

Urkesh as Tell Mozan:
Profiles of the Ancient City

Giorgio Buccellati

University of California, Los Angeles

The effort that goes into understanding an ancient urban layout is daunting, no less so at Tell Mozan than at other sites. The relatively amorphous topographic contours all but hide the articulation of the ancient settlement, especially for its earlier periods. We are, nevertheless, beginning to find certain clues which permit us at least to formulate some working hypotheses. These I will present here. The virtue of this exercise is to bring together, on the one hand, the observations from our work on different parts of the Tell; and to suggest, on the other, avenues through which we may simultaneously test and broaden these observations in the years ahead of us. No attempt has been made here to provide the pertinent documentation, and illustrations are given only for the Royal Building AK, which is the one most recently excavated.

As is generally the case when ancient settlements are identified with modern sites, while we may say that Urkesh is Tell Mozan, the converse is not true: Tell Mozan is not just Urkesh, but rather more than Urkesh. It includes, in fact, certain modern components to which the ancient name clearly does not apply. It is true, however, that this need for terminological precision is almost negligible in our case. The non-Urkesh material on Tell Mozan is extremely limited,¹ since it appears that the ancient site retained its name until at least the middle of the second millennium B.C., and most

¹ It is also clearly recognizable, at least typologically. Stratigraphically, the top layers merge at times with earlier ones in ways that are difficult to distinguish: this is due to the fact that the later occupation is sparse and scattered, without any appreciable and coherent intrusions in the earlier strata.

probably until its abandonment in the Nuzi period, i.e., until the end of its ancient period of occupation.

1 Early Third Millennium

Several soundings have reached virgin soil, of which the most significant are one on the High Mound (S2, Fig. 2) and the other in the Outer City (OS12, Fig. 3). S2 was a well dug by hand to virgin soil (then continued with a mechanical auger). In stratum S2sA13, just above virgin soil, some Halaf sherds were found, and in the stratum immediately above (S2sA12) three small cups were found set on a floor surface: the three cups may be classified typologically as Ninevite V, and the stratum was dated, by C14 analysis of carbon remains found in it, to 2920 +/- 170 B.C. (UCI-145; see RLA 8, 1995, p. 389)

The sounding in the Outer City (OS12) was started as a hole dug during our absence by the utilities company for the westernmost pilon of the power line which runs along the northern perimeter of the site; we then regularized and expanded the excavation before cement was poured into it. This sounding holds special interest because (a) it seems to have reached the deepest absolute elevation yet on the tell, and (b) it seems to indicate two major stratigraphic phases in the Outer City. An ash layer (f3 in k2), dark black midden (f12 in k1), and the large cooking jar with four lug handles (i7 in k4) are all at the lowest depth (between 2 and 3 m below the surface), and would seem to indicate an early phase of simple (?) domestic occupation. Even though no clear floors and no architecture were uncovered, it seems certain that we have here no evidence of burials or burial-related activities. We cannot date it positively, since the cooking pot is in itself non-distinctive, and the pottery from the higher burials is not diagnostic. The depth of this deposit below the modern plain level would document the elevation for the original plain level, since the domestic activities documented in OS12 could not likely have taken place in a sunken environment.

The construction of the inner city wall, around the High Mound, is documented especially in KW and in S1. In neither area did we reach the base of the wall, so we cannot suggest a stratigraphic date for its construction. Inferentially, however, we may assume this date to have been in the early third millennium, since it appears to have been rendered inoperable by the middle of the same millennium (see below, 2.1).

A few burials in the Outer City may be dated, typologically, to the early part of the third millennium, in particular those in soundings OA4 and OB1. The latter had more

than 100 well preserved ceramic vessels and several bronze objects. The ceramics include, next to Metallic Ware, conical cups and a number of late Ninevite V vessels, and also some stands painted with geometric patterns in the Scarlet Ware tradition (*Hamidiya* p. 130).

2 Mid Third Millennium

2.1 The city walls

We assume that, by the middle of the third millennium, the inner city wall was no longer used for its defensive purposes. This is based primarily on the results of our excavations in area KW (*Mozan 1*, pp. 61-64). Here we observed that the moat in front of the wall itself was backfilled in such a way as to render it inoperative: without a moat, the wall would obviously lose much of its effectiveness. The date is proposed on the basis of the nature of the deposition and the typology of the material found. The surface of the moat and the glacis which leads up to the wall was covered by a compact and coherent fill, which included a large quantity of burnt brick and was clearly dumped at once, not as the result of gradual accumulation. The preponderance of items found in this fill were door sealings, fragments of small spouted jars, and fragments of large storage vats and jars. They were contained in a red matrix resulting from burning. Our understanding of the depositional processes is that the material for the fill was brought from a single building which had burned down, and was dumped so as to level this portion of the moat.

Two inferences follow. (1) If the fill was so coherent with respect to the nature of its components, it seems hard to imagine that it could have survived for long in some other location before being dumped in KW. In other words, the burning of the building is likely to precede by very little the dumping of the debris. Accordingly, the obliteration of the moat in KW can be dated to roughly the same date to which the materials found in the dump can be assigned typologically, i.e., to some time in the ED III period. (2) One cannot easily explain a partial backfilling of a moat, since by its very nature the system consisting of a wall and a moat must be whole and complete to retain its defensive function: a partial backfilling of the moat, just like an occasional breach in the wall, cannot be reconciled with the goal for which it was built and maintained. Accordingly, it seems legitimate to give wider significance to the results obtained even though the exposure in KW is admittedly quite limited. It is interesting, at any rate, to

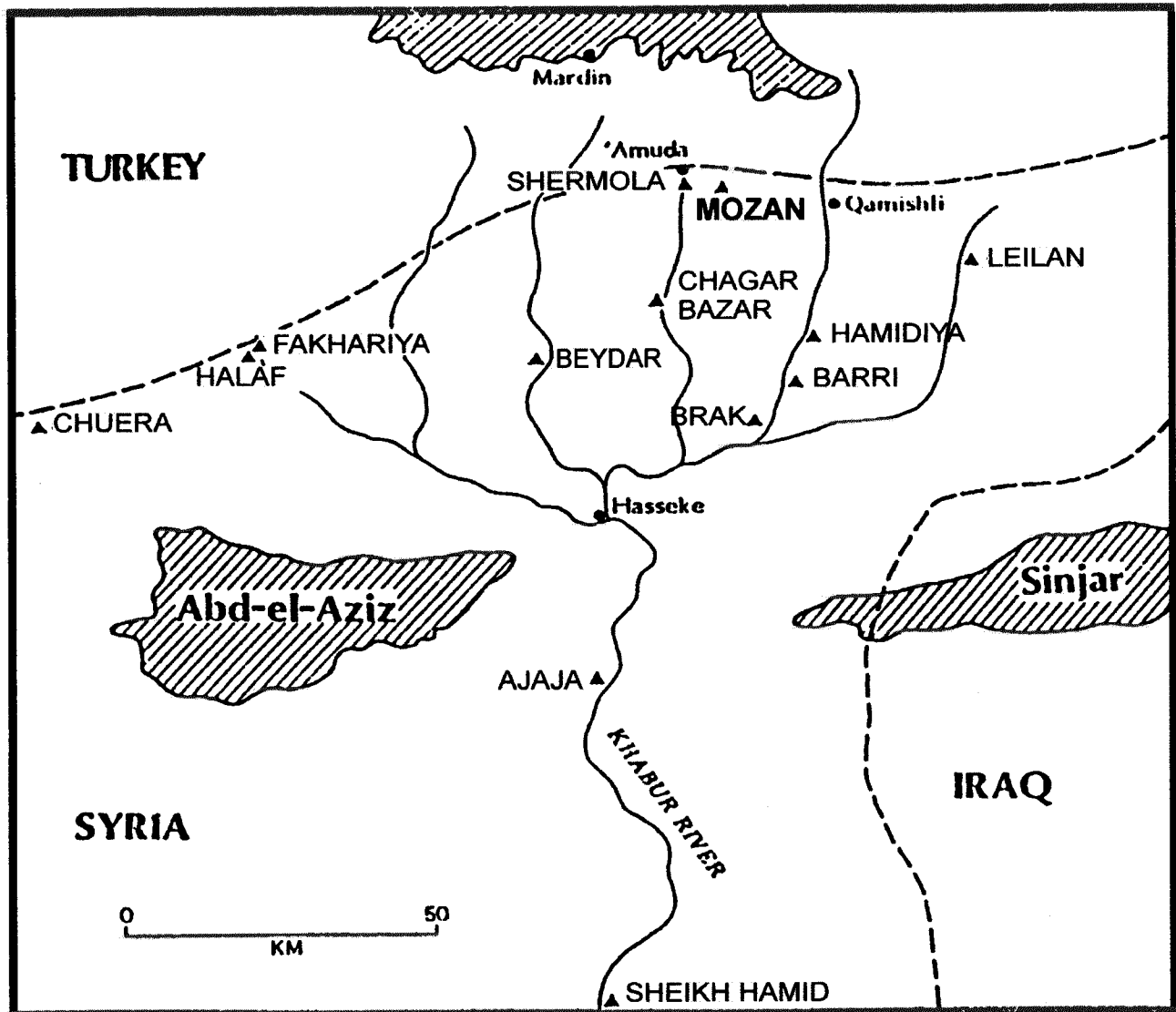


Fig. 1. Sites in the Khabur Region

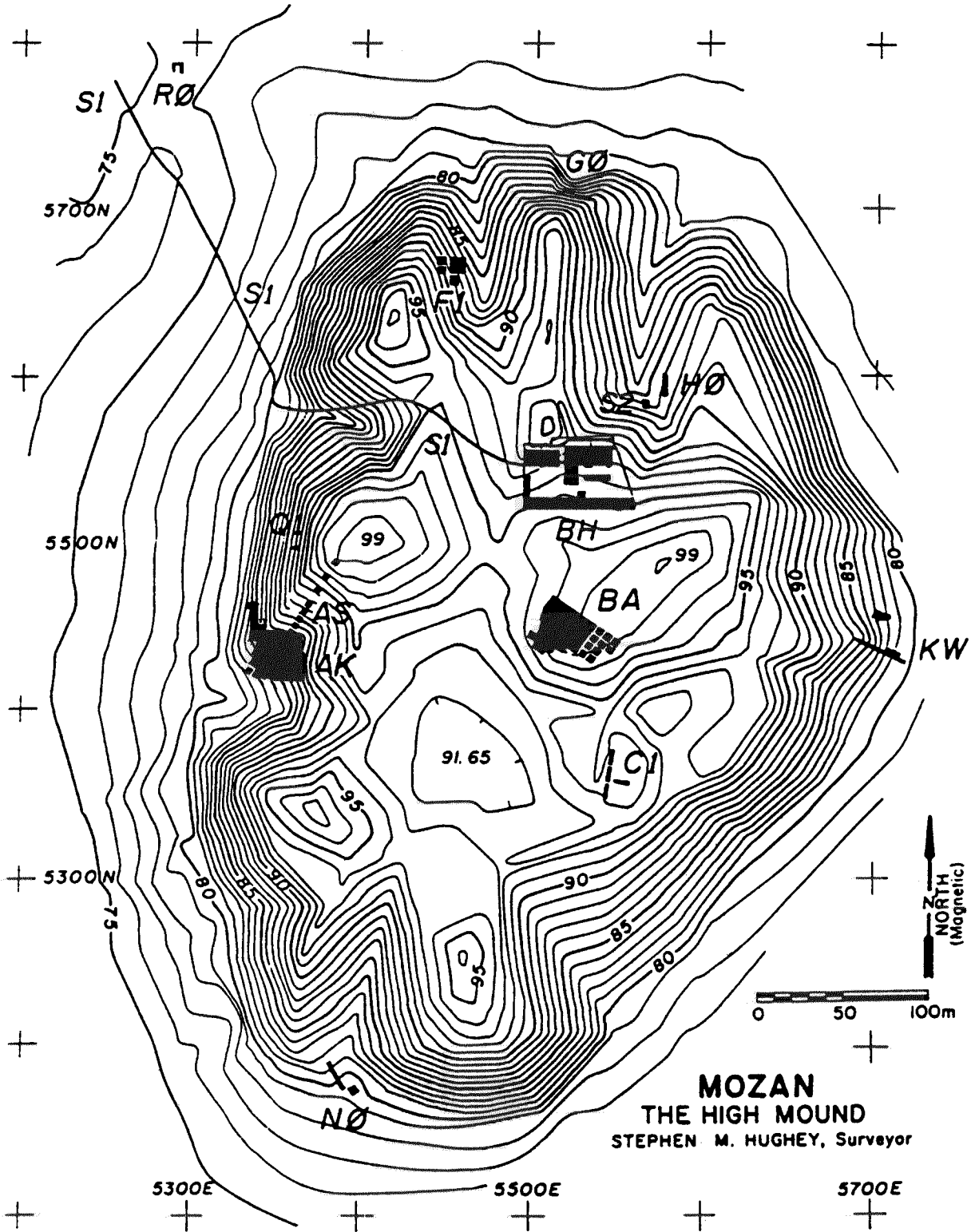


Fig. 2. The High Mound (excavations as of 1997)

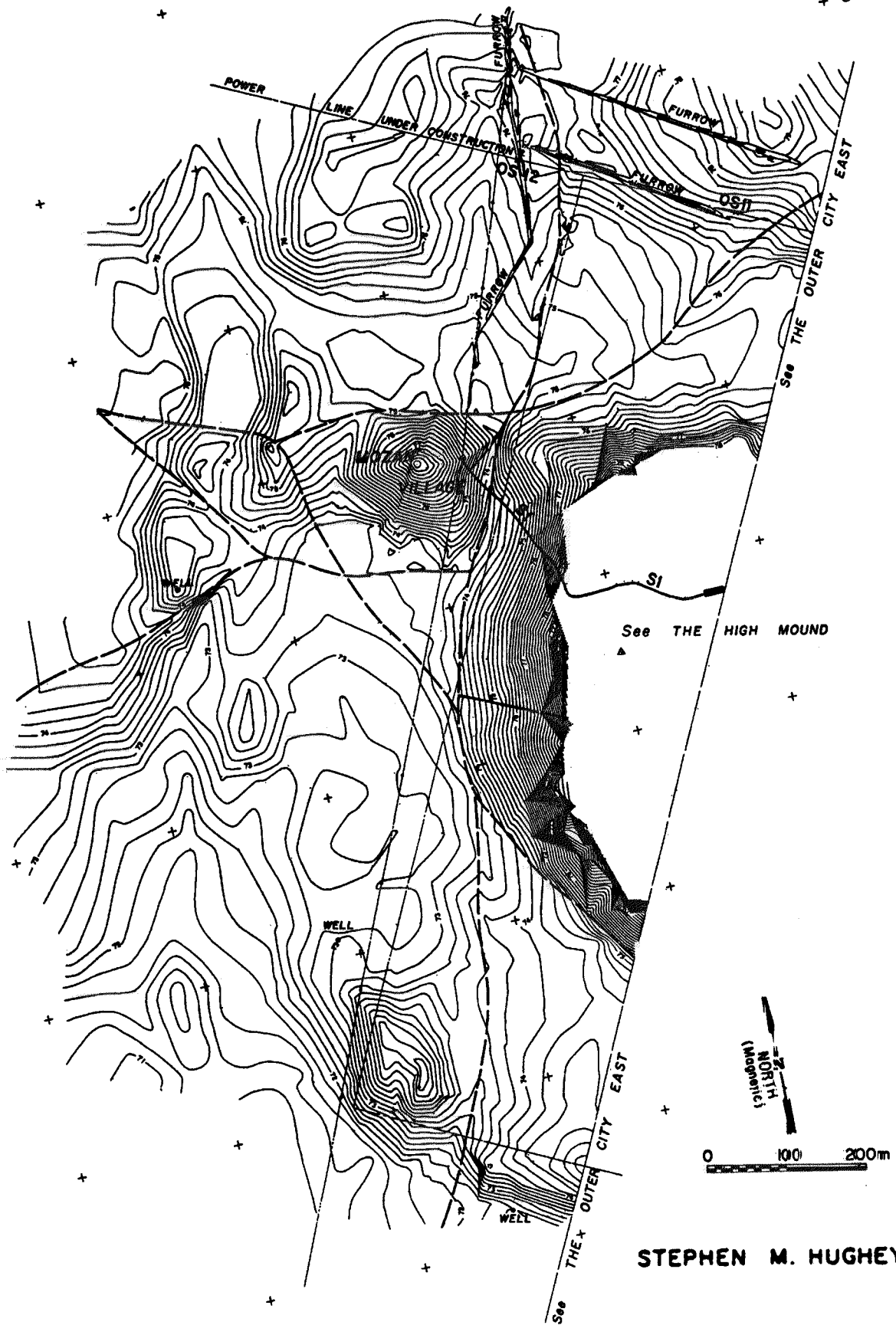


Fig. 3a. Tell Mozan: the Outer City (west)

note that the steep profile of the High Mound along all its edges (with the limited exception of Area AK) results clearly from this wall having served like a protective girdle: in the third millennium the settlement grew up within it, and in the second on top of it.

An important question which must remain unresolved is that pertaining to the existence of an outer city wall. Three factors can be adduced in support. (1) The topography of the site reveals a rise which is oval in shape, and which surrounds the entire site up to height of more than a meter (Fig. 3). Though there are several interruptions, one can clearly follow this rise all around the site, along a line which remains consistently equidistant from the base of the High Mound. No other such regular ridges can be seen. (2) There is a clear demarcation in the nature of the deposits within and without this external oval. Two major lines of evidence are pertinent in this respect. On the one hand, an extensive surface foot survey revealed the presence of very rich cultural material within this oval, while no such evidence was found without. On the other hand, the soundings OS10 through OS15 showed remarkable contrast between the areas inside and those outside the oval, the former being culturally rich, and the latter instead totally sterile. (3) If the inner city wall was indeed deprived of its defensive function somewhere in ED III, it would seem plausible to assume that an alternative defensive system was created, and that what is topographically recognizable as an outer ring might be precisely such a wall.

Unfortunately, various constraints have prevented us from carrying out excavations to resolve this issue. A preliminary sounding (OH1) was carried out in 1985 on the summit of the outer ring, and it did not reveal any trace of a wall; but the exposure was so limited that it could not contradict the possibility of there being a wall, if the sounding itself for instance were to have been within the core of a casemate structure.

2.2 The first phase of Temple BA

The earliest phase of the temple is dated to ED III, on the basis of both the finds and C14 determinations (for a brief discussion of these phases see *Hamidiya* pp. 125-126). What is remarkable about this dating is that the absolute elevation of this floor of the temple is very high, well near the highest point on the tell. At first, this had seemed to suggest that much of the higher parts of the tell would also have to be dated to the late third millennium, a suggestion which seemed in turn reinforced by the relatively high frequency of third millennium material on the surface of both the High Mound and the

Outer City (see *Mozan 1*, pp. 50-56). However, subsequent excavations in BH, F1, A4/A3, C1, and lastly in A7, A8, A9, showed otherwise, at least as far the High Mound is concerned. While the top of the southern part of the High Mound (Areas D and E) has not been tested yet, it would appear now that the Temple stood isolated at a considerable height above other third millennium buildings (see also Section 4.1), and that only in the early second millennium did the rest of the High Mound reach the same elevation as the Temple. On the other hand, none of the soundings in the Outer City could be dated to any period later than the third millennium, so that it may stand to reason that the rise in elevation of the center that occurred in the second millennium was matched by a shrinking of the perimeter of the settlement. In other words, the second millennium settlement (see below, Section 4) would have clustered on what were then the relatively lower slopes of the High Mound, and around the high central terrace of Temple BA, and not in the Outer City.

If the Temple stood isolated, it must have been the most important religious structure in the city. No clue was found in the excavations as to the identity of the deity worshiped there, except for the stone sculpture of a lion (see below, Chapter 4). This came from the debris of the first phase, piled up to serve as subfloor for a room (not preserved) of the second phase; it can, in other words, be dated to the first phase. We have no idea as to the original emplacement of this statue, but one may at least conjecture that it may have been connected with the cult of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated. One further conjecture along similar lines is that the lions of Tish-Atal may also be connected with a later phase of the temple (see below, 3.2).

The nature of the rise on which the temple stood remains to be determined. It could hardly have been a natural hill of a height anywhere near that of the elevation of the Temple, because to the east the slope of the Tell is within some 50 m of the edge of the temple, and to the north our sounding S2 revealed a complete sequence of cultural deposit down to virgin soil some 100 m to the north. Within such confines, it is unlikely that any substantial natural rise could have existed on which to build the temple, nor are any such steep natural hills visible in the landscape today. It is certainly possible that a minor hill did exist, and that the earliest (and unexcavated) phases of the temple were built on it. At any rate, the major phases as we know them by the middle of the third millennium must have rested on some artificial terracing, whether derived in part from an earlier natural hill, or only from earlier strata of the Temple. That the terracing did not appear like a ziggurat is suggested by the very size of the temple, and by the additional fact that service areas have been identified in the areas adjacent to the Temple

itself (excavation units B3 and B5). Future excavations leading down from the Temple entrance in the direction of the Royal Building AK would of course help answer this question, though a fuller understanding of such a vast monumental complex would be a very long enterprise, especially since one would have to dig to a considerable depth through later Khabur period strata (see below, 4.1).

3 Late Third Millennium

3.1 The Royal Building AK

After the initial excavations in building AK, we postulated (*AfO*) that it was a royal storehouse: it was a storehouse because of the large number of sealings discarded on the floor, and it was royal because the inscriptions on the seals referred to the king and especially to the queen and her household. Further excavations to the north of the storehouse revealed that the storehouse belonged to a larger building, possibly the royal palace itself (*Orient Express* pp. 73-74). Reporting on the most recent work done in this area, I give here more information about this building, including various floor plans and a 3D reconstruction based on the work done during the most recent season of excavation (Summer 1997; see also below, Chapter 5). Figure 4 shows the Excavations Areas. Since our recording system is based entirely on absolute coordinates, we do not depend on orthogonal excavation units for measurements; rather, unit boundaries are extended as the strategy requires, and may in fact even overlap (as is the case with A8 vs. A6 and A10). Conceptually, an excavation unit, which corresponds to a recording book, is a registration as much as a volumetric entity. Since area labels are used as indices for the entire registration system of stratigraphic elements, including architectural features and objects, it is useful to map them as shown.² Figure 5 (=PDS 2.1) shows the major

² It must be noted that in 1997 we decided to change the orientation of the grid. The original step trench (started in 1990 and labeled AS) followed the topographic contour of the mound and was so placed as to run parallel with the presumed location of the mid third millennium city wall further to the west (see PDS 2.4-5). As it turned out, this AS grid was slightly oblique in relation to the orientation of Building AK, as shown at various places on the floor plan, and in particular by the line of squares in the area of Sectors J and F. The new AK grid was laid so as to be parallel with the orientation of Building AK, and this is reflected in some of the new squares which are shown on the same floor plan. Since, as already mentioned, all our measurements are in terms of absolute coordinates, the orientation of the grid has no direct impact on the coherence of our referential system.

sectors and gives room labels for the portion excavated. Figure 6 (=PDS 2.2) shows (in a three-dimensional version) the maximum projection which we are assuming at this stage (see also PDS 2.3).

The floor plan in Fig. 5 (=PDS 2.1) provides a good synopsis of the results obtained so far. The floor areas shown in darker grey (dark green in PDS 2.1) represent the earliest floor accumulations within the building. We can distinguish the successive accumulations because the floor surfaces were covered with a thin coat of gypsum plaster—except in Sector F1 where, in the small sounding labeled A9k5, we have exposed a beautiful pavement of baked bricks (this pavement is limited to the eastern portion of the locus, so we must infer that it did not cover the entire extent of the courtyard). A total of between three and five such accumulations constitute what we consider the earliest period of occupation, for a total depth of the deposit of about half a meter.

We know that these were the very first floors because we have exposed at various points the foundations of the walls. It is from these floors that the majority of seal impressions were recovered, including those which have allowed us to identify the site as ancient Urkesh and which we have already published (see especially *AfO*, *WZKM*, and *Subartu*).

A number of distinctive features were associated with these early floors and not with the later ones. In particular, we should mention the following: in room D1, a bread oven and a small andiron hearth; in C6, a square shaft lined with square bricks, which was found empty to a depth of about 2 m, and which might be interpreted as a toilet; a drain which slopes downward from the threshold of C6 toward C3 and has not yet been fully excavated; in C2 a bin, only partially excavated.

The areas shown in light grey (light green in PDS 2.1) indicate the higher floors and corresponding accumulations still contained within the walls of Building AK. In Sectors D and F these deposits reach a depth of almost 3 m, and it seems likely that such a state of preservation might continue as we excavate further to the east and to the north. There may be evidence that at some point in time the walls were rebuilt. (1) In some cases, bricks in the higher courses are different from those below. (2) A small disk-shaped feature in Sector E shown on the 1996 plan may best be interpreted as the bottom of a pit cut into the early floors, originally dug for making bricks, and preserved full of mud and straw before being covered by the new, higher floors. (We had considered the possibility that this “disk,” described as a “round brick platform” in *Orient Express*, p. 73, might have served as the base for a column, but this alternative hypothesis must be

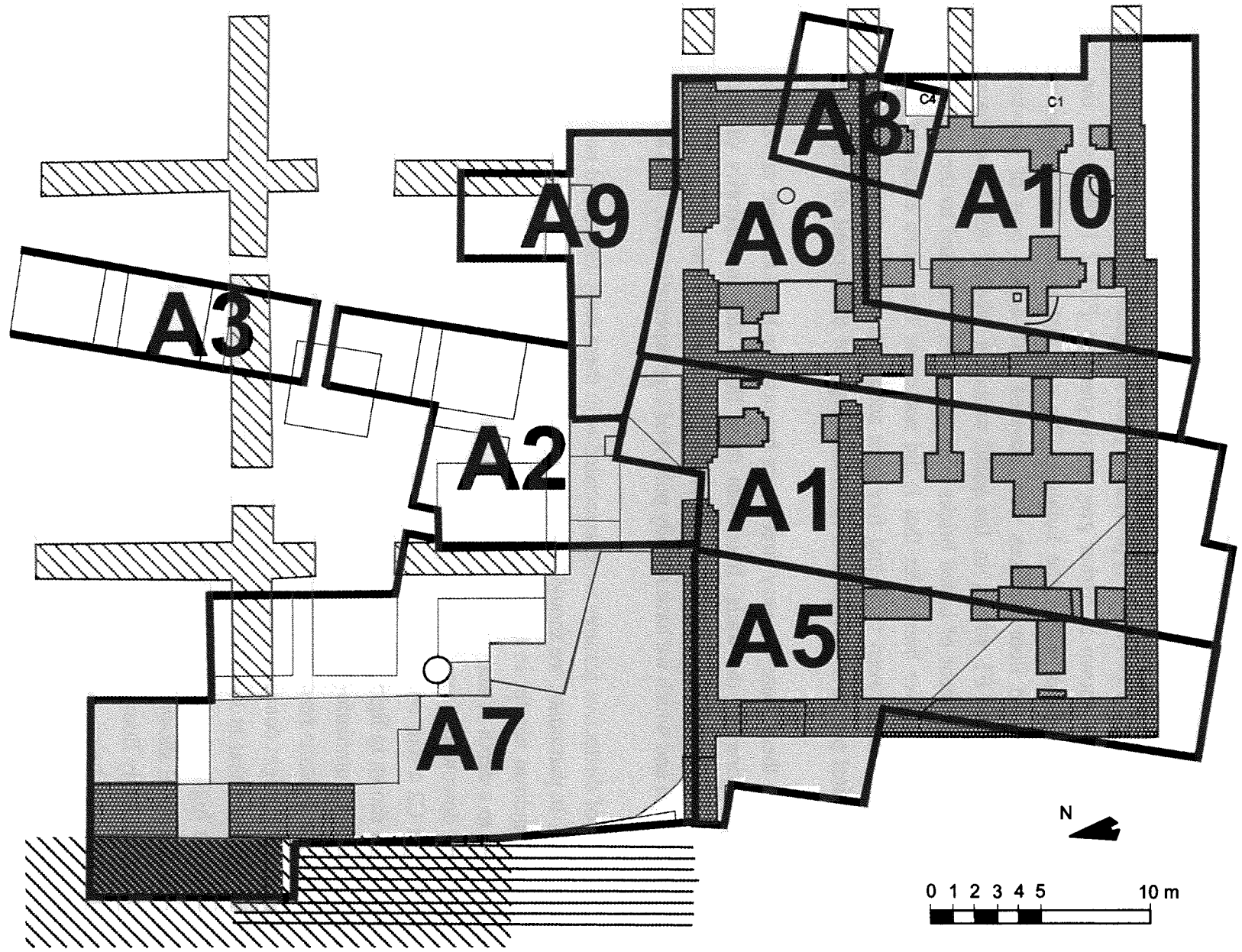


Fig. 4. Excavations Areas in Royal Building AK

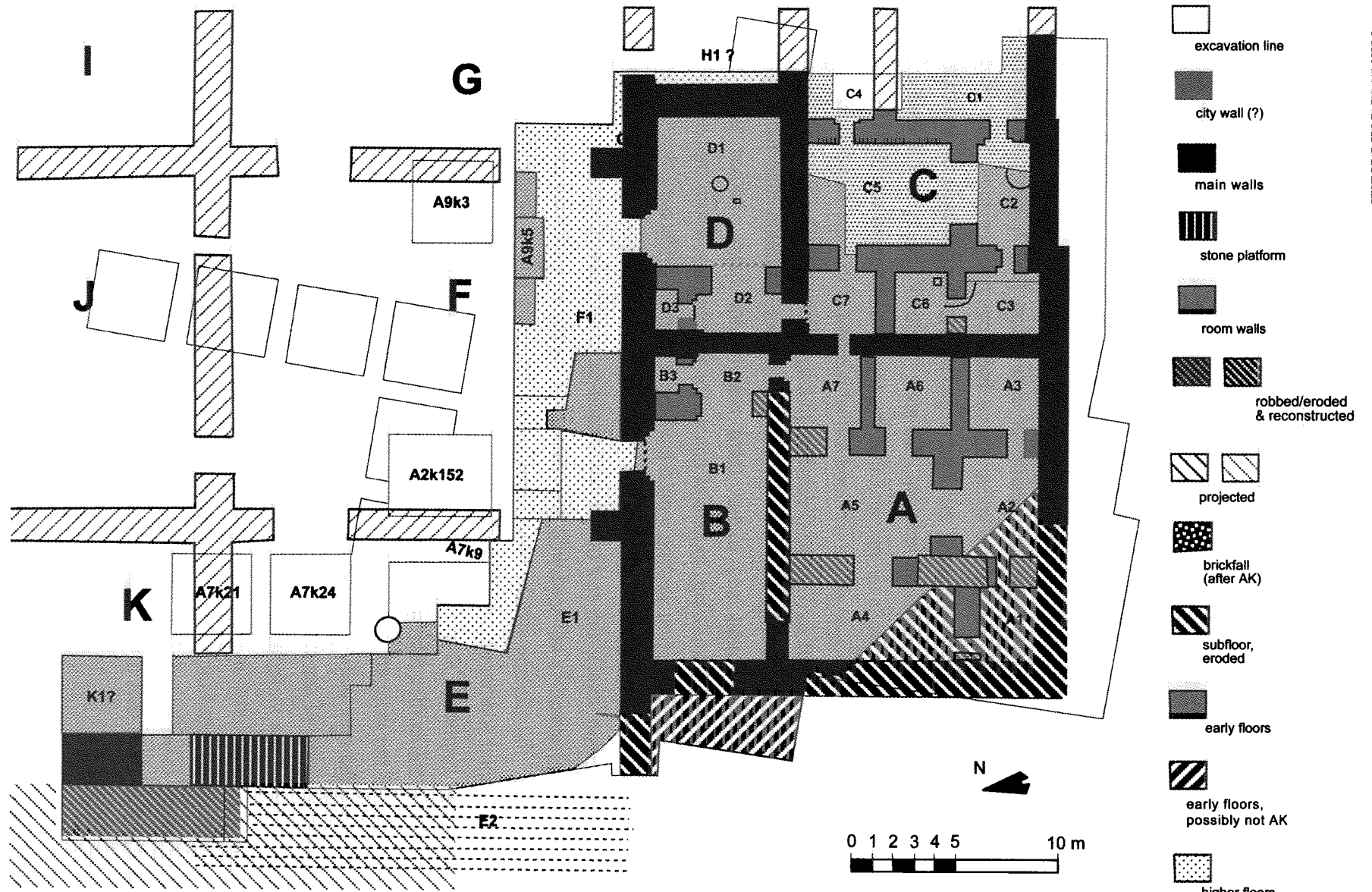


Fig. 5. Royal Building AK excavations as of 1997, with room labels.

discarded.)

All early floors in Sector E1 slope downward towards the east, i.e., down from the threshold toward the interior of the building. This is strange if the western edge of E1 is indeed to be considered as an external threshold. Yet so far we have not found any evidence for a wall that might delimit the room, instead of a threshold. Since the ancient accumulation is often only a few centimeters below the modern surface, and since we have deliberately kept our soundings limited until we could reach a better understanding of the entire sector, it is still possible that evidence for a wall might yet be found.

Two stratigraphic results of the last season of excavation (1997) are particularly pertinent here. The first is that in the strata above building AK we have late third millennium residential units on the west, but Khabur period residential units on the east. This means that, in the late third millennium, the area “behind” (i.e., to the east of) Royal Building AK was not built up yet, and that the temple BA (dated to ED III in its first phase) was standing isolated atop a terraced hill which dominated the Royal Building AK and was in direct view of it. This consideration has significant implications. It seems unlikely that other buildings might have been built at a higher elevation than the Royal Building (nor have we found any higher third millennium strata, earlier than or contemporaneous with this building, except of course for the temple). From this it would follow that the third millennium skyline would have been slightly different from the one we see today: while the temple was at the same rather exceptional height as today (about 23 m above the plain level), the rest of the city would have all been much lower. Since the temple was presumably covered with a pitched roof, along an east/west axis like the Royal Building, the skyline would have been rather dramatic and it could hardly be otherwise intended (comparable, in some ways, to that of Tell Chuera).

The second important stratigraphic result is that the staircase and ramp appear to be built on top of the earlier city wall. The proximity of the city wall has been noted since the planning of the stepped trench AS, and in fact we placed the trench so as to avoid cutting across the city wall. I must confess that, working against our own assumptions, I had come to think of the city wall and presumed city gate as a factor conditioning our understanding of the storehouse as a storehouse—precisely on account of its being near a main access to the city. In point of fact, the wall was no longer in use by the latter part of the third millennium, for the reasons adduced above. Whether or not the staircase/ramp is built on top of the city wall (to determine this, further excavations are required), it is clear that at this particular point the remnants of the city wall were torn

down to make room for direct access to the palace from a wide-open area in front of it, and possibly also to provide an unobstructed view to the west.³

The projections in Fig. 6 (=PDS 2.2) contain a suggestion about a possible functional understanding of the building. It is of course possible that the building is smaller than projected; in principle, it could even terminate just north of sectors B, D, and H. But this is highly unlikely, given especially the regularity of the construction and the homogeneity of the deposit beyond the limits of the southern sectors. Assuming, then, a projected layout such as shown here (which would cover as much as 2400 m² of surface), we may mention the following in support of the functional interpretation proposed.

Entrance (Sector E). A relatively high number of conical cups was found in the floor deposits of Sector E. This suggests that drinks might have been offered to important visitors as a welcome upon their arrival. Of the many seal impressions found, several were identical to those from sectors A-D: this supports the assumption of a homogeneous occupation throughout the building. The structural layout remains unclear. Even assuming a wall between Sectors E and F, as reconstructed here, access to the courtyard F would have been wide open, since there is no wall to screen the view from the outside. Such an arrangement of space is puzzling. One of the circular structures which had begun to appear in the previous season and had suggested the possible presence of columns, is in fact a deep pit filled with collapsed mudbrick. There is no evidence for columns.

Courtyard (Sector F). The major problem is the one mentioned above, namely the lack of a wall screening access from the outside. The two walls projecting north from Sectors B and D (see PDS 2.9) give all the appearance of serving as doorjambs, but we have not found any trace of a matching doorjamb in the space to the north excavated thus far. This means that both doorways are at least 3 m wide. A portion of the courtyard was paved with beautiful baked bricks. These were found in a small sounding (A9k5), but may extend considerably farther.

³ This explains the fact that only at this particular point in the topography of the tell is the circuit of the walls interrupted for a considerable length, resulting in a relatively wide and flat area near the base of the tell. This consideration is of particular interest since it sheds light on our choice of a higher point on the tell for the construction of the Expedition House. Unlike other tells, Tell Mozan has no real citadel with a middle city built around it; with the exception of the area where the Royal Building AK is located, no middle ground is available on the slopes of the tell. If we did not choose area AK, the only possible middle ground then available, it was because surface collections and preliminary soundings suggested that area BH, where the house came to be located, was among the most recent to have been occupied in the settlement history of the ancient city.

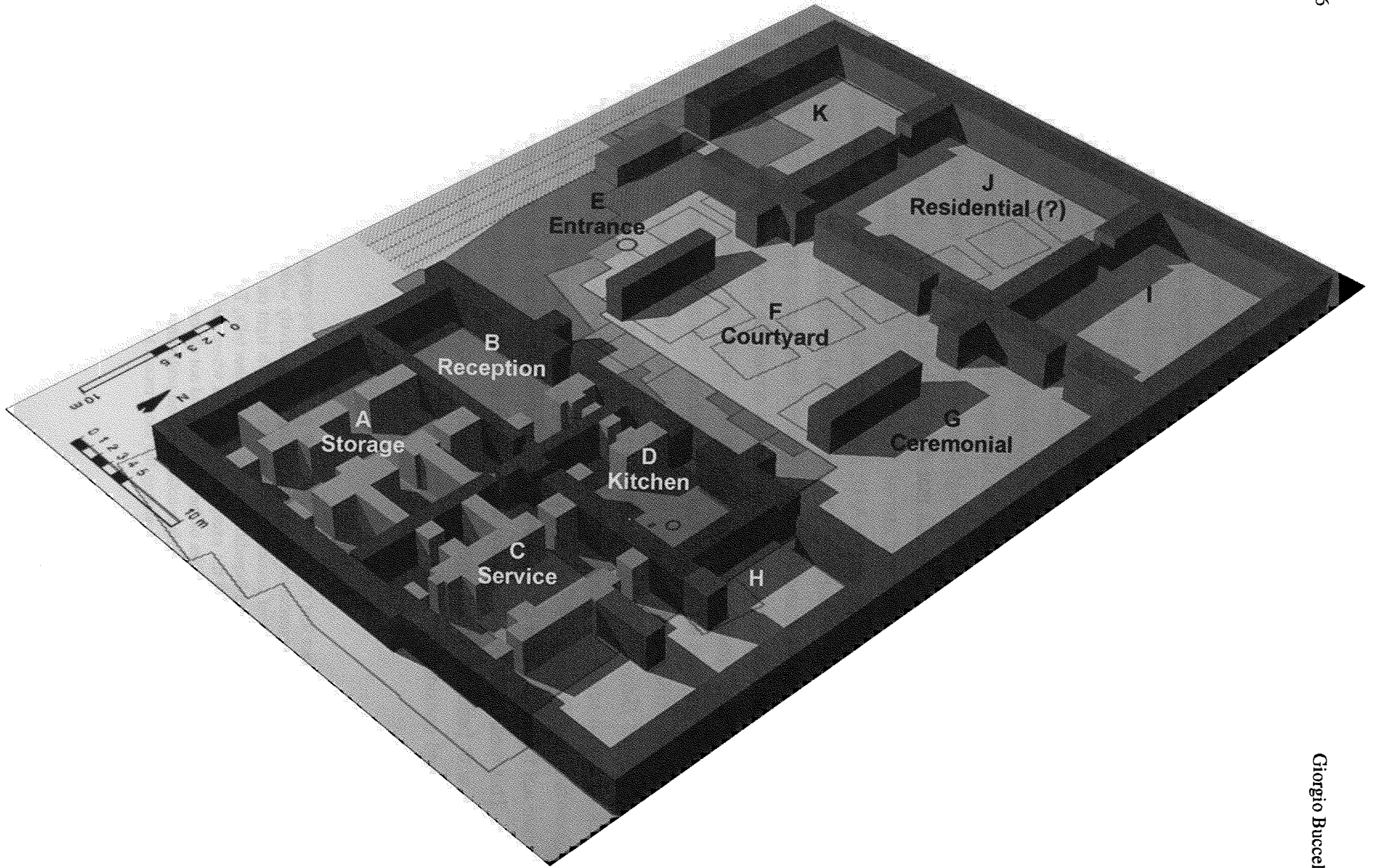


Fig. 6. 3-D rendering of Royal Building AK (maximal projection).
View looking northwest, with presumed functional definition of sectors.

Reception area (Sector B). Goods were brought in through the door leading from the courtyard. They were delivered in sealed containers. In our view, the seal identified both the sender and the beneficiary of the delivery: for instance, goods from the estate of the queen would be delivered to the palace to be stored there on her own behalf. Upon receipt, the seal was broken and the content verified. This would account for the large number of seal impressions found discarded on the floor in Sector B. We may assume that at this point the goods were accessioned by the scribes through a regular accounting procedure, and were then sent for storage in Sector A.

Storage area (Sector A). In contrast with the rest of the building, most of the floor deposits in this sector were lost through erosion. Hence we can infer function only through the layout. The walls, too, were later quarried for stone. Differently from our earlier reconstruction, we assume that there was no entrance from the south (though this is uncertain, since the corner walls are also eroded). If so, the sector would be accessible only through the small room A7, and such relative seclusion would fit well with the interpretation of the space as a storage area.

Kitchen [Sector D (see PDS 2.9)]. The presence of a relatively large oven in the middle of the room, endowed with a flue, and of a small hearth, indicates that the room served for food preparation. There are no other major installations of any sort, nor are the finds particularly indicative of cooking. The oven was well cared for, since it was rebuilt several times. Its size, its location at the center of the room, and its condition, leave no doubt that cooking was the main function of this sector. The deposition contained within the walls of the original building reaches the height of 3 m in this sector. Some of the walls themselves were preserved to this height.

Services (Sectors C—and H?). Only a small portion of this sector has been excavated to the level of the early floors. The presence of a drain and a deep shaft lined with baked bricks, possibly a toilet, in room C6, suggests that the sector may have served as a support area for the kitchen. The existence of a separate Sector H is questionable: it is possible that Sector C developed in an L-shaped form around Sector D to join with Sector G.

Ceremonial (Sector G) and Residential areas (Sectors K, I, J). The suggested interpretation is totally hypothetical, and is based solely on the possibility that the building may be a palace, in which case we would expect these two functions to be reflected in the architecture. There is a suggestion of a split-level deposition in K (a possible ramp and congruence of the finds from higher strata with those of the early floors). This might imply that there was a second story, but presumably terraced, i.e.,

built on top of earlier deposition, and not raised. There are possible indications of destruction strata in Sector K. If so, the physiognomy of the deposition may change dramatically, since up until now the building is characterized by undisturbed, long-term deposition.

3.2 The second phase of Temple (?) BA

The second phase of the building BA cannot be identified with certainty as a temple, although some indications seem to suggest it. What is certain is that the general layout had changed considerably from what is known of Phase 1. Two elements stand out in particular. The main entrance of Phase 1 had been blocked, and the area toward the back of the building had been raised, with access to the higher level made possible through a corridor and steps. The raised portion was filled in with material which apparently came from a destruction of the Temple of Phase 1.

Some observations may suggest that the structure continued in fact to be a temple. On the one hand, there is some ceramic material, preserved on a bench, aligned with the western wall of the corridor, which may be linked with cultic use, in particular a burner. Also, the presence of the lion statue in the debris used to form a raised platform might be interpreted as an intentional reburial of a decayed statue, even though we found no other indication that this might have been the function of the rubble heap derived from the apparent destruction of the earlier phase.

On the other hand, one is tempted to speculate on the provenience of the bronze lions of Tish-atal, and link them with this phase of building BA. Since they originate in Urkesh (see *Mozan 1*, pp. 32 f.), and since they were sold (hence, almost certainly found) together as a pair, it seems logical to infer that they had been found at Tell Mozan in their original context, and not too deep below the surface—for the tell showed no signs of large-scale clandestine excavations. The Temple at the top of the tell is a likely source, since a modern burial ground is to be found in the immediate vicinity, and excavations for a tomb may have yielded the lions, while the further discovery of the large stones used as foundations for the Temple may have discouraged the villagers from pursuing the attempt to bury their dead in this area. An intrusion was found in the middle of the access platform, but not under the threshold nor in the corners of the Phase 1 building, where foundation deposits would normally be expected; nor would the lions of Tish-atal fit with the ED III date for Phase 1 of the temple. It is possible that the corners and threshold of the Phase 2 building were still preserved a few decades ago, but so close

to the surface that they would easily have come to the attention of the local villagers shortly before the time (1948) when they came to be sold on the market in Amuda. If so, they could be adduced retrospectively to identify the deity of the temple as the god Nergal (see below, Chapter 9), to whom the Temple of Tish-atal was dedicated. Clearly, however, this remains a simple speculation.

3.3 The residential areas

The building in Area F1 has been described briefly in *Mozan 2* (pp. 10-14). Its function (whether administrative or residential), and even the precise articulation of spaces, remain uncertain. The date, provided by the epigraphic finds made there, is the late Akkadian period.

In the strata above Royal Building AK a total of four house complexes were excavated. They were all in the western portions of the excavations [in excavation units A7k9, A7k24, and A2k152; see Fig. 5 (see *PDS 2.5*)]. The dating is generally at the end of the third millennium. Some 16 graves, also dating to the end of the third millennium, have been found throughout the L-shaped area which overlays Sectors C, F, and E; a fairly rich assemblage of bronze objects was found therein. The resulting impression is that, after the abandonment of Building AK, we are dealing with a settlement consisting of modest installations not necessarily articulated within a homogeneous town plan. This impression, however, may be conditioned by the fact that these structural remains were found on the slopes of the present mound, and thus have been affected by erosion. Continued excavation in this area may provide evidence for the existence of more organic links among the houses, if not for town planning proper. For now, the following observations will suffice. The graves appear to be later and to have been placed in shafts, as one would expect. (In one case, the nature of the emplacement seemed at first to suggest the possibility of a tumulus, but in the end the evidence did not bear this out.) The pits may be contemporaneous with the houses to the extent that they were used for storage, but in each case their fill consisted only of refuse. To clarify all of this, we need to clear and study more closely the horizontal correlation of the various installations and accumulations, even if this means delaying the uncovering of the "palace" strata.

It is interesting to note that most of this later occupation was along two distinct transects, i.e., the northwestern and the southeastern portions of the area occupied by Building AK. These two transects would correspond to the same two ridges that are apparent in the topography of the tell as visible today [see the contours still visible

outside the excavated area of AK in Fig. 2 (see also *PDS* 2.4)]. It is our general impression that the northwestern transect may be earlier, but this requires a more extensive horizontal exposure.

An important question pertains to the type of evidence we may have for the abandonment of Building AK. An extensive brickfall (shown in Fig. 5) may be part of this evidence. It rests above the accumulation within Building AK, an accumulation which at this juncture is about 2 m in height. The direction of the fall is towards the south-southwest. There is an outside possibility that the material may come from a second story of Building AK, whereby Sectors K, J, I (and part of G?) would have been raised as a split level or terraced series of floors. The reasons, admittedly quite tenuous, for this hypothesis come both from structural considerations and from the homogeneity of the material in the upper levels of Sector K (as exposed so far) and the first-floor accumulations of Building AK (in Sectors A through E). But whatever the origin of the brickfall, it is reasonable to assume that it might extend east into Sector E and part of Sector F. If so, it is desirable to keep it as a stratigraphic seal before we descend across the entire area into the accumulations contained within AK proper.

Besides the brickfall, we have at the moment three more clues. (1) In the eastern portion of Sector F (including the excavation unit A9k3 shown in Fig. 5) we have found a rather amorphous clayish mass, relatively clean of cultural inclusions and very hard and compact. This clayish mass was in part contained within the walls and accumulations of Building AK. We are entertaining the assumption that this represents a brick melt from the original AK Building itself, possibly from a higher (split-level?) story in Sectors G, I, and J. (2) In Sector D (and partly also in Sectors F and E), the accumulation within Building AK is very high (almost to 3 m), and very regular, without any trace of a structural reorganization of space, other than some occasional narrowing of doorways. Nor is there any trace of destruction, which lowers the expectation of finding important objects. (3) In Sector K, on the other hand, there is indication of burning, which may suggest destruction by fire. If that is so, and if we are in fact still within the confines of Building AK, the nature of the finds pertaining to AK rooms would change considerably.

4 Second Millennium

4.1 Khabur period

It has been noted above (Section 2.2) that overall urban density seems to have decreased considerably in the second millennium. While a city of Urkesh continues to be mentioned in OB texts (*Mozan 1*, p. 34; see now also D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand, *MARI 8*, p. 384, for a Mari text that gives the spelling Ur-gi-iš^{KI}), sometimes as the seat of a king, it clearly plays but a very minor role in the geo-political situation of the Khabur plains. And this fits the meager evidence we have from Tell Mozan.

The third phase of Building BA, which is even less likely to have served as a temple than Phase 2, may belong to this period. There is, however, hardly any diagnostic material from it, since it consists primarily of a platform encasing a fine and hard, and relatively sterile, gray packing, which obviously served as a substructure for a building of some importance which we no longer have. Erosion would have been considerable over the three millennia that followed the abandonment of the site.

In A3 (the location is shown in Fig. 4) a massive brick structure was found, dating to this period, for which we have no ready explanation. It may simply be the corner of two or more private houses. But it might also be the remnant of a more important structure, possibly a later version of the royal palace which, if Royal Building AK may be so interpreted, would have existed in the same location a few centuries earlier. Otherwise, the only house belonging to this period was excavated in A8 (see Fig. 4 for the location of this excavation unit). It was largely eroded by the tell slope, and it is likely that more houses may be found as excavations proceed to the east. It appears, therefore, that a considerable Khabur period deposition ought to be preserved in the central part of the tell, encircling the terrace on which temple BA stood.

Several burials belonging to the Khabur period were found. In A8, A3, and A1 we had shafts lined with bricks, slightly corbeled toward the center, and then capped by bricks placed vertically on wooden boards. As the boards eroded, the roofing collapsed, except in A8, where it was still found mostly in place. The burials in A8 and A3 had simple ceramic offerings inside. The one in A1 was dug down to the level of the first AK floor (it did not cut it, but it came so neatly on top of it that it removed the entire floor accumulation, thus depriving us of the sealings that were certainly contained therein). This was the largest of all the burials we have excavated, but it was totally empty; the roof had collapsed, and a good portion of the side walls had eroded. The location of this

tomb suggests that the accumulation on top of Royal Building AK was relatively limited in this area. Another burial was found in C1 (see Fig. 5 for the location of this excavation area), in an open shaft, and with a certain number of bronze objects.

A number of bread ovens and hearths were found, in what appear to have been open areas; it was not always possible to link these installations specifically to domestic residences. A number of pits were discovered in the L-shaped area over Sectors C, F, and E, most of them filled with refuse. In some cases, the refuse was contained within large and deep hollows, which had not originally been excavated as pits but had formed as a result of changing topographic contour following the abandonment of Building AK. The refuse is all of a domestic nature. The impression one gains is that of a scattered occupation, partly in open areas next to domestic quarters.

4.2 Nuzi period

In only two areas did we find evidence of Nuzi period structures. One is at the very summit of the tell, and consists of the top two squares, labelled A4, of the step trench AS (Fig. 2). There were the remains of very modest private houses, even more modest than those in BH (see presently), since no painted vessels were found here, but only common ware ceramics.

The largest exposure of Nuzi period strata occurred in the area excavated to investigate the proposed location for the Expedition House, BH. The entire area exposed belonged, in fact, to this period, to a maximum depth of some 2 m. Only in a few points, particularly to the northwest, did some earlier material begin to appear. The remains were those of small private houses, with wall substructures made of relatively small stones, and outdoor floor surfaces with pebbles and sherds embedded vertically in the ground, to provide a paving relatively resistant to water erosion. The most interesting finds were some sherds of painted Nuzi ware.

Our decision to build the Expedition House at this location was conditioned by the nature of the finds, which belonged to the last phase, and admittedly the one that was historically the least interesting. But it also depended on the fact that nowhere else on the mound was there a relatively level middle ground that might be suitable for our purposes. It is in fact a characteristic feature of Tell Mozan that, unlike other mounds in the Khabur region, it does not have a mid-level step half way between a higher citadel or acropolis and the lower city only slightly higher than the modern plain level (see above, n. 3). The only possible exception would have been the area which came to be labeled

AK, which lies within the perimeter of the High Mound, and exhibits at the same time a fairly large and relatively flat space at a lower elevation. We excluded this area from consideration because of the high concentration of surface material dating to the early periods which, as it turned out, corresponded in fact to the Royal Building AK. It should also be noted that we excluded from consideration the area of the Outer City because this entire area is subject to severe, overall flooding during the Winter, which would have necessitated the construction of excessively large foundations. Accordingly, even though the sight of the Expedition House as one approaches the tell is forbidding because of its location so high on the tell itself, it must be acknowledged that our original choice, based on what appeared to be reasonable presumptions, has been further supported by the progress of excavations at the site.

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