An inter-planar system in action
The *Urkesh Global Record*[1]

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(translated by M. De Pietri)

1 An artificial humanism? 1
2 The Urkesh website 3
3 The "staccato" narrative 4
3.1 Data input 4
3.2 The confluence of data into a narrative unit 5
3.3 The integration of parallel planes 6
4 The "legato" narrative 6
5 The concept of narrative 7
6 Narrativity and inter-planarity 8
7 The multiplanar systemic or inter-planar system 9
8 "Writing" and "reading" a digital "book" 10
9 From grammar to hermeneutics 11
10 Figures 12

1 An artificial humanism?

The prevailing ideal of digitization in the humanities is to create an artificial humanism, thus, to transform the very nature of the phenomenon fundamentally. It is an ideal as much implied as it is pervasive. The prominence given to technique is increasingly understood to mean that it is technique that creates the value of the human, to use the terms inscribed in the title of the research project within which this volume of ours finds its place, as well as the conference from which it originated. The prominence of technology means, in essence, prominence of automation, for the purposes of what we might therefore also call an automated humanism. The concept of artificial intelligence is paradigmatic in this sense, but the same spirit lies behind the effort that prevails in what are called "Digital Humanities."

In doing so, however, one gradually comes to stifle and extinguish properly humanistic engagement, both at the level of the original understanding of the data and at the level of their fruition. If humanism sees its relationship to artificiality in this way, it

[1] This article is part of the *Cybernetica Mesopotamica* research project, under the aegis of the Balzan Foundation, of which the authors are co-directors.

comes to abdicate its own vocation, which must instead remain that of "inverare il vero," quoting Vico. The relationship between technique and the value of the human is, in fact, bivalent, depending on the prominence given to one or the other: when technique prevails, it tends to stifle the human, while the human, properly understood, can only enhance technique. Thus, when we say "Humanism and digitization" (as in the title of our volume) we implicitly give prominence to the former, thereby coming to value digitization precisely as a value, rather than diminishing it.

And it is in this sense that we intend, here, to illustrate how this is possible by presenting in concrete terms a particular case, namely the vast digital system we have dedicated to the publication of our excavations of ancient Urkesh. Starting from an immense amount of data, literally calculable into millions of elements, we want to arrive at an articulation and communication of this data, and thus at an epistemic system that presents a coherent set of facts and interpretations. This "whole" wants to be something more, indeed, different than the sum of the data collected, namely an organic "whole" that aims to capture the values of a life lived when the site was thriving and inhabited.

It is certainly not that we don't believe in the usefulness of what automation can do, far from it – and we have been committed since the 1970s to working at the crest of the wave in this very field. We want, however, to make sure that the result of automation is a starting point and not an end point. At first glance, this is also the aim of digitization understood in the sense we have just described. The trap behind this approach, however, lies in the presumption that everything is already known, and that the purpose of research is reduced to reshuffling this known, which can be done by the application of automatic techniques, programming, thus offering all possible correlations between the data – as if the patterns in the data can be identified in such a way that an overview, a view of that "whole" of which we have only fragments will automatically emerge (as for excavation in our specific case).

In other words, the result of what programming can do must not reduce intellectual effort, but challenge it to expand, in new and different ways. This expansion requires effort, and it is a deeply humanistic effort. It is to see ways in which human intelligence fully confronts the complexity of what artificial intelligence can offer us. It is the same effort that was posed in the Stone Age with the introduction of language and logical thought, and then that which was posed at the dawn of civilization with the introduction of writing. In both cases, and they are the only ones in my opinion that properly stand on par with the introduction of digitality in our times, the technique proposed a *reification* of reality as it was perceived, through words in the first case, and through graphic format in the second. What digitality offers us is the reification of speech in all its dynamicity. Of this potential of the technique we are not yet aware – and that is what we want to illustrate here.

In contrast to an artificial humanism we therefore need an integral humanism. With

this term, Maritain[2] wanted to affirm the value of a humanism properly human as opposed to social and political systems that proposed a vision that aimed, yes, to put the human dimension on new foundations, but which in effect eroded its substance. In our case, the idea of an artificial humanism similarly undermines the foundations of our properly human capacity to confront the whole in that wholeness that transcends the control of the multitude of known data, seen only as an aggregation and not as an organic unity. In other words, an artificial humanism ultimately comes, and precisely as a method, to purposely exclude the human component, not to "integrate" it.

It is highly significant in this regard to see how, in a long-range historical perspective, this perception of the whole is rooted in the *ethos* of the Old Testament. Even apart from the religious dimension, we can in fact consider monotheism, properly understood, as a cultural phenomenon in countercurrent with the development of the intellectual system that found its highest expression in the great polytheistic framework that finds especially expression, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, in the Syro-Mesopotamian tradition: on a purely conceptual level, monotheism affirms the value of a human relationship with the absolute seen as the whole, while polytheism aims at fragmenting even the absolute thus abdicating the very ability to accept its reality.[3]

1 The Urkesh website

We therefore want to present the concept of integral digital publication of the Urkesh excavation as a model in action of what we mean by integral digital humanism instead of an artificial digital humanism. We have been working on this project since the 1970s, where Giorgio is mainly concerned with the theoretical and stratigraphic part and Marilyn with the analytical and typological part. The aspect we intend to highlight here is the nature of the website as a privileged locus for this publication, offering details that, necessarily technical as far as archaeology is concerned, we believe may be of illustrative value for the central problem we have described above.

We began excavations of ancient Urkesh, now Tell Mozan, in 1984, and continued uninterruptedly until 2010 when the conflict in Syria prevented us from returning for excavation activities. But the project has remained extremely present and active at the site itself with a series of activities involving local people, and then with a growing commitment to digital publication. Urkesh is one of the earliest urban centers in history, the beginnings of which date back to the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C.; it is also one of the largest sites in Syro-Mesopotamia and has the distinction of being the only urban center of the third millennium so far excavated that can be linked with the Hurrians. We do not dwell here on its historical importance (for a brief introduction see urkesh.org/glance). By way of illustration, it is only necessary to refer to the nature of the

[2] J. Maritain, *Humanisme intégral. Problèmes temporels et spirituels d'une nouvelle chrétienté.* Paris: Aubier, 1936.

[3] These concepts are developed in two articles in press: G. Buccellati, "The Possession of Destiny in Mesopotamia. Thoughts about Anzu" and "Polytheism vs. Monotheism. A Socio-epistemic Culture Clash".

available documentation: since this is a large urban center, and an excavation project of indefinite duration, where the amount of data is immense, and equally complex is the categorization to which they have been subjected – just as an example, consider that the number of sherds recorded reaches one million.

What we are interested in here is the nature of the digital publication we have developed. It is the "browser" navigator model, with which we propose an articulation of data based on inter-planar and multilinear digital discourse. They are, these, concepts addressed in another chapter in this volume,[4] to which we refer. It should be emphasized that the urkesh.org website actually contains a cluster of websites devoted both to individual excavation units and to typological aspects: here we will use as examples the website devoted to excavation unit A16 and the one devoted to ceramics (Fig. 1).

What we intend to do is to illustrate the nature of the narrative underlying this digital discourse. There are in this regard two types of narrative. The first is a "staccato" type of text (to use a musical metaphor), that is, a text created by multiple authors at different times, whereby a quantity of seemingly disparate fragments converge into a unity of meaning that can be read as a narrative with its own internal sequentiality. The second is a "legato" type of text (to continue with the same kind of metaphor), that is, a text created as a narrative sequence in itself enclosed, generally written impromptu by a single author, while remaining open to changes and additions. In both cases, the texts are radically embedded in that inter-planar and multilinear dimension that precisely characterizes the digital discourse, and which we may discuss more fully later.

3 The "staccato" narrative

3.1 Data input

This narrative is created at different times, by different people, and especially by people reflecting very different specialties from each other – the excavation managers (both at the immediate level of each excavation unit and at the directional level of the project as a whole), experts in related disciplines (ceramics, epigraphy, physical anthropology, and so on), technical experts (draftsmen, photographers, etc.).

Let us take a simple sherd, A16.34, as an example. Fig. 2 shows the page devoted to this sherd – and it should be kept in mind that this is one of 59,834 whole pottery sherds and vessels from A16, a single and relatively small excavation unit, for each of which there is a similar page. The page as illustrated in the figure is necessarily compressed, and in order to read it properly one will need to go online to the site itself (urkesh.org/A16.34).

To give an idea of the multiplicity of sources, with a total of eight different people contributing data:

[4] G. Buccellati, "Umanesimo digitale. I frammenti in-discorso con il tutto".

- July 15, 2001 – discovery
- July 16, 2001 – photos of the excavation are recorded
- July 23, 2001 – laboratory description
- July 27, 2001 – photos in the mission house study
- August 18, 2010 – additional photos in the mission house study
- September 7, 2010 – typological definition in the mission's ceramic laboratory
- September 9, 2010 – recording of the destination in the mission storeroom
- May 19, 2015 – further typological (not autoptic) definition
- May 20, 2015 – assignment to layer and phase, following stratigraphy study
- October 30, 2022 – interpretive commentary on the use of sherd in the burial

It is obviously not the details that interest us here. What we want to highlight is the multiplicity and great diversity of the moments and specialists who contributed to a structure that emerges as strongly unified to describe a simple sherd, in an inventory of tens of thousands of items.

3.2 The confluence of data into a narrative unit

The unified structure of our sample page consists of the narrative dimension; it is the "grammatical" uniformity of the data entry format that ensures that, wherever and whenever they come from, they can flow coherently into a single page. Consistency is illustrated by the index of items on the page, in effect a subject index (Fig. 3): an internal logic is shown according to predetermined categories that, after an overall identification, present details of stratigraphy and typology, followed by references related to graphic documentation up to the assignment of a place in the mission repository.

The "staccato" style means that the sequential moments of this narrative are segmented. Indeed, every narrative consists of segments, but in our case the segmentation is also in evidence formally, and on purpose, because we want to preserve documentation of the origin of each segment, as to date and author. But the sequence is the same as would be found in a prose piece, so much so that our sample page can be "translated" as follows (abbreviated):

> A16.34 is the portion of a chaff tempered vessel, of an unassigned shape type (variously described as bowl or jar) with only 3-6 centimeters of the body with red painted stripes preserved. It contains a typical Khabur decoration. It sits in the fill f128, which is found in the burial a9, with the head i31 resting on this vessel. It is associated directly with the ceramic lot q292, and a number of other items were found with it (i31, i33, i36, i37, q301, q361 e q362). It can be assigned to stratum s245 and phase h6m in the stratigraphic sequence AAH. Typologically, it is of the chaff tempered ware, and it is of the typical Khabur type…. We only have the base of this bowl. For a drawing and photos of the sherd in situ and in a studio setting see Figs. The sherd seems to have been worked so as to be level at the upper edges – see this image from one side, and this one from the other. I assume that this may

> have been in function of the use to be made in the burial…. This suggests a special level of care for the deceased. It is interesting that there should be no complete ceramic vessel in the burial, even though there were two silver rings (i33, i36) and onebronze bucket (i29). The unusual shape of the sherd i34 may perhaps be reminiscentof the shape of the bucket.

The purpose of this exercise is only to show the "narrative" reality of the "staccato"-type presentation as seen on the website page (note that the website also offers a version in purely ASCII form to ensure greater portability, see Fig. 4). The narrative develops an argument, which in this case is primarily descriptive; but which can also include comments of an interpretive nature, such as the one (at the end of the narrative as given above) concerning a detail of the sherd's morphology: if the relatively regular chipping of the edges is intentional, it can be assumed that it was done as a pillow on which the dead man's head could rest (Fig. 5).

3.3 The integration of parallel planes

The reference to the photos we have just alluded to opens a window into the iter-planarity to which this format lends itself. The two photos on the left in Fig. 5 point to a discussion of the morphology of the object from which this sherd came: a bowl, of a certain shape and decoration, details that are fully discussed in the morphological section of the page, with a reference to ceramics of a similar format, such as can be found on a different website devoted entirely to ceramics (Fig. 6). Similarly, the reference to burial a9 (Fig. 7) brings us to another "staccato"-style page, with a narrative explaining the nature and contents of the burial.

These examples indicate how hyperlinks refer not to a detail isolated from its context but to that very context, namely the narrative in which they are themselves embedded. They refer, we may say, not to a cell but to the organism of which the cell is a part. This is even more significant in that this organism does not come into being as a whole, but as the result of a process that is integrative: elements are added progressively, with a temporal and authorial sequence that does not correspond as such to the final organism, but actually produces that organism. The narrative is "staccato" in nature, but is at the same time deeply and organically coherent in its parts. It is, in other words, a true narrative, developing an argument: that the sherd may have had an ideal function as a pillow to support the dead man's head and prevent him from being in contact with the ground of the grave – this is a conclusion that is based, at a distance of time and space from the other authors, on their data organically viewed as a logical whole. It is clearly something different from a databank collected and organized only to be mined for an argument unrelated to the data.

4 The "legato" narrative

While detached-type narratives are thus the result of a process that we might describe

as agglutinating, a "staccato"-type narrative is composed from its inception as a whole, usually by a single author and in a short period of time. Let us look at two examples. The first one also taken from the site of excavation unit A16, describes in detail the chronological phase ($6m^{AAH1}$) to which our sherd A16.34 belongs; here there is also an overall description of the finds made in the same excavation unit that belong to this phase (Fig. 8, which gives only the initial part of the page). The second example (Fig. 9), on the other hand, comes from the site devoted to all pottery from the site. We see here only the beginning of a long page that comprehensively describes the pottery of a certain chronological horizon, known as ED II. Both texts are written in normal prose: so what is the difference from a printed or electronic text like .PDF?

The fundamental difference lies not in the format, but in the ways in which hyperlinks are conceived: these actually refer not to the detail as the ultimate term, but to the plan within which the detail is embedded. Thus, the page describing the phase to which sherd A16.34 belongs invokes elements of the excavation not as examples, but as part of the argument by which the nature of this phase is explained. The argument developed on the plane of the page devoted to the phase incorporates the stratigraphic arguments developed on the plane of the pages relating to the various elements. Thus, the page describing the pottery of the ED II period embraces the stratigraphic and stylistic arguments developed on the pages relating to the items mentioned. It is a true embrace, integrating the data developed in those pages.

A formal aspect of the "legato"-type narrative consists in the presence of a frame that gives at all times a sense of the whole to which the page belongs. This is well highlighted in Fig. 9, where the drop-downs on the left and right guide the reader by giving an overview of the whole website within which this page is located. These arrangements are intended to keep anytime alive the awareness of the whole to which each individual page belongs.

5 The concept of narrative

An argument follows a linear thread of logic, starting with a premise and reaching a conclusion; it is linear because each step in the argument builds on one or more previous steps. It is typically formulated in a written text, which can expand to include an entire book: thus Darwin could describe his great work as a (single) "long argument."[5]

It is to this sequentiality that the term "narrative" refers. Narrative is the form of an argument, the way in which the succession of various moments of an argument is expounded or "narrated."

The two narratives we have described, "staccato" and "legato", exemplify this pattern

[5] *On the Origin of Species.* London: Murray, 1861[3] (darwin-online.org.uk) p. 492, e Nora Barlow, *Autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882. With Original Omissions Restored. Edited with Appendix and Notes by His Granddaughter.* London: Collins, 1958, p. 140 (http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?itemID=F1497&viewtype=side&pageseq=1).

in different ways. Both develop a topic, in a different style, and properly digital. And it is this digitality that distinguishes it from the others.

6 Narrativity and inter-planarity

The digital distinctiveness of the narratives in our two examples lies in a systemic and dynamic inter-planarity. In this it differs both from a narrative as found in a printed text and a website as commonly found on the Web.

(1) In a sense, every narrative is multiplanar, including a narrative as found in a printed text. Even that of a relatively short text such as this article: the different sections into which the article is divided can be seen as planes that call on each other – for example, this section on narrative anticipates the one (8) on writing and reading, which in turn calls on this one, and so on. A book is obviously more complex, and a multi-volume book is even more complex. But in essence these are in each case multiplanar "systems," where the basic argument flows by leaning on the various moments developed separately in each of these planes. More explicit are the cross-references to other texts, typically in the form of footnotes: again, we can speak of multiplanarity, but it is a static multiplanarity, in the sense that the end point of the cross-reference is accessible only outside the text itself; one must, in other words, physically get to the new text, open it and leaf through it to get to the citation.

Note that by "printed text" we mean not only text printed on paper, but also text that we can define as electronic, as opposed to digital, i.e., text either in an analog format (.PDF type) or in a format designed for a navigator ("browser," .HTML type). Where there are links to other sites or other pages on the same site, the link typically targets a detail, not the topic as such contained on that page. The case of Wikipedia is paradigmatic in this regard. And it should be noted that there are many scholarly sites of great importance that do not in practice use any kind of hyperlinking, for example, encyclopedias of the highest value and utility, such as the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (https://plato.stanford.edu/index.html) or the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (https://iep.utm.edu/, entrambe iniziate nel 1995) and the *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (https://uee.cdh.ucla.edu/login/openid): these are the electronic equivalent of printed encyclopedias, without a real digital dimension. In this sense, although they are networked, these encyclopedias fall typologically into the category of printed texts, and we can call them electronic texts.

(2) The structure of current websites, i.e., of aggregation-type websites, is, yes, based on an awareness of multiple other planes that can be accessed for clarification of details, and thus multiplanar – but it does not develop a narrative capable of weaving these planes together. The multiplanarity of these sites is, in other words, anecdotal or rhapsodic, not systemic. The site is constructed by adding fragments to an agglomeration of other fragments, which are certainly well-structured as a collection of fragments, but without a clear definition of a whole that should transcend the agglomeration and without being

systemically related to other planes. As a consequence, an aggregation-type site is used to arrive at a given fragment, drawing on it according to a pre-established interest, but without the assumption that this fragment fits into a narrative that includes the various planes, thus multiplanar.

Note that while the term "aggregative" refers to the structure of the site as a container, the term "anecdotal" refers to multiplanarity, namely the function of linking between planes, which remains at the level of the individual detail, not the topic within which the detail is situated. Both terms have to do with the quality of the narrative. A site is aggregative because it favors the accumulation of data and information instead of a narrative that unifies them into a single coherent topic. And it is anecdotal because the end point of a hyperlink is not an integral part of the topic itself.

We can summarize by saying that

1. a printed text (paper or electronic) is narrative and multiplanar but not dynamic, whereas
2. an aggregative website is multiplanar and dynamic, but anecdotal because it does not develop a narrative. What we propose, therefore, is
3. a different epistemic system, i.e., a website that combines the specific and distinct characteristics of both systems, and therefore a system that systemically and dynamically develops a narrative where the different planes are interlaced, so to speak, and which we can therefore define as inter-planar.

	narrative	*multiplanarity*		
		static	*dinamic*	*systemic*
printed or electronic text	x	x	–	–
aggregative website	–	–	x	–
systemic (inter-planar) website	x	–	x	x

7 The multiplanar systemic or inter-planar system

The website we propose is thus *systemic* in the sense that the narrative itself is inter-planar. As we have seen above (3 and 4), hyperlinks lead not just to details, but to an essential component of the topic – in other words, it is the narrative itself that is multiplanar. The target of a hyperlink is not just a detail, it is a passage of the larger, and that is inter-planar, argument which is proposed. It is what we have seen for the two models, "staccato" and "legato", because both types of narrative follow, within them, a logical thread that is both linear and inter-planar: linear because the narrative proceeds sequentially, but inter-planar because some of the steps in the sequence are on different planes and are integrated into the larger argument that is thus developed.

On each plane we find authentic texts, texts that develop a coherent and self-contained argument, but do so in tune and synchrony with a larger argument carried on, systemically, on multiple competing planes. It is in this sense that we speak of multilinearity (see already above, 2). The argument itself is linear, but in this case the linearity is composed of segments taken from different "lines," that is, from arguments that are themselves linear and are on two or more planes. The narrative flows in parallel on planes that are competitive, that is, written in such a way as to make possible a reading that hooks into one or the other plane depending on what the topic requires.

And this means that we must develop a new way of understanding both "writing" and "reading" a website – or "digital book."

8 "Writing" and "reading" a digital "book"

The Urkesh examples illustrated above (3 and 4) indicate what this new way of dealing with a website might be, and hint at the difficulties – which we can now briefly describe.

The difficulty in *writing* a text lies in maintaining a coherence in the development of the argument across multiple planes that rival each other, so to speak, in drawing attention. A systemic website is properly "written" with an awareness of this equally systemic inter-planarity, that is, a multiplanarity that allows the development of a properly multilinear discourse. It is a new way of writing, with difficulties similar to those that the scribes of early urbanism must have faced when they put on clay both the details of a great administrative system that was developing as population bases and economic resources grew, as well as the paramount mythological visions that had hitherto been handed down only orally. The difficulty for us lies in the need to conceive an inter-planar argument. It is a matter of structure: when we formulate an argument, we see it as an argument that coherently unfolds according to a series of logical steps. An inter-planar structure implies that this unfolding occurs con-currently on multiple parallel planes, so that a digital discourse between these planes is possible. In the case of the "staccato"-type narrative this occurs because the planes are guided by a categorization of fragments that organizes them in such a way as to create these parallel structures: the planes are, we might say, co-structured as they are created. In the case of the "legato"-type narratives the plans are invoked as a function of a particular moment in reasoning, with an awareness on the part of the writer of the structural coherence of these other plans, which must themselves have been written with this structural coherence in mind.

Similarly, we will have to get used to *read* a systemic, i.e., inter-planar, multiplanar website with a new mental habit, aware that the topic is not only linear, but multilinear. As we have seen (2 and 7), this means that when we arrive at a hyperlink, we must follow it in the parallel line of the narrative so invoked, namely, that at that point of arrival we must access that argument in its entirety (not just in the detail to which we have been referred), and we must then return to the starting point to continue with our argument. This getting-off and getting-on again must take place not so much because of a mechanical

function, but because of what has been defined "narrative gravity" (Lynn Dodd, personal communication), i.e., the urgency of the internal logic of reasoning. This, too, requires a re-education analogous to that which transformed the mental patterns of early urban populations: surely, it was only scribes who could read, but everyone depended in a para-scribal way on reading written texts, whether it was the recipient of a letter or the one who disputed a contract or the one who trusted the accounts of administrative account or, finally, the one who heard a divinatory response read out.

An important consequence arises from this contrast between the aggregative type we are used to, which requires to be "built" and "used," and the systemic type, which requires instead to be "written" and "read." It is about the very concept of a website. A website of the systemic type must be regarded as a digital *book*. This is quite different from an electronic book (eBook), which reproduces a printed text by adding basically only word-search capability. A digital book is written as we have just described, and it is read in the same way. It is an entity that holds the idea of a topic in its entirety, but a topic that is at the same time intimately intertwined with other parallel topics, a book, that is, that embodies in itself the possibility of a digital discourse.

9 From grammar to hermeneutics

It is interesting to see how Gadamer explicitly excludes archaeology from hermeneutics: the bearer of the tradition is the one who lives it, not a text, much less a mute monument, which at best allows for hermeneutics only in a broad sense.[6] Our project aims to indicate how the alternative is possible instead, which aims to arrive at the voice with which these now mute monuments were originally endowed. It is the concept of "archaeological reason." And digitality plays a key role in this process. Cybernetics is the piloting or governance of the fragments, especially in a situation like archaeological excavation and data handling, as we have seen above (3 and 4). And this immense amount of data, as well as its provenance from contexts where it has been deposited in entirely occasional and unplanned ways, creates the need for control that can only be enacted through a digital approach. Crucially, one can thus achieve control of the totality of the excavated data, without reductive sampling.

This is what we describe as "grammar": a control based on a rigorous and coherent categorization of all data, a categorization that gives us control of the fragments in their totality. It is from here that we can arrive at a hermeneutics of that whole from which the fragments derive, as fragments of that organic whole in which they had meaning and life. Hermeneutics thus becomes a technique that initiates us to an understanding of the values

[6] "Der Träger der Überlieferung ist ja nicht diese Handschrift als ein Stück von damals, sondern die Kontinuität des Gedächtnisses. [...] wenn wir von einer Kultur überhaupt keine sprachliche Überlieferung besitzen, sondern nur stumme Monumente, und wir nennen solche Kunde vom Vergangenen noch nicht Historie. [...] Nur in einem erweiterten Sinne stellen auch nichtschriftliche Monumente hermeneutische Aufgabe". H.-G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1960, p. 394.

of a living human, even and only living a life that no longer speaks directly to us. The hermeneutic circle is operative precisely because, starting from the disaggregated data we find in the ground, we arrive not just at create a catalogue, which, even if complex and accurate, leaves us only and always confronted with fragments. For example, the analysis of the finds in the burial to which sherd A16.34 belongs, detailed and diverse from the point of view of observers and moments, suggests a particular delicacy toward the person buried there almost four thousand years ago. It is an argument built on various steps that come from different planes, all present at the Urkesh site, and an argument that is perfectly transparent even in its uncertainties. What happens is the confluence of the fragments into an argument that takes all the fragments into account but sees them as witnessing a profound awareness. It is the awareness that guided the confrontation of the ancient bearers of the culture just as it can guide our awareness and even our empathy today for those values of the human that lie ahead of any mass of fragments into which the original perception has broken down.

10 Figures

1. The homepage of two digital books (A16 and Ceramics)
2. The page of sherd A16.34
3. Detail of webpage A16.34: table of contents
4. Data of webpage A16.34 in ASCII format
5. Images related to burial A16a9
6. Detail of the digital book about ceramics
7. Webpage of burial A16a9
8. Webpage of phase $h6m^{AAH1}$ in A16
9. Beginning of the webpage about the ED II horizon in the digital book on ceramics

A16
The courtyard of the Tupkish palace

Seasons: MZ14 (L/2001) – MZ15 (M/2002)

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with the collaboration of

Federico Alessandro Buccellati
Caitlin Chaves Yates
and Laura Ramos

General Intro
home: unit A16
preface
shortcuts
Urkesh website
Mozan sitewide
area AA
table of contents
page layout
topical index

A16 synthetic
(expand)

INTRODUCTION
STRATIGRAPHY
TYPOLOGY
BUILT ENVIRONMENT
OBJECTS
SAMPLES
CONSERVATION
PRESENTATION
INTEGRATIVE

A16 tabulations
introduction
indices
frequencies
data set
logs
special tabulations
correlations
strat summaries

sitewide

Grammar
overview
the *Grammar*
the *Manual*
shortcuts

A16 constituen
introduction
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a aggregates
b assemblages
c composites
f features
h phases
i items
k loci
p plots
q lots
qb bones
qi q-items
qp pottery
r relays
s strata
v views
w drawings
spcfc label

A16 items
37
i1
i2
i3
i4
i5
i6
i7
i8
i9
i10
i11
i12
i13
i14

Urkesh Ceramic Analysis

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with the assistance of
Laerke Recht
Caitlin Chaves Yates

Ceramic Typology
shortcuts
home
Urkesh website

THE BOOK
preface
authorship
page layout
left and right hand side
relationship to UGR

THE DATA
the Urkesh corpus
history of the project
field methodology
community archaeology
big data

Categorization

THE SYSTEM
introduction
roster and lexicon

ROSTER
types and attributes
roster

LEXICON
introduction
lexicon: overall
wares
shapes
decoration
color
measurement
function
time assignment

Horizons

Introduction
Index

2.Temple Terrace (LC3)
3.Urban growth
1 (EDII) 2 (EDIII)
4.Great alliances (Akk)
5.Urban contraction (UrIII-IL)
6.Provincial status (Khabur)
7.Royal sanctuary (Mittani)
8.Foreign presence (MA)

Cross-horizon typology

Shapes

INTRODUCTION
DATABASE
INDICES AND SYNOPSES
phase
stratum
feature
ware
shape: overall
INDICES ONLY
shape:
family
sub-family
type
detail
no overall
comprehensive
unit
vessel and sherd

Whole vessels

Introduction
Index

jars
bowls
cups
pots
bottles
pitchers
strainers

A16.34

File: "/MZ/A/A16/D/I/0034.htm".
Processed on 2022-10-19.

(Expand)
1. OVERVIEW
2. IDENTIFICATION
3. STRATIGRAPHY
4. TYPOLOGY
6. REFERENCE
7. INTERPRETIVE

Back to top: A16.34

1. OVERVIEW

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Category	!!	!!	clay artifact
Best definition	2007-10-19	mKB	unassigned [Input: RX19GB.j]
Best image	2002-08-16	!!	[Input: M816SB.j]

Back to top: A16.34

2. IDENTIFICATION

Designation

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Definition	2001-07-15	lR	jar [Input: RX19GB.j]
Definition	2001-07-23	sV	bowl [Input: RX19GB.j]
Definition	2007-10-19	mKB	unassigned [Input: RX19GB.j]
Description (summary)	2001-07-23	sV	Portion of a chaff tempered ceramic bowl or flared vase with only 3-6 centimeters of the body with red painted stripes preserved. The vessel contains a typical Khabur decoration with the stripes extending down to the base of the vessel. This vessel was found in a9, with the head i31 resting on this vessel. Please refer to drawing w48 and W14d4059 [Input: N128LR.j]
Notes on identification	2007-10-19	mKB	The initial identification by sV as "bowl or flared base" and by lR as "jar" indicates an uncertainty, which is due to the fact that the preserved portion of the vessel is cylindrical, in a way that is not otherwise found with bowls. It seems better to consider this an unassiogned type. [Input: RX19GB.j]
Notes on identification	2022=10-30	mKB	Portion of a chaff tempered ceramic vessel with a cylindrical lower portion and a trace of a small outturned portion above; possibly a bowl or pot. Only 3-6 centimeters of the body with red painted stripes preserved. [Input: RX19GB.j]

Back to top: A16.34

3. STRATIGRAPHY

Volumetric Localization

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Locus	2001-07-15	lR	k105 [Input: L81SLR3.j]

Contact Association

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Type of contact: contemporary events/movable items	2001-07-15	lR	i34 (bowl) sits in f128 (fill) [Input: L81SLR3.j]

Spatial Aggregation

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Nature of association	2001-07-15	lR	associated q-lot: 292 [Input: L81SLR3.j]

Time Sequencing

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Stratum (to which element belongs)	2015-05-20	!!	s245AAH [Input: ZA520CJC.j]
Phase (to which element belongs)	2015-05-20	!!	h6mAAH [Input: ZA520CJC.j]

Back to top: A16.34

4. TYPOLOGY

Measurements

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Height	2001-07-23	sV	6.3 [Input: -M726-A.j]
Length	2010-09-07	bH	12.3 [Input: U907BH.j]
Width 1 or diameter of rim	2015-05-19	cJC	10 [Input: ZA519CJC.j]
Width 3 or diameter of base	2001-07-23	sV	10.3 [Input: -M726-A.j]
Reference to drawing (W files)	2001-07-23	sV	w48 [Input: -M726-A.j]

Morphology

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Ware or Material, species	2010-09-07	bH	clay
	2015-05-19	cJC	Chaff Tempered
Color	2001-07-15	lR	ceramic vessel- The lower portion of a (human skeleton) rested.
Notes on typology	2001-07-15	lR	base of cv that i31 head rests on
Zca.DECORATION: Technique	2015-05-19	cJC	painted
Zca.DECORATION: Type	2015-05-19	cJC	parallel straight lines
Zca.SHAPE: Rim/base /handle	2015-05-19	cJC	base: flat
Zca.SHAPE: Notes on shape	2015-05-19	mKB	The walls of the vessels flare out less th decision to consider this type as unaagi vessels that are also relatively straight; bowls.
Zca.SHAPE: Notes on shape	2022-10-30	mKB	In some ways, the shape may be remini (i29) also found in a9.

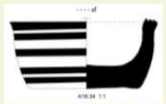
Function

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Activity definition	2022-10-30	mKB	used as pillow under the head of the deceased [Input: W203LC1.j]

Back to top: A16.34

6. REFERENCE

Analogical Record

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Photo of context (v view)			2001-07-16 lR [Input: -M726-A.j] 2001-07-16 lR [Input: -M726-A.j] 2001-07-16 lR [Input: -M726-A.j]
Photo of individual elements (studio)			2001-07-27 ms [Input: A16V-L^.j] 2010-08-18 !!! [Input: A16V-U^.j] 2010-08-18 !!! [Input: A16V-U^.j] 2010-08-18 !!! [Input: A16V-U^.j] L_V23d4075 A16i34 U818 dM cv.jpg
Drawing of individual element (studio)			 2001-07-26 cw [Input: A16W14.j]

Disposition

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Storage	2010-09-29	jN	ZSB 006-007 [Input: W203LC1.j]

Back to top: A16.34

7. INTERPRETIVE

Historical

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Religion	2022-10-30	mKB	The sherd seems to have been worked so as to be level at the upper edges – see this image from one side, and this one from the other. I assume that this may have been in function of the use to be made in the burial: the sherd was to serve as a pillow for the head of the deceased, so that it may not be in contact with the dirt. The template of the context shows this well. This suggests a special level of care for the deceased. It is interesting that there should be no complete ceramic vessel in the burial, even though there were two silver rings (i33, i36) and one bronze bucket (i29). The unusual shape of the sherd i34 may perhaps be reminiscent of the shape of the bucket. [Input: ZOy22 TEST.j]

A16.34

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(Contract)

1. OVERVIEW
2. IDENTIFICATION
   Designation
3. STRATIGRAPHY
   Volumetric Localization
   Contact Association
   Spatial Aggregation
   Time Sequencing
4. TYPOLOGY
   Measurements
   Morphology
6. REFERENCE
   Analogical Record
   Disposition
7. INTERPRETIVE
   Burial customs

```
 A16i0034
 File processed on 10-10-2016 - Source Files: ; QX100845.E.E - Standards: ;
A20     RX19-RX19GB.J   !!      cv
A21     RX19-RX19GB.J   gb      bo
A35     M816-M816SB.J   sb      L_V14d4519 A16.34 L727 ms.jpg
B11     L723-N128LR.J   sv      Portion of a chaff tempered ceramic bowl or flared vase with only 3-6
centimeters of the body with red painted stripes preserved. The vessel contains a typical Khabur decoration
with the stripes extending down to the base of the vessel. This vessel was found in a9, with the head i31
resting on this vessel. Please refer to drawing w48 and W14d4059
D01     L715-L818LR3.J  lr      k105
F02     >si f0128       L715-L818LR3.J  lr
G03     L715-L818LR3.J  lr      associated q-lot: 292
I01     QX10-S-CUMUL.J  !!      s245-AAH
I03     QX10-S-CUMUL.J  !!      h6m-AAH
J01     L723--M726-A.J  sv      6.3
J02     U907-U907BH.J   bh      12.3
J03     Z519-ZA519CJC.J cjc     10
J05     L723--M726-A.J  sv      10.3
J10     L723--M726-A.J  sv      w48
K03     U907-U907BH.J   bh      cl
K03     Z519-ZA519CJC.J cjc     CH
K05     L715--MX12-99.J lr      ceramic vessel- The lower portion of a khabur jar in which the head of i31
(human skeleton) rested on.
K99     L715-L818LR3.J  lr      base of cv that i31 head rests on
O01     v0040   L716--M726-A.J  lr
O01     v0040a  L716--M726-A.J  lr
O01     v0040b  L716--M726-A.J  lr
O02     L727-A16V-L^.J  ms      L_V14d4519 A16.34 L727 ms.jpg
O02     L727-A16V14I.J  ms      L_V14d4519 A16.34 L727 ms.jpg
O02     U818-A16V-U^.J  !!!     L_V23d4073 A16i34 U818 dM cv.jpg
O02     U818-A16V-U^.J  !!!     L_V23d4074 A16i34 U818 dM cv.jpg
O02     U818-A16V-U^.J  !!!     L_V23d4075 A16i34 U818 dM cv.jpg
O03     L719-W314LC.J   ns      w0016
O03     L911-W315LC.J   lr      w0048
O04     L726-A16W14.J   cw      L_W14d4059 A16.0034 L726 cw cv.jpg
P02     U929-W203LC1.J  jn      ZSB 006-007
ZcaD1   Z519-ZA519CJC.J cjc     1
ZcaD2   Z519-ZA519CJC.J cjc     K4
ZcaS4   Z519-ZA519CJC.J cjc     xf
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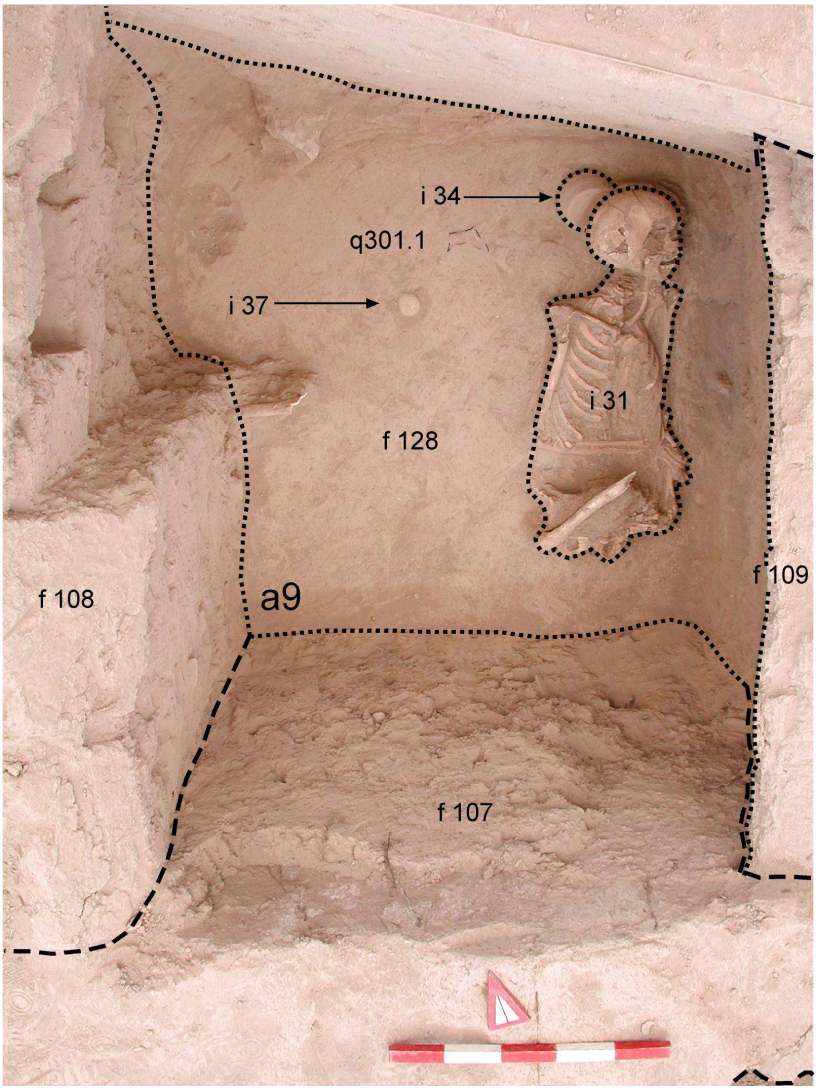
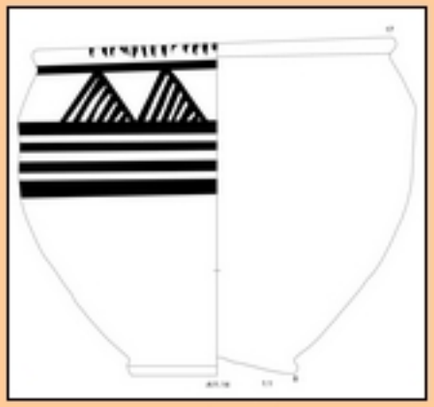
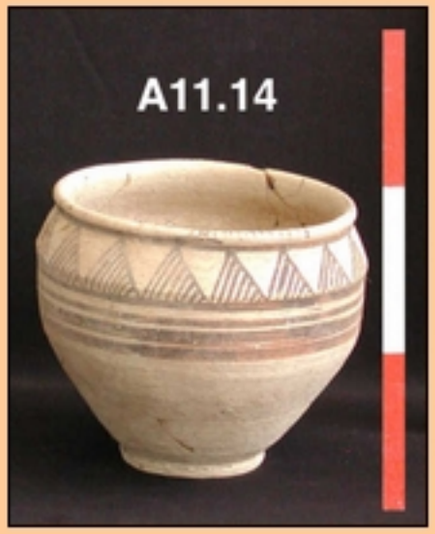
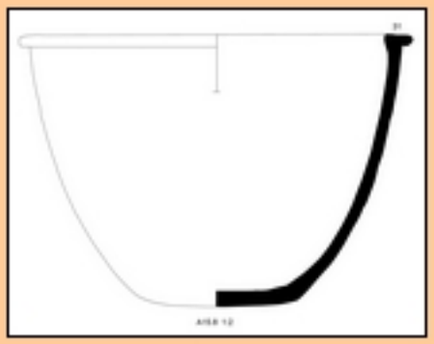


Deep Bowls

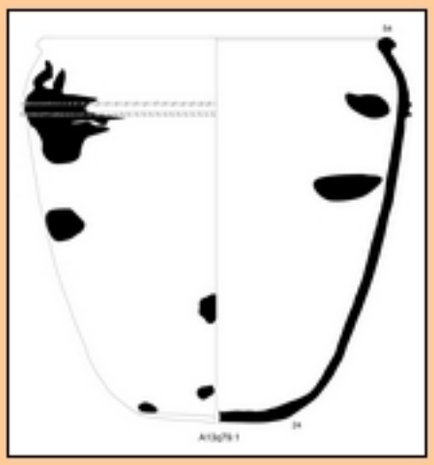




A11.14 f64
bd.-2 Khabur



A15.8
bd.-3



A13q79.1
bd.-23

A16a9

File: "/MZ/A/A16/D/A/0009.htm".
Processed on 2022-10-19.

(Expand)
1. OVERVIEW
2. IDENTIFICATION
3. STRATIGRAPHY
6. REFERENCE

Grammar
overview
the *Grammar*
the *Manual*
shortcuts

A16 constituents
introduction
-incidentals
a aggregates
b assemblages
c composites
f features
h phases
i items
k loci
p plots
q lots
qb bones
qi q-items
qp pottery
r relays
s strata
v views
w drawings
spcfc label

A16 aggregates
Filter
a1
a2
a3
a4
a5
a6
a7
a8
a9
a10
a11
a12
a13
a14

Back to top: A16a9

1. OVERVIEW

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Best definition	2002-07-30	!!	^bu [Input: M730SB2.j]
Summary	2007-07-16	sG	One room burial structure in locus k105 containing an adult skeleton. Three mudbrick walls were identified on the west, south and east. The inner sides of the western and eastern walls have collapsed in a way which suggests that the tomb may have been vaulted. Grave goods found in the burial include two silver earrings (i33, i36), ceramic vessel i34, and bronze bucket i29. [Input: R716SG.j]
Best image	2007-07-16	sG	v40 [Input: R716SG.j]

Back to top: A16a9

2. IDENTIFICATION

Designation

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Definition	2001-07-12	lR	grave [Input: L724LR.j]
	2002-07-30	sB	^bu [Input: M730SB2.j]
Description (summary)	2001-07-12	lR	vaulted tomb with doorway [Input: L724LR.j]
	2002-07-30	sB	*** A16 plate 500 [Input: M730SB2.j]

Back to top: A16a9

3. STRATIGRAPHY

Recovery/Assignment

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Notes on recovery	2001-07-15	fAB	This tomb seems to have a female skeleton (since the skeleton had earings). THere is the chance that there is a second body. The very high location of the pail is odd, but is is difficult that the pail belongs to the surrounding accumulation, because it was found within the structure a9; perhaps it was hanging from the vaulted roof of the strucure? [Input: -M726-A.j]

Volumetric Localization

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Locus	2001-07-12	lR	k105
Relays (applicable to elements)	2001-07-14	lr	179 (41101 38000 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	180 (41084 37985 - 8941 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	181 (40958 38001 - 8941 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	182 (41018 37946 - 8925 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	183 (40997 37880 - 8925 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	184 (41047 37442 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	185 (41144 37893 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	199 (41081 38036 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	200 (41080 38000 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	201 (40955 38017 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	202 (40984 37998 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	203 (40982 37880 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	204 (40950 37829 - 8940 / Relay loc
	2001-07-14	lr	205 (41137 37896 - 8940 / Relay loc

Spatial Aggregation

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Elements in aggregate	2001-07-12	lR	f107 (^w), f108 (^w), f109 (^w), f110 (

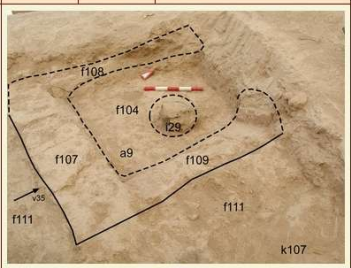
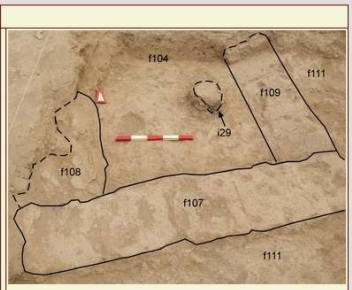
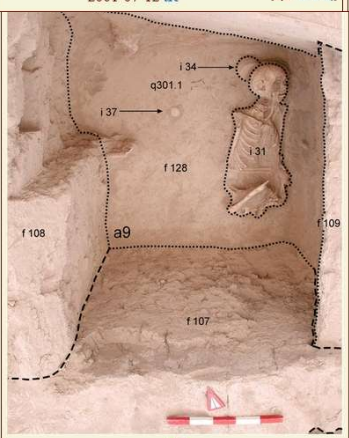
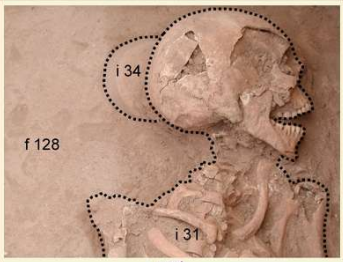
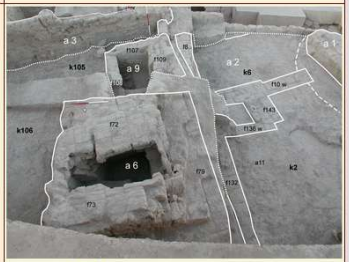
Time Sequencing

Roster	Date	Author	Record
Stratum (to which element belongs)	2015-05-20	!!	s245[AAH] [Input: ZA520CJC.j]
Phase (to which element belongs)	2015-05-20	!!	h6m[AAH] [Input: ZA520CJC.j]

Back to top: A16a9

6. REFERENCE

Analogical Record

Roster	Date	Author	Record	
Photo of context (v view)	 v35 2001-07-12 tR [Input: -M726-A.j]			 v35a 2001-07-12 tR [Input: -M726-A.j]
Photo of context (v view)	 v40 2001-07-12 tR [Input: -M726-A.j]			v40a 2001-07-12 tR [Input: -M726-A.j]
Photo of context (v view)	 v40b 2001-07-12 tR [Input: -M726-A.j]			 v44 2001-07-12 tR [Input: -M726-A.j]

Phase 6m^{AAH} within unit A16

May 2012 - L. Crescioli

The home for this page is A16

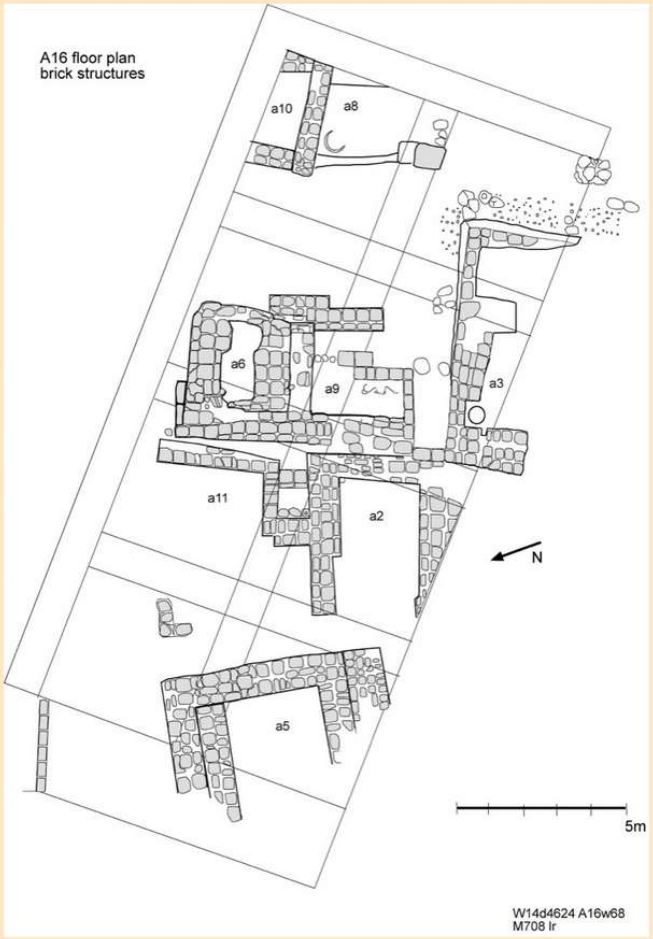
Overview
Burial structures and rooms
Streets and open areas
Objects

Overview

Some of these later Khabur structures are identified as burials, other as rooms and other are still uncertain. In between the structures outdoor spaces with pavements and street are found. Their chronological assignment to a later phase is based mainly on the stratigraphic relationship with brickfall a4.

Burial structures and rooms

In A16 can be identified 8 rooms/structures. 6 were built during this phase and their interpretation is not always easy, because the preservation condition is often bad. Some of them seem to be small houses, and moreover no foundation and very small doorway were found. a1 presents larger dimensions and a stone foundation, so it is probably a room, but unfortunately very eroded. To the East above an higher step other four structures are found. a9 is a burial, a6 is probably a burial too, because freestanding, without foundation small in dimension and with a very small doorway. a3 is a house with a niche and some vessels in situ. a10 is just partially excavated and it look like a tomb for typology, dimensions, doorway. During third construction phase in front of a10 two pisè walls were added forming an outdoor area (a8) with tannurs. Two flanking walls were added to room a1 too.



Back to top

Streets and open areas

The structures are not organized, they are oriented more or less in the same direction but they do not look following a organized plan. An open area was between a10/a8 and the western structures a6 and a9. East of house a3 a pebble and sherd street was running following the structure itself. To the east another open area was found north of a1 with a pebble pavement. a8 is a open room with tannurs.

Back to top

Objects

Not many objects were found in primary deposition inside the structures. In room a1 three Khabur jars (i2, i4, i9), another complete jar i14 and a clay figurine i1. Mainly bronze objects were found in burial a9 and structure a6 (silver earring i38, bronze earrings i33, i36, bucket i29) and a painted Khabur bowl i34.

ED II
Urban Growth 1

Introduction

July 2020 - Authorship

Overview

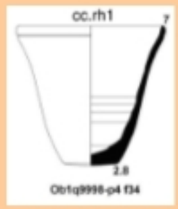
The main ceramic evidence for ED II in Urkesh/Mozan comes from tombs, including two large graves in the Outer City, Oa4 on the west and Ob1 on the northeast. On the western side of the High Mound a burial, F2, dating to late ED II, was excavated near the highest portion of the S1 trench. This trench ran from the base of the High Mound almost reaching the summit of the mound in this area. S2 is a sounding at the base of the S1 trench containing ED II ceramics.

S2q13-p6

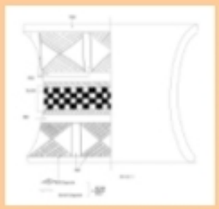
S2.5

Ceramic evidence from ED II Tombs

In the north-eastern part of the Outer City. we discovered a tomb (Ob1) indicated by a large number of early Metallic ware sherds on the surface. Excavation here showed that it indeed was the burial place of two adults; they were entombed in a pit without any structure, whereas tomb Oa4, located on the western side of the Outer City was lined with large stones which functioned as the sides and part of the stone roof. Because the contents of Oa4 had been robbed, few ceramic vessels were found in it. Fortunately, the Ob1 tomb contained over one hundred vessels and a number of metal objects. The ceramics included an early form of Metallic ware conical cups and a number of late Ninevite V vessels with the grooved and incised designs typical of this period. In addition to a number of undecorated vessels in shapes which reflected the Ninevite V pottery, there were several examples of a type of painted stand, painted in the Scarlet ware tradition. The paint, applied after firing, is bright red fugitive paint with black used on the borders and for designs inside the panels. The designs are only geometric and cover the entire stand. The typical Scarlet ware paint and the use of designs arranged in panels can be paralleled by examples from the south; the concept of tight overall patterning in geometric designs however is a northern characteristic. One similar Scarlet ware stand was published from Tell Chuera with a second one also mentioned in the publications.[1] From the assemblage in this tomb it now becomes clear that the early development of Metallic ware overlapped with the latest stage of Ninevite V (e.g. Ob1q9998-p4) pottery and that this stage of development in both these wares coincided with a local development in Scarlet ware (e.g. Ob1.52).



Ob1q9998-p4



Ob1.52