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Landscape and Spatial Organization

An Essay on Early Urban Settlement Patterns in Urkeš

Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati

Since the beginning of our interest in Mozan we have been researching the extent and spatial organization of the settled area of the High Mound and the Outer City in all the time periods of the occupation of the site.¹ In addition, questions we have asked ourselves over the years relate to the nature of the original settlement and the reason why the city was founded on this spot. A preexisting Halaf site may have been one of the conditioning factors, but we have no evidence for its size or spatial organization since we have found traces of its existence only in a deep sounding (S2) in the northern part of the High Mound. The answer to the question about the choice of this particular location must include positive environmental factors such as a good water supply with a wadi running near it and plentiful rainfall for agriculture, since it is well above the 400 mm isohyet. The ground water table was high so that wells could easily reach it. In antiquity the site was in a savannah type area with a wide variety of animals.² Additionally, the site is located close to stone sources in nearby foothills, as well as other natural resources in the mountains such as wood and especially copper from the Ergani area. Notably it was important to be near but not too near the Mardin Pass. Being close to the pass was advantageous for communication and trade, but the relative distance was also a positive factor in that hostile non-urban elements living in the Tur Abdin mountains could attack easily; thus, the flat empty space between Mozan and the Taurus foothills offered a protective advantage. This space also heightens the relief, Mozan stands out more distinctly because there is a space between it and the mountains; it does not appear as part of the foothills but is a mountain onto itself!

On another level, as pointed out by Tilley and others, distinctive natural landscape features accentuate the choice of the setting.³ Special places in the landscape can be correlated with high peaks, rocks, caves, permanent water sources and distinctive phenomena such as those we can see in the very wide and clearly marked mountain pass of Mardin. The stark contrast between the near flat and fertile Khabur plains and the mountains of the Tur Abdin accessible via the Mardin Pass was present from the very beginning. Such clearly defined settings as mountains and mountain passes have a profound effect on the human mind. The Mardin Pass is obviously such a unique point on the mountainscape with its constant presence on

1 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 1988: 43–46; Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988: 49–56.

2 This is based on paleo-zoological studies by H.-P. Uerpmann and paleo-botanical studies by L. Costantini and M. delle Donne. It also appears from the analysis of Riehl in: Deckers *et al.* 2010: 13–158 and Doll in: Deckers *et al.* 2010: 191–360.

3 Tilley 1994.

the northern horizon. This presence is experienced continually because of its proximity to the site, its distinctive shape which is both high and wide, and because it looms so large on the horizon; it is one of the cases when our modern experience and perception approximates the ancient experience.⁴ From a practical point of view the Pass is a gateway that allows relatively easy access to the natural resources in the mountains and valleys to the north, but is also a route for wider communication with those living in these valleys and beyond.

We have proposed that the people living to the north can be identified with the Hurrians living in Urkeš, implying the existence of a strong ethnic and cultural bond between the urban dwellers and the highlanders.⁵ It is also evident that both the people living in Urkeš and those living in the mountain valleys experience the same general landscape and that landscape is central to formation of their group and personal identities.⁶ Over time, the landscape took on more and more meaning for both groups due to the accumulated memories associated with it. In Urkeš, part of this meaning comes from the mythology associated with the mountains. Mythology and mythological associations help to reinforce meanings and connotations within the group identity. Particular places have meanings attached to them because of real or mythological events that have taken place there.⁷ In the case of Urkeš, the linking narrative that establishes bonds between the city, the landscape and one of the main Hurrian gods is found in the Kumarbi cycle. Urkeš is depicted there as the home of Kumarbi, encapsulating as it were the city and the mountains with symbolic meaning. Kumarbi is a mountain god *par excellence*. One of his main functions is to dispense justice in the mountains and by extension in his home city of Urkeš. Besides the urban center of Urkeš he feels equally at home in the mountains so that, we are told, when his son Silver goes to visit him he is not in Urkeš but “is walking in the mountains”.⁸ The prominent role of myth and ritual in this area may have been present from the beginning. Since it is known from later texts that Kumarbi lived in Urkeš and also that the city is one of the Hurrian locations where sacred waters are found, the presence of a fourth millennium monumental ritual terrace and temple leads us to believe that the god was worshiped here from a very early period.

Urban Spatial Organization and the Wider Landscape

It was clear to us from our first visit to the site in 1983 that the High Mound consisted in a number of high points rising around a central Plaza. Our first reflection on the topography indicated that the sides of the High Mound were too steep to be explained by a natural slope. The High Mound had to be bounded on all sides by a city wall. Fortunately when we walked around the exterior of the High Mound we noted that part of this wall had been recently exposed by local people excavating for soil to make mud bricks. Our subsequent excavations in

⁴ For an alternative approach to the Temple Terrace see F. Buccellati 2010.

⁵ Buccellati 1999a; Buccellati 1999b; Buccellati 2005; Buccellati 2010b; Kelly-Buccellati 2004; Kelly-Buccellati 2005; Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 2005; Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 2007.

⁶ Tilley 1994: 18.

⁷ Tilley 1994: 18.

⁸ Hoffner 1990: 40–61.

KW detailed part of the history of the wall on the eastern side of the city. Also immediately clear was the fact that the depression in the central portion had very few sherds on the surface in comparison with the remaining areas of the High Mound, suggesting a differential use of this central area. During the first season we made a surface survey of the High Mound and later in the year, when the fields were bare, Judith Thompson-Miragliuolo surveyed the Outer City on foot.⁹ Based on the evidence collected in the first survey we concluded that the mound was extensively occupied in the mid to late third millennium, that the Ninevite V period was well represented, especially on the northwestern portion of the site, and that some fourth millennium presence was indicated. From this first survey and subsequent excavations we have shown that the whole of the High Mound was more than likely covered with the mid to late third millennium occupation.

These introductory remarks will help to place in its proper focus the central theme of my paper, namely the interaction between the spatial organization of the urban built environment¹⁰ on the one hand, and on the other the landscape within which this organization takes place. In our case, it is important to see how the process of mound formation relates to and harmonizes with the physical aspect of the changing local territory. The topography of the High Mound is neither due to an original natural feature¹¹ nor does it result from a slow and accidental build-up of structures in the city over time. Rather, and this is my contention, it owes its unique configuration to a deliberate attempt at designing a cityscape that echoed the shape and perceptual meaning of the mountainscape to the immediate north. And this is because the central part of the city must have been a religious center from its very inception, at least as early as Late Chalcolithic 3 (ca. 3500) and possibly earlier, in the Late Chalcolithic 2 period. The High Mound grew up around this ritual core and its outer perimeter was more clearly defined, in the ED III period, by the inner city wall. But it remained throughout a directionally defined terrace, meaning that it was to be seen and perceived, and of course accessed, only from the south. We know that the wide Plaza onto which the Terrace fronted was at the same elevation (some ten meters above the plain level) already by LC3 times. It was like a stage half way up between the level of the plain to the south and the top of the Terrace to the north. All of this blended the Temple Terrace, and thus the city as well, with the mountains, the base of which is only some twenty kilometers to the north, and which form as if the target to which the rise of the Temple Terrace points. Through the two millennia that followed there was an abandonment of some parts of the city with contemporary build up in other parts, but essentially this very special urban landscape retained its unique perceptual characteristic for the entire existence of the city.

In what follows, I will describe the components of this remarkable architectural and perceptual accomplishment as they are known from our excavations, limiting myself to the formative period of the fourth millennium and the full consolidation in the third.

9 Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988: 49–56.

10 On this see the still relevant monograph by Preziosi 1979.

11 We can be certain of this because the deep sounding S2 reached virgin soil at a point that is only about 100 meters north of the the location of Temple BA, which is situated at the summit of the tell.

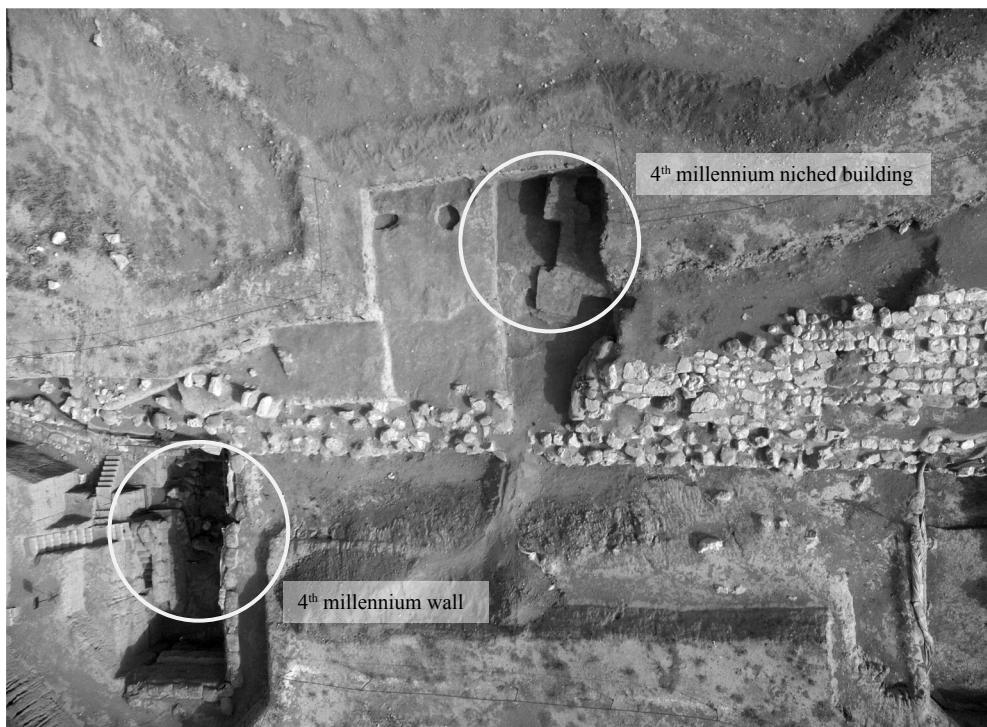


Fig. 1 View of Temple Terrace and revetment wall with fourth millennium structures indicated.
All Figures: © Tell Mozan / Urkeš Archaeological Project.

The Shape and Extent of the City in the Fourth Millennium

As already mentioned, the earliest period when the site was occupied dates to the Halaf period. For the fourth millennium, we did have positive evidence already from the first survey of the High Mound,¹² but it was only with the excavations of the Temple Terrace and the revetment wall encasing it that we have begun to investigate its nature and extent (Fig. 1).¹³ In 2005 we excavated a large amount of Late Chalcolithic 3 pottery and some cylinder seal impressions in J3, on top of the Temple Terrace. The deposits containing these objects were relatively high on the slope inside the encircling ED III revetment wall.¹⁴ At the base of this revetment wall was a Late Chalcolithic wall, excavated in J1, which must have served the same purpose. We could be certain of the date because of the quantity of the material and the fact that it was not mixed with any later sherds. In order to explore further the stratigraphic situation of the Temple Terrace in this area, a new sounding was made in 2010.

12 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 1988: 45.

13 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 2010.

14 Kelly-Buccellati 2010.



Fig. 2 Section above the LC3 niched building showing the position of the two glacis.

As we excavated through a stratigraphic seal consisting of a *baqaya*¹⁵ layer that we had encountered nearby previously, we found the corner of a niched mud brick building (Fig. 2).¹⁶ The building was founded on a mud brick platform with a glacis to the north of it firmly dated to the LC3 period (Fig. 3).¹⁷ The building thus far excavated consists of a corner with two niches on either side, that is in the southern and western walls. Niched buildings are characteristic of temples in this time period in the south and can be found in the north, notably the Eye Temple at Tell Brak. Several of the LC3 contexts on top of the Terrace also contained LC2 ceramics, leading us to think that there may be a LC2 stratum immediately below the LC3 one. Based on this evidence, at such a high elevation (20 meters above the plain level), we have concluded that the highest part of the mound in LC3 is under the later temple and terrace (Fig. 4). The new LC3 building is on the southern side of the Terrace, not on the sum-

¹⁵ The Arabic term *baqaya*, literally “the remainder,” refers to a type of red, hard clayish soil that is found where gravel is quarried, and that is used today as in antiquity as a subfloor and for floor plastering.

¹⁶ Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati (in print).

¹⁷ C¹⁴ determinations of seeds associated with the structure have confirmed a date in the mid fourth millennium, see details in the Appendix at the end, for which I am grateful to Prof. Ervin Taylor.



Fig. 3 Fourth millennium niched building and platform supporting it.



Fig. 4 Possible outline of the mound in the fourth millennium with the highest portion the constructed ritual “mountain”.

mit. It may be that there is more than one temple on the Terrace in this time period. Another alternative is that the main temple existed on the southern side. This appears to us less likely since the pattern of the placement and longevity of sacred buildings on one specific place is followed by all the temples later than the ED III Temple BA in Urkeš. It is also possible that



Fig. 5 View of the mound from the south framed by the Tur Abdin mountains to the north.

the stone stairway beneath the later monumental ED III stairway is dated to this period. The pebble pathways leading from this early stairs into the Plaza contained few sherds but those found give the impression that the stratigraphically lower set of stairs were utilized from at least the end of the fourth millennium into the beginning of the third millennium. Based on this evidence we have concluded that by the mid-fourth millennium a high Temple Terrace already existed and had a function similar to that of the mid-third millennium Temple Terrace.

Monumental constructions, such as our Temple Terrace, created within a unique landscape can take on qualities of the landscape, resulting in complex linkages to the wider region. The artificial mound erected as the earliest temple terrace resembled from a distance, especially from the south, a created mountain set against the backdrop of the natural mountains to the north (Fig. 5).¹⁸ This very high monument must have been a point of reference for all the surrounding area, both for local residents as well as long distance travelers. It is interesting to look at the journey of these travelers in the region of Urkeš/Mozan, no matter where their journey originated. If they were traveling north, on most days the gap in the Tur Abdin at Mardin would be clearly in view, guiding them in that direction. If they were going south, the Jebel Sinjar, on

18 G. Buccellati (in print).

the southeast, the Jebel Abd al-Aziz to the southwest, and the Kaukab to the south are points of reference. However, parts of the Jazirah along such a route are low lying, making the outlines of these two hilly regions difficult to see. Also while in the early morning, with little haze, these high hills are visible, later in the day and in the evening they are nearly always obscured. In either case the High Mound of Mozan would help to calibrate the distance needed still to travel or already traveled. If the journey followed an east-west route, the High Terrace in the area of Mozan would also be extremely useful in judging the amount of distance covered. Based on these considerations it can be suggested that the High Terrace in the city was one of the chief organizing elements on the landscape for most travelers in the region.¹⁹ While there were many religious, political, socio-economic reasons for expending the resources to build such a monumental terrace, its dominance as a constructed monumental marker for travelers and local inhabitants alike must have been of major importance to the city.

Concomitant with natural distinctive landscape elements is the phenomenon of special built places such as we see in Mozan, where at a very early date a high terrace was constructed and connected with architecture at or near its summit. As we have seen, our earliest evidence for a building on top of this terrace is religious in nature. In Mozan the symbolic valence must have been heightened as the monumental terrace was visually associated with the Mardin Pass for the city's residents, but clearly a strong association between the two would have been sharply etched in the minds of all travelers in the area. We can venture further and say that associated with a symbolic purpose there must have been a quest for prestige: as the terrace grew higher over time and the various temples were built on top of it, there was a connection made in the minds of travelers and residents alike between the city and the mountains accessed through the mountain pass. The gateway city of Urkeš with its monumental Temple Terrace was not only a landmark for the successful journey of travelers, but it was also a symbol of the link between the mountains and the plains. The importance of this symbol of the city's power and prestige can be seen also in Hurrian texts. It was no accident that Kumarbi lived in Urkeš on the plain and is said to walk in the mountains where he dispenses justice. No other early Hurrian city is so successful in connecting landscape symbolism and constructed symbolism, transforming both into a new construct whereby power is communicated visually over vast distances.

This dynamic interrelationship between natural and constructed realities stresses the internal flow of needs and desires for changes in spatial structure. The full extent of the fourth millennium settlement on the High Mound cannot yet be determined but given the resources expended to construct the terrace and given its position in the landscape along major trade routes, it is clear that the political and economic structures were already in place for such a monumental task. The evidence shows that there had already emerged by the mid-fourth millennium a hierarchical social structure which allowed some individuals to organize and exploit the work of others. Whatever the driving force behind the political will and social apparatus needed to accomplish this major achievement, the results for the city were enormous. It allowed the city to become a focal point for trade in the northern Jazirah, it created a new level of prestige for the city administration and its inhabitants. The Middle Uruk period cylinder seal impressions found

19 This approach to the landscape has been forcefully brought out by Richard Bradley for Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe (Bradley 1998; Bradley 2000a; Bradley 2000b).

in shallow deposits in J3 are an expression of this trade pattern. The largest known center in this period is Brak where a number of contemporary cylinder seal impressions have been found. It is our opinion that the examples found near the surface of the Temple Terrace came from containers originating elsewhere, possibly Brak. At Brak the succeeding period, LC4, sees a large amount of southern pottery being used at the site. This is not the case at Mozan where there is little ceramic evidence of any southern influence. These early constructed realities of ritual landscapes in Urkeš created an early spatial organization that was a template for the rest of the dynamic history of the formation of the site. It is impressive that this pattern lasted throughout its history from the fourth millennium through the Mitanni period.

The City of the ED III Period: New Urban Initiatives

The most extensive building period we have discovered on the site dates to the ED III. The evidence of this vast architectural program comes both from excavations and surface surveys.²⁰ The number of seal impressions dating to this period in all excavation areas indicates that the administration of the city was thriving and that goods stored and transported in sealed containers were the norm. In Temple BA the large amount of small bowls made of fine Simple Ware gives the impression that some of the ceramic craftsmen could produce large amounts of these high quality vessels for use in important contexts.²¹

We have no evidence for a palace in the period but it should be noted that we did find indications of an ED III stratum below the later palace of Tupkiš in area AA. Although we have not excavated to the earliest construction phase of the *ābi*, the lowest features we reached inside are dated to ED III or possibly the early Akkadian period.²² At this point the *ābi* was enlarged by the addition of a square space, creating an overall keyhole shaped underground structure, accessed by a steep and narrow staircase.

The City Wall

The city wall around the High Mound was constructed near the end of ED II or the beginning of ED III. This wall, made from mud brick, was at least 5 meters high and more than 4 meters in width. We can date the end of its functional life as a defensive wall from the deposit filling the glacis constructed at its external base. Thrown on top of the glacis, and thus voiding the defensive purpose of the moat, were the remains of a structure that had been destroyed by fire. This inner moat seems clear in Figure 9 except on the west where a wadi existed. In the deposit were a very limited number of ceramic vessel types and many door sealings.²³ We interpreted this as a closed deposit coming from the destruction of what was probably a stor-

20 Buccellati 1999a; Buccellati 2005; Buccellati (in print); Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 1995. Patrizia Camatta is writing her Dissertation on the work she did on the Temple Terrace

21 Kelly-Buccellati (in print); Kelly-Buccellati 2012.

22 Kelly-Buccellati 2002; Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 2001: 66-71, 78-89; Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 2004.

23 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 1988: 81; see also 58 and Fig. 12 and Ill. 19 for the moat.

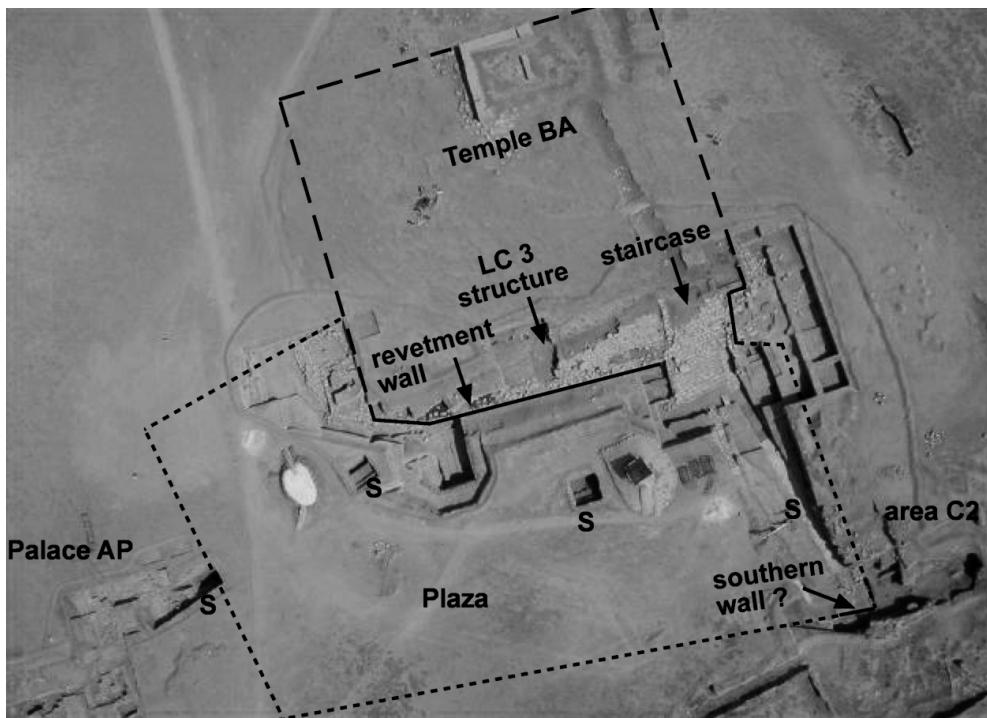


Fig. 6 Kite view of the Temple Terrace and its surroundings. The dotted line indicates the presumed perimeter of the Plaza, the dashed line the presumed outline of the revetment wall. The letter S refers to soundings made in the Plaza to document the nature of the stratigraphy.

age building that held large vats with water drip marks down the exterior, a few small Simple Ware bowls and a larger number of spouted pots. The deposit also contained mud bricks secondarily fired, as were all the objects found.²⁴ The fact that the sealings could be identified as having been applied to doors led us to conclude that a storage building had been destroyed by fire and was demolished with the debris thrown into the moat. This trajectory for the goods from the building would indicate that the glacis was no longer needed and therefore available for the discard of debris from the city above.²⁵ Although no gates have been excavated, on the northwestern side of the mound our excavations in S1 discovered a tower-like structure and evidence for a street leading toward the center of the city.²⁶

24 Ibid III, 22 a spouted pot with burnt clay clinging to the exterior from secondary firing.

25 Another reason why we assume that the inner city wall had become inoperative is that the western edge of the Tupkiš Palace appears to have been built on top of this city wall.

26 This is in agreement with the observations by Pfälzner/Wissing 2004 who argue in favor of towers flanking the gates of the outer city wall. The possible gate in S1 would be in line with the western gate of the outer city wall as hypothesized by P. Pfälzner and A. Wissing.

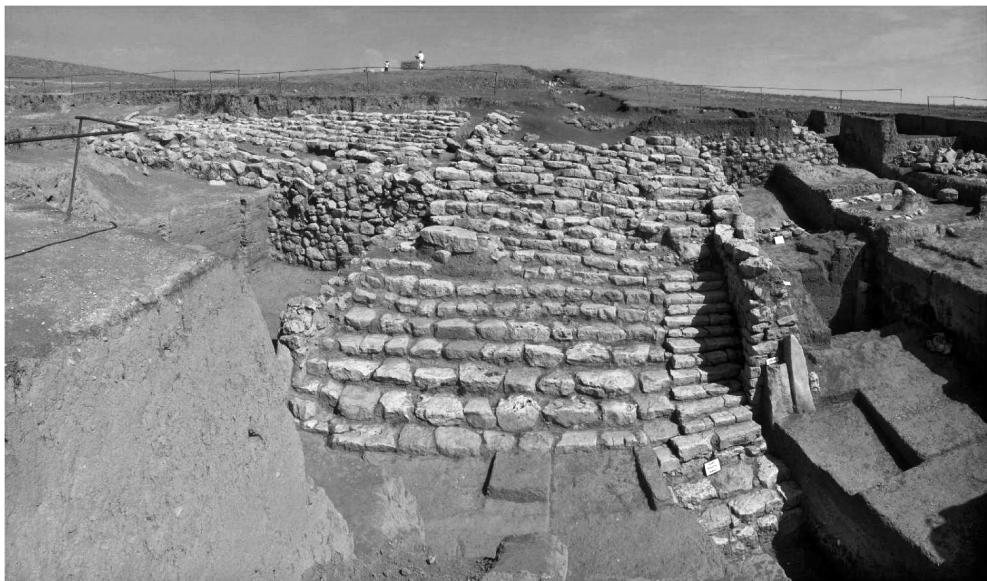


Fig. 7 Monumental ED III stone staircase with earlier stone stairs below. To the east two white stone orthostats mark the entrance to the sacred area.

The Temple Terrace

The Temple Terrace was partly reorganized in that a substantial monumental stone revetment wall was constructed at the bottom of the terrace with an escarpment leading from its base to the level of the Plaza (Fig. 6).²⁷ The wall is 3 meters in height and placed on an escarpment that was probably 2 meters above the Plaza.²⁸ We assume from our excavations that the Plaza level in this period is about ten meters above the plain level. The monumental stone staircase of 25 steps on the east was rebuilt with a flanking wall on its eastern side shielding it. At the southern end of this wall two undecorated orthostats of large white polished stones (Fig. 7), mark the entrance of the holy place.

Flanking the stairs on the western side is an apron of large stones comprising one step for every two steps of the monumental stairway. A tempting hypothesis is that this apron may have been used by spectators watching ritual performances taking place in the Plaza below or alternatively the spectacles might have been taking place on this apron with the viewers positioned in the Plaza. Whatever the function of the apron turns out to be, it is clear that the whole conception of this architectural space is asymmetrical including the stairway which leads toward the eastern end of Temple BA, not to its entrance: this may be due to the fact that there was an intermediate station between the stairway and the Temple itself, as at Chuera.²⁹

27 Buccellati 2010a.

28 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 2009: 45, 54–55.

29 Meyer 2010a: 218.

In front of the revetment wall are two escarpments, found both in J5 and J1, sloping down to the Plaza. The earliest escarpment is made of stone but evidence of extensive water damage soon necessitated the construction of a different type of escarpment, one in clay. From the ceramics and seal impressions associated with them we judge that the stone escarpment dates to early ED III and the later clay one to late ED III.

To the east of the staircase we see a more rapid build-up of the terrace probably due to the fact that other buildings connected with the temple and its administration were located on this eastern side of the Temple Terrace. The eastern portion of the revetment wall makes a sharp angle to the east of the stairway leading toward the southeastern corner of the temple.

The basic form of the Temple Terrace is essentially straight on its southern side with sharp corners on both the higher eastern side and the lower western side, as shown in figure 6.³⁰ On the east of the monumental staircase the wall is located further north, at the top of the staircase. Ten meters east of the staircase this wall made a sharp corner turning northward, presumably marking the southeastern corner of the Terrace.³¹ It may have had this shape because of another stone founded building to the east of which we have only excavated a part of the entrance stairway in B6.

Temple BA

So far in our excavations in Mozan, we have found the remains of only one temple (which we labeled BA). It stood on what was the highest point in the cityscape in ED III times and it was most likely founded on where the older temples stood. We distinguished four phases, but only the earliest retains a clear footprint. It was constructed with foundations of large, roughly hewn, limestone blocks and mud brick walls placed on top. The plan consists of a large single room (10 m in length and 9 m wide) with the entrance on the southwest in the typical bent-axis architectural style. This entrance is approached by a stone ramp 8 m in length. The single room pavement is covered by a thick white gypsum plaster at an elevation of about 22 m above the plain level.³²

In the center of the room an embedded dark stone (ca 1 x 1.5 m) had a rough depression in the middle that appears to have been the result of multiple usage. This altar or offering table was connected with a trough dug in the white plaster floor and running from the stone to a sunken ceramic vessel placed so that its wide rim overlapped the plaster floor. It appears more than likely that the sacrifice of animals took place on this stone with the blood channeled to the vessel. In the palace we discovered an Akkadian seal showing a ritual sacrifice during the ceremonial moment of the enactment of the sacrifice, just after the head of the bull had been placed at the base of a palm column (Fig. 8). The headless body of the animal is hanging vertically to facilitate the drainage of the blood.³³

30 Clearly, the shape of the Temple Terrace is not an oval, as originally proposed by Pfälzner 2008b neither in its architectural layout nor in terms of the functional and perceptual organization of space.

31 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati (in print).

32 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 2009: 41–42.

33 Kelly-Buccellati 2005: 36–40.



Fig. 8 Akkadian seal from the AP palace showing a ritual enactment.

On the north and east of the temple there were service quarters at the same elevation as the temple. To the north we excavated a series of ephemeral rooms partly built of reeds as we found burned roofing materials. A pebble path was bordered on either side by sherds of large jar rims set upright. The many small metal objects, pottery and spindle whorls found connected with these rooms suggest that they were small workshops serving in some fashion the temple complex. Small rooms also flanked the building on the east.

The temple was destroyed by fire at the end of the ED III period or the beginning of the Akkadian period. From the burned debris came a stone statue of a lion stratigraphically associated with a C¹⁴ sample dating to 2435 BC +/- 60 years. A late third millennium rearrangement of the access to the building consisted in a narrow corridor with stairs at the eastern end. While little is remaining of this building, it was most likely also a temple as a ritual type burner was discovered on a narrow shelf which additionally contained ceramics typical of the end of the third millennium. This rearrangement was followed by some evidence of Khabur period use of the area; however since the building was discovered directly under the surface of the tell, whatever evidence there existed for its function and any possible later use was lost due to erosion.

The Plaza

As I mentioned above, the topography of the mound, even before excavations, was characterized by a large flat area in the center. When we made a surface survey of the High Mound at the beginning of our work on the site there were very few sherds found on the surface of this whole area. This suggested that what appeared now as a depression was originally an open space, onto which the temple fronted. Accordingly, we placed several soundings (shown on fig. 6) in this area in connection with our excavations of the revetment wall. We discovered that this was indeed a large Plaza, and that the ED III levels were deep below the present surface, three to four meters. The stratigraphy of the Plaza showed that the later deposition had accumulated in a very even manner. The layers were so hard and compacted as to resemble cement, as even a brief test using a jack-hammer showed. We interpreted this as due to centuries of rain and snow naturally compacting the soil of the Plaza.

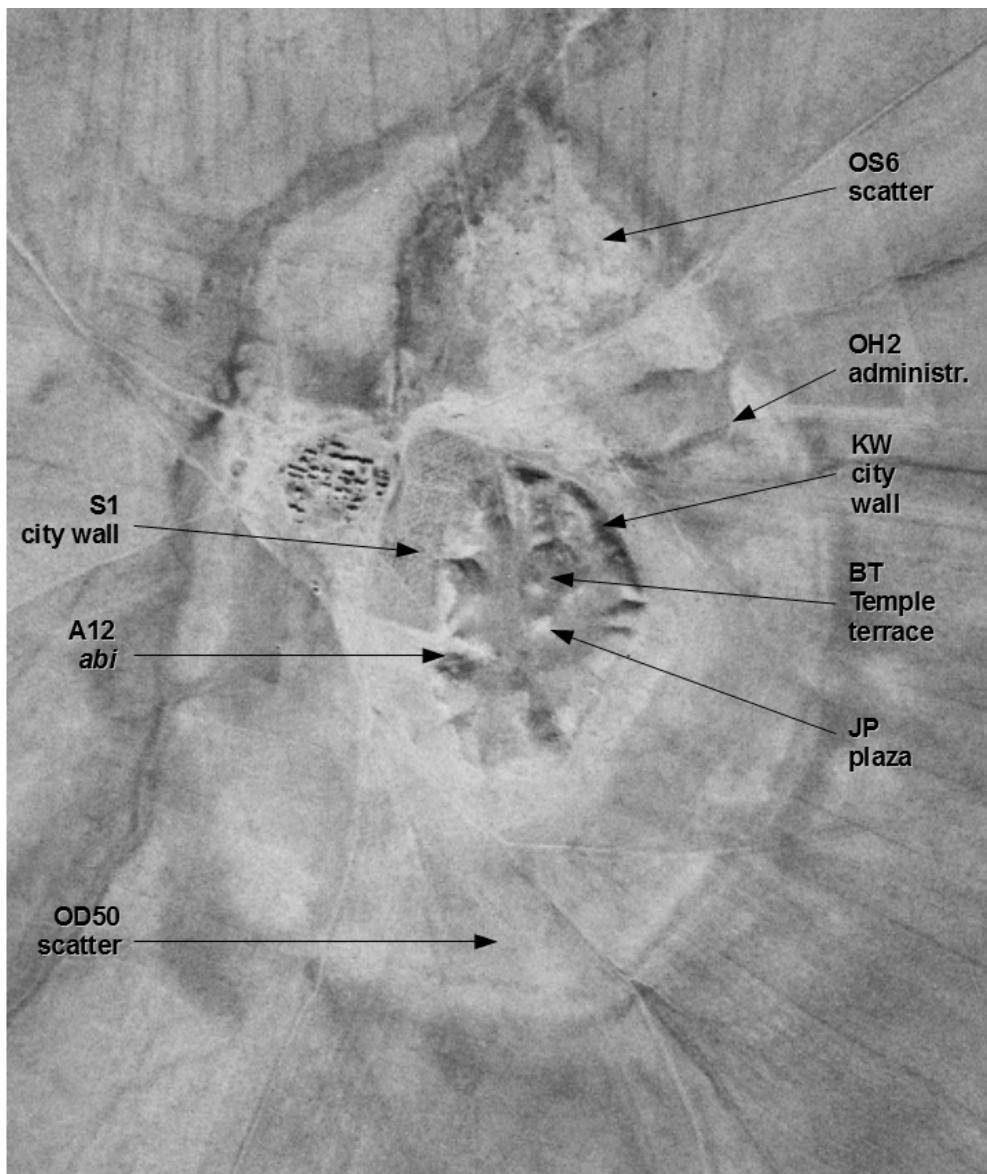


Fig. 9 This 1968 Corona image shows well the outline of the Outer City. The main areas where ED III material has been found are indicated.

Relatively few ED III sherds were found in these excavations, in sharp contrast with the clay escarpment where there were many ED IIIB sherds. This was one of the results of the fact that the Plaza was kept clean of both artifacts and installations. The effect of this Plaza cleanliness was that when in the late Mitanni period the mud brick buildings east of the

monumental staircase were allowed to deteriorate, the resulting brick fall covered the eastern portion of these highly compacted Plaza layers containing much earlier sherds.

At a distance of some fifty meters south of the revetment wall, a long wall running in an east-west direction had been found in the excavations of C2, at an elevation similar to that of the base of the revetment wall. We have proposed that this may mark the southern edge of the ED III Plaza (see fig. 6), the date being set by the large ash dump containing seal impressions clearly dating to that period.³⁴

The Outer City

Since the High Mound is bounded by a well preserved city wall, this forms a clear demarcation between the higher part of the mound and the lower Outer City. The external boundary of the Outer City consists in a rise that extends around the external rim; the general contours of the Outer City are clear today on the north, east and south, with some points of the rise somewhat higher than others; the moat around the Outer City is visible on the south and east sides of the mound (Fig. 9). The area inside the rise and surrounding the High Mound is relatively flat with some slightly higher elevations as for instance on the western side under the modern village of Mozan. The rise is not high but is a definite cultural boundary since the artefactual distribution falls off distinctly on the exterior portion of this rise.³⁵ The situation on the western side of the High Mound is different today. The Corona images show that on the west this rise did continue around the western side of the site. From the air photos we had taken in 1984 it appears that the rise on the west no longer existed. The earlier images show that a wadi went through the western part of the Outer City between the High Mound and the modern village. We had verified this through a sounding that showed the existence of deposits consonant with the hypothesis of a river bed. Subsequent work by K. Deckers on the geomorphology of the area verified the ancient presence of a wadi in this part of the site.³⁶

The low rise marking the perimeter of the Outer City lies at a distance of about 400 meters from the High Mound.³⁷ The reasons for interpreting this rise as a city wall are not based on excavations: a small sounding conducted during our first season yielded a deposit of pebble layers, which may be interpreted as a fill within a casemate type of wall. But the conclusion equating the rise with some type of wall seems inescapable given (1) the very specific linear nature of the rise, (2) the sharp contrast between the areas inside the rise and those outside (the first rich with cultural deposits, the second sterile),³⁸ and (3) the important results of Pfälzner's geophysical survey of a portion on the south.³⁹

34 Dohmann-Pfälzner/Pfälzner 2001; Dohmann-Pfälzner/Pfälzner 2002.

35 Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988: 55–56.

36 Deckers 2010: 360–378.

37 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 1988: Fig. 6.

38 Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988: 56.

39 Pfälzner/Wissing 2004; Pfälzner 2010. Their observation (pp. 51–53) about the polygonal nature of the outer city wall is important, because of the contrast with the oval configuration of the so-called “Kranzhügel” cities. The Corona image in Ill. 9 suggests that the western side may have been a longer straight segment of the city wall, perhaps because it was running parallel to the wadi coming from the north.

In the eastern portion of the Outer City, just within the rise, we excavated what appears to be part of an Early Dynastic III administrative area (labeled OH2). Sitting on a floor, about a meter below the surface, were a number of ED III door sealings and ceramics. The discovery of an ED III administrative area on the eastern border of the city is not surprising. In our initial foot survey and in all subsequent work in the Outer City, we have found a large number of ceramics from this period on the surface.⁴⁰ This richness of ED III material on the surface was not found for later periods. Our reconstruction of the developmental history of the site in this period indicated that the High Mound was extensively utilized and the Outer City was occupied as well.⁴¹

Conclusions

The creation of a dramatic ritual landscape in Mozan, highlighted here for the fourth and third millennia, we can imagine would have had a profound effect on the inhabitants of the city itself, its visitors and passing travelers. The idea of the re-creation of the surrounding landscape for ritual purposes seems to have originated in the fourth millennium. With the political will, the economic strength, the social cohesion and perceived ritual imperative, the elite of Mozan were able to imagine and create an imitated reflection of the mountain as a home for the deity. In the third millennium the intensification of ritual activity could only have served a political strategy as well. The purpose of this strategy must have included the appropriate respect for the deity with the establishment and maintenance of a monumental home, but this would obviously have reverberated onto the city giving it added prestige as a conspicuous gateway to the mountains in the north and alternatively to the plains in the south. The pattern for a bounded ritual space that included a built mound as a support for a temple or temples with a revetment wall at its base and a monumental stairway as a controlled access flanked by an apron continued until the late Mitanni period.

In our excavations we have considered seriously the ancient's perception of this built environment they created. Here I will give two examples.⁴²

On a given Friday during the excavations we would rent a large open bed truck and took a trip with the staff and visitors all along a wide arc around the site. As we stood in the back of the truck on numerous occasions, we became increasingly sensitized to the hinterland of the city (as shown in Fig. 5). What was always especially impressive was the view of the constructed "mountain" foregrounding the "real" mountains on the not too distant northern horizon. Bradley's concept of monuments patterning and in some way controlling the landscape always struck me with its full force on these trips.

40 Thompson-Miragliuolo 1988: 49–56; Pfälzner/Wissing 2004: Fig. 15. Caitlin Chaves is currently writing her dissertation on her work in the Outer City.

41 Buccellati/Kelly-Buccellati 1999: 7–16. Subsequently our reconstructions on the basis of our research were confirmed by the German team working with us at the site from 1998 to 2002 (Pfälzner/Wissing 2004).

42 These two examples were initiated and carried out by my husband, G. Buccellati, who received the Archaeological Institute of America's first ever award for Best Practices in Conservation and Site Preservation in 2011. See Buccellati 2010b.



Fig. 10 Kite view of the widened transect aimed at recreating the perceptual view the ancients had of the Temple Terrace with its monumental stairway, and the revetment wall as seen from the southernmost end of the Plaza.

My second example is one from the excavations themselves. A basic underlying question was: how did the ancients perceive the ritual context from within the city? To answer the question of perception we widened the excavated area of the ancient Plaza, extending it from the base of the monumental stairway through a long transect in a southern direction (Fig. 10). The aim was to open a space that would allow us to view the monumental staircase and the revetment wall encasing the Temple Terrace, plus of course the temple itself at the top, from the southern end of the Plaza and at the same elevation it had in antiquity. This would allow us and the visitors to experience what the ancients would have seen when looking at the ritual complex. This complex towered in its mountain-like appearance, dominating both the city and the plain. The Plaza was the middle ground between the plain level and the Terrace itself, as if a wide step, a landing on the ascent towards the focal point of the entire construction, the temple itself, presumably dedicated to the supreme deity of Urkeš and of its mountain hinterland, Kumarbi.

Appendix

C14 determinations for seeds associated with the LC3 structure (by Erwin Taylor)

Irvine Lab Number	¹⁴ C age (yrs BP)	Calibration (cal BC yrs)
UCIAMS-93490	4815±15	3645-3630 (0.39) 3565-3535 (0.57)
UCIAMS-96019	4800±15	3640-3630 (0.19) 3585-3530 (0.81)
UCIAMS-93491	4790±15	3640-3625 (0.15) 3590-3530 (0.85)
UCIAMS-96020	4785±15	3640-3625 (0.13) 3590-3525 (0.87)

Radiocarbon measurements obtained at the Keck Carbon Cycle Accelerator Mass Spectrometry Laboratory, Department of Earth System Science, University of California, Irvine with the collaboration of Dr. John R. Southon .

Calibration of the ¹⁴C age for each measurement utilized CALIB 6.0.0 program protocols employing the Intcal09 data set (Reimer et al. 2009). Single interval 2σ range calibration values are expressed for intercepts representing ≥ 0.95 of the relative area under the probability distribution. In cases of multiple intercepts, the 2σ ranges with relative areas under probability distribution of ≥ 0.05 are noted in parenthesis for intercept separations of ≥ 20 yrs. Age ranges are rounded to nearest 5 yrs increments.

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