

Euro-Syrian Excavations at Tell Beydar

REPORT ON THE 15TH SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AND
THE 6TH SEASON OF ARCHITECTURAL RESTORATION
AT TELL BEYDAR (2008)

RAPPORT SUR LA 15^{ÈME} CAMPAGNE DE FOUILLES ET
LA 6^{ÈME} CAMPAGNE DE RESTAURATION ARCHITECTURALE
À TELL BEYDAR (2008)

Marc LEBEAU & Antoine SULEIMAN (editors-éditeurs)



Introduction

Marc Lebeau & Antoine Suleiman
(ECUMS – DGAM)

The Syro-Europaeen Archaeological expedition at Tell Beydar is composed of collaborators, technicians and students of different nationalities. The Syrian component of the team is directed by Abd-el-Messiah Baghdo (DGAM), assisted on the field by Antoine Suleiman (scientific adviser). During this 15th campaign, it consisted of the following members: Rania Ali (Aleppo University), Cheikhmous Ali, Housam ed-Din Hammoudeh, Shirin Nasan (DGAM), Khaled Amor, Sa'ud al-Husein (Hassake), Fidaa Darwish (Damascus University) et Degham Muhammad (Qamishli). The Europaeen component, under the direction of Marc Lebeau (ECUMS), consisted of: Marie-Eve Sténuît, Chiara Dezzi Bardschi (ECUMS), Véronique Van der Stede, Florence Rey, Anne Devillers, Léonore Poncin (UL Bruxelles), Alexander Pruß, Aaron Schmitt, Annelen Brodner (LMU München), Lucio Milano, Elena Rova, Monica Tonussi, Stefania Facco, Valentina Dal Ben (UCF Venezia). Two students of Coimbra University (Portugal), Ricardo Cabral and André Tomé assisted the excavators of the Syrian and Europaeen groups. Juliette Mas (Lyon University) and Katia Gavagnin (UCF Venezia) took care of pottery processing and registering. The technicians attached to the Europaeen component of the missions are: Manuela Core (UP Milano), architect, Anne Lebrun-Nelis (UL Bruxelles) and Manfred Lerchl (LMU München), draftpersons. Antonio Barbosa took care of the logistics during the first month of the excavation season.



The Europaeen Centre for Upper Mesopotamian Studies (ECUMS) co-ordinates the work of the Europaeen component of the team on behalf of four universities: Université Libre de Bruxelles (Véronique Van der Stede), Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia (Lucio Milano), Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München (Walther Sallaberger), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Maria Covadonga Sevilla Cueva). The Syrian component of the team depends on the Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées de Syrie (DGAM).

Work on the site started on April the 7th and was concluded on May the 22nd (fieldwork) and on May the 27th (finds processing and registering). The team reached Damascus on May the 28th.

In general terms, the results of these six and half weeks of excavation are quite important, and confirm the richness and the potentials of the site, in particular as far as the 3rd millennium B.C. is confirmed. Excavation was carried out in five different areas (Fields B, I, M, P, and S). In each case, it represented the continuation (widening or deepening) of investigations carried out during the previous seasons.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT FIELDS

Field	Period	Phase(s)	Nature	Responsibility
B	3rd Millennium B.C.	EJ IIIb	Private houses, residence (?)	UL Bruxelles
	Hellenistic period		Pisé and mud-brick walls	
I	3rd Millennium B.C.	EJ IIIb	Dwelling and workshops (?)	UCF Venezia
	Hellenistic period		Stone foundation walls Mud-brick walls	
M	3rd Millennium B.C.	EJ IIIb, phase 3 EJ IVa	Temple E, workshops workshops (?)	DGAM
	Epoque hellénistique		Private houses (?)	
P	3rd Millennium B.C.	EJ IIIb, « Eastern Palace » and later phases		LMU München
	Hellenistic period	EJ IIIb – IVa, EJ IVa	Private houses (?)	
S	3rd Millennium B.C.	EJ IIIb	Large public space (« Parvis Sud »/« South Square ») and surrounding area (S and E wings)	ECUMS group
		EJ IVa	Foundations (dwelling area ?)	
	Hellenistic period		Private houses (?)	

A large number of Hellenistic pits, mostly of conical shape, have also been found in Fields B, I, M, P et S. These pits have often deeply cut into the underlying third millennium occupational levels.

AIMS AND RESULTS

Field B

In B Field, the team of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, under the responsibility of Véronique Van der Stede, continued the investigation of the private house quarter of the EJ IIIb period. The squares excavated this years are the following: 096.047c-d, 096.48, 096.49, 097.047a-c, 097.048a. The extension of the excavated area of this dwelling quarter has thus been considerably extended. All the EJ IIIb walls are in mud-brick, coated by a white gypsum plaster of very good quality. The rooms are equipped with installations of different shapes and dimensions. The doorways of two small rooms were entirely preserved, and were vaulted in their upper part. Excavation reached the western limit of the U-shaped building (storerooms or sheepfold), which was flanked by

two streets. An interesting assemblage of in situ ceramic material of the EJ IIIb period has been discovered on the floors of the rooms. An infant grave, probably of the EJ IIIb-EJIV transition phase, had been dug in to the EJ IIIb level from a later surface. Burial goods consisted of a metal bowl. A second grave, dating to the EJ IVa period and consisting of a corrugated jar, shows that this sector of the mound was still in use at the beginning of the EJ IV period. The excavation of building B1 had been extended in western direction. This building shows several EJ IIIb occupational phases. A rich assemblage of ceramic vessels has been recovered in situ, smashed on the floors of the building. The function of this significant building remains unknown, and its excavation has not yet been completed. A number of pisé and mud-brick walls of the Hellenistic period and some light installations of the same phase have been recovered near the surface of the excavated area, as well as some large silos-pits, most of them of conical shape.

Field I

Lucio Milano, Elena Rova and the team of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice extended the area excavated during the previous years in western direction, towards the limits of Fields A and G, with the aim of excavating the continuation of the official building of the EJ IIIa period discovered further to the E in the 2002-2005 season. As a matter of fact, this building showed an elaborate system of architectural decoration including niches and multiple-buttressed walls, which made it worth to continue its investigation. The extension of the excavation (squares 101.039, 101.40, 102.039, 102.040, 103.039, for a) involved 9 different quadrants (including minor operations in the part of the building excavated during the previous seasons). Since the excavation area is lying on the Upper City mound slope, work involved first of all the investigation of the later (Hellenistic and EJ IIIb) levels. In the course of the 2008 campaign, a poorly preserved EJ IV occupational phase has been as well recognised in the area. Near the surface, some stone foundations and mud-brick walls belonging to the Hellenistic period have been recovered. The 3rd millennium layers were deeply buried under this later occupation. The EJ IIIb period occupational level has been completely investigated: the uncovered architectural remains suggest that the area was devoted different kinds of industrial and domestic activities. In addition, work was continued in the area of the EJ IIIa Northern Building located to the E, whose internal layout and stratigraphy have been further clarified.

Field M

Antoine Suleiman and the Syrian team continued their work in Field M, in the SW sector of the Upper City Mound. The investigation concerned, on the one hand, a series of workshops located to the E of a wide street, and, on the other one, the excavation of a very large official building ("Temple E"), located on a lower terrace of the Upper City mound, to the S of the elongated building which hosted the workshops associated with Temples B and C. The following quadrants have been excavated in 2008: 094.055, 094.056, 095.055, 095.056, 095.057, 096.055, 096.056, 097.056, 097.057, 098.056 et 098.057. Before reaching the 3rd millennium levels (EJ IIIb and EJ IIIb-IVa), a complex of mud-brick walls of the Hellenistic periods have been brought to light. These consisted of series of dwelling rooms or workshops devoted to grinding activities, to judge from the considerable amount of basalt tools which are normally associated with this function. As for the EJ IIIb period workshops located to the E of street 13137, during the 2008 campaign the team completed the excavation of the large trapezoidal room 13302. Its floor (locus 13312) yielded a large amount of EJ IIIb in situ ceramic material. In southern direction, there was workshop 11312, whose first occupation dated back to the EJ IIIb period, but which had been re-used during the following EJ IVa phase, at the beginning of the Akkadian period. Some red-coloured walls of the EJ IVa phase had deeply modified the layout of the room, thereby cutting the walls of the previous phase. On the floor of this room, a large number of ceramic vessels of the EJ IVa period have been unearthed, as well. The limits of a very large building have been discovered to the S of the workshops associated to Temples B and C. This building has very large walls, two to three meters wide. The discovery of a block of wall decorated with multiple niches and recesses proves that we are dealing with a massive temple – Temple E – of surprisingly large dimensions. A very large central ceremonial space is surrounded on the W and E sides by wings of rooms of smaller dimensions, both square and rectangular in shape. The building's N wall is preserved up to a height of 4.60 m, while elsewhere its walls are still standing to a minimal height of 3.50 m. Several excavation seasons will be necessary to investigate this large building in its entirety.

Field P

The Munich University team, led by Alexander Pruß, widened the limits of Field P considerably in the course of the 2008 campaign (squares 105.050, 106.050, 106.051, 106.052, 106.053, 107.051, 107.052 et 107.053, corresponding to a total of 14 quadrants). The excavation area is situated in the E part of the Upper City mound, not far from the Acropolis Palace and its glacis. About one half of the Eastern Palace, dated on the basis of the ceramic material to the EJ IIIb period, had been investigated in the course of the three preceding campaigns. The present excavation season resulted in the discovery of ca 65% of the plan of the building. We estimate that two additional campaigns will be necessary to complete its exposure. In 2008, the excavation area has been extended

in N, E and S direction. The S and E limits of the central courtyard, paved with baked bricks in fish-grate pattern, have been reached. In addition, the excavation allowed to begin the exploration of two rooms, located to the N and to the E of the banquet room, one of which may have had the function of an audience hall. The organisation and the plan of this important building are very similar to those of the Acropolis Palace. Its erection seems to have been contemporary with phase 3 (EJ IIIb) of the Acropolis Palace. Around the end of the EJ IIIb period, the function of the building was modified: it became the seat of an important metallurgical workshop, where metal was melted and worked. Some large and deep Hellenistic pits, as well as a few graves dating to the Early Akkadian (EJ IVa) period had partially damaged the walls of the EJ IIIb period. The most recent archaeological layers in Field P yielded some flimsy installations and floors dating to the transitional phase between the EJ IIIb and the EJ IV, to the Early Akkadian (EJ IV) and to the Hellenistic period (this latter level was very eroded).

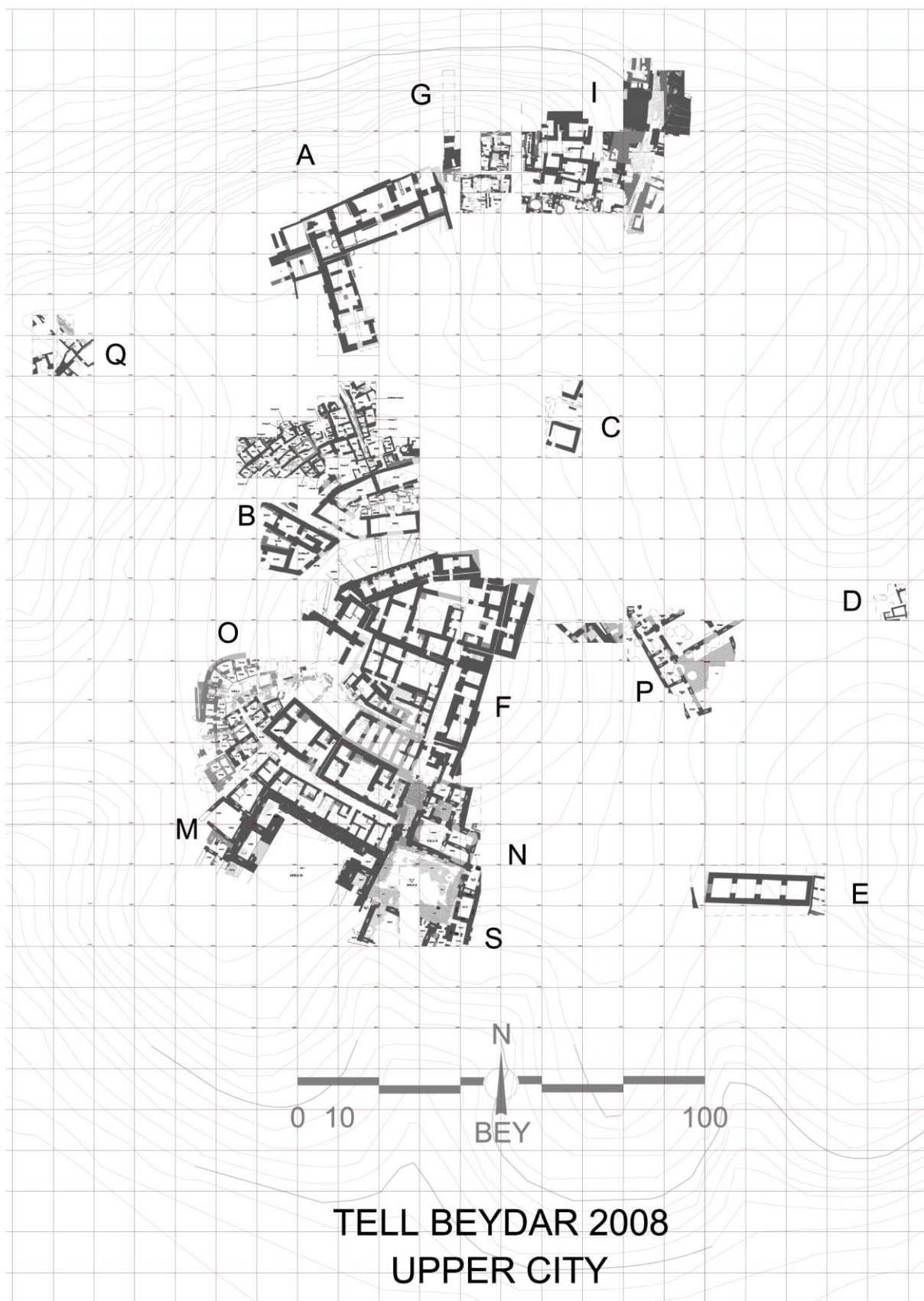
Field S

During this season, the ECUMS group devoted its activity to continuing the investigation of Field S, situated on the S side of the Upper City mound, on the lower terrace beyond the "Main Street". The following squares: 098.058, 099.057, 100.057, 100.058, 101.057, 101.058, have been completely or partially excavated. They are located around the large open space 14112, the so-called « Parvis Sud » ("Southern Square") and inside the latter. Following the axis of the long straight street which leads from the S city gate to the entrance of the Acropolis palace, on a lower terrace, one meets this extremely large space, whose floor is paved with baked bricks in fish-scale pattern. The "Southern Square" is situated immediately to the S of the Acropolis gate. Two of its limits had been already found during the 2005 campaign. Its third limit, the SW corner, had been discovered in the course of the 2006 season, while its fourth corner has been reached this year. It is therefore now possible to measure the overall dimensions of the space, which amount to 18.50m in E-W direction and to 15.50m in N-S direction. The N and E facades are decorated with buttresses which create a number of niches whose base is equipped with benches, while the W façade is straight. The S façade has been brought to light during the present season. It is decorated by buttresses and it is pierced by four multiple-recessed doorways, which provide access to two different rooms. One of the latter was provided with a juss-plastered floor of very good quality and was probably a room of some importance. The E wing of rooms surrounding the courtyard consists of at least four different spaces. One of them has been excavated down to the floor level. Beside a number of different installations, it yielded some in situ pottery vessels and a considerable number of sealing with cylinder seal impressions. The huge filling of the "Southern Square", which is quite deep and consists of deep layers of ashes in the upper part and of a massive layer of brick collapse in its lower part, has been almost completely removed this year. The courtyard was paved with paved bricks laid in fish-grate pattern. It was well preserved near the court's walls, but had almost completely disappeared in the centre of the space. In spite of the fact that the bricks had disappeared in the central part of the floor, it was possible to reconstruct their layout completely on the basis of the impressions they had left on the soil. Also worth mentioning are numerous Hellenistic pits, which cut the upper part of the space's filling.

Restoration, information for visitors etc.

In the course of the sixth campaign of architectural restoration, 6000 mud-bricks have been put into place, with the aim of reinforcing and consolidating the restoration work carried out since 2003, in particular in the area of the Acropolis palace and of Temple A. In addition, the top of the walls and certain sections of walls have been re-plastered over a total surface of ca 500 square meters. Minor interventions have been carried out in Fields P and S.

Thirteen information panels in English and Arabic language have been installed on the site. They have been built near Paris, and are guaranteed to last for at least 6 years.



Tell Beydar 2008 –Field B

Véronique Van der Stede
with the collaboration of Anne Devillers, Léonore Poncin & Florence Rey
(Université Libre de Bruxelles)

During this season's excavation, the Université Libre de Bruxelles team, lead by Véronique Van der Stede (Chargé de Recherches du F.N.R.S.), was made up of Anne Devillers (doctoral student in archaeology), Léonore Poncin (student in assyriology) and Florence Rey (doctoral student in archaeology – Paris I). Ricardo Cabral (student in archaeology - Universidade de Coimbra) completed the team for two weeks. The excavation was financed by the « Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique » (F.R.S. - F.N.R.S) and the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

The B field spreads across the upper city plateau, to the N of the palatial complex. The aim of the 2008 campaign was double: firstly to pursue the excavation of building B1 (quadrants 096.049 and 096.048), an official structure that was partially excavated during previous campaigns (cf. Subartu XV) and, secondly, to continue the excavation of the residential sector so as to further excavate some houses discovered in 2006.

Stratigraphically, three occupation phases can be identified in the B field. The oldest (phase 3), clearly dated by the pottery as being EJ IIIb, is represented by two official buildings (the “U” complex and building B1) and a residential neighbourhood. This phase is followed by an akkadian occupation (EJ IV) characterised by pits but also, since this year, by a large monocellular structure (54254). Finally, the latest phase (phase 1), dating from the Hellenistic period, is attested by pits and at least two successive construction levels.

The EJ IIIb occupation (phase 3) is, for the moment, represented by four sub-phases. The most recent (phase 3a) is characterised by graves laid in the transitional period EJ IIIb – EJ IV in the ruins of the 3 b level. The three following levels are superimposed construction levels, designated from the latest to the oldest: phases 3 b, c and d. Furthermore, some of the buildings of these levels have several internal phases of readjustments.

Phase 1	Hellenistic	Pits, architectural structures
Phase 2	EJ IV	Pits, architectural structures
Phase 3 a b c d	EJ IIIb	Official buildings, residential neighbourhood, graves

1. Phase 3 – the EJ IIIb occupation (ca. 2400 B.C.)

Phase 3a

This transitional phase between EJ IIIb and EJ IV is represented by two children burials. T. 54295, a burial in a jar placed in a 3b phase wall, contained the scattered bones of an infant, less than 6 month old (+- 3 months). The discovery of beads under his head indicates that he was buried wearing a necklace. T. 54449, a side chamber grave, contained the skeleton of an adult aged 50 – 60 years old. He was found in anatomical order, laying in a N-S axe; the head was turned towards the S, the face to the O. The body was placed on its left side, its upper and lower members hyperflexed.

Phase 3b

This phase identified in quadrants 096.047 c-d, 096.048 b and 097.048 a, is represented by little structures built on a brick terrace reinforced by a stone foundation along streets 28936 and 29914. The building of this terrace and of the structures supported by it are contemporary to the building of the “U” complex.

Phase 3c

Building B1

Building B1, partially excavated in 2001 and 2004, stands at the foot of the glacis, to the O of the “U” complex from which it is separated by a radiating street (28914). Its trapezoidal shaped plan is for the moment

made up of 5 buildings (28729, 54266, 54436, 54325, 54519) and a large stairwell (28747) in the NE angle of the building. The existence of a stairwell, the thickness of the walls and the type of room fillings all suggest that their used to be an upper story to the building. This hypothesis is confirmed by the positioning of the 60 ceramics found in room 54266 that must have been stored on the upper floor before it collapsed.

This building, probably contemporary to phases 2 and 3 of the palatial complex, has at least three phases of use. The floor of the original phase (phase B1/c) has only been reached in room 28729. The presence of a door opening onto the street following the foot of the glacis (28736) identifies this room as the entrance room of the building. It is also very likely that the staircase (28747) started from this large trapezoidal space. During the next phase of occupation (phase B1/b), the floors of rooms 54266, 54436, 54325, 54519 were raised by at least 50 cm. This was also the case in the stairwell where a kind of bench was installed in the NO angle (cf Subartu XV), who's function is still to be precised. Room 54436 is rearranged and the walls defining it are reinforced by a brick formwork, probably due to a weakening of the original masonry. Only room 54325 is equipped with special installations. Three of its walls are cut by niches and a low podium covered with bitumen occupies its NO corner. Ten ceramics, including one large storage vessel, were found in place on the beaten earth floor. Finally, during the last occupation phase of the building (phase B1/a), only rooms 28729 and 54436 are still in use. New floors are placed and room 54436 is subdivided into three spaces (54432, 54523, 54428) by narrow little walls built with low quality red bricks. It is highly likely that this last restructuration of building B1 is contemporary to the building of the "U" complex.

The residential neighbourhood

The 3c level of the residential neighbourhood has only been reached in quadrant 097.047a. Three rooms, belonging to two adjoining houses (houses 11 and 12) have been identified. House 11 is at present made up of two small rooms (54106 and 54129) that are linked by a corbelled door, entirely preserved. Room 54129 also opens to the O onto a space that has not yet been excavated. The walls of this room preserved to a height of nearly two meters are covered by successive layers of plaster. This plaster coating also covers the floor and the installations set up in the room. A bench leans against the E and S walls of room 54129. A horse-shoe shaped brazier is set in it. Another low bench is installed in the NO corner of the room. The SO corner of room 54106 is occupied by a large storage jar resting on a square podium. The body of the jar is covered by a plaster coating which suggests that the vessel was meant to contain a liquid, maybe drinking water. As in the next-door room, low benches carefully plastered follow the bottom of the walls. House 12, of which only one room has been excavated, lies directly to the E of house 11. A corbelled door, relatively low, gives access to this room. Two tannurs and a niche cut into the N wall equip this room.

2. Phase 2 – the EJ IV occupation (ca. 2300 B.C.)

The EJ IV occupation is represented by a monocellular building of which only the foundations and one level of floor foundation are preserved. This building leans on the E wall of room 54266 of building B1 that must have still been visible at the time of its construction. The only preserved installation in this room is a large bench against the N wall.

3. Phase 1 – the Hellenistic occupation (2nd – 1st centuries B.C.)

The Hellenistic occupation is represented in quadrants 096.048 a-d and 096.049 a by two superimposed construction levels. Only the most recent level forms a coherent ensemble. It is made up of several architectural structures that seem to spread over two terraces. The architectural structure (54305) built on the upper terrace is only preserved at foundation level, massive pisé walls. A pisé bloc, forming a kind of bench, leans against the E wall. Another pisé bloc occupies the SE corner of the building. The architectural structure (54137) built on the lower terrace is a large room closed by brick walls. This room is equipped with an underground silo and a round hearth. Directly to the O, small annexe rooms, including one equipped with a tannur (54069), complete the plan of this residential entity.



- Fig. 1 - General view of the building B1.



Tell Beydar 2008 – Field I

L. Milano & E. Rova (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

The 2008 season at Tell Beydar of the Ca' Foscari University team lasted from April the 2nd to May the 31st. The Venice group consisted of prof. Lucio Milano (responsible of the team), Prof. Elena Rova, Ph.D candidate dott. Monica Tonussi, MA candidate dott. Stefania Facco, Miss Valentina Dal Ben, students at Ca' Foscari University (archaeologists), and Ph.D candidate Katia Gavagnin (pottery recorder), joined on the field for 2 weeks by André Gonçalo Tomé, student at Coimbra University (Portugal).

The 2008 season was devoted to extending the excavated area in western direction, toward the top of the third millennium Upper City mound, in order to bring to light the continuation of the “Northern Building” of the EJ IIIa period excavated during the 2002-2005 seasons, and to find its western limit. The investigated area extended over 13 different quadrants (101.040 a-d, 101.039 b, d, 102.040 a, 102.039 a, 103.039 c, a, for a total excavated area of ca 200 square meters.

The whole area had been re-occupied during the Hellenistic period, presumably at the same time as the official building in Field A to the West. The Hellenistic occupation showed at least two different phases. Of the later one, only some massive stone foundations were left, while some large mud-brick walls and different installations (mainly tannurs) could be attributed to the earlier phase. A number of large pits, which deeply cut into the third millennium layers in the southern part of the excavation area, belong to the Hellenistic occupation as well.

The earlier Hellenistic walls cut into the latest third millennium occupation in the area, a poorly preserved level which can be ceramically dated to the EJ IV period (a hitherto unattested phase in Field I). This phase yielded some pyrotechnical installations (fireplaces and small pits filled with ashes and surrounded by a grit layer).



- Fig. 1 - General view of the W part of the excavation, EJ IIIb phase

The following layer was better preserved, and could be excavated over the whole investigated area. It dated to the EJ IIIb period, and could be correlated with the latest occupational phase (Phase 1, with sub-phases a and b) discovered in 1997-2002 in the area adjacent to the East.

The south-western part of the excavated area (Fig. 1) was occupied by a multiroom building of some importance, which continued in the unexcavated sector to the West. Two different floor levels of this building, both yielding some *in situ* material, could be excavated. Two parallel rows of rooms were exposed. The western row consisted of four spaces. These were – from North to South –: 87761, occupied by a white-plastered basin which abutted a stone canalization; 87760, which showed a good floor with some *in situ* ceramic material, 87863, where a large number of smashed jars were found *in situ*, and 87878, of which only a small portion

could be excavated, which was provided with a white-plastered floor. The second row of rooms, heavily damaged by the Hellenistic pits, contained three rooms: – from North to South –: 87976, which had a good white-plastered floor, 113263 and 113259.

A second group of spaces occupied the south-eastern part of the excavated area. It included an open space, whose floor was paved with stones and pottery sherds (87986), and a room (113237), which contained a shallow white-plastered basin and a small tannur-like installation. This room was divided from rooms 113263 and 113259 by a 40 cm wide narrow open area, and must therefore have belonged to a different building.

On the other hand, a group of rooms located in the northern part of the excavation, beyond the main baulk, may have been part of the first building discussed above. These included: spaces 113130 and 113079, which were completely filled with ashes and probably hosted some tannurs or other pyrotechnical installations, space 113053, only a small section of which could be excavated, and rooms 113049, 113099, and 113048, which contained a number of plastered installations. The eastern limit of this group of rooms was located near the limit of the excavation, and a sherd-plastered street or open area extended to the East of it.

The northernmost portion of the excavation was located very near to the ancient slope of the tell, and had therefore been much disturbed by surface erosion. During the EJ IIIb period it had been organised according to a series of progressive steps. In their lowest part, these exploited some large walls, which we can attribute to the Northern Building of the EJ IIIa period, while in their upper part they covered a large area occupied by industrial installations (kilns etc.) which probably dates to the transitional EJ IIIb-a period. In the EJ IIIb period, the different steps were occupied by industrial installations (among them, two pottery kilns, and a large fireplace), which could be accessed directly from rooms 113048 and 113099.

While the specific functions of the different rooms of the area during the EJ IIIb period are not yet fully understood, it is nevertheless clear that, like in the case of the area excavated during the previous years, we are not dealing with simple domestic structures, but rather with a larger complex, mainly devoted to industrial activities of different type.

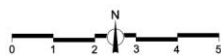
In addition, minor operations were carried out in quadrants 102.039 b-d, 103.039 a-c, in the area of the Northern Building excavated in 2002-2005, with the aim of completing the exposure of the sub-phase 4c complex and to solve some still open stratigraphical questions. In particular, we completed the exposure of the sub-phase 4c walls of spaces 87563 and 87456-87208, which showed an elaborate system of white-plastered benches and recesses, and included a deep 160 cm high, 120 cm wide vaulted niche (Fig. 2). In addition, we reached the earliest sub-phase 4c floor of room 61918.

Among the most significant small finds of the 2008 season in Field I are a fragment of a cuneiform tablet bearing an administrative text, whose palaeography dates in it the EJ IIIb period, and a cylinder seal of white gypsum depicting a row of animals.

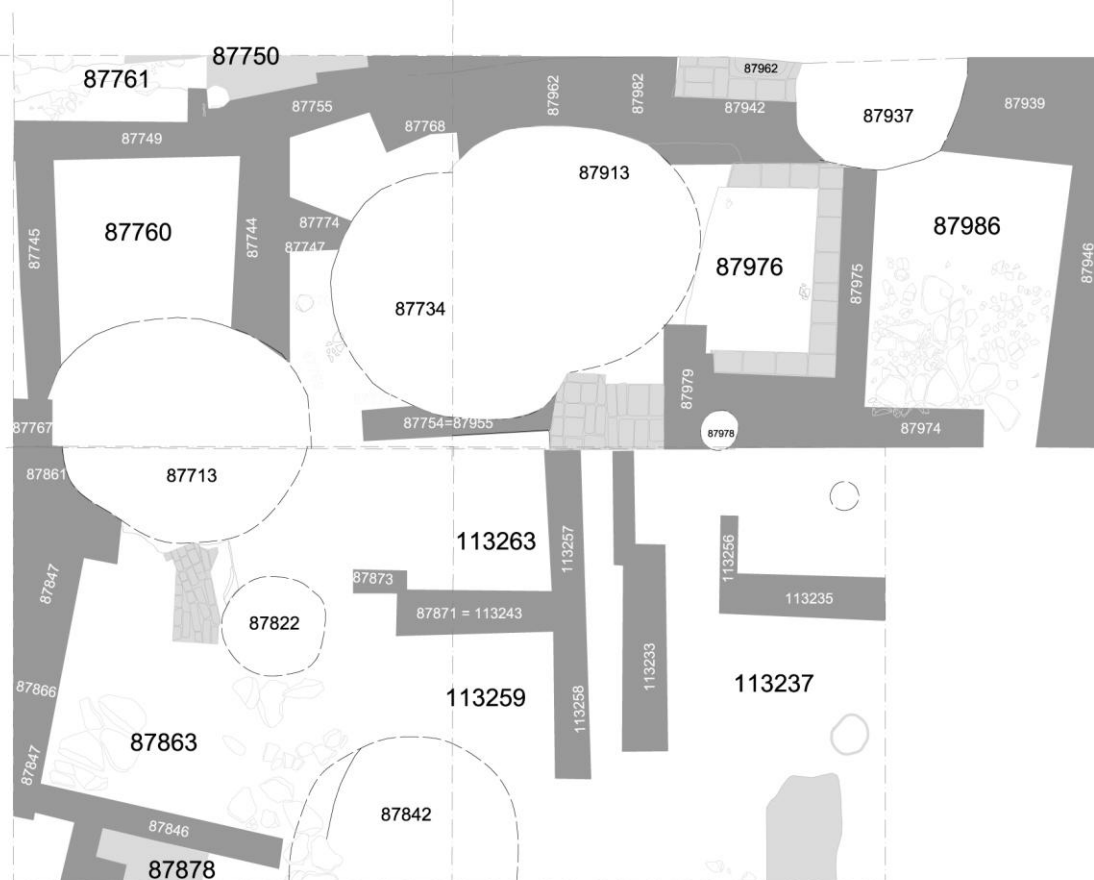
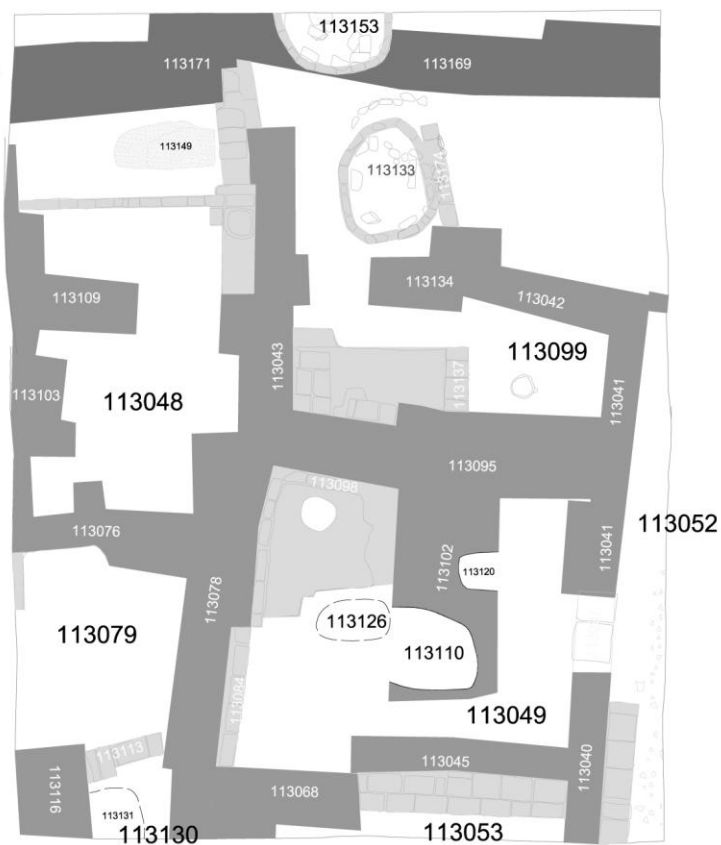


- Fig. 2 - View of space 87208 of the EJ IIIa Northern Building with vaulted niche.

TELL BEYDAR 2008
AREA I
EARLY JEZIRAH III b
SCHEMATIC PLAN



- BRICK WALL
- PIT
- INSTALLATION
- BRICK WALL EJ-IIIa



Tell Beydar 2008 – Field M

Antoine Suleiman

(DGAM)

During the 2008 season of excavations at Tell Beydar, the Syrian working team was composed of Abd-el-Masih Baghdo (DGAM), Dr. Antoine Suleiman, Dr. Rania Ali (University of Aleppo), Fida'a Darwish & Khaled Amor (University of Damascus), Shirin Nasan, Sa'ud al-Husein & Dergham Muhammad (DGAM).

The mission lasted from April 5th, 2008 to May 28th, 2008. The activities of the Syrian team were concentrated on Field M, in the S part of the Upper City, S of the workshops facing Temples B and C. The following squares of the Beydar grid were investigated: 093.055, 095.056, 095.057, 096.055, 096.056, 097.056, 097.057, 098.056.

EJ IIIb period

The sector is located between the “Southern Square” (Courtyard 14112, field S) and Street 13137. Last year, we started working in these squares and this season we have been continuing to work in the same area. The excavation of this campaign exposed part of a temple — Temple E —, the dimensions of which are about 24 x 30m. Its walls are preserved to a height varying from 3,50m to 4,60m.

The temple is composed of a very wide central room, only very partially excavated, surrounded by two square rooms on the E side (13461, 13455), and three rectangular rooms in the W wing of the building (13254, 13329, 13412). The floor of rooms 13254 and 13329 is made of square mud-bricks (38x38cm), while the floor of room 13412 is made of fired bricks.

Doorway 13414 of room 13412 leads westwards, probably to street 13137. A mud-brick bench (13416) is located in the N part of the room. A mud-brick wall (13333-13320) separates these rooms. Wall 13320 is 3m wide and wall 13333 is 2m wide.

In the E wing of the temple are located two rooms (13461, 13455), both accessible from the E through, respectively, doorways 13463 and 13454. Room 13455 contains a toilet installation (13457) in its NE corner and is accessible from the W, through a recessed doorway (14454), located in the axis of doorway 13415, in the W wing of the building.

In the W wing of the building the floor of room 13456 is covered by white plaster while the doorway of room 13462 is made of mud-bricks.

A wall separates rooms 13455 and 13461 and another wall separates fields M and S (between Southern Square and Temple E). This large wall is one single wall and not two different walls (as believed formerly, and labelled 13286/32948). It consists in a thick wall, 5 mud-bricks wide (38x38x10cm). In bathroom 13455 a toilet-installation was discovered (13457), on the surface of which a large fragment of tablet and some sealing impressions were lying.

The main and huge central room was decorated by an ornamented masonry block (13468) leaning on the E wall, which comprises niches and recesses, white-plastered. At the base of this block runs a bench. This bench (13467) is 5.57m long, 0,41m wide and 0,66m high. These installations characterize as well the main central rooms of Temples A, B, C and D, excavated during the previous seasons. The length of the central room reaches 19,50m and the floor is covered with white plaster.

In the W wing of the temple two walls limit three rectangular rooms (13254, 13329, and 13412). One of these is 3m wide and the other one is 2m wide.

The height of walls 13470 and 13252 (in room 13458) is about 3,50m, and the height of the walls of room 13254 reaches 4,60m. Numerous impressions on sealings were discovered on the floor of rooms 13461, 13455, 13412, and 13329. We estimate that the main central hall is maybe square, nearly 20x20m, but it still needs to be proved during the next season. The main entrance is expected to be on the S wall of the temple, very close to a street oriented E-W. On the basis of pottery, Temple E could be dated around 2450-2400 BC. It clearly belongs to Beydar phase IIIb, dated to EJ IIIb.

EJ IV period (Akkad)

The Akkadian period is attested in a workshop W of Temple E, where some former EJ IIIb rooms were reutilized, as it is visible from some floors in the excavated rooms (rooms 13302-13313). The Akkadian walls for these rooms are made of red mud-bricks. These rooms are located beside street 13137, the direction of which

is N-SW. Inside rooms 13359-13347 we found traces of Akkadian walls (13318, 13357) added successively to further divide the EJ IIIb rooms. We remarked that square 094.056 contains mixed layers and the most important layer (13339) contains tannurs and a kiln. This workshop sector of the city was thus reused in the EJ IV period. We found in room 13302 various potteries and three tannurs. This room has two doorways, one close (13338) to the South-West corner (wall 13300) and one (doorway 13297) on the NE corner (wall 13256). The latter has been blocked during the Akkadian reoccupation.

Hellenistic period

Three different phases, dating back to the hellenistic settlement, were recognized close to the surface. They probably belong to private housing structures. A substantial ceramic material, as well as many basalt grinding tools were discovered on the floors.



- Fig. 1: Temple E, the decorated block of the central room.

Tell Beydar 2008 – Field P

Alexander Pruß, assisted by Annelen Brodner & Aaron Schmitt
(Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München)

The German team within the Tell Beydar project is headed by Prof. Walther Sallaberger. The field team of 2008 consisted of Alexander Pruß (field director; LMU Munich), Annelen Brodner and Aaron Schmitt (both JGU Mainz). The fieldwork was made possible by funding from the German Research Society (DFG).

The main goals of the campaign were:

- a) To enlarge our knowledge of the Eastern Palace which had been excavated since 2005.
- b) To find more evidence for metal production in the latest phase of this building.
- c) To understand the transformations of the Eastern Palace after its abandonment in the late phase Beydar IIb.

Level 5c: The Eastern Palace (Beydar IIb, EJ IIb, ca. 2400 B.C.; see Plan)

We enlarged the excavated area of the Eastern Palace to the N, E, and S. The attested dimensions of the building are now 30m in SE-NW direction and nearly 20m in SW-NE direction. Considering that we have not yet reached the limits of the building other than in the SW, we may assume an extension of at least 35×25m for the whole Eastern Palace. Since all floors of the original building phase excavated this year were reused in level 5a-b, we can only use the architecture to interpret the original plan of the building.

The most important result was the discovery of the S and E limit of courtyard 16425. Wall 16793 in the S and 16845 in the E are both three bricks wide. We have thus now the dimensions of the courtyard: it measures 13.60×13.60m. The W wall 16642 is cut by the walls of room 16685 (level 3b).

Another interesting discovery is a door (16741) in wall 16642 connecting the courtyard and room 16659. It is ca. 1.40m wide. Right next to the southern doorjamb a pedestal is erected with a basalt basin on top (fig.*). A close parallel comes from Temple C. Both the pedestal and the basin were probably part of the original construction of the Eastern Palace.

We discovered another room (16797) to the S of room 16698. The two rooms are linked through a wide door (at least 1.50m wide). The W jamb of that door seems to be recessed twice in room 16797 and might be connected to a bench on the W wall. The recessed door and the width of both doors to room 16698 show the importance of both rooms as does the basalt basin. It is unclear if the two rooms served to give access to the courtyard or if they were entered from the courtyard. In the latter case, room 16797 might have probably served ritual or religious purposes.

The banquet hall 16473 is by far the largest covered room of the Eastern Palace excavated until now. It measures 10.80×7.80m. There are four doors attested so far, one in every wall. The main entrance seems to have been the one from the courtyard, situated near the S corner of the room. Near the W corner there are two doors: one is leading to room 16160 and is thus giving access to the SW wing of the palace. The other door allows the communication between hall 16473 and space 16999 situated in the NW. The wall 16193 between these two rooms has buttresses on its northern face. If space 16999 is as wide as 16473, and if the whole façade was decorated with buttresses, we might expect four of them. Wall 16193 had been razed down to the foundation layer when two new rooms were built in level 4 (see below), but the lowest layer of bricks could still be traced.

Space 16999 can be considered to be situated within the building for three reasons: it has a normal beaten earth floor typical for inside rooms, it allows direct access to the large hall 16473, which would be very surprising for an outside space and it is situated to the E of the inside room 16192, which would create an odd outline of the building. We can therefore expect another representative or ceremonial space here, probably another large one.

To the east of room 16473, we discovered room 16990. The façade of the wall leading to this room is again decorated with at least one buttress (three buttresses when assuming a regular pattern). It is accessible through a recessed door. We have not yet reached the floor of level 5 within the room, but according to its situation within the building and the nature of the building it might be a throne room. In this case, we would have an early attestation of the Mesopotamian reception suite consisting of a courtyard (16425), a banquet hall (16473) and a throne room (16990) in a consecutive order.

Level 5a-b: The metal workshop (Beydar IIIb, EJ IIIb, ca. 24th century B.C.)

The palace of level 5c was transformed into a metal workshop in phase 5a. The intermediate phase 5b can be defined only in the large courtyard 16425 and in the street running to the W of the palace. There are no indications for the existence of the workshop already in this phase.

In the N of courtyard 16425, along its N wall 16197, there are three small rooms of 2,20m width, which were added in level 5a-b. The baked brick pavement of the courtyard was removed in this area, and only a simple mud floor was used. The central of these rooms (16680) was further excavated this year. It was, however, much destroyed by a large Hellenistic pit. The easternmost of these small rooms (16965), which was discovered during this year's campaign, is considerably smaller than the two others. It seems to have been accessible only from room 16680 by a door in its W wall. An installation in front of the S wall might be interpreted as a bench.

The westernmost room 16564 was in level 5a filled in and used as a ca. 1,50m-high platform. This platform was one of the workshop's production areas. There is no indication though, that the other two rooms were used in a similar way.

In the S corner of courtyard 16425 a thin wall was discovered which we assigned to level 5a-b. It can be compared to the thin walls near the N limit of the courtyard, though it is standing on the floor and does not cut it. Inside the room limited by this wall we found some crucible fragments. They prove that the workshop also covered this part of the former palace.

We continued to excavate room 16659 in the SW of the building. Some pottery was still lying on floor. A fireplace (16789) could be uncovered resting directly on the floor and leaning on wall 16642. It is made of reused baked bricks.

The former banquet hall 16473 became the central production area of the metal workshop. We knew already three kilns in this room and found traces of a further fireplace in front of the N wall. The fireplace itself had, however, been razed during the construction of the level 4 rooms. Near the E corner of the room, a narrow space (42105) had been constructed in level 5a, which also blocked the entrance of room 16990.

Level 4 (Beydar IIIb, EJ IIIb, ca. 24th century B.C.)

The northern part of the former banquet hall 14673 and the adjacent part of space 16999 were nearly completely destroyed when, in level 4, two rooms (16941 and 16956) were erected here, which were founded at the level of the level 5 floors. Both rooms seem to have been separate single-room units of ca. 4×4m size. We did not find any installation in these rooms; the pottery points to a domestic use.

We found a small infant burial (16974), oriented in W-E direction, within the limits of room 16965. It was dug from a level 4 surface. The tomb itself consisted merely of a small elongated pit of ca. 50cm length and 20cm width. It contained the scattered remains of an infant, less than a year old. No grave goods were found. It is possible that there are two more infant burials to the N and S of burial 16974.

Level 3b (Beydar IIIb/IVa transition, ca. 2300 B.C.)

During level 3b, the reuse of the palace was limited to the former courtyard and its direct vicinity. We exposed a small building (room 16685) of this level which was trenched into the brick collapse of the Eastern Palace, also cutting its walls. The outer faces of the walls were directly set against the brick collapse, they were not plastered and showed no traces of weathering. So far only the northern half of the building is completely excavated. The entrance to the building might be situated in the E wall, but this has to be confirmed by further excavation.

We can distinguish two occupational phases for room 16685. A first phase belongs to the original layout of the room and includes three subsequent floors. Afterwards the walls in the N, E and S became out of use and were covered by a later succession of three other floors. We suggest that all the floors belong to level 3b. The room was probably entered from a significantly higher level, since no Beydar IV layers were found around the building being at the same level as the early floors.

Level 3a (Beydar IVa, Akkadian period, ca. 23rd century B.C.)

The latest occupational level of a series of squatter occupations is 3a, which can be dated into the Beydar IVa period. In this phase, the earlier walls were only occasionally used as foundations. Structures of a more substantial nature were now erected.

Room 16916 in the N of the excavated area contained a large grinding table which was connected with a carefully prepared gypsum floor. This room was probably accessed from the E, where we found the continuation of a massive stone-paved terrace or stone foundation (16578) already discovered in 2006. Among these stones we found a mould made of sandstone.

Room 16990 of level 5c was still existing (it had been blocked since level 5b) and was reused in level 3a. We found at least two floors of this period which yielded a considerable amount of Beydar IVA-Pottery.

Levels 1 and 2 (Seleucid-Parthian period, 2nd to 1st century B.C.)

For the first time we were able to more clearly define a succession of several occupation phases of the Seleucid-Parthian period. In former seasons, we were only able to distinguish two phases (1 and 2). Level 1 was only attested by pits dug from completely eroded surfaces. We assume that the later phases of this year's Hellenistic levels are corresponding to level 1, since they are no longer affected by later pits.

In quadrant 107.052a we counted four succeeding phases (2b-1a): The first phase (2b) consists of the construction of a very large, rectangular pit (16850) which was then filled with alternating layers of ashes and mixed soils. Its N-S extension is about 7m; its extension in E-W direction is still unknown. The pit is fairly deep (at least 1.80m), even cutting the brick pavement of courtyard 16425. In a second phase, 2a, some smaller, bell-shaped pits were dug down into the filling of 16850 from a floor level overlaying this large pit.

During the following phase 1b, the area was transformed into an inside space, 16821. We found a fairly complete room inventory covering the floor of this room, including several large jars and smaller vessels, a lot of loom weights and pyramidal weights of unbaked clay and a copper coin. A small room (42021) in quadrant 107.051b, containing two tannurs, might correspond to phase 1b as well. Finally, the last occupation phase (1a) in quadrant 107.052a consisted of some small additional pisé foundation walls, which were added along the western and northern limits of room 16821.



- Fig. 1: Eastern Palace, the central courtyard.

Tell Beydar 2008 – Field S

Marie-Eve Sténuît, Chiara Dezzi Bardeschi & Cheikhmous Ali (ECUMS, Brussels – DGAM, Damascus)

With the participation of Ricardo Cabral & André Tomé (University of Coimbra)

The extension of field S this year concerns the squares 098.058, 098.058, 099.057, 100.057, 100.058, 101.057, 101.058, which are located in the periphery of courtyard 14112, the so-called « South Square », and inside the courtyard itself.

Hellenistic level (quadrants 098.058b-c, 099.057b-c-d, 100.058c-d, 101.058a-c)

The Hellenistic settlement consists in this area of a series of large tronconical pits, concentrated in the brick collapse that fills the courtyard, as well as S and E of it, where they have cut all the occupation levels. Some of these pits (19091, 19093, 19101) are limited by narrow brick walls (19126, 19132) and are separated by outer floors with simple stone installations (19137). A wide and deep foundation wall, built in stairs following the slope of the tell, was built S of the collapse of the courtyard. This wall is to be related to another series of similar construction settled more to the W (Field M).

EJIV level (quadrants 101.057a-c)

Two EJIVa rooms, built immediately on top of the collapse of the N part of the E wing of the courtyard have been excavated. The two rooms are preserved at the level of the foundations only. The N one (19066, 2,70m x 1,60m) opens to the E, the S one (19067, 2,80m x 3,60m) to the S. They were both equipped with a bench strongly founded with stones and bricks.

EJIIb level

- Courtyard 14112 (098.057a-c, 099.057a-b-c-d, 100.058a-b) : The excavation of the large surface of baked bricks filling « South Square » (15,5m x 18,5m) has been continued. The pavement 14105 which slopes down to the S (c. 1m of declivity), is mainly preserved alongside the walls, but the excavation has shown that the whole area was covered by baked bricks. This is attested by the presence of imprints of bricks of same dimensions and same pattern in the gaps. The good conservation of these imprints indicate that the courtyard has not been exposed for a long time before the collapse of the surrounding buildings. Three big jars have been found crashed on this floor. To the SE, along the E façade, is a long bench (19100, 4,1x0,55m x 0,7m of height), built in compact clay and keeping traces of white djuss on the summit. In the same area, which is the lowest of the courtyard, has been installed a drain for the evacuation of the rain water, traces of which are still visible on the pavement and at the base of door 19327. Traces of repairing are visible at the base of the S wall 19318, on a height of c. 30cm, as well as on the buttress between doors 19327 and 19332. Baked bricks lying on gravel have been used. In the SW area of « South Square », leaning on S wall 19511, was discovered a brick installation, with two (or three ?) steps, covered with djuss. It was covered by a thick layer of ashes and partially destroyed. Along the same wall, between this installation and the door 19516, were also observed traces of a djuss basin (19067, 2,80m x 3,60m) totally destroyed by the wadi erosion.

- The Eastern wing (quadrants 101.057a-c, 101.058a-c) : This wing, which presents a nice buttressed façade (19070) consists of a series of three rooms (19122, 19119, 19141, from N to S), all accessible through recessed doors and a few steps. An additional room (not excavated yet) was built the N, along the façade of Temple D, and another southwards (19150), which also communicates with the S wing. Rooms 19122 and 19119 are rectangular, and of similar dimensions (3m x 5m and 2,50m x 5,85m, respectively). The first one gives access to the N room and is equipped with niches, a kind of high « chest » with two compartments (19155) and a bench (19163). Room 19119 contains a bench. Traces of burnt bricks and fragments of burnt floor have been noticed in the NE corner of the room, in the brick collapse, which, added to the presence of a door socket and sealings, found at a close level, may suggest the existence of a second floor. Rooms 19141 (2,60m x 2,60m) and 19150 have not been excavated yet. Let us notice that the E wall (19143) of this wing is buttressed on its E façade, in a similar way than the N wall of « South Square ».

- The Southern wing (quadrants 099.057a, 099.057b-d et 100.058a-d) : The S wall of the courtyard (19318, 1,80m of width) presents a slight change of axis towards the NW. It is preserved on c. 2m of height. Four rooms have been discovered (from E to W: 19361, 19334, 19354, 19355). The excavated part of the façade presents two wide recessed doors (19327 and 19332), separated by a buttress of 1,30m of width. Door 19327 leads to

room 19334, not completely excavated. This space is reachable through a narrow passage (1936, c.1,3m x c. 2,4m) which can be compared to the one connecting « South Square » to « Main Street ». This room communicates with room 19150 of the E wing. A second phase has been identified in this wing, characterised by a changing in the organisation of the space, with the insertion of a new, elongated room (19354) equipped with a niche in the E wall (19536), and by a changing in the circulation, due to the blockage of passage 19332 (from the courtyard) as well as of the door between spaces 19141 and 19150. It has to be noted that the upper part of the plaster of the walls in this area show traces of burning. The second door (19332) leads to a rectangular room (19355), partially excavated.

- The South-West corner (quadrants 099.057a c, 098.058a-d, 099.058 a-c) : The excavation was continued in the two rooms located in the SW corner of the courtyard (19513 and 19517) and towards the E, in order to follow the S of « South Square ». This wall (19511) is pierced by two doors (19512 and 19516). The first one leads to a trapezoidal room (19513, 1,66m to the N 2,30m to the S, 7,90m long), with a earthen floor bearing traces of gypsum. In the S wall of this room (19535) is a door which lead in a first stage to the space 19533). It was blocked later. This space 19533, the S limit of which is not reached yet, is covered by a djussed floor (19534) which is at a lower level compared to the one of room 19513. It continues to the W, in direction of Temple E (Field M). This space can be reached from the E by a brick staircase (19530/19531) plastered with djuss also, and seems to have had two phases also. The second room (19517), 8,10m long, is accessible from the courtyard through the recessed door 19516. Its E part is not excavated yet. This space is filled by a nice djussed floor, 4,5cm thick, well preserved and settled on a preparation layer made of two layers of bricks, the large joints of which are filled with the same djuss, a system which ensures the stability of the floor. A previous floor (19528) has been noticed, consisting of a thin layer of djuss laid on a layer clay fragments and small metal « bubbles ». All this area has unfortunately strongly suffered from the erosion due to the presence of the wadi.

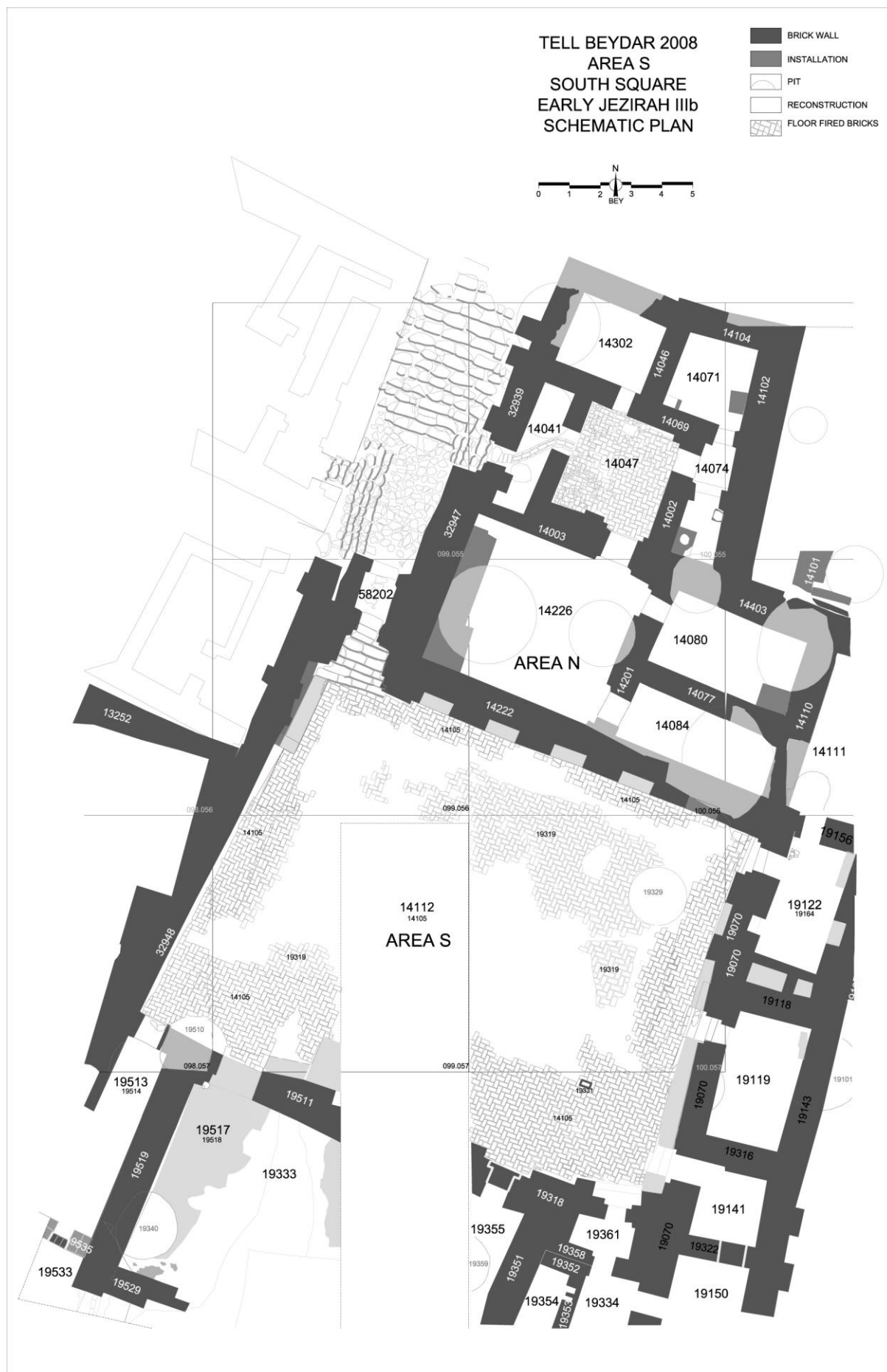
Let us remark, finally, that, both by its architectural conception and by its dimensions, « South Square » is very close to the courtyard of the SS sanctuary of Tell Brak.

Material

For the Hellenistic level, the only remarkable objects are a vase with plastic decoration (19102-C-1) and an iron spoon (19341-M-1). For the EJIIb level : mostly inscribed sealings coming from the rooms of the E wing and of the SW area : 19164-S-1-8, 19121-S-1-3, 19120-S-1, 19333-S-1-2, 19018-S-6-8, 19514-S-10-12.



- Fig.1: Le Parvis Sud et les bâtiments environnants.



Tell Beydar 2008 –Restoration Programme

Marie-Eve Sténuît
(ECUMS, Brussels)

As every year since spring 2004, we have proceeded to the maintenance of the restored buildings (refection of plaster in the Acropolis Palace and Temples A and B, mainly, as well as to the refection of the summit of some walls.¹) Six thousand unbaked bricks have been moulded and settled in the Acropolis Palace, the Temple A and the Temple B. The walls separating the Palace from Temple A have been reinforced and strengthened.

We also proceeded to the evaluation of the restoration works undertaken since the beginning of the programme. Four years of observation of the aging process of the restored buildings allow us to note that the more efficient and lasting method is the one of the total reconstruction in the respect of the original materials. In second position comes the system of formwork of ancient walls with modern bricks, but only for low walls (up to a height of 1,20m). The application of modern plaster on ancient bricks is not lasting, less aesthetic and inefficient.

The draining system installed in 2006 in the floors of several buildings gave satisfying results. After two winter seasons, the base of the walls in the concerned rooms have much less suffered from the undermining due to the retention of the rain waters than before.

Small strengthening interventions were made in two fields still in course of excavation (P and S), in order to facilitate the understanding of the field for the visitors and in wait of a forthcoming, more complete restoration.

The final information panels have been installed on the tell, at convenient places. The thirteen panels have been manufactured in France, near Paris. Their bear pictures, plans and a text both in Arabic and in English language. The metallic stands and the assembly have been realized by local craftsmen.

Finally, in order to improve the cleanness of the site, light and elegant aluminium dustbins have been specially conceived and locally manufactured. They will be put in place at the beginning of each excavation season.



¹ These works have been supervised by the mason Aissam ed-Din Ali, who takes part to the restoration programme from 2004 on.

Tell Beydar 2008 – Epigraphic Finds

Lucio Milano

(Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

In the course of the 2008 excavation season a fragment of a cuneiform tablet (upper left quarter of a squarish tablet with rounded corners) was found in Field I. The tablet comes from a subsurface layer (locus 113011) which can be dated to the EJ IIIb period. Three columns are visible both on the obverse and on the reverse. Colour is light brown-whitish. The reverse is slightly convex.

As for its content, the text has to do with amounts of grain given as rations to different groups of personnel. The text type is already well known in the Tell Beydar text corpus. Two of the personal names mentioned in the tablet are also already known from the texts found in Field B and in Field F, which is an interesting chronological link between the EJ IIIb administration activity in the area of Field I and in the rest of the Beydar acropolis.

The tablet is dated to month ^dUTU.



- Fig. 1: Cuneiform tablet 113011-T-1

A second fragmentary cuneiform tablet (13458-T-1) was found during the last days of the campaign in Field M. It was lying on the plaster upper surface of a toilet installation in temple E.

Tell Beydar 2008 – Glyptic Finds

Elena Rova

(Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

The 2008 campaign was very rich in glyptic finds. One original cylinder seal, more than 100 impressed sealings and numerous fragments thereof, all of them dating to the EJ IIIb period, were brought to light.

The largest group of impressions, mostly belonging to door sealings, was found in two different rooms (13429, 13412) of the large building (Temple E) located on the lowest terrace of the Beydar Upper City Mound (Field M). Another significant group was recovered in one of the rooms (19164) adjacent to the large open space (Southern Square) in Field S. These were also mostly door sealings, found in situ near the room's doorways. In addition, isolated sealing fragments were recovered from other rooms in Field S, as well as from Fields B, P, and I.

Beside several duplicates of seals which were already known from the site, the 2008 corpus of impressions included several new designs, a few of which could be completely reconstructed on the basis of a large number of sealings bearing their impression.

A double register composition with a banquet scene and an “Anzu” scene divided by a hatched band in a fine miniaturistic style (Fig. 1) appeared on a number of very massive door sealings from field S.



- Fig. 1 Large door sealing with cylinder seal impression from Field S

Door sealings from Field M bore, among others, the impressions of a seal associating a wagon and a boat-god scene (Fig. 2, left) and of a seal with a complex composition depicting a banquet scene, human beings, birds and scorpions framed between two bands of horizontal lion heads (Fig. 2, right). Both these impressions are very typical of the best glyptic production of Tell Beydar in their iconographic repertoire (e.g. the wagon scene), as well as in their composition and in their style, which shares many characteristic features which the so-called “Brak style”, but is characterised by more complex composition schemes and by a finer engraving technique.



- Fig. 2 Door sealings with cylinder seal impression from Field M

The inventory of impressions from the 2008 season is completed by two pottery sherds (from fields P and M) bearing the impression of the same cylinder seal (a “master of animal” scene), which was already known from the site from a number of impressed sherds.

Finally, a cylinder seal of white gypsum showing a design in typical “Syrian animal style” (a row of three animals: a bull, a goat and a lion) was found in Field I (Fig. 3).



- Fig. 3 Cylinder of white gypsum from Field I, with modern impression.

Étude anthropologique – Les ossements humains

Dr. Rania Ali (DGAM)

I. Présentations et méthode de fouille

Durant cette campagne de fouille de 2008, nous avons travaillé dans les trois chantiers suivants: M, B et P, tout en suivant une stratégie de fouille soignée, les techniques de fouille, d'enregistrement et d'analyse employées ici de manière générale, les méthodes paléoanthropologiques adaptées aux restes immatures.

La démarche initiale consiste en une fouille fine par découpages successifs. Les données relatives à la nature et à la disposition précise de tous les vestiges sont enregistrées en détail, l'ensemble du sédiment est conservé pour être tamisé (par la suite).

Un photographe assistait à la fouille, les relevés dessin ont pu être remplacés par des photos de chaque décapage (relevé photographique).

Nous présenterons également les résultats obtenus lors de la confrontation des données de terrain et de laboratoire en ce qui concerne l'âge aux décès des sujets et le sexe des adultes.

II. Les méthodes

➤ Chez les enfants

Afin de déterminer l'âge au décès, nous avons adopté la méthode d'Ubelaker (1978). C'est la méthode la plus fiable de détermination de l'âge au décès des enfants qui est basée sur l'éruption dentaire.

Nous avons également utilisé d'autres méthodes, celles des mensurations des os longs (Stloukal et Hanakova, 1978)

➤ Chez les adultes

Différentes méthodes ont été appliquées afin de déterminer l'âge au décès et le sexe de l'individu (Lovejoy, 1985; Owings-Web et Suchey, 1985; Masset, 1971; Ascadi G et Nemeskeri, 1970; Bruzek, 1992; Ferembach, 1978).

Ces méthodes s'appliquent sur la symphyse pubienne, l'usure dentaire, les sutures crâniennes, la morphologie du crâne et de la mandibule.

Concernant l'état sanitaire de ces individus, nous suivons Brothwell D. R., 1981.

III. Étude et discussion

Durant cette opération de fouille, de nombreux vestiges ont été mis au jour. En totalité, quatre squelettes ont été relevés dans les chantiers M, B et P.

Chantier M

Les restes humains mis au jour dans ce chantier appartiennent à un enfant déposé dans une jarre en position fœtale (13349, cf., Pl. 1)

L'ouverture de la jarre est orientée clairement vers l'ouest. Le squelette se trouve en pleine terre et en très bon état de conservation. L'enfant repose en décubitus latéral, sur le côté gauche du corps, la tête orientée vers le nord.

Suivant la méthode de relevé photographique, nous avons pu relever correctement le squelette, en très bon état de conservation.

L'étude anthropologique montre qu'il s'agit d'un enfant de 6 mois (± 3 mois).

Le crâne présente un cas de pathologie moyennement marqué sur le pariétal droit.

Il est intéressant de souligner la présence de marques légères d'hyperostose porotique.

Autour du cou de l'enfant et en dessous de la mandibule, nous avons remarqué la présence d'un collier composé de quelques perles de différentes couleurs et formes.

Chantier B

Deux squelettes ont été mis au jour: un enfant et un adulte.

- Le squelette 54295

L'étude anthropologique montre qu'il s'agit d'un enfant de 6 mois (± 3 mois). Cet enfant a été déposé dans une jarre « en pleine terre » et en position fœtale.

L'ouverture de la jarre est orientée vers l'ouest. Il y a eu un glissement du corps après sa décomposition et cela peut expliquer l'état de perturbation anatomique des os.

- Le squelette 54449

Il s'agit d'un homme de 50 à 60 ans, mesurant 1,65 cm. La disposition du défunt est assez claire. Le défunt est placé en position fœtale sur le côté gauche du corps, la tête orientée vers l'ouest.

En ce qui concerne l'état sanitaire du squelette (pathologie), nous avons noté les détails suivants :

- Abscès des dents (ICD et G supérieurs, M1, M2 et M3)
- Torsion de M3 droit inférieur
- Usure dentaire avancée
- Fissures des dents (phénomène fréquent sur les squelettes gisant en milieu désertique)
- Réaction de type inflammatoire de la surface supérieure des vertèbres lombaires
- Nodules de Schmorl
- Hyperostose poreuse sur les vertèbres cervicales
- Insertion trochléaire dans la cavité de l'ulna (épiphyse proximale)
- Ankylose sur quelques phalanges du pied

Parmi les caractères discrets, nous observons les suivants :

- Vaste encoche de la patelle
- Facette articulaire supéroantérieure .

L'étude métrique montre que le tibia est de type platycnémie et l'ulna de type hypereulénie.

Chantier P

Un squelette en mauvais état de conservation a été révélé dans le chantier P (16975).

L'étude anthropologique montre qu'il s'agit d'un enfant de 9 mois (± 3 mois), déposé dans une tombe.

Le défunt a été déposé et placé la face contre le sol et en position fœtale, tête orientée vers l'ouest.

L'étude anthropologique a montré que cet enfant souffrait de cribra orbitalia (lésion poreuse de la calva et du toit de l'orbite). Ces lésions sont souvent considérées comme un indicateur d'anémie (Angel et Bisel, 1982 ; Stuart-Mac Adam et Kent, 1992).

Comme on le sait, l'anémie peut être provoquée par différents éléments extérieurs (alimentation, hygiène, conditions géographiques, facteurs génétiques).

Nous avons observé aussi la déformation de la surface auriculaire de l'os coxal gauche, par rapport à celle de droite.

N. Squelette	Nature	Chantier	Datation	Etat	Sexe	Age
13349	Jarre	M	EJ IV	Bon état	–	6 mois (± 3 mois)
54295	Jarre	B	EJ IV	moyen	–	6 mois (± 3 mois)
54449	Tombe	B	EJ IV	TB état	homme	50-60 ans
16975	Tombe	P	EJ IV	Mauvais	–	9 mois (± 3 mois)

Tableau 1. Les squelettes découverts à tell Beydar (mission de fouille 2008)



- Fig. 1: Squelette 13349 (chantier M).

Conclusion

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The excavations of the Joint Syro-European Mission are ongoing in an excellent atmosphere and with a fast pace (six weeks and a half of excavations). The results are very satisfactory and confirm the importance of the site, in particular for the third millennium. One week of study allowed us to update completely our data and our documents.

For the Early Jezirah IIIb period (2500-2375 BC), our knowledge about the city planning has been considerably enlarged, in particular its S sector. The extension of the excavation areas allows us better understanding the city planning at its peak phase, around 2400 BC.

This campaign was important as well in the domain of the architecture. The excavations areas, previously concentrated on the upper terraces, now extend beyond the core of the city, and reach its Eastern Palace (area P), its private housing (area B), its large open areas (Southern Square), its economic buildings and its workshops (areas M and I). A huge temple — Temple E — is progressively unearthed.

Area B provides us further EJ IIIb private houses and the plan of a large building (building B1). Area I testifies domestic and handicraft activities. Area M reveals a majestic building (Temple E), which is settled on a lower terrace of the town, and a series of large workshops close to one of the main streets of the city. In area P a second Palace, dated EJ IIIb, has been discovered, transformed later into a metallurgy workshop. More than half of its plan is currently known. Area S presents a wide open area — Southern Square —, characterized by the quality of its design, its beautiful buttresses and doors. A stepped plastered podium seems to indicate a possible function of audience courtyard. The wings of rooms that surround it are being currently explored.

Studies concerning palaeoenvironment, as well as technical investigations on various types of materials, are progressing. Architectural restoration work and activities aimed to increase the touristic impact of the site are largely developed. New publications are in print or scheduled soon.

126 small finds and ceramics have been delivered to the Museum of Deir ez-Zor on May 26th. This is the inventory discovered during the current season.

We don't forget that this season of excavations, as all the former ones, would not have been possible without the help and constant support of our friends of the Directory-General of Antiquities of Syria, in Damascus, Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor and Hassake.

We address our best greetings to all those colleagues and friends, in the name of the Joint Mission.

Tell Beydar, May 28th, 2008.