



ADELHEID OTTO & KAI KANIUTH (HRSG.)

unter Mitarbeit von FEMKE GROPS

50 Jahre Vorderasiatische Archäologie in München

Der vorliegende Band feiert das 50-jährige Bestehen des Instituts für Vorderasiatische Archäologie der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. Er schöpft aus Archivalien, Forschungs- und Verwaltungsdaten, vor allem aber aus den Erinnerungen seiner Mitglieder seit der Gründung im Jahr 1970. Institutsgeschichte, Lehrerfahrungen und Forschungsleistung sind die drei vielfach ineinander verwobenen Eckpunkte, zwischen denen sich die Beiträge bewegen. Das lebendige Bild einer Gemeinschaft von Praktizierenden ist zugleich Würdigung des Vergangenen und Werbung für eine weitergehende Erforschung der „Wiege der Kulturen“.

Adelheid Otto &
Kai Kaniuth (Hrsg.)

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Tall Bazi, the entrance gate to the EB IVa citadel, or how to excavate hundreds of sling bullets of sundried clay.

Tall Bazi (1993–2010)

Rescue excavations in the Syrian Euphrates valley were carried out at the Bronze Age city of Tall Bazi. They began as a project of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI Damascus) and were continued at LMU. The team lived and worked in close cooperation with the inhabitants of the village of Banat at the foot of Jebel Bazi. The first seasons focused on the most endangered parts of the Late Bronze Age lower town, where living quarters yielded detailed information about domestic life in the Mittani kingdom. After the lower town had been flooded, investigations were concentrated on the steep citadel, which had been fortified in the Early Bronze Age and reused in the Middle and Late Bronze Age, when a large temple was erected at its top.

كرست تنقيبات الإنقاذ في وادي الفرات السوري للمدينة التي ترجع إلى فترة البرونز في تل بازي. بدأت أعمال التنقيب هذه من قبل معهد الآثار الألماني (قسم دمشق) واستمرت كمشروع في معهد جامعة ميونخ. عاش وعمل الفريق في تعاون وثيق مع سكان قرية بنات، الواقعة عند أطراف جبل بازي. ركزت مواسم التنقيب الأولى على الأجزاء الأكثر عرضة للخطر في المدينة المنخفضة، التي ترجع إلى فترة البرونز الحديث، حيث قدمت الأحياء السكنية المكتشفة معلومات تفصيلية عن الحياة المنزلية في مملكة ميتاني. تركزت أعمال البحث، بعد غمر المدينة المنخفضة، على التلة شديدة الانحدار والتي قد تم تحصينها في فترة البرونز القديم وأعيد استخدامها في فترتي البرونز الوسيط والحديث، حين أقيم معبد ضخم عند قمته.

We rarely grasp the scope of just the most important decisions at the moment we make them. When in 1992 the Syrian Board of Antiquities called upon foreign missions to take part in the rescue excavations in the region of the future Tishreen reservoir, also the Damascus branch of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) followed this call. After a brief survey of the Tishreen area in 1993, Berthold Einwag – who represented Near Eastern Archaeology at DAI Damascus at that time – chose Tall Bazi as a promising excavation site, immediately received the licence, and a few days later started his first campaign. He had planned to conduct not more than two or three seasons of excavation at most, for the dam was supposed to be finished by 1994. Luckily, its construction proved to be far more difficult than imagined, which enabled us to carry out several “last” annual campaigns between 1994 and 1997. Only in 1999, when neither the inhabitants of the village of Banat nor we ourselves believed anymore in the finalization of the dam, just 5km downstream from Bazi/Banat, did the time come. Within a few months only, the Euphrates valley was submerged, swallowing hundreds of villages, the entire fertile valley whose fields and gardens had nourished thousands of people, and more than 60 archaeological sites (Fig. 1).

Thoughts on the Philosophy of an Excavation

In the course of the past 150 years during which excavations were conducted in the Near East, the relationship between the foreigners excavating in a host country and its inhabitants taking part in these excavations has changed dramatically. Today, we have moved far from the post-colonial manner of some of the earlier excavators, but the ways and means of creating a cooperation to this day differ considerably. Still in the 1990s there were many foreign teams in Syria which separated themselves from the local population as much as possible in comfortable excavation houses and tried to keep their way of life preferably unchanged also during the excavation campaign. This style had always appeared problematic to us. Only being interested in the past of a country, but not in its people and their habits, showing little willingness to learn their language and adapt to the local way of life, did not only strike us as indecent and arrogant, but also as not very clever in many ways.

Excavating is specialized teamwork. You need people developing the objectives of the excavation (= the excavation director), others who realize these objectives



Fig. 1. Last work in the Weststadt 1999, while the water is constantly rising.

(= the workers, who carry out the manifold excavation tasks), again others who document and rework the results (= the students and other staff). The component parts engage like small gearwheels, and nothing but close cooperation and an understanding for what is hap-

pening can ensure smooth processes. In our opinion, a too strict separation of tasks and non-transparent communication is not wise. We as the directors of the excavations used to explain to students and workers alike the questions and objectives of the work, as well as the cul-



Fig. 2. The team, Bazi 2007.



Fig. 3. A puzzle with 10.000 pieces: Restoring Late Bronze pottery (2010).

tural, sociological, and historical background of the archaeological records and finds. In this way, the workers and students often found their own solutions to the problems arising during the excavation. Between 30 and 50 workers from Banat and two neighbouring villages used to work with us at the excavation in the mornings (Fig. 2). Most workers became highly skilled excavators who perfectly mastered all procedures independently, which gave us time to concentrate on the documentation. Some of them additionally supported us in the afternoons, restoring thousands of vessels largely on their own in the courtyard of Ahmed's grange (Fig. 3).

Another basic question refers to the division of labour. It may be more efficient to assign the students either so-called outside or inside work ("Innen- or Außendienst"), but we consider this as unjust, especially from a gender point of view; for it is mostly the women who have to take care of the finds at home all day long, while the men exclusively work at the excavation site. At some point, this causes frustration and envy. Our motto – which we had learned from Eva Strommenger at Tell Bi'a – has always been that everybody has to carry out all kinds of work in order to learn all the procedures and to be able to direct an excavation some day on her or his own. Fur-

thermore, we do not consider it as reasonable to subdivide into outside and inside work. It is the context only that makes a sherd or a small find meaningful. This can be grasped in its full extent during the excavation, when writing a diary about one's own trench in the evening and trying to explain the results of the day – of course on the basis of the sherds and small finds. This, however, is only possible if the finds are not separated from their context and the archaeologist working on it.

Sharing life is an essential requirement for a close cooperation. We did not have our own excavation house, but always rented a few rooms in the village (Fig. 4). Our centre used to be the grange of our guardian Ahmed al-Yahjia, who always prepared several rooms for us when our team arrived. Working and sleeping rooms we rented with his neighbours. Only during the last two years did we erect two mud brick rooms as our offices in Ahmed's grange.

We always lived close together with the families and were thus gradually integrated into the village. In the beginning, we were considered exotic people with strange habits, such as sitting on chairs at tables. Taking our children with us to the field helped, for we were less disturbing as a family. There were always a lot of children, chicken, and sheep bustling about the yard. As long as they did not approach our sherd yard, this was unproblematic. Upon sunset, often some men showed up for playing soccer with us or for smoking water pipes with the students. The money we brought to the village was highly welcome and saved many people from working as day labourers in the large towns. Also, the medicine we distributed among the sick, as well as the medical consulting hours we – being considered doctors in the real sense – gave to the best of our knowledge, were very much appreciated, for nobody in the village could afford to see a doctor in the distant town.

The early period of the excavations, 1993–1999

Living and excavating in Bazi

The directors of DAI Damascus, at first Thilo Ulbert and then Klaus Stefan Freyberger, had always supported the Bazi campaigns in the period from 1993–1999. Nevertheless, the excavation conditions of this "heroic early period" could hardly be surpassed in simplicity. Since the Syrian government wanted to make unmistakably clear to the inhabitants of the Euphrates valley that they should leave the area, all electric cables were cut in 1995. Three months of excavation in the Syrian summer at



Fig. 4. The village of Banat in 1998, seen from above the citadel; in the foreground is Ahmed's compound serving as the excavation house.

30–50°C had never been particularly pleasant, let alone without any fridge or ventilators. However, it helped us considerably later on when interpreting the excavation findings to have lived under almost the same conditions as they used to be thousands of years ago. When we analyzed the Late Bronze Age houses of Bazi, we profited enormously from this experience. Of course, we cannot directly compare life in the granges of ordinary villages today to the life in narrow townhouses of the Late Bronze Age, but quite a few parameters – such as climate and resources – have remained unchanged. From the experience that you cannot sleep in a closed room – let alone in one without windows – in summer, we can for instance argue that the roofs of Late Bronze Age row houses must have been used as yards, or we can reconstruct ancient methods of beer brewing with the heat of the sun without fuel feed.

The budget was meager and the team was always very small, consisting of Syrian and German staff in equal parts. Our friend and colleague Mohammed Miftah from Habuba Kabira contributed considerably to this excavation in his function as a field director: he had a sixth sense for archaeological remains, performed supernaturally, and always knew the solution in challenging cases. George Dabboura, a friend and architect from Damascus, made the drawings of the excavated architecture and of thousands of sherds and objects; the photographer Mohammed Roumi took photos of all finds and pottery. Along the way, he made an award-winning film (“bleugris”), setting a memorial to the villages in the Euphrates valley, before they drowned in the new reservoir. Sur-

veying technicians from Technical University Munich made a topographic map of the settlement, and a few archaeologists, architects, friends and family – above all Helgunde Otto, mother of one of the authors – provided invaluable non-paid help during the first campaigns¹. When Dariusz Szelag (University of Warsaw) joined us for helping us processing the pottery, our team was complete and able to work.

On site, the entire village of Tall Banat was supporting us, or rather half of it; for when we arrived there in 1993, the American-Australian team headed by Ann Porter and Tom McClellan was already examining the approx. 30ha Early Bronze Age city of Tall Banat, which was largely overbuilt by the modern village (Porter 2002). Tall Banat and Tall Bazi represent one single archaeological site. Its subdivision into Tall Banat and Tall Bazi is artificial: Our teams defined a modern track through the village as “the frontier”. By mutual agreement, we defined that “Banat-Bazi” was the Early Bronze Age and “Bazi-Banat” the Late Bronze Age town (Porter 2018). Accordingly, one part of the village worked with us, the other one with the American team.

1 The following persons took part in the campaigns from 1993–1997: Basim al Ahmed, Usama Al Sayasna, Bernard Clerc and Katja Clerc-Kage, George Dabboura, Berthold Einwag, Oliver Friede, Hamido Hammade, Kay Kohlmeyer, Wilhelm Mayr, Mohammed Miftah, Klaus Niepelt, Klaus Obermeier, Adelheid Otto, Helgunde Otto, Mohammed Roumi, Adel Samara, Hansjörg Schmid, Radwan Sharaf, Norbert Steinhäuser, Dariusz Szelag, Peter Ternes, Philip von Pohlheim, Arne Weiser.



Fig. 5. The excavation of the Weststadt, view from the Citadel (1997).



Fig. 6. The Late Bronze Age IB Weststadt, House 46, in the center, excavation 1998.

When we arrived at the village of Banat for the first time in 1993, its inhabitants did not believe that the dam would ever be finished. Only when the government started to dismantle all power poles and demolished the school building, they started to realize that their lives would change drastically. Those who received a remuneration for their registered land downstream near Meskene, moved away into a new, rapidly built village of concrete houses, which were brooding hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. But most inhabitants of the village were left with nothing and built them-

selves new mud brick granges a kilometer uphill, above the reservoir. This was officially not allowed, but where else should they go? It was also forbidden to take water from the reservoir, but the people stayed and paid the fines – somehow they always arranged with each other. (See cover image of Chapter III, a water colour by Cornelia Wolf: The Tishreen reservoir is flooding the houses of the village of Banat).

For us, the three summer campaigns without electricity and running water were exhausting. We did not have any possibility of keeping food and beverages cool,



Fig. 7. Siesta at 45°C in the new “village” further up the hill (2006).

which is not unimportant in a place where you had to buy food and drinking water in canisters on a weekly basis in the town of Membij, an hour’s drive away. To the discontent of many of the excavation team, we never had meat, because we could not cool it during the transport and on site, but we had lovely fruit and vegetables in abundance. Indispensable, however, was the cooling of the unexposed films for the documentation of the excavation and the small finds. Every year we brought dozens of black-and-white and colour slide films from Germany, which were used very economically so that they would last until the “final photos”. If they had not been permanently cooled, they would have perished; no single photograph would have been preserved and the results of the excavation would have been destroyed, too – an impending nightmare, which can hardly be imagined today in times of digital photography. The suspense whether the photos would be successful sustained until their development in Germany.

Archaeological results of the early seasons

The objective of the working programme of the first campaigns was the Citadel on the one hand, which consisted in its core of a 50m high, steep natural hill. It was fortified all around with several circular walls made of large boulders, which later on turned out to be part of the Early Bronze Age fortification. The citadel’s plateau exhibited remains of a stone wall already on the surface, however, there was also pottery from the Roman period and from the Late Bronze Age on the surface. A large

local complex of Roman time, which was examined by Michaela Konrad and Katharina Schloder, lay directly above the Late Bronze Age buildings and was partly reusing their walls (Schloder 2019). The systematic test trench from West to East across the entire plateau we cut so disadvantageously that we missed the large temple by 20cm; we did not discover it until 2004.

Our focus was, however, on the lower town, because it would be flooded first. West of the Citadel, there was the so-called “Weststadt” (“Western Town”), which had been built on a natural gravel terrace, spanning approx. 200 by 120 m (Fig. 5). It was a deliberate settlement extension or new town founded around 1450 BC and destroyed only after around 100 years (approx. 1350/1325 BC) in a single conflagration. The entire town, also the large temple on the citadel and all other structures, were looted and burnt in the same catastrophic event. Therefore, it is very likely that the destruction correlates with the expansion of the Hittites (Otto 2018).

The Late Bronze Age houses of the Weststadt lay directly beneath the surface. Thus, we were able to excavate a total of 49 houses during the seven campaigns from 1993–1998, which accounted for about 3/4 of the Weststadt (Einwag/Otto 1996). Helmut Becker and Jörg Faßbinder detected the remaining houses by means of magnetometer prospection in 1998 (Einwag/Otto 2001).

The Weststadt was disappointing at first. Only uniform houses strung together. Almost every house was built according to the same scheme: several side rooms flanked one long main room, the houses measured between 120 and 170 sqm (Fig. 6). Was it possible that no houses of a different kind were to be found in the Weststadt? Were there no workshops, shops, shrines or other specialized buildings?

In the course of the excavation, however, the value of the Weststadt became obvious (Otto 2006). The houses further north had been preserved only to a shallow height of a few cm, but therefore they were quick to excavate. The houses further to the south were still standing up to 1.5 m, which slowed down their excavation, but they contained considerable remains of their inventory. Obviously, the houses were abandoned so abruptly that their inhabitants could save their naked lives, but even left behind weapons and jewellery. The finds allow a very detailed insight into the lives of the people at that time (Otto 2006): They not only served as residential dwellings of extended households, but were also used as workshops for metal, stone, wood, and other handicraft activities. In the centre of the Weststadt, whose urban population clearly lived on trade and handicraft, there was a market place, and some shops aligned along the main roads. Bazi almost offers a „Pompeji Case“ for the

Late Bronze Age, so detailed are the social and economic data that could be secured.

The Campaigns from 2000–2010

Life and work at the bank of the new reservoir

The reservoir had meanwhile flooded the Euphrates valley and destroyed the village of Banat. Many families moved uphill and built new mud brick houses; so gradually, a new village came into existence. Again, we rented several rooms in the grange of our guardian Ahmed and his neighbours, added two working rooms, a bathroom and a tiny kitchen. The beauty of the complex was the zig-zag mud brick balustrade of the flat roof above the working room. It offered two enormous advantages: firstly, the students sleeping on the roof would not fall down. Secondly, we could enjoy the sunset over the Euphrates valley in the evening as on a terrace – the long-awaited reward for the pains of the day. Two benches in front of the kitchen served as the ‘dining room’ or as a welcome resting place during the siesta (Fig. 7).

Again, we lived closely together with our landlord and his neighbours – as did our children, who had to come with us already at baby age, and now spent their time tending sheep and getting water with the donkey from the river. Bedha, the warden’s wife, and various female neighbours, spoil us with fresh homemade bread and yoghurt. The cooking in the evenings, however, had to be done by the students – seemingly a bigger challenge than excavating. We now had electricity, but it regularly broke down in the evenings. There are indeed more appealing things than cooking vegetables for a hoard of hungry students on two gas cookers in a narrow mud brick room without any light or ventilator. It was probably thanks to the rule that he or she who complained would have to do the cooking on his or her own the next day that averted mutinies. The vegetarian diet – the nearest town we drove to for shopping once a week, Membij, was one hour’s drive away – was not everybody’s cup of tea either, although we thought that the vegetables and fruit would be much more appealing than long-travelled meat from the souk at Membij. Only at the end of our campaign did we have one or two sheep slaughtered, which we enjoyed in the final feast with all helpers.

The campaigns from 2001–2010 were financed by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*. They granted us two three-year projects only, but Berthold Einwag succeeded in economizing with these financial means to such an extent that we were able to finance eight excavation



Fig. 8. Rescue excavation of Late Bronze age houses washed free by the Tishreen lake (2001).

campaigns and two study campaigns – of course, under very modest conditions.

Life in Bazi became clearly more comfortable in the period when the excavations were directed from Munich (1998–2010). Now we always had between six and eight students with us. On account of the logistics we could not take more people, but we also did not want to, because we had experienced as students that too many people at an excavation inevitably formed groups and caused a negative atmosphere. The students, above all Christoph Fink, Anna Kurmangaliev, Oliver Mack, Frances Sachs, Alexander Sollee, and Martin Gruber, worked until exhaustion at the excavation in the mornings and in the sherd-yard in the afternoons, analyzing and documenting small finds.

In addition to the Munich students, others came from Damascus, Vienna, Amsterdam, Oslo, Rome, and Berlin (see chs. II.17 and II.18).² Botanists, geologists, zoologists,

² Participants of the campaigns from 1998–2010: Walid Abd-el Karim, Rania Abdellatif, Ahmed al Rawi, Monica Arivabeni, Helmut Becker, Hennig Becker, Thomas Beckh, Nicole Berndt, Laura Besl, Annelen Brodner, Anna-Sophie Buchhorn, Maria Bürgle, Martina Burgstaller, Sabine Christian, Constanza Coppini, Albert Dietz, Aron Dornauer, Anna Dyrkorn, Berthold Einwag, Friederike Einwag, Johannes Einwag, Jörg Faßbinder, Jola Feix, Christoph Fink, Stefan Giese, Martin Gruber, Christian Hallweger, Yvonne Helmholtz, Barbara Hohmann, Christian Hübner, Juliane Israel, Joachim Jendersie, Korbinian Kick, Bettina Klare, Michaela Konrad, Nikola Köpke, Anna Kurmangaliev, Lars Erik Larsen, Manfred Lerchl, Hardy Maaß, Oliver Mack, Ludwig Masch, Christopher Mayr, Franz Meußdoerffer, Mohammed Miftah, Reinder Neef, Daniel

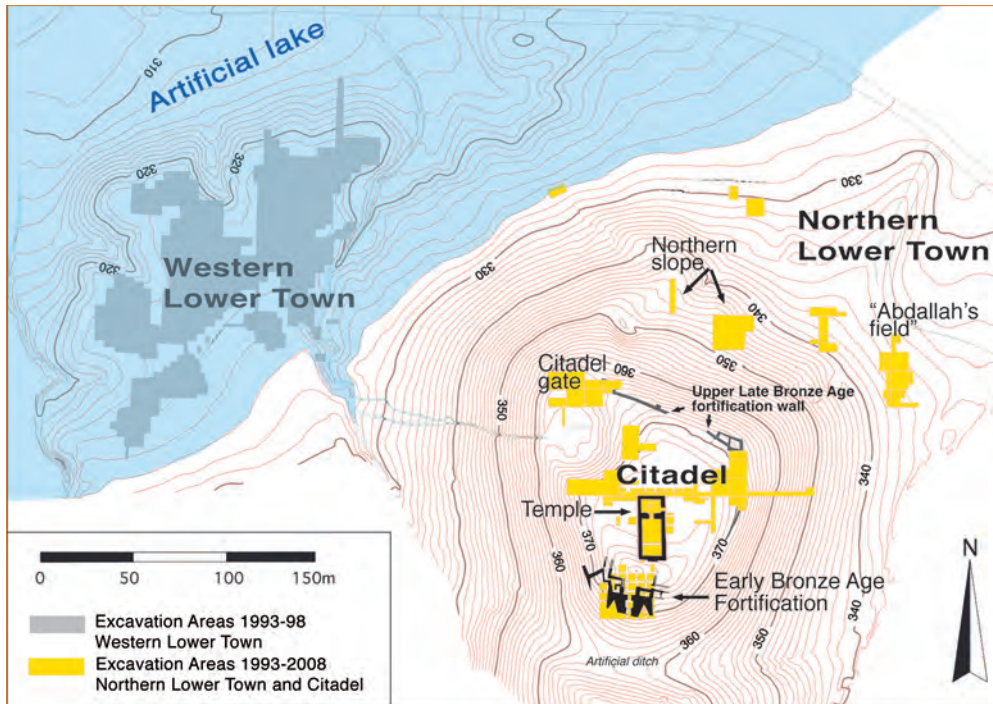


Fig. 9. Schematic plan of the excavation areas.



Fig. 10. 3D model of the Weststadt and the Citadel in the Late Bronze Age IB.

Neumann, Sven Orgus, Adelheid Otto, Helgunde Otto, Nathalie Pintea, Anne Richter, Nicole Richter, Michaela Rinner, Michael Roaf, Mohammed Roumi, Silvia Rumbach, Bertram Sacher, Frances Sachs, Walther Sallaberger, Monika Sallaberger, Adel Samara, Katharina Schloder, Radwan Sharaf, Zuza Sike, Marina Skaletz, Alexander Sollee, Claudia Speiser, Elmar Spieleder, Vera Steinbrücker, Lilith Steinhilber, Manfred Stephani, Frank Stephani, Dariusz Szelag, Peter Ternes, Tony Vermeulen, Angela von den Driesch, Aleksandra Walus, Cornelia Wolff, Rasha Yousef, Martin Zarnkow, Hannes Zarnkow, Stephanie Zintl. Participants from Banat: Ahmed el-Yahya and family, Junis Abdallah, and more than 90 workers.

photographers, geophysicists, beer brewing experts from TU München, and innumerable other people have contributed to the success of this project; cordial thanks to them all. We would like to single out here Cornelia Wolff and Manfred Lerchl, who tirelessly drew thousands of sherds, vessels, and objects over many years. Some of the watercolours that Cornelia Wolff painted at sunset in Bazi embellish this book (see the cover page of chap. III).

Archaeological results of the seasons 2000–2009

The Weststadt was flooded now, but the Citadel rose from the reservoir like a peninsula, and also part of the lower town (“Nordstadt”) was still above the water. Therefore, our activities concentrated on two objectives: firstly, to salvage as much information as possible (Fig. 8). Every year, the lake washed free more outlines of houses that were similar to those of the Weststadt and obviously constituted the continuation of the Late Bronze Age town (Einwag/Otto 2006). We diligently documented the buildings in this “Nordstadt” and at the Citadel’s northern slope. Here used to be the old town, which held a continuous succession of levels of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (Szelag 2012).

Now we were able to systematically examine the fortified Citadel high above the Weststadt, housing monumental buildings of the Early to Middle Bronze Age



Fig. 11. Excavations of the top of the citadel, after the Euphrates valley was flooded (2005), with the EBA IV fortified gate building in the foreground.

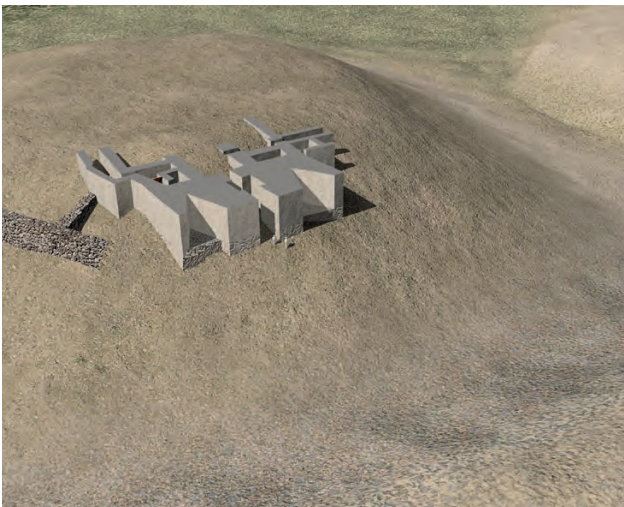


Fig. 12. 3D model of the EBA IV fortified gate building beyond the artificial ditch.

(Fig. 9). In March 2004, our Syrian representative and dear friend Walid Abd-el Karim was excavating a large Roman pit in the centre, when he suddenly called out, highly pleased: “tablet!” Directly next to the pit, there was the first cuneiform tablet ever found in Bazi – there should be just one more to come – on a floor paved with stone slabs (Sallaberger et al. 2006). We had discovered the temple of the town. It turned out to be a mighty Middle Bronze Age *templum in antis*, which had undergone structural alterations in the Late Bronze Age. Its



Fig. 13. The EB IVA chamber gate leading to the heart of the Citadel, in background the artificial ditch (2005).

conquerors had thoroughly smashed the inventory, only leaving behind worthless objects. These, however, allowed us to reconstruct that the temple not only used to be a place of extensive offering, but also the only specialized building of the town that served as a place of get-together of the council of elders with the town god. This is the reason why the royal documents, by which the kings of Mittani consigned provincial towns to the “sons of the city of Bašīru” were stored in this place (Einwag/Otto 2019). Now we finally understood why the lower town consisted but of uniform houses for wealthy craftsmen and merchants and why the citadel as only specialized building included a temple: Bazi was one of the many towns ruled by committees (Fig. 10).

But also Michael Roaf, who took part in the 1998 campaign, should prove right: he had claimed from the outset that the citadel used to form part of the Early Bronze Age town of Banat. We did not believe him until we examined the large boulders at the artificial ditch of the citadel more closely (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12). They proved to be part of a monumental gate complex of the Early Bronze Age IV, which – together with the numerous walls surrounding the hill – turned the citadel into an almost impregnable fortification. The floor of the gate was covered with hundreds of sling bullets, testifying to the final attack on Bazi in the EB IV period (Fig. 13, and facing page). But what was so much worth protecting, what was in the centre of the fortification? We did not have the opportunity to explore this in more detail, but the structural remains indicated that there used to be a large building of several rooms, which most probably served as a kind of refuge for the kings who resided down in Banat and had their mighty grave-mounds there.

Conclusions

Excavations in Tall Bazi were a pure piece of luck. We were able to unearth large parts of a Late Bronze Age town and to reconstruct from its inventory the everyday life of its inhabitants in great detail. Even the structure of the society under the reign of the Mittani in the 14th century became clear: the city was governed by a col-

lective body of the elders. The temple at the top of the citadel served as a central building for all cultic and administrative activities. After the town’s violent destruction around 1350/25 BC., probably by the Hittites, it was not used again until a sanctuary was erected there in the Roman period, which skillfully incorporated the still visible remains of the Bronze Age temple.

Contrary to our original assumption, the natural hill was converted into a citadel not in the Late Bronze Age, but already around 2400 BC. Apparently “Jebel Bazi” now represented the most exposed part of an approx. 40 ha Early Bronze Age town, the greater part of which was located down in Tall Banat. Presumably this town – one of the largest in the Syrian Euphrates valley – was the city of *Armium*, known from the Ebla texts, or *Armanum*, of whose destruction the Akkadian king Naram-Sin boasted (Otto/Biga 2010). We were able to excavate only a small part of the Early Bronze Age citadel structures, among others the massively fortified entrance gate beyond the artificial ditch, a large cistern, and the remains of a large building, possibly a palace.

Despite a permanent shortage of funds we were able to achieve extremely good results, because we had enormously committed staff and a large part of the inhabitants of Banat assisted us. We hope that this kind of intense living and working together will be possible again in the future. However, the chances are slight at the moment. Since 2011, the people of Banat have experienced unimaginable suffering in the Syrian war. They have been dispossessed of their entire belongings several times over, some of the inhabitants have fled and currently live in refugee camps in Turkey or in Lebanon, some of them have perished. Especially women, children and elderly people have returned to their looted houses and are trying as far as possible to live on the yields of their small gardens and fields. Every now and then they are sending us pictures from their mobile phones showing the destroyed excavation sites and the tanks positioned up on the citadel. They still feel responsible for the protection of this archaeological site and every time they are asking us whether we will come back one day, when there will be peace again. Inshallah, dearest friends!

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Berthold Einwag & Adelheid Otto



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