Facing the centuries

The wall in front of you was built around 2600 B.C. It encased the terrace that sloped up to the temple you see in the distance. It remained in use for over 1000 years. In the last centuries of Urkesh (1500 to 1200 B.C.) the plaza was filled in, and the effect was lost – much as it is lost today. In order to recapture the original perception of this vast sacred space, you are invited to walk down the steps on your left to the level of the ancient plaza.
Sections - time seen through space

Sections are an essential aspect of archaeological work. They show us a cut through the materials that have accumulated sometime over centuries. They are, physically, a measure of time.

Looking at them, you understand well the concept of stratum. It is a slice through space that corresponds to a period in time. Everything that is found in that slice was in use at the same moment in time.

The concept of stratum is fundamental in archaeology. You may well ask yourselves how we can date the wall in front you to 2600 B.C. and the strata in the facing section to twelve centuries later. It is because of the items (written documents, ceramics, carbonized wood) found in strata associated with each of these structures.

This is also what distinguishes true archaeology from treasure hunting.

On your tour of Tell Mozan, you will see many examples of sections. We protect and explain them with the same care reserved for monuments. The curtain is of the same type we use for mudbrick walls, except for the painted stripes: these help you to see at a glance the difference between sections and walls.

المقاطع: رؤية عبر الزمن من خلال المكان

تعتبر المقاطع الأثرية ناحية أساسية في العمل الأثري، فهي تُظهر لنا مقطعًا للمواضئ التي تراكمت في زمن ما، على مدى قرون. فهي تشكل القياس الملموس للزمن.

بالنظر إلى هذه المقاطع تستطيع إدراك مفهوم التتابع الزمني بشكل جيد. فهي نظرة في المكان الذي يتوافق مع فترة معينة من الزمن. كل ما وجد في ذلك المكان كان يستعمل في نفس اللحظة من الزمن المتوافق معه.

مفهوم التتابع الزمني أساسي في علم الآثار. قد تُمتد نفسك كيف استطعنا تاريخ الجدار الظاهرة أمامك إلى عام 2600 ق.م. والطبقات في المقطع المقابل إلى 12 قرن لاحق. وذلك من خلال اللقى (الوثائق المكتوبة، الفخار والكربون 14)، التي عثر عليها في الطبقات المرتبطة مع كل بناء من هذه الأبنية.

هذا أيضًا ما يميز علم الآثار الحقيقي عن هاوي صيد الكنوز.

خلال جولتك في تل موزان، سوف تشاهد عدة أمثلة عن المقاطع التي نحن بها ونشرح عنها بنفس الاهتمام الذي نوليه للأوابد السوئات التي تحمي المقاطع هي من نفس النوع المستخدم في حماية جدران اللبن، ما عدا الفرق في الخطوط المرسومة، والتي تساعدها على التمييز بملحة إلى الفرق بين المقاطع و الجدران، على امتداد الموقع.
The clash of centuries

The three meters of accumulations in front of you were deposited in just a little over a century (1400-1300 B.C.)

The wall against which the accumulations rose was built some twelve centuries earlier. And it stood, fully visible, for those twelve centuries.

The layers at the bottom date to the same period as the wall (you will see more details in the next panel). So the later layers lay directly above and against layers that had remained exposed for more than a millennium.

Why?

The answer is in the fact that to the south (your right) new buildings were erected which blocked the Plaza. This caused the Plaza to become a basin – and as a result it filled up relatively rapidly.

That is the archaeologist’s secret: to see connections across space that are not immediately apparent. This is why our trade is often compared to that of a sleuth, our story to a detective novel…
Facing the centuries

In archaeology, you dig from the top and count from the bottom. It is obvious why, when you look at the section. As time passes, things accumulate on top of each other. There are five main horizons in Urkesh history.

(1) Under a metal cover to your left, there is the earliest wall that parallels the big wall – but is some eight centuries older. This was the time when cities started, and so did Urkesh, which begins to define its Hurrian identity.

(2) Next, cities develop into more assertive states, and Syro-Mesopotamia develops into a coherent cultural entity. That is when the large stone wall was built for the Temple Terrace.

(3) The first empire (Akkad) controls all of Syro-Mesopotamia, but leaves Urkesh alone, as the safest access to the mountain resources. This is the time of the Palace you will see later.

(4) By 2000, Urkesh has shrunk but retains its significance as a Hurrian religious center under the “Amorite” kingdoms (the “Khabur” period). We have many graves from this period, especially above the abandoned Palace.

(5) The last three centuries of Urkesh coincide with the last three centuries of the Hurrians, now represented by the powerful state of Mittani. Until the end, Urkesh functions as a Hurrian shrine.
On most panels and generally on the upper right, you will find a logo with one or more of the maps and date bars given below. This will help you situate yourself immediately at the place and time to which the panel refers.
(1) The layers are very regular, showing how evenly the buildup accumulated in the Plaza, against the wall of the Temple Terrace. They consist of dust deposited by the wind, then compacted by rain (even snow) and the trampling of people walking.

(2) There is no trace of any later intrusions such as pits, graves, tannurs. Nor is there any trace of dumping. This means that the Plaza was a highly privileged space – because of its sacrality.

(3) The accumulations grew to a point where the revetment wall of the Terrace was entirely covered and thus no longer visible. This was allowed to happen because the focal point of the Temple had shifted from east to west.
The ancient perception

Archaeology is like vertical tourism.
We visit landscapes and people from times long since past.
And we want to make our own the basic feelings these ancient forebears experienced. Just as we do when we visit not other times, but other countries.
It is, through archaeology, the country of the past that we visit.
But we must not fantasize. Here is where scholarship can lead us by the hand.
It tells us what are the reasonable patterns that truly reflect the ancient perception.

Here is a beautiful example. Look at the wall in front of you. We have taken you all the way down to this level so that you may be able to see it as the ancients did, looking up at it from the Plaza, where you are standing. And not from above, like an animal in a zoo...

Now think. The wall was built 46 centuries ago, even before the pyramids. As we showed you in the previous panel, the wall remained unimpeded for at least twelve centuries, and only then did it gradually become obliterated by the accumulations that buried it from view – and thus happily preserved it for us. For all that time the Plaza, the one where you are standing, remained a privileged space, unsullied. Can you share in the sense of awe that induced the ancients to so respect this sacred space?

Look more carefully now. Do you recognize any patterns?
Here is a curious pattern for a wall – triangles! And it is not accidental. You will see it also in one of the next stops, to the left of the main staircase. It is too pronounced to be accidental – and it seems to occur at other sites as well.

It seems not very practical as a construction technique. So we ask: could it have a symbolic function?

Rows of rounded triangles are found frequently in Mesopotamian art – as in this Akkadian seal. Three triangles are also the cuneiform sign for mountain. Could our wall be like a pointer to the Hurrian homeland – the mountains you see in the distance?

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Here we have a motif that is quite common: a series of triangles. This pattern seems to appear consistently across various sites. It is not clear if this is purely a decorative element or if it has some symbolic significance.

Rows of these rounded triangles are often found in Mesopotamian art, as seen on this Akkadian seal. Three triangles are identifiable in the cuneiform sign for mountain. Could this wall be a symbolic pointer to the Hurrian homeland, with the mountains in the distance serving as a geographical indicator?

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This motif is common in Mesopotamian art, as seen on this Akkadian seal. Three triangles are identifiable in the cuneiform sign for mountain. Could this wall be a symbolic pointer to the Hurrian homeland, with the mountains in the distance serving as a geographical indicator?
Escarpments and curtain walls

In antiquity, you would look up at the wall from the lower level of the Plaza. But the wall itself was charged with meaning. It set a boundary between the sphere of humanity and that of the gods. It was a barrier.

To emphasize this message, the wall itself was set up higher. A steep escarpment protected its base and raised it to a higher plane, symbolically as well as physically.

The first escarpment was built with the wall itself. The second only two centuries later.

Then, when the Plaza had become a basin, the accumulations began to grow and the Plaza floor rose to where it met the wall itself, canceling the effect that was intended by the escarpment. At this point, low curtain walls were erected that shielded the wall from easy direct access. One is shown here in the lower picture, as it was when first excavated. We have since removed it, but you see traces of it in the sections.

In the cell, you'll notice to the left a single wall from another level of the Plaza. But the wall itself was charged with meaning. It set a boundary between the sphere of humanity and that of the gods. It was a barrier.

To emphasize this message, the wall itself was set up higher. A steep escarpment protected its base and raised it to a higher plane, symbolically as well as physically.

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If you look back from the wall, you see the same type of leveling in the direction of the Plaza, to the southwest (your right). The Mitanni levels dipped around 1400 B.C. more progressively than they are perfectly flat. 

Looking at the Plaza
(1) The accumulations to the south, immediately below the Mittani levels, date to Ninevite V. It seems likely that these early floors were still visible in Mittani times, because we have found no evidence of Mittani period cuts that would have removed the later layers.

(2) The metal cover in front of the large 3rd millennium stone wall protects the remnants of what appears to be an earlier wall – parallel in orientation and structurally analogous to the later wall. The ceramics from the soundings is Late Chalcolithic 3, as in all other soundings below the third millennium levels. Hence we assume this is a 4th millennium antecedent of the revetment wall, about 12 m. above the ancient plain level.
A bird’s eye view

From this panoramic vista point you can gain a comprehensive view of the great Terrace wall and of the staircase – both built around 2600 B.C. It is not how the ancients saw it (the next stop will take you down to their level ...). But the view from up here, aided by the descriptive panels in front of you, offer you a good synthetic survey of the visual and the historical dimensions of this great monument.

المنظر
من عين الطائر
من مركز المشاهدة (البانوراما) هنا، بإمكانك أن تحقق رؤية واسعة تشتمل على كل من جدار المصطبة الضخم والدرج الذين بُنيا حوالي 2600 قم. هذه الرؤية تختلف عن رؤية القدماء لهما (مركز المشاهدة التالي سوف يهبط بك إلى سویتهم...). لكن المشهد من أعلى هنا، والمرفق لوحات الوصف أمامك، يزودك برؤية مركبة جيدة لامتداد هذا الصرح العظيم زماناً ومكاناً.
Facing the transcendence

From the high vista point behind us we looked down at the staircase as a bird would. Now we descend to the level where humans stood – and still stand. We have excavated a large portion of the Plaza specifically in order to make it possible for you to walk on the ground the ancients trod. As you approach the staircase, be mindful of the rich meaning it held for those who approached it thousands of years ago.

في مواجهة السموم
من مركز المشاهدة المرتفع خلفنا، نظرنا إلى الأسفل باتجاه الدراج كما يفعل الطائر. الآن ننزل إلى السوية حيث وقف البشر سابقاً - ولا زالوا يقفون. لقد نقبنا قطاعاً كبيراً من البلارا بشكل خاص، لكي نمكنك من السير على الأرض التي وطئها القدماء. باقتراب من الدراج، حاول إدراك المعنى العميق الذي حمله لهؤلاء الذين دنو إليه منذ آلاف السنين.
The boundary

In the distance, you see the staircase and the Terrace, with the Temple on top. We opened this large swath to gain a visual foothold that might allow us to recapture the perceptual experience of the ancients as they approached their shrine from the southern end of the Plaza. The excavations are not completed, but you can already enjoy a good approximation of what the final result will be.

You will now walk along the path and approach, as the ancients did, the Temple complex. There would not have been, of course, the corridor effect that our excavations have created. But there would have been a steep edge to the east (your right). This was a sharp boundary between the privileged space of the Plaza (kept immaculately clean over the centuries) and the constant buildup to the east.

الحدّ الفاصل

على بعد مسافة قصيرة، بإمكانك رؤية الدرج والمصطلبة التي يتوج المعبد قمتها. لقد فتحنا هذا الممر الكبير للاكتساب رؤية خلال مسيرنا فيه، تساعدنا على استرجاع تجربة القدماء الحسية بينما كانوا يدنون من مُقدِسينهم، قادمين من الحدود الجنوبية للساحة. إن أعمال التنقيب غير مكتملة، لكن بإمكانك الاستمتع بمقارنة جيدة لما قد تكون عليه نتائج التنقيب الأخيرة.

سوف تسير الآن على طول المعبر وسوف تقترب، كما فعل القدماء، من مُجمع المعبد. بالتأكيد، لم يكن هذا الممر بهذا الشكل-

الحاصل نتيجة أعمال التنقيب. لكن ربما كان هناك حافة حادة باتجاه الشرق (على يمينك). هذا ما شكل حدوتا واضحة بين فضاء الساحة الاستثنائي (الذي حافظ على خلو الصافي عبر القرون) ومنطقة الإعمار المتناهي باتجاه الشرق.
This portion will be excavated in 2009 to widen the field of vision.
Literally, a bird…

We entrust our camera to a kite that, like its namesake, soars with the wind and faithfully brings back images.

In the aerial view to the right you see the entire area from this southern edge of the Plaza to the Temple at the top. You see clearly the “boundary” which is on your right as you walk towards the staircase. The other limits of the Plaza are also fairly certain.

It is too early, instead, to say where the limits of the Temple Terrace are. The dotted line shows the projection we currently think is most plausible.
(1) The large excavation that has opened up a perspective towards the Temple Terrace (behind you) was undertaken in 2008 as a special effort to answer the need of the many additional workmen who were seeking employment because of the drought in the preceding winter. Work in the Plaza requires less supervision because the deposition contains no structures, but only accumulations with hardly any objects. Even so, we could not fully complete the project, and will have to continue next year.

(2) Since no conservation was done in the area in front of you, it is not included in our itinerary.
The great ascent

You are now ready to climb the stairs. There are two important lessons to be learnt. The first is archaeological. The sections will teach us a most important historical lesson, and will enlighten us on the final years of Urkesh’ history. The second is perceptual. Was the ascent a casual stroll, that anybody in the city could take, or was it laden with meaning, and reserved only for religious occasions?

الارتقاء العظيم

أنت الآن مستعد لصعود الدرج، حيث توجد فكرتين أساسيتين للفهم. الأولى أثرية، فالمقطع سوف يقدم لنا لمحة تاريخية هامة، وسينورنا بالسنين الأخيرة من تاريخ أوركيش. الفكرة الثانية حساسة، إذ هل كان الدرج مُعبًراً عاماً، بإمكان أي شخص في المدينة أن يجتازه، أم كان عبوره ذو معنى، وحُفِظ فقط للمُ المناسبات الدينية؟
From section to section

You have been walking through a “corridor” flanked by sections, and you now face wall and staircase, again flanked by sections.

Like a doctor reading X-rays, you are beginning to read behind the cuts we make in the mound. You can see how ancient volumes, still unexcavated and thus hidden, can be visualized.

Look at your left. The neat and level sequence of layers is identical to the one you just saw in the other side (stop 1). It is in fact the same. Or so we can assume. It stretches across a distance of some 40 meters to the west (your left).

The accumulations that gradually covered escarpment and wall on the other side, also covered wall and staircase on this side. Once again, you can read time through space.

But there is here a new element, one that proved to be decisive in explaining many things about the history of Urkesh. Look and see if you detect something in the sections that is different from what you saw before. The next panel at the top of the stairs will tell you what we see.
Sections against the revetment wall similar to those you saw in Stop 1
A mountain in the city

To the left of the staircase you will see another “mountain triangle,” like the one we first recognized on the wall you saw on the other side. It is, indeed, the same wall. So it stands to reason that the triangle motif should continue.

Notice how very rough this wall is, in contrast with the staircase to your right and the wall that flanks the staircase.

We like to think that this was intentional. The great wall is a barrier, emulating the mountains in the distance. The triangle motif emphasizes this perception. The staircase and the wall that flanks it, with well hewn stones, is a bridge across the barrier – a bridge created by our human culture. We see the city emerge as a way of re-inventing nature.

جبل في المدينة

إلى اليسار من الدرج، سترى جبل مثلثات آخر، تماماً كالذي استطعنا ملاحظته على الجدار الذي رأيته في الجانب الآخر. إنه بالفعل نفس الجدار، لذلك من المنطقي أن نشاهد عليه نفس نمط المثلثات. لاحظ مدى خشونة هذا الجدار بالمقارنة مع الدرج إلى يمينك و الجدار المحيط بجوانب الدرج.

نود أن نعتقد أن هذا كان مقصوداً، فالجدار الكبير يمثل حاجزاً يحاكي الجبال في الأفق. نمط المثلثات يعزز وجهة النظر هذه. الدرج والجدار الذي يحيط بجوانبه، بحجارته الممتازة التوضع، يشكل جسراً عبر الحاجز، جسر ابتكرته ثقافتنا الإنسانية. انا نرى شكل المدينة يشبه إعادة خلق للطبيعه.
Before 2600 B.C.
1 earliest steps & pavements

2600 B.C.
2 staircase
3 “apron”
4 eastern wall

2400 B.C.
5 western wall

2100 B.C.
6 escarpment (red)

1500-1400 B.C.
7 early Mittani accumulations

1400 B.C.
8 first Mittani pavement
9 second Mittani pavement
10 ash layer
11 great brickfall
12 brickmelt

1400-1300 B.C.
13 late Mittani accumulations

1500 - 1400 B.C.
7-13: The Mittani accumulations and the ashes were used extensively during this period.

1400 B.C.
8-11: The first Mittani pavement and ash layer were used extensively during this period.

1400-1300 B.C.
14-16: The second Mittani pavement and ash layer were used extensively during this period.

2100 B.C.
2-5: The escarpment and western wall were used extensively during this period.

The diagram illustrates the sequential events and the usage of these structures.
The photo showing the great brickfall was taken before excavations were completed. The baulks in the center are still showing, and the two oblique stones have not yet been exposed. But the wide panorama gives an effective overview of the entire area.

The area in front of the “apron” is covered with our backfill from earlier seasons. By early Mittani times, the area to your left had already been built up to a level much higher than the area in front of the staircase. This is because of the sharp functional (if not structural) boundary between the service sector (left) and the Plaza (right).

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The Temple of the Lion

At the summit of the Terrace, and today of the tell, there was the Temple. You have seen already a synthetic overview in the “panorama” atop the vista point. We found only the foundations of the building that was in use around 2400 B.C., and we have added a partial reconstruction in modern mud-brick.

معبد الأسد

على قمة المصطبة - قمة التل اليوم - كان هناك المعبد. لقد شاهدت للتو المنظر المركب من أعلى "البانوراما" (مركز المشاهدة). لقد وجدنا فقط أساسات البناء الذي كان مستخدماً حوالي 2400ق.م، كما تمت إعادة بناء جزئية باستخدام قرميدات لين حديثة.
A ritual burying of the Temple (?)

Here is where we began our excavations in 1984. To our astonishment, we found mid third millennium layers immediately below the surface (phase A1). And it quickly became apparent that this was a temple: the “bent axis” approach (i.e., entering the sacred space from one end of the long side) and the altar (the monolith visible in the middle of the floor) were telltale signs.

A rebuilding in phase A2 (dated to the late third millennium) changed the entrance to the narrow side.

And then, on top (phase A3) we found a curious wide trench, packed with sand-like clean fill (shown here in yellow). No ceramic material was clearly associated with it, so that we could not date it other than attributing it to the second millennium.

For reasons that will become clear at the end of the tour, we now assume that this trench (which overlays the earlier walls) may have been the ritual burial of the earlier temple, at a time (Mittani) when a new temple was built somewhere else on top of the Temple Terrace.
The lions of Urkesh

Before our excavations, Urkesh was renowned especially because of two bronze statues, each representing a lion in a different posture – one in a static stance holding a stone tablet (now at the Louvre), the other with a dynamic twist of the body looking askance (now at the Metropolitan). Bought on the antiquities market in 1948, they were known to come from Urkesh because of the cuneiform inscription inscribed on the tablet and on the bronze flange.

During our excavations, we found the statue of another lion, this one in stone. We assume that the bronze lions came from our temple as well (see inset below). The god to whom the Temple is dedicated (according to the bronze lions) is identified as NERGAL, which we interpret to be a logogram for Kumarbi, the main god of the Hurrian pantheon. The temple of the lion would then be the temple of Ku-marbi. It is, so far, the only temple excavated at Mozan.

أسوِدُ أوركِيش

قبل بدء تنقيبنا، كانت أوركيش مشهورة و يعود ذلك على وجه الخصوص لتماثلين برونزين صغيرين، يمثل كل منهما أسداً بوضعية مختلفة – أحدهما بوضعية الواقف الثابت يحمل رقماً حجرياً (محفوظ الآن في متحف اللوفر)، الآخر بوضعية جسمية حيث ينظر شرزاً (محفوظ الآن في متحف الميتروبوليتان). تم بيعهما في أحد متاجر الآثار عام 1948، و قد عرف أنها قادمين من أوركيش بفضل النقش المسماري المحفور على الرقم وعلى الطرف البرونزي. أما خلال تنقيبنا، فقد عثرنا على تمثال صغير لأسد آخر، وهذا الأخير كان من الحجر. كما أننا نعتقد أن الأسدون البرونزيين قد جاءا من المعبد أيضاً (أي أن الكثير من الأسدين البرونزيين) وعرف ب"نرجال" والذي نفترض أنه المقطع الصوتي المقابل ل"كوماري" الإله الرئيسي في مجمع الآلهة الحورية. وعليه، فإن معبد الأسد يمكن أن يكون معبد كوماري. وهو – حتى الآن – المعبد الوحيد المكتشف في موزان.
We assume that the two bronze lions were part of a foundation deposit placed at the entrance of the Temple, and that they were discovered accidentally by local inhabitants digging to bury their dead. Our assumption is that they removed one or more of the slabs of the entrance ramp of the Temple, found the box and decided to move to a different location (there is a small burial ground to the northeast).
Projecting the Palace

From this panoramic vista point you have both a visual and a conceptual overview of the Palace of Tupkish, built around 2250 B.C.

But the excavations have brought to light only a portion of the full Palace – the service wing in its entirety (to the left) and a small portion of the residential and administrative sectors (to you right). Also, the northern portion of the Palace remains unexcavated.

In the distance to your right you see a yellow metal corner that marks the projected northeastern corner of the Palace. This gives you an idea of how much more there is to do in the coming years, if we want to expose the rest of the Palace...

المخطط المقترض للقصر

من مركز المشاهدة (البانوراما) هذا، يمكنك تحصيل رؤية بصرية و علمية لقصر "توبكيش", الذي بُني حوالي 2250 ق.م.
لكن التنقيبات كشفت فقط جزءاً من القصر - الجناح الخدمي كاملاً (إلى اليسار), وجزءاً صغيراً من القطاعين السكني والإداري (إلى يمينك). أما عن الجزء الشمالي من القصر فلم يقترب بعد.
على بعد مسافة إلى يمينك ترى زاوية معدنية صفراء، والتي تشير إلى زاوية القصر الشمالية الشرقية المقترحة. إن هذا كفيل بإعطائك فكرة عن كم الجهد الإضافي الواجب عمله في السنوات المقبلة، في حال أردنا الكشف عن بقية القصر....
Descent to the Netherworld

The structure to your right was not visible from the outside as our protective cover seems to suggest. It was entirely underground, and only a small cave like entrance would have been visible, blocked by a couple of boulders instead of a regular door panel. (These boulders are simulated by the two metal boxes we have placed in front of entrance.)

Here and throughout the Palace you will be more dependent, for explanations and illustrations, on the panoramic panel at stop 6, and on the binder that our guard will show you. This is because we are in a transitional phase in our signage. We are experimenting with the small metal panels you have seen so far on your itinerary. If successful, we will replace the binder with such panels throughout.

الهبوط إلى العالم السفلي

المبنى إلى يمينك لم يكن مرئياً من الخارج كما قد ينوي الغطاء الحامي الذي وضعناه. لقد كان مطموراً بشكل كامل تحت الأرض، لكن ربما فقط بوابة صغيرة تشبه الكهف كانت مرئية، ومغلقة ببحريين كبيرين عوضاً عن لوحة الباب الاعتيادية. (تم تمثيل هذين الحجرين ببسطارتين معدنيتين وضعناهما أمام المدخل.)

هذا عبر القصر، سوف تتشابه الشروحاوات والصور التوضيحية على لوحة الباب لبانوراما في الوقفة 6، وفي المجلد الذي سيعرضه عليك الحارس. كل هذا لأننا نمر بمرحلة إنتقالية في وضع لوحات الدلالة. إذا نختار الآن اللوحات المعدنية الصغيرة التي رأيتها توجًا في دليل الزائر. إذا نجح الاختبار سوف نستعجاز عن المجلد بهذه اللوحات عبر المكان.
We did not find, as yet, the entrance to the Palace. To visit the Service wing, you are now entering through a breach in the wall and if you follow the red line you will see three of the preserved sectors.

C – royal wardrobe (uncertain)
   1 – toilet
   2 – courtyard
   3 – highest preserved wall
   4 – control room

D – kitchen
   7 – cooking installations
   8 – service courtyard

A – administration (? – eroded)

B – storeroom
   5 – iwan
   6 – large storage room

C – ﻟﺨﺪمﻲ ﻓﻲ ﻋﻠﻰ

D – ﻣﻄﺒﺦ

A – إداري (؟- متآكل)

B – مخزن

5 – إیوان

6 – غرفة تخزين كبيرة
Reception suite of the Palace

Just as in the Service wing, here, too, we enter through a breach in the wall. The blue arrow shows the projection of a possible entrance to the Formal wing. The few rooms excavated so far seem to correspond to the reception suite, where the king would receive important visitors.

1 – Originally with a white pavement and white plaster on the walls, and with a drain, this was probably a room for freshening up
2 – the formal courtyard
3 – access to the courtyard
4 – possibly a waiting room

1- كانت هذه الغرفة في الأصل ذات أرضية بيضاء وكسرة حصبة بيضاء على الجدران، وتحوي على صرف صحي، من الممكن أن تكون غرفة للاستراحة.
2- البارحة الرسمية
3- مدخل إلى البارحة
4- ربما غرفة انتظار
The formal courtyard

This is only a portion of the full courtyard. Given the position of the entrance and the slope of the pavement, we assume that the full courtyard, when excavated, will be about three times as large.

The position in the plan of the Palace (as far as we know it at the moment) and the quality of the architecture suggest that this was the focal point of the reception suit, where important visitors would have been admitted in the presence of the king.

(We are experimenting in this panel with an option to present multiple images in bound format. The measure of the success will be whether the panel survives the winter... If so, this model will give us an opportunity to further expand our graphic offerings.)
A precise drawing of the section in front of you gives a full rendering of each visible detail.

 إن رسمًا دقيقًا للمقطع الذي أمامك يقدم لك نقلاً كاملاً لكل تفصيل مرنًا.

The last layer to be removed before fully exposing the stone pavement contained the collapse of the red brick walls of the first phase of the Palace.

 الطبقة الأخيرة التي يتوجب إزالتها للكشف الأرضية الحجرية بشكل كامل، تحتوي على انهيار جدران اللبن الأحمر العائدة إلى المرحلة الأولى للفناء.

From the same angle as in the photo above you now see the pavement completely exposed.

 من نفس الزاوية في الصورة أعلاه، بإمكانك الآن رؤية الأرضية مكشوفة بشكل كامل.

Another earlier moment in the excavations of the stone pavement.

 صورة قديمة أخرى أثناء التنقيب عن الأرضية الحجرية
A burial at the bottom of a deep pit excavated about four centuries after the abandonment of the Palace, when the pavement was no longer visible.

An overhead view of the stone pavement showing the top of a baked brick structure, presumably a tank for water (now backfilled).

A detail of the baked brick structure.

A human body interred in one of the graves above the section on your right.
The tablet in the wall

At this spot on the floor we found a small clay tablet. Unassuming because not inscribed, it may in fact be more significant than it first appears.

It bears the plan of a three room suite, with a small cross on the lower right. Remarkably, the plan matches that of the three rooms to your right (in red on the floor plan above).

We assume that it was the plan used by an ancient surveyor (the “father of the rope” as he was called), who would stretch out a rope from a benchmark in the ground, and measure out a distance proportional to the distance from the little crossbar on the tablet. Once all distances had been measured, the tablet was no longer needed. This one was dumped in the wall in front of you, and from there it dribbled down to the floor when the wall collapsed.

الرَقِيمِ في الجدار

١٨٨٩

إِذَا يَحْتِلَ مَخْطِطًا لَجَنَاح سَكَنَي مُؤَلِّفٍ مِنْ ثَلاَثِ غَرَف، مَروَقَةَ بِخْطِ مَتَصَالِب
صَغِيرٍ فِي أَسْفَلِ الْيَمِين. وَمِن الْوَاحِظِ أَنَّ المَخْطَطِ يَوَافِقُ الْغَرَفِ الثَّلَاثِ عَلَى يَمِينِك
(تَزَا رَا بِاللَّوْنِ الأَحْمِرِ عَلَى مَخْطَطِ الأَرْضِيَةِ أَعْلَاهُ).

إِنَّا نَفْتَرَضُ أَنَّهَا كانَ المَخْطَطُ المَسْتَخْدِمُ مِنْ بَيْنِ خَبِيرِ مَسَاحَاتٍ قَدِيمٍ ("أَبِي
الْجَبَل" كَمَا كَانَ يَدْعَى سَابِقًا)، إِذَا كَانَ يَمَدَّ حِيْلاً مِنْ نَقْطَةٍ إِسْتَنْدَادٍ عَلَى الأَرْضِ وَيُقَسِّمُ
الْمَسَاحَةِ بَيْنَمَا يَتَنَاسَبُ بِمَسَاحَةَ الْخَطِ السَّتَعُرَصُ الصَّغِيرُ عَلَى اللَّوْحِ الطَّينِي.
وَعِنْدَمَا يَتمَّ قِيَاسُ كُلِّ المَسَاحَاتِ، لَا حَاجَةٌ لِلرَقِيمِ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ. وَهَذَا الرَقِيمُ كَانَ قد طُمِرَ
في الجدار الذي أمامك، وَمِن هَذَا سُقِطَ عَلَى الأَرْضِ عِنْدَما انْهَارَ الجِدار.
Here is the statue of a southern Sumerian king, Gudea (slightly later than the time of our Palace). He cradles the floor plan of a temple on his lap. The detail view of the floor plan shows a graduated scale below the drawing.

هنا نشاهد تمثالاً لملك سومري جنوبي، جوديا (بعد عصر القصر هذا بوقت قليل). إنه يحمل مخطط أرضية معد على حضنه. الصورة التفصيلية لمخطط الأرضية يبين مقياسًا مُدرجًا أسفل الرسم.
Around 2150 B.C. the Palace was abandoned. It was as if it had gone to sleep, because we can see no trace of violent destruction. And so it came to be overlaid by the activities of people who came in the following centuries. First (2150-1900 B.C.), this became an open area, where among other things the dead were buried in simple shafts. Then (about 1900-1700 B.C.) there were semi-industrial installations like pottery kilns, from which came the large dumps you see in section. This was followed (about 1700-1500 B.C.) by built-up graves in the shape of small houses which you see shrouded in front of you. Finally, after a massive brickfall, this area developed into the main service quarter for the Temple.
We are back at the beginning of our journey into time. In front of the great staircase we saw, as we called it, the beginning of the end: a great brickfall that began to obliterate the lower steps of the staircase.

Here we see the completion of our story: another staircase, replacing the older access to a Temple that had slightly shifted in axis.

It was a comprehensive re-organization of the urban and sacral space, which we can reconstruct in some detail – and of which we gain an excellent overview from this vista point.
A look at the past (2600 B.C.)

At the extreme end of the excavations in front of you, you barely see the wall that stood astride the great staircase. And deep down, slightly to the right, you see the great section that hovers above the ancient floor of the Plaza. You may remember that we called it “The clash of the centuries,” because the thick accumulations of the last century in the life of Urkesh (1400 B.C.) overlaid directly the much earlier floors of the time when the wall was first built (2600 B.C.).

From this vista point, you see the large revetment wall of the Plaza come in our direction, until it takes a sharp turn to the north (see the photo to the right). That was the end of the Terrace in the early periods, and it was the northern end of the Plaza as well.

نظرية إلى الماضي (2600 ق.م.)

عند أقصى نهاية للتنقيبات أمامك، بالكاد ترى الجدار الذي يلتقي مع الدرج الضخم. وفي الأسفل عميقًا، قليلًا باتجاه اليمين، ترى المصطغد الضخم الذي يعلو فوق أرضية الساحة القديمة. ربما تذكر أننا أسميناه "تضارب القرون" لأن الركام السميك في القرن الأخير من حياة أوركеш (1400 ق. م) يغطي مباشرة أجزاء من الأراضي الأقدم، تزامناً مع الوقت الذي بني فيه الجدار قديماً (2600 ق. م).

من مركز المشاهدة هذا، ترى الجدار الإستداني الضخم للساحة قدماً باتجاهنا، حتى ينخفض بزاوية حادة نحو الشمال (انظر إلى الصورة المرفقة على اليمين). هذه كانت نهاية حدود المصطبة في الفترة الباكرة، كما كانت أيضاً الحدود الشمالية للساحة.
A look at … the present (1400 B.C.)

When the large staircase to the east came into disuse (because of the brickfall we saw in Stop 4), the whole organization of the sacral and urban space changed configuration: the main access to the Temple was now from the west, through the new (smaller) staircase you see to the left in front of you. At that point, they also added a border (see the photo to the right), which continued the line of the earlier revetment wall. This earlier wall was very soon obliterated by the accumulations above the Plaza, so that the final appearance was not much different from the way it looks today.

Eventually (by about 1300 B.C.), this smaller staircase came to be covered as well, and at this point we find few sherds which are typically Middle Assyrian. We have otherwise no evidence of an Assyrian presence, and we know that the site was longer settled as of that time. Urkesh, we conclude, was too “Hurrian” for the Assyrians to take over its cultic traditions, and so, for our good fortune, it was totally abandoned to itself.

نظرية إلى ... الحاضر (1400ق.م)

عندما هُجرَ الدَّرَج الأَصْغَر إِلَى الشرق (نتيجة للرَّمَد اللُّبَنِي الذي شاهدناه في الوقفَة 4)، تغيّر تصميم النظام الكلي للمنطقة الحضرية والدينية: أصبح المدخل الأساسي للمعبد الآن من الغرب، من خلال الدَّرَج الجديد (الأصغر) الذي تراه أمامك على اليسار. بهذه الحالة، أضافوا أيضا إطارا (انظر إلى الصورة على اليمين) مكملاً لخط الجدار الاستنادي الأقدم. الجدار الأقدم سابق الذكر قد طُمس سريعاً بالركام الذي يعلو الساحة، لذلك لم يختلف مظهره الأخير عما يبدو عليه اليوم.

في النهاية (وبحلول حوالي 1300ق.م)، ظهر الدَّرَج الأَصْغَر أيضاً، وفي هذه المرحلة نجد كسر فخاريّة عديدة يُنسِب إلى الطراز النموذجي للعهد الآشوري الوسيط. وفي الوقت الذي لا ينتمي فيه أي دليل آخر على الحضور الآشوري الوسيط فإننا نعرف أن الموقع كان مأهولاً بالسكان بحلول ذلك العصر. أوركيش، كنتيجة، كانت "حورية" إلى الدرجة التي لم يستطع الآشوريون فيها أن يسيطروا على تقاليدها الدينية، بالتالي، وحسن حظنا، فقد هُجرت وتراثها بشكل كامل.
Around 1300 B.C., Urkesh was still an active sanctuary. It was serviced by a relatively small settlement, of which you see here the final remains – the Temple always visible a short distance to the east.

It was Urkesh’ last century.

And it is the last stop where we can show you an excavation in progress.

حوالي 1300 ق.م.، تابعت أوركيش دورها كمكان مقدس حيوي. إذ كانت تُخَدَّم من قبل مستوطنة صغيرة نسبياً، ترى بقاياها الأخيرة هنا – وكان المعبد مرئيًا دائماً من مسافة قريبة إلى الشرق.

كان القرن الأخير من حياة أوركيش.

وهنا المحطة الأخيرة حيث نعرض تقدم التنقيبات.
The rooms in this area have stone pavements (now backfilled). We do not know what their function may have been, but we assume they were for some institutional purpose linked to Temple activities (in other words, they were not private houses in a rural context). A similar conclusion is suggested by the fact that a number of bronze objects were found in these levels.

إن الغرف في هذه المنطقة ذات أرضيات حجرية (أعيد تطويرها الآن). ولنتملك أية فكرة عن طبيعة الوظيفة التي شغلها هذه الغرف في السابق، لكننا نفترض أنها قد تكون منشأة ذات هدف مرتبط بنشاط المعبد (لم يكن آخر أنها لا تمثل بناءًا سكنية خاصة ضمن مجتمع ريفي). ونتوصلنا إلى نفس النتيجة اتتاماً من حقيقة ظهرها على عدد من اللوحات البرونزية في هذه الطبقات.
13 The broader limits

This is the highest point on the mound, more than 25 meters above the plain level (and almost 500 m above sea level). From here, you have a good view of the limits of the Outer City. The city had an oval shape, about 1.5 km in length and 1 km in width. It was one of the largest Syrian cities of the third millennium B.C..

هذه هي أعلى نقطة من الهضبة (التل)، أكثر من 25 متر فوق السطح المستوي (وحوالي 500 متر فوق سطح البحر). من هنا، بإمكانك أن تشاهد بشكل جيد حدود المدينة الخارجية. كان للمدينة شكل بيضوي، حوالي 1.5 كم طولاً، و 1 كم عرضًا. لقد كانت واحدة من أكبر المدن السورية في الألف الثالث قبل الميلاد...
Our final task as archaeologists is to document and interpret what we have excavated. We must, as it were, translate a mound of dirt into a mound of paper (or, today, of electronic bits...). The expedition house has been conceived as a full fledged Research Center. It allows our staff to engage in protracted study periods, using, right here on site, some of the most advanced methods and techniques. The result is a broad series of publications which you will find in their entirety on our website: www.urkesh.org. We will see you online!

إن مهمتنا الأخيرة كأثاريين أن نوثق ونفسر ما اكتشفناه في تنقيباتنا. يجب علينا، كما في السابق، أن نترجم ركز الأثرية إلى كومة ورق أو بالأحرى، إلى وحدات إلكترونية في يومنا هذا. ويعتبر بيت البعثة مركزاً لبحث مكتمل النمو، فإنه يمكن فريق العمل من خوض فترات دراسة مطولة، مستخدمين، هنا في الموقع، بعضاً من أكثر المناهج والتقانات تطورا. والنتيجة هي سلسلة ضخمة من المنشورات، التي سنجدها بأكملها على موقعنا الإلكتروني، www.urkesh.org. نلفاك على شبكة الإنترنت!