

## 1. Introduction – G. Buccellati and M. Kelly-Buccellati

### 1.1 The sixth season of excavations at Tell Mozan

We present in this fascicle a brief preliminary report on the sixth season of excavations at Tell Mozan,<sup>1</sup> in which pride of place is given to the single most important find of that season – two cuneiform tablets of the latter part of the third millennium. As the second in our sequence of official excavation reports, this monograph deals first with the broader background of the sixth season as a whole; it also takes up in some detail the issue of the general archaeological and specific stratigraphic context in which the tablets are situated.

Excavations at Tell Mozan are made possible through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, the S. H. Kress Foundation, the Martin Foundation, Neutrogena Corporation, and various private donors. The Mozan Archaeological Project is under the overall sponsorship of IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies, with the collaboration of the University of California, Los Angeles; California State University, Los Angeles; and the University of Rome.

<sup>1</sup>The sixth season lasted from April 30 to July 5, 1990. The staff included the following individuals: Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Giorgio Buccellati, directors; Sharyn L. Crane, assistant director and archaeologist; Mario Liverani, Antone J. Mathys, Barbara Cifola, Alessandra Asteriti, archaeologists; Stephen M. Hughey, surveyor and archaeologist; Lucio Milano epigraphist and archaeologist; Daniele Ghidoli, Patricia D. Kent and Federico A. Buccellati, photographers; Carla Pearson, Darlene A. Siedschlag and Kathy King, draftspersons; Suzanne Robey and Karen Nathan, registrars; Chiara Sogno Buccellati, conservator; Judith Thompson-Miragliuolo and Skia, palaeoecologists; Mark L. Peterson and David Miller, geophysicists; Bruno Marcolongo, geomorphologist; Jean Mathys, hydrologist; Peter Nathan, technical manager; Pamela Hughey, house manager. Messrs. Muhammad Mukdash of the National Museum in Raqqa and Ali Ali of the Hassaka section of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums were the representatives of the Directorate General. Mr. Jean Lazar, Director of the Office in Hassaka, and his assistants, Mr. Ibrahim Nano and Ms. Najah Touer, were also particularly helpful during our season of excavations.

As always, we benefitted fully from the invaluable assistance of our hosts and colleagues in the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, both in Damascus and in Hassaka. We wish in particular to acknowledge the warm spirit of collegiality with which we were received by Dr. Ali Abu-Assaf, the new Director General. It was in fact a great pleasure for us that during our first season in Mozan since his taking the leadership of the Directorate General, he was able to accompany the Minister of Culture of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr. Najah Attar, on a visit to the site, together with the Governor of the Province of Hassaka, Mr. Muhammad Mustafa Miro, and with Dr. Adnan Bounni, Director of Excavations. We are always mindful of the fact that if we have been able to make a strong commitment to a long term and ambitious program of archaeological work in Syria it is due in large measure to the unqualified support that we have received over the years from the Syrian authorities, who have been unfailing in both providing every possible assistance in all practical needs and showing at the same time the greatest interest in our intellectual concerns. The official visit of the Minister and the Director General was in this respect especially symbolic coming as it did upon completion of our new Expedition House, which will allow us to implement a much more effective program of excavation and laboratory research over the coming years.

## 1.2 Archaeological objectives

A major objective of the sixth season was to open two new areas of excavation on the High Mound (see below, Fig.1), chosen from the particular perspective which we had gained in earlier seasons about the layout and occupation of the site. One of these areas was Area F, where we anticipated that we might be able to obtain a substantial horizontal exposure of strata dated to the earliest periods of the history of the site. The reason for this assumption was based on the results of our 1984 surface ceramic collection, and on the observation that here the gradient of the tell is not very steep, thus allowing for a fairly broad excavation unit situated by the toe of the slope. Work in this unit is described briefly below by M. Liverani.

A second new operation (labeled AS) was a stepped trench chosen for just the opposite reasons. The area in question corresponds to the highest rise on the the

High Mound, where our 1984 ceramic survey had resulted in the largest concentration of later material. Another important consideration for the choice of this area was its particular topographic configuration: its long and gradual slope followed the orientation of the city wall in a parallel line, rather than cutting across it at a perpendicular. The trench was so laid out that it followed the slope in this particular direction, ending in its lowest part with a fairly large and level area, not much higher in elevation than the level of the Outer City, but still well within the projected perimeter of the inner City Wall. Our expectation was to obtain thereby a complete stratigraphic sequence for the occupational history of the site, with the possibility of further horizontal excavation where the stratigraphy would warrant it. The results did indeed match very closely our expectations. From small private houses of the Nuzi period at the top, and through sizeable brickwork remains of the Khabur period, we came, about half way through the slope, to late third millennium strata, and began to excavate at the bottom of the trench a large structural complex of the mid third millennium, which appears to be a relatively well preserved public building. We are currently working on the publication of a preliminary monograph which will be devoted entirely to this trench.<sup>2</sup>

Two other major ancillary projects were brought to completion during the sixth season, and a third one was begun. The first two are a new topographical survey of the site, including a much finer coverage of the Outer City, and the geophysical survey, which had been started in 1988: a separate publication is being prepared for each of these projects, by S. M. Hughey and by J. Ericson and M. L. Peterson respectively. A geo-morphological survey of the immediate environs of the site was begun by B. Marcolongo, who also plans to continue his work at the site in 1992.

<sup>2</sup>We had also intended to complete, during the sixth season, the excavations of the Temple BA, but we were hampered by the fact that some key members of our projected staff were not able to join us in the field, so we had to postpone that particular operation. We intend to resume it in the 1992 season (since we are working on a two year cycle, according to the current policies of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums). Publication of the temple excavations is thus postponed until after that date. See for now *Moza 1*, 59-61; *SAB 2*; Kelly-Buccellati 1990a; 1990b.

### 1.3 The epigraphic finds

The present monograph is devoted primarily to the epigraphic finds which were made in area F1 during the sixth season. We are especially grateful to Lucio Milano for the speed and competence with which he has prepared this material for publication. This find is clearly sufficiently important to warrant immediate publication in this form. To be sure, no one more than Milano himself is aware of the fact that the discovery of additional tablets may significantly increase our understanding of these documents; and given the fact that the tablets came from the very top layers of a deposit contained within a well preserved building, we may in fact expect that future excavations in this area may yield additional epigraphic finds of the same nature. Similarly, in spite of the relatively clear stratigraphic definition of the structural remains in F1, it is obvious, as Liverani emphasizes in his presentation below, that we may well expect a finer resolution as a result of an increased exposure.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, therefore, this is truly a preliminary report. And yet both the degree of definition which is already possible at this juncture, and the significance of the finds in themselves, are such that we felt immediate publication was needed within the official sequence of the Mozan reports.

The tablets published here represent the northernmost cuneiform epigraphic finds of the third millennium excavated to date.<sup>4</sup> Though not at a great distance from Tell Brak, Mozan appears to fit in a milieu rather different from Brak: hence the fact that the preponderance of names in our tablets are Akkadian, and even more importantly the fact that the tablets themselves were most probably written in Akkadian (as argued by Milano, below), is significant because it marks a stronger link with the south than one might at first have expected. Since the date of the tablets appears to be relatively late in the Sargonic period, we may have here evidence of the spreading of Akkadian cultural, and possibly also administrative, influence, suggesting perhaps that the Akkadian kings had suc-

<sup>3</sup>For instance, one wonders if the deposit in which the tablets were found (f73) is a levelling in function of a higher terrace, or a floor accumulation; or what the fuller stratigraphic connections might be between the "upstairs" and the "downstairs" strata; or again whether some details of the comparisons in ceramic typology may not have to be revised.

<sup>4</sup>See Fig. 7. The Naram-Sin inscription of Pir Hüseyin is the only one coming from a location even farther to the north, but this text was not found in an excavation, and doubts have been raised as to whether it was found in or even near its original emplacement, or was brought there in later times, see references cited in Börker-Klähn 1982, p.134.

ministrative, influence, suggesting perhaps that the Akkadian kings had succeeded in securing not only the lower funnel of the Khabur (where Brak was the major center), but also the upper plains in the piedmont region of Mozan.

The presence of Hurrian onomastic elements in our tablets is however even more significant. The case should not be overstated, because only one name (*Ú-na-ap-šè-ni*) can be matched as a full name in the later onomastic Hurrian repertory, while in the other cases we can only isolate individual onomastic elements (see Milano's comments below, 3.6 and 3.7). Nevertheless, our data do provide some meaningful new evidence for the presence of Hurrian linguistic elements in this region at this date. Conversely, the total absence of Amorite names provides a strong intimation as to the presumed absence of such a linguistic element. This is in line with the thesis advanced in *Mozan 1* as one of the research objectives of our excavations, to the effect that the Khabur plains were an early Hurrian enclave. What the overall influence of the Hurrian linguistic element may have been, how far back in time the Hurrian scribal tradition extended (first clearly attested in the *Tiš-atal* inscriptions), how widespread the Akkadian cultural and administrative presence was – these are clearly questions that cannot be answered at this stage. But the very fact that we can pose them in such detail is indicative of the significance of our epigraphic finds from 1990, and of the interest and determination with which we will pursue this particular set of problems in our future work at the site.

#### 1.4 Notes on third millennium ceramic chronology at Mozan

The ceramics found in the two storerooms of Area F1 are consistent with those from other third millennium deposits excavated so far at Mozan, and yet sufficiently different to warrant a brief comparative discussion here. Through the sixth season (Spring 1990), we have excavated major deposits with a significant corpus of ceramics from: two burials in the Outer City (Oa4 and especially Ob1, where there were over 50 vessels found as part of a grave); the burnt deposit (f16) in Area K1 immediately outside the city wall; the Temple BA; and now the two storerooms in Area F1. In the Ob1 grave a substantial corpus of late Ninevite V vessels was found including the large pointed base, globular bowls with deeply grooved designs (Fig. 8e) also excavated at Tell Ailun west of Mozan and Tell

with geometric designs painted in red and black (Moortgat and Moortgat-Correns 1976, Abb. 28a,b) were placed in this tomb along with small, roughly made and poorly fired Metallic ware cups (Fig. 8a-d). As will be demonstrated in detail in the publication of this pottery, on which I am currently working, it appears that the contents were placed in this tomb at a point late in terms of the Ninevite V and Scarlet ware tradition (at least in our area) and early in the Metallic ware tradition. This then means that Ob1 represents the earliest third millennium deposit thus far excavated at Mozan. It is not, however, the earliest third millennium deposit extant at Mozan since surface sherds of earlier Ninevite V incised ceramics have been found. In fact it was especially this earlier material which gave us the impetus to excavate in Area F1 (see below 2.1).

Between this deposit and the next chronological segment of the pottery chronology there is probably a short gap since the city wall burnt deposit (f16) in Area K1 does not overlap with the material from the tombs. This, however, may also be due to the nature of the burnt deposit and the fact that a limited range of types was found there (*Mozan 1*, pp. 65-67). The ceramics from this burnt deposit are dated partly through comparison with other sites but also by the date of the seal impressions on the door sealings (*Mozan 1*, pp. 67-81). Storage vessels with plastered interiors and some of the Simple ware shapes overlap the ceramics found in Temple BA. Most of the ceramics from the Temple BA are from the Simple ware tradition but a significant proportion is Metallic ware. This is also true for the vessels in the storerooms in Area F1. Some overlap of types may be seen in the decorated storage vessels but confirmation of this awaits the restoration of the F1 material. Certainly both the Simple ware and the Metallic ware of these rooms are somewhat different in both shape and manufacturing technique from that of the wares excavated in Temple BA.<sup>5</sup>

Thus even at this preliminary stage we may propose that the F1 storage rooms are among the latest third millennium ceramic material excavated at Mozan. One of the goals of the Mozan excavation is to reconstruct a well articulated ceramic chronology for the third millennium through substantial deposits of well stratified material combining not only the ceramics but also their associated objects which

<sup>5</sup>A useful link for establishing the internal third millennium ceramic chronology at Mozan will probably be not so much the conical cups as in the south (see comment by Oates 1986, p. 272) but rather the Simple ware spouted vessels. Already we have a progression of types from the city wall through this new deposit in the F1 storerooms. In general, the earliest spouted vessels have short spouts attached to the shoulders of small, squat jars while the later examples have longer spouts on taller, somewhat larger jars.

material combining not only the ceramics but also their associated objects which can give independent evidence for the date of these deposits. The vessels found *in situ* in the two storerooms of Area F1 are an important step in this direction. If these storeroom vessels do indeed also turn out to be dated by the tablets published here, then we will have a secure anchor for the later part of the Sargonic period.

### 1.5 An inscribed sherd from the fifth season (M2 3)

By way of a complement to the tablets from F1, we also publish here a sherd inscribed with a few cuneiform signs which was found in 1988 during the fifth season of excavations. Discovered on the surface of the tell by J. Ericson during his work on the geo-physical survey, it came from the an area immediately west of the Temple BA. It was assigned the field number Z1.66, and is published here under the label M2 3 (see Illustr. 6). To date, this is the only other epigraphic find demonstrably from Mozan.<sup>6</sup>

A reading of the few signs remains uncertain. The best interpretation is the one which has been offered privately by W. W. Hallo, whom we wish to thank for his kindness in sharing his insight with us. He suggests that the signs may be read as the logogram E<sub>2</sub>LUḪ,<sup>7</sup> possibly referring to a lustration establishment – which would fit with the fact that the findspot of the sherd happened to be near a temple, though this may of course be purely accidental.

<sup>6</sup>For our tentative suggestion that the Tiš-atal lions may also have been found at Mozan see *Mozan 1*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>7</sup>For a comparable sign which is “remotely similar” in shape to our second sign, Hallo (private communication) refers to a Kassite LUḪ listed in Fossey 1926 as # 19735. He also notes that the sign LUḪ may of course be read as SUKKAL, so that, “if the signs are read correctly, they can be interpreted as ‘house of the messenger’ as well as ‘bath house,’ ‘house of lustration(s)’ or the like.” We conclude, as he does, with a sober *non liquet*.

**MONOGRAPHIC JOURNALS OF THE NEAR EAST  
SYRO-MESOPOTAMIAN STUDIES 5/1 (July 1991)**

**A publication of  
IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies**

**SMS 5/1**

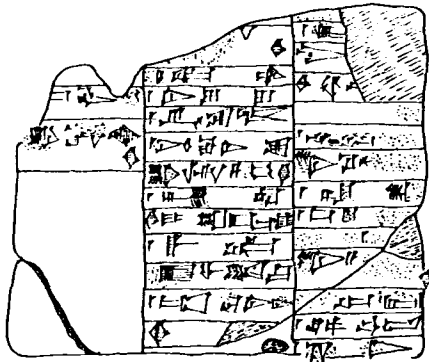
**MOZAN 2**

**THE EPIGRAPHIC FINDS  
OF THE SIXTH SEASON**

**Lucio Milano**

**with contributions by**

**Giorgio Buccellati, Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, and Mario Liverani**



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*SMS 5/1*. – The tablets recovered in Mozan during the sixth season of excavations in 1990 represent the northernmost find to date of well stratified cuneiform texts for the third millennium. They are accounts of people listed by name, profession and sometimes provenience. The language in which the texts are written is plausibly Old Akkadian, and so is a majority of personal names, but several names may be explained as Hurrian. The date is that of the later portion of the Sargonic period. Besides providing a complete philological treatment of the texts, this fascicle briefly describes the archaeological context – a stratigraphically well defined deposit within a sizeable stone building; it also provides a brief report on the work of the sixth season of excavations.

An electronic version of the text portion of this monograph (labeled *CM E2*) is available from Undena.

Publication of this monograph was made possible through a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities.

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ISBN: 0-89003-276-9

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