

PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA SETS

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

Editors: **G. Buccellati (data) and D. Ghidoli (photography)**

PDS 2

**ZIYADA:
THE EARLY SEASONS**

Giorgio Buccellati



Malibu 1991
Undena Publications

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Acknowledgments.

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INTRODUCTION

The first three seasons of excavations at Tell Ziyada were carried out in 1988, 1989 and 1990, under the direction of the author, and with Daniela Buia Quinn serving as Field Director in the first two, and Stephen Reimer in the third, season. General surveys in the Khabur salvage area were conducted between 1983 and 1986 in order to select a site; Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Ismail Hijara were actively involved in the survey and were especially instrumental in the final selection of the site. We benefitted of course from the results of earlier surveys, in particular conducted in 1983 by Monchambert (Montchambert 1983, 1984a, 1984 b), and the unpublished one conducted by Dr. Adnan Bounni and Mr. Michel Makdisi of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums. Unbeknownst to us, Bounni had in fact intended to excavate the site on behalf of the Directorate, but then decided against it, and most graciously turned over to us the records of his survey.

The Ziyada expedition was part of the broader research program of excavations undertaken by IIMAS - The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies, in the Khabur basin, which had begun with our excavations at Terqa (1976) and Qraya (1977) at the mouth of the Khabur, and then was considerably expanded with the beginning in 1984 of the Mozan Archaeological Project in the upper Khabur plains (see *PDS 2 1* for a map identifying these sites). It was in fact under the aegis of the Mozan archaeological project and with the support of its resources that the Ziyada salvage project was undertaken.

→ Funding for the excavations has generously been made available by the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History and the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation. To Dr. Craig C. Black, Director of the Museum, and to Mr. Joseph W. Tkach, President of the Foundation, as well as to Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, also of the Foundation, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude: it is due to their personal interest in our work and to the sustained support given to our project that that we have been able to achieve the results about which I am reporting in this slide set.

The major reason for our interest in Tell Ziyada was the presence of Halaf/Ubaid material on the surface, which had been documented by the various surveys. This was appealing to us both because it would have helped to provide a cultural backdrop to the Mozan sequence (which, to our present knowledge, begins only in the third millennium), and because relatively few Halaf/Ubaid sites had been identified from surface remains in the Khabur salvage area. As it turned out, the site proved to be even more profitable than anticipated for an elucidation of the Halaf/

Ubaid period, and in addition provided some unexpected results for the third millennium. While I had originally committed IIMAS to carry out this project for a period of only three seasons, the results have been sufficiently positive to warrant a continuation beyond that time frame; this decision was also made possible by the postponement of the initial timetable for the construction of the dam.

The results achieved so far, while still preliminary in nature, seem sufficiently well defined to justify, in my opinion, the publication of this slide set. As with other slide sets in this series, it is my intention to provide corroborative documentary material to the ongoing publication of the excavation reports, of which a preliminary one for the first three seasons is in press (*CSMSB*; see below in the Bibliography); a fuller report on the same three seasons is in preparation and will appear in the journal *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*. The major omission from this slide set pertains to the **ceramics**, which is especially significant for the Halaf/Ubaid period: while a number of vessels were found complete, they were badly damaged and still need to be restored. Given their significance, a separate slide set will be devoted to this class of objects at a later date. In addition, **Area J** is not represented: excavated during the second season (1989) by Anthony Mathys, it yielded interesting architectural material of the Halaf/Ubaid period, but its exposure is still too limited to be included here.

Work at the site began with a **topographic survey** carried out in 1987 by Stephen M. Hughey, the topographer of the Mozan Archaeological Project. Mr. Hughey has continued to remain involved with the topographic control at Ziyada, and both the site plan and the plan of Area N given below (*PDS* 2 6 and 18, respectively) are due to him. The site is small, some 100 x 150 ms. in area and 10 ms. high (*PDS* 2 5,6). It lies directly on the banks of the Khabur river (*PDS* 2 2-4,6), just across from Tell Umm Qser, which is closely related to Tell Ziyada in terms of its deposition.

Areas A and B (*PDS* 2 6-7) were excavated in 1988-89 under the direction of Daniela Buia Quinn. **Area A** was started just below the summit of the tell (*PDS* 2 8 shows the top of the sounding coinciding with the beginning of the slope), with a view towards probing the possible presence of Halaf/Ubaid strata at a mid elevation. The results were most gratifying: some 6 ms. above plain level a pottery kiln was excavated, complete up to the vault, which had slightly caved in at the top. The structural make-up of the kiln and its stratigraphic context (both discussed in detail by Buia in *CSMSB*, pp. 14-17) are of great interest. Tholos-like in shape, about 6 x 4 ms. in size (*PDS* 2 11-12; *PDS* 2 7 shows a plan view of the kiln on the right hand side), the kiln was clearly in use at the time of abandonment: it was full with vessels,

still in an upright position, even though they had been smashed by the weight of the collapsing dome. The kiln itself was overlaid by a thick, hard layer of an ash-like material (clearly visible in *PDS 2 9-10*): we have tentatively interpreted this as being connected in some way with the Kaukab volcano, which is only some 12 kms. north of Ziyada and is clearly visible from the site (*PDS 2 16*); also some of the rocks found in the Ziyada deposition are very similar to those found at the top of Kaukab (*PDS 2 17*). While the exact nature of this layer remains uncertain, and can only be resolved by direct scientific analysis of the data at the site, one conclusion seems clear, namely that the grey band results from some natural cause which brought about the abandonment of the kiln at a time when it was in use. (That this was presumably not a localized phenomenon is suggested by what appears to be an analogous situation in Area J). – **Area B** is located above Area A, and was excavated down to the beginning of the Halaf/Ubaid levels. The third millennium material found here consists primarily of an extensive dump and of modest wall structures (showing on the left side of *PDS 2 7*). – The most important **objects** other than the ceramics were all found in Areas A and B (*PDS 2 13-15*).

Area N was excavated in 1990 by Stephen Reimer. The location of the trench had been chosen to test the northern side of the mound beginning at the top, where we expected to find modest third millennium remains similar to those of neighboring Area B (*PDS 2 6,19*). Instead, the third millennium remains proved to be more important: a sizable structure presumably for the storage of grains harvested from the neighboring fields. Small bins (*PDS 2 20*) were accessible from the top, and were protected to the north by a brick platform (*PDS 2 18*). It is conceivable that the whole site served as a working and storage area for some other third millennium urban center (such as Tell Brak); the dump and houses in Area B may then be explained as reflecting the remains of seasonal work at the site and possibly of a small permanent guard house. The situation would thus be analogous to that identified at Tell Atij (Fortin 1986-87; 1989; 1990a; 1990b).

CREDITS

The field photographs were taken by: G. Buccellati (*PDS 2 3-5*); D. Buia Quinn (*PDS 2 8-10*); L. Gault (*PDS 2 7,11,13-15*); D. Ghidoli (*PDS 2 16*); T. L. Pebworth (*PDS 2 17*); S. Reimer (*PDS 2 19-20*).

The regional map (*PDS 2 1*) was drawn by G. Buccellati, and the vicinity map (*PDS 2 2*) by S. M. Hughey. The site plan (*PDS 2 6*) as well as the plan of Area N (*PDS 2 18*) were drawn by S. M. Hughey, who also did all the pertinent topographic work. The reconstruction of the kiln f69 (*PDS 2 12*) is by D. Buia Quinn.

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COMMENTARY

Note. Numbers in square brackets are the archival numbers of the Mozan/Ziyada photo archive. Individual items are identified by their field number (e.g. C1.66).

1. Map of the Khabur area, with major routes.

[*S137]

Relief is shown with contour lines of 500 meters (yellow) and 1000 meters (brown). Other sites excavated by IIMAS expeditions (Mozan, Terqa and Qraya). Ziyada is on a major route running south along the Khabur, though we have no evidence at this point that overland trade played any major role in the development of the site.

2. Vicinity map of Ziyada.

[*S261]

The map shows some of the other major sites being excavated as part of the Khabur salvage project. Note in particular Atij and Umm Qser which are mentioned above in the introduction.

3. River Khabur from Tell Ziyada.

[ZY1C0113] - Looking south-east; taken in May.

4. River Khabur from Tell Ziyada.

[ZY1C0132] – Looking south; taken in May.

Both slides are taken from the top of the tell, the lower slopes of which show at the bottom.

5. Profile of Tell Ziyada, with Area N.

[ZY31009] – Looking south-south-east; taken in June, before the harvest.

The wheat fields ready to be harvested, against the background of the storage building in Area N (showing on the slope of the tell) are emblematic of what we presume to have been the function of the city in third millennium: a local silo installation for some major urban center in the region.

6. Site plan.

[*S262]

All excavation areas excavated in 1988-90 are shown, color coded for the major period of occupation. (Area P on the west was a minor sounding which only yielded modern debris; the excavation outline is not shown.)

7. Overhead of Areas A and B.

[ZY2B1913] – Kite photo, directly overhead.

Area B is on the left: notice the modest structural remains, which continue in the upper part of Area A. Where the slope begins, the trench of Area A revealed the Halaf/Ubaid strata in which the pottery kiln is clearly visible.

8. Top of Area A.

[ZY1C8027] – Looking east; taken in May.

At the beginning of excavations, the slide shows well the edge of the top portion of the tell; notice also the wheat fields which are still green, and the river in the distance.

9. Area A: lower levels.

[ZY1C8036] – Far shot, looking west; Halaf/Ubaid period.

Overall view of the trench, showing the bricks of the dome, and the hard, grey layer overlaying the kiln, and the burnt deposit below the structure (notice the contrast in color between the two). The deposit of vessels inside the kiln has been removed.

10. Pottery kiln in Area A.

[ZY1C8039] – A1f69. Medium shot, looking west-north-west; Halaf/Ubaid period.

11. Pottery kiln in Area A.

[ZY2C1231] – A1f69. Close shot, oblique, looking west; Halaf/Ubaid period.

The tholos-like shape of the kiln is well in evidence in this and the following slide; the fire-box shows on the right, and the base of the kiln in the center after the removal of the collapsed portion of the dome. The structural and stratigraphic aspects of the kiln are discussed in detail by D. Buia Quinn in *CSMSB*, 14-17.

12. Pottery kiln in Area A, reconstruction.

[*S265] – A1f69.

13. Gold boss rivet.

[ZY2C1119] – C1.16, Halaf/Ubaid.

A solid gold boss rivet, found near the kiln, at the bottom of the abandonment stratum (see a full description by D. Buia Quinn in *CSMSB*, 19f.).

14. Weight or anchor.

[ZY2C0631] – B1.43, early third millennium.

The groove at the top is presumably for the retaining rope (D. Buia Quinn, *loc. cit.*, p.23).

15. Bronze hook.

[ZY2C0930] – G1.4, early third millennium.

16. View of the Kaukab, taken from the vicinity of Ziyada.

[ZY3C8001] – Looking north; taken in June, after the harvest.

An extinct volcano, the Kaukab (just north-east of Hassaka, and about 12 kms. north of Ziyada) is clearly visible from Ziyada. It may have been the cause for a natural disaster which would have brought about the destruction and abandonment of Ziyada in the Halaf/Ubaid period. For some preliminary suggestions in this sense see Buccellati and Buia Quinn in *CSMSB*, pp. 3-5; 11-13).

17. Volcanic (?) rocks from Ziyada and the Kaukab.

[MZ5C1708]

18. Plan of Area N.

[*S263]

The perimetral wall is flanked by buttresses, and is fronted by a brick platform, which was presumably for access to the base of the silo. For a description of the structure see R. Reimer in *CSMSB*, p.27.

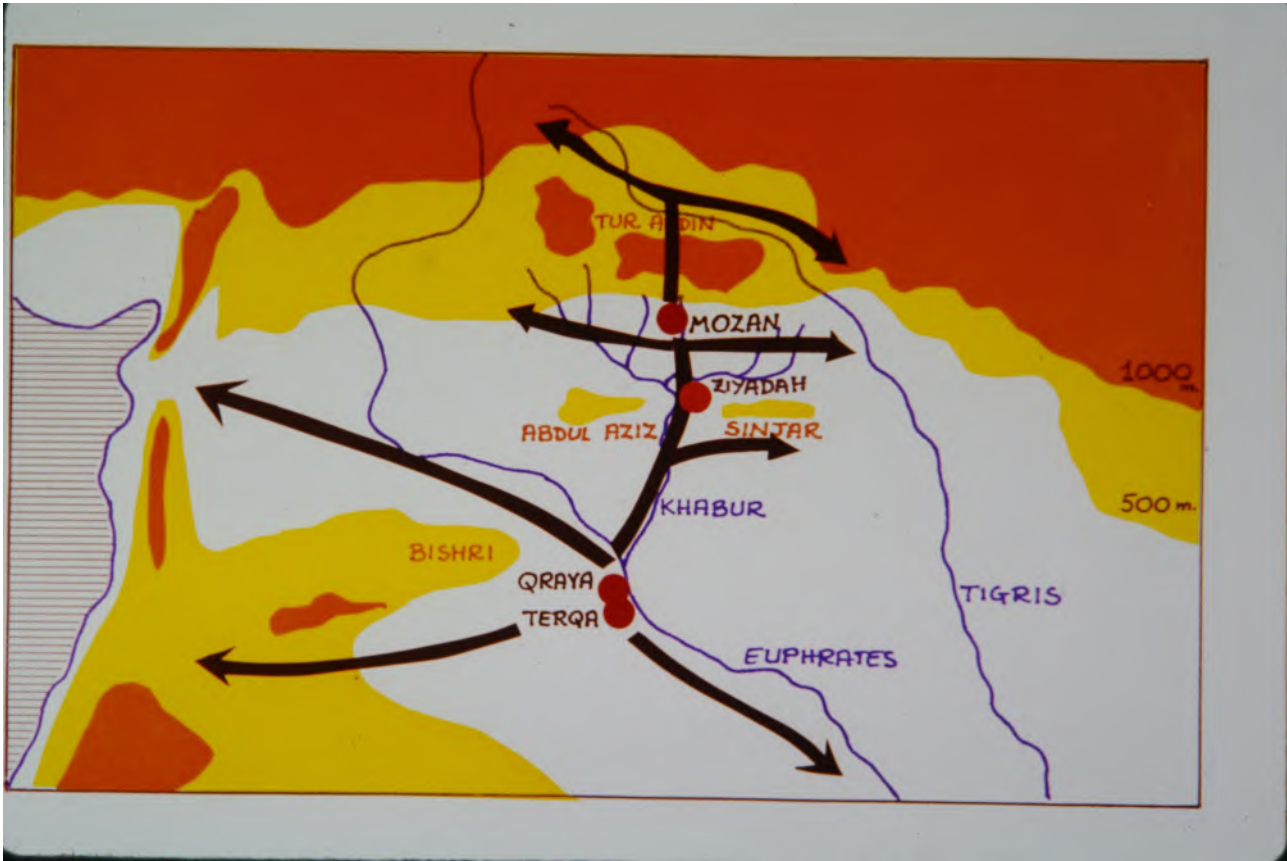
19. Area N.

[ZY3C0108] – Looking south-south-east; third millennium.

20. Detail of storage bins in Area N.

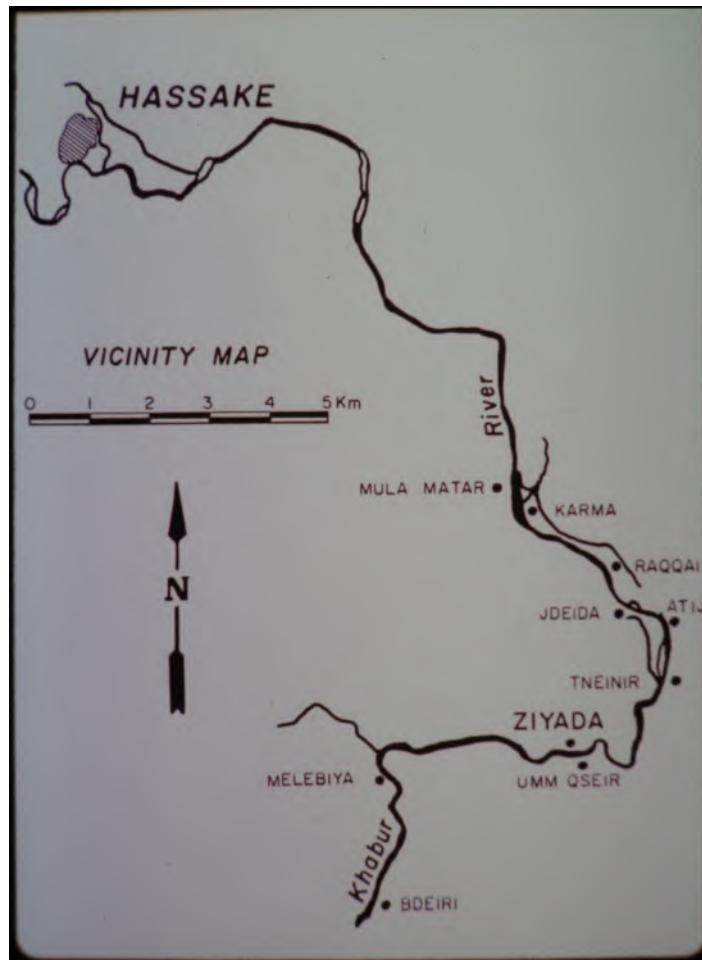
[ZY3C0109] – Looking south-west; third millennium.

The storage cubicles are small (about 1 x 3 ms.), and about 1.6 ms. deep. They were plastered, and had a thick brick subfloor, to serve as protection against dampness and rodents. The top of the walls would have been reached by means of ladders, and the grain would have been dumped from the top, and then covered with some lid.



Slide 1

Note.
 In the original publication
 the images were given
 as individual slides
 in a separate single
 holder.



Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4

PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA SETS

Editors: **Giorgio Buccellati (data) and Daniele Ghidoli (photography)**

PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA SETS represent a specialized publishing concept aimed at providing a fuller and more diversified documentary base, at accessible costs.

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- (1) The slides are selected and annotated by **scholars in the field**, generally those who are responsible for the primary publication of the data.
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