



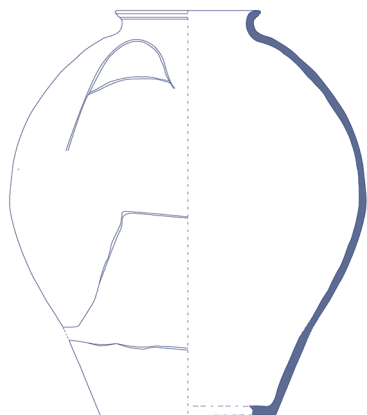
TELL TUQAN EXCAVATIONS AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INNER SYRIA
FROM THE EARLY BRONZE AGE
TO THE PERSIAN/HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Proceedings of the International Conference
May 15th-17th 2013
Lecce

edited by

Francesca BAFFI, Roberto FIORENTINO, Luca PEYRONEL



CONGEDO EDITORE 2014

Contents

7	Preface
9	FRANCESCA BAFFI, LUCA PEYRONEL Tell Tuqan and the Matkh Basin in a Regional Perspective. Thoughts and Questions Raised by the International Conference
35	PAOLO MATTHIAE A Note on Tell Tuqan and the Archaic Urbanization in Western Syria. Some Cue for Future Reflections
45	AGNESE VACCA The Tuqan IC Pottery Sequence from Area P South
85	MICHEL AL-MAQDISSI Notes d'Archéologie Levantine XLVII. Nouvelles données sur la coupole de Loth à Mishirfeh- <i>Qatna</i>
95	GEORGES MOUAMAR Tell Al-Şūr/Al-Sankarī: une nouvelle agglomération circulaire du Bronze ancien IV à la lisière de la steppe syrienne
115	LUCA PEYRONEL Living Near the Lake. The Matkh Region (Syria) during the Early and Middle Bronze Ages
163	FRANCESCA BAFFI The Defences at Tell Tuqan in the 2 nd Millennium B.C.
189	ENRICO ASCALONE The Long Life of the Dead. A Middle Bronze IB Necropolis at Tell Tuqan, Syria
227	FRANCES PINNOCK The Ceramic Horizon of Middle Bronze I-II in North Inner Syria: The Case of Ebla
247	ELENA FELLUCA Clay Figurines from Tell Tuqan

- 275 DANIELE MORANDI BONACOSSÌ
Some Considerations on the Urban Layout of Second Millennium BC
Qatna
- 297 FABRIZIO VENTURI
The Late Bronze Age Sequence at Tell Afis
- 325 JOACHIM BRETSCHNEIDER, GRETA JANS, ANNE-SOPHIE VAN VYVE
The Early Iron Age at Tell Tweini: Results from the 2008, 2009 and 2010
Excavations
- 343 STEFANIA MAZZONI
The Archaeology of Tell Afis and the Iron Age II-III in Syria: A
Reassessment
- 391 ROBERTO FIORENTINO
The Urban Settlement at Tell Tuqan during the Iron Age
- 427 FRANCESCA BAFFI
Tell Tuqan: A Village of the Persian Period on the Shores of the Lake
- 447 GRAZIA SEMERARO
Notes on Terra Sigillata Pottery from Tell Tuqan
- 459 CLAUDIA MINNITI
Reassessing Animal Exploitation in Northern Syria from the Early Bronze
Age to the Persian/Hellenistic Period: The Evidence from Tell Tuqan
- 485 VALENTINA CARACUTA, GIROLAMO FIORENTINO
Garbage Disposal in the Middle Bronze Age in Tell Mardikh-Ebla (NW
Syria): Using Plant Remains to Investigate Midden Formation Processes
- 507 LUCIO CALCAGNILE, GIANLUCA QUARTA, MARISA D'ELIA
Nuclear Physics for Archaeology: Radiocarbon Dating from Tell Tuqan
and Ebla by the Tandetron Accelerator at CEDAD
- 517 GIOVANNI QUARTA, CHIARA MARCHIORI, DAVIDE MELICA
Archaeometric Study of Mud Bricks from Excavations of Tell Tuqan:
Preliminary Results
- 541 ETTORE JANULARDO
Moravia: Visions of Syria
- 551 List of Plates

Some Considerations on the Urban Layout of Second Millennium BC Qatna

DANIELE MORANDI BONACOSSÌ

Università di Udine

After the pioneering explorations conducted in the 1920s by Count du Mesnil du Buisson, recent work by the Syrian, German and Italian Missions at Mishrifeh has radically changed our understanding of the urban organization of the ancient city of Qatna during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, the periods of the city's greatest splendour and urban development.

In the following I shall summarize the available archaeological evidence concerning Qatna's urban layout and its evolution during the second millennium BC and make some more general comments on the characteristics of urban planning in Qatna and Syria during this period.

The transition between the Early Bronze Age and the Middle Bronze Age at Mishrifeh is marked by a radical change in the organization of its urban layout. The city probably acquired its characteristic quadrangular shape in the early second millennium BC, as a result of the construction of a mighty system of defensive earthworks, equipped with four principal and possibly several additional gates giving access to the city. While no specific archaeological studies have been conducted on the fortifications which surround the city, enclosing an area of 110 ha, considerations based on their appearance and typology suggest that they were probably constructed during Middle Bronze Age I.

Although the relevant information at our disposal is still limited, it is clear that at the transition between the third and second millennia BC the organization of Qatna's upper town also changed markedly (Fig. 1). On the summit of the upper town a monumental building of (as yet) unknown function was built.¹ Unfortunately it has survived in a very poor state of conservation, but occupied a central position in the city and surely had a public function, as is suggested also by its association with a pair of Old

¹ Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 85-92; 2012: 541-546.

Syrian king statues portraying enthroned royal ancestors which were found in a pit next to it.²

To the north of this building, at the foot of the acropolis central mound, the investigation of an ancient open area or square immediately to the south of the later Royal Palace brought to light an area which was subsequently occupied by the construction of the Late Bronze Age I palace annexe (Fig. 2).³ This area was equipped with a series of installations which are remarkably similar to features in the Middle Bronze Age sacred area of Ishtar at Ebla.⁴ This enables us to suggest that this might have been a space for cultic activities related to a temple. The sacred area, which remained in use until the late Middle Bronze Age, was later de-sanctified by the construction of the palace annexe, which obliterated it, even though it respected the cultic installations which were not destroyed by the annexe walls.

As in Ebla, the sacred area included a 6 m deep *favissa* (7262), where votive materials and food offerings were piously buried. In the layers filling this votive pit Middle Bronze Age terracotta figurines, a Black-Burnished bottle and a group of 18 jars and jugs were discovered (Fig. 3).⁵

A large underground cistern was also found, perhaps functionally related to a drain located immediately to the north. In a later stage, in the fills of the cistern five human burials were deposited. Human burials were also found in the area sacred to Ishtar at Ebla, where they were interpreted as ritual deposits.⁶ In the case of Qatna's sacred area, however, I consider the five inhumations as pertaining to a later reuse of the water cistern, as is shown by the Late Bronze Age I B pottery associated with them.

Finally, the sacred area included also the graves of two adult dogs.⁷ The tombs of three greyhounds, two of them buried together in the same grave, as in Qatna, were found also in the Ishtar sacred area at Ebla.⁸ Other burial pits with puppy dogs and donkeys were recorded in the courtyards in front of Palestinian Middle Bronze Age temples at sites such as Tel Haror,⁹ Tell Abu Hureira¹⁰ and Lachish.¹¹

In sum, the archaeological evidence indicates that during the Middle Bronze Age cultic activities were performed in this open, sacred space. These

² Morandi Bonacossi 2006.

³ Morandi Bonacossi 2012.

⁴ Marchetti - Nigro 1997; 2000.

⁵ Morandi Bonacossi 2012.

⁶ Marchetti - Nigro 1997.

⁷ Perhaps greyhounds according to our archaeozoologist, Emmanuelle Vila (personal communication); Morandi Bonacossi 2012: 571-573.

⁸ Marchetti - Nigro 1997: 29 and fig. 18.

⁹ Oren 1997: 264; Klenck 2002.

¹⁰ Marchetti - Nigro 1997: 29, fn. 89.

¹¹ Ussishkin 1996: 26-30, figs. 22-25.

actions included the ritual burial in a *favissa* of votive objects used in rites or dedicated in a temple and of food offerings (solid as well as liquid), which were probably related to communal consumption and offering of food during rituals. Included within this sacred area were also a water cistern and two greyhound burials.

The presence in Qatna's upper town of a sacred area allows us to hypothesize that a temple existed in this sector of Qatna's acropolis. But where was this temple? A possible and most plausible candidate is the monumental building on the summit of the upper town. This public building controlled an extensive adjacent area devoted to large-scale pottery production with installations for clay preparation, such as settling and levigation tanks, and basins and underground canals supplying the water used to work the clay, pottery working and drying surfaces and different kiln types.¹² Besides pottery, votive terracotta figurines, possibly related to cult activity, were also produced in the ceramic workshop.

Pottery production areas associated with temples and related to the needs of cults and the temples themselves are also known from second millennium Palestinian sites, such as Late Bronze Age Hazor (in the Area C and H temples),¹³ whilst other productive areas – such as those related to metal industries (production of votive figurines) – may also be connected with temples, as is indicated by finds made at Tell el-Hayyat,¹⁴ Nahariya¹⁵ and the Area A temple at Hazor.¹⁶

Many features suggest that this monumental building might have been one of the temples of Middle Bronze Age Qatna: its location on the highest and most central part of the site, its possible association with a pair of royal statues, its vicinity to a sacred area equipped with a *favissa* and other cultic installations and the existence of a large ceramic and terracotta figurine workshop adjacent to it.

As from the Early Bronze Age-Middle Bronze Age transition, the northern plateau of the acropolis was occupied by a large intramural necropolis (Fig. 4),¹⁷ which was used until the late Middle Bronze Age, as the recent discovery of a lavishly furnished hypogeum by the Syro-German team shows (Tomb VII).¹⁸ In its northern part, the cemetery included a series of multiple burials in rock-cut shaft graves, distinguished by abundant luxurious and ostentatious grave goods – comprising numerous vases, and

¹² Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 92-114; *in press a*.

¹³ Bonfil 1997: 89, 95; Yadin 1972: 82.

¹⁴ Falconer - Magness Gardiner 1989: 256-259.

¹⁵ Dothan 1956: 20-21.

¹⁶ Bonfil 1997: 100.

¹⁷ Morandi Bonacossi 2011.

¹⁸ Pfälzner - Dohmann-Pfälzner 2011.

several weapons and personal ornaments made of metal – which indicate that the individuals interred in what were probably ‘family vaults’ belonged to Qatna’s urban elite.¹⁹ The south-central part of the cemetery, on the contrary, was reserved for the burial in simple pits or in jars/cooking pots of individuals of middling to low social status.

To the east of the necropolis and the sacred area, joint Syrian-Italian excavations have brought to light the Eastern Palace (Pl. III), a late Middle Bronze Age II A/early II B monumental building that possesses the typical asymmetrical plan and tripartite reception suite which are amongst the most distinctive characteristics of the Middle Bronze Age Western Syrian palace architectural tradition.²⁰ The (still incomplete) layout of the northern palace sector is dominated by a large tripartite reception suite, which is distinguished by thick polished concrete floors, lime plastered walls, a central block consisting of a large vestibule AL and what was probably the actual reception room M, still not fully excavated. It is not yet clear whether the entrance to Room M was equipped with basalt column bases as we see, for instance, in the Alalakh VII palace and in the Western Palace at Ebla. The central reception block was flanked by two lateral wings, the western of which probably also contained a stairwell (Room Y) which may well have housed a wooden staircase giving access to the reception suite itself from an upper story.

The discovery, for the first time at Qatna, of a Middle Bronze Age monumental palace of Syrian type with clear links to other contemporary western Syrian palaces is of exceptional importance and indicates that this sector of Qatna’s upper town was already occupied by official architecture in the late Middle Bronze Age II A/early II B. A point which is not yet clear is whether the Eastern Palace was Qatna’s Middle Bronze Age II royal palace, or rather one of several palaces that existed at the site during this period, following a pattern which is well known from Middle Bronze Age Ebla. However, since the Royal Palace of Areas G and H was built over the above-mentioned Middle Bronze Age necropolis only at the end of the Middle Bronze Age II B,²¹ the former hypothesis cannot be excluded.

To the east of the Eastern Palace, which was abandoned at the end of the Late Bronze Age I (or even very early Late Bronze Age II), and separated from it by a street, there was a residential quarter that has been explored in part by the Syrian Mission. These are the first Middle Bronze Age dwellings uncovered so far at Qatna.²²

¹⁹ du Mesnil du Buisson 1927: 13-22; 1928: 81-82; Dussaud 1928: 132-138; Morandi Bonacossi 2011.

²⁰ Morandi Bonacossi *et al.* 2009; Iamoni *in press*.

²¹ Morandi Bonacossi 2007.

²² Al-Maqdissi *et al.* 2009.

The upper town of Qatna in the Middle Bronze Age was possibly fortified with a defensive wall, the foundations of which have been detected at its northern foot (Fig. 5). The presence of a double fortification system, consisting of the outer ramparts and the inner acropolis fortification wall is a well-known feature in Middle Bronze Age Syrian town planning, as is shown by other sites such as Umm Al-Marra,²³ Ebla²⁴, Afis²⁵ and Tuqan.²⁶ However, it has not yet been ascertained whether this wall surrounded the whole acropolis or only part of it.

Archaeological excavations have brought to light some evidence related to the city's road system and revealed the existence of a main north-south street, which has been excavated to the west of the Eastern Palace and in the zone of the pottery production area on the summit of the upper town and probably connected Qatna's northern city gate, with the area of the putative temple and its pottery production area. Here the street divided: one branch turned eastwards probably towards the eastern gate, whilst the other continued southwards, reaching in all likelihood the city's southern gate. The main streets that ran between the city gates divided the city into four main zones. Furthermore, it also seems likely that the foot of Qatna's upper town was encircled by a road flanking the fortification wall of the acropolis and serving as a ring road linking the main streets and neighbourhoods to the upper town.

A further crucial point in Qatna's urban development was reached during the late Middle Bronze Age and early Late Bronze Age (Fig. 6). By this time the city had already lost the political rank of capital of a vast and powerful territorial state that it had held during the early part of the Middle Bronze Age. And yet it was during this poorly known epoch that Qatna's royal dynasty initiated a centralized programme of public and institutional building, which appears to have involved both the upper and lower cities, thus launching a further important phase of urban and functional reorganization of the town after those of the Early Bronze Age IV and the first part of the Middle Bronze Age.

Significantly, during this period both official buildings of the Middle Bronze Age, the Eastern Palace and the public building on the acropolis summit – as well as the Middle Bronze Age necropolis – were abandoned.²⁷ Roughly at the same time during the late Middle Bronze Age II, the imposing new Royal Palace was erected (Fig. 7). It is of course impossible to

²³ Nichols - Weber 2006: 47-49.

²⁴ Matthiae 1997a.

²⁵ Mazzoni 2005 *et al.*: 9; Affanni - Di Michele 2007: 12-15.

²⁶ Baffi (ed.) 2006.

²⁷ Morandi Bonacossi 2008; 2011; 2012; Iamoni *in press*.

ascertain whether these episodes were functionally related, but it is a striking fact that when the Middle Bronze Age II Eastern Palace fell into disuse, a new, more magnificent and lavishly furnished palace was built in the same part of the upper town, which had already been devoted to the administration of power in the preceding Middle Bronze Age.

The new palace and the debate on the dating of its foundation have already been extensively discussed elsewhere.²⁸ Here I wish only to emphasize the fact that the building's ceremonial reception suite, consisting of Halls A, B, and C, was extremely extensive, thus leaving only limited space for administrative, storage and residential functions.

This may have been one of the reasons which determined the partial reuse of the Eastern Palace during the Late Bronze Age I, after a phase in which the abandoned Middle Bronze Age building had been converted into a burial area,²⁹ and the contemporary construction of two palaces to the north and south of the new Royal Palace: the Lower City Palace and the Southern Palace (Fig. 8). In mid-second millennium BC Qatna, therefore, a decentralized palatial model can be observed, in which the residential functions and those of political and economic power were divided between several public buildings situated in an extensive area of the upper and lower towns around the Royal Palace, which remained the focus of the ruling dynasty's power. A similar pattern can also be observed in the contemporary city of Ugarit, where the *zone royale* of the city with the royal palace at its centre consisted of a series of monumental buildings surrounding the palace. This urban pattern clearly derives from an earlier Middle Bronze Age town planning tradition, which is very evident at Ebla, where the urban layout was distinguished by two clusters of public buildings, one on the acropolis and the second in the lower city, arranged in concentric circles.³⁰ Future research will hopefully show whether the urban plan of Qatna during the Middle Bronze Age matched this pattern.

Of the two subsidiary palaces, the 'Lower City Palace' (Fig. 9) is of particular interest.³¹ This large building shows the typical hallmarks of second-millennium Syrian palace architecture, consisting of the following features: an elongated layout with the absence of the huge courtyards typical of Mesopotamian architectural tradition which here are replaced by several small courtyards strategically placed within the building to provide ventilation and illumination; a characteristic ceremonial suite (Rooms D-F) and the general internal arrangement of the entrance, reception, domestic and service wings which clearly derive from previous inner Syrian Middle Bronze

²⁸ Morandi Bonacossi 2007.

²⁹ Iamoni *in press*.

³⁰ Matthiae 1997a; 2006.

³¹ Luciani 2006; Morandi Bonacossi 2009; *in press b*.

Age prototypes such as the Southern Palace at Ebla; the use of wooden columns on basalt bases, with basalt orthostats lining the doorways of the entrance and ceremonial blocks and Minoan or Minoanizing fresco-technique wall paintings; and finally, the utilization of half-timbered construction, which is typical of quite a few second-millennium Levantine palaces.

The palace contained valuable Middle Cypriot (Red-on-Black and White Painted), Late Cypriot (White Slip II and Base Ring I-II) and Mycenaean (LH IIIA2) type pottery, imported from the eastern Mediterranean and Argolis (as neutron activation analysis shows), hundreds of pieces of ivory inlay and administrative documents such as seals, clay sealings and a small archive of cuneiform tablets.³²

Most of the tablets list issues of grain and beer to various categories and individuals. One of the texts stands out for the particular interest of its content: it lists quantities of beer issued to at least 453 men from different localities.³³ These groups of men, probably soldiers, were placed under the supervision of named individuals in important buildings. The structures mentioned include five *bīt abullim* – ‘houses of the big gate’ – overseen by an individual called Zibbisatum and a ‘palace’ under the supervision of a person named Šep-šenni, probably a high-ranking officer.

The meaning of the term ‘house of the big gate’ is controversial; it could refer to the Qatna gate structures themselves or, more probably, to fortresses controlling the ramparts located close to the city gates, like those excavated on the ramparts of Middle Bronze Age II Ebla.³⁴ Some of the Ebla fortresses were indeed connected to city gates, whilst others were devoted to the control of sections of the rampart. Their size appears in some cases to have been quite considerable and one could imagine that the Ebla fortresses were manned by numerous soldiers.

If this hypothesis is correct, Qatna’s earthen ramparts might have been controlled by at least five fortresses – possibly built during the preceding Middle Bronze Age – called *bīt abullim* and housing at least 374 soldiers, whilst 79 men were based in the ‘Palace of Šep-šenni’. It is a fascinating possibility that the Lower City Palace could be the ‘palace’ inhabited by Šep-šenni. Certainly the fact that the tablet mentioning the *bīt abullim* structures and the Šep-šenni palace was found in the Lower City Palace represents quite strong evidence in support of this proposal.

To the south of the Royal Palace the Syrian team excavated the so-called Southern Palace, a smaller building with large rooms and the same cement mortar floors as the Royal and Lower City Palaces.³⁵

³² Eidem 2003; 2007; 2009.

³³ Eidem 2007.

³⁴ Matthiae 1997a: 11; 1998: 577-582; 2002; Peyronel 2000.

³⁵ Al-Maqdissi 2003a: 1500-1505; 2003b: 235-239; 2007.

Roughly at the same time at which the Royal Palace was destroyed, the whole system of Late Bronze Age palaces at Qatna fell into disuse. Both the Lower City Palace and the Southern Palace, together with the reused Eastern Palace, were abandoned during the mid-fourteenth century BC.³⁶

Late Bronze Age residential architecture has been identified in different parts of the site, on the acropolis as well as in the lower town. The only fully excavated houses, however, date to a period following the destruction of the Royal Palace in around the mid-fourteenth century BC, as the excavations of dwellings by the Syrian team next to the *Coupole de Loth* and by the Italian team next to the Royal Palace have shown (Fig. 10).³⁷ Besides these houses only scanty remains of dwelling architecture have so far been identified.

This leads us to the problem of the nature and character of second millennium urbanism at Qatna. A first consideration to be born in mind is that archaeological exposure at Qatna is as yet largely insufficient to reveal much of the organization of the Middle and Late Bronze Age city. In general this is also the case in most known Syrian cities, with the only notable exception of Ebla.

As is clear from the discussion so far, the overwhelming majority of the archaeological data regarding Qatna during the Middle Bronze Age-Late Bronze Age transition and the following Late Bronze Age comes from the upper town region. The lower town, in contrast, is still virtually unknown, with the exception of the 'Lower City Palace' and the dwellings unearthed next to the *Coupole de Loth* that date to the end of the Late Bronze Age.

Notwithstanding the scarcity of archaeological evidence regarding Qatna's lower town in the second millennium, field observations allow us to add a further detail concerning the northern lower town to the general picture. Between the internal water reservoir and the northern rampart there is an extensive area distinguished by the superficial presence of reddish earth derived from the deterioration of mud-brick structures (Fig. 6). Examination of the exposed sections of a large modern pit which crosses the area has revealed the existence of mortar floors belonging to buildings, probably houses, with stone-built foundations and mud-brick standing walls. The pottery recovered from the floors allowed us to date these features to the Late Bronze Age I. It thus seems that in this period part of the north-western lower town may have been occupied by a residential quarter.

The area to the south of it was covered by the inner water reservoir and was therefore uninhabited, as was probably also the north-eastern part of the lower town, where several geoarchaeological soundings have shown the presence of soil which was seasonally saturated with moisture.³⁸ This means

³⁶ Morandi Bonacossi 2013: 119-121.

³⁷ Al-Maqdissi 2008: 12, figs. 15-16; Morandi Bonacossi *et al.* 2009: 93-105.

³⁸ Cremaschi *et al.* 2003.

that, with the exception of the possible residential area mentioned above and the Lower City Palace built on a low elevation, the northern lower town would not appear to have been densely inhabited.

These observations are preliminary, partial and not yet verified by extensive archaeological excavation, but point to the possibility that during the Late Bronze Age Qatna's lower city was not densely settled and that the site was a sort of 'hollow capital', a city containing numerous and impressive administrative buildings concentrated in the upper town and its raised margins and around the *Coupole de Loth*, together with open areas free of buildings, perhaps occupied – as we know from texts from Middle Bronze Age Mari³⁹ – by gardens, as well as fields and bodies of water, but with only limited areas occupied by common housing.

The scarcity of ordinary residential quarters so far brought to light in second millennium large urban centres – in comparison with the plentiful evidence of monumental defensive, public and religious architecture – has not as yet attracted careful reflection. Several examples of this dearth of domestic buildings can be offered. In Ebla large residential neighbourhoods are so far known from only a few excavation areas.⁴⁰ Furthermore, their size and quite standardized layout and the absence of large residences (with the only notable exception of the Area Z Small Western Palace⁴¹) seem to suggest that these dwelling neighbourhoods might have belonged to officers of the civil or religious administration.⁴² Similar situations have also been observed in other north Mesopotamian and Syrian Middle Bronze Age sites, such as Tell ar-Rimah⁴³, Tell al-Hawa⁴⁴ and Tell Leilan.⁴⁵ Nor do we have evidence of extensive, ordinary residential quarters from Mari, but only of a few large high-status dwellings, like the *Grand Résidence orientale* and *Grand Résidence occidentale* and the houses in Areas E (*Bâtiment du chantier E*) and K (*Maison des Tablettes*).⁴⁶

The scarcity of neighbourhoods lived in by common people might suggest that these urban centres were what might be called 'hollow cities',

³⁹ Margueron 2004: 446.

⁴⁰ Baffi 1989; Matthiae 1997b: 125, 133; 2009: fig. 2; Peyronel 2008: 5. It is uncertain whether the structures discovered northeast of Temple N were houses (Matthiae 1997b: 125). Matthiae notes that "*notwithstanding the extension of the regions thus far brought to light of the urban area of Middle Bronze II Ebla [...], the total surface of the urban pattern which might be classified as private houses area is extraordinarily limited*" (Matthiae 1997b: 125).

⁴¹ Matthiae 2000: 600-610.

⁴² Matthiae 1997b: 133.

⁴³ Oates 1985.

⁴⁴ Ball *et al.* 1989.

⁴⁵ Weiss 1985; Ristvet - Weiss 2013.

⁴⁶ Aynard - Spickett 1987-1990; Durand 1998: 520; Fleming 2004; Margueron 2004: 442-458.

i.e. administrative shells characterised by numerous imposing public buildings, large residences of high-status palace and temple officials, but low densities of ordinary inhabitants.

According to the available archaeological evidence, the ‘hollow cities’ phenomenon seems to have arisen in Syria and northern Iraq at the beginning of the second millennium BC, and is in contrast with the impression conveyed by many mid and late third millennium urban centres, which were distinguished by close-packed urban districts.⁴⁷

This suggests that perhaps, with respect to the Early Bronze Age, in Middle Bronze Age Syria a new ‘idea’ had developed of the city, which dominated the countryside as a sort of ‘disembedded’ capital essentially devoid of common residents, who mainly lived in rural villages and towns that surrounded the urban centres, and enormous, enclosed fortified areas. These huge enclosures were used also for the protection of the rural inhabitants of the countryside, as a group of letters of the governor of Karana, Hasidānum, to Iasmakh-Addu suggests.⁴⁸ These walled cities thus considerably exceeded the needs of the individual centres and could also be viewed as an expression of the emulation and competition processes characteristic of peer-polity interaction.

As we have seen, this novel paradigm of the city that emerged during the Middle Bronze Age may underlie also the urban re-organization of Qatna during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. However, only extensive excavations of domestic buildings and of the lower town areas of the Syrian second millennium urban centres will enable us to verify whether the ‘hollow cities’ hypothesis is correct.

Bibliography

Affanni, G. - Di Michele, A.

2007 Le fortificazioni orientali dell’acropoli di Tell Afis (Siria) dal Bronzo Antico al Ferro I, *OCNUS. Quaderni della Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Archeologici* 15: 9-22.

Al-Maqdissi, M.

1995 Tell Sh‘airat (région de Homs), *Syria* 72: 196-198.

⁴⁷ See for instance Tell Taya (Reade 1973), Tell Beydar (Lebeau - Suleiman 1997), Tell Chuera (Pfälzner 1997; 2001; Meyer (Hrsg.) 2010), Selenkahiye (van Loon 2001: 3.31-3.86), Tell Halawa A (Orthmann (Hrsg.) 1989), Tell Hadidi (Dorneman 1979), Sweyhat (Holland 1976; Peregrine *et al.* 1997; Zettler 1997), ar-Rawda (Gondet - Castel 2004; Castel - Peltenburg 2007), Sha‘ayrat (Al-Maqdissi 1995), Moumassakin (Bounni - Al-Maqdissi 1992; Al-Maqdissi 2000) and Khirbet el-Umbashi (Braemer *et al.* 2004).

⁴⁸ ARMT V, 36-37, 43.

- 2000 Note à propos de Moumassakhin, agglomération à la lisière de la steppe, *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* 52: 73-82.
- 2003a Recherches archéologiques syriennes à Mishirfeh-Qatna au nord-est de Homs (Émèse), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 147/4: 1487-1515.
- 2003b Ergebnisse der siebten und achten syrischen Grabungskampagne 2001 und 2002 in Mishrife-Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 135: 219-245.
- 2007 Notes d'Archéologie Levantine. VI bis. À propos d'une statuette en basalte trouvée à Mishirfeh-Qatna, *Al-Rafidan* 28: 75-82.
- 2008 Réflexion sur Qatna et sa région, *Studia Orontica* III: 3-25.

Al-Maqdissi, M. *et al.*

- 2009 Présentation sommaire des travaux archéologiques de la mission syro-italienne: Les fouilles archéologiques à Mishirfeh - Qatna et la prospection de la Palmyrène occidentale, *Studia Orontica* I: 5-20.

Aynard, J.-M. - Spycket, A.

- 1987-90 Mari. B. Archäologisch, *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* 7: 390-418.

Baffi, F. (ed.)

- 2006 *Tell Tuqan. Ricerche archeologiche italiane nella regione del Maath (Siria), Galatina (Lecce).*

Baffi, F.

- 1989 Le case private di Ebla paleosiriana, *Studi Eblaiti* 8: 152-169.

Ball, W. *et al.*

- 1989 The Tell al-Hawa Project: Archaeological Investigations in the North Jazira 1986-1987, *Iraq* 51: 1-66.

Bonfil, R.

- 1997 Area A. In A. Ben-Tor - R. Bonfil (eds.), *Hazor V. An Account of the Fifth Season of Excavation, 1968*, Jerusalem: 15-176.

Bounni, A. - Al-Maqdissi, M.

- 1992 Al-Moumassakhin, site du 3e millénaire au nord-est de Damas. In B. Hrouda *et al.* (Hrsg.), *Von Uruk nach Tuttul. Eine Festschrift für Eva Strommenger*, München - Wien: 33-36.

Braemer, F. *et al.* (éds.)

- 2004 *Khirbet El Umbashi (Syrie): villages et campements de pasteurs dans le « désert noir » (Syrie) à l'âge du Bronze. Travaux de la mission conjointe franco-syrienne 1991-1996*, Beyrouth.

Castel, C. - Peltenburg, E.

- 2007 Urbanism on the Margins: Third Millennium BC Al-Rawda in the Arid Zone of Syria, *Antiquity* 81: 601-616.

Crevaschi, M. *et al.*

- 2003 Underfitted Streams and the Holocene Palaeo-Environment in the Region of Tell Mishrifeh-Qatna (Central Syria). In D. Morandi Bonacossi *et al.*, Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna 1999-2002. A Preliminary Report of the Italian Component of the Joint Syrian-Italian-German Project, *Akkadica* 124/1: 71-77.

Dornemann, R.H.

- 1979 Tell Hadidi: A Millennium of Bronze Age City Occupation. In D.N. Freedman (ed.), *Archaeological Projects from the Tabqa Dam Project - Euphrates Valley, Syria*, (Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 44), Cambridge (MA): 113-151.

Dothan, M.

- 1956 The Excavations at Nahariya. Preliminary Report (Seasons 1954/55), *Israel Exploration Journal* 6: 14-25.

du Mesnil du Buisson, R.

- 1927 Les ruines d'el-Mishrifé au Nord-Est de Homs (Émèse), *Syria* 8: 13-33.
1928 L'ancienne Qatna ou les ruines d'el-Mishrifé au N.-E. de Homs (Émèse). Deuxième campagne de fouilles (1927), (2e et 3e article), *Syria* 9: 6-24 and 81-89.

Durand, J.-M.

- 1998 *Documents épistolaires du Palais de Mari. Tome II*, (Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 17), Paris.

Dussaud, R.

- 1928 Observations sur la céramique du IIe millénaire avant notre ère, *Syria* 9: 131-150.

Eidem, J.

- 2003 The Cuneiform Tablets, *Akkadica* 124: 164-167.
2007 Notes on the Topography of Late Bronze Age Qatna. New Evidence from the 'Lower City Palace' Tablets. In D. Morandi Bonacossi (ed.), *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital. Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in Central-Western Syria*, (Studi archeologici su Qatna 1 - Documents d'Archéologie Syrienne 12), Udine: 297-304.
2009 Von Stadttoren und Bier. In Landesmuseum Württemberg in Zusammenarbeit mit. In M. Al-Maqdissi *et al.* (Hrsg.), *Schätze des Alten Syrien. Die Entdeckung des Königreichs Qatna*, Stuttgart: 114-115.

Falconer, S. - Magness Gardiner, B.

- 1989 Bronze Age Village Life in the Jordan Valley: Archaeological Investigations at Tell Hayyat and Tell Abu en-Ni'aj, *National Geographic Research* 5: 335-347.

Fleming, D.A.

- 2004 *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors: Mari and Early Collective Governance*, Cambridge.

Gondet, S. - Castel, C.

2004 Prospection géophysique sur le site d'Al-Rawda et urbanisme en Syrie du nord au Bronze ancien, *Paléorient* 30/2: 93-109.

Holland, T.A.

1976 Preliminary Report on Excavations at Tell Sweyhat, Syria, 1973-74, *Levant* 8: 36-70.

Iamoni, M.

in press The Eastern Palace of Qatna and the Middle Bronze Age Architectural Tradition of Western Syria. In P. Pfälzner (ed.), *Qatna and the Networks of Bronze Age 'Globalism'*, (Qatna-Studien 4), Wiesbaden.

Klenck, J.D.

2002 *The Canaanite Milieu: The Zooarchaeological Evidence from Tel Haror, Israel*, (British Archaeological Reports - International Series 1029), Oxford.

Lebeau, M. - Suleiman, A. (eds.)

1997 *Tell Beydar, Three Seasons of Excavations (1992-1994): A Preliminary Report*, (Subartu 3), Turnhout.

Luciani, M.

2006 Palatial Workshops at Qatna?, *Bagdader Mitteilungen* 37: 403-429.

Marchetti, N. - Nigro, L.

1997 Cultic Activities in the Sacred Area of Ishtar at Ebla During the Old Syrian Period: The Favissae F.5237 and F.5238, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 49: 1-44.

2000 The Favissa F.5238 in the Sacred Area of Ishtar and the Transition from the Middle Bronze I to the Middle Bronze II at Ebla. In K. Van Lerberghe - G. Voet (eds.), *Languages and Cultures in Contact. At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm. Proceedings of the 42th RAI*, (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 96), Leuven: 245-287.

Margueron, J.-Cl.

2004 *Mari. Métropole de l'Euphrate au IIIe et au début du IIe millénaire av. J.-C.*, Paris.

Matthiae, P.

1997a Tell Mardikh 1977-1996: vingt ans de fouilles et de découvertes. La renaissance d'Ebla amorrhéenne, *Akkadica* 101: 1-29.

1997b Typologies and Functions in the Palaces and Houses of Middle Bronze Age II Ebla. In C. Castel *et al.* (éds.), *Les maisons dans la Syrie antique du IIIe millénaire aux débuts de l'Islam. Pratiques et représentations de l'espace domestique*, (Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 150), Beyrouth: 125-134.

1998 Les fortifications de l'Ébla paléo-syrienne: Fouilles à Tell Mardikh, 1995-1997, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 142/2: 555-586.

- 2000 Nouvelles fouilles à Ébla (1998-1999): Forts et palais de l'enceinte urbaine, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 144/2: 567-610.
- 2002 A Preliminary Note on the MBA I-II Fortifications System at Ebla, *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 13: 29-51.
- 2006 Un grand temple de l'époque des archives dans l'Ébla protosyrienne: fouilles à Tell Mardikh 2004-2005, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 150/1: 447-493.
- 2009 Temples et reines de l'Ébla protosyrienne: résultats des fouilles à Tell Mardikh en 2007 et 2008, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 153/2: 747-792.

Mazzoni, S. *et al.*

- 2005 Tell Afis (Siria) 2002-2004, *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 28: 5-14.

Meyer J.-W. (Hrsg.)

- 2010 *Tell Chuera: Vorbericht zu den Grabungskampagnen 1998 bis 2005*, (Vorderasiatische Forschungen der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung, Band 2: Ausgrabungen auf dem Tell Chuera in Nordost-Syrien Teil II), Wiesbaden.

Morandi Bonacossi, D.

- 2006 A New Royal Statue from Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna. In E. Czerny *et al.* (eds.), *Timelines. Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak*, (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 149), Vol. III, Leuven: 53-62.
- 2007 The Chronology of the Royal Palace of Qatna Revisited. A Reply to a Paper by Mirko Novák, *Egypt and the Levant* 17: 221-240.
- 2008 Excavations on the Acropolis of Mishrifeh, Operation J. A New Early Bronze Age III – Iron Age III Sequence for Central Inner Syria. Part 1: Stratigraphy, Chronology and Architecture, *Akkadica* 129/1: 55-127.
- 2009 Der Unterstadtpalast. In M. Al-Maqdissi *et al.* (Hrsg.), *Schätze des Alten Syrien. Die Entdeckung des Königreichs Qatna*, Stuttgart: 156-159.
- 2011 The Middle Bronze Age Necropolis at Mishrifeh. In P. Pfälzner (Hrsg.), *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft von Qatna*, (Qatna-Studien 1), Wiesbaden: 11-37.
- 2012 Ritual Offering and Termination Rituals in a Middle Bronze Age Sacred Area in Qatna's Upper Town. In G.B. Lanfranchi *et al.* (eds.), *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, (Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien 2), Wiesbaden: 539-582.
- 2013 The Crisis of Qatna at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age II and the Iron Age II Settlement Revival. A Regional Trajectory towards the Collapse of the Late Bronze Age Palace System in the Northern Levant. In K.A. Yener (ed.), *Across the Border: Late Bronze-Iron Age Relations between Syria and Anatolia. Proceedings of a Symposium held at the Research Center of Anatolian Studies, Koç University, Istanbul, May 31 - June 1, 2010*, (Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Supplement Series 42), Leuven - Paris - Walpole (MA): 113-146.
- in press* a Large-scale Pottery Production at Middle Bronze Age Qatna. In J.-C. Margueron *et al.* (eds.), *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Paris.

in press b The Lower City Palace at Qatna. In P. Pfälzner (ed.), *Qatna and the Networks of Bronze Age 'Globalism'*, (Qatna-Studien 4), Wiesbaden, 2014.

Morandi Bonacossi, D. *et al.*

2009 The 'Eastern Palace' and the Residential Architecture of Area T at Mishrifeh/Qatna. Preliminary Report on the 2006-2008 Excavation Campaigns of the Italian Component of the Syro-Italian Archaeological Project, *Mesopotamia* 44: 61-112 and Pls. I-VI.

Nichols, J.J. - Weber, J.A.

2006 Amorites, Onagers, and Social Reorganization in Middle Bronze Age Syria. In G.M. Schwartz - J.J. Nichols (eds.), *After Collapse: The Regeneration of Complex Societies*, Tucson: 38-57.

Oates, D.

1985 Walled Cities in Northern Mesopotamia in the Mari Period, *Mari. Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 4: 585-594.

Oren, E.D.

1997 The "Kingdom of Sharuhén" and the Hyksos Kingdom. In E.D. Oren (ed.), *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*, Philadelphia: 253-283.

Orthmann, W. (Hrsg.)

1989 *Halawa 1980-1986: Vorläufiger Bericht über die 4.-9. Grabungskampagne*, (Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 52), Bonn.

Peregrine, P.N. *et al.*

1997 Geomagnetic Mapping of the Outer Town. In R. Zettler (ed.), *Subsistence and Settlement in a Marginal Environment: Tell es-Sweyhat, 1989-1995 Preliminary Report*, Philadelphia: 73-84.

Peyronel, L.

2000 The Middle Bronze II Fortress V at Tell Mardikh-Ebla (Syria). Preliminary Analysis of Architectural Contexts and Archaeological Materials. In P. Matthiae *et al.* (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Rome, May 18th - 23rd 1998*, Roma: 1353-1378.

2008 Domestic Quarters, Refuse Pits, and Working Areas. Reconstructing Human Landscape and Environment at Tell Mardikh-Ebla during the Old Syrian Period. In H. Kühne *et al.* (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 29 March - 3 April 2004, Freie Universität Berlin. Volume 1. The Reconstruction of Environment. Natural Resources and Human Interrelation through Time. Visual Communication*, Wiesbaden: 177-189.

Pfälzner, P.

1997 Wandel und Kontinuität im Urbanisierungsprozess des 3. Jtsds. v. Chr. in Nordmesopotamien. In G. Wilhelm (Hrsg.), *Die orientalische Stadt. Kontinuität,*

- Wandel, Bruch. 1. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft 9.-10. Mai 1996 in Halle/Saale*, (Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 1), Saarbrücken: 239-265.
- 2001 *Haus und Haushalt. Wohnformen des dritten Jahrtausends vor Christus in Nordmesopotamien*, Mainz am Rhein.
- Pfälzner, P. - Dohmann-Pfälzner, H.
- 2011 Die Gruft VII. Eine neu entdeckte Grabanlage unter dem Palast von Qatna, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 143: 63-139.
- Reade, J.E.
- 1973 Tell Taya. Summary Report, *Iraq* 35: 137-144.
- Ristvet, L. - Weiss, H.
- 2013 The Ḫābūr Region in the Old Babylonian Period. In W. Orthmann *et al.* (éds.), *Archéologie et Histoire de la Syrie I: La Syrie de l'époque néolithique à l'âge du fer*, Wiesbaden: 257-272.
- Ussishkin, D.
- 1996 Excavations and Restoration Work at Tel Lacish 1985-1994: Third Preliminary Report, *Tel Aviv* 23: 3-60.
- van Loon, M.N.
- 2001 *Selenkahiye. Final Report on the University of Chicago and University of Amsterdam Excavations in the Tabqa Reservoir, Northern Syria, 1967-1975*, Istanbul.
- Weiss, H.
- 1985 Tell Leilan and Shubat-Enlil, *Mari. Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 4: 269-292.
- Yadin, Y.
- 1972 *Hazor: The Head of All Those Kingdoms*, London.
- Zettler, R.L.
- 1997 Surface Collections and Excavations in the Lower Town and Lower Town South. In R.L. Zettler (ed.), *Subsistence and Settlement in a Marginal Environment: Tell es-Sweyhat, 1989-1995 Preliminary Report*, Philadelphia: 35-72.

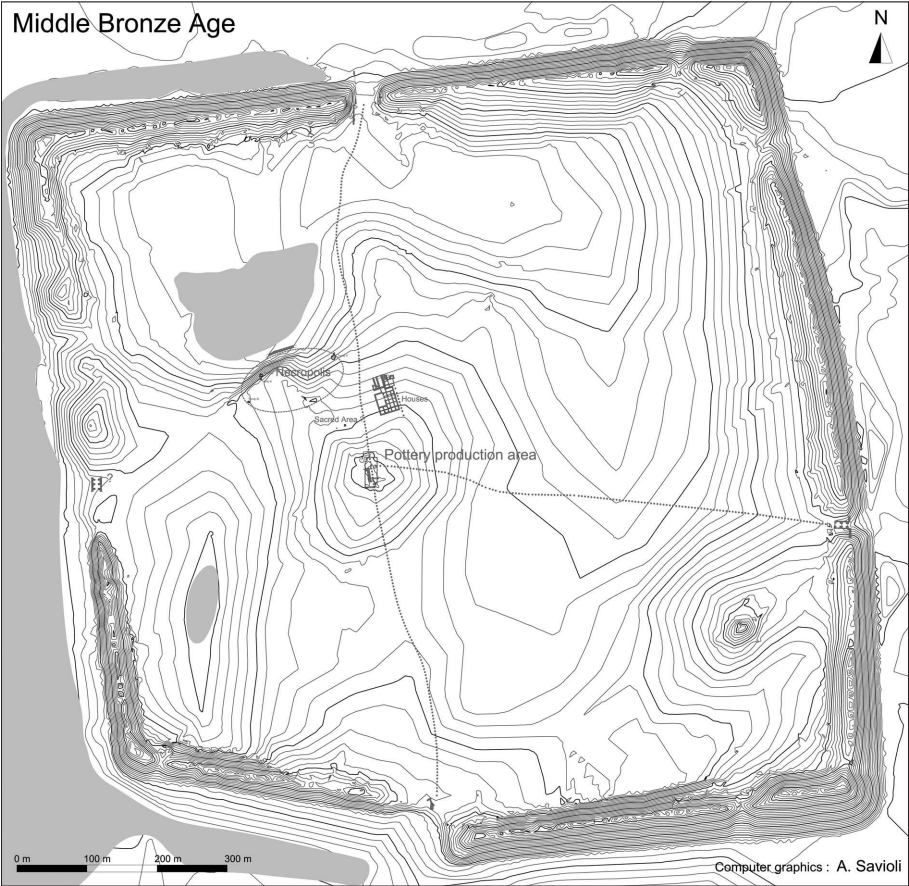


Fig. 1. The urban layout of Qatna during the Middle Bronze Age. (Map: A. Savioli)

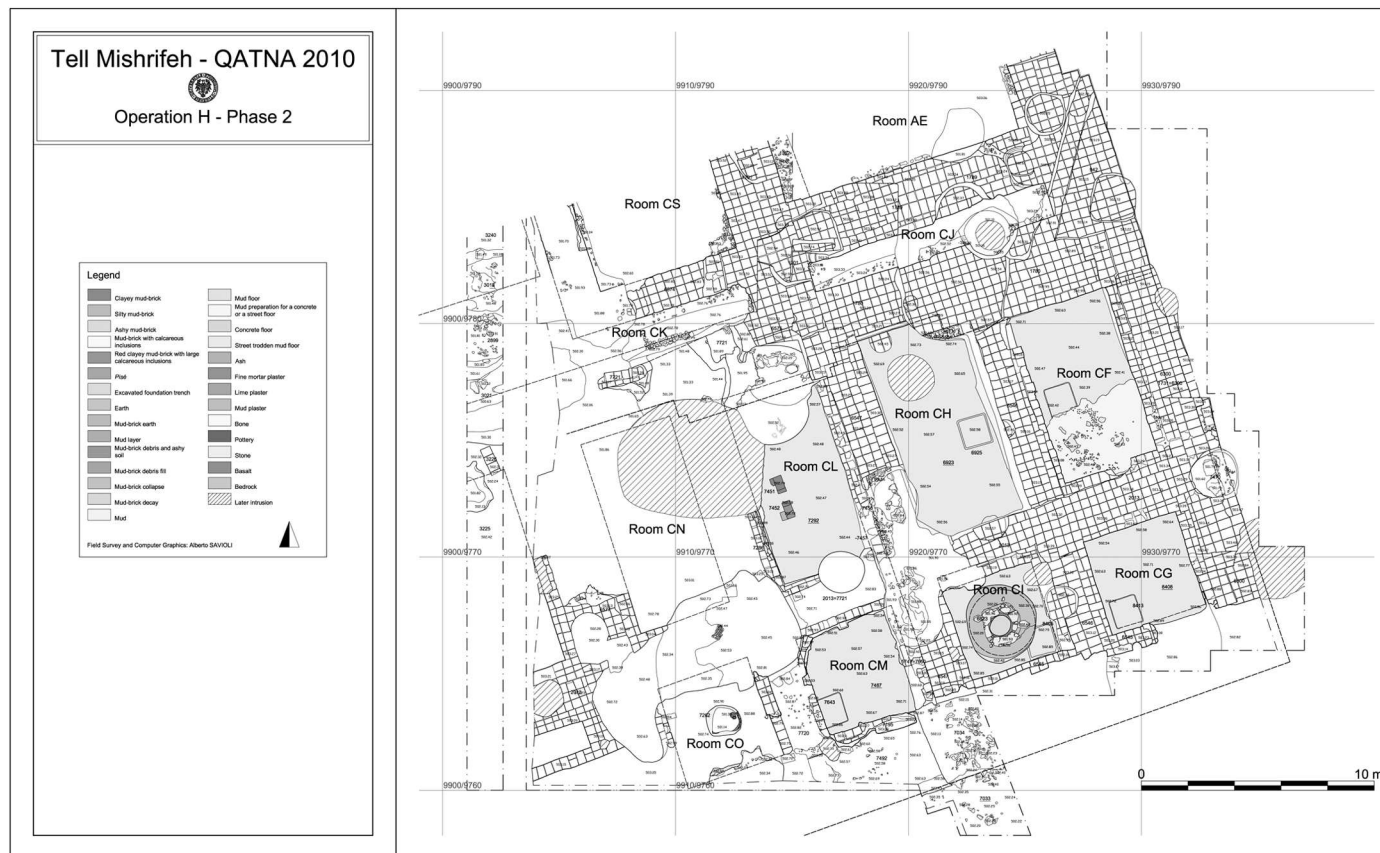


Fig. 2. Plan of the latest phase of the sacred area cut by the later palace annexe, Area H. (Plan: A. Savioli)



Fig. 3. The jars, double-handled jars and jugs from the favissa 7262. (Photograph: M. Gatti)

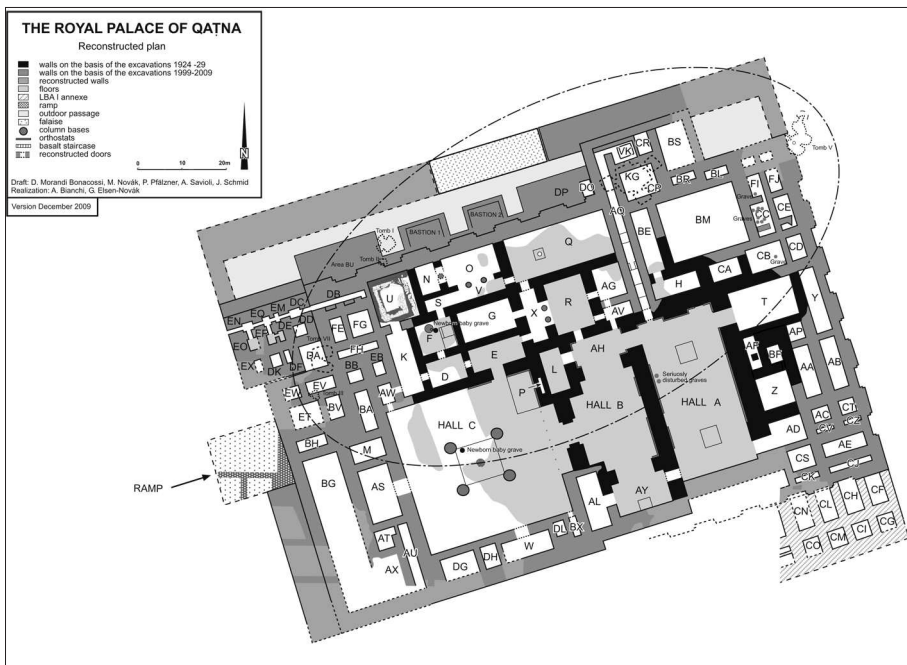


Fig. 4. Schematic plan of the Royal Palace showing location of the underlying cemetery with pit and shaft graves and reconstruction of its estimated area, Areas G, H, R. (Plan: A. Savioli)

Fig. 5. The remains of the upper town wall foundation. (Photograph: M. Cusin)

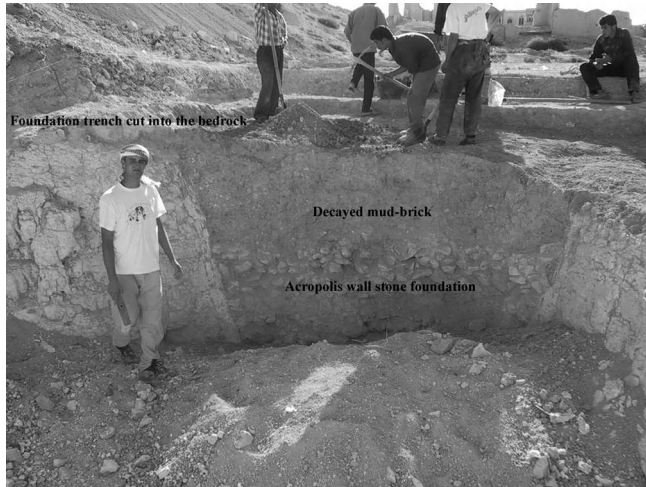
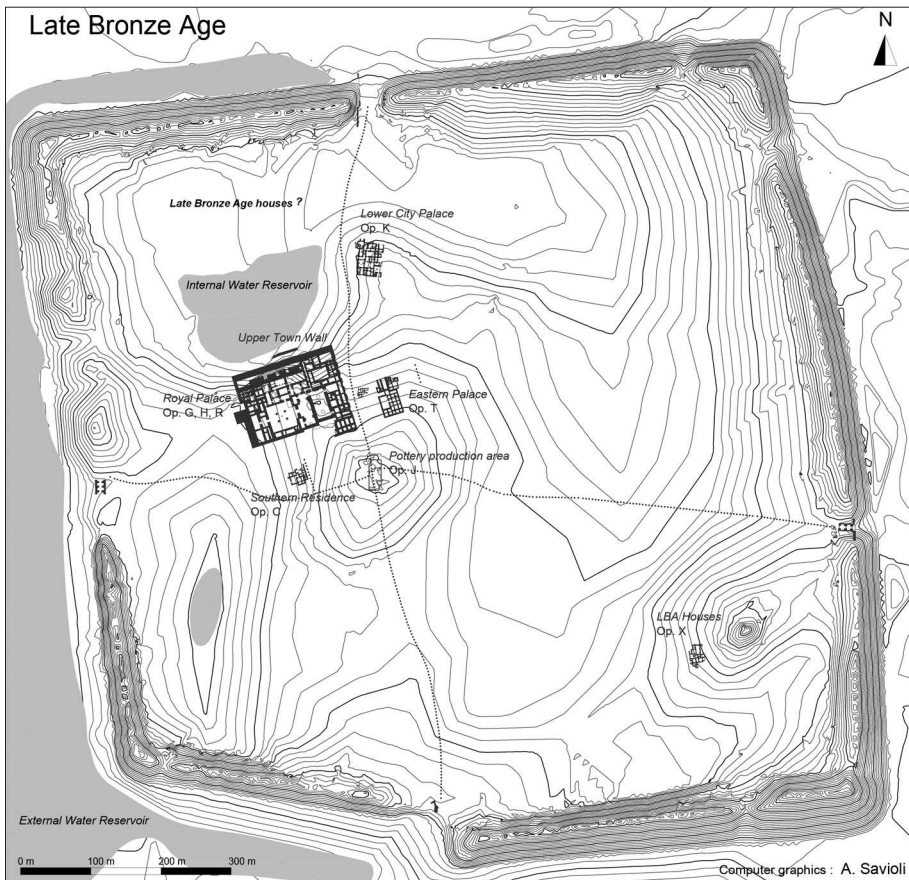


Fig. 6. The urban layout of Qatna during the Late Bronze Age. (Map: A. Savioli)



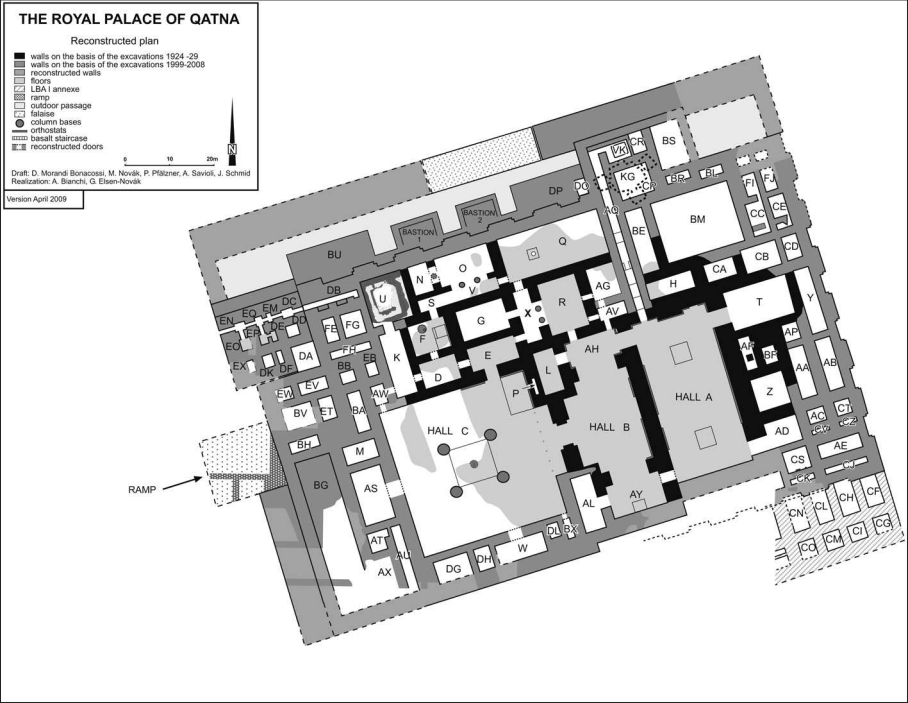


Fig. 7. Schematic plan of the Royal Palace. (Plan: A. Bianchi and G. Elsen-Novák)

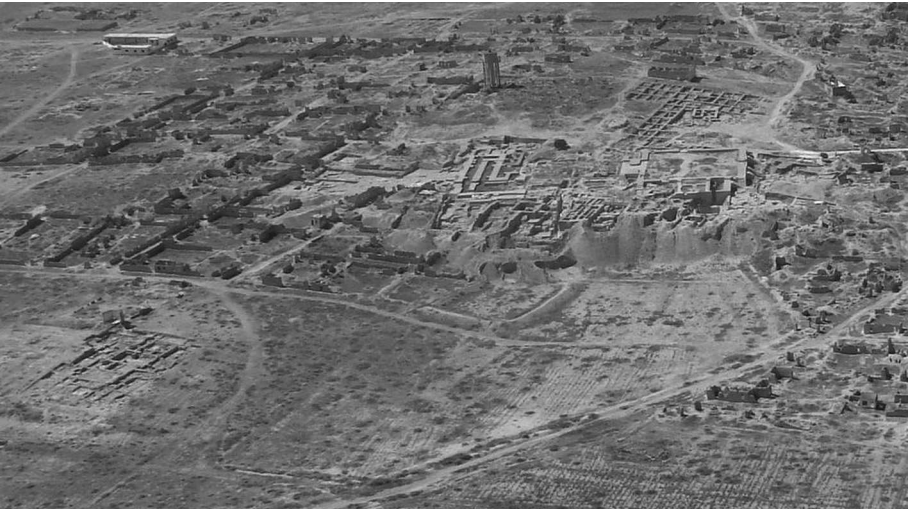


Fig. 8. Aerial view of the Lower City Palace (bottom left), the Royal Palace (centre) and the Southern Palace (top right) from the north. (Photograph: A. Deeb)

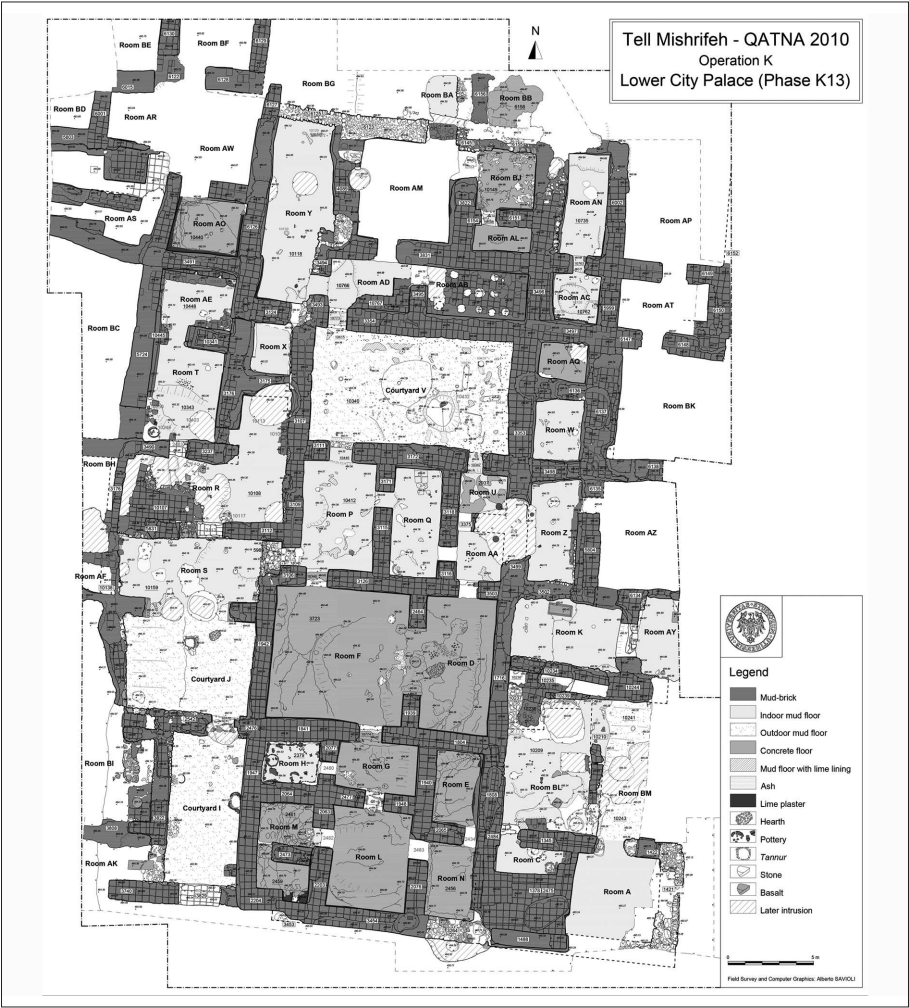
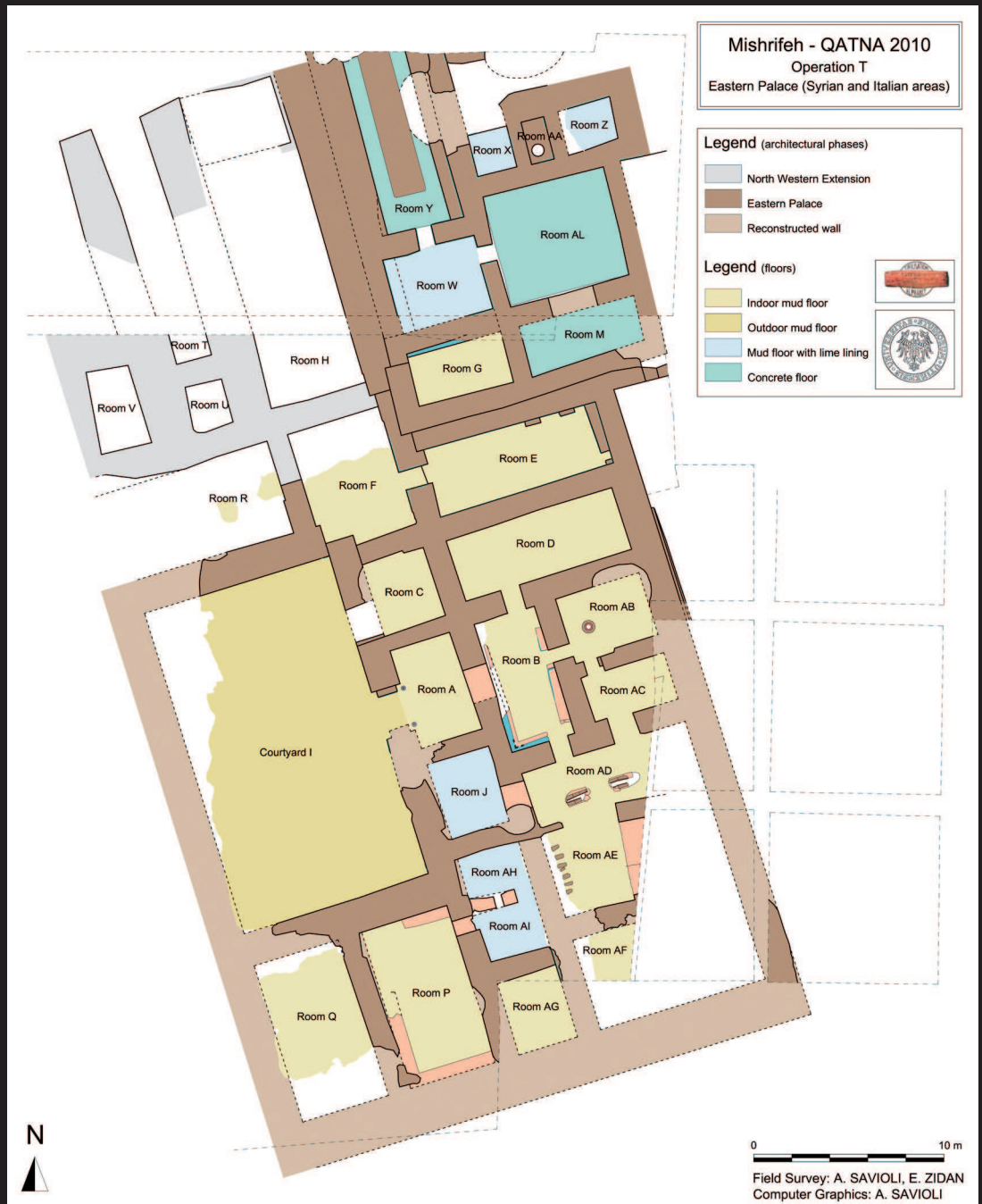


Fig. 9. Plan of the Lower City Palace. (Plan: A. Savioli)



Fig. 10. General view of the Area T1 house (sub-phase 14a) from the north. (Photograph: M. Gatti)



Pl. III. Qatna: schematic plan of the Eastern Palace. (Plan: A. Savioli). (D. Morandi Bonacossi)