The Archaeology of Anatolia, Volume IV

Recent Discoveries (2018–2020)

Edited by

Sharon R. Steadman

Gregory McMahon

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CHAPTER SEVEN

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE AT TELL ATCHANA, ALALAKH: THE 2007–2019 SEASONS

MURAT AKAR, K. ASLIHAN YENER, MÜGE BULU, AND TARA INGMAN

Tell Atchana, Alalakh, holds a unique position in the 2nd millennium BC[1] political, economic, and cultural history of Anatolia, the Near East, and the Levant. Located in a buffer zone that connects distant and distinct regions along the southernmost fringe of the Anatolian peninsula in modern Turkey, the site has the potential to provide answers to a long list of research questions that dominate the literature, from the late 3rd millennium BC collapse, to 2nd millennium BC urbanization, to the transition from the 2nd to 1st millennium BC (Fig. 7-1). This includes themes from craft production to imperial strategies and systems of exchange, as well as controversial topics such as climate change-induced collapse, urbanization, and mobility patterns.

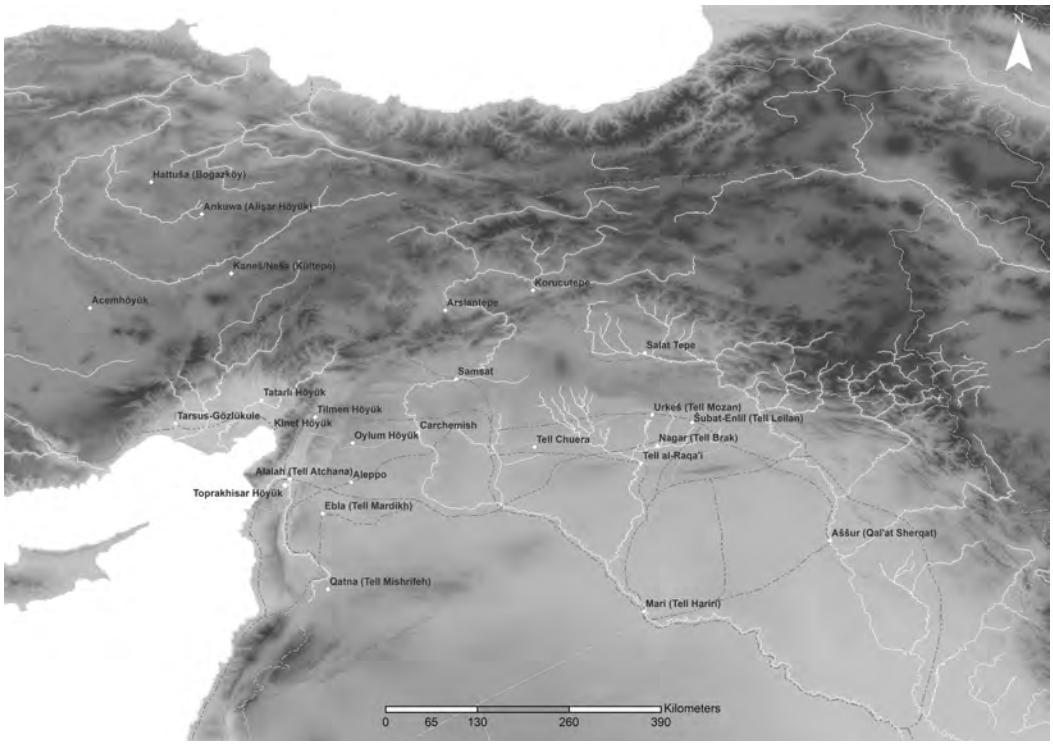

Figure 7-1. Map showing major second millennium BC Anatolian and Near Eastern sites (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, map by M. Akar).

This chapter exclusively deals with, and provides an overview of, the recent archaeological fieldwork (2007–2019) that sheds light on the late Middle Bronze Age (MBA, hereafter) sequence, when the site reached a flourishing state under the hegemony of the Kingdom of Yamḫad as the capital city of the kingdom later called Mukiš. This is defined as a period of prosperity, urban expansion, and establishment of cross-cultural contacts generally accepted to end ca. 1650 BC, according to the Middle Chronology, with the early Hittite campaigns in the region (Yener 2007).

The beginnings of this urban expansion period, on the other hand, remain in need of further exploration, as the end of the 3rd millennium BC is marked by the presence of numerous destructions, collapse, and abandonment layers in a wide geographical framework; in a regional framework, it may be defined by declines in the number of settlements (see for instance, Schwartz and Nichols 2006; Kuzucuoğlu and Marro 2007; Weiss 2017). This is observed through key sites and their surroundings, such as Kültepe (Kaneš) in central Anatolia, Tell Mardikh (Ebla) in the northern Levant, and Tell Leilan in the Ḫabur Valley. The succeeding revival and re-establishment phases at the aforementioned sites point to urban expansions, often linked to the formation of territorial city-state kingdoms and

[1] As a policy, Tell Atchana Excavations uses "BC" in order to be consistent with the high number of calibrated C14 dates.

their successful exploitation of production and surplus supply, as well as to the supra-regional trade networks that were the hallmark of the MBA (Schwartz 2006; Yener 2007; Laneri and Schwartz 2011; Kulakoğlu 2011; Akar and Kara 2020).

In the Amuq Valley, this transition is still ambiguous, due to the fragmented nature of the archaeological data between the two tell sites, Atchana and Tayinat. Tell Tayinat revealed the major 3rd and 1st millennium BC sequence (Welton et al. 2011; Harrison 2013), whereas Tell Atchana was mainly occupied throughout the 2nd millennium BC (Yener 2013a). This disconnected view lies partly in the modern topography and partly in how these two tells were approached by archaeologists as distinct entities. The recent discovery of Iron Age levels at Tell Atchana has shown that the Iron Age city expanded beyond the limits of Tell Tayinat (Yener 2013a; Montesanto and Pucci 2019–20). These new archaeological finds further suggest that the temporal shifts observed between the two locations from the 3rd millennium to the 1st millennium BC created a multiproxy city which developed according to changes in the riverbed of the Orontes. This is clearly visible in various boring/coring projects, which have revealed several diverse riverbed channels and the presence of lower towns expanding beyond the visible tells, including the small mound of Tayinat al-Saghir (Batiuk 2007; Horowitz et al. 2019; Avşar et al. 2019, 2020). Therefore, the larger cityscape of Tell Atchana and Tell Tayinat should then be seen as the palimpsest of the multilayered history of a "Megacity" shaped by the Orontes River (Fig. 7-2, Yener 2005: 4, 2013a: 22).

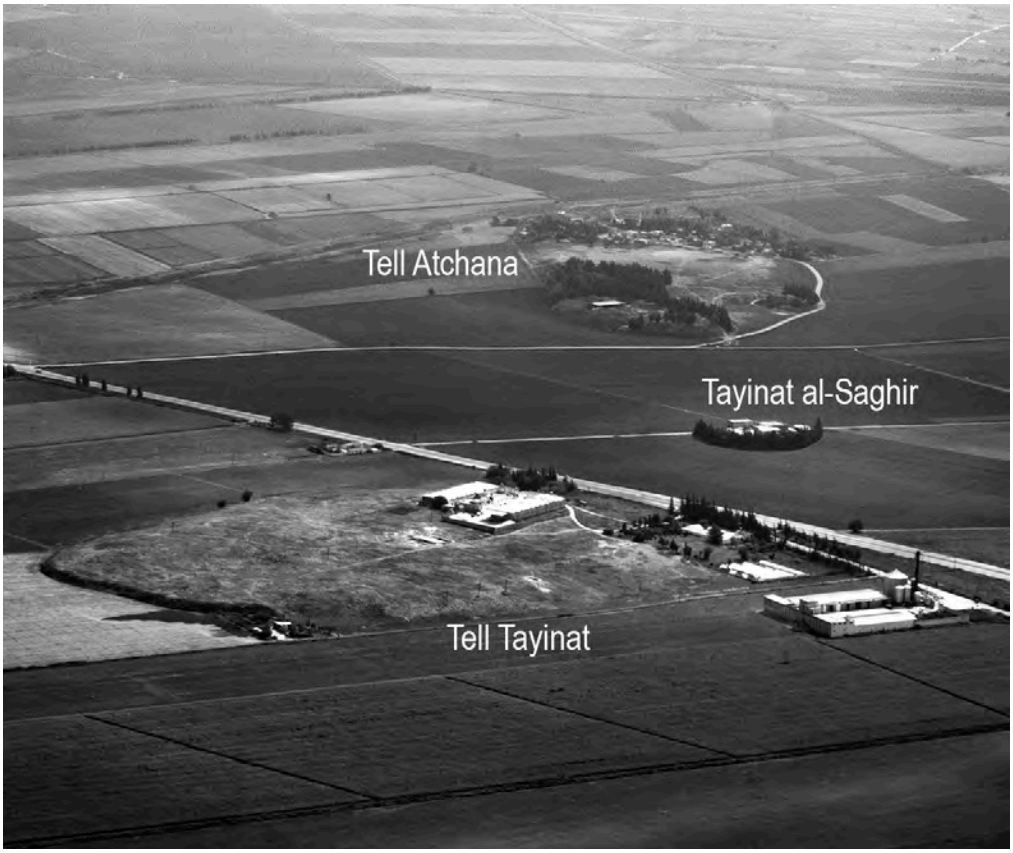

Figure 7-2. Map showing Tell Tayinat (AS126), Tayinat al-Saghir (AS127), and Tell Atchana (AS136) representing different loci of a *Megacity* (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

The view, on the other hand, is more elusive for the Early–Middle Bronze Age transition. At Tell Mardikh (Ebla), a late 3rd millennium BC Palace G text refers to a dependent city called *A-la-la-ḫu-um* in various forms, likely associated with the 2nd millennium BC city of Alalakh (Matthiae 1978; Astour 1992; Yener 2005; Archi 2006, 2020). This textual evidence may then be geo-referenced to the Early Bronze Age remains at Tell Tayinat, as Tell Atchana, according to Woolley's temple sounding, revealed no Early Bronze (EB) IVA (2500–2300 BC) remains contemporary to the Tell Mardikh (Ebla) Palace G (see Mellink 1957; Batiuk and Horowitz 2010 contra Woolley 1955). This suggests that the heart of the city moved, yet the name continued to be used in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (Yener 2005: 4).

At Tell Atchana, except for the broad-scale horizontal exposure of the monumental Level VII Palace, temple, and gate complex, the earlier MBA remains and their stratigraphic and chronological correlations were left ambiguous in Woolley's final publication (1955). Due to the high water table, the stratification pit that was dug through the southern end of the Level VII Palace in squares L–K 13–15 reached 13.75 m below the top of the mound. The excavation area became progressively smaller due to the depth and the difficulty of removing soil, and Levels XVI–XIV were investigated only in 10 × 8 m exposures. Level XVII was not explored, due to its being under water (Woolley 1955: 10–11, fig. 2). The stratification pit, the temple sounding, the Level IV Palace soundings, and the Site H and Trench F

excavations generated data for the MBA but with limited exposures. Today, the temple sounding resembles a meteor crater, which is partially filled with decayed mudbrick detritus and which is visible down to Level XVI, revealing an uninterrupted sequence of temples. The Palace stratification pit reached Level XVII, where the earlier house/palace complexes of the city were explored. The third deep exploration was in the Level IV Palace room 22, which revealed a severely burnt workshop with substantial architecture, whereas Site H and Trench F revealed the city fortifications (Woolley 1955: 106–110, 133, pl. XXII). Unfortunately, the limited documentation from the MBA soundings, the absence of elevation data, and the inaccessible field records have prompted the complicated task of re-exploring Woolley's MBA stratigraphic sequence. This operation became more complex with the long, steady, slow-changing nature of the material culture, often creating difficulties in defining index markers for chronological implications. Nevertheless, the earliest levels encountered in the temple sounding at Tell Atchana point to the presence of monumental architecture, reflecting signs of a well-organized administrative system indicative of urbanization (Woolley 1955: 36, fig.19).

Indirectly, the signs of a strong administrative system are also evident in the recent excavations conducted at the peripheral site of Toprakhisar Höyük in the Altınözü highland, located roughly 10 km from Alalakh. The presence of an administrative building there, dated to the early 20th century BC, is regarded as the reflection of the business of olive oil and wine production operated under the management of the kings of Alalakh (Akar and Kara 2020). The high number of dispersed small and medium sized MBA sites across the Amuq Valley points, on the other hand, to an efficient organization of agricultural practice (Bulu 2017a). According to recent sedimentary corings around Tell Atchana, the documented charcoal intensity may indicate a significant increase in agricultural activities during the MBA (Avşar et al. 2019). Thus, intra- and offsite data confirm that the Amuq Valley and its surroundings benefited from various aspects of urbanization at the beginning of the MBA.

As Sydney Smith (1949: 8) stated, Tell Atchana provided the potential of establishing linkages to historical events from stratified archaeological layers. In this delicate task, scholarly work was predominantly concentrated on redefining Woolley's chronology through his stratigraphical attributions (see Mellink 1957; Gates 1981; McClellan 1989). Apart from Heinz's (1992) in depth re-examination reconstructing the developmental patterns of the MBA material culture and chronology, no further studies were conducted to understand the early 2nd millennium BC sequence. This has become one of the primary research goals of the recent excavations at Tell Atchana.

THE NEW EXCAVATIONS (2007–2019)

Figure 7-3. Map of Tell Atchana (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, map by M. Akar).

The continuous alterations of the Royal Precinct throughout the MBA are best observed in the ruins of the burnt gateway of Level VII, lower in elevation than the Level VII Palace and Temple, which were built on higher ground in the northeast corner of the Royal Precinct. While a gentle rising grade from the gateway to the palace and temple complex is to be expected, for a careful observer, the relationship between the still-standing walls of the MBA Level VII Palace and the Late Bronze Age Level IV Palace is somewhat puzzling. Although there seems to be at least 200 years between these two palace complexes, today one can look at the western façade of the Level VII Palace by standing in the southeast corner of the much younger Level IV Palace. In fact, the floor level of the Level VII Palace southern wing is on the same level as the Level IV Palace. This is due to major MBA construction projects that ultimately altered the topography of the Royal Precinct, where several platforms and terracing operations transformed this area into a stepped terrace, creating a puzzling stratigraphic effect.

According to new research conducted on a broader area investigating the Late Bronze (LB) II stratigraphy at Tell Atchana, a new site sequence is presented using "Periods" rather than Woolley's "Level" attributions (Yener 2013a; Yener et al. 2019). This is still in progress for the MBA. Thus, for the MBA, the Period and Level designations are in accordance with Woolley, meaning that Period 7–8–9 is equivalent to Level VII–VIII–IX.

Fourteen excavation squares have been placed along an east-west orientation cross-cutting the Royal Precinct of Alalakh (Area 1), where stratigraphic correlations can be obtained with the standing architectural remains of Levels IV and VII. Three excavation units yielding MBA levels were located in the Level VII (Squares 33.32 and 33.53) and Level IV Palace courtyards (Square 32.57). While Square 33.32 and Square 32.57 were successful in exploring the stratigraphic sequence from pre-Level VII to pre-Level IV Palace contexts, Square 33.53, expanding to Rooms 16, 17, 18, 22, 34, and 35, revealed new data regarding the construction history of the Level VII Palace. The excavations conducted on the northeastern slope of the tell, on the outskirts of the Royal Precinct in Area 3 (Squares 45.44 and 45.45), revealed a sequence of city fortification systems from MB II to LB I and a slope cemetery. The stratigraphic excavations conducted in the southwestern elevated portion of the tell in Area 4 recently revealed MBA levels, which will be detailed elsewhere once the contextual study is finalized (Fig. 7-3).

Area 1, Square 32.57

The deep sounding located in the courtyard of the Level IV Palace has generated data regarding the poorly understood, problematic phases represented by Levels VI and V in Woolley's chronology. The Local Phases 1–3 in these squares represent the LB I levels. Local Phase 4 is a short-lived MB II–LB I transitional phase defined by sacrificial pits as part of a termination ritual over the remains of the partially exposed monumental building complex (Local Phase 5) that dates to the MBA (Yener 2015, 2017). This long-lasting building revealed seven different phases defined according to continuous alterations, the raising of floors, and various modifications in the arrangement of spaces. Of most particular interest is the presence of a curvilinear southern wall (in Local Phases 5b, f, and g), which added a remarkable character; it is defined as the "Apsidal Building" (Yener 2015; Yener et al 2020; cf. Fig. 7-4). While Local Phase 5 revealed excellent levels of preservation, with walls standing up to 3 m tall, the continuous alteration of the rooms resulted in the clearance of floors prior to the repacking of new floors, leading to a limited presence of materials that can be used to attribute functional designations to partially exposed rooms. Yet, from its adherence to a sacred space in each phase, its unique architectural features in close proximity to the Ishtar Temple, and ritual objects, the building is of significant importance and likely functioned as a temple dedicated to one of the gods or goddesses of Alalakh, further discussed below (Yener 2015; Yener et al. 2020: 9).

Figure 7-4. Aerial view of Square 32.57, Local Phase 5g Apsidal Building in Area 1 (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

Area 1, Squares 33.32 and 33.53

The Level VII Palace is an extraordinary structure that expands over a 100 × 30 m wide area. Together with the Northern Palace at Tell Mardikh (Ebla), it represents the characteristics of palace architecture in the region during the rule of the Amorite dynasty (Matthiae 2002). It is located in the northeast sector of the Royal Precinct, incorporated into the city wall on the east. The rooms in the north (1–8) are at a much lower elevation and are interpreted to be the residential quarters, the audience chamber, and the throne room, with courtyards providing access. The staircase located in the northeast corner of the palace (room 3) indicated that a tower was built in conjunction with the city wall. The elevation rises south of courtyard 9 via a staircase, where one could reach the more utilitarian sectors of the palace. This creates approximately 2 m of elevation difference within the same building. Occupied by several rooms and courtyards, the southern wing of the palace has facilities that served as workshops and for cooking and storage, along with the enigmatic addition of the royal hypogeum (Woolley 1955: 93, fig. 35).

Square 33.32 is located in the large lower courtyard in the north, whereas Square 33.53 expanded across several rooms on the high terrace in the southern sector of the palace (Fig. 7-5). These two squares now provide a fine-tuned stratigraphy for understanding the earlier MBA levels, as well as the subsequent step-by-step construction phases of the Level VII Palace. The results acquired are thus altering our understanding of commonly accepted paradigms, such as the origins of wall painting practices in the eastern Mediterranean.

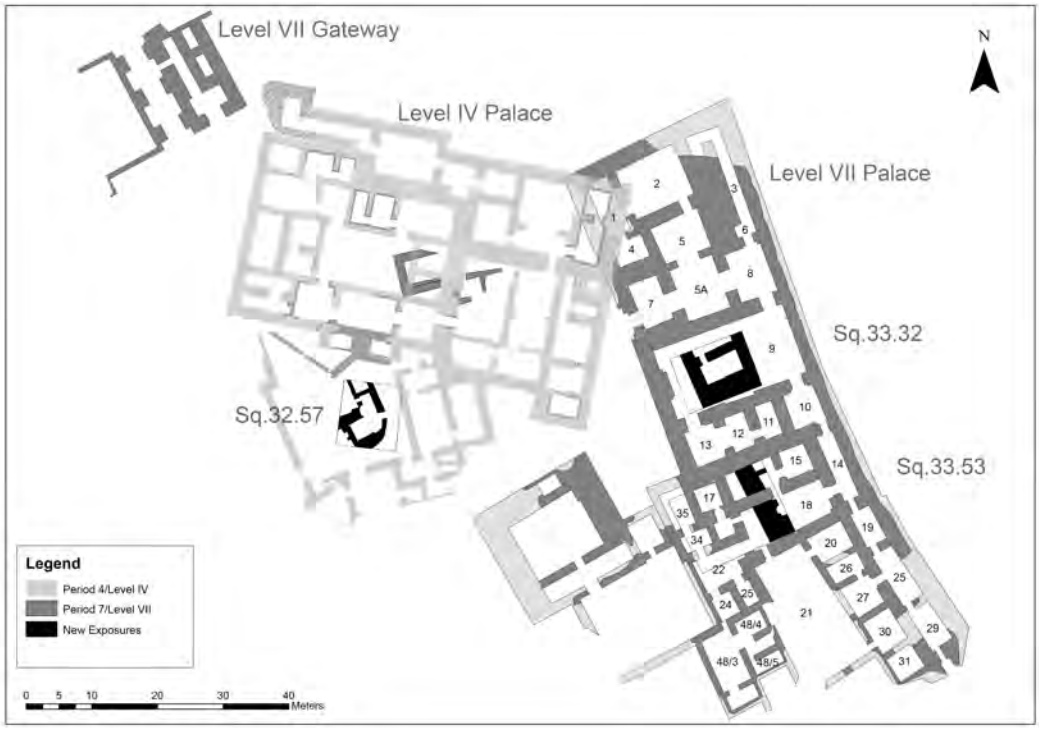

Figure 7-5. Plan showing the remains of the earlier palace in Squares 33.32 and 33.53 in relation to the Level VII Palace (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, plan by O.H. Kırman).

The excavation conducted in Square 33.32 revealed the presence of an earlier palace complex with at least three re-building phases (3a, b, c). The severely burnt earliest Local Phase 3c revealed two rooms, one partially exposed, functioning as the cooking, storage, and serving quarter of a large complex (Bulu 2016). The thickness of the walls showed that the structure was at least two stories high. Of particular importance, the southern wall likely functioned as a terrace wall, since beyond this point, the continuation of the building was exposed at a much higher elevation in Square 33.53 in the south. This showed that the terraced nature of the Level VII Palace is due to previous construction projects that altered the topography.

Signs of burning were also encountered in Square 33.53; yet, due to the extreme width of the mudbrick walls exposed, the spaces left for investigating living surfaces were minimal (Fig. 7-6). Nevertheless, the square provided an understanding of the general layout of the previous palace. The northwest–southeast wall likely functioned as the exterior wall, since trash deposits were revealed to the west in both squares. Of particular importance, this trash deposit revealed a Middle Minoan IIB–IIIA Kamares Ware fragment, indicating that Alalakh was directly or indirectly involved in a network of exchange that included the Aegean world (Koehl 2020: 204, fig. 2).

In relation to the later Level VII Palace, a construction deposit (Local Phase 2) was documented in both squares. While the leveling fill was relatively homogenous in Square 33.32, the rubbish fill deposit in Square 33.53 revealed the presence of various objects, including ivory inlays, composite statue fragments, and non-joining wall painting fragments. Sealed by the thick concrete-like floor of Level VII, there is no doubt that these fragments belong to a

context earlier than the burnt Level VII Palace. The stratigraphic and chronological significance of these findings will be discussed elsewhere in detail in future publications.

Cleaning operations conducted in the Level VII Palace revealed further interesting artifacts that were not registered by Woolley for almost a century. These include the recovery of a tablet documenting a witness list (Lauinger 2014), vitrified limestone fragments of a winged sculpture (Yener 2013b), and, recently, the fragment of a *BIBRU* in central Anatolian style, likely depicting a bull.

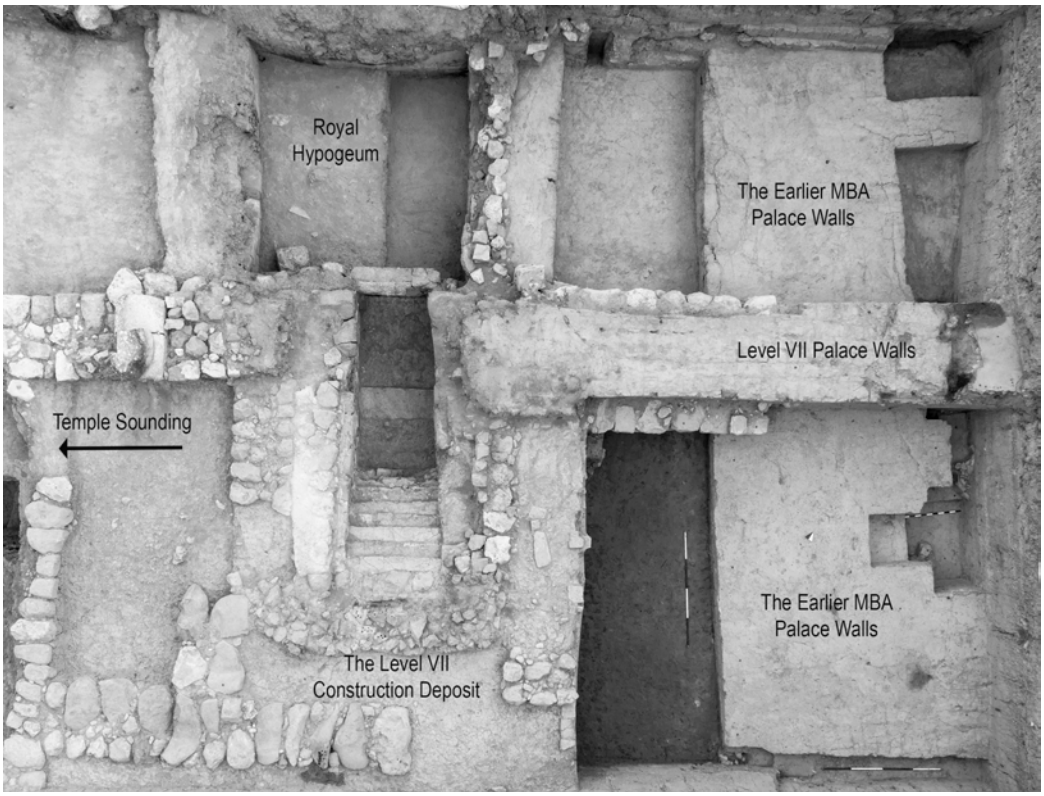

Figure 7-6. Aerial view of Square 33.53 (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

New Wall Painting Fragments from the 2018–2019 Seasons

Our soundings during the 2015–2019 seasons in the Alalakh Level VII Palace also unearthed more than 70 high-quality new wall painting fragments from MB II contexts in Square 33.53. Radiocarbon analyses have dated the fragments to be within a span from 1780–1680 BC (Yener 2021; cf. Fig. 7-15). Most were burnished and painted, and some had figurative patterns, although the designs cannot as yet be reconstructed. In total, the fragments themselves vary in size and quality of preservation, yet this small assemblage adds valuable information about the different phases of the palace decorated with frescoes, the chronology of the palace, and the techniques used in the plaster fragments themselves.

Wall painting fragments at Alalakh were first discovered by the previous excavator, Sir Leonard Woolley (1955: 228) in the Level VII Palace and have often been considered as examples of the earliest so-called *fresco-secco* techniques in western Asia. Re-analyzing some of these fragments in the Ashmolean Museum, Brysbaert (2002) has described their fresco techniques as the presence of fingernail impressions, particular tool and brush marks, the use or absence of specific pigments, and the use of lime plaster. This also confirms the original Woolley analysis (Barker 1955), which had concluded that the wall frescos were painted while the plaster was still wet. All of these attributes have been seen on the new fragments as well.

The wall painting fragments from Woolley's excavation have gained special attention due to the continuing discussion about the technique's assumed origins in the Aegean (Niemeier and Niemeier 2000: 780–781) and the question of traveling craftspeople in the eastern Mediterranean serving as the vehicle of transmission for the iconography (Niemeier and Niemeier 2000; von Rüden 2020; Koehl 2013, 2020). Yener (2021) has recently argued that the canonical "Aegean" griffin motif at Alalakh was thus attributed based on mistaken interpretations. Newly accessed UCL Library Special Collections archival photos argue against this reconstruction and suggest rather an image of a winged deity, reflecting its ancient Near Eastern roots. Furthermore, according to Woolley, the Level VII Palace is to be dated over 100–150 years older than the Knossos paintings, making it difficult to assume influence from the west; he pointed instead to north Syria as the place from which the tradition of wall painting emerged. Usually overlooked, it is important to note that fresco fragments were found in earlier Level IX (dated to the 19th century BC) and Level VIII palace contexts as well. Woolley (1955: 31–32) notes that the red and white painted wall

plaster fragments came from the floor of Level IX Building A and were of "Pompeian" red color, although a pattern could not be distinguished.

The first new fresco fragments emerged in the palace construction fill (Local Phase 2, see above). To judge by the thickness of the painted lines and the great precision of the brush strokes in the application of the paint, the artistic skill of the painters demonstrates a good control of the brush. Only three examples of the new wall painting fragments are described here.

Figure 7-7. AT26395, wall painting fragment from Square 33.53, Local Phase 2 (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

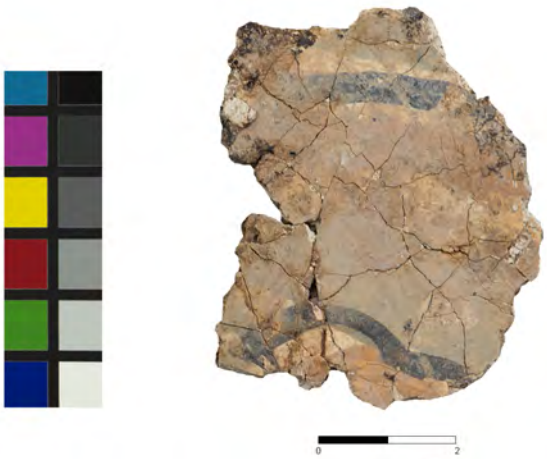

Figure 7-8. AT26620, wall painting fragment from Square 33.53, Local Phase 2 (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

AT26395 (Fig. 7-7) is a large polychrome fragment from Square 33.53. Various pigments were preserved, such as dark blue, dark yellow, dark red, black, and cream, on polished plaster. Two red bands are seen on the upper and lower part of the fragment and are delineated with string marks. Clearly visible are finger smudges on the bottom band. One dark blue triangle and one dark blue stump emanate vertically from the upper red band. A dark yellow, curvilinear s-shape, whose vertical appendage is overpainted by the red band, has a black tapering brush stroke, which runs parallel to it. Portable x-ray fluorescence (pXRF)[2] analysis revealed that cobalt and iron minerals were used as pigments. Significantly, the dark blue triangular design was made with a cobalt-rich pigment. Preliminary analysis revealed that the dark red color is iron, while the dark yellow ochre color was created by using crushed glass pigmented by iron oxide.

AT26620 (Fig. 7-8) from Square 33.53 is a fragment with two black parallel lines with a curvilinear motif in black framing a faded light grayish-blue interior. Originally the center was a much more vibrant blue color, given the

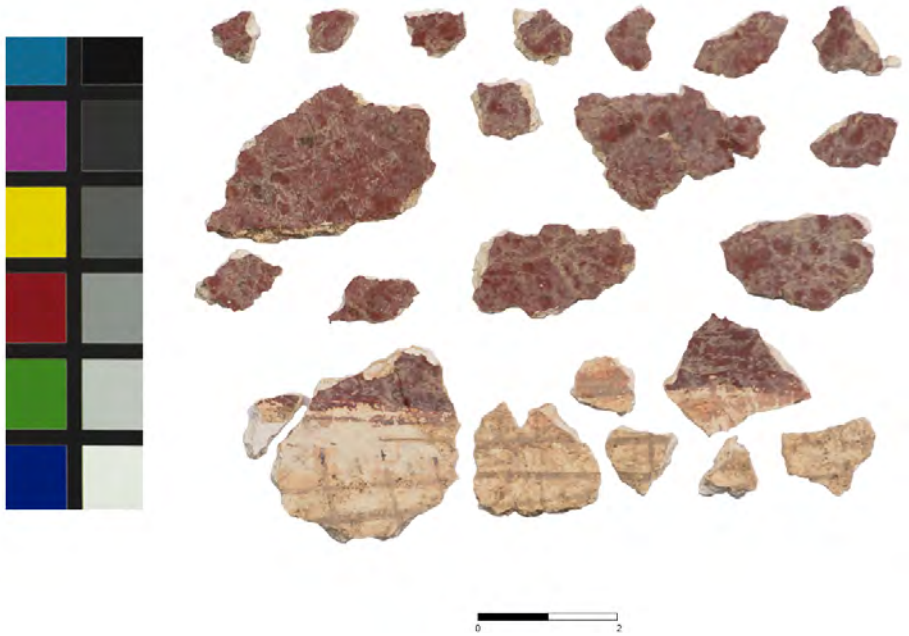

Figure 7-9. AT26367, wall painting fragments from Square 33.53, Local Phase 2 (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

[2]XRF, Oxford Instruments XMET 5100; measurement time was at 120sec on mining_le_fp with 25sec at 45KeV; remainder at 13KeV.

copper content revealed in the pXRF analysis. Iron oxide/ochre and the black border pigments contained iron. The lower design may depict the petal of a flower.

AT26367 (Fig. 7-9) from Square 33.53 consists of several smaller fragments painted with a dark red pigment over a cream-colored white background. Cross-hatched darker, black-brown patterns may portray mudbricks stacked like a wall, although the architectonic staggering in mudbrick depictions in Aegean paintings is missing. According to the size of the designs, this appears to be a miniature fresco.

Area 3, Squares 45.44 and 45.45

Area 3 was opened initially to explore the fortification system on the northeastern slope of the mound (Yener and Yazıcıoğlu 2010: 24), and four squares have been explored here to date (Squares 45.44, 45.45, 45.71, and 45.72). These are the earliest phases thus far excavated, and are preliminarily dated to the late MBA: Local Phase 4 in Squares 45.71 and 45.72, which consists of a casemate fortification wall with five transitional MB II–LB I graves dug into it (Yener and Yazıcıoğlu 2010: 25–26); Local Phase 5 in Squares 45.44 and 45.45, where the casemate fortification wall has also been identified, along with two rooms of a likely domestic structure to the west (Ingman 2014: 62–63, 2017). Five graves have been found in the rooms west of the wall, with more burials placed to its east in the cemetery area (Fig. 7-10). While this extramural cemetery in Squares 45.71 and 45.72 is interspersed with phases of architecture (the fortification wall in Local Phase 4 and a kitchen/workshop complex in Local Phase 2; Yener and Yazıcıoğlu 2010: 24–29), in Squares 45.44 and 45.45 it is placed directly against the eastern, outer side of the fortification wall and consists of an open space with no architecture. This has been extensively subjected to post-depositional disturbances, particularly slope wash, erosion, and modern farming activities (Ingman 2017: 249). Preliminary dating of the burials in Squares 45.44 and 45.45, therefore, was accomplished with the use of a 3D GIS model that used identified fill layers within the cemetery area and reference points from the wall itself, such as dateable foundations, to propose a phasing sequence of the cemetery in these squares. This placed the majority of excavated graves within the LB I, with the earliest burials dating to the late MBA (Ingman 2017). However, recent radiocarbon dates from a sample of the individuals buried in the cemetery suggest that burial in the cemetery began much earlier, perhaps as early as the MB I, and that the majority of these graves may in fact date to the MB II (Ingman et al. 2021; Skourtanioti et al. 2020). Further analysis is needed to resolve this question, and a conservative approach is therefore taken here, with discussion only of those burials which can be confidently assigned to the MBA by both stratigraphic and radiocarbon data.

Figure 7-10. Domestic quarters, MBA fortification wall, and the slope cemetery in Area 3, Square 45.44 (©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

Tell Atchana has one of the largest 2nd millennium BC burial assemblages in the region, with 342 graves documented to date (Ingman 2020a). Although the majority of these have been dated to the Late Bronze Age, 31 have been identified as belonging to the MBA, most of which were found in an extramural cemetery in Area 3, where 134 burials have been excavated to date (Ingman 2017, 2020a). The MBA burials are mostly single, simple pit graves

(n=26), which dominate the assemblage at the site in all areas and time periods (67% of the total burials), as well as multiple, simple pit burials (n=3), one infant pot burial, and one constructed tomb, the so-called royal hypogeum found by Woolley within the Level VII Palace (Ingman 2020a; Woolley 1955: 95–97). Sixteen of the burials were found inside the city; those discovered by Woolley were under floors in the Royal Precinct, in Site H on the southern slope, and in his exploratory Trench A (Woolley 1955: 221–222), and those found by Yener were in Square 45.44 to the west of the fortification wall, including four inside the two room contexts that back up against the city wall; one was dug into the foundations of the city wall (Ingman 2014: 63). The remaining 15 MBA graves were found in the extramural cemetery, making the intra-/extramural distribution in this period nearly a 50% split.

Figure 7-11. A selection of burial vessels from the Area 3 cemetery
(©Alalakh Excavations Archive, photo by M. Akar).

Grave goods are common in the MBA burials (Fig. 7-11), with 71% of the graves including at least one object, although most have only one (32.3%) or two (22.6%) objects; "rich" graves are rare (Ingman 2020a: 172). As is true for MBA and LB I graves generally, pottery makes up the majority of grave goods in the MBA burials (Ingman 2020a: 168–169), which comprises just over two-thirds of the grave goods assemblage (67.8%). Piriform juglets (Fig. 7-12.26) are the most common shape (n=10; 25% of the pottery), followed by shoulder goblets (n=6; 15% of the pottery, Fig. 7-12.14) and short-neck jars (n=6; 15% of the pottery, Fig. 7-12.24). These three shapes are almost exclusively associated with graves at Tell Atchana, leading to their identification as "funerary vessels" (Ingman 2020b), and together they make up close to 40% (37.3%) of the total grave goods in the MBA (Ingman 2020a: fig. 4.22). Most of the rest of the grave goods in this period consist of personal adornments (18.6%) such as pins, rings, and beaded jewelry, made of both metal (mainly copper alloys, though an infant female [L152] was also found with a silver ring and a piece of lead wire) and stone or vitreous materials.

The Late MBA Ceramics

The ceramic repertoire of Periods 9, 8, and 7 is fairly homogeneous, with some contextual differences regarding the appreciation and consumption of different ware and shape types. The ceramics were predominantly manufactured by the use of a rotary kinetic energy (hereafter RKE, Roux 2019: 54). Although it is not always possible to reconstruct the fashioning techniques macroscopically since their traces are concealed by finishing techniques, traces of wheel-throwing can be seen on some of the small and medium-sized vessels. Larger vessels, on the other hand, were likely produced on a turntable. Hand modeled ceramics that were manufactured without RKE are rarely encountered and are mainly limited to a few body sherds that are likely non-local (Bulu 2016: 305), whereas very large pithoid jars and some of the Syro-Cilician Ware vessels were produced with the combination of both fashioning techniques (Bulu 2021: 217–219). The vast majority of the ceramics were wet-smoothed, and further surface treatments are less frequent. Burnishing with and without the use of RKE is occasionally encountered in various ware types, but it is the associated characteristic of Gray Burnished Ware. Among the decorative techniques, simple line or comb incisions are mainly applied to jars and kraters (Fig. 7-13.1–2, 7–8). Although attested in rare cases, potter's marks applied as incisions prior to the firing of the vessel are sometimes found on bowls and jars (Fig. 7-12.4). Added rope decoration to the shoulder (sometimes also to the lower part) is almost exclusively seen on cooking pots and pithoid jars (Fig. 7-13.13, 15). Application of painting appears as two main traditions: Syro-Cilician Ware and Banded Ware. The less frequent third tradition is the Sgraffiato Ware, which combines the application of paint and incisions. All ware types have medium- to hard-fired fabrics; low-fired fabrics are attested only by some of the trays.

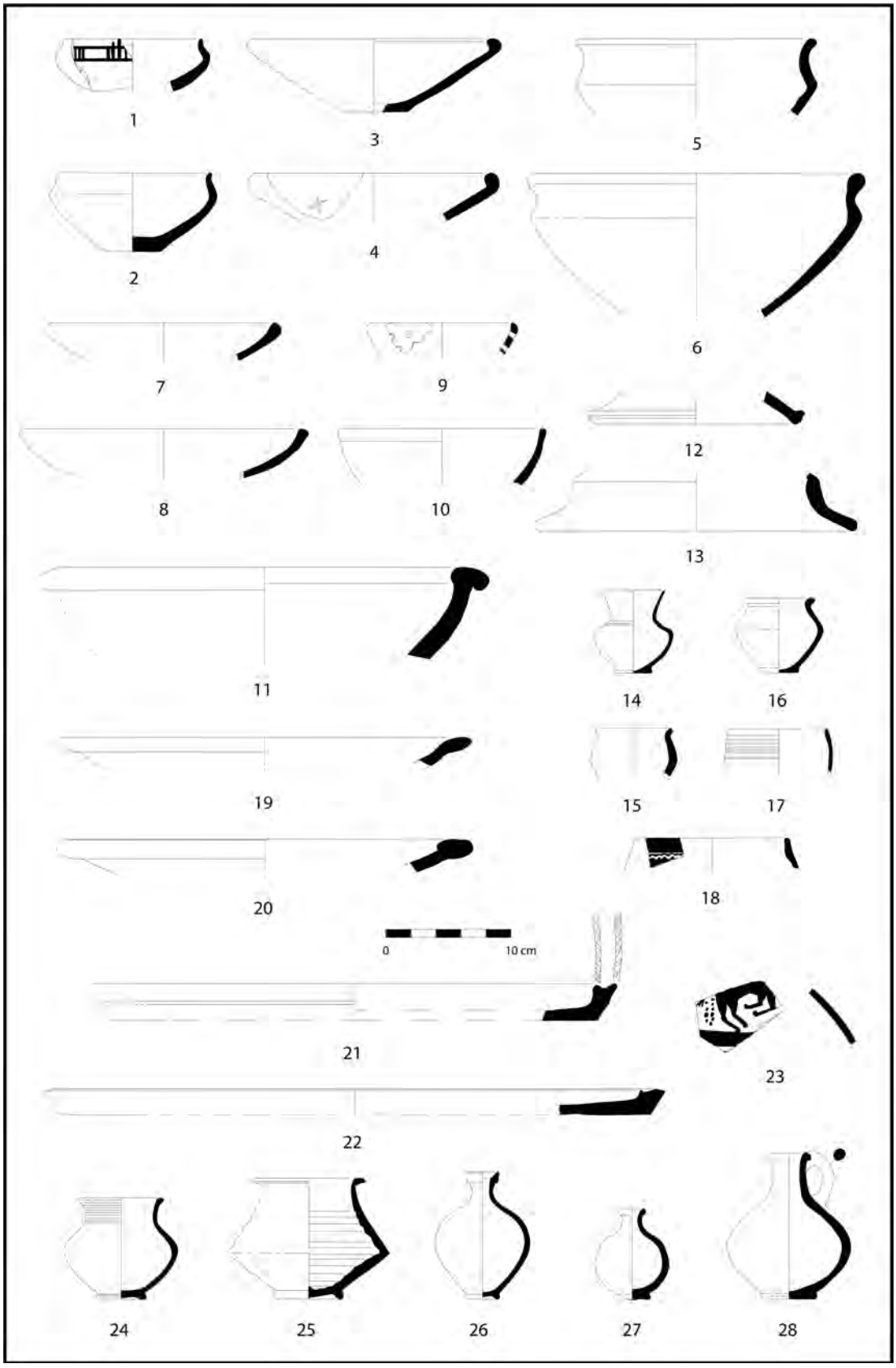

Figure 7-12. Selected late MBA ceramics. 1-AT19010.14 (SCW), 2-AT23311 (SW): s-curve bowls; 3-AT24347.1, 4-25415.17: SW hook-rimmed bowls; 5-AT25423.1, 6-AT25409.9: SW carinated bowls; 7-AT25083.1, 8-AT27108.21: SW rounded shallow bowls; 9-AT25411.3: SW strainer bowl; 10-AT25093.1, 11-AT25409.2: SW hemispherical bowls; 12-AT25091.6, 13-AT26998.1: SW lids; 14-AT18961: SF shoulder goblet; 15-AT25490.3: SF s-curve cup; 16-AT19261: SW biconical cup; 17-AT25096.2 (SF), 18-AT26501.1 (SG): hemispherical cups; 19-AT25475.2, 20-AT25496.2: CWO high footed bowls; 21-AT25409.7, 22-AT23664.1: MI trays; 23-AT17665.1: SCW closed shape; 24-AT15712: SW short-neck jar; 25-AT14646: SF biconical jar; 26- AT14699: GB piriform juglet; 27-AT15754, 28-AT19263: SW globular juglets (©Alalakh Excavations Archive).

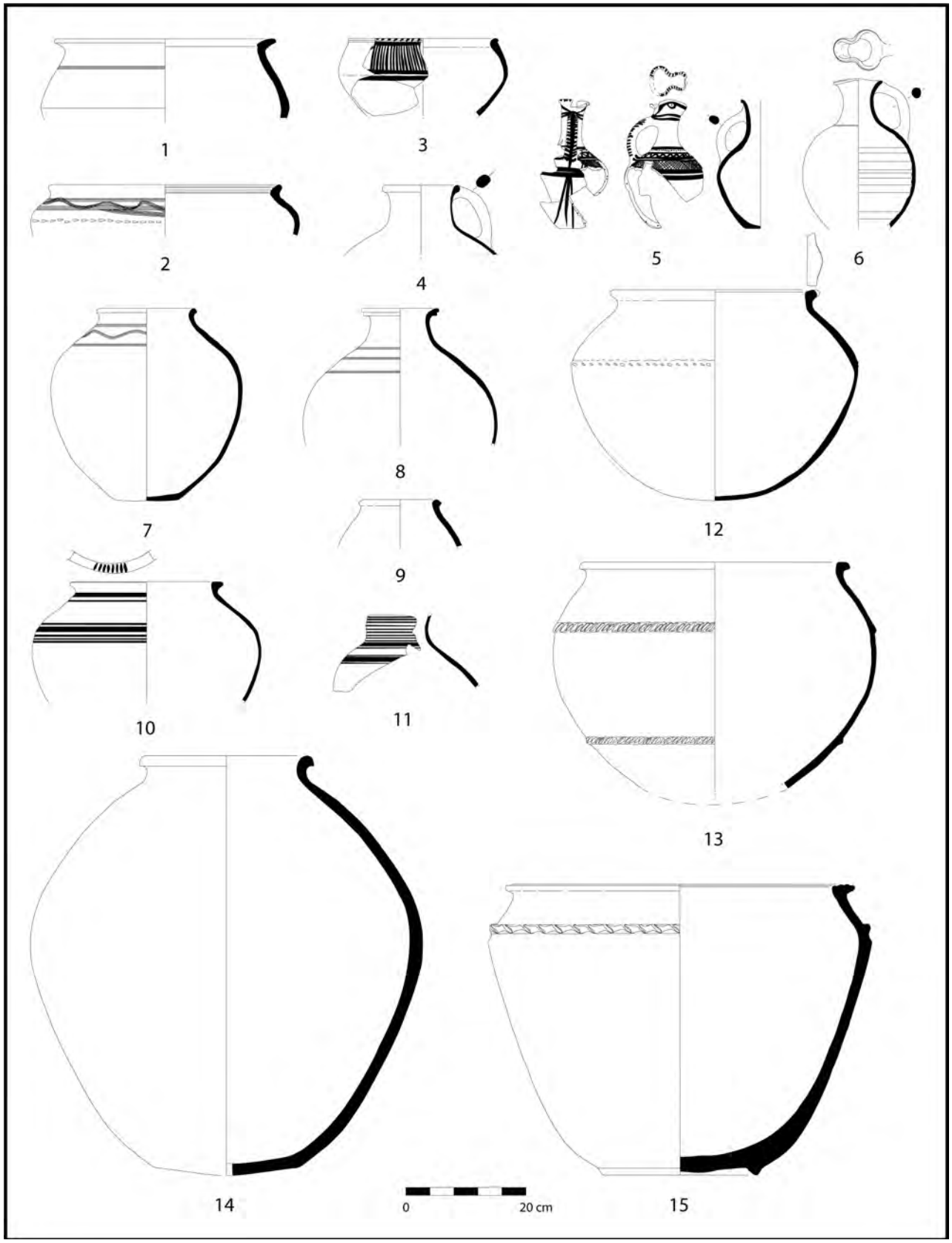

Figure 7-13. Selected late MBA ceramics. 1-AT9257.3 (SW), 2-AT4247.1 (SW), 3-AT6124.3 (SCW): kraters; 4-AT25423.2: SW jug; 5-AT19024.2 (SCW), 6-AT12719 (SW): pitchers; 7-AT8381, 8-AT23669, 9-AT25415.7: SW globular jars; 10-AT18356: BW globular jar; 11-AT27124.1: BW high-neck jar; 12-AT8384, 13-AT23349: MI cooking pots; 14-AT11792: SW globular pithoid jar; 15-AT11765: SW hemispherical pithoid jar (©Alalakh Excavations Archive).

The ware and shape typology of LB II ceramics of Tell Atchana have been extensively studied and published (Horowitz 2019), whereas those of LB I and MBA are still ongoing and have only partially been published (Horowitz 2015, 2017; Bulu 2016). Different ware types of the MBA and LBA ceramics that have been macroscopically classified as local products have also been confirmed through the implementation of Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) and ceramic petrography, demonstrating that they were produced with the exploitation of locally available calcareous clays and tempering agents at Tell Atchana (Bulu 2012, 2021; Gutsuz et al. 2017); experimental studies support this (Morrison and Horowitz 2016).

Some ware types have a very long tradition at the site, first appearing during the MBA and continuing throughout the 2nd millennium BC without any major differences in the fabric characteristics. The prevailing ware type among them is Simple Ware (SW), which is characterized by a semi-fine to medium-coarse calcareous fabric with river sand added as temper. The MBA shape types that appear in Simple Ware are numerous. Among the open shapes, the s-curve bowl (Fig. 7-12.2) is the prevailing bowl type that appears in all MBA contexts. The second most frequent bowl type is the hook-rimmed bowl (Fig. 7-12.3, 4). Other bowl types that appear in far fewer numbers are rounded shallow bowls (Fig. 7-12.7, 8), hemispherical bowls (Fig. 7-12.10, 11), and carinated bowls (Fig. 7-12.5, 6). In comparison to bowls, cups are much less frequent; the retrieved examples are s-curve (Fig. 7-12.15), biconical (Fig. 7-12.16), and hemispherical (Fig. 7-12.17) types. Constituting a rather intermediate shape between open and closed vessels, kraters (Fig. 7-13.1, 2), and especially the biconical subtype with a distinct carination on the shoulder, are also commonly attested in all MBA contexts. Among the closed shapes, the prevailing jar type is the globular jar; while medium-sized, wide-mouthed (Fig. 7-13.7) and narrow-mouthed (Fig. 7-13.8) globular jars are the most frequently attested ones, small-sized globular jars and those with an ovoid body (Fig. 7-13.9) are much rarer subtypes. The other jar types are high-neck jars, as well as the small-sized short-neck jars (Fig. 7-12.24) and biconical jars (Fig. 7-12.25). Examples of jugs (Fig. 7-13.4), pitchers (Fig. 7-13.6), and juglets (Fig. 7-12.27, 28) have also been retrieved. Lastly, the storage related large pithoid jars were also manufactured with Simple Ware fabric. Hemispherical pithoid jars with a rail rim (Fig. 7-13.15) are very typical of the MBA, but globular pithoid jars (Fig. 7-13.14) are also commonly found. On some examples of the latter type, the base has a single perforation, which might be associated with cheese making or beer brewing (Ellison 1984; Gates 1988: 68). Within the shape repertoire of Simple Ware, rare shapes such as lids (Fig. 7-12.12–13) and strainer bowls (Fig. 7-12.9) are also attested.

The very fine, likely levigated variant of Simple Ware is classified as Fine Simple Ware (SF), which was mainly used to manufacture thin-walled bowls, cups, shoulder goblets (Fig. 7-12.14), or small-sized jars. Painted pottery of the MBA is also classified as subvariants of Simple Ware, since it shares the same properties regarding the paste preparation, fashioning, and finishing techniques, as well as firing (Horowitz 2015: 165). The most characteristic painted pottery of the MBA contexts is Syro-Cilician Ware (SCW). It is characterized by its distinct geometric, floral, figural, and animal motifs that are applied to specific vessel shape types, and it constitutes one of the materialized reflections of early interregional connectivity between different and distant regions during the MBA (see Seton-Williams 1953; Tubb 1983; Bagh 2003, 2013; Bulu 2017b). The fabrics of the Syro-Cilician Ware vessels range from very fine to medium-coarse. Although the vast majority of the Syro-Cilician Ware vessels were manufactured with the use of RKE, recent technological analysis results showed that some of the pitchers and kraters were manufactured with a combination of hand modeling and RKE (Bulu 2021). The most commonly attested shape types are pitchers with the typical "eye" decoration (Fig. 7-13.5), kraters (Fig. 7-13.3), and s-curve bowls (Fig. 7-12.1), but examples of carinated bowls, rounded shallow bowls, cups, globular jars, short-neck jars, juglets, side-spouted jars, and animal-shaped vessels are also attested.

The second painted pottery tradition is Banded Ware (BW). In contrast to the LBA examples that are characterized by broad horizontal bands (Horowitz 2019: 197), the MBA examples are typically decorated with either simple horizontal lines or with an arrangement of thicker bands that are framed by thinner lines. Complete/partially complete examples and diagnostic sherds of Banded Ware vessels are very rare, and they are mostly represented by globular jars (Fig. 7-13.10), high-neck jars (Fig. 7-13.11), and short-neck jars, although fragments that belong to cups and shallow bowls are also found. The last and least common painted pottery tradition of the MBA is Sgraffiato Ware (SG), the typical vessel shape of which is the hemispherical cup (Fig. 7-12.18). In this style, thin, straight, and wavy lines were horizontally scratched on the broad painted bands, revealing the fabric color underneath.

The other MBA ware types with specific surface treatments are Gray Burnished Ware (GB) and Red Slip Ware (RS). Gray Burnished Ware has a very fine to semi-fine fabric with no or very rare visible inclusions. The surfaces of the vessels were highly burnished, and the dark gray color was acquired through reducing atmospheric conditions during the firing of the vessels. The most typical vessel shape types are the hook-rimmed bowl, often with one or more incised lines on top of the rim, and piriform juglets (Fig. 7-12.26). Red Slip Ware is one of the least common ware types during the MBA. Although the majority of the retrieved examples are non-diagnostic body sherds of open and closed vessels, there are also diagnostic sherds that belong to shallow bowls, biconical cups, and globular jars.

Cookware assemblages of MBA Tell Atchana consist of two distinct ware types. The prevailing one is calcite tempered (MI), which constitutes a chronological marker for MBA, as opposed to the shell tempered one that is characteristic of the LBA (Horowitz 2019; Horowitz and Çakırlar 2017). The most common shape type is the wide-mouthed cooking pot with a globular or carinated body (Fig. 7-13.12, 13); two opposing handles added to the rim is a frequently attested characteristic. Calcite tempered trays (Fig. 7-12.21, 22) are also very typical of the MBA, with the top of the rim mainly adorned with incised rope decoration or with a thick groove. The second but less frequent cookware is grit tempered (CWO), which is mainly found as fragments of shallow bowls (Fig. 7-12.19–20) or body

sherds of cooking pots. The high foot fragments that are found in this fabric indicate that the bowl fragments likely belong to high-footed bowls that were previously named "champagne-cups" by Woolley (1955: 329, Type 113).

The overall late MBA local ceramic assemblage from Tell Atchana finds parallels in various sites in a wider geographic setting. These include Ebla/Tell Mardikh, Hama (Nigro 2002a, 2002b), and Qatna/Tell Mishrifeh (Iamoni 2012) in western Syria, Umm el-Marra (Curvers et al. 1997: figs. 23–24, 20.9–10; Schwartz et al. 2000: fig. 8, 2003: figs. 29–30, 33), and Tell Hadidi (Dornemann 1992, 1979: figs. 20–23) in the Syrian part of the middle Euphrates, Oylum Höyük in the Kilis Plain (Özgen and Helwing 2001: abb. 7, 16–19; Engin 2020: fig. 11), and Zincirli in the Karasu Valley (Morgan and Soldi 2021: figs. 10, 15, 19–22), as well as Tarsus Gözlükule (Goldman 1956: pls. 287, 291, 293, 295, 297–298, 368–370, 372) and Kinet Höyük (Gates 2000, 2010: fig. 8, 2011: fig. 10, 12) in Cilicia.

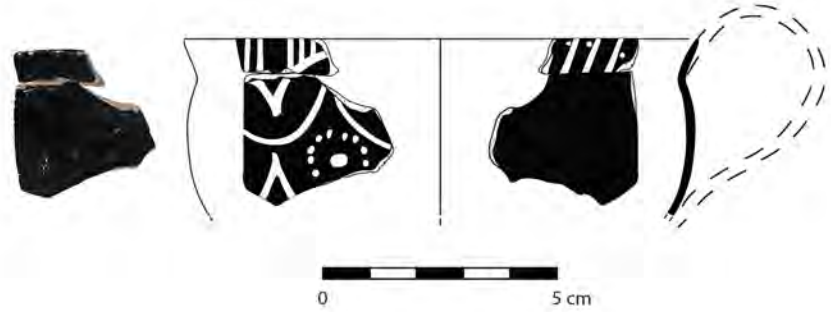

Figure 7-14. AT25415.1, Kamares Ware fragment from Square 33.53, Local Phase 3 (©Alalakh Excavations Archive).

Among the non-local ceramics retrieved from the late MBA contexts, the recovery of a Middle Minoan IIB–IIIA Kamares Ware hemispherical cup fragment (Fig. 7-14) is intriguing for a number of reasons, not only because it is the very first example retrieved throughout the excavation history at the site, but also since its presence in the broader eastern Mediterranean setting is limited to a few sites (Koehl 2020: 203, fig. 2a–b; Pucci et al. 2020: 152). Furthermore, while the earliest contacts between Alalakh and Crete have mainly been attributed to the technical and iconographic similarities between the wall paintings from the Level VII Palace and those of the Minoan Palaces (see the discussion on this topic in the wall paintings section here), the recovery of a Kamares Ware cup from a context predating the latest phase of the Level VII Palace testifies to the presence of interactions between Alalakh and the Aegean much earlier. The late MBA contexts also yielded several other body sherds with likely non-local fabrics, which include bichrome slipped and bichrome painted examples that are not known among typical local painted and slipped wares at the site. Future archaeometric research will be conducted on the non-local fabrics to shed light on the extent of these external contacts.

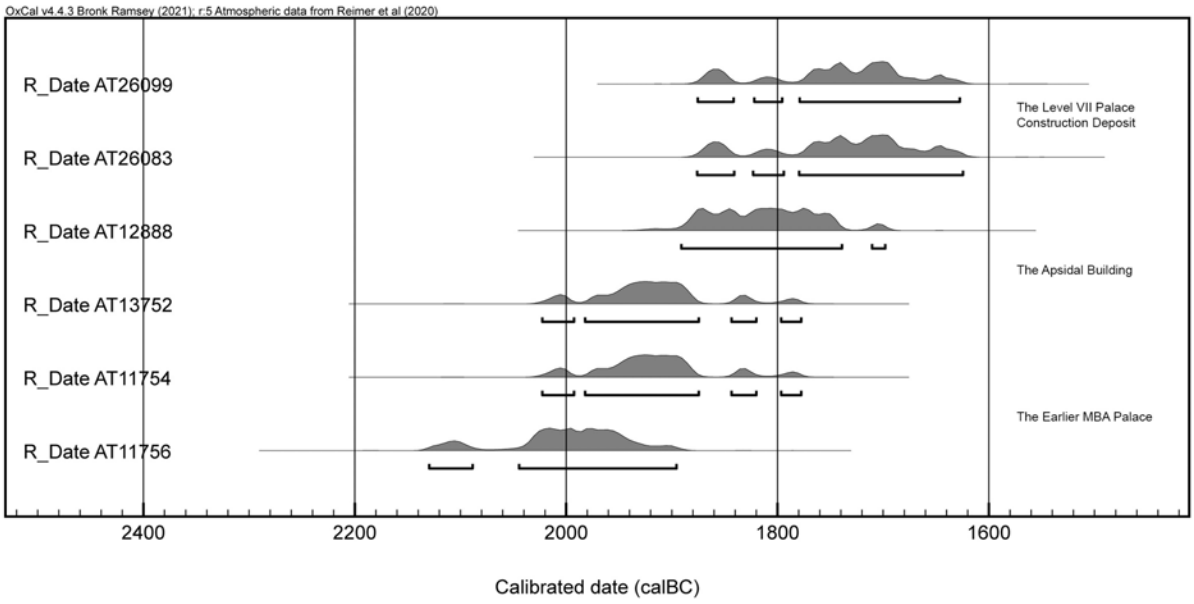

Figure 7-15. MBA radiocarbon dates from Tell Atchana. AT26099 (TÜBİTAK MAM YDBE AMS Laboratory; TÜBİTAK-0491) and AT26083 (TÜBİTAK-0492) are from Square 33.53, Local Phase 2, Level VII Palace construction deposit. AT12888 (Beta Analytic; BETA-409551) is from a room context and AT13752 (BETA-409550) is a short-lived sample from a mixed street deposit in Square 32.57, Local Phase 5b, apsidal building. AT11754 (BETA-409552) and AT11756 (BETA-409553) are from Square 33.32, Local Phase 3c, pre-Level VII palace. The raw dates were calibrated using OxCal v.4.4.3 software (Bronk Ramsey 2020) based on the IntCal20 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al. 2020).

DISCUSSION

The urbanized, complex nature of the city during the MBA is well defined through all excavation areas, revealing the presence of a long-lasting, strong administrative system capable of conducting large-scale building programs from palaces to temples and city fortifications. This is partially defined through deep soundings, providing a glimpse of the arrangement of the space and the city's public monuments. The C14 dates acquired from these distinct building phases provide a temporal framework that stretches across a wide span due to continuous and long-lasting usage of the building phases discussed (Fig. 7-15). Unfortunately, owing to the massive size of the buildings exposed, squares were often mostly occupied by thick mudbrick walls, leaving limited space for exploration of the living surfaces. Continuous re-floorings and the absence of stone foundations in most cases further complicate the matter. Nevertheless, several important points can be presented regarding the exposed MBA contexts and their significance in the wider Anatolian, Near Eastern, and eastern Mediterranean setting.

With regards to the Apsidal Building exposed in Square 32.57, the rectangular buildings with curvilinear walls are a common feature of the Aegean and western Anatolian Early Bronze Age, though at a much smaller scale; this tradition is minimally noted in central and southeastern Anatolia and eastward (Yener 2015). The multi-functional buildings of utilitarian nature such as the Early Bronze Age Rounded Building (Level 4) at Tell al Raqa'i, along the middle Ḫabur River, is an example of the architectural traditions of a northern Mesopotamian rural community where the structure was dedicated to processing, storing, and administrative management of grain supply (Schwartz and Curvers 1992). In the upper parts of the Ḫabur, the remarkable monumental underground stone structure exposed in close proximity to the palace of Tupkiš in the city of Tell Mozan, Urkeš (ca. 2300 BC) is another unique architectural example that may perhaps signal Hurrian construction practices in cult and ritual buildings in the late Early Bronze Age. According to its excavators, the stone-covered underground structure (*abi*) served as a sacred space for the spirits of the netherworld in accordance with the Hurrian rituals known from later Hittite sources (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2007: 142). Furthermore, recent research (Yener et al. 2020) suggests that the complete plan of the Apsidal Building at Alalakh may resemble the later 3rd millennium BC *in antis* plan of Temple C at the middle Euphrates site of Tel Bi'a, Tuttul (Miglus and Strommenger 2002: 102, Taf. 124). All these examples may perhaps then hint at connections to the east, in accordance with the Hurrian and Amorite practices that intrude into the Amuq Valley at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, also suggested through recent excavations at Toprakhisar Höyük (Akar and Kara 2020). Thus, speculatively, the presence of an apsidal building in the late MBA at Alalakh may represent temple building practices with northern Mesopotamian origins. This is in accordance with the limited number of small finds retrieved from the building. The presence of a particular mold-made female figurine with a tall headdress is regarded as representing an early Hurrian-style iconographic predecessor to LBA examples from Anatolia (Yener 2015: 489). The strong connections to northern Mesopotamian late 3rd millennium BC architecture at Tell Atchana may then be linked to the 4.2 K BP climate event leading to habitat tracking groups, including Hurrians and Amorites (Weiss 2014; Burke 2017: 296; Akar and Kara 2020). Such a statement also finds support in the new genomic research conducted on the individuals from the MBA cemetery at Tell Atchana, which points to the presence of genetic contributions to the population that could have northern Mesopotamian origins (Skourtanioti et al. 2020: 1168).

The funerary practices at Tell Atchana in the MBA also fit within a larger picture of Near Eastern ritual practices in this period, showing connections to regions both near and farther flung. Although the collective rock-cut and residential tombs that appear commonly in both the Levant and Mesopotamia, respectively (e.g., Cradic 2017; Gonen 1992; Hallote 1995; Keswani 2012; Laneri 2014; Morandi Bonaccosi 2011), are not found at Tell Atchana, burials from other sites in northern/northwestern Syria are very similar in terms of locations, types, and grave goods. At sites such as Oylum Höyük (Engin 2020), Tell Afis (Di Michele and Pedrosi 2012), Tell Tuqan (Ascalone 2014), Tilmen Höyük (Duru 2003), and Tell Leilan (Weiss et al. 1990), simple pit graves have been recovered in association with city fortifications, as seen in the extramural cemetery at Tell Atchana, and all of these graves have a similar range of grave goods and resemble each other in terms of body and object positionings. This association between pit graves and fortifications begins in the early MBA (Felli 2012) and seems to represent a uniquely northern Syrian phenomenon that may reflect the region's intermediary position—both geographical and perhaps cultural—between the Levant and Mesopotamia on the one hand, where intramural burials were the general rule of the time, and Anatolia on the other, where a strong tradition of extramural and off-site burial prevailed for much of the Bronze Age (e.g., Akyurt 1998; Bachhuber 2015; Emre 1991).

There are also indications at Tell Atchana that post-funerary rituals may have been carried out for the dead similar to the *kispum* rituals that are well-known (and textually attested) from sites like Mari (e.g., Barrett 2007; Jacquet 2012; Jonker 1995; MacDougal 2014; Pfälzner 2015; Pitard 1996; Salles 1995). Texts describe these rituals as dedicated to caring for and remembering the dead in the form of continued provisioning with food and drink at regular, designated festivals, and although most of the texts describe these practices in a royal context, there is growing archaeological evidence that corresponds to the performance of similar rituals in non-royal contexts, such as vessels and animal bones deposited in the fills of tomb shafts and pits, as well as depressions and installations that seem to have been designed for pouring libations (Horwitz 2001; Keswani 2012: 187; Lange 2012; Wissing 2012; Wygnanska 2014: 46–48). Despite the often highly disturbed nature of the extramural cemetery fill, there are indications that funerary feasts and/or post-funerary offerings may have been conducted here, particularly vessel shapes such as s-curve bowls that do not appear in the grave good assemblage at Tell Atchana but which are common in MBA graves at nearby sites, such

as Qatna (Morandi Bonacossi 2011; Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2009), Tell Tuqan (Ascalone 2014), and Ebla (Matthiae 1984), as well as farther south in the Levant (Baker 2012: 92–94). Fragments of basins, two examples of pot stands (or perhaps portable hearths?) and a box-shaped, burnished vessel, all found in the cemetery fill, may also indicate the practice of offering ceremonies or funerary feasts taking place here (for more details, see Ingman 2020a: 148–157). Perhaps the most intriguing evidence for such practices at Tell Atchana comes from the Level VII Palace and the Shaft Grave, where the surrounding rooms of the palace contained funerary vessels (Woolley 1948: 16, 1955: 95–104), indicating that these rooms may have served as a locus for the performance of funerary rituals (Ingman 2020a: 55–64).

The discovery of well-preserved fresco fragments in Square 33.53 in the southern sector of the Level VII palace has now begun to shed light on the question of early 2nd millennium BC wall painting practices in the eastern Mediterranean and their chronological relevance to similar practices in the Aegean world. It is well known that the palette of red, black, and white wall painting over plaster has a very early appearance dating back to the Aceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic in Anatolia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and inner Syria. This stylistic tradition continued into the 3rd millennium BC as evidenced by tri-color figurative and geometric wall paintings at Tell el-Halawa B, Tell Mumbaqat, and Tell es-Sweyhat (Dunham 1993 and references), as well as at Ebla (Pinnock 2019: fig. 16).

An antecedent to the MB II multi-colored frescos at Alalakh is the use of polychromatic pigments on wall paintings (especially blues and greens) at Tell Burak (Kamlah and Sader 2010: pl. 115) dated to the 19th century BC. These "proto-frescos" are described as having Egyptian stylistic influences as well as underscoring the technique of preliminary paintings applied on wet plaster and final paintings applied on secco.

Polychrome paintings at Mari make their appearance in the 19th century BC with the so-called investiture scene, given its blue sky, the multi-colored sphinxes, and the blue bird with the drooping lotus flower (Parrot 1958: pl. A; Nunn 1988; Nunn and Piening 2020). It is described as tempera on a mud wall and partly white-washed lime gypsum plaster. The emphasis scholars place on the use of lime plaster for frescos is misplaced since at issue is local geology. That is, the painters and preparers of the walls used whatever was available in their own region. At Alalakh, the region was filled with limestone, and therefore lime plaster was used; at Mari, gypsum was plentiful in the region, and thus it became the background of preference. Furthermore, enhancing the relevance of Mari to Alalakh, in her examination of Mari wall paintings, Muller (2018: fig. 15) has found that the blue pigment at Mari was crushed vitrified Egyptian blue faience, imitating lapis lazuli. This use of faience, mimicking the color blue, mirrors the crushed glass and faience applied on the Alalakh paintings. With reflected light, what a dazzling, sparkling Level VII Palace it must have been.

By the early 2nd millennium BC, polychrome wall painting was well established in western Asia. We would submit that, with the iconographic preference at Alalakh for local and Egyptian themes so prevalent in the Level VII seals, as well as the tradition of polychrome Ancient Near Eastern fresco motifs, Alalakh identified predominantly with regional styles in general, and Egypt and Mari in particular, more than with the Aegean.

In terms of ceramic evidence, although the late MBA corpus is characterized as a homogeneous assemblage as a whole, contextual analysis conducted in Areas 1 and 3 indicates that there were some differences in the appreciation and consumption of some shape and ware types within and between the two areas. For instance, while the s-curve bowl is the prevailing bowl type attested in Squares 32.57 and 33.32, hook-rimmed bowls, as well as rounded shallow bowls, are by far the most frequently encountered bowl types in Square 33.53. Local Phase 5 of Square 45.44 in Area 3 is a rather small MBA exposure, but, while the hook-rimmed bowls are completely absent from its domestic contexts, rounded shallow bowls outnumber s-curve bowls. These results would indicate different eating and/or serving-related traditions seen within different sectors of the Royal Precinct, as well as between different areas of the settlement during the MBA. A similar distinction can also be seen in the distribution of painted pottery styles. The predominant painted pottery style retrieved from Squares 33.53 in Area 1 and 45.44 in Area 3 is Banded Ware, as opposed to the prevailing Syro-Cilician Ware assemblages retrieved from Squares 33.32 and 32.57 (Bulu 2021: 269–270, 275). In addition to the typical Syro-Cilician Ware examples, a closed vessel sherd depicting a defecating equid from Square 45.44 clearly constitutes a unique example (Fig. 7-12.23). The band decoration below resembles the framing pattern of the Syro-Cilician Ware examples, but the animal motif, and its posture, is extraordinary. This phenomenon may suggest that they could have been trying to imitate the Syro-Cilician Ware vessels used in the Royal Precinct in a rather unusual way, or it may reflect different painted pottery production and/or consumption practices applied outside the Royal Precinct (Bulu 2021: 230).

CONCLUSIONS

After two decades of new archaeological fieldwork at Tell Atchana, the political, economic, and cultural complexity of the Kingdom of Mukiš and its capital city Alalakh has been broadly investigated and intensively published for the Late Bronze Age (see Yener et al. 2019). The MBA, on the other hand, remains to be further investigated via the generation of new data from various districts of the tell and through the re-evaluation of the data collection from the 1930s–1940s excavations. This short chapter presents only a glimpse of the ongoing research into the MBA, revealing the urbanized and cosmopolitan nature of a city located in the borderlands. The research at Alalakh has also proven the far-reaching potential of the re-evaluation of old excavation data for redefining commonly accepted and well-rooted assumptions such as the origins of wall painting practices in the Anatolian and eastern Mediterranean world.

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