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Tell Arbid: Adam Mickiewicz University Excavations in Sector P, Spring Season of 2008

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TELL ARBID

ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY

EXCAVATIONS IN SECTOR P

SPRING SEASON OF 2008

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Abstract: In 2008, the Institute of Prehistory of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań started a three-year-long research project at Tell Arbid, based upon a cooperation agreement with the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw. The aim was to excavate extensively the remains of so-called post-Akkadian settlement on Tell Arbid, identified during PCMA UW excavations in Sector SR in 2001. The main task of the first season was to explore layers covering post-Akkadian structures in the southern part of Sector SR (renamed P) and to clarify the outlines of underlying post-Akkadian structures.

Keywords: North Mesopotamia, Bronze Age, post-Akkadian, Khabur Ware, Tell Arbid, settlement, graves

In 2008, the Institute of Prehistory of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań embarked on a three-year project aimed at investigating the so-called post-Akkadian settlement on Tell Arbid. The project works in cooperation with the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of

Warsaw, and is financed from a grant of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The selected area, renamed Sector P, encompasses several squares referred to as Sector SR in previous reports. The first season was unduly short due to delays in renewal of excavation permit.

THE PROJECT AND ITS FIELD PROGRAM IN 2008

The research project aims at investigating post-Akkadian period remnants identified in 2001 at the base of the eastern side of the high mound of Arbid (Bieliński 2002: 291). A small area used for household activities was cleared at the time, including a well preserved bread oven with three complete clay pots and a basalt mortar inside it and

parts of three rooms with well preserved clay floors. A wall clearly belonging to another post-Akkadian structure, cleared while exploring a pit cut into it, was demonstrated to be at least 1.20 m high, suggesting good preservation of the remains, unlike that of post-Akkadian constructions excavated at the top of the tell (Sector SL).

Later damages to the building remnants there precluded the reconstruction of a coherent plan of the structure(s). Yet the significant quantity of pottery retrieved from the layer demonstrated the lasting and relatively extensive nature of post-Akkadian settlement on Tell Arbid (Rutkowski 2006).

The current project extended excavations in the southern squares of Sector SR, renamed P (squares 37/62, 37/61 and 37/60) and opened new trenches to the west (western half of square 37/60), east (southern half of square 37/62 and 36/63 and square 37/63) and south (squares 38/60, 38/61), to the south of the relatively well preserved remains of 2nd millennium BC houses [Fig. 1]. A single test trench was dug to the north of the sector (square 35/61) in order to trace the extent of a Khabur Ware period housing area.

The overall objective in the newly-opened squares was to explore early 2nd millennium BC levels in order to clear the tops of walls belonging to post-Akkadian period structures. Based on earlier observations of the area, the condition of these remains was expected to be poor due to heavy slope erosion. In square 37/61 where

the tops of post-Akkadian structures had been reached in 2001 the objective was to clear away the *pisé* foundations of Khabur Ware period House II and continue with a limited exploration of the post-Akkadian remains.

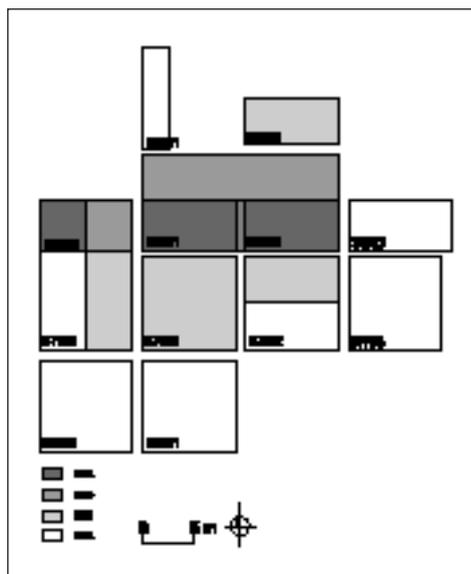


Fig. 1. Location of trenches in Sector P
(Drawing R. Koliński)

Team

Dates of work: 10 June–3 July 2008

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CHRONOLOGY OF REMAINS

Instead of the two chronological units which had been expected at the outset of the project, it turned out that the remains in Sector P represented four units, covering more than a millennium in time.

The oldest discovered structures belonged to a settlement from the Ninevite 5 period (Early Jazirah II, approximately 2800–2600 BC). The second chronological unit in evidence, following a gap of several centuries, was the post-Akkadian period (Early Jazirah V, approxi-

mately 2150–2000 BC). A subsequent unit, which was represented mainly by pits, could be dated tentatively to the Old Jazirah I period (approximately 2000–1800 BC). Finally, in most trenches, situated just under the present surface, there were some extensive and, in places, well preserved remains of Khabur Ware period houses and graves (Old Jazirah II, approximately 1800–1700 BC). The periods listed above will be described in detail, starting with the youngest occupation in the area.

KHABUR WARE PERIOD

Structural remains attributed with the Khabur Ware period were discovered in nearly all of the trenches excavated this season. A well preserved mud-brick house was partly cleared in squares 36/63 and 37/63. *Pisé* wall foundations (discovered previously also in square 37/61) were encountered in squares 37/60, 37/62, 38/60 and 38/61, but their mud-brick superstructures had been eroded away completely [Fig. 2].

A number of contemporary graves accompanied the houses. In two areas, the presence of small cemeteries could be surmised. In square 35/61, two large chamber graves were identified in an area lacking in other structures. Seven cist graves were identified in a similar context in square 37/60. It is likely that the two cist graves discovered in 1998 in square 36/59 had also belonged to this cemetery. Finally, a few other graves were found dispersed over the remaining squares; at least some of them were connected with architectural remains.

HOUSE III

Remains of House III were discovered in squares 36/63 and 37/63, but it is clear that the building extended farther west, as far as the east wall of House I. House III comprised a nearly square courtyard (Locus 2/36/63, approximately 3 x 4 m) with a surface of small stones and pottery sherds (which did not form, however, a regular pavement) [Fig. 3]. From it a doorway opened to the north, onto a big room (Locus 1). At least three more rooms (Loci 3, 4 and 5) were located on the western side. The southern extent of the house is not known; remains of a room cleared in square 37/63, to the south, seem to belong to another structure slightly later than House III. It seems that the house did not continue towards the east, where only some horizontal, ashy levels were encountered. The entrance to the house should be expected in the east wall of the courtyard, in the part that has not been preserved.

Only the southern part of Locus 1/36/63 was excavated within the limits

of the trench and consequently, its full dimensions could not be established. The front siding the courtyard was 3 m long. The room was provided with a quality clay floor spread with remains of thin layers of white, gypsum-like plaster, most probably collapsed from the walls. The plaster on all of the extant walls (standing up to 1.25 m in height) was very poorly preserved. The doorway to the courtyard

was 0.70 m wide and was found blocked with bricks. Inside the room, to the right of the doorway, a stone door-socket was set into the floor. A second doorway was located in the west wall, leading to another room (Locus 4). Very little of this room was excavated, but the doorway was explored and it was ascertained that it had been provided with a mud-brick threshold, approximately 0.10 m high and two

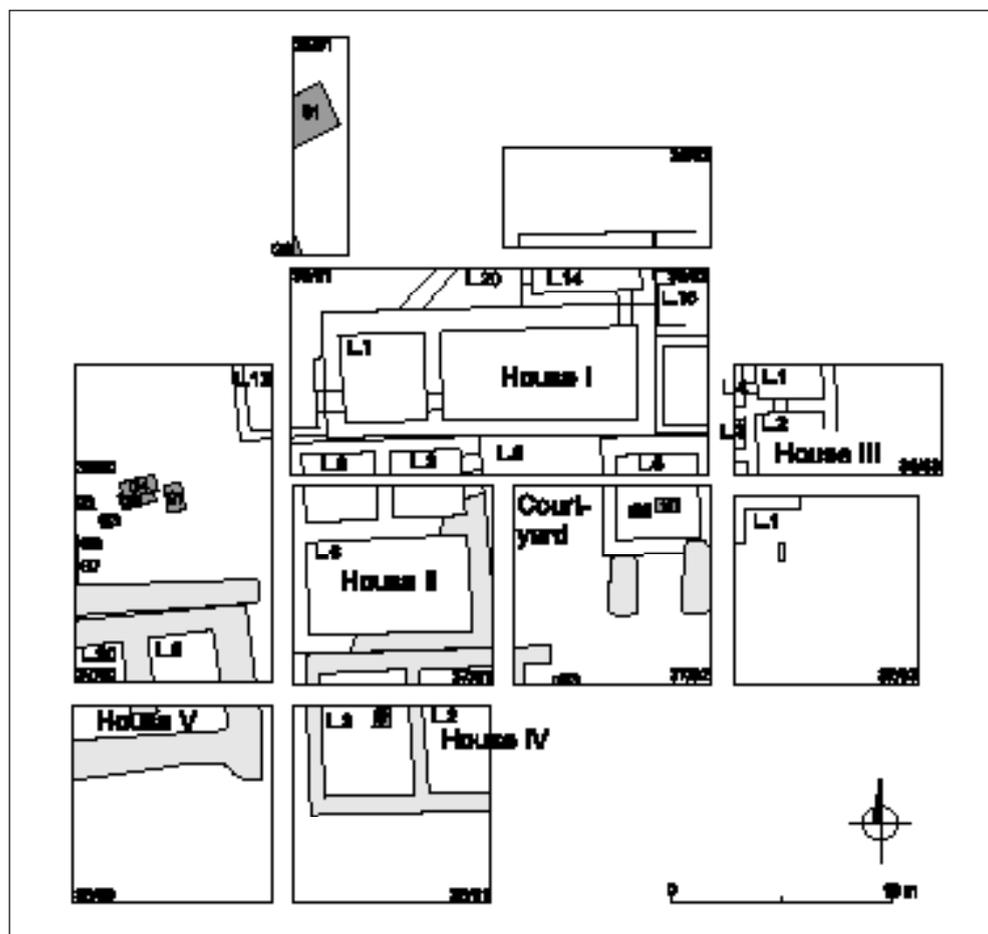


Fig. 2. General plan of the Khabur Ware period settlement
(Drawing R. Koliński)

stone door-sockets, set into the floor of Locus 4, one on the left and the other on the right of the doorway. Two other, probably small rooms were not excavated, but remains of a bread oven observed in Locus 3 suggest that it accommodated at least one *tannur* (probably corresponding in level to a *tannur* excavated in 1998 under Locus 5 of square 36/62).

The western part of Locus 4 had been excavated in 1998 in square 36/62, where a test pit was dug into deposits underlying the topmost architectural layer. The eastern face of the west wall of a room was cleared then together with a floor corresponding in level to the floor of Locus 4

(386.40 m a.s.l.). The said floor appears to have been the topmost one in a sequence of several floors, of an overall thickness of 0.11 m, pointing to prolonged use of the room. The room was 3.05 m long. A considerable difference in level between the floors of House I and House III strongly suggests that House III was located on a different terrace, approximately 0.75 m lower than the terrace of House I.

HOUSE IV

The northern part of this house, comprising a *pisé* foundation running east–west and two perpendicular stretches running into the south trench wall, was

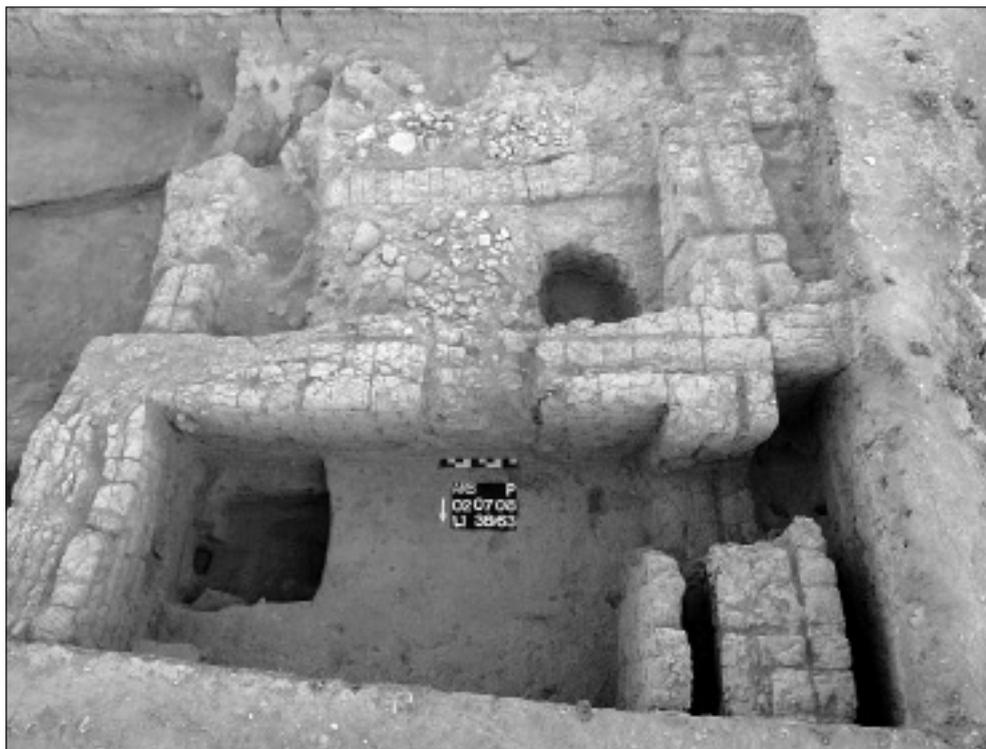


Fig. 3. Remains of House III in square 36/63, viewed from the north
(Photo J. Wierzbicki)

cleared in 2001 in square 37/61 (Bieliński 2002: 291, Fig. 10). In 2008, excavations in two neighboring squares (38/61 in the south and 37/62 in the east) revealed a nearly complete house composed of three rooms. It was located to the south of House II and formed the southern limit of an open space L.6/36/62. All the remains were preserved in foundations, the mud-brick walls and floors having been eroded completely. Consequently, the house plan is not entirely clear. Two nearly rectangular rooms were traced, both 5.60 m wide, the western one 3.80 m and the central one 4.20 m long. The room to the east was almost completely eroded away, but its existence is beyond doubt, as the north foundation of the house continued towards the east for more than a meter beyond the east wall of the central room.

HOUSE V

This house was located on a higher terrace and, similarly to House IV, was preserved as nothing but *pisé* foundations. Its northern extent had been cleared in 2001 in square 37/60. A large part of it was cleared this year, but without reaching the western end. Assuming the south side had been eroded away, the house plan would resemble that of House II: square in outline with two smaller rooms in the north (the only measurable one was 4.10 m by 2.90 m) and a bigger one in the south.

KHABUR WARE PERIOD GRAVES¹

Two chamber graves were identified in the northern part of Sector P, in square 35/61, only 6 m apart. G2/35/61, the larger part of which was situated inside

the trench, was excavated and found to comprise a rectangular chamber of mud bricks covered with a vault constructed of the same material. The vault rested on the longer walls and was visible in the shorter wall of the chamber in the shape of an arch. An opening under the arch, in the east wall of the grave, was permanently blocked by a mud-brick wall, while the arch in the opposite wall (which was not excavated this season) served as an entrance to the chamber [Fig. 4]. The four lowest courses of bricks in the longer walls were laid horizontally, but starting from the fifth course, they were placed more and more obliquely, forming the actual vault reaching (at the highest point) approximately 1.15 m over the chamber floor. Another layer of bricks was laid flat, lining



Fig. 4. Chamber grave G2/35/61
(Photo J. Wierzbicki)

¹ An extensive study of MBA graves at Tell Arbid can be found in Z. Wygnańska's doctoral thesis (2006), summarized in a paper in this volume, see Wygnańska 2011.

the curve of the vault from the outside, so that at the level where the vault started, the bricks were positioned almost vertically. This second layer of bricks may have helped to preserve the vault at least in part, unlike other graves of this kind excavated in 2000 and 2001: G2/35/64 (Bieliński 2001: 326, Fig. 10) and G8/37/54 (Bieliński 2002: 284–285, Fig. 4), where the vault could not be documented.

The full outside length of the tomb could not be determined as its western end was concealed in the trench wall; it was probably as much as 2 m (maximum recorded length 1.60 m). The width was established as 1.10 m. In the eastern part of the chamber, a number of human bones was discovered, lying in complete disarray. This feature is typical of chamber graves, which usually served family needs and accommodated subsequent burials.

In such burials, remnants of the body deposited earlier were pushed deeper into the chamber to make room. This is certainly the case in grave G2/35/61: an anthropological examination of bones revealed that they belonged to two adult persons, one of which was a male. It seems that the grave had been robbed in antiquity, as no grave goods were found among the bones, save for two small carnelian beads. The robber's shaft may account for the destruction of the vault in the eastern part of the chamber, though no clear outline of this shaft was observed.

A group of cist graves was excavated in square 37/60, in the western part of Sector P. Two such graves (G4 and G5) were located within the trench, another (G2) projected from the western trench wall. Two more graves were observed in the same trench wall. It seems that G1/37/60,



*Fig. 5. Cist grave G5/37/60
(Photo J. Wierzbicki)*

excavated in 2001, and G2/36/59, explored in 1998 (Bieliński 1999: 209), belonged to the same cluster of cist graves.

A typical cist grave, such as G5/37/60, was constructed in a rectangular pit dug in the ground [Fig. 5]. Three walls of the cist were built of several courses of mud bricks (height ranging from 0.40 to 0.60 m); the fourth side was left open. The body was placed at the bottom of the chamber, most often with the back resting against one of the side walls, hands and legs constricted, projecting into the center of the chamber. A typical set of burial gifts consisted of one pottery vessel (usually standing by the wall opposite the body, near the shoulders of the buried person), a bronze toggle pin for fastening robes and a limited number of beads adorning either the clothing or the body. Quite often the remains of an animal or part of an animal were found in graves of this kind. After deposition in the grave the body was partly covered with earth and the grave was closed with vertical bricks set orthogonally (diamond pattern). Cist graves were used exclusively for burying adult persons. G2/37/60 turned out to be slightly different as it contained the remains of two persons and two pottery vessels.

Two shaft graves were located within a very small distance from one another in square 37/62. They represented the same type: shaft, rectangular in outline, sunk into the ground approximately 0.70 m, with a niche cut in the east wall level with the bottom. A pottery vessel containing the burial was laid on its side in the niche, the mouth opening to the north. There were, however, differences

between the discovered graves. In G1 the niche contained a large jar, filling it almost completely; the niche was blocked with several bricks. Two medium-sized pottery vessels were found in the niche next to the jar, probably because there was no place in the jar, which contained the remains of at least four children, aged three to five. Inside the jar there were five small painted jugs and a number of stone beads and pendants [Fig. 6]. One of them was of particular interest, as it turned out to be a cylinder seal. The cylinder is very small (height 1.7 cm, diameter 0.8 cm) made of gray-bronze agate and depicts an animal combat scene typical of mid-3rd millennium BC seals. It is most likely a quality local product showing two pairs of fighting animals, a lion attacking a gazelle and another one attacking a deer(?) [Fig. 6, inset].²

In the other shaft grave, G2/37/62, the niche contained a large pot and had not been blocked with bricks [Fig. 7]. The skeleton of a four-year-old child was found in the vessel, accompanied by a miniature painted cup. Two other small vessels were placed inside the niche but outside the “coffin-pot”.

The two shaft graves appear to belong to an early phase of the Khabur Ware period settlement. They were dug on the spot of the later Locus 5/36/62 (room), but as no trace of shafts cutting through the floor of the room were observed, they clearly predate it. The pottery found in the grave also suggests an early date: the high shoulders and transparent paint resemble the Early Khabur Ware assemblages on Tell Arbid. It is impossible to be sure whether they were related to an earlier phase of

² Similar rendering of fighting animals can be found on a cylinder seal dated to the ED III period from Tell Asmar (Frankfort 1955: No. 575).

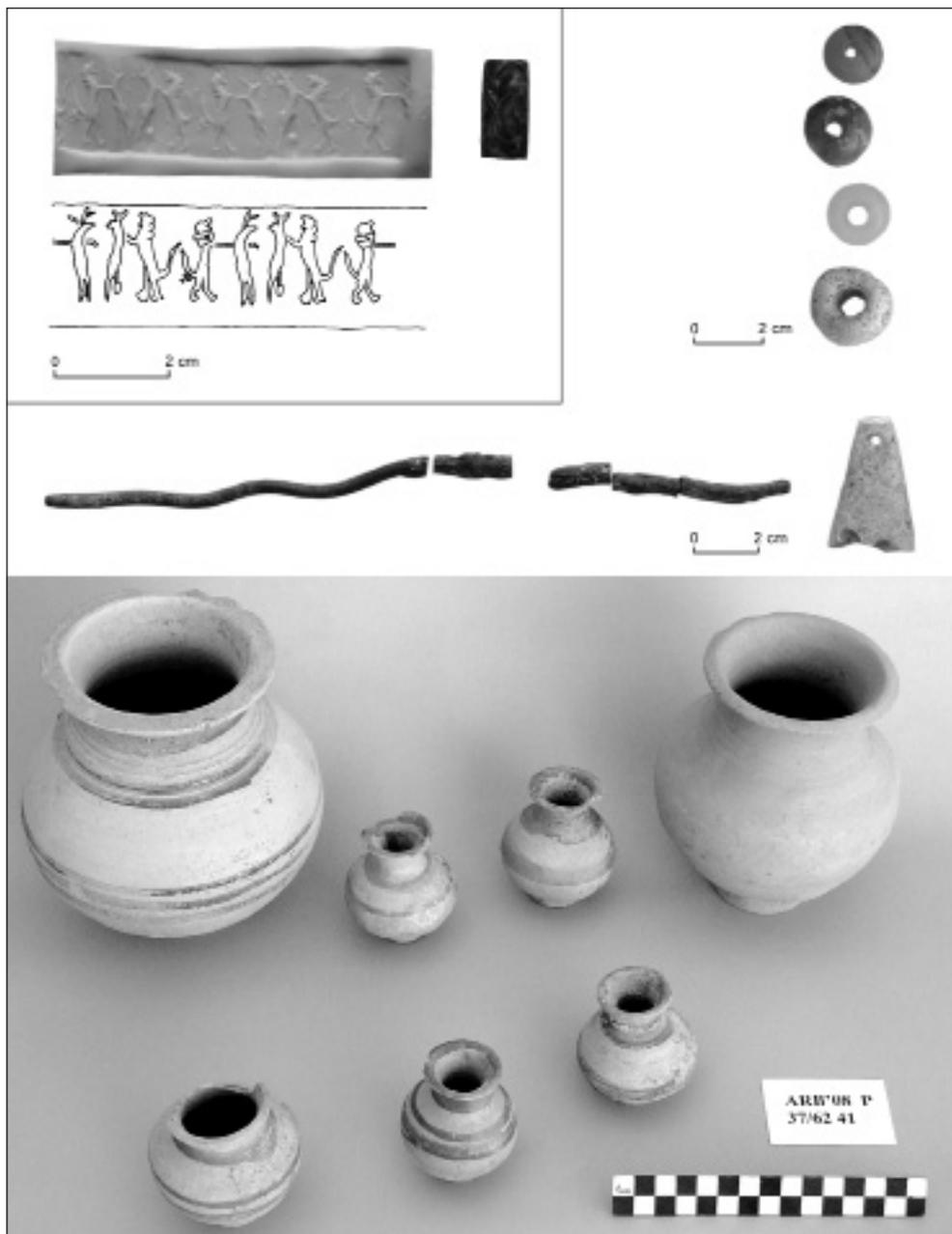


Fig. 6. Finds from shaft grave G1/37/62: plain and painted pottery vessels (bottom); stone beads and pendants (top right), piece of bronze(?) wire (center); inset (top left), ED III cylinder seal with animal combat scene (Photo J. Wierzbicki; drawing X. Kolińska)



occupation of House I, located nearby, or date to the period prior to its construction.

The Middle Bronze Age graves seem to form three clusters located to the north (chamber graves), west (cist graves) and southeast of the Khabur Ware period houses. This last cluster included not only the shaft graves, but also a pit grave excavated in 1998 (G1/36/62) and grave G4/37/62, which cannot be qualified to any of the abovementioned groups at the moment. The location of the graves is somewhat surprising, as in early 2nd millennium BC Mesopotamia graves and especially adult graves tended to be located within houses.³

*Fig. 7. Shaft grave G2/37/62
(Photo J. Wierzbicki)*

EARLY TO MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TRANSITION

The transition from the Early to Middle Bronze Age was characterized by a number of pits: round pits with a diameter between 0.60 m and 1.50 m and elongated pits about 2 m wide and 4–5 m long.

Pits belonging to the first group cut in many places through the walls or floors of post-Akkadian period structures, but in some cases they themselves were cut by the foundation trenches of Khabur Ware period houses, establishing firmly their chronological position. Unfortunately, in a homogenous fill composed mainly of clay there was very little material for more precise dating. A cooking pot with triangu-

lar handles on the rim was found in one of the pits (Locus 11); it proved to be of a type typical of the post-Akkadian period.

Pits of the second type were filled with ashy deposits and yielded a limited number of Early Khabur Ware sherds. They also cut into walls of post-Akkadian buildings and were, at least in part, covered by Khabur Ware period structures. Shaft graves of the Khabur Ware period were dug in the fill of one of these pits (Locus 14) located in square 37/62. This pit will be explored in 2009 in the hope of obtaining a representative sample of Early Khabur Ware period material.

³ This custom may have not been observed in the Khabur Basin area as at Tell Mozan, for instance, Khabur Ware period chamber graves were built outside houses (Dohman-Pfälzner, Pfälzner 2001: 129–131, Fig. 24).

The only structural remains to this transitional period consist of a short section of wall and a *tannur* that was in the southeastern part of square 37/62. The lower part of

a jug was found set into the floor beside the *tannur*; it contained the shoulder part of a cup with decoration seen on Early Khabur Ware vessels.

POST-AKKADIAN PERIOD

Remains of post-Akkadian period structures were largely covered by later buildings. Consequently, they were cleared, to varying extent, only in squares 37/61, 37/62, 38/61 and 38/62. In square 37/60 some structural remains were explored in 2001; this year the work concentrated in the higher-lying western part of the square, where deposits containing post-Akkadian material were explored, but no structures identified so far.

Generally speaking, the discovered structures fall clearly into four units, or rather functional zones: 'Residence', 'Extension', household activity area(s) and dispersed installations on the western slope of the eastern ridge of the tell.

'RESIDENCE'

The 'Residence' constituted the core structure of the post-Akkadian settlement discovered in Sector P. This building, unearthed in square 37/62, stretched into the eastern part of square 37/61. Making it up was a courtyard and at least three rooms [Fig. 8]. Its walls (0.75 m, that is, two bricks wide) were built of square mud bricks (0.36 m to a side) and were covered with a thick layer of reddish clay plaster.

The only area of the 'Residence' that was cleared to floor level was the courtyard (Locus 9/37/62). Its surface was covered with a pavement of densely packed pebbles (3–5 cm in size) set in clay, with occasional larger stone slabs. Only in the western corner, in the vicinity of the main entrance

to the building, there were square baked bricks forming a paved area of approximately 1.50 m by 1 m. The stone pavement, which was destroyed by erosion in the southeastern part of the courtyard, was also pierced by at least three pits: a large round one (Diam. 1.50 m) in the north, a small round one (Diam. 0.70 m) in the southeast and a large rectangular pit in which a mud-brick cist grave of uncertain date was located (G4/37/62). In the west, there was an open area where a bread oven, hidden for the most part in the baulk, was located. There was no pavement here and only a water channel lined with potsherds, running approximately east–west and discharging onto the pavement, indicated the original usage level of this area. It seems that there was no partition wall between the bread-oven compartment and the courtyard, but a homogenous block of reddish clay suggests the presence of a high clay bench or work-table. A very low clay bench, some 0.20 m wide, was located along the northwestern and northeastern wall of the courtyard.

There was an entrance to the building, 1.10 m wide, provided with a threshold made of several large stones covered with clay mortar. The upper surface projected 0.20 m above the level of the pavement. The inner face of the threshold was damaged by a later pit, but there is no reason to doubt that it had originally filled the entire width of the wall. The room to which this doorway led has yet to be explored, but it

may have continued both to the east and west (the eastern end was also destroyed by a huge 2nd millennium BC pit). On the west, in square 37/61, a fragmentary partition wall with a narrow doorway was discovered. Its plan will become clear once the deep foundations of Khabur Ware period houses, which disturbed the area, are removed. Another room was located most likely to the east of the courtyard, as its east wall lacks continuity in the brick bonding, suggestive of another entrance.

‘EXTENSION’

The term ‘Extension’ refers to four or five rooms built to the west of the ‘Residence’. The walls of the ‘Extension’ are slightly narrower than those of the ‘Residence’

(0.50 m, i.e., one-and-half bricks, or 0.75 m, i.e., two bricks) and made of pinkish bricks of uniform size. Since the walls of the ‘Extension’ were not interbonded with the west wall of the ‘Residence’ and the floor levels were considerably higher than the level of the courtyard, it seems that this building was constructed later than the ‘Residence’. It comprised at least four rooms, which also suffered considerable damage from pit-digging and from 2nd millennium BC foundation trenches. This structure, as far as it was cleared, is composed of two rectangular rooms oriented SW–NE (Loci 17 and 19 in square 37/61); at least two more rooms, oriented perpendicularly, were located between them (Loci 12, 13 and possibly

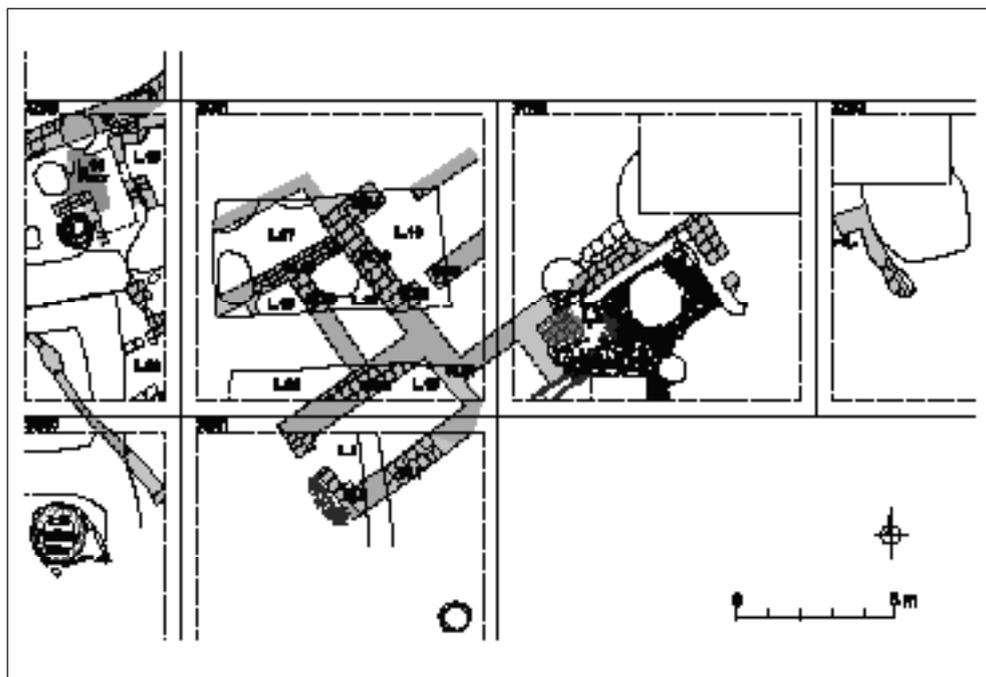


Fig. 8. Post-Akkadian remains uncovered in Sector P in 2008 (remains shown in square 37/60 were discovered in 2001) (Digitizing M. Momot)

18 in square 37/61). Of these Loci 13, 18 and Locus 1 (a continuation of Locus 19/37/61 in square 38/61) were explored to floor level.

The most interesting finds came from Locus 13, where a small oven was found to be constructed on the floor, against wall W23. It was a pottery vessel decorated with appliqué snakes, scorpions, a crescent and a disc, as well as an incised palm-leaf design [Fig. 9].⁴ In Locus 17, a flint arrowhead of a type known from (Late) Akkadian period contexts from Tell Brak (Mallowan 1947: 180–181, Pl. XXXVII, 10, 12, 14–17; LIII, 8–10, 15–16) was found in the fill of the room.

HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES AREA(S)

A zone used for household activities extended to the west and south of the



Fig. 9. Pot with appliqué snakes and scorpions from Locus 13 of the post-Akkadian 'Extension' (Photo J. Wierzbicki)

'Extension' building. An open area located south of Locus 1/38/61 (belonging to the 'Extension') featured very few installations, among them a *tannur*-oven with walls supported by a mud-brick structure, identical with the one cleared in square 37/60 (Locus 6) in 2001, and a pot sunk in the ground about 2 m toward the west. A pot-burial of post-Akkadian date (G3/38/61) was explored in the south-western corner, partly in the southern trench wall. Most of the open area located in square 38/61 will be explored in the next season.

Work carried out in 2008 in the western part of square 37/60 added to the structures cleared already in 2001 to the west of the 'Extension', which included the abovementioned *tannur*-oven (Loc. 6/37/60) containing three complete vessels, as well as two smaller, partly preserved rooms (Loci 14 and 15). Khabur Ware period graves (see above) were dug into a homogenous deposit containing a considerable quantity of ashes. This deposit, in which numerous post-Akkadian sherds, a number of animal figurines, as well as a single human figurine [Fig. 10] and a fragmentary seal impression of the same date were found, had accumulated probably in a hollow between the west wall of the 'Extension' and the slope itself, made up partly of debris from the post-Akkadian settlement in Sector P and partly of post-Akkadian material washed down the slope from contemporary houses on the summit of the tell. It seems very likely that the household activity area located

⁴ A vessel with similar decoration was found in a post-Akkadian layer excavated at the top of the tell (Bieliński 2002: 286, Fig. 6). The closest parallel is provided by a vessel discovered by Max Mallowan at Tell Brak (Mallowan 1947: 183, Pl. XXXVIII, 4; LXX, 3–5). A more elaborate decoration including the same set of motifs appears on a pot excavated at Tell Chagar Bazar in Area D (Tunca *et alii* 2007: No. 129, Pl. 3.28).

west of the 'Extension' was formed by digging a substantial trench down from the surface of the slope to a level corresponding to the foundations of the post-Akkadian structures, and screened on the west by a retaining wall constructed of large blocks of tamped soil. This wall was identified in the northeastern corner of square 38/60 and its continuation had been encountered back in 2001 in square 37/60. The presence of the terracing wall on the west was confirmed by the results of work in square 38/60 where, just under the surface of the tell, layers containing undisturbed Ninevite 5 period material were cleared approximately 2.20 m above the level of the post-Akkadian courtyard in square 37/62.

POTTERY KILN

The only post-Akkadian structure discovered in square 38/60 was a large pottery

kiln dug into earlier strata (Locus 3/38/60). Its subterranean part was composed of two elements: a round chamber (1.80 m in diameter) built of mud bricks that got eventually baked during use [Fig. 11], and a deep and much narrower pit under it, reaching as much as 2 m under the surface of the tell. These two parts had originally been divided by a clay grill supported on two brick consoles, remnants of which were observed below the brickwork, in the east and south walls of the pit. Not a piece of this grill was preserved, but a clear difference between the very highly baked bricks of the chamber (their inner surfaces were partly vitrified) and the walls of the pit, which showed hardly any trace of exposure to high temperature, very strongly suggests the presence of a partition there. The preserved remains should be interpreted as a fire chamber with an ash pit located under it. The firing chamber was



Fig. 10. Post-Akkadian figurine of a bearded man wearing a cap (Photo J. Wierzbicki)

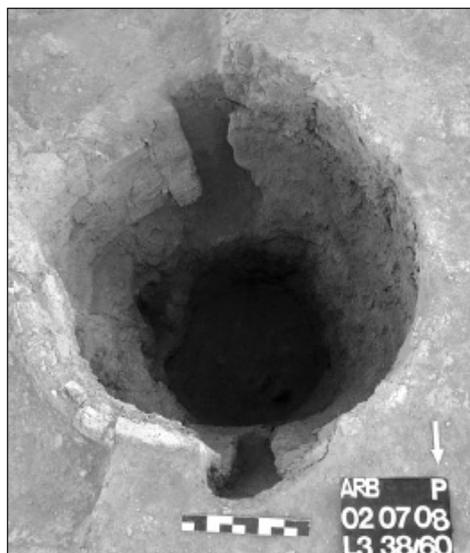


Fig. 11. Post-Akkadian pottery kiln (Locus 3/38/60) (Photo J. Wierzbicki)

most likely located above ground surface, where wind-catcher vents should also be expected. Save for broken bricks found in the fill of the pit, no remains of this part of the structure have survived. The oven is dated by pottery material found in the fill,

including some rim sherds clearly belonging to a post-Akkadian repertoire, but final confirmation of this date was provided by several sherds forming an over-burned and partly warped post-Akkadian bowl, from a batch of pottery fired in the kiln.⁵

NINEVITE V SETTLEMENT

Surprisingly enough, the most ancient remains encountered during the 2008 field season were unearthened just under the modern surface of the tell, in square 38/60, which is situated higher than most of the other trenches. This odd situation was explained when evidence of extensive terracing of the slope was recovered in the course of the season, demonstrating that areas located east and north of this square were dug down to a considerable depth as early as the post-Akkadian period, in an attempt to obtain a large, level area for construction of an extensive post-Akkadian complex of structures (the object of present research in Sector P). The only structure later than the early 3rd millennium BC in the said square was the pottery kiln described above.

Remains of the Ninevite 5 period were generally poorly preserved. Mud bricks of typical reddish-brown color, used in structures of the period, were decomposed

and walls and other structures were extremely difficult to clean. The fill of what is supposed to be rooms consisted of earth containing a substantial admixture of ashes, in which sherds with incised decoration and other artifacts typical of an early phase of Ninevite 5 culture were found. A number of fragmentary sealings were also discovered in this fill. Most represent Piedmont Style seals decorated with rosettes. Two later examples, featuring a banquet scene and another design, difficult to identify, are later, dating most likely to the Early Jazirah II–III period. The only Ninevite 5 period structure to be explored this season was a child's grave (G1/38/60), which was identified just under the surface of the tell. It contained a plain ware juglet and a similar cup of Ninevite 5 pottery, as well as a small number of beads.

Once it became clear that the remains evidently predate the scope of the project, work in square 38/60 was desisted.

PROSPECTS FOR THE 2009 SEASON

The short field season in 2008 confirmed expectations as to finding well preserved post-Akkadian architecture in Sector P on

Tell Arbid. An obvious task is the exploration of recently discovered post-Akkadian structures, primarily units belonging to the

⁵ A kiln of similar construction was discovered in Level 35B (post-Akkadian in date) at Tell Barri (Pecorella, Pierobon-Benoit 2004: 24, 29).

'Residence' and 'Extension'. Work will be carried out in the household areas as well, mainly in squares 38/61 and 37/60.

Though the Khabur Ware period had not originally been on the agenda of the mission, interesting grave structures

discovered during the 2008 campaign will merit attention during fieldwork in the next season. Certainly, chamber grave G1/35/61 will be explored, as well as three cist-graves visible in the west trench wall of square 37/60.

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