

DIACHRONIC DEVELOPMENTS AT THE CENTRAL MONUMENTAL COMPLEX OF ANCIENT URKESH (TELL MOZAN)

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The recent seasons of excavation at Tell Mozan (ancient Urkesh) have considerably broadened our understanding of its stratigraphic history. The earliest levels containing architecture in the chronological sequence now date to the Late Chalcolithic 3 period, and from the fact that this architecture at one of the highest points on the tell we can infer that there was an extended settlement already in the proto-historic periods. The presence of this earlier mound also conditioned the configuration of the temple terrace when it was rebuilt in Early Dynastic times. The ED III terrace was modified almost immediately due to the danger posed by heavy rainfall, but it then remained basically unaltered in its configuration until the middle of the Mittani period, when, during the single final century of Urkesh's history, it underwent a major reorganization.

The long gap from ED III to Mittani is by no means due to abandonment, because the sequence is filled by a continuous depositional history in the area of the royal palace, immediately to the west of the Temple complex. Recent work done on the Turkish Palace has led to a broader understanding of the architecture and methods of construction of this monumental structure. By using local construction methods as an ethnographic metaphor, a hypothetical operational analysis of construction techniques is possible. This analysis allows for a deeper understanding of both the life of the building in its physical aspect as well as the role it played in shaping the social framework of the society. By carefully interdigitating the two series of strata in the adjacent areas of Temple and Palace, the paper will highlight this diachronic aspect of the complex Mozan stratigraphy, as it emerges from the latest excavation results.