

Études et Travaux

Chroniques de fouilles

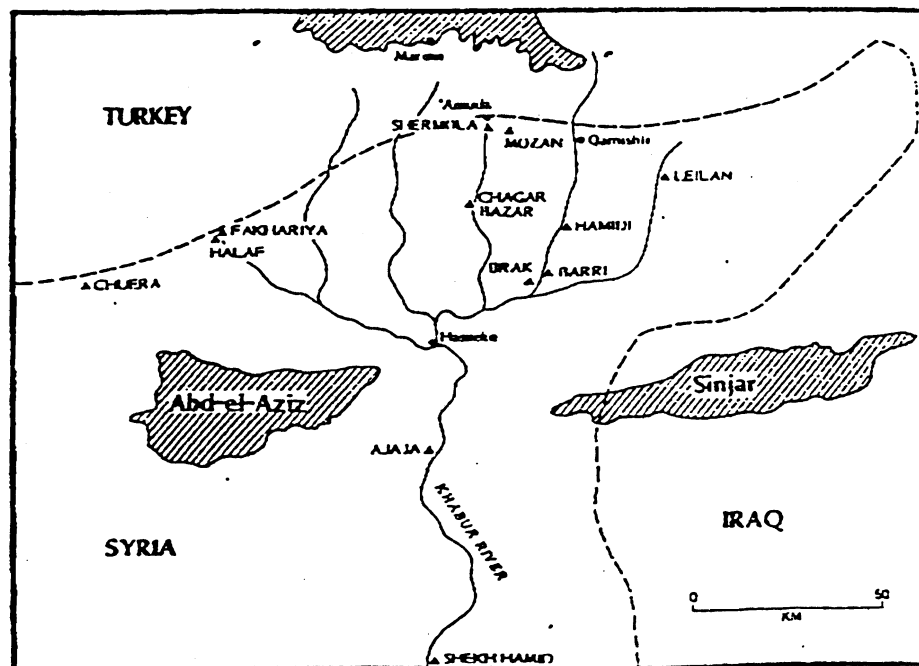
The Identification of Urkesh with Tell Mozan (Syria)

Ever since our first visit to Amuda and to Tell Mozan in the Spring of 1983, we had come to the conclusion that the tell in Amuda (known as Tell Shermola) could not be considered the site of ancient Urkesh, as was generally assumed, and that Tell Mozan was a much more probable candidate. Our reasons were articulated in some detail in our first report on the excavations at Tell Mozan (*Mozan I*, Malibu 1988). Subsequent excavations at the site showed that indeed Tell Mozan presented the profile which one would expect for such a site, but failed to produce any direct evidence to that effect. It was only during the study of glyptic material that had come to light during the last season of excavations (June-July 1993) that positive evidence for such identification could be first established. Such evidence was not immediately apparent, since it was hidden by some very unusual glyptic practices, including carving the seal in the positive and the vertical inversion of individual cuneiform signs. While we will not present here the details of the philological argument, we will offer an overview of the archaeological context, and will give the readings of the major seal impressions which belong to a previously unknown king (*endan*) of Urkeš, Tupkiš, and his wife, Uqnitum.

We were able to develop our analysis of the evidence while serving as visiting professors at the Oriental Institute of the University of Vienna in the Spring semester 1995. We circulated a preliminary report among a few colleagues, and spent the Summer season of 1995 at Tell Mozan collating the

hundreds of sealings on which our argument rested ; we also completed the documentation with a view to a full publication of the evidence. The first public announcement was given at the meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Philadelphia on November 20, 1995, followed by a one day seminar at UCLA on December 2, 1995, in which Harry A. Hoffner and Piotr Steinkeller also took part. We are very grateful to these colleagues, and to the others who commented on our preliminary report, in particular Mirjo Salvini, Gernot Wilhelm and Michael Jursa. The brief presentation given here is the first published report on our findings; a longer article will follow in the next issue of *Archiv für Orientforschung*, where photographs will also be given. Other articles will be devoted to particular aspects of the corpus, which will be published in its entirety in the *Mozan* series.

The material was excavated in *building AK*, on the western side of the tell (Fig. 1). The floor plan of the building (Fig. 2) shows that the excavations have been limited to its southwestern portion. We project a symmetrical wing to the east, and another portion to the north, with a large courtyard and rooms around it. While we cannot give here a stratigraphic history of the later building activities, it is worth mentioning that the floor accumulation where the seal impressions were found was the earliest in the building. The foundations, in stone, were rather shallow and of the same width as the walls; the lower courses of the



Cover : Sealing of king Tupkiš, with lion and sealing of queen Uqnitum (Drawing by Pietro Pozzi).

walls were in stone as well, about 1 m. high, while the rest of the walls were in mud brick. The walls were not plastered, but the floors were very carefully laid, with a substantial red packing supporting a good gypsum surface. The thickness of the red packing varied depending on the location: it was greater to the south, to compensate for what must have been already at the time of construction a considerable slope of the mound. This slope may have been conditioned by the presumed presence, to the immediate southwest of building AK, of a gate in the defensive wall which surrounded the High Mound (excavated in KW and S1, and traced elsewhere on the surface, Fig. 1). The construction of the building and the first floor is assigned to stratum B12. The building which preceded it (stratum B13) shows a different alignment, which implies that the storehouse was built to meet different needs. The building remained in use for a long time, because an extended series of floors and floor accumulations was preserved within its walls.

We consider this a *storehouse* because of the sealings found on the floor: they had been placed on a variety of containers, which were presumably used to store

important goods belonging for the most part to the queen and her household. The sealings come from sector B. A closet with large walls, which we have called a "vault," might have served to store important goods; the size of the walls need not have been in function of security, but may have served a more mundane purpose, for instance to provide cool storage for perishable supplies. Sector A may have been used for accessioning the incoming goods rather than for storage, but little was left of the floor accumulation because of erosion. It appears that two symmetrical sectors A' and B' complete the storehouse on the East: it might have been reserved for the king. Sector C (for which we have but an intimation of a possible courtyard with perimetral rooms) may have housed the personnel of the storehouse, possibly including a scribal installation. A complete school tablet was found in Sector B (A1.69+); it contains an excerpt of 6 lines from the ED LU E list of professions also known from Abu Salabikh (*MSL* 12, 17: 34-39) and Ebla (*MEE* 3, 36f.: 34-39); some interesting variants are found in the Urkesh text. Small fragments of some 40 administrative tablets were found in the building.

A date in the mid Old Akkadian period (23rd century) is suggested by the glyptic and the epigraphy. Carbon 14 samples are currently being processed.

More than 170 seal impressions were made by seals which were inscribed. At least four seals are attributed to *the king*. They read as follows:

1. *Tup-ki-iš/ en-da-an / 'U[r]-kèš!*, KI (4 sealings)

The seal impression is a negative; the reading above gives the positive as it would have been on the seal. The sign *keš*¹ is written DINGIR.U.RÉC215 as in a pre-Sargonic text published by P. Steinkeller and N. Postgate, *Mesopotamian Civilizations* 4, N. 10, 1.3 (this reference courtesy of P. Steinkeller).

2. *Tu[p-ki-i]š/ [...] / [Ur]-kèš.KI* (3 sealings; see composite on Fig. 3)

3. *Tup-ki-i[š] / [en]-[da-an] / [...]* (1 sealing)

4. *Tup-ki-iš/ en-[da-an] / [...]* (1 sealing)

The name *Tupkiš* can be understood as Hurrian, and the title *endan* is the Hurrian term for king. Both 'the' title and this spelling of Urkeš appear on the bronze lions of Tiš-atal.

At least six seals are attributed to *the queen*, who bears the Akkadian name *Uqnitum*. Generally, most seals are represented by a large number of sealings. They read as follows:

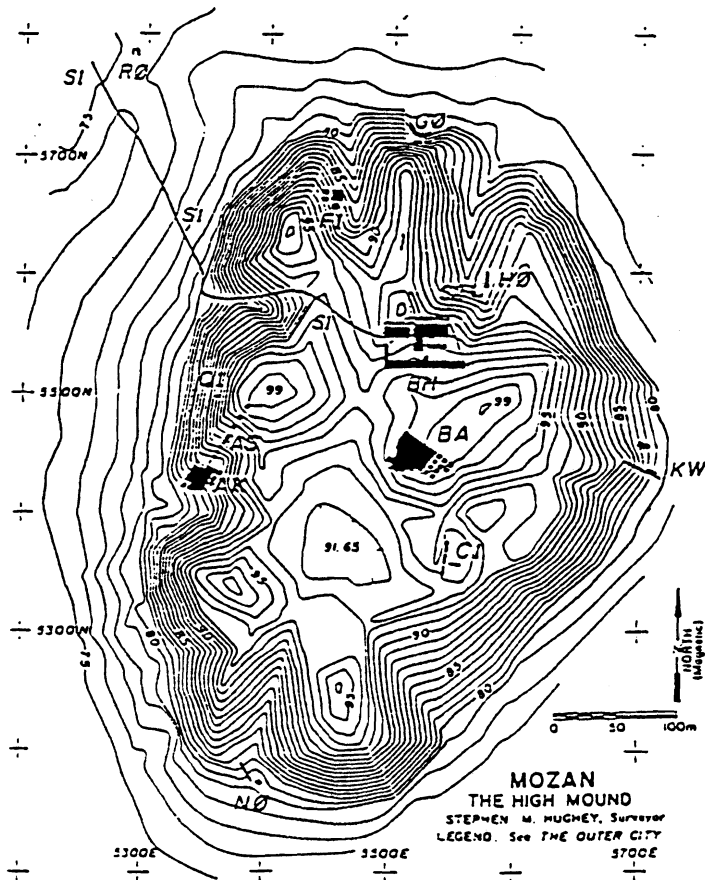


Fig. 1. Site plan of Mozan/Urkes

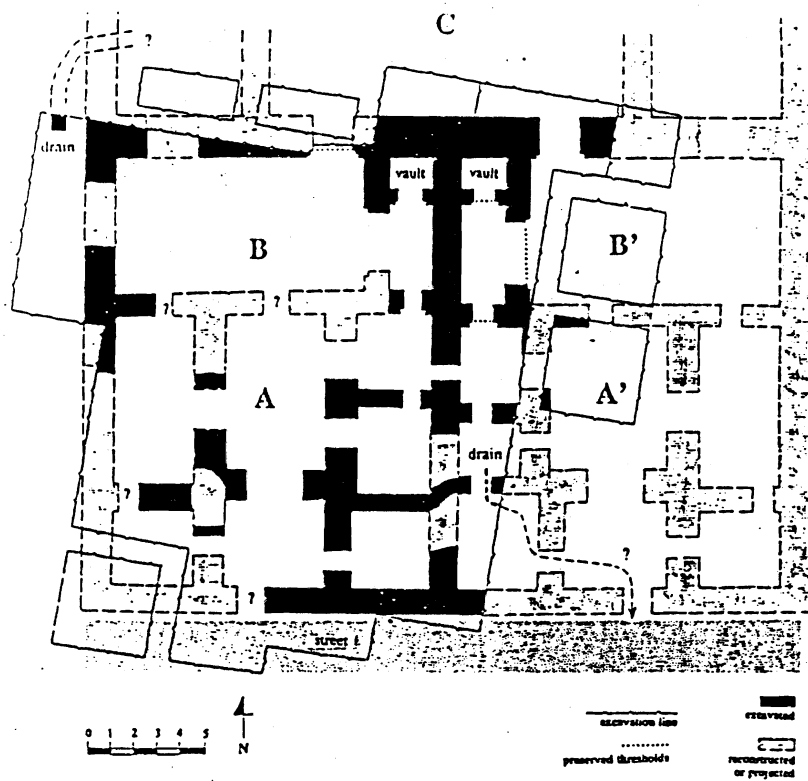


Fig. 2. Floor plan of Royal Storehouse AK (Stratum B12)

1. ZA.GÌN-*ni-tum* / NIN
2. GÌN.ZA-*ni-tum* / DAM / *Tup-ki-iš* (see composite on Fig. 4).
3. GÌN.ZA-*ni-tum* / DAM
- 4-6. ZA.GÌN-*ni-tum* / DAM (with variations in both the cuneiform and the scene).

There are explicit correlations between the legends and the scenes. This is especially apparent in two other seals of "Zamena, the nurse of Uqnitum" and one seal of "the female cook of Uqnitum" (her name is abraded). All of these seals exhibit stylistic and iconographic idiosyncrasies that set them apart from contemporary southern glyptic. One more inscribed seal shows instead an animal combat scene of a well known type; the legend gives the name *Innin-šadū* known from contemporary southern onomastics. Illustrated here are *two royal seals*, one of the king and the other of the queen (Cover). The queen's seal shows her seated facing right and wearing a long tiered garment. Her hair is braided; at the lower end is either a braid ornament or a spool for thread or yarn. In another royal seal the same type of ornament is shown connected with a young girl. A naked (?) child is sitting on the lap of the queen; this child, facing right, has its left hand raised and slightly extended

forward. A star is placed between the child and the standing male child, who may be the crown prince, touching the lap of a second seated figure who holds a conical cup. The standing child wears a hat with a series of parallel upright elements (feathers?). The inscription identifies the seal as belonging to Uqnitum, wife of Tupkish. The scene, too, shows her with presumably two royal children. The second seated figure is incomplete but may be the king. The king's seal (Cover), too, is carved with a representation of the same royal child bearing the same garment and headdress. In this case the king is seated holding an upright mace (or scepter?). Crouching at

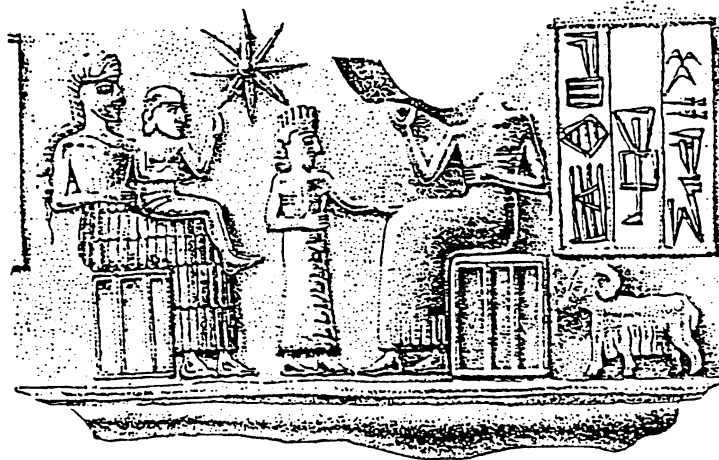
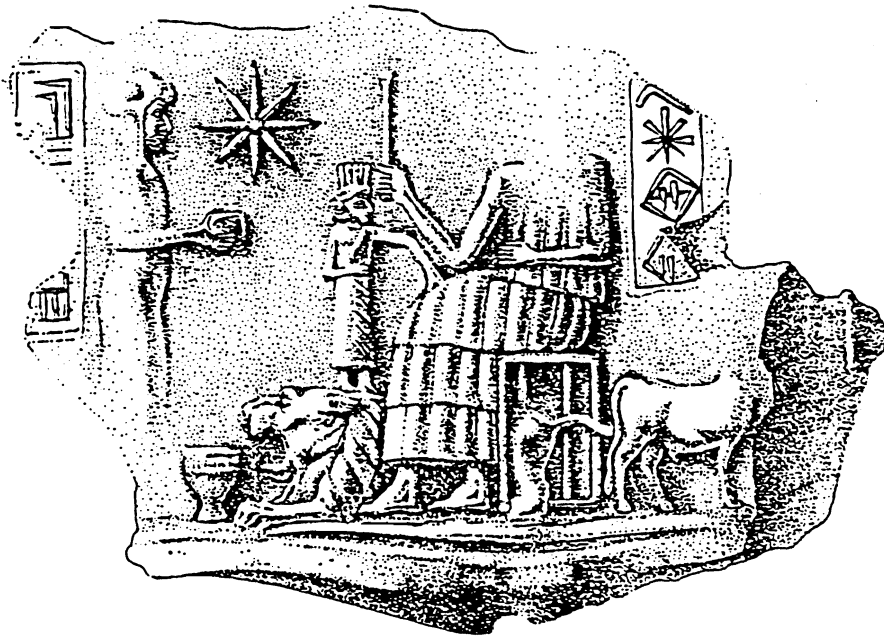
the feet of the king is a lion. The remarkable realism of the lion and the fact that the child, presumably the crown prince, stands on his head, heightens the aura of royal power surely intended by the artist. On the left, a standing figure, only partially shown in our rolling, may be an attendant or even the statue of a deity. These two seals are connected in style, iconography and in conveying the impression of dynastic power.

The *iconography of the seal impressions* can be divided into three major groups: (1) seals which may have been imported from the south or perhaps are locally carved but closely follow southern models; (2) seals in a style which can provisionally be called schematic and which have parallels in seals from Tell Brak, but are not known in the south; and (3) dynastic seals belonging to the King, the Queen and the Queen's household; they emphasize the royal family as the embodiment of royal power. The latter two categories were certainly carved locally. The dynastic seals are unknown in the south and have their best parallels in later representations of the royal family in Hittite art. "Schematic" seals are characterized by the use of discrete elements, geometric borders and frames; the long history of these stylistic traits in the

area is shown, to give just one example, in the paintings from Nuzi. This material will help place in a new perspective the long standing question about the very existence of Hurrian art.

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...CELLANI and ALLEI-DUCELLANI 1993 Identification of Urkesh - Orient Express 1995/3, 63-70.