

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID

Proceedings of the 5th International Congress
on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

**Proceedings of the 5th International
Congress on the Archaeology of
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Edited by
Joaquín M^a Córdoba, Miquel Molist, M^a Carmen Pérez,
Isabel Rubio, Sergio Martínez
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La arqueología y el entorno de las ciudades y las aldeas antiguas
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La artesanía y el arte en el Oriente Antiguo
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The Origins of the Halaf and the Rise of Styles

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Programme - Programa

Organization of Late Bronze Age cities in the Upper Syrian Euphrates Valley

Adelheid Otto, Munich

Abstract

Late Bronze Age cities in the Upper Syrian Euphrates Valley contain temples and extended domestic areas. However, residencelike structures have not been discovered so far. This paper will attempt to demonstrate that the structure of the cities reflects the collectively organized society in this region. This is in contrast to many Near Eastern regions, for example the Syrian coast. The settlements functioned by means of private subsistence and trade and a collective leadership. This can be exemplified at Bazi with its 50 excavated houses in the lower town and the temple on top of the citadel. It allows us to reconstruct daily life (e.g. subsistence, manufacturing activities, trade, cultic practices) with the help of textual evidence, natural scientific methods and ethnographic analogies. It will be argued that residential structures were missing because temples and houses served also for administrative purposes.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age, Mittani, temples, domestic quarters, collectively organized society, Euphrates valley, Syria.

Region and date of the investigated sites

Excavations in areas where future reservoirs threaten archaeological sites are always a challenge in archaeology, however, they often result in a more intensive investigation of a region than that which is ordinarily achieved. If the archaeological results are complemented by finds of cuneiform texts which contain information about the settlements' historical, social and everyday background, good conditions for the investigation of a region's structure are given. This is the case in Northern Syria, in the Assad and Tishrin lake area of the Upper Syrian Euphrates, especially for the well documented Late Bronze Age (ca. 15th-13th cent. BC) (fig. 1). A dense network of investigated sites is paired with detailed cuneiform records. This allows deep insight into the settlements and enables us to draw a sketch of the functioning of Late Bronze Age cities in the upper Syrian Euphrates valley.¹

In the following I will argue that the settlements which have many features in common consist of two elements only: domestic quarters and temples. This imposes the question of where the administration of the settlements could have taken place. It will be demonstrated that the historical and socio-economic background known from cuneiform texts helps to find a possible explanation, namely that the spatial organization of the settlements is a mirror of the society's structure.

¹ Frequently used literature: Otto 2006 = A. Otto, *Alltag und Gesellschaft zur Spätbronzezeit: Eine Fallstudie aus Tall Bazi (Syrien)*, Subartu XIX, Turnhout 2006 (see also for previous literature); Sallaberger, Otto and Einwag 2006 = W. Sallaberger, A. Otto and B. Einwag, *Schenkungen von Mittani-Königen an die Einwohner von Bašīru. Die zwei Urkunden aus Tall Bazi am Mittleren Euphrat*, ZA 96 (2006) 69-104.

The focus of this paper lies on the area between Karkemish, the major royal city in the 2nd millennium BC, and Meskene, ancient Emar, an important economic centre from the Early to the Late Bronze Age, excavated by Jean Margueron and Uwe Finkbeiner.² In between lie Munbaqa, ancient Ekalte (excavations directed by Dittmar Machule),³ Hadidi, ancient Azu (directed by Rudolf Dornemann),⁴ Qitar, ancient Til Abnu (directed by Tom McClellan and W. Culican),⁵ Faqus (directed by Jean Margueron),⁶ Tall Fray (directed by Adnan Bounni and Paolo Matthiae),⁷ Suyuh foqani (directed by Luc Bachelot and Mario Fales)⁸ and Bazi-Banat (Banat being directed by Tom McClellan and Anne Porter,⁹ Bazi by Berthold Einwag and myself).¹⁰

The area was part of the Mittani kingdom from the 16th to the 14th cent. BC. The Mittani kings apparently did not alter the already existing structure of society, but tied the extant entities to their kingdom by alliances. Around 1350, during the Hittite expansion to the south, the area was divided, as is well known from the treaty between the Great king Suppiluliuma and the Mittani king Shattiwaza: the area to the west of the Euphrates was dominated by the Hittites, east of the Euphrates by the Mittani. When an area on the eastern bank was given to the Hittites, as was the area in the north eastern part of the Karkemish territory, it must be laid down explicitly.¹¹ Many of the mentioned settlements had their last heydays

² D. Beyer (ed.), *Meskéné – Emar. Dix ans de travaux 1972-1982*, Paris 1982; J. Margueron, s.v. Meskene (Imar/Emar). *B. Archäologisch*, RIA 8 (1993-97) 84-93; U. Finkbeiner, *Emar & Balis 1996-1998*, Preliminary Report of the Joint Syrian-German Excavations with the Collaboration of Princeton University, *Berytus* 44 (1999-2000) 5-57; id., *Emar 2002 – Bericht über die 5. Kampagne der syrisch-deutschen Ausgrabungen*, *BaM* 34 (2003) 9-100.

³ For a summary of the previous literature see R. M. Czichon and P. Werner, *Tall Munbaqa-Ekalte I. Die bronzezeitlichen Kleinfunde*, *WVDOG* 97, Saarbrücken 1998.

⁴ R. H. Dornemann, *Tell Hadidi: an important center of the Mitannian period and earlier*, in: J. Margueron (ed.), *Le Moyen Euphrate. Zone de contacts et d'échanges; Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg*, 10-12mars, 1977, Leiden 1980, 217-234; id., *The Late Bronze Age Pottery Tradition at Tell Hadidi, Syria*, *BASOR* 241 (1981) 29-47.

⁵ W. Culican and T. L. McClellan, *El-Qitar: First season of excavations, 1982-83*, *Abr-Nahrain* 22 (1984) 29-63; T. L. McClellan, *A Syrian Fortress of the Bronze Age: el-Qitar*, *National Geographic Research* 2,4 (1986) 418-440.

⁶ J. Margueron, *Aux marches de l'empire hittite: Une campagne de fouille a Tell Faq'ous (Syrie), citadelle du pays d'Astata*, in: *La Syrie au Bronze Récent*, Paris 1982, 47-66.

⁷ A. Bounni and P. Matthiae, *Tell Fray 1973*, in: *Antiquités de l' Euphrate, Aleppo 1974*, 33-40; P. Matthiae, *Ititi ed Assiri a Tell Fray: lo scavo di una città medio-Siriana sull'Eufrate*, *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 22 (1980) 35-51.

⁸ L. Bachelot and F. M. Fales (eds.), *Tell Shiukh Fawqani 1994-1998*, *HANEM VI/1*, Padova 2005.

⁹ T. L. McClellan, *Banat*, in: H. Weiss, *Archaeology in Syria*, *AJA* 95 (1991) 700-702; see fig. 12: These houses which are situated appr. 300 m northeast of the Weststadt of Bazi, belong to the northern lower town of Bazi(-Banat).

¹⁰ Excavations were first conducted on behalf of the German Archaeological Institute Damascus; since 1999 they have been a project of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. Our thanks are due to them, as well as to the General Directorate of Antiquities in Damascus, especially to the General Director Dr. Bassam Jamous and the Director of excavation Dr. Michel Maqdissi.

¹¹ M. Yamada, *The Northern Border of the Land of Ashtata*, *ASJ* 116 (1994) 261-268.

in the 14th and 13th century BC. They collapsed around 1200 B.C. for unknown reasons.¹²

The structure of society in the Upper Syrian Euphrates region

The region of the Upper Syrian Euphrates is very well documented in texts. Thousands of cuneiform tablets were found in Meskene, hundreds in Munbaqa, several in Hadidi, and most recently a few in Umm el-Marra and Bazi. These texts reveal the remarkable social structure in this area. Gary Beckman stated: «the Middle Euphrates was the home of a relatively egalitarian society of traders and small producers».¹³ Daniel Fleming speaks of a «limited nature of kingship in Emar,» and recently showed that the existing collective initiatives can be traced back at least to the Middle Bronze Age.¹⁴ There was a king and he is mentioned in several legal documents from Emar and Ekalte where he served as the first witness, but otherwise nothing hints at his outstanding position. He seems to have been the «*primus inter pares*,» more or less.

The highest governing body was the «Elders of the city,» followed by the «Brothers». The Elders together with the god of the city held sway in the city. For example they appear as the sellers in one third of the real estate transactions in Emar, but they do not appear as buyers.¹⁵ In contrast, the king does not buy or sell more often than others.¹⁶ At Ekalte the city god Ba'aka and the Elders, sometimes headed by the mayor, appear as the sellers in many real estate transactions.¹⁷

On a lower level there existed the institution of the «Brothers».¹⁸ They are differentiated from their blood brothers (written «šeš») already by the pseudo-logographic writing «lu mes aḥ.ḥi.a». Probably they belong to the extended circle of relatives or to the clan. They assemble for private-law affairs. In Munbaqa several seals of the «Brothers» are documented¹⁹. This organization of society is discernible not only in Emar and Ekalte, but also in Hadidi / Azu²⁰ and in Bazi / Baršū (see below).

¹² The date of the settlements within the Late Bronze Age is a still unsolved problem which could be partly due to the calibration of radiocarbon dates; see A. Otto, The Pottery of the Weststadt of Bazi and the End of the Late Bronze Age, in: Recent Trends in the Study of Late Bronze Age Ceramics in Syro-Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Regions, Workshop Berlin, 2-5 November 2006 (forthcoming).

¹³ G. Beckman, Real Property Sales at Emar, in: G. D. Young et al. (eds.), Crossing boundaries and linking horizons. Studies in honor of Michael C. Astour, Bethesda 1997, 107.

¹⁴ D. E. Fleming, The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar. A Window on Ancient Syrian Religion, Harvard Semitic Studies 42, Atlanta 1992, 59-60; id., Democracy's Ancient Ancestors. Mari and Early Collective Governance, Cambridge 2004, 212-214.

¹⁵ As a result, the seal of the city god is always well represented: In Emar the seal E1 (D. Beyer, Emar IV: Les sceaux, OBO 20, Fribourg, Suisse / Göttingen 2001), in Ekalte the seal 4559 (P. Werner, Tall Munbaqa - Ekalte - III, Die Glyptik, WVDOG 108, Saarbrücken 2004). In Ekalte a seal of the Elders is also known: seal 4576 (Werner 2004, 32).

¹⁶ Beckman 1997 (see footnote 13).

¹⁷ W. Mayer, Tall Munbaqa - Ekalte - II, Die Texte, WVDOG 102, Saarbrücken 2001, 25.

¹⁸ C. Wilcke, A II, die „Brüder« von Emar. Untersuchungen zur Schreibtradition am Euphratknief, AuOr 10 (1992) 115-150; Mayer 2001 (see footnote 17) 25-26.

¹⁹ P. Werner, Tall Munbaqa - Ekalte III, Die Glyptik, WVDOG 108, Saarbrücken 2004, 20-21.

²⁰ Although the texts have not yet been published, their contents is partly known; see R. H. Dornemann, Tell Hadidi: an important center of the Mitannian period and earlier, in: J. Margueron (ed.), Le

This structure of society is radically different from those existing in most of the palace based systems of the Ancient Near East and also from those on the Syrian coast, even though they had close diplomatic and economic relations to the Euphrates region. The best known example is Ugarit, where the dominance of the palace leaves no doubt about the superior position of the ruling elite.²¹ The strict hierarchical system which supposedly was one of the factors in the collapse of the Bronze Age society, is reflected in the layout of the city of Ugarit. It shows three main elements: the palace in the western part of the city, the domestic quarters and temples situated in the eastern part.²²

Temples and domestic dwellings as the two elements of the Middle Euphrates sites

In the Upper Euphrates region several settlements have been investigated on a large scale, but a palace- or residence-like building has not been found to date. Munbaqa/Ekalte shows domestic areas and three temples at the highest point; another temple, fully excavated in 2006, lies a bit further down near the northern city gate. Although the city was completely surveyed by geomagnetic and electric,²³ there were no traces of other outstanding buildings (fig. 2).

At Tall Fray several houses and a small temple («Tempio Sud») were brought to light. The building which was formerly named «Palazzetto» has now been described as the «house of Šimegi-tal» by Frances Pinnock.²⁴ Of course, the excavated area at Tall Fray is limited. However, it can be stated that there is no evidence of a palacelike structure in the investigated parts of the settlement. A similar statement can be made for Hadidi, where the Late Bronze Age levels were only exposed in a small area as well. Here too, only domestic dwellings were found.

The excavations at Emar have brought to light several domestic quarters and three temples (temple M2 and the twin temples in chantier E).²⁵ Again, like in Ekalte, one temple is found in the lower town in a domestic area, while the sanctuary of chantier E with the Ba'al temple and the so-called «Astarte» temple is situated on the most prominent point of the site (fig. 3).

Moyen Euphrate. Zone de contacts et d'échanges; Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 10-12mars, 1977, Leiden 1980, 218-220; see also Mayer 2001 (see footnote 17).

²¹ See for example M. Liverani, The collapse of the Near Eastern regional system at the end of the Bronze Age: The case of Syria, in: M. Rowlands, M. T. Larsen, K. Kristiansen (eds.), *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, Cambridge 1987, 66-73.

²² M. Yon, *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra*, Winona Lake 2006, VI, fig. 1.

²³ H. Becker, J. Fassbinder and F. Chouker, *Magnetische und elektrische Prospektion in Munbaqa/Ekalte 1993*, MDOG 126 (1994) 65-80.

²⁴ F. Pinnock, *Elements of Urbanization in Inner Syria in the Late Bronze Age*, in: S. Mazzoni (ed.), *Nuove fondazione nel vicino oriente antico: realtà e ideologia*, Pisa 1994, 203. In fig. 3 she shows a good plan of the houses at Tall Fray.

²⁵ See J. Margueron, *Architecture et urbanisme*, in: Beyer 1982 (see footnote 2) 23-39, and the more recent map of the southern part of the city, in: U. Finkbeiner, *Emar 2001 – Bericht über die 4. Kampagne der syrisch-deutschen Ausgrabungen*, BaM 33 (2002) 111-146, plan 1.

Of course, one could argue that the limited size of the excavated areas is the reason why no buildings other than temples or houses have been found at the mentioned sites. However, this argument is not valid for Munbaqa/Ekalte (for the large scale excavations see above) and Bazi.

In the western lower town («Weststadt») of Bazi about 50 houses were excavated on an area of appr. 10.000 sqm. The remaining surface was geomagnetically surveyed (fig. 4).²⁶ However, no traces of an official building were found. Only domestic units have been discovered in our limited excavations at the northern lower town²⁷ and in Tom McClellans trenches at Banat-south (see footnote 9) which is in fact the continuation of the northern lower town.

The aim of our excavations on the citadel of Bazi was therefore to investigate if a building with other than domestic character had once existed on this exposed location, 50 m above the lower town. In the 2004 season we hit upon a large building with broad walls and a carefully paved floor in the centre of the citadel's plateau. The building was investigated more thoroughly in the 2005 and 2006 seasons. What we first cautiously called the «central building» or «building 1», turned out to be a temple which was in use at least throughout the Late Bronze Age (see in detail below). Its last phase is contemporary to the Weststadt and suffered the same fate of a violent destruction (figs. 4, 6, 7).

This quick overview over five sites in the Middle Euphrates region shows that all had temples and domestic areas. However, there is only one building to which the function of a palace-like edifice was ascribed: the so called «hılan» at Emar (see fig. 3). Indeed, it differs from most of the standard Emar houses which consist mostly of a large room in the front and two smaller rooms in the back. At the time of Margueron's pioneer work at Emar the architecture of the Middle Euphrates area was poorly explored. It is therefore easy to understand that the outstanding position of the building on the northernmost elevation (chantier A) and its, until then, unknown groundplan led to the assumption that this was a residence-like building. Additionally, different lots of cuneiform tablets mentioning members of the royal family were interpreted as a «palace archive».²⁸ In the light of recent research at other sites the outstanding position of the building in chantier A is no longer so evident. Its groundplan is comparable to one of the larger houses of the Bazi Weststadt, house 14, which also has a long room at the front of the main room and a row of rooms behind it, as well and is even slightly larger (Otto 2006, 168-171).

Of course, it cannot be ruled out that buildings of a different type and function existed in the areas not yet investigated, but there is no positive proof for a «palace» or a residence so far. Thus the question arises where the administration of the cities took place, if official buildings were apparently missing?

²⁶ B. Einwag and A. Otto, Tall Bazi 1998/1999 – Die letzten Untersuchungen in der Weststadt, DaM 13 (2001/2003) 65-88, pl. 5d.

²⁷ B. Einwag and A. Otto, Tall Bazi 2000 und 2001 – Die Untersuchungen auf der Zitadelle und in der Nordstadt, DaM (in press).

²⁸ As M. Dietrich rightly stated, the texts of this building mention frequently members of the royal family, but as witnesses. Therefore the archive is in fact not a royal, but a family archive; see M. Dietrich, Die akkadischen Texte der Archive und Bibliotheken von Emar, UF 22 (1990) 25-48.

The character and function of Late Bronze Age houses

Let us first examine the domestic quarters. Their character and functions can best be observed in the Weststadt of Bazi, a one level settlement enlargement, which was planned and built on a shallow terrace in the latter part of the Late Bronze Age (see Otto 2006). After about 100 years it was violently destroyed.

The Weststadt consists of several blocks of houses (fig. 5). Within them the houses stood close to each other. The blocks of houses were carefully designed along the broad streets which were built first. Along the walls bordering the streets the plots were laid out, and these plots were successively covered with houses. The size of the plots varies little. In general, the plots measure between 100 and 200 sqm, two thirds of them measure 120 to 160 sqm, which is a variation of only 25%. There are few exceptions to this standard size, e.g. the small house 42 with only 65 sqm.

The size of some of the plots and houses changes within the approximately 100 years of existence of the Weststadt. Several houses were split up, in most instances probably due to a dividing of inheritance, and were transformed into two smaller households (for example H. 43; see Otto 2007, 218-220). Others were enlarged at the expense of neighbouring plots (for example H. 19+22-N; see Otto 2006, 175-179), but even then two thirds of the houses measured between 100 and 160 sqm during the final phase of the Weststadt (Otto 2006, 254-258).

In contrast to the dense habitation areas stands the central square which was an empty space in the first phase. In the second phase some shallow walls were added which can be attributed to modest shoplike structures (see fig. 5). What was the purpose of this central square? I do not want to enter into the discussion about the existence of marketplaces in the Ancient Near East.²⁹ However, in this case such a function seems quite plausible (Otto 2006, 266-268). The analysis of the palaeobotanical and palaeozoological remains showed that the subsistence economy of the Weststadt relied on a trade with pastoralists and farmers. Presumably this was one of the places, where manufactured objects were exchanged against foodstuff. The central square seems to have been an economic and social focus point of the city of Bašīru.

A large square must have existed at Emar, too. Real estate documents mention houses situated «beside the large place».³⁰ The text concerning the conspiracy against king Zu-Aštarti of Emar indicates that the KILAM («square/place») served also for the assembly of persons: here the conspirators assembled, and here the royal troops put a bloody end to the conspiracy.³¹

The fact that all the houses of the Weststadt were burnt in the final destruction, led to the rarely observed case that major parts of the inventory were preserved, especially pottery, tools, botanic and animal remains. They were mostly still in situ or so far in place that it was possible to reconstruct the systemic inventory

²⁹ For a summary of the discussion see C. Zaccagnini, s.v. Markt, RIA 7 (1987-90) 421-426.

³⁰ D. Arnaud, *Textes syriens de l'âge du Bronze Récent*, AuOr Suppl. 1, Barcelona 1991, no. 54:4, 8; «sila.dagal.gab» = «large place(?)».

³¹ D. Arnaud, *Recherches au pays d'Astata, Emar VI*, Paris 1985-7, no. 17.

of the rooms. We could also deduce what individual rooms were used for and so reconstruct the activities in the houses: On the one hand, they served domestic-profane processes like food preparation, consuming or storing. On the other hand economic and cultic activities took place within the houses.

In the following the main functions of the houses (mainly of the ground floor) will be briefly summarized (a detailed analysis of the Weststadt can be found in Otto 2006). A clue for reconstructing the uses of the buildings was the fact that the houses of the Weststadt were remarkably uniform. This is true not only for the ground plan (nearly always a main room is flanked by a row of three to six smaller rooms), but also for the inventory. For example, the pottery can be sorted into 22 main types; beyond this there are only a few rarely occurring types or unique pieces. The houses were so uniform, that it was possible to reconstruct the «ideal type» of a house and its ideal typical activity areas (the method derived from Max Weber's «Idealtypus»).³²

The most common domestic activities were food preparation like grinding corn on saddle querns and crushing it in stone basins, baking bread in a tannour, cooking food in an oven or on a hearth. Another common activity was brewing. Apparently beer was produced in every household. A large vat was set firmly into the ground at the best ventilated place of the house, i.e. in most houses under the staircase. In order to prove our assumption that these large vats served for brewing we began work in cooperation with the Faculty of the Technology of Brewing at the Technical University Freising-Weihenstephan. After the residue analysis proved that the sherds contained oxalate, we started an experimental brew of the Bazi beer with similar equipment. Thus the houses of Bazi Weststadt furnish one of the rare archaeological proofs for brewing in Mesopotamia. The extraordinary importance of beer in the Ancient Near East has always been evident from texts.³³

In some houses clear evidence of handicraft was found. For example house 20 did not only serve domestic purposes, but was also used for metalworking, as indicated by the presence of moulds for tools and jewellery, slag and tiny bronze fragments. In several houses we found evidence of work with semiprecious stones, especially goethite and cornelian, and the production of jewellery and weights. Goethite, closely related to haematite, is available from the mountains around Bazi. It was probably one of the most important export articles. Numerous weights (mostly of goethite) found in nearly all the houses are a further hint at the inhabitants' trade activities.

Cultic activities centered around gods and ancestors could be traced in most houses. We know from texts that the «ilī-ja ù mētē-ja» (the gods and ancestors)

³² See Otto 2006, chapter 3.7.3.

³³ The so called brewery at Hadidi which has often been cited as the only certain example of a Near Eastern brewery (see for example R. I. Curtis, *Ancient Food Technology*, Leiden 2001, 214), is clearly a normal house of the type so well represented in the Weststadt of Bazi. For our beer studies see M. Zarnkow, E. Spieleder, W. Back, B. Sacher, A. Otto and B. Einwag, Cold mashing process – a technology possibly used in ancient times in the Orient, *Brauwelt International* 2006/V, 306-310; ead., *Interdisziplinäre Untersuchungen zum altorientalischen Bierbrauen in der Siedlung von Tall Bazi/Nordsyrien vor rund 3200 Jahren*, *Technikgeschichte* 73 (2006) 3-25.

played an important role within the families. This house cult can be located at the small side of the main room opposite the entrance, where there was an altarlike installed facility. Traces of laid down food and libation close to these altars prove that gods and ancestors were looked after with care. Private cult ceremonies must have taken place here, too. For example in house 8 several figurines were lying in front of the altar: the weathergod standing on his chariot drawn by bulls, the figurine of a lute player and the figurine of a cult attendant clasping his hands:³⁴ They seem to imitate large public processions in a private setting.

The long bench in the main room apparently was thought for socializing, for the assembly of the family and the reception of guests. At least some of the benches were covered with goats' or stags' skin as the small bones found there indicate. Either fine drinking and eating vessels stood in front of the bench, or the area was empty. The only object which was often lying on the bench and sometimes in front of it was a basaltic tripod. Apparently it had a special purpose and was not used for normal food preparation.

Evidently, the houses served not only for domestic activities and the private house cult, but also for social purposes like assemblies. For example, house 7 had a main room of considerable size (13 x 5 m), which was equipped with a long bench (13 m long) and an altar. However, all domestic activities had been deliberately transferred to a separate room, thus making the main room suitable as a reception area.³⁵ It is taken as given that the meeting of the Brothers took place in the house of one of the Brothers. This can be derived from the formula: «x (PN) let enter his brothers and let them take place ...».³⁶ Further on, the texts of the treaties, which were made in the presence of the Brothers, mention the ceremony of the «breaking of the hukku-bread and the anointment of the table».³⁷ Due to the standardized outlay of the houses, the most suitable place for such an assembly must be sought in the main room in the area of the benches and the altar or table.

Thoughts about the function of the temples in the Northern Syrian Euphrates Region

If we admit that the assemblies of the Brothers could have taken place in the houses of the Brothers themselves, the question remains where the Elders and the city god could have assembled. In this respect the similarities of the temples and the main rooms of the houses are striking, concerning both the groundplan and the installed facilities: Both show a long room, provided with a bench along one of the long sides, a table or altar which was attached to the middle of the wall opposite the entrance, and sometimes a pedestal in front of the altar. Even the size

³⁴ A. Otto, Ein Wettergott auf dem Stier: Rekonstruktion eines spätbronzezeitlichen Kultgefäßes, *DaM* 13 (2001/2003) 53-64.

³⁵ See Otto 2006, 161-163, 234.

³⁶ Arnaud 1985-7 (footnote 31), nos. 6, 176, 183, 195 etc.; Mayer 2001 (footnote 17), nos. 19, 20, 51, 54.

³⁷ G. Beckman, Family Values on the Middle Euphrates in the Thirteenth Century B.C.E., in: M. W. Chavalas (ed.), *Emar: The History, Religion, and Culture of a Syrian Town in the Late Bronze Age*, Bethesda 1996, 59.

of the rooms is similar.³⁸ Is it conceivable that the meeting of the Elders with the city god could have taken place in the god's temple?

I think the recent excavations on top of the Bazi Citadel have delivered new arguments in favor of this theory. During the 2004 season we hit an extraordinary room on the center of the citadel's plateau. It was paved with large, carefully worked, rectangular stone slabs, and its surrounding walls were 3 m wide (fig. 6).³⁹ We continued excavating the building in the 2005 and 2006 seasons.⁴⁰

It turned out that the room was part of a building which was 38 m long and 16 m wide and oriented in a North-South direction (fig. 7). It consisted of two rooms, the long room B to the south and the smaller room A to the north. Only room A was paved with stone slabs, room B had a plaster or mud floor. The walls were 2-2.3 m wide and were additionally reinforced by an outer wall, 0.6-0.7 m wide. The purpose of this outer wall remains an open question, as does the groundplan and several other things. For example, the main entrance has not yet been located. Although the entrance to room A turned out to be flanked by two stone sculptures of gate lions (season 2006), this cannot have been the only entrance to the building.⁴¹

However, its dimensions and situation seem to make its designation as a temple («Temple 1») reasonable, although the type of temple is not yet evident. In dimensions it approximately resembles «Steinbau 2» at Munbaqa⁴² (the largest temple of the site) and temple P2 at Ebla (the largest *Antentempel* of the site), but it differs from these by the missing *Anten*. However, it must have been an important building considering its size. In Bronze Age Syria only the temple of the weathergod of Halab⁴³ and the enigmatic building P3 at Ebla were larger than the Bazi temple. It was certainly the main building at the top of the citadel, and probably the main temple of Bazi.

This temple was in use throughout the Late Bronze Age and possibly even earlier (the date of its foundation has not yet been determined with certainty and will be the focus of the next campaign). Only the small room A was still in use during the temple's last phase, which was contemporary to the Weststadt. The temple area was deserted after its destruction until Roman times.

Room A was destroyed by a fire (like the Weststadt houses) and major parts of the inventory were preserved under the collapsed roof beams. Numerous jars belonged to the inventory, a part of them containing food. They offered a whole menu: cereals, fruits (pomegranate and grapes), olives, sesame seeds and more.⁴⁴ Further on, the remains of meals of meat were found. In the southwestern cor-

³⁸ A. Otto, Wohnhäuser als Spiegel sakraler Bauten? in: P. Butterlin et al. (eds.), *Les espaces Syro-Mésopotamiens*, Volume d'hommage offert à Jean-Claude Margueron, Subartu XVII, Turnhout 2006, 487-496.

³⁹ See Sallaberger, Otto and Einwag 1996.

⁴⁰ A. Otto and B. Einwag, Ein Tempel für den Ältestenrat, *Alter Orient aktuell* 6 (2005) 27-29.

⁴¹ Neither the geomagnetic nor the ground penetrating radar survey contained any information concerning the main entrance.

⁴² P. Werner, *Die Entwicklung der Sakralarchitektur in Nordsyrien und Südostkleinasien vom Neolithikum bis in das 1. Jt. v. Chr.*, München/Wien 1994, 103-105, pl. 22.

⁴³ K. Kohlmeyer, *Der Tempel des Wettergottes von Aleppo*, Münster 2000, 24.

⁴⁴ I owe this information to R. Neef who analyzes the palaeobotanical material.

ner many small beakers and animal bones were lying together.⁴⁵ One gets the impression that people ate and drank here shortly before the final disaster which brought an end to the entire settlement.

On the floor of room A the only two tablets which have been found in Bazi so far were discovered. Both are royal documents, sealed with the dynastic seal of the Mittani king Saushtatar.⁴⁶ One tablet is of Saushtatar himself, the other of his successor Artatama I. These royal documents must have been kept for a considerable time, because they date back to the late 15th and early 14th cent. BC. The tablets document that the kings Saushtatar and Artatama respectively gave settlements on the opposite bank of the Euphrates to the «Sons of Bašīru» (by this we know the Late Bronze Age name of Bazi, which is indeed «Bašīru».⁴⁷ Text 1 reads: «King Saushtatar gave the location Baidali to the sons of the town Bašīru». Text 2: «The location x, whose neighbour on one side is the location Teru-x and on the other the location Tewab-x, the fortress of Halab, king Artatama gave to the sons of Bašīru» (for a detailed analysis of the tablets see Sallaberger, Otto and Einwag 2006).

On the one hand, Room A contained royal documents, which were crucial for the community; on the other hand people apparently ate and drank in this room. The presence of vessels containing food is strange in the context of this building, which was most probably a temple. How are we to interpret this puzzling fact?

Perhaps the two cuneiform documents can help to explain it. With the mentioning of the «sons of Bašīru», the designation of the Elders from the point of view of the king,⁴⁸ the existence of the above described society with little hierarchical stratification is proven for Bazi, too. If Temple 1 was the temple of Bašīru's city god, it could have been the place, where the Elders met with the city god. This is additionally corroborated by the structural similarity of temples' and houses' main rooms (see above). Therefore I would suggest that sacred buildings in the cities of the Upper Euphrates region were used for collective purposes, too, and thus made separate administrative buildings unnecessary.

Conclusions

During the Late Bronze Age the area of the bend of the Euphrates was the home for a society which was guided by the two collective institutions of the Elders and the Brothers. The settlements functioned by means of private subsistence and trade and had a collective administration. I would argue that this is mirrored in the archaeological record by settlements which contained temples and

⁴⁵ Otto and Einwag 2005 (see footnote 40) 29, fig. 7.

⁴⁶ This dynastic seal of the Mittanian kings since Saushtatar was used throughout several generations. Impressions of it have been found on tablets from Nuzi, Tall Brak and Umm el-Marra, but at least in Brak and Umm el-Marra they date from even later kings; see Sallaberger, Otto and Einwag 2006, 85-90.

⁴⁷ Etymologically the place name is probably derived from semitic «bšr», «to separate» (see Sallaberger, Otto and Einwag 2006, 97). This suggests that the citadel of Bazi was very aptly called «the cut off place» during the Late Bronze Age, but that the city of Banat-Bazi should have been named differently in the Early Bronze Age.

⁴⁸ For example Idrimi fled from Halab to the «sons of Emar».

similar houses with little variations in size and equipment. Since temples and houses served for administrative purposes, as well, there was no need for separate official or residence-like buildings. Taking the evidence of Middle Bronze Age houses at Halawa, Emar and Bazi, into consideration we might even consider that this particular structure of society may go back at least to the Middle Bronze Age.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ For Middle and Early Bronze Age collective leadership see D. E. Fleming, *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors. Mari and Early Collective Governance*, Cambridge 2004. He states (p. 230) that Imar, Tuttul and Urkesh (i.e. partly the area investigated in this article) were the towns with the strongest collective political forms.

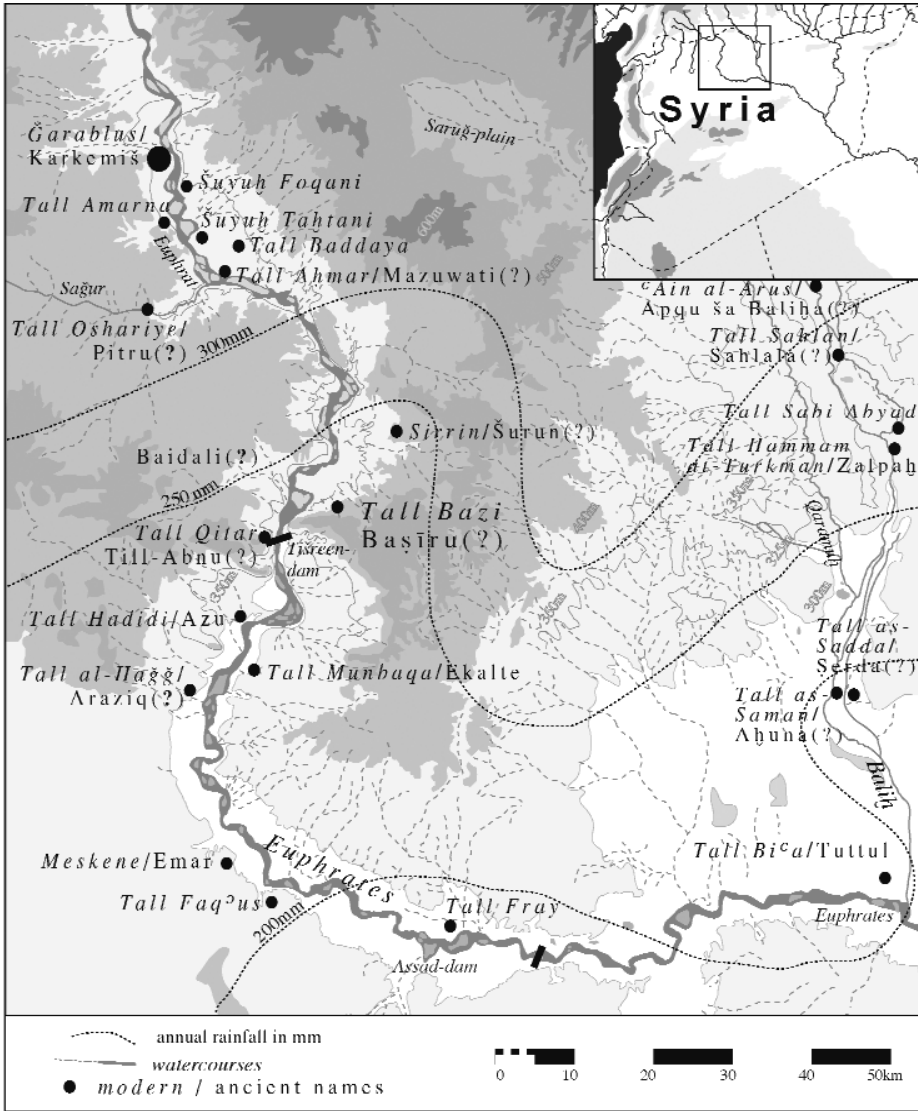


Fig. 1: The Upper Syrian Euphrates valley during the Late Bronze Age.

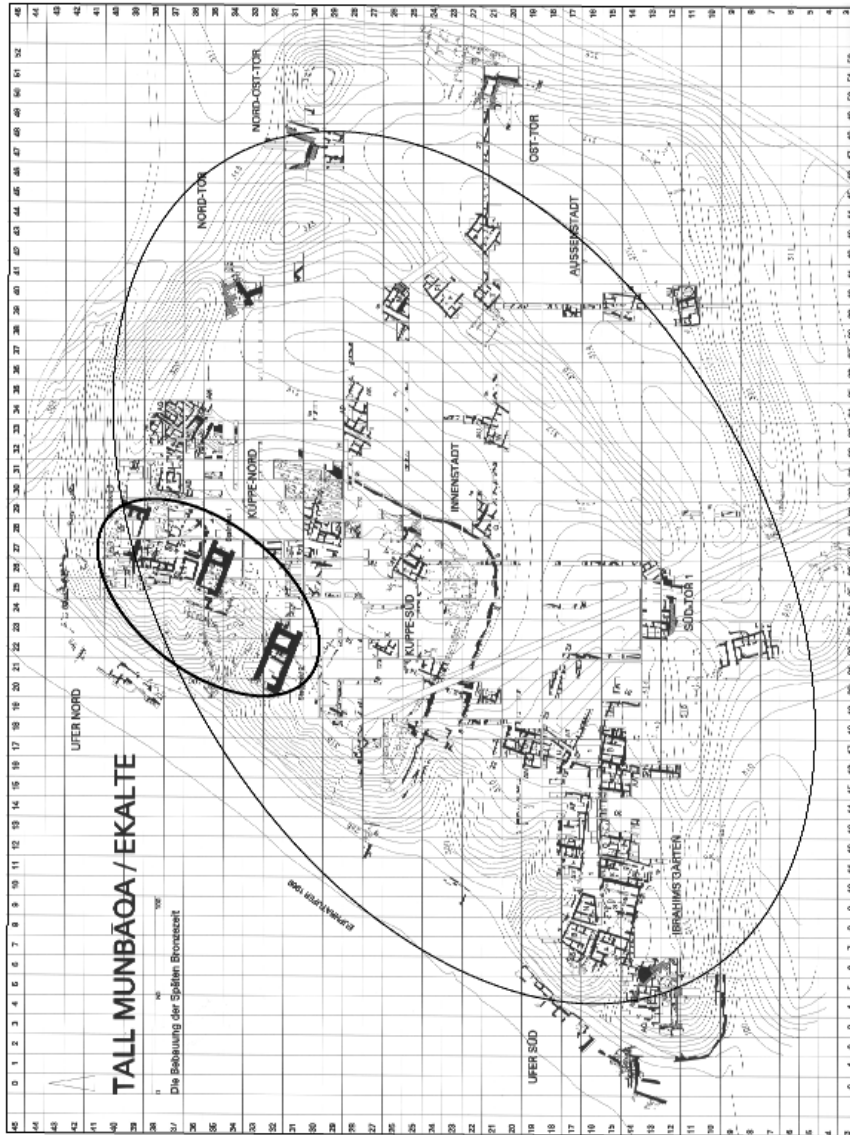


Fig. 2: Tall Munbaqa / Ekalte with domestic quarters (thin line) and three temples (thick line) on the most prominent elevation (map adapted from: P. Werner, Tall Munbaqa – Ekalte – III, Die Glyptik, Saarbrücken 2004, pl. 48).

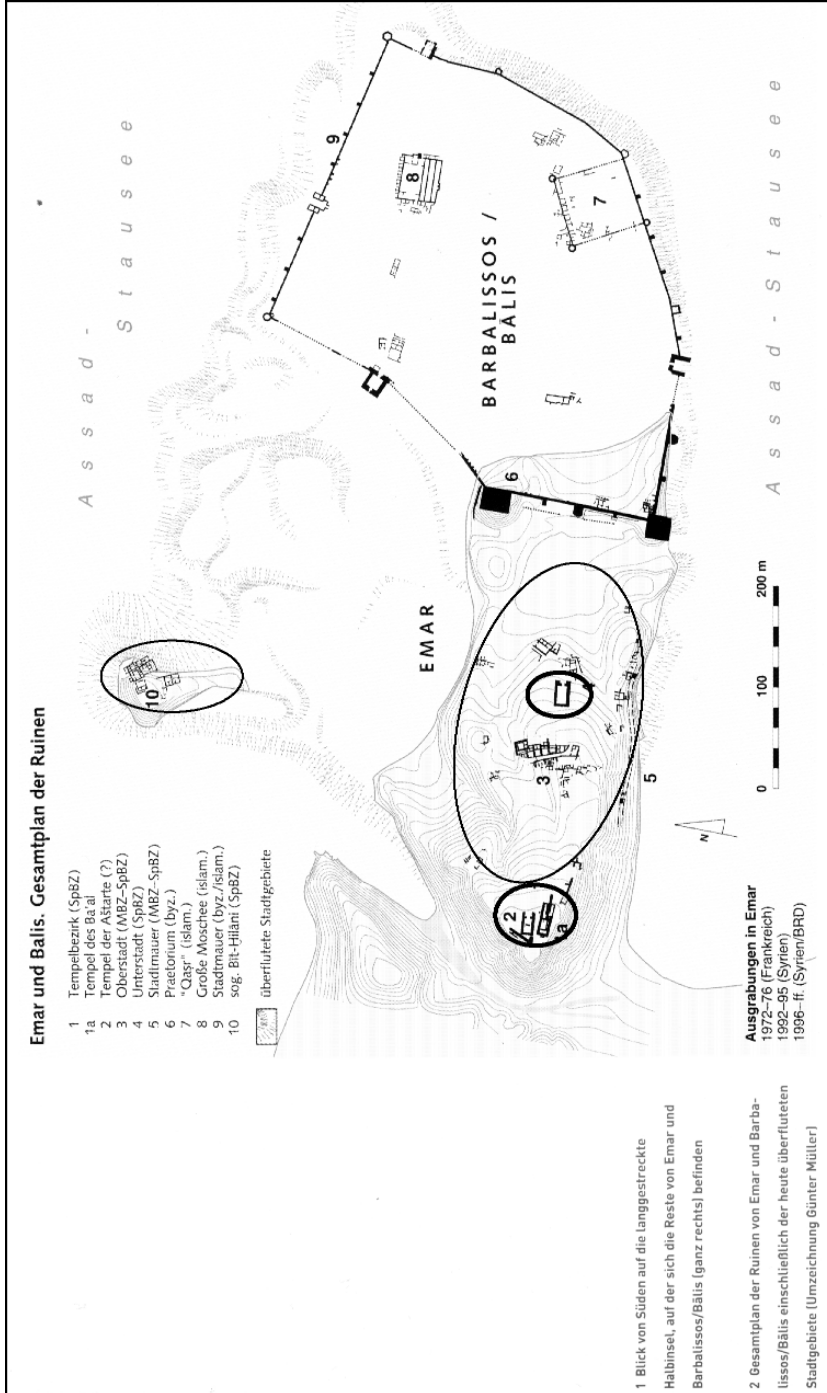


Fig. 3: Tall Meskene / Emar with domestic quarters (thin line), Temple M2 in the lower town (thick line) and the twin sanctuary on the most prominent elevation, chantier E (thick line) (map adapted from: B. Faist / U. Finkbeiner, Emar, in: Die Hethiter und ihr Reich, Katalog Bonn 2002, 191, fig. 2).

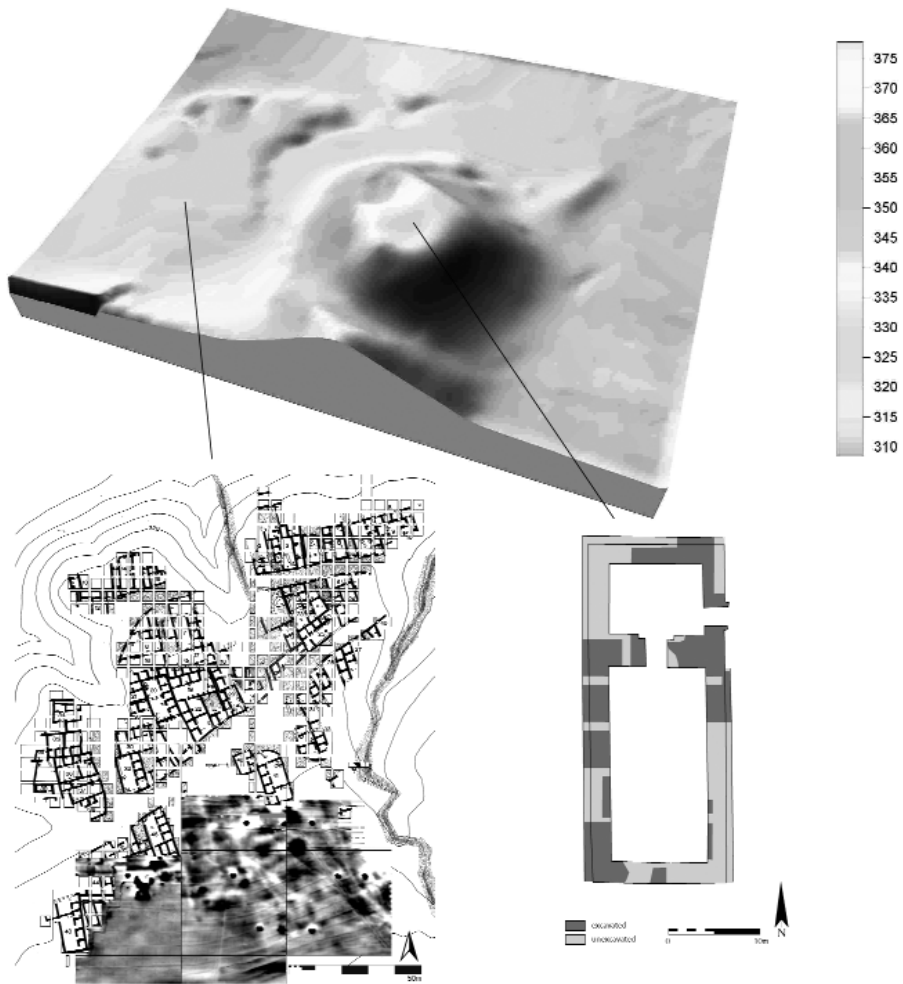


Fig. 4: Bazi / Bašuru with domestic areas in the lower town (especially well documented in the Weststadt, bottom left), and Temple 1 on the plateau of the citadel (bottom right).

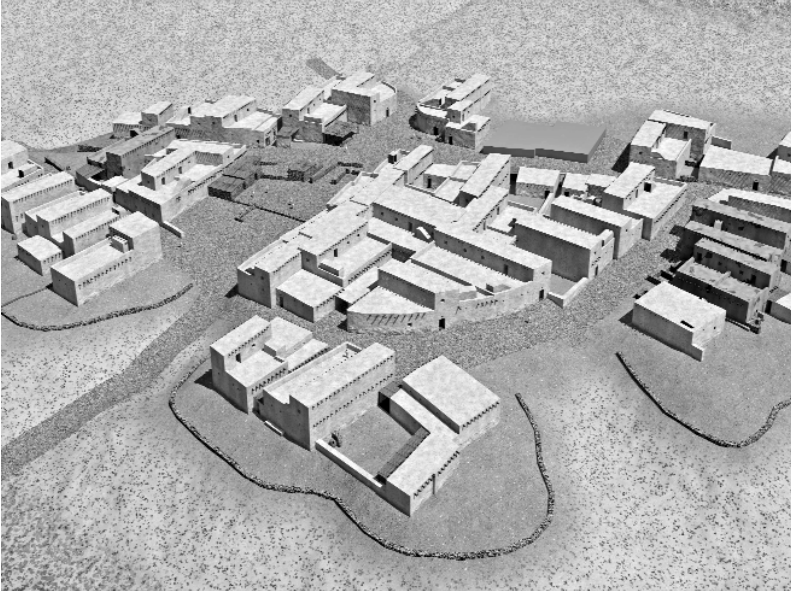


Fig. 5: Threedimensional model of the Weststadt of Bazi, view from northwest: blocks of similar houses are arranged around the central square and along broad streets.



Fig. 6: Temple 1, room A with paved floor, surrounded by broad walls (view from south).

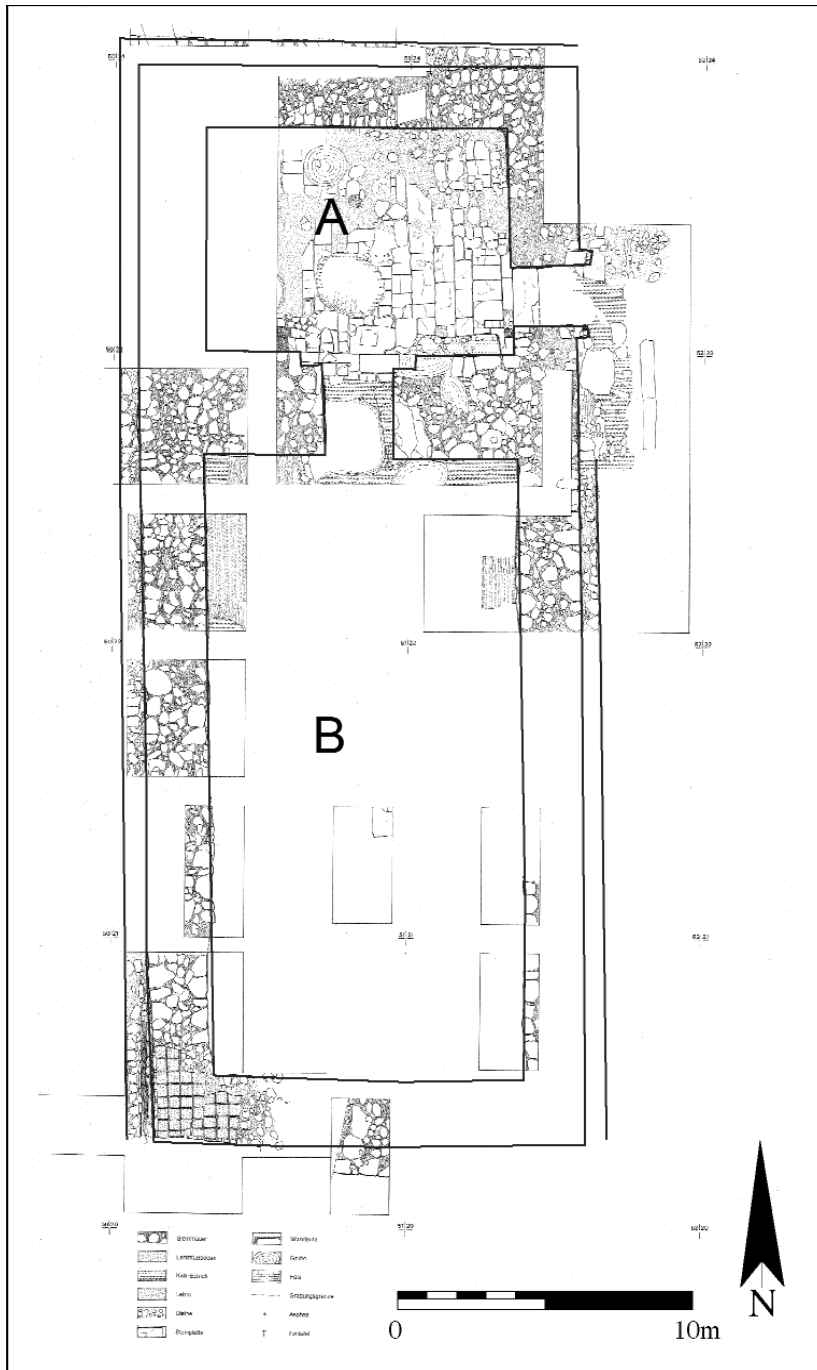


Fig. 7: Bazi citadel, Temple 1 (state: 2006).

