the Old Palace in Assur was 8 m wide and probably 33 m long.[10] The throne room (B) in the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu was considerably larger, with a size of 10 by 47 m.[11] An additional throne room

1 Quoted in Chatenet 2009, 200.
2 This is not related to the way Assyrian rooms are designated, since they did have rooms named 'room of the bed' (*bēt mayāli*) or 'room of the bath' (*bēt ramāki*).
3 Kertai 2015a.
4 Kertai 2015b.
5 Kertai 2011; Mallowan 1966.
6 For this designation see Kertai 2011, 72.
7 Frahm 1999.
8 Kertai 2015b, 122–147; Russell 1991.
9 On those palaces cf. Margueron in this volume.
10 Heinrich 1984, 111.
11 Layard 1849, 132.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

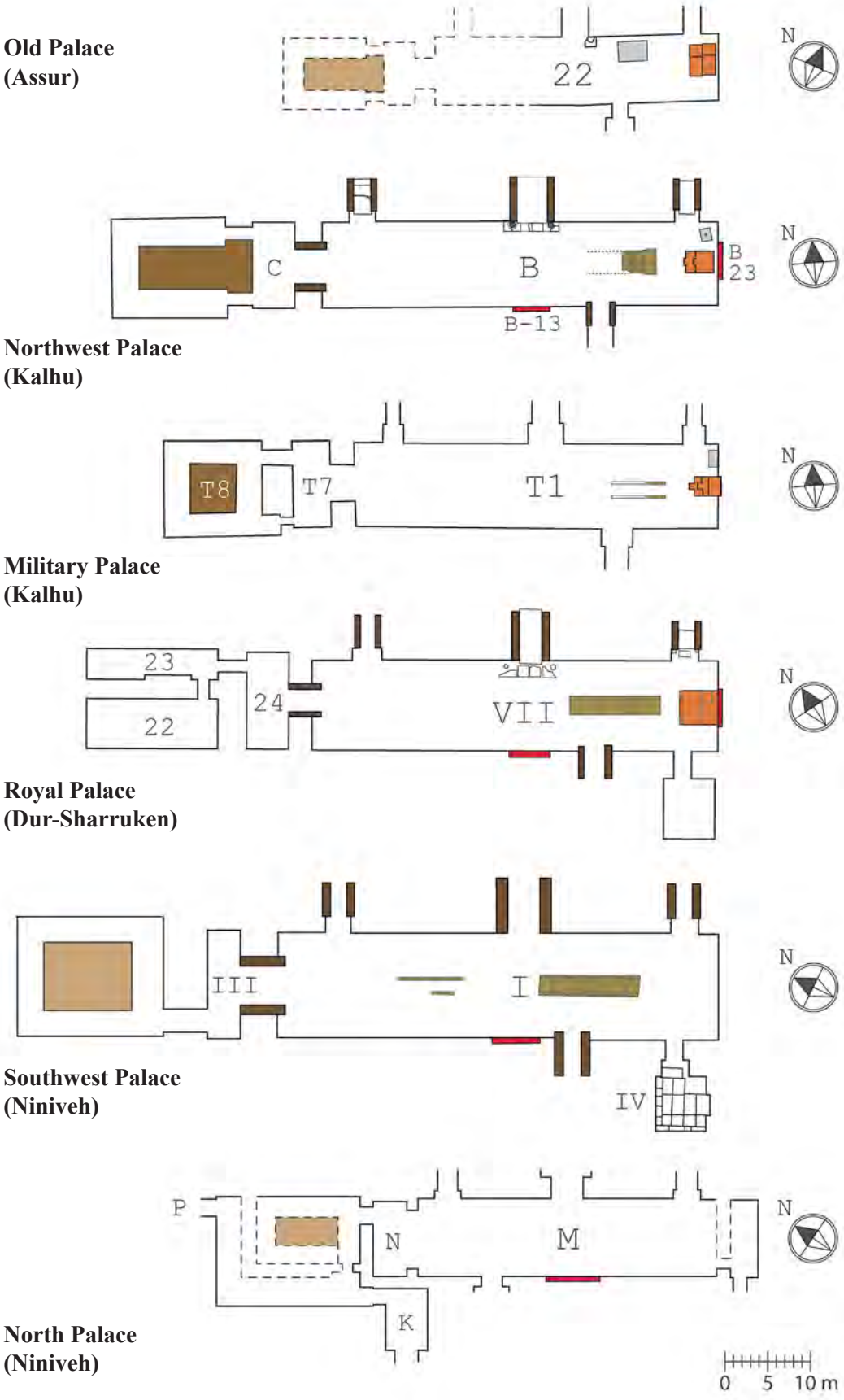


Fig. 1 The throne rooms of Assyria

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

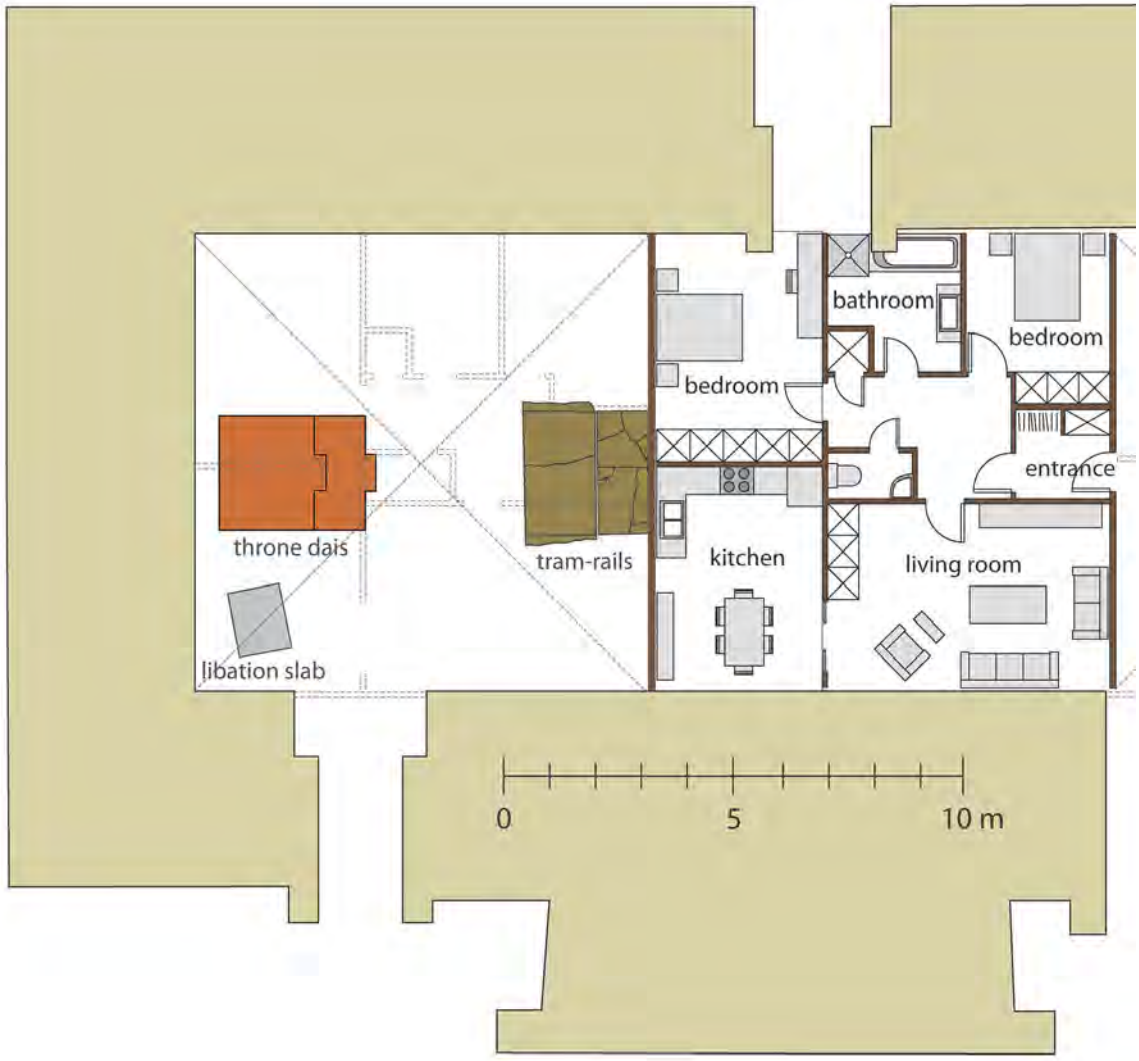


Fig. 2 Throne room (Northwest Palace, Kalḫu) with a 100 sq.m apartment inserted

(T1) was located in the city's Military Palace, which measured c. 10 by 42 m.[12] The throne room in Sargon II's (722–705 BC) Royal Palace in Dur-Sharruken was similar in size to the one in the Northwest Palace.[13] The throne room (23) in Dur-Sharruken's Military Palace seems to have been even bigger with an estimated size of 50 by 10 m.[14] The throne room (I) in the Southwest Palace in Nineveh, constructed during the reign of Sennacherib (704–681 BC), measured 12.25 by 51 m.[15] This is the largest known room to have been constructed in Assyria. The throne room (M) of the North Palace in Nineveh, constructed during the reign of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), was similar in size to the one in the Old Palace in Assur. Although each throne room was large, there was a considerable variation, with the major royal throne rooms measuring between 420 and 625 sq.m and the smaller throne rooms measuring 264 sq.m. The large sizes of these rooms do seem to fit with their probable designation as the *bētu dannu* (lit. 'the large/strong room'),[16] even if the term itself had a much wider connotation, especially in non-palatial contexts.[17] The term has an affinity to the Akkadian term for palace, ***egallu*,** which is derived from, and often written as the Sumerian É.GAL (lit. 'large building').[18] É.GAL might translate as *bētu rabû*, but is not used in this way. The Sumerian É and Akkadian *bētu* can, however, both refer to a room as well as to a building, whereas *dannu* and *rabû* are near synonyms, making 'throne room' into a metonym for the palace itself.

12 Oates 1963, 8.
13 Loud et al. 1936, 61.
14 Turner 1998, 24.
15 Russell 1991, 47.
16 Kertai 2015b, 216–217.
17 Radner 1997, 270–271.
18 C.f. Winter 1993, 27.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

As a small discursion, one can comprehend the size of a Late Assyrian throne room by comparing it to a modern apartment building. Using an average size of 500 sq.m as an example, a floor space is created that could easily incorporate five apartments of 100 sq.m each (Fig. 2). These measurements only take the interior of the throne room into account. Including the external walls, which are generally 3 to 4 m thick, the entire floor space doubles.

Even in Mesopotamia, which has a history of monumental throne rooms, these dimensions are quite exceptional.[19] The biggest room within the throne room suite of Mari measured 'only' 11.7 by 26.3 m.[20] The same room was much larger in the palace of Qatna, measuring 20 by 41 m.[21] The earlier Old Palace in Assur had a similar room (called Courtyard IV by its excavators[22]) measuring 10.6 by 21.6 m. Except for the room in Qatna, the width of most rooms remained constant. This is likely related to the difficulty of finding and transporting longer roof beams and transforming them into a constructively stable roof. Alternatively, these large spaces might have been unroofed.[23] This would mean that the first room to be entered, which tended to be less wide, functioned as the actual throne room. The Assyrian throne room merged the two spaces present in earlier throne rooms into a single roofed room.[24] Whereas the width of the Assyrian throne rooms followed historical precedence, their length increased, making them more elongated.

The tradition of large throne rooms lasted until the construction of the South Palace in Babylon, whose throne room measured c. 17.5 by 52 m.[25] Its length is similar to an Assyrian throne room but it is considerably wider. These measurements are, however, almost identical to a throne room (*bētu dannu*) mentioned in descriptions of Esarhaddon's Military Palace in Nineveh.[26]

Wooden beams longer than 10 m had to be brought from afar.[27] Beams were probably reused whenever possible. This is reflected in house sale contracts, which often included the wooden features such as beams and doors within the sell.[28] Beams long enough to cover a throne room are likely to have been rare. The most prestigious wood came from the mountains along the eastern Mediterranean. Carrying these large cedar beams to the capitals of Assyria was obviously a daunting task.

The height of an Assyrian throne room was arguably even more monumental than its horizontal dimensions. Although no throne room has been preserved up to its roof, their original height can be argued to have been at least 15 m.[29] Such dimensions are hard to contemplate. A single throne room is akin to a modern apartment building of four storeys (i.e. five floor levels; Fig. 3). This translates into a building with twenty-five 100 sq.m apartments, or fifty apartments if the external walls are included.

The throne room as a reception room

In many ways, throne rooms were a monumental version of the common reception room as found throughout the palaces of Assyria. Unfortunately, their ubiquity is related to the lack of architecturally distinctive features that would allow one to reconstruct more specific uses. The exact uses of these reception rooms are likely to have been more heterogeneous than the term 'reception room' suggests.

Assyrian palace architecture consisted of a set of installations used in specific rooms, which were combined into suites of rooms, following certain combinatory rules.[30] The resulting suites were generally self-contained and only accessible from one side. Suites did not tend to have backdoors or alternative entrances, nor were they generally connected to each other. They were entered through their biggest room, which functioned as a threshold into the remainder of the suite. The palaces were organised around a set of such self-contained suites, whose presence is among the most characteristic features of Assyrian architecture.

The large rooms through which one entered individual suites can generally be described as a reception room. These represent the biggest rooms within their respective suites and contained a specific set of installations. This included large, often grooved stone plates placed in the middle of the room, intended for the placement of a portable brazier (Fig. 1–2).[31] This enabled the rooms to be heated in the winter. These stone plates are often called tram-rails in modern literature. Most reception rooms also contained large stone plates placed on the floor against their outer wall, which can be described as 'libation slabs', even if their actual purpose remains elusive.[32] Throne rooms are comparable: they were the biggest room within their respective suites, placed at the entrance of the suite, and contained 'tram-rails' and 'libation slabs'.

The throne rooms contained a third type of installation in the form of a stone dais placed at one of the short ends of the room. It is these daises that introduce the throne into the throne room, even if actual

19 Heinrich 1984.
20 Parrot 1958, 111.
21 Pfälzner 2007, 33.
22 Preusser 1955, 17.
23 Shepperson 2017, 221–226, 231–233.
24 Novák 2012, 260.
25 Heinrich 1984, 214.
26 Rinap 4, 2: v. 18–32; Kertai 2015b, 217.
27 Fuchs 1994, 377; Parpola 1995, 59–61.
28 Radner 1997.
29 Kertai 2015b, 8–10.
30 Kertai 2015b, 185–249.
31 Kertai 2015b, 185–187.
32 Kertai 2015b, 194–195.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

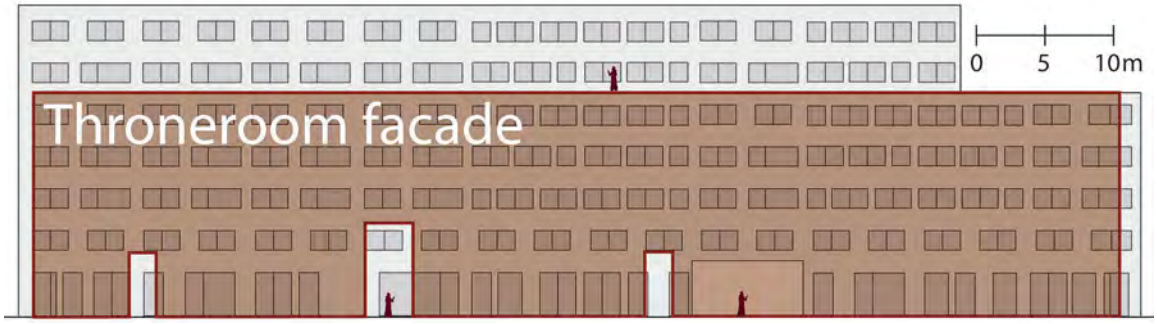


Fig. 3 Comparison between the elevations of a 15 m high throne room and a modern apartment complex

thrones have not been preserved. Stone daises are rare in other rooms, but were not unique to the throne room. They appear to have been common in two additional locations as well: the courtyards in front of the throne room and the reception rooms that were located closest to this courtyard, as part of what can be described as a double-sided reception suite.[33]

The setting at the end of a reception room was frequently elaborated to accommodate the presence of the king, especially in the 9th century BC. Most monumental reception rooms within the Northwest Palace depicted the king on the wall at the room's end, creating an axis towards it and adding a nearby backdoor for the king's use.[34] This setting was enhanced in the throne room by incorporating the image of the king into an elaborate niche placed behind the dais. In the Northwest Palace, this niche showed the king twice[35] surrounded by different apotropaic creatures.

More specific to the throne room is a second setting that was created in the middle of the room through the addition of a second niche similar to the one placed at the end of the room. This setting did not include a dais, but is unique to the throne room and has not been found in other reception rooms.

The best preserved niches were found in the throne room of the Northwest Palace. Niches were also found at the end of the throne room of the Military Palace in Kalḫu,[36] in both locations in the Royal Palace in Dur-Sharruken,[37] and in the centre of the room in the throne rooms of the Southwest and North Palaces of Nineveh. Most throne rooms, with the possible exception of that of the North Palace, are likely to have originally contained both niches (Fig. 1). The decoration of the preserved niches remains mostly unknown, but a scene with the king, similar to the scenes in the Northwest Palace, can probably be reconstructed in the Military Palace of Kalḫu[38] and the Southwest Palace of Nineveh.[39]

These settings remained part of all Assyrian throne rooms, but declined in prominence within the other reception rooms. The common reception suite of the 7th century BC, which can be described as a dual-core suite – a type that was organised around two reception rooms – lacked similar settings.[40]

Movement to and within the throne room

So far the throne room has been discussed as a decontextualized room, but one of its most distinct features was its location within the palace. The Assyrian throne room was typified by its forward placement within the palace, where it was the first monumental room to be encountered.[41] One could argue that the suite replicated the organisation of the individual suites by placing the most important room/suite in the front and centre.

The route towards the throne room is not always known in detail, but its general organisation was similar. People went up to the citadel, entered the palace, and had to pass through one or more forecourts before reaching the throne room. The architecture of this route seems to have been relatively modest, with decoration being limited to the gates that one had to pass through. These gates could include large apotropaic statues of different types of winged human-headed bulls or lions.[42] Their use was generally restricted to the central doorways of the more monumental suites and the external gates of the palace. These statues were not placed in the smaller side entrances of rooms. The notable exception was formed by the throne room where each doorway, both internal and external, was flanked by large apotropaic statues. Additional statues were placed back to back along the buttresses of the throne room's façade. The ten

33 Kertai 2015b, 219–222.
34 Kertai 2015c; Kertai forthcoming.
35 Reade 1983, 26. For a different interpretation of the scene see Brentjes 1994, 50–54; Brown 2010, 25–27.
36 Oates 1963, 8.
37 Loud et al. 1936, 60–61.
38 Kertai 2011, fig. 9.
39 Reade 1979, 34; Russell 1991, 48–50.
40 Kertai 2015b, 222–224.
41 Cf. Margueron in this volume.
42 Engel 1987.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

statues lining its façade created a protective wall at the front of the palace.

The monumentality of the throne room also acted as a physical and symbolic wall, shielding the rest of the palace from view. The throne room would have impressed through its sheer size. Nothing along the route towards it is likely to have prepared first-time visitors for this encounter. The decoration of the throne room's façade would have enhanced its impact. It was not only sumptuously covered with stone reliefs, but it was also the first place where narrative reliefs were shown, which included the image of the king. In the Northwest Palace the throne room's façade formed the only exterior space where narrative reliefs were employed. The Royal Palace in Dur-Sharruken and the Southwest Palace in Nineveh did use such reliefs in their inner courtyards,[43] but did not employ them along the route towards the throne room.

The use of and movement within the throne room were dependent on the throne room's connections with the outside. Like the internal settings, these were standardised and changed little over time. Assyrian throne rooms possessed three external entrances, centred on a large doorway symmetrically flanked by two smaller, but still monumental, entrances (Fig. 1). These doors organised movement, but might have also been important in providing light to these rooms.[44] The doors were generally oriented to the north, which meant that they received "almost no direct light for most of the year",[45] keeping the rooms relatively cool even in summer.

The narrative reliefs along the throne room's façade guided movement towards these entrances.[46] This is again more apparent in the Northwest Palace, where the two side entrances were flanked by depictions of foreign tribute bearers carrying jewellery and monkeys towards the doors (Fig. 4).[47] The door closest to the throne dais was flanked by representations of three tribute-bearing individuals on each side facing the doorway. A larger and linearly organised group was shown moving towards the door farthest from the throne dais. This group walked towards the king who was depicted awaiting them on the other side of the doorway. It is generally assumed that most people entered the throne room through this door.[48] The king stood outside his throne room welcoming the visitors depicted on the reliefs as well as the actual visitors walking towards him.[49]

The reliefs along the façade of the throne room in Sargon's Royal Palace were similar, but were moved farther away from the actual throne room. The procession towards the king covers the entire length of the external façade west of the throne room's entrance, leading people to enter behind the king's image.[50] The reliefs outside Sennacherib's throne room do not seem to have guided movement in a similar way. Distinctions are instead made in the inscriptions used on the colossi standing in the different doors, with the colossi in the entrance door focussing "the attention on the favour and love by the gods",[51] in contrast to the inscription in the central door, which included an extensive military account.[52]

By entering the throne room at the opposite end of the room, the route to the king was extended. The sheer size of the room would likely have been enough to overwhelm visitors. The discomfort of visitors would have been enhanced by the gaze of the king and his entourage, awaiting visitors at the other end of the room, while one was making his/her arduous way across the room (Fig. 5). Light entering through the door closest to the throne would have highlighted the king, though it would have made it more difficult for him to see what was happening in the relatively darker space before him.[53] The light entering the room in the centre would have had the added advantage of shining a light on the people moving towards the king midway along their walk.

Movement in the room would have been somewhat curtailed in the winter, when braziers are likely to have been placed in the centre of the room. This would have made a direct approach towards the king impossible, forcing people to walk closer to the walls of the room. The smoke and heat emanating from the brazier would have also influenced the visibility of the king, potentially even blocking a direct view of him from the other end of the room. It would also have hindered the king's view, creating a smaller area of mutual visibility closer to the king.

The most likely path through the room is along the southern wall, as this would force visitors to pass alongside the throne on their way out, which is likely to have occurred through the doorway closest to the throne. Other routes are, however, impossible to substantiate or exclude. One can alternatively envisage a route that led visitors back to the door that they had used to enter the room.[54] This would have made people walk back near the reliefs along the northern wall and would have maximised their stay in the throne room. The door closest to the throne could have been used to take out the objects brought to the king rather than for the visitors themselves. As a source of light for the area around the throne, the door would have been important even if nobody used it.[55]

43 Russell 1987.
44 Shepperson 2017, 225.
45 Shepperson 2017, 219–221.
46 Porter 2003, 184–185; Winter 1983, 26.
47 Meuszyński 1981.
48 Mallowan 1966, 103; Nadali 2008, 476–477; Oates and Oates 2001, 51–52; Paley and Sobolewski 1992, 12; Russell 1998, 711; Porter 2003, 185.
49 Kertai forthcoming; Porter 2003, 184–186.
50 Kertai forthcoming.
51 Nadali 2008, 477.
52 Nadali 2008, 477–478; Russell 1987, 530–535.
53 Shepperson 2017, 228.
54 Porter 2003, 186.
55 Russell 1998, 707.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

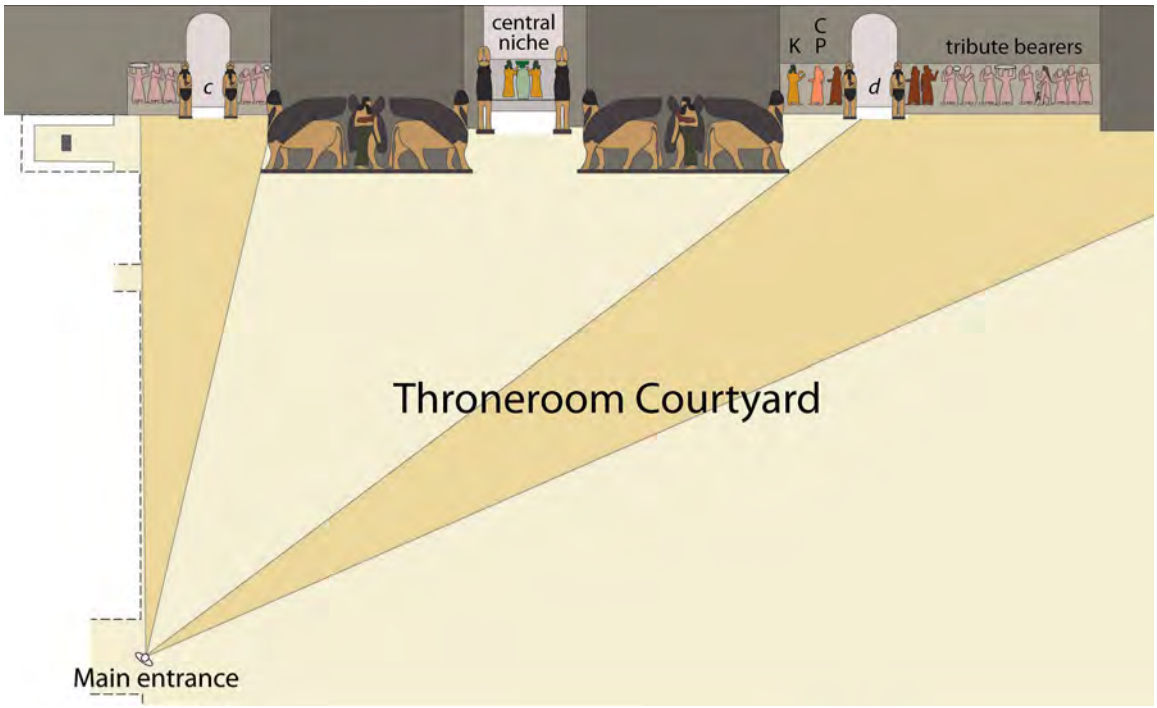


Fig. 4 Throne room courtyard (Northwest Palace, Kalḫu) showing the view from the courtyard's main entrance (K = king; CP = crown prince)

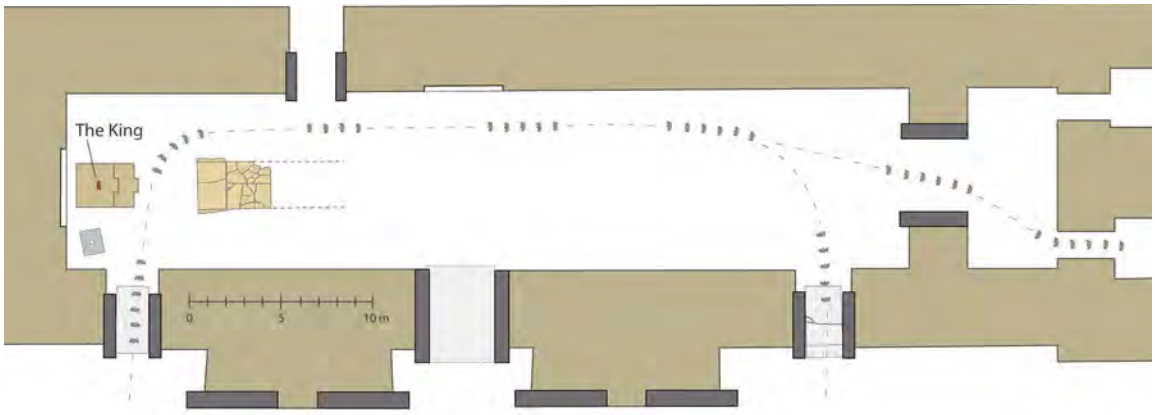


Fig. 5 Throne room (Northwest Palace, Kalḫu) with possible routes through the room

The central niche and gatherings in the throne room

The central entrance of the throne room was more likely related to the niche opposite it. It created a visual axis from the outside, which allowed people in the courtyard to glimpse inside to see the niche. This niche is sometimes described as replicating the setting at the end of the room, with a king seated on a throne.[56] The absence of a dais, and other means to create a distance from the king, might however make it less likely that the central setting was intended for the seated king. Without a dais, people would have looked down on the king. It is possible that a portable dais was used, as suggested by John Russell,[57] but the king is perhaps more likely to have been standing, as he is commonly show doing when groups approach him. Being in the centre of the room would have allowed an audience to stand around him. It would have also allowed people to walk past him rather than towards him.

56 Turner 1970, 186; Turner 1998, 24; Paley and Sobolewski 1992, 13.

57 Russell 1998, 710.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

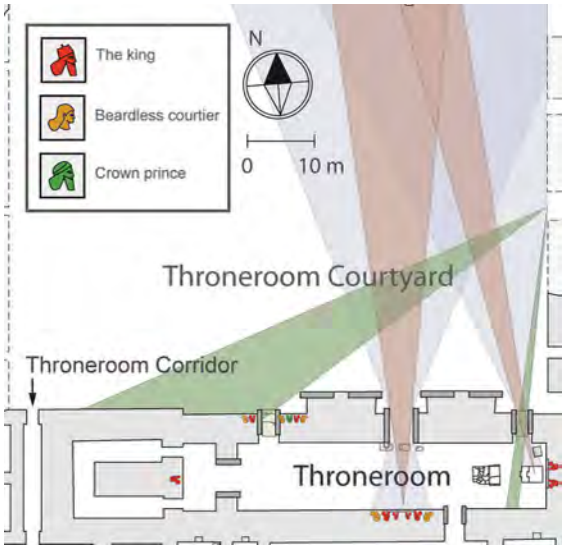


Fig. 6 Throne room courtyard (Northwest Palace, Kalḫu) showing the visibility of the two settings of kingship within the throne room

The axis to the outside is less likely to have been intended for audiences in the courtyard, as the niche could only be seen from a relatively small area (Fig. 6). The niche was similarly ill-suited as a vantage point to view activity happening outside of the room. It is for this reason that a second throne dais seems to have been present in the courtyards in front of the throne room. The niche could, however, have framed the king even if he was further away. Stella Nair, in her study on Inca architecture, has highlighted how a large, distinctive doorway could act to frame the ruler who was actually seated outside the building in front of the door.[58] The central doorway of the throne room would similarly have provided an elaborate frame for the king. Seated on the threshold of the central doorway, the king would have been able to view the courtyard, while being framed by the most monumental portal that Assyria had to offer.

The central door also allowed people walking through the courtyard to peek inside the throne room on their way towards its entrance. It must be noted, however, that one would have already been able to look into the throne room through the door closest to the throne, and would have thus already seen the seated king prior to seeing the central niche. The central niche might therefore have been especially powerful when the king was not present at all. By opening the central door, the king's presence would have been conveyed even if nothing was happening in the throne room.

While most studies have focussed on movement, the throne room seems similarly suited for gatherings, which must have occurred just as frequently. Such events are less about approaching the king but about being present. Gatherings have a lot of potential for communicating hierarchies but we know little about the associated protocol.

The throne room could accommodate large crowds. If we take the smallest royal throne rooms, which measured c. 450 sq.m, we can try to calculate the potential audience for such events. A very modest crowd of 1 person per sq.m would already result in a capacity of 450 people. With a medium-sized crowd of 2.5 people per sq.m, the throne room would be able of accommodating more than a thousand people,[59] while a packed room could accommodate considerably more.

The room is unlikely to have been filled completely if only to preserve space for the king and his entourage. The installations within the room would have limited the crowds even further. It can be assumed that the end of the throne room, where the throne dais was located, was off-limits to the general audience. The tram-rails in front of the dais would have created an even larger distance. Moving the audience back beyond the tram-rails has the added advantage of placing the door leading farther into the palace on the side of the king. Even if one assumes that people gathered at such a distance from the king, the remaining space would still have been c. 300 sq.m in size and could thus easily have accommodated up to 300 people, or 750 if a medium-sized crowd density is chosen (Fig. 7).

The throne room ramp

Special features were added to the throne room, which would have otherwise been a common reception room. It was, however, the suite of rooms it was part of, that made the throne room truly unique within Assyrian palace architecture. The most prominent addition to the throne room was formed by a room placed at its end, which was occupied by a monumental ramp (Fig. 1). This ramp has not received much attention in scholarship, but is among the most distinct features of the Assyrian throne room suite. Moreover, the ramp was unique to the throne room suite. No other suite included a staircase or ramp. In fact, in most palaces, the throne room formed the only place where a vertical connection existed. This foremost reflects the lack of second storeys within the palaces of Assyria.[60] Unfortunately, most ramps have not been excavated. One notable exception is the ramp in Room 61 of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh,[61] which was clearly not part of any suite.

Room 61 is also the only proof that these spaces were equipped with ramps rather than staircases. A staircase allows a steeper climb and thus a shorter distance would have been required to reach similar heights to a ramp. The treads of a monumental staircase would, however,

58 Nair 2015, 103.

59 Gilibert 2011, 103.
60 Kertai 2015d.
61 Layard 1853, 460–462.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

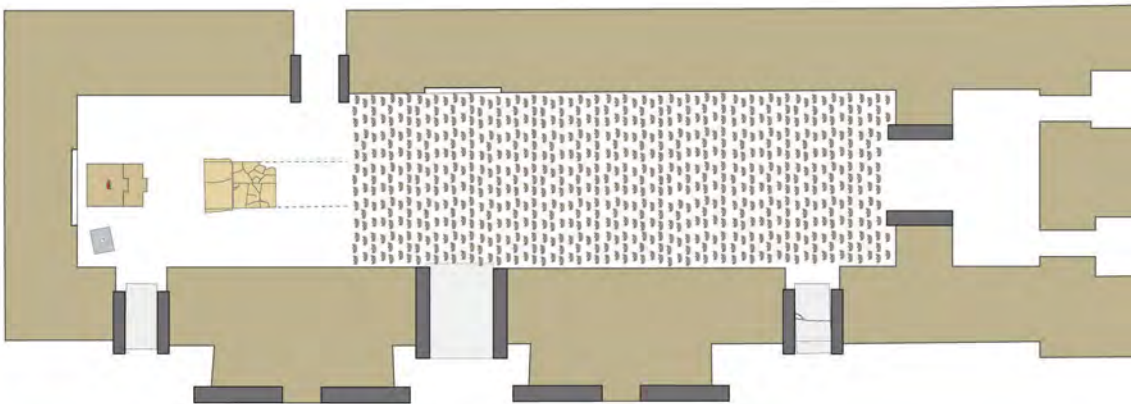


Fig. 7 Throne room (Northwest Palace, Kalḫu) filled with a medium-sized crowd (c. 750 people; 2.5 per sq.m)

probably have been constructed of sturdier materials such as stone, which are more likely to have been discovered during excavations. The floor of the ramp in Room 61 was paved "with lime about 1½ inch thick" (i.e., c. 4 cm).[62] Such information on the construction of a floor is in itself surprisingly rare. Most publications have focussed on reliefs or installations rather than on the more mundane features such as the construction of the floors.

The continuous presence of throne room ramps is doubtless, and their inner contours have often been traced. A vestibule, which connected the ramp with the throne room, has also been found in all excavated royal palaces. This vestibule connected to the throne room through a large central opening. This portal was flanked by large apotropaic statues in the palaces where stone reliefs were employed. Vestibules are otherwise uncommon in Assyrian architecture. The Northwest Palace did include a few such rooms (N and T), but these acted as side entrances into their respective suites. Similar side entrances were created in later palaces as well, but remained atypical.

The door towards the ramp itself was smaller and located on the outer side of the suite. A second door, which led to a storage space underneath the ramp, has been traced less frequently, but can be assumed to have formed another standard feature. Its location, however, seems to have changed over time. In the Northwest Palace, this second door (*c*) was located between the vestibule (C) and the ramp. The throne room suite of Kalḫu's Military Palace seems to have been organised similarly, even if this area was only explored by surface scrapping.[63]

In the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharruken the storage space seems to have been accessed from within the ramp (23).[64] The same seems to have been true for the city's Military Palace.[65] The fact that these spaces are, however, not discussed in the publications, casts doubts on the degree to which they were excavated.

The throne room ramp of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh is mostly unknown, but its existence is suggested by the large blank area where the ramp is expected to have existed and by its external protrusion on Layard's plans. No door was located along the external wall between the vestibule (3) and the ramp, but one could have existed on the inner side of the room.[66]

The nature of the ramp in the North Palace is even more uncertain. The ramp itself was not traced. Instead, the area is described as a courtyard. Only one door seems to have connected this space to Vestibule N of the throne room. A storage space would have therefore been accessible only from within the space of the ramp itself, similar to the royal palaces of Dur-Sharruken. The 'courtyard' also provided access to Rooms K and P. These doors are likely to have been connected through a corridor running behind or under the ramp. Whether it also connected to the ramp itself and whether a storage space existed remains unknown.[67]

The wall between the vestibule and the ramp faced the throne dais at the other end of the throne room. In the Northwest Palace, the king's image was depicted in the centre of this wall.[68] Unfortunately, the other palaces do not allow a detailed reconstruction of the reliefs at this location.

The vestibule and ramp are an inherent part of the throne room suite. They added between 20 and 25 m to the length of the throne room suite, thereby increasing its size by c. 50 %. With such dimensions, it is not surprising that the ramps were themselves monumental. Judging by the central pier, a typical throne room ramp was between 2.5 and 3 m wide. This

62 Russell 1995, 83.
63 Oates 1963, pl. II. For surface scrapping see Kertai 2015b, 59–60; Reade 2002, 203–204.
64 The ramp itself was first reconstructed by Loud (Loud and Altman 1938, 55).
65 Loud and Altman 1938, pl. 75.
66 Kertai 2015b, 131, n. 49; Turner 1970, 189–190.
67 Kertai 2015b, 175.
68 Relief 7, Room C. For its reconstruction see Meuszyński 1981, 29.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

would have allowed up to four people to walk besides each other.[69]

Due to a lack of excavated ramps, their slopes remain unknown. The slope of 8° in Room 61 can, however, be used as a guide.[70] This angle falls within the parameters for an architectural slope.[71] Other known slopes seem to have been steeper. The smaller ramp leading up to the Royal Palace terrace in Dur-Sharruken, as reconstructed by Loud, seems to have had a slope of c. 20°, although its actually excavated surface was slightly less steep with a slope of c. 15°.[72] The ascending corridor (A/R) in the North Palace of Nineveh was reconstructed with a gentler slope of c. 5°.[73] However, Geoffrey Turner reconstructed it, as well as the similar descending corridor (51) in the Southwest Palace in Nineveh, twice as steep, based on the angle of the reliefs known to have come from these corridors.[74] The similarly ascending corridor (R2–R6) in the Military Palace of Kalḫu had a slope of c. 8.5° and c. 13°[75] with an average of c. 9°. The 8° of the slope in Room 61 thus seems comparable to other Assyrian ramps.

Different reconstructions can be proposed for the way in which the ramp continued upwards. The ramp could have come full circle within its own space. If one assumes that the corners were flat, a single run would have resulted in a slope c. 25 m long, comprising of lengths of c. 7.5 and 5 m in each direction. If one includes the vestibule, then one can reconstruct a ramp consisting of two long slopes (both c. 10 m long) connected by a shorter slope of c. 5 m. The space above the vestibule could have been flat or have added an additional 5 m long slope. The first option creates a slope of 25 m, similar to the first reconstruction, whereas the latter creates a slope with a length of 30 m.

The slope would have been shorter, however, if the entrance to the storage space was located inside the room of the ramp. This would likely have moved the start of the ramp beyond the door of the storage space, shortening its overall length and thereby limiting the height that could have been reached after one run of the ramp. Regardless of the chosen reconstruction, the slope was considerable in length. This article will consider the option with a slope concentrated in the room of the ramp. Using the ramp in Room 61 of the Southwest Palace as an example, one run of the ramp would have resulted in a height of c. 3.5 m (Fig. 8).

The purpose of the ramp remains unknown. The absence of a second storey would have limited the places the ramp could have led to. A more localised second storey might be feasible in theory, but seems unlikely considering the location of the ramp, which was only accessible from the throne room itself. The ramp did not have its own access and was thus dependent on the throne room for accessibility, which suggests also a functional dependence. Sobolewski suggested that the ramp could have been intended to provide the opportunity to look back into the throne room by creating a balcony above the vestibule.[76] Such balconies are certainly feasible, though they seem to lack support in the archaeological or textual evidence. In order to reach such a balcony, a second run of the ramp would probably have been required, to arrive above the statues standing in the doorway between the vestibule and the throne room; however, a second run would have placed people c. 7 m above the floor of the throne room. This is not necessarily problematic and can be compared to a choir in the back of a church, but would have restricted the type of use for which it could have been intended.

A balcony could have provided a vantage point into the throne room (Fig. 9), but, as will be discussed below, the ramp does not seem to be associated with the king, who would have been the most likely person to have taken advantage of such a position. Other groups that might be assumed to have appreciated such vantage point could include women or royal offspring, but the ramp's lack of back entrance does not seem very conducive for such interpretation. Any person going up the ramp would have needed to enter and leave through the throne room, severely limiting its use as a secluded and/or secret vantage point.

The roof of the throne room

By process of elimination, the ramp – which does not seem to have been connected to anything else – is most likely to have been intended to reach the roof of the throne room.[77] Considering the room's probable height of more than 15 m, not including the considerable thickness of the roof itself, reaching the roof would have entailed substantial effort. Few people are happy to walk up five storeys, which would entail climbing up 125 m with a slope of 8°. The king, rather than walking up himself, might have enjoyed the privilege of being carried up in a palanquin.[78] While this might have been more pleasant for the king, it would obviously have made the climb more arduous for those carrying him.

A height of 15 m would have required up to five complete runs around the ramp's core (Fig. 8). The construction of the additional runs adds another unknown. They were most likely constructed as vaulted spaces or through the use of wooden supports.[79] The storage spaces below the third flight indicate that the ramp floated after the second flight.

69 Neufert 2000, 17.
70 Kertai 2015b, 215.
71 Neufert 2000, 192.
72 Based on Loud and Altman 1938, pl. 82.
73 Barnett 1976, 31–32.
74 Turner 1998, 34.
75 Mallowan 1966, n. 124.
76 Sobolewski 1982, 254.
77 Oates and Oates 2001, 53; Russell 1998, 705; Turner 1970, 189.
78 Kertai 2015b, 201–202.
79 Loud and Altman 1938, 27; Kreppner and Schmid 2013, 289–299; Novák and Schmid 2001.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 8 Section through a throne room (Northwest Palace, Kalḫu) showing a possible reconstruction of the throne room ramp

Fig. 9 Section through a throne room (Northwest Palace, Kalḫu) showing a possible reconstruction of a balcony

Although light is an issue in all Assyrian spaces,[80] it would have been especially pronounced in the relatively low and winding spaces of the ramp.[81] Whereas the general lack of windows might be countered by the assumption that some form of clerestory lighting existed, the ramp would have required light on much lower levels. No light sources have been found in any of these spaces, although this might partially be related to the lack of properly excavated ramps.

The hypothesis that the ramp was intended to provide access to the roof creates more questions than it answers. The most basic question is: why the roof? Loud suggested that it was to "seek the cooler evening breezes".[82] The roof could also have offered sleeping places during hot summer nights. Whether the royal court slept outside is, however, unknown and would have depended more on social mores than climatic considerations. The need would have been reduced due to the thick walls and limited openings of the main rooms, which were likely relatively cool even in the summer. More importantly, the throne room's roof would be an unlikely place for a residential roof due to its inaccessibility and association with the throne room suite. Its height would have added little to the climatic advantages of the outside, while adding the inconvenience of an arduous climb. The palace's courtyards would have represented an easier way to enjoy a summer evening.

Gojko Barjamovic has suggested that the throne room's roof could have been used by the king "to greet passing processions of dignitaries at grand imperial celebrations".[83] This is based on a text written by Nabû-šumu-iddina, the mayor/inspector of the Nabu Temple at Kalḫu:[84]

"Let an order be given to the palace-overseers: when the elders pass by beneath the terrace, let them allow me to see the face of the king, my lord, and may the k[ing] look at me. Let them constantly send me word on the health of [the king, my lord]".[85]

This text does not, however, refer to a roof (*uru*), but rather describes the king looking down from a courtyard terrace (*tamlû*). At a height of more than 15 m, the roof was not the most practical vantage point. It would have been difficult for the king to see in detail what was happening on the ground, and it would have been even more difficult for people to look up to the king. Also, looking down from a ledge 15 m above the ground is not for the fainthearted. That a roof, especially one of such height, could be dangerous seems self-evident. The protagonist of the *Righteous Sufferer's Prayer to Nabû* makes this explicit, even if his attempts were unsuccessful: "I repeatedly ascend the roof in order to fall down, but my life is too precious, it turns me back".[86] Such a death was among the several modes of dying mentioned in *Bilgames and the Netherworld* as being

80 Kertai 2015b, 189–190; Shepperson 2017.
81 Loud and Altman 1938, 27.
82 Loud and Altman 1938, 27.
83 Barjamovic 2011, 34.
84 Baker 2001, 885–886.
85 SAA 13, 80, 14: r.9.
86 SAA 3, 12: r.1.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

amongst those that did not allow for a complete burial. Enkidu came across such a man in the netherworld and described him as follows: "They cannot repair his bones. He twitches like an ox as the maggots consume him."[87]

The depiction of mourners after the Assyrian conquest of their city usually occurs on the city's walls. Sargon II, however, describes how the inhabitants of Muṣaṣir, "the old men and women of its people went up on the roofs of their houses to weep bitterly".[88] A beardless official is seen sitting on the roof of one of Muṣaṣir's buildings on a relief from Sargon's palace.[89] One did not need to fall from a roof for bad things to happen. Roofs were among the many places where danger lurked. A hemerology for the first seven days of the month Tishri (VII) warns against going up to the roof on two of the seven days to avoid the situation in which "the ardat-lilî-demon will seek him in marriage".[90]

The roof as cultic space

Perhaps the simplest explanation for why a ramp was created in the highest room, with all the inconvenience this must have entailed in reaching the roof, was the height that could be achieved. The throne room's roof would have provided almost unobstructed views of its surroundings. Only the city's ziggurat can be assumed to have reached a greater height. The throne room's height would have especially benefitted celestial observations and cultic activities. These important rituals could require a roof as their location. Ritual texts mention the cleaning of the roof, the sprinkling of pure water, which often had been placed on the roof below the stars previously, and the placement of a portable altar and different ritual assemblages on the roof.[91] A literary example is offered by Queen Ninsun, the mother of Gilgamesh, who is said to have climbed a staircase to go up to the roof in order to place a censer for Shamash.[92]

A Namburbi ritual adds the requirement for the ritual to take place on an unspecified roof at a difficult place to reach[93] – a setting that certainly applied to the throne room's roof. A *Commentary to the Assyrian Cultic Calendar* describes how on the 18th day of the month Shebat (XI),[94] a day called 'Silence', "they cast Qingu and his forty sons from the roof. The oil and honey which is cast into the gutter, is cast as a representation of their blood."[95] Qingu is the son or husband of Tiamat, the main protagonist in the Mesopotamian creation myth *Enuma Elish*. It is from Qingu's blood that Ea creates mankind, an act that might be referenced to in this ritual.[96]

Numerous letters to the king include reports of celestial observations. These texts do not generally mention the locations where such observations were made. These texts are, however, likely to refer to observations made outside the palace, in the homes of the scholars or in the temples of Assyria.[97] It is their occurrence elsewhere that forms the main reason why the letters were written in the first place. In general, things happening in the palace seem to have been conveyed verbally rather than through written communication. This would explain why so few texts describe activity within the palaces.

An exception is a letter written to the king by Marduk-šakin-šumi, the chief exorcist of Esarhaddon,[98] in which he describes the incantations he performed against different potential evils. The letter states: "I have today performed on the river bank; Urad-Ea will perform (his share) on the roof of the palace tonight."[99] This Urad-Ea was another elite scholar.[100] The letter differs from the common texts in being an announcement of Urad-Ea's future activity, rather than a report on an event that has already taken place. The actual report might well have been given to the king in person within the palace later that evening. A Late Assyrian royal ritual includes the performance of Balağs and Eršaḫuğas on the roof of the palace.[101] These texts do not mention which palace's roof would have been used, but the throne room's roof represents the most likely location for any ritual, since the other roofs were more difficult to reach.

The ramp in Room 61 of the Southwest Palace created an alternative access point to the roof, which continued to exist throughout the 7th century BC. This ramp was located deep within the monumental part of the palace and was accessible only from the terrace of the palace. Being located close to Rooms 29 and 34, the most monumental rooms besides the throne room, suggests that it reached a considerable height as well. The ramp was connected to these rooms through Room 33. It remains unknown whether a functional distinction existed between the activity associated with this ramp and the one in the throne room. The continued presence of the throne room ramps does suggest that they remained an essential.

87 George 1999, 189.
88 Foster 2005, 808. See also Mayer 1983, 103 (l. 344).
89 Botta 1849, pl. 141.
90 CTN 4, 58: o.14, r.14 <http://oracc.org/cams/gkab/P363473> (last access 20 February 2017).
91 Maul and Strauss 2011, no. 20: 3', no. 34: 8', no. 39: 19', no. 47: 4'–6' and no. 53, Rs. 3–5. See also Maul 1994, 41–42, 45; Zgoll 2003, 97–105. See also the Geography of Knowledge Corpus: <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/cams/gkab/corpus/> (last access 20 February 2017).
92 George 1999, 24–26.
93 Maul 1994, 294–295 (l. 3).
94 For a discussion of its dating see Annus 2002, 65–67.
95 SAA 3, 40, 3–4.
96 Krebernik 2007; Talon 2005.
97 Ambos 2004, 172–197.
98 Frahm 2001, 722–725.
99 SAA 10, 240. See also Maul 1994, 31.
100 Radner 2011, 1396–1397.
101 Gabbay 2015, 166.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Conclusion

The Assyrian throne room was the main place where the king welcomed the court community and visitors alike.[102] It was the place where the king awaited people at one of two main settings of Assyrian kingship: on the throne at the end of the room or in front of the niche in its centre. These settings are likely to have governed the use of and movement within the throne room. Most visitors would have entered the room from the far end in order to walk the entire length of the room where the 'acquiring gaze' of the king, to use the words of Marian Feldman,[103] awaited them. Henri Lefebvre's description of entering a cathedral seems an apt analogy (except, perhaps, the notions of sin and redemption):

"For visitors are bound to become aware of their own footsteps, and listen to the noises, the singing; they must breathe the incense-laden air, and plunge into a particular world, that of sin and redemption; they will partake of an ideology; they will contemplate and decipher the symbols around them; and they will thus, on the basis of their own bodies, experience a total being in a total space".[104]

Entering an Assyrian throne room made visitors aware of themselves as they entered the space of Assyrian kingship. The Assyrian throne room did not only communicate with its audience, but also placed the king front and centre. It evoked the accessibility of the Assyrian king. Whether he would have characterised his monarchy as being defined by "the free and easy access of its subjects to the sovereign" as Louis XIV did (see epigraph) remains unknown, but the Assyrian throne room similarly combined an architecture of symbolic and actual accessibility with pervasive court ritual within an architectural setting that aimed to overwhelm, making the throne room an obvious case of conspicuous consumption.[105] The throne room was, however, only the start of the palace's monumental part. Behind the immense wall created by the throne room lay the large, sumptuously decorated suites of the Assyrian court. The route towards these suites did not, however, run through the throne room, but was diverted to the corridor located at its end.

Although the throne room contained the most important throne of the empire, it was the ramp within the suite that was arguably its most distinctive feature. The ramp was always located at the far end of the room. This probably indicates that the king was not its primary user. The spaces for the king, such as a bathroom and a door leading farther inwards, were located close to the throne dais at the end of the room, for the king's convenience. The ramp's placement suggests that it was less about the king going up than it was about others doing so and reporting back to the king. The organisation of the throne room suite allowed the king to remain on his throne while different experts went up to the roof. The placement of the ramp necessitated the officials to walk the entire length of the throne room to bring their reports, where the king's 'inquisitive gaze' awaited them. Such route was markedly similar to that taken by most visitors coming into the room and increased their actual, as well as symbolic, distance to the king. The vestibule between the ramp and the throne room created a threshold into the room where people might have awaited further admission. The vestibule might signal that a pause was required before returning into the throne room.

The throne room suite is remarkable for its longevity as an architectural unit. The suite was present throughout the Late Assyrian period. Its features remained remarkably stable. The conservatism inherent in the throne room suite is alluded to by the value placed on reconstructing anew the throne rooms as they were. It might also suggest that the types of events for which the suite was envisaged remained similar throughout this period, but an exact equation between space and its use cannot be presumed. The discussed events did have a temporal component. The rituals associated with roofs, and therefore the throne room ramp seem associated mostly with the night or early morning. The throne room itself and its northern orientation are more suited for a daytime use. As Mary Shepperson has shown, its northern orientation seems intended to keep the throne room cool during summer days, rather than to retain heat for the evening or during the winter.[106]

Although this paper has focussed on the royal palaces, the throne room was not a royal prerogative. Elite houses contained a similar large room, placed to the fore. These rooms might not have contained a proper throne, but allowed guests to be entertained and awaited in similar settings. These rooms contained their own ramps or, in some cases, a staircase, which generally formed the only vertical connection within these buildings. Like their royal counterparts, these ramps were only accessible from the main room of the building. The combination of a throne room and a vertical connection seems to have been as important in elite houses as it was in the royal palaces. The importance and effort entailed in going up to the roof was shared by the Assyrian elites and was intrinsically connected to the main room of a house. The roofs of elite houses would not have reached the same height as the royal throne room, but were still monumental. The main room of the largest known Assyrian elite house, Residence K in Dur-Sharruken, had an internal height of at least 14 m.[107] These roofs would have provided excellent views of their surroundings, including a view of the other elite roofs and the activities occurring on them. Together, the elite houses, temples, and royal palaces created a shared roofscape within the cities of Assyria.

102 Winterling 1997, 14.
103 Feldman 2014, 91.
104 Lefebvre 1992, 221.
105 Trigger 1990.
106 Shepperson 2017, 221.
107 Loud and Altman 1938, 90.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Ambos, C.
2004 *Mesopotamische Baurituale aus dem 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Dresden.

Annus, A.
2002 *The God Ninurta: In the Mythology and Royal Ideology of Ancient Mesopotamia*, State Archives of Assyria Studies 14, Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki.

Baker, H.D.
2001 *Nabû-šumu-iddina*, in: H.D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Vol. 2, Part II, *L–N*, Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, 884–888.

Barjamovic, G.
2011 *Pride, Pomp and Circumstance: Palace, Court and Household in Assyria 879–612 BCE*, in: J. Duindam, T. Artan and M. Kunt (eds.), *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, Leiden, 27–61.

Barnett, R.D.
1976 *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668–627 BC)*, London.

Botta, P.E.
1849 *Monument de Ninive*, Paris.

Brentjes, B.
1994 Selbstverherrlichung oder Legitimitätsanspruch? Gedanken zu dem Thronrelief von Nimrud-Kalah, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 21.1, 50–64.

Brown, B.A.
2010 Kingship and Ancestral Cult in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 10.1, 1–53.

Chatenet, M.
2009 *The King's Space: The Etiquette of Interviews at the French Court in the Sixteenth Century*, in: M. Fantoni, G. Gorse and M. Smuts (eds.), *The Politics of Space: European Courts (ca. 1500–1750)*, Rome, 193–208.

Engel, B.J.
1987 *Darstellungen von Dämonen und Tieren in assyrischen Palästen und Tempeln nach den schriftlichen Quellen*, Mönchengladbach.

Feldman, M.H.
2014 *Communities of Style: Portable Luxury Arts, Identity, and Collective Memory in the Iron Age Levant*, Chicago.

Foster, B.R.
2005 *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, Bethesda, MD.

Frahm, E.
1999 Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, das Gilgameš-Epos und der Tod Sargons II, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 51, 73–90.
2001 *Marduk-šākin-šumi*, in: H.D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Vol. 2, Part II, *L–N*, Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, 721–725.

Fuchs, A.
1994 *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad*, Göttingen.

Gabbay, U.
2015 *The Eršema Prayers of the First Millennium BC*, Heidelberger Emesal-Studien 1, Wiesbaden.

George, A.
1999 *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*, London.

Gilibert, A.
2011 *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, Berliner Studien der Alten Welt 2, Berlin.

Heinrich, E.
1984 *Die Paläste im alten Mesopotamien*, Denkmäler antiker Architektur 15, Berlin.

Kertai, D.
2011 Kalḫu's Palaces of War and Peace: Palace Architecture at Nimrud in the Ninth Century BC, *Iraq* 73, 71–85.
2015a The Guardians at the Gate. Entering the Southwest Palace in Nineveh, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 74.2, 325–349.
2015b *The Architecture of Late Assyrian Royal Palaces*, Oxford.
2015c *The Architecture of Connectivity: Ashurnasirpal II's Late Assyrian Palace in Kalḫu*, in: D. Kurapkat, P.I. Schneider and U. Wulf-Rheidt (eds.), *Die Architektur des Weges: Gestaltete Bewegung im gebauten Raum*, Diskussionen zur Archäologischen Bauforschung 11, Regensburg, 337–347.
2015d *Imagining Second Storeys in Late Assyrian Palaces: The Architectural Reconstructions of James Fergusson and Jean-Claude Margueron*, in: D. Nadali and M.G. Micale (eds.), *How Do We Want the Past to Be? On Methods and Instruments of Visualizing Ancient Reality*, Regenerating Practices in Archaeology and Heritage 1, Piscataway, NJ, 49–76.
forthc. *The Architectural Presence of the Assyrian King in His Palaces*, in: *Picturing Royal Charisma in the Near East (3rd Millennium BC to 1700 AD).*

Krebernik, M.
2007 *Qingu*, in: M.P. Streck (ed.), *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 11, Berlin, 178–179.

Kreppner, F.J. and Schmid, J.
2013 *Die Stratigraphie und Architektur des "Roten Hauses" von Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu. Mit Beiträgen von Jens Rohde und einer Abhandlung über die Holzkohlefunde von Rainer Gerisch*, Berichte der Ausgrabung Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu 11, Wiesbaden.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Layard, A.H.
1849 *Nineveh and Its Remains: With an Account of a Visit to the Chaldæan Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or Devil-Worshippers; and an Inquiry into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians*, London.
1853 *Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon: With Travels in Armenia, Kurdistan, and the Desert: Being the Result of a Second Expedition Undertaken for the Trustees of the British Museum*, New York.

Lefebvre, H.
1991 *The Production of Space*, Oxford.

Loud, G. and Altman, C.B.
1938 *Khorsabad, Part II, the Citadel and the Town*, Oriental Institute Publications 40, Chicago.

Loud, G., Frankfort, H. and Jacobsen, T.
1936 *Khorsabad, Part I, Excavations in the Palace and at a City Gate*, Oriental Institute Publications 38, Chicago.

Mallowan, M.E.L.
1966 *Nimrud and Its Remains*, London.

Maul, S.M.
1994 *Zukunftsbewältigung: Eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonisch-assyrischen Löserituale (Namburbi)*, Baghdader Forschungen 18, Mainz.

Maul, S.M. and Strauss, R.
2011 *Ritualbeschreibungen und Gebete I*, Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 4, Wiesbaden.

Mayer, W.
1983 Sargons Feldzug gegen Urartu – 714 v. Chr. Text und Übersetzung, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 115, 65–132.

Meuszyński, J.
1981 *Die Rekonstruktion der Reliefdarstellungen und ihrer Anordnung im Nordwestpalast von Kalhu (Nimrud) (Räume: B.C.D.E.F.G.H.L.N.P)*, Baghdader Forschungen 2, Mainz.

Nadali, D.
2008 *The Role of the Image of the King in the Organizational and Compositional Principles of Sennacherib's Throne Room: A Guide to the Historical Narrative and Meaning of a Specified Message*, in: H. Kühne, R.M. Czichon and F.J. Kreppner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East: 29 March – 3 April 2004, Freie Universität Berlin*, Wiesbaden, 473–493.

Nair, S.
2015 *At Home with the Sapa Inca: Architecture, Space, and Legacy at Chinchero*, Austin.

Neufert, E.
2000 *Architects' Data*, 3rd edition, Oxford.

Novák, M.
2012 *Dūr-Šarru-ukīn – Die Festung Sargons, Schaltzentrale eines Weltreiches*, in: O. Dally, F. Fless, R. Haensch, F. Pirson and S. Sievers (eds.), *Politische Räume in vormodernen Gesellschaften ; Gestaltung – Wahrnehmung – Funktion; Internationale Tagung des DAI und des DFG-Exzellenzclusters TOPOI vom 18. – 22. November 2009 in Berlin*, Rahden, 255–265.

Novák, M. and Schmid, J.
2001 Zur Problematik von Lehmziegelgewölben, Konstruktionstechniken und Verfahren zur Analyse am Beispiel von Gewölbebauten im 'Roten Haus' in Dur-Katlimmu/Magdalu, *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 32, 205–253.

Oates, D.
1963 The Excavations at Nimrud (Kalḫu), 1962, *Iraq* 25.1, 6–37.

Oates, J. and Oates, D.
2001 *Nimrud, an Assyrian Imperial City Revealed*, London.

Paley, S.M. and Sobolewski, R.P.
1992 *The Reconstruction of the Relief Representations and Their Positions in the Northwest Palace at Kalḫu (Nimrūd) III (The Principal Entrances and Courtyards)*, Baghdader Forschungen 14, Mainz.

Parpola, S.
1995 *The Construction of Dur-Šarrukin in the Assyrian Royal Correspondence*, in: A. Caubet (ed.), *Khorsabad, le palais de Sargon II, roi d'Assyrie : actes du colloque organisé au musée du Louvre par le services culturel les 21 et 22 janvier 1994*, Paris, 47–77.

Parrot, A.
1958 *Le palais – architecture*, Paris.

Pfälzner, P.
2007 *Archaeological Investigations in the Royal Palace of Qatna*, in: D.M. Bonacossi (ed.), *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Udine, 9–11 December 2004*, Studi Archeologici su Quatna 1, Udine, 29–64.

Porter, B.N.
2003 *Intimidation and Friendly Persuasion*, in: I. Eph'al, A. Ben-Tor and P. Machinist (eds.), *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies. Hayim and Miriam Tadmor Volume*, Jerusalem, 180–191.

Preusser, C.
1955 *Die Paläste in Assur*, Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 66, Berlin.

Radner, K.
1997 *Die neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt*, State Archives of Assyria Studies 6, Helsinki.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

2011 *Urad-Ea*, in: H.D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Vol. 3, Part II, *Š–Z*, Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, 1396–1398.

Reade, J.E.
1979 Assyrian Architectural Decoration: Techniques and Subject-Matter, *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 10, 17–49.
1983 *Assyrian Sculpture*, London.
2002 The Ziggurrat and Temples of Nimrud, *Iraq* 64, 135–216.

Russell, J.M.
1987 Bulls for the Palace and Order in the Empire: The Sculptural Program of Sennacherib's Court VI at Nineveh, *The Art Bulletin* 69.4, 520–539.
1991 *Sennacherib's Palace without Rival at Nineveh*, Chicago.
1995 Layard's Descriptions of Rooms in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, *Iraq* 57, 71–86.
1998 The Program of the Palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud: Issues in the Research and Presentation of Assyrian Art, *American Journal of Archaeology* 102.4, 655–715.

Shepperson, M.
2017 *Sunlight and Shade in the First Cities: A Sensory Archaeology of Early Iraq*, Mundus Orientis, Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Cultures 1, Göttingen.

Sobolewski, R. P.
1982 The Polish Work at Nimrud: Ten Years of Excavation and Study, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 71, 248–273.

Talon, P.
2005 *Enūma Eliš: The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Introduction, Cuneiform Text, Transliteration, and Sign List with a Translation and Glossary in French*, State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 4, Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki.

Trigger, B.G.
1990 Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour, *World Archaeology* 22, 119–132.

Turner, G.
1970 The State Apartments of Late Assyrian Palaces, *Iraq* 32, 177–213.
1998 *The Architecture of the Palace*, in: R.D. Barnett, E. Bleibtreu and G. Turner (eds.), *Sculptures from the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh*, London, 20–39.

Winter, I.J.
1983 *The Program of the Throneroom of Ashurnasirpal II*, in: P.O. Harper and H. Pittman (eds.), *Essays in Near Eastern Art and Archaeology in Honor of Charles Kyrle Wilkinson*, New York, 15–31.
1993 'Seat of Kingship'/'A Wonder to Behold': The Palace as Construct in the Ancient Near East, *Ars Orientalis* 23, 27–55.

Winterling, A.
1997 *'Hof'. Versuch einer idealtypischen Bestimmung anhand der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Geschichte*, in: A. Winterling (ed.), *Zwischen "Haus" und "Staat". Antike Höfe im Vergleich*, Historische Zeitschrift, Beiheft 23, Berlin, 11–25.

Zgoll, A.
2003 Ein Modell zum Verständnis mesopotamischer Handerhebungsrituale. Mit einer Deutung der Novelle vom Armen Mann von Nippur, *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 34, 181–204.

Abbreviations

CTN *Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud*, British School of Archaeology in Iraq, London.
RINAP *The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Winona Lake, IN.
SAA *State Archive of Assyria*, Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki.

(All images are by the author)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Tell Chuera, Palace F in the Light of Early Syrian Palatial Architecture

by Alexander Tamm

1. Introduction

Chuera was first mentioned in the early 20th century by Max Freiherr von Oppenheim, who visited the ancient settlement hill on one of his travels while he was working at nearby Tell Halaf. The first excavations were conducted some decades later, in 1955, under the direction of Jean Lauffray and since 1958 under the direction of Anton Moortgat. After his death in 1977 his wife, Ursula Moortgat-Correns continued her husband's work until the mid-1980s. In the following years the mission was led by Winfried Orthmann and, from 1996 until the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, by Jan-Waalke Meyer.

Today Chuera lies only few kilometres south of the Turkish border in an area where rain-fed agriculture is still possible (Fig. 1). As far as we are able to reconstruct past circumstances, the climate in the 3rd millennium, when Chuera had reached its maximum expansion, was nearly the same as today. Only later, by the end of the 3rd millennium, did it become more arid and a large number of settlements in the wider region were abandoned, including Chuera itself.[1]

2. History

The Early Bronze Age city was founded as a round settlement around 3100 BC.[2] Already with its foundation the settlement occupied a large area of roughly 25 ha. Besides its sheer size, the arrangement of some infrastructural elements tells us that Chuera was most probably a planned settlement. Right from the start the city had a radial concentric street network, a central plaza, and some massive fortifications. Although we can conclude that a central authority was responsible for the planning, we have not been able to locate this institution in the areas excavated so far. Of course this is mainly because more than 10 m of later settlement layers overlay the earliest Bronze Age city.

Around 2700 BC, 400 years after its foundation, the settlement was enlarged to almost 70 ha.[3] The newly founded lower town completely encircled the earlier upper town. The site's outline led to the designation of Chuera and similar settlements as *kranzhügel* or *cup and saucer* type. Again, from the beginning onward, the lower town was fortified with a massive city wall. A circular road connected most parts of the lower town.[4] Still, several metres of rubbish and later settlement layers hindered securely locating the institutions responsible for planning Chuera's lower town. Then, a large mid-3rd millennium building complex was found, which might have been a precursor of the later palace. Due to later massive structures, namely Palace F, we know only of some walls and the approximate extension of this building.[5] The structure was destroyed around 2465 BC together with large parts of the settlement.[6] Some 10 to 20 years later Palace F was erected.

3. Palace F – location

Palace F was located in the western fringes of Chuera's upper town (Fig. 2). As Ursula Moortgat-Correns has already stated, it is one of the most pleasant places to excavate at Chuera.[7] A light breeze comes from the north-west, which makes work in the palace area a bit more bearable than in other trenches.

The monumental structure was built directly against Chuera's inner fortification and used it partially as its western limit. The south part of the palatial complex even cut through a 5 m segment of the inner city wall and continued westwards. The reason behind this construction might have been to create a service entrance or to allow some fresh air into the building. By this, it should have been possible to cool down parts of the complex in hot summer months and to carry away unpleasant scents from the working areas.

Directly east of the palace was an open plaza. Today its full extent of roughly 80 × 50 m is only visible on the geomagnetic map (Fig. 3). In antiquity, standing in the plaza one could capture the complete eastern façade of the palace, including its wide entrance area. In order to take advantage of the visibility and to impress visitors, the façade was not built with the usual mudbricks, but had a visible base of large stones, not affordable by Chuera's ordinary citizens. The same building technique and materials were used for the northern façade, where a wide street led from the plaza to a gate in the inner fortifications and further down into Chuera's lower town.

Along the southern side of the palace ran only a small alley, 2 m wide at most, which separated the palatial

1 For a discussion of the so-called 4.2 ka event see the contributions in Weiss (ed.) 2012.
2 Hempelmann 2013, 209–212.
3 Hempelmann 2013, 212.
4 Helms and Tamm 2014; Helms, Tamm and Meyer (eds.) 2017; Meyer 2010.
5 Tamm in prep.
6 For the destruction layer see Helms and Tamm 2014.
7 Moortgat-Correns 1988, 12.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

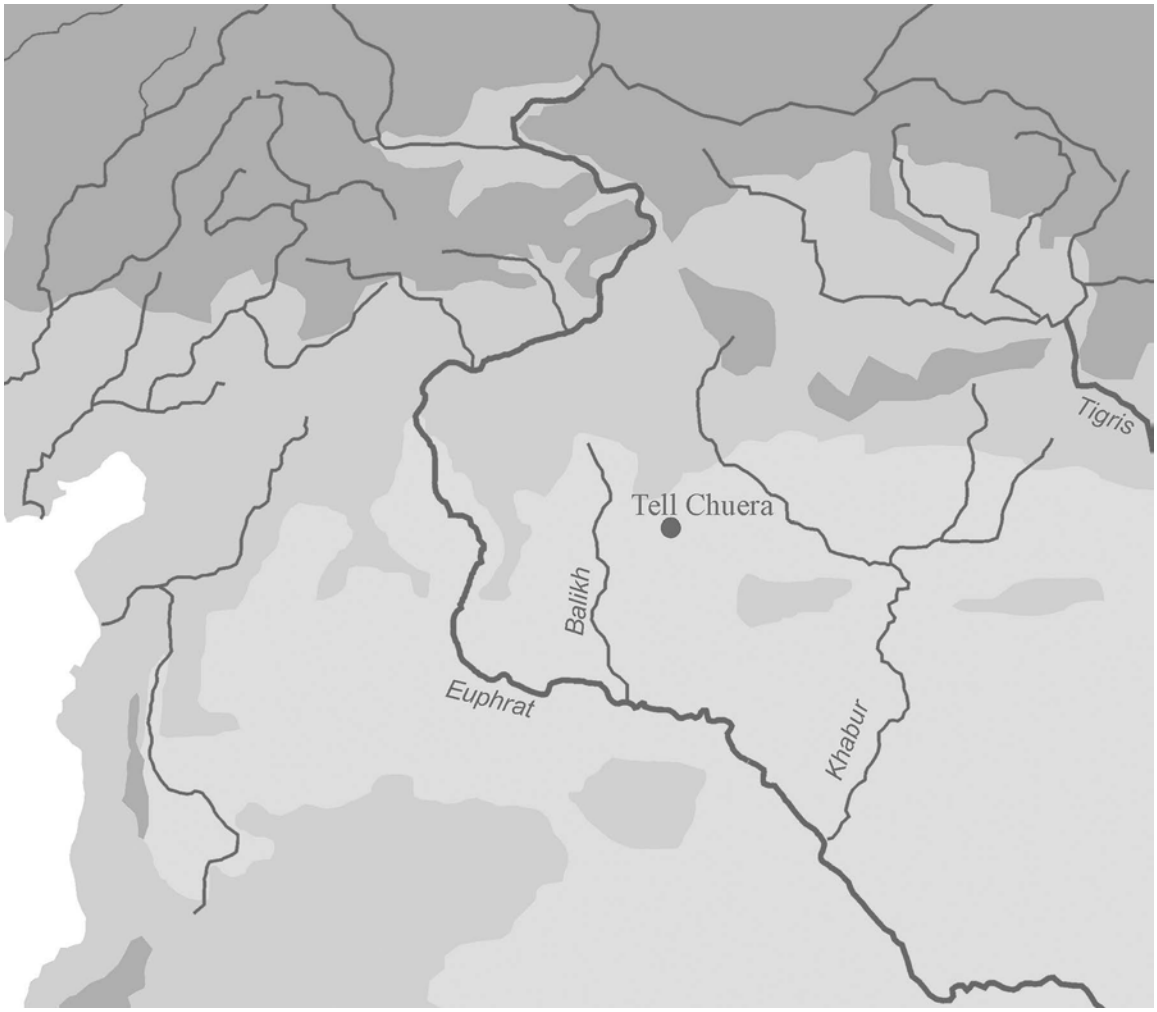


Fig. 1 Map of northern Syria with Tell Chuera (after Hempelmann 2013, fig. 2)

complex from a residential area to the south. Only some crudely built walls lacking any representative function were excavated there. Concerning the relations between the elites in the palace and the commoners living south of it, it is notable that the toilet sewage from the palace was drained directly into this alley.

In the wider picture, Palace F stood in one row with the so-called *Steinbauten*, which are often interpreted as having housed Chuera's sacral institutions.[8] The so-called *Aussenbau* – an external sanctuary – was located outside the settlement to the south-east.[9] At the border between the upper and lower town was a large staircase,[10] already in the upper town some structures of unknown purpose, and, finally, the monumental temples in Areas A and S.[11]

Although today the *Steinbauten* are of the most prominent structures at Chuera, surely shaping the present-day picture of the settlement, the impression in antiquity might have been a different one. With an area of almost 3.000 sq.m, the palace was the largest single building in the city. To compare, *Steinbau 1*, the largest of the *Steinbauten*, had an area of only 600 sq.m. Even though the sacral institutions might have dominated the centre of Chuera, Palace F was located at the highest point in the settlement. In this setting, it might have been invisible from inside the densely built-up city, but it displayed the power of Chuera's ruling family far into the plains of the western Jezirah.

Examining other palaces in 3rd millennium northern Syria it is noticeable that most of these buildings occupied the centre of their settlements. The buildings at Ebla and Bi'a in particular might have been completely invisible from outside their cities. In contrast, one of the palaces at Beydar was located in the middle of the settlement but elevated high above its environs and thus most probably visible from beyond the city walls. In regard to the building's position, the Palace of

8 Orthmann 1990.
9 Moortgat 1960, 9–22.
10 Moortgat 1967, 4–8.
11 Orthmann 1995; Klein and Orthmann 1995; Orthmann 2002.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

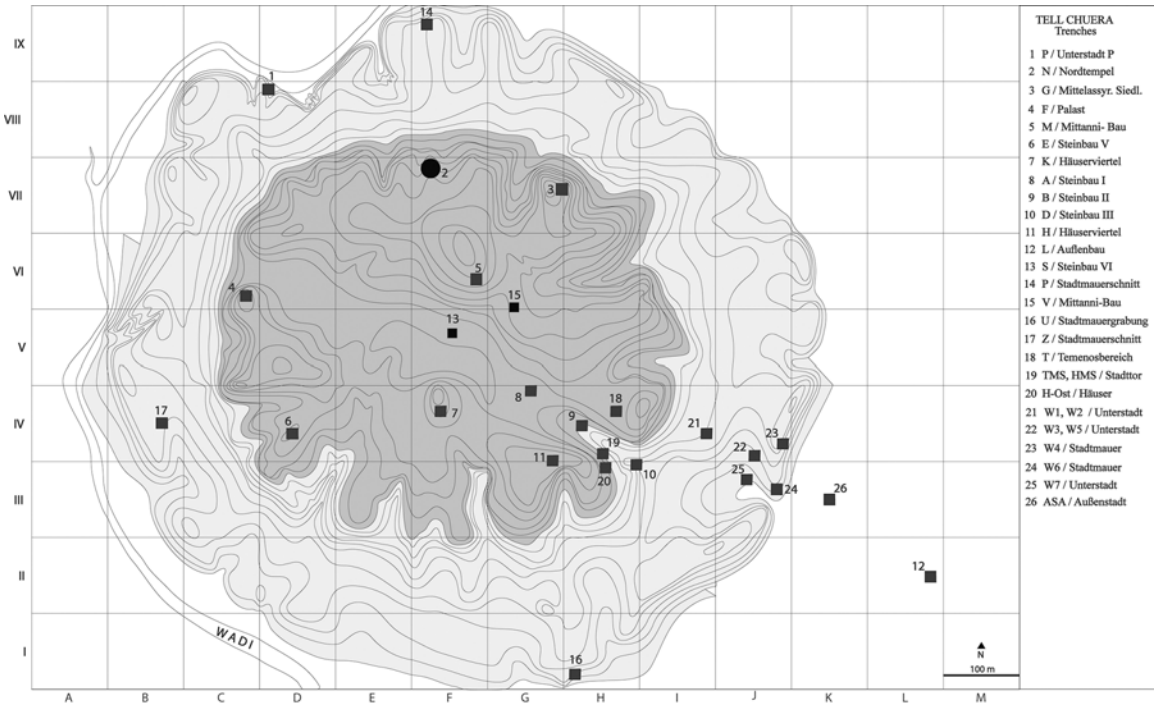


Fig. 2 Map of Tell Chuera

Tupkish at Mozan might be the best comparison. Like Palace F, it was located in the western fringes of the upper town and even disrupted the city wall. Similar to Palace F, the palace of Tupkish must have been visible from outside the settlement.[12]

Based on the location of the palace, one may conclude that Chuera's sacral institutions might have been more important inside the settlement, thus having more meaning for the identity formation of Chuera's citizens. Based on the size of many of the palaces, and especially considering finds and texts from other sites, we can still be sure that it was the palace household that concentrated most of the city's power and even had control over the temple economy.

4. Palace F – main use

Palace F[13] presented itself to the visitor as an exhibition of its inhabitants' access to labour and materials not affordable by most of Chuera's commoners (Fig. 4). This presentation of wealth started already in the building's entrance area (105). It seems that to improve the effect of monumentality, it was possible to look from the wide entrance room directly to one of the representative rooms and a platform at the other end of the palace, about 50 m away (42). The size of the building's interior must have appeared enormous compared to ordinary dwellings.

Furthermore, the entrance area had a large channel and a small basin, most probably meant for washing before the building was entered. From traditions still present today in the Near East, we can guess that it was pretty normal to wash before entering a house. Nevertheless, special installations for this occasion are known mainly from palaces and not from ordinary residential buildings. Examples can be found at nearby Mozan[14] and Beydar;[15] even a washing room near the entrance area in the Plano-convex Building at Kish[16] might be interpreted in a similar way.

After leaving the entrance area, the visitors would find themselves inside a large courtyard (3), which alone was much bigger than almost all residential houses excavated so far at Chuera. In addition to large parts of the courtyard being coated with thick gypsum plaster, the sides were fitted with large stone slabs, displaying the inhabitants' wealth. The most important feature was unearthed at the northern end of the courtyard: a large platform made of hewn and smoothed limestones. This platform qualified the open area as an audience courtyard and place for the royal ceremonial.

12 Buccellati 2013, 45. Cf. as well Buccellati in this volume.

13 A preliminary report about the excavations at Palace F was published by Orthmann and Pruss (1995). I am currently preparing the final publication (Tamm in prep.).

14 Buccellati 2013, 81.

15 Pruss and Schmitt 2011, 116.

16 Moorey 1964, 86.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 3 Geomagnetic map of the surroundings of Palace F (after Tamm in prep.)

Counterparts can be found in contemporaneous palaces in northern Syria. The best known of these is perhaps the court in Palace G at Ebla.[17] Other examples include the palace of Tupkish at Mozan,[18] Area SS at Brak,[19] or Area S at Beydar.[20] A similar area with a platform can even be assumed in Palaces F[21] and P[22] at Tell Beydar, even though the courtyards in these buildings were subject to later changes and the existence of a platform cannot be proven anymore.

It seems that this type of audience courtyard might have been a tradition from northern Mesopotamia, which is attested only much later in other areas in the Near East.[23] Although most contemporaneous buildings in the south had courtyards, these never displayed a platform like their Syrian counterparts. Additionally, to reach the courtyards in the palaces at Kish, Eridu, or other southern cities, one had to pass a larger number of rooms that were sometimes even maze-like.[24] The Mesopotamian courts were thus much more part of the private sphere, while in northern Syria the audience courtyard seems to have been open to the public.

Behind the platform lay an area that was most probably a large room for official occasions (2). Similar

17 Matthiae 1976, 99–100; Matthiae 1978; Matthiae 1982, 112–113. Cf. as well Pinnock in this volume.

18 Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 112–113; Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2004, 13–19; for the possibility of a throne dais see especially p. 18.

19 Oates and Oates 2001, 76–84; Oates 2007, 166–170.

20 Dezzi Bardeschi et al. 2011, 227–236.

21 Tamm in prep. For a description of the courtyard see Bretschneider et al. 1997, 122; Bretschneider 2003, 71–73; Debruyne 2003, 49; Lebeau 2003; Lebeau 2008, 60–62; Van der Stede 2003, 33–34.

22 Tamm in prep. For a description of the courtyard see Pruss and Schmitt 2011, 114–116.

23 The South-East Courtyard in Fort Shalmaneser has a throne dais set against the western wall and thus maybe had a similar function to the audience courtyards of the 3rd millennium palaces in Syria. E. Heinrich states that this is the only example of a throne dais in an outside area known to him (Heinrich 1984, 117).

24 Compare, for example, Courtyard 1 in the palace of Eridu (Margueron 1982, 107–109, fig. 57) and Courtyard 6 in Palace A at Kish (Margueron 1982, 38–52, fig. 12). Courtyard X in the Plano-convex Building at Kish is positioned near the entrance, but no throne dais was found there (Margueron 1982, 74–78, fig. 35). In the palace of Umm al-Aqarib no area adequate for an audience courtyard was exposed (Oraibi Almamori 2014, 177–185, fig. 48).

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 4 Original layout of Palace F (after Tamm in prep.)

rooms might be found in some of the buildings at Beydar.[25] These rooms were always the largest in the building and, in all cases, had a platform suitable for one person to sit on. The rooms are thus interpreted as a cross between an audience room and a banquet hall. While Room 2 in the palace at Chuera was surely the largest room and as such adequate to serve as a banquet hall, a platform was not found here, but rather in a completely different room. In contrast to the buildings at Beydar, there might have been a spatial separation of these functions in Palace F.

The areas to the west were built on a terrace about 2 m higher than the entrance area and the audience courtyard. A central element of the upper terrace was a series of connected courtyards (Rooms 7, 8, 16) flanked on both sides by official rooms. The very first room on the southern side (12) exhibits a platform set against one of the walls and thus might be interpreted as an audience room. On the opposite side of the courtyard was a room of similar dimensions (6). In this room, instead of a platform, some narrow benches ran along the walls and two incense burners were unearthed. It seems certain that this room had an official function in the broadest sense. Still, its exact purpose remains uncertain. Possible suggestions are a room for small gatherings or just a place for visitors to wait for their audience.

To the west were some smaller rooms (11, 15, 17, 18) for which there is hardly any evidence of an official function. Since there were no installations other than some fireplaces, a use as working rooms also has to be laid aside. Again, a look at the official buildings at Beydar might help. In the southern side of the lower town palace some rooms of similar size were exposed and interpreted by the excavators as servant rooms.

25 For the hall in Palace F see Bretschneider 2003, 86; Debruyne 2003, 51; Lebeau 2003. For the hall in Palace P see Pruss and Schmitt 2011, 116–117. For the so-called White Hall in Field S see Dezzi Bardeschi et al. 2011, 233–234; Dezzi Bardeschi and Sténuit 2014, 154.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Opposite of the small rooms was one bigger room (39), its walls carefully coated with gypsum plaster. Although we are – again – not sure of its exact purpose, the room design tells us that an official use is highly probable. The original excavator of Palace F assumed this was a smaller banquet hall.

Possibly the most important room in the arrangement of the upper terrace lay at the west end of the long courtyard: Room 42 was designed as a broadroom with a small platform opposite the centred entrance. The buttressed outer façade and whoever was sitting on the platform were meant to be seen already from the entrance area. Although the room would not have been adequate as an audience room, it was clearly meant to display the ruler.

The southern side of the long courtyard was pierced by several corridors, which led to rooms further south, for which an official function can be rejected. In the south-east and also accessible from the audience room, were some small chambers (13, 21, 22, 23). These rooms housed the toilets and washing rooms. A similar arrangement is visible in the palaces at Brak and Beydar.[26]

Further to the west was another courtyard (44) surrounded by some rooms. The finds and installations in these rooms clearly point to the direction of storage and working rooms. Some mudbrick installations in Room 47 were most probably substructures for shelves. Beside these, some fireplaces and hollows in the ground show that the room was used for food processing.

Some large jars found in situ when Room 34 was excavated show that it was used as a storage area. One may suggest that the goods stored in these vessels were seeds that were not meant to be eaten. A potter's mark in the shape of a plough might support this direction of interpretation.[27] A small annex (45) to Room 34 housed only a single jar with a wide mouth, completely unsuitable for storage. In later times similar vessels had been used for brewing beer,[28] so a similar purpose can be assumed for this container.

The rooms in the north-western corner of the palace were separated from the other parts of the building and accessible by only two ways. The whole complex might have been the private area of the household.

5. Comparisons

In its original layout, the palace shows significant similarities to other Early Bronze Age monumental complexes in the wider region.[29] A common feature shared by these structures is that they were built on varying elevations. As far as earlier strata were exposed in the Chuera palace, it seems that these differences were clearly intended and are not owed to any earlier structures.

The earlier layer of the Acropolis Palace at Beydar presented no differences of elevation. Only with some alterations in Phase 3, a height difference was artificially created between the courtyard and the adjacent representational room.[30] At Biʿa some earlier elite graves were even cut at the same height. Still, the palace directly above these graves was erected on different terraces right from the start.[31] To my mind, these are clear indications that these height differences were intended to achieve a distinct effect on visitors in antiquity. Thus we might assume that the differences in elevations in the palace of Tupkish at Mozan, in Area SS at Brak, in Building 7 at Banat, and perhaps even in Palace A at Kish were intentional and not the result of earlier settlement layers underlying the monumental buildings.

There are additional architectural elements in the Chuera palace that have been observed at other monumental complexes as well. An element that is hardly emphasised in Palace F is niched façades at the representational rooms; however, this feature seems to have been more common in the Habur triangle and disappears when we look west. Niched façades are specifically displayed in some of the official buildings at Brak and Beydar.[32] But since at Beydar other walls – mainly temple and terrace walls – also have niched façades, we should assume their function was twofold: they were representational in temples and palaces and had constructional purposes in terraces. In the west, including Chuera, a building decoration style similar to that of the Habur type developed only in later buildings.[33]

In contrast to the Syrian buildings, the palaces in southern Mesopotamia – Kish, Eridu, and Umm al-

26 For Brak Area SS/Room 5 see Oates and Oates 2001, 76; Oates 2007, 170. For Beydar Palace F/Room 6331 see Bretschneider et al. 1997, 122; Bretschneider 2003, 82. For Beydar Palace P/Room 42371 see Pruss 2014, 121–122.

27 Helms et al. 2014, 162.

28 Zarnkow et al. 2008, 62–67.

29 A comparison of some 3rd millennium palaces in northern Syria can already be found in Matthiae 2010.

30 Compare Phases 2 and 3 (Van der Stede 2003; Debruyne 2003; Bretschneider 2003).

31 Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000, 8–41. Compare especially the sections A–A' (Beilage 9), C–C' (Beilage 11), and F–F' (Taf. 14).

32 For Beydar see the descriptions in Bretschneider 2003, 86; Debruyne 2003, 51; Lebeau 2003; Pruss and Schmitt 2011, 116–117; Dezzi Bardeschi et al. 2011, 233–234; Dezzi Bardeschi and Sténuit 2014, 154. For Brak see Oates and Oates 2001, 87.

33 See, for example, *Steinbau V* at Chuera (Moortgat and Moortgat-Correns 1975, 45–46) and the *Pfeilergebäude* at Biʿa (Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000, 42–52).

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Aqarib – had no niched façades inside the buildings, but rather buttressed outer façades.[34] Although these buttresses surely had a decorative effect, construction reasons should also be kept in mind. These walls had to withstand immense pressure from the buildings' interior, which had to be counterbalanced by a reinforcement of the outer walls of the structures. As mentioned, the concept of an audience courtyard seems to be of northern Mesopotamian origin and can be found not only at Chuera, but also at Brak, Beydar, and Ebla.

All in all, the Chuera palace shared some similarities with the contemporaneous buildings at Ebla and Biʿa, while other elements can be traced to the Habur triangle. Besides all differences between the Syrian palaces, they still present themselves as a more or less homogeneous group, which most probably developed independently from their southern Mesopotamian counterparts.

34 Compare the architectural plans in Margueron 1982, figs. 12, 35, 57 and Oraibi Almamori 2014, fig. 48.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Bretschneider, J.
2003 *Der spätfrühdynastische "Palast-Tempel" auf der Akropolis von Tell Beydar: Die Bauschichten der Phase 3 a/b (Früh-Gezira IIIb)*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2003, 65–141.

Bretschneider, J., Debruyne, M., Jans, G. and Lahlouh, M.
1997 *Grabungsstellen im Bereich der Hügelkuppe (Akropolis − Feld F)*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 1997, 117–134.

Buccellati, F.
2013 *Three-dimensional Volumetric Analysis in an Archaeological Context: The Palace of Tupkish at Urkesh and Its Representation*, PhD Dissertation, University of Frankfurt, Frankfurt.

Buccellati, G. and Kelly- Buccellati, M.
2004 Der monumentale Palasthof von Tall Mozan/Urkeš und die stratigraphische Geschichte des *ābi*. Bericht über die 15. Kampagne 2002, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 136, 13–39.

Debruyne, M.
2003 *The Early Jezireh IIIb Public Building on the Acropolis of Tell Beydar (Field F): The Building Level Phase 2*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2003, 43–64.

Dezzi Bardeschi, C. and Sténuit, M.-E.
2014 *Chantier S: Le "Parvis Sud" (Southern Square) – Campagne 2010*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2014, 149–180.

Dezzi Bardeschi, C., Sténuit, M.-E, Rey, F. and Ali, C.
2011 *Chantier S: Le "Parvis Sud" (Southern Square) – Campagnes 2004−2009*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2011, 227–272.

Heinrich, E.
1984 *Die Paläste im alten Mesopotamien*, Denkmäler Antiker Architektur 15, Berlin.

Helms, T., Kromberg, O. and Tamm, A.
2014 Archäologische Quellen zur Agrargeschichte Tell Chuēras (Nordost-Syrien). Agrartechnische Darstellungen und Lithik aus den frühbronzezeitlichen Schichten, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 145, 137–183.

Helms, T. and Tamm, A.
2014 *Exploring the Outer City of a Major EBA Centre: Recent Excavations in the Eastern Extent of Tell Chuera's Lower Town (2005−2010)*, in: P. Bielinski, M. Gawlikowski, R. Kolinski, D. Lawecka, A. Soltysiak and Z. Wygnanska (eds.), *Proceedings of the 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East. 30 April – 4 May 2012, University of Warsaw, Vol. 1, Plenary Sessions, Township and Villages, High and Low – The Minor Arts for the Elite and for the Populace*, Wiesbaden, 287–302.

Helms, T., Tamm, A. and Meyer, J.-W. (eds.)
2017 *Tell Chuera in Nordost-Syrien. Grabungen in der südöstlichen Unterstadt – Bereich W*, Vorderasiatische Forschungen der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 2/V, Wiesbaden.

Hempelmann, R.
2013 *Ausgrabungen in Tell Chuēra in Nordost-Syrien. Tell Chuēra, Kharab Sayyar und die Urbanisierung der westlichen Ğazīra*, mit Beiträgen von Taos Babour und Matthias Hüls, Vorderasiatische Forschungen der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 2/IV, Wiesbaden.

Klein, H. and Orthmann, W.
1995 *Grabungen im Bereich des Steinbau 2*, in: Orthmann et al. 1995, 73–93.

Lebeau, M.
2003 *Le bloc officiel de Tell Beydar. Introduction aux fouilles du chantier F*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2003, 21–26.

Lebeau, M. and Suleiman, A. (eds.)
1997 *Tell Beydar, Three Seasons of Excavations (1992−1994). A Preliminary Report*, Subartu III, Turnhout.
2003 *Tell Beydar, the 1995−1999 Seasons of Excavations. A Preliminary Report*, Subartu X, Turnhout.
2011 *Tell Beydar. The 2004/2–2009 Seasons of Excavations, the 2004/2–2009 Seasons of Architectural Restoration. A Preliminary Report*, Subartu XXIX, Turnhout.
2014 *Tell Beydar. The 2010 Season of Excavation and Architectural Restoration – A Preliminary Report*, Subartu XXXIV, Turnhout.

Margueron, J.-C.
1982 *Recherches sur les palais mésopotamiens de l'âge du bronze*, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 107, Paris.

Matthiae, P.
1976 Ebla in the Late Early Syrian Period: The Royal Palace and the State Archives, *The Biblical Archaeologist* 39.3, 94–113.
1978 Preliminary Remarks on the Royal Palace of Ebla, *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 2.2, 13–31.
1982 *The Problem of the Relations between Ebla and Mesopotamia in the Time of the Royal Palace of Mardikh IIB1 (ca. 2400–2250 B.C.)*, in: H. Kühne, H.-J. Nissen and J. Renger (eds.), *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn. Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im Alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. XXV Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Berlin 3. bis 7. Juli 1978*, Berlin, 111–123.
2010 *Early Syrian Palatial Architecture: Some Thoughts about Its Unity*, in: J. Becker, R. Hempelmann and E. Rehm (eds.), *Kulturlandschaft Syrien. Zentrum und Peripherie. Festschrift für Jan-Waalke Meyer*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 371, Münster, 349–358.

Meyer, J.-W.
2010 *Erste Überlegungen zu den Befestigungsanlagen in Tell Chuera*, in: J.-W. Meyer (ed.), *Ausgrabungen in*

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Tell Chuera in Nordost-Syrien. Tell Chuera: Vorberichte zu den Grabungskampagnen 1998 bis 2005, Vorderasiatische Forschungen der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 2/II, Wiesbaden, 173–186.

Moorey, P.R.S.
1964 The "Plano-Convex Building" at Kish and Early Mesopotamian Palaces, *Iraq* 26.2, 83–98.
1978 *Kish Excavations 1923–1933*, Oxford.

Moortgat, A.
1960 *Tell Chuēra in Nordost-Syrien. Vorläufiger Bericht über die Grabung 1958*, Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen Band 14, Köln–Opladen.
1967 *Tell Chuēra in Nordost-Syrien. Vorläufiger Bericht über die fünfte Grabungskampagne 1964*, Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung Heft 6, Wiesbaden.

Moortgat, A. and Moortgat-Correns, U.
1975 *Tell Chuēra in Nordost-Syrien. Vorläufiger Bericht über die sechste Grabungskampagne 1973*, Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung Heft 8, Berlin.

Moortgat-Correns, U.
1988 *Tell Chuera in Nordost-Syrien. Vorläufiger Bericht über die elfte Grabungskampagne 1985*, mit Beiträgen von Barthel Hrouda, Felix Blocher, Tilman Eickhoff, Berlin.

Oates, J.
2007 *Monumental Public Architecture in Late Chalcolithic and Bronze Age Mesopotamia, with Particular Reference to Tell Brak and Tell al Rimah*, in: J. Bretschneider, J. Driessen and K. Van Lerberghe (eds.), *Power and Architecture: Monumental Public Architecture in the Bronze Age Near East and Aegean. Proceedings of the International Conference Power and Architecture Organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the Université Catholique de Louvain and the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster on the 21st and 22nd of November 2002*, Leuven, Paris and Dudley, 161–181.

Oates, D. and Oates, J.
2001 *The Excavations*, in: D. Oates, J. Oates and H. McDonald (eds.), *Excavations at Tell Brak*, *Vol. 2, Nagar in the Third Millennium BC*, Oxford and Oakville, 15–98.

Oraibi Almamori, H.
2014 The Early Dynastic Monumental Buildings at Umm al-Aqarib, *Iraq* 76, 149–187.

Orthmann, W.
1990 *Zu den monumentalen Steinbauten von Tell Chuera*, in: P. Matthiae, M. van Loon and H. Weiss (eds.), *Resurrecting the Past: A Joint Tribute to Adnan Bounni*, Istanbul and Leiden, 249–258.
1995 *Die Grabungen am Steinbau 1*, in: Orthmann et al. 1995, 17–72.
2002 Ein neuer Antentempel in Tell Chuera, *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 13, 3–9.

Orthmann, W., Hempelmann, R., Klein, H., Kühne, C., Novák, M., Pruss, A., Vila, E., Weicken, H.-M. and Wener, A
1995 *Ausgrabungen in Tell Chuēra in Nordost-Syrien I. Vorbericht über die Grabungskampagnen 1986 bis 1992*, Vorderasiatische Forschungen der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 2, Saarbrücken.

Orthmann, W. and Pruss, A.
1995 *Der Palast F*, in: Orthmann et al. 1995, 121–172.

Porter, A. and McClellan, T.
1998 The Third Millennium Settlement Complex at Tell Banat: Results of the 1994 Excavations, *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 10, 11–63.

Pruss, A.
2014 *The 2010 Excavations in Field P*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2014, 119–148.

Pruss, A. and Schmitt, A.
2011 *Excavations in Field P in the Years 2004–2009*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2011, 111–175.

Strommenger, E. and Kohlmeyer, K.
2000 *Tall Biʿa/Tuttul – III. Die Schichten des 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr. im Zentralhügel E*, mit Beiträgen von Reinhard Feisel, Jochen Görsdorf, Muhammad Miftah und Claudia Sarkady, Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesell schaft 101, Saarbrücken.

Tamm, A.
in prep. *Tell Chuera Palast F – Architektur, Stratigraphie und Kleinfunde*.

Van der Stede, V.
2003 *Le bloc officiel et résidentiel: phase 1*, in: Lebeau and Suleiman (eds.) 2003, 27–42.

Weiss, H. (ed.)
2012 *Seven Generations since the Fall of Akkad*, Studia Chaburensia 3, Wiesbaden.

Zarnkow, M., Spieleder, E., Back, W., Sacher, B., Otto, A. and Einwag, B.
2008 Kaltmaischverfahren – eine Basistechnologie zum altorientalischen Bierbrauen. Interdisziplinäre Untersuchungen in der Siedlung von Tall Bazi/Nordsyrien vor rund 3200 Jahren, *Gesellschaft für Geschichte des Brauwesens e. V. Jahrbuch 2008*, 59–80.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The Royal Palace G of Early Syrian Ebla: Structure and Functions

by Frances Pinnock

1. Introduction

The excavation campaigns at Tell Mardikh, ancient Ebla, revealed, in forty-seven seasons, three main phases of development of the ancient town in Early Bronze IVA and IVB (c. 2400–2000 BC) and in Middle Bronze I–II (c. 1900–1600 BC),[1] with minor phases of occupation in Early Bronze II–III (c. 2600–2400 BC) and in the Late Bronze (c. 1500–1200 BC), Iron Age (c. 1200–600 BC), and the Persian-Hellenistic period.[2]

The excavation of the Royal Palace G of Early Bronze IVA (Mardikh IIB1a–b, c. 2450–2300 BC) started in 1973, with a sounding along the west slope of the Acropolis, which led to the identification of the top of the Ceremonial Staircase. From 1974 to 1977 the palace was the main excavation area, but work never ended in the region, as minor operations were conducted each year until 2010, when the work of the expedition was stopped by the Syrian crisis (Fig. 1). Only a peripheral part of the building has thus far been cleared, at the feet and on the slopes of the Acropolis, to the west and south, whereas the central core of the palace lies on the Acropolis under a very thick layer of superimpositions. Besides the huge Royal Citadel of MB I–II, after the final destruction of Ebla around 1600 BC, the Acropolis was occupied by a Late Bronze Age settlement of squatters,[3] by a succession of rural settlements of Iron Age I–III, and, lastly, by a Persian-Hellenistic residence, occupying at least the whole eastern part of the Acropolis.[4] The complete exploration of the Acropolis was the task we were planning to accomplish starting in 2009.[5]

The earliest periods of occupation at Ebla are still quite obscure (Early Bronze I–II, Mardikh IIA1, c. 3000–2750 BC),[6] while it is certain that the first occupation of the Acropolis should be dated from Early Bronze III (Mardikh IIA2), around 2750–2550 BC, when Building

1 The passage between EB IVA and EB IVB is marked by the complete destruction of the site, probably at the time of Sargon of Akkad, around 2300 BC; the EB IVB town was also destroyed. The passage between MB I and II is not marked by destruction. On the period and modes of the three destructions see Matthiae 2013b; 2013c. For ^{14}C dating of the destruction of EB IVA Ebla see Calcagnile, Quarta and D'Elia 2013.

2 Matthiae 2010, 359–374. Based on the evidence brought to light, the town's first flourishing period probably started around 2550 BC, when Building G5 was built on the Acropolis; the climax was reached between 2400 and 2300 BC, c. in EB IVA. During this phase (mature Early Syrian period = Mardikh IIB1a–b), Ebla was the main centre in north inner Syria, with international relations reaching northern Mesopotamia (Matthiae 2008, 114–123; 2010, 128–131) and commercial relations with Egypt (Biga and Roccati 2012, contra Archi 2016). Ebla was certainly one of the main centres along the long-distance trade route bringing lapis lazuli from Afghanistan to the Mediterranean coasts, and hence to Egypt (Pinnock 1986; 2006). In EB IVB (late Early Syrian period = Mardikh IIB2) the evidence is less consistent as regards archaeology: two cult places, a part of the Royal Palace, and a few remains of the settlement and town wall have thus far been retrieved (Matthiae 1993, 619, 634–637; Pinnock 2004, 89, 94–95; 2009). Based on this evidence, it is possible to say that the settlement was probably still as large as the previous EB IVA one, but impoverished and quite likely with a reduced population, though still keeping important trade relations with southern Mesopotamia, as proved by some Ur III texts (Owen 1990, 117–122). After the destruction of the EB IVB town, around 2000 BC, the third period of flourishing, in MB I–II (archaic and mature Old Syrian period = Mardikh IIIA–B), features a phase of huge building activities, when the town was completely rebuilt, based on a unitarian plan and on a monumental scale. In the following period Ebla became a vassal of Aleppo, around 1770 BC, and the final phase was probably of slow decline, until the final destruction around 1600 BC. On the Ebla phases and destructions see Matthiae 2013b; 2013c.

3 The Late Bronze Age is represented by an attempt at reoccupation and revitalisation of the town after its destruction in 1600 BC. The best preserved sectors of some public building, in particular the Royal Citadel on the Acropolis and the Southern Palace in the Lower Town North (Area FF), were re-occupied with some refurbishing of the older structures, in order to create poor houses, without any apparent attempt at building major public structures. Traces of cult activities in the region of Temple P2 in the Lower Town North were also detected, with cult deposits of vases, some of which were imported: Matthiae 2011, 739, 753, 755–758.

4 The Iron Age is represented by a poor village located on the Acropolis (Matthiae 2010, 364–366), where a residence of the Persian-Hellenistic period was also built later on, reusing, in part, stones taken from Middle Bronze monuments: Mazzoni 1984.

5 Operations started in the region between Area D, where a succession of temples had been built starting in EB IVA, and Area E, where the north quarter of the MB I–II Royal Palace had been brought to light between 1964 and 1966; other operations were carried out south and west of the already excavated sector of Palace E, bringing to light mainly residential areas of the Royal Palace: Matthiae 2011, 745–755.

6 Doubtless, no architectural remains were left from these periods, which are attested only by stamp seals and pottery fragments, found mainly in the region of private houses in Area B of the Lower Town South: Vacca 2016; Pinnock in press b.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

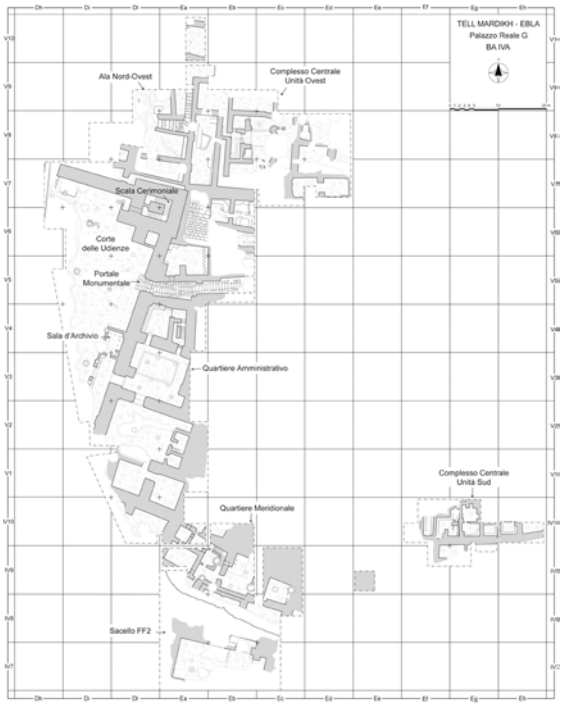


Fig. 1 Ebla, general plan of the Royal Palace G, c. 2400–2300 BC (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

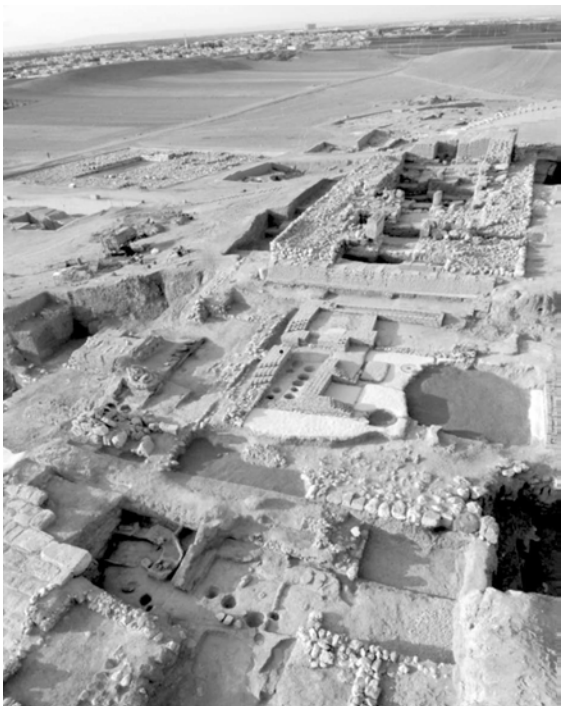


Fig. 2 Ebla, Royal Palace G, North-West Wing; wall foundations in small stones (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

G2 + CC certainly occupied at least the southern slope of the hill.[7] Stretches of imposing Early Bronze III terracing walls are visible also to the north-west of the Acropolis, where a huge Iron Age pit cut the previous levels, reaching to the floor of the Royal Hypogeum, built below the floor of Palace G during the last years of the building's life. The real antecedent of Palace G is Building G5, with two subphases, of Early Bronze IVA1–2 (Mardikh IIA3–IIB1a), dating from around 2550–2450 BC. Some of whose walls were singled out below the structures of the Royal Palace G in the north-west sector.[8]

The palace itself was built starting in EB IVA2 (Mardikh IIB1a), around 2450 BC, when the structures on the north-west edge of the Acropolis were erected, leaning in part on the massive terracing walls of EB III.[9] This is the phase we now call PG1, which also features two subphases (PG1a–b), represented by minor refurbishing of the floors of the rooms. Phase PG2 started around 2400 BC (Mardikh IIB1b), when the palace underwent important changes, doubtlessly related to equally relevant changes in the royal ceremonies: in Phase PG2a (c. 2400–2350 BC), the main core of the palace on the Acropolis was built, or heavily refurbished, whereas, in an intermediate phase between PG2a and PG2b, the Court of Audience was added at the west foot of the Acropolis. Lastly, around 2350 BC, in PG2b (c. 2350–2300 BC), the Administrative Quarter and the Royal Hypogeum were the last features to be built, before the destruction of the Royal Palace G around 2300 BC.[10] The main units of the palace are built over pre-existing structures, showing a relevant continuity between EB III and EB IVA2, whereas the Court of Audience and the Administrative Quarter were founded on the rock, and are therefore evidence of an important change in the concept of the building, with a centrifugal movement

7 Two separate sectors of the building were brought to light, G2 and CC, in two different operations; the two sectors are nearly 40 m apart, but the orientation of the walls, their building technique, and their contents made it quite clear that they belonged to one building only, which was, therefore, quite extended and monumental: Matthiae 1987, 137–138 (Building G2); 2000, 572–576 (Building CC); Vacca 2015 for a complete reappraisal of the two areas.

8 Vacca 2015, 8–9; Pinnock in press a.

9 Pinnock in press a.

10 The attribution of the Royal Hypogeum to this phase is based mainly on the written evidence: in a cuneiform text from the Royal Archives, a large amount of silver is allotted for the construction of a tomb for King Ishar-Damu, which might be this hypogeum: Archi 2015, 534–538. The construction of the hypogeum, as opposed to the use of royal mausolea, documented by the texts of the Ritual of Kingship, might point to a change in the international politics of Ebla, which faced a serious challenge by the Akkadian army, and, on the other hand, to a wish of Ebla's king to adopt funerary customs typical of the new advancing power: Pinnock 2016, 112–113.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 3 Ebla, Royal Palace G, Court of Audience; north façade with the foundations in larger stones (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

from the Acropolis towards the Lower Town.[11] The dating of the Administrative Quarter later than the Court of Audience is proved by the fact that the walls of the Main Archive L.2769 and of the vestibule of the quarter encased some columns of the porch of the court.

2. The Royal Palace G

If, as it is quite likely, Palace G – probably called 'Saza' in the archive texts[12] – occupied the whole citadel of Tell Mardikh, its original size might have reached 20.000/30.000 sq.m, of which only c. 4.500 sq.m were brought to light, presumably representing between 22 and 15% of the total surface area. In the part brought to light, it is possible to identify several distinct sectors whose functions may be inferred from their contents and structure. As concerns building technique, usually the oldest sectors feature low foundations of small to medium-sized rough-shaped stones (Fig. 2), whereas the latest structures were based on larger, irregular stones (Fig. 3). The foundations were not visible, as they were covered by a thick layer of plaster, painted white and reaching the floor where it curved slightly leaning on the floor itself; moreover, the stone layers, unlike what happened in MB I–II, did not reach a relevant height over the floor level. The mudbricks are

Fig. 4 Ebla, Court of Audience; detail of a column base with the stone at the bottom (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

square and quite large, measuring 60 × 40 × 20 cm. The columns of the Court of Audience and of the inner porch of the Administrative Quarter were made of wood and set in holes in the floor at the bottom of which was a stone at a depth of 50 cm (Fig. 4). At the time of the destruction the columns were forced out of their setting by means of rotation to enlarge the top of the holes, which left evident traces at the edges of these holes; this observation led us to propose that the

11 See, in this regard, the important contribution by Bonechi 2016, in particular on p. 32.

12 Matthiae 2008, 34, 42, 97; 2010, 50–51, 83.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

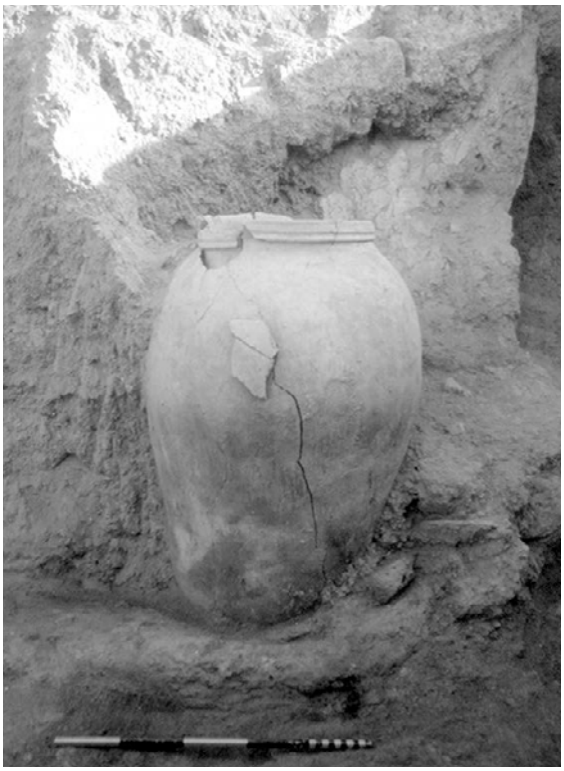


Fig. 5 Ebla, Central Complex; detail of jar in situ in one of the south stores (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

Fig. 6 Ebla, North-West Wing of the Central Complex; detail of the staircase (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

columns were made of wood, possibly cedar or another kind of valuable conifer tree, and had thus become an important part of the booty.[13]

The sectors of the Royal Palace thus far identified are

1. the Central Complex, on the top of the Acropolis;
2. the Court of Audience, at the west foot of the Acropolis;
3. the Administrative Quarter, stretching south of the Monumental Stairway, opening through the east façade of the Court of Audience;
4. the Southern Quarter, located south of the south perimeter wall of the palace and leaning against it; and perhaps also
5. Building FF2, a cult place located in the Lower Town South at a short distance from the Southern Quarter.

2.1. The Central Complex

The Central Complex probably included the residential quarters,[14] services, and, possibly, also workshops – not real production areas but rather installations for the creation or restoration of palace furniture. This complex could be reached through the Monumental Stairway – 22 m of which have been brought to light – which was at least 5 m higher than the level of the Court of Audience. As it stretched over a large part of the Acropolis, only its peripheral parts are thus far

13 It is not easy to propose what the columns supported. The most probable hypothesis, based on the observation of the destruction and collapse layers in the Court of Audience, is that they supported a light roof, possibly a canopy, which had to run higher than the best preserved parts of the walls of the court, which at some point still stood 6 m high (Pinnock 2012, 274–275). Thus, the columns had to be tall shafts of hardwood that would have been most appreciated for further building activities. Among the 464 wood samples from Palace G, 48 were found in the Court of Audience, and they are all fir (*Abies* sp.) (Caracuta and Fiorentino 2013, 407, tab. 24.1), which is the most frequent species in the building with 224 specimens; in fact, fir was used particularly for roof beams (ibidem, 405), and was frequently found with remains of reed from the covering of roofs. Fragments of cedar wood were found in the Treasury and in the store-rooms south of the Throne Room (L.8495 and L.8496), where they were probably used to make display pieces of furniture. This evidence might confirm the hypothesis that the columns were made of logs, which were brought away with great care, not breaking them or leaving fragments behind, though it does not help in identifying which wood was used to make them. Cedar is the most likely candidate, for the presumed height of the columns.

14 These residential quarters probably occupied the topmost part of the Acropolis and might correspond to the é-é-makh of the texts: Bonechi 2016, 34.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 7 Ebla, West Wing of the Central Complex; detail of one of the rooms with grinding stones in situ (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

Fig. 8 Ebla, West Wing of the Central Complex; detail of the round cult fitting in one of the north rooms (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 9 Ebla, Hypogeum G4, from the east (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

known: to the south, on the slope of the Acropolis, the South Unit included two rows of small rooms, possibly including also another row or a set of rows farther south, which is separated from the north row by a thick enclosure wall. Several rooms had clay benches along their sides and all the chambers were full of pottery, with many typical EB IVA goblets as well as some large storage jars fixed in the floors (Fig. 5). For their size, the poor quality of their masonry, and the absence of any other installation, these rooms were clearly only stores, for both vases and foodstuff.

The North-West and West Wings, on the edge of the Acropolis, probably belonged also to the same Central Complex: the North-West Wing included two large parallel rooms whose floors are approximately 3 m higher than the Court of Audience, and a large, bent staircase of stone pebbles, leading to the higher North Wing (Fig. 6). On the floor of the southernmost room, the first forty-two tablets of the Ebla archives were found, whereas in the northernmost chamber some beautiful pieces of wooden furniture were kept, among which at least a table and a chair or throne were identified.[15] Though such refined fittings look quite suitable for the kind of ceremonies that took place in the Court of Audience, so far we have to acknowledge that they had to be brought there, eventually, through the Central Complex, as there is no direct communication with the court.

The rooms of the North-West Wing are set on terraces, sloping from north to south, and go up to a maximum of 3 m further with respect to the North Wing: these rooms are quite small and irregular with poor walls, and they contain a large number of grinding stones with their pestles, placed on benches, as well as other fittings and holes in the floor, all meant for food preparation, likely mostly flour milling (Fig. 7).[16] One particularly large room, which has six large holes in the floor and is related with one room with benches, opened into the eastern part of the North-West Wing, featuring larger, more regular rooms. These rooms are not separated by doors, but rather by large passages marked on the ground by a wooden decoration of planks fixed into regular grooves. Their overall aspect is that of a long tripartite hall, flanked by other rooms or by recessed niches. Almost in the middle of the northernmost space, there was a peculiar fitting: a low, round platform, approximately 1 m in diameter (Fig. 8) of plastered clay with a kind of stud in its centre, probably meant to support a light, possibly wooden object. Furthermore, the wooden planks in the floor of this chamber still bore, on their downturned faces, an inlaid decoration of large limestone plaques, depicting victorious soldiers and lion-headed eagles dominating human-headed bulls.[17] They were probably the vestiges of a larger fitting called the Victory Panel of Ebla, which was possibly exhibited in the older Building G5 in a region corresponding to that of their reuse in EB IVA. It is not easy to explain, however, why the inlays had not been discarded before the planks were put in place. In the last phase of life of Palace G, PG2b, this region of the palace was razed (Fig. 2) and the monumental Red Temple for the god Kura was erected over its northernmost part, probably by order of Ishar-Damu, the last king of Ebla.[18] In the same years, Hypogeum G4 was excavated to the south, probably for the same king (Fig. 9). The peculiar fittings, the width of some rooms, the presence of the wooden decoration on the floor, the latest transformations, and the connection with the Red Temple and the Royal Hypogeum lead

15 Matthiae 1985, pls. 41–43.

16 The number of working places is quite high, which leads to hypothesise that the processed food was not meant only for internal consumption, but that there was also some connection to the distribution of rations to palace officials: Matthiae 2010, 73–74.

17 Matthiae 2013e, 498–507; 2017.

18 One text of Ishar-Damu's time registers the delivery of a large amount of silver for the building of Kura's Temple, which is probably the temple on the Acropolis, which is later than the Temple of the Rock, also dedicated to the god Kura, in our opinion. The latter is possibly the same cult building mentioned in the texts of the Ritual of Kingship as being very close to the city walls of Ebla and to Kura's Gate: Bonechi 2016, 32; Matthiae 2010, 97, 387–391.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 10 Ebla, Court of Audience; the entrance to the Ceremonial Staircase, from the west (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

to propose that this sector had always had a kind of ceremonial function, related also with the distribution of ground cereals.

2.2 The Court of Audience

The largest excavated part of the palace is the Court of Audience, with the adjacent Administrative Quarter, which were also the most relevant sectors of the building for administration, economy, and ceremonies. Three passages opened through the eastern façade of the Court: 1) the Ceremonial Staircase to the north; 2) the Monumental Gateway in a central position between the Ceremonial Staircase and the entrance to the Administrative Quarter; and 3) the entrance to the Administrative Quarter to the south.

The Ceremonial Staircase connected the king's private apartments with the royal dais in the middle of the north façade of the court: its steps were covered with wooden planks decorated with shell inlays creating geometric and floral motifs; the door was screened by a low parapet, beyond which, in the court, there was a well. There was also a small bathroom under the lowest flight of stairs (Fig. 10).[19] Thus, it might have been possible for the king to wash or purify himself before or during ceremonies.

Fig. 11 Ebla, Monumental Gateway; the east wall of the 'kitchen' with the fireplaces, from the west (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

The Monumental Stairway was the entrance to the Central Complex, but also the path the Eblaic notables probably followed to reach the Court of Audience, from their lodgings on the top of the Acropolis.[20] Shortly before reaching the Court, they could find a closed door, its wood cut to host a large storage jar that blocked the

19 The small room featured a hole in the floor, quite suitable for the elimination of water.

20 According to Bonechi (2016, 33), the Monumental Stairway was called ká é-é makh, '(Twofold) Gate of the Upper Apartments'.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

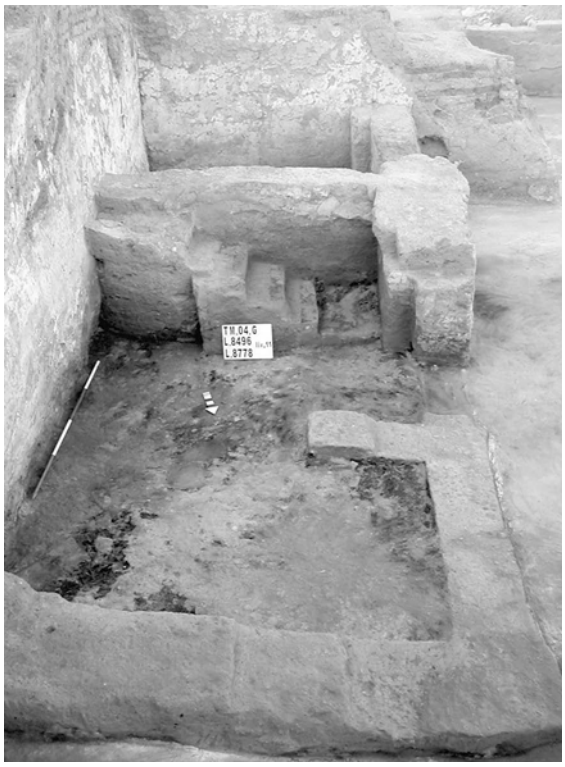


Fig. 12 Ebla, Administrative Quarter; the two small rooms built against the east wall of the Throne Room, from the north (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

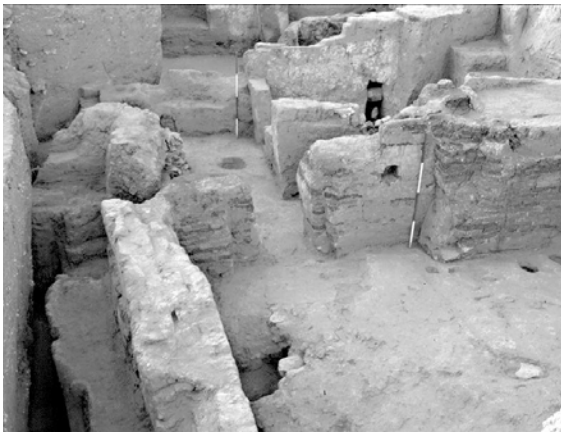


Fig. 13 Ebla, the Southern Quarter, from the east (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

entrance. It was thus probably possible to take a drink from the jar, which would have been poured into it from inside the room and had to be consumed in the court. Beyond the door, in fact, there was a kitchen with a small antechamber, where eight fireplaces still held in situ fragmentary cooking pots (Fig. 11). Based on analyses of the contents of the room and the jars, it was inferred that some beverage was made with euphorbia, a medical plant that may also become a kind of drug.[21] In the light of recent proposals about the use of sealing the bodies of jars before cooking, it is interesting to note that a few jars in this kitchen bore such sealings.[22] The Monumental Stairway was made of stone, with each step including three slabs – two of limestone on the sides, and a basalt one in the middle – covering a drain that collected rainwater into a cistern that stretched under most of the court.

One small archive room, L.2712, was built in the corner between the Ceremonial Staircase and the east façade of the court. Two long stores for the preservation of foodstuff and other goods were located behind the north façade, while a small door placed against the same façade, opening to the side of the royal dais, led towards the stores and two well-built rooms (L.9330 and L.9583), where the queen probably dressed up before she entered the court.[23] This is the place where Tabur-Damu's royal standard was found.[24] The largest amount of sealed containers, mainly storage jars but also wooden boxes, caskets, and wickerwork baskets, were kept in the two long stores.

2.3 The Administrative Quarter

The third entrance led into the Administrative Quarter, including a space to the left of the entrance, with an antechamber where documents were written, and Archive Room L.2769. As is well known, this is the main archive of Ebla, including the largest amount and the largest variety of documents.[25] Two steps led into the quarter, and they were decorated with wooden planks – now obviously lost – and shell inlays in geometric motifs – still in place on the mudbrick steps; the threshold was made with two well-cut limestone slabs. The Administrative Quarter included a trapezoidal store to the north, a small court with four columns and a gallery in the centre, the Throne Room to the south, and two square stores further south, communicating only between themselves and with the Throne Room. The Throne Room was identified as such for the presence of two columns, which must have framed the throne, which was placed, perhaps, on a dais in the middle of the long south wall. Two narrow staircases, opening into the trapezoidal store and into the courtyard, led to a second floor and to the gallery. Cuneiform tablets

21 Wachter-Sarkady 2013, 381–382; samples of other plants from which beverages could be produced – mostly wild species – were also collected in the room.

22 See, in this regard, Graff 2012. See Mazzoni 1992 about the sealings stamped on jars before firing and their possible meaning.

23 Pinnock 2012.

24 Matthiae 2013f.

25 Matthiae 2008, 64, 66–71; 2010, 118–151.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

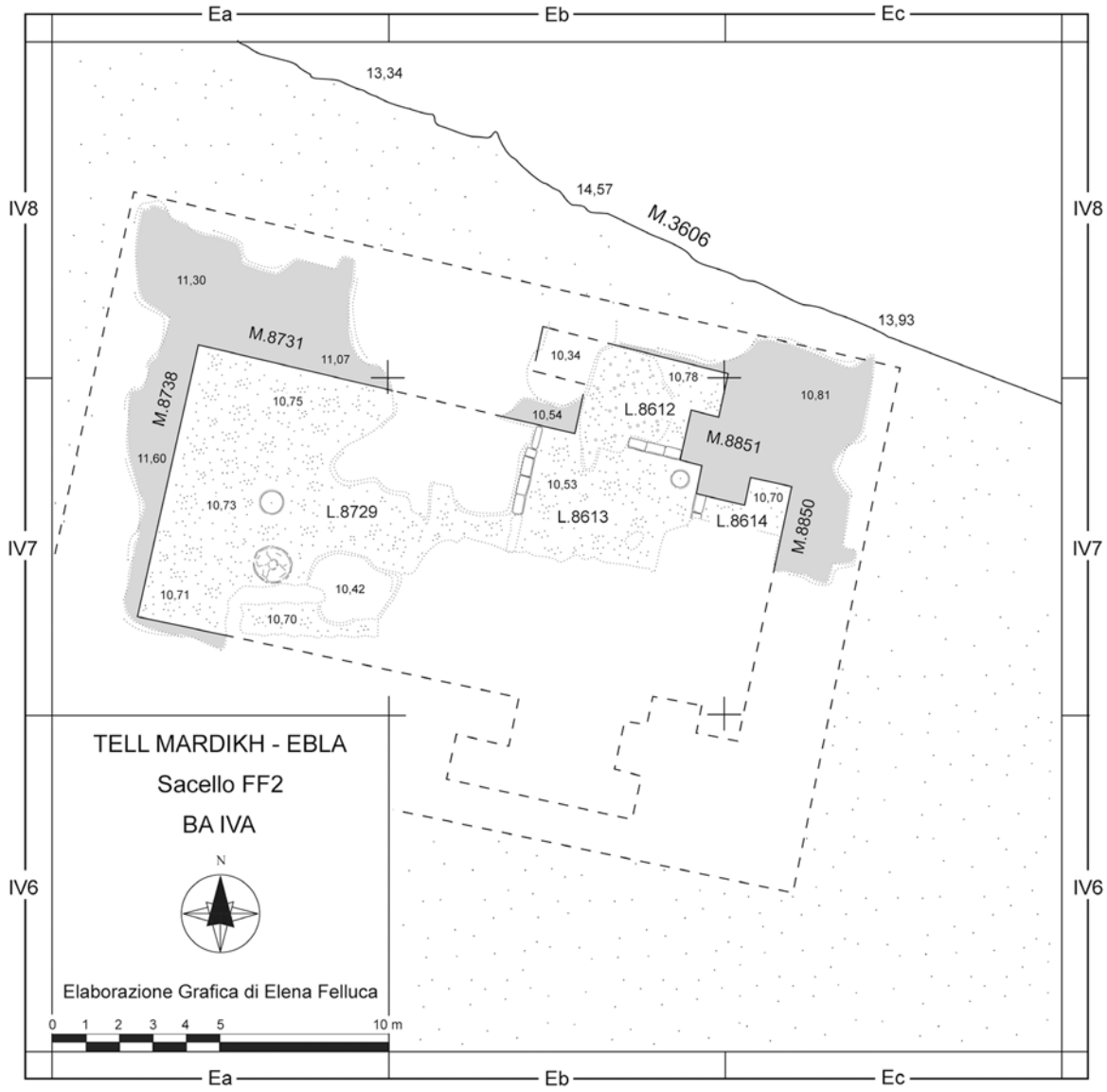


Fig. 14 Ebla, schematic plan of Sanctuary FF2 (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

were kept in cupboards in the trapezoidal store, whereas precious goods and imported materials were kept there and also on the second floor. In the Throne Room, during the latest refurbishing of the palace, two service rooms were created against the east wall in order to keep precious clothes and a few written documents (Fig. 12).[26] The largest amount of valuables was kept in the two rooms south of the Throne Room, which was probably the real Treasure of the Crown.[27] As already maintained by P. Matthiae, this sector of Palace G bears interesting resemblance to the ceremonial sectors of the palaces of Tell Chuera and Tell Biʿa/Tuttul, pointing to possible similarities also in the ceremonials of the three sites.[28]

26 The two rooms are certainly a late refurbishing, as their walls were built when the Throne Room walls were already plastered.

27 This sector was identified with the é-siki ('Wool-house'): Archi 2005, 96, now republished as Archi 2015, 754–755; Matthiae 2008, 61; 2010, 83; Bonechi 2016, 33.

28 Matthiae 2013d. Cf. as well Matthiae in this volume. The comparison with Palace B at Tuttul is particularly interesting in the light of the finding of a fragment of a stone statue in Court 5, wrongly identified with a beard. The craftsmanship of the latter is strikingly similar to that of the male hairdress found in the court of the Administrative Quarter of Ebla, close to the entrance to the Throne Room: Strommenger and Kohlmeyer 2000, pl. 43, 1.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

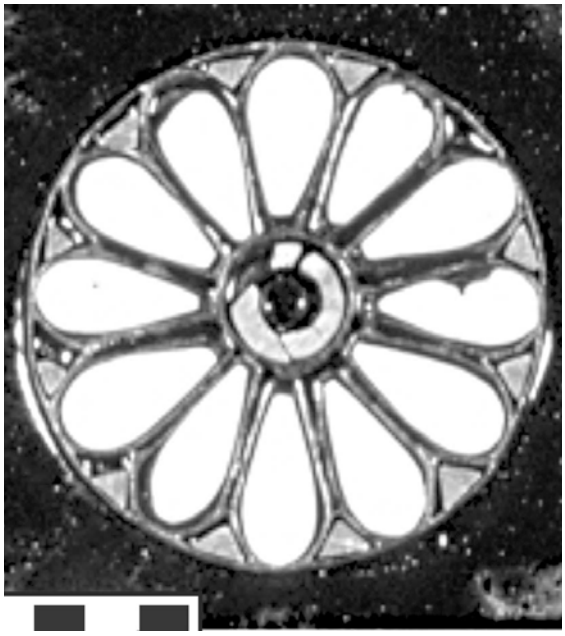


Fig. 15 Ebla, Sanctuary FF2; stone rosette, TM.04. FF.580, limestone and jasper, ca. 2300 BC (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

2.4 The Southern Quarter

One peripheral unit, located south of the palace, certainly also belongs to the building: the Southern Quarter is a private house occupying two floors of which seven rooms are preserved, but it probably included other rooms to the south and east. The size of the rooms, the building technique, and the thickness of the perimeter wall lead to infer that the unit belonged to a high-ranking personage (Fig. 13). Moreover, the house was directly connected to the Central Complex of the Royal Palace G, as a door opened through the south perimeter wall of the palace leading directly into the house, and a small group of cuneiform documents was found in one of its rooms, dealing with trade in timber and silver, a subject not covered by the texts of the main archive.[29] It might be proposed that the owner of the house was the *baʾal bayti malkim*, a high official charged with the control over messengers,[30] a function quite close to the function of the palace prefect who, in MB I–II, dwelled in the Southern Palace, built in the Lower Town South, close to the Early Bronze Southern Quarter of Palace G.[31]

3. Building FF2

Further south there was Building FF2, certainly a cult building (Fig. 14), whose plan is different from that of the other preserved temples of EB IVA Ebla – the Temple of the Rock and the Red Temple. In fact, the two main temples already have the classical structure of the Syrian temple *in antis*,[32] whereas Sanctuary FF2 features a large hall – c. 17 × 8 m – with a strong articulation of the walls towards the east corners. The entrance was not found, and it is difficult to reconstruct. Overall, some comparison with this peculiar structure may be found in northern Syria, in the older and much simpler cult buildings of Tell er-Raqaʾi or Halawa.[33] The sanctuary was characterised by the presence of a decoration, probably from an elaborate recessed niche, in plaster painted in geometric motifs in white, red, and black (Fig. 16).[34] It was possibly connected to the Southern Quarter, though the connection is now lost because of the cut made in order to build the massive stone wall of the MB I–II fortification. On the floor there is a round element, quite like the one found in the North-West Wing. The presence of rosettes in the painted decoration and of a large composite stone rosette (Fig. 15) on the floor lead to propose that Building FF2 was dedicated to a form of Ishtar.[35] Though possibly not belonging physically to the palace, Building FF2, for its position very close to the southern limit of the palace itself, for its peculiar ground plan, and for its possible titular deity, cannot, in my opinion, be considered an independent sanctuary, but rather a cult annex of Palace G, possibly related with the presence of the official inhabiting the Southern Quarter.

29 Matthiae 1983, 547–551.

30 Bonechi 2016, 9–11; in this contribution the author reconstructs the life of one *Íl-zi*, who held the position of *baʾal bayti malkim* until the end of the Royal Palace G.

31 Matthiae 2010, 252–253.

32 Matthiae 2010, 387–396; Pinnock 2013, 390–397.

33 Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 217, figs. 7.5b, c. The building of Tell er-Raqaʾi has the entrance in a deep niche, through one long side wall, but very close to the dais; the Halawa building features a strong articulation of the outer walls; the entrance, placed in the middle of one side wall, is also enclosed in a kind of deep porch. Another element of comparison may possibly be sought in the cult architecture of Mari, Ville 2, in particular in the complex of the Massif Rouge and of the temple of Ninkhursag: Margueron 2004, 235 fig. 221, 238 fig. 224.

34 Matthiae 2004, 317–326.

35 Two Eblaic goddesses correspond to this profile: Ashtar/Ishtar and Ishkhara. Ashtar, whose role in the Rituals of Kingship is quite important, owned several temples, one of which was in the Saza (Pomponio and Xella 1997, 66–67). Ishkhara had a relevant position in the dynastic cults, receiving special attention by the members of the Eblaic royal family and elite. Ishkhara was adored in Kura's Temple in the Saza (in our interpretation the Red Temple on the Acropolis), but she also owned a dag_x, a chapel or small sanctuary, whose location is not mentioned, but which had a priesthood that received rations from the central administration (Pomponio and Xella 1997, 214–217). About these two goddesses see, also, Archi 1993, now reprinted in Archi 2015.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

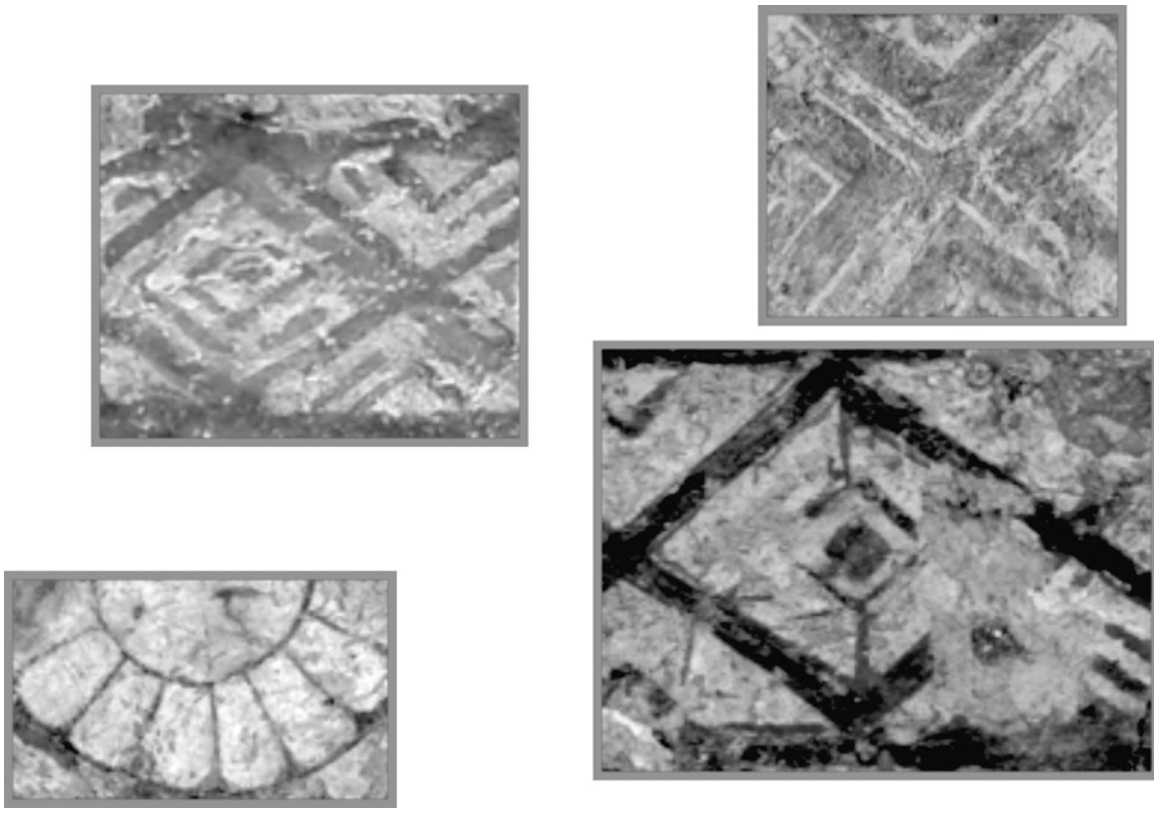


Fig. 16 Ebla, Sanctuary FF2; some fragments of painted plaster (Copyright: Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria)

4. Conclusion

Summing up, 1) the sectors of the Royal Palace G thus far brought to light did not have any residential function, with the exception of the Southern Quarter; 2) the service areas identified were closely related to the ceremonial functions that took place in the Court of Audience and in the Throne Room, and not to the everyday function of the building; 3) with the exception of the stores of the Central Complex to the south and the Southern Quarter, all the sectors identified had some ceremonial function; 4) the Court of Audience and the Throne Room were the reception places of the palace in a complementary, non-alternative way; 5) the definition of the Administrative Quarter is limitative, as this quarter had multiple functions, such as a reception suite, a repository of precious, imported goods, and a place where documents of different kinds were written and preserved; 6) with the exception of the stores of the Central Complex and the Southern Quarter, the areas brought to light display a rich decoration of wall panels, statues, decorated furniture, and possibly also decorated textiles, all depicting different aspects of kingship and the results of good rule.

Since the time of its discovery, it was stated that the Court of Audience was a kind of monumental scenario for the development of royal ceremonies;[36] this first impression is now confirmed, and has to be extended also to the Administrative Quarter.[37] The comparison between archaeological and textual evidence reveals that the ideology of kingship at Ebla underwent an evolution towards the end of the mature Early Syrian period, EB IVA, leading to a centrifugal enlargement of the palace and to an expansion of the manifestation of royal power towards the town, inside Ebla, and towards the territory, outside Ebla.

36 Matthiae 1977, 73.

37 About these aspects of the ceremonial use of the Court of Audience and of the Administrative Quarter see, also, Pinnock 2012; 2015.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Akkermans, P.M.M.G. and Schwartz, G.M.
2003 *The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (ca. 16,000–300 BC)*, Cambridge.

Archi, A.
1993 Divinités sémitiques et divinités de substrat: le cas d'Iškhara et d'Ištar à Ébla, *Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 7, 71–78.
2005 The Head of Kura – the Head of ʾAdabal, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 64, 81–100.
2015 *Ebla and Its Archives. Texts, History and Society*, Boston and Berlin.
2016 Egypt or Iran in the Ebla Texts?, *Orientalia* 85, 1–49.

Biga, M.G. and Roccati, A.
2012 Tra Egitto e Siria nel III millennio a.C., *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 146, 17–42.

Bonechi, M.
2016 Building Works at Palace G. The Ebla King between Major-domos, Carriers and Construction Workers, *Studia Eblaitica* 2, 1–45.

Calcagnile, L., Quarta, G. and D'Elia, M.
2013 *Just at that Time. 14C Determinations and Analysis from EB IVA Layers*, in: P. Matthiae and N. Marchetti (eds.), *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*, Walnut Creek, CA, 450–458.

Caracuta, V. and Fiorentino, G.
2013 *Forests Near and Far: An Anthracological Perspective on Ebla*, in: P. Matthiae and N. Marchetti (eds.), *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*, Walnut Creek, CA, 403–412.

Graff, S.
2012 *Culinary Preferences: Seal-impressed Vessels from Western Syria as Specialized Cookware*, in: S. Graff and E. Rodríguez-Alegría (eds.), *The Menial Art of Cooking: Archaeological Studies of Cooking and Food Preparation*, Boulder, CO, 19–45.

Margueron, J.-C.
2004 *Mari, métropole de l'Euphrate au III^e^ et au début du II^e^ millénaire av. J.-C.*, Paris.

Matthiae, P.
1977 *Ebla. Un impero ritrovato*, 1st edition, Torino.
1983 Fouilles de Tell-Mardikh-Ébla en 1982: nouvelles recherches sur l'architecture palatine d'Ébla, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 127.3, 530–554.
1985 *I tesori di Ebla*, Roma, Bari.
1987 Les dernières découvertes d'Ébla en 1983–1986, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 131.1, 135–161.
1993 L'aire sacrée d'Ishtar à Ébla: résultats des fouilles de 1990–1992, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 137.3, 613–662.
2000 Nouvelles fouilles à Ébla (1998–1999): forts et palais de l'enceinte urbaine, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 144.2, 567–610.
2004 Le palais méridional dans la ville basse d'Ébla paléosyrienne: fouilles à Tell Mardikh (2002–2003), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 148.1, 301–346.
2008 *Gli Archivi Reali di Ebla. La scoperta, i testi, il significato*, Milano.
2010 *Ebla, la città del trono. Archeologia e storia*, Torino.
2011 Fouilles à Tell Mardikh-Ébla en 2009–2010: les débuts de l'exploration de la citadelle paléosyrienne, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 155.2, 735–773.
2013a *Studies on the Archaeology of Ebla 1980–2010*, ed. F. Pinnock, Wiesbaden.
2013b *Archaeology of a Destruction: The End of MB II Ebla in the Light of Myth and History*, in: Matthiae 2013a, 155–175.
2013c *Crisis and Collapse: Similarity and Diversity in the Three Destructions of Ebla from EB IVA to MB II*, in: Matthiae 2013a, 57–93.
2013d *Early Syrian Palatial Architecture: Some Thoughts about Its Unity*, in: Matthiae 2013a, 235–242.
2013e *Masterpieces of Early and Old Syrian Art: Discoveries of the 1988 Ebla Excavations in a Historical Perspective*, in: Matthiae 2013a, 495–516.
2013f *The Standard of the* Maliktum *of Ebla in the Royal Archives Period*, in: Matthiae 2013a, 455–477.
2017 The Victory Panel of Early Syrian Ebla: Finding, Structure, Dating, *Studia Eblaitica* 3, 33–83.

Mazzoni, S.
1984 L'insediamento persiano-ellenistico di Tell Mardikh, *Studi Eblaiti* 7, 87–132.
1992 *Materiali e Studi Archeologici di Ebla, 1. Le impronte su giara eblaite e siriane nel Bronzo Antico*, Roma.

Owen, D.I.
1990 *Syrians in Sumerian Sources from the Ur III Period*, in: M.W. Chavalas and J.L. Hayes (eds.), *New Horizons in the Study of Ancient Syria*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 25, Malibu, 108–182.

Pinnock, F.
1986 *The Lapis Lazuli Trade in the Third Millennium BC and the Evidence from the Royal Palace G of Ebla*, in: M. Kelly-Buccellati (ed.), *Insight through Images: Studies in Honor of Edith Porada*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 21, Malibu, 221–228.
2004 *Change and Continuity of Art in Syria Viewed from Ebla*, in: J.-W. Meyer and W. Sommerfeld (eds.), *2000 v. Chr. Politische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklung im Zeichen einer Jahrtausendwende. 3. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 4.–7. April 2000 Frankfurt/Main und Marburg/Lahn*, Saarbrücken, 87–118.
2006 *The Raw Lapis Lazuli in the Royal Palace G of Ebla: New Evidence from the Annexes of the Throne Room*, in: M.E. Alberti, E. Ascalone and L. Peyronel (eds.), *Weights in Context: Bronze Age Weighing Systems of Eastern Mediterranean. Chronology,*

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Typology, Material and Archaeological Contexts. Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Rome 22nd–24th November 2004, Rome, 347–357.

2009 *EB IVB–MBI in Northern Syria: Crisis and Change of a Mature Urban Civilisation*, in: P.J. Parr (ed.), *The Levant in Transition: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the British Museum on 20–21 April 2004*, Leeds, 69–79.

2012 *Colours and Light in the Royal Palace G of Early Syrian Ebla*, in: R. Matthews and J. Curtis (eds.), *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East. 12 April – 16 April 2010, The British Museum and UCL, London*, Wiesbaden, 272–286.

2013 *Syrian and North Mesopotamian Temples in the Early Bronze Age*, in: K. Kaniuth, A. Löhnert, J.L. Miller, A. Otto, M. Roaf and W. Sallaberger (eds.), *Tempel im Altem Orient. 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft. 11.–13. Oktober 2009, München*, Wiesbaden, 385–405.

2015 The King's Standard from Ebla Palace G, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 67, 3–22.

2016 Royal Images and Kingship Rituals in Early Syrian Ebla: A Multi-faceted Strategy of Territorial Control in EB IVA North Inner Syria, *Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie* 9, 98–116.

in press a *Ebla in the IIIrd Millennium BC. Architecture and Urban Planning*, in: S.J. Bourke and M. Kennedy (eds.), *The Settlement Landscape of the Orontes Valley in the Fourth through Second Millennia BCE*, Studia Chaburensia.

in press b *Ebla in the Mid- to Late III Millennium BC: Architecture and Chronology*, in: S. Richard (ed.), *New Horizons in the Study of the Early Bronze III and Early Bronze IV in the Levant*, Winona Lake, IN.

Pomponio, F. and Xella, P.

1997 *Les dieux d'Ébla. Étude analytique des divinités éblaïtes à l'époque des archives royales du IIIe millénaire*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 245, Münster.

Strommenger, E. and Kohlmeyer, K.

2000 *Tall Bi`a/Tuttul – III. Die Schichten des 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr. im Zentralhügel E*, Saarbrücken.

Vacca, A.

2015 Before the Royal Palace G. The Stratigraphic and Pottery Sequence of the West Unit of the Central Complex: The Building G5, *Studia Eblaitica* 1, 1–32.

2016 *New Data on the EB III–IVA1 of North-Western Syria in the Light of Old and Recent Excavations at Tell Mardikh/Ebla and Tell Tuqan*, in: R.A. Stucky, O. Kaelin and H.-P. Mathys (eds.), *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 9–13 June 2014, Basel*, Vol. 3, Wiesbaden, 269–282.

Wachter-Sarkady, C.

2013 *Consuming Plants: Archaeobotanical Samples from Royal Palace G and Building P4*, in: P. Matthiae and N. Marchetti (eds.), *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*, Walnut Creek, CA, 376–402.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The Architectural Culture of the Middle Bronze Palaces of Ebla in a Historical Perspective

by Paolo Matthiae

One of the most relevant results of the systematic exploration of Tell Mardikh is its contribution to the recovery of a well-founded reconstruction of the architectural culture of one of the most meaningful centres of the Old Syrian period in the northern Levant.[1] The architectural culture of Ebla between c. 2000 and 1600 BC was independent and homogeneous and characterised by specific peculiarities in the palatial and religious buildings as well as in the fortification system and domestic dwellings.

Palatial architecture is well documented in a series of completely excavated royal, residential, and administrative buildings in the Lower Town, in excavation Areas P, Q, and FF, forming a kind of belt at the foot of the Acropolis, and in a complex and extensive royal ensemble called the Royal Citadel in Areas E and F, excavated only in limited and peripheral areas (Fig. 1). In fact, this quasi 'belt' of public buildings, both sacred (Temple N dedicated to Shamash/Shapash, Temple P2 dedicated to Ishtar, and Temple B dedicated to Rashap) and palatial, is documented throughout the northern, western, and south-western areas of the Lower Town, where excavations were extensive and systematic, while no data are available concerning the eastern area at the foot of the Acropolis, as yet unexcavated. The Royal Citadel, located in Areas E and F of the Acropolis, had already been identified in a 1968 sounding in Area E in the northernmost sector of the central mound. Later, after further excavation of the area in 2008, 2009 and 2010, the construction originally denominated 'Royal Palace E' at the start of the excavations was identified as the Royal Citadel, on account of its considerable extension, most probably over much of the Acropolis.[2]

The palaces of the Lower Town comprise, in the north-west, the Northern Palace of around 3.500 sq.m;[3] in the west, the Western Palace of around 7.200 sq.m;[4] and, in the south-west, the Southern Palace of around 1.200 sq.m (Fig. 2).[5] A number of concrete indications point to the Northern Palace as having been a ceremonial structure related to the adjacent Sacred Area of Ishtar Eblaitu, the Western Palace as being the residence of the crown prince, and the Southern Palace as the office of the palace prefect of the Old Syrian city.[6]

These three Old Syrian palaces of Ebla's Lower Town, the first two of which are impressive in size, were quite different in layout, in part depending on the structure of their predecessors. In particular, the unusual morphology of the Northern Palace, with converging western and eastern perimeter walls, the emerging entrance to the west and the jutting block on the eastern rear side, was certainly determined by the pre-existing Archaic Palace of Early Bronze IVB and the Intermediate Palace of Middle Bronze I (Fig. 3).[7]

1 A general reconstruction of salient aspects of the architectural culture of Old Syrian Ebla, outlined in Matthiae 1991 (English translation: Matthiae 2013a, 259–284) is available in Matthiae 2010a, 226–278, while Matthiae 2013d gives a more extensive overview for inland western Syria. The definition of Old Syrian rather than "of the Old Babylonian period" for the artistic and architectural culture of the first half of the 2nd millennium BC was introduced in Matthiae 1975 and is now widely adopted.

2 For the identification of the deities titular of the temples: Matthiae 1986, English translation in Matthiae 2013a, 302–312; Matthiae 1993. About the 'Royal Palace E' and the recent results of excavations: Matthiae 2010a, 438–442; Matthiae 2011.

3 On the Northern Palace, where excavations began in 1986, see Matthiae 1987, 152–160; Matthiae 1989, 171–175; Matthiae 1990a, 405–410; Matthiae 2010a, 254–258, 457–461.

4 The Western Palace was identified during a 1978 sounding attempting to locate remains of the western area of the Royal Palace G Court of Audience from Early Bronze IVA, and was systematically excavated between 1978 and 1982. In 2000 and 2001 excavations were extended to gain complete understanding of peripheral elements of detail of the considerable palatial structure, above all in the north-east and south-east sectors, prior to the restoration of the remains, completed in 2001: Matthiae 1980; Matthiae 1982a, 303–315; Matthiae 1982b; Matthiae 1983, 532–542; Matthiae 1984; Matthiae 1989, 162–171; Matthiae 2002, 558–565; Matthiae 2010a, 248–251, 442–448.

5 The Southern Palace was excavated following a 2002 sounding. The western and central areas were completed in 2003, and its eastern boundaries in 2004: Matthiae 2004, 326–346; Matthiae 2010a, 252–254, 449–452.

6 Matthiae 2010a, 247–262.

7 On the Archaic Palace of Early Bronze IVB and Middle Bronze IA see Matthiae 2006 and Matthiae 2010a, 197–198, 203–204 and 396–399; a very limited amount of data regarding the Intermediate Palace is to be found in Matthiae 1995, 674–676 and Matthiae 2010a, 237–238. This was constructed over the Archaic Palace in Middle Bronze IB, or shortly later, and preceded the Northern Palace, which it resembled in size and extension in all probability.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

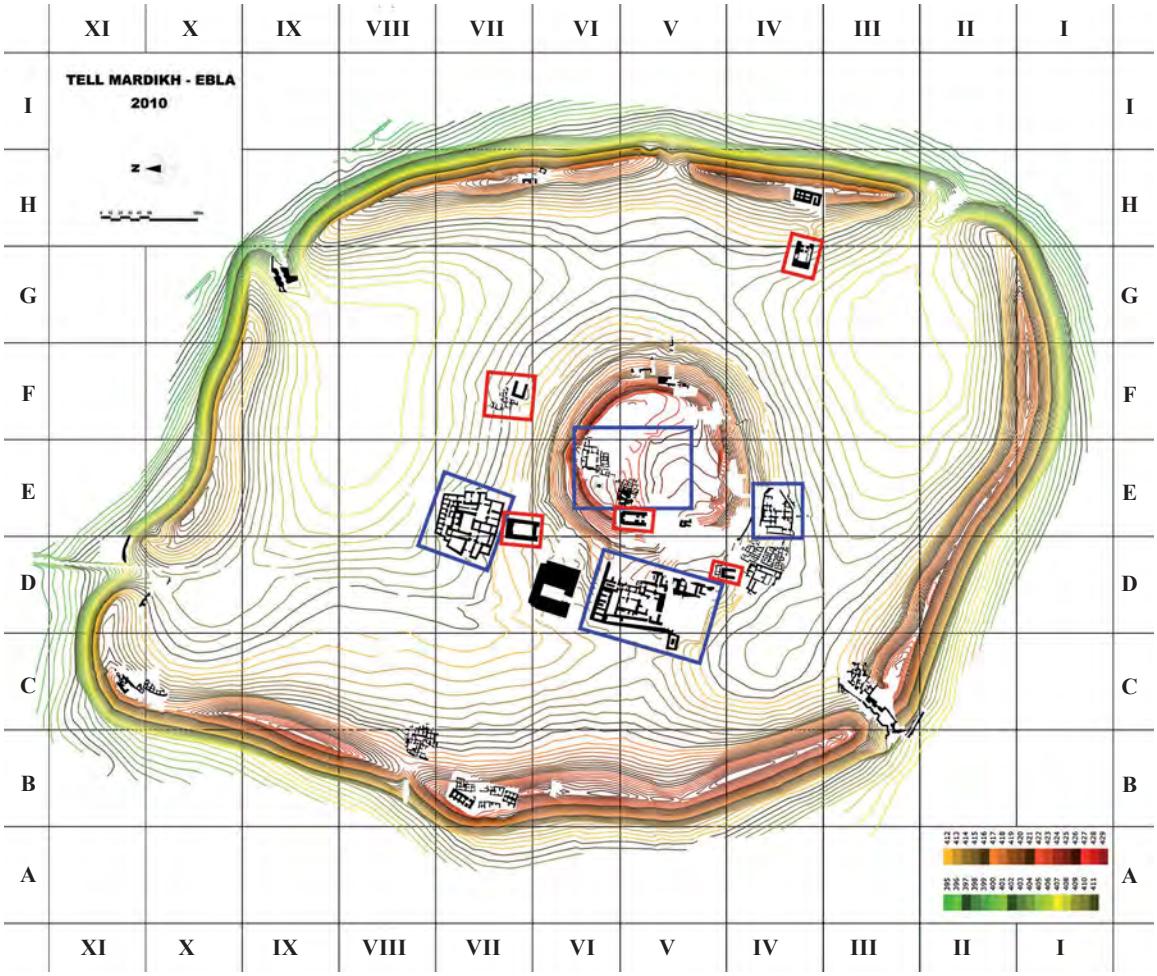


Fig.1 Ebla, Topographic map with palaces (blue) and temples (red) of Middle Bronze I–II

Notwithstanding the differences between the three palaces in size, shape, and function, a number of patterns of architectural planning are clear and recurring, revealing constant features of a unitary architectural culture typical of the methods, criteria, and procedures of Old Syrian architects. However, the more general problem of the unity and geographical limits of the architectural culture of Middle Bronze I–II Syria (besides that of its relations with the Neo-Syrian world), specifically as regards the fortifications and city gates, is possibly best dealt with in its application to religious architecture, not least on account of the quantity and diffusion of monuments to examine.[8]

At least three of these main architectural principles, recurrent in the Old Syrian palatial architecture of Middle Bronze I–II, are identifiable, as I had occasion to underline many years ago.[9]

The first one is the planimetric structure of the reception suite, always located in a central position.[10] This suite, in full evidence in the Western Palace, has a tripartite scheme: the audience hall is conceived as a long room, nearly 20 m in length, flanked by two side wings formed by two or three smaller rooms with the function, on one side, of a bent axis entrance and, on the other side, of stores (Fig. 4).[11]

In the Northern Palace this great central hall, L.4038, oriented west-east, had three small chambers, undoubtedly store-rooms, on its north side (L.4150, L.4027, L.4115, intercommunicating and with a single access from the great hall), two small ones on the

8 Preliminary considerations on the continuity between Middle Bronze I-II and Iron Age architectural culture are found in Matthiae 1989, 210–320. Syntheses on the fortifications are Burke 2008 and Rey 2012. In the various evaluations of the question of the religious architecture, typological considerations have for the most part prevailed (Werner 1994; Margueron 2001; Mazzoni 2010; Castel 2010), even in important recent contributions (Metzger 2012), or functional evaluations regarding the concepts of sanctuaries and *temenoi* as compared with the Babylonian world: Otto 2013.

9 These principles were individually distinguished in the Western Palace of Area Q, the first of the Tell Mardikh palatial constructions of the Old Syrian period to be recovered: Matthiae 1989, 166–170.

10 Cf. Kallas in this volume.

11 This tripartite scheme in Old Syrian royal palaces was first discovered by Matthiae 1990b.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

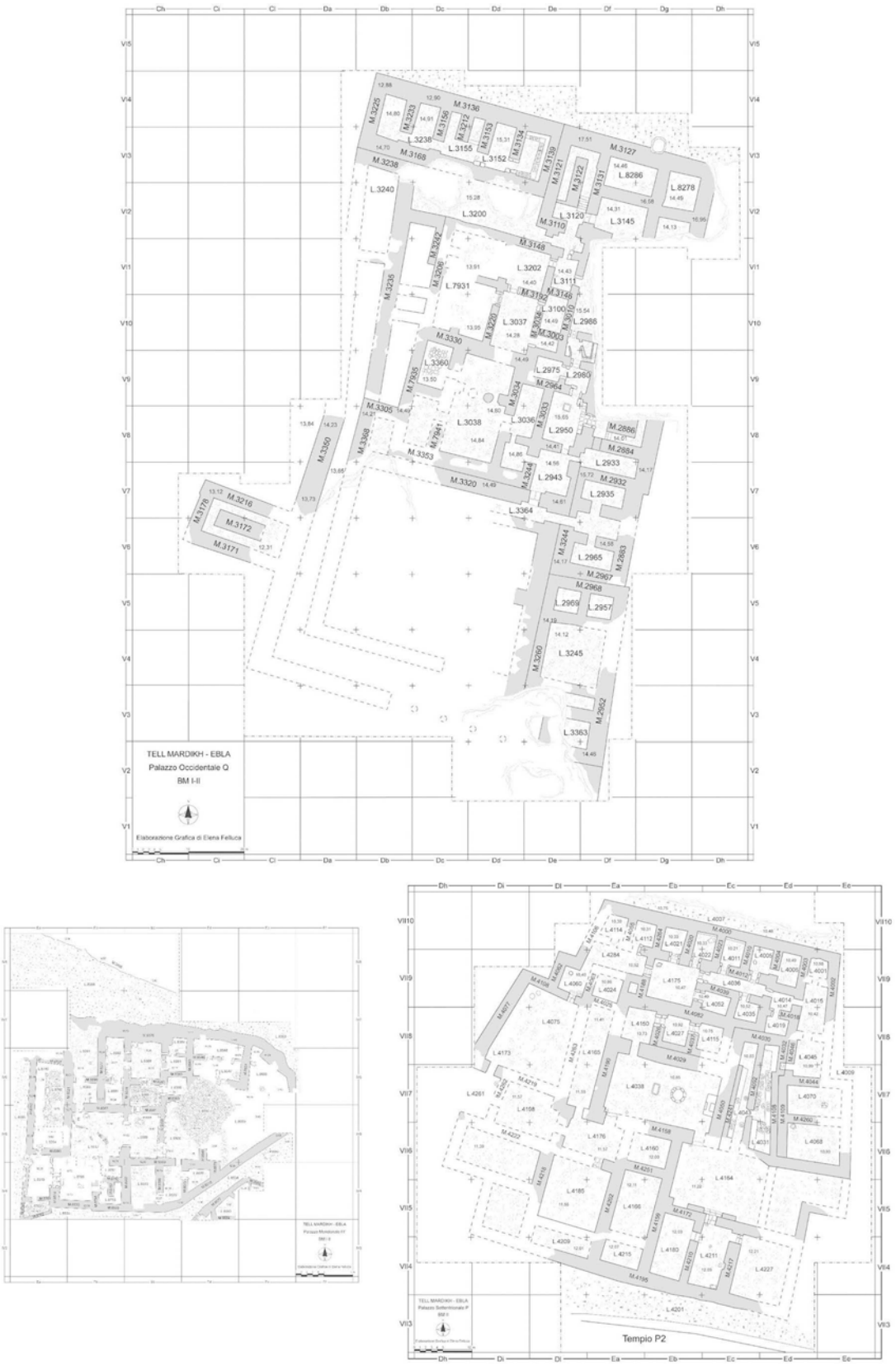


Fig. 2 Ebla, Lower Town: plans of the Western, Northern, and Southern Palaces

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

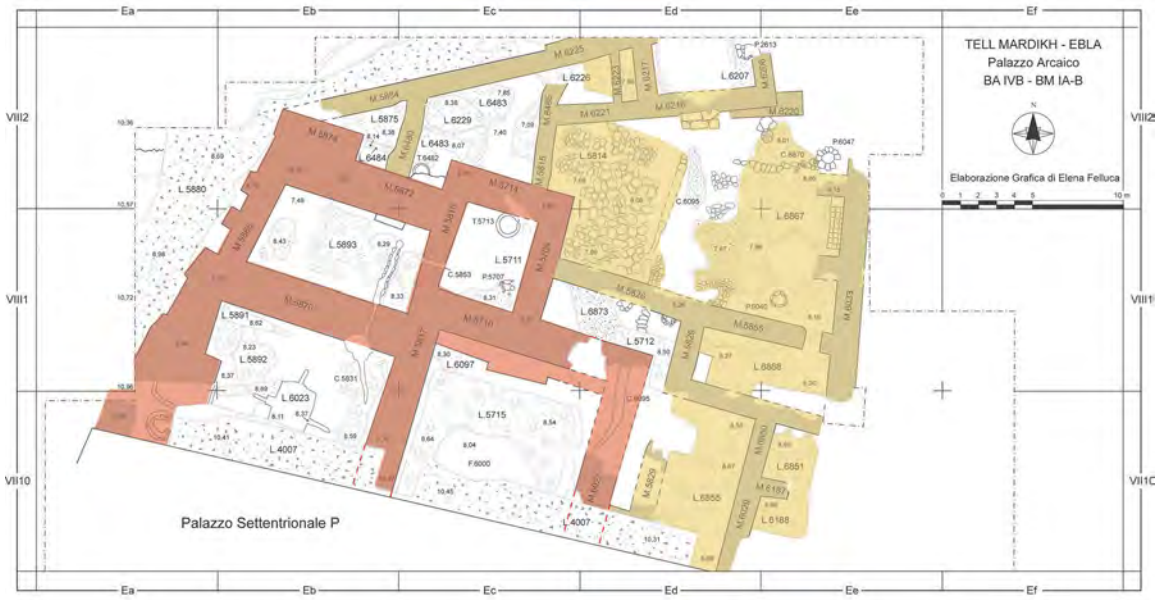


Fig. 3 Ebla, Lower Town: Archaic Palace (Area P), structures of EB IVB (red) and MB I (yellow)

south side (L.4176, with a door into the central hall, and L.4160), and a considerably larger one, L.4164, equally with a door into the hall. The two chambers on the south side, L.4176 and L.4164, which had a door to the north on the south side of hall L.4038, were respectively the vestibule of the public entrance and that of the private royal entrance into the central throne room: the public entrance was, significantly, at the opposite point from the eastern side, where the royal throne stood, while the private entrance was situated beside the dais, near the eastern side where the royal throne would have stood.[12]

In the Southern Palace, the Old Syrian reception suite, while still in evidence, had been significantly modified, in part due to the reduced size of the building, but also due to the fact that the palace administrator was not in all probability the king but a very high-ranking dignitary; here the central nucleus of the audience suite comprised the square vestibule, L.8517, and the rectangular chamber forming the reception space, L.8505. Even though, perfectly normatively, there is no axial entrance into the central hall, here too west-east facing, the Southern Palace has only two lateral store-rooms (unusually positioned and in the north-west corner, L.8583 and L.8591) entered through three doors: one, the public entrance on the south side of the square antechamber, L.8517, indirectly communicating with the vestibule at the entrance to the palace, L.8755; the private entrance on the north side of the reception room, L.8505, directly communicating with the North Wing, which was almost certainly the residential area of the palace, and a supplementary entrance open on the rear of the reception room, giving access to a spacious room, L.8500, the largest in the building, which probably functioned as a store-room for particularly prised goods.[13]

In the Old Syrian reception suite, the constant absence of an axial entrance and the regular presence, without exception, of a lateral entrance are the rule. The main central hall may be either a long uninterrupted space, as in the Northern Palace, or a double room with a larger antechamber and a smaller back room forming the real reception space, as in the Southern Palace, separated by a two-columned porch, as in the Western Palace. In this last imposing building, the central audience hall had a vestibule, L.3038 (square, as in the Southern Palace), and a rectangular inner reception space with two side wings. The western wing comprised two rooms used as store-rooms, only one of which, L.3360, is in a good state of preservation; the eastern wing was divided into two chambers, the southern, a small square space linking the outside vestibule, L.2943, with its handsome basalt threshold stones, and the inner, northern vestibule, L.3036: this was the last side chamber allowing access to the square

12 Matthiae 1990a, 405–409; Matthiae 2010a, 457–61.

13 It was in this room that fragments of large storage jars were found, engraved with the word É.GAL, ‘palace’ (no such engraved pots were found in any other building in Old Syrian Ebla), together with the unique cuneiform tablet of the Southern Palace containing a list of functionaries (TM.02.FF.600): Matthiae 2004, 334–341, figs. 35, 41.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 4 Ebla, Lower Town: Western Palace, Rooms L.2943, L.2950, L.3036, and L.3038 of the reception suite, from the north

vestibule, L.3038, of the audience hall. In the large, central audience hall the southern vestibule and northern reception space were separated by a portico with two columns; while the place where the west column stood was in a poor state of preservation, that of the east, though damaged, was clearly visible and part of the column's basalt base was found a short distance away.[14]

The second principle is the long semi-peripheral route with a distributive function, running between the central reception suite and the peripheral rooms adjacent to the perimeter walls of the buildings. This route was formed by an irregular sequence of small rooms and small courts, open, on one side, onto the reception suite and, in some cases, onto other central quarters, and, on the other side, to the peripheral wings. This pattern is clearly recognisable in the larger palatial and certainly royal buildings, both in the Western and Northern Palaces (Fig. 5) and, perhaps on a larger scale, also in the Royal Citadel on the Acropolis.[15]

In the Western Palace, this semi-peripheral route is clearly identifiable in the eastern section of the building's well-preserved northern area. This begins with chamber L.2943, which, as anti-vestibule of the entrance to the central audience suite, is situated between this important suite and the peripheral chambers flanking the eastern perimeter wall, L.2935 and L.2933. It continues towards the north with the small court, L.2950, then the small chamber, L.2980, and, after a second minor chamber, continues as a long area that was again most probably a semi-peripheral court, L.2986, which in correspondence with the north-east corner of the palace veers west with the large semi-peripheral court L.3200, lying between the five peripheral chambers adjacent to the northern perimeter wall M.3136 and the North-Centre Wing, adjacent to the central audience suite. There seems to have been a similar semi-peripheral route, very badly preserved, in the western sector of the Western Palace, between the central wings and the peripheral rooms, the latter being far smaller than those on the eastern side of the building.

In the Northern Palace this semi-peripheral route can be clearly traced along the western façade of the building, which includes the entrance to the whole complex and, above all, on the northern side where, exactly as in the Western Palace, it ensured access, through chambers L.4024 and L.4284, the square court, L.4175, and corridor L.3036, both to the service areas adjacent to the northern perimeter wall M.4000 and to L.4052, L.4036, and L.4019 of a central secondary wing behind the great audience suite (L.3037, L.3202, L.7931). Inside the palace, the plan of which was greatly conditioned by the

14 In the Western Palace there was clearly no distinction between a public and a private entrance to the central hall: the same bent axis door on the eastern side of the suite served both for the public and the owner of the palatial building.

15 The identification of this second principle is difficult in the Royal Citadel because only a very partial north-western sector of the entire huge architectural complex has been excavated, but already nowadays it is clear in this limited part of the ensemble: Matthiae 2011, 743–61.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

underlying Archaic Palace from Early Bronze IVB and the Intermediate Palace from Middle Bronze IB, the presence of the two long store-rooms for storage jars, L.4043 and L.4031, parallel to the rear side of the central audience suite, impeded the continuation of the semi-peripheral route, just as on the southern side, the layout for very large rooms probably destined for temporary residence imposed a different system of distribution.

The third principle is the usual arrangement of the peripheral rooms belonging to the lateral wings. These are orthogonal and not parallel to the perimeter walls of the buildings. This too is a rule, almost without exception: in fact, this particular layout of peripheral chambers was adopted in all Ebla's Old Syrian palaces, independently of their function, except in the rather rare cases in which the residential function created specific requirements of circulation or increased comfort, in which case square or almost square rooms were chosen as opposed to distinctly elongated, rectangular rooms.

In the Western Palace, the arrangement of rooms at right angles to the perimeter walls is found both in the North-Western, basically catering Wing, and in the rooms on the eastern side in the extant southern stretch, most probably store-rooms. It is impossible to advance conjectures as to the very highly deteriorated western side, though there may have been a series of small rooms, roughly square for reasons of space. An exception to the norm in the Western Palace are the rooms of the North-Eastern Wing (L.8286, L.8278, L.3145), almost certainly secondary residential rooms complementary to the principal chambers that would have been on the upper floor.

In the Northern Palace, the orthogonal arrangement against the perimeter wall is used along the whole northern wall for service areas, along the southern wall for the occasionally residential rooms of the South-Eastern Wing (L.4211, L.4180, L.4166, L.4215), and in the central protruding element on the rear sector of the east side of the building, where rooms L.4070 and L.4968 were very probably workshops of royal artisans.

The norm applies to the Southern Palace too, with minor variations, both in the almost certainly residential Northern Wing and in the Southern, catering Wing, while there can be no certainty as to the arrangement of peripheral rooms in the eastern part of the building, both irregular in layout and rather badly preserved.[16]

As a consequence of this arrangement, unknown in the contemporary Old Babylonian architecture of Mesopotamia, these rooms are, as a rule, parallel to each other and always with their short sides built against the perimeter walls. The perimeter walls, in turn, are sometimes lined, on the exterior faces only, with large limestone orthostats, as in the Western Palace,[17] which is the most monumental and technically sophisticated palatial building of Old Syrian Ebla.[18]

These three architectural principles were not only constantly applied in the plans of the completely excavated Lower Town palaces, but were very probably also taken into consideration in the complex project of the Royal Citadel: the second and third principles were certainly applied, and the same is probably true for the first.[19] As regards the second principle, the semi-peripheral route is documented, at the south-western extremity of Area E, by the south–north oriented corridor ramp separating the North-Centre Wing from the West Wing, continued to the north-east, in the central part of Area E, by the paved, west-east oriented 'loggia' separating the North-West Wing

16 Matthiae 2004, 324–46; Matthiae 2010a, 449–52.

17 The Western Palace, the last, particularly monumental reconstruction, which probably dates to Middle Bronze IIA, though Middle Bronze IB is not to be excluded, was without doubt the most majestic palatial building in Ebla's Lower Town. Its perimeter walls were consistently 3.2 m thick and had large limestone orthostats along the entire outer façade, as can be reconstructed, even where the orthostats no longer exist, from the regular square blocks of the foundations, still in place. The still extant orthostats on the western stretch of the northern perimeter wall are consistently c. 1.45 m high, but vary in width between 3.15 m and 4.25 m. The only inner part of the building that definitely had orthostats as faces of the stone bases of the mudbrick walls was the central audience suite, where, although completely lost, these can be reconstructed from the partial in situ preservation of the foundation blocks, very similar to those of the perimeter walls: Matthiae 2002b, 558–562; Matthiae 2010a, 445–446. Interestingly, in the Southern Palace too the central audience suite was the most technically refined sector, its regular orthostats precisely planed on the front, albeit considerably smaller than those of the Western Palace: Matthiae 2004, 326–344. The limestone orthostats of the Damascus City Gate piers (South-West City Gate, Area A) in Ebla, which are slightly higher than those of the perimeter wall of the Western Palace – 1.65/1.7 m – are exactly identical in maximum width to their larger counterparts of the Western Palace – 4.25 m: Davico 1966, 22.

18 The extraordinary similarity in dimensions and arrangement between the orthostats of the Damascus City Gate and of the Western Palace of Ebla and those of the cella of Hadad's Temple in the Aleppo Citadel was one of the fundamental elements used in dating to the Middle Bronze Age the most ancient phase of the exceptional (and well-preserved) sacred building of Aleppo, brought to light by the Joint Syro-German Expedition, led by K. Kohlmeyer: Kohlmeyer 2000; Gonnella, Khayyata and Kohlmeyer 2005, 89; Kohlmeyer 2013, 184–187; Kohlmeyer 2016, 301–302.

19 On the Royal Citadel (Areas E and F), previously named Royal Palace E, see Matthiae 2010a, 438–442. Supplementary materials from the results of the last excavation season of 2010 are illustrated by Matthiae 2011, 743–761.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

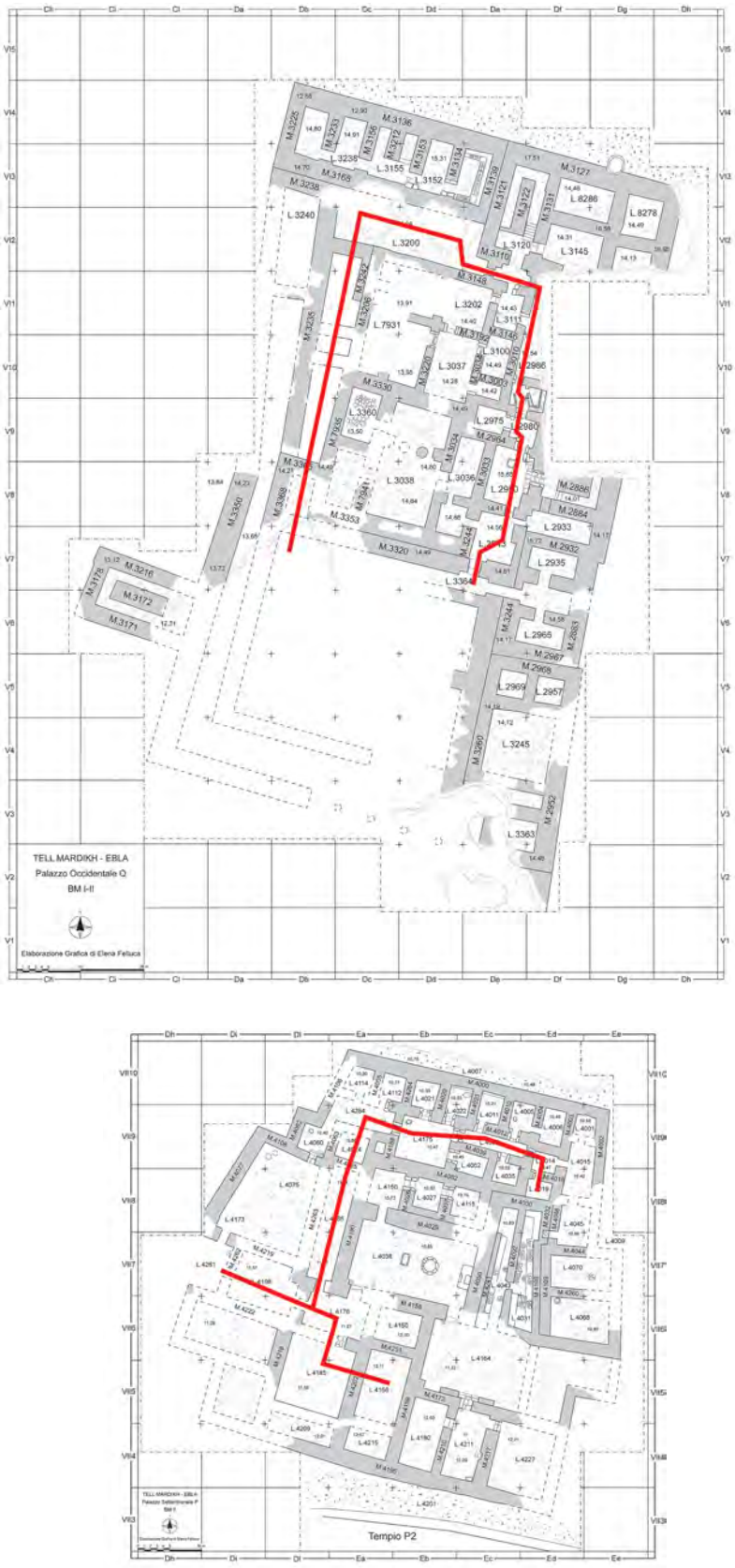


Fig. 5 Ebla, Lower Town: Western Palace and Northern Palace, semi-peripheral route

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

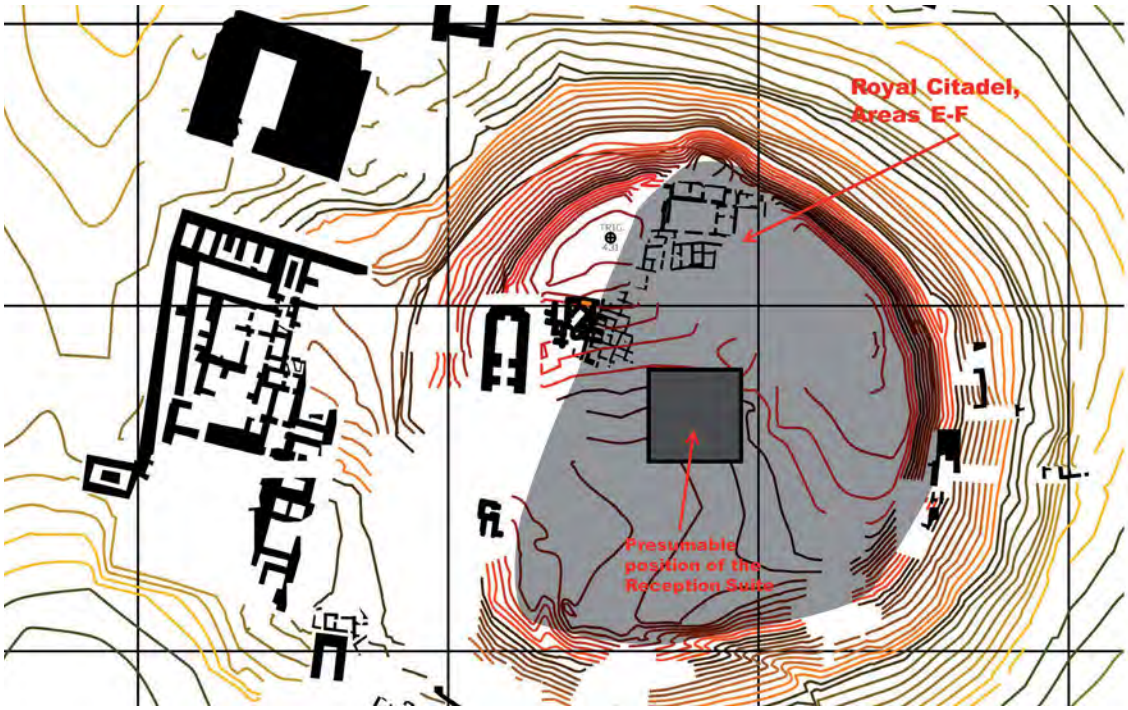


Fig. 6 Ebla, Acropolis: Royal Citadel (Areas E–F), peripheral northern and western excavated sectors and presumed place of the audience suite

from the North-Centre Wing.[20] Given that only a very small part of the enormous Royal Citadel E–F complex has been excavated – little more than 1,400 sq.m of its full extension (probably some 15,000 sq.m) –, the third principle of the orthogonality of peripheral chambers with respect to the perimeter wall (which on account of the Royal Citadel's very unusual structure is lacking any form of monumentality and was simply the western wall of the West Wing), is documented only on the northern side in the incompletely excavated North Wing, and on the western side by the secondary residential Units I–IV of the great West Wing.[21] The reception suite of this major residential and administrative complex has not yet been excavated, though it certainly was in the central region of the Acropolis where a sounding was planned for 2011 (Fig. 6).[22]

As regards the positions of quarters and wings with specific functions within the general plan of the palaces, it is possible to recognise a degree of regularity. The reception suite (red), the core of the palatial structure, was always in a quintessentially central position, but the residential (blue) and service (green) wings also had unvarying locations (Figs. 7–9).

The residential quarters were always in peripheral parts of a building, to the rear. The Western Palace, the only one which, with certainty, had a second floor at some point of its considerable length, as well as a main façade on the southern side, had a lower floor sector, the North-East Wing, and one on the upper floor, most probably above the lower northern quarters, with residential function.

In the Northern Palace, which had its entrance on the western side and certainly had no actual residential quarter, given its ceremonial function, an occasional residential sector was present in the South-East Wing. This was used by the king and his dignitaries only for ceremonies and receptions taking place in the building.

In the Southern Palace, the entrance to which was on its south-western corner, the residential quarter, which must have belonged to the palace prefect, was the North Wing, constructed against the perimeter wall.

The service quarters, including the kitchen, were generally situated in the rear sector or along one of the side walls of the palatial buildings: the North-West Wing in the Western Palace, the North Wing in the Northern Palace, and the South-Centre Wing in the Southern Palace.

What is certain is that the residential quarter was either directly connected to the reception suite, as

20 Ibidem, figs. 7–13, 19.

21 Ibidem, figs. 14-19, 24.

22 From a comparison between the layout of the Western Palace of the Lower Town and the Royal Citadel, respectively identified as the residence of the crown prince and of the king of Old Syrian Ebla, it would appear likely that the probably monumental audience suite of Royal Citadel E–F stood in the central area of the Acropolis, some 20–25 m south of the sector of the North-Centre Wing so far excavated: Matthiae 2011, 758–764, figs. 23–24.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

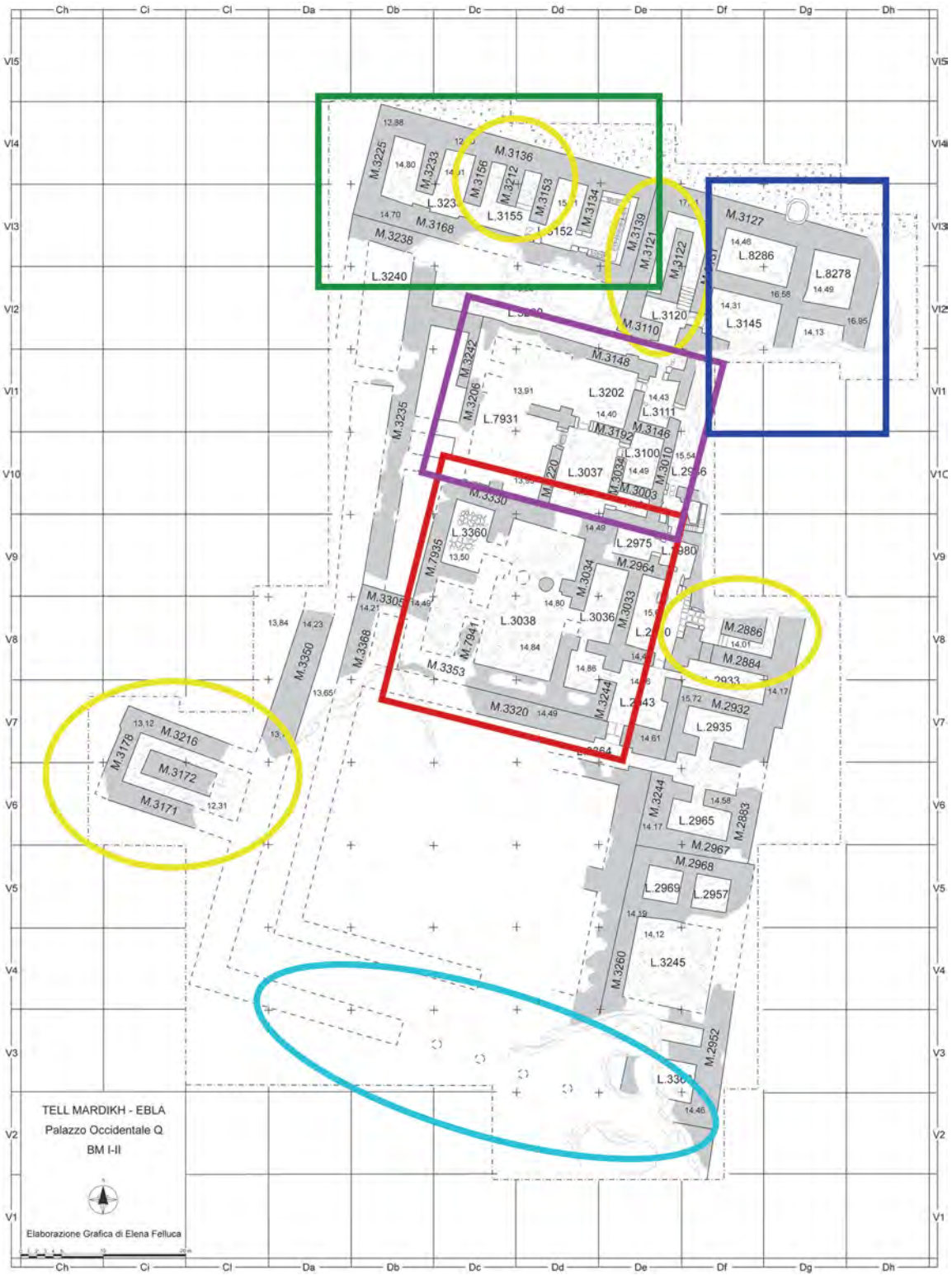


Fig. 7 Ebla, Lower Town: Western Palace, reception suite (red), residential wing (blue), service quarter (green), stairways (yellow), storage quarter (violet), entrance area (azur)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 8 Ebla, Lower Town: Northern Palace, reception suite (red), residential wing (blue), service quarter (green), storage quarter (violet), entrance area (azur)

in the Southern Palace,[23] or had a kind of intermediate wing between the reception suite and the residential quarter, as in the Western Palace, where the North-East Wing, of peculiarly sophisticated architectural technique, was in the innermost back corner of the complex (Fig. 7).[24] A similar position may be observed in the Northern Palace, where, apparently, there was no real residential wing, but

23 In the Southern Palace, the residence of a high dignitary, who as mentioned above must have been the palace prefect, was discovered in the North-Centre Wing: its only access door communicated, significantly, only with the rear reception space of the audience suite, clearly bespeaking its private nature. It should be observed that the North-Centre Wing of the Southern Palace repeats the classical scheme of the audience suite only apparently, in that the front central room of this residential quarter is a small court and not a covered antechamber, as in the audience hall; this rather undermines the layout analogy, as does the function of four of the five side rooms, which could only have been bedrooms.

24 The four chambers of the North-East Wing present at least three technical and planning characteristics that are somewhat enigmatic and possibly contradictory, although their interpretation is beyond the scope of the present contribution: firstly, at least the two inner rooms, L.8286 and L.8278, have no door and must therefore have had direct and thus private access via wooden ladders from the upper floor; secondly, all chambers had a very peculiar masonry in deep red and light brown regularly alternating mudbricks, which may have been left exposed under a very light layer of plaster; thirdly, these technically sophisticated areas had no cement flooring like all the other rooms of the palace, but merely beaten-earth floors, which on excavation were covered with a thin and relatively regular layer of fine ash, probably the remains of matting, implying that the floors were covered with matting and probably precious carpeting: Matthiae 2002b, 559–563.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

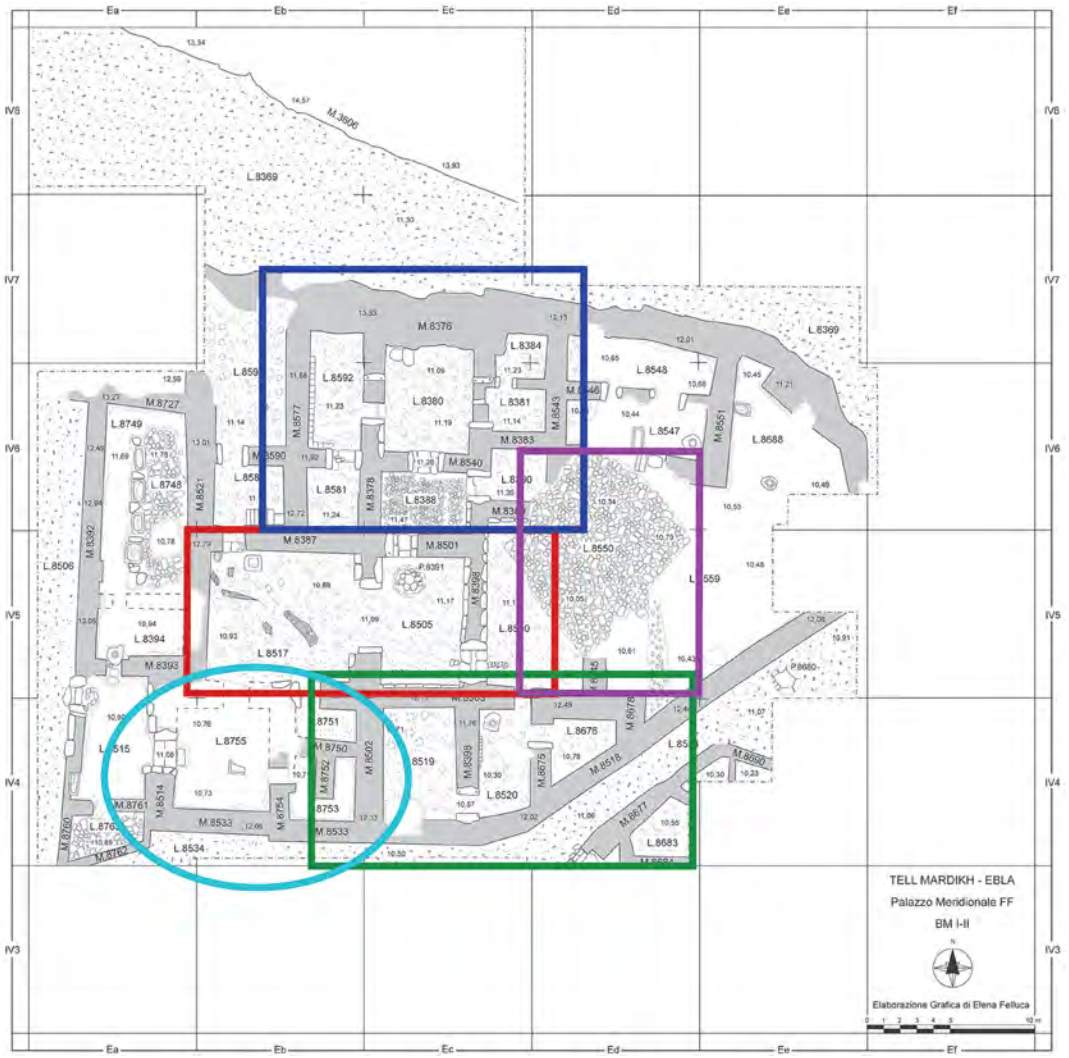


Fig. 9 Ebla, Lower Town: Southern Palace, reception suite (red), residential wing (blue), service quarter (green), stairways (yellow), storage quarter (violet), entrance area (azur)

where a kind of temporary residential suite (blue) was situated in the south-eastern corner of the palace, directly related to the central reception suite (red) (Fig. 8).[25]

The service quarters for food production (green) were generally located in the rear sectors of the palaces; this arrangement is found in the Western Palace (Fig. 10) and in the Northern Palace.[26] In the Royal Citadel too the service quarters, with the kitchens, were in the northernmost rear region of the architectural complex. Only in the Southern Palace were the kitchens in a lateral sector near the central quarter of the reception suite.[27]

The location of the storage quarters (violet) is more problematic, as only in the Northern Palace are there two well-preserved long parallel rooms full of big stor-

25 Direct communication in the two palaces – Northern and Southern Palaces – is significantly provided between the central reception suite and residential quarter (permanent and occasional) where the audience hall had a double entrance: one public, near the entrance to the building itself, and one private, open very close to the rear, where the throne of the king would have stood in the first case, and that of the palace prefect in the other.

26 In the North-West Wing of the Western Palace, which would certainly have supplied constant and considerable catering, three of the four very regular rooms comprising this sector, together with the small central stairway, were found to be completely empty, while the spectacular easternmost chamber, L.3135, still contained, intact, a long horseshoe-shaped bench with sixteen basalt millstones with their pestles in situ: Matthiae 2010a, 446, pl. XVI.2. An impressive amount of bread (which, with some approximation, could be calculated) was clearly produced here.

27 The identification of the South-East Wing (L.8519, L.8520, L.8676) as a catering sector is further endorsed by the presence of at least one large open fireplace in the central room: Matthiae 2004, 336–337.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 10 Ebla, Lower Town: Western Palace, Room L.3135 of the service wing with basalt millstones in situ, from south-west

Fig. 11 Ebla, Lower Town: Northern Palace, Rooms L.4043 and L.4031 of the storage quarter, from south-east

Fig. 12 Ebla, Lower Town: Southern Palace, Rooms L.8394 and L.8749 of the Stables

age jars in situ: these are behind the reception hall (red) of the central core of the palace (Fig. 11). The two rooms L.4043 and L.4031 contained at least twenty large storage jars typical of Middle Bronze IIB, each with a capacity of holding some 120 litres, indicating a considerable quantity of oil stored in the Northern Palace; it is improbable, however, that this was used by the kitchens since there was no communication between the two rooms and the North Wing of the palace, where small portable ovens were discovered, clearly used for the production of relatively modest quantities of food.[28] Furthermore, the fact that L.4043 and L.4031 communicate only with court L.4164, the space allowing, through a private entrance, passage from the long southern chambers of the South-East Wing to the central reception suite, would imply that the considerable quantity of oil in the store-rooms served for rituals that took place in the large central hall of the reception suite, in the presence of the king.[29]

However, in all three palaces of the Lower Town, the sector adjacent to the rear wall of the central audience suite, while strangely divergent in lay-out, always contained storage jars in situ or at least significant remains of such, as in the case of the Southern Palace. So, it is possible that the same arrangement applied to the Western Palace, where the North-Centre Wing behind the reception suite was found to be almost completely empty, as was the large room L.8500 behind the reception quarter of the Southern Palace, beyond a few fragments of large storage jars found here with the inscription É. GAL, 'palace' (Fig. 9).[30]

28 Pinnock 2005, 77–81.

29 Matthiae 1987, 153–158; Matthiae 1990a., 406–409; Matthiae 2010a, 467–68.

30 Matthiae 2004, 332, 334–36, figs 32–33, 3543; Matthiae 2010a, 450–51. It is quite probable that the rooms of the North-Centre Wing of the Western Palace, well preserved only in the eastern sector and in a seriously damaged state in the western sector, the reconstruction of which is highly conjectural, had a similar function to that of the room L.8500 of the Southern Palace, opening onto the rear of the central audience hall, with which it communicated directly. Furthermore, while, given its damaged state, there is no evidence that the western sector of the North-Centre Wing of the Western Palace had this kind of utilisation, the small rooms in the eastern sector of the same wing contained not few storage jars mainly of medium-sized to medium-sized-large dimensions: Pinnock 2005, 92–96.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Middle Bronze IA 2000 - 1900 BC ca.	Mardikh IIIA1	Early Old Syrian Period	Ibbit-Lim of Ebla
Middle Bronze IB 1900 - 1800 BC ca.	Mardikh IIIA2	Early Old Syrian Period	
Middle Bronze IIA 1800 - 1700 BC ca.	Mardikh IIIB1	Classical Old Syrian Period	Yarim-Lim of Yamkhad
Middle Bronze IIB 1700 - 1600 BC ca.	Mardikh IIIB2	Classical Old Syrian Period	Indilimma of Ebla Mursili of Khatti Pizikarra of Nineveh

Fig. 13 Terminology of MB I–II with the Mardikh phases and some kings of Ebla, Yamkhad, Hatti, and Nineveh

Strangely enough, the entrances to the palaces of the Lower Town were all different. In the Western Palace, where the whole front sector on the southern façade is lost,[31] there are various indications that it may have been a columned porch. Indications of a portico on the southern façade of the Western Palace are at least the two circular cavities in the rock, which could have been seats for stone bases, and the fact that these are aligned with the beginning of the southernmost east-west wall of the whole complex, of which there remains only the connection, at the south-western corner of the building, with the western perimeter wall M.2952.

The entrance to the Northern Palace was a gate with a vestibule between two jutting masonry blocks in a central position on the western side of the building.[32] Although there are no precedents for such a layout in the entrance to a palatial building, the structure of the two jutting blocks is unquestionable since a sufficient amount of its foundations are preserved, though it is impossible to reconstruct the circulation in the rooms they delimit, as the remaining foundations are always at a lower level than the floors of the rooms and the thresholds.

In the Southern Palace the entrance was in the southwestern corner, with only a vestibule in the western façade, and it was connected with the outer Stables, located immediately to the northwest (Fig. 12). This entrance is very unusual. The thickness of the southern and western perimeter walls M.8533 and M.8514 and their joining point of at the south-western corner of the building clearly indicate that the two structures originally marked the limit of the palatial building, and that its entrance was marked by vestibule L.8755. Afterwards, however, a small external space in front of the vestibule was fenced off, forming the 'piazzetta' (L.8515), paved with large, smooth stones that served as a small courtyard giving access to Stables L.8394 and L.8749 to the north, and to the Southern Palace to the east. This planimetric device was conceived to allow direct communication between the Southern Palace and the Stables, and to create a unified rectilinear prospect of the Stables/Southern Palace complex on the east side of the south-north running road, L.8506. In fact, the small court L.8515, besides the two doors already mentioned, had a third door on the west side open onto the street L.8506, and a fourth on the south side, accessing the small

31 If the front of the Western Palace has been completely lost in the systematic plundering of the foundation and base stones, clearly exposed on account of the slightly elevated rock in this central region of the Lower Town West compared with the southern and western sectors, the area facing the southern façade of the great palatial building, while almost equally seriously damaged, has maintained a series of great round blocks of basalt in situ. The blocks were lined up so as to form the front of the eastern limit of a wide road, clearly monumental in aspect, winding upwards, sometimes with steps for short stretches and linking the Damascus City Gate (Area A) with the façade of the Western Palace, which must have dominated impressively over anyone entering from the south-western city gate. This great south–north running 'avenue' must have opened on its eastern side towards the nearby Sanctuary B2, the sacred building designated for the cult of the deified royal ancestors, and the adjacent Rashap Temple (Area B). The Western Palace, Sanctuary B2, and Temple B would have constituted in the Lower Town South-West an important sacred area connected with Rashap, the god of the netherworld and comparable to the great Sacred Area of Ishtar, which in the Lower Town North-West included Temple P2, the Sacred Terrace P3, and the Northern Palace: Matthiae 1991 (English translation in Matthiae 2013a, 271–276); Pinnock 2001.

32 Matthiae 1990a, 405–410; Matthiae 2010a, 457–461.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

trapezoid room L.8763, probably a service room storing equipment for the horses temporarily housed in stable L.8749. [33]

What is absolutely clear is that the three main architectural principles of the Old Syrian palatial tradition, well-documented at Ebla, and certainly already present in Middle Bronze IA–B, are completely different from the usual Old Babylonian rules of Mesopotamian palatial architecture.[34] The morphology of the Ebla reception suite is also clearly recognisable in the Royal Palace of Alalakh VII and, perhaps, with some difference, in the almost contemporary palace of Tilmen Hüyük.[35]

The fact that the reception suite pattern and various other characteristics, like the longitudinal development of the building, typical of the Western Palace of Ebla and of the Royal Palace of Alalakh, are present in the lesser palaces of Qatna[36] may be considered in support of the thesis that the architectural principles of the palatial architecture of the Old Syrian Ebla tradition were characteristic of the north region of western inland Syria, the region of Aleppo and Ebla, and, possibly, in an early phase, also of the central region, the region of Qatna.[37]

Our proposal is that the very beginning of the early Old Syrian period, corresponding to Middle Bronze IA, was the formative phase of an independent, relatively unitary and homogeneous architectural tradition including palatial and religious buildings, fortification systems, and dwelling typologies.[38] This process was entirely achieved in Middle Bronze IB, and in general terms during the 19th century BC.[39] On the other hand, from the start of Middle Bronze IIA onwards, in the decades around 1800 BC, a number of different traditions led to contaminations and re-elaborations of spatial concepts.[40] These came mainly from southern Mesopotamia and the Euphrates Valley, possibly under influences related to political events surrounding the emergence firstly of the kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia under Shamshi-Adad I and, later on, of the power of Yamkhad under Yarim-Lim I (Fig. 13).[41]

33 Matthiae 2004, 338, figs. 30, 39–40.

34 It is a commonly known fact that, in palatial architecture in Mesopotamia in general and in the Old Babylonian period in particular, the canonical layout of rectangular rooms is always parallel to the sides of the courtyard and the perimeter walls of buildings, while this orthogonal relation to the perimeter walls is almost completely unknown: Margueron 1982, 168–422; Heinrich 1984, 49–81.

35 For an analysis of the layout of the reception suite in the Royal Palace of Alalakh VII see Matthiae 1990b, while an updated evaluation of that of the palatial complex of Tilmen Hüyük can be found in Marchetti 2006. Traces of this northern Syrian typology have been observed in contemporary architecture of Middle Bronze Palestine, at least in Megiddo: Nigro 1994a, 375–380; Nigro 1994b.

36 These are the Lower City Palace and the Eastern Palace preceding the building of the last monumental Royal Palace at Qatna, which, in terms of spatial conception, is seemingly inspired by Mesopotamian models, not least the celebrated Royal Palace of Mari, despite far from secondary differences between the two, which are not in evidence in Palace A at Tuttul: Miglus and Strommenger 2007. The Old Syrian reception suite is adopted in its most canonical form in the Lower City Palace: Morandi Bonacossi 2007; Morandi Bonacossi 2015. In the Eastern Palace, still only partially excavated, the presence and localisation of the Syrian classic reception suite have been plausibly posited, while it is interesting that this palace's peripheral rooms have been documented as being orthogonal in relation to the perimeter wall: Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2009; Iamoni 2015.

37 In a recent publication by Morandi Bonacossi (2014, 423–424), these architectural principles are considered to characterise the cultural tradition, denominated Syro-Levantine, which seems to correspond precisely with what the present article defines as the Old Syrian architectural culture. Although the terms 'northern Levant' and 'southern Levant' are today ill-advisedly used as synonyms for coastal and inland northern Syria, on the one hand, and Palestine and Transjordan, on the other, the architectural culture of coastal Syria (or Lebanon), particularly concerning Byblos, during Middle Bronze I–II seems to have too many points of difference from that of inland northern Syria: Matthiae 2000, 175–187.

38 The formation of the Old Syrian architectural culture is a complex issue that needs to be addressed in further studies. At the present state of knowledge, while elements of continuity with high Early Syrian tradition are indisputable as regards sacred architecture (Matthiae 2009b; Matthiae 2015; Matthiae 2016) and fortification systems (Matthiae 2013b), and possibly also exist in the case of palatial architecture (Matthiae 2010b; Matthiae 2014), it is necessary to factor in the strong probability of influences inspired by the knowledge of important monuments of Neo-Sumerian Ur (Matthiae 2002a), which took place in the context of relations between Ebla and Ur in the 21st century BC. Although these are as yet vague, clear textual and archaeological evidence is available: Owen 1990; Pinnock 2006.

39 For a general evaluation of the Old Syrian architectural culture besides Ebla see Matthiae 2010a; Matthiae 2013d.

40 Morandi Bonacossi 2014, 423–424 maintains that reciprocal influences have been ascertained between the Syro-Levantine cultural tradition and what he defines as Syro-Mesopotamian, particularly in the period indicated.

41 When adequate written sources allow, all apparent interference, implication, and influence among architectural cultures should be considered in the light of precise historical events. From this perspective, it is extremely probable that the adoption of southern Mesopotamian/Old Babylonian concepts of typology and space in Upper Mesopotamia is related to the equally probable presence of Babylonian architects at the court of Shamshi-Adad I: Matthiae 2000, 124–131.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

While, as a consequence of the discovery at Ebla of several cult buildings of Early Bronze IVA–B – the Temple of the Rock, the Red Temple, and their successors – from the four last centuries of the 3rd millennium BC, the development of Old Syrian religious architecture from its Early Syrian predecessor is clear,[42] any historical judgment as to the origins of palatial architecture must remain open, since Royal Palace G of Ebla,[43] Palace F of Tell Khuera,[44] and Palace B of Tuttul are, in comparison to their presumably large extension, too partially known to allow sound considerations as to their architectural history.[45]

In conclusion, it is evident that, in a historical perspective, the architectural tradition of the Old Syrian period, not least as concerns palatial buildings, was, as Henri Frankfort guessed in 1952 on the sole evidence of excavation results at Alalakh,[46] at the origin of all the developments of successive traditions in inland western Syria.

42 Matthiae 2006b; Matthiae 2007; Matthiae 2009a; Matthiae 2009b; Matthiae 2009c; Matthiae 2010c; Matthiae 2013c; Pinnock 2013; Matthiae 2014; Matthiae 2015; Matthiae 2016.

43 Cf. Pinnock in this volume.

44 Cf. Tamm in this volume.

45 Despite the limited excavation of Palace B in Tuttul, on the one hand, and the considerably different dimension of monumentality between Ebla's Palace G and the Palace F of Tell Khuera, on the other, a number of analogies in layout among sectors of the three royal buildings in these urban centres have been noted by Matthiae 2010b, all of which would have been of considerable political importance as early as Early Bronze IVA.

46 The short but illuminating article by Frankfort (1952), which remains fundamental in the much debated issue of the historical origin of the so-termed Hilani in the architectural culture of the Neo-Syrian period in inland western Syria (Naumann 1971, 360–278; Hrouda 1972–1975), was the first study, albeit partial, to properly call attention to significant aspects of continuity between Old and Neo-Syrian architectural culture. The Anatolian origin of the Hilani typology was sustained by Margueron (1977; 1980), while its dependence on the Old Syrian architectural tradition, as proposed by Frankfort (1952), was endorsed by Matthiae (2002c), positing, contra Margueron, that Building E, Büyükkale at Hattusa, was inspired by Old and Middle Syrian palatial buildings (see, however, the recent doubts in Genz 2006, 503 regarding Building E and its Hilani typology). While a considerably long-standing tradition in Ebla's Early Syrian period has rightly been cited, above all in the choice and function of the columns in relation to the Hilani origins (Novák 1999, 316–317), the thesis is gaining ground that Hilani's palatial typology descended directly from the architectural culture of the Middle Syrian period at least, as again confirmed by Novák (2014, 265–267). On the other hand, the identification in Neo-Assyrian palaces of the Hilani layout, whose presence is frequently mentioned in the royal inscriptions of Assyria from the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (Renger 1972–1975; Novák 2004; Gillmann 2008; Reade 2008), remains decidedly problematic.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Burke, A.A.
2008 *"Walled Up to Heaven": The Evolution of Middle Bronze Age Fortification Strategies in the Levant*, Harvard Semitic Museum Publications, Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 4, Winona Lake, IN.

Castel, C.
2010 *The First Temples in Antis: The Sanctuary of Tell Al-Rawda in the Context of 3rd Millennium Syria*, in: J. Becker, R. Hempelmann and E. Rehm (eds.), *Kulturlandschaft Syrien. Zentrum und Peripherie. Festschrift für Jan-Waalke Meyer*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 371, Münster, 123–164.

Davico, A.
1966 *Il Settore A: Lo scavo*, in: P. Matthiae (ed.), *Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria. Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1965 (Tell Mardikh)*, Serie Archeologica 10, Roma, 19–24.

Frankfort, H.
1952 The Origin of the Bît Hilani, *Iraq* 14, 120–131.

Genz, H.
2006 Hethitische Präsenz im spätbronzezeitlichen Syrien: Die archäologische Evidenz, *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 37, 499–509.

Gillmann, N.
2008 Le bâtiment isolé de Khorsabad: une nouvelle tentative de reconstitution, *Iraq* 70, 41–50.

Gonnella, J., Khayyata, W. and Kohlmeyer, K.
2005 *Die Zitadelle von Aleppo und der Tempel des Wettergottes*, Münster.

Heinrich, E.
1984 *Die Paläste im Alten Mesopotamien*, Denkmäler Antiker Architektur 15, Berlin.

Hrouda, B.
1972–1975 *Ḫilāni, bīt. B. Archäologisch*, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 4, 406–409.

Iamoni, M.
2015 *The Eastern Palace of Qatna and the Middle Bronze Age Architectural Tradition of Western Syria*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. al-Maqdissi (eds.), *Qaṭna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism. Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qaṭna Studien Supplementa 2, Wiesbaden, 451–466.

Kohlmeyer, K.
2000 *Der Tempel des Wettergottes von Aleppo*, Münster.
2013 *Der Tempel des Wettergottes von Aleppo*, in: K. Kaniuth, A. Löhnert, J.L. Miller, A. Otto, M. Roaf and W. Sallaberger (eds.), *Tempel im Alten Orient. 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 11.–13. Oktober 2009, München*, Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 7, Wiesbaden, 179–218.
2016 *The Temple of Hadad at Aleppo. The Greatest Urban Sanctuary of Northern Syria in Historical Perspective*, in: P. Matthiae and M. D'Andrea (eds.), *L'archeologia del sacro e l'archeologia del culto. Sabratha, Ebla, Ardea, Lanuvio (Roma, 8–11 ottobre 2013). Ebla e la Siria dall'Età del Bronzo all'Età del Ferro*, Atti dei Convegni Lincei 304, Roma, 295–336.

Marchetti, N.
2006 *Middle Bronze Age Public Architecture at Tilmen Hüyük and the Architectural Tradition of Old Syrian Palaces*, in: F. Baffi, R. Dolce, S. Mazzoni and F. Pinnock (eds.), *Ina kibrāt erbetti: Studi di Archeologia Orientale dedicati a Paolo Matthiae*, Roma, 275–308.

Margueron, J.-C.
1977 *Un 'Hilani' à Émar*, in: D.N. Freedman (ed.), *Archaeological Reports from the Tabqa Dam Project, Euphrates Valley, Syria*, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 44, Boston, 153–174.
1980 *Émar. Un exemple d'implantation hittite en terre syrienne*, in: J.-C. Margueron (ed.), *Le moyen Euphrate, zone de contacts et d'échanges*, Strasbourg, 285–312.
1982 *Recherches sur les palais mésopotamiens de l'âge du Bronze*, I–II, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 107, Paris.
2001 *De Paestum à Chuera: temple in antis et temenos*, in: J.-W. Meyer (ed.), *Beiträge zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie, Winfried Orthmann gewidmet*, Frankfurt am Main, 260–271.

Matthiae, P.
1975 *Syrische Kunst*, in: W. Orthmann (ed.), *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, *XIV, Der Alte Orient*, Berlin, 466–493.
1980 Fouilles à Tell Mardikh-Ébla, 1978. Le bâtiment Q et la nécropole princière du Bronze moyen, *Akkadica* 17, 1–51.
1982a Fouilles de 1981 à Tell Mardikh-Ébla et à Tell Touqan: nouvelles lumières sur l'architecture paléosyrienne du Bronze moyen I–II, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 126.2, 299–331.
1982b *The Western Palace of the Lower Town at Ebla*, Archiv für Orientforschung, Suppl. 17, 121–129.
1983 Fouilles à Tell Mardikh-Ébla en 1982: nouvelles recherches sur l'architecture palatine d'Ébla, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 127.3, 530–554.
1984 New Discoveries at Ebla: The Excavation of the Western Palace and the Royal Necropolis of the Amorite Periods, *Biblical Archaeologist* 47, 18–32.
1986 Sull'identità degli dèi titolari dei templi paleosiriani di Ebla, *Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale* 1, 335–362.
1987 Les dernières découvertes d'Ébla en 1983–1986, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 131.1, 135–161.
1989 *Ebla. Un impero ritrovato, Dai primi scavi alle ultime scoperte*, 2nd edition, Saggi 719, Torino.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

1990a Nouvelles fouilles à Ébla en 1987–1989, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 134.2, 384–431.
1990b *The Reception Suites of the Old Syrian Palaces*, in: Ö. Tunca (ed.), *De la Babylonie à la Syrie, en passant par Mari. Mélanges offerts à M. J.-R. Kupper à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire*, Liège, 209–228.
1991 Architettura e urbanistica di Ebla paleosiriana, *La Parola del Passato* 46, 304–371.
1993 L'aire sacrée d'Ishtar à Ébla: résultats des fouilles de 1990–1992, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 137.3, 613–662.
1995 Fouilles à Ébla en 1993–1994: les palais de la ville basse nord, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 139.2, 651–681.
2000 *La storia dell'arte dell'Oriente Antico. Gli Stati territoriali, 2100–1600 a.C.*, Milano.
2002a *About the Formation of Old Syrian Architectural Tradition*, in: L. al-Gailani Werr, J. Curtis, H. Martin, A. McMahon, J. Oates and J. Reade (eds.), *Of Pots and Plans: Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria Presented to David Oates in Honour of His 75th Birthday*, London, 181–209.
2002b Fouilles et restaurations à Ébla en 2000–2001: le palais occidental, la résidence occidentale et l'urbanisme de la ville paléosyrienne, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 146.2, 531–574.
2002c *L'origine dell'Edificio E di Büyükkale e il problema storico del Hilani*, in: S. de Martino (ed.), *Anatolia antica. Studi in memoria di F. Imparati,* Eothen 11, Firenze, 571–592.
2004 Le palais méridional dans la ville basse d'Ébla paléosyrienne: fouilles à Tell Mardikh de 2002–2003, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 148.1, 313–358.
2006a *The Archaic Palace at Ebla: A Royal Building between Early Bronze Age IVB and Middle Bronze Age I*, in: S. Gitin, J.P. Dessel and J.E. Wright (eds.), *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, Winona Lake, IN, 85–103.
2006b Un grand temple de l'époque des archives dans l'Ébla protosyrienne: fouilles à Tell Mardikh 2004–2005, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 150.1, 447–493.
2007 Nouvelles fouilles à Ébla en 2006: le Temple du Rocher et ses successeurs protosyriens et paléosyriens, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 151.1, 481–525.
2009a *The Temple of the Rock of Early Bronze IVA–B at Ebla: Structure, Chronology, Continuity*, in: J.M. Córdoba (ed.), *Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Madrid, April 3–8, 2006*, II, Madrid, 547–570.
2009b Il Tempio della Roccia a Ebla: la residenza mitica del dio Kura e la fondazione della città protosiriana, *Scienze dell'Antichità* 15, 677–730.
2009c Temples et reines de l'Ébla protosyrienne: résultats des fouilles à Tell Mardikh en 2007 et 2008, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 153.2, 747–792.
2010a *Ebla, la città del trono. Archeologia e storia*, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi 492, Torino.
2010b *Early Syrian Palatial Architecture: Some Thoughts about Its Unity*, in: J. Becker, R. Hempelmann and E. Rehm (eds.), *Kulturlandschaft Syrien. Zentrum und Peripherie. Festschrift für Jan-Waalke Meyer*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 371, Münster, 349–358.
2010c *Recent Excavations at Ebla, 2006–2007*, in: P. Matthiae, F. Pinnock, L. Nigro and N. Marchetti (eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 5 May – 10 May 2008, Sapienza Università di Roma, Vol. 2, Excavations, Surveys and Restorations: Reports on Recent Field Archaeology in the Near East*, Wiesbaden, 3–26.
2011 Fouilles à Tell Mardikh-Ebla en 2009–2010: les débuts de l'exploration de la citadelle paléosyrienne, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 155.2, 735–773.
2013a *Studies on the Archaeology of Ebla 1980–2010*, Wiesbaden.
2013b Dalle cortine ai terrapieni. Realtà fisica e valori simbolici delle mura nella Siria dell'Età del Bronzo, *Scienze dell'Antichità* 19, 129–159.
2013c *The Royal Palace: Functions of the Quarters and the Government of the Chora*, in: P. Matthiae and N. Marchetti (eds.), *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*, Walnut Creek, CA, 49–65.
2013d *North-Western Syria in the Old Syrian Period: Stratigraphy and Architecture*, in: W. Orthmann, M. al-Maqdissi and P. Matthiae (eds.), *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie, I, la Syrie de l'époque néolithique à l'âge du fer*, Schriften zur Vorderasiatichen Archäologie 10, Wiesbaden, 283–308.
2014 *Temples et palais d'Ébla protosyrienne et le problème de l'unité architecturale de la Syrie au dynastique archaïque final*, in: P. Butterlin (ed.), *Mari, ni Est, ni Ouest*, Supplément Syria 2, Beyrouth, 483–516.
2015 Cult Architecture between Early Bronze IVA and Middle Bronze I: Continuity and Innovation in the Formative Phase of a Great Tradition, *Studia Eblaitica* 1, 75–108.
2016 *Archeologia del culto ad Ebla: Residenze degli dèi e ideologia della regalità*, in: P. Matthiae and M. D'Andrea (eds.), *L'archeologia del sacro e l'archeologia del culto. Ebla e la Siria dall'Età del Bronzo all'Età del Ferro. Roma 8–11 ottobre 2013*, Atti dei Convegni Lincei 304, Roma, 17–95.

Mazzoni, S.
2010 *Syro-Hittite Temples and the Traditional in Antis Plan*, in: J. Becker, R. Hempelmann and E. Rehm (eds.), *Kulturlandschaft Syrien. Zentrum und Peripherie. Festschrift für Jan-Waalke Meyer*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 371, Münster, 359–376.

Metzger, M.
2012 *Kāmidel-Lōz 17. Die mittelbronzezeitlichen Tempelanlagen T4 und T5*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 71, Bonn.

Miglus. P.A. and Strommenger, E.
2007 *Der Palast A*, Tell Bi'a/Tuttul 7, Wiesbaden.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Morandi Bonacossi, D.
2007 *Qatna and Its Hinterland during the Bronze and Iron Ages*, in: D. Morandi Bonacossi (ed.), *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital. Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in Central Western Syria*, Studi Archeologici su Qatna 1, Udine, 65–90.
2014 *The Northern Levant (Syria) during the Middle Bronze Age*, in: M.L. Steiner and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant c. 8000–332 BCE*, Oxford, 414–433.
2015 *The Lower City Palace at Qatna*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. al-Maqdissi (eds.), *Qaṭna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism. Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qaṭna Studien Supplementa 2, Wiesbaden, 359–375.

Morandi Bonacossi, D., da Ros, M., Garna, G., Iamoni, M. and Merlino, M.
2009 The "Eastern Palace" and the Residential Architecture at Mishrifeh/Qatna. Preliminary Report on the 2006–2008 Excavation Campaign of the Italian Counterpart of the Syro-Italian Archaeological Project, *Mesopotamia* 44, 61–112.

Naumann, R.
1971 *Architektur Kleinasiens von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ende der hethitischen Zeit*, 2nd edition, Tübingen.

Nigro, L.
1994a *Ricerche sull'architettura palaziale della Palestina nelle Età del Bronzo e del Ferro. Contesti archeologici e sviluppi storici*, Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale 5, Roma.
1994b Palace 5019 of Megiddo: Its Eblaic Counterpart and the Unity of Architectural Tradition of Syria-Palestine, *Orient-Express* 1994, 51–52.

Novák, M.
1999 *Herrschaftsformen und Stadtbaukunst. Programmatik im mesopotamischen Residenzstadtbau von Agade bis Surra man ra'a*, Schriften zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie 7, Saarbrücken.
2004 *Hilani und Lustgarten. Ein "Palast des Hethiter-Landes" und ein "Garten nach dem Abbild des Amanus" in Assyrien*, in: M. Novák, T. Prayen and A.M. Wittke (eds.), *Aussenwirkung des späthethitischen Kulturraumes. Güteraustausch – Kulturkontakt – Kulturtransfer*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 323, Münster, 335–372.
2014 *Architecture*, in: H. Niehr (ed.), *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*, Handbuch der Orientalistik, Ancient Near East 107, Leiden, Boston, 255–271.

Otto, A.
2013 *Gotteshaus und Allerheiligstes in Syrien und Nordmesopotamien während des 2. Jts. v. Chr.*, in: K. Kaniuth, A. Löhnert, J.L. Miller, A. Otto, M. Roaf and W. Sallaberger (eds.), *Tempel im Alten Orient. 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 11.–13. Oktober 2009, München*, Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 7, Wiesbaden, 355–383.

Owen, D.I.
1990 *Syrians in Sumerian Sources from the Ur III Period*, in: M.W. Chavalas and J.L. Hayes (eds.), *New Horizons in the Study of Ancient Syria*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica, Malibu, 107–175.

Pinnock, F.
2001 The Urban Landscape of Old Syrian Ebla, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 53, 13–33.
2005 *Materiali e Studi Archeologici di Ebla, VI, La ceramica del Palazzo Settentrionale del Bronzo Medio II*, Roma.
2006 Ebla and Ur: Relations, Exchanges and Contacts between Two Great Capitals of the Ancient Near East, *Iraq* 68, 85–97.
2013 *Syrian and North Mesopotamian Temples in the Early Bronze Age,* in: K. Kaniuth, A. Lohnert, J.L. Miller, A. Otto, M. Roaf and W. Sallaberger (eds.), *Tempel im Alten Orient. 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 11.–13. Oktober 2000, München*, Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 7, Wiesbaden, 385–405.

Reade, J.
2008 Real and Imagined "Hittite" Palaces at Khorsabad and Elsewhere, *Iraq* 70, 13–40.

Renger, J.
1972–1975 *Ḫilāni, bīt. A. Nach neuassyrischen inschriftlichen Zeugnissen*, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 4, 405–406.

Rey, S.
2012 *Poliorcétique au Proche-Orient à l'âge du Bronze. Fortifications urbaines, procédés de siège et systèmes défensifs*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 197, Beyrouth.

Werner, P.
1994 *Die Entwicklung der Sakralarchitektur in Nordsyrien und Südostanatolien vom Neolithikum bis in das 1. Jt. v. Chr.*, Münchener Vorderasiatische Studien 15, München und Wien.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Local Building Traditions and Foreign Influences. The Levantine Middle Bronze Age Palatial Structure

by Nathalie Kallas

1. Introduction: the potential of architecture

In the introduction to their book *The Domestic and the Foreign in Architecture*, which studies modern architectural form, Lee and Baumeister write that "architecture in its traditional contexts has been the labour of those who dwell within a specific locale, constructing their world step by step, balancing between the past, the present and the future, as well as the inside and the outside, the domestic and the foreign. On the other hand, in order to preserve and promote its own interests, character and values a cultural entity may be compelled to incorporate the foreign into its architecture."[1] This paper aims at examining the validity of this statement in the context of the Middle Bronze Age Levant by studying the architecture of its palaces and attempting to identify in their remains "the domestic and the foreign", and the possible incorporation of the foreign.

Many architects and writers in the field of architecture argue that architecture has the capacity, through its physical and visual form, to convey social and intellectual meaning including expressing the religious belief and political practice.[2] Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that architecture may not carry the same meaning for everyone and at all times, and that meanings may change, as they are closely tied to a particular social context and historical moment.[3] Yet given it does have the potential to transmit messages to the mass populace,[4] architecture was and still is commonly used as a tool in the service of politics by the ruling elites, to serve as a symbol of their authority and power.[5] In addition, architecture has a potential of transmitting their order of ideas and to shape their identities, as well as the identity of those they rule. Hence, by looking at the remains of what has been built in the past, by observing the plan of the structures, the choice of the material, as well as other architecture-related details, one can reconstruct a virtual blueprint of the ancient cultures.[6]

2. The shifting dynamics of the Middle Bronze Age

In this framework, it has been noted by several scholars, although with some overgeneralisation, that, during the early stages of civilisations, monumental temples reflect the need of the upper class to consolidate a hierarchical political order in which power was not yet highly centralised; according to Trigger, these temples were a symbol of the collective power of the upper class. In later stages, the increase in the size of palaces may reflect the centralisation of the power in the hands of kings or rulers.[7]

This is exactly the shifting dynamic that was taking place in the Levant during the Middle Bronze Age (henceforth MBA). After the upheaval of the end of the 3rd millennium BC, the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC was marked with a reinvention of urban life.[8] It started at first on a limited scale and reached its zenith in the second half of the MBA when large city-states flourished across the region. This development is the result of a combination of a variety of factors.[9]

The two primary historical sources, the Execration Texts for the southern Levant and the Mari Letters for the northern Levant, testify to the strength of the relationships that each of the two sub regions of the Levant had with its respective neighbouring cultures.[10] Furthermore, archaeological finds also testify to a larger network of exchange reaching as far as Anatolia and the Aegean Islands.

At the start of the MBA II the polities of the northern Levant at Yamḫad, Ugarit, Qaṭna, and Hazor further south are identified as kingdoms in the Mari texts. These polities, which rose during the MBA, mostly in the northern Levant, possibly as a result of the military campaigns of the Mesopotamian kings, dominated the entire region. These kingdoms or city-states spread from the north to the south during the MBA, following the main trade routes: along the Levantine coast from Ugarit to Ashkelon and inland from Aleppo to Hazor. This led to the establishment along the southern cost of commercial ports, which eventually developed into kingdoms in their own right.[11]

1 Lee and Baumeister 2007, 16–17.
2 For the general theories see Rapoport 1982 and Eco 1980; for observations on specific cases, periods, or locations see, amongst others, Coaldrake 1996; Mako 2014; Maran 2006; Schwandner and Rheidt 2001.
3 Rapoport 1982; Eco 1980.
4 Jencks 1980.
5 DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle. 1996.
6 Thompson 1990.
7 Trigger 1990, 128; de Miroschedji 2015, 91.
8 Or "the regeneration of complex society" as termed by Akkermans and Schwartz 2003.
9 Larsen 2008.
10 Burke 2014a, 403.
11 Burke 2014a, 405–407.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The rise of the Mesopotamian powers during the 20th–19th centuries BC led to an interchange of knowledge and political connections especially with the administrative entities in the northern Levant. Mazar and Burke, among others, argue that the whole northern part of the fertile crescent, including Yamḫad in northern Syria, Qaṭna in central Syria, and Hazor in the Galilee, were part of a network of 'Amorite kingdoms'.[12] These cities, as well as others in the region, flourished mainly due to their strategic locations; for instance, Yamḫad was on the intersection between the north–south and east–west trade routes.[13] To the south, Egypt witnessed one of its most stable eras during the Middle Kingdom, followed by the foreign rule of the Hyksos during the Second Intermediate Period.[14] The nature of relations between Egypt and the Levant has been widely debated. Recent studies suggest that these were probably diplomatic and commercial contacts rather than a military occupation as previously believed.[15] The large amount of Egyptian and Egyptianising objects found at several sites in Syria, Palestine, and Lebanon are a clear indication of the intensity of the relations between the two regions. Large amounts of Egyptian finds from the sites of Qaṭna and Ebla in Syria, mainly in contexts associated with the respective palaces, are considered as an indication of the existence of trade and political connections between Syria and Egypt.[16] Furthermore, a rich assemblage from Byblos on the Lebanese coast underlines the role the coastal area played during the MBA.[17] This was not the result of unidirectional relations but rather exchange; a variety of commodities was moved across the region via sea and land routes. A *mélange* of Levantine, Egyptian, Cypriot, and Mesopotamian objects where found at sites in all these regions.

The political circumstances in the area, the technological changes, and the movement of things, people, and ideas played a crucial role in the rise of the MBA Levant and the establishment of its local culture. The impressive fortified settlements, large palaces, and temples uncovered in numerous archaeological sites are a testimony of the powers that were at play during that period.

Fig. 1 Location map of the Levantine sites where MBA palaces were excavated

3. The Levantine palaces as a testimony of power

From Alalaḫ (Tell Atchana) in the northern Levant to Tell el-ʿAjjūl in the southern Levant, fifteen sites have yielded remains of some twenty-two MBA palatial structures (Fig. 1).[18] These span the whole period, which lasts around 450 years, and are not necessarily contemporary with each other. The state of preservation, excavation, and publication of these buildings is quite varied. Predominantly, only the foundations and floors survived and in few cases parts of the rising walls, while in most cases doors, installations, and inventories have largely been lost.

12 Burke 2014a; Burke 2014b; Mazar 1968.
13 Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 297.
14 Mumford 2014, 73−74.
15 Schneider 2008, 61.
16 For a short summary of the Egyptian finds from the Royal Hypogeum under the Royal Palace of Qaṭna see Ahrens 2012. For the Egyptian finds from the Royal Hypogeum of Ebla beneath the floor of the Western Palace and a comparison with the Byblos assemblage, see Nigro 2009.
17 For a short summary on the relationship between Egypt and Byblos, especially in the MBA, see Hakimian 2008.
18 Some of the Levantine sites at which MBA palaces were found have been identified with ancient cities. The names of Alalaḫ, Ebla, Qaṭna, Hazor, and Schechem were mentioned in MBA textual sources indicating that they existed in the MBA. Megiddo and Aphek are known from EBA and LBA textual sources. In this article, the ancient names of the sites are used only for these cases. For the rest, the modern mound name is given priority, followed by the ancient city name (which indicates an earlier, later, or still debated name) indicated in parentheses, as it recurs more often in publications and may be better known.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The architectural remains of the Levantine palatial structures give us an opportunity to examine the materialisation of the shifting and competing powers, yet such a work has some limitations. While it is true that monumental architecture, given its very nature, has a better chance than any other aspect of the archaeological record of surviving and being highly visible, nonetheless, it must always be kept in mind that what is actually preserved does not represent exactly and completely what was originally present.[19] Despite the fact that the palaces were, and still are, the only structures extensively excavated and recorded by archaeological expeditions, what remains is mostly badly preserved or disturbed. In addition, the records and publications are often superficial and leave us with many questions about the design and function of these buildings.

It should be noted that in my work I take into consideration all the structures that have been labelled by their excavators as palaces, although this term is sometimes applied indiscriminately to any monumental structure that does not seem to be cultic or religious, or which is not a simple residence, given its dimensions or given the complexity of its plan, the quality of building material and technique, or the richness of its furnishing (Fig. 2).[20] Nonetheless, most of the MBA palaces found in the Levant do, in fact, conform to the five defining criteria detailed by de Miroschedji.

The first is the dimensions, meaning simply that a palace is much bigger and more complex than a domestic structure and hence has a monumental character. The second criterion is the location within the urban space, be it in a city or the territory, it benefits from a distinct position, which automatically singles it out. The third criterion is its building technique and materials, which are either superior to or simply different from those of even the largest and best-constructed domestic structures in the city, revealing the involvement of skilled specialised workers and a substantial labour force. The fourth is its layout, which is usually quite particular: not simply an oversized house or a juxtaposition of several houses, but rather a layout that reveals pre-planning that follows specific identifiable guidelines for orientation, space distribution, organisation of spaces, and circulation between the specialised wings. The fifth criterion is the fact that the palace structure is the result of the combination of its functions, as it is a residence of the ruler, serves for public receptions, and is a storage space capable of accommodating more than the needs of its inhabitants, probably serving as a redistribution centre. Furthermore, it could serve as the economic and political centre of the city's territory.[21] This paper will focus on the third and fourth criteria mentioned above, namely, the building materials and technique and the particular layout elements.

4. The geomorphology of the Levant and the availability of building material

The first thing that is usually considered when it comes to the choice of building material is its availability in the natural environment. A quick look at the map of the Levant clearly shows its diversified geomorphology; the area is marked with mountain chains dotted with plains. In the northern Levant the Orontes River flows through a series of plains rich in alluvial soil and sediments. From south to north these are the Beqaʿ Valley, the Upper Orontes Valley, al-Ghab Plain (or the Middle Orontes), and, finally, the Amuq Valley.

The Upper and Middle Orontes plains are guarded by mountain ranges in the west and east. The Jebel Ansariya in the west is a limestone plateau that breaks down into sandstone hills in the north, and to its north is the Jebel Akra, which has a limestone summit and less permeable rocks at lower elevations. In the east is the limestone plateau Jebel el-Aʿla and to its south are the hills of Jebel Zawiya. Further east, is a plateau consisting of the steppes surrounding Aleppo. The plain southwest of Aleppo is rich with limestone marls and other sediments. The western mountain ranges end so close to the Mediterranean shore that only a narrow coastal plain is left, which is watered by a large number of tributaries, bringing with them sediments.[22]

Further south, the Mount Lebanon range is an unbroken phalanx that runs closely to the Mediterranean coast. Its high elevation plateau and low slopes consist of limestone, while its mid-elevation area is sandstone outcrops and marl, from

19 Trigger 1990, 120.

20 De Miroschedji 2015, 91. The plans in Fig. 2 are an elaboration of the published plans of the palaces. The sources of each of the original plans are as follows: Alalaḫ, the Level VII palace: Woolley 1955, fig. 35; Ebla, the Royal Palace E: Matthiae 2011, fig. 7; Ebla, the western Palace Q: Matthiae 2002, fig 24; Ebla, the northern Palace P: Matthiae 2010, fig. 246; Ebla, the southern Palace FF: Matthiae 2004, fig. 30; Qaṭna, the Royal Palace: Pfälzner 2009, 166; Qaṭna, the Eastern Palace: Morandi Bonacossi 2008, fig. 3; the palace of Tell el-Burak: Kamlah and Badreshany 2010/2011, fig. 2; the palace of Kamid el-Loz: Heinz et al. 2010, fig. 42; the palace of Tell Sakka: Taraqji 2015, fig. 8; the palace of Tel Kabri: Cline et al. 2013; Megiddo, the *Nordburg*: Schumacher 1908b, pl. XII A; Megiddo, the palace in Area AA: Loud 1948, fig. 381; the 5 phases of the palace of Shechem: Campbell and Wright 2002; Palaces I, III, and IV of Aphek: Yadin 2009; Palace II of Aphek: Yadin and Kochavi 2000, fig. 9.26; the palace of Tel Seraʿ: Oren 1992, fig. 7; the palace of Tell el-ʿAjjūl: Petrie 1933, pl. XLVI; the Level P-4 palace of Lachish: Ussishkin 2004, fig. 4.17.

21 De Miroschedji 2015, 92.

22 Suriano 2014, 11–12; Brice 1966, 206–209.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

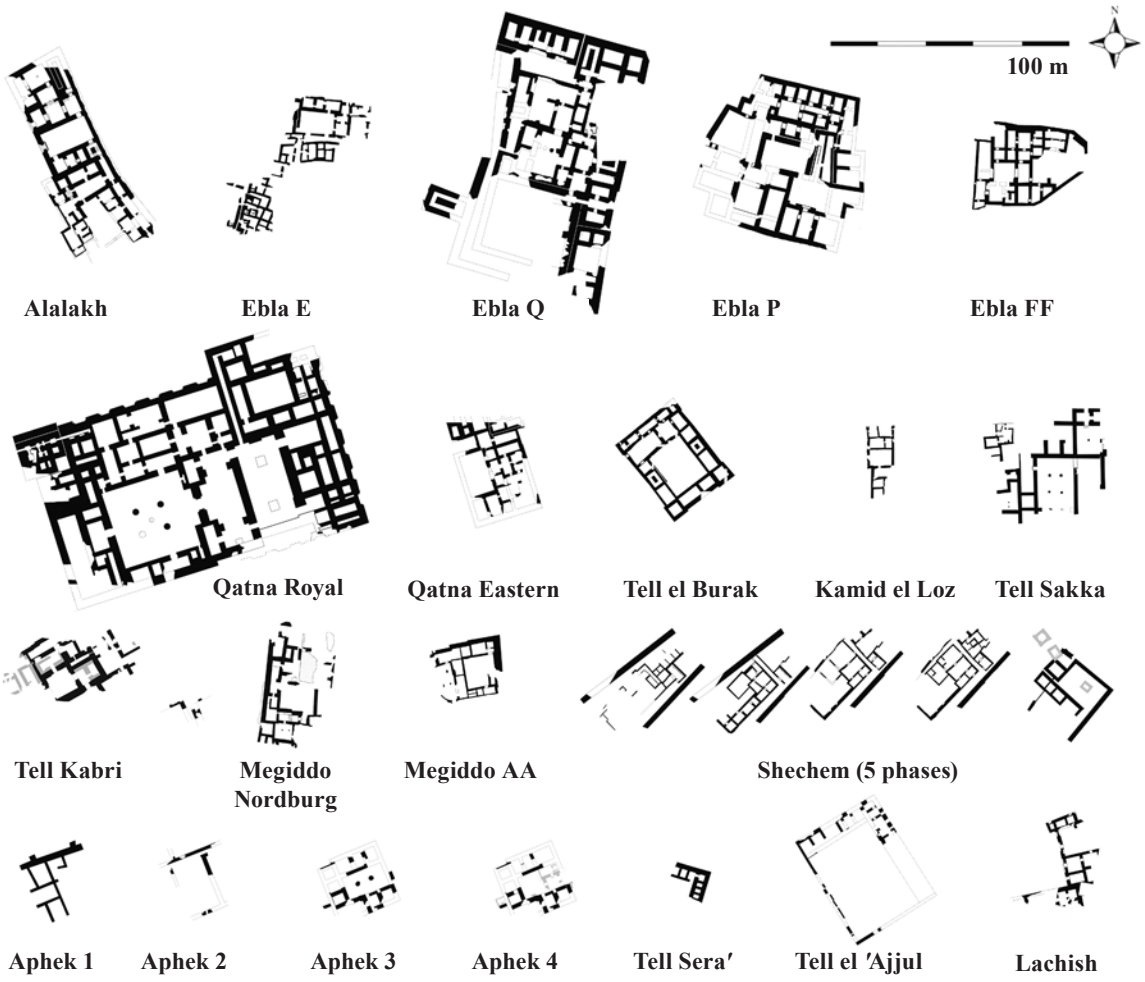


Fig. 2 Plans of the Levantine MBA palatial structures to the same scale. Excavated walls/foundations are in thick black lines and dotted lines indicate their supposed continuation where necessary

which a number of aquifers and springs emerge that water the narrow coastal plain. In antiquity, the cities of the plain traded timber originated from the mountainous region.[23] To the east of Mount Lebanon, the broad Beqaʿ Basin is abundant with water and has large expanses of arable land in its southern part. It ends with rising limestone ridges in the south.[24] Along the eastern slopes of the Anti-Lebanon or Sirion Mountain range is the hinterland that surrounds Damascus, the al-Ghutah Oasis, a semi-arid oasis of fertile land just before the arid expanse of the desert.[25] Further south Mount Hermon has a summit formed of limestone and its lower elevation is sandstone much of which is covered with volcanic basalt.[26]

The southern Levant has a similar morphology to the northern Levant and is divided by the Jordan Valley, which marks the border between the Cisjordan and the Transjordan. The Cisjordan, where MBA palaces were found, has wider coastal plains than the northern Levant and mountain ranges that are not as elevated.[27]

The areas in the northern Jordan Valley, the Jordanian Plateau, the Galilee, and the area of Mount Hermon are rich with basaltic lava flows and outcrops.[28] The Galilee Mountains are divided into two parts by an east-west valley, the Upper Galilee in the north is primarily limestone and the Lower Galilee is composed of limestone slopes on the west and considerable basalt exposures along its eastern slopes. Rich alluvial soil from the disintegration of limestone and basalt has accumulated in the valleys

23 Suriano 2014, 13; Brice 1966, 212–215.
24 Suriano 2014, 13; Brice 1966, 215.
25 Suriano 2014, 13; Brice 1966, 216.
26 Brice 1966, 215–216.
27 Suriano 2014, 15. The only MBA palace that has been found in the Transjordan is at Pella (Tabaqat Fahl), it is however still being excavated and not sufficiently published, and hence could not be included in this work.
28 Schneider and LaPorta 2014, 21; Brice 1966, 216. Also known as the plateaus of Jaulan and Hauran.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

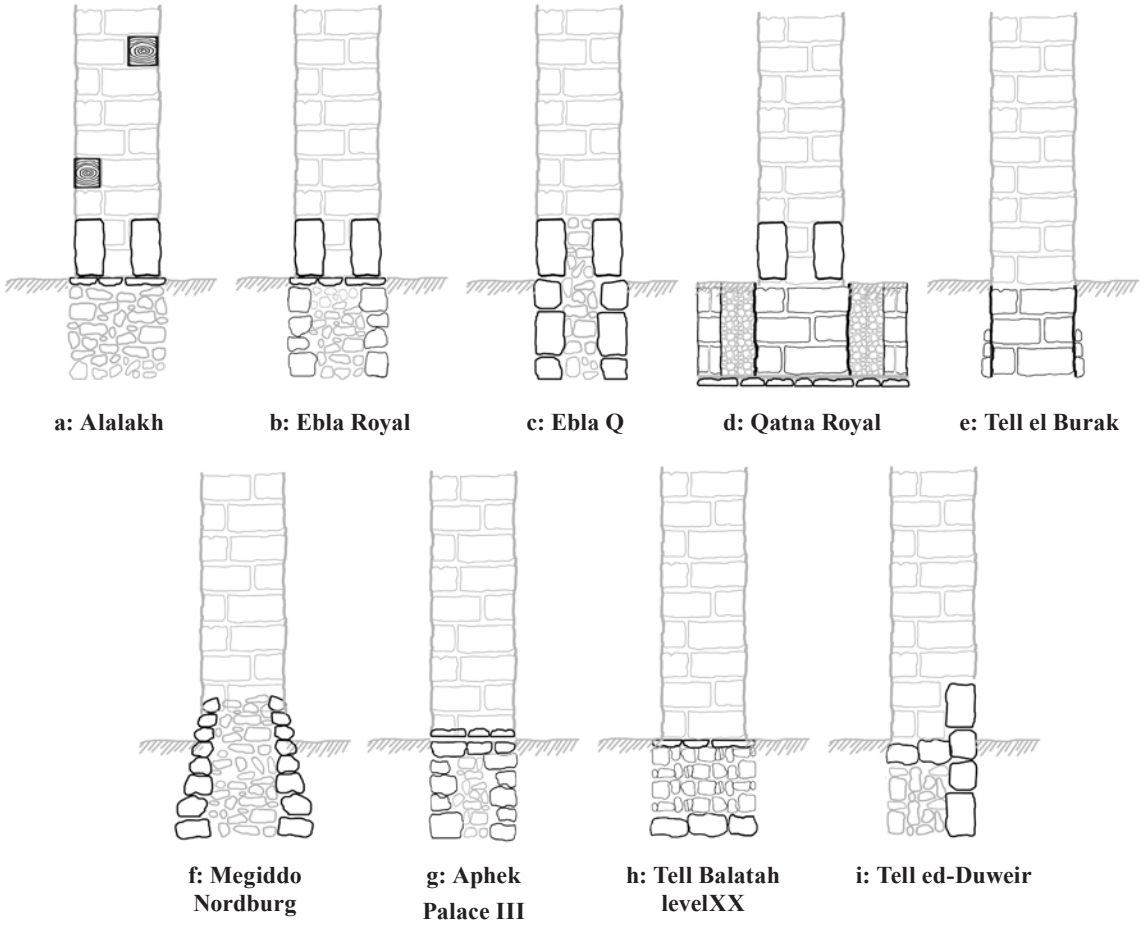


Fig. 3 Drawings of the cross-sections of walls/foundations of some of the studied structures. In each case, the distinctive elements are marked with darker lines

of the Galilee. To the west, along the coast, the coastal strip begins with an area of vast sand dunes devoid of outcrops, followed by wide alluvial plains.[29]

To the south of the Galilee are the central highlands composed of the plateaus of Samaria and Judea that are criss-crossed by a number of small fertile valleys. While the Samarian Plateau is of limestone and has some exposures of sandstone and other soft rocks, the Judean Plateau is mostly limestone. The latter is bordered in the west by the soft chalky limestone Judean Foothills known as the Shephelah. The coastal plains to the west of the plateaus consist of alluvial soil deposited by the highlands and trapped by sandstone ridges. The plain gradually dies out in the south, near Gaza, giving way to the sand and loess soil of the western Negev.[30]

29 Suriano 2014, 17; Baly 1974, 154–163; Brice 1966, 220–221.The valley in the Galilee is called Sahl el-Battauf, Asochis, or Biq'at Bet Netofa.

30 Suriano 2014, 18; Brice 1966, 221–223; Baly 1974, 164–190.

By observing the location of the identified MBA palaces, it is notable that in most cases the builders had equal access to stone, as well as to clay for mudbricks. Despite the availability of a variety of both building materials, the palaces are almost all built with mudbrick walls on stone foundations, stone walls or mudbrick foundations are found in very few cases and are the exception. Despite this apparent uniformity, it can be noted that the building technique differs from site to site

5. Building materials and construction and technique

In Alalaḫ (Tell Atchana) the walls of the official sector of the palace of Level VII were built of mudbrick placed on orthostats set on a plinth course of limestone blocks, which, in turn, was set on rubble or cobble foundations (Fig. 3a). These walls were sometimes plastered, and there was a layer of lime and mud under the layer of plaster. Some of the walls were also found to have been

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

painted.[31] Furthermore, horizontal wooden beams were observed in four rooms in the mudbrick superstructures, either immediately above the orthostats or higher.[32] In one room, though, an unusual feature was noted – the use of upright timbers, three of which were identified.[33]

In Ebla (Tell Mardikh) in the Royal Palace E on the acropolis,[34] the mudbrick walls had sometimes no foundations at all, and at other times a 2 m deep foundation to make up for the sloped terrain. The stone foundations consisted of an outer stone facing with a rubble fill and a flat stones surface on which the orthostats – when present – were set at the bottom of the mudbrick superstructure (Fig. 3b).[35]

As for the western Palace Q, the foundations of the outer walls consisted of two to three courses of large square stones, with a filling of smaller stones, and it emerged above floor level as a socle protected by limestone orthostats (Fig. 3c). In the northern outer wall several orthostats were preserved in their original position with the mudbrick superstructure on top.[36] In the throne room sector the foundations consisted of well-cut limestone blocks, supposedly to support the unpreserved orthostat facing of the walls.[37] For some other walls, the lowest level of the foundations along the sides of the foundation trenches consisted of a line of large stones with layers of smaller stones in between and the upper levels consisted of medium-sized stones, which continued past the floor level. These emerging socles, reaching 0.8 m above the floor level, ended with even smaller stones.[38] In this palace the brickwork of the superstructure was sometimes arranged to create a geometric design.[39] In general, the mudbrick superstructure is believed to have been reinforced with wooden beams.[40]

In the Royal Palace of Qaṭna (Tell Mishrifeh) the mudbrick walls had elaborate stone and mudbrick foundations unparalleled in other palaces, and various techniques for terrain preparation and foundation were found in the different palace parts.[41] The foundation trenches, which were sometimes 4 to 6 m deep, reached down to the bedrock. At their bottom a bed of stones covered with a thin layer of mud served as a base for the mudbrick foundations. This protected the mudbrick foundations from the humidity contained in the underlying calcareous bedrock. The foundations were further protected along both faces with stone alignments, which are known in different thicknesses. In the broader type, referred to by du Mesnil du Buisson as *Couloirs* and found in the reception suite area, an additional enclosing mudbrick wall was built on the other side of the stones, so that the stones could be filled in between the foundation wall proper and the enclosing wall (Fig. 3d). This lateral protection prevented the spread of soil humidity and protected the sides of the foundations.[42] The mudbrick foundations were built up to the level of the palace floors, and the only slightly thinner walls of the rooms were immediately superimposed on them without any dividing layer.[43] Furthermore, some of the walls were lined with orthostats and some plastered and painted.[44] Even the outer surfaces of the perimeter palace walls seem to have been plastered.[45] The usage of wood in the structure of the walls was indicated by the discovery of four vertical posts imbedded in the stone foundation and mudbrick superstructure of the eastern wall of the well room U, the western outer wall and the Porte Royale.[46]

The walls of the structure at Tell el-Burak were of mudbricks and their foundations also of mudbricks. These were more than 11 m deep and rose with the artificial hill, which in a way, was itself also a foundation of the structure.[47] In one case, a stone casing was found against the deepest level of the mudbrick foundations (Fig. 3e),[48] but no stone foundations were

31 Woolley 1948, 10−13; Woolley 1955, 92−102. Rooms 1 to 13 are considered to belong to the official sector.

32 Woolley 1955, 100−103. These are Rooms 4, 9, 12, and 14; note that in the published text there is no clear indication of what the hint was to the existence of such beams, but the most likely possibility is charred remains or ash resulting from the burning of the structure.

33 Woolley 1955, 100. In Room 5A.

34 Concerning the Ebla palaces cf. Matthiae in this volume.

35 Matthiae 1968, 17−18; Matthiae 1974, 25; Matthiae 1980a, 133−134; Matthiae 2011, 743.

36 Matthiae 1982a, endnote 42; Matthiae 1982b fn. 18; Matthiae 1982c, 122; Matthiae 1983, fn. 18; Matthiae 1985, pl. 67; Matthiae 2002, 559, fn. 63; Matthiae 2010, 445.

37 Matthiae 1995b, 169; Matthiae 2010, 445.

38 Matthiae 1980b, endnote 36, p. 7; Matthiae 2002, fn. 64.

39 Matthiae 1980c, 114; Matthiae 1985, pl. 73; Matthiae 2010, 445.

40 Matthiae 1980b, 7; Matthiae 1980b, endnote 38. Unfortunately, besides being indicated from wall M.2944, the excavators do not specify where else the wooden reinforcements were identified.

41 Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2011, 46. Cf. Pfälzner in this volume.

42 Du Mesnil du Buisson 1926, 314−315; du Mesnil du Buisson 1928, 13; du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, 72; Novák 2006, 68−71; Pfälzner 2007, 35−36; Barro 2003, 83−84, fn. 18.

43 Pfälzner 2007, 35; du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, 94.

44 For the orthostats: du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, 73−74, 82−90. For the plaster and paint: du Mesnil du Buisson 1928, 13; du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, 114; Novák and Pfälzner 2002, 214; Novák and Pfälzner 2005, 69; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2008, 24−27, 30−31; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2011, 24.

45 Barro 2003, 85; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2007, 151; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2008, 47.

46 Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2006, 80; Novák and Pfälzner 2005.

47 Kamlah and Sader 2010a, 98−100; Kamlah and Sader 2010b, 159.

48 Kamlah and Sader 2010a, 98−100.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

found. The walls were sometimes plastered and in one room painted.[49]

In Megiddo (Tell el-Mutesellim), the western perimeter wall of the Nordburg had segments consisting of four parts: a stone foundation, a stone substructure, another stone superstructure, and, finally, a mudbrick wall.[50] The other walls had foundations of up to six courses of unhewn limestones bound with smaller stones and mortar, and a mudbrick superstructure. In a few cases the stone substructure had courses above the floor level acting as a socle. In general, the bottom of the foundations was wider than their top (Fig. 3f).[51]

Each of the four palaces of Aphek (Tell Ras el-ʿAin) shows a different technique. The earliest Palace I had stone foundations and white plastered mudbrick walls.[52] The stone foundations of Palace II consisted of large stones, hammer-trimmed on both faces, which supported the assumed mudbrick superstructures.[53] The foundations of Palace III consisted of two outer rows of medium-sized stones enclosing a fill of smaller stones. The tops of the foundation walls were covered with a c. 30 cm thick layer of medium-sized stones that was covered with a 10−20 cm thick layer of plaster. The mudbrick superstructures were then built atop a second layer of stones (Fig. 3g).[54] For its later phase, Palace IV, the new walls were constructed of mudbricks and covered with a fine white plaster.[55]

At Shechem (Tell Balâṭah) the palace structure has four phases and in each the construction technique is slightly different. The most interesting is the earliest Stratum XX. In general, the foundations consisted of three to six courses of unhewn stones with a rubble interior.[56] In one wall, a course of large unhewn stones was laid at the bottom of the substructure and on it seven to eight courses of smaller stones were built. Where it was preserved, the surface of the stone foundation was levelled with small flat stones on which the mudbrick superstructure was constructed (Fig. 3h).[57] The mudbrick walls, when preserved, were set back slightly from the foundation and their faces were plastered.[58] In two cases alternating courses of light and dark bricks were observed.[59]

At Tell esh-Shariʿa (Tel Seraʿ) the structure was built atop a 1–1.2 m high artificial platform. The outer walls of the platform were built of stones and wadi pebbles and its inner space was filled with sand and debris from the earlier occupational levels.[60] The walls themselves were built of mudbricks in alternating courses of white and brown bricks and coated with a thick layer of mud plaster.[61]

At Tell ed-Duweir (Lachish) the three-room structure of Level P-5 seems to have been built entirely of stone, as there was no indication of a mudbrick superstructure.[62] In Level P-4 the walls were mostly built of mudbricks on stone foundations and covered with plaster.[63] In one case two parts of the same wall had different construction techniques. The substructure of the first part consisted of small stones overlaid with large stone blocks, and that of the other part consisted of a course of three large limestones ashlars covered by plaster, indicating that they did not have a decorative function, but a constructional one (Fig. 3i).[64] Furthermore, superimposed ashlars were found placed at the bottom of the mudbrick structure in the corners.[65]

Stones were used for a variety of purposes within the palatial structures. As described above, they were the most employed material for building foundation walls. When it comes to the types of stones used, limestone is reported to have been utilised in palaces of the northern and southern Levant, while basalt is only known for the palaces of Alalaḫ, Ebla, Qaṭna and Tell Sakka in the northern Levant. Sandstone as building material can only be documented for Tell el ʿAjjūl in the southern Levant. Mostly unhewn stones were used, while orthostats as decorative or structural features are known from Alalaḫ, Ebla, Qatna and Tell Kabri.

As for the floors of these palaces, a variety of material was used, also within the same structure (Tab. 1). Even the layers under the floor or the floor makeup, when investigated, were found to be variable. In general, it is believed that the role of each unit, its level of privacy, and whether it was covered or uncovered, might have influenced the choice of material for its floor.[66] A direct correlation between the type of floor material and the room function within the studied palaces does not reveal any specific regional trends; the choice of floor material seems to be based on local preferences. For instance, the floors of the rooms believed to have been the reception halls in both the palaces of Tel Kabri and Tell el-Burak seem to have been plastered and painted.[67] In the Royal Palace of Qaṭna the floors of the rooms of the audience suite, as well as those believed to have been for public use, were made of a

49 Kamlah and Sader 2008, 21.
50 Schumacher 1908a, 38−40.
51 Schumacher 1908a, 42−47.
52 Yadin 2009, 14.
53 Yadin and Kochavi 2000, 153.
54 Yadin 2009, 19.
55 Yadin 2009, 31.
56 Campbell 2002, 34−35, 39.
57 Campbell 2002, 34−35.
58 Campbell 2002, 34.
59 Campbell 2002, 34, 38−39.
60 Oren 1982, 164−165.
61 Oren 1982, 164−165; Oren 1993, 1330.
62 Ussishkin 2004, 146, 186, Locus 525.
63 Ussishkin 2004, 154.
64 Ussishkin 2004, 154−155.
65 Ussishkin 2004, 155.
66 See Reich 1992, 16 for a short summary on the usage of earthen floors and pavements in ancient Israel and, for instance, Papayianni and Stefanidou 2007 for a case study on the choice of flooring material at the site of Olynthos.
67 Kempinski 2002, 63; Kempinski and Niemeier 1991, 24*–25*.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Site	Palace	Cement	Concrete/ compressed lime	Clay/ Adobe	Mud/ beaten earth	Plastered	Paved: flagstone/ stone slabs	Paved: pebble/ cobbles	Wood
Tell Atchana (Alalakh)		✓	✓	✓	✓				
Tell Mardikh (Ebla)	Palace E	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	Palace Q			✓		✓	✓		
	Palace FF	✓						✓	
Tell el-Mishrife (Qatna)	Royal Palace	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
	Eastern Palace		✓		✓	✓			
Kamid el Loz (Kumidi)				✓			✓		
Tell Sakka					✓	✓			
Tell el Burak					✓	✓		✓	
Tell al-Qidâh (Hazor)						✓			
Tell Kabri					✓	✓	✓		
Tell el-Muteselim (Meggido)	The nordburg			✓		✓			
	The mittelburg				✓		✓		
Tell Ras el-ʻAin (Aphek)	Palace I			✓	✓				
	Palace II		✓			✓			
	Palace III					✓			
	Palace IV					✓			
Tell Balâṭah (Shechem)	Stratum XX		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Stratum XIX		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Stratum XVIII		✓			✓	✓		
Tell esh-Shariʻa						✓			
Tell el ʻAjjūl (Sharuhen)						✓	✓		
Tell ed-Duweir (Lachish)	Level P-5		✓			✓			

Table 1 The types of floors found in each of the palaces considered in this work.

thick compact concrete.[68] On the other hand, the rooms of the north-western sector of the same palace, which were believed to have had a service function, had floors of thick lime mortar or packed earth with complex wooden underfloor grates.[69] At Shechem during Phase XX, most of the rooms, even those believed to have been open courtyards, had floors of either packed limestone or packed soil, except for a large hall that was paved with well-laid flagstones. Despite the lack of evidence indicating the function of this space, it was assumed that this hall's role was different from that of the other rooms, and it was therefore designated the Entrance Hall.[70] (Tab. 1)

Albeit the fact that the builders of all these palaces had more or less equal access to the same building materials: stone, clay for mudbrick, wood, or reed, the result is a variety of material choice and employment or building technique. This clearly suggests a degree of deliberate choice when it came to the employment of

68 For instance, Units A, B, C, AH, T, O, and Q on the new plan; du Mesnil du Buisson 1928, 13, 14, 16; Du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, 72, 86–90, 96.

69 Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2008, 20–43; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2011, 10–28.

70 Campbell 2002, 34–41.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

different materials for specific construction purposes. Ethnoarchaeological studies in traditional cultures have revealed that technical choices, as well as style, are social behaviours that reflect a common understanding of how things are done in a specific culture, and that they are not simply governed by environmental factors.[71] It has even been argued that the intentional cultural choices when it comes to types of materials used for ancient architecture are more important than the availability of the resources.[72] While it is true that "nature provided the resources, but culture decided the architectural form and choice of materials",[73] the extent to which the choice can be unrestricted depends on the ease of access to the material; on the effort, funds, and means intended to be spent in the construction; and on what non-local building material was within the reach of the elites commissioning the construction. In the case of the MBA Levantine palaces, it seems that the more powerful the rulers were the more elaborate the building technique and the more sumptuous the building materials were. For instance, basalt, wood and well-cut orthostats were identified only in the palaces of the more powerful cities of the northern Levant, as well as at Tell Kabri.

6. The overall buildings' layout

The overall layout of a building is also one of the main architectural aspects that could provide further clues about a regional or local style (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, the bad state of preservation of the palaces or the incomplete excavations make a detailed study of the layout of all the structures difficult. Nonetheless, some features can be identified. For instance, the palaces of Ebla, despite their apparent diversity, show some common characteristics as noted by Matthiae.[74] These are: the location of an audience suite at the centre of each structure, the location of the food preparation sector at the northern back side of the structure, the orientation of peripheral rooms orthogonal to the outer walls and a semi-peripheral circulation. These characteristics are local to Ebla and other northern Levantine palaces do not necessarily show similar patterns. The Royal Palace of Qaṭna shows a more distributive circulation pattern with corridors or courts providing access to different building sectors and access to the adjacent rooms. On the other hand, in Tell el-Burak and the Eastern Palace of Qaṭna, doors − when detected − linked each room to the adjacent one. As for the orientation of the rooms, the palaces of Alalaḫ, Qaṭna and Tell el-Burak have the peripheral rooms oriented parallel to the outer walls. Some other features are also completely local, such as the grid layout and protruding corners of Tell el-Burak, or the niched outer walls of the Royal Palace in Qaṭna.

On the other hand, a regional feature noted for the northern Levantine palaces is their general elongated form, as is the case for the Palace of Alalaḫ, the western Palace of Ebla, the two palaces of Qaṭna and the Palace of Tell el-Burak (Fig. 2). In the southern Levant this can also be seen in the *Nordburg* of Megiddo and the Palace of Tell el-ʿAjjūl.

7. The reception suites

A further aspect that might also indicate interactions between the different polities and the interconnections between cultures, already discussed by Matthiae, Marchetti, Pfälzner, and Iamoni, is the resemblance between the central representative units and the typology of the reception suite as a recurrent feature, albeit some minor differences (Fig. 4).[75] Two variations of a northern Levantine reception suite layout can be mentioned. In the palace of Alalaḫ and in the Western Palace Q of Ebla[76] the reception suite is set at the centre of an isolated block, it has a north-south orientation, and a tripartite composition. The throne room is located in the central wing, with one or two back rooms. In both cases, it could be entered from the southeast. The arrangement of the central wing, with a square reception suite and an elongated back room, but without the tripartite division, is found in the southern Levantine Palace of Tell Kabri,[77] with a different orientation in the Eastern Palace of Qaṭna and the southern palace of Ebla.[78] This arrangement can also be found in the Anatolian Palace A of Tilmen Höyük, in a peripheral wing of the complex.[79]

The second layout was found in the Royal Palace of Qaṭna. It consisted of a square front hall or court followed by two longitudinal halls.[80] It is also known in a much smaller scale in the smaller palace of Tell Sakka, only partially excavated. [81] The striking resemblance

71 Stark 1998, 4−5.
72 Love 2013a; Love 2013b.
73 Love 2013b, 755.
74 Matthiae 2010, 258.
75 Matthiae 2013; Marchetti 2006; Pfälzner 2007; Iamoni 2015. The plans of the reception suites in Fig. 4 were taken from Fig. 2 and are an elaboration of the same published plans; see footnote for Fig. 2. The plan of the reception suite of the palace of Mari is based on Margueron 2004, fig. 437 and that of Tilmen Höyük is based on Marchetti 2006, fig. 1. The resemblance between the reception suites of the Levantine palaces and those of neighbouring areas has been discussed in more detail in Kallas 2017, the article also addresses their appearance as reflecting the process of building an architectural domestic vocabulary of rulership.
76 Woolley 1948, 92−93; Matthiae 2013, 337−338; Matthiae 1995b, 168.
77 Cf. Yasur-Landau and Cline in this volume.
78 For more details, see Kallas 2017, 92−94.
79 Matthiae 2013, 340−342; Marchetti 2006, 277−278. It should be noted that the reconstruction of the reception suite of the palace of Tilmen Höyük is based on the analogy with the Royal Palace of Qaṭna; cf. Pfälzner in this volume.
80 Pfälzner 2007, 33, 38.
81 Marchetti 2006, 284, 288.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 4 The reception suites to the same scale

between the three-hall central representative unit of the Royal Palace in Qaṭna and that of the last phase of the Palace of Zimri-Lim in Mari was noted by Pfälzner.[82]

The similarities between the reception suites of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna, Tell Sakka and the Royal Palace of Mari could be considered as an indication that all three sites were part of the so-called network of 'Amorite Kingdoms'. The reception suite of the Royal Palace of Mari is, as illustrated by Margueron, a final development of a tradition that can be traced in the palace of Mari itself as well as in the palaces of Mesopotamia,[83] while on the other hand in Qaṭna and Tell Sakka it appears as a finished module.

These comparable cases clearly show that the layout of the central representative units are a recurrent feature of the palace of the northern Levant, and reach Tell Kabri in the southern Levant. Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that the local variations are quite remarkable.

8. Corridors and courts

Other layout elements hint to a more limited regional or local style. For instance, the presence of long, narrow rooms that could have only served a distributive function and can hence be interpreted as corridors.[84] In the Royal Palace of Qaṭna we notice the presence of long Units X and V/S. A corridor could also be identified in the palace of Alalaḫ, Unit 14, and maybe to some extent also Unit 25. A long corridor is also present in Royal Palace E at Ebla: Unit L.1645 – called *loggia* or gallery by Matthiae – as well as the sloping north-south Corridor L.10147.[85] Three corridors are also found in the northern Palace P of Ebla: Corridor L.4165 connecting the entrance sector to the northern sector of the building and the two opposing Corridors L.4284 and L.4036 providing circulation within the northern sector.[86] No other long corridors were found

82 Pfälzner 2007, 33, 38.
83 See Margueron 2007, 82–83, 88–93.
84 The presence of these corridors has been alluded to by Morandi Bonacossi who labels them as galleries (Morandi Bonacossi 2014, 423).
85 Matthiae 1980a, 132–133; Matthiae 2011, 748–753.
86 Matthiae 1995a, 676.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

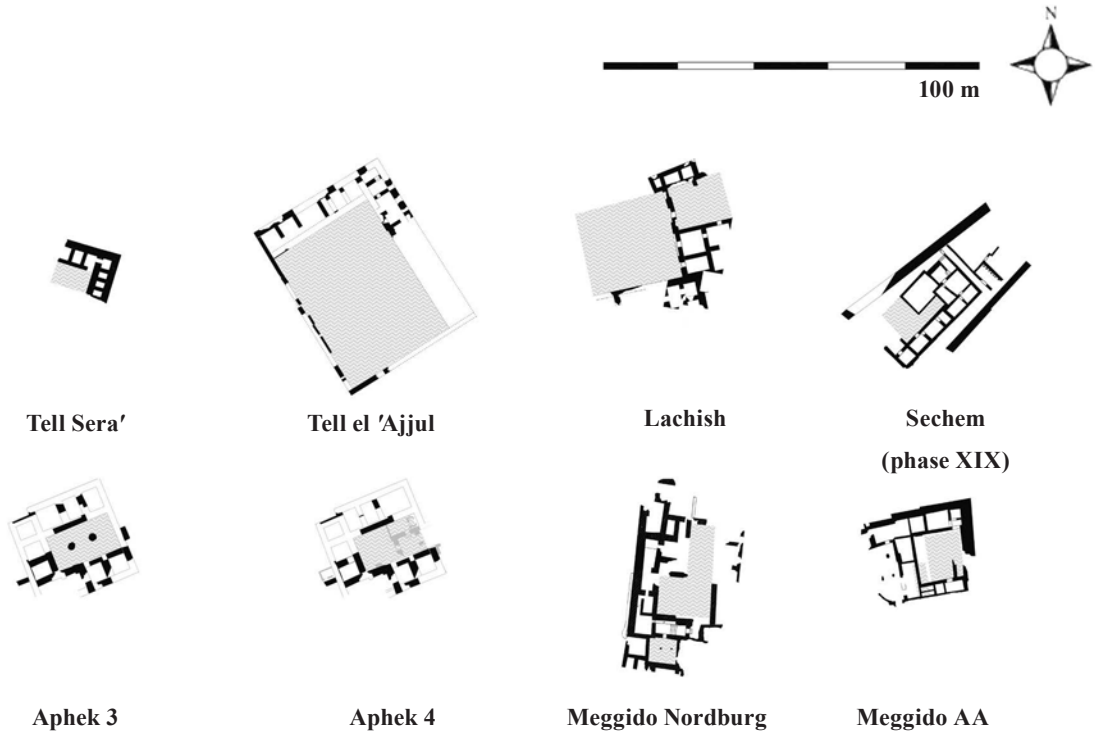


Fig. 5 Plans of the palaces of the southern Levant with the courtyards indicated in grey

in either of the other two palaces of Ebla. These long, narrow corridors are, at the current state of research, completely absent in the other palaces of the northern Levant and those of the southern Levant.

As for the palaces of the southern Levant, one thing that does not apply to all of them is their categorisation as 'courtyard palaces' as defined by Oren.[87] It is true that all the palaces had at least one courtyard, but only in some of them was the courtyard at the centre of the structure, and it rarely had a fundamental distributive function (Fig. 5).[88] Furthermore, due to the bad state of preservation, incomplete excavation, and poor publication, some palaces should only be considered with caution to shed light onto this feature. At Tell el-ʿAjjūl and Tell esh-Shariʿa there is a courtyard surrounded by rooms on at least two sides. One could also add Tell ed-Duweir.[89] In all three palaces it seems that, despite the presence of a courtyard, the rooms communicated with each other, so the courtyard was not central for circulation. As we go further north, the situation is different: Palaces III and IV at Aphek had courtyards, but not much is known about the circulation.[90] The palace of Shechem had a courtyard in all its phases, but it was nor central neither distributive.[91] The two palaces at Megiddo had courtyards, but the rooms also communicated with each other.[92]

While it is true that there is a courtyard at the centre of the palace at Tell el-Burak, all rooms were accessible from the adjacent ones and the courtyard itself does not seem to have played any major role for the circulation within the structure (Fig. 6).[93] In the northern Levant, the courtyards seem to have been a feature of the wing to which they belonged and not of the palace as a whole. In Alalaḫ, courtyards are found in the entrance wing and the service wing of the palace of level VII. In Ebla, small courtyards are located in the circulation path in Palace Q and in the service wings of all four palaces,

87 Oren 1992, 105: "The basic plan of a palace consists of a spacious, rectangular-shaped courtyard with rooms surrounding it on all sides or flanking it on two sides.… Well designed courtyard palaces appear for the first time in MBA IIA occupation strata, and became the typical public building in Syria and Palestine from that time through the Late Bronze Age."

88 The plans in Fig. 5 are an elaboration of the published plans of the palaces. For the sources of each of the original plans see the footnote for Fig. 2.

89 For a description of the palaces of Tell el-ʿAjjūl, Tell esh-Shariʿa and Tell ed-Duweir see Petrie 1933; Oren 1992; Ussishkin 2004.

90 For a description of the palaces of Aphek see Yadin 2009.

91 For a description of the palaces of Shechem see Campbell 2002.

92 For a description of the palaces of Megiddo see Schumacher 1908a; Kempinski 1989.

93 For a description of the palace of Tell el-Burak see Kamlah and Sader 2010a. The plans in Fig. 6 are an elaboration of the published plans of the palaces. For the sources of each of the original plans, see the footnote for Fig. 2.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

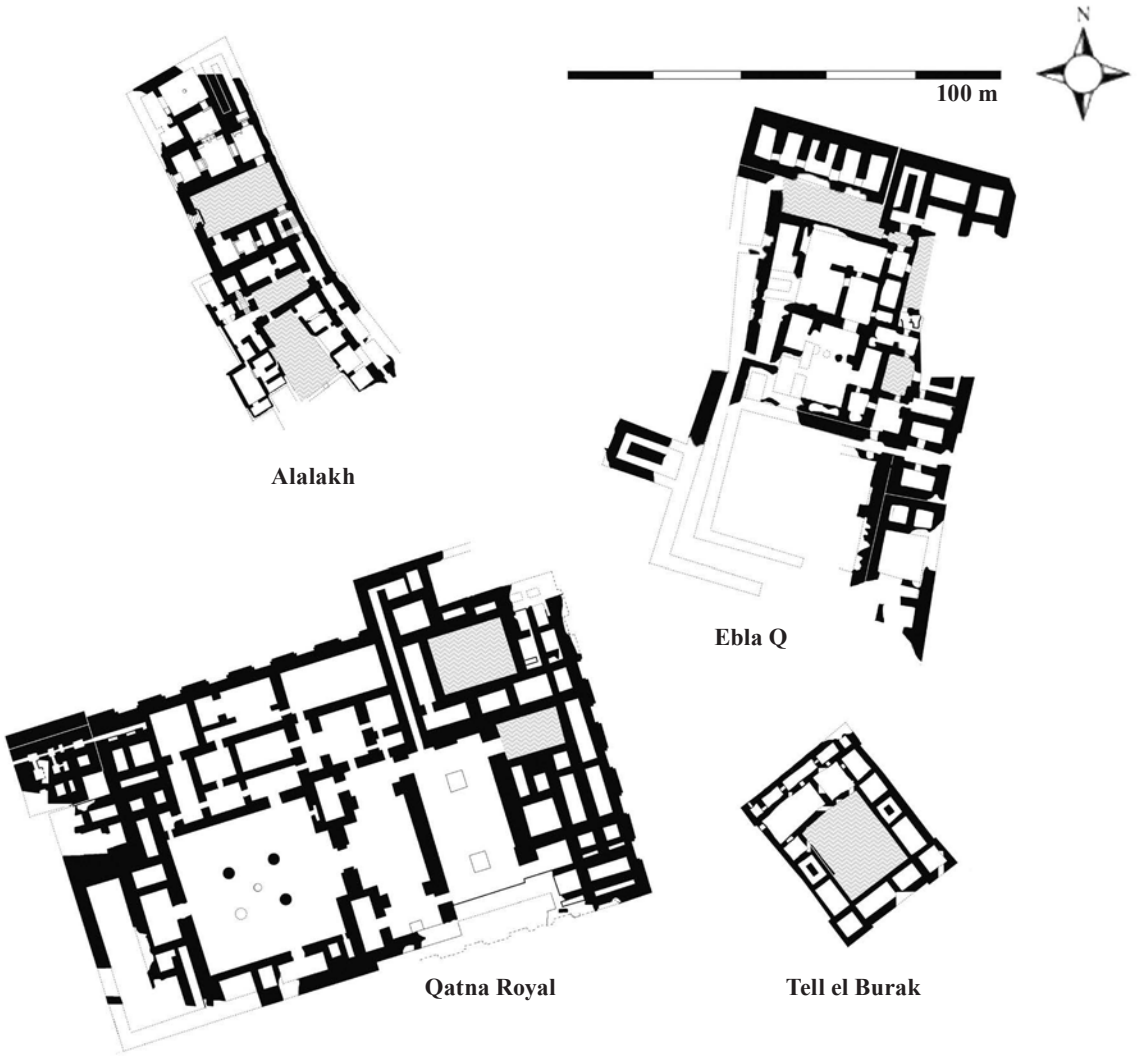


Fig. 6 Plans of the palaces of the northern Levant with the courtyards indicated in grey

and in Qaṭna, they are located in the residential and private wings of the Royal Palace.[94]

9. Conclusions

It has been so far a rather dry presentation of different building materials, methods and layouts. One can easily forget that behind each individual palace stand not only a series of techniques, but a series of builders and owners, each using the materials at hand in a creative way to make a particular statement. Each palace presents its own material narrative of building, rebuilding and dwelling, and it is important to remember that each is slightly different from the next.

In "House Form and Culture", Rapoport examined patterns of non-Western architecture to argue that socio-cultural factors were far more important than climate, technology, and materials in shaping architecture.[95] In his work on English houses, Johnson notes that buildings make complex statements about the relationships between materials, structure, and technique that are also material statements about the communities and people who created and used them.[96] These and other works concentrated on the spatial dynamics of building types, which were forged by commonly accepted cultural values.[97] In the case of the MBA Levantine palatial structures, the creators are the elites. As such, buildings in general and palaces in

94 For a description of the palaces of Alalaḫ, Ebla, and Qaṭna see Woolley 1955; Matthiae 1995b; Matthiae 2011; Matthiae 1995a; Pfälzner 2007.

95 Rapoport 1969, 46.

96 Johnson 2010, 41.

97 Lounsbury 2010, 489.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

particular hold within them clues not just about the building techniques and the soil, but also about the material, social, cultural and political landscapes. With this kept in mind, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, when it comes to the MBA Levantine palaces, there are distinctive regional styles that are not uniquely determined by the accessibility to materials or the knowledge of building methods and availability of construction technology.

Concerning the choice of building material, building techniques, and the palaces' layout, one can isolate distinctive regional styles and abundant local variations. To integrate this into the general historical picture of the Levant in the MBA: when the area was dominated by large and small city-states competing amongst each other and with no shared common identity, it comes as no surprise that the palaces of the ruling elite of each of these cities were unique. The palaces then became a social and cultural expression, communicating the individuality of the local culture through architectural language. Some regional trends, such as corridors in the northern Levant and courtyards in the southern Levant, can seem to be a minor feature when not isolated from the general picture. Nonetheless, the formation of a local regional trend seems to emerge.

The palaces of the northern Levant like Alalaḫ, Ebla and Qaṭna with their complex plans, seem to be a product of a regional elite culture, and differ from the southern Levantine examples. They show common traits in the choice and usage of specific building material.[98] Most importantly, the shared layout of their reception suites reveals the processes behind the creation of a local elite architectural style.[99] These features combined indicate a regional trend. The extent of this northern palatial architectural tradition seems to reach as far as Tilmen Höyük in the north and Tell Kabri, and most probably Hazor, in the south. This northern Levantine building traditions seem to have absorbed some Mesopotamian features, such as he layout of some reception suites (see above), but also the exclusive usage of mudbrick in foundation walls, at Qaṭna and Tell el Burak, or in the symmetric layout with protruding corners of the latter.[100]

The palaces of the MBA Levant are, in fact, a reflection of the very nature of the competitive and acquisitive nature of the trade that was taking place during the MBA and that defined the Levant and its elites. The Levant was not isolated and had no fixed identities and boundaries; it was in continuous interactions with its neighbours. As a result of this interaction, the elites thought to distinguish themselves even from their regional neighbours by building unique palaces, using unique building techniques and materials, and adorning them with paintings of foreign styles.[101]

Most of the major sociologists have addressed the issue of distinction, and their theories all converge on one common topic: the necessity for the dominant groups to display external or internal signs of superiority that signal their upper social position.[102] Furthermore, the importance of working on the exportation/importation of means of distinction has long been recognised.[103] The palaces of the MBA Levant show both strategies of emulation and imitation as well as of distinction.[104] The elites who built these palaces, given their relatively weak and unstable authority and power compared to their neighbouring hegemonies, emulated the prestigious symbols of the foreign states to demonstrate themselves as equals.[105] This was perhaps an attempt to prove they belonged to the elites through the visual language of architecture, amongst other communication means.

They nonetheless preserved a certain distinction from their regional peers. The palatial architectural language that can be uncovered through the study of the MBA palaces of the Levant does not show a 'pan-Levantine' architectural vocabulary. Aside from the similarities noted for the north Levantine palaces, the lack of a more prominent regional uniformity reveals the lack of a sense of common identity. The palaces thus become an architectural expression of the defragmentation or independence of the Levantine MBA city-states.

98 For instance, the usage of basalt, stone socles at the bottom of walls, wooden reinforcement of walls, and orthostats as wall cladding. These as well as other local and regional trends are treated in more detail in an upcoming article by the author to be published in *West & East. Rivista della Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Archeologici.*

99 For more details, see Kallas 2017.

100 The structure finds its closest comparisons in the palace of Tell Biʿa /Tuttul and the small Eastern Palace (the Šakkanakku palace) of Mari as noted by Kamlah and Sader 2010b, 135.

101 See Brysbaert 2009 for a summary of the wall paintings found in the Levantine palaces. See Kallas 2017 for the role of these wall paintings in the processes of emulation and distinction.

102 See, for instance, Bourdieu 1984; Coulangeon 2004; Daloz 2007; Daloz 2010.

103 See Tarde 1903.

104 For the difference between emulation and imitation, see Mayernik 2016.

105 See Morandi Bonacossi 2014, 424 for a short summary of how the Levantine (Syrian) elite emulated foreign states to legitimate their own authority.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Ahrens, A.
2012 Egyptian Imports from Tomb VII at Tell Mišrife/Qatna (Syria), *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 4.4, 2.

Akkermans, P.M.M.G. and Schwartz, G.M.
2003 *The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c.16,000–300 BC)*, Cambridge.

Baly, D.
1974 *The Geography of the Bible*, revised edition, New York.

Barro, A.
2003 Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna 1999–2002. A Preliminary Report of the Italian Component of the Joint Syrian-Italian-German Project. Rediscovering 'Le Palais': New Data from the Royal Palace of Qatna (Operation H), *Akkadica* 124, 77–96.

Bourdieu, P.
1984 *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, MA.

Brice, W.C.
1966 *A Systematic Regional Geography: South-west Asia*, London.

Brysbaert, A.
2009 *The Power of Technology in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean: The Case of the Painted Plaster*, Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology 12, London, Oakville.

Burke, A.A.
2014a *Introduction to the Middle Bronze Age: Themes and Developments*, in: M.L. Steiner and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant (ca. 8000–332 BCE)*, Oxford, 403–413.
2014b Entanglement, the Amorite Koiné, and Amorite Cultures in the Levant, *ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 26, 1&2, 357–373.

Campbell, E.F.
2002 *Shechem III: The Stratigraphy and Architecture of Shechem/Tell Balâṭah, Vol. 1, Text*, Boston.

Campbell, E.F. and Wright, G.R.H.
2002 *Shechem III: The Stratigraphy and Architecture of Shechem/Tell Balâṭah, Vol. 2, The Illustrations*, Boston.

Cline, E.H., Yasur-Landau, A., Koh, A., Goshen, N., Ratzlaff, A. and Samet, I.
2013 Preliminary Report on the Results of the 2013 Excavation Season at Tel Kabri, <http://digkabri2013.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/preliminary-report-on-the-results-of-the-2013-excavation-season-at-tel-kabri.pdf> (last access 7 August 2018).

Coaldrake, W.H.
1996 *Authority in Architecture: Container and Contained*, in: W.H. Coaldrake (ed.), *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, London and New York, 1–15.

Coulangeon, P.
2004 Classes sociales, pratiques culturelles et styles de vie: le modèle de la distinction est-il (vraiment) obsolète?, *Sociologie et sociétés* 36.1, 59–85.

Daloz, J.-P.
2007 Elite Distinction: Grand Theory and Comparative Perspectives, *Comparative Sociology* 6.1, 27–74.
2010 *The Sociology of Elite Distinction: From Theoretical to Comparative Perspectives*, Basingstoke.

DeMarrais, E., Castillo, L.J. and Earle, T.
1996 Ideology, Materialization, and Power Strategies, *Current Anthropology* 37.1, 15–31.

Dohmann-Pfälzner, H. and Pfälzner, P.
2006 Ausgrabungen in Tall Misrife-Qatna 2004 und 2005. Vorbericht der deutschen Komponente des internationalen Kooperationsprojektes. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 138, 57–107.
2007 Ausgrabungen und Forschungen 2006 im Königspalast von Qatna. Vorbericht der syrisch-deutschen Kooperationsprojektes in Tall Misrife/Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 139, 131–172.
2008 Die Ausgrabungen 2007 und 2008 im Königspalast von Qatna. Vorbericht des syrisch-deutschen Kooperationsprojektes in Tall Misrife/Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 140, 17–74.
2011 Die Ausgrabungen 2009 und 2010 im Königspalast von Qatna. Vorbericht der syrisch-deutschen Kooperationsprojektes im Tall Misrife/Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 143, 5–62.

Du Mesnil du Buisson, R.
1926 Les Ruines d'el Mishrifé au nord-est de Homs (Émèse), *Syria* 7, 289–325.
1928 L'ancienne Qatna ou les ruines d'el-Mishrifié au N.-E. de Homs (Émèse): deuxième campagne de fouilles (1927), *Syria* 9, 6–24.
1935 *Le Site Archéologique de Mishrifé-Qatna*, Collection de textes et documents d'Orient 1, Paris.

Eco, U.
1980 *Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture*, in: G. Broadbent, R. Bunt and C. Jencks (eds.),

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Signs, Symbols, and Architecture, Chichester, 11–70.

Hakimian, S.
2008 *Byblos*, in: J. Aruz, K. Benzel and J.M. Evans (eds.), *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, New York, 49–50.

Heinz, M., Wagner, E., Linke, J., Walther, A., Catanzariti, A., Müller, J.M. and Weber, M.
2010 Kamid el-Loz. Report on the Excavations in 2008 and 2009, *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 14, 9–134.

Iamoni, M.
2015 *The Eastern Palace of Qatna and the Middle Bronze Age Architectural Tradition of Western Syria*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. al-Maqdissi (eds.), *Qatna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism: Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qatna Studien Supplementa 2, Wiesbaden, 451–466.

Jencks, C.
1980 *The Architectural Sign*, in: G. Broadbent, R. Bunt and C. Jencks (eds.), *Signs, Symbol, and Architecture*, Chichester, 71–118.

Johnson, M.
2010 *English Houses 1300–1800: Vernacular Architecture, Social Life*, London.

Kallas, N.
2017 The Construction of Power and the Production of Elite Identity: the Middle Bronze Age Palaces of the Levant. *Studia Eblaitica* 3, 141–164.

Kamlah, J. and Badreshany, K.
2010/2011 Middle Bronze Age Pottery from Tell el-Burak, Lebanon, *Berytus* 53–54, 81–113.

Kamlah, J. and Sader, H.
2008 The Tell el-Burak Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report on the 2005, 2008 and 2009 Seasons, *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 12, 17–34.
2010a Deutsch-libanesische Ausgrabungen auf Tell el-Burak südlich von Sidon: Vorbericht nach Abschluss der siebten Kampagne 2010, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 126.2, 93–115.
2010b Tell el-Burak: A New Middle Bronze Age Site from Lebanon, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 73, 2/3, 130–141.

Kempinski, A.
1989 *Megiddo: A City-State and Royal Centre in North Israel*, Munich.
2002 *Tel Kabri: The 1986–1993 Excavation Seasons*, Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University 20, Tel Aviv.

Kempinski A. and Niemeier W.D. (eds.)
1991 *Excavations at Kabri: Preliminary Report of 1990 Season, Vol. 5*, Tel Aviv.

Larsen, M.T.
2008 *The Middle Bronze Age*, in: J. Aruz, K. Benzel and J.M. Evans (eds.), *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, New York, 13–17.

Lee, S. and Baumeister, R. (eds.)
2007 *The Domestic and the Foreign in Architecture*, Rotterdam.

Loud, G.
1948 *Megiddo II: Seasons of 1935–39*, Oriental Institute Publications 62, Chicago.

Lounsbury, C.R.
2010 *Architecture and Cultural History*, in: M.C. Beaudry and D. Hicks (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, Oxford, 484–501.

Love, S.
2013a The Performance of Building and Technological Choice Made Visible in Mudbrick Architecture, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 23.2, 263–282.
2013b Architecture as Material Culture: Building Form and Materiality in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic of Anatolia and Levant, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 32, 746–758.

Mako, V.
2014 *Ideology and Architecture: Aesthetic Rationalism and Its Cultural Response*, in: V. Mako, M.R. Blagojević and M.V. Lazar (eds.), *Architecture and Ideology*, Cambridge, 13–20.

Maran, J.
2006 *Architecture, Power and Social Practice – An Introduction*, in: J. Maran, C. Juwig, H. Schwengel and U. Thaler (eds.), *Constructing Power – Architecture, Ideology and Social Practice. Konstruktion der Macht – Architektur, Ideologie und soziales Handeln*, Münster, 9–14.

Marchetti, N.
2006 *Middle Bronze Age Public Architecture at Tilmen Höyük and the Architectural Tradition of Old Syrian Palaces*, in: F. Baffi, R. Dolce, S. Mazzoni and F. Pinnock (eds.), *Ina kibrāt erbetti: Studi di archeologia orientale dedicati a Paolo Matthiae*, Rome, 275–308.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Margueron, J.-C.
2004 *Mari, métropole de l'Euphrate au III^e^ et au début du II^e^ millénaire av. J-C.*, Paris.
2007 Notes d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Orientales 14 − La salle du trône, d'Uruk à Babylone. Genèse, fonctionnement, signification. *Syria* 84**,** 69−106.

Matthiae, P.
1968 Mission archéologique de l'Université de Rome à Tell Mardikh: Rapport sommaire sur la troisième campagne 1966, *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* 18, 5−20.
1974 Tell Mardikh. Origine et développement de la grande culture urbaine de la Syrie du nord à l'époque des royaumes ouest-sémitiques, *Archeologia* 69, 17−31.
1980a *Ebla: An Empire Rediscovered*, London.
1980b Fouilles à Tell Mardikh-Ebla, 1978: le Bâtiment Q et la nécropole princière du Bronze Moyen II, *Akkadica* 17, 1−51.
1980c Campagne de fouille à Ébla en 1979: les tombes princières et le palais de la ville basse à l'époque amorrhéenne, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 124.1, 94−118.
1982a Fouilles à Tell Mardikh-Ébla, 1980: le palais occidental de l'époque amorrhéenne, *Akkadica* 28, 41−87.
1982b Fouilles de 1981 à Tell Mardikh-Ébla et à Tell Touqan: nouvelles lumières sur l'architecture paléosyrienne du Bronze Moyen I–II, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 126.2, 299−331.
1982c The Western Palace of the Lower City of Ebla: A New Administrative Building of Middle Bronze I–II, Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft 19, 121−129.
1983 Fouilles de Tell Mardikh−Ébla en 1982: nouvelles recherches sur l'architecture palatine d'Ébla, communication du 29 avril 1983, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 127.3, 530−554.
1985 *I tesori di Ebla*, Roma and Bari.
1995a Fouilles à Ébla en 1993–1994: les palais de la ville basse nord, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 139.2, 651−681.
1995b *Ebla: un impero ritrovato: dai primi scavi ultime scoperte*, Torino.
2002 Fouilles et restauration à Ébla en 2000−2001: le palais occidental, la résidence occidentale et l'urbanisme de la ville paléosyrienne, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 146.2, 531−574.
2004 Le palais méridional dans la ville basse d'Ebla paléosyrienne: fouilles à Tell Mardikh (2002−2003), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 148.1, 301−346.
2010 *Ebla, la città del trono*, Archeologia e storia, Torino.
2011 Fouilles à Tell Mardikh-Ébla en 2009−2010: les débuts de l'exploration de la citadelle paléosyrienne, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 155.2, 735−773.
2013 *The Reception Suites of the Old Syrian Palaces*, in: F. Pinnock (ed.), *Studies on the Archaeology of Ebla 1980–2010*, Wiesbaden, 225−246.

Mayernik, D.
2016 *The Challenge of Emulation in Art and Architecture: Between Imitation and Invention*, London and New York.

Mazar, B.
1968 The Middle Bronze Age in Palestine, *Israel Exploration Journal* 18.2, 65−97.

Miroschedji, P. de
2015 *L'apparition des palais au Levant méridional au Bronze ancien et sa signification*, in: C. Michel (ed.), *De la maison à la ville dans l'orient ancien: bâtiments publics et lieux de pouvoir*, Thème VIII, Cahiers des thèmes transversaux d'ArScAn XII, Nanterre, 91−101.

Morandi Bonacossi, D.
2008 Excavations on the Acropolis of Mishrifeh, Operation J: A New Early Bronze Age III–Iron Age III Sequence for Central Inner Syria, Part 1: Stratigraphy, Chronology and Architecture, *Akkadica* 129.1, 55−127.
2014 *The Northern Levant (Syria) during the Middle Bronze Age*, in: M.L. Steiner and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology in the Levant: c. 8000–332 BCE*, Oxford, 414−433.

Mumford, G.R.
2014 *Egypt and the Levant*, in: M.L. Steiner and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology in the Levant: c. 8000–332*, Oxford, 69−89.

Nigro, L.
2009 The Eighteenth Century BC Princes of Byblos and Ebla and the Chronology of the Middle Bronze Age, *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises, Hors-Série* VI, 159−175.

Novák, M.
2006 *Fundamentierungstechniken im Palast von Qatna*, in: E. Czerny, I. Hein, H. Hunger, D. Melman and A. Schwab (eds.), *Timelines. Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak, Vol. 3*, Leuven, 63−71.

Novák, M. and Pfälzner, P.
2002 Ausgrabungen in Tall Misrife-Qatna 2001. Vorbericht der deutschen Komponente des internationalen Kooperationsprojektes, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 134, 207−246.
2005 Ausgrabungen in Tall Misrife-Qatna 2003. Vorbericht der deutschen Komponente des internationalen Kooperationsprojektes, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 137, 57−78.

Oren, E.D.
1982 Ziglag: A Biblical City on the Edge of the Negev, *The Biblical Archaeologist* 45.3, 155−166.
1992 *Palaces and Patrician Houses in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages*, in: A. Kempinski and R. Reich (eds.), *The Architecture of Ancient Israel from the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods*, Jerusalem, 105−120.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

1993 *Seraʿ, Tel*, in: E. Stern (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Vol. 4*, Jerusalem, 1329–1335.

Papayianni, I. and Stefanidou, M.
2007 Durability Aspects of Ancient Mortars of the Archeological Site of Olynthos, *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 8, 193–196.

Petrie, W.M.F.
1933 *Ancient Gaza III: Tell el Ajjūl*, London.

Pfälzner, P.
2007 *Archaeological Investigations in the Royal Palace of Qatna*, in: D.M. Bonacossi (ed.), *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in Central-Western Syria*, Udine, 29–64.
2009 *Macht und Reichtum in der Königsresidenz*, in: M. al-Maqdissi, D. Morandi Bonacossi and P. Pfälzner (eds.), *Schätze des Alten Syrien. Die Entdeckung des Königreichs Qatna*, Stuttgart, 164–171.

Rapoport, A.
1969 *House Form and Culture*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
1982 *The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach*, Beverly Hills.

Reich, R.
1992 *Building Materials and Architectural Elements in Ancient Israel*, in: A. Kempinski and R. Reich (eds.), *The Architecture of Ancient Israel from the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods*, Jerusalem, 1–16.

Schneider, J.S. and LaPorta, P.C.
2014 *Geological Constraints on Ground Stone Production and Consumption in the Southern Levant*, in: Y.M. Rowann and J.R. Ebeling (eds.), *New Approaches to Old Stones: Recent Studies of Ground Stone Artifacts*, London and New York, 19–40.

Schneider, T.
2008 *Egypt and the Levant*, in: J. Aruz, K. Benzel and J.M. Evans (eds.), *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, New York, 61–64.

Schumacher, G.
1908a *Tell el Mutesellim; Bericht über die Ausgrabungen von 1903 bis 1905. I. Band: A. Text*, Leipzig.
1908b *Tell el Mutesellim; Bericht über die Ausgrabungen von 1903 bis 1905. I. Band: B. Tafeln*, Leipzig.

Schwandner, E.L. and Rheidt, K. (eds.)
2001 *Macht der Architektur – Architektur der Macht: Bauforschungskolloquium in Berlin vom 30. Oktober bis 2. November 2002 veranstaltet vom Architektur-Referat des DAI*, Diskussionen zur Archäologischen Bauforschung 8, Mainz.

Stark, M.
1998 *Technical Choices and Social Boundaries in Material Culture Patterning: an Introduction*, in: M. Stark (ed.), *The Archaeology of Social Boundaries*, Washington, 1–11.

Suriano, M.J.
2014 *Historical Geography of the Ancient Levant*, in: M.L. Steiner and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology in the Levant: c. 8000–332 BCE*, Oxford, 9–23.

Taraqji, A.F.
2015 *Tell Sakka, fouilles syriennes dans la région de Damas*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. al-Maqdissi (eds.), *Qatna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism: Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qatna Studien Supplementa 2, Wiesbaden, 101–110.

Tarde, G.
1903 *The Laws of Imitation*, New York.

Thompson, J.
1990 The Architect as Cultural Anthropologist, *Process Architecture*, June, 132–134.

Trigger, B.G.
1990 Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour, *World Archaeology* 22.2, 119–132.

Ussishkin, D.
2004 *Area P: The Middle Bronze Age Palace*, in: D. Ussishkin (ed.), *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)*, Tel Aviv, 140–187.

Woolley, L.
1948 Excavations at Atchana-Alalakh, 1939, *The Antiquities Journal* 28, 1–2, 1–19.
1955 *Alalakh: An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937–1949*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London XVIII, London.

Yadin, E.
2009 *Middle Bronze Age (Strata X19–X15)*, in: Y. Gadot and E. Yadin (eds.), *Aphek-Antipatris II: The Remains on the Acropolis. The Moshe Kochavi and Pirhiya Beck Excavations*, Tel Aviv, 7–40.

Yadin, E. and Kochavi, M.
2000 *Area A: Stratigraphy, Architecture and Tombs*, in: M. Kochavi, P. Beck and E. Yadin (eds.), *Aphek-Antipatris I: Excavations of Areas A and B, the 1972–1976 Seasons*, Tel Aviv, 134–172.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The Modularisation of Palatial Architecture in 2nd Millennium BC Syria

by Peter Pfälzner

1. Introduction

During the 2nd millennium BC, Syria was characterised by a set of regional states of varying sizes, most of which had a palatial system controlling power and resources at its core.[1] The visual and organisational focus of the palatial system was the palace as a structure, located in a prominent position within the capital city, which itself formed the centre of the kingdom. Many aspects of the political, administrative, cultic, and ideological structures of the Old and Middle Syrian states were embedded in the palace. Thus, the palaces are a reflection and a symbolic token of the political organisation of these states in all their facets. Many of these aspects are highlighted by textual evidence from palatial archives, most notably those of Mari, which help to reconstruct life and politics in the palace during the Old Syrian period.[2] Furthermore, archaeological artefacts in palaces, embedded in specific functional contexts, have the potential to indicate activities, resources, and symbols of the palatial system.[3] Finally, the architecture is an important tool to reconstruct palatial organisation, political prestige, and concepts of power.

A theoretical background for such an approach is offered by the concept of 'conspicuous consumption of energy' with regard to monumental architecture, as expressed by Bruce Trigger.[4] Monumental architecture is here conceived as a form of symbolic behaviour that aims at displaying power by demonstrating the ability of the builder, for example, a ruler, to control and consume energy, mainly resources and labour, for non-utilitarian purposes. In fact, monumental architecture is one of the most enduring statements of power. This idea is derived from Veblen's definition of 'conspicuous consumption' as a typical feature of elite culture.[5] The case of the Middle to Late Bronze Age palaces of Syria offers wide possibilities to apply this concept.

2. Semiotic approaches to interpret palatial architecture

This paper aims at demonstrating that the construction of a palace mirrors the construction of power. This is based on a semiotic understanding of architecture, in which buildings are perceived as a means to emit political messages about authority and power relations in an impressive and widely recognisable way.[6] These messages are transferred to a very broad public through codes embedded in such features as size, room volumes, height, wall thickness, monumentality, visual axes, wall decorations, and many more aspects of architectural design. One of these aspects, discussed in this paper and exemplified by the Royal Palace of Qaṭna, concerns the foundations of the building, which can have both a structural function and a symbolic meaning. Another aspect refers to architectural concepts, which can be understood as spatial conventions established within a cultural setting. They are familiar to the members of a society and, therefore, have a readable political meaning and trigger specific ideas about authority. These cognitive associations evoke traditions, memories, and emotions, such as amazement, admiration, or intimidation. In doing so, they reinforce the acceptance of the existing power.[7]

The Royal Palace of Qaṭna will be discussed as a starting point for highlighting these effects in the case of the palatial architecture of Syria in the 2nd millennium BC. It was first exposed in parts by du Mesnil du Buisson from 1924 to 1929 and fully excavated from 1999 to 2010 by an international Syrian-German-Italian mission. The intensive modern investigations have provided a broad set of data regarding the architecture, the construction techniques, the layout, and the room equipment. This has yielded insights into the functions of and the activities in the building, its visual appearance, and its representative character. On this basis, two main issues can be discussed: first, it will be investigated how the palace shaped the urban landscape of power; thereafter, the architectural design will be examined to extract the guiding concepts and ideas of the palace builders. Both aspects are regarded as keys for understanding the language of power as expressed by the architecture.

The Royal Palace of Qaṭna is particularly suitable for a study of this kind because its architectural plan has been exposed in full, comprising 101 rooms (on the ground level) and an overall area of 18.000 sq.m (Fig. 1). Thus, it is one of the largest Bronze Age palaces in Syria and the Near East. Furthermore, for lack of preserved standing walls, the foundations of

1 Klengel 1965; 1969; 1970; 1974; 1979; Liverani 1974; 1975; Zaccagnini 1987; Schloen 2001; Pfälzner 2012.
2 Durand 1987.
3 See Puljiz 2016.
4 Trigger 1990, 119–129.
5 Veblen 1899; compare with Trigger 1990, 124 f.
6 Eco 1980; 1988, 195–249; Nöth 1985, 400–408; Preucel 2006.
7 For various kinds of applications of the semiotics of architecture in archaeology see Steadman 1996, 66–68; Reade 1979; Marcus 1995a; 1995b; Novák 1999; Suter 2000; Pucci 2008; Orthmann 2008; Meijer 2008.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

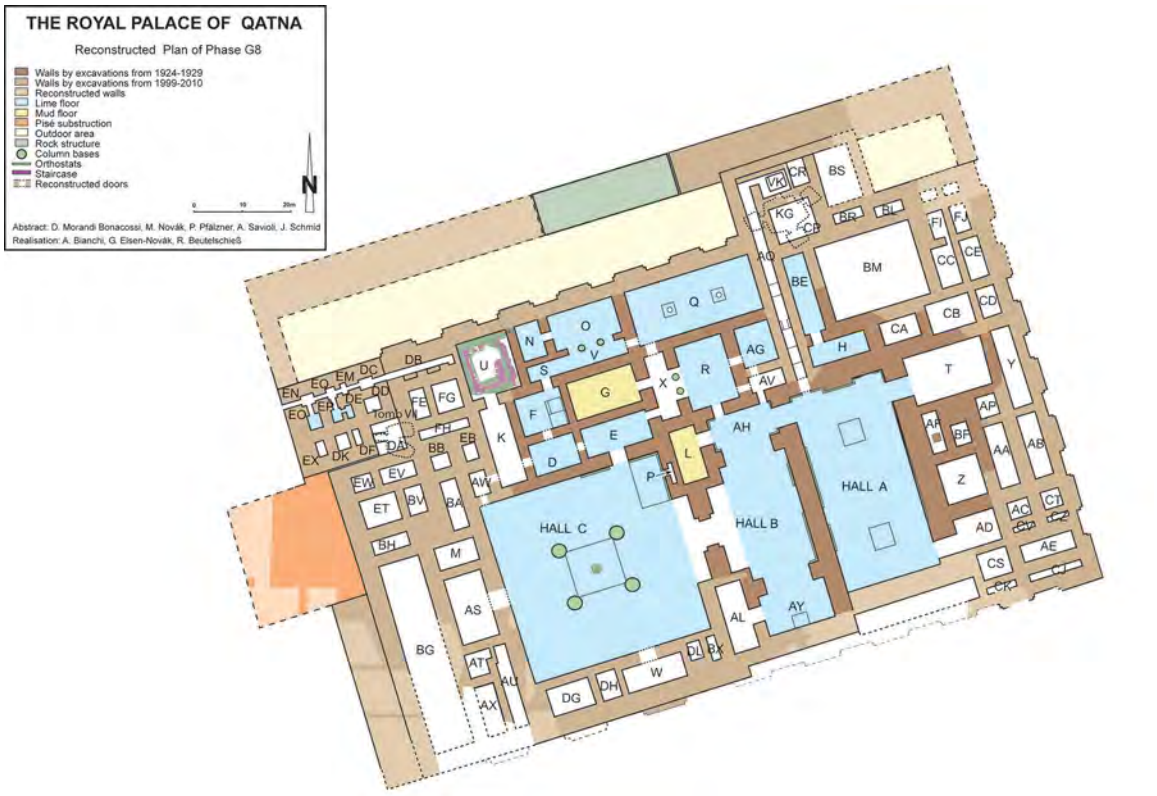


Fig. 1 Reconstruction of the layout of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna during the Middle Bronze Age: the 'Implemented Plan' of Phase G 9a

the building were intensively investigated with two important results: first, it was found that the building was not erected in steps, gradually growing in size over an extended period of time, but was rather built – with the exception of two later annexes – in one contiguous construction process; secondly, it became clear that only very few alterations were made to the ground plan during the long lifetime of the building from the 18th to the 14th century BC. This allows us to identify the original planning idea of the palace builders, which was projected and realised at a specific moment. This point in time can be determined rather precisely on the basis of our intensive chronological investigations: the building was erected in the Middle Bronze Age IIA (MB IIA), i.e. the 'Mari period', most probably between 1790 and 1760 BC.[8]

Apart from the below-mentioned modifications of the plan, no substantial earlier palace constructions could be observed in this area. Thus, the builders were not restricted by pre-existing structures. We can therefore assume that the builders principally had the freedom to make choices between the different current building concepts and they also had the principal possibility to realise innovative ideas. Consequently, the architects were in a position to implement an overarching, well-considered building concept, which was optimally adjusted to the underlying political intentions.

However, as has been mentioned above, a sudden modification of the plan occurred during the construction process. It reveals that the building concept obviously needed to be adapted to a changed idea or intention. This change happened suddenly, in the course of the construction of the first concept, the *Urplan* (Phase G 9b), and did not result in an interruption of the building process. The second concept, the 'Implemented Plan' (Phase G 9a), was immediately realised, without halting the construction process.[9] This measure partly changed the original layout of the palace. Chrono-stratigraphic investigations demonstrate that both building steps most probably took place within the mentioned time range of 1790 to 1760 BC. This far-reaching change of the architectural layout of the palace can be interpreted as the result of changed ideas about the functional and representative aspects of the building and, thus, it reflects a redirection of political intentions connected to the palace.

8 See: Pfälzner 2007; in press a.

9 This is proven by stratigraphical observations; see Novák and Pfälzner 2005, 66 f.; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2006, 61–65, 77 f.; 2007, 137–146; 2008, 59–63; 2011, 45–47.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

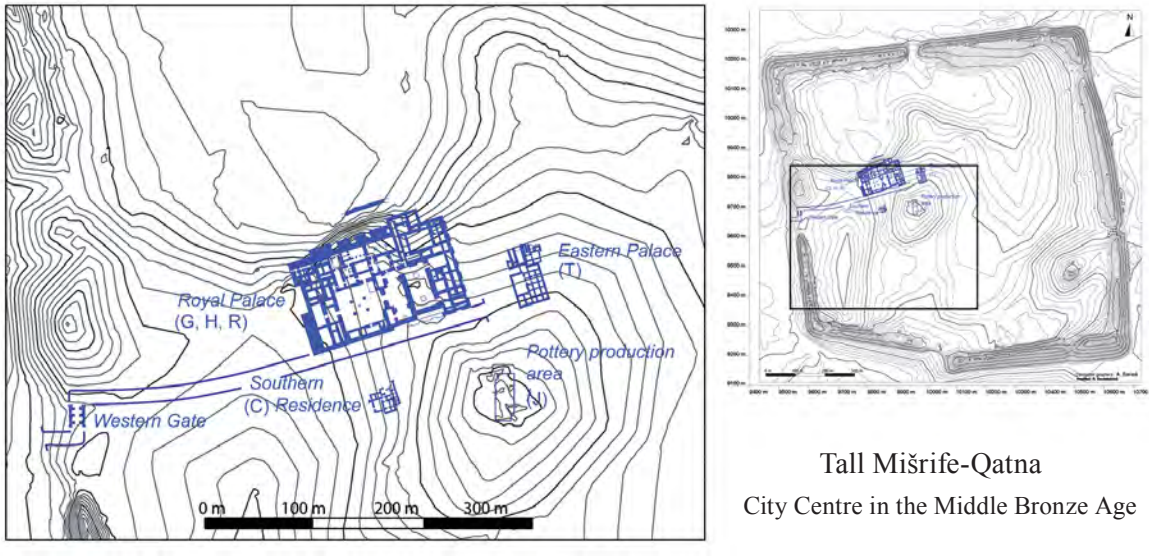


Fig. 2 Plan of the central part of the city of Qaṭna with palatial buildings (situation during the Middle Bronze Age) (plan by D. Morandi Bonacossi, A. Savioli, P. Pfälzner, R. Beutelschieß)

3. The urban landscape of power at Qaṭna

The Royal palace of Qaṭna is the focal point of a set of official buildings that existed during the Middle Bronze Age in the central part of the city. Together with the topography of the city centre, they can be understood as an urban landscape of power (Fig. 2). The palatial complex stood on top of a natural elevation overlooking the lower city to the north. To the east of the Royal Palace was the Eastern Palace (Operation T),[10] which existed beside it during the MB II and must have had a complementary political or economic function, while the major representative functions were located in the Royal Palace.[11] However, the Eastern Palace lost its palatial function at the end of the Middle Bronze Age,[12] while the Royal Palace continued to be used. The much smaller so-called Southern Building[13] also seems to have existed uninterruptedly from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age.[14] It was situated close to the southern side of the Royal Palace and might have supported the residential and probably also the official functions of the Royal Palace. Thus, a strong functional differentiation of official architecture existed in the central part of the city during the Middle Bronze Age. The palatial complex was considerably reduced in extent during the Late Bronze Age due to the abandonment of the Eastern Palace.

The set of official buildings formed the core of the city during the Middle Bronze Age and, to a lesser extent, still during the Late Bronze Age. This demonstrates that most aspects of political power were concentrated in the city centre. It served as the practical exertion of power as well as its symbolic representation. From an architectural point of view, the different official buildings in the city centre of Qaṭna adhere to different types. This does not need to be seen as a result of different periods of construction but can be understood as a consequence of different functions. Representative functions are mainly concentrated in the Royal Palace, while the other buildings seem to have had more practical functions. Therefore, the symbolism of power through architecture can be traced best in the Royal Palace.

The Royal Palace overlooked the northern lower city as far as the northern city gate. The view from there towards the palace must have formed an important visual focus of political power within the city. The impressiveness of this view was strongly supported by the substantial terracing works below the palace. The natural slope of the limestone cliff had been cut so that a straight-lined and nearly vertical escarpment was created, standing 10 m high above the ground of the lower city. Its face was clad in a mudbrick terrace wall of equal height. This terracing stretched all along the northern face of the palace, from its eastern to its western corner. As a result, a huge platform was created, the Royal Palace standing on its top. As the palace was positioned close to the edge of the platform, this ensemble offered an extremely impressive view when looked at from the lower city or the northern city gate (Fig. 3). The positioning of the palace on a huge platform, an arrangement normally known from temple constructions in the ancient Near East, was a peculiar innovative idea of the Qaṭna Royal Palace builders. It clearly contains a strong language of power.

10 Morandi Bonacossi 2014, 278 f.; Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2009; Iamoni and Kanhouch 2009; Iamoni 2010; 2012, 81–84; 2015; Kanhoush 2015.

11 See Pfälzner in press a.

12 Iamoni 2012, 82 f., 169 f., tabs. VI-1, VI-2.

13 Al-Maqdissi 2003a, 235–239; 2003b, 1500–1505; al-Maqdissi and Morandi Bonacossi 2005, 21, 48 f.; 2009, 132.

14 Al-Maqdissi 2003a, 236, figs. 19–21; Morandi Bonacossi 2013, 119.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The northern front, however, was not the most important side of the Royal Palace functionally. The entrance to the building was from the west. Here, an impressive ramp or staircase led up to the main gate of the building. An open plaza was located in front of the entrance, offering full view onto the western facade of the building (Fig. 4). This place must have been accessible from the main east–west street of the city, connected to the western city gate. Thus, the central axis of the city led directly to the large plaza in front of the palace. With these intentionally created visual axes the palace also offered a very strong and powerful sight from the west.

Even the south side offered an impressive sight as the mentioned main east–west street passed all along the southern front of the palace in a straight line so that the southern face of the palace was visible in its entirety from any point along this stretch of the street. Taken together, these three main visual axes from north, west, and south enabled a very impressive perception of the monumentality and greatness of the palace.[15] This enhanced the notion of power and authority emitted by the palace building.

Further symbolic renderings contributed to the language of power transmitted by the Royal Palace of Qaṭna. The massive and extraordinarily deep foundations of the palace were not only structurally important for the technical stability of the building, but also guaranteed its longevity and durability, which can be understood as a symbol of political stability.[16] Also of high relevance is the fact that the palace was built on top of an older necropolis of the MB I with big chamber tombs containing a rich inventory, as in the case of Tomb I.[17] This site can be interpreted as the older elite cemetery of the city. Thus, the palace was literally constructed upon the old elite of the kingdom, a fact from which the ruling elite of the time might have derived legitimation and a reputation based on tradition and permanence.

4. The principle of modularisation

The plan of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna is composed of two different kinds of architectural elements: on the one hand, the building consists of a number of different functional units and, on the other hand, it is assembled from various architectural modules. The combination of functional units and typological modules generated the characteristic and unique form of the palace. Assembling the palace plan from units and modules can be regarded as the major architectural process in the planning stage of the construction.

4.1. The functional units

Although the Royal Palace of Qaṭna was built as one coherent architectural block with only two secondary annexes, it can be subdivided into eleven functional units.[18] These are defined as groups of rooms that are closely linked to each other and to which a specific set of functions can be attributed (Fig. 5). The Entrance Unit (Unit 1) forms a representative block of five rooms in a tripartite arrangement, led up to by the access ramp to the palace. Unit 1 gave access to the Western Unit (Unit 2), which probably had controlling and administrative functions and played a key role in the circulation system within the palace. From here, the Central Representative Unit (Unit 3) of the palace was reached, which is composed of a succession of three monumental halls: the 36 × 36 m large square Hall C with four interior columns to carry a roof; the elongated Hall B with a representative middle-axis entrance through the *Porte Royale*; and Hall A, accessible through a bent-axis entrance and measuring 41 × 20 m in size. The functions of these halls comprise the whole range of official and ritual activities of the ruler. Hall C served as a huge covered banquet and audience room; Hall B as a governmental hall for the major administrative activities of the king; and Hall A as a cult hall for important ritual activities, mainly in the frame of the royal ancestor cult.[19] The Royal Hypogeum Complex (Unit 4) is directly connected to Unit 3, which underlines the close functional coherence of both units. The Eastern Unit (Unit 5), located to the east of the cult hall, was probably used for administrative and storage purposes, and furthermore gave access to an upper floor where living rooms might have been located. The Southeastern Annex (Unit 6) was a storage area, which was added to the palace during the Late Bronze Age. The Northeastern Unit (Unit 7) can be interpreted as a residential wing, with Room CP as the main royal living room. It is located directly above the main chamber of the subterranean Royal Hypogeum and thus expresses a symbolic bond between the ruling and the dead kings. The Northern Unit (Unit 8) is dominated by Room Q, presumably an assembly hall for special events. The palace archive and the scribal chamber (Rooms AV, AG, and AQ_2) were located in the same unit, which appears to have been multifunctional. The Well Unit (Unit 9) is another multifunctional area. It includes the monumental Well-Room U serving as the main water supply of the palace and the small Room N with wall paintings indicating religious functions in relation with water. The Northwest Wing (Unit 10) is a separate architectural unit with three storeys built on lower ground. The well-preserved unit contained storage rooms and gave access to a second underground royal

15 Compare with Pfälzner in press a.
16 Novák 2006; Pfälzner 2007.
17 Pfälzner and Dohmann-Pfälzner 2011, 64–67.
18 Pfälzner in press a; in press b.
19 Pfälzner in press a; in press b.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 3 View of the northern palace front from the northern lower city; 3D computer reconstruction (conception: Peter Pfälzner and Jochen Schmid; modelling: Tobias Reich)

Fig. 4 View of the northern and western palace fronts; 3D computer reconstruction (conception: Peter Pfälzner and Jochen Schmid; modelling: Tobias Reich)

burial chamber, Tomb VII.[20] The North Terrace (Unit 11) is located between the northern palace wall and the face of the monumental terracing system. It must once have offered a wide view over the northern lower city.

20 See Pfälzner and Dohmann-Pfälzner 2011; Pfälzner 2014.

4.2. The typological modules

The eleven functional units mentioned above demonstrate that the architectural layout of the palace was conceived in accordance with the various functional requirements of the building. The representative, political, ritual, economic, practical, residential, and funerary activities were allocated to specific places

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

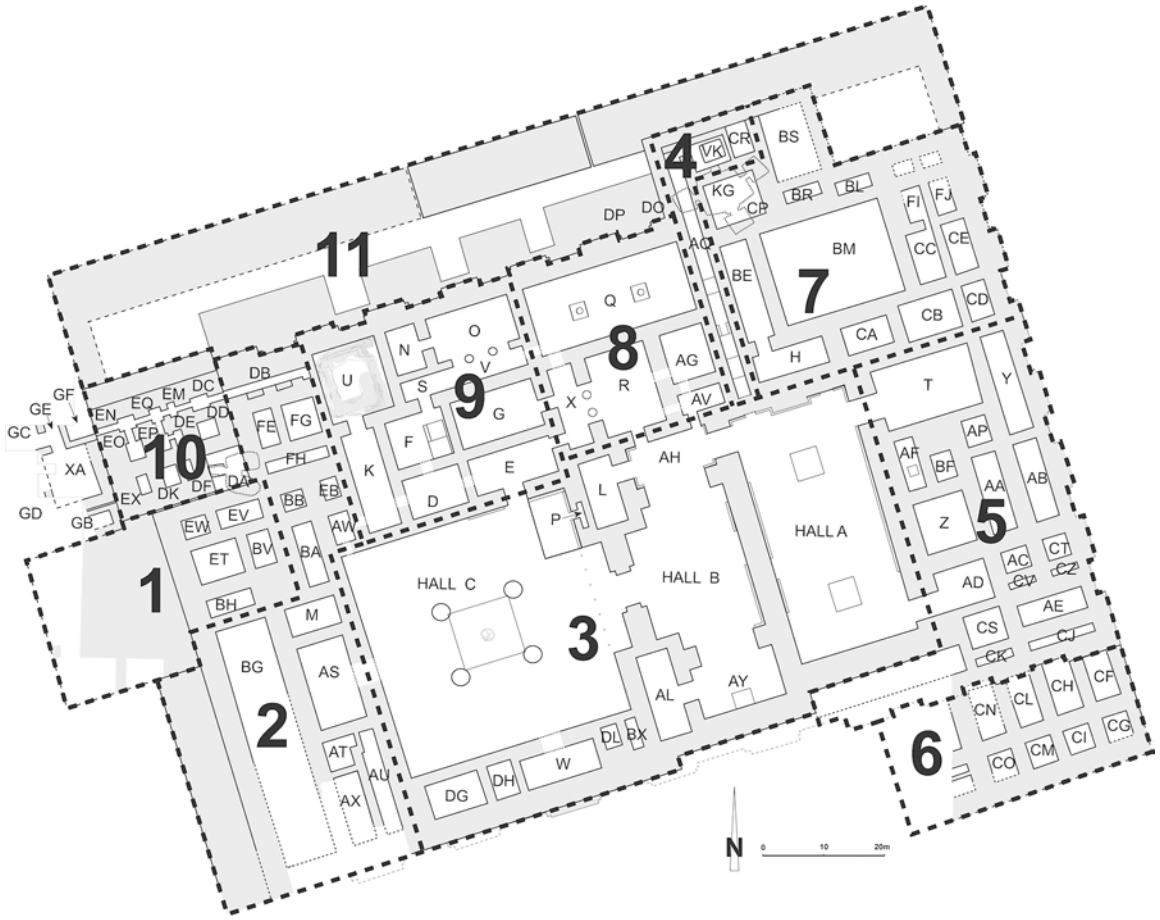


Fig. 5 Functional units of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna

within the palace. These various activities were spatially organised by establishing a thoroughly designed circulation system. However, the layout of the palace offers not only an understanding of the functional organization, but also of the representative properties, which prove to be deliberately and carefully selected. The functional requirements as well as the representative intentions were the guiding principles for selecting the typological concepts for the architectural plan of the palace.

Six different typological modules can be distinguished in the palace of Qaṭna, each connected to one or more functional units (Fig. 6).

Module A: the tripartite entrance block

Functional Unit 1 is typologically characterised as a tripartite entrance block, with a symmetrical arrangement of a wide central row of rooms accompanied by a smaller lateral row of rooms on each side. The entrance leads through the middle row of rooms. The concept is well suited for an entrance situation as it offers a visual focus from the outside, probably supported by columns in the main entrance room, and clearly directs and at the same time controls access to the building.

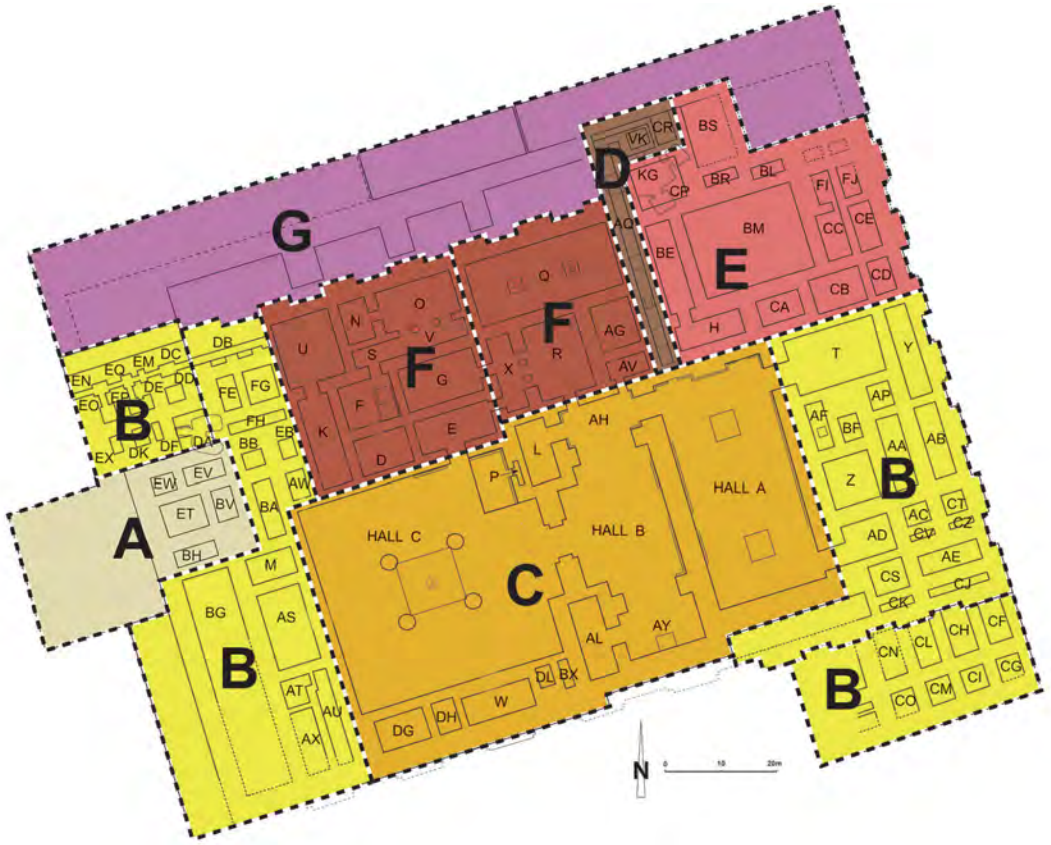
Module B: the grid scheme

The grid scheme is applied several times within the palace: in Units 2 (Western Unit), 5 (Eastern Unit), 6 (Southeastern Annex), and 10 (Northwest Wing). It is a standard architectural unit with a clear and regular arrangement of rectangular rooms in blocks of different sizes. The format of the rooms within each block depends mainly on their function. This concept allows for flexibility and functional efficiency but it lacks major visual effects and representative properties. Thus, it was used mainly for those parts of the palace that housed practical, economic, and administrative functions.

Module C: the double-hall complex

The double-hall complex forms the core module of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna. It corresponds to Unit 3 (Central Representative Unit) of the palace and consists of three monumental halls designated for the major political, ritual, and representative functions of the palace. The basic component of this concept, which is also attested at Mari and in other palaces (see below), consists of a parallel and direct juxtaposition of two monumental halls, of which the first is the main political space of the palace and the second, the

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516



Module A: The Tripartite Entrance Block
Module B: The Grid Scheme
Module C: The Double-Hall Complex
Module D: The Integrated Hypogeum
Module E: The Courtyard-House
Module F: The Double-Column Concept
Module G: The Outer Terrace

Fig. 6 Typological modules of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna

main ritual one. Hall B, the first of the two rooms, is identified through a close analogy to Room 64 in the Palace of Mari as the governmental hall, where the king carried out his major administrative and political duties.[21] The room is 14.6 m wide and 46 m long and thus of monumental form. The roofing of this hall posed an enormous engineering challenge. The room is subdivided into three parts by two pairs of projecting wall piers (*antae*). From the northern part of the room, a door leads to the adjoining Hall A, which is located parallel to Hall B and is even larger in dimensions. It measures 20 × 41 m, and thus presented an even bigger challenge for roofing. Only extraordinarily long and strong cedar beams were suitable for this purpose (Fig. 7). Remains of wooden beams were found on the floor of both Halls A and B in the 1920s by the French excavator du Mesnil du Buisson.[22] In the northern wall of Hall A, a large central niche that might once have held ancestor statues can be reconstructed.[23] The close analogy of this room to *Salle* 65 in the Palace of Mari[24] makes it very compelling to identify Hall A as the cultic hall, which would have been used, like its counterpart at Mari, for rituals connected to the dynastic ancestor cult.

Hall C is located in front of the two aforementioned main halls and can be identified as the banquet and audience hall of the palace. Its function can be reconstructed on the basis of a close analogy between the dimensions and position of this room to those of Courtyard 106 at Mari.[25] However, unlike the open Courtyard 106 at Mari, Hall C at Qaṭna was roofed, as can be demonstrated by four huge internal columns (Fig. 8). Thus, it could have served its purpose also during bad weather. In view of the wet climatic situation of western Syria, where much more rain occurs than, for example, at Mari on the Middle Euphrates, this architectural rendering can be understood as an environmental adaptation. With a size of 36 × 36 m, the hall is of monumental format. It can be considered the largest known covered space in Bronze Age architecture, not only in Syria but also

21 Durand 1987, 58–61.
22 Du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, 82, 88, pl. XVI.
23 Pfälzner 2015, 423–425, fig. 7 f.
24 For the function of *Salle* 65 at Mari compare with Durand 1987, 107–109.
25 For the function of Courtyard 106 at Mari compare with Durand 1987, 55–57.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 7 Hall A of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna with hypothesis for roofing (© Landesmuseum Württemberg and FaberCourtial)

Fig. 8 Hall C of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna with internal columns and roofing (© Landesmuseum Württemberg and FaberCourtial)

in Mesopotamia and other parts of the Near East. A wide and very impressive gate set into the center of the eastern wall of the square hall, the *Porte Royale*, led into Hall B.

Hall C, although being of high functional importance, is an architecturally flexible component of the Central Representative Unit. Therefore, it is not considered to be a defining element of the double-hall concept. Instead, Hall C represents an architectural sub-concept inserted into the Central Representative Unit of the Royal Palace at Qaṭna. It is a four-column hall that finds parallels in the main room of the MB IIA palace of Tell Sakka in southern Syria and in the central part of MB IIC Palace 2134

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

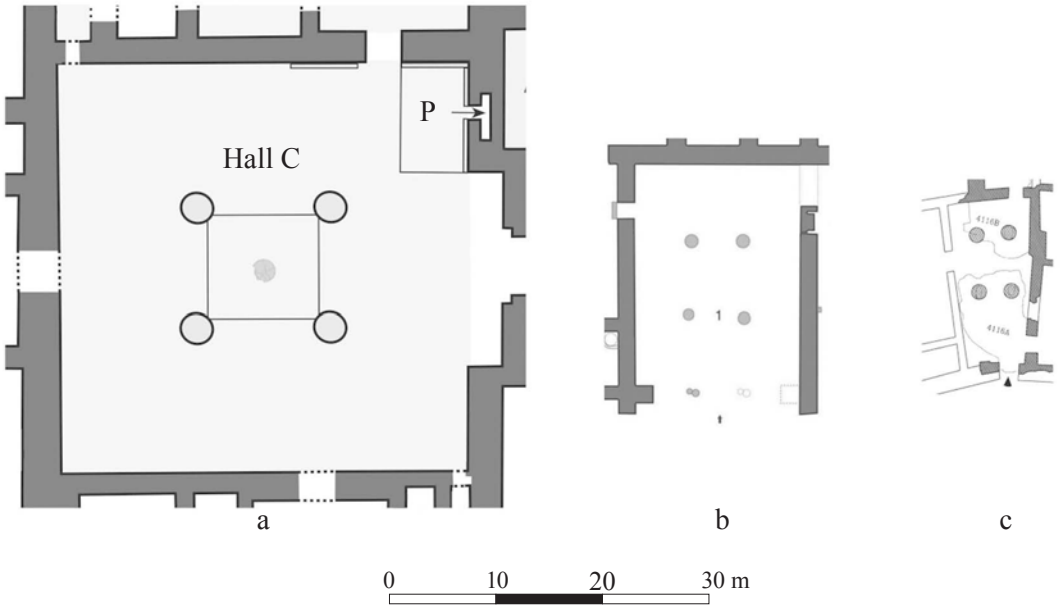


Fig. 9 The four-column halls of Middle Bronze Age palatial architecture: the examples of (a) Qaṭna, (b) Tell Sakka, and (c) Megiddo, Palace 2134; all plans to the same scale (after Pfälzner in press a)

at Megiddo (Level IX). Thus, it is evident that the four-column hall in the Middle Bronze Age existed as an architectural concept in a wide area stretching from central Syria to northern Palestine (Fig. 9). The concept seems to have originated in Syria, as can be seen, albeit in a considerably smaller format, in the four-column arrangement in Room L.2913 of the Early Bronze Age Palace G at Ebla.[26] The Syrian/northern Levantine four-column hall concept spread to other regions during the Late Bronze Age. It can be found in Mycenaean palaces, as is demonstrated by the famous example at Pylos in Greece, where the central Megaron Hall is equipped with four columns in an arrangement that is strikingly similar to the one found at the palace of Qaṭna. The example at Pylos dates to the Late Helladic IIIA period (c. 1400–1340 BC), and thus was built much later than the Middle Bronze Age examples in Syria. However, as the palace of Qaṭna was still in use during the 14th century, with its four-column Hall C unchanged, it could theoretically have become a model for the Mycenaean palaces.

It can be concluded that in the plan of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna an existing regional room concept, the four-column hall, was selected and integrated into the double-hall concept, by considerably increasing the dimensions of the four-column hall. In doing so, an innovative variation of the double-hall concept was created. This case of architectural planning presents an enlightening example of how architectural concepts could be modified and composed in new ways in 2nd millennium BC Syria. It demonstrates that architectural concepts were not conceived as rigid building norms but were rather flexible and dynamic. They can be identified as architectural modules, which could be composed in various ways to generate complex building plans. This principle was particularly suitable for palatial buildings with their multiple functions and their manifold practical and symbolic requirements. With this understanding in mind, we can consider the layout of the palaces under discussion as a modular scheme.

Module D: the integrated hypogeum

The Royal Hypogeum Complex (Functional Unit 4) represents a separate module, an integrated hypogeum. It has been inserted into the palace plan and connected to the other units with the help of a 40 m long corridor. The grave chambers represent a four-chamber tomb type with an antechamber, characteristic of the Middle Bronze Age.[27] In the palace of Qaṭna this grave concept is adopted as a module and inserted into the aggregated architectural plan of the building. The long corridor that establishes the connection of the tomb to the core of the palace forms an innovative element in the overall plan, through which existing modules are combined and new concepts are created.

26 Matthiae 1978, 211–216, fig. 1; 1983, fig. 16; 1995; see also the discussion in Pfälzner in press a.

27 Pfälzner 2011, 80, fig. 16.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Module E: the courtyard-house

A courtyard-house of the Babylonian type[28] with a central open courtyard and a row of rooms surrounding it on all sides is inserted in the north-eastern part of the palace. It corresponds to Functional Unit 7 (Northeastern Unit). The courtyard-house is a popular, widely distributed scheme for private houses of an elevated social status.[29] It is known in southern Mesopotamia from the 3rd millennium BC onwards.[30] Inserted into the palace of Qaṭna, it may have served residential functions also here, if we assume that architectural form and function are related to each other.

Module F: double-column concept

The double-column concept is applied twice in the Royal Palace of Qaṭna: in Units 8 (Northern Unit) and 9 (Well Unit). It consists of two columns erected on heavy stone bases, which are situated in a wide opening between *antae*, separating two neighbouring rooms. This arrangement offers an impressive and representative sight and, at the same time, serves the practical purpose of bringing light into a roofed area. Thus, the larger room on one side of the double-column entrance can be reconstructed as an open courtyard (Rooms R and O) into which light enters, while the smaller one is a portico (Rooms X and V) transporting the light into adjoining rooms. This architectural concept can be found in several examples in the palace of Ugarit,[31] and thus seems to have been particularly popular during the Late Bronze Age. The employment of the concept during the Middle Bronze Age in the Royal Palace of Qaṭna, in the palace of Tell Sakka,[32] and in palaces of the reception-suite concept (see below), such as Palace Q at Ebla,[33] shows the importance of the concept also in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. These examples demonstrate that the double-column concept has a long tradition in Syria from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age, and even further into the palatial architecture of the Iron Age, as a basic element of the *bit ḫilani*.[34]

Module G: the outer terrace

The idea of constructing an elevated outer terrace is principally uncommon in Mesopotamian and Syrian palatial architecture of the Bronze Age; it is more usual in religious architecture. Thus, its integration into the palace plan of Qaṭna can be considered another instance of innovation by the architects. Unit 11 (North Terrace) plays an important role in the representative arrangements of the palace of Qaṭna, as it forms an attractive visual focus from the outside and offers splendid views over the city for those inside the palace. Thus, it has an important function for the performance of power connected to the palace.

In summary, the plan of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna is composed of a number of different architectural modules. They were taken from existing typological concepts and were applied to form functional units within the building. Each module could derive from a different region or a different tradition. Their specific aggregation in the Royal Palace of Qaṭna, as well as in other palaces of Middle Bronze Age Syria, constitutes a deliberate choice of the architects. The choice follows specific interests with regard to the utility, tradition, and symbolism of the architectural concepts. Consequently, the modularisation of a palace plan is a very specific process in every palatial construction project, and in each case it results in a specific, unique architectural plan. At this point of the planning process, individual and innovative ideas can be realised, as long as they are embedded in the general traditional conventions. For this reason, no palace in Bronze Age Syria matches any other in plan. The variations are due to different combinations of the existing modules. Thus, each palace plan reflects a specific aggregation of modules. To conclude, one of the most fundamental characteristics of Syrian palatial architecture of the 2nd millennium BC is the principle of modularisation, which results in individually assembled palace plans.

5. The typology of Middle Bronze Age Syrian and Mesopotamian palaces

The Middle Bronze Age palaces of Mesopotamia and Syria have been investigated from an architectural point of view in several studies. Heinrich is renowned for his definition of the *Thronsaal/Festsaal* palace type.[35] This is to be understood as an arrangement consisting of a first monumental hall used as a throne room, followed by a second, even larger hall used as a ceremonial hall. The latter is a *Mittelsaal*, i.e. a hall flanked by an additional row of rooms on both of its long sides. Margueron, on the other hand, proposed to categorise Syrian palaces into three groups: the 'volume type' housing extensive room complexes; the '*espace vide* type' with an open area in its middle; and, finally, palaces without a standardised general room scheme.[36] Margueron classified the Royal Palace of Qaṭna into the second category, the '*espace vide* type', on the basis of the Courtyard of Nin-Egal, which he considered as an open area in the middle of

28 See Heinrich 1950; 1975 for an architectural definition.
29 Koldewey 1913, 63, 279–288; Heinrich 1950; 1975; Miglus 1996; 1999, 254–250.
30 Heinrich 1975, 208–217; Miglus 1999, 6 f., 245–254.
31 Schaeffer 1962, fig. 21, plan I; Margueron 1987, 147–149, fig. 12; 1995, 187–191, figs. 1–3; 2004b, 144, fig. on p. 147.
32 Taraqji 2015.
33 Matthiae 1990, 211 f. Cf. Matthiae in this volume.
34 Cf. Killebrew in this volume.
35 Heinrich 1984, 41 f., 68.
36 Margueron 1987, 134–142.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

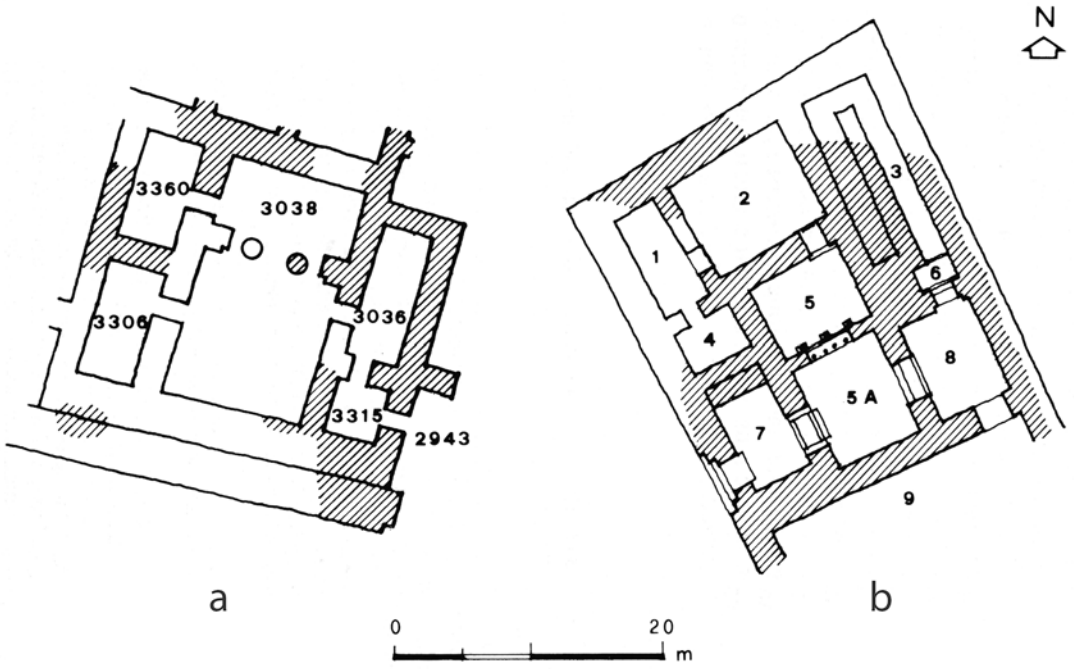


Fig. 10 A comparison of the reception suites in the palaces of (a) Ebla (Palace Q) and (b) Alalaḫ (Palace Level VII) (after Matthiae 1990, figs. 1–2).

the building. However, he could not yet know that this was in fact a covered space (Hall C).[37]

Matthiae regards the reception-suite complex, composed of a vestibule and an audience room, as the basic concept of Syrian palaces of the Middle Bronze Age.[38] He considers Ebla (Palace Q) and Alalaḫ (Palace Level VII) as the most typical examples of this type (Fig. 10), but also includes the Royal Palace of Qaṭna in this concept.[39] Marchetti adopts Matthiae's concept of the reception suite and applies it to the Middle Bronze Age palace of Tilmen Hüyük, but introduces the additional element of a throne room.[40] Thus, Marchetti's concept of a combination of a reception suite and a throne room could be called an extended reception-suite complex.[41] He also considers the Royal Palace of Qaṭna to belong to this concept, with Hall B as the reception suite and Hall A as the throne room.[42]

The new investigations of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna and the affirmation of its construction date in the MB IIA allow for a comparison of its plan to those of other contemporary palaces in Syria and Mesopotamia and, in doing so, enables to evaluate the existing typological approaches. This will lead to an adjustment of existing typological classifications for the Bronze Age palaces of Syria.

The principle of modularisation of the Syrian palaces, as recognised above, makes it impossible to attribute the overall scheme of a given palatial building to one or several groups of seemingly homogenous ground plans. Rigid, static groups of ground plans of palaces do not exist. Due to the individuality of each plan, resulting from the modularisation principle, a meaningful typological classification needs to refer either to a set of modules or to only one selected module. Here, the proposed classification is based on the central module of each palace. As a matter of fact, this kind of typological focus on the central representative unit of a palace already implicitly underlies the typologies of Heinrich, Matthiae, and Marchetti. Principally, this approach requires a prior decision in each case on what the most relevant and important module of a given palatial building is. Usually, this is regarded to be the throne room or the throne-room complex.[43] However, due to the difficulties in identifying a throne room as such,[44] other kinds of central rooms have been

37 Ibidem, 142.
38 Matthiae 1990; 2002. Cf. Matthiae in this volume.
39 Matthiae 1990, 221.
40 Marchetti 2006, 277–278.
41 Compare with the discussion in Pfälzner in print a.
42 Marchetti 2006, 282.
43 Margueron 2007.
44 The difficulty of identifying a throne room is particularly obvious in the palaces of Qaṭna and Mari, where Halls 64 and 65 (Mari) or Halls A and B (Qaṭna) have been variably considered as such. In fact, it needs to be critically questioned whether a proper throne room existed at all in the Syrian palaces of the 2nd millennium BC; on this problem see Pfälzner in print a.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

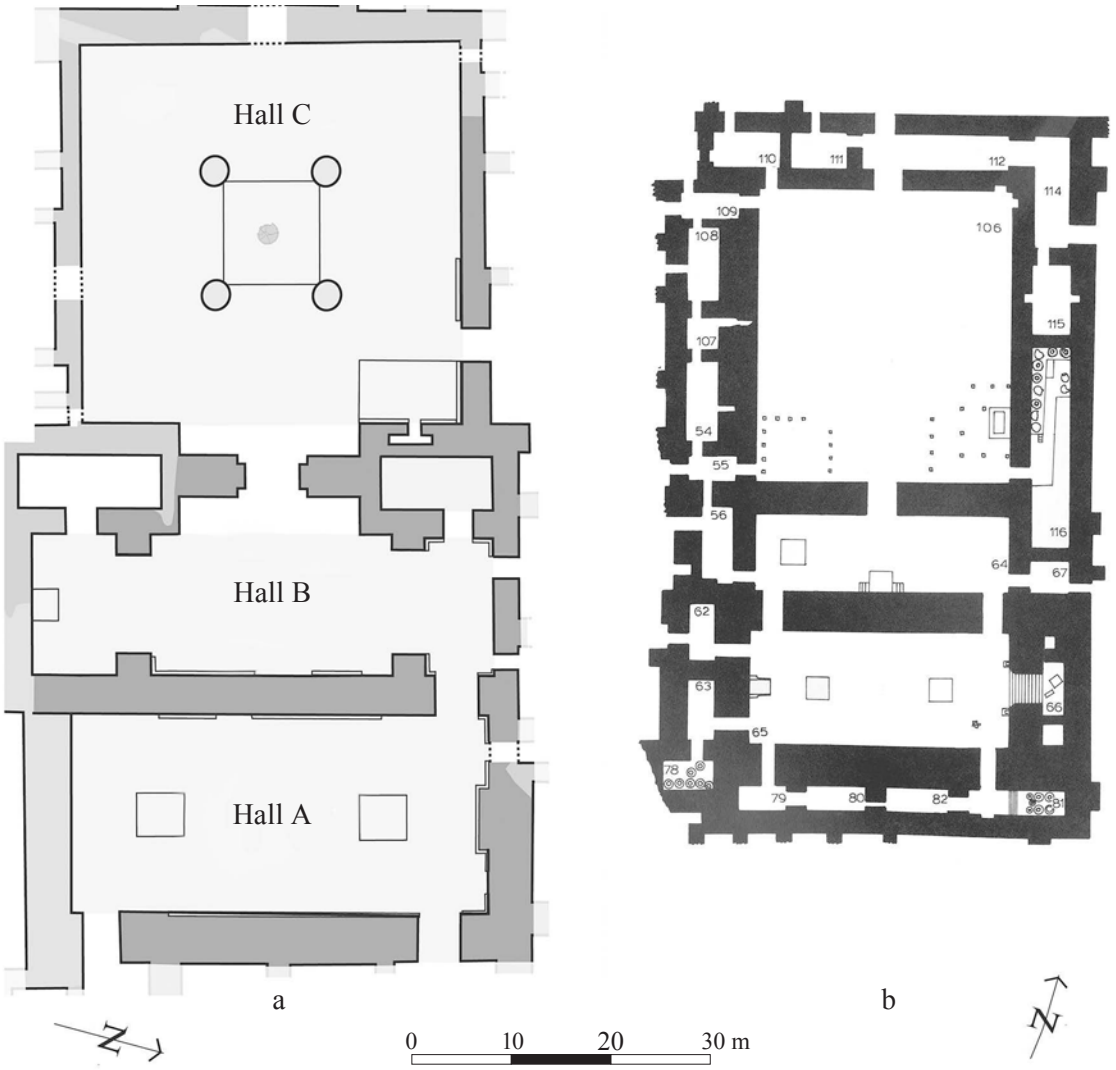


Fig. 11 The double-hall modules in the palaces of (a) Qaṭna and (b) Mari; both plans to the same scale

preferably considered as cores of a palace, such as the audience room,[45] the reception suite,[46] or, as in the case of Mari, the *papāḫum*.[47]

Taking these methodological concerns into consideration, the coexistence of three different typological concepts for palaces of the Middle Bronze Age in Syria and Mesopotamia can be proposed:

Concept I: the Syro-Mesopotamian double-hall concept

The double-hall concept applies to those palaces that have a double-hall complex (Module C, see above) as their basic module. The defining elements of this concept are two long rectangular monumental halls positioned parallel to each other, without an intermediate row of rooms separating them. A very clear example of this scheme is presented by the 'Implemented Plan' of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna, which can be attributed to Phase G 9a and dates to the MB IIA. Here, the double-hall complex consists of the two parallel Halls B and A. An equally monumental square hall (Hall C) has been added to this complex, resulting in a three-room unit that functioned as the Central Representative Unit of the palace (Unit 3, see above). It is noteworthy to point out that the double-hall concept was not part of the original planning stage at Qaṭna, which becomes evident when looking at the *Urplan* of the palace (Phase G 9b), also dating to the MB IIA. The double-hall module is missing here. It was added at the time when the modifications of the construction were made, which resulted in the 'Implemented Plan' (Phase G 9a). This happened during the ongoing construction process, before the construction of the *Urplan* had been finished. Thus, the introduction of the double-hall concept at Qaṭna

45 Matthiae 2002, 194.
46 Al-Khalesi 1978, 25; Matthiae 1990; 2002; Marchetti 2006.
47 Durand 1987, 58–61.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

can be chronologically determined to a time within the MB IIA. This is a clear indication of the process of integrating a module into the aggregated plan.

The closest parallel to this kind of central unit as found in the palace of Qaṭna can be seen in the palace of Mari (Fig. 11). It dates to the same period, the MB IIA. The palace of Mari is best attested in the time of Zimri-Lim but looks back on a long construction history of two and a half centuries.[48] Thus, its construction predates even the *Urplan* of Qaṭna. The formal analogy of the double-room complexes at Mari and Qaṭna is so close that a direct takeover of this idea must be assumed. The similar entrance situations and the two nearly identical platforms along the middle axis of the second hall in both palaces additionally support this assumption. As the palace of Mari is the earlier one, the model was surely brought from Mari to Qaṭna. This must have happened before the palace of Mari was destroyed by Hammurabi in 1759 BC.[49] This case is an enlightening example of how the transfer of architectural modules actually functioned.

The insertion of the module, however, was not carried out in a simple way of copying. Innovative changes were introduced into the module. First, the dimensions of the two halls were increased considerably. While Hall 65 in Mari is 26.3 × 11.70 m (308 sq.m), its counterpart at Qaṭna, Hall A, measures 41 × 20 m (820 sq.m) and is thus three times larger than at Mari. Hall 64 at Mari measures 25.6 × 7.7 m (197 sq.m), while the corresponding Hall B at Qaṭna is 46 × 14.6 m (672 sq.m) and is thus 3.4 times larger than its counterpart at Mari. This appears as a manifestation of gigantomania applied by the architects of Qaṭna in the palatial construction project. It can be interpreted as the intention to strengthen the visual expression of power by the palatial building through architectural monumentalism. It indicates a purposeful reinforcement of the language of power at Qaṭna, a language that is embedded in the palace architecture.

A further modification of the double-hall module at Qaṭna, which is particularly noticeable in comparison to the palace of Mari, relates to the room situated in front of the double hall, which completes the three-room central unit. While this is an open courtyard (Court 106) at Mari, at Qaṭna a covered hall (Hall C) was inserted into the plan. It is designed as a four-column hall (see above). This modification during the adoption process of the module can again be understood as a means of power representation. Typologically, the arrangement in both palaces is similar, as there is a square room located in front of the double hall, indicating that the idea of a tripartite unit was basic to the concept. Thus, the modification that took place at Qaṭna happened within this general scheme of the module. It concerned the roofing and the inner

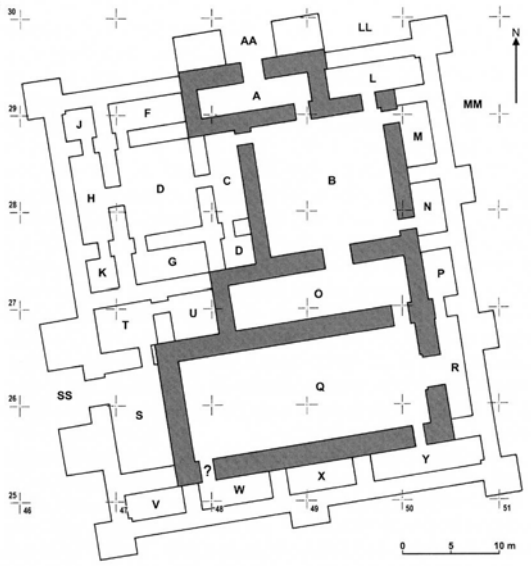


Fig. 12 The Middle Bronze Age Palace A at Tell Bi'a/Tuttul, general plan (after Miglus and Strommenger 2007, pl. 1)

arrangement of the room. The visual and functional effect of the modification, however, could not have been more efficient, as it changes the character of the room completely. This tells much about the freedom and flexibility of the palace architects, who do not seem to have been completely subjected to the typological conventions of their time. As has been argued above, this modification might have been a response to the rainy weather conditions in western Syria, but, at the same time, it could hint at a greater importance of banqueting and assembly activities in the palace of Qaṭna. As stated above, these kinds of activities are assumed to have taken place in Hall C. Regardless of the reason, the architectural modification of this module underscores the high degree of flexibility that characterised the modularisation principle in 2nd millennium BC Syria.

A similar observation arises when looking at other parts of the two palaces at Mari and Qaṭna. Apart from the central representative wings, the layout of the remaining room units differs considerably between both palaces. Thus, no other conformities or mutual dependencies of the two palace plans are observable. Again, this is characteristic of the modularisation principle, as it indicates that in two given examples it is possible for a single specific module to correspond, while the aggregation of modules visible in the remaining parts of the building can be different.

Two other examples of the double-hall concept can be identified in Middle Bronze Age palaces of Syria. The first is Palace A at Tell Biʿa/Tuttul,[50] where the

48 Margueron 2004a, 371 ff.

49 Charpin and Ziegler 2003, 242–245, 261 f.; Ziegler 2015, tab. 1 (dates according to the Middle Chronology).

50 Miglus and Strommenger 2007.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

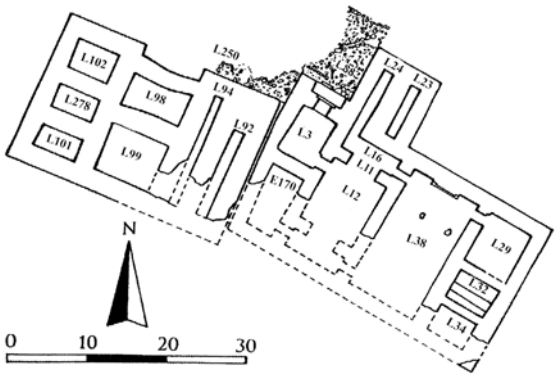


Fig. 13 The Middle Bronze Age palace of Tilmen Hüyük, general plan (after Marchetti 2006, fig. 1)

three-room central representative unit of the palace is arranged in a conventional layout, very similar to both Mari and Qaṭna (Fig. 12). It consists of an open courtyard (B) from which the first hall (O) is accessible through a wide central doorway. The second hall (Q) has an access system similar to that at Qaṭna. The room opens on its short side to a lateral room (R), similar to the situation of the corresponding Hall 65 in Mari with its side-Room 66, the so-called Tribune. As in the cases of Mari and Qaṭna, this second hall is clearly related to the dynastic cult. Here, this is particularly obvious through the presence of a large royal tomb below the centre of the hall. The palace of Tuttul reveals a very close connection to the Palace of Mari as it applies the double-hall concept in a very similar arrangement. The political dependence of Tuttul on Mari offers an explanation for the direct derivation of the architectural module from the famous palace of Mari. It can be further argued that, for the same reason, the dimensions of the central-room unit at Tuttul were considerably smaller than in the palace of Mari. Additionally, it is remarkable that only the central representative unit was adopted from Mari, while the remaining rooms at Tuttul are differently arranged and much fewer. This demonstrates that the palace of Tuttul completely differed in political importance from the palaces of Mari and Qaṭna. Nevertheless, the employment of the double-hall concept as a module in the palace of Tuttul clearly shows the usage of a comparable language of power expressed in a conventional syntax.

Despite being located far away to the north-west of the previously discussed regions, the MB II palace at Tilmen Hüyük[51] also provides evidence of the double-hall concept (Fig. 13). However, here it is realised in a less pronounced form and embedded into a completely different general architectural layout. The central representative unit of the palace consists of two large parallel halls in an arrangement very similar to Mari and Qaṭna. The first hall (L.12) corresponds to Hall B at Qaṭna; it even shows the same kind of interior wall piers subdividing the room into (probably) three parts. The second room (L.38) shows a similar access system and room arrangement as Hall A in Qaṭna; it even contains a flat buttress at the short northern side of the room made of stone orthostats, in the same form as it can be found in the corresponding Hall A at Qaṭna.[52] At Qaṭna this buttress was connected to a niche in the wall, which was probably used in relation to the ancestor cult. Hall A served as a cultic hall for the ancestor veneration of the kingdom. A similar function can be assumed hypothetically for Hall L.38 at Tilmen Hüyük.

Despite the mentioned similarities, there is a clear architectural difference at Tilmen Hüyük when compared to Mari and Qaṭna. The first room of the three-room central unit – as it is typical of the palaces of the double-hall concept with Hall C at Qaṭna and Courtyard 106 at Mari – is missing in the palace of Tilmen Hüyük. It can be assumed that the important activities of banqueting and assembly, which were located in the first hall of the three-room central unit at Mari and Qaṭna, were housed at a different place at Tilmen Hüyük: in the huge courtyard L.88, located to the north of the entrance room L.3 and carefully paved with flagstones. This courtyard seems to have belonged to the palace as an integral part and was perfectly suitable for the mentioned functions. For this reason, another hall – equivalent to Courtyard 106 at Mari or Hall C at Qaṭna – was not necessary at Tilmen Hüyük. Furthermore, a lack of space might have contributed to this specific arrangement at Tilmen Hüyük. If this functional reconstruction holds true, it would again be proof of the flexibility of the modules of Syrian palatial architecture, which could be modified according to local needs.

Hypothetically, the adoption of the double-hall module at Tilmen Hüyük, geographically distant from the other known palaces of the same kind, could have been mediated through the Old-Syrian political centre of Ḫalab/Yamḫad. Tilmen Hüyük is located in the Karasu Valley (in modern Turkey) c. 100 km to the north-west of Aleppo and was probably under the political influence of Yamḫad during the Middle Bronze Age.[53] The political and cultural importance of Ḫalab might have contributed to the expansion of the double-hall concept to this north-western edge of ancient Syria, particularly if one supposes that the local potentate of Tilmen Hüyük was under the hegemony of the kingdom of Ḫalab. One might even

51 Marchetti 2006; 2008.

52 For the interior arrangement of Hall A at Qaṭna see Pfälzner 2015, 423–425.

53 Marchetti (2006, 276) thinks that Tilmen Hüyük was "probably the capital of a vassal kingdom of Yamkhad during the Middle Bronze Age".

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 14 The Syro-Mesopotamian double-hall concept: the palaces of Mari, Qaṭna, Tuttul, and Tilmen Hüyük; all plans to the same scale (after Pfälzner in press a)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

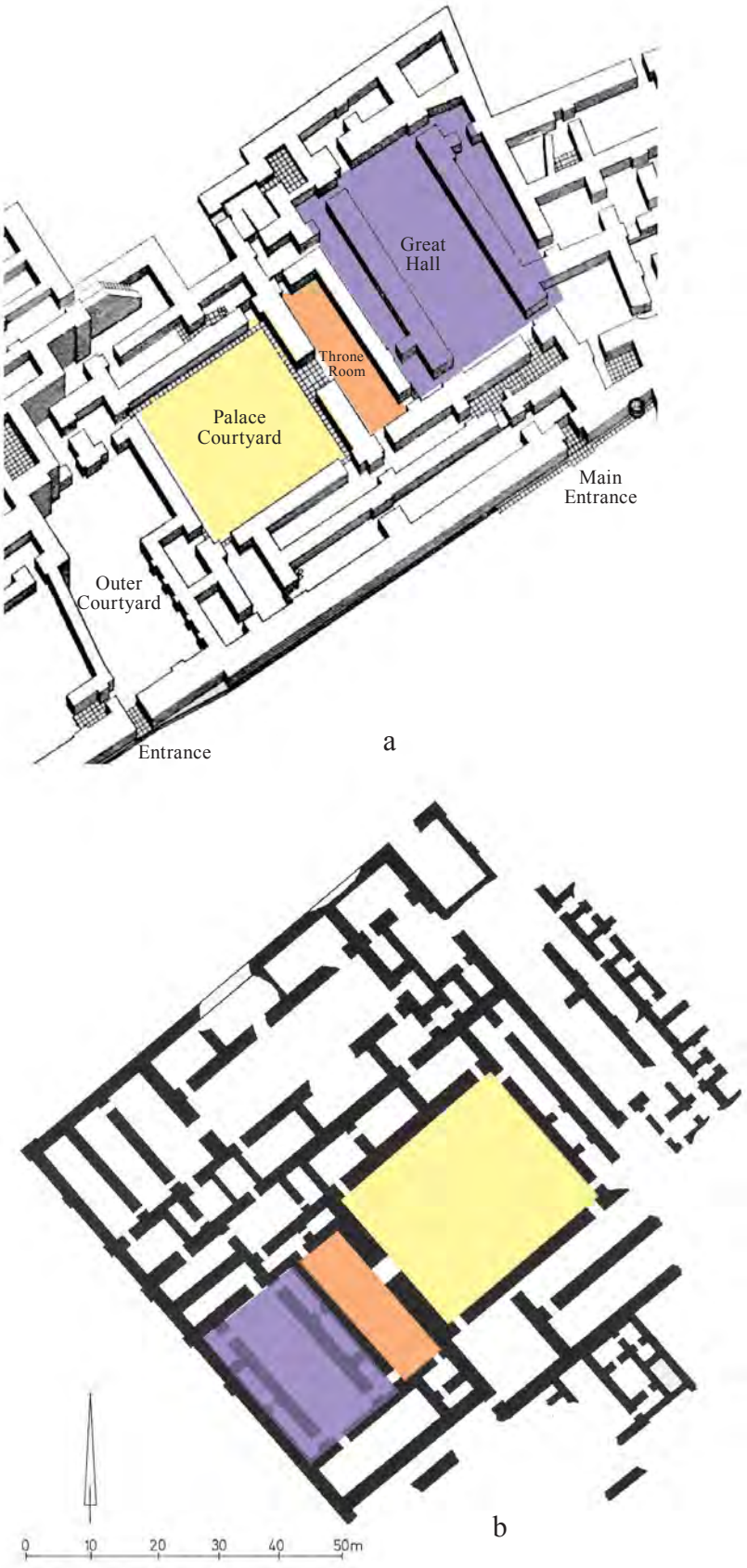


Fig. 15 The Mesopotamian ante-hall – central-hall concept: (a) the Palace of the Rulers at Tell Asmar/Ešnunna and (b) the palace of Senkere/Larsa (from Heinrich 1984, Figs. 25 and 37)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

speculate that the Old Syrian palace of Ḫalab, which has not yet been discovered, equally contained the double-hall concept. Of course, this hypothesis cannot be proven, but it is supported by the existence of the double-hall concept at Tilmen Hüyük.

To sum up, the double-hall concept is distributed over a wide region, from the Middle Euphrates at the threshold between Syria and Mesopotamia to western and north-western Syria. Thus, it can be considered as a true Syro-Mesopotamian architectural concept, which owes its wide distribution to the closely related political networks of the kingdoms of Mari, Qaṭna, and probably Yamḫad. All four known examples of Middle Bronze Age palaces employing the double-hall concept differ in size, in room numbers, and in general layout (Fig. 14). What is common to all of them is the adoption of the double-hall complex as an architectural module.

Concept II: the Mesopotamian ante-hall – central-hall concept

The ante-hall – central-hall concept is principally similar to the double-hall concept, but contains one basic element that distinguishes it typologically from the latter: this is the fact that the second hall is not as a single room but a central hall flanked on either side by a row of smaller rooms. This *Mittelsaal* can be regarded as one of the classical elements of Mesopotamian architecture.

The concept was first defined by Heinrich who called it the *Thronsaal/Festsaal* concept.[54] His denomination refers to a functional interpretation of the two main elements in the central unit of the palaces, which, however, cannot be regarded as secure. Therefore, the more neutral term 'ante-hall – central-hall concept' is proposed here. Formally, it perfectly conforms to the concept defined by Heinrich. The scholar convincingly compiled the most prominent examples of this concept (Fig. 15): The Palace of the Rulers at Tell Asmar/Ešnunna,[55] the palace of Senkere/Larsa,[56] the palace of Sinkašid at Uruk,[57] and the so-called *Urplan* of the palace at Assur. Heinrich considered the palace of the Third Dynasty at Ur to be the earliest example of the concept. Thus, the ante-hall – central-hall concept is widely spread across Mesopotamia and surely originated from there.

The palace of Mari was included by Heinrich in his *Thronsaal/Festsaal* concept, but he already pointed out that this building represents a special variant of it, as the lateral wings of the central hall are missing in this example. Therefore, he considered the palace of Mari as an indication of a further development of the concept. However, a distinction between the ante-hall – central-hall concept and the double-hall concept is useful, especially as they exhibit two different access systems between the first and the second hall. The distinction of the two concepts is particularly advisable in view of the newly investigated examples of the double-hall concept in Syria (Qaṭna, Tuttul, Tilmen Hüyük). Nevertheless, it is possible that the double-hall concept developed from the ante-hall – central-hall concept. This would be particularly plausible for a site such as Mari, located close to the Mesopotamian sphere. It could be argued that the double-hall concept was taken as a module from the existing Mesopotamian architectural scheme and inserted into Syrian palaces, while an important modification was made during this conceptual transfer by omitting the *Mittelsaal* structure. The general historical situation, especially the close contacts between Babylonia, Assyria, and the Syrian kingdoms during the Mari period, was an ideal background for this kind of idea transfer.

Concept III: the north-western Syrian reception-suite concept

As defined by Matthiae,[58] the reception-suite concept consists of a tripartite room unit, the middle unit of which is composed of a vestibule leading into an audience room through a wide opening with columns. The prototypes of this concept are Palace Q at Ebla and the palace of Level VII at Alalaḫ (Fig. 16). Matthiae is convinced that all Syrian palaces of the Middle Bronze Age adhere to this principle.[59] He also includes the Royal Palace of Qaṭna in this group, with the middle part of Hall B as a vestibule and the northern part of the same hall as an audience room.[60] According to the general characteristics of the reception-suite concept, he suggested that a row of columns existed in Hall B, between the short wall piers, which once might have separated the two parts of the room. The modern excavations, however, disproved the possibility that such columns existed in the hall and, thus, the proposed reconstruction turned out to be incorrect. Therefore, the Royal Palace of Qaṭna definitely does not belong to the reception-suite concept, not only because the setting of columns is missing, but also because there is no tripartite arrangement of the central unit and no sequence of a vestibule and audience room in the middle unit.

Marchetti modified the reception-suite concept by postulating that a third room, the throne room, was added to the main unit of a vestibule and audience room.[61] His main example for this idea is the palace of Tilmen Hüyük, in which he identifies a reception suite (Rooms L.12 and L.16) followed by a throne room

54 Heinrich 1984, 41 f., 68.
55 Ibidem, 4547, 49–55, fig. 25, 27–30.
56 Ibidem, 61–63, fig. 37.
57 Ibidem, 65; compare with Miglus and Strommenger 2007, 69.
58 Matthiae 1990; 2002.
59 Matthiae 1990, 211.
60 Ibidem, 221.
61 Marchetti 2006.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 16 The North-west Syrian reception-suite concept: Palace Q at Ebla (left) and the palace of Level VII at Alalaḫ (right) (based on Matthiae, Pinnock, Scandone Matthiae 1995, p. 176 and Woolley 1955, fig. 35)

(L.38). This arrangement can be termed an 'extended reception-suite concept'. Marchetti considers this to be the basic concept of Old Syrian Palaces.[62] Besides Ebla and Alalaḫ, he applies the scheme also to the Royal Palace of Qaṭna, identifying Hall B as a reception suite and Hall A as a throne room.[63] This idea, however, needs to be dismissed, because Hall A at Qaṭna is not a throne room but rather the cultic hall of the palace, and because the general arrangement at Qaṭna of a square unit followed by two long parallel halls is not in accordance with the reception-suite concept as attested in Ebla or Alalaḫ. Notwithstanding, Marchetti's observation of a close similarity between the palace of Tilmen Hüyük and the Royal Palace of Qaṭna can be fully supported; this similarity is indeed the basis for attributing both buildings to the double-hall concept (see above).

Recently, Iamoni argued that the Eastern Palace at Qaṭna is another example of the Syrian reception-suite concept.[64] He proposed to identify Room AL as a vestibule and Room M as the throne room of this palace.[65] Principally, this would be an interesting observation because it would mean that both concepts, the double-hall concept (Royal Palace) and the reception-suite concept (Eastern Palace), would have existed simultaneously at Qaṭna during the Middle Bronze Age. However, the Eastern Palace of Qaṭna lacks two of the three defining criteria of this concept: the tripartite arrangement of the central unit and the row of columns separating the vestibule from the audience room. Therefore, and in view of the fact that the building is not fully exposed, it should not be counted as an example of the reception-suite concept. It probably even represents a new yet undefined concept centring on Room A, which opens through a wide, very representative doorway into Courtyard I.[66] This, again, would underline the flexibility of palatial planning in Middle Bronze Age Syria.

Consequently, only Palace Q at Ebla and the palace of Level VII at Alalaḫ can be taken as true representatives of the reception-suite concept. Thus, at least for the moment, the concept seems to be concentrated in

62 Ibidem, 278.
63 Ibidem, 282.
64 Iamoni 2015, 461–464.
65 Ibidem, 461 f.
66 See Iamoni 2015, fig. 10 and p. 456.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 17 The Urplan of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna (Phase G 9b)

north-western Syria. As the palace of Tilmen Hüyük, located in the same general region, adheres to the double-hall concept, there is no clear geographical distinction between the two concepts. This interesting observation shows that the reception-suite concept and the double-hall concept actually existed at the same time in Syria during the Middle Bronze Age. One might suggest, that the reception-suite concept is more strongly rooted in the western Syrian regions, while the double-hall concept was influenced from outside, from Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, the contemporary existence of both concepts in Syria demonstrates that there was a choice for palace architects of the Middle Bronze Age. This underlines the flexible character of the modularisation principle.

6. The Urplan of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna and the emergence of the double-hall concept

To fully understand the architectural concept of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna, it is necessary to study its building history in detail. There was a two-step planning process. The original plan, or *Urplan* (Phase G 9b), was not fully completed but substituted by a modified version, the so-called 'Implemented Plan' (Phase G 9a). This happened during the ongoing construction process. Both building phases can be clearly dated to the MB IIA. The modifications of the plan considerably changed the layout of the central part of the palace. Among various alterations, the most important and decisive one was the introduction of the double-hall module into the new plan of Phase G 9a.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

A new concept regarding the representation of power can be identified behind this architectural change. At the same time, this observation confirms the idea that the architectural layout of the palace was composed of different modules that could be altered individually.

Within the Central Representative Unit of the *Urplan* of the palace of Qaṭna (Fig. 17), only Hall A existed in the same way as in the later plan. The banquet/audience Hall C and the administrative Hall B were still absent.[67] Instead of Hall C there was a rectangular open courtyard (DQ), and the area of the later Hall B was taken up by a rectangular unit of six smaller rooms. This unit has a tripartite arrangement, with the largest rooms in the middle row: these are the long rectangular Room GT followed by the square Room GN. Due to its position and its substantial size of 14 × 14 m, Room GN seems to have been a major representative room, probably equal in function to the later administrative Hall B. From the tripartite unit, the monumental Hall A was accessible, which might have been planned to be the cultic hall of the palace already in the *Urplan* conception.[68]

The *Urplan* clearly demonstrates that the architectural scheme selected for the Central Representative Unit was totally different from that of the later 'Implemented Plan'. This does not mean that the Central Representative Unit fulfilled different functions, but it hints at the fact that the architects of the *Urplan* had different symbolic and visual intentions and used a different language of power. For this reason, a different kind of architectural module was selected for the central part of the palace. Other differences in the language of power of the *Urplan* are obvious: the smaller overall size of the palace, a less prominent entrance situation, and even a different conception of the domestic wing in the north-eastern part of the palace. Furthermore, the Royal Hypogeum, connected to the Central Representative Unit in the later plan, was still absent in the *Urplan*. Thus, the modifications between the *Urplan* and the 'Implemented Plan' can be understood as a monumentalisation process of the palatial architecture.

If one searches for the origins of the typological schemes present in the *Urplan*, two different examples come to mind. At first glance, there is a similarity to the reception-suite concept as attested at Ebla and Alalaḫ. This is indicated by the general tripartite arrangement of the central unit at Qaṭna and the presence of a kind of vestibule (Room GT) followed by a larger central room (GN), which would correspond to the audience room in the mentioned concept. It could even be argued that there once might have been columns, typical of the reception-suite concept, in the passage between Rooms GT and GN, although any clear evidence of such a feature is lacking. However, the combination of this kind of unit with a monumental hall (Hall A) next to it is not familiar in the reception-suite concept as attested at Ebla and Alalaḫ. Thus, the relation of the *Urplan* to the reception-suite concept, if it exists at all, is at most weak.

A much more compelling analogy can be drawn from the Royal Palace of Mari, where a similar arrangement can be seen in the earlier stage of the palace, dated to the late Šakkanakku period (Fig. 18).[69] Based on recent archaeological investigations below Hall 64, it became clear that the double-hall concept did not yet exist in the earlier stages of the Mari palace as it was the case in the first phase of the palace at Qaṭna. Instead, there was a unit of four smaller rooms below Hall 64. They were arranged – similarly to the *Urplan* in Qaṭna – in a tripartite scheme, with the middle room most probably functioning as a predecessor of the *papāḫum* of the later Zimri-Lim palace. Consequently, the palaces at Mari and Qaṭna reveal in their early phases a very similar architectural scheme in their central unit, and this original scheme was in both cases replaced by the double-hall concept in the later phases. This observation hints at a strikingly parallel development of palatial architecture at Qaṭna and Mari. At the same time, this alludes to a closely comparable development of the language of power at these two important political centres of the Middle Bronze Age in Syria. The Syrian double-hall concept was an outcome of these new requirements pertaining to the political symbolism expressed by the palaces in the MB IIA, i.e. during the so-called Mari period, when both Mari and Qaṭna had reached their political zenith.

7. Conclusions

It can be demonstrated that three different typological concepts existed for palatial architecture in Syria and Mesopotamia during the Middle Bronze Age: the double-hall concept, the ante-hall – central-hall concept, and the reception-suite concept. They represent different ideas of political ideology, which resulted in different attitudes towards monumentalism and representation.

The Royal Palace of Qaṭna, dated to the MB IIA, is the most monumental example of the double-hall concept. This can be interpreted as a political message sent out visually by the architects of the palace that the kingdom of Qaṭna conceived itself as one of the leading, if not the superior political power in Syria. Thus, the Royal Palace is not only a self-representation, but a declaration expressing a claim

67 See in more detail Pfälzner in print a.

68 It needs to be pointed out that the rooms of the *Urplan* were never actually used, because the construction project was stopped on the level of the foundations, before the rooms were finished.

69 Margueron 2007, 88, fig. 6f–g. It is the second phase of the palace within the Šakkanakku period; for the earlier phase of the Šakkanakku period see Margueron 2004a, 367–374.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

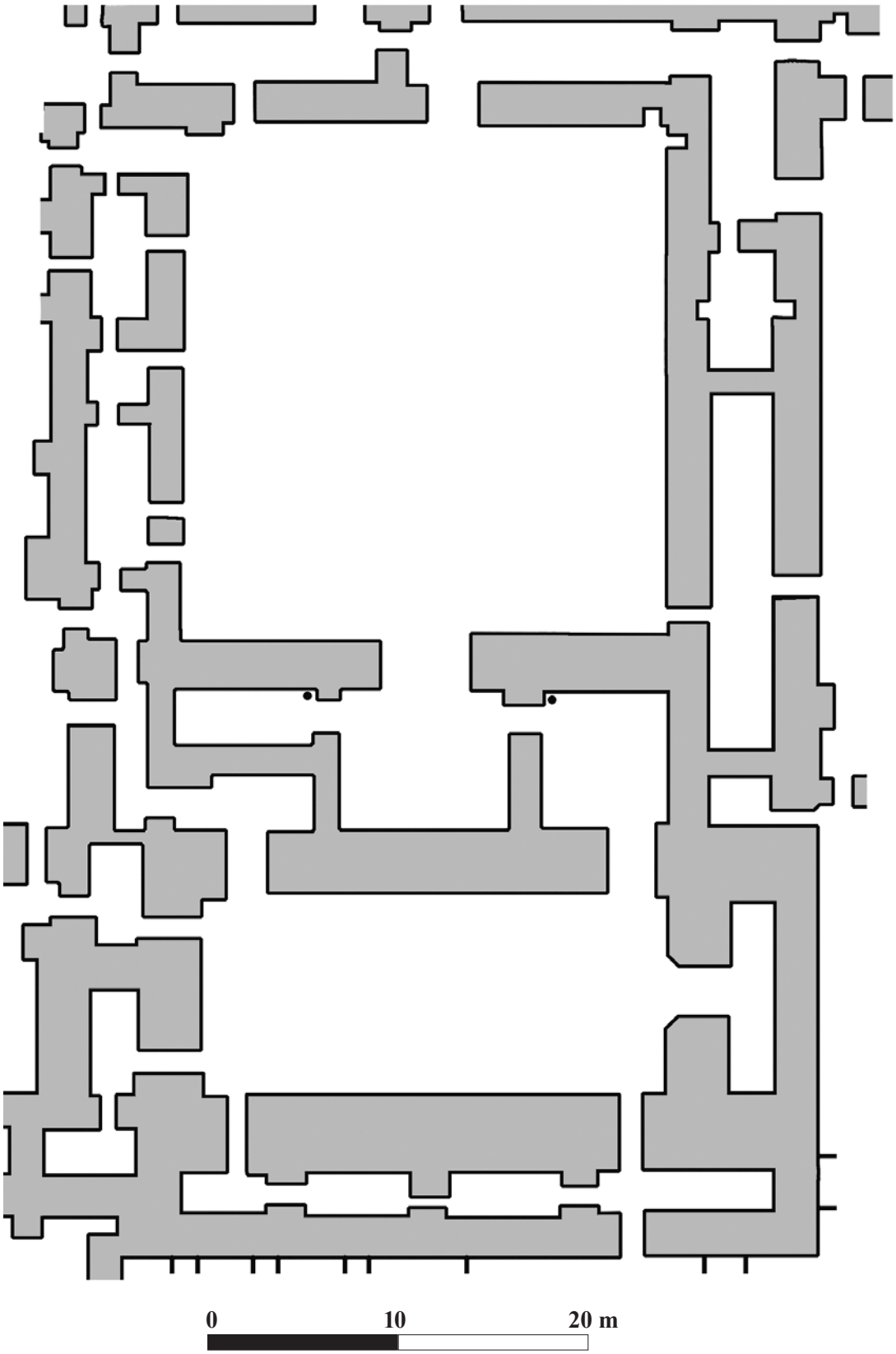


Fig. 18 The early stage of the Royal Palace of Mari during the late Šakkanakku period (after Margueron 2007, fig. 6g)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

to political authority. It was not only a static visual symbol but it actively functioned as a convincing force for those visiting the palace and reporting about it during the Middle Bronze Age. Thus, the palatial building contained agency. This effect must still have been operative during the Late Bronze Age, when the real political power of Qaṭna had already diminished considerably, but the palace was still present as a symbol of (lost) political supremacy.

The differences in the three concepts of Middle Bronze Age palaces were created mainly by the adoption of specific modules applied to the central representative units of the palaces. As it seems, the selection of a module from the existing architectural repertoire was deliberate and its formal rendering was flexible. This resulted in constant development of the palatial architecture. Consequently, no single palace building clearly matches another palace in Syria in its layout. Each palace has a distinctive individual ground plan. This demonstrates that the single architectural modules could be inserted into different general layouts. Additionally, the modules could be converted into different sizes, dependent on the political claim connected with the palatial building. In conclusion, the modular system of palatial architecture in Middle Bronze Age Syria was a very suitable tool for adapting the construction plan of a palace to political intentions, aspirations, and messages.

The language of power, however, was not only related to the typological concepts of the Syrian palaces. As the example of Qaṭna shows, the general situation and visibility of the palace, the intentionally raised position on top of a huge platform, the interior and exterior visual axes of the building, and even the foundations of the structure, are all factors that strongly supported the visual communication of power though coded messages. Taken together, these factors clearly reveal how the 'conspicuous consumption of energy', as described by Bruce Trigger, was realised in the Royal Palace of Qaṭna and other palatial buildings of the time.

The double-hall concept is the most articulate expression of the language of power in Syrian architecture of the Middle Bronze Age, with Qaṭna and Mari, two of the leading political powers in Syria, adopting this concept at nearly the same time, during the apogee of their power. On this background, it would be extremely interesting to discover whether the contemporary royal palace of Ḫalab/Yamḫad, the paramount power in Syria during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC, was also of the same type. It would be very tempting to speculate that the kings of Ḫalab also selected the double-hall concept as the best suitable way to communicate visually their claim on supreme political power in competition with the other Syrian kingdoms of the time. One can only hope that the surely splendid palace of Yamḫad will be found and excavated sometime in the future, in a hopefully peaceful Syria.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Al-Khalesi, Y.M.
1978 *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamia 8, Malibu.

Al-Maqdissi, M.
2003a Ergebnisse der siebten und achten syrischen Grabungskampagne 2001 und 2002 in Mišrife/Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 135, 219–245.
2003b Recherches archéologiques syriennes à Mishirfeh-Qatna au nord-est de Homs (Émèse), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 147.4, 1487–1515.

Al-Maqdissi, M. and Morandi Bonacossi, D.
2005 *The Metropolis of the Orontes: Art and Archaeology from the Ancient Kingdom of Qatna. Seven Years of Syrian–Italian Collaboration at Mishrifeh/Qatna*, Damascus.
2009 *Stadtmauer und Akropolis – Das Stadtbild im 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, in: M. al-Maqdissi, D. Morandi Bonacossi and P. Pfälzner (eds.), *Schätze des Alten Syrien – Die Entdeckung des Königreichs Qatna*, Stuttgart, 130–133.

Charpin, D. and Ziegler, N.
2003 *Mari et le Proche-Orient à l'époque amorrite. Essai d'histoire politique*, Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 6, Paris.

Dohmann-Pfälzner, H. and Pfälzner, P.
2006 Ausgrabungen und Forschungen in Tell Mišrife/Qaṭna 2004 und 2005. Vorbericht der deutschen Komponente des internationalen Kooperationsprojektes, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 138, 131–180.
2007 Ausgrabungen und Forschungen 2006 im Königspalast von Qaṭna. Vorbericht des syrisch-deutschen Kooperationsprojektes in Tall Mišrife/Qaṭna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 139, 131–172.
2008 Die Ausgrabungen 2007 und 2008 im Königspalast von Qatna: Vorbericht des syrisch-deutschen Kooperationsprojektes in Tall Mišrife/Qaṭna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 140, 17–74.
2011 Die Ausgrabungen 2009 und 2010 im Königspalast von Qatna: Vorbericht des syrisch-deutschen Kooperationsprojektes in Tall Mišrife/Qaṭna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 143, 5–62.

Du Mesnil du Buisson, R.
1935 *Le site archéologique de Mishrifé-Qatna*, Paris.

Durand, J.-M.
1987 *L'organisation de l'espace dans le palais de Mari: le témoignage des textes*, in: E. Lévy (ed.), *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome*, Strasbourg, 39–110.

Eco, U.
1980 *Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture*, in: C. Jencks, R. Bunt and G. Broadbent (eds.), *Signs, Symbols, and Architecture*, New York, 11–69.
1988 *Einführung in die Semiotik*, Munich.

Heinrich, E.
1950 Moderne arabische Gehöfte am unteren Euphrat und ihre Beziehungen zum "Babylonischen Hofhaus", *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 82, 19–46.
1975 *Haus. B. Archäologisch*, in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 4, Berlin, 176–220.
1984 *Die Paläste im Alten Mesopotamien*, Berlin.

Iamoni, M.
2010 *The MB–LB Pottery from the Eastern Palace of Qatna. Tradition and Variation in the Ceramic Horizon of a Mid-Second Millennium Syrian Metropolis*, in: P. Matthiae, F. Pinnock, L. Nigro and N. Marchetti (eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 5 May–10 May 2009, Sapienza Università di Roma*, Wiesbaden, 333–349.
2012 *The Late MBA and LBA Pottery Horizons at Qatna: Innovation and Conservation in the Ceramic Tradition of a Regional Capital and the Implications for Second Millennium Syrian Chronology*, Studi Archeologici su Qatna 2, Udine.
2015 *The Eastern Palace of Qaṭna and the Middle Bronze Age Architectural Tradition of Western Syria*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. Maqdissi (eds.), *Qaṭna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism. Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qaṭna Studien Supplementum 2, Wiesbaden, 451–466.

Iamoni, M. and Kanhouch, Y.
2009 *Der Ostpalast*, in: M. al-Maqdissi, D. Morandi Bonacossi and P. Pfälzner (eds.), *Schätze des Alten Syrien – Die Entdeckung des Königreichs Qatna*, Stuttgart, 160–163.

Kanhoush, Y.
2015 *Rapport préliminaire des résultats des campagnes de fouilles syriennes 2006–2009. Le « Palais Est » du Chantier T sur l'acropole de Mishrifeh-Qatna*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. Maqdissi (eds.), *Qaṭna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism. Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qaṭna Studien Supplementum 2, Wiesbaden, 441–449.

Klengel, H.
1965 *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v. u. Z. Teil 1 – Nordsyrien*, Berlin.
1969 *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v. u. Z. Teil 2 – Mittel- und Südsyrien*, Berlin.
1970 *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v. u. Z. Teil 3 – Historische Geographie und allgemeine Darstellung*, Berlin.
1974 *Königtum und Palast nach den Alalah-Texten*, in: P. Garelli (ed.), *Le palais et la royauté: archéologie et civilisation, XIX. Rencontre assyriologique internationale organisée par le groupe François Thureau-Dangin, Paris, 29 juin – 2 juillet 1971, compte rendu*, Paris, 273–282.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

1979 *Die Palastwirtschaft in Alalah*, in: E. Lipinski (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East* I, Leuven, 435–458.

Koldewey, R.
1913 *Das wiedererstehende Babylon*, Leipzig.

Liverani, M.
1974 *La royauté syrienne de l'âge du Bronze récent*, in: P. Garelli **(ed.),** *Le palais et la royauté: archéologie et civilisation, XIX. Rencontre assyriologique internationale organisée par le groupe François Thureau-Dangin, Paris, 29 juin – 2 juillet 1971, compte rendu*, Paris, 329–356.
1975 Communautés de village et palais royale dans la Syrie à IIème mill., *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 18, 146–164.

Marchetti, N.
2006 *Middle Bronze Age Public Architecture at Tilmen Höyük and the Architectural Tradition of Old Syrian Palaces*, in: F. Baffi, R. Dolce, S. Mazzoni and F. Pinnock (eds.), *Ina kibrāt erbetti: Studi di Archeologia Orientale dedicati a Paolo Matthiae*, Rome, 275–308.
2008 *A Preliminary Report of the 2003 and 2004 Excavations at Tilmen Hüyük*, in: H. Kühne, R. Czichon und F.J. Kreppner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Vol. 2*, Wiesbaden, 353–360.

Marcus, M.I.
1995a *Geography as Visual Ideology: Landscape, Knowledge, and Power in Neo-Assyrian Art*, in: M. Liverani (ed.), *Neo-Assyrian Geography*, Rome, 193–202.
1995b *Art and Ideology in Ancient Western Asia*, in: J.M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. IV, part 10, New York, 2487–2505.

Margueron, J.-C.
1987 *Les palais syriens a l'âge du Bronze*, in: E. Lévy (ed.), *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome: actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 19 – 22 juin 1985*, Travaux du centre de recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antique 9, Leiden, 127–158.
1995 *Le palais royal d'Ougarit. Premiers résultats d'une étude systématique*, in: M. Yon (ed.), *Le pays d'Ougarit autour de 1200 av. J.-C.: histoire et archéologie, actes du colloque international, Paris, 28 juin – 1er juillet 1993*, Ras-Shamra-Ougarit XI, Paris, 183–202.
2004a *Mari, métropole de l'Euphrate au IIIe et au début du IIe millénaire av. J.-C.*, Paris.
2004b *Le palais royal d'Ougarit*, in: *Le royaume d'Ougarit. Aux origines de l'alphabet, exposition Musée des Beaux-Arts Lyon*, Paris, 143–149.
2007 Notes d'archéologie et d'architecture orientales 14. La salle du trône, d'Uruk à Babylone. Genèse, fonctionnement, signification, *Syria* 84, 69–106.

Matthiae, P.
1978 Recherches archéologiques à Ébla, 1977: le quartier administratif du palais royaI G, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 122.2, 204–236.
1983 Fouilles de Tell Mardikh-Ebla en 1982: nouvelles recherches sur l'architecture palatine d'Ebla, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 127.3, 530–554.
1990 *The Reception Suites of the Old Syrian Palaces*, in: Ö. Tunca (ed.), *De la Babylonie à la Syrie, en passant par Mari. Mélanges offerts à Monsieur J.-R. Kupper à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire*, Liège, 209–228.
1995 *Il Palazzo Reale G: struttura e immagine del centro del potere nel Periodo Protosiriana*, in: P. Matthiae, F. Pinnock and G.S. Matthiae (eds.), *Ebla: Alle origini della civiltà urbana*, Milano, 104–111.
2002 *About the Formation of Old Syrian Architectural Tradition*, in: L. al-Gailani, J. Werr, H. Curtis, H. Martin, A. McMahon, J. Oates and J. Reade (eds.), *Of Pots and Plans. Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria Presented to David Oates in Honour of His 75th Birthday*, London, 191–209.

Meijer, D.J.
2008 *Cracking the Code? Aspect and Impact in Mesopotamian Architecture*, in: H. Kühne, R.M. Czichon and F.J. Kreppner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 29. March – 3. April 2004, Freie Universität Berlin, 1: The Reconstruction of Environment: Natural Resources and Human Interrelations through Time, Art History: Visual Communication*, Wiesbaden, 431–436.

Matthiae, P., Pinnock, F. and Scandone Matthiae, G.
1995 *Ebla. Alle origini della civiltà urbana. Trent'anni di scavi in Siria dell'Università di Roma "La Sapienza"*, Milano.

Miglus, P.
1996 *Die Räumliche Organisation des altbabylonischen Hofhauses*, in: K.R. Veenhof (ed.), *Houses and Households in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Leiden and Istanbul, 211–220.
1999 *Städtische Wohnarchitektur in Babylonien und Assyrien*, Baghdader Forschungen 22, Mainz.

Miglus, P. and Strommenger, E.
2007 *Der Palast A, Tall Biʿa/Tuttul – VII*, Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient gesellschaft 114, Wiesbaden.

Morandi Bonacossi, D.
2013 *The Crisis of Qatna at the Beginning of the Late Bronze Age II and the Iron Age II Settlement Revival. A Regional Trajectory towards the Collapse of the Late Bronze Age Palace System in the Northern Levant*, in: K.A. Yener (ed.), *Across the Border: Late Bronze–Iron Age Relations between Syria and Anatolia*, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Supplement 42, Leuven, Paris and Walpole, MA, 113–146.
2014 *Some Considerations on the Urban Layout of Second Millennium BC Qaṭna*, in: F. Baffi, R. Fiorentino and L. Peyronel (eds.), *Tell Tuqan Excavations and Regional Perspectives*, Lecce, 275–296.

Morandi Bonacossi, D., Da Ros, M., Garna, G., Iamoni, M. and Merlino, M.
2009 The "Eastern Palace" and the Residential Architecture of Area T at Mishrifeh/Qatna, *Mesopotamia* 44, 61–112.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Nöth, W.
1985 *Handbuch der Semiotik*, Stuttgart.

Novák, M.
1999 *Herrschaftsform und Stadtbaukunst*, Saarbrücken.
2006 *Fundamentierungstechniken im Palast von Qatna*, in: E. Czerny, I. Hein, H. Hunger, D. Melman and A. Schwab (eds.), *Timelines. Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak*, Vol. III, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 149, Leuven, 63–71.

Novák, M. and Pfälzner, P.
2005 Ausgrabungen im bronzezeitlichen Palast von Tall Mišrife/ Qaṭna 2003. Vorbericht der deutschen Komponente des internationalen Kooperationsprojektes, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 137, 57–78.

Orthmann, W.
2008 *Aspects of the Interpretation of Ancient Near Eastern Art as Visual Communication*, in: H. Kühne, R.M. Czichon and F.J. Kreppner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 29. March – 3. April 2004, Freie Universität Berlin, 1: The Reconstruction of Environment: Natural Resources and Human Interrelations through Time, Art History: Visual Communication*, Wiesbaden, 243–253.

Pfälzner, P.
2007 *Archaeological Investigations in the Royal Palace of Qaṭna*, in: D. Morandi Bonacossi (ed.), *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital: Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qaṭna and in Central-Western Syria. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Udine, 9–11 December 2004*, Studi Archeologici su Qaṭna 1, Udine, 29–64.
2011 *Die Königsgruft von Qatna als architektonisches Ensemble*, in: P. Pfälzner (ed.), *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft*, Qatna-Studien Band 1, Wiesbaden, 69–84.
2012 Levantine Kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age, in: D.T. Potts (ed.), *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Oxford, 770–796.
2014 Royal Funerary Practices and Inter-regional Contacts in the Middle Bronze Age Levant: New Evidence from Qaṭna, in: P. Pfälzner, H. Niehr, E. Pernicka, S. Lange and T. Köster (eds.), Contextualising Grave Inventories in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of a Workshop at the London 7th ICAANE in April 2010 and an International Symposium in Tübingen in November 2010, Both Organised by the Tübingen Post-Graduate School "Symbols of the Dead", Qatna Studien Supplementum 3, Wiesbaden, 141–156.
2015 A *House of Kings and Gods – Ritual Places in Syrian Palaces*, in: A.-M. Maila-Afeiche (ed.), *Cult and Ritual on the Levantine Coast and Its Impact on the Eastern Mediterranean Realm: Proceedings of the International Symposium, Beirut 2012*, Bulletin d'archéologie et d'architecture libanaises, Hors-Série X, Beirut, 413–442.
in press a *Der Königspalast von Qaṭna: Stratigraphie und Chronologie*, in: P. Pfälzner and J. Schmid (eds.), *Der Königspalast von Qaṭna. Teil I: Chronologie, Grundriss, Baugeschichte, Bautechniken, mit Beiträgen von Heike Dohmann-Pfälzner, Eva Geith, Tulip Abd-el Hay, Tina Köster, Simone Riehl, Katleen Deckers, Judit Zöldföldi, Farkas Pintér und Fidaa Hlal*, Qaṭna Studien 5.
in press b *The Royal Palace of Qaṭna and the Classification of Syrian Palatial Architecture of the 2nd Millennium BC*, in: D. Wicke (ed.), *9. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, Frankfurt 2016*.

Pfälzner, P. and Dohmann-Pfälzner, H.
2011 Die Gruft VII. Eine neu entdeckte Grabanlage unter dem Königspalast von Qaṭna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 143, 63–139.

Preucel, R.W.
2006 *Archaeological Semiotics*, Malden, MA.

Pucci, M.
2008 *Visual Communication of Architecture: The Syro-Hittite Town of Zincirli*, in: H. Kühne, R.M. Czichon and F.J. Kreppner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 29. March – 3. April 2004, Freie Universität Berlin, 1: The Reconstruction of Environment: Natural Resources and Human Interrelations through Time, Art History: Visual Communication*, Wiesbaden, 545–555.

Puljiz, I.
2016 *Gold von Königen und von Göttern. Zur Bedeutung von Goldobjekten für die syrisch-nordlevantinischen Königtümer der Mittleren und Späten Bronzezeit*, PhD Dissertation, University of Tübingen (in preparation for print in Qatna Studien).

Reade, J.
1979 *Archaeology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art*, in: M.T. Larsen (ed.), *Power and Propaganda. A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, Mesopotamia 7, Copenhagen, 329–344.

Schaeffer, C.F.-A.
1962 *Ugaritica IV*, Paris.

Schloen, D.
2001 *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*, Winona Lake, IN.

Steadman, S.R.
1996 Recent Research in the Archaeology of Architecture: Beyond the Foundations, *Journal of Archaeological Research* 4.1, 51–93.

Suter, C.E.
2000 *Gudea's Temple Building: The Representation of an Early Mesopotamian Ruler in Text and Image*, Groningen.

Taraqji, A.F.
2015 *Tell Sakka, fouilles syriennes dans la région de Damas*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. Maqdissi (eds.), *Qaṭna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism. Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qaṭna Studien Supplementum 2, Wiesbaden, 101–109.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Trigger, B.G.
1990 Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour, *World Archaeology* 22.2, 119–132.

Veblen, T.
1899 *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York.

Woolley, C. L.
1955 *Alalakh. An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937–1949*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London 18, Oxford.

Zaccagnini, C.
1987 *Aspects of Ceremonial Exchange in the Near East during the Late Second Millennium B.C.*, in: M. Rowlands, M. Larsen and K. Kristiansen (eds.), *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, 57–65.

Ziegler, N.
2015 *Qaṭna at the Time of Samsi-Addu*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. Maqdissi (eds.), *Qaṭna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism. Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qaṭna Studien Supplementum 2, Wiesbaden, 139–147.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Decentralisation of Power in a Late Bronze Age Syrian City: The Lower City Palace of Qatna

by Luigi Turri[1]

At the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, Qatna was no longer the capital of one of the largest and most powerful regional kingdoms of the Near East, as it had been in the Middle Bronze Age (MBA),[1] although it still remained an extensive political entity in central Syria, probably including Hama to the north and possibly with some territories in Lebanon too.[2] Nonetheless, it was in the late MBA to early Late Bronze Age (LBA) that the city reached one of its periods of maximum development and splendour. During this epoch – between the 17th and 15th centuries BC, a time for which we do not have textual information on the city – Qatna's rulers started an impressive centralised programme of public and institutional building, involving both the upper and lower cities and marking a new phase of urban and functional reorganisation of the town. At least three monumental buildings, in which ceremonial, administrative, bureaucratic, production, and residential activities were conducted by the local elites, were erected in this span of time. The first, at the end of the MBA II, was the 'Royal Palace',[3] the largest Syrian palace of the mid-2nd millennium BC, measuring 153 × 107 m and thus covering over 16.000 sq.m.[4] A smaller 'Southern Palace' to the south was built more or less at the same time (on the basis of the pottery found in it) as the third monumental building, the 'Lower City Palace', erected at the foot of the northern slope of the upper town at the beginning of the LBA.

In this last building (Fig. 1) – excavated between 2000 and 2003 and subsequently in 2010, before work was interrupted due to the tragic events that are still unfolding in Syria – three main phases of use have been identified (K 14 − K 12).[5] The excavated evidence of the earliest phase, which has been dated to the 15th century on the basis of the finds from it,[6] is still limited and insufficient for a comprehensive reconstruction of the palace's original layout – although it seems to have undergone only minor changes through time, at least with regard to what could be considered the core area. Subsequent phases are better known on the basis of the pottery assemblage,[7] other archaeological finds – especially an Amenhotep III scarab discovered in situ[8] – and three AMS radiocarbon determinations of charred olive pits found in the Courtyard V tannurs (see below).[9] Phase K 13 may be dated to the late 15th − early 14th centuries BC (Fig. 2), while the imported pottery from Phase K 12 deposits (Fig. 3) – Middle Cypriot (Red-on-Black and White Painted) and especially Late Cypriot (White Slip II and Base Ring I–II) and Mycenaean (Late Helladic IIIA2) fragments – belongs to the first half of the 14th century BC.[10]

The building exhibits a magnificent style typical of monumental palace architecture: some of the doorways had basalt slabs and columns, while portions of the walls were half-timbered[11] or adorned with paintings[12] and other decorations. Its wealth is demonstrated by the rich repertoire of imported pottery found inside the palace, alongside hundreds of pieces of durable animal material inlays and administrative documents such as seals, sealings, and several administrative cuneiform tablets that were left in the palace when it was abandoned. Though far smaller than the Royal Palace, its size is considerable: according to the preliminary results of geoelectric survey work, the

1 The review of the Lower City Palace excavation data and the study of the durable animal material items found in it has been made possible thanks to a grant assigned to the writer by the Shelby White-Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications. A monograph is under preparation.
In the Mari letters, it is stated that the king of Qatna at that time was one of four or five great kings ruling in the Near East (the others being the kings of Yamhad, Babylon, Larsa, and Eshnunna). See Klengel 1992, 57; Turri 2015a, 308−309; 2016, 146 and the texts in Dossin 1938, 117−118 and Durand 1998 (ARM XXVI/2, 56−59, text 303, 21'−22').

2 This area was reduced in later phases of the LBA. See Turri 2015a, 270.

3 On the controversial construction date of the palace see Novák and Pfälzner 2002, 244; 2003, 133–134; Novák 2004 vs. Morandi Bonacossi 2007a. Cf. as well Pfälzner in this volume.

4 For the 'Royal Palace' see Pfälzner 2007.

5 For detailed descriptions of the different phases see Luciani 2003; 2006a; 2006b; 2008; Morandi Bonacossi 2009 (K 12); Morandi Bonacossi 2015 (K 13).

6 Luciani 2004, 135; Morandi Bonacossi 2013, 118; 2015, 362.

7 Iamoni 2012.

8 Boschloos 2015.

9 The dates range from c. 1430 to 1370 calBC. See details in Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 369−371.

10 Luciani 2008; Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 370−371.

11 Columned thresholds, basalt orthostats, and the half-timber technique, used especially in the doorways, are also found in Alalakh Palace IV; see e.g. Woolley 1955, 112, 225−226; Yener 2005, 108.

12 On LBA wall paintings see Feldman 2007; Aruz, Benzel and Evans 2009, 123−132; for those from the Royal Palace of Qatna especially see Pfälzner and von Rüden 2008; von Rüden 2011.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

2.200 sq.m uncovered so far – with more than 60 rooms identified – must represent approximately half of the area occupied by the palace.[13] For this reason its overall shape is unknown; in the excavated area the perimeter wall has been identified only to the south, although the wide doorway it contains – the only known access to the palace – might have been the building's main entrance, since it leads, through an entrance suite, to a sizeable reception/ceremonial area and then to the adjoining residential block. These last two units (which together with the entrance suite occupy the south-western part of the excavated area) must have been the core of the palace, given both the sumptuousness and the high quality of the materials and finishings and the fact that this seems to be the oldest part of the building. A further huge service and storage wing lies to the north and east of the others, to which it is connected.

These different functional and architectural areas have been identified on the basis of the overall palace layout, the arrangement of the rooms, the presence of distinctive building materials – uniformly employed throughout each separate unit – and the existence of a coherent circulation pattern.

The entrance suite

The entrance suite is composed of three rooms in a north-south row. The palace entrance mentioned above – 2.3 m wide, framed by basalt orthostats, and facing the Royal Palace – gives access to two courtyards (I and J), connected with each other by a narrower doorway. Both of them have a beaten-earth floor resting on a gravel preparation and covered by a thin layer of white plaster. The first is an elongated space (8.8 × 4.2 m) whose length corresponds to that of the residential area, from which it is separated by its eastern wall. The second is oriented west-east and adjoins the eastern margin of the reception area. The wall separating the two courtyards has the same orientation as the wall that separates the reception and residential areas. Many of these walls pertain to the palace's early phase (K 14) and were subsequently reinforced and then plastered in white (K 13), but never changed substantially until the end of the last main phase (K 12).

A large tannur abuts the eastern wall of the first courtyard, while a second, smaller one stands near its western wall. This suggests that visitors and important guests waiting to enter the palace could have been offered food in this area.[14]

The second courtyard is connected to the similarly oriented – but markedly narrower – third portion of the suite by an extremely monumental doorway, 4.5 m wide and flanked on both sides by large, smooth, rectangular basalt orthostats. Between these door-jambs the floor is cut by two later large pits (Phase K 11), each at nearly one third of the distance between the orthostats. They probably mark the sites of two basalt column bases that were later removed (a column base was found ex situ in the south-eastern corner of adjacent Room BI[15]), which would have supported wooden columns.

The stratigraphy visible in the pit shows the long history of Room S, with several floors underlying the oldest extensively uncovered beaten-earth surface. Along the northern and eastern walls of the room there are some postholes, and for this reason it was previously interpreted as an open space where wooden pillars held up a covering.[16] This reconstruction, although fascinating, is not totally convincing: the postholes are not positioned at regular distances from one another or from the wall – the westernmost one in particular is very near it – and the walls of the room, as well as the doorway to Room P, are different from those of the two courtyards and are built with the half-timber construction technique. Moreover, the northern wall would have been that most visible to the visitors entering the palace and may well have been decorated with frescoes or wall paintings, considering that a plaster fragment depicting a palm tree with blue leaves was found in the fill of the room.[17] A door in this wall[18] leads to the north-western sector of the service block.

The connecting hub

In the north-eastern corner of Room S there is a doorway that is completely different from the other ones, with a stair made of two stone and mudbrick steps in it. The jambs are formed by the side of the southern wall and the edge of the western one of adjoining Room P, a passageway room that links the entrance suite just described to the service quarters arranged around Courtyard V to the north and the ceremonial and residential areas to the south. The three doorways between these rooms were half-timbered.

Several contrasts mark this passage. First of all, after entering the palace and walking straight across Courtyards I and J and through Room S, here visitors had to turn 90° to the right and climb the stair described above to reach Room P, whose earliest excavated floor level (Phase K 13) – like those of the ceremonial and residential areas – was actually about 0.4−0.7 m higher than that of the entrance block. Furthermore, if we consider that the

13 Morandi Bonacossi 2013, 116; 2015, 360.

14 Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 362.

15 Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 363 fn. 18.

16 Report by Marta Luciani.

17 Luciani 2006a, 405; Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 364−365, fn. 20. This is a typical motif of Aegean derivation that is also well known from the Royal Palace. See fn. 12.

18 In Phase K 13 the door faced the columned entrance directly, but it was later changed; see below.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

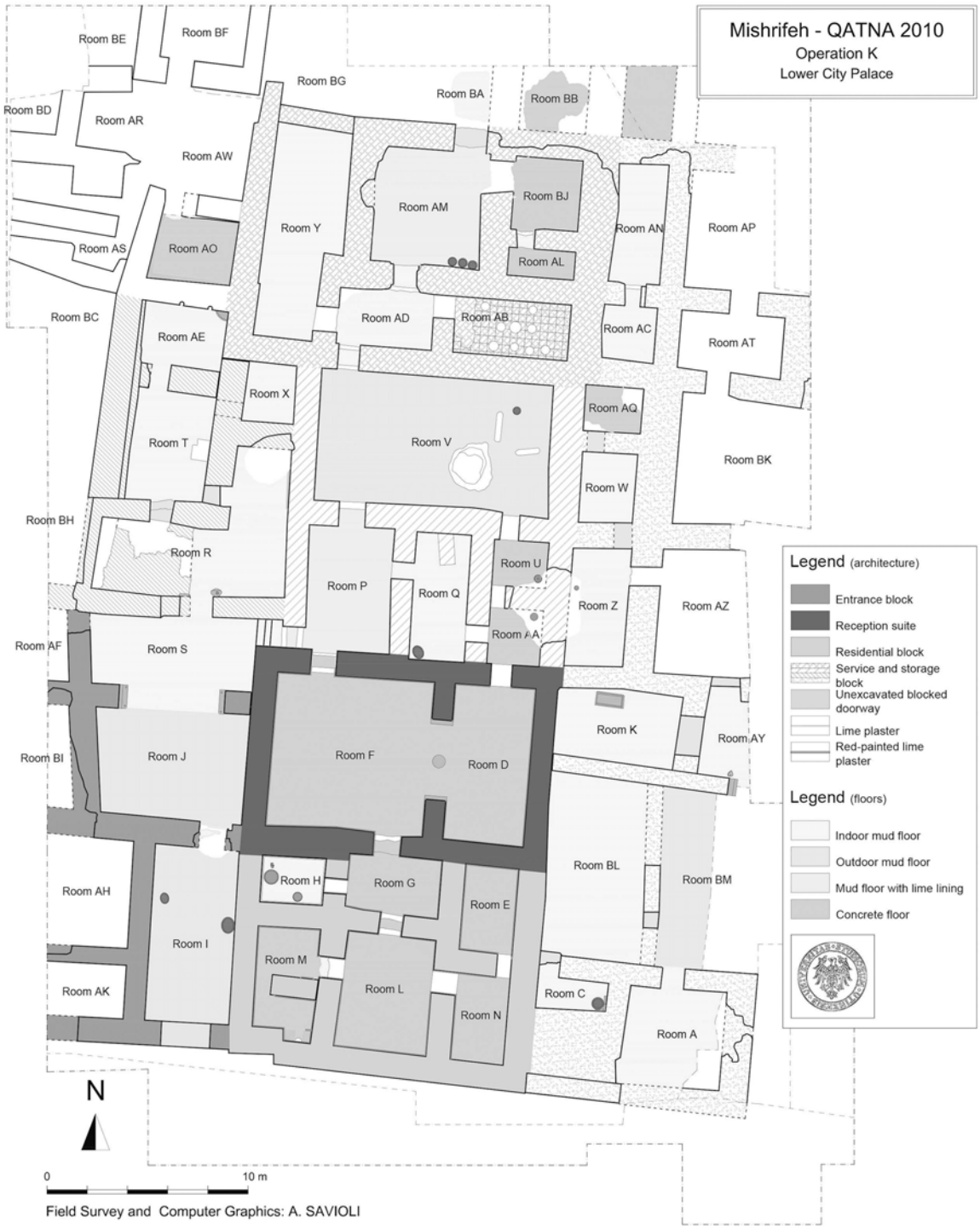


Fig. 1 Schematic plan of the Lower City Palace, Qatna (© University of Udine; plan: A. Savioli)

sun has an east-west trajectory, the contrast between the bright light of the courtyards and the relative darkness of an indoor space (Room S) would be at a maximum on the stairs (that could receive a little direct light only at dusk, being in shadow for the rest of the day). So this would have been the point that really marked the passage between the outside and the inside of the palace, highlighted by the stairs and a dramatic change in illumination.

A further 90° turn to the right would have led visitors from Room P into the ceremonial area, while a 90° turn to the left brought them to the service quarters. Across the room, a fourth doorway, not in axis with the first one, gives access to Room Q,

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

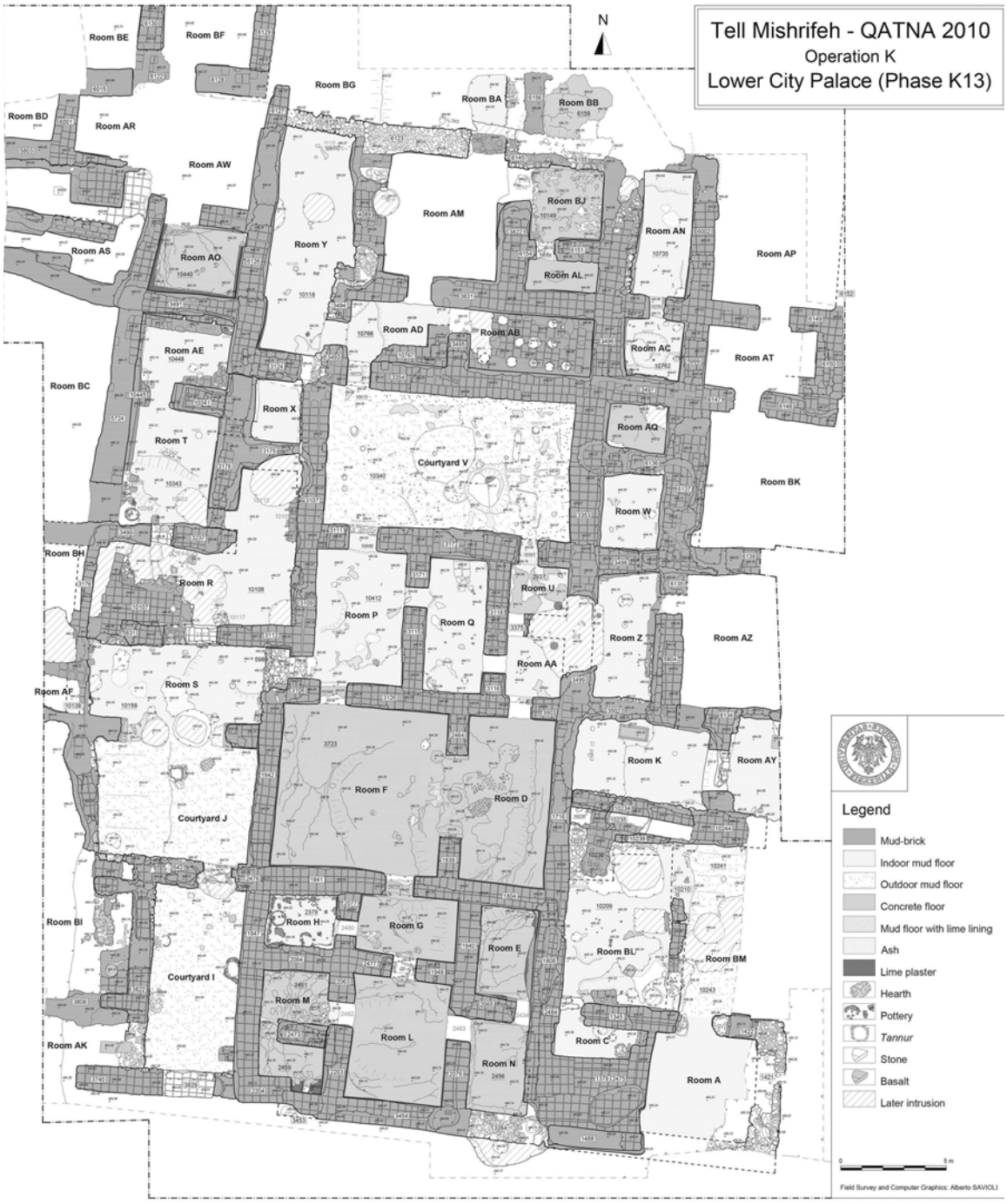


Fig. 2 Plan of the Lower City Palace, Qatna, Phase K 13 (© University of Udine; plan: A. Savioli)

which is connected with the contiguous Room AA and, across it, Room U. Topographically, these four rooms form the central block of the excavated portion of the palace and they seem to compose a 'hub' that served both the northern and southern sectors.

Room Q is an elongated space with a *tannur* (5264) in its south-western corner and a low mudbrick bench abutting the northern wall. The presence of a substantial layer of ash with storage jar and cooking pot fragments among the deposits inside it suggests that the room was used as a kitchen. This interpretation is supported by the presence of the two interconnected squarish rooms to the east – both of them heavily truncated by a huge later pit. Only the

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 3 Plan of the Lower City Palace, Qatna, Phase K 12 (© University of Udine; plan: A. Savioli)

southernmost one (AA) is connected to Room Q and gives access to Room D in the reception/ceremonial suite; a door connects the northern room (U) to the big courtyard (V) of the service wing. In the former of the two, a jar was interred in the north-eastern corner of the concrete floor, paired by another one in the south-eastern corner of the latter room, where several earthenware cooking vessels were also found, in both Phases K 13 and K 12 levels. So we can see these three rooms as a kitchen unit, used by the areas both to the north and south: food was prepared in Room Q – and in Courtyard V and adjoining rooms, as we will see – while utensils and vessels were stored in Rooms U and AA.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The reception and residential blocks

Immediately to the south of this hub there are the reception unit and, further south, the residential block, an area that altogether covers more than 240 sq.m (Fig. 4).

The reception and ceremonial unit measures roughly 8 × 13 m[19] and consists of two rooms whose walls are covered with red-painted lime plaster. Both of them have a thick concrete floor that had been repaired many times,[20] and that in the western room was later covered by a mud floor finished with lime. They are connected by a monumental doorway, 3.6 m wide, whose jambs stand on massive basalt orthostat bases. In its centre there would have been a wooden column whose basalt base was found still in situ.

This unit is composed of a huge square vestibule (F) – the biggest space in the palace (Fig. 5) after Courtyard V – and a reception room (D); a similar group, formed of a large squarish hall and an adjoining elongated room, was present in the MBA at Ebla, in the Southern Palace – a little larger than Qatna's – and also (more or less contemporary) in the LBA at Alalakh, in the so-called Palace of Niqmepa.[21]

In the fills of Hall F more than 100 cylindrical vessel stands were found.[22] Their significant number, the size of the hall, its position in the palace layout, the proximity of a kitchen unit, and the items found in neighbouring rooms (see below) suggest that Hall F – besides being a vestibule to the reception room – was used as a banqueting hall for communal feasting.[23]

A door in the south-eastern corner of Hall F connects it with Room G and the entire southern unit. The half-timbered doorway is only 1.1 m wide but nevertheless it must have been magnificent: the collapsed mudbricks lying nearby show rather clearly that it was vaulted and there were basalt orthostats. Across Room G, a second (slightly narrower) door in axis with the previous one (with which it shares the same features) leads to Room L.

Concrete floors and red-painted lime plaster similar to those of the reception unit are present across almost this entire southern suite, which is slightly bigger than the neighbouring one (9 × 13 m) and composed of three pairs of rooms. This uniformity of the group and its similarity to the adjoining northern reception area suggest a clear functional association of the two; moreover, their carefully finished walls and the structure of the floors, which resemble those of the Royal Palace, are distinctive of this part of the building and suggest the 'high status' of these two blocks.

No particular activity can be ascribed to Rooms G and L, but surely the former was a connecting space for circulation in this southern part of the palace. Moreover, it is possible that Room L, with its remarkable size (slightly less than 6 × 5 m), was a courtyard that gave light and air to this wing.

Several lumps of clay and seal impressions – whose non-schematic content and very accurate style, with galloping horses or crouching gazelles,[24] are typical Hurrian – were found in the fills of Room G, one lying exactly in front of the very narrow western doorway that connects it to Room H.

The latter of these is the smallest room in the unit (2.2 × 3 m) and its door lintel, still preserved in situ, is only 0.75 m higher than the oldest excavated beaten-earth floor. Both the lintel and the walls of the room are lined with tiles covered by a thick layer of yellow plaster. The tiles are flat rectangular/square pieces of coarse-fabric terracotta, of non-standard size (average 0.2 × 0.3 m), apparently made especially for the lining of this room, since they are not used in any other excavated parts of the palace. The highest preserved tile is 1.2 m above the floor, and it is likely that the roof and the entrance of this room were lower than those of the other rooms.[25] The double layer of tiles plus mud-and-straw plaster would have assured good thermal insulation in the room, enhanced by its partially underground position, a narrow and low door, and probably low roof. All these features indicate that the room must have been a sort of cold store or cellar for the conservation of wine, beer, and possibly food as well.

Southwards, in Room L, two perfectly aligned doors provide the only access to Room M to the west and Room N to the east.

The former, an elongated north-south space, is divided into a northern and a southern part by a (now collapsed) east-west mudbrick wall that at some point was added, abutting the face of the southern part of the north-south wall. Some cracks are present in the floor of the room: one runs along the base of the collapsed wall to the south. The very thick concrete floor, whose hardened upper coating lies over and mixes with a thick layer of small stones overlying a preparation of cobbles, and the presence of what could be interpreted as channels

19 It may be noted that this is almost exactly a golden rectangle!

20 This was probably due to the sinking of the floors in the two adjoining Rooms F and D over time.

21 For Ebla Southern Palace see Matthiae 2004; Matthiae in this volume; for Alalakh see Woolley 1955, 113–115; Yener 2005, 108.

22 Morandi Bonacossi (2015, 365–366) indicates 108 vessel stands, but actually only some of these (nearly 30) are complete, while the others are fragments, so it is impossible to establish an exact number. They have diameters of 13–14 cm and heights of 9–10 cm, so they were suitable only for tableware or small vessels. Considering the height above the floor at which they were found, it is likely that they came from elevated features in the room, such as shelves. Luciani 2003 (147, fn. 15) supposes that, alternatively, they could have been reused as architectural elements, e.g. as ventilation shafts.

23 Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 366.

24 Luciani 2003, 150–151.

25 The tiles and the plaster continue below the floor, so it must be assumed that the original floor level was lower than in neighbouring rooms.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

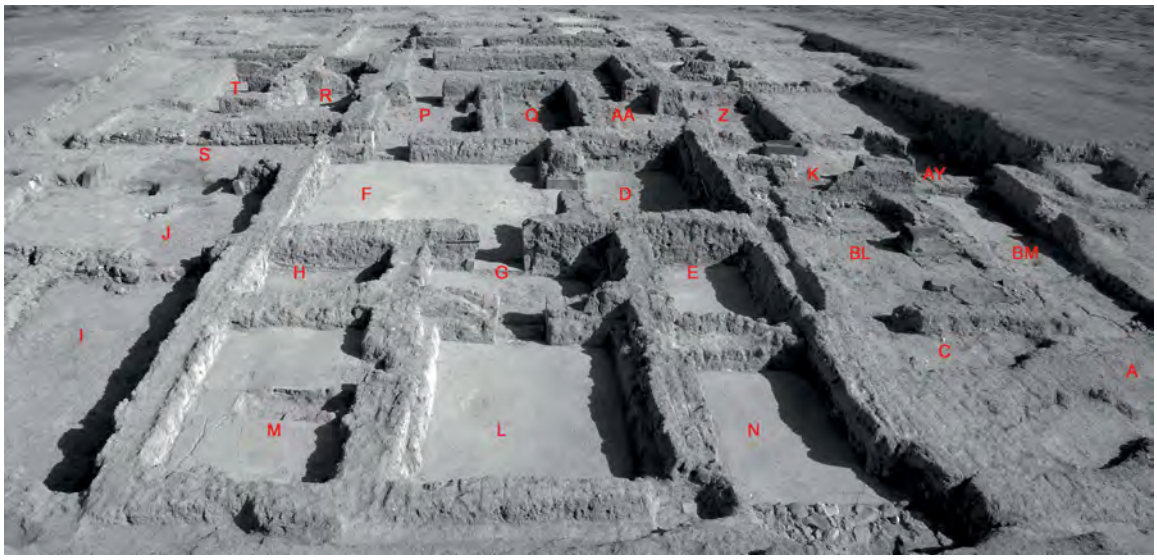


Fig. 4 View of the Lower City Palace from the south (© University of Udine; photo: J.B. Serrano)

suggest that the room was furnished with installations for draining liquids. And we may suppose that the collapse of the wall might have been caused by erosion due to the presence of water in the room, flowing in the gutters and on the floor. In a niche in the south-east corner of the room, hidden from view by the partition wall, there is a toilet, a hole in the cement floor flanked by two raised plastered square surfaces, with a waste pipe draining outside the palace.[26]

On the other side of Room M, across from Room L, Room N and (further north) Room E are situated. No certain functions can be attributed to these two rooms on the basis of archaeological finds, but considering their secluded position, isolated and accessible only from the ceremonial and reception suite, and the presence of a large bathroom nearby, it is likely that they had a residential function. Moreover, one of the jambs of each of their doors is constituted directly by the face of a wall – a very rare feature in the palace. One may wonder if the reason for this could have been to leave more wall space free of interruptions so that furniture could be placed against it.

The service and storage wing

Northwards and eastwards of these blocks there is an enormous service and storage wing that must have been divided into several subunits (Fig. 6), but because of the unplanned interruption of the excavation, their function, layout, and interconnections are not always totally clear, especially in the eastern and western parts. The fulcrum of the northern area seems to be the large courtyard (V) (11.8 × 6.7 m) that could be reached through Room P.

Fig. 5 The doorway between Rooms F and D, with column base, basalt orthostats, and lime plaster on the walls (© University of Udine; photo: M. Cusin)

Besides being a connecting space and a means of ventilation and illumination of the surrounding rooms, as mentioned above, the courtyard was also connected with food preparation and thus functionally linked with neighbouring Rooms Q, U, and AA. In its north-eastern part several pyrotechnical installations were found: near a small *tannur* there were two elongated rectangular pits with scorched sides, 50 cm deep and 1.5 m long on average, pertaining to the Phase K 13 earthen floor. They contained ash and large amounts of charred olive pits that could have been used as fuel. A less elongate pit associated with the Phase K 12 trodden floor was excavated.[27]

26 A toilet was also found in the Southern Palace; see al-Maqdissi 2003b, 1500, fig. 14A.

27 Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 368.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 6 View of the Lower City Palace from the north (© University of Udine; photo: J.B. Serrano)

A half-timbered doorway leads from Courtyard V to Room AD. Here a plaster-coated L-shaped mudbrick structure, removed in Phase K 12, could have been a work bench, although the room seems to have been essentially a passageway, since it connects Courtyard V to three different spaces. Westwards there is an irregularly shaped, more or less rectangular room (Y), whose length – almost 11 m – is more than three time its average width. Hundreds of small artefacts were found in its fills, the majority of them being durable animal material inlays.[28] Among these were also basalt and bronze tools, slag fragments, glass-paste beads, clay stoppers and sealings, a few lumps of bitumen, a couple of cut antlers, worked and unworked bones, horns, antlers, and fish bones. Many triangular antler inlays were found concentrated near the western wall; it is possible that they had been used to decorate its plastered surface, as with the square inlays in Room BJ (see below). The nature and diversity of the finds and the possible presence of a shallow basin suggest that this room may have been used as a workshop.[29]

To the east of Room AD there is a large storage room (AB) whose raised mudbrick floor contains at least nine circular pits with an average diameter of 0.5 m arranged in three rows. It seems likely that they were used to hold storage vessels, which were later removed, probably when the palace was abandoned, since no remains of them were found.

Considering that the last space connected with Room AD, to the north, is a square-shaped possibly open area (AM) – in which, during Phase K 12, there was a row of three *tannur*s in its south-east corner[30] – it appears that most of the zone linked to Courtyard V was devoted to large-scale food preparation, probably servicing the events held in the reception area as well as feeding those involved in other activities in the palace.

To the east of Room AM there are two interconnected rooms (BJ and AL) that have walls finished with lime plaster and concrete floors. Hundreds of elephant ivory, bone, and antler inlays were found on their floors (mainly that of Room BJ). Many square-shaped, pierced antler items, each containing a peg made of the same material, were found distributed in a semicircle in front of the door connecting the two rooms. They were probably fixed to the wall, decorating the arched doorway[31] (Fig. 7).

Probably by means of a door in its northern wall, Room AM was also connected to the eastern and north-western areas of the palace, but the functions and interconnections of these parts are not entirely clear at present, since they have not been excavated. The small Room AC, measuring less than 3 × 3 m and accessible

28 See Luciani 2006a; 2006b; Turri 2015b, 300–308.
29 Luciani 2006a; Turri 2015b, 304.
30 The Phase K 13 floors were not reached, so we cannot be sure of the earlier function of this room.
31 Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 368.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 7 Square-shaped, pierced antler items distributed in a semicircle in front of the door of Room BJ (© University of Udine; photo: M. Gatti)

only through a half-timbered doorway at the southern end of the elongated Room AN, seems to have been particularly important: its secluded and protected position plus the precious finds discovered there – clay sealings with seal impressions, faience and carnelian beads, a fragment of a folded gold sheet, and, in situ on the threshold, an Egyptian faience scarab in a gold mounting with the cartouche of Pharaoh Amenhotep III[32] – suggest that it could have been a sort of treasury.

Further south there is an area of interconnected rooms, clearly devoted to production activities, as suggested by a monolithic basalt tank in Room K and *tannur*s in Rooms C and BL. In Phase K 12 the last of these was united with neighbouring Room BM by the removal of the dividing wall and transformed into a spacious courtyard containing a huge tank made of five basalt slabs sealed with waterproofing plaster at its centre. This and a waste discharge dug into its lower slab, connected to a circular pit through a clay pipe, point to the fact that activities involving liquids were carried out in this room – and the same could be true also for Room K.

A huge square mudbrick platform (roughly 6 × 6 m) lies to the east of Room N. Its function and its construction chronology are not clear, but considering that the area to the south of Room K could not have been part of the earliest palace layout, originally, this massive construction may have marked its south-eastern corner and had a defensive or reinforcement function.[33]

Other service rooms are located in the north-western sector but only a few of them have been excavated in depth; these include three or four rooms connected with the entrance suite. Their contents were hidden from those entering the palace by the door between Rooms S and R mentioned above – which was probably wooden – whose basalt hinge socket was found still set in the floor. Room R was L-shaped and had a large mudbrick platform resting on stone foundations in its western part. The height and the use of the platform are unknown, since it was later razed.[34] In fact, in Phase K 12 the entire room underwent several far-reaching modifications and rebuilds: after the platform was removed, the room's former southern door was walled up and a new one was made just to the west; the arched doorway leading to Room T was also closed and substituted by another one connecting it to the northern part of Room R. In the fill of this later phase of Room R many durable animal material inlays of various shapes were found - many of them made of elephant ivory. Among these were also lumps of bitumen and clay, beads, bronze objects, painted pottery, clay sealings – some with seal impressions – several small, unfired administrative cuneiform tablets – most of them in fragments – and a finely carved ivory face.[35] Buried

32 Amenhotep III was a Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty, i.e. the first half of the 14th century BCE. For a description of the scarab and its importance see Boschloos 2015.

33 Luciani 2003, 151–152.

34 Morandi Bonacossi (2015, 369) suggests that the platform could have been the remains of a mudbrick stair leading to an upper storey of the palace, but there is no reliable evidence that a second storey existed. Moreover, it would be rather strange that it was later removed.

35 See Luciani 2006a; 2006b; Turri 2015b, 300–308 for the objects, and Eidem 2003 for the texts.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

in the later floor (and cutting the previous ones) there was also a jar with an infant burial.

Considering that the backs of the inlays and the ivory face do not bear any clear traces of adhesive material, it seems likely that they were stored in this room awaiting to be mounted on precious pieces of furniture or other objects. Taking also into account the nature of the other finds (intact bitumen lumps, beads, precious vessels), the room appears to have been a sort of depository for materials to be used for work in other areas of the palace, luxury objects, and administrative documents. A workshop function could be assigned to neighbouring Rooms T and AE: in the former a *tannur* and an adjoining pyrotechnical installation were found,[36] while in the latter there were mudbrick benches on both the southern and northern walls. Between the northern bench and the wall there were also two postholes that could have held two wooden beams, part of some sort of machinery perhaps. By Phase K 12, though, all these installations in Rooms T and AE had already been removed, although it is possible that at the same time Room R was connected with Room Y – where, as described above, a second concentration of durable animal materials and bitumen lumps was found – through Room X. Unfortunately, the doors of this room were not identified with certainty.

Disuse of the Lower City Palace

At the end of Phase K 12, the Lower City Palace lost its function. This probably occurred in connection with the changes that affected the whole city in the mid-14th century, at the time of the Hittite advance in Syria and the turmoil that simultaneously involved the whole region, during which part of the Royal Palace was set on fire and then deserted. The Southern Palace too was abandoned at the same time.

In the Lower City Palace there are no signs of destruction; its abandonment seems to have been carefully planned so it cannot have been due to a tragic contingent situation. First of all, the palace was fairly thoroughly cleared of its contents: the objects found during the excavations were mostly the leftovers of this operation; the sealings and especially the tablets – administrative records connected with food and deliveries – had probably become useless at that time and so their transferral would have been pointless, while many of the inlays were part of wall decorations and thus difficult to remove. Notably, at least nine doors were blocked with mudbricks (or fragments), so movement inside the building was intentionally impeded. It appears significant that among these there were the four doors of Room P – the connecting room par-excellence – and both the doors of Courtyard I – the first part of the entrance suite, including the only known entrance to the palace. The other closed passages are those between Courtyard V and Room U and between Room AD and Room AM, i.e. between the kitchen unit and the rest of the service wing. The last to be blocked was the door of Room AC, a sort of treasury where the most important precious items – whose presence in an emptied palace could be otherwise inexplicable – were found.

The area of the building changed in function but was not abandoned completely. Some of the rooms were modified and used for different purposes – although these are not readily discernible. Courtyard I probably acquired an entrance from the south-west and in Courtyard J a basalt debitage area was found. A thin wall partitioned Room S, creating in its western part a new room (AG) whose new sloping cement floor was penetrated by a ceramic pipe – and so some activity involving liquids must have been performed there. Subsequently, the south-eastern sector, both the residential area and the service block to the east, was converted into two large courtyards.

The urban layout and the decentralisation of power

The Lower City Palace was built during a massive urban reorganisation of Qatna that likely started some time before the mid-2nd millennium with the erection of the Royal Palace on the northern part of the acropolis, at the foot of its central mound, just above Qatna's internal water reservoir,[37] in a place previously occupied by a large necropolis that was bordered southwards by a sacred area.[38] At about the same time, the MBA Eastern Palace (Fig. 8-9) was abandoned and subsequently partly converted into a burial area and partly reused; but it is impossible to know whether or not its new functions were connected with the activities of the Royal Palace.[39] In the 15th century, a second, small monumental building, called the Southern Palace, was erected to the south of the Royal Palace.[40] Its rooms, with concrete floors and solid walls, are built around a great hall or courtyard that, just as in the Lower City Palace, is connected through an entrance porch with two columns to a reception room (Fig. 10).

On the basis of the architectural features and the associated pottery, the construction of the Southern Palace seems to have been more or less contemporary with that of the Lower City Palace, built north of the Royal Palace, just at the foot of the upper town in a highly strategic position.

36 A perfectly preserved copper/bronze chariot wheel hub was found in this room. See Morandi Bonacossi 2015, 269–370, fig. 9.

37 For the internal reservoir see Cremaschi 2007; Morandi Bonacossi 2007b, 72, 74 and attached pls. 1–3.

38 Morandi Bonacossi 2011; 2014, 277–278.

39 On the Eastern Palace see Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2009, especially pp. 76–77 for its LBA reoccupation.

40 For the Southern Palace see al-Maqdissi 2003b, 1500–1505; 2003a, 235–239; 2007, 75.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

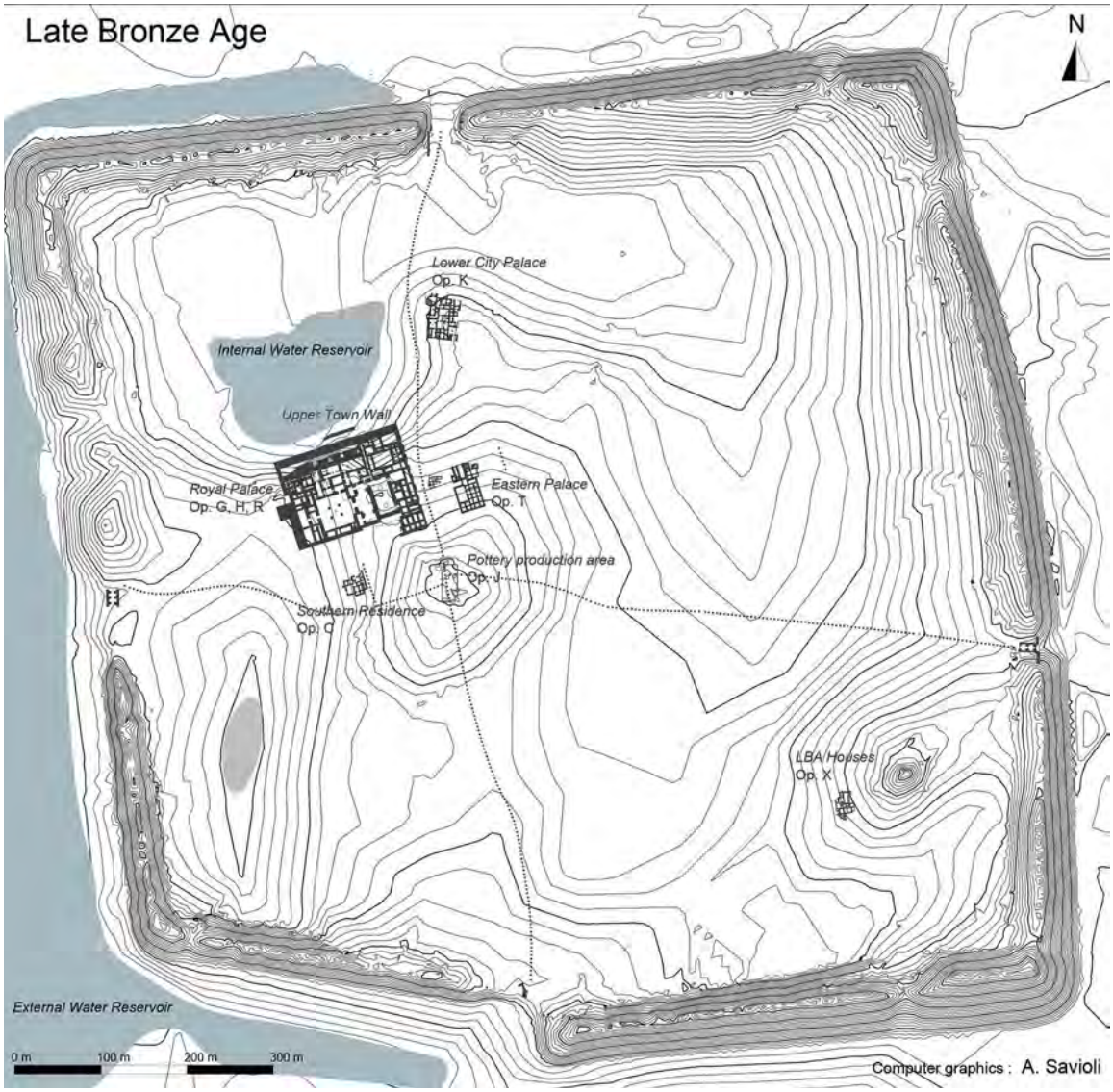


Fig. 8 Topographic map of Qatna and urban layout during the Late Bronze Age (© University of Udine; map: A. Savioli)

The building was likely located on one of the main roads that crossed the town and connected the northern and southern city gates. Traces of trodden surfaces pertaining to a north-south oriented street, dated to the MBA II and LBA on the basis of ceramic finds, were identified near both the Eastern Palace and the pottery production area on the summit of the acropolis, where in the MBA there was probably also a temple.[41] Here it must have intersected another street linking the eastern and western gates.

Moreover, the Lower City Palace was situated midway between the Royal Palace and the northern city gate, 100 m to the east of Qaṭna's internal reservoir and to the north of a gate in the upper town wall.[42]

A connection between the Lower City Palace and one of the main city gates in the mighty earthworks – built in the first half of the 2nd millennium, which gave the city its quadrangular shape[43] – seems to be

41 Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2009, 101–107; Morandi Bonacossi 2014, 276–277.

42 This inner wall, which probably surrounded the upper town, and the gate have been located at the foot of the acropolis northern terrace; see Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2008, 57–58; Morandi 2014, 279; 2015, 359, fn. 9.

43 On the defensive structures of Qatna and their still unclear chronology see Cremaschi 2007; Morandi Bonacossi 2007b, 72 and fn. 38 with bibliography; 2014, 275; Burke 2008.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

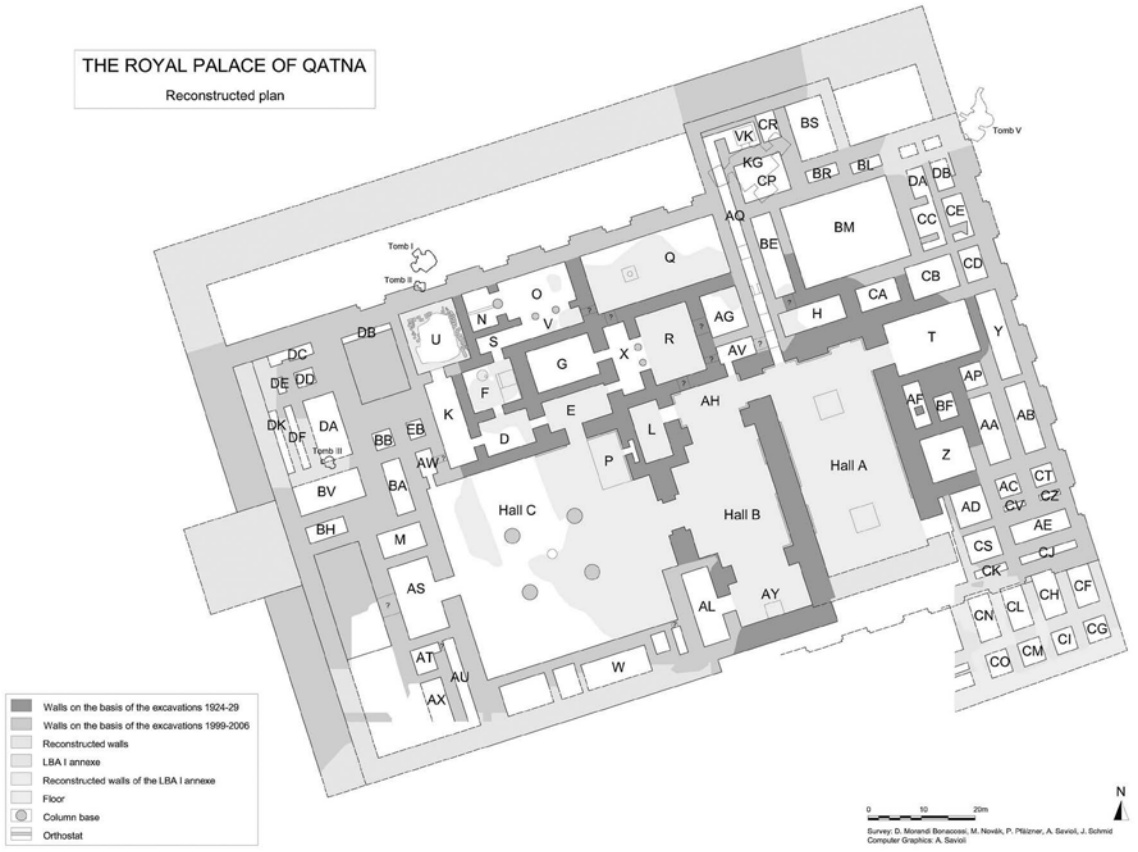


Fig. 9 Schematic plan of the Royal Palace, Qatna (© Qatna Project, University of Tübingen; plan: A. Bianchi and G. Elsen-Novák)

documented by a tablet found in Room R. The text lists quantities of beer issued to about 500 men who came from thirteen to fifteen different localities, probably soldiers stationed in important military posts inside or just outside Qatna, where they were in service. Seventy-nine men were based in a palace under the supervision of Šep-šenni and most of the others were divided between at least five 'houses of the big gate' (*bīt abullim*). We have no other information about Šep-šenni and do not know if the palace mentioned in the text was the Lower City Palace or the Royal Palace. With regard to the 'houses of the big gate', we may suppose that these were the city gates themselves, structures perhaps equipped with rooms for soldiers as well as for other purposes, or maybe fortifications built close to the gates and/or the earthworks, such as those known in MBA II Ebla.[44] Even though the archaeological investigation of the gates and earthworks has been very limited, an examination of the site plan shows five main gates in Qatna, one on each side of its ramparts plus one in the north-eastern corner,[45] as there were at least five *bīt abullim* according to the tablet.

The presence of three different monumental buildings, in use at the same time and clearly with public functions (among others), suggests that in Qatna at the beginning of the LBA a decentralised palace model prevailed and that ceremonial, political, administrative, residential, and production activities, instead of being concentrated in a single large palace, were distributed among several.

The excavation of Qatna is still of modest extent – less than 10 % of the total area has been thoroughly investigated archaeologically – and so we do not know if there were other public buildings in the city. However, the study of the layouts of the three known 'palaces' and of the items found inside them forms a basis from which to identify their different functions. First of all, it appears evident that the Royal Palace was the centre of this large official hub, because of its position and size. Its huge ceremonial suite (Halls A, B, and C) with annexed rooms occupies by itself more or less one

44 For the text and its explanation see Eidem 2007. For Ebla see Matthiae 1997, 11; 1998, 577–582; 2002; 2004; Peyronel 2000.

45 It is possible that there were additional gates to the town. See references in fn. 42.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

third of the whole area of the building. Considering that there was also a chapel in it (Room P) and that the Royal Hypogeum could be reached through a corridor (AQ) from Hall A, and that immediately to the north there were rooms connected with scribal activities (Rooms G, R, AG, and AQ_2[46]) and a possible inner reception area (Room Q),[47] it seems evident that the complex had ceremonial, reception, political, and religious functions connected with the city's royal power and its management – and this was likely the palace's main function. It is clear that there was relatively little space left over for service and storage activities (compared to the enormous reception area) and we may wonder if this lack of space was the reason for the partial reuse of the MBA Eastern Palace.

Given both its peripheral position and smaller size, the Lower City Palace must have had a subsidiary role. Although it was cleared out at the time of its 'abandonment' and the precise use to which many of its rooms were put is not known, the tablets found there – compared with those from the Royal Palace – could offer some clues to their different functions. Of the fifty or so legible texts discovered in Corridor AQ of the Royal Palace,[48] five are letters, six are legal in nature, and seven are inventories – one regarding a tribute paid to the Hittite king – while the others are administrative texts: distribution of mudbricks and silver, an order to a smith, lists of persons or families, and a few connected with cereal distribution. One of the few texts from elsewhere in the palace, a letter found in the eastern portion, deals with precious goods, a failed delivery of lapis lazuli and gold.[49] In Room R of the Lower City Palace there were only administrative texts,[50] unfortunately, often in a very poor state of preservation or just small fragments. Some texts whose purpose is not clear seem to be parts of larger lists of names of individuals, especially women, but the majority are notes written on small tablets, mainly concerning issues of barley and beer, animal fodder, servant women, named individuals, or groups of people. The largest and best preserved text is that already mentioned concerning the issuing of beer to groups of men, probably guards, coming from different localities and belonging to military posts inside Qatna, and probably also in its vicinity. Another text lists villages placed under the supervision of named men, while a third mentions a 'chief of the boundary walls' (LU SAG *ša hal-wa-te*),[51] a title not attested elsewhere. All these clues suggest a more administrative function for the Lower City Palace, possibly connected with human resources management, in particular with respect to military and security forces. This last supposition is supported not only by the texts, which connect the building with security issues and especially with defensive structures inside and outside the city, but also by its privileged position on one of the main roads crossing Qatna and near one of the city gates, which would have facilitated the control of people entering the town.

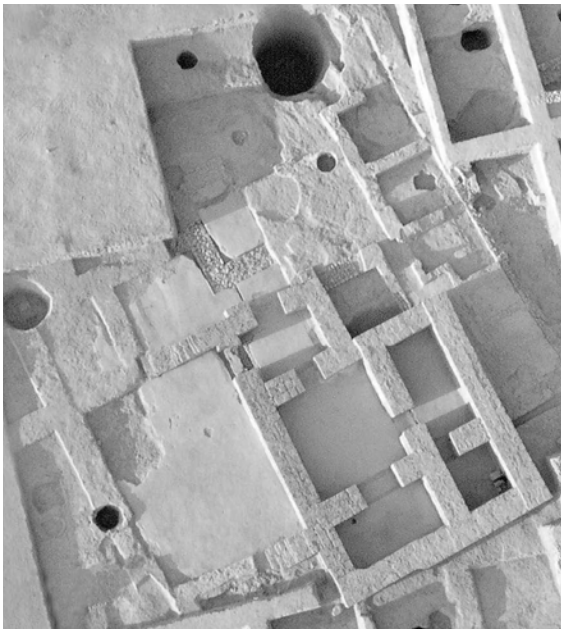


Fig. 10 Aerial view of the Southern Palace, Qatna (© Direction générale des antiquités et des musées de Syrie; from al-Maqdissi and Morandi Bonacossi 2005, 49)

The area around Courtyard BM in the north-eastern part of the Royal Palace and that south of the ceremonial suite in the Lower City Palace could have had residential functions, and other private zones may have existed on possible second storeys, whose existence in the Royal Palace at least is highly probable,[52] although these would have been of limited extent compared to the total area of the buildings. Considering its reduced size and layout, it seems likely that the small Southern Palace[53] was mainly residential in function, with some service areas in its eastern part connected with the activities of its high-ranking inhabitants. Their status is denoted by the high-quality building materials used, and also by the presence of a reception area, which also points to a public function of the building, as in the other two palaces.

46 This room was above the subterranean Corridor AQ.

47 For a functional reconstruction of the Royal Palace see Pfälzner 2007, 43–51.

48 For the Royal Palace texts see Lange and Richter 2012.

49 Eidem 2003, 165.

50 For the Lower City Palace texts see Eidem 2003, 166–167; 2007.

51 Eidem 2003, 167.

52 Morandi Bonacossi 2007b, 229. For the Lower City Palace see above fn. 32.

53 For the Southern Palace see al-Maqdissi 2003a; 2003b; 2007.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

It is curious that, notwithstanding the enormous area encompassed by its ramparts (110 ha), extensive residential areas are still unknown in Qatna. During the LBA I, a residential quarter might have existed between the internal reservoir and the northern earthwork: here reddish earth derived from the deterioration of mudbricks is visible on the surface, while thick mortar floors – on which LBA I pottery was recognised – stone-built foundations, and mudbrick walls have been observed in the section of a modern pit.[54] The city was probably a place of abode only for the upper classes and those who worked closely with the executive apparatus: scribes, specialised artisans, and so forth. The majority of the population must have been basically rural and resided outside the city in the several small satellite settlements identified in or in proximity to three nearby *wadi*s,[55] and possibly corresponding to the places mentioned in the cuneiform texts discovered in the town, which are not known to be mentioned anywhere else.

So, as seems to have been rather common in Syria and northern Iraq in the 2nd millennium BC,[56] Qatna must have been a 'hollow city', a place enclosed by huge fortifications that gave protection to the centre of power and, if necessary, to the rural population too, containing sumptuous public buildings but with a low population density. Enclosed within these fortifications there must have been open spaces with fields or gardens, as in Mari,[57] and bodies of water. These imposing buildings were political symbols of the city's power, as well as residences for high-status officials and, as suggested above, the various administrative functions were shared between them.

54 Morandi Bonacossi 2007b, 79.

55 One of these *wadi*s used to run along the city's ramparts and feed a lake, while the other two encompassed a triangular area covering 180 sq.km around the city. See Morandi Bonacossi 2007b; al-Maqdissi 2011; 2012; Turri 2015, 79–80, 89–99.

56 Morandi Bonacossi 2007b, 81–82; 2014, 283–284.

57 Margueron 2004, 446.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Al-Maqdissi, M.

2003a Ergebnisse der siebten und achten syrischen Grabungskampagne 2001 und 2002 in Mishrife Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 135, 219–245.

2003b Recherches archéologiques syriennes à Mishirfeh-Qatna au nord-est de Homs (Émèse), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 147.4, 1487–1515.

2007 Notes d'archéologie levantine VI bis. À propos d'une statuette en basalte trouvée à Mishirfeh-Qatna, *Al-Rafidan* XXVIII, 75–82.

2011 Prospections archéologiques dans la région autour de Mishirfeh-Qatna (2005–2009), *Chronique Archéologique en Syrie* V, 43–57 (in Arabic; French abstract *ivi* 305).

2012 *Notes d'archéologie levantine XXVI. Réflexion sur la séquence de l'occupation de Mishirfeh et sa région*, in: P. Quenet and M. al-Maqdissi (eds.), *"L'heure immobile". Entre ciel et terre: mélanges en l'honneur d'Antoine Souleiman*, Subartu XXXI, Turnhout, 69–75.

Aruz, J., Benzel, K. and Evans, J.M.

2009 *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, New Haven.

Boschloos, V.

2015 *A Scarab of Amenhotep III in Qatna's Lower City Palace*, in: Pfälzner and al-Maqdissi (eds.) 2015, 377–382.

Burke, A.A.

2008 *Walled Up to Heaven: The Evolution of Middle Bronze Age Fortification Strategies in the Levant*, Harvard.

Cremaschi, M.

2007 *Qatna's Lake: A Geoarchaeological Study of the Bronze Age Capital*, in: Morandi Bonacossi (ed.) 2007, 93–104.

Dohmann-Pfälzner, H. and Pfälzner, P.

2008 Die Ausgrabungen 2007 und 2008 im Königspalast von Qatna: Vorbericht des syrisch-deutschen Kooperationsprojektes in Tall Mišrife/Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 140, 17–74.

Dossin, G.

1938 Les archives épistolaires du palais de Mari, *Syria 19*, 105–126.

Durand, J.-M.

1998 *Archives épistolaires de Mari* I/2, Archives royales de Mari XXVI/2, Paris.

Eidem, J.

2003 The Cuneiform Tablets from the Italian Excavations at Tell Mishrifeh 2001–2002, *Akkadica* 124, 164–167.

2007 *Notes on the Topography of Late Bronze Age Qatna. New Evidence from the 'Lower City Palace' Tablets*, in: Morandi Bonacossi (ed.) 2007, 297–304.

Feldman, M.H.

2007 *Frescoes, Exotica, and the Reinvention of the Northern Levantine Kingdoms during the Second Millennium B.C.E.*, in: M. Heinz and M.H. Feldman (eds.), *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, Winona Lake, IN, 39–65.

Iamoni, M.

2012 *The Late MBA and LBA Pottery Horizons at Qatna. Innovation and Conservation in the Ceramic Tradition of a Regional Capital and the Implications for Second Millennium Syrian Chronology*, Studi Archeologici su Qatna 2, Udine.

Klengel, H.

1992 *Syria 3000 to 300 BC. A Handbook of Political History*, Berlin.

Lange, S. and Richter, T.

2012 *Die Keilschrifttexte aus dem Königspalast von Qaṭna*, Qaṭna Studien 3, Wiesbaden.

Luciani, M.

2003 The Lower City of Qatna in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages: Operation K, *Akkadica* 124, 144–163.

2004 *Palazzi, abitazioni e botteghe tra prima Età del Bronzo Tardo e Ferro nell'antica Qatna. Il Cantiere K a Tell Mishrifeh*, in: A. Guidi and S. Ponchia (eds.), *Ricerche Archeologiche in Italia e in Siria, Atti delle Giornate di Studio, Verona 6–7 maggio 2002*, Padova, 105–120.

2006a Palatial Workshops at Qatna?, *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 37, 403–429.

2006b *Ivory at Qatna*, in: E. Czerny, I. Hein, H. Hunger, D. Melman and A. Schwab (eds.), *Timelines. Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak*, 3 vols., Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 149, Leuven, Paris and Sterling, 17–37.

2008 *The Late MB to Early LBA in Qatna with Special Emphasis on Decorated and Imported Pottery*, in: M. Bietak and E. Czerny (eds.), *The Bronze Age in the Lebanon*, Vienna, 115–126.

Marchetti, N.

2006 *Middle Bronze Age Public Architecture at Tilmen Höyük and the Architectural Tradition of Old Syrian Palaces*, in: F. Baffi, R. Dolce, S. Mazzoni and F. Pinnock (eds.), *Ina kibrāt erbetti: Studi di Archeologia orientale dedicati a Paolo Matthiae*, Roma, 275–308.

Margueron, J.-C.

2004 *Mari, métropole de l'Euphrate au III^e^ et au début du II^e^ millénaire av. J.-C.*, Paris.

Matthiae, P.

1990 *The Reception Suites of the Old Syrian Palaces*, in: Ö. Tunca (ed.), *De la Babylonie à la Syrie, en passant*

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

par Mari. Mélanges offerts à Monsieur J.R. Kupper, Liège, 209–228.
1997 Tell Mardikh 1977–1996: vingt ans de fouilles et de découvertes: la renaissance d'Ebla amorrhéenne, *Akkadica* 101, 1–29.
1998 Les fortifications de l'Ébla paléo-syrienne: Fouilles à Tell Mardikh, 1995–1997, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 142.2, 555–586.
2002 About the Formation of Old Syrian Architectural Tradition, in: L. al-Gailani Werr, J.E. Curtis, H. Martin, A. McMahon, J. Oates *and* J. Reade (eds.), *Of Pots and Plans. Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria Presented to David Oates in Honour of his 75th Birthday*, London, 191–209.
2004 Le palais méridional dans la ville basse d'Ebla paléo-syrienne: Fouilles à Tell Mardikh (2002–2003), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* 148.1, 301–346.

Morandi Bonacossi, D.
2007a The Chronology of the Royal Palace of Qatna Revisited. A Reply to a Paper by Mirko Novák, *Ägypten & Levante* 17, 221–240.
2007b *Qatna and Its Hinterland during the Bronze and Iron Ages. A Preliminary Reconstruction of Urbanism and Settlement in the Mishrifeh Region*, in: Morandi Bonacossi (ed.) 2007, 65–90.
2009 *Der Unterstadtpalast*, in: M. al-Maqdissi, D. Morandi Bonacossi and P. Pfälzner (eds.), *Schätze des Alten Syrien. Die Entdeckung des Königreichs Qatna*, Stuttgart, 156–159.
2011 *The Middle Bronze Age Necropolis at Mishrifeh*, in: P. Pfälzner (ed.), *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft von Qatna*, Qaṭna Studien 1, Wiesbaden, 11–37.
2013 *The Crisis of Qatna at the Beginning of the Late Bronze Age II and the Iron Age II Settlement Revival. A Regional Trajectory towards the Collapse of the Late Bronze Age Palace System in the Northern Levant*, in: K.A. Yener (ed.), *Across the Border: Late Bronze–Iron Age Relations between Syria and Anatolia*, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Supplement 42, Leuven, 115–148.
2014 *Some Considerations on the Urban Layout of Second Millennium BC Qatna*, in: F. Baffi, R. Fiorentino and L. Peyronel (eds.), *Tell Tuqan Excavations and Regional Perspectives*, Lecce, 275–296 and pl. III.
2015 *The Lower City Palace at Qaṭna*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. al-Maqdissi (eds.) 2015, 359–375.

Morandi Bonacossi, D. (ed.)
2007 *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital. Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in Central-Western Syria*, Studi Archeologici su Qatna 1, Udine.

Morandi Bonacossi, D., Da Ros, M., Garna, G., Iamoni, M. and Merlino, M.
2009 The 'Eastern Palace' and the Residential Architecture of Area T at Mishrifeh/Qatna. Preliminary Report on the 2006–2008 Excavation Campaigns of the Italian Component of the Syro–Italian Archaeological Project, *Mesopotamia* 44, 61–112.

Novák, M.
2004 The Chronology of the Royal Palace of Qatna, *Ägypten & Levante* 14, 299–317.

Novák, M. and Pfälzner P.
2002 Ausgrabungen in Tall Misrife-Qatna 2001. Vorbericht der deutschen Komponente des internationalen Kooperationsprojektes, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 134, 207–246.
2003 Ausgrabungen im bronzezeitlichen Palast von Tall Mishrife-Qatna 2002. Vorbericht der deutschen Komponente des international Kooperationsprojektes. Mit Beiträgen von Gabriele Elsen-Novák, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 135, 131–165.

Peyronel, L.
2000 *Middle Bronze II Fortress V at Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Syria. Preliminary Analysis of Architectural Context and Archaeological Materials*, in: P. Matthiae, A. Enea, L. Peyronel and F. Pinnock (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Rome May 18–23, 1998*, Rome, 1353–1378.

Pfälzner, P.
2007 *Archaeological Investigations in the Royal Palace of Qatna*, in: Morandi Bonacossi (ed.) 2007, 29–63.

Pfälzner, P. (in collaboration with C. von Rüden)
2008 *Between the Aegean and Syria: The Wall Paintings from the Royal Palace of Qatna*, in: D. Bonatz, R.M. Czichon and F.J. Kreppner (eds.), *Fundstellen. Gesammelte Schriften zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altvorderasiens ad honorem Hartmut Kühne*, Wiesbaden, 95–118.

Pfälzner, P. and al-Maqdissi, M. (eds.)
2015 *Qaṭna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism. Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in October 2009*, Qaṭna Studien Supplementa 2, Wiesbaden.

Turri, L.
2015a *"Vieni, lascia che ti dica di altre città". Ambiente naturale, umano e politico della valle dell'Oronte nella tarda Età del Bronzo*, Studi Archeologici su Qatna 3, Udine.
2015b *Ivory, Bone and Antler in Late Bronze and Iron Age Qatna*, in: P. Pfälzner and M. al-Maqdissi (eds.) 2015, 119–131.
2016 *The Last Kings of Qatna*, in: D. Parayre (ed.) avec la collaboration de M. Sauvage, *Le fleuve rebelle. Géographie historique du moyen Oronte d'Ebla à l'époque médiévale*, Syria, supplément IV, Beyrouth, 145–158 and pl. XI.

Von Rüden, C.
2011 *Die Wandmalereien aus Tall Mišrife/Qaṭna im Kontext interkultureller Kommunikation. Mit Beiträgen von Ann Brysbaert und Ilka Weisser*, Qaṭna Studien 2, Wiesbaden.

Woolley, C.L.
1955 *Alalakh: An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937–1949*, Oxford.

Yener, K.A.
2005 *Alalakh Spatial Organization*, in: K.A. Yener (ed.), *The Amuq Valley Regional Projects, Vol. 1, Surveys in the Plain of Antioch and Orontes Delta, Turkey, 1995–2002*, Oriental Institute Publications 131, Chicago, 99–144.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Early Bronze Age Palaces in the Southern Levant

by Pierre de Miroschedji

It is usually agreed that the appearance of palaces in ancient societies expresses a centralised political power held by one or a handful of individuals who transmit their authority according to well-defined modalities; in other words, it is assumed that the existence of a palace implies kingship. From the point of view of archaeology, the material expression of this phenomenon is the presence in the urban landscape of a large building clearly distinguishable from the mass of ordinary dwellings, which functioned at the same time as the residence of an elite, a centre of political decision, and a focus of economic activities. The emergence of a centralised political power was of course not the result of a sudden transformation but rather the outcome of a slow and multiform process. It may therefore be assumed that the appearance of palaces *sensu stricto* was preceded by less elaborate elite buildings reflecting less complex political organisations.

These remarks set at once a problem of definition (what is a palace?) and of archaeological identification (how does one recognise a palace archaeologically?), which determine our ability to distinguish the stages leading to the rise of palatial buildings, that is to the first manifestations of a centralised political power that may be called kingship. This is the enquiry that I intend to pursue in the following pages, with the example of Palace B1 at Tel Yarmuth seen against the backdrop of the other elite buildings discovered in the southern Levant of the Early Bonze Age.[1]

1. What is a palace?

1.1. Theoretical definition

Even in antiquity the answer to this question must have been difficult, since there was no specific word to designate a palace. In Akkadian it was called *ekallu*, sumerian É-GAL, 'big house', or simply *bîtu*, sumerian É, 'house', and rarely É-LUGAL, 'house of the king'. In the Old Testament it is usually called *bayit*, 'house', translated as 'palace' according to context, and sometimes *beth ha-melekh*, 'house of the king'. It is therefore not surprising that archaeologists face problems in identifying palatial buildings which, in antiquity, were designated as such primarily because of the prominent status of their owner.

Usually, most archaeologists use the word 'palace' in an empirical way: a 'palace' is any building that is clearly not cultic and also not an ordinary dwelling given its size, the complexity of its plan, the quality of its construction, or the abundance and wealth of the material found therein.[2] This implicit definition is prevalent in the archaeology of the southern Levant[3] and has led to some laxity in the identification of palaces.

However, some scholars have attempted to refine the definition of palaces. In order to avoid a prejudgment about the function of large non-cultic buildings. H. Genz calls them simply 'public buildings',[4] an ambiguous formulation because it is not known whether these buildings were accessible to everyone, and in the case of palaces *stricto sensu* some texts indicate that they were actually closed places whose entrance was severely guarded.[5] In the same vein, L. Cooper prefers to call them 'large scale secular buildings',[6] a literally descriptive designation that tells nothing about their destination, while O. Aurenche calls them more aptly 'maisons de prestige',[7] a designation stressing the social pre-eminence of their owner.

This reluctance to qualify these large secular buildings as palaces is due to the fact that this word has a wide social and political connotation; it implies a priori the existence of a king, to which some scholars ascribe absolute power in the context of a well-developed monarchy, whose existence is notoriously doubtful in early periods.[8] Therefore, a *large-scale secular building* cannot be called a 'palace' if the associated archaeological context implies a socio-political organisation incompatible with the existence of kingship, or even one in which the king would have had only limited power.[9] Hence, the designation 'palace' should not be given to buildings whose royal character is uncertain, and *a fortiori* to those that were definitely not royal, such as the seat of a governor or the residence of the head of a tribe or a large clan – despite

1 The present article is a revised and much expanded version of a paper delivered in 2013 at a seminar of the Maison de l'Archéologie et de l'Ethnologie René-Ginouvès at Nanterre and later published in French in an internal publication: see Miroschedji 2015. For absolute chronology and a synthetic presentation of the Early Bronze Age civilisation of the southern Levant see Miroschedji 2014.

2 See, among others, Margueron 1982, 7–8; Naumann 1971, 389; Fritz 1983, 1; Wright 1985, 269–270.

3 See, among others, Nigro 1994.

4 Genz 2010.

5 Cf. Durand 2002, 59, 69–70 for the palace of Mari at the time of Zimri-Lim.

6 Cooper 2006, 126.

7 Aurenche 1982, 253.

8 Cooper 2006, 126; Margueron 1997, 197; 2007, 72–73.

9 See Porter 2010, 75.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

the fact that these large buildings were called 'palaces' in the medieval, modern, and even contemporary Near East.[10]

Following a similar line of reasoning, J.-C. Margueron considers only the archaeologically demonstrated existence of a throne room as proof of the royal character of such large building complexes, justifying their designation as 'palaces'.[11] He asserts that throne rooms appear in Mesopotamia with the reign of Naram-Sin, the first king who claimed the divine character of the royal function. Since no throne room *sensu stricto* can be identified archaeologically among the large-scale secular buildings of the 3rd millennium BC discovered to date, regardless of their size and the complexity of their plan, he concludes that it is safer to call them 'maisons du pouvoir', a designation comparable to, although somewhat more precise than Aurenche's 'maisons de prestige', which implies that they were the seat of a political power but not necessarily the residence of a king.[12]

It may be questioned, however, whether all kings enjoyed absolute power and whether it necessarily required their deification and, accordingly, a throne room with specific architectural characteristics. It is most doubtful that the nature of kingship in early history, when the power of a king was still vague and his means of action limited, was the same as in later periods, when some kings enjoyed absolute power regarded as sacred. After all, texts, images, and monuments testify to the existence of kings in Syria and Mesopotamia a long time before Naram-Sin asserted the divine nature of his kingship. In fact, the power of most of the kings before and after the Akkad period was counterbalanced by a council of elders, as illustrated in the Ebla archives by the EN/ABBA (king/elders) dichotomy[13] and in the royal archives of Mari by the status of the king as head of the major tribal element.[14] The institution of kingship evolved through time and political circumstances, as did the house of the king whose inner organisation had to adapt to the changing requirements of the exercise of royal power. Therefore, the layout of Palace G at Ebla and Zimri-Lim's palace at Mari are not comparable and their respective throne rooms are also entirely different.[15] Hence, there is no reason why the organisation and function of 3rd millennium palaces should be similar to those of 2nd or 1st millennium palaces.

This last remark is at the heart of our enquiry. Our basic assumption is that the architectural organisation of a so-called 'house of power' is a direct expression of the nature of the political power residing in it. The nature of this power was variable in time and place; it emerged progressively according to different modalities and therefore expressed itself architecturally in various manners. The problem is to determine archaeologically when and how the 'houses of power' had acquired radically new architectural features that can be considered as 'palatial' and which imply the emergence of a political organisation also radically new and corresponding to some form of kingship. This raises the difficult question of an archaeological definition of palaces.

1.2. Archaeological definition

A perusal of the architectural features of known palaces in the Near East and the Mediterranean from the Early Bronze Age to the Iron Age[16] enables to formulate a series of criteria for the archaeological identification of palaces. I propose five major criteria that must be observed *simultaneously*, meaning that considered separately none of them could suffice to justify this designation.

1. The first criteria, immediately identifiable among the archaeological remains, is that of size: as a rule, a palace is much larger than an ordinary dwelling and presents a monumental character. It means that its 'scale and elaboration exceed the requirements of any practical functions that a building is intended to perform'[17] and it therefore represents conspicuously a testimony to the power of its builder.[18]
2. As a result, a palace is clearly segregated within the urban layout of a city – a situation that reflects at once its pre-eminent status in the urban surrounding, and access to it is obviously restricted.
3. In addition to size and location, a palace is also distinguished by the quality and nature of its building techniques: preparation of the ground prior to its construction (razing of pre-existing buildings, creation of an artificial terrace, etc.); the choice of materials and their treatment; the quality of masonry; and the methods of construction of walls (depth of foundations, thickness, plastering, decoration), doors (frame and threshold), column bases, pavements, etc. All these elements are better made than those found in ordinary dwellings, even large and well-built ones, or completely different from them in technique and appearance, thereby revealing the participation of professional

10 See Aurenche 1985.
11 Margueron 2007.
12 Margueron 2003, 267–286; 2007. See, earlier, Margueron 1982, 577–578, 581–582, 589, and remarks by Yoffee 2005, 228–229.
13 Peltenburg 2013, 249, with references.
14 Fleming 2004; Rede 2015.
15 See Matthiae 2006; 2010; 2013; Margueron 1982, 355–56; 2004, 464–465. Cf. as well the contributions of Matthiae and Pinnock in this volume.
16 See Margueron 1982; 1987a; 1987b; 1997.
17 Trigger 1990, 119.
18 For a discussion of monumentality see Miroschedji, in press, with references.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

builders (architects, masons, stone-cutters) in their execution and of an abundant labour force, far exceeding the capabilities of a few households.

4. An essential specificity of palaces is their peculiar inner layout, which is neither that of an over-dimensioned domestic dwelling[19] nor the result of the juxtaposition of several domestic dwellings linked together. Notwithstanding the diversity of their layouts, all palatial buildings in the ancient Near East present some typical common features:
   - A layout revealing a monumental planning concept applied from the start; successive additions, when they exist, do not alter the general impression of a carefully planned monumental complex.
   - This planning conforms to principles of organisation that are immediately perceptible (such as orientation and orthogonality of the walls and regular distribution of rooms) and eventually measurable (such as a planning module based on a unit of measurement).
   - The inner layout exhibits some peculiar features, such as inner courtyards, hall(s) for gatherings, and corridors leading to groups of rooms – an organisation destined to control or restrict the access to some parts of the building complex, notably the housing sector and the store-rooms. Domestic installations comparable to those found in contemporary dwellings may be found in palaces, but instead of being spatially dispersed they are grouped together according to activity type (food preparation, cooking, etc.) in particular sectors.
5. The inner layout expresses a combination of functions that are specific to a palace and that are therefore not found in other kinds of buildings (domestic dwellings, temples, fortified structures). This is because the palace is altogether a place for residence, for reception, and for storage of foodstuff and various goods, i.e. a political, administrative, and economic centre in charge of the management of a large domain or a territory.[20]

It is important to stress that these five criteria share a general significance: they are valid for all ancient Near Eastern palaces and do not apply only to the particular case of the southern Levant of the Early Bronze Age.

19 Contra Heinrich (1970); Naumann (1971, 389); and Fritz (1983, 1), who considered the plan of a palace as deriving from that of a domestic dwelling.

20 See Sallaberger 2013, 220: 'A palace can be viewed as a large household, an *oikos*.'

2. A review of the archaeological evidence

2.1. A specific problem for the southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age

There are several reasons why it is interesting to apply the above definition to the case of the Early Bronze Age southern Levant. This region has been often considered as 'peripheral', and consequently somewhat backward in comparison with the more developed 'centre' represented by Mesopotamia and its immediate vicinity, which witnessed more precocious and spectacular socio-political developments. It is now generally acknowledged that the less impressive achievements of the late 4th and 3rd millennia southern Levant owe nothing to contacts with a supposedly more advanced Syro-Mesopotamian 'centre'.[21] They rather resulted from an autochthonous evolution, which led eventually to the establishment of a largely idiosyncratic socio-political organisation. Its definition, however, is the subject of a protracted debate. A pervasive tendency in the archaeological literature of the last twenty-five years, mostly on the part of anthropologically oriented archaeologists working in Jordan, is to define the Early Bronze (EB) II–III fortified settlements as being essentially 'corporate villages'[22] characterised by an inclusionary or corporate mode of social organisation[23] in the framework of a heterarchical political organisation.[24] In short, these settlements would correspond to a corporate society, with little social hierarchy, no form of state apparatus, and a basically non-urban layout. Although the diversity of settlement organisation in the southern Levant may be occasionally acknowledged,[25] this description excludes *a priori* the possibility of the existence of palaces in this region during the Early Bronze Age. Indeed, a perusal of the archaeological literature pertaining to Early Bronze Age palaces in the southern Levant reveals that the opinions of many scholars about their existence range from denial[26] to scepticism.[27]

But other scholars, who do not share the corporate interpretation of Early Bronze Age society, have manifested outright confidence in the existence of palaces from the EB IB onward, a position resulting in a plethora of Early Bronze Age palaces, real or putative,

21 Braemer 2007, 65–67.

22 Philip 2001, 165–166; Chesson 2003; 2015. See also Savage, Falconer and Harrison 2007; Philip 2003; Chesson and Philip 2003; Braemer 2007, 67.

23 Renfrew 1974, 74–79, 83; Blanton 1998; Blanton et al. 1996; Feinman 1995; 2001; 2012; 2013; Kolb 2014, 172–174.

24 Crumley 1995.

25 E.g. Braemer 2007, 80.

26 E.g. Chesson 2003; 2015; Chesson and Philip 2003.

27 E.g. Philip 2001, 165–166, 168, 176; 2003, 112; Genz 2010, 49.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

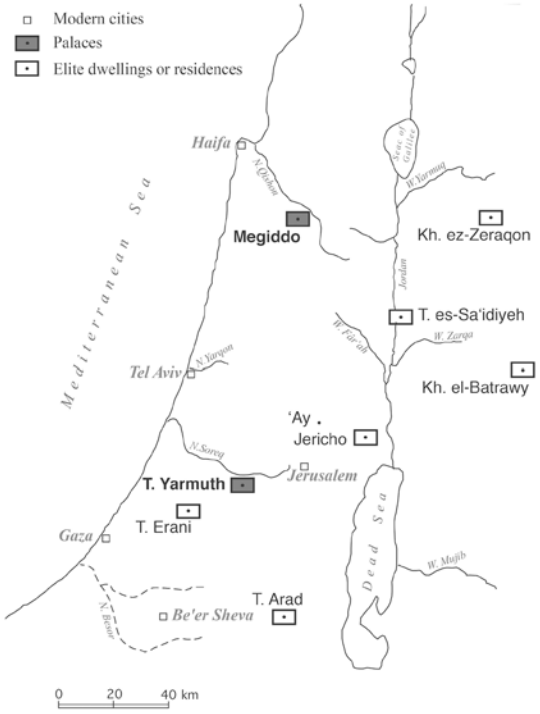


Fig. 1 Map of sites mentioned in the text

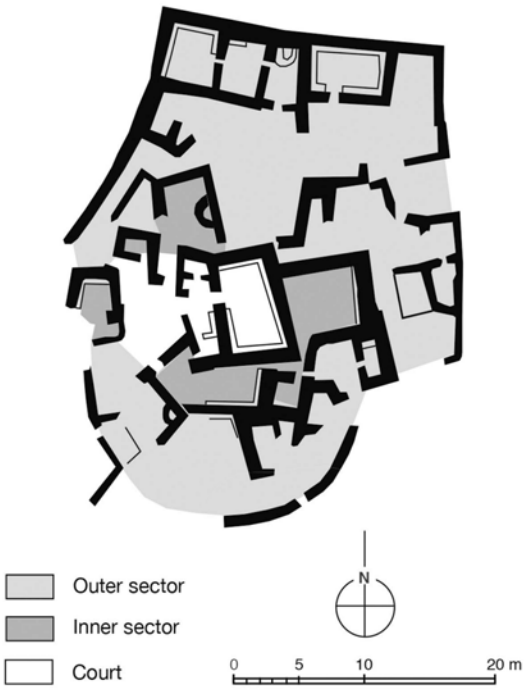


Fig. 3 Area T (the 'palace') at Tel Arad (after Amiran and Ilan 1992, fig. 92)

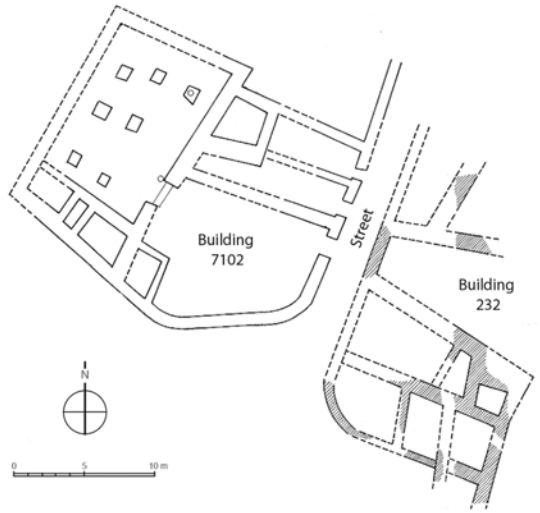


Fig. 2 Building 7102 of Tel Erani, Period C (after Kempinski and Gilead 1991, fig. 4)

in the archaeological literature.[28] The following pages will review the archaeological evidence in light of the palatial definition proposed above (Fig. 1).

28 E.g. Nigro 1994.

2.2. EB I–II archaeological evidence

Evidence is scanty for the EB I–II. Building 7102 at Tel Erani, ascribed to Period C (EB IB, c. 3300 BCE), is remarkable for its size and layout (Fig. 2).[29] Identified as a palace by L. Nigro,[30] it does not exhibit any of the palatial criteria listed above: occupying an insula bordered by streets, it consists of a hall with square mudbrick pillars and attached rooms, among which some may be later additions. Since little is known about this building and its content, it is difficult to determine its function, which was possibly public but clearly not palatial.

Once considered a palace,[31] the EB II Sanctuary A at Ai is actually a cultic building surrounded by a temenos wall.[32] At Tel Arad, the purported 'palace' in Area T hardly deserves this designation (Fig. 3).[33] it is a cluster of domestic dwellings, each composed of a broadroom preceded by a courtyard, forming together an insula bordered by streets with no architectural unity. It is uncertain whether these dwellings were interconnected, and each has yielded typical domestic installations and material assemblages.

The case of the EB II 'palace' of Tell es-Saʿidiyeh is different (Fig. 4). Its architectural layout is clearly not

29 Kempinski and Gilead 1991, fig. 6.
30 Nigro 1994, 7–11.
31 Dever 1995, 605–606.
32 Amiran 1972.
33 Amiran and Ilan 1996, 27–45; Nigro 1994, 12–16.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

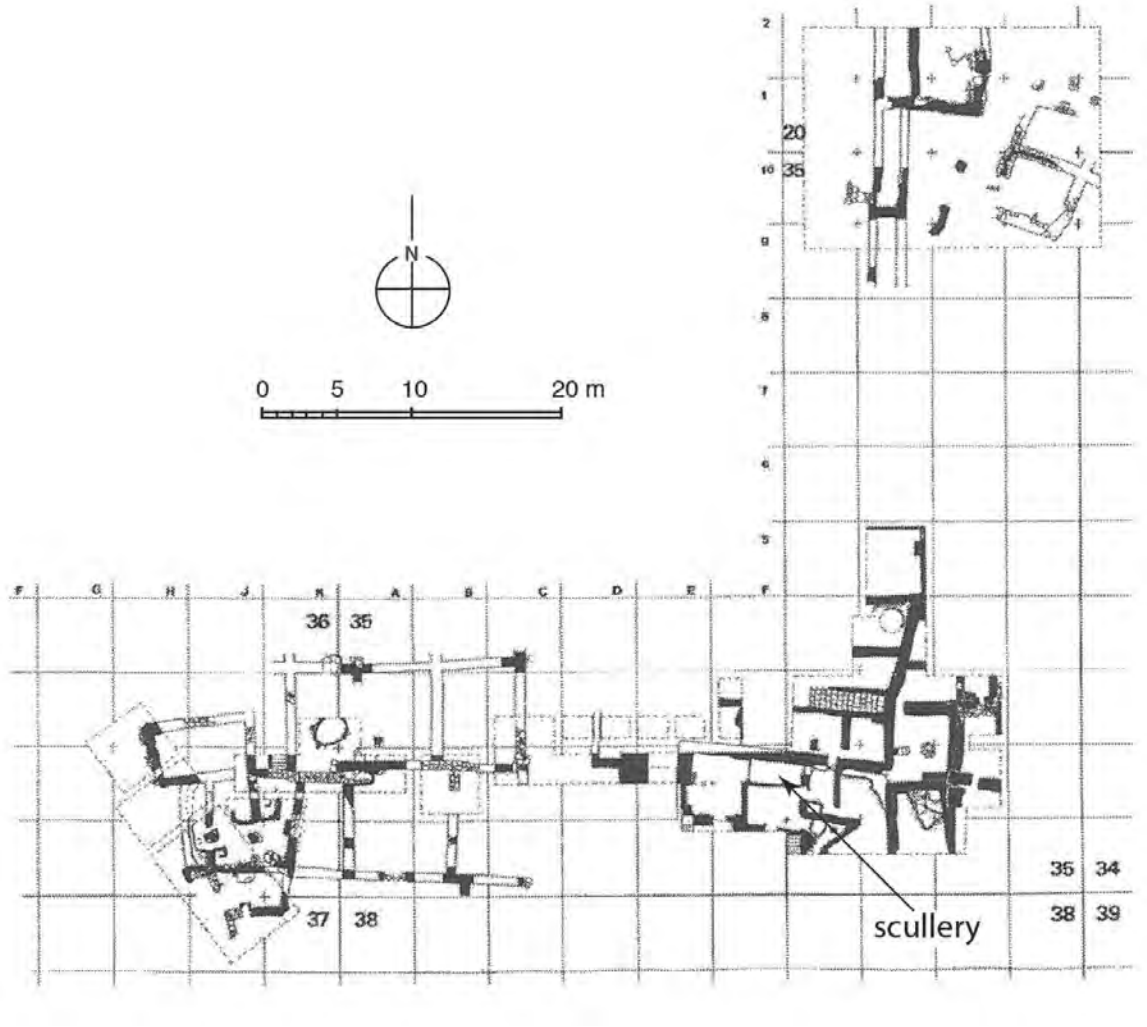


Fig. 4 The 'palatial area' at Tell es-Saʿidiyeh (after Tubb 2006, fig. 17)

palatial: limited excavations have revealed a series of rooms, built modestly and without overall planning, lined up along a passage or a street and distributed over at least three terraces.[34] However, the content of the rooms does not evoke domestic dwellings, despite the presence of hearths and silos. On the basis of the installations and the nature of the material assemblage brought to light, the excavators have distinguished within this complex several distinct functional areas for the production of olive oil, wine, and textiles, in addition to a remarkable small room (the 'scullery'), in which a large amount of high-quality pottery was found, including many drinking vessels apparently intended for banquets. Hence, the complex of Tell es-Saʿidiyeh was of a peculiar character, housing specialised activities, including receptions – although it does not correspond to the palatial criteria listed above.

2.3. EB III archaeological evidence

Seven EB III buildings have been termed 'palaces' in the archaeological literature.

2.3.1. Khirbet ez-Zeraqon

The excavators of Khirbet ez-Zeraqon called a partly exposed building complex close to a sacred precinct a 'palace' (Fig. 5). It is noteworthy for the quality of its construction and because some of its rooms seem to have been used for storage.[35] However, this complex does not present an architectural unity; it is comprised of two distinct buildings (B0.7 and B0.10–11), each well built with fairly thick walls, which were later connected by the addition of small, poorly built rooms (B0.8). At least initially it was a public building of some sort, but it cannot be regarded as a palace on the basis of the criteria formulated above.

34 Tubb, Dorrell and Cobbings 1996, 16–21; 1997, 55–65; Tubb 2006, 42–48.

35 Genz 2010, 49.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

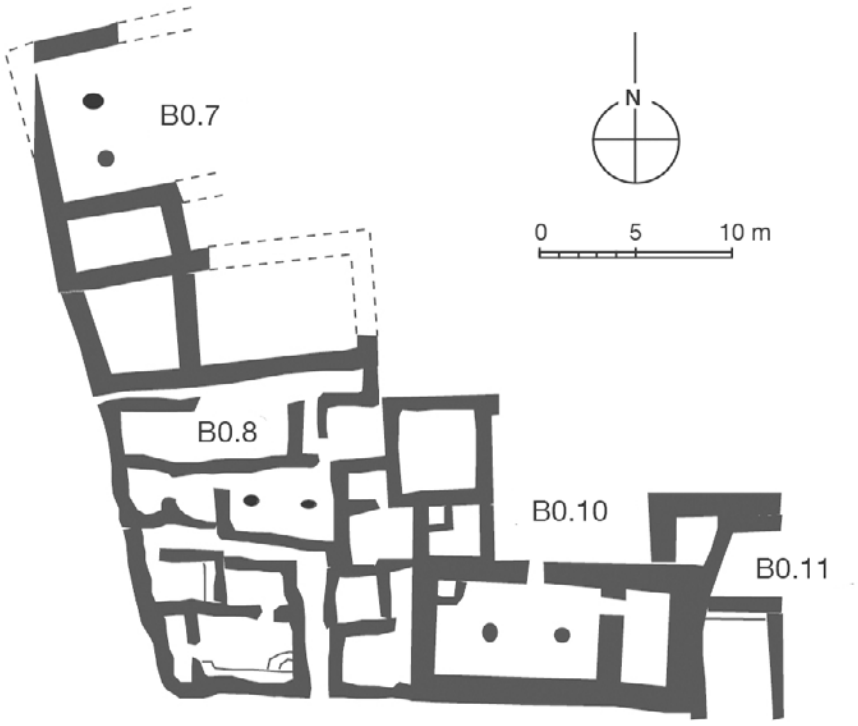


Fig. 5 The public building area at Khirbet ez-Zeraqon (after Genz 2010, fig. 6.2)

2.3.2. Khirbet el-Batrawy

Excavations at Khirbet el-Batrawy have brought to light, on both sides of a passage or a street, two separate buildings that resemble, judging by their plan and architectural character, the typical domestic dwellings of the period (Fig. 6). They were interpreted by the excavator as two symmetric 'pavilions' of a 'palace' with a central passageway, not so much because of the nature and quality of the construction but probably because of the abundance and nature of the finds mainly in the western 'pavilion'.[36] These finds comprise storage and display vessels, bone and metal tools, personal ornaments, a basalt tournette, and also mortars and grinding stones, i.e. they constitute the complete assemblage of a wealthy domestic dwelling and do not reflect the spatial segregation of activities expected in a palace. These discoveries rather suggest that the so-called Palace of the Copper Axes at Khirbet el-Batrawy was actually an elite residence.

2.3.3. Jericho Palace G

L. Nigro has also identified a palace (Palace G) among EB IIIB building remains laid out in tiers on the eastern slope of the tell of Jericho (Fig. 7).[37] Their precise nature is as yet difficult to determine because the published plan is schematic and shows extensive reconstructions, some rather questionable. This plan brings together building remains uncovered by three different expeditions over the last hundred years in three separate areas of excavations with elevation differences of several metres. They belong to a series of rooms (some probably domestic; at least one devoted to storage) distributed over three consecutive terraces each bordered by a thick, well-built retaining wall. The quality of construction is very good, although not monumental, and apparently there are no particular architectural features implying elaborate building techniques. Assuming that these remains belong indeed to one single building complex, it shows little architectural homogeneity although its size betrays its public nature, most probably that of an elite residence. Admittedly, however, the sloping topography of the tell of Jericho was hardly conducive to coherent, comprehensive planning.

2.3.4. Yarmuth Building C

The excavations at Tel Yarmuth have revealed in the north-west part of the city a sequence of three successive public buildings. The earliest is Building C partly uncovered in Area C, where it characterises Stratum C-2 dated to an early phase of EB IIIB (Fig. 8).[38] Its plan is still elusive because its remains have been

36 Nigro 2010; 2013; 2014; 2016a; 2016b, 162–163; Nigro and Sala 2011; 2012; 2013.

37 Nigro 2016b, 159–161; 2016c; Nigro et al. 2011; Nigro and Taha 2013.

38 Miroschedji 2006, 56–67.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

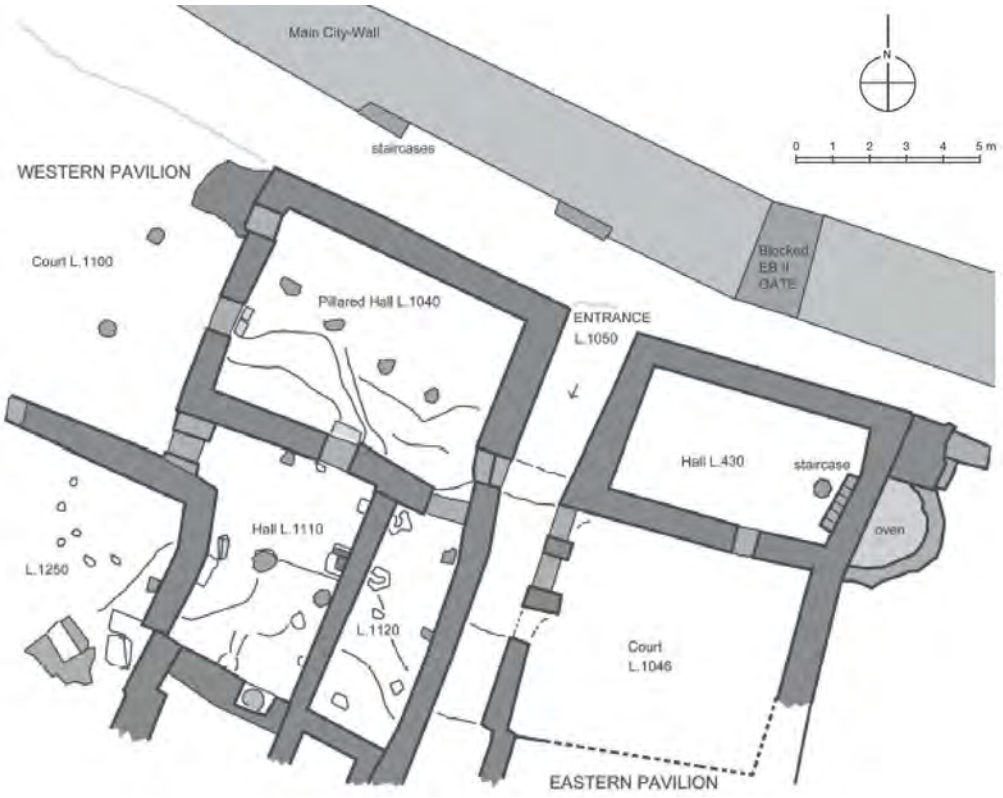


Fig. 6 The 'Palace of the Copper Axes' at Khirbet el-Batrawy (after Nigro 2016, fig. 8.15, with kind permission)

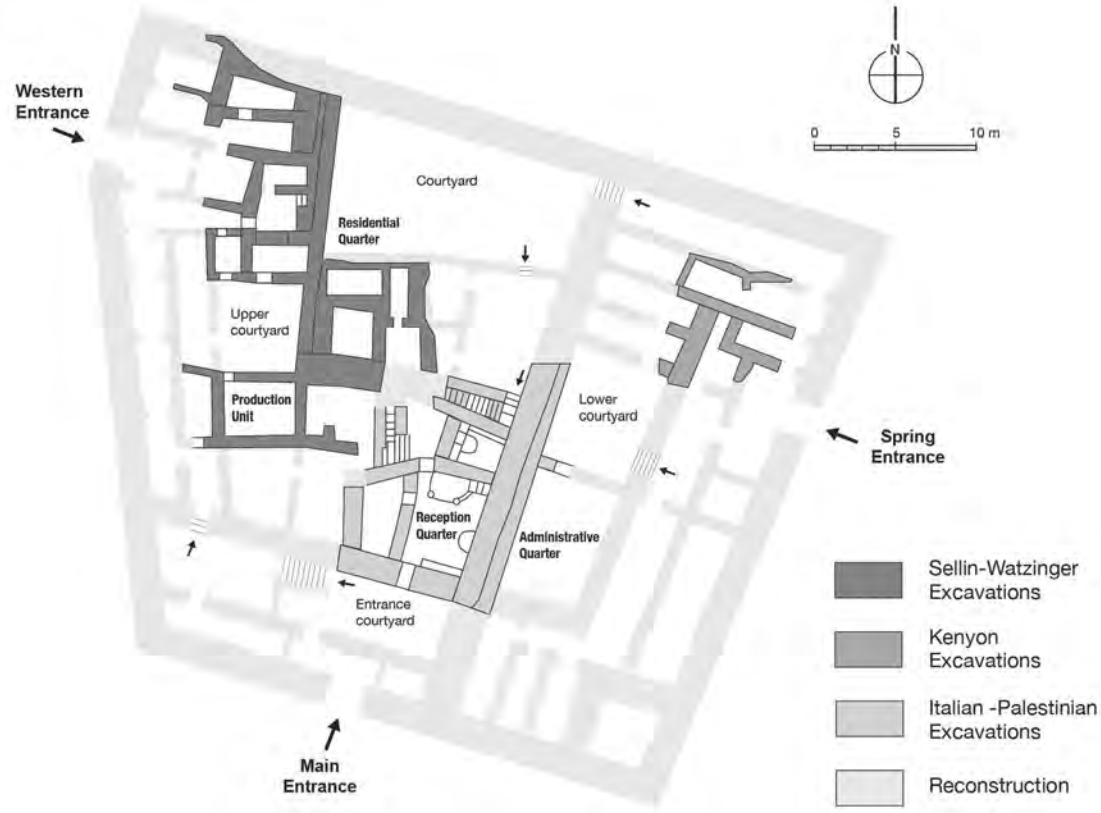


Fig. 7 Palace G at Jericho (redrawn after Nigro 2016, fig. 8)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

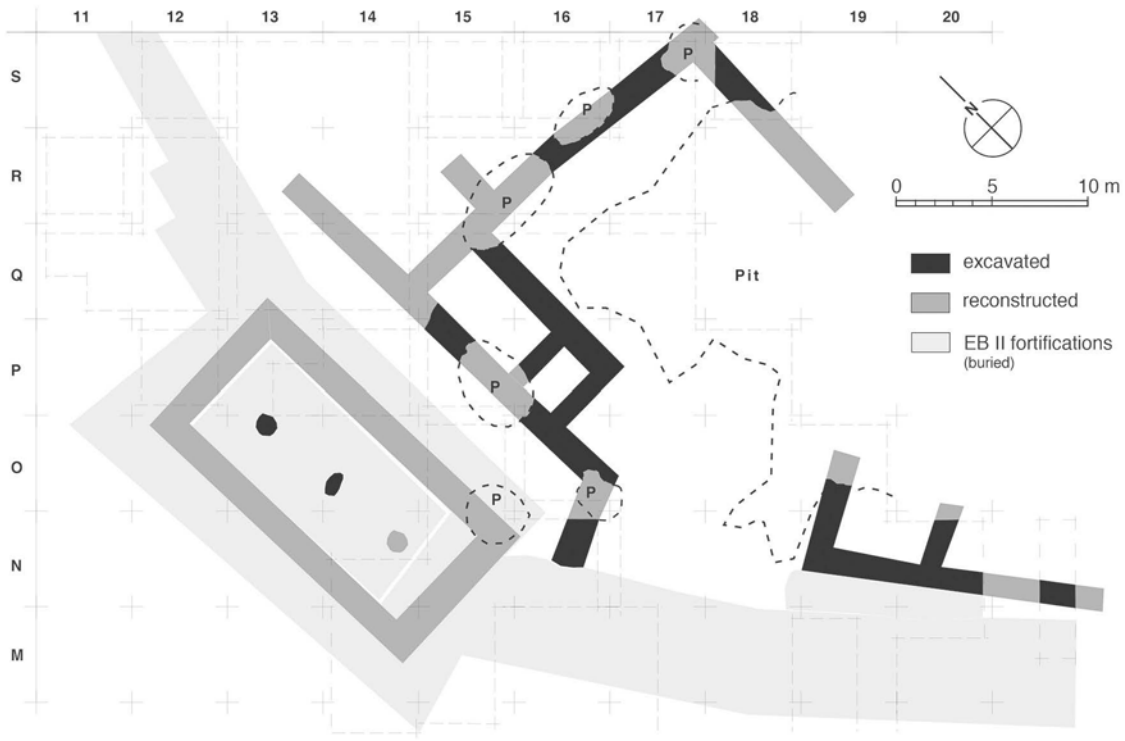


Fig. 8 Remains of public Building C at Tel Yarmuth (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

extensively plundered – presumably when the nearby later Palaces B2 and B1 were constructed – and they were then further destroyed by erosion. Only the wall foundations were preserved together with a few isolated patches of floors. These scattered remains suggest that it was a large building, extending over possibly as much as 1.000 sq.m, with walls 1–1.5 m thick, some with foundations up to 3 m deep. Two large pillar bases resting on top of the EB II bastion probably belong to a large hall related to this building. Building C represents the first recorded evidence at Yarmuth of a monumental public construction erected according to building and measuring techniques that are reminiscent of palatial architecture.[39] Although its plan shows little regularity and its function cannot be ascertained, it may have been a direct predecessor of the forthcoming palaces in the sequence of public buildings at Yarmuth.

2.3.5. Yarmuth Palace B2

The next two large-scale public buildings at Tel Yarmuth, Palaces B2 and B1, both dated to a later phase of EB IIIB, were uncovered in Area B, some 100 m to the south of the adjacent Area C.

Palace B2, the earlier of the two and the first confirmed one, was erected on the levelled remains of a quarter of domestic dwellings of which the greater part had been violently destroyed (Fig. 9).[40] That this area was henceforth devoted to palatial constructions instead of domestic buildings represents a radical change in the life of the city.

Since Palace B2 had been systematically plundered for the building of the subsequent Palace B1 (Fig. 9.2), it is poorly preserved and has yielded almost no material in situ. Its plan has been partially reconstructed by piecing together the observations made in several dispersed soundings of varying sizes, some quite narrow, excavated within the rooms and courtyards of the overlying Palace B1, whose walls had to be preserved for future restoration.[41]

It extended over at least 1.750 sq.m, but its limits could be ascertained only on the south-western side.

39 Miroschedji 2001, 478–479. Note that the remains of a monumental construction extending over nearly 3,000 sq.m and dating possibly to the EB II have been observed on Terrace M and part of Terrace K at Yarmuth; see Miroschedji 2000, 700. The nature of this construction remains, however, undetermined.

40 Miroschedji 2006, 57–59; 2013, 780–784.

41 For a plan of the superposition of the building remains of Strata B-1, B-2, and B-3 see Miroschedji 2006, fig. 6; 2013, fig. 12.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

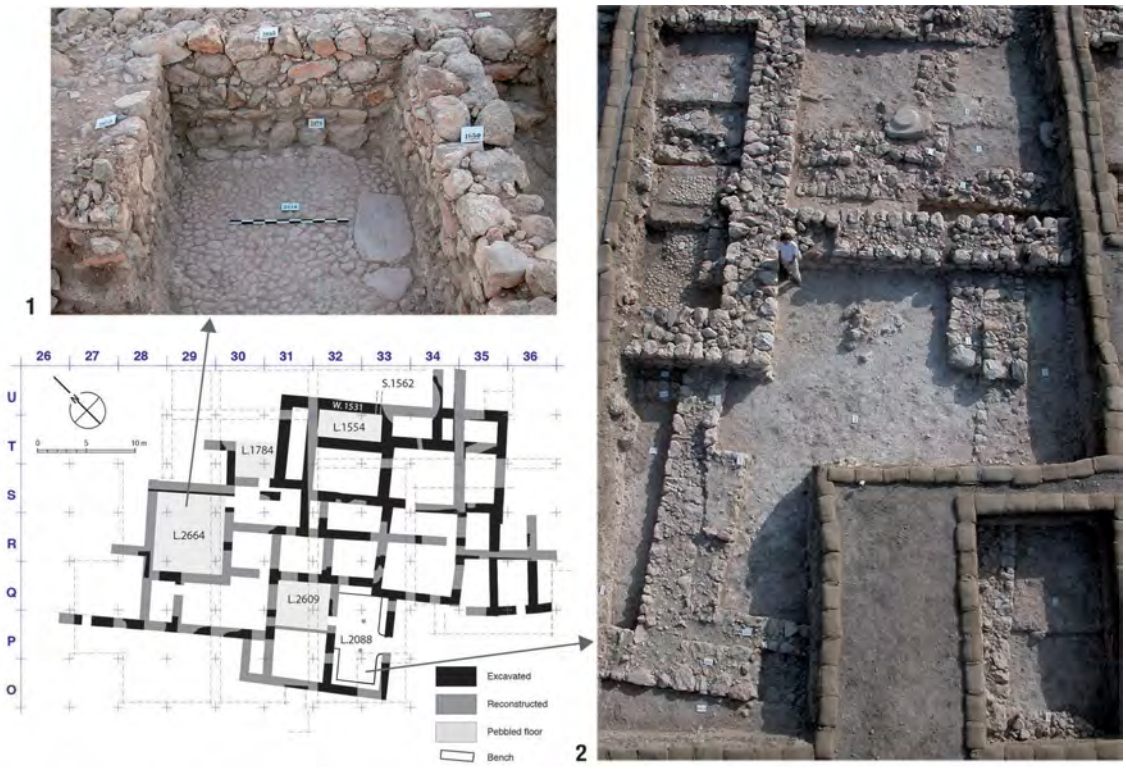


Fig. 9 Plan of Palace B2 at Tel Yarmuth (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

It was thus much larger than the EB III Building 3177 at Megiddo (see below) and more comparable in size to the Middle Bronze Age palace of Tell el-ʿAjjul I (2.200 sq.m).[42] It was a dense construction, of which twenty-six rooms and four inner courtyards have been identified. Its orientation marks a clear break with that of the preceding strata, confirming that its construction introduced a drastic change in urban layout. Its planning is less rigorous than that of Palace B1, suggesting that no general grid was used for the positioning of its walls.[43] Some walls are not regularly aligned and the junctions between them do not form perfect right angles. There are also variations in the building techniques and the thicknesses of the walls, indicating that the palace was not built according to a single method of construction. Thus the walls in the north-eastern part of the palace (Squares S–U 31–35) are quite comparable to those of the subsequent Palace B1, being also well built with a thickness of 1.05/1.1 m (i.e., 2 cubits of 0.525 m), while the other walls, measuring only 0.9 m or 0.8 m in thickness, suggest instead the use of a 'traditional' cubit of c. 0.45 m.

However, the planning and building techniques of Palace B2 are far superior to those used in contemporary domestic building and clearly pertain to palatial architecture. This is especially obvious when considering some peculiar features of this building complex, such as the following examples:

- The main walls uncovered in Squares S–U 31–35 were built with deep foundation trenches that cut through the walls of Stratum B-3 and formed the infrastructure of an artificial terrace.
- A significant connection with the subsequent Palace B1 is represented by four inner courtyards with pebbled floors (Fig. 9.1). Established on a layer of medium-sized coarse stones and joined together with plaster, the equally sized pebbles are identical to those used in several doorways of Palace B1.
- Linked to the Northeastern Courtyard (L.1554) there is a water channel (S.1562) crossing Wall 1531 in Square U 33.

Most rooms have lost their pillar bases, which were almost certainly plundered during the construction of the next palace, and present no peculiar features denoting their function, except for one (Fig. 9.2): L.2088 in Squares O–P 32–33 is distinguished by its large size (9.5 × 5 m, i.e. 47.5 sq.m), traces of two pillar bases placed lengthwise along a central line and the presence of stone benches along its walls; it is thus reminiscent of the Reception Hall (L.2011) of Palace B1 (see Figs. 10–11) and may have had a similar function.

42 Nigro 1994, pl. 21.
43 See Miroschedji 2018, 8.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

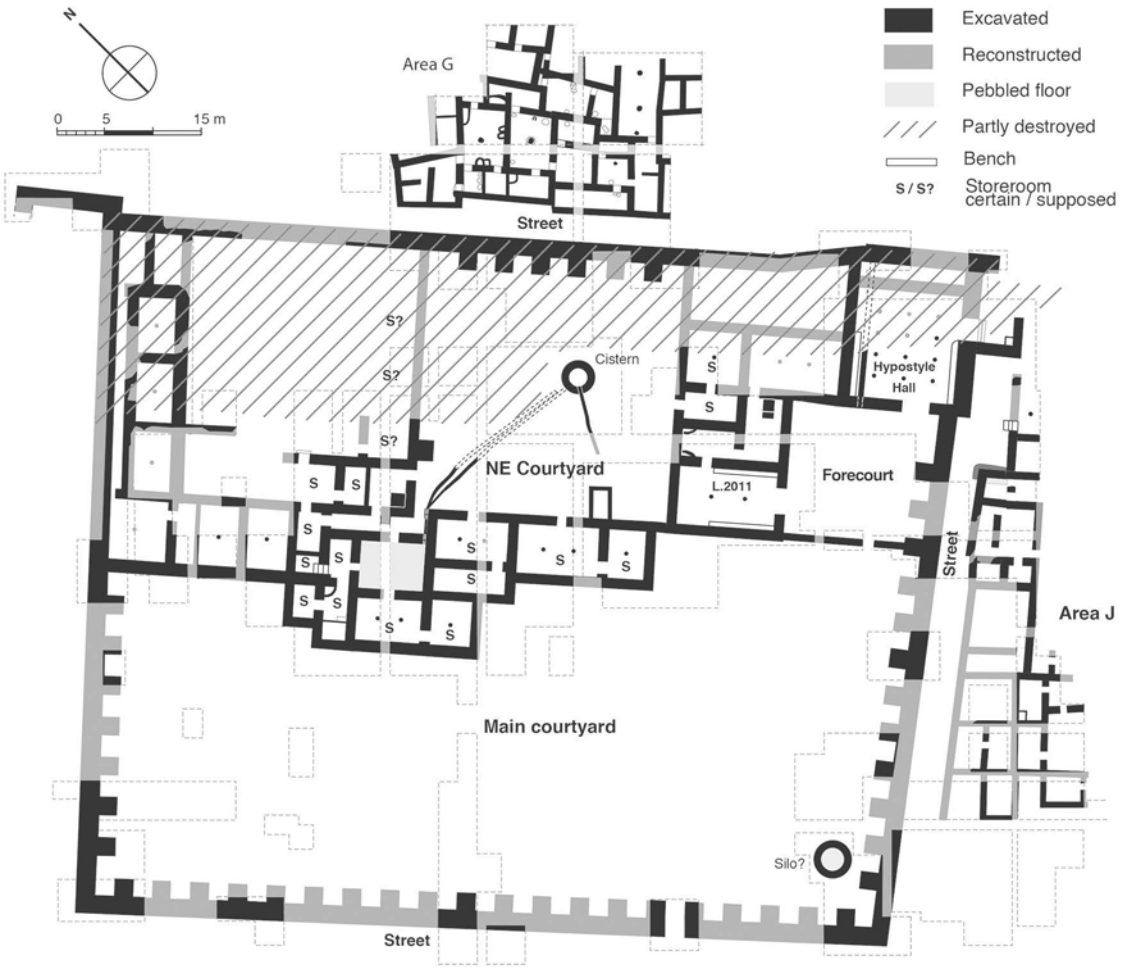


Fig. 10 Palace B1 at Tel Yarmuth (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

2.3.6. Yarmuth Palace B1

Palace B2 was clearly a first experiment in palatial architecture at Yarmuth. Its existence was apparently ephemeral: it was razed to the ground and its planimetric and constructional imperfections were corrected with the subsequent Palace B1, a much larger, ambitious, and coherent building enterprise (Fig. 10). As details of this palace have already been described in previous papers,[44] only its most pertinent features will be reviewed here, according to the five palatial criteria mentioned above:

1. *Size*. – The complete outline of the palace has been cleared: measuring 84.5 m by 73 m, it covers an area of 6.000 sq.m and is one of the largest building complexes known in the southern Levant of the Bronze Age in general, even larger than palaces of the Middle and Late Bronze Age such as Tell el-ʿAjjul I (2.200 sq.m), Megiddo X (1.000 sq.m) and Megiddo VIII (1.200 sq.m).[45]
2. *Spatial segregation*. – Limited by thick walls and bordered by streets on at least three sides, the palace is clearly segregated from the surrounding domestic quarters. It towered at least 4 m above the dwellings of Area G located downslope to the north-east.[46]
3. *Quality and nature of the building techniques*. – Since the palace was erected on a sloping terrain, its construction was preceded by large-scale ground preparation: a stretch of the EB II Fortification Wall A, which had been out of use for a long time by then, and some of the associated domestic houses were levelled to a depth of c. 2 m.[47] The debris was accumulated downslope to form an artificial terrace that incorporated the smaller terrace of Palace B2. The fill rested against the north-eastern peripheral wall whose foundations served as a retaining wall.

44 Miroschedji 2001; 2003; 2006, 60–69; 2013, 785–790; 2018, 3–8.

45 Nigro 1994.

46 See Miroschedji 2013, fig. 17.

47 See Miroschedji 2013, 785, figs. 2, 17.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 11 Partial view of Palace B1 to the north-west; Reception Hall 2011 is in the foreground (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

Fig. 12 Partial view of Palace B1 to the north; Inner Courtyard 2137 with pebbled floor is in the centre (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

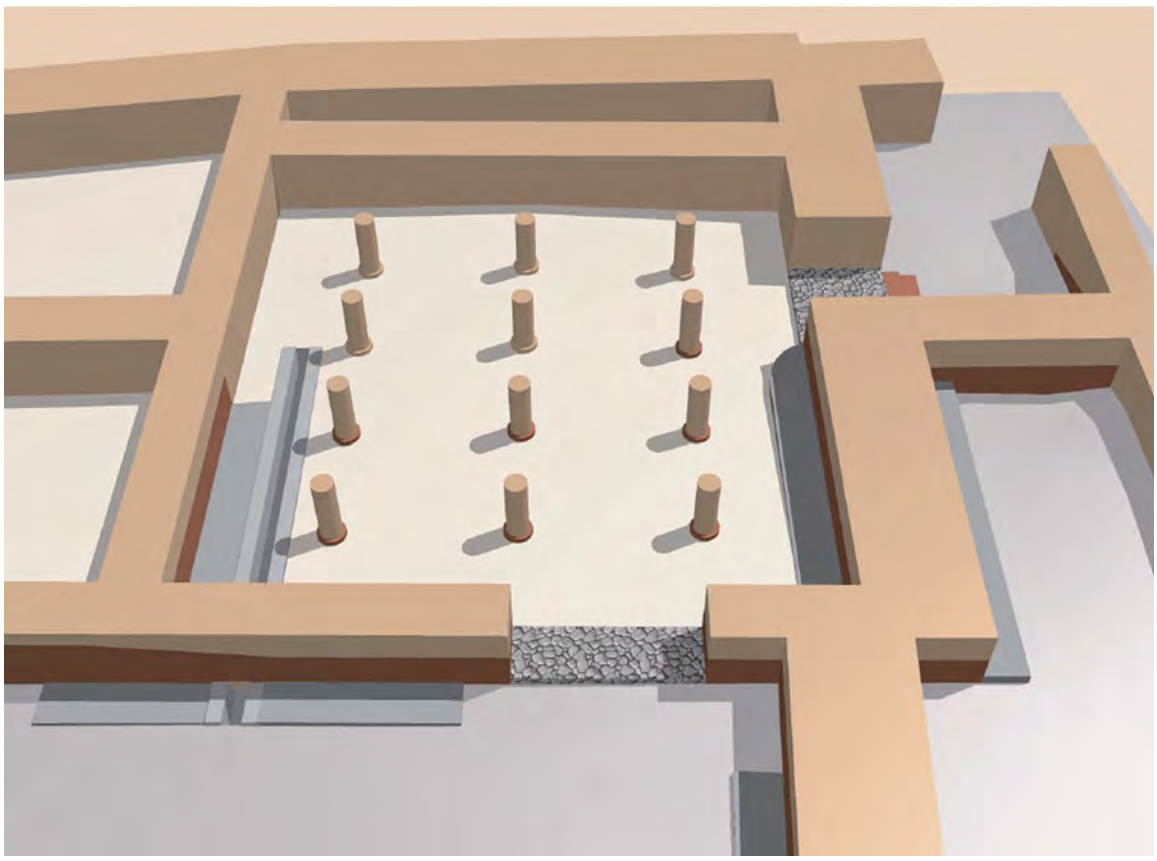


Fig. 13 Three-dimensional reconstruction of the Hypostyle Hall (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

At the same time, Palace B2 was razed to the ground (see Fig. 9.2), in some places even beneath its floors, and its stones were reused.

The building techniques are especially elaborate and must be considered as characteristic of palatial architecture since they are not attested in the domestic architecture of the Early Bronze Age neither at Yarmuth nor elsewhere. This can be seen in the following features:

- The presence of a hypostyle hall marking the ceremonial entrance to the palace (Figs. 13–14). In this hall the first two rows of pillar bases to the south-west rest on transverse stylobate walls – a unique building technique for this early period.
- The walls have deep foundations and elaborate masonry and they are coated with lime plaster. They have standardised thicknesses based on multiples of a 0.525 m cubit.[48] This regularity in measurements is especially remarkable in the case of the spacing of the buttresses along the inner face of the peripheral walls of the Main Courtyard and the Northeastern Courtyard.[49]
- The doorways also tend to be standardised and belong each to one of two main types according to their width: the common doorways (38 in all) have a passage that is usually 2 cubits wide and can be further divided into several subtypes, the most common one having a 2 cubits wide passage flanked by half-cubit thick brick door-jambs and a threshold made of stone slabs or pebbles.[50] The 'ceremonial doorways', attested three times in connection with the Hypostyle Hall and the Reception Hall, are comparable to the kind just mentioned, but are double their size: the passage is 3 or 4 cubits wide, the brick door-jambs are 1 or 1.5 cubits thick, and there are 4 or 5 wooden pillars on both sides, each with a diameter of c. 20 cm and with a disposition suggesting that the door frame was recessed.[51]
- The floors of the rooms are plastered and the floor of a large inner courtyard is made of fine pebbles set into a mortar of crushed limestone (Fig. 12, centre).
- With few exceptions, the pillar bases are of the same type: a very big stone whose upper part has been carved to form a raised disk supporting the pillar (Figs. 11, 14).

48 Miroschedji 2001, fig. 24.2; 2018, 3–8.
49 Miroschedji 2001, fig. 24.5; 2018, 4–5.
50 Miroschedji 2001, fig. 24.4; 2003, fig. 8.
51 Miroschedji 2018, 5–6 and fig. 4.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 14 View of the Hypostyle Hall to the north-east (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

- Several water channels run across the palace, draining the inner courtyard and the forecourt from where they emerge (Figs. 15, 17). Since they cross walls and door-jambs, their course was pre-planned when the palace was built. The water channels of the central part of the palace converge toward a huge stone-lined hydraulic installation located near the centre of the Northeastern Courtyard (Figs. 15, 17). It is actually a well-shaped water cistern with an inner diameter of 1.6 m and a depth of at least 4.5 m, which penetrated into the bedrock.[52]

4. *Planning and layout.* – With very few exceptions, there is no correspondence between the structures (walls and pillar bases) of the two successive palaces, i.e. Palace B1 did not reuse existing walls as foundations for the new walls or the pillar bases (e.g. Fig. 9.2).[53] It was built independently from its predecessor as a completely new project following an original monumental planning scheme applied from the start with only very few later additions. Established on a 7.5 × 7.5 cubits grid, the rigorous planning resulted in a regular plan with perfect right angles (Figs. 10–12).[54] A detailed analysis of the plan has shown that three identical planning grids with slight differences in orientation were used for the planning of the palace, either at different stages of the building process or, more probably, by different teams working simultaneously on three different parts.[55]

   A remarkable aspect of the interior layout of the palace is the presence of an inner courtyard, large halls, and corridors leading to groups of store-rooms. The dimensions of the rooms and the corridors apparently follow standardised proportions repeated in several places within the palace. Unfortunately, the fact that the rooms of the northern part of the palace have been destroyed by Byzantine earthworks and that several doorways had been blocked in a later phase of its use precludes an understanding of the original circulations in the entire complex.

5. *Functional specialisation by area.* – The analysis of the plan reveals at least five distinct functional areas within the palace:

- An 'official' sector, with the main entrance, the Hypostyle Hall, the Forecourt and the Reception Hall (Figs. 10–11, 13–14).
- The latter gave access to other rooms to the north-east, forming possibly a private sector.

52 Miroschedji 2013, 786–789.
53 See Miroschedji 2013, fig. 12.
54 Miroschedji 2001, 475–477.
55 Miroschedji 2018, 6 and fig. 7.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

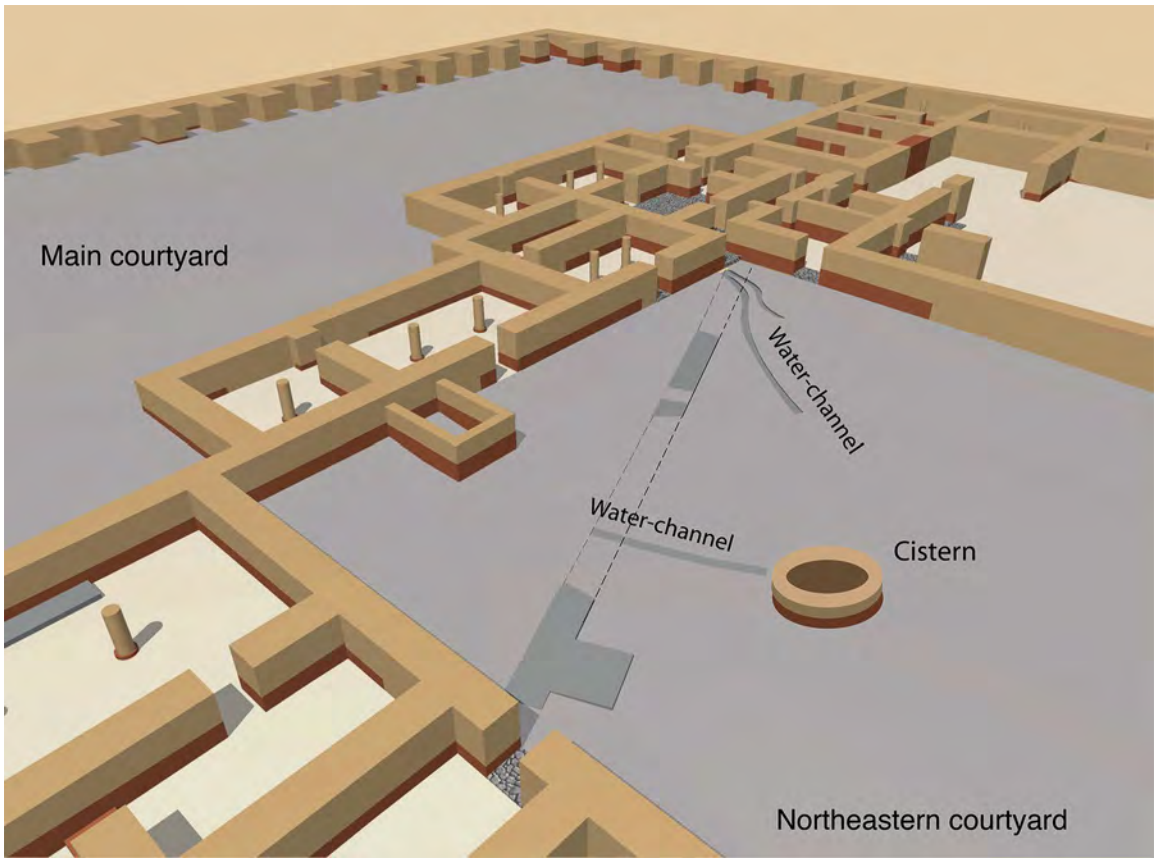


Fig. 15 Three-dimensional reconstruction of the Northeastern Courtyard; view to the west (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

Fig. 16 View to the north-west of Storeroom 2152 with the pithoi in situ (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 17 Detail of the central part of Palace B1, showing the distribution of the pottery within the store-rooms (© Mission archéologique de Tel Yarmouth)

- An economic sector centred on the Northeastern Courtyard that gave access to a series of store-rooms, most of them arranged in pairs, so that one door led to two consecutive rooms (Figs. 15, 17). Most store-rooms were found filled with pithoi, vats, and jars (Figs. 16–17); altogether, nearly 200 pithoi were collected within the palace. Presumably, the store-rooms which were found more or less empty once contained goods held in containers made of perishable material.[56]
- A domestic sector to the north-west, including at least one kitchen with several cooking installations.
- The Main Courtyard forms another sector of uncertain function: it may have been a stockyard or a courtyard for periodic gathering of people.

By its dimensions, its monumentality, the complexity of its layout, the elaborate character of its planning, the quality of its building technique, and the nature of the finds, Palace B1 represents to date the most accomplished palace of the southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age.

2.3.7. Megiddo (Building 3177)

Another EB III palace, more or less contemporary with the Yarmuth palaces, is Building 3177 of Megiddo XVI (Fig. 18).[57] Although its incomplete excavation and succinct publication preclude a detailed description, the data from Palace B1 at Yarmuth shed light on some photographs and cursory descriptions from the report and suggest that there were striking similarities in architectural details between the two buildings.

56 Miroschedji 2006, 64–67.

57 Loud 1948, 70–76; Fritz 1983, 2–4; Kempinski 1989, 30, 155; Esse 1991, 84; Nigro 1994, 16–23.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

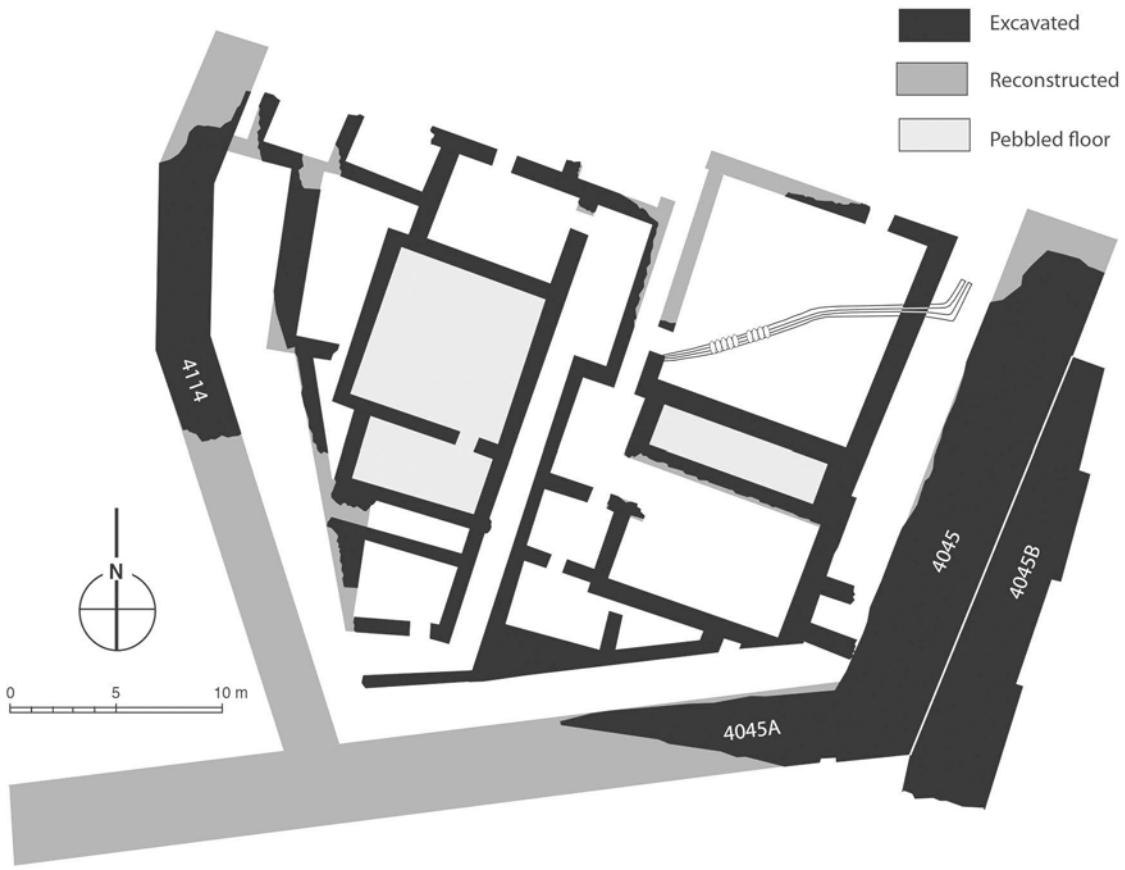


Fig. 18 Building 3177 at Megiddo (after Loud 1948, fig. 304)

Building 3177 is a very large building, covering at least 800 sq.m, built in the framework of a large-scale urban project of monumental proportion, involving both the temples and the palace. Erected on a terrace bordered by huge terrace walls (Walls 4114 and 4045), markedly separated from the surrounding buildings, its partially uncovered plan is regular, suggesting a comprehensive planning scheme, even though its builders could not design it freely as they had to take into account the adjacent terrace walls. The metrological analysis of the plan reveals the probable application of a grid with a module of 11 cubits of c. 0.52 m, the same as that used for the nearby temples (Temple 4040 and the twin Temples 5192+5269), and with exactly the same orientation as Temple 4040.[58] It comprises two inner courtyards, a central corridor, and a series of communicating rooms arranged in pairs or in groups.

Most interesting are the building techniques, unattested in contemporary domestic dwellings and comparable to those observed in the Yarmuth palaces. The walls are thick and well built, usually with a fill of rubble between the faces made of roughly hewn stones;[59] they are covered with a thick plaster of crushed limestone mixed with lime that extends to the floors.[60] Pebbled-floors cover the courtyards[61] and appear also on thresholds.[62] The carefully hewn circular stone bases are similar to those at Yarmuth, with a raised disk on the top.[63] No less characteristic is the presence of a water channel buried under the floors and similar to those in Palace B1; it probably came out of the square courtyard with the pebbled floor and crossed also a doorway underneath one of its door-jambs.

3. The process and significance of the emergence of palaces

Several conclusions emerge from this overview of purported or established palaces of the southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age.

58 Miroschedji 2001, 483–485.

59 Loud 1948, fig. 174.
60 Loud 1948, figs. 168, 172.
61 Loud 1948, fig. 162.
62 Loud 1948, figs. 173, 178.
63 Loud 1948, fig. 174.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 19 Partial view of the late 5th – early 6th Dynasties relief of the Tomb of Inti at Deshasheh (after Petrie 1898, pl. IV)

3.1. The appearance of the first palaces in the EB III

The first conclusion concerns the process of emergence of palaces. In accordance with the strict definition of palaces given above, it appears that no palaces *sensu stricto* are attested in the southern Levant before the second half of the EB III at Yarmuth (Palaces B2 and B1) and at Megiddo (Building 3177). These palatial complexes were erected as a comprehensive monumental endeavour on an unprecedented large scale, employing new planning and building techniques. Significantly, in both cases the palaces were erected on the occasion of a large-scale urban reorganisation, which took place at Yarmuth following a widespread destruction of a domestic quarter, either deliberate or accidental.

These palaces stand in sharp contrast to the earlier and contemporary buildings sometimes labelled as 'palaces' and mentioned above (§ 2.2 to 2.3.4). However, it should be emphasised that these doubtful or questionable 'palaces' are not just enlarged domestic dwellings: they actually do belong to a distinct category of buildings that have not yet received proper consideration: they are most probably testimony of elite dwellings (Erani, Arad, Khirbet el-Batrawy) or residences (Khirbet ez-Zeraqon, Jericho, the White Building at Yarmuth), with evidence of storage (Khirbet el-Batrawy, Khirbet ez-Zeraqon) and/or of feasting activities (Tell es-Saʿidiyeh). This does not mean that there was a kind of 'architectural continuum' between

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

elite buildings and palaces, the latter being simply larger or more complex than the former. The rigorous archaeological definition of palaces suggested above actually delineates a threshold beyond which an elite building becomes a palace *sensu stricto*. At the same time it bears witness to the emergence in the EB III of a different type of socio-political organisation that found its architectural expression in a new category of buildings.

3.2. A widespread architectural tradition

A second conclusion derives from the observation of close similarities between the building techniques used in both Palace B1 at Tel Yarmuth and Building 3177 at Megiddo and their uniqueness among constructions of this time. Such similarities can hardly be explained without assuming that the two buildings had been erected by specialised builders sharing the same architectural tradition and using the same building techniques.[64] As their expertise could have been acquired, maintained, and transmitted only through repeated experiences, it is most probable that these specialised builders were not attached to one single settlement and that they put their talent into practice as itinerant specialists in several southern Levantine city-states, not just Yarmuth and Megiddo.[65] It can thus be predicted that other comparable palaces will be discovered in the future at other sites, probably west of the Jordan River.

3.3. The emergence of a centralised political organisation

This last observation leads to a third conclusion with a wider scope. The emergence of palaces implies that significant socio-political changes had taken place in several southern Levantine city-states during the mature EB III. These palaces were built at the initiative of an elite whose power could be transmitted over several generations, as suggested by the direct succession of Palaces B2 and B1 at Yarmuth. Until then, the only monumental building projects attested in the southern Levant concerned temples and fortifications: in serving immediate social needs (cult, defence) and in developing and asserting a collective identity, they fulfilled first and foremost collective interests, in accordance with an inclusionary or corporate mode of social organisation.[66] On the other hand, since palaces are built by an individual or by a small elite group to serve particular or restricted interests, their very existence betrays an exclusionary or network mode of social organisation, in which the promotion of the social and ideological status of a small elite is of primary importance.[67]

Hence, the appearance of the first palaces during the EB III reflects a change from an earlier emphasis on types of construction enhancing communal/corporate values to a later tendency towards the erection of ostentatious buildings intended to manifest symbolically the power of their owner. It seems that this shift from inclusionary to exclusionary monumental building projects materialises a parallel shift from a corporate to an individualised political power that took place then within some city-states as a result of the concentration of authority in the hands of a restricted group. After generations of competing power, one lineage eventually managed to impose its pre-eminence over the others and its head asserted kingship. An indirect iconographic testimony that kings did exist in southern Levantine Early Bronze Age cities is actually given by the late 5th Dynasty Deshasheh relief, which shows a seated king within the Canaanite city besieged by an Egyptian army (Fig. 19).[68] The political organisation resulting from these changes was presumably that of a rudimental kingship, in which the king was simply a *primus inter pares* negotiating his authority with the heads of the other lineages of the city forming a Council of Elders, following a model similar to the one documented in the Ebla and Mari archives.[69] The so-called Reception Hall of Palace B1 at Yarmuth could well be a material expression of this balance of political power, since it appears as a distant ancestor of the throne rooms of historic periods, which were essentially formal meeting rooms in which the king consulted with his advisers.

64 Miroschedji 2001, 483–485; 2018, 16.

65 For further discussion see Miroschedji 2001, 487; 2018, 15.

66 See above §2.1 and Miroschedji in press.

67 Blanton 1998; Blanton et al. 1996; Feinman 1995; 2001; 2012; 2013; Kolb 2014, 172–174.

68 Petrie 1898, pl. IV.

69 See above §1.1 and Miroschedji in press.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Amiran, R.
1972 Reflections on the Identity of the Deity at the Early Bronze II and III Temples at Ai, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 208, 9–13.

Amiran R. and Ilan, O.
1996 *Early Arad II: The Chalcolithic and Early Bronze IB Settlements and the Early Bronze II City: Architecture and Town Planning: Sixth to Eighteenth Seasons of Excavations, 1971–1978, 1980–1984*, Jerusalem.

Aurenche, O.
1982 À l'origine du temple et du palais dans les civilisations de la Mésopotamie ancienne, *Ktéma* 7, 237–260.
1985 L'apport de l'observation ethnographique à la compréhension des monuments anciens: palais de Mari et palais actuels du Proche-Orient, *Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 4, 347–374.

Blanton, R.E.
1998 *Beyond Centralization: Steps toward a Theory of Egalitarian Behavior in Archaic States*, in: G.M. Feinman and J. Marcus (eds.), *Archaic States*, Santa Fe, 135–172.

Blanton, R.E., Feinman, G.M., Kowalewski, S.A. and Peregrine, P.N.
1996 A Dual-processual Theory for the Evolution of Mesoamerican Civilization, *Current Anthropology* 37, 1–14.

Braemer, F.
2007 *Transformations des systèmes d'agglomération au Levant (3500–3000 avant notre ère): peut-on parler d'urbanisations précoces?* in: J. Guilaine (ed.), *Le Chalcolithique et la construction des inégalités. Tome II: Proche et Moyen-Orient, Amérique, Afrique*, Paris, 65–83.

Chesson, M.
2003 Households, Houses, Neighborhoods and Corporate Villages: Modeling the Early Bronze Age as a House Society, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 16, 79–102.
2015 Reconceptualizing the Early Bronze Age Southern Levant without Cities: Local Histories and Walled Communities of EBA II–III Society, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 28, 21–79.

Chesson, M. and Philip, G.
2003 Tales of the City? 'Urbanism' in the Early Bronze Age Levant from Mediterranean and Levantine Perspectives, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 16, 3–16.

Cooper, L.
2006 *Early Urbanism on the Syrian Euphrates*, New York and London.

Crumley, C.L.
1995 *Heterarchy and the Analysis of Complex Societies*, in: R.M. Ehrenreich, C.L. Crumley and J. Levy (eds.), *Heterarchy and the Analysis of Complex Societies*, Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 6, Washington, D.C, 1–5.

Dever, W.G.
1995 *Palaces and Temples in Canaan and Ancient Israel*, in: J.M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, Vol. I*, New York, 605–614.

Durand, J.-M.
2002 *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari*, *tome I*, Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 16, Paris.

Esse, D.L.
1991 *Subsistence, Trade, and Social Change in Early Bronze Age Palestine,* Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations 50, Chicago.

Feinman, G.M.
1995 *The Emergence of Inequality: A Focus on Strategies and Processes*, in: T.D. Price and G.M. Feinman (eds.), *Foundation of Social Inequality*, New York, 255–279.
2001 *Mesoamerican Political Complexity. The Corporate-Network Dimension*, in: J. Haas (ed.), *From Leaders to Rulers*, New York, 151–175.
2012 *Comparative Frames for the Diachronic Analysis of Complex Societies: Next Steps*, in: M.E. Smith (ed.), *The Comparative Archaeology of Complex Societies*, Cambridge, UK, 1–43.
2013 *The Emergence of Social Complexity. Why More Than Population Size Matters*, in: D.M. Carballo (ed.), *Cooperation and Collective Action: Archaeological Perspectives*, Boulder, CO, 35–56.

Fleming, D.E.
2004 *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors: Mari and Early Collective Governance*, Cambridge, UK.

Fritz, V.
1983 Paläste während der Bronze- und Eisenzeit in Palästina, *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 99, 1–42.

Genz, H.
2010 *Thoughts on the Function of 'Public Buildings' in the Early Bronze Age Southern Levant*, in: D. Bolger and L.C. Maguire (eds.), *The Development of Pre-state Communities in the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of Edgar Peltenburg*, British Association of Near East Archaeology Publications Series Vol. 2, Oxford and Oakville, 46–52.

Heinrich, E.
1970 Vom reichen Wohnhaus zum Palast?, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 102, 100–103.

Kempinski, A.
1989 *Megiddo: A City-State and Royal Centre in North Israel*, Materialen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie 40, Munich.

Kempinski, A. and Gilead, I.
1991 New Excavations at Tel Erani: A Preliminary Report of the 1985–1988 Seasons, *Tel Aviv* 18, 164–191.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Kolb, M.J.
2014 *Monumentality among the Mediterranean Islands*, in: J.F. Osborne (ed.), *Approaching Monumentality in Archaeology,* Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology Proceedings 3, New York, 153–180.

Loud, G.
1948 *Megiddo II: Seasons of 1935–1939*, 2 vols., Oriental Institute Publication 62, Chicago.

Margueron, J.-C.
1982 *Recherches sur les palais mésopotamiens de l'âge du Bronze*, 2 vols., Bibliothèque archéologique et historique CVII, Paris.
1987a *L'apparition du palais au Proche-Orient*, in: E. Levy (ed.), *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome: actes du colloque de Strasbourg 19–22 juin 1985*, Leiden, 9–38.
1987b *Les palais syriens à l'âge du Bronze*, in: E. Levy (ed.), *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome: actes du colloque de Strasbourg 19–22 juin 1985*, Leiden, 127–158.
1997 *Palace*, in: E.M. Meyers (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, Vol. 4, New York, Oxford, 197–200.
2003 *Les Mésopotamiens*, 2nd edition, Paris.
2004 *Mari, métropole de l'Euphrate*, Paris.
2007 Notes d'archéologie et d'architecture orientales 14 – La salle du trône, d'Uruk à Babylone, *Syria* 84, 69–106.

Matthiae, P.
2006 Un grand temple de l'époque des archives dans l'Ebla protosyrienne: fouilles à Tell Mardikh 2004–2005, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 150.1, 447–493.
2010 *Early Syrian Palatial Architecture*, in: J. Becker, R. Hempelmann and E. Rehm (eds.), *Kulturlandschaft Syrien, Zentrum und Peripherie, Festschrift für Jan-Waalke Meyer*, Münster, 349–358.
2013 *The Royal Palace. Functions of the Quarters and the Government of the Chora*, in: P. Matthiae and N. Marchetti (eds.), *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*, Walnut Creek, CA, 49–65.

Miroschedji, P. de
2000 Fouilles de Tel Yarmouth: résultats des 11e, 12e et 13e campagnes de fouilles (1996–1999), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 144.2, 670–710.
2001 *Notes on Early Bronze Age Metrology and the Birth of Architecture in Palestine*, in: S.R. Wolff (ed.), *Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and Neighboring Lands in the Memory of Douglas L. Esse*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations No. 59 and American Schools of Oriental Research Book No. 5, Chicago, 465–491.
2003 The Late EB III Palace B1 at Tel Yarmuth – A Descriptive Summary, *Eretz Israel* 27, 153*–170*.
2006 *At the Dawn of History: Sociopolitical Developments in Southwestern Canaan in Early Bronze Age III*, in: A.M. Maeir and P. de Miroschedji (eds.), *"I Will Speak the Riddle of Ancient Times": Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, Vol. 1, Winona Lake, IN, 55–78.
2013 Fouilles de Tel Yarmouth: résultats des travaux de 2003 à 2009 (14e–18e campagnes), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 2013.3, 759–796.
2014 *The Southern Levant (Cisjordan) during the Early Bronze Age*, in: A. Killebrew and M. Steiner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant, c. 8000–332 BCE*, Oxford, 307–329.
2015 *L'apparition des palais au Levant méridional au Bronze ancien et sa signification*, in: C. Michel (ed.), *Séminaire d'Histoire et d'Archéologie des Mondes Orientaux (SHAMO) 2012–2013, de la maison à la ville dans l'Orient ancien: bâtiments publics et lieux de pouvoir*, Cahiers des thèmes transversaux d'ArScAn 12, Nanterre, 91–101.
2018 *Metrology and Early Bronze Age Urbanization in the Southern Levant: Some Additional Notes*, in: I. Shai, J.R. Chadwick, L. Hitchcock and J. Uziel (eds.), *Tell It in Gath: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Israel. Essays in Honor of A. M. Maeir on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, Ägypten und Altes Testament 90, Wiesbaden, 2–19.
in press *Monumental Architecture and the Socio-political Development of City-states in the Southern Levant of the Early Bronze Age*, in: S. Richard (ed.), *New Horizons in the Study of the Early Bronze III and Early Bronze IV in the Levant*, Winona Lake, IN.

Naumann, R.
1971 *Architektur Kleinasiens von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ende der hethitischen Zeit*, Tübingen.

Nigro, L.
1994 *L'architettura palaziale della Palestina nelle Età del Bronzo e del Ferro*, Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale 5, Roma.
2010 *In the Palace of the Copper Axes, Khirbet el-Batrawy: The Discovery of a Forgotten City of the III Millennium BC in Jordan*, Rome La Sapienza Studies on the Archaeology of Palestine and Transjordan 1, Rome.
2013 Khirbet al-Batrawy: An Early Bronze Age City at the Fringes of the Desert, *Syria* 90, 189–209.
2014 *The King's Cup and the Bear Skin: Royal Ostentation in the Early Bronze Age III "Palace of the Copper Axes" at Khirbat al-Batrawy?* in: Z. Kafafi and M. Maraqten (eds.), *A Pioneer of Arabia: Studies in the Archaeology and Epigraphy of the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula in Honor of Moawiyah Ibrahim*, Rome La Sapienza Studies on the Archaeology of Palestine and Transjordan 10, Rome, 261–270.
2016a Khirbat al-Batrāwī 2010–2013: The City Defenses and the Palace of the Copper Axes, *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Jordan* 12, 135–154.
2016b *The End of the Early Bronze Age in the Southern Levant, Urban Crisis and Collapse Seen from Two 3rd Millennium BC Cities: Tell es-Sultan/Jericho and Khirbet el-Batrawy*, in: R. Cunningham and J. Driessen (eds.), *Crisis to Collapse: The Archaeology of Social Breakdown*, Aegis 11, Louvain, 149–173.
2016c Tell es-Sultan 2015: A Pilot Project for Archaeology in Palestine, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79, 4–17.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Nigro, L. and Sala, M.
2011 Preliminary Report on the Sixth (2010) Season of Excavation by "La Sapienza" University of Rome at Khirbat al-Batrāwī (Upper Wādī az-Zarqā'), *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 55, 85–100.
2012 Preliminary Report on the Seventh (2011) Season of Excavations by 'La Sapienza' University of Rome at Khirbat al-Batrāwī, Upper Wādī az-Zarqā', *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 56, 45–53.
2013 Preliminary Report on the Eighth (2012) Season of Excavation by 'La Sapienza' University of Rome at Khirbat al-Batrāwī (Upper Wādī az-Zarqā'), *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 57, 217–228.

Nigro, L., Sala, M., Taha, H. and Yassine, J.
2011 The Bronze Age Palace and Fortifications at Tell es-Sultan/Jericho, the 6th–7th Seasons (2010–2011), by Rome "La Sapienza" University and the Palestinian MOTA-DACH, *Scienze dell'Antichità* 17, 571–597.

Nigro, L. and Taha, H.
2013 *The Ninth Season (2013) of Archaeological Activities at Tell es-Sultan/Ancient Jericho, by Rome "La Sapienza" University and the Palestinian MOTA-DACH*, excavation report available at: https://www.academia.edu/5638061/The_ninth_season_2013_of_archaeological_activities_at_Tell_es_Sultan_ancient_Jericho_by_Rome_La_Sapienza_Unversity_and_the_Palestinian_MoTA-DACH

Peltenburg, E.
2013 Conflict and Exclusivity in Early Bronze Age Societies of the Middle Euphrates Valley, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 72, 233–252.

Petrie, W.M.F.
1898 *Deshasheh 1897*, Egypt Exploration Fund 15, London.

Philip, G.
2001 *The Early Bronze Age I–III*, in: B. MacDonald, R. Adams and P. Bienkowski (eds.), *The Archaeology of Jordan*, Sheffield, 163–232.
2003 The Early Bronze Age of the Southern Levant: A Landscape Approach, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 16, 103–132.

Porter, A.
2010 *From Kin to Class – and Back Again! Changing Paradigms of the Early Polity*, in: D. Bolger and L.C. Maguire (eds.), *The Development of Pre-state Communities in the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of Edgar Peltenburg*, British Association of Near East Archaeology Publications Series Vol. 2, Oxford, Oakville, 72–78.

Rede, M.
2015 *Le palais bédouin à Mari: royauté urbaine et chefferie tribal*, in: C. Michel (ed.), *Séminaire d'Histoire et d'Archéologie des Mondes Orientaux (SHAMO) 2012–2013, de la maison à la ville dans l'Orient ancien: bâtiments publics et lieux de pouvoir*, Cahiers des thèmes transversaux d'ArScAn 12, Nanterre, 139–147.

Renfrew, C.
1974 *Beyond a Subsistence Economy: The Evolution of Social Organization in Prehistoric Europe*, in: C.B. Moore (ed.), *Reconstructing Complex Societies*, Supplement of the American Schools of Oriental Research 20, Cambridge, MA, 69–85.

Sallaberger, W.
2013 *The Management of Royal Treasure: Palace Archives and Palatial Economy in the Ancient Near East*, in: J.A. Hill, P. Jones and A.J. Morales (eds.), *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority. Cosmos, Politics and the Ideology of Kinship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia,* Philadelphia, 219–255.

Savage, S., Falconer, S. and Harrison, T.P.
2007 *The Early Bronze Age City-states of the Southern Levant: Neither Cities nor States*, in: T.E. Levy, P.M. Daviau, R.W. Younker and M. Shaer (eds.), *Crossing Jordan: North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan*, London, 285–297.

Trigger, B.
1990 Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behavior, *World Archaeology* 22, 119–132.

Tubb, J.N.
2006 *Canaanites*, London.

Tubb, J.N., Dorrell, P.G. and Cobbings, F.J.
1996 Interim Report on the Eighth (1995) Season of Excavations at Tell es-Saʿidiyeh, Jordan, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 128, 16–40.
1997 Interim Report on the Ninth (1996) Season of Excavations at Tell es-Saʿidiyeh, Jordan, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 129, 54–77.

Wright, G.R.H.
1985 *The Significance of Ai in the Third Millennium B.C.*, in: A. Kuschke and E. Kutsch (eds.), *Archäologie und Altes Testament: Festschrift für Kurt Galling*, Tübingen, 299–319.

Yoffee, N.
2005 *Myths of the Archaic State, Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States and Civilization*, Cambridge, UK.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Activity Areas within the Last Palace of Kabri

by Assaf Yasur-Landau and Eric H. Cline

Introduction

The 34 ha site of Tel Kabri is located in the western Galilee of modern-day Israel, five kilometres east of Nahariya. It has been the focus of two large-scale expeditions: the first led by Aharon Kempinski and Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier from 1986 to 1993 and the second led by Eric H. Cline and Assaf Yasur-Landau from 2005 to the present.

Both excavations have focused primarily on the Middle Bronze Age Canaanite palace at the site, presenting a picture of continuous development from the MB I (Phase DW VI) to its destruction during the MB II, probably during the late 17th or early16th century BC (Phase DW III = Kempinski and Niemeier's Stratum 3c).[1] At its peak, during the MB II, it was the centre of a polity covering at least the area between Rosh Haniqra to the north and the northern border of the Akko polity to the south and spreading east up to the western slopes of the Meiron Massif.

Today, the palace area is located within an avocado plantation. A modern north-east–south-west road, as well as a water channel, separates the palace into southern and western excavation areas (labelled Area DS and Area DW, respectively). Most of the excavated remains of the palace are in the western area.

To date, ca. 1.300 sq.m of the palace area have been excavated north of the modern road and another ca. 300 sq.m south of the modern road (Fig. 1). Since no external wall of the palace has yet been found, we can still only estimate the size of the palace, as well as its overall plan. However, the renewed excavations have found areas of the palace extending much beyond the area excavated by Kempinski, so his original estimate of an area of 2.000 sq.m[2] should now perhaps be at least doubled. While it is likely that much of this area was taken up with open courtyards, there is also evidence of a second story in the central part of Area DW; both factors will affect estimates of the size of the usable space available within the palace.

The earlier excavations were duly published in a final report.[3] The renewed excavations have presented studies of architecture and stratigraphy,[4] pottery typology,[5] zooarchaeology,[6] and textile production,[7] as well as organic residue analysis[8] and synthetic studies on the palatial economy.[9]

There are often considerable difficulties involved in attempting to reconstruct the activities conducted within Canaanite palaces, and from these to understand the socio-political and economic aspects of their function. Hence, to date, most studies of Canaanite palaces related to their architecture.[10] However, the case of Kabri is somewhat different, as the finds from the palace, from both the earlier expedition led by Kempinski and Niemeier, and the renewed excavations led by Cline and Yasur-Landau, together present an ample quantity of remains that allows for some analysis of the use of palatial space mainly in the latest phase of the palace, DW/DS III.

While the study of material from the recent excavation seasons is still underway, it is the aim of this article to present an updated picture of the finds from the last phase of the palace, and to draw initial conclusions regarding room function that will contribute to the understanding of life within such a Mediterranean palace.

Area DW

Halls and transition rooms east of Hall 611

A storage jar was embedded into the floor of transitional Room 607.[11] A jug decorated with a band with herringbone design was also found here.[12] While there are numerous possibilities that could be suggested, one wonders if this sunken installation and jug were possibly used for libation or for washing before entering Hall 611. After passing through another small room (667), the first of the service spaces that one entered is inner Courtyard 703, which had as many as five entrances/exits. Three columns probably supported a roof covering its eastern side, thus making this space a semi-covered courtyard. Three pithoi without their rims and bases were set into the floor of the middle of

1 Yasur-Landau, Cline and Goshen 2014; Yasur-Landau et al. 2016; Höflmayer et al. 2016.
2 Oren 2002, 68.
3 Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002.
4 Yasur-Landau, Cline and Goshen 2014; Goshen et al. 2017.
5 Samet 2015.
6 Marom et al. 2014; Marom, Cline and Yasur-Landau 2015.
7 Goshen, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2013.
8 Koh, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2014.
9 Yasur-Landau et al. 2012; Yasur-Landau et al. 2016; Yasur-Landau and Cline 2014; Yasur-Landau et al. 2018.
10 E.g. Wright 1985, 269–281; Oren 1992.
11 Oren 2002, 58.
12 Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.51: 6.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 1 Plan of the excavated portions of the Kabri palace (Areas DW and DS)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Object	No.	Reference
Pithoi (as installations)	3	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.51: 2–5
Bowl, shallow	1	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.49: 17
Lamps	3	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.52: 1–3
Spindle whorls	3	Oren 2002, fig. 10.11

Table 1 Finds in Courtyard 703

Object	No.	Reference
Bowl, carinated	1	Collapse from second floor? Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.48: 3
Bowl, shallow	2	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, figs. 5.47: 4, 5.49: 7
Large dipper juglet	1	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.50: 7
Cypriot juglet	1	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.55: 1
Spouted krater	1	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.56: 1
Loom weights	5	Oren 2002, fig. 10.11

Table 2 Finds in Room 751

the room. One of these contained shells and fish bones and another contained a lamp and a cooking pot.[13] The presence of spindle whorls in this inner space may indicate that it was used in part for spinning, a task perhaps connected with female occupation activity. The lamps found in this area may indicate that this may have been a hub of activity also during the night (see Table 1). To the south of Courtyard 703, Room 751 was dominated by a square hearth, 1.3 by 1.3 m in size, with its sides plastered. Small pits in the plaster floor contained ash and bones. This was not a cooking installation, since no restorable cooking pots or any other cooking vessels were found, but was more likely a fire installation meant to provide heat. The bones found here, as in Hall 1434 (see below), may be an indication that this was a locus in which food consumption took part − a notion strengthened by the presence of the spouted krater and the bowls. Some of the pottery found within this room was interpreted to have come from a second storey collapse (see Table 2).

To the north-east of inner Courtyard 703 is large Hall 1434, which has a plaster floor that has been only partially excavated. Accumulations on the floor found in the renewed excavations[14] included fragments of an andiron (portable fire stand) and much charred material and bones, probably indicative of the consumption of food in the hall. The presence of loom weights near the entrance to the room may also be related to a collapse from the second storey (see Table 3).

The north-eastern side of this hall is disturbed by later activities, but a cache of vessels found in 2005 within an installation made of half a pithos with a perforated base may well belong to it.[15] The cache includes a jug, a dipper juglet, a storage jar, and a spouted krater. Alternatively, this installation, like the one in Courtyard 703, could have belonged to a hypothesised room immediately to the east of this area, which has not yet been excavated.

To the north, inner Courtyard 703 opened into Room 787, which may have led in turn to a northern set of rooms. Room 690 contained at least twenty-six loom weights and four spindle whorls (see Table 4), which probably fell from the second floor.[16] It is thought that most textile making activities within the palace took place in a hall located on the second storey, probably part of the residential suite of the inhabitants of the palace. The loom weight count indicates that only one or two looms were active in the palace, making it a domestic production, rather than a palatial industry.[17]

South of Room 690, a long, narrow space of the corridor of Phase DW VI of the palace was uncovered, which may have been used as a stairwell. It, too, contained six loom weights, probably from a second storey collapse.

To the east, inner Courtyard 703 opened into another large space with a plaster floor, Room 779. Beyond this, the palace continues at least another

13 Oren 2002, 59.

14 Yasur-Landau, Cline and Goshen 2014.

15 See also https://digkabri2013.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/preliminary-note-on-the-results-of-the-2005-exploratory-see280a6.pdf.

16 Goshen, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2013, 48–49.

17 Goshen, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2013, 51–52.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Object	No.	Reference
Miniature cup	1	Collapse from second floor? Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.56: 7
Loom weights	3	Oren 2002, fig. 10.11
Fragments of andiron with zoomorphic feet	1+	Currently under conservation and study
Possibly from the same room		
Spouted krater	1	Samet 2014, fig. 8:3
Pithos (as installation)	1	Currently under conservation and study
Jug	1	Currently under conservation and study
Dipper juglet	1	Currently under conservation and study
Storage jar with two handles	1	Currently under conservation and study

Table 3 Finds in Hall 1434

Object	No.	Reference
Ceramic finds		
Cypriot jug	1	Collapse from second floor? Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.55: 2
Other finds		
Loom weights	26	Goshen, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2013, fig. 3.2
Spindle whorl	4	Goshen, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2013, fig. 3.2

Table 4 Finds in Room 690

30 m to the east, as indicated by probes conducted by both the Kempinski expedition and the renewed excavations expedition. Further to the east, a possible bastion or a segment of a 4–5 m wide fortification wall made of boulders was excavated by the Israel Antiquities Authority;[18] this may be part of the still-missing eastern extremity of the palace.

Ceremonial Hall 611 and the 'Orthostat Building'

Returning to the centre of the excavated area, another threshold made of ashlar, this time plastered and painted, leads from Room 607 to the west, towards ceremonial Hall 611. This large, 10.4 × 10.4 m ceremonial hall had three entrances/exits through recessed doorways. The remains of cedar wood may indicate that this large hall, with no signs of pillar bases that could support the roof, was roofed using long cedar planks.[19]

The plaster floor of this hall was painted *al fresco*, with a grid pattern in red lines, containing squares decorated with imitation-stone patterns, as well as floral designs, all influenced by Aegean art.[20] This painted floor, as well as fragments of Aegean-style miniature fresco found reused as packing material in the northern doorway of this hall, belongs to an earlier building phase, DW IV, and continued to be used in the last phase of the palace.[21]

A jar was found sunk into the centre of the floor; it is unclear what purpose this installation may have served, although it may have been for something connected with libation or similar ceremonies. Among the most interesting finds from this room was a large amphora (or rather an oversized jug) with a ring base and two handles, which was decorated in the 'Chocolate on White' style. Residue analysis conducted on a fragment of this vessel that was discovered in 2009 indicated that it contained red wine. Loom weights and a spindle whorl found in the debris above the floor are probably related to activities in the second floor apartment(s) (see Table 5).

18 Shalem 2009.
19 Oren 2002, 58.
20 Niemeier and Niemeier 2002, 255–266.
21 Cline, Yasur-Landau and Goshen 2011.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

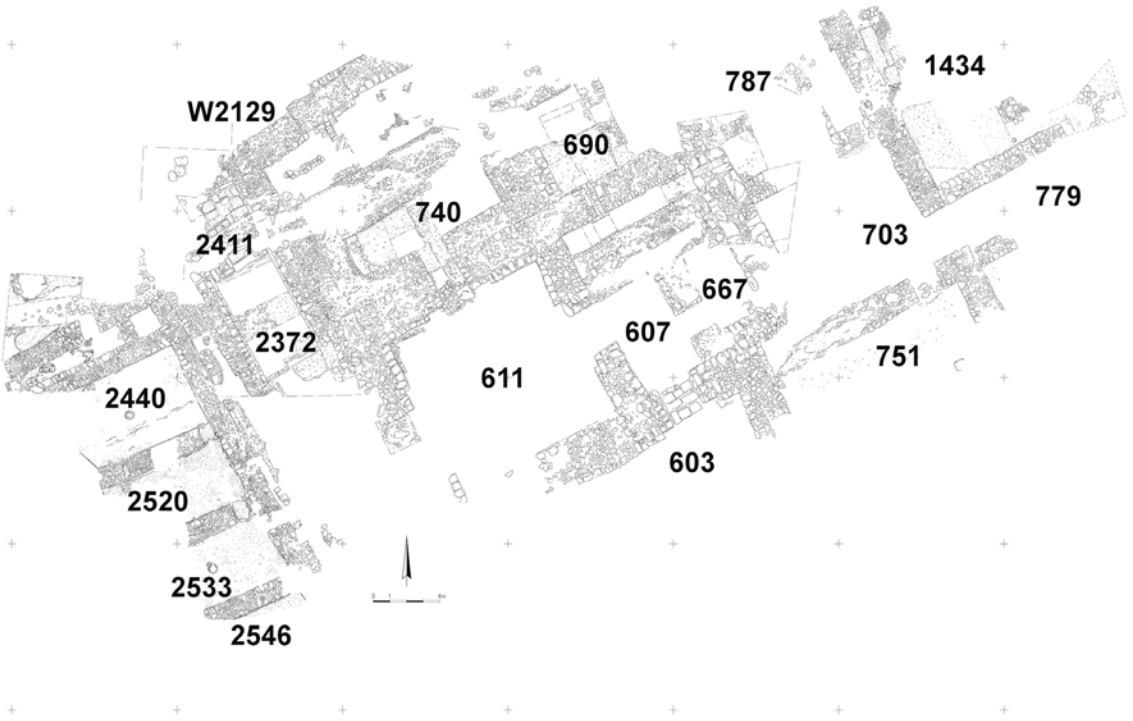


Fig. 2 Area DW

North of ceremonial Hall 611, Room 740 is a narrow rectangular room with a single access point. It has a thick plaster floor that yielded few finds. Further to the north, a wide, segmented wall (2129) does not seem to be attached to anything else. It may be the base of a curtain wall surrounding the palace to the north-west or a wide causeway within a courtyard that remains to be excavated.[22]

It is very likely that the western doorway of ceremonial Hall 611 led to a wing that included both the so-called Orthostat Building and the storage rooms of the palace. The Orthostat Building is a small building complex, rather than an independent building. It was built against the north-western walls of ceremonial Hall 611 and Room 740.[23]

The complex had an outer size of approximately 6 × 14 m and consists of two rooms: a front room (2372) with an entrance from the south and a back room (2411). Both rooms showed signs of heavy collapse, including many fragments of white wall plaster lying on the floor. The inner faces of the stone wall foundations in both rooms are lined with beach rock orthostats, covered with white plaster; square dowel holes were chiselled into their top surface. The back room of the structure was paved with large drafted and plastered stones, and contained at least three large restorable storage jars of the type found elsewhere in the store-rooms.[24] The zooarchaeological finds from this structure and around it suggest that it may have been the locus of elite banquets.[25]

The storage complex

The storage complex was built against the west wall of the Orthostat Building. This complex had a strongly protected entrance from the north-west, which consisted of four walls (piers) and two chambers (2517 and 2460) between them, used also for storage.

The entrance led to least four rooms: Rooms 2440, 2520, 2533, and 2546.[26] Room 2440 is the most completely excavated of the four rooms. It has inner dimensions of 4.6 × 6.7 m, with a white plaster floor in the centre of which the lower part of a pithos was set, perhaps serving as a collection basin for spilled liquid. On the floor (L2440) were the remains of ca. 25–40 large, restorable, mostly handle-less pithoi, which were found covered by a thick collapse of mudbricks. Additional finds in the room included one

22 Yasur-Landau, Cline and Goshen 2014, 362.
23 Yasur-Landau et al. 2012.
24 Samet 2014, fig. 14: 4, 5, 7.
25 Yasur-Landau et al. 2012.
26 Yasur-Landau et al. 2018.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Object	No.	Reference
Chocolate on White amphora	1	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.62
Miniature bowl	1	Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002, fig. 5.47: 9
Loom weights	26	Goshen, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2013, fig. 3.2
Spindle whorl	4	Goshen, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2013, fig. 3.2

Table 5 Finds in ceremonial Hall 611

Room	Minimum number of pithoi by rim count (Yasur-Landau et al. 2018)
2517 (entrance)	4
2460 (entrance)	6
2440	25
2533	30
2520	23
2546	4
Total	**92**

Table 6 Pithoi in the storage complex

goblet (sometimes referred to as a 'Kabri cup'[27]), a small storage jar with two handles, a jug, and a dipper juglet. These seem to be a set for wine tasting used for the contents of this room (see below). Organic residue analysis (ORA) showed that the pithoi contained luxurious red wine with resin and herbal additives.[28]

As in Room 2440, the pottery assemblage in Rooms 2520, 2533, and 2546 also included a small number of jugs, dipper juglets, and bowls. However, since these were found in a much poorer state of preservation, it will be some time until we learn more about them.

The southernmost room (2546) was cut by the construction of the modern road and so only a small part of it was excavated. It still yielded six smaller two-handled storage jars. An entrance to the south of the Orthostat Building may have led into this room, though that remains to be conclusively ascertained.

Since the work on the finds from the storage complex is still underway and the pottery conservation effort is likely to take years, it is possible at this point to give only a very preliminary count of the pithoi, based on a minimum number of rims (see Table 6).

This number − 92 pithoi − should be regarded as an absolute minimum, since additional pithoi seen in the field included many more whose rims did not survive the collapse of the building's walls. The fact that only ca. 50% of the entire area of the storage-rooms has been excavated to date should also mean that the final number of pithoi will be even higher.

27 Cf. Yasur-Landau, Cline and Samet 2011.

28 Koh, Yasur-Landau and Cline 2014; Yasur-Landau et al. 2016.

Area DS

The area to the south of the modern road, DS, is more disturbed by modern activities. The western part of the area contains a well-built terrace wall with a drain and a flight of steps.[29] These led to Area F, which contained a courtyard with a thick plaster floor (1550). Two podia made of ashlar stones and a possible rectangular hearth were built on this floor, in proximity to massive, yet very much disturbed, architecture of the MB II. A clay model of an incised scapulae was found on this floor.[30]

Kempinski suggested that the southern wing of the palace had cultic functions, as an analogue to the Alalakh Level VII palace, which had a symmetrical 'Syrian' temple attached to it.[31] Indeed, the eastern part of Area DS contains a massive, rectangular one-room structure (3079), measuring 7.5 × 9.1 m with a niche in its north-western wall. It was found surprisingly clean; finds on its thick plaster floor included only a locally produced Second Intermediate Period scarab, currently under study by Daphna Ben-Tor, as well as a basalt mortar. The niche contained many crushed remains of small storage jars. Due to the similarity in plan of this structure to 'Syrian' temples and its location adjacent to the palace, it may be possible to identify it as the palace's temple; future finds may refute or strengthen this identification.[32]

29 Yasur-Landau, Cline and Goshen 2014, 260−261.

30 Oren 2002, 66−67.

31 Oren 2002, 69.

32 See the preliminary report for 2011; available online at: https://digkabri2013.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/preliminary-report-on-the-results-of-the-2011-excavation-season-at-tel-kabri-final-version.pdf.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 3 Area DS and F

Because of the modern road, little is known of the central court separating the western and southern areas of the palace. The area excavated north of the terrace wall in the southern area indicates that this may have been a vast open area without a plaster floor, covered with ash and with collapsed mudbricks from the destruction of the palace. Finds in this area included a carinated bowl and a piece of gold foil.

Conclusions

Palaces in the ancient Near East are commonly seen simply as buildings used for the residence of the royal household, the seat of the government, and a centre of an economic enterprise.[33] A very similar list of activities − religious, commercial, political, and residential − is also seen in the palaces of the Aegean, manifested in the private quarters, reception halls, large courts for gatherings, storage areas, archives, and palatial workshops.[34]

The archaeological manifestation of these functions may be widespread across the ancient Near East. Thus, for example, Margueron argues that the Near Eastern palace "…is an organism that must satisfy specific requirements and whose contents vary little".[35] Every palace should contain royal living quarters that are the private residence of the king and family, official quarters that include courts and a throne room facilitating the public activity of the king, and administrative offices, in charge of the dependent personnel and goods held by the palace.[36]

33 Postgate 1992, 137−154; 2004.

34 E.g., among many, Cadogan 1987 and articles in Driessen, Schoep and Laffineur 2002.

35 Margueron 1997, 199.

36 Margueron 1997, 199−200. For the definition of the term palace cf. as well Miroschedji in this volume.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

The finds emerging from Phase DW III of the palace at Tel Kabri provide a unique opportunity for the study of activities within Canaanite palaces. They present a picture of activities both similar and dissimilar to those in Syro-Mesopotamian palaces, both reflected in and resulting from the different Canaanite palatial economy.[37] The core of the excavated area contains a series of halls connected by passages and transitional rooms extending from Hall 1434 in the north-east to richly decorated ceremonial Hall 611 in the west. Finds within these halls indicate that they were used for gathering and the consumption of food and drink. The second storey above Hall 611 and the rooms to its east was likely dedicated to private apartments, as well as domestic activities of textile production, as evident by the objects that were found within the collapse.

The Orthostat Building to the west of ceremonial Hall 611 was the locus of more exclusive dining. Further west, the large storage complex contained wine for the palace's needs. The southern area of the palace may have been dedicated to cultic activity. We can therefore define the palace of Kabri as a multi-purpose structure used for residence, large-scale gatherings, and the storage needed for the wine consumed in them, as well as an area possibly dedicated to cultic activity.

However, there are several functions commonly connected with Levantine, Syro-Mesopotamian, and Aegean palaces that are still missing from the Tel Kabri palace. Perhaps the most conspicuous among them is the lack of evidence for food preparation and cooking, as compared, for example, to the western palace of Ebla, where the northern unit contained a room dedicated to the grinding of grain,[38] and to the fortified palatial structure at Tell el-Burak, where Room 4 has been identified as a kitchen with several ovens.[39]

Also missing at Kabri is any indication for literate administration, from sealings to tablets. However, writing is also missing at most other Middle Bronze Age palaces in the southern Levant. We have suggested that the palatial economy of Kabri, as well as other Canaanite palaces, was basically an *oikos* economy, with the palace serving as the head of an estate, rather than the head of a state. Thus the use of writing would have been optional, rather than necessary, for control over production, personnel, and goods, in sharp contrast to Syro-Mesopotamian and Aegean palaces.[40]

A partial 'wish list' for activity areas within such a vast palace may also include a palatial workshop, and perhaps a tomb as well, since private houses excavated by Kempinski in Area C included built tombs. It may be that future seasons of excavation will uncover such areas and items.

The full architecture of the palace will be discussed in detail in a separate study, yet it may be noted that the palace seems to follow an agglomerative plan, i.e. that it is asymmetrical. The functional units were constructed and added in a modular manner, likely related to the changing needs of the palace. The use of a similar asymmetrical, agglomerative plan can be seen, for example, in the Hyksos palace from Tell el-Dabʿa.[41]

We can define at least three functional units that were 'inserted' into the palace during the renovation between Phases DW IV and DW III:

- the construction of the Orthostat Building into an earlier built space;
- the construction of the one-room structure (3079) in Area DS;[42]
- the construction of the storage complex as a preplanned unit west of the Orthostat Building, built on top of earlier walls of the palace.

These changes in architecture may indicate that functions, and very likely patterns of activities, changed dramatically throughout the existence of the palace. Recent work on patterns of pottery consumption within Middle Bronze Age palaces in Canaan[43] has exposed a process of growing differentiation between activities in MB I palaces as compared to those in MB II palaces. The earlier palaces showed patterns of pottery consumption essentially similar to those of households, but on a larger scale. The later palaces showed some form of specialisation in the MB II, perhaps connected with strategies that were implemented to attract clients and to display the power of the ruler. It is possible that the changes in some activity areas in the last palace of Tel Kabri is an indication of such a process of specialisation, putting an emphasis on large-scale hospitality as a means to achieve political goals.

The current excavation of the Kabri palace is an ongoing effort. As in the previous expedition led by Kempinski and Niemeier, publication efforts of preliminary reports and analysis of finds continue side by side with the excavation. Furthermore, the richness of finds in recent seasons and the use of an extensive sampling programme for archaeozoology, micro-archaeology, and residue analysis, amongst other methods, is necessarily making the progress of the excavations a steady one, yet by no means fast. With an estimated minimum of at least 2.600 sq.m still to be excavated within the palace, we − and perhaps future expeditions − should be ready to enjoy additional seasons of pleasant surprises and discoveries.

37 Yasur-Landau et al. 2016.
38 Matthiae 2013, pl. 75.
39 Kamlah and Sader 2010, fig. 3.
40 Yasur-Landau et al. 2016.
41 Bietak et al. 2012.
42 Yasur-Landau, Cline and Goshen 2014.
43 Samet and Yasur-Landau 2016.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the organisers of this most stimulating workshop, Prof. Manfred Bietak and Prof. Paolo Matthiae, for their kind invitation. We also thank Prof. Pierre de Miroschedji for valuable advice about palaces. The Tel Kabri excavations and related research have been supported by grants from the Israel Science Foundation (grant 910/2015), the National Geographic Society, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, and donations from private individuals, as well as by the University of Haifa, George Washington University, and Brandeis University, to all of whom we are most grateful.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Bietak, M., Math, N., Müller, V. and Jurman, C.
2012 Report on the Excavations of a Hyksos Palace at Tell el-Dab'a/Avaris (23rd August – 15th November 2011). *Ägypten & Levante* 22–23, 17–54.

Cadogan, G.
1987 *What Happened at the Old Palace of Knossos?*, in: R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (eds.), *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 1984*, Stockholm, 71–76.

Cline, E.H., Yasur-Landau, A. and Goshen, N.
2011 New Fragments of Aegean-Style Painted Plaster from Tel Kabri, Israel, *American Journal of Archaeology* 115.2, 245–261.

Driessen, J., Schoep, I. and Laffineur, R. (eds.)
2002 *Monuments of Minos: Rethinking the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the International Workshop "Crete of the Hundred Palaces?" Held at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 14–15 December 2001*, Aegaeum 23, Liège and Austin, 1–14.

Goshen, N., Yasur-Landau, A. and Cline, E.H.
2013 *Textile Production in Palatial and Non-Palatial Contexts: The Case of Tel Kabri*, in: M.L. Nosch, H. Koefoed and E. Andersson (eds.), *Textile Production and Consumption in the Ancient Near East: Archaeology, Epigraphy, Iconography*, Oxford, 45–53.

Goshen, N., Yasur-Landau, A., Cline, E. H., and Shahak-Gross, R.
2017 Palatial architecture under the microscope: production, maintenance, and spatiotemporal changes gleaned from plastered surfaces at a Canaanite palace complex, Tel Kabri, Israel. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports:189-199.*

Höflmayer, F. et al.
2016 New Evidence for Middle Bronze Age Chronology and Synchronisms in the Levant: Radiocarbon Dates from Tell el-Burak, Tell el-Dab'a, and Tel Ifshar Compared, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 375, 53–76.

Kamlah, J. and Sader, H.
2010 Deutsch-libanesische Ausgrabungen auf Tell el-Burak südlich von Sidon, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 126.2, 93–115.

Kempinski, A., Gershuny, L. and Scheftelowitz, N.
2002 *Pottery III. Middle Bronze Age*, in A. Kempinski, N. Scheftelowitz and R. Oren (eds.), *Tel Kabri: The 1986–1993 Excavation Seasons*, Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, Tel Aviv, 109–175.

Koh, A.J., Yasur-Landau, A. and Cline, E.H.
2014 Characterizing a Middle Bronze Palatial Wine Cellar from Tel Kabri, *PlosOne* 9.8, DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0106406

Margueron, J.-C.
1997 *Palace*, in: E.M. Meyers (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, New York, 197–200.

Marom, N., Cline, E.H. and Yasur-Landau, A.
2015 The Silent Coast: Zooarchaeological Evidence to the Development Trajectory of a Second Millennium Palace at Tel Kabri, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 39, 181–192.

Marom, N., Yasur-Landau, A., Zuckerman, S., Cline, E.H., Ben-Tor, A. and Bar-Oz, G.
2014 Shepherd Kings? A Zooarchaeological Investigation of Elite Precincts in Middle Bronze Age Tel Hazor and Tel Kabri, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 371, 59–82.

Matthiae, P.
2013 *Studies on the Archaeology of Ebla, 1980–2010*, Wiesbaden.

Niemeier, B. and Niemeier, W.-D.
2002 *The Frescoes in the Middle Bronze Age Palace*, in: A. Kempinski, N. Scheftelowitz and R. Oren (eds.), *Tel Kabri: The 1986–1993 Excavation Seasons*, Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, Tel Aviv, 254–285.

Oren, E.
1992 *Palaces and Patrician Houses in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages*, in: A. Kempinski and R. Reich (eds.), *The Architecture of Ancient Israel from the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods in Memory of Immanuel (Munya) Dunayevsky*, Jerusalem, 105–120.

Oren, R.
2002 *Area D,* in*:* A. Kempinski, N. Scheftelowitz and R. Oren (eds.), *Tel Kabri: The 1986-1993 Excavation Seasons*, Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, Tel Aviv, 55–72.

Postgate, J.N.
1992 *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History*, New York.
2004 Palast. Einleitung, *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* 10, 195–200.

Samet, I.
2014 The Chrono-typological Pottery Sequence from the Middle Bronze Age Palace at Kabri: Some Preliminary Results, *Ägypten & Levante* 24, 365–395.

Samet, I. and Yasur-Landau, A.
2016 Patterns of Pottery Usage in Middle Bronze Age Canaanite Palaces, *Tel Aviv* 43.1, 76–90.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Shalem, D.
2009 Results of a Salvage Excavation at Tel Kabri, *ʿAtiqot* 61, 19–39.

Wright, G.R.H.
1985 *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine*, Leiden.

Yasur-Landau, A. and Cline, E.H.
2014 *The Four-dimensional Palace: The Middle Bronze Age Palace of Kabri through Time*, in: S. Souvatzi and A. Hadji (eds.), *Space and Time in Mediterranean Prehistory*, New York, 231–245.

Yasur-Landau, A., Cline, E.H. and Goshen, N.
2014 Initial Results of the Stratigraphy and Chronology of the Tel Kabri Middle Bronze Age Palace, *Ägypten & Levante* 24, 355–364.

Yasur-Landau, A., Cline, E.H. and Samet, I.
2011 *Our Cups Overfloweth: 'Kabri Goblets' and Canaanite Feasts in the Middle Bronze Age Levant*, in: W. Gauss, M. Lindblom, R.A.K. Smith and J.C. Wright (eds.), *Our Cups Are Full: Pottery and Society in the Aegean Bronze Age. Papers Presented to Jeremy B. Rutter on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, Oxford, 382–392.

Yasur-Landau, A., Cline, E.H., Goshen, N., Marom, N. and Samet, I.
2012 An MB II Orthostat Building at Tel Kabri, Israel, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 367, 1–29.

Yasur-Landau, A.; Cline, E.H., Koh, A., Ben Shlomo, D., Marom, N. Ratzlaff, A. and Samet, I.
2016 Rethinking Canaanite Palaces? The Palatial Economy of Tel Kabri during the Middle Bronze Age, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 40, 607–625.

Yasur-Landau, A., Cline, E.H., Koh, A.J., Ratzlaff, A., Goshen, N., Susnow, M., Waiman-Barak, P., and Crandall, A.M.
2018 The Wine Storage Complex at the MB II Palace of Tel Kabri: Results of the 2013 and 2015 Seasons. *American Journal of Archaeology* 122.2: 309-338.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 1 Location of Syro-Anatolian and Levantine Iron Age palaces mentioned in the text. *Bīt-ḫilāni*-style palaces are indicated by a circle; central hall tetra-partite palaces/residencies are indicated by a triangle (graphics by R. Stidsing; Google Earth Image)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Iron Age Palaces in the Levant

by Ann E. Killebrew

Monumental palatial architecture is a defining feature of ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian urban settlements during the 3rd to 1st millennia BC. These large structures served as royal residences and hubs from where authority was exercised. Often these multi-roomed complexes encompassed additional activities, as indicated by the presence of administrative and storage facilities, workshops, and ceremonial spaces. They are the physical expression of political, religious, and economic centralisation that typifies the cultures of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and Egypt for much of the Bronze and Iron Ages.[1] In contrast, early 1st millennium Iron II Levantine royal residencies are smaller, free-standing structures that lack the architectural complexity of imperial multifunctional compounds characteristic of Mesopotamian, Anatolian, and Egyptian palaces.

In the Levant, two local traditions of palatial architecture emerge during the first half of the 1st millennium (Iron Age II). Large broad-house structures with a columned portico along the long axis, dated to the first three centuries of the 1st millennium BC, characterise palatial architecture in the northern Levant.[2] Modern scholarship identifies this basic plan as a *bīt-ḫilāni*, a North-Syrian term that appears in 8th and 7th century BC Assyrian royal texts dating to the reigns of Sargon II, Tiglath-Pileser III, and Sennacherib.[3] In this textual context, *bīt-ḫilāni* refers to a component of Neo-Assyrian palaces, which includes a portico façade that was built *tamsil ekal mat Hatti* (a replica of a palace of the land of Hatti [north Syria and south-eastern Anatolia]).[4]

In the southern Levant, structures identified as palaces are more modest in size and lack the monumentality and decorative features of northern Levantine *bīt-ḫilāni* architecture. Originally also associated in earlier research with the northern *bīt-ḫilāni* tradition, southern Levantine palatial architecture instead reflects a localised development that derives from the Iron Age domestic four-room house.[5] The emergence of these structures, termed 'central hall tetra-partite residencies' by Lehmann and Killebrew,[6] coincides with the initial signs of political and economic consolidation and secondary state formation in this historically peripheral region. In what follows, I examine both Levantine traditions and contextualise the palatial structures within their larger archaeological and regional setting.

Features of Iron Age Levantine Palaces: *Bīt-hilāni* Royal Residencies in the Northern Levant:

Although scholars remain divided regarding the defining features of the *bīt-ḫilāni* and its identification in the archaeological record,[7] there are several characteristic architectural elements that monumental northern Levantine[8] Iron Age palaces share:

1. The structure is self-contained, free-standing, and is not part of an extended multi-unit complex typical of palaces in Mesopotamia and Egypt.
2. The building is approached by several steps leading to an open portico entrance hall with one, two, or three columns or pillars standing on bases, sometimes flanked by one or two towers.
3. The main hall, located behind the entrance, is a broad-room, sometimes including a hearth or other installation, such as a raised platform or podium.
4. Smaller adjoining rooms appear behind or along the side of the main hall.
5. These structures often included a second storey as indicated by the appearance of a stairwell adjacent to the portico.
6. Decorated orthostats and sculptures may be incorporated in the portico entrance.

Monumental buildings with these architectural features have been excavated at several northern Levantine sites (see Fig. 1 for the location of sites mentioned in this chapter). These Syro-Anatolian free-standing Iron Age palaces tend to be located within walled citadels that often included richly decorated gates and ceremonial spaces, surrounded by a fortified lower city.[9] Most of these monumental

1 For a detailed discussion of Near Eastern palaces see e.g. Winter 1993.

2 See e.g. Frankfort 1952; Margueron 1979; Pucci 2008 for overviews.

3 Renger and Hrouda 1972–1975, 405–406.

4 For a discussion of the term *bīt-ḫilāni* in textual sources and summary of the history of research see e.g. Lehmann and Killebrew 2010, 24–27; Osborne 2012, 31–32.

5 See e.g. Sharon and Zarzecki-Peleg 2006; Lehmann and Killebrew 2010.

6 Lehmann and Killebrew 2010.

7 See e.g. Reade 2008.

8 In this chapter, the term 'northern Levant' includes sites located in northern Syria and south-eastern Turkey (Anatolia), a region that is also referred to in the literature as Syro-Anatolia.

9 Gilibert 2013, 40; Novák 2014, 261–265; Osborne 2014, 198, 202.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

public edifices were excavated in the early decades of the 20th century or between the two World Wars when excavation methodologies were in their infancy. Although renewed excavations in recent years at many of these sites are refining our understanding of these late 10th/9th–8th/early 7th century BC structures, the lack of detailed documentation that characterises earlier investigations of these royal residencies continues to be a serious obstacle in our analyses of the structures and their chronology. The best-preserved examples of the *bīt-ḫilāni*-style palaces are at Zincirli, Tell Halaf, and Tell Tayinat (Figs. 2 and 3). Additional palaces in northern Syria generally classified in the literature as a *bīt-ḫilāni* include Tell Sheikh Hamad, Tell Fakhariyah and Sakçagözü (Fig. 4).[10] At Emar and Carchemish the identification of structures as *bīt-ḫilāni* palaces has been challenged in recent years.[11]

In their plan, these monumental residencies resemble palatial architectural traditions of the 2nd millennium, best exemplified in the 14th century BC Late Bronze Age ceremonial palace of Niqmepa at Alalakh[12] and the Area A Ceremonial Palace (Building 7050) at Hazor (Fig. 5).[13] Based on these similarities, the origins of the *bīt-ḫilāni* likely continue Late Bronze Age palatial architectural traditions. The *bīt-ḫilāni* plan is later appropriated and appears as part of Neo-Assyrian palatial complexes, most notably Palace F at Khorsabad[14] and possibly the colonnaded structures in Sennacherib's Southwest Palace and Ashurbanipal's North Palace, both in Nineveh.[15]

10 See Kühne 1986/1987, 242–245, fig. 1; 2011, 146, fig. 11.5 (Tell Sheikh Hamad, specifically Building F, a residency that forms part of the palatial residential area located in the North East Corner of the lower town); McEwan et al. 1958, pls. 6b, 7b (Tell Fakhariyah) and Garstang 1913, 68–72, pl. III (Sakçagözü).

11 Regarding Emar see McClellan 1997, 30–31 who argues that this structure is too small to be a palace. Recent excavations at Carchemish indicate that the structure referred to as a '*hilani*' there (Hogarth 1926, fig. 23 and Margueron 1979, 16) is a temple originally constructed in the Late Bronze II (Marchetti 2016).

12 Woolley 1955, 110–131, figs. 44–45.

13 Regarding Hazor, see Bonfil and Zarzecki-Peleg 2007; but compare Zuckerman 2010, 172–178 who identifies this structure as a temple. An additional Late Bronze Age Hittite structure, Building E in the citadel (Büyükkale) of Hattusa, has also been suggested as a source of inspiration for the *bīt-ḫilāni*-style residency (see e.g. Magueron 1979, 174–175). However, due to the lack of a detailed plan, this proposal has been challenged. See e.g. Frankfort 1952, 127 who rejects this identification and argues for a northern Syrian origin of the *bīt-ḫilāni*.

14 Luschan, Humann and Koldewey 1898, 137.

15 See Novák 2004; Reade 2008, 13–31; Lehmann and Killebrew 2010, 24–27; and Osborne 2012 for a history of research and additional bibliography.

Zincirli:

The first monumental free-standing buildings accompanied by an entrance portico to be identified as *bīt-ḫilāni*-style palaces were uncovered during the 1888–1902 excavations at Zincirli (ancient Sam'al), directed by F. von Luschan and R. Koldewey.[16] Seven structures, spanning the 10th–7th centuries BC, were discovered in the fortified citadel at this site, which is located in the northern Amuq Plain (Fig. 2). They have all been classified as *bīt-ḫilāni* palaces but in various publications are referred to by a variety of names. This situation, combined with the limitations of early excavations and final publications, has resulted in some confusion and has complicated our understanding of these large public buildings. One of the most recent treatments of the Zincirli citadel palaces is Pucci's[17] attempt to reconstruct their stratigraphic sequence in her analysis of the functional use of space in Syro-Hittite architecture. She classifies three structures as *bīt-ḫilāni* palaces: Hilani I ("das alte Hilani"), in the north-east, and Hilani II and Hilani III ("Barrakib Palast"), in the north-west sections of the fortified citadel (Fig. 2).[18] Additional smaller structures in the Zincirli citadel, including Buildings G, J, and K and Hilani IV, which share characteristic features like a portico entrance and reception hall, have also been identified by some as *bīt-ḫilāni*-style palaces.[19]

Tell Halaf:

Excavated by M. von Oppenheim between 1911 and 1913, the early 1st millennium BC palace at Tell Halaf is among the most impressive examples of the Syro-Anatolian *bīt-ḫilāni*-style residency (Fig. 3).[20] The site, identified as ancient Guzana (biblical Gozan), served as the seat of an independent Aramean state that was annexed by Ashurnasirpal II (ca. 870 BC). The Iron Age city reached its peak during the reign of King Kapara, which scholars currently date to either the later 10th century or 9th century BC.[21] The western palace, identified by an inscription as the palace of Kapara, comprises two narrow spaces with their main axis parallel to the façade, and additional rooms behind the throne room. The first long room was entered by a portico, remarkable for its large caryatid statues of two men and a woman standing on two lions and a bull (Fig. 6).[22]

16 Renewed excavations at Zincirli commenced in 2006 under the direction of D. Schloen.

17 Pucci 2008.

18 Pucci 2008, 29–42.

19 See e.g. Frankfort 1952, 122–123 and Margueron 1979, 161–165.

20 Renewed excavations at Tell Halaf commenced in 2006 under the direction of L. Martin, A. al-Masih Bagdo, J. Becker, and M. Novák.

21 Currently there is no consensus for dating Kapara's reign. See e.g. Fuchs 2011 who proposes a mid- to late 10th century BC date for Kapara. If he is correct, this would be the earliest example of a *bīt-ḫilāni*. Schaudig 2011, on the other hand, suggests a mid-9th century date.

22 See e.g. Frankfort 1952, 120–121; Bryce 2009, 275–276.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

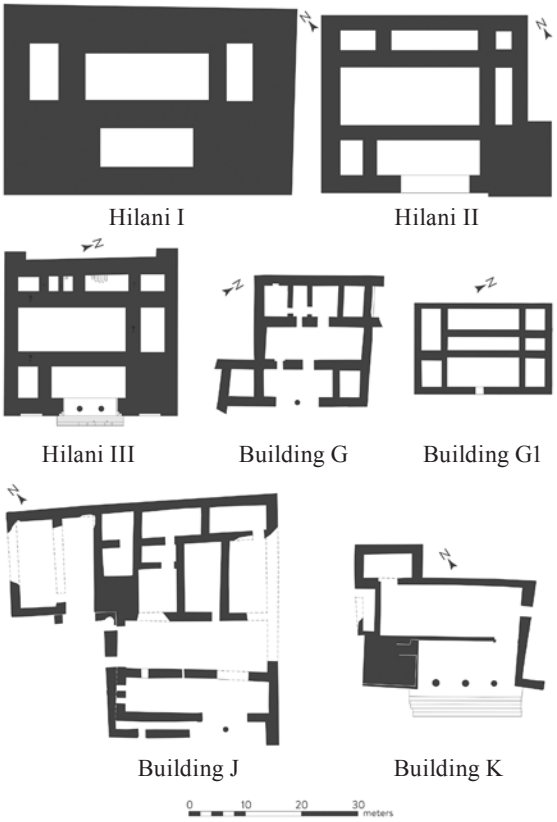


Fig. 2 Plans of structures often identified as *bīt-ḫilānis* at Zincirli (drawings by R. Stidsing after Pucci 2008, pls. 4, 5, 9, 11, 12)

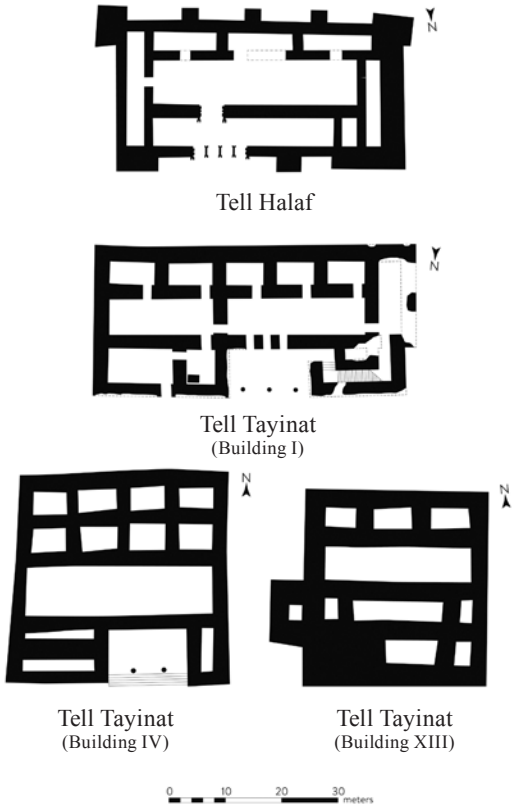


Fig. 3 Plans of structures often identified as *bīt-ḫilānis* at Tell Halaf and Tell Tayinat (drawings by R. Stidsing after Margueron 1979, fig. 11; Harrison 2012, fig. 4; Pucci 2008, pls. 26, 27)

Tell Tayinat:
Located in the southern edge of the Amuq Plain, Tell Tayinat is identified as the Iron Age Syro-Hittite royal city of Kunulua. Following annexation by Tiglath-Pileser III in 738 BC, the city served as administrative capital of the Assyrian province of Kinalia. Between 1935 and 1938, four seasons of excavation conducted by the University of Chicago's Syrian-Hittite Expedition uncovered several structures dating to the Iron II and III periods that have been identified as *bīt-ḫilāni* palaces (Fig. 3). Poorly preserved Building XIII, dated to the First Building Period (9th century BC) and located below Building IV, is the earliest structure identified at Tayinat as a *bīt-ḫilāni*.[23] The best examples of this architectural type are Buildings I and IV dated to the Second Building Period (late 9th and 8th centuries BC). Current excavations, the Tayinat Archaeological Project directed by Timothy Harrison (University of Toronto), largely confirm the dating of the palaces and conclusions of the Syrian Hittite Expedition's work in the West Central Area of the upper mound.[24]

The *bīt-ḫilāni* in context:

During the past decade, treatments of the *bīt-ḫilāni*-palace tradition have explored the function of space and space syntax and expanded the study of these structures to include their broader urban and environmental settings.[25] The publications highlight the shared architectural and planning elements of these Syro-Anatolian royal citadels. A detailed reanalysis of the original excavations at Zincirli, Tell Halaf, and Tayinat by Pucci[26] suggests that two basic modules characterise palatial architecture: a rectangular tripartite form comprising two rectangular rooms and a third wing with smaller rooms. When combined with the porticoed entrance, this basic plan defines the *ḫilāni* palaces. A second reoccurring plan defined by Pucci is the 'Hofhaus' module that is defined by structures organised around a central courtyard. This form evolves into what is often referred to as the 'Assyrian building type'. In her analysis of the *bīt-ḫilāni*-style structures, Pucci demonstrates that their main functional uses include reception and dwelling areas, with only occasional

23 Haines 1971, 38–39.
24 Harrison and Osborne 2012.
25 See e.g. Pucci 2008; 2009; Osborne 2012; 2014; 2015.
26 Pucci 2008; 2009.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

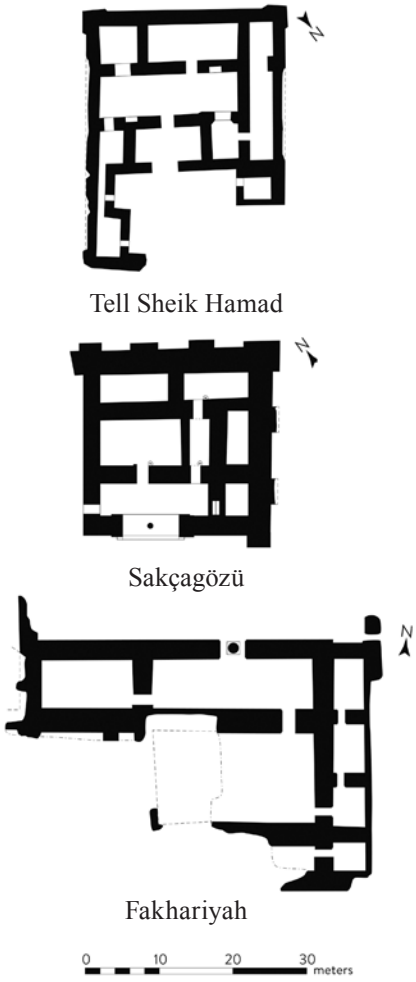


Fig. 4 Plans of structures often identified as *bīt-ḫilānis* at Tell Sheikh Hamad, Sakçagözü, and Tell Fakhariyah (drawings by R. Stidsing after Kühne 2011, fig. 11.5; Garstang 1913, fig. 3; Margueron 1979, fig. 12)

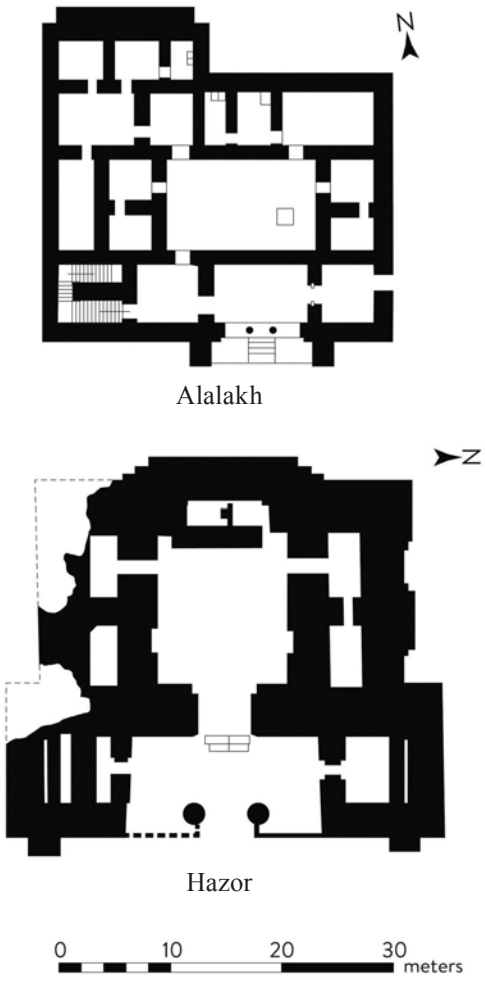


Fig. 5 Late Bronze Age palaces at Alalakh and Hazor (drawings by R. Stidsing after Wooley 1955, figs. 44–45, pl. 14; Bonfil and Zarzeki-Peleg 2007, fig. 4)

indication of usage as storage facilities. Largely lacking is the integration of the administrative, work, and religious functions in the *bīt-ḫilāni* basic plan. Rather, these activities were situated in other areas or structures in the royal citadel.[27]

Other recent studies of the free-standing *bīt-ḫilāni* address questions of royal power and political authority as reflected in its architectural plan and regional setting.[28] As Osborne convincingly argues,[29] these structures display royal authority within Syro-Anatolian fortified city-states. However, there is little evidence that the state's presence extended into the surrounding hinterlands. In contrast, the much larger, multiroomed, and multifunctional Neo-Assyrian palatial complexes represent imperial power that permeated its hinterland and landscape, as reflected by the presence of imperial building projects, monuments, and 'top-down' settlement planning.

Central hall tetra-partite palaces/royal residencies in the southern Levant:

Initial treatments of southern Levantine monumental structures, most notably analyses of Palace 6000 at Megiddo, associated them with the *bīt-ḫilāni* tradition.[30] Palace 6000 and other similar structures, including Lachish (Stratum IV Palace A), and Samaria (Period I Palace of Omri), are defined by their square size and symmetry along the main axis with a focus on the central space that likely served either as a courtyard or roofed central hall. Features that define

27 Pucci 2008, 163–177.
28 Osborne 2012; 2014.
29 Osborne 2015.
30 See e.g. Ussishkin 1966; 1973; Yadin 1972, 150–158.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 6 Reconstructed portico of the Tell Halaf *bīt-ḫilāni* with large caryatid statues of two men and a woman standing on two lions and a bull that today serves as the entrance to the National Museum of Aleppo (photo by Xvlun~commonswiki; https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/deed.en)

the Syro-Anatolian *bīt-ḫilāni*s, such as richly decorated entrance porticos, asymmetrical plan and a broad-room main hall, are lacking in the southern Levantine palace tradition. Reanalysis of these palace structures suggests an indigenous development, distinct from the northern Levantine tradition. The term 'central hall tetra-partite residency' for these palaces reflects their close affiliation with the four-room house, the ubiquitous domicile that defines Iron Age domestic architecture in the southern Levant.[31]

Megiddo:

The Stratum VA/IVB Palace 6000 in Area L at Megiddo represents the best-documented and most extensively excavated southern Levantine structure identified as an Iron Age royal residency or palace (Fig. 7). As such, it serves as the starting point for this presentation. Palace 6000, first discovered and partially excavated by Yadin during his excavations at the site in 1960, 1966, and 1967,[32] is noteworthy for its well-hewn ashlar stones.[33] Based on the biblical account in I Kings 9:15 and the stratigraphic situation of Palace 6000, Yadin assigned it to Stratum VA/IVB and attributed it to the 10th century building activities of King Solomon. In the years that followed, D. Ussishkin and others identified this building and a group of similar impressive structures in the Levant as early examples of Iron Age *bīt ḫilāni*s.[34]

Initially, few questioned the 10th century date, its attribution to Solomon, and its association with the *bīt ḫilāni* northern Levantine tradition. But in recent decades, new archaeological evidence has raised doubts on both the 10th century BC date and as well as its identification as a *bīt ḫilāni*. During the 1998, 2000, and 2004 excavation seasons directed by I. Finkelstein and D. Ussishkin of Tel Aviv University

31 Lehmann and Killebrew 2010.

32 Yadin 1970.

33 See Zarzecki-Peleg 2016, 53–132 for the final publication of Yadin's excavations of Palace 6000.

34 Ussishkin 1966; 1973.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

(TAU), Palace 6000 was re-examined.[35] Although chronological concerns were a key reason for re-excavating this iconic 'Solomonic Palace', the TAU excavations in Area L did not produce any conclusive findings that resolved the chronological debate.[36] The excavations did, however, succeed in revealing that the plan of Palace 6000 differs in layout from Yadin's published interpretation.[37] Most notably, the walls in the easternmost area of his plan, which were highly conjectural and not based on actual findings, did not exist, thus changing the structure from a rectangular plan to a square one and discounting its identification as a *bīt-hilāni*.

Palace 6000 is an almost square building measuring 20 × 22 m, built of ashlar blocks, which lend the structure a monumental appearance (Fig. 7). The building was most likely surrounded by an enclosure, of which only some wall remains of three casemate-like rooms to its west have survived. This residency was built on the northern edge of the mound, with its northern outer wall system possibly serving as a line of fortifications. The internal plan of Palace 6000 is symmetrical, with a central hall in the middle of the building. Rather than a courtyard, this central space should be identified as a hall, as indicated by the discovery of the foundations of a stylobate (W00/17) that runs along the central long axis in the middle of the central hall and likely served as a support for a ceiling.[38] The fully exposed plan of Palace 6000 is comparable to a contemporary public structure at Megiddo, designated as Palace 1723, which is located on the southern edge of the mound. It was excavated and removed by the University of Chicago expedition in the 1920s and 30s.

Other southern Levantine Iron Age residencies: Among the documented central hall tetra-partite structures, the 9th century BC 'Palace of Omri' at Samaria (Fig. 8) most closely resembles Palaces 6000 and 1723 at Megiddo (Fig. 7). In the plan published by the Harvard expedition, the Samaria structure in turn is similar to two smaller 9th century buildings at Jezreel (Fig. 8). These two structures were built at the corners of the palace-terrace enclosure, perhaps serving as towers. Significantly, the 'Palace of Omri' was also constructed at the corner of the walled palace-podium enclosure at Samaria. Other central hall tetra-partite structures at Lachish (Stratum IV Palace A), Hazor (Stratum VIII–V Citadel), and Jericho also likely served as palaces or citadels (Fig. 8).[39] Remnants of an Iron II 10th century BC public structure at Gezer, partially excavated by Dever[40] and more recently by S. Ortiz and S.R. Wolff, may resemble Iron Age II central hall tetra-partite palaces described above.[41]

In addition to the appearance of these palace or public structures in Israel and Judah, several large Phoenician buildings share features with the central hall tetra-partite residencies. Most notable is the tower structure at Rosh Zayit, a site that reflects Phoenician expansion on the Akko Plain during the Iron II period (Fig. 8).[42] An 8th–7th century BC building at Toscanos in Spain[43] could also be a similar tower structure whose function may have been to guard this Phoenician trading station (Fig. 8). Although a Phoenician origin for the central hall tetra-partite residency plan is possible, based on the archaeological evidence that suggests an indigenous development, it is more likely that Phoenician architects were influenced by the southern Levantine central hall tetra-partite public structures.

The central hall tetra-partite palace in context:

When considered in their southern Levantine context, the strong resemblance of these structures' plan to the Iron Age four-room domestic house is evident. In 2006 I. Sharon and A. Zarzecki-Peleg re-examined these buildings in an attempt to establish a coherent paradigm for large-scale monumental structures that resemble four-room houses. Distinguishing them from the smaller domestic houses, they termed these monumental residencies 'Lateral-Access Podium' (LAP) structures, defined as high, tower-like monumental structures, typically 15–20 × 15–20 m in size, often built of ashlar blocks with deep foundations and situated on a high podium adjoining an enclosure wall or the city fortifications. The plan of these structures is either square or almost square. According to Sharon and Zarzecki-Peleg,[44] the buildings are characterised by a marked symmetry along the long main axis, with a focus on the central space that was either a courtyard or a central hall. The one monumental building they excluded from this group was Palace 6000 at Megiddo. They understood this structure as belonging to the *bīt ḫilāni* tradition, an identification that is now annulled by the TAU excavations of Palace 6000.

35 Cline 2006; Cline and Cohen 2006; Lehmann and Killebrew 2010. During the 1998 and 2000 seasons, excavations in Area L were supervised by A.E. Killebrew, G. Lehmann, and E.H. Cline. E.H. Cline and M.E. Cohen supervised the 2004 excavations in Palace 6000.

36 For details regarding the chronological debate of archaeological remains traditionally dated to the 10th century that impact the dating of Palace 6000, see e.g. Finkelstein 2005 and Mazar 2005.

37 Lehmann and Killebrew 2010, 14–24.

38 Lehmann and Killebrew 2010, fig. 2.

39 Sharon and Zarzecki-Peleg 2006, 151–160; Lehmann and Killebrew 2010, 27–30 and extensive bibliography there.

40 Dever 1985, 219–222.

41 Ortiz and Wolff 2017, 82–89.

42 Gal and Alexandre 2000, 12–24, plan 4.

43 Niemeyer 1984, 46, fig. 38.

44 Sharon and Zarzecki-Peleg 2006, 145.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

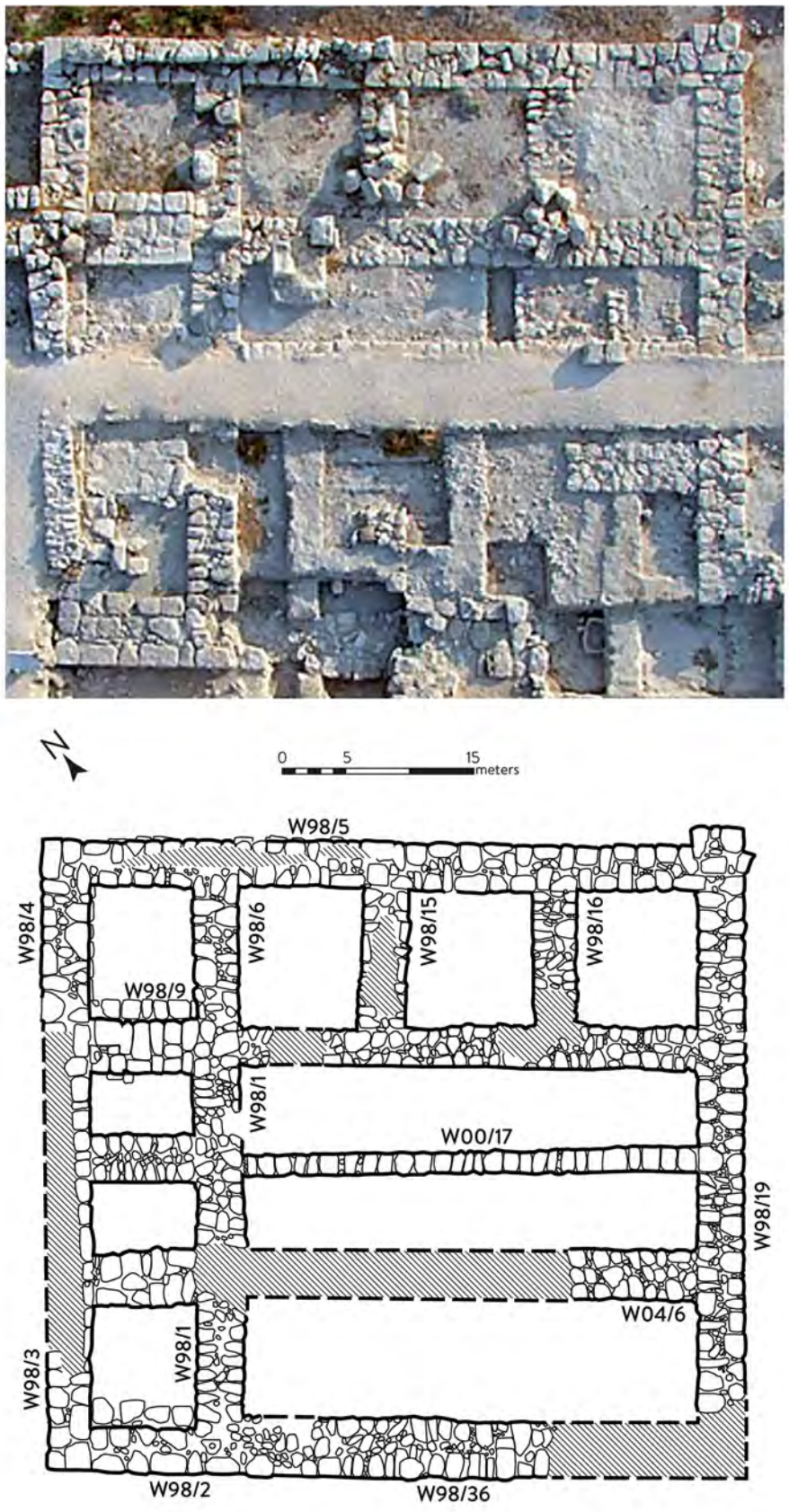


Fig. 7 Aerial photo and plan of Palace 6000 at Megiddo (photo courtesy of the Megiddo Expedition; drawing by R. Stidsing after Lehmann and Killebrew 2010, fig. 2)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

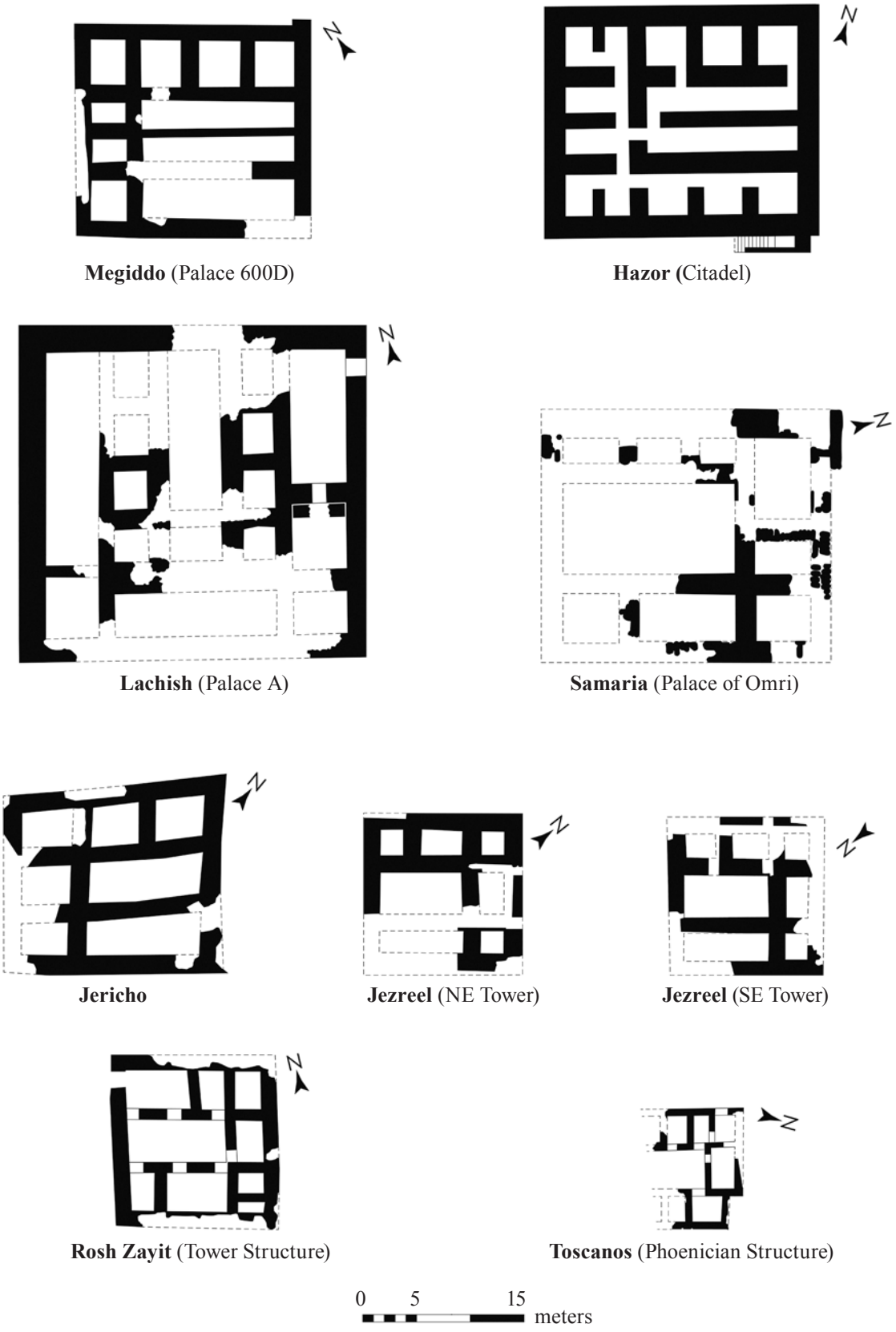


Fig. 8 Central hall tetra-partite buildings in the southern Levant (drawings by R. Stidsing after Lehmann and Killebrew 2010, figs. 2, 10; Gal and Alexandre 2000, pl. 4)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Recognising the close conceptual ties to the four-room house and the fact that not all of these residencies are built on podiums, Lehmann and Killebrew proposed the term 'central hall tetra-partite residency' as a more appropriate designation for these public structures[45] that could have served in multiple ways, as palaces, residencies, citadels, fortresses, or towers. A careful examination of the southern Levantine structures reveals that residencies in the southern Levant develop as a local tradition. They are distinct from the northern Levantine palaces identified as *bīt ḫilāni*, which are significantly larger in size. The northern examples also differ in their direct and often elaborate access in the form of a portico, which suggests that one of the main functions in the *bīt ḫilāni* was that of a royal reception hall. These ceremonial entrances are lacking in the central hall tetra-partite buildings, which were often accessed via an entrance located in proximity to one of the corners. Differences are also evident in the architectural symmetry of the two building traditions. Lastly, the decorated orthostats and sculptures that characterise some *bīt ḫilānis* are absent in the southern Levant.

What emerges from this study is that the southern Levant developed an alternative local paradigm – the central hall tetra-partite residency building – which is best exemplified by Palace 6000 at Megiddo. It differs from the northern Levantine *bīt ḫilāni* architectural plan, which traces its origins back to Late Bronze Age palatial structures. In contrast to the *bīt ḫilāni*, the central hall tetra-partite plan was a multifunctional public structure that could be adapted to serve the needs of a royal residency or palace for a local ruler, a citadel, fortress or tower, and/or a storage facility. Both traditions represent the regional character of the Levantine Iron Age. They express the process of ethnicised secondary state formation during the early centuries of the 1st millennium BC prior to the impact of Neo-Assyrian expansion in the Levant.

45 Lehmann and Killebrew 2010.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Bonfil, R. and Zarzecki-Peleg, A.
2007 The Palace in the Upper City of Hazor as an Expression of a Syrian Architectural Paradigm, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 348, 25–47.

Bryce, T.
2009 *Tell Halaf*, in: T. Bryce (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia: The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire*, London, 275–277.

Cline, E.H.
2006 *Area L (The 1998–2000 Seasons)*, in: I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin and B. Halpern (eds.), *Megiddo IV: The 1998–2002 Seasons, Vol. I*, Monograph Series of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 24, Tel Aviv, 104–123.

Cline, E.H. and Cohen, M.E.
2006 *Appendix: The 2004 Season*, in: I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin and B. Halpern (eds.), *Megiddo IV: The 1998–2002 Seasons, Vol. I*, Monograph Series of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 24, Tel Aviv, 124–129.

Dever, W.G.
1985 Solomonic and Assyrian Period 'Palaces' at Gezer, *Israel Exploration Journal* 35, 217–230.

Finkelstein, I.
2005 *A Low Chronology Update: Archaeology, History and Bible*, in: T.E. Levy and T. Higham (eds.), *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science*, London, 31–42.

Frankfort, H.
1952 The Origin of the Bît Hilani, *Iraq* 14, 120–131.

Fuchs, A.
2011 *Zur Geschichte von Gūzāna*, in: N. Cholidis and L. Martin (eds.), *Die geretteten Götter aus dem Palast vom Tell Halaf*, Regensburg, 353–358.

Gal, Z. and Alexandre, Y.
2000 *Ḫorbat Rosh Zayit: An Iron Age Storage Fort and Village*, IAA Reports 8, Jerusalem.

Garstang, J.
1913 Second Interim Report on the Excavations at Sakje-Geuzi in North Syria, 1911, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 5, 63–72.

Gilibert, A.
2013 Death, Amusement and the City: Civic Spectacles and the Theatre Palace of Kapara, King of Gūzāna, *KASKAL* 10, 35–68.

Haines, R.C.
1971 *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch II: The Structural Remains of the Later Phases. Chatal Hüyük, Tell al-Judaidah, and Tell Ta'yinat*, Oriental Institute Publications 95, Chicago.

Harrison, T.P. and Osborne, J.F.
2012 Building XVI and the Neo-Assyrian Sacred Precinct at Tell Tayinat, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64, 125–143.

Hogarth, D.G.
1926 *Kings of the Hittites*, Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1924, London.

Kühne, H.
1986/1987 Preliminary Report on the Excavation at Tell Schech Hamad/Dur-Katlimmu in 1986, *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* 36–37, 242–267.
2011 *Urbanism in the Assyrian Homeland*, in: B.S. Düring, A. Wossink and P.M.M.G. Akkermans (eds.), *Correlates of Complexity: Essays in Archaeology and Assyriology Dedicated to Diederik J.W. Meijer in Honor of His 65th Birthday*, Leiden, 143–152.

Lehmann, G. and Killebrew, A.E.
2010 Palace 6000 at Megiddo in Context: Iron Age Central Hall Tetra-Partite Residencies and the Bīt-Ḫilāni Building Tradition in the Levant, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 359, 13–33.

Luschan, F. von, Humann, C. and Koldewey, R.
1898 *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli, Vol. 2, Ausgrabungsbericht und Architektur*, Königliche Museen zu Berlin, Mitteilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen 12, Berlin.

Marchetti, N.
2016 *The Cultic District of Karkemish in the Lower Town*, in: M. Torelli (ed., in collaboration with A. Marroni), *L'archeologia del sacro e l'archeologia del culto: Sabratha, Ebla, Ardea, Lanuvio (Roma, 8–11 ottobre 2013). Ebla e la Siria dall'età del Bronzo all'età del Ferro (Atti dei Convegni Lincei 304)*, Rome, 373–414.

Margueron, J.-C.
1979 *Un "hilani" à Emar*, in: D.N. Freedman (ed.), *Archeological Reports from the Tabqa Dam Project: Euphrates Valley, Syria*, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 44, Cambridge, MA, 153–176.

Mazar, A.
2005 *The Debate over the Chronology of the Iron Age in the Southern Levant: Its History, the Current Situation, and a Suggested Resolution*, in: T.E. Levy and T. Higham (eds.), *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science*, London, 15–30.

McClellan, T.L.
1997 *Houses and Households in North Syria during the Late Bronze Age*, in: C. Castel, M. al-Maqdissi and F. Villeneuve (eds.), *Les maisons dans la Syrie antique du IIIe millénaire aux débuts de l'Islam*, Beirut, 29–59.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

McEwan, C.W., Braidwood, L.S., Frankfort, H., Güterbock, H.G., Haines, R.C., Kantor, H.J. and Kraeling, C.H.
1958 *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah*, Oriental Institute Publications 79, Chicago.

Niemeyer, H.G.
1984 *Die Phönizier und die Mittelmeerwelt im Zeitalter Homers*, Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz 31, Mainz.

Novák, M.
2004 *Hilāni und Lustgarten. Ein "Palast des Hethiter-Landes" und ein "Garten nach dem Abbild des Amanus" in Assyrien*, in: M. Novák, F. Prayon and A.-M. Wittke (eds.), *Die Außenwirkung des späthethitischen Kulturraumes. Akten der zweiten Forschungstagung des Graduiertenkollegs 'Anatolien und seine Nachbarn' der Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 323, Münster, 335–372.
2014 *Architecture*, in: H. Niehr (ed.), *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*, Handbook of Oriental Studies, Handbuch der Orientalistik Section 1, Ancient Near East, Vol. 106, Leiden, 255–272.

Ortiz, S.M. and Wolff, S.R.
2017 *Tel Gezer Excavations 2006–2015: The Transformation of a Border City*, in: O. Lipschits and A.M. Maeir (eds.), *The Shephelah during the Iron Age: Recent Archaeological Studies,* Winona Lake, IN, 61–102.

Osborne, J.F.
2012 Communicating Power in the Bīt-Ḫilāni Palace, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 368, 29–66.
2014 Settlement Planning and Urban Symbology in Syro-Anatolian Cities, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 24, 195–214.
2015 Ancient Cities and Power: The Archaeology of Urbanism in the Iron Age Capitals of Northern Mesopotamia, *International Journal of Urban Sciences* 19, 7–19.

Pucci, M.
2008 *Functional Analysis of Space in Syro-Hittite Architecture*, BAR International Series 1738, Oxford.
2009 *Enclosing Open Spaces: The Organisation of External Areas in Syro-Hittite Architecture*, in: J. Maran, C. Juwig, H. Schwengel and U. Thaler (eds.), *Constructing Power: Architecture, Ideology and Social Practice*, Hamburg, 169–184.

Reade, J.
2008 Real and Imagined "Hittite Palaces" at Khorsabad and Elsewhere, *Iraq* 70, 13–40.

Renger, J. and Hrouda, B.
1972–1975 Ḫilani, Bit: A. Nach neuassyrischen inschriftlichen Zeugnissen; B. Archäologisch, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Vol. 4, Berlin, 405–409.

Schaudig, H.
2011 *Die Zerstörung des West-Palastes von Guzana*, in: N. Cholidis and L. Martin (eds.), *Die geretteten Götter aus dem Palast vom Tell Halaf*, Regensburg, 359–363.

Sharon, I. and Zarzecki-Peleg, A.
2006 *Podium Structures with Lateral Access: Authority Ploys in Royal Architecture in the Iron Age Levant*, in: S. Gitin, J.E. Wright and J.P. Dessel (eds.), *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, Winona Lake, IN, 145–167.

Ussishkin, D.
1966 King Solomon's Palace and Building 1723 in Megiddo, *Israel Exploration Journal* 16, 174–186.
1973 King Solomon's Palaces, *Biblical Archaeologist* 36, 78–105.

Winter, I.J.
1993 "Seat of Kingship"/"A Wonder to Behold": The Palace as Construct in the Ancient Near East, *Ars Orientalis* 23, 27–55.

Woolley, L.
1955 *Alalakh: An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in Hatay, 1937–1949*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London 18, London.

Yadin, Y.
1970 Megiddo of the Kings of Israel, *Biblical Archaeologist* 33, 66–96.
1972 *Hazor: The Head of All Those Kingdoms*, Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1970, London.

Zarzecki-Peleg, A.
2016 *Yadin's Expedition to Megiddo: Final Report of the Archaeological Excavations (1960, 1966, 1967, and 1971/2 Seasons)*, Qedem Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 56, Jerusalem.

Zuckerman, S.
2010 "The City, Its Gods Will Return There …": Toward an Alternative Interpretation of Hazor's Acropolis in the Late Bronze Age, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69, 163–178.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

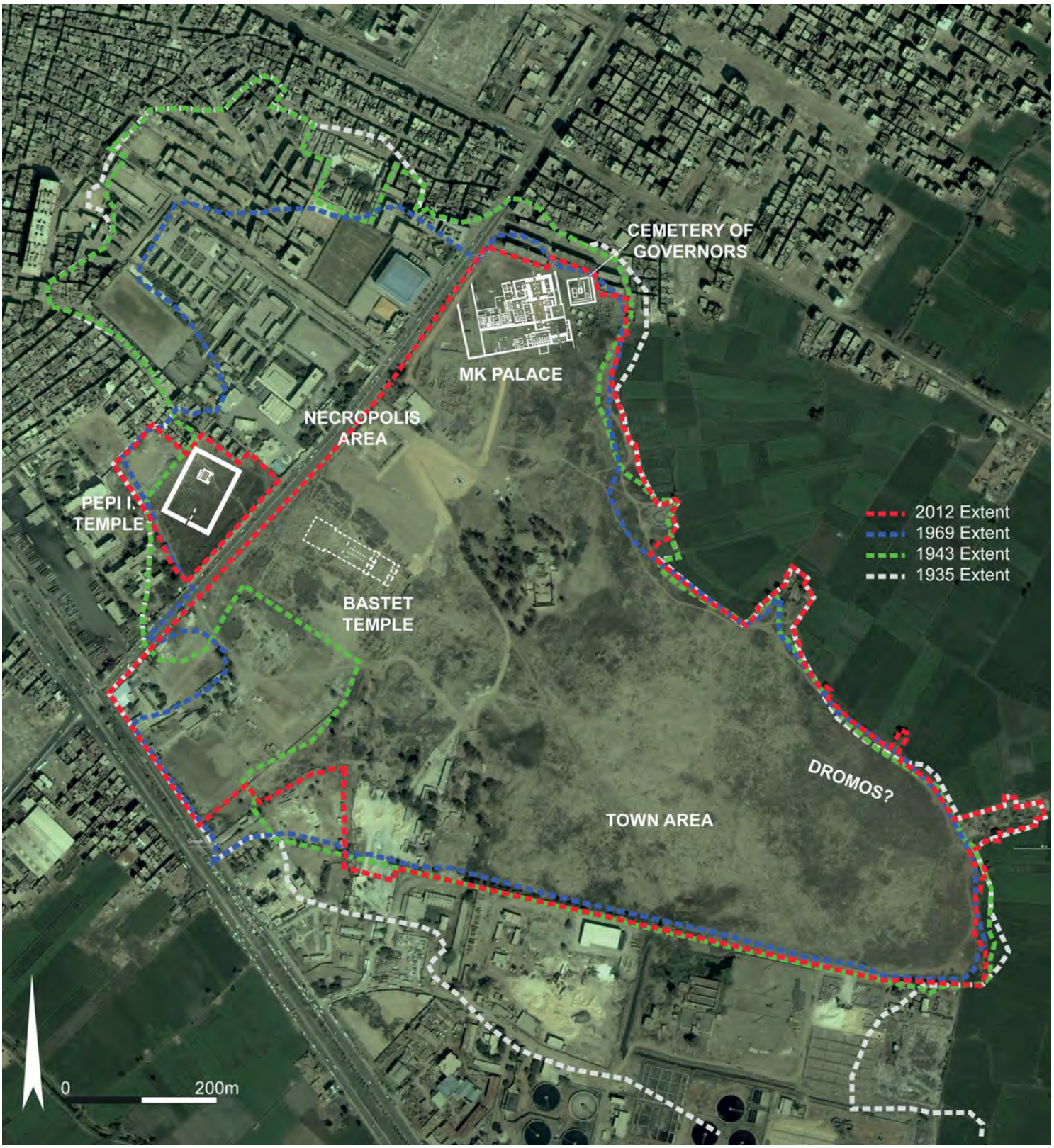


Fig. 1A Map of Bubastis (© Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe, Imagery date: March, 28, 2005 with embedded images of Lange and Ullmann 2015, fig. 1; Lange, Ullmann and Baumhauer 2016, fig. 4)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bubastis: A Palace for a King or a Provincial Administrative Centre?

by Manfred Bietak

1. The position of the site

The ancient town of Bubastis[1] was situated in a region east of the easternmost Nile branch, called the 'Waters of Reʿ' or the 'Bubastic River' in antiquity.[2] In the 3rd and 2nd millennia and in the second half of the 1st millennium, this was the most important river channel that connected Egypt with the Levant (Fig. 41). Bubastis lies also at the intersection of the Bubastic branch with the land route along Wadi Tumilat to the Bitter Lakes, the Sinai, and the Gulf of Suez. Therefore, one could expect from a geographical point of view that this place played an important role in the organisation of expeditions to the turquoise and copper mines in the Sinai Peninsula and to the Red Sea. At the time of the late 20th Dynasty, when the easternmost Nile branch seems to have been clogged for half a millennium, which had brought about the end of Piramesse, Bubastis profited from the Tanitic branch, which nearly joined the easternmost river that passed west of this town.[3] Thus, the connection to the Mediterranean via Tanis was still open and both towns became the most important centres of the eastern Delta during the Libyan Period. Both towns also profited from quarrying at Piramesse for their sacred buildings.[4]

Any assessment of the extent of Bubastis during different periods is, for the time, difficult without results of core-drilling and scientific analyses of ceramic materials produced from the cores. In the 1940s, the tell extended from north-west to south-east over 1.500 m and from north-east to south-west for a maximum of 700 m, covering an area of at least 100 ha (Fig. 1A). It is highly likely that the site's original extent was even greater in the Late Period, reaching over 200 ha. Wilkinson's 1843 map of Tell Basta shows a considerable extension of the eastern part of the tell to the south and to the north (Fig. 1C).[5]

Fig. 1B Detail with the position of the palace (© Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe, Imagery date: March, 28, 2005 with embedded images of Bietak 2014/15, fig. 1).

The north-western part of the antiquities' area was cut off by the Port Said–Alexandria road and has, in the meantime, with the exception of the Pepi I Temple precinct, largely disappeared under modern buildings (Figs. 1A, 3). This part has been traditionally used for cemeteries such as the famous Cat Cemetery. It seems that this burial ground was taken up until modern times by Coptic, Syrian, Protestant, and Jewish cemeteries. In ancient Egypt the cemetery area continued in a strip at least 200 m wide also east of the Port Said–Alexandria road, north of the big Temple of Bastet from the Old Kingdom until the late New Kingdom. The position of the necropolis along the western strip of the town is meaningful in respect of the importance of the West as realm of the dead. This concept has parallels with other towns such as Mendes. The necropolis once continued until the northern edge of the tell.[6] It was there that the palace of the Middle Kingdom cut deeply into the older tombs and partly into an elite necropolis of the Old Kingdom (Figs. 1B, 3). But when this was realised, further damage was avoided by limiting the eastern enclosure wall of the palace.

1 Older excavations and appraisals of the site in general: Naville 1891; Habachi 1957; 1975; on the site in the Late Period: Leclère 2008, 363-391 with literature. Recent overviews: Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2010; 2014.

2 For the Nile branches in the eastern Delta see Daressy 1927–1929; 1929–1931; 2002; Bietak 1975, 47–112.

3 Bietak 1975, 99–105, fig. 13.

4 Habachi 2001, 92–104.

5 Rawlinson 1858, after p. 186; Wilkinson 1843, 427–431; see recent works on the reconstruction of the ancient landscape: Rosenow 2010; Lange and Ullmann 2015; Lange, Ullmann and Baumhauer 2016; 2017; Ullmann, Lange, Göbel and Baumhauer 2018.

6 About the Old Kingdom necropolis in Bubastis see Bakr 1979; 1992; Bakr and Lange 2017; Lange 2013.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 1C The map of Bubastis after Wilkinson 1842 in: Rawlinson 1858, embedded in a Google Earth image in consultation with Lange, Ullmann and Baumhauer 2016, fig. 5 (© Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe, Imagery date: March, 28, 2005)

The palace had a different orientation than the previous cemeteries, as the building plan was nearly according to the cardinal points. Only 10 cubits to the east of the palace, Shafik Farid found a nearly square cemetery (c. 40 × 33 m) of the mayors of Bubastis with the same orientation as the palace (Figs. 2–3).[7] It is surrounded by a thick mudbrick wall.

The palace seems to have been built at the northern part of the town, if not at its northern border. This location was an advantage for the palatial area, as, during most of the year, the prevailing north winds would have cleared the smoke and odours of the town.

It was only during the 18th Dynasty that the former cemetery areas began to be used for settlement, which was given up, however, after some time. It seems that the demand for settlement space brought about the invasion of the cemetery ground by domestic constructions, but the area was re-established in Ramesside times as a burial ground. The town itself seems to have been situated south-east of the cemeteries in a region that is still partially covered by a tell. Its major part, however, is presumably levelled agricultural land.

The principal sacred precinct, the Temple of Bastet, was originally in the southern part of the town in the Old Kingdom.[8] If Herodotus's description (II. 59–60) can be trusted, the temple seems to have been situated in the midst of the town during the Persian period,[9] but this may have been the result of the town's growth towards the south. It is not unlikely that during the Middle Kingdom the palace and the temple of this period were connected by a processional road leading through the necropolis or even separating the cemeteries from the town. All these reflections, however, must still be verified by survey and excavation.

7 Farid 1964, 192, figs. 1–3; Van Siclen 1991; 1996; about this cemetery see, recently, Lange 2016.

8 Habachi 1957, 11–32.

9 Herodotus's narrative about the temple seems to be quite realistic, especially his mention of looking down at the temple from the surrounding town. This is a repeating feature of the position of Egyptian temples versus the quick, vertical growth of domestic areas of tells, where a stone-built temple rests ritually on 'primeval ground' (see the situation at Abydos, Edfu, Luxor, and other places). Another verifiable feature is the stone-paved processional road from the entrance of the temple to the 'Temple of Mercury'. This road in front of the temple was verified by the University of Würzburg excavations.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 2 The Middle Kingdom palace of Bubastis (Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: March 21, 2015)

2. History of the exploration[10]

The palace of the Middle Kingdom at Bubastis was discovered and excavated previously by Shafik Farid (1961–1967)[11] and Ahmed El-Sawi (1967–1971)[12] for the Egyptian Department of Antiquities and by Mohamed Ibrahim Bakr (1978–1989)[13] for the University of Zagazig. In 2000 the University of Potsdam under Christian Tietze, in cooperation with the University of Zagazig and afterwards in cooperation with the Supreme Council of Antiquities started to clean the palace again, surveyed the palatial compound, and redrew its plan on a scale of 1:500.[14] More recently, investigations have been carried out by the author for the Austrian Academy of Sciences with the kind consent of the concession holder, the University of Würzburg (2012–2015).[15] Thus far, about two-thirds to three-quarters of the palace's area have been uncovered. The architecture in the northern and north-western parts remains, therefore, unclear concerning their spatial programme. Afterwards, work on the palace had remained on hiatus for many years. Except for preliminary reports,[16] a final analysis has yet to be published. This would need, however, more excavations in the north-western part of the precinct. In recent years, the Antiquities Organisation (The Ministry of State of Antiquities/ MoA) started to prepare an archaeological park by

10 This fieldwork is part of a project entitled 'Palaces in Ancient Egypt' funded by the Austrian Science Fund-FWF (Project P25945-G21).

11 Farid 1964.

12 El-Sawi 1977; 1979a; 1979b.

13 Bakr 1979; Bakr 1992; Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis (eds.) 2010; 2014; Bakr and Lange 2017.

14 Tietze (ed.) 2001, 11–18; Tietze and Jäger 2003.

15 The author would like to thank the former Director General of Antiquities in the Delta and northern Sinai Mohamed 'Abdel-Maksoud for offering this project, Eva Lange-Athinodorou from the University of Würzburg for accepting the project under the umbrella of the concession of her university, and Daniela Rosenow for supervising the 2015-season. For studies of this project see Bietak 2014–2015; Bietak 2015; Bietak and Lange 2014.

16 See previous footnotes.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

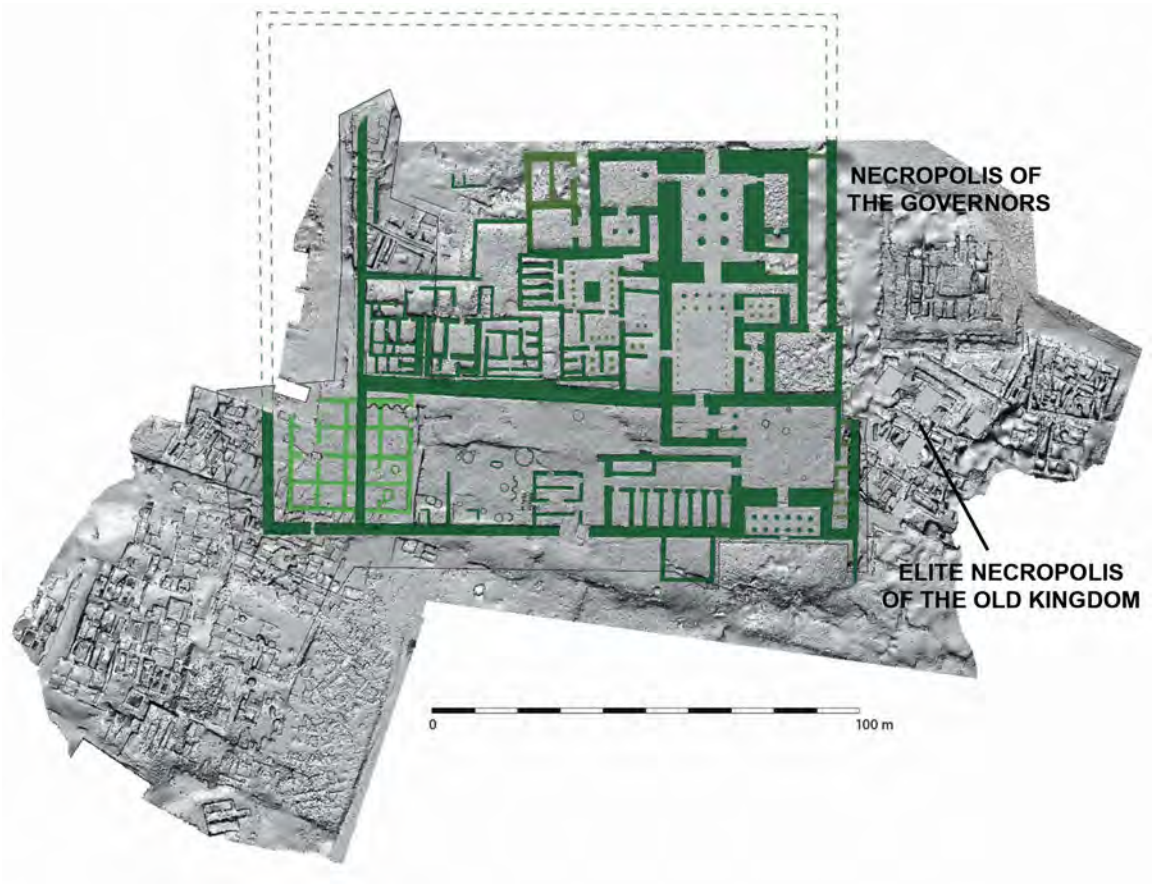


Fig. 3 Scanned image of the Middle Kingdom palace with the position of the necropolis of the governors east of it; recorded walls (2013–2015) in green; magazines of an earlier phase in light green

adding layers of new mudbricks in order to protect the ancient walls from weathering by winter rain and damage by vegetation. In the most important spaces of the palace, sand was placed in order to create clean floors. At the same time, the MoA decided to continue the excavations and to record the previously unearthed architecture before creating the archaeological park. For this reason, the intention was to remove the new brick material temporarily, in order to record the brick pattern of the original crowns of the walls and then to rebuild these protective measures.

3. The stratigraphy

The palace is embedded into a rich stratigraphy that can be defined in a preliminary fashion as follows:

Ph. f Necropolis of the late New Kingdom (19th–20th Dynasties) cutting into all the following phases

Ph. g Settlement with loosely detached houses, hurdle walls, and silos (18th Dynasty)

Ph. h/1 Tombs of the Second Intermediate Period cutting into the palace and the Middle Kingdom settlement

Ph. h/2 Palace of the Middle Kingdom and a necropolis for the mayors of Bubastis, settlement remains at the south-eastern edge of the palace (late 12th–13th Dynasties)

Ph. i Older phase of the Middle Kingdom palace (12th Dynasty)

Ph. k Necropolis of the late Old Kingdom including an elite necropolis in the east (6th Dynasty)

Ph. l Substantial walls of the same orientation, most likely belonging to a palace of the Old Kingdom. Probably already then existed an elite necropolis in the east.

The stratigraphic sequence was assessed by the successive destruction caused by tomb pits and foundation trenches. The exploration proceeded by first removing the fill recently added by the antiquities authority in order to protect the monuments and, to a small extent, by area stripping. Also, some sections were secured and drawn by using blocks of soil that had been left intact under New Kingdom tombs and walls by the previous excavators (Figs. 5–6).

The aim of the recent explorations was to document the palace using modern methods of archaeology and to study its architectural history and function. At a later stage,

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

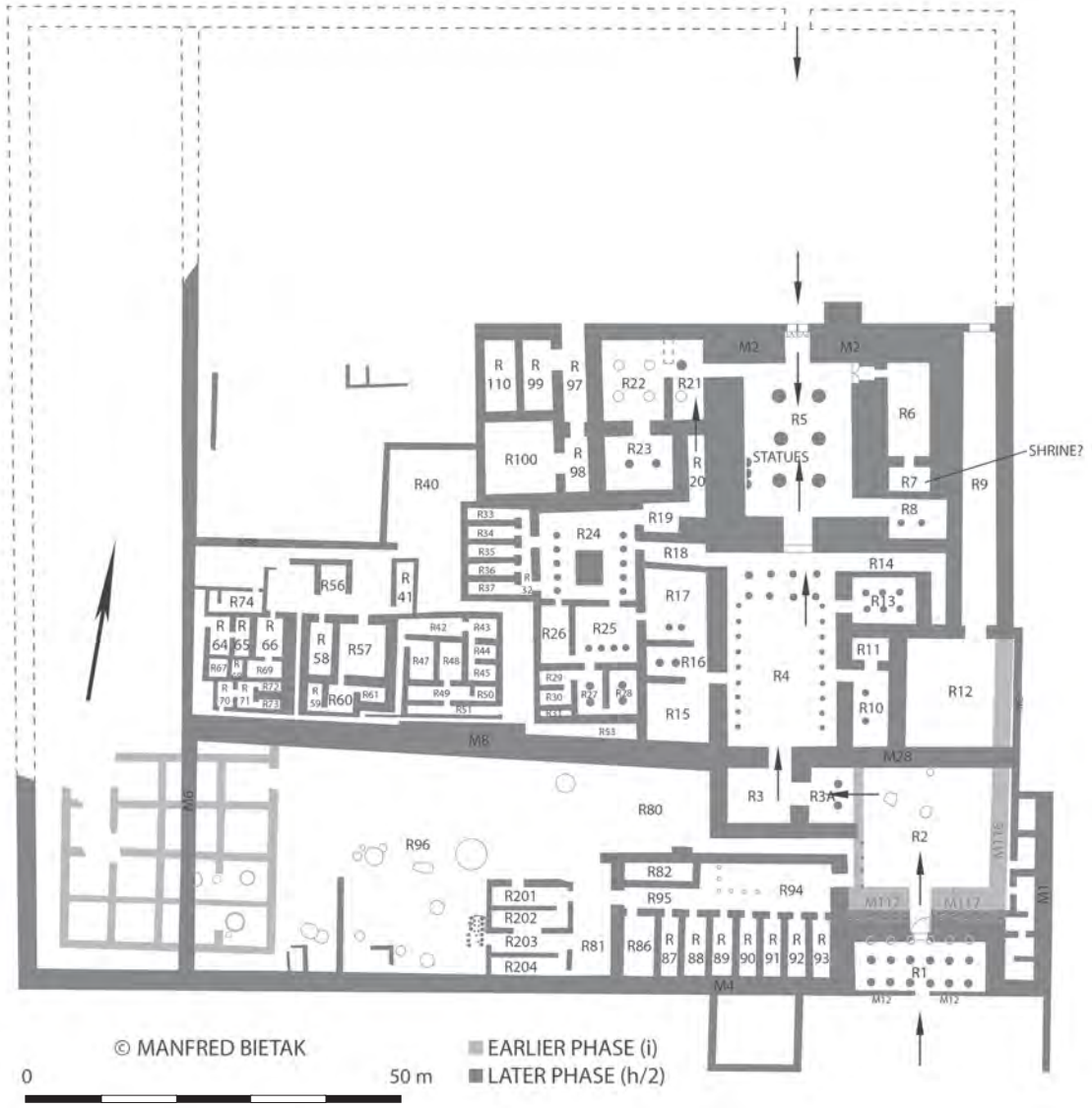


Fig. 4 Plan of the Middle Kingdom palace of Bubastis with room numbers; light grey walls of an earlier phase of the palace

we intend to uncover parts of older strata inasmuch as they were not destroyed by deep penetrating excavations of the past, and to document older phases of the Middle Kingdom palace, the late Old Kingdom necropolis, and, finally, the presumed Old Kingdom palace in courtyards and outside the Middle Kingdom palace, in order not to destroy walls of the most important building of the Middle Kingdom. Another intention is to find settlement remains contemporary with the Middle Kingdom palace and tombs of the Second Intermediate Period.

4. Survey of the relative and absolute chronology of the palace

The palace was not constructed in one phase, but evidently had a longer architectural history. This history is recognisable e.g. in details of the division wall between the southernmost and the middle strip of the palace, which shows that this wall originally had a slightly different orientation, which was changed in a final phase of the palace (Fig. 4). In the southernmost strip with a courtyard, remains of tree pits were found, which show a systematic arrangement differing from the final orientation but also being nearer to an east-west cardinal orientation (Fig. 38). This shows that changes were made in the construction of the palace over a prolonged period. Another noticeable change was the enlargement of the first courtyard behind the monumental southern entrance, where its eastern wall was dismantled and rebuilt in a more easterly position in order to expand the courtyard. In addition, the western wall and the southern wall with the entrance were moved in order to create more space for the original courtyard.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

A breach within the western wall of the core area of the palace was dismantled and rebuilt on a smaller scale, which shows that, most probably, building material had to be transported into the domestic area of the palace for later installations. It is, however, premature to present an architectural history of the palace at present. This can only be done following more detailed architectural analyses and documentation.

The chronology of the palace is still dependent on the epigraphic evidence of the cemetery of the town mayors and dignitaries, known to us by their statues and fragments of their offering tables found in the palace (Figs. 22–25). According to onomastic and genealogical conclusions, the mayors of Bubastis seem to have served at the time of Amenemhat II, Sesostris III, and Amenemhat III, until the end of the 12th Dynasty.[17] A fragment of a door-jamb and a lintel with two representations of Amenemhat III, sitting on the double Heb-sed throne, were found within the palace and give a date to the later part of this king's reign (Fig. 26).[18]

The only part of the cemetery (Fig. 3) that is preserved was the very part constructed under the ancient surface. The upper architecture with the individual chapels has disappeared, but stone objects such as parts of door constructions, offering tables, and stela fragments were occasionally found, having fallen into the chambers below.[19] If these chapels had survived, it would have been easier to reconstruct the number of mayors of the town. The cemetery may have consisted originally only of the burial chamber in the centre, constructed of limestone. It is thought that it belonged to the founder of this cemetery, the earliest traceable mayor. The tomb was surrounded by a thick enclosure wall of mudbricks, measuring, according to Shafik Farid, c. 33 × 40 m, and was accessible from the north, perhaps issuing originally in a dromos to the oldest tomb. By and by, the tombs of other dignitaries were added and it seems that some were constructed together in a planned fashion, but the whole assemblage was certainly not built at one time. Finally, in the north, in a planned construction, magazines were added within the enclosure wall, largely closing the corridor that continued along the eastern enclosure wall. The succession of tombs was reconstructed only in initial studies.[20] Six of the chambers were built of limestone and researchers believe that these were the chambers of the mayors, while the other chambers were for relatives. As epigraphic evidence identifies at least nine mayors, who were all most likely from Bubastis, there must have been others who were not buried in limestone chambers, but in humbler chambers built of mudbricks. As Van Siclen III claims, the finding of a scarab of the oldest king's son and later King Nehesy in this cemetery indicates that the cemetery must have been occupied throughout the 13th Dynasty, until the beginning of the 14th Dynasty.[21] The many tomb chambers, even if only built from mudbricks, have enough space to accommodate the succession of mayors during the first part of the 13th Dynasty until the 14th Dynasty established itself in Avaris. As traces of conflagration were found in the magazines and in the largest living unit west of the central colonnaded courtyard [R4], which was most likely the residence of the mayor of Bubastis, the excavators and Van Siclen III associate this evidence with the political takeover of the Delta by precursors of the Hyksos. For the time being, we have to work with this chronology. It is a pity that the artefacts, especially the ceramic remains such as storage jars in the magazines, are at present unavailable for study.[22] These, perhaps, would contribute to the establishment of a more solid chronology of the functional time of the palace. The zir of Marl C clay used in the piping system found by Shafik Farid[23] in the destroyed northern part of the palace belongs already to a 13th Dynasty type and is definitively still from the time when the palace was in official use.[24] The same kind of marl jar was used as receptacle of a simple bath in a settlement of the late Middle Kingdom at the south-eastern edge of the palace.[25] This settlement seems to be contemporary with the palace. The cylindrical neck of a beer jar found in a doorway between corridor [R18] and the big colonnaded courtyard [R4] dates also to the 13th Dynasty (Fig. 34). This means that the palace was still used in the 13th Dynasty. Van Siclen III's assumption that the palace was in function till the early 14th Dynasty seems to be correct.

5. Description of the Middle Kingdom palace of Bubastis

The palace was constructed of mudbricks while doorframes, and plinths were made of limestone. As in other domestic contexts, no fragments of columns made of stone were found at this site, leading to the presumption that they were made of wood. Some drums of small columns of limestone with a diameter of c. 35 cm were found, however, thrown in more recent times into open chambers of New Kingdom tombs at the western part of the palace.

Within the main walls, which still stand up to 1.5–2 m including the foundations, reed mats could be found

17 Van Siclen 1991, 192–194; 1995, 244; Lange 2015, 197–200.

18 Farid 1958, 194, pl. 10; Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis (eds.) 2014, 18–19, fig. 5.

19 Van Siclen 1991, 189.

20 Farid 1964, 192, figs. 1–3; Van Siclen 1991; 1996; recently Lange 2016.

21 Van Siclen 1991, 194.

22 The location where these jars are stored should be sought.

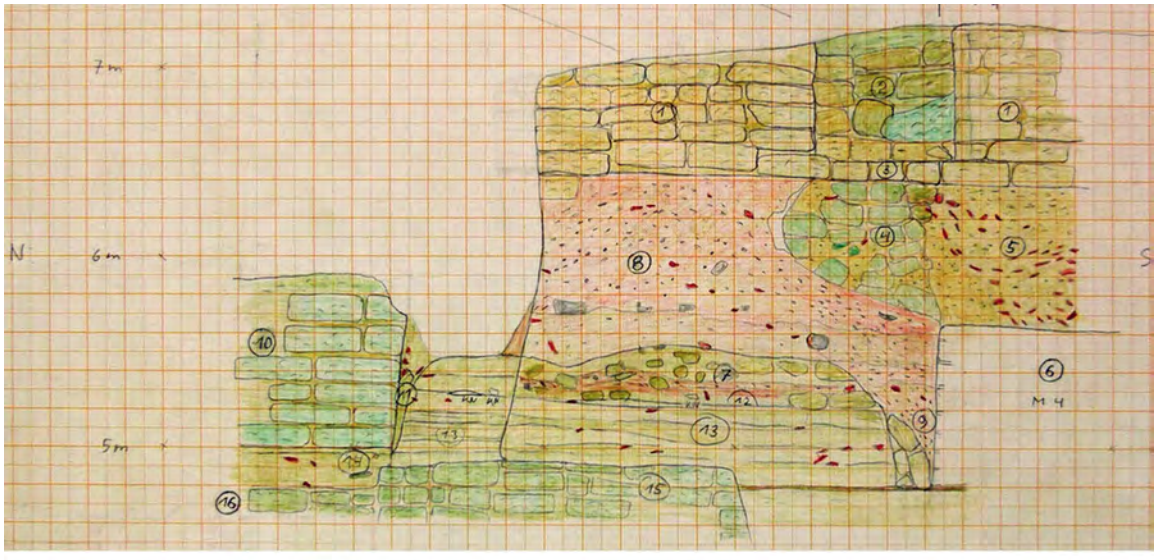
23 Van Siclen 1996, 242, fig. 7.

24 Bader 2001, Type 4; Kopetzky 2010, 165–170, fig. 50, Type 4.

25 Unpublished excavation, spring 2016.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 5 Section that remained under a New Kingdom tomb after excavation of the Egyptian Antiquities Authorities under Ahmed El-Sawi in the 1970s, showing the stratigraphy of Phases f–k



1. Remains of the entrance façade of New Kingdom tomb q/503–1 (L 254), brownish-grey mudbricks, constructed without mortar in the lower layers (Ph. f)
2. Entrance of previous (no.1) closed with mudbricks (Ph. f)
3. Threshold to tomb chamber 1 (Ph. f)
4. Pit, filled with soil and brickbats, fill of a pit, either an older tomb or a waste pit, (Ph. f or g), cut by 5
5. Pit to remove the bricks of the upper part of wall 6 ([M4]), filled with a fine-grained mix of ash and loam and numerous potsherds (Ph. f or g?)
6. Southern outer wall [M4] of the Middle Kingdom palace, near its south-western corner; grey mudbricks with grey mortar (Ph. i)
7. Levelled building waste with brickbats (Ph. i)
8. Red burnt soil and brick grit, most likely from ovens (between Ph. i and h/2)
9. Foundation ditch for no. 6, filled with soil and brickbats (Ph. i)
10. Dark mudbrick wall [M9]of granaries from the older phase of the palace (Ph. i)
11. Foundation ditch of 10 = wall [M9], excavated from the same level as no. 9 (Ph. i)
12. Horizon below no. 7; probably a surface before building activities for the Middle Kingdom palace started (Ph. i)
13. Compacted mud layers with walking surfaces (between Ph. i and k)
14. Fine-grained mud/loam material (between Ph. i and k)
15. Mudbrick wall [M161]; serial tomb constructions; late Old Kingdom (Ph. k)
16. Mudbrick wall [M162]; serial tomb constructions; late Old Kingdom (Ph. k)

Fig. 6 Drawing of the section on Fig. 5 by E. Czerny 2013.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

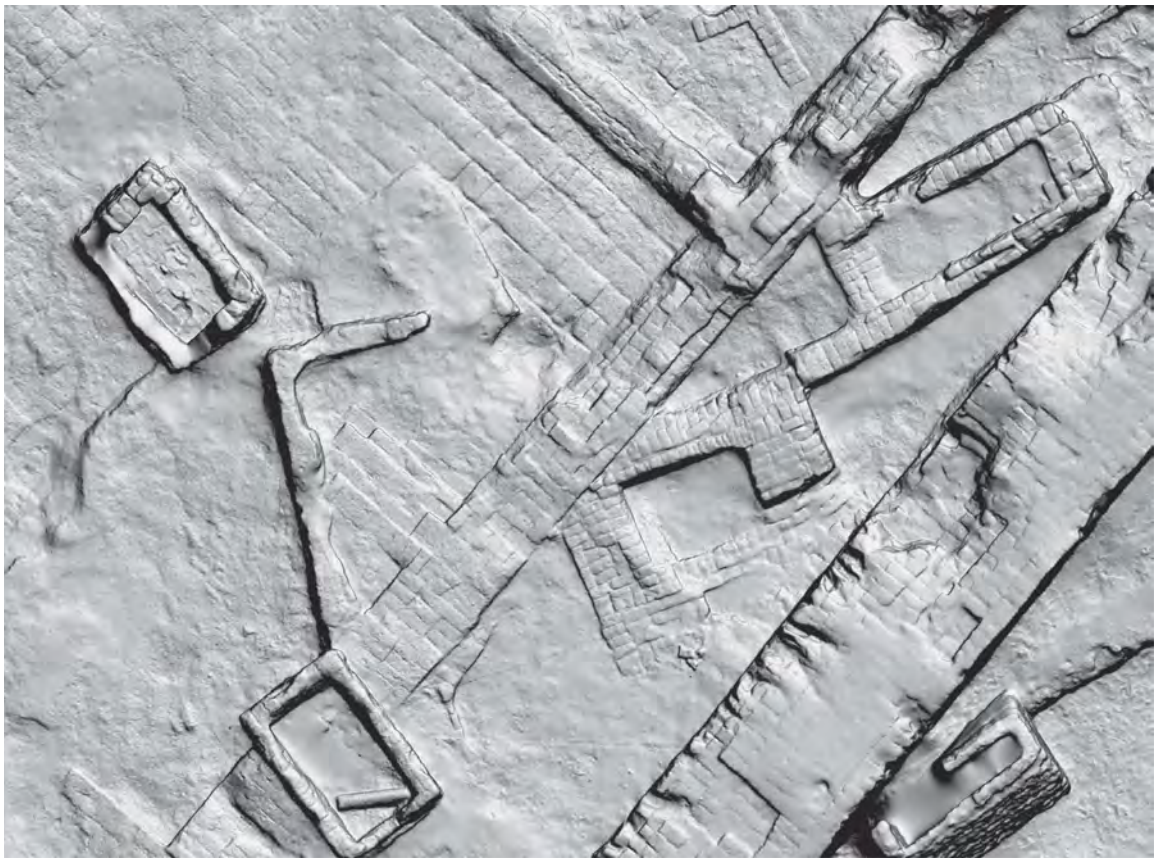


Fig. 7 Walls of the Middle Kingdom palace (Ph. h/2 and i) cutting into late Old Kingdom tombs (Ph. k) and being disturbed by New Kingdom tomb chambers

on top of the twelfth course of bricks, used to bind the massive brickwork together in a more stable way. The outer walls have a thickness of 5–5.5 bricks (5 cubits),[26] while inner walls were normally 3 bricks (3 cubits) thick. The façade in the south measured originally 131 m and it seems that a width of 250 cubits (131.25 m) was intended. Taking the position of the mayors' necropolis as a line to be situated in the extension of the median east-west axis of the building and, doubling the southern half of the palace to the north, one arrives at a length that is approximately the same as the width of the building.

As indeed walls of the palace continue to the north, a square building would measure c. 17.000 sq.m, which would be an amazing size. One cannot even exclude a greater extension, but the most likely reconstruction is a square building. Square plans are also the preferred shape of temples in the Middle Kingdom. In any case, it is one of the largest palatial buildings found thus far in ancient Egypt. Therefore, the assumption of Van Siclen III and Tietze that this palace was not a royal installation but just the residence and office of the mayors of Bubastis[27] must be subjected to closer scrutiny. The aforementioned *ḥeb-sed* representation of King Amenemhat III[28] cannot be explained just as a royal presence to the office of the mayor (Fig. 26). We shall return to this question below.

An enormous rectangular building pit was cut into older remains for the foundations of the palace – an action that removed quite a lot of material from the late Old Kingdom cemetery (Figs. 7–8). Even a part of the presumed Old Kingdom palace (Phase l) was chopped off. In addition to that, foundation trenches were lowered into the base of this building pit for the walls. Some walls had no extra trenches. They seem to be late in the architectural history of the palace.

The preparation of the foundations of the palatial compound required c. 27.000 cu. m. to be removed. The excavation soil seems to have been used for producing bricks for the project as no dump heaps can be recognised in the vicinity of the building. Nevertheless, the foundation pit created a big

26 Ancient Egyptian cubits (0.525 m).

27 Van Siclen 1985; 1991; Tietze and Jäger 2003.

28 Farid 1958, 194, pl. 10; Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis (eds.) 2014, 18–19, fig. 5.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 8 Walls of the Middle Kingdom palace (Ph. h/2 and i) cutting into Old Kingdom tombs (Ph. k), looking north

Fig. 9 Entrance porch [R1] of the Middle Kingdom palace with twelve column bases, looking east

elevation difference between the floors within the palace and the outside surface.

The palatial precinct was not continuously roofed. It consists of courtyards, magazines, and largely roofed units. Its plan presents, however, a closed appearance. In analysing this building, three strips could be identified from south to north; it is also possible to differentiate three units from east to west. The southernmost strip is 31.5 m (60 cubits) deep, comprises magazines and silos, and seems to have had mainly economic functions. The middle strip has a depth of 55.1 m (105 cubits) and presents in its excavated area, besides the official part, a residential function with four houses in a row, in the west. The northernmost strip is still not properly explored. It was largely destroyed before excavations began in 1961 and one can only hope to reconstruct in the future the spatial programme with the help of the drainage system found by Shafik Farid, and by the position of column pits. Another hope is an envisaged geomagnetic survey that will utilise the compaction of the soil in order to discern the position of walls.

5.1 The official part of the palace

The entrance [R1] is positioned asymmetrically at the right (eastern) end of the southern façade and is set as a niche into the façade (Figs. 9–10). The position is highly unusual for palatial architecture, where entrances are normally situated in the north and consistent with an axial system.[29] The asymmetric position at the right end of the façade has been borrowed from the domestic house architecture. With its portico of 18.3 × 7.8 m (35 × 15 cubits) and with two rows of six columns, the entrance is monumental. A ledge of mudbrick, in line with the façade, should have kept the colonnade clean of blown-in dust. The back wall of the entrance [M13] is unusually thick, with a width of 9–9.5 bricks = 4.17 m (8 cubits) (Fig. 11). It was situated originally 2.98 m farther northward and must have created a deeper entrance niche. It remains to be seen if the columns were originally arranged in a different way in order to fit the once deeper door niche. Indeed, the original space enabled the accommodation of a third row of columns just under the southern face of the new entrance back wall (Fig. 11). The door itself

29 Ricke 1932, 56–68; Bietak 2005, 131–141.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

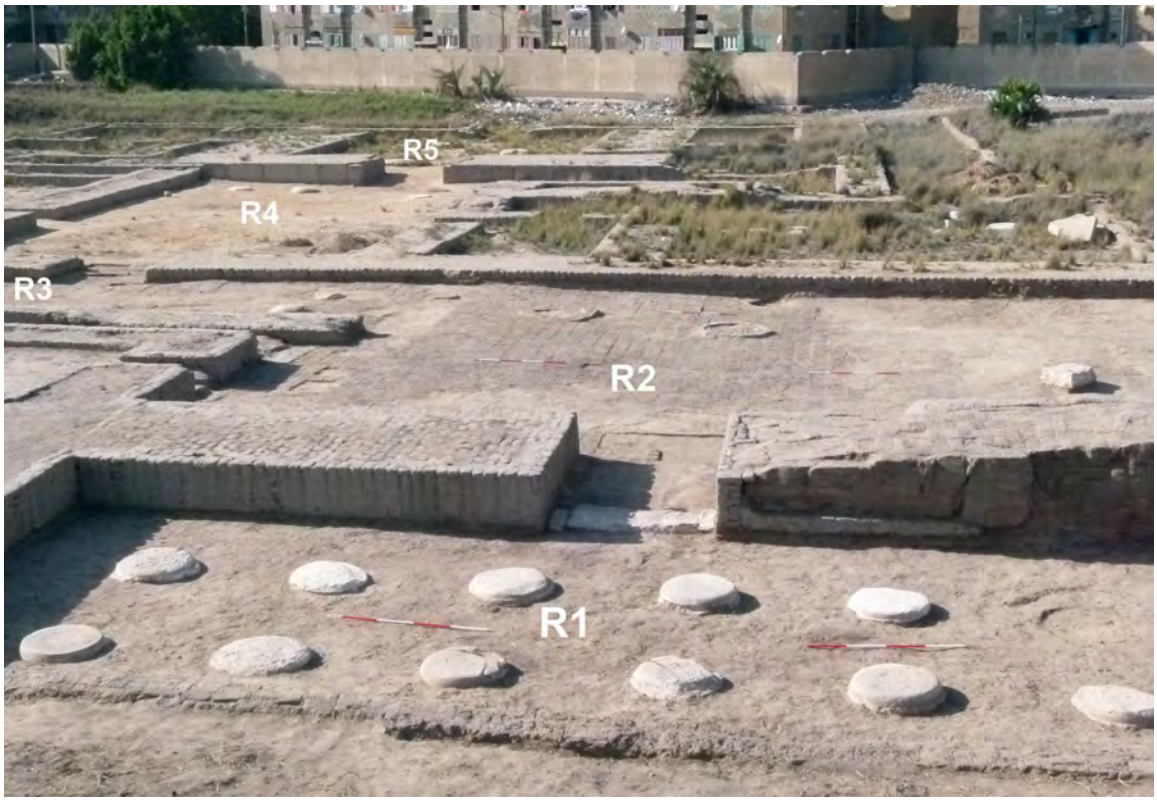


Fig. 10 Entrance porch [R1] of the Middle Kingdom palace with twelve column bases (one missing), looking north onto paved courtyard [R2] leading left to the 'espace en chicane' ([R3]) and the big courtyard [R4] and the ceremonial six-columned hall [R5]

consisted of a monolithic threshold of 2.08 × 0.98 m and shows the negatives of two square door-jambs with 31 cm sides, enclosing a clear doorway width of 1.46 m (Fig. 12). The door was single winged (1.53 m = 3 cubits) and should be therefore considered as profane. It opened to the right.

From here, a large, squat courtyard, [R2], was entered (Figs. 13–14), which originally measured 18.76 × 16.18 m (c. 35 × 30 cubits) but was later widened to the east and to the south to measure 21.65 × 19.14 m (c. 40 × 35 cubits). The estimate of the east-west dimension in cubits is so inaccurate that one could suspect that also another change was made at the western limit of the courtyard. The floor was paved with mudbricks and the southern part of its western side was once shaded by slender colonnades. The holes of the plinths were still visible (Figs. 13–14). When the courtyard was excavated by Shafik Farid, some of the plinths were still preserved. It seems that the original western limit of the courtyard was a wall under these plinths (Fig. 4).

As the courtyard was open, the pavement must have been covered by a lime screed; otherwise, winter rains would have rendered this area into an impassable slippery arena. Such a screed was indeed preserved in some spots, especially at the southern edge of the courtyard. The gradient of the pavement was arranged in such a way that rainwater moved towards a south-north line of the court and from there it was collected in a big cylindrical storage jar [L314] sunk in the middle of the northern face of the court (Fig. 15). Two pottery pipes cut into the walls of the jar: the higher one came from the blind courtyard [R12], north of the present one and, on a deeper level, a second pipe carried the collected rain water towards the south, outside the building.

At the southern end of the east wall of the courtyard there is access to an attached wing with a series of rooms, probably for guards. Three closely spaced entrances were found in the west wall of the courtyard. The southern one leads to a courtyard with magazines [R80], the middle one to a corridor [R81] into the domestic courtyard of the southern strip of the palace, and the northern one is a monumental entrance with a portico of two columns leading through a door into a bent passageway [R3] with a door to the north into the central colonnaded courtyard [R4] of the representative tract of the palace (Figs. 13–14). Regarding the eastern extension of the first courtyard, it appears that the east wall of the entrance niche is a continuation of the east wall of corridor [R9]. This continuation appears to suggest that, originally, the entire eastern façade was in one line and that the east walls of courtyards [R2] and [R12] were originally one with a substantial east wall of the palace and the eastern element of

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 11 Eastern entrance pylon with a join of an older phase

the entrance construction. The extension of the two courtyards to the east happened at a later stage, and the annex with the guard-rooms seems to have been attached later. This explanation has still to be verified by archaeological autopsy.

It is unclear if the bent passageway [R3] leading to the most representative part of the palace was a courtyard or if it was covered, which seems more likely, with the portico and the sturdy wall [M193] having a thickness of 7.5 bricks (2.95–2.98 m) in front of it (Fig. 20). This wall, which enclosed a 3.2 m wide door, was installed only secondarily in a second phase. No threshold was found within this doorway, but in the midst of the door were fragments of a rounded limestone block which may have been its remains (Fig. 16).

Originally, the north wall of passageway [R3] continued the slightly diverging direction of the separation wall [M8] between the first and second strips of the palace, and seems to have ended in a wall-head – possibly the western end of the original door leading asymmetrically into the central colonnaded courtyard [R4] (Figs. 16–17B). This doorway seems to have originally been in the midst of the north wall of this passage room, belonging to the earlier phase (Phase i) of the palace. This wall is still visible under wall [M28]. In a later phase, the central courtyard was entered through a door in the middle of its southern edge.

The central courtyard [R4] measured 15.04 × 25.95 m[30] (30 × 50 cubits).[31] It ended to the north of a portico with two rows of four sturdy columns in the north and two colonnades of nine thin columns at its eastern and western sides, which seem to have been installed only secondarily, as they are neither in-line nor in the size of the mentioned portico (Fig. 17B). As the representative part of the palace has been heavily restored recently and as the original walls are not visible, no precise information about the dimensions of doorways could be given.

From the colonnaded courtyard [R4], there was access on both sides to what seem to have been offices. On the western side there were three rooms [R15–17]: a two-columned room in the middle flanked by two nearly square courtyards to the north and south. The northern one had access to a courtyard [R25] of the largest of four apartments, which most probably housed the mayor. On the eastern side of the courtyard, there are another couple of rooms that look like offices [R10–11]. Their access is opposite the offices attached

30 Measurements according to Farid 1964, 193. The dimensions, which look reasonable, can only be verified after removing the reconstructed walls on top of the original ones.

31 The following parts of the palace have not yet been re-excavated; therefore, the measurements depend on the reconstructed walls of the MoA.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 12 The threshold of the single-blade entrance door to the palace, looking south

Fig. 13 The paved courtyard [R2], looking west-south-west. Along its western edge, several square recesses of recently removed column plinths. In the background, magazines [R82–94] and the espace en chicane [R3]) behind a two-columned porch [R3A]. In the background: the economic courtyards [R80] and [R96]; in the foreground to the right: a circular drain shaft and secondary silo constructions

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 14 Paved courtyard [R2], looking north-west; it leads to the espace en chicane [R3] and in a right angle to the ceremonial colonnaded courtyard [R4] with a porch at its northern side, leading to a door into the ceremonial six-columned hall in the background on the right [R5]

Fig. 15 Drainage shaft of a pottery barrel with two terracotta pipes connected to it, in the northern edge of courtyard [R2]

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 16 Espace en chicane [R3] with two-columned porch [R3A] in front of it, looking north

to the supposed mayor's residence. There is a north-south-oriented room [R10] with two columns, which are both west of the median line of this space. In its north is a smaller rectangular room [R11]. Another door through the northern part of the east wall leads into a rectangular room [R13], oriented east-west and furnished with six columns arranged in two rows. From the north and east this room is encased by a corridor [R14], the entrance of which is in the eastern end of the courtyard portico [R4]. It could have been a staircase leading up to a window overlooking the blind courtyard [R12]. Van Siclen III thought that this corridor ended with a 'window of appearances'.[32] It is planned, however, to remove the recent reconstructions on top of these walls to see if this was not just a simple corridor to a door leading to the blind courtyard, which would make sense. On the opposite (western) side of the portico is a newly discovered door leading via a corridor into the northern courtyard [R24] of House 1, which, as mentioned above, served most likely as the residence of the mayor of Bubastis.

Through the easternmost pair of columns of the portico in the north of courtyard [R4], the most representative and impressive hall of the palace hitherto found, the six-columned hall [R5], was entered axially (Figs. 21A–21B). It is encased on all four sides by 10 cubit-thick (5.25 m) walls. Following Shafik Farid, the dimensions of this hall are 21.5 × 14.8 m (40 × 28 cubits).[33] The floor consisted of mudbrick pavement. Four of the original six column plinths were still in situ. It is not a throne room, as it is accessible axially from the north and the south. The northern door opened to the south and indicates that there was a second route of access to the palace. The left (eastern) part of the threshold is still in situ at the northern edge of the door and shows that it had been a double door with two wings each. This can be recognised by the recesses for two door hinges on both sides of this threshold (Figs. 18–19B). In the middle of the wide door one has to expect a middle post, and in the western half of the opening, another threshold with two hinges. Unfortunately, this part is no longer preserved. The split of the threshold into two and the form of the threshold makes it even possible to identify the double two-wing doors. Also, the width of the doorway, over 3.5 m, would have demanded such a door construction.

Double-wing doors were used in ancient Egypt for palaces, big fortresses, temples, and shrines – even small ones – while for profane domestic architecture and for private tomb entrances, the single-winged door was used.[34] Therefore, the single-winged door for the

32 Van Siclen 1996, 246.

33 Farid 1964, 193. Again, the precise measurements can only be taken after removal of the reconstruction walls, but these measurements look reasonable.

34 The difference in employment of single or double doors in ancient Egypt seems to have not been much considered in research; see Königsberger 1936; Brunner 1982; 1986; Arnold 1994, 267–269.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 17A Entrance from espace en chicane [R3] to the ceremonial courtyard [R4], looking north; in front of the entrance are remains of an earlier wall

Fig. 17B View from the ceremonial courtyard [R4], looking north to the six-columned hall [R5] at the time of excavations 1961 (archives of Shafik Farid, courtesy Family Shafik Farid & Charles van Siclen III)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 18 Northern portal of the ceremonial six-columned hall; eastern threshold of a double-blade door, looking south

southern entrance of the palace signals the profane world. Unfortunately, the threshold of the southern entrance into the six-columned hall [R5] has been removed. At the southern end of the doorway, some limestone powder and small chips were found, which seem to be the remains of a threshold opening to the north. As the portico leading from the colonnaded court [R4] to the six-columned hall [R5] indicates clearly the direction of approach from south to the north, we may assume that this was the original architectural design. The question remains whether the southern door [R5] was possibly a single-wing or double-wing door. Taking the width of the door into consideration, we think it must have been a double-wing door. It seems that in an earlier phase there was a different construction with small columns there, as a limestone plinth was found under the western southern corner and chips of limestone, in a circular pit near the north-eastern corner of the door opening (Fig. 20). For a thorough investigation, it will be necessary to remove completely the reconstructed wall built by the MoA.

At the southern end of the west wall of the six-columned hall, Shafik Farid found three slightly smaller than life-size statues of dignitaries, most likely all of mayors of Bubastis (Figs. 21B–25). But only one, of quartzite, bore inscriptions that

Fig. 19A Detail of the previous threshold, showing the remains of the pivot of the eastern door wing

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 19B Detail of the threshold in Fig. 18, showing the remains of the pivot of the western door wing

disclosed the title of a mayor and priest of Bastet.[35] It was of remarkable quality and is possibly the product of a workshop in the residence. His name, *ḥ3-k3w-Rˁ-snb*, and his facial features date the statue to the reign of Sesostris III or soon thereafter (Fig. 23).

The other two statues were also of good quality, but could be classified as good provincial work. They were fashioned of limestone and are uninscribed. The statues were discovered nearly in situ; they had only sunk to their left side and were partly resting on each other due to compaction or because of the weight of a collapsed wall (Fig. 22). As fragments of more honorary statues[36] and of two offering tables were found in the same place and the adjoining colonnaded courtyard, it is highly probable that this monumental hall served, among other functions, the cult and memory of the deceased mayors of the town. It is most interesting that a woman is also represented in a double statue together with her husband, most probably a mayor.[37] Additionally, one of the offering tables was dedicated to two ladies.[38] It seems most likely that the honoured persons were buried in the cemetery of the mayors in the east, but enjoyed also a cult with offerings in the six-columned hall. The aforementioned fragments of additional statues suggest that more statues and offering tables were arranged side-by-side along the west wall in a similar way to honorary statues along a processional road. It seems therefore likely that their owners were thought to participate eternally in rituals and processions that took place in the palace. The function of the rooms and the corridor [R20–23] behind the statues were tied to the work and the residence of the mayors of Bubastis (see below). At the same time, it looks as if the six-columned hall served also as an intermediate space to the northern, now destroyed, part of the palace. At the same time the statues looked towards the eastern wall behind, what we assume to be a chapel for the cult of the king.

At the northern end of the west wall of the six-columned hall is an entrance leading into an anteroom and to a two-columned hall in its south [R21–22] (Fig. 27). It appears that this anteroom was originally equipped with six columns of which only the plinth of the north-easternmost one is preserved. In a secondary development, the anteroom was divided into a small room [R21], and a large anteroom [R22]. Most likely, this apartment, accessible from the six-columned hall, was the office of the mayor of Bubastis whose reception

35 Farid 1958, 193, pls. 7–9; Verbovsek 2004, 235–242; Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2014, 7–23, 108–119.

36 Farid 1958, 163; Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2014, 10, figs. 9–11, 13–16.

37 Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2010, 12, fig. 13.

38 El-Sawi 1979a, 155–156.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 20 Detail under the western edge of the southern door to the six-columned hall [R5] with a small column base under the wall restored by the SCA

room [R23], was furnished by two columns. It seems that there was a direct access from the largest of the four residencies (House 1) in the second strip of the palace via an L-shaped corridor [R19–20]. Approximately 80 cm from the south wall of the first anteroom, there was a stone threshold that most probably originated from a doorway leading from this corridor into the anteroom.

The monumentality of the six-columned hall with its enormous walls incorporates also a long room and a small broad-room [R6–7], attached to it in the east. The aforementioned rooms west of the hall were built of much narrower walls, which gives a strong emphasis to the importance of rooms [R6–7] in the east. The entrances to both sets of rooms are opposite each other at the northern end of the sidewalls of the hall. Together [R6–7], they seem to measure 30 × 6 cubits. The southern part is set off by a thin wall with a central entrance. Van Siclen III suggested, in analogy to the big Kahun house, that this was a formal sleeping room flanking the monumental reception room (the six-columned hall).[39] This interpretation is attractive at first glance. The incorporation of these rooms into the part with the thick ceremonial walls and the entrance to these rooms by a double-winged door[40] suggest, however, a shrine with a sanctuary set off in the south by a wall or a barrier with a central doorway. In this respect, other evidence should be considered:

A limestone lintel (247 × 103 × 15 cm) with a double *ḥeb-sed* representation of King Amenemhat III (Fig. 26) was found at the north-eastern edge of the palace.[41] Although a more exact location is not mentioned in Farid's report, a photograph published by Van Siclen III seems to suggest that it was found at a doorway into a wide corridor [R9], leading into the blind courtyard [R12].[42] If so, the usual meaningful orientation of the king of Lower Egypt should be expected in the north and of the king of Upper Egypt, in the south. If used for this door, the position of the two royal images would, however, lose the meaningful orientation, common in Egyptian architecture. The representation of the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt would be oriented east-west instead of north-south.

In the following, I would like to present a much more meaningful reconstruction for the position of this lintel. During the excavations of hall [R5] and room [R6], the lintel was found and dragged, possibly a short distance, over the remains of the wall to the extreme north-eastern edge of the excavations so that it would be out of the way. In the photograph published by Van Siclen III, the stone, which seems to be the lintel, is not in contact with the ground, i.e. it is no longer in situ. Also, the upper fragment of a door-jamb was placed neatly, together with another limestone block, beside the threshold of what seems to be the door to corridor [R9].[43] This position is

39 Van Siclen 1996, 243.
40 Ibidem.
41 Farid 1964, 193 f., pl. 10; Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2014, 18 f.
42 Van Siclen 1996, 243.
43 Ibidem.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 21A The ceremonial six-columned hall, looking north at the time of excavations 1961 (archives of Shafik Farid, courtesy Family Shafik Farid & Charles van Siclen III)

Fig. 21B The ceremonial six-columned hall, looking north at the time of excavations 1961 (archives of Shafik Farid, courtesy Family Shafik Farid & Charles van Siclen III)

Fig. 22 Position of the three statues of mayors of Bubastis along the west wall of the ceremonial six-columned hall at the time of excavations 1961 (archives of Shafik Farid, courtesy Family Shafik Farid & Charles van Siclen III)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 23A, B Statue of the mayor of Bubastis *Ḥ‘-k3w-R‘* (© Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2014, 111, photograph Harald Keller)

Fig. 24 Statue of a dignitary, most probably mayor of Bubastis (© Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2014, 112, photograph Harald Keller)

Fig. 25 Statue of a dignitary, most probably mayor of Bubastis (© Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2014, 116, photograph Harald Keller)

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 26 Limestone lintel with a double Heb-sed representation of Amenemhat III, most likely from the door to shrine [R6-7] with a double-blade door (© Bakr, Brandl and Kalloniatis 2014, 18–19, fig. 5)

not to be expected for a door and a building after they had collapsed into ruins or were being used as a quarry.

As the entrance of room [R6] is oriented north-south, facing west, the orientation of the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt would be in keeping with the usual building canon. Second, the entrance into room [R6] was a double-winged door,[44] therefore it was most probably the entrance to a shrine, which also explains its incorporation into the part of the palace with the ceremonial strong walls. It seems most likely that this long room with a set-off southern chamber is a shrine for the king's cult. We could expect a statue of the king there, looking north. To the south of it, there seems to be another room, [R8], perhaps another shrine with a double door, but with a partition in its midst. The ceiling is supported by two columns, east and west. The bipartite door suggests regulated coming and going into room [R8], which perhaps served as a public shrine for the same purpose as did the supposed shrine [R7].

If our interpretation of the architectural evidence is correct, the six-columned hall was divided into the royal power on the right side with a shrine for the kingship, while the opposite, left (lesser) side was devoted to the profane power, the mayors of Bubastis (Figs. 4, 21B). Finally, is it a coincidence to find the three statues of the town's mayors concentrated at the southern end of the west wall of the six-columned hall looking towards the position of the supposed royal shrine [R7]?

As the northernmost strip has an access route from the north to the south, with a double door with two wings opening into the representational six-columned hall [R5] rather than into the opposite direction to the north, one has to conclude that there must have been a second entrance into the palace from the north, which is also the traditional orientation of doorways to houses and palaces alike.[45] The double-winged door indicates that this space was either cultic or royal. I would like to propose, therefore, that the northernmost strip was devoted to the king. This proposal is supported by the presence of the aforementioned lintel with the *Heb-sed* representations of King Amenemhat III. The king may have resided in the northern part of the palace during times when he had to officiate religious or secular duties at Bubastis.

Some space of the second strip is accessible only from the northernmost strip, such as apartment [R97–100, 110] west of the mayor's rooms [R21–23] and the entrance to the 10 cubit-wide corridor [R9] leading to the blind square courtyard [R12] of 25 × 25 cubits.

5.2 The southern courtyard with the magazines (Fig. 28)

The southern courtyard was excavated by the Antiquities Service (now MoA) under Shafik Farid. A layer more than 1.5 m thick of sandy soils was removed, which contained besides tombs of the New Kingdom also burials of the Second Intermediate Period.[46] The courtyard is not rectangular but has an oblique northern separation wall. The explanation for this feature has to be found in the architectural history of the palatial compound, which has to be explored by further excavations. A part of the courtyard is taken away by the access rooms to the official part

44 Ibidem.

45 Bietak 2014–2015, 55–56.

46 Ashmawy 2016.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 27 Two-columned hall west of the ceremonial six-columned hall, most likely the office of the mayor of Bubastis

of the palace by rooms [R3a–3]. The yard therefore measures east to west 68.25 m (130 cubits) to 86 m (165 cubits), north to south from 31.5 m (50 cubits) and in the west to 28 m in the east. The south-eastern part of this space is taken up by a block of store-rooms [R86–93], measuring 31.5 × 16.8 m (60 x 32 cubits) without the southern enclosure wall. They are organised in the following way: there is a row of eight store-rooms in the south; the western one is larger than the rest. The ordinary store-room seems to measure 15 × 5 cubits each. All are oriented north-south. The remaining space north of them was used for a room in the north-western corner – perhaps for administering the magazines – and a courtyard with an L-shaped colonnade in front of the rooms. Access to this block of store-rooms was provided by gates from the entrance courtyard [R2] in the east and from the remaining courtyard in the west. The floors of these store-rooms were undercut by the excavators; therefore, the original filling is no longer preserved. The walls are completely overbuilt by the restoration process for the archaeological park. According to the excavators, the brickwork shows signs of conflagration.

After an interval of 10 cubits in the west, forming a street, another block of store-rooms or stables, [R201–204], was erected – this time consisting of four units of 20 × 5 cubits each, oriented east-west (Fig. 29). West of this building, the original surface was still intact. In 2013 one found two rows of six cooking pits (Figs. 30–31). They were filled with ashes of straw from wheat, pieces of charcoal, potsherds, animal bones, and lumps of soil.[47] Under this horizon another series of smaller cooking pits was found. Until c. 50 years ago farmers and Bedouins used to wrap pieces of meat or poultry in lumps of clay mixed with potsherds and roasted them in such pits with fire that used straw and charred wood.[48] It is to be doubted that this was the official kitchen for the palatial precinct. More likely, it served the people engaged in this domestic courtyard.

The remains of the western part of the courtyard show damaged remains of walls and circular brick constructions, most likely for storing fodder for animals.

5.3 Residences of palace dignitaries and employees

In the western part of the second strip of the palatial compound one finds four largely detached houses, which differ from each other in their plans. All of them are also detached from the separation wall between the southern and the middle strip of the palace.

House 1 (Figs. 32–34): The biggest residence is attached to the palace and covers c. 570 sq.m. This size would equal in size already some of the big Amarna villas. It is most likely that this was the residence of the mayor of Bubastis at the time of the 12th and 13th

47 Thus far, it was not possible to bring an archaeo-botanist and an osteologist to examine the floral and faunal material.

48 According to workmen from Qift in Upper Egypt.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 28 Scan of the southern strip of the palace looking southeast with the twelve-columned entrance and the entrance court [R2] leading to the espace en chicane [R3]; to the right of it are the magazines [R82–94] and the domestic courtyards [R80] and [R96]

Dynasties. The reason for this identification is that it had direct access to the offices [R15–17] west of courtyard [R4] and also to the portico in the north of this courtyard, just at the entrance to the ceremonial six-columned hall [R5], where the statues and offering tables belonging to mayors of Bubastis, had been found by Shafik Farid (Fig. 34).[49] Furthermore, there is an L-shaped corridor [R19–20], leading from the courtyard of House 1 either to the roof or, what is more likely, to the group of rooms [R21–23], which we suspect to have been the offices of the mayor. If we read the architecture correctly, the mayor could reach his office without being seen directly (Fig. 4).

House 1 has the normal orientation of the Middle Kingdom houses. At its north is a representative courtyard [R24], of 25 × 23–25 cubits with colonnades

49 S. fn. 35.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

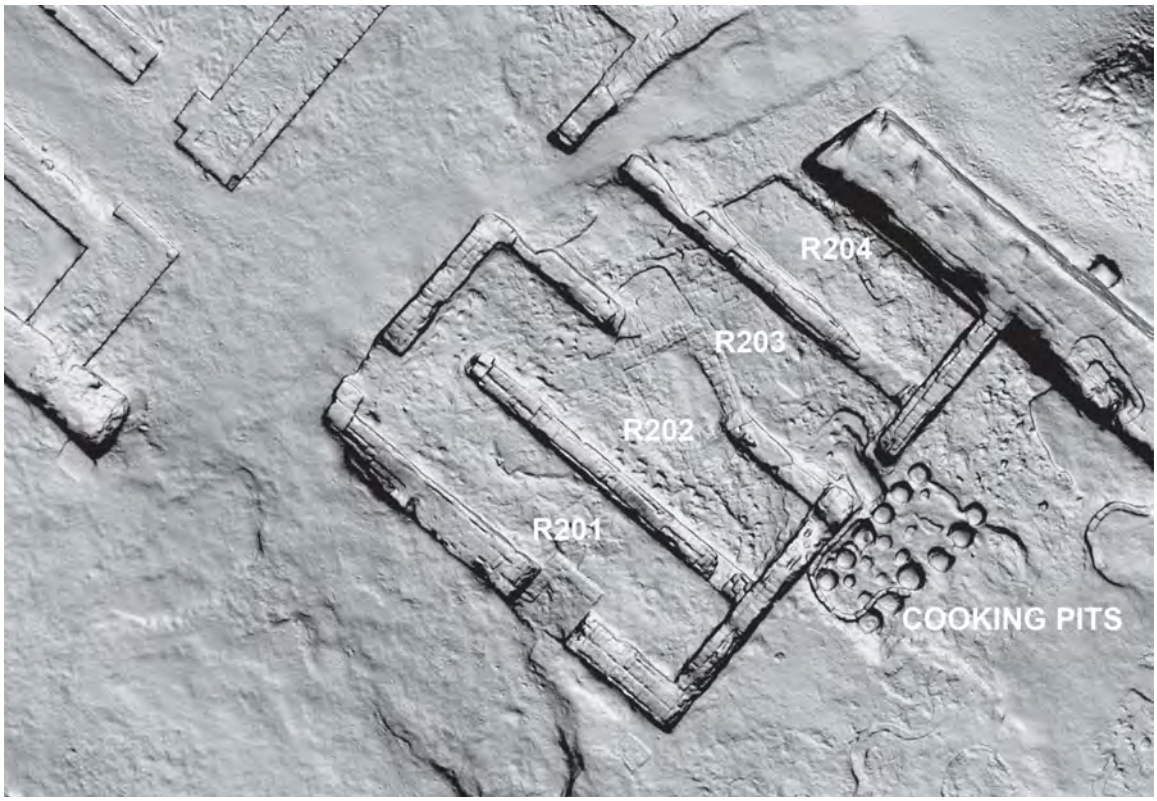


Fig. 29 Scan of Storerooms or stables [R201-204]

Fig. 30 Excavation of cooking pits west of magazines [R201–204], looking south-south-west

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 31 Two layers of cooking pits west of magazines [R201–204], looking south-west; in the background on the left: remains of stalks of sun shelters

east and west (Figs. 32–33). The two northernmost columns bases are missing. Why the court is slightly trapezoid and not square or rectangular has still to be explored. Placed slightly south of the centre is a rectangular stone basin equipped with a pottery drain leading to a circular well made of a pottery casket (Ø c. 1 m) immersed into the ground; its base was paved with stone slabs. Its function had been an inspection shaft. Another pottery pipe cut into the wall of the well on a deeper level and drained the water to an unknown area. The floor around the basin is made of burnt bricks. To its west two doors open to a storehouse of five long rooms that are accessible from a corridor [R32–37]. To its south is another courtyard, [R25], with a porch at its southern side and room [R26] at its western side, each with a separate entrance. The third strip of this building is the intimate part as we know from the scheme of the so-called Kahun house.[50] It is tripartite with a central room with two columns [R27] and an identical side room to its east [R28], while the three units in the west, [R29–31], may be identified as sleeping rooms. [R31] is not a room but a bench created by a wall with a backfill – a mastaba. The separation between [R29] and [R30] could be explained by [R29] being a bath- or robing room.

50 Ricke 1932, 51–55; Arnold 1989, 75–93; Bietak 1996, 23–37.

House 2 (Fig. 35): It is situated west of House 1 and is distinctly separated from it by a c. 5 m wide street. It fits into a corner created by House 1 and its annexed store-rooms [R32–37]. House 2 forms with Houses 3 and 4 a row of buildings of approximately equal size. It covers c. 182 sq.m. If the plan of the excavators is accurate, it is contrary to House 1, which served one household only, composed of three apartments each with a separate entrance. All three are accessible from the south, which is unusual. Corridor [R51] leads to [R48–50], corridor [R42] leads to the single room [R47] and further in the north to the triple rooms [R43–45]. Because of the tripartite plan of the building in both directions one wonders if this partition into three separate units was not a secondary affair and if it had not been originally a house with a vestibule [R42] from the north, a central reception room [R48], a sleeping room either in the east or in the west, and stores in the south.

House 3: It is accessible from the north and covers c. 177 sq.m. It stands out because of its particularly thick walls and is also divided into two units with two separate entrances: the single room [R58] and the multiple-room unit [R57, 59, 60–61]. It probably had an upper floor, however, no staircase could be identified. Another explanation could be that this building was used for storing precious items. Overlapping with House 2, an additional room, [R41], was added in the north with a door towards the entrances of House 3. Perhaps it was a

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 32 House 1 with courtyard in the middle ground, looking north

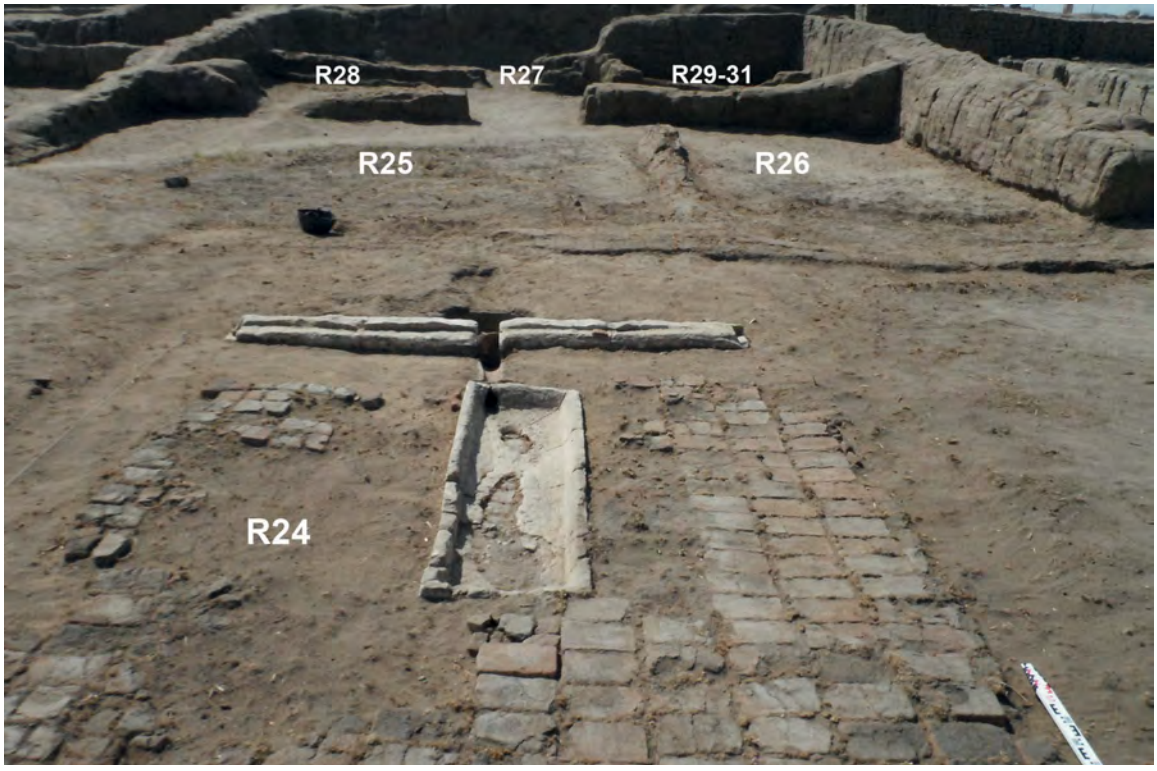


Fig. 33 Courtyard [R24] with a stone basin, surrounded by burnt bricks in the centre of a small garden belonging to House 1 in the background, looking south

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

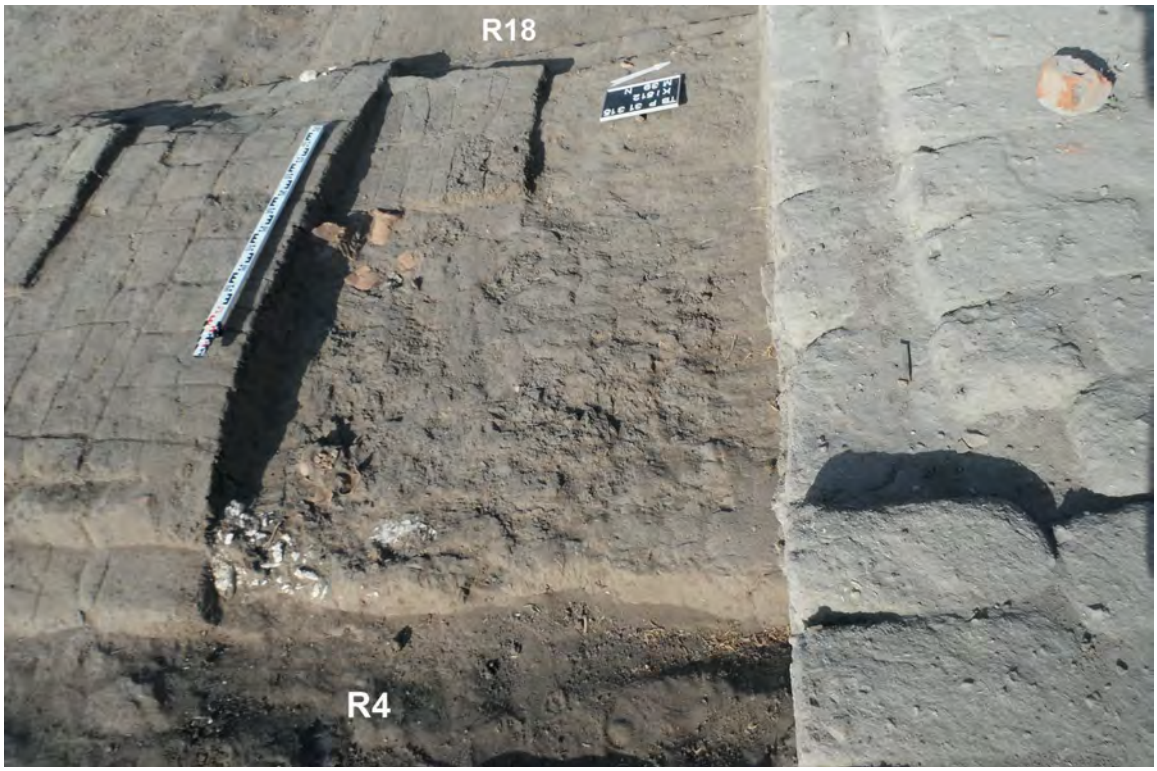


Fig. 34 Passage from House 1 via corridor [R18] to the northern porch of ceremonial courtyard [R4] providing access from the alleged residence of the mayor to the central ceremonial part of the palace; on the floor: fragments of beer bottles of the 13th Dynasty

Fig. 35 Houses 3 and 2 in the middle strip of the palace, looking north; most of the walls in this area were raised with new brickwork by the Egyptian Antiquities Authorities

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 36 House 4, looking north-east; most of the walls were raised with new brickwork by the Egyptian Antiquities Authorities

guard-room, which would fit the interpretation of House 3 as a store for precious commodities. Additional rooms [R56] were added to its north.

House 4 (Fig. 36): It is divided into at least three flats and covers c. 155 sq.m. Striking is the very thick eastern wall towards House 3, which leaves a narrow passage of less than a metre between the two buildings. A door at the northern end of its west wall opens to rooms [R64–65]; perhaps [R67–68] were also accessible from this unit, but no doors could be recognised because of poor preservation. Today these walls are covered by new walls of the project of the archaeological park. Rooms [R66, 69] are accessible by a separate door from the north while rooms [R70–73] show clearly the three-strip house and can be accessed from the south to room [R70]. More rooms were added to the north of Houses 3 and 4 [R56, 74]. But as they protrude beyond the common northern front of the three houses, they seem to be later additions.

The domestic residential area which is represented by Houses 2–4 was delimited from the northern strip, which is not yet well explored, by walls. They create an open space [R40] west of the store-room annex to House 1. Whether this is indeed an open space has still to be established by excavation. The western strip of the palace, with an inner width of c. 20 m, is completely unexplored. One may expect more storage facilities there.

5.4 Early phases of the palace (Phase i)

As already mentioned, in describing the evidence of the first spaces after gate [R1–2, 12], there were clear signs of one or two earlier phases of the palace that still have to be explored in more detail. The gate-porch [R1] was originally deeper and furnished, most probably, with a third row of columns; courtyards [R2] and [R12] were enlarged towards the east and the guard-rooms added. As a building was added outside, west of the gate, one may assume that, originally, the control over the gate had been installed outside the southern façade of the palace.

The division wall [M8] between the first and the second strip of the palace was oblique to the general orientation of this precinct and was also more robust than the other main walls. A c. 17 m long segment of wall [M8], south of House 2, protruded c. 1.8 m from the northern (inner) side of the wall [M8]. This evidence could be explained by an incorporated stair that ran up to the top of this wall. However, wall [M8] was built using parts of an older wall that deviated even more from the orthogonal system of the precinct and shows that parts of the palace had an older phase, which has yet to be elucidated by archaeological autopsy.

South of wall [M8] tree pits with a diameter of over 1 m were found, which had a slightly different alignment than this wall and its predecessor (Fig. 38). This shows that more than two phases have to be expected for this

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 37 South-western corner tower of the palace, looking south

Fig. 38 Tree pits of an earlier phase of the palace found in the domestic courtyard

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 39 Remains of older square palace magazines with pavement, view to south-west. They cut into massive walls of older phases (Phases k or l). After the abandonment of the magazines, the area was used to operate circular ovens (between Phases h/2 and i)

palace. This became clear when under the division wall [M6] of the latest phase, a block of uniform mudbrick silos of c. 29 × 27.5 m, with 16 nearly square storage chambers of c. 10 × 10 cubits each was found (Figs. 39–40). They were arranged in four rows by four chambers. Their floors were paved with bricks. This block fitted perfectly into the south-western corner of the palace precinct, leaving a 10 cubit-wide street between the enclosure wall and the silo block. In an interim phase, the walls were dismantled and three circular kilns of mudbricks, with a diameter of 2.5–3 m, were built on top of the pavement. They contained charcoal, ashes, and potsherds. Most likely they were bread ovens for a big household or for the preparation of expeditions. As this excavation area had been stripped by the MoA, it is not possible to assess the finds except what is left in the kilns. The output from these kilns such as red, burnt grit was distributed in a 0.5 m thick layer across this area. It was also used as a burial ground for some infants before it was converted again into an economical court of the palace. Instead of the block of magazines, the new store-rooms were built at the south-eastern corner of the palatial precinct. The good fit of the old store-rooms within the south-west corner of the precinct seems to prove that the enclosure wall was constructed at the very beginning of the palace project. The division wall of the western strip, which limits the original size of the southern courtyard, clearly belongs to the latest phase of the palace, as it was added without foundations between the enclosure wall [M4] and the separation wall [M8] between the southern and the middle strips.

6. Conclusions

The palace has a building history and was changed over time. Therefore, it was most probably constructed before the time of Amenemhat III, whose reign is attested with the cited lintel in the building history (Fig. 26). The offering tables and statuary cannot be dated more precisely than to the second half of the 12th Dynasty. According to Eva Lange-Athinodorou, the titles of Mayor Maʿatiu date to around the days of Amenemhat II and not much later.[51] The name of a mayor reconstructed after the throne name of Sesostris III as *ḥʿ-k3w-Rʿ-snb* suggests that its bearer may have started his career during the reign of this king.[52] The big cemetery of the mayors, the ceramic material found in the palace in situ, and a scarab of King Nehesy of the early 14th Dynasty show

51 Lange 2015, 199.
52 Ibidem.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 40 Block of square paved magazines of an older palace phase (Ph. i), under walls of the the south-western part of the palace, looking west. At the left side remains of ovens, installed between Phases I and h/2

Fig. 41 Map of Sites of the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period showing the situation of Bubastis west of the Wadi Tumilat, one of the principal routes connecting the Sinai with the eastern Nile Delta

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

that this precinct was used throughout the time of the 13th Dynasty. This time span explains well changes of the precinct.

The size of c. 17.000 sq.m and the inner structure of the palace of Tell Basta suggest that it is very unlikely to assume that it functioned just as an administrative and residential building for the mayors of Bubastis. The asymmetric plan of the known section of the palace, with the unusual entrance from the south and its position at the right end of the façade with a single-winged door, originate from the domestic house architecture. It has no resemblance of what we know about palatial architecture in ancient Egypt.[53] The double-winged door, however, leading from the north into the central ceremonial six-columned hall [R5] shows clearly that there existed a second entrance route from the north, which is the normal orientation for palatial and domestic structures. Besides this, the double-winged door is used only for temples, shrines, fortresses, and royal palaces, whereas even large tombs and houses have only single-winged doors, which normally open to the right and inwards.[54] This would mean that the southern part of the palace served as the administrative centre of the town and the easternmost nome, whereas the northern part of the palace, which was destroyed, must have been designed for royal presence, when the king had to stay in Bubastis for administrative or ritual events related to his dual function as a king and a mediator between the divine and profane realms. This explains also the presence of the abovementioned lintel with the double *Heb-sed* representation of Amenemhat III.

P.S. The author would like to thank P. Aprent for graphic work, S. Prell and I. Samet for editing, R. Matic for reading and K.-D. Uhe for the layout. Special thanks go to my excavation team at Bubastis, to be submitted in more detail in a forthcoming excavation report.

53 Bietak 2005.

54 On doors in ancient Egypt in general; see Königsberger 1936; Brunner 1982; 1986.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliography

Arnold, D.
1994 *Lexikon der ägyptischen Baukunst*, Zurich.

Arnold, F.
1989 A Study on Egyptian Domestic Buildings, *Varia Aegyptiaca* 5, 75–93.

Ashmawy, A.A.
2016 Tell Basta during the Second Intermediate Period, *Ägypten & Levante* 26, 145–156.

Bader, B.
2001 *Tell el-Dab'a XIII. Typologie und Chronologie der Mergel C-Ton Keramik. Materialien zum Binnenhandel des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit,* Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo XIX, Vienna.

Bakr, M.I.
1979 *New Excavations of Zagazig University*, in: *L'Égyptologie en 1979: Axes prioritaires de recherches, Vol. I. Colloques internationaux du C.N.R.S. 595*, Paris, 153–160.
1992 *Tell Basta I. Tombs and Burial Customs at Bubastis. The Area of the So-called Western Cemetery*, Cairo.

Bakr, M.I., Brandl, H. and Kalloniatis, F. (eds.).
2010 *Egyptian Antiquities from Kufur Nigm and Bubastis*, Museums in the Nile Delta 1, Berlin.
2014 *Egyptian Antiquities from the Eastern Nile Delta*, Museums in the Nile Delta 2, Berlin.

Bakr, M.I. and Lange, E.
2017 *Die Nekropolen des Alten Reiches in Bubastis*, in: F. Feder and G. Sperveslage (eds.), *Gedenkschrift für Erika Endesfelder*, Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie XVIII, Berlin and London, 31–48.

Bietak, M.
1975 *Tell el-Dab'a II. Der Fundort im Rahmen einer archäologisch-geographischen Untersuchung über das ägyptische Ostdelta*, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo II, Vienna.
1996 *Zum Raumprogramm ägyptischer Wohnhäuser des Mittleren und des Neuen Reiches*, in: M. Bietak (ed.), *House and Palace in Ancient Egypt, International Symposium 8.–11. April 1992 in Cairo*, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo XIV, Vienna, 23–43.
2005 *Neue Paläste aus der 18. Dynastie*, in: P. Jánosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance: Thoughts on Ancient Egyptian Architecture (Festschrift for Dieter Arnold)*, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo XXV, Vienna, 131–168.
2014–2015 Nord und Süd. Königlich und Profan: Neues zum Palast des Mittleren Reiches von Bubastis, Gedenkschrift Werner Kaiser, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 70/71, 49–57.
2015 *Funktionsbestimmung des Raumprogrammes des Palastes des Mittleren Reiches von Bubastis im Nildelta*, in: G. Buchinger and F. Hueber (eds.), *Bauforschung und Denkmalpflege, Festschrift für Mario Schwarz,* Wien, Köln and Weimar, 39–52.

Bietak, M. and Lange, E.
2014 Tell Basta: The Palace of the Middle Kingdom, *Egyptian Archaeology* 44, 4–7.

Brunner, H.
1982 Die Rolle von Tür und Tor im Alten Ägypten, *Symbolon* N.F. 6, 37–52.
1986 Tür und Tor, in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie VI*, Wiesbaden, 778–787.

Daressy, G.
1927–1929 Les branches du Nil dans la XVIII[e] dynastie, *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Égypte* 16, 225–254, 293–329.
1929–1931 Les branches du Nil dans la XVIII[e] dynastie, *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Égypte* 17, 81–115, 189–223.
2002 *Atlas archéologique de l'Égypte – Archaeological Atlas of Egypt*, ed. N. Grimal, Collège de France, Paris.

El-Sawi, A.
1977 Preliminary Report on Tell Basta Excavations, Seasons 1969, 1970, 1971, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 104, 127–131.
1979a Some Objects Found at Tell Basta (Season 1966–67), *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 63, 155–159.
1979b *Excavations at Tell Basta: Report of Seasons 1967–1971 and Catalogue of Finds*, Prague.

Farid, S.
1964 Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Antiquities Department at Tell Basta (Season 1961), *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 58, 85–98.

Habachi, L.
1957 *Tell Basta*, Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte Supplément 22, Cairo.
1975 Bubastis, in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* I, Wiesbaden, 873–874.
2001 *Tell el-Dab'a 1: Tell el-Dab'a and Qantir: The Site and Its Connection with Avaris and Piramesse*, eds. E.-M. Engel, P. Jánosi and C. Mlinar, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo II, Vienna.

Königsberger, O.
1936 *Die Konstruktion der ägyptischen Tür*, Ägyptologische Forschungen 2, Glückstadt.

Kopetzky, K.
2010 *Tell el-Dab'a XX. Die Chronologie der Siedlungskeramik der Zweiten Zwischenzeit aus Tell el-Dab'a, Teil I-II*, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo XXXII, Vienna.

Lange, E.
2016 *The So-called Governors' Cemetery at Bubastis and Provincial Elite Tombs in the Nile Delta: State and Perspectives of Research*, in: W. Grajetzki and G. Miniaci (eds.), *The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1550 BC)*, GHP Egyptology, London, 187–203.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Lange, E. and Ullmann, T.
2015 Goddess on the Water: The Sacred Landscape of Bubastis, *Egyptian Archaeology* 47, 17–19.

Lange, E., Ullmann, T. and Baumhauer, R.
2016 Remote Sensing in the Nile Delta: Spatio-temporal Analysis of Bubastis/Tell Basta, *Ägypten & Levante* 26, 377–392.

Leclère, F.
2008 *Les villes de Basse Égypte au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Analyse archéologique et historique de la topographie urbaine*, Bibliothèque d'Ètudes 144, Cairo.

Naville, E.
1891 *Bubastis (1887–1889),* 8th Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund, London.

Rawlinson, G.
1858 *The History of Herodotus, by Herodotus,* translated by George Rawlinson, Vol. I, London.

Ricke, H.
1932 *Der Grundriss des Amarna-Wohnhauses*, *Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Tell el-Amarna IV*, Leipzig.

Rosenow, D.
2010 Revealing New Landscape Features at Tell Basta, *Egyptian Archaeology* 37, 17–18.

Tietze, C. (ed.)
2001 *2. Der Mittlere Reichs-Palast*, in: C. Tietze (ed.), *Tell Basta: Vorläufiger Bericht über die XII. Grabungskampagne in Tell Basta (Ostdelta)*, Potsdam, 11–18 (internal preliminary report that was circulated only in xerocopies).

Tietze, C. and Jäger, N.
2003 *Der Gouverneurspalast: Vermessung und Rekonstruktion*, in: C. Tietze (ed.), *Rekonstruktion und Restaurierung in Tell Basta*, ARCUS - Berichte aus Archäologie, Baugeschichte und Nachbargebieten 6, Potsdam, 123–135 (internal preliminary report that was circulated only in xerocopies).

Ullmann, T., Lange, E., Göbel, A. and Baumhauer, R.
2018 Preliminary Results on the Paleo-landscape of Tell Basta /Bubastis (Eastern Nile Delta): An Integrated Approach Combining GIS-based Spatial Analysis, Geophysical and Archaeological Investigations, *Quarternary International* 29, 1–15.

Van Siclen III, C.C.
1985 The City of Basta, An Interim Report, *Newsletter of the American Research Center in Egypt* 128, 28–39.
1991 *The Mayors of Basta in the Middle Kingdom*, in: S. Schoske (ed.), *Akten des 4. Internationalen Ägyptologen Kongresses München 1985*, Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur, Beihefte 4, Berlin, 187–194.
1996 *Remarks on the Middle Kingdom Palace at Tell Basta*, in: M. Bietak (ed.), *House and Palace in Ancient Egypt, International Symposium April 8 to 11 1992 in Cairo*, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo XIV, Vienna, 239–246.

Verbovsek, A.
2004 *"Als Gunstbeweis des Königs in den Tempel gegeben …": Private Tempelstatuen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches*, Ägypten und Altes Testament 63, Wiesbaden.

Wilkinson, J.G.
1843 *Modern Egypt and Thebes: Being a Description of Egypt, Including the Information Required for Travellers in that Country*, Vol. 1, London.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Des palais cérémoniels au sud de l'Egypte

par Charles Bonnet

Depuis sept ans, la Mission archéologique suisse-franco-soudanaise à Doukki Gel-Kerma met au jour les vestiges d'une ville cérémonielle à quelque 700 mètres au nord de la capitale de l'antique Royaume de Kerma. Si l'on peut considérer que la capitale est construite selon des traditions partiellement inspirées d'Egypte, avec des bâtiments quadrangulaires et des monuments religieux qui se situent dans la continuité de certaines institutions de leur puissant voisin, la nouvelle ville découverte il y a peu appartient à un tout autre courant d'influences (Fig. 1). En effet, les fondations dégagées ont permis de reconnaître de multiples édifices en briques crues de plan ovale ou circulaire.[1] L'architecture de ces constructions du 2ème millénaire avant J.-C. est originale, et nous ne disposons à ce jour d'aucun ensemble comparable. Nous pensons que ces structures de briques, souvent consolidées avec des poutres ou des poteaux de bois, voire même avec des masses de limon durci, sont probablement à associer à des populations vivant au sud de la Nubie, sur des territoires du Soudan Central.

Les travaux de recherche nécessiteront encore plusieurs années, car la surface de cette nouvelle ville est considérable.[2] Nous avons été très surpris par l'importance et la complexité des systèmes de défense rendant le centre urbain quasi inexpugnable. Cet effort militaire pourrait bien répondre aux forteresses égyptiennes du Moyen Empire concentrées le long de la 2ème cataracte. Les dégagements des couches archéologiques demandent du temps car ce type de structures est marqué par un grand nombre de reprises. La chronologie est fournie par du matériel du Kerma Moyen et surtout du Kerma Classique, soit entre 2000 et 1500 avant J.-C. Mais il est certain que des lieux de culte se maintiennent durant tout le Nouvel Empire et même jusqu'aux temps napatéens. Là encore, la céramique permet de dater les différents niveaux.

Comme nos décapages n'ont pas encore atteint les strates profondes, nous n'avons pas de données sur les premiers niveaux. Cependant, le plan général déjà obtenu est impressionnant et permet de se livrer à une interprétation préliminaire de l'urbanisation de ce centre si singulier. On sait par les sources égyptiennes que les armées pharaoniques ont souvent été confrontées à des coalitions. Dès lors, il semble possible de postuler que les Nubiens étaient épaulés par des guerriers venant des contrées méridionales. Les dirigeants du Royaume de Kerma avaient certainement établi des contacts avec ces derniers au fil des transactions commerciales, les produits du Sud étant particulièrement recherchés. Cette ville cérémonielle indigène a pu abriter des réunions préparatoires avant les affrontements avec l'Egypte. On observe en effet que les palais cérémoniels étaient nombreux tout autour des murs d'enceinte et que plusieurs trônes existaient dans le même bâtiment. D'autres constructions ayant des fonctions analogues sont présentes à l'intérieur du noyau urbain.

Cette ville cérémonielle de Doukki Gel est dotée d'une première enceinte de 6 m d'épaisseur délimitant une surface intérieure de 170 à 180 m de longueur par 80 à 90 m de largeur.[3] Elle comporte une dizaine de portes formées de deux tours ménageant un passage de 1 à 2 m de large, dont la fermeture était assurée par deux battants en bois. Des crapaudines et la base du pieu de fixation des battants étaient constituées de masses de terre durcie circulaires, parfaitement préservées dans le sol. De grands vestibules d'entrée, de 75 m sur 50 à 60 m, permettaient aux visiteurs d'attendre une audience ou de présenter les marchandises destinées aux échanges. Ces vestibules avaient une couverture légère, soutenue par des colonnes au diamètre idoine relativement espacées pour laisser place aux diverses activités ; trois ont déjà été reconnus (F, I puis H). Autour de l'enceinte, sur un espace de 50 à 60 m, d'autres bâtiments occupent une surface importante. Une partie d'entre eux a été étudiée: il s'agit de palais. Des temples arrondis et des ouvrages militaires ont été repérés vers l'extérieur, où devait s'étendre un système de défense qui reste à comprendre.

Les palais

À l'intérieur du noyau central, dans l'angle nord-est, a été dégagé un quartier religieux composé de deux temples, d'une chapelle, ainsi que d'un palais de 18 m de diamètre (Fig. 2), dont l'étude a permis de retrouver deux états principaux.[4] Le premier est caractérisé par un mur d'une épaisseur de près d'un mètre formant un cercle de 5.70 m hors œuvre, doublé à l'extérieur par onze contreforts semi-circulaires saillants qui contrebutent vraisemblablement une couverture voûtée (Fig. 3). La porte placée au sud était épaulée par deux massifs circulaires; le passage, bien qu'étroit (50 à 60 cm), était équipé de crapaudines

1 Bonnet 2012, 57–75.
2 Bonnet 2013, 807–823.
3 Bonnet 2015, 1–14.
4 Bonnet 2011, 7–16; 2009, 95–108.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

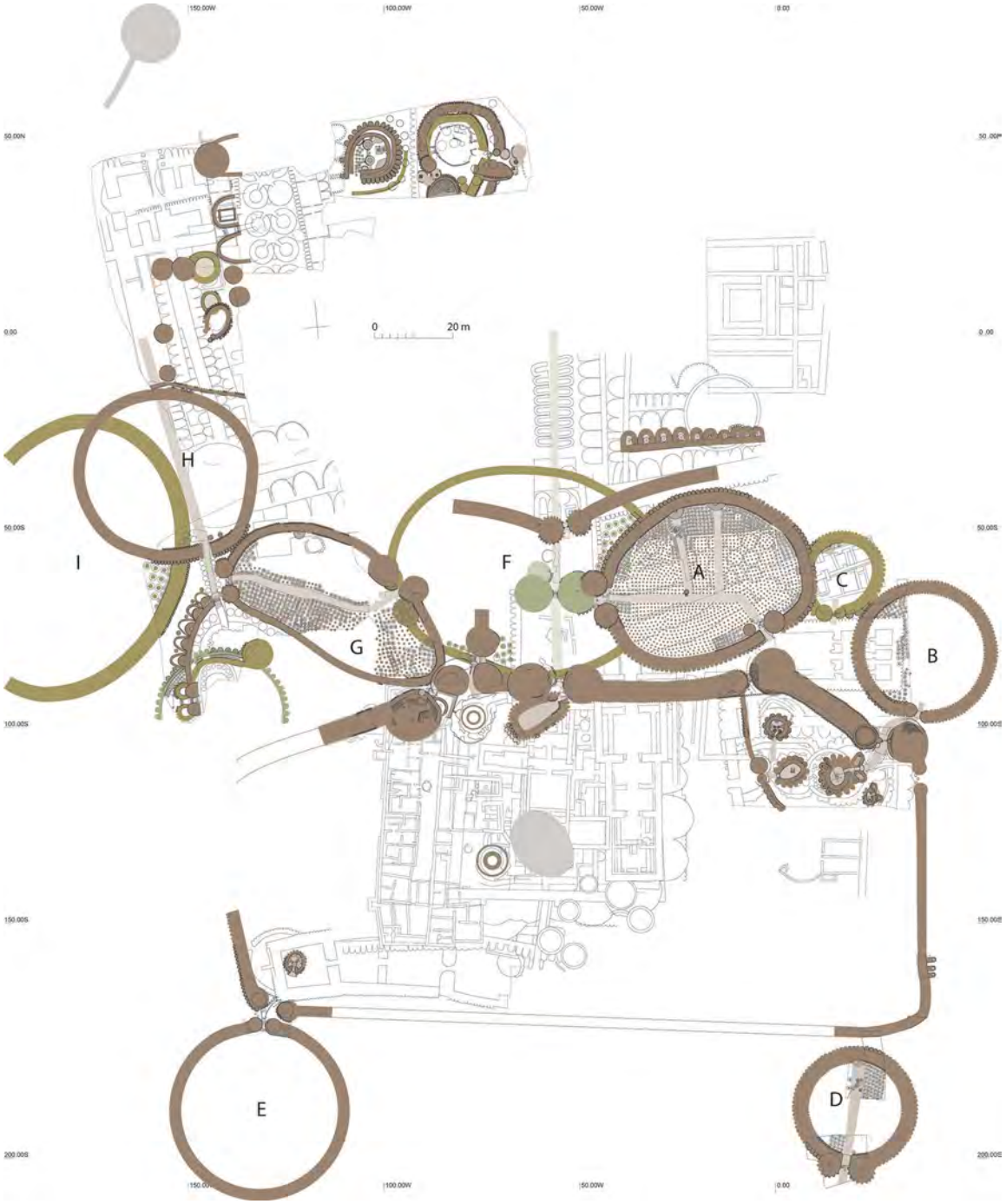


Fig. 1 Plan schématique de la ville indigène de Doukki Gel

pour deux battants. Des murets limitaient le passage à l'intérieur jusqu'aux quatre colonnes d'un dais qui surmontait une table d'offrande en terre de forme ronde. De part et d'autre des quatre colonnes étaient aménagés des sièges façonnés à partir de mottes de terre argileuse, consolidés par de petits segments de roseaux. Le trône principal, de forme presque semi-circulaire, se trouvait au nord et était précédé de trois marches. Il était flanqué de deux autres trônes.

Contre la paroi extérieure des contreforts, des pieux ont été plantés tous les 30 cm pour consolider la face des maçonneries, constituant un parement très solide qui faisait sans doute partie de la voûte. Ce petit bâtiment palatial était certainement en rapport avec le temple occidental, car un cheminement visible sur le sol conduit à la porte du lieu de culte qui s'ouvrait à l'ouest, en direction d'une entrée ménagée au travers d'une enceinte intérieure. À l'origine, le second temple à l'est était peut-

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 2 Le quartier religieux nord-est avec un palais reconstruit deux fois. Le site après restaurations

être associé au palais B, puisqu'une allée bordée de barrières définies par de gros poteaux de bois passait par l'une des portes de la ville pour rejoindre le temple dont l'accès était fortifié par deux bastions. La relation entre le palais B et le temple oriental confirme le caractère cérémoniel de cet édifice. Un sondage partiel a permis de retrouver dans le palais B la configuration habituelle : un édifice dont l'espace intérieur est caractérisé par un grand nombre de colonnes de petit diamètre (60 à 70 cm), très rapprochées les unes des autres, et un trône contre la paroi nord.

En une seconde phase, le bâtiment palatial a été élargi par un énorme mur circulaire de près de 3 m d'épaisseur, épaulé de part et d'autre par des petits contreforts (Fig. 4). Il s'ouvrait vers l'extérieur par deux portes orientées vers les temples. Dans les deux cas, le passage de l'entrée était protégé par des murets latéraux saillants par rapport au mur périphérique; des montants arrondis déterminant l'emplacement des seuils, alors qu'un pavement de briques facilitait la marche. Une colonnade court le long de la paroi intérieure, tandis que deux colonnes supplémentaires mettent en évidence l'une des deux portes. Il est possible que le monument ancien n'ait pas été entièrement démantelé, et que les trois trônes aient simplement été repris. On cherchait avant tout à donner de nouvelles proportions au palais, plus adaptées aux transformations effectuées dans le quartier religieux. Ici encore, la relation du palais avec les temples démontre que ces bâtiments avaient une fonction cérémonielle.

Plusieurs des palais établis sur le pourtour de l'enceinte du centre urbain ont été étudiés par sondages (B, C, D, E, G). Seul le palais A a pu faire l'objet d'une analyse d'ensemble, nous donnant ainsi l'occasion de présenter une première réflexion sur un type d'architecture qui, à ce jour, n'est pas documenté.[5] Le bâtiment de plan ovale mesure 55 m par près de 50 m (Fig. 5). Son plan n'est pas très régulier, sans doute en raison des nombreuses restaurations menées sur ses deux portes. Le mur périphérique a environ 4 m d'épaisseur, si l'on tient compte des contreforts montés de chaque côté. Les deux tours de l'entrée occidentale sont presque de même diamètre, elles sont constituées de massifs pleins faits de briques placées de manière concentrique et consolidées par des pieux. Leurs parois extérieures sont soulignées par des contreforts. Entre les tours sont préservés plusieurs seuils dont l'orientation a varié, ainsi que les masses rondes de terre argileuse renforcée par les crapaudines et le pieu de fixation des battants. La porte méridionale est elle aussi formée de deux tours, mais celles-ci sont de proportions différentes. La plus petite semble avoir été déplacée vers l'intérieur. On a l'impression que les tours ont été montées indépendamment, et que c'est le mur périphérique qui a été réglé sur ces dernières. Au sud, nous avons pu vider une grande fosse ronde de laquelle, à une époque ancienne, presque toutes les briques crues avaient été

5 Bonnet 2013, 809–817.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

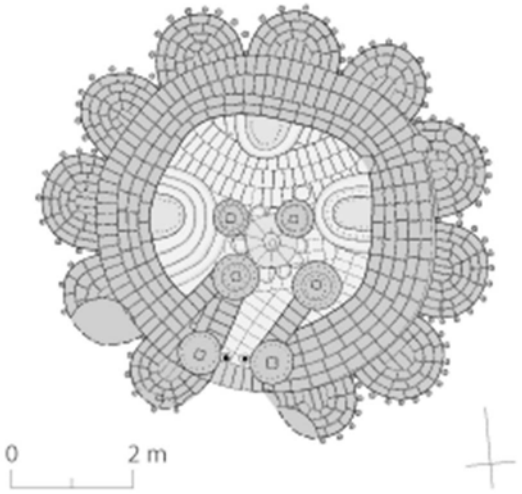


Fig. 3 Le petit palais cérémoniel du quartier religieux nord-est

extraites, ce qui nous a permis de retrouver à plus de 2 m de profondeur une ou deux des assises marquant le bas de la fondation. De tels soutènements permettent de conjecturer que l'ouvrage s'élevait à une hauteur conséquente. De ce côté, l'embrasure présente des alignements de poteaux qui comptaient parmi les renforts prévus pour la porte. L'existence de deux battants est démontrée par les restes de crapaudines et d'aménagements en bois. Une allée assez large dont le pavement de briques s'est conservé par endroits reliait les deux portes. Elle forme un coude vers son extrémité orientale.

Perpendiculaires à cette allée partaient, du côté nord, deux autres allées qui ont pu être suivies jusqu'au mur périphérique du bâtiment. Elles conduisaient vers de grands socles semi-circulaires en briques qui restituent l'emplacement de deux trônes, chacun précédé par un escalier arrondi (Fig. 6). Devant celui placé à l'ouest étaient encore présentes les bases de quatre colonnes appartenant à un dais, ainsi qu'une table d'offrande ronde confectionnée en terre, doublée de petits contreforts. Un mur de faible hauteur formait une sorte de barrière ovale avec un accès du côté du trône. Cet aménagement secondaire devait bloquer les circulations, et l'on a peut-être sacrifié une ou deux colonnes de ce secteur. Les restes d'une autre table d'offrande ont été localisés à l'intersection avec l'allée principale, elle semble être restée en fonction après les profondes transformations intervenues lors du démantèlement partiel du palais A.

Dans tout l'espace du monument A ont été repérées des colonnes d'un diamètre de 60 cm dont les fondations, un peu plus larges, s'enfonçaient à environ 1 m de profondeur. Les supports sont très rapprochés et devaient compliquer les circulations. Après avoir vérifié

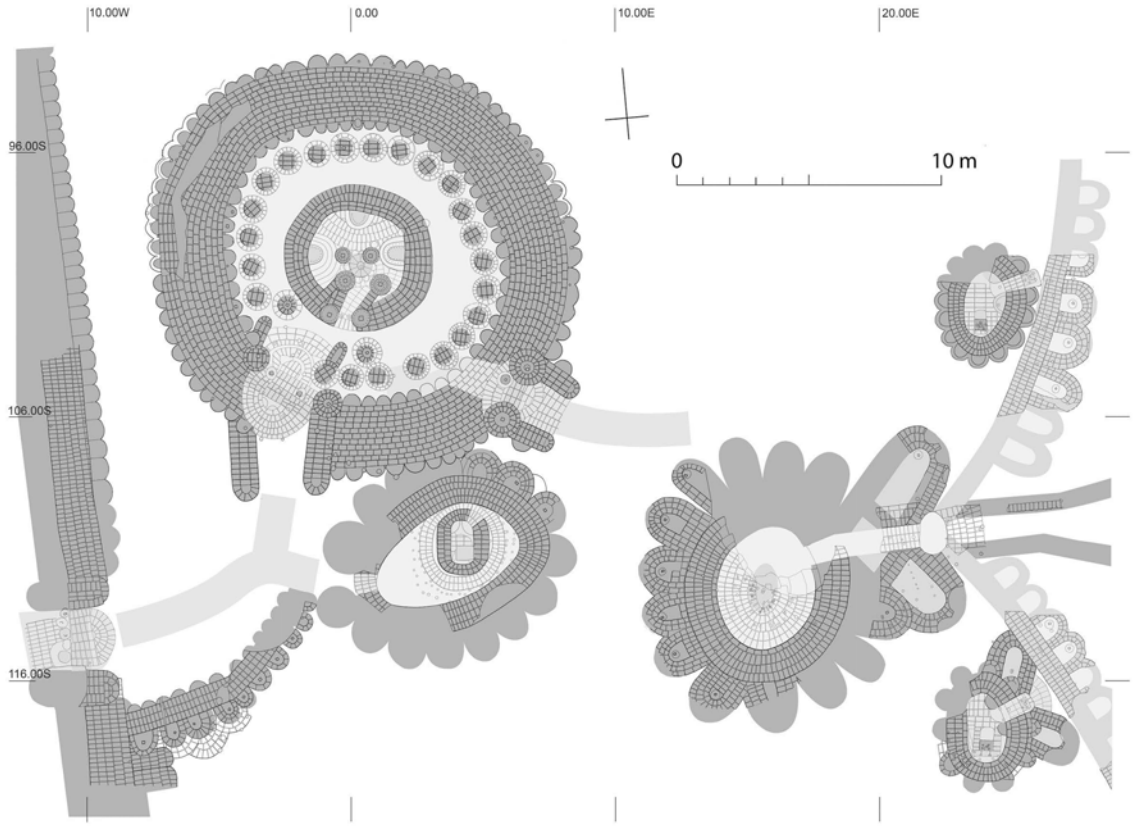


Fig. 4 Plan détaillé du quartier nord-est après l'agrandissement du palais

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

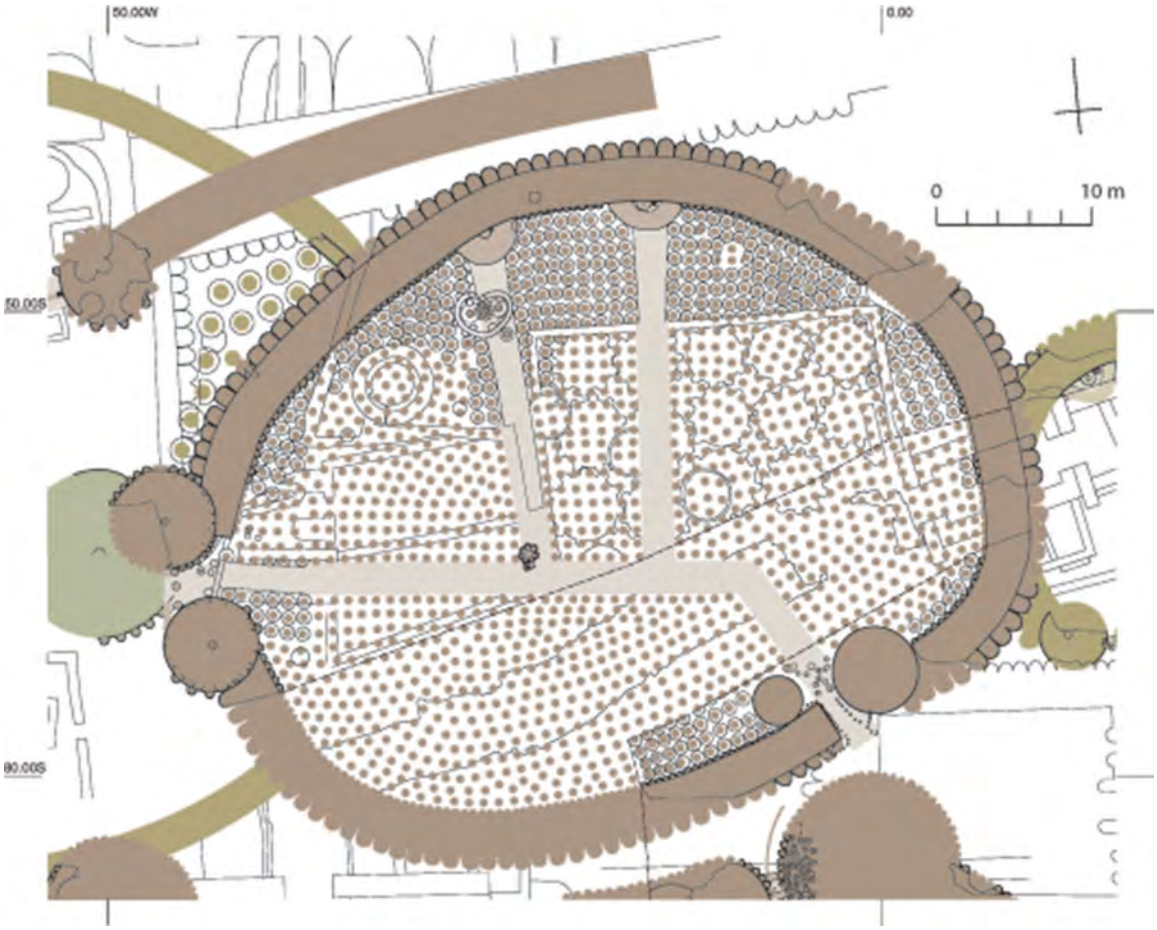


Fig. 5 Plan schématique reconstitué du palais A

par sondages la présence de fondations, il est possible de restituer quelque 1400 supports, constituant une véritable « forêt symbolique ». Sur la base d'exemples subrécents, une hauteur comprise entre 10 ou 12 m paraît envisageable. Compte tenu des vents violents du nord du Soudan, une toiture d'aussi grandes dimensions, implique un système de fixation sur le mur extérieur et sur le haut des colonnes. Nous avons pu vérifier que les autres palais comportaient également des supports très rapprochés. Les traces de plusieurs trônes (jusqu'à quatre pour le palais G) en rapport avec les allées d'accès ont également pu être observées.

Parmi les exemples subrécents, c'est sans doute le palais de Muteesa I sur la colline de Kasubi en Ouganda, près de Kampala, qui nous paraît le plus pertinent.[6] Construit en 1882, il remplace celui visité en 1875 par l'explorateur Henry Stanley. Il a malheureusement brûlé en 2010. Le centre de cet ensemble architectural, qui comprend de nombreux bâtiments et une hutte d'entrée particulièrement soignée, est occupé par la case Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga. Avec un diamètre de 31 m pour une hauteur de 7.5 m, elle forme un dôme particulièrement impressionnant. L'espace intérieur est divisé par un rideau en tissu d'écorce qui cache une vaste « forêt sacrée » (*Kibira*), où se trouvent quatre tombes royales, et à laquelle seules les veuves des rois défunts ont le droit d'accéder. Le palais A est certes antérieur de près de 3500 ans et abritait des cérémonies qui relevaient d'autres traditions. Toutefois, les analogies qu'il présente donnent matière à réflexion quant aux fonctions de ces bâtiments, et il nous semble possible de postuler que les allées spacieuses étaient réservées au roi et à ses visiteurs.

Le palais A est radicalement transformé par le pharaon Thoutmosis I avant la conquête de la Nubie: le mur périphérique et les quelque 1400 colonnes ayant sans doute été en partie abattus, le palais est réduit à une salle hypostyle rectangulaire, d'environ 12 m par 5 m dans œuvre, dont la toiture était supportée par deux rangées de cinq grosses colonnes à larges bases placées de part et d'autre d'une allée axiale menant vers un trône adossé à la paroi orientale (Fig. 7). Celui-ci est dans la tradition de ceux des palais, c'est-à-dire modelé à partir de mottes de terre et consolidé avec des segments de roseaux ou de branches. En forme de fer à cheval, il était posé sur

6 Moriset et al. 2011, site du patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 6 L'un des trônes du palais A et les bases des colonnes en cours de fouilles

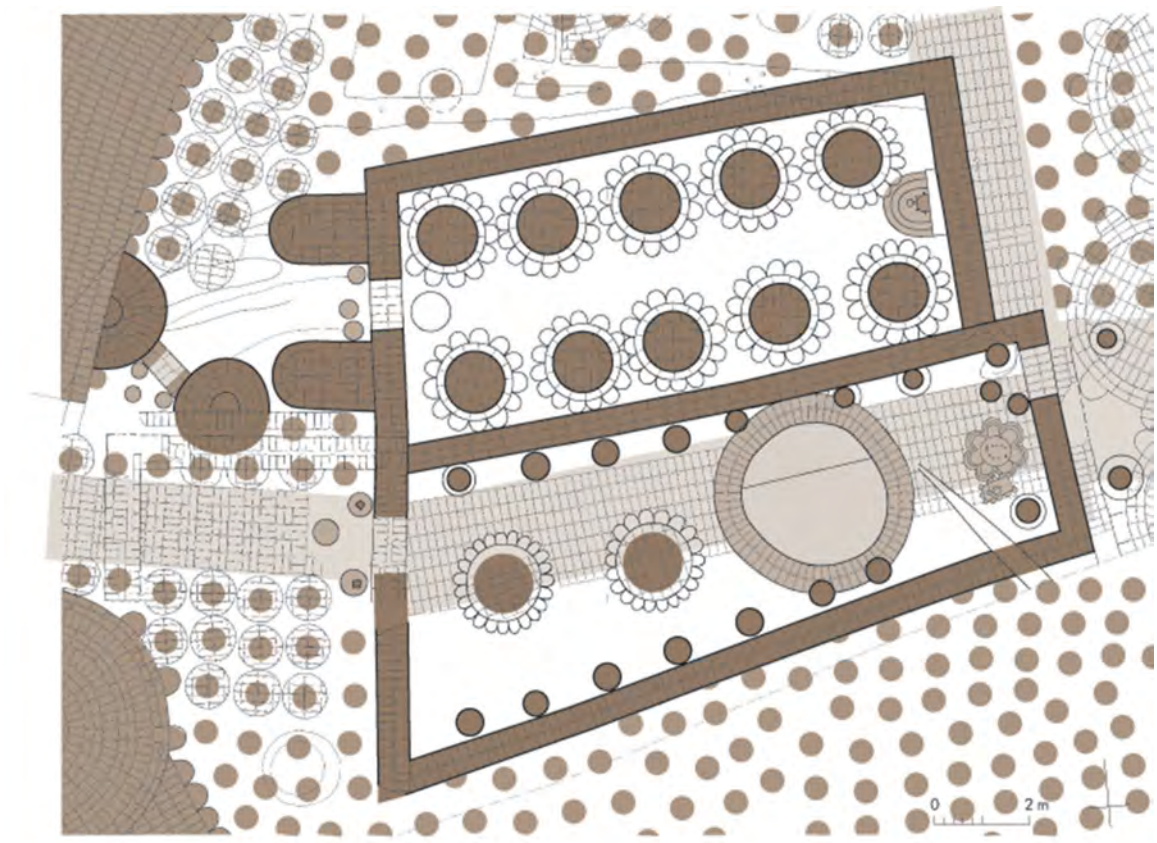


Fig. 7 Plan détaillé de la salle hypostyle du palais tardif après la destruction du palais A; l'allée cérémonielle réaménagée

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 8 Vue générale du site de Doukki Gel

un socle entouré d'un escalier semi-circulaire. Les murs de la salle sont plutôt étroits avec une épaisseur de 60 à 70 cm. L'embrasure de la porte ouverte sur la façade occidentale est mise en relief par deux gros contreforts à face arrondie. La base des colonnes est renforcée par une série de petits contreforts similaires à ceux qui encerclent les tables d'offrandes indigènes.

Cette salle étonnante, bien que bâtie avant la conquête de Touthmosis I, à une époque où les grandes salles hypostyles ne sont pas encore très fréquentes, semble déjà refléter une influence égyptienne. Le mur périphérique de l'ancien palais a peut-être été partiellement maintenu pour servir d'enceinte, car en avant des deux contreforts de la façade occidentale s'élevaient encore les deux tours d'une porte à double battant permettant d'isoler la salle. Adossé à celle-ci, un bâtiment de plan trapézoïdal mesurant 15 m de long abritait une allée pavée; des colonnes de petit diamètre longeaient ses murs tandis que deux grosses colonnes, similaires à celles de la salle hypostyle, en occupaient la moitié occidentale (Fig. 7). L'allée est coupée par un bassin rond de plus de 4 m de diamètre, dont le fond porte des traces de passage. La ville portant le nom de *panébès*, le « jujubier », l'on est enclin à restituer dans ce bassin la présence d'un arbre sacré, d'autant que des traces de tiges et de branches ont également été observées. Entre le bassin et le mur se trouvait une table d'offrande circulaire, flanquée d'une seconde table rectangulaire.

Tous les palais reconnus autour du noyau urbain paraissent construits selon les mêmes critères, à savoir des colonnes très proches les unes des autres ainsi que des allées pavées conduisant uniquement vers les trônes toujours placés au nord, contre le mur. Plusieurs tables d'offrandes, quelquefois surmontées d'un dais, se trouvaient devant les sièges. Un seul exemple de petite enceinte à l'intérieur de laquelle était préservée la base d'un autel a été localisé latéralement dans le palais G. Les travaux archéologiques sont encore en cours ; il sera nécessaire d'élargir le champ de nos investigations pour comprendre cette architecture si singulière (Fig. 8). Les résultats évoqués ici n'offrent qu'une image partielle de ces palais qu'aucun texte ne vient commenter. L'histoire compliquée de la conquête égyptienne est longue ; durant cette période troublée, les alliances avec les populations du Sud ont certainement fluctué. Il est évident que les troupes venant de Pount aux bords de la Mer Rouge, de Kassala au Soudan Central ou du Darfour par la « route des quarante jours » ne partageaient pas les mêmes intérêts. Le roi du Royaume de Kerma a pu jouer un rôle fédérateur. Le nombre élevé de palais pourrait correspondre à celui des chefs de guerre impliqués dans les négociations.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliographie

Bonnet, Ch.
2009 Un ensemble religieux nubien devant une forteresse égyptienne du début de la XVIII^e dynastie-Mission archéologique suisse à Doukki Gel-Kerma (Soudan), *Genava* n.s. 57, 95–108.

2011 Les deux villes égyptienne et nubienne de Doukki Gel (Kerma, Soudan), *Genava* n.s. 59, 7–16.

2012 Les grands monuments égyptiens et nubiens du début de la XVIII^e dynastie sur le site de Doukki Gel (Kerma), *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Archéologie Orientale* 112, 57–75.

2013 Découverte d'une nouvelle ville cérémonielle nubienne et le *MENENOU* de Thoutmosis I^er (Doukki Gel, Soudan), *Comptes rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (avril-juin), 807–823.

2015 Une ville cérémonielle africaine du début du Nouvel Empire égyptien, *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Archéologie Orientale* 115, 2015, 1–14.

Moriset, S. et al.
2011 *Kasubi Tombs, Uganda, Kampala*, CRATerre-ENSAG, Seconde édition, Pont de Claix.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Les palais du *ménénou* de Doukki Gel

par Charles Bonnet

Lors de sa conquête des pays du sud, Thoutmosis I fait établir un *ménénou* dans l'ancienne *Panébès* (le jujubier) à Doukki Gel.[1] Cette ville cérémonielle est à 700 m seulement de la capitale nubienne du Royaume de Kerma. L'établissement de l'institution égyptienne entraîne la construction de trois temples, d'une chapelle, de deux palais, d'un complexe de stockage, de bassins pour le bétail et d'un grand atelier de potiers (Fig. 1). L'ensemble bâti est protégé par un système de défenses extraordinairement développé où les entrées principales disposent d'avant-portes monumentales.[2] Les lieux de culte indigènes antérieurs sont maintenus et bénéficient ainsi des protections fortifiées. Si certains d'entre eux ont sans doute disparu, les autres sont intégrés à la nouvelle urbanisation. L'abandon d'une architecture de type africain au profit des modèles pharaoniques est bien attesté car les bâtiments aux plans ovales ou circulaires sont remplacés par des constructions systématiquement quadrangulaires. Pourtant plusieurs temples vont encore conserver leur caractère africain.

Cette singularité de Doukki Gel, où se côtoient trois traditions architecturales – nubienne, africaine et égyptienne – est une occasion unique d'étudier les modes de bâtir, de saisir leurs originalités et de comprendre comment ces différents courants se sont influencés les uns les autres (Fig. 2). Si les palais du *ménénou* bâtis au début du Nouvel Empire égyptien appartiennent bien à la série d'édifices construits en pierre ou en briques en territoire conquis, le recours à une main d'œuvre locale pour leur réalisation a introduit des éléments qui ne relèvent pas du modèle égyptien. En utilisant la stratigraphie établie dans les temples où de nombreux blocs inscrits ou décorés datent les différents niveaux, il a été possible d'associer les palais à plusieurs règnes des pharaons de la 18ème dynastie.

Les palais égyptiens

Thoutmosis I fait construire dans son ménénou un palais cérémoniel au nord-est.[3] Une allée le relie au temple central en passant par la grande salle hypostyle établie entre la porte nord et l'entrée du monument religieux. De cette façon, l'accès du palais est perpendiculaire à l'axe du dromos nord-sud. Cette orientation va se maintenir avec plusieurs édifices successifs jusqu'à la période méroïtique. On retrouve ainsi une situation bien connue en avant des temples où les palais sont devant le lieu de culte et sont reliés au dromos. Le nouveau bâtiment s'élève à l'emplacement de plusieurs palais indigènes. Le nivellement de ces derniers a libéré de grandes surfaces de terrain. Les rares sondages en profondeur ont montré que ce secteur était occupé depuis longtemps et que des vestiges antérieurs aux trois palais successifs érigés durant le Kerma Classique (1750–1500 avant J.-C.) restent à découvrir.

Le bâtiment que nous attribuons à Thoutmosis I mesure 33 à 34 m de longueur par 17 à 18 m de largeur, il s'élargit un peu du côté de la salle du trône. En avant de l'entrée, à environ 11 m, ont été dégagés les restes d'une allée bifurquant vers le sud en direction du temple oriental. Le pavement aux briques rangées en long passait sous l'allée axiale restaurée sous Thoutmosis II et Hatchepsout. On peut supposer que les deux passages existaient dès l'origine. Le mur occidental ne devait guère excéder 1.60 m d'épaisseur, toutefois il est possible qu'un vestibule ait prolongé l'ensemble du monument mais les remaniements compliquent la lecture des massifs postérieurs. La restitution d'un avant-corps avec un espace barlong de 2.60 m de large et de 11.60 m de longueur dans l'œuvre paraît plausible, il était éventuellement doté de quatre colonnes, plus tard reprises par des fondations de grand diamètre. L'organisation des briques paraît confirmer l'hypothèse; il est vrai que la façade est très étroite (1.30 m), peut-être a-t-elle été élargie par de gros contreforts, mais il est impossible de s'en assurer, ce secteur ayant été entièrement reconstruit postérieurement.

Mise à part la façade ouest, tous les murs du bâtiment étaient épaulés sur leur face externe par de petits contreforts semi-circulaires très réguliers. Après avoir traversé le vestibule, on gagnait une première salle hypostyle dont les fondations des colonnes, d'environ 1.30 m de diamètre, sont encore in situ, restituant deux rangées de quatre supports de chaque côté d'un large passage axial, soit 16 supports en tout. Le mur qui sépare cette salle de la suivante est percé de trois portes, soulignées par des contreforts arrondis, de moindres proportions pour les portes latérales dont la largeur se situe entre 0.80 et 1 m. Le système de fermeture des portes est similaire à ceux observés dans les bâtiments indigènes. Les crapaudines et le logement du pieu médian servant à bloquer les deux vantaux en bois se présentent sous la forme de masses circulaires en terre indurée extrêmement solides.

1 Bonnet et Valbelle 2000, 1099–1120.
2 Bonnet 2013, 817–821.
3 Bonnet 2012, 67–74.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

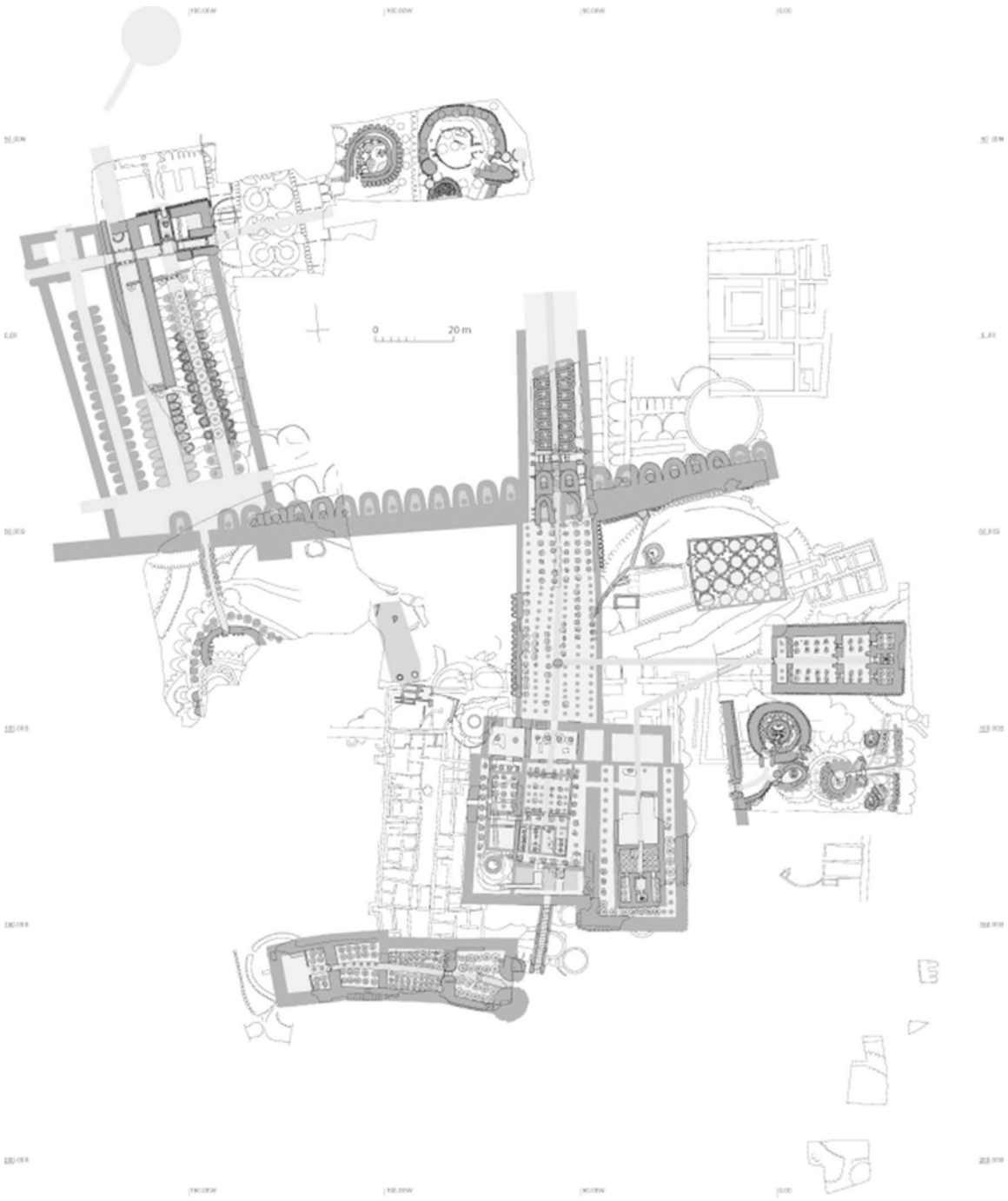


Fig. 1 Plan schématique du *ménénou* de Thoutmosis I à Doukki Gel

La salle hypostyle suivante, de 12.60 par 7 m, comporte quatre rangées de deux colonnes placées dans le même alignement que celles de la première salle. Les fondations sont identiques, constituées de briques placées en cercles concentriques. Les trois passages parallèles se poursuivent et mènent à nouveau à des portes rehaussées de contreforts arrondis. Leur embrasure est consolidée par un alignement de puissants poteaux jusqu'au seuil où se retrouvent les masses circulaires du mécanisme de fermeture des portes. Dans le fond du palais, la salle du trône est encadrée par deux pièces carrées disposant de quatre colonnes. Les fondations circulaires appartiennent au dernier état du monument, mais on doit imaginer qu'elles ont succédé aux fondements antérieurs. Dans les deux salles hypostyles, les bases des colonnes ont été mises au jour entre les fondations appartenant au dernier état (Fig. 3).

Avec seulement 4 m par 2.60 m, la salle du trône est bien modeste si on la compare aux dimensions

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Fig. 2 Vue générale des vestiges du *ménénou* après restauration

Fig. 3 Le palais cérémoniel de Thoutmosis I en cours de restauration

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

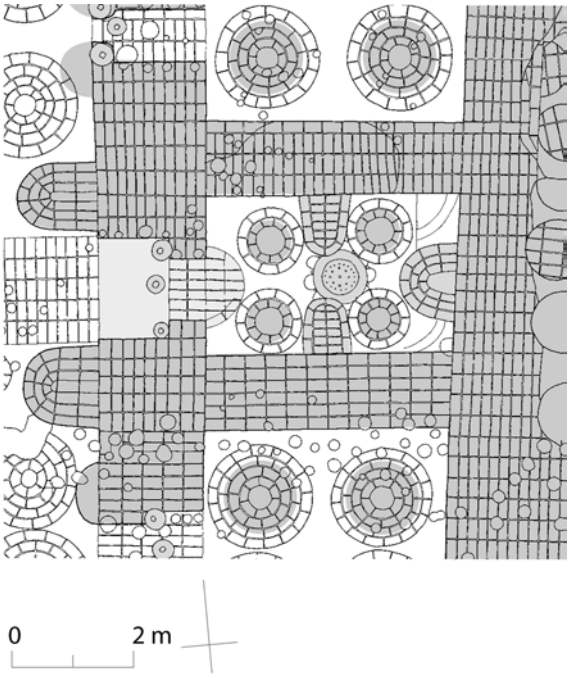


Fig. 4 Plan détaillé de la salle du trône du palais nord-est

généAvec seulement 4 m par 2.60 m, la salle du trône est bien modeste si on la compare aux dimensions générales du palais de Thoutmosis I. Curieusement, son aménagement intérieur fait appel aux mêmes éléments que ceux rencontrés dans les petites salles des palais indigènes, mais disposés de manière à s'adapter à l'espace quadrangulaire. La porte d'entrée est établie avec une large embrasure se terminant par des crapaudines. Juste derrière le seuil, une plateforme semi-circulaire légèrement surélevée donne sur un étroit cheminement entre les colonnes d'un baldaquin surmontant une table d'offrande cerclée de pseudo-contreforts. De chaque côté deux sièges sont installés contre les parois latérales. Le trône, précédé d'un escalier, est placé au fond de la pièce, dans l'axe. La table d'offrande ne semble pas avoir gêné les circulations (Fig. 4). Dans le mur arrière de l'édifice, les dégradations ont permis d'observer les fondations du palais et de constater que les premières assises des murs latéraux étaient posées sur le niveau d'arasement du palais indigène antérieur. En revanche, sans doute pour des raisons liées à la statique du bâtiment, les colonnes disposaient de fondations plus profondes.

Le palais du sud a été bouleversé lors des attaques menées par la coalition indigène. D'ailleurs toute cette partie est transformée pour constituer plusieurs fronts de défense où des traces rubéfiées pourraient appartenir aux restes de violents combats. Ce sont les fortifications qui sont ainsi privilégiées, et le palais a disparu durant le règne de Thoutmosis I.[4] Son plan n'est pas régulier et s'éloigne du modèle égyptien car il intègre plusieurs éléments de l'architecture locale. On peut aussi s'étonner de son accès sous la forme d'un long corridor en pente prenant naissance derrière le sanctuaire du temple principal et débouchant sur l'axe d'entrée au palais. Curieusement, entrée est constituée de deux tours de diamètre différent laissant place à une porte relativement étroite. Des contreforts peu saillants flanquent les parois arrondies. La cour d'entrée est de plan trapézoïdal, de larges portiques à double-colonnades de cinq supports définissent un espace central presque triangulaire où passe une allée pavée (Fig. 5). Au milieu, un escalier de quatre marches compense les irrégularités de niveaux. On montait en direction de la salle du trône. Un mur très épais limitait cette cour, il est interrompu par un passage marqué de chaque côté par une élévation semi-circulaire, donnant l'impression que le maître d'œuvre a créé deux demi tours pour cette porte massive. Une seule crapaudine est dégagée au nord, alors qu'un seuil très large occupe tout le passage. Il est vraisemblable que ce mur ait été réutilisé plus tard dans les fortifications du front sud. La salle hypostyle qui fait suite a 16 m de long; elle est bâtie avec six rangées de neuf ou dix colonnes (Fig. 6). Le plan n'est pas parfaitement orthogonal, et le dégagement n'a pas pu être terminé au nord où des vestiges postérieurs n'ont pas été déposés. L'allée axiale est pavée avec des briques placées selon l'orientation du bâtiment, alors qu'autour des colonnes le sol était exécuté avec des alignements en biais.

Les murs latéraux du bâtiment semblent avoir été construits à partir d'un système de mesure faisant appel à des puits circulaires. Les maçonneries sont épaulées par de petits contreforts arrondis. Le chantier s'est déroulé en plusieurs phases et l'on note que l'extrémité occidentale du palais est désaxée. Au sud, le mur latéral est flanqué de contreforts allongés. La deuxième salle hypostyle présente un plan trapézoïdal dû au changement d'orientation du bâtiment. Des rangées de cinq colonnes corrigent le biais des parois. Curieusement, l'allée centrale est encombrée par un alignement de cinq petites colonnes laissant peu d'espace pour le passage. Après un nouveau mur percé d'une embrasure bien conservée, on passait entre deux espaces annexes comprenant quatre colonnes chacun. Sur l'allée, on retrouve deux petites colonnes. Un mur très épais devait entourer la salle du trône, laquelle a été entièrement démantelée et ne peut donc être restituée. On notera pourtant qu'elle a été édifiée presque à l'emplacement d'une salle indigène ayant aussi des fonctions cérémonielles. Les adaptations du mur du palais pourraient traduire une forme de continuité.

4 Bonnet 2011, 14–16.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

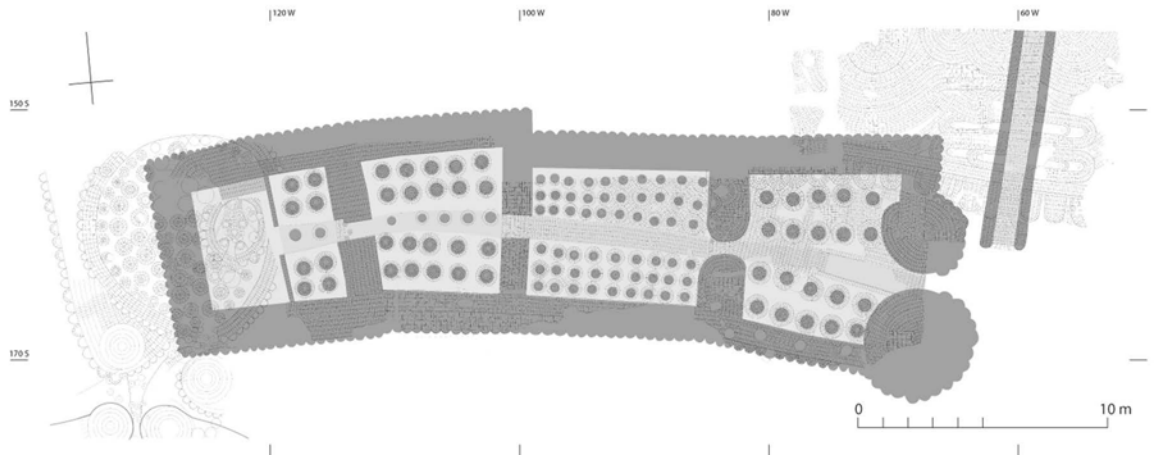


Fig. 5 Plan détaillé du palais méridional de Thoutmosis I

Fig. 6 La première salle hypostyle du palais sud en cours de fouilles

Grâce à la stèle d'Assouan de Thoutmosis II, on sait que le *ménénou* de Thoutmosis I fut détruit par une coalition de trois chefs de guerre.[5] Nous avons pu étudier à Doukki Gel cette période de soulèvements marquée de sévères destructions, auxquelles le palais nord-est n'échappe pas. De nombreuses fortifications sont élevées par les indigènes qui veulent protéger leurs lieux de culte en priorité. Le palais paraît laissé à l'abandon, alors que des fronts militaires dotés de bastions accolés sont édifiés au voisinage dans les quartiers religieux. Les conflits vont cesser lorsque Thoutmosis II puis Hatchepsout reprennent le pouvoir en Nubie.[6] Ils font reconstruire le *ménénou* de leur père à partir des plans des principaux bâtiments. C'est ainsi que les maîtres d'œuvre suivent avec beaucoup de précaution le tracé des murs de l'ancien programme

5 Gabolde 2003, 129–148.

6 Valbelle 2005, 35–50.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

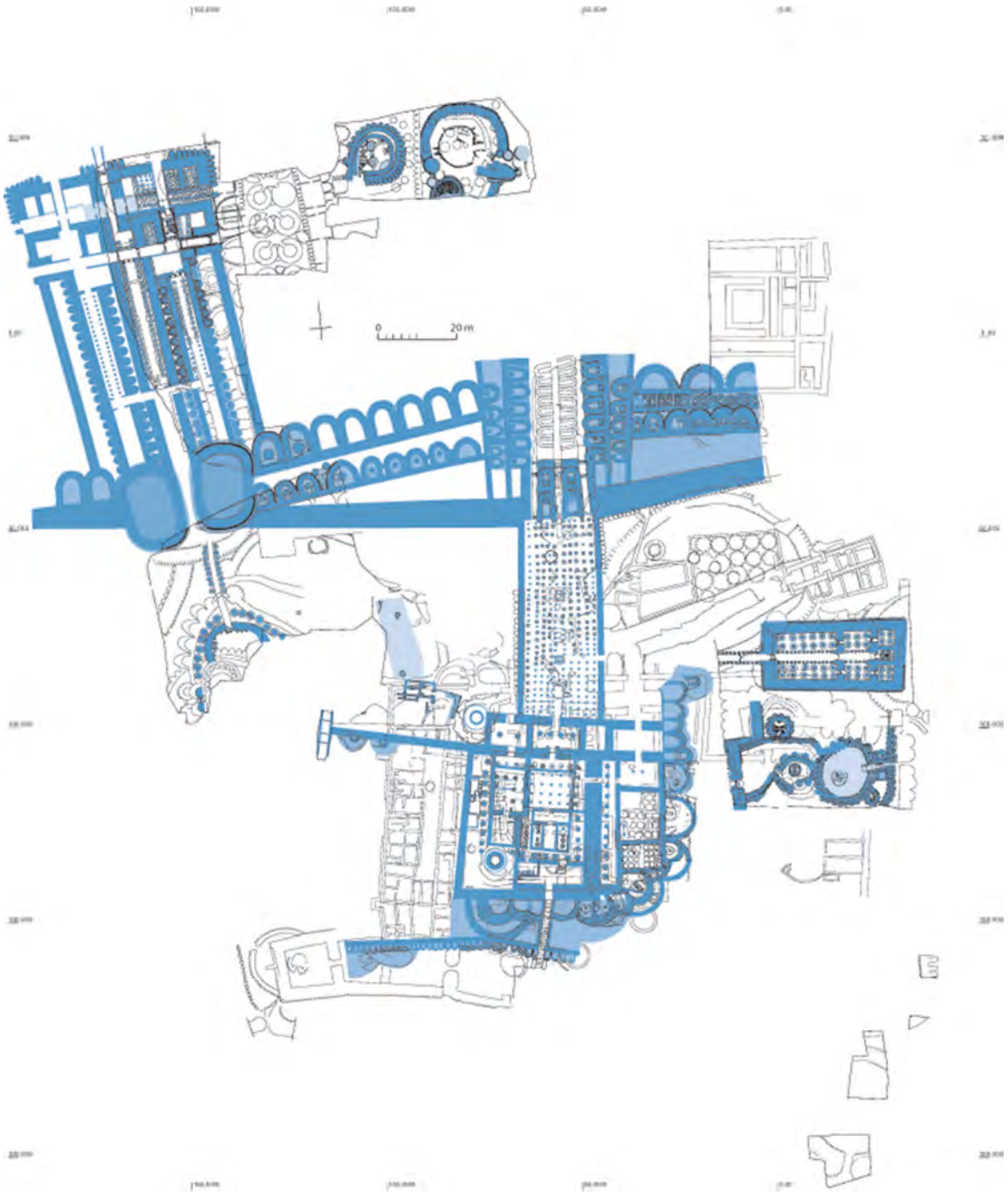


Fig. 7 Plan schématique du *ménénou* restauré par Thoutmosis II et Hatchepsout

architectural. Compte tenu de la courte durée de cette période de transition gagnée par les forces nubiennes et leurs alliés, on ne peut qu'être étonné de la superposition des différents édifices, notamment dans le cas du palais nord-est, rétabli presque exactement sur la même surface.

Le chantier du second *ménénou* donne une nouvelle ampleur à l'ensemble, facilitant l'agrandissement des bâtiments (Fig. 7). Le palais nord-est est monumentalisé et son accès transformé en une allée cérémonielle pavée de briques et flanquée de colonnades. Sur le dromos, le point de jonction entre l'allée menant au temple principal et celle venant du palais est mis en valeur par une grande base de briques circulaire. Placée dans l'axe central de la salle hypostyle d'entrée, cette base existait probablement déjà sous Thoutmosis I puis a été restaurée lors des reprises du *ménénou*. L'allée cérémonielle, avec ses colonnes, est comparable aux passages intérieurs dans l'avant-porte monumentale au nord-ouest de la ville. Les colonnades pénètrent à

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

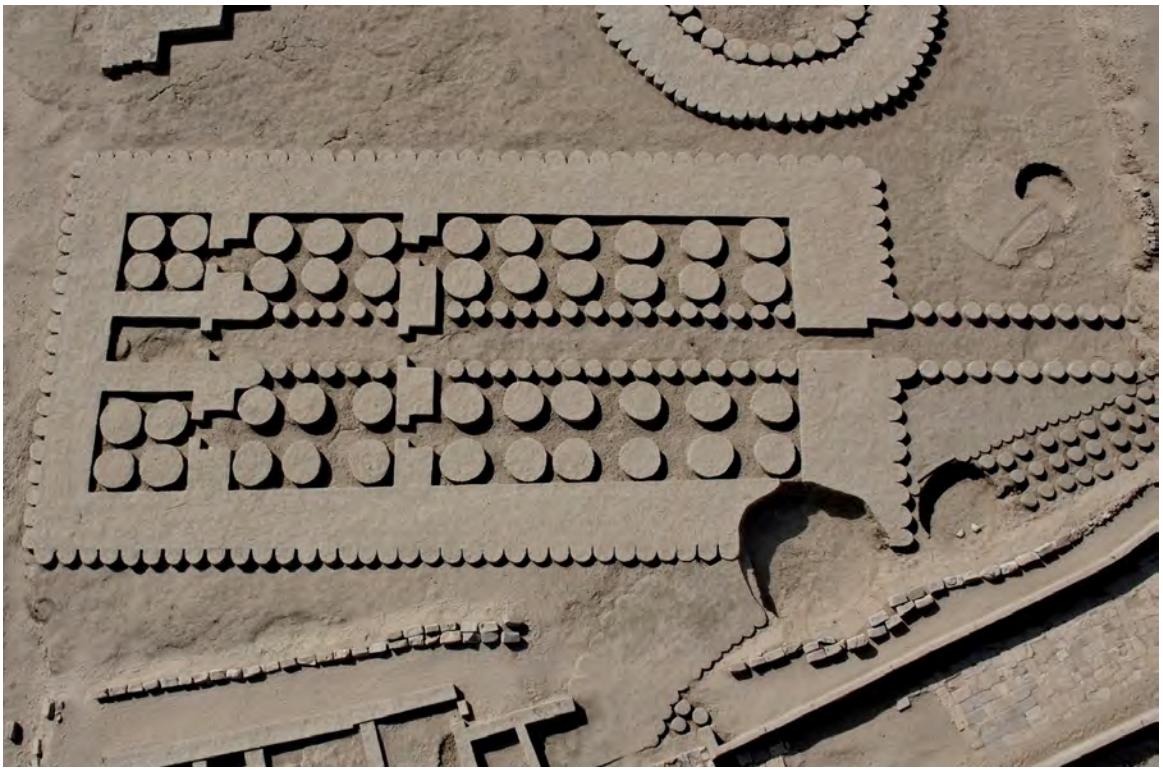


Fig. 8 Le palais nord-est de Thoutmosis II et Hatchepsout après restauration

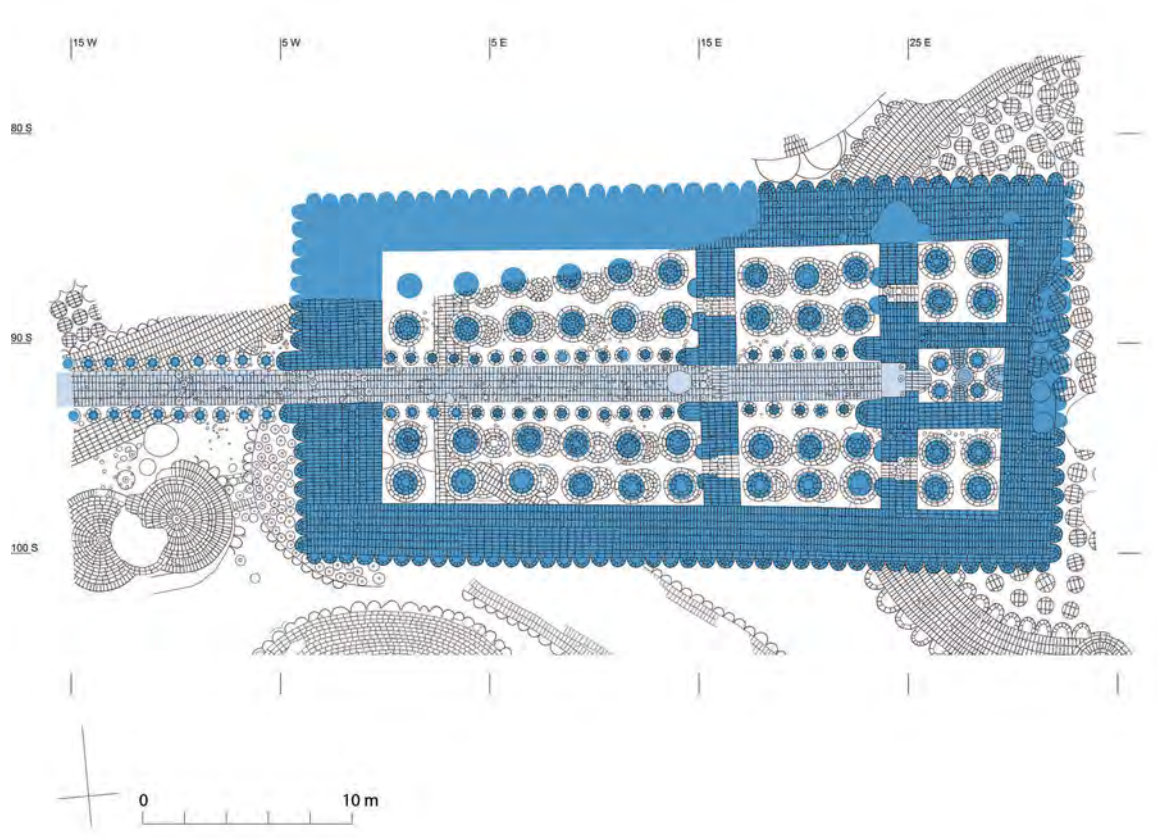


Fig. 9 Plan détaillé du palais nord-est sous Thoutmosis II et Hatchepsout

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

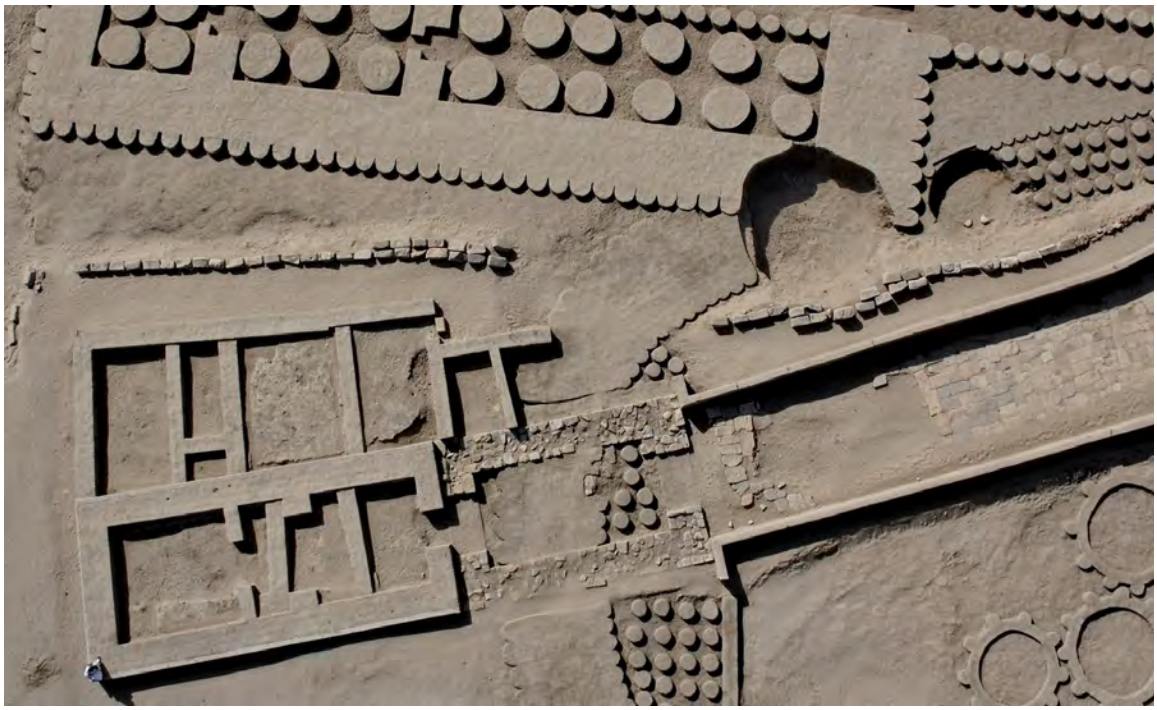


Fig.10 Le palais nord-est de Thoutmosis III et son allée cérémonielle

l'intérieur du bâtiment, ce qui modifie le couvrement de l'allée centrale.

La première salle hypostyle est agrandie en englobant le vestibule de l'entrée et en épaississant le mur de façade jusqu'à 3.60 m. Les contreforts latéraux se retournent devant le mur massif qui devient une sorte de pylône. L'entrée est également soulignée par deux contreforts allongés. Elle semble isolée par une première porte à deux vantaux placée à 6 m en avant de la façade, sur l'allée cérémonielle. Dans l'embrasure, plusieurs seuils et crapaudines témoignent de remaniements. L'unité de la salle hypostyle est donnée par les quatre rangées de six colonnes dont les bases ont un diamètre compris entre 1.80 m et 1.90 m. Les passages secondaires entre les rangées des supports paraissent être maintenus mais ils sont plus étroits. Les petites portes sont consolidées avec des pieux enfoncés à la base des parois des embrasures. Dans la deuxième salle hypostyle, l'espace est mis à profit pour ajouter une colonne à chacune des quatre rangées, soit quatre fois trois colonnes. La salle du trône a sans doute conservé la même organisation, avec les deux salles annexes dotées chacune de quatre colonnes (Fig. 8–9).

C'est encore au cours du Nouvel Empire qu'un nouveau palais est établi au nord-est.[7] L'allée cérémonielle menant aux temples est tracée à l'aide de dalles de grès bordées de murets. Ce pavage fort bien aménagé conduit jusqu'au temple central, mais l'organisation des pierres jointives suggère un premier état allant aussi en direction du temple oriental. On a ensuite supprimé la bifurcation. Cette allée a été restaurée à l'entrée du temple central, peut-être à l'époque amarnienne. Le pavage a été prélevé sur plusieurs segments, sa datation reste à préciser. Cependant les premiers aménagements devraient être placés sous le règne de Thoutmosis III. L'allée pénètre à l'intérieur d'une grande porte bâtie en pierre et en briques crues. Seule la tranchée de fondation du mur constitué de blocs de grès est attestée, mais un mur secondaire en briques l'entoure, il a pu servir lui aussi pour les élévations lors des remaniements. On aurait donc une « porte d'apparition » directement associée à un palais cérémoniel (Fig. 10).

L'ensemble du bâtiment qui se développe autour de la porte est construit en briques. Il est installé sur les restes de taille de blocs de grès jaune. L'érosion éolienne a détruit le bâtiment en profondeur du côté nord. Au centre, deux pièces longitudinales prolongent l'axe de l'allée cérémonielle, elles sont fondées en biais puis réhabilitées au moins deux fois. Pour l'un des derniers états, les pièces ne sont séparées que par un arc dont les pilastres sont encore conservés en fondations. Un dernier parement en briques cuites semble démontrer que l'édifice est encore en place à l'époque méroïtique. L'aile sud appartient à des appartements accessibles par une petite porte extérieure précédée d'un vestibule. Les multiples restructurations du bâtiment brouillent quelque peu l'image de ces pièces dont l'organisation n'a cessé d'être modifiée. Ce palais est resté disponible durant une longue période ainsi que son allée d'accès aux temples. Sur le pavage de dalles usées ont été

7 Bonnet 2009, 103–108.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

repérés des trous de poteaux qui ont peut-être servi pour élever des reposoirs.

Un palais résidentiel méroïtique a fait l'objet d'un dégagement au nord du site.[8] Il succède à un bâtiment napatéen dont il ne reste presque rien. Il faut pourtant souligner que l'emplacement de ces palais s'inscrit dans une continuité puisque ces derniers se trouvent dans un secteur qui permettait de rejoindre aisément le dromos, ils ont été reconstruits de nombreuses fois avec un léger déplacement vers le nord. Il s'agit chaque fois de monuments d'envergure dont l'architecture rehausse l'image de la ville. Certes la fonction exacte des bâtiments palatiaux pose problème. Si ceux que nous avons étudiés ici semblent être des édifices cérémoniels, il est possible que les fonctions aient varié si l'on en croit les exemples connus en Egypte.

Les temples et les palais mis au jour à Doukki Gel constituent une série d'autant plus originale qu'ils appartiennent à un seul site. Le point géographique ainsi documenté est également unique car il se trouve aux limites du territoire de l'Empire égyptien, proche de la capitale nubienne de Kerma et en relation avec le Soudan Central.[9] Les grands bâtiments de briques crues avec leurs chaînages de bois relèvent d'un courant architectural encore méconnu qui est loin d'avoir livré toutes ses caractéristiques. Leur étude en est à ses débuts et les interprétations proposées devront être vérifiées. Longtemps en effet, l'essentiel de nos données concernant l'architecture provenait de l'analyse de bâtiments édifiés en pierre, et ce principalement dans la vallée du Nil. Les travaux archéologiques menés à Doukki Gel ouvrent ainsi un nouveau champ d'étude, témoignant de la richesse de l'histoire du Soudan.

8 Bonnet, 1995a, 41–48.

9 Voir en complément: Bonnet 1996, 45–52; Bonnet 1995b, 6–16; O'Connor 1989, 73–87.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516

Bibliographie

Bonnet, Ch.
1995a Palais et temples dans la topographie urbaine. Les exemples du Bassin de Kerma , *Revue d'Egyptologie* 45, 41–48.
1995b La topographie urbaine de Kerma, *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Egyptologie* 133, 6–16.
1996 Habitat et palais dans l'ancienne Nubie, in: M. Bietak (éd.), *House and Palace in Ancient Egypt, International Symposium in Cairo, April 8 to 11, 1992*, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts 14, Vienne, 45–52.
2009 Un ensemble religieux nubien devant une forteresse égyptienne du début de la XVIII^e^ dynastie-Mission archéologique suisse à Doukki Gel-Kerma (Soudan), *Genava* n.s. 57, 95–108.
2011 Les deux villes égyptienne et nubienne de Doukki Gel (Kerma, Soudan), *Genava* n.s. 59, 7–16.
2012 Les grands monuments égyptiens et nubiens du début de la XVIII^e^ dynastie sur le site de Doukki Gel (Kerma), *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 112, 57–75.
2013 Découverte d'une nouvelle ville cérémonielle nubienne et le *MENENOU* de Thoutmosis I^er^ (Doukki Gel, Soudan), *Comptes rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (avril-juin), 807–823.

Bonnet, Ch., Valbelle, D., en collaboration avec Salah El-Din M. Ahmed
2000 Les sanctuaires de Kerma du Nouvel Empire à l'époque méroïtique, *Comptes rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (juillet-octobre), 1099–1120.

Gabolde, L.
2003 La stèle de Thoutmosis II à Assouan, témoin historique et archétype littéraire, *Actes du Colloque international Séhel. Entre Egypte et Nubie*, Université Paul-Valéry, 31 mai–1^er^ juin 2002, Orientalia monspeliensia 16, 2003, 129–148.

O'Connor, D.
1989 City and Palace in New Kingdom Egypt, *Cahiers de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Egyptologie de Lille* 11, 73–87.

Valbelle, D.
2005 Hatchepsout en Nubie, *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Egyptologie* 167, 35–50.

ISBN Print: 9783447111836 — ISBN E-Book: 9783447198516