

الشرق

Ash-sharq

Bulletin of the Ancient Near East
Archaeological, Historical and Societal Studies

Vol 1 No 1 April 2017



ISSN 2513-8529

ARCHAEOPRESS JOURNALS

Ash-sharq
Bulletin of the Ancient Near East
Archaeological, Historical and Societal Studies

Vol 1 No 1 April 2017

ISSN 2513-8529

eISSN 2514-1732

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Laura Battini

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Silvana Di Paolo

Yagmur Heffron

Barbara Helwing

Elif Koparal

Marta Luciani

Maria-Grazia Masetti-Rouault

Valérie Matoïan

Béatrice Muller

Tallay Ornan

Adelheid Otto

Jack M. Sasson

Karen Sonik

StJohn Simpson

Pierre Villard

Nele Ziegler

Ash-sharq is a Bulletin devoted to short articles on the archaeology and history of the Ancient Near East. It is published twice a year. Submissions are welcome from academics and researchers at all levels. Submissions should be sent to Laura Battini (laura.battini@college-de-france.fr)

PUBLISHED BY ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

Subscriptions to the **Bulletin of the Ancient Near East** should be sent to
Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, Gordon House, 276 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7ED, UK
Tel +44-(0)1865-311914 Fax +44(0)1865-512231
e-mail info@archaeopress.com
<http://www.archaeopress.com>

Opinions expressed in papers published in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the Scientific Committee.

© 2017 Archaeopress Publishing, Oxford, UK.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Ash-sharq
Bulletin of the Ancient Near East
Archaeological, Historical and Societal Studies

Vol 1 No 1 April 2017

Contents

A Short Introduction	iii
Laura Battini	
عمریت خلال العصر الفینیقی المتأخر	1
Michel Al-Maqdissi and Eva Ishaq	
A Double-Sided Board from Tell Afis	9
Anne-Elizabeth Dunn-Vaturi	
Some Considerations on the Funnels from Tell Afis	18
Giuseppe Minunno	
أعمال البعثة السورية في المدينة البيزنطية (تل الكسرة الأثري) خلال خمس مواسم (2006-2010)	
الأثري يعرب العبدالله (المديرية العامة للآثار والمتاحف- مدير المتحف الوطني بدمشق)	22
Yaarob Dahham	
Men, Animals and Pots. A few Thoughts about a Narrative Motive on Syrian Bronze Age Vessels	33
Juliette Mas	
Entrusting One's Seal in the Ancient Near East in the First Half of the 2nd millennium BC	40
Julie Patrier	
Bronze Metallurgy in the Times of the Earliest Cities. New Data on the City I of Mari	48
Juan-Luis Montero Fenollós	
Localized Ištar Goddesses and the Making of Socio-Political Communities: Samsi-Addu's Eštar Irradan at Mari	55
Elizabeth Knott	
Of Pins and Beads: Note on a Feminine Costume in Mari	62
Barbara Couturaud	
Ships and Diplomacy. The Historical Connection between the Letters RS 18.031 (from Tyre) and RS 94.2483 (from Ugarit)	69
Juan-Pablo Vita	

Issues in the Historical Geography of the Fertile Crescent	72
Ran Zadok	
The Kiriath-Jearim Archaeological Mission	93
Thomas Römer	
An Entanglement between Nature and the Supernatural: the Early Second Millennium BCE Ceremonial Complex of Hirbemerdon Tepe in the Upper Tigris Region	96
Nicola Laneri	
The Architecture of Bahra 1, an Ubaid Culture-Related Settlement in Kuwait .	104
Piotr Bieliński	
A Summary of the 5th Campaign of the French Archaeological Mission at Qasr Shemamok (Kurdistan, Iraq), 21 September – 19 October, 2016.....	112
Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault	
The Peshdar Plain Project, 2015-2016. A Major Neo-Assyrian Settlement on the Empire’s Eastern Border	124
Karen Radner, Janoscha Kreppner and Andrea Squitieri	
Abu Tbeirah’s Craft Area NE: A Preliminary Survey	131
Franco D’Agostino and Licia Romano	
The Creation of the First (Divinatory) Dream and Enki(g) as the God of Ritual Wisdom.....	155
Annette Zgoll	
The Hare has lost his Spectacles. Notes on Contest Scenes, Early Occurrences	162
Reinhard Dittmann	
Daughters from Good Families and their Seals in the Old Babylonian Period ..	170
Gudrun Colbow	
Re-contextualizing Clay Figurines, Models, and Plaques from Iščali	177
Elisa Roßberger	

The Peshdar Plain Project, 2015-2016. A Major Neo-Assyrian Settlement on the Empire's Eastern Border

Karen Radner, Janoscha Kreppner and Andrea Squitieri

LMU Munich

The Peshdar district is part of the province of Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdish Autonomous Region of Iraq. It is situated directly on the border with Iran (Figure 1). The Peshdar Plain Project was inaugurated in 2015 and aims to uncover the ancient history of this understudied area with a focus on the 9th-7th centuries BC when the Neo-Assyrian Empire controlled the region. The project initially focused on two sites: Gird-i Bazar (henceforth Bazar, 36° 8' 18' N, 45° 8' 28' E), a shallow mound situated in the plain, and the more impressive Qalat-i Dinka (henceforth Dinka, 36° 8' 12' N, 45° 7' 57' E; altitude: 579m), looming high over the Lower Zab. However, the results of geoarchaeological work conducted in 2015 by Mark Altaweel and the survey of the Mission Archeologique Française du Gouvernorat de Souleimaniah (MAFGS), directed by Jessica Giraud, suggested that Bazar and Dinka are parts of one extended site belonging to the Neo-Assyrian period (Radner *et al.* 2016: 23-36) and this was confirmed in autumn 2016 by the results of the magnetometer survey conducted by Jörg Fassbinder between Bazar and Dinka. Our preliminary designation for the entire site is 'Dinka settlement complex'.

The project was inaugurated because of the discovery of a Neo-Assyrian private legal contract from 725 BC (in the shape of a clay tablet) at Dinka during agricultural work in 2013 and because of the recent damage to Bazar due to the construction of a chicken farm in winter 2014. The legal document mentions a subordinate of the Palace Herald and this can be taken as an indication that the transaction took place in the sphere of authority of this official, that is the Border March of the Palace Herald (Radner 2015). The tablet as well as more generally the presence of pottery of the Neo-Assyrian period at Bazar and Dinka indicated that the Peshdar Plain was part of this border march, situated at the border with client states including the kingdoms of Mannea and Hubushkia (Radner *et al.* 2016: 17). As our knowledge of the Eastern frontier of the Neo-Assyrian Empire is limited, starting salvage excavations at Bazar and Dinka offered the chance to remedy this as well as synchronize the Western Iranian pottery cultures with the Assyrian material (Radner *et al.* 2016: 21).

Headed by Karen Radner and based at LMU Munich, the Peshdar Plain Project brings together international experts in history, archaeology, bioarchaeology, landscape

archaeology, geophysics, material science studies, GIS, photogrammetry and 3D modeling, with Janoscha Kreppner as field director.¹ We are grateful for the support of the Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Antiquities headed by Kamal Rasheed and the General Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage of the Kurdish Autonomous Region of Iraq, headed by Abu Bakr Othman (Mala Awad).

The current goal at Bazar is to excavate the area inside the fence surrounding the modern chicken farm whose construction destroyed parts of the site. We use a grid composed of 25 10×10m squares aligned northwards (Figure 2), seven of which have been completely excavated while a further six were partially excavated. In total, an area of about 700 m² was excavated during two field campaigns in 2015 and 2016.

A charcoal sample collected in 2015 from above the floor of Room 3 in Building A underwent 14C radiocarbon analysis at the Center for Applied Isotope Studies (CAIS) of the University of Georgia, Athens (sample number UGAMS-23213), yielding a calibrated date of 829 calBC (92.2%). This only provides a *terminus post quem* for the associated context but fits the dating of the site's occupation to the Neo-Assyrian period. Analysing short-lived plant samples, namely carbonised seeds gained from flotation, might soon provide more precise dates although the 14C Hallstadt Plateau affecting samples from the period ca. 800-400 BC drastically limits the potential for dating later Neo-Assyrian contexts from the outset.

In terms of relative stratigraphy, one main occupation period and two periods of later re-occupation were identified in 2015. In the main (oldest) occupation period, the buildings were founded on the bedrock (virgin soil) and used until their abandonment. The 14C date came from this occupation period. The main occupation period can be sub-divided into two phases detected in Buildings D/E, H and I. A second occupation period is defined by new floors in Buildings A and B. This clearly differs from the first occupation, as many rooms were altered or no longer in use. The third occupation period is sporadic and is currently only represented by a surface with Sassanian pottery in Square 268930, abutting a re-used wall and overlying older structures. After a period of abandonment of currently unknown length, the eastern and central parts of site were re-used as a graveyard, with several graves cut into the older structures. A surface and an installation exposed in Square 271927 can be dated to the 20th century AD because of some modern Iraqi coins.

¹ 2015-6 team members: Zuhair Rajab Al-Samarrae, Mark Altaweel, Silvia Amicone, Andrei Așandulesei, Mohammed Aziz, Peter Bartl, Francesca Chelazzi, Vera Egbers, Jörg Fassbinder, Christoph Forster, Tina Greenfield, Zahra Hashemi, Jean-Jacques Herr, Alice Hunt, Baiaz Ibrahim, John MacGinnis, Ibrahim Manla Issa, Anke Marsh, Hayman Noori, Abdullah Othman, Alessio Palmisano, Elsa Perrucchini, Melissa Rosenzweig, Hero Salih, Aziz Sharif, Blind Shushe, Andrea Squitieri, Adam Stone, Muhamad Kahraman Walika, Eleanor Barbanes Wilkinson, and workers from the village of Nureddin.

The excavation currently focuses on three areas: three buildings in the eastern part of the site, five buildings in the western part and an open area with several kilns in between.

The excavations in the east (Figure 3) were led by John MacGinnis and Alessio Palmisano, while Tina Greenfield dealt with the younger graves found in this area. The main occupation consists of Building A, with several rooms around Courtyard 2, separated from Building J (not excavated because it was destroyed by construction work) by Alley 25, and from Building C by Alley 4. Building B, with one excavated room, may be in fact part of Building A. The pit excavated in Room (?) 1 is almost 2m deep and completely filled with refuse material, most importantly pottery representing the entire range of types and fabrics attested so far in Bazar. In Room 23, a stone installation composed of two flat stones separated by a drain may be a toilet; it is associated with a large jar and a small bowl, perhaps used to contain and pour water respectively.

In the west (Figure 4), excavations led by Peter Bartl, Vera Egbers and Zahra Hashemi uncovered the remains of five buildings (D/E, F, G, H, I) and two alleys. In Building G, the one room exposed so far has a floor made of stone slabs and yielded evidence for cooking; unfortunately, the fence surrounding the chicken farm prevented furthering the excavation here. Building F is better understood, as four rooms and an inner courtyard were excavated. The latter contained a well with a water pulling system (*shaduf*), whose pole hole was found, and two bread ovens. The exact relationship of the rooms forming Building D/E, or possibly Buildings D and E, is currently unclear. Again, there is a well in Courtyard 27, but without a pole support, and a large oven in Room 31. Two channels, one from Courtyard 21 and one from Courtyard 27, drain water into Alley 13.

In a central open area of the site, excavations led by Adam Stone, Francesca Chelazzi and Silvia Amicone located two kilns, one of which has been excavated so far. This kiln is roughly circular in plan view, with intact clay lining and a smoke outlet on the back. It yielded remains of the perforated grate and the last load was still *in situ*: this provides highly welcome evidence for the local production of pottery. A close parallel was excavated at the Neo-Assyrian site of Khirbet Qasrij, north of Nineveh (Moorey 1994: fig. 9d).

The pottery repertoire (Figure 5) represents predominantly a local ceramics tradition in terms of ware, form, and manufacturing technology. Many shapes and the surface treatment of burnishing have close comparisons in Western Iran while some morphological types parallel Assyrian shapes (Radner *et al.* 2016: 80-99). This is very fitting for the location of the Dinka settlement complex in the Border March of the Palace Herald, whose function was to broker contacts with the polities adjoining the Assyrian Empire to the east and northeast. Thin section and clay sourcing analyses

by Silvia Amicone as well as the reconstruction of the chaînes opératoires by Jean-Jacques Herr are ongoing.

The excavation has a bioarchaeological sampling strategy, with strict protocols for the gridding of floors allowing for the collection of organic data, most importantly phytoliths, bones, charcoal and other palaeobotanical remains (Radner *et al.* 2016: 77–80). A preliminary assessment of faunal data by Tina Greenfield has identified cattle, sheep, goat and domestic pig, with goat as the most frequent species. Palaeobotanical data and phytoliths are currently under analysis by Melissa Rosenzweig and Arlene Rosen, respectively.

At Dinka, excavations have been undertaken on a much more limited scale. A test trench of about 42 m² was opened in spring 2016 on the western slope (Figure 1). Here, the discovery of large stone walls and a brick pavement may indicate an elite occupation of a character quite different compared to the simple housing and workshops at Bazar. These structures may be linked to a fortress overlooking the Zab river on top of Dinka. The pottery found on the floors, however, matches the finds from Bazar, providing evidence for a contemporary occupation. Sadly, the area was severely damaged by looters in the recent past.

The first two years of fieldwork and analysis of the Peshdar Plain Project yielded important new data for a settlement in a border region of the Assyrian Empire with close ties to Western Iran. Moreover, the 2016 geophysical survey conducted by Jörg Fassbinder and Andrei Aşandulesei across ca. 8 ha between Bazar and Dinka revealed several areas with domestic units, with workshops and a large structure set into an open area whose plan resembles that of the great elite residences known from Dur-Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad) and Tušhan (Ziyaret Tepe). In combination with the excavation results, these results provide a good footing for planning future work on the Dinka settlement complex. The next campaign will start in April 2017.

For more detailed information, follow the link:

<http://www.en.ag.geschichte.uni-muenchen.de/research/peshdar-plain-project/index.html>

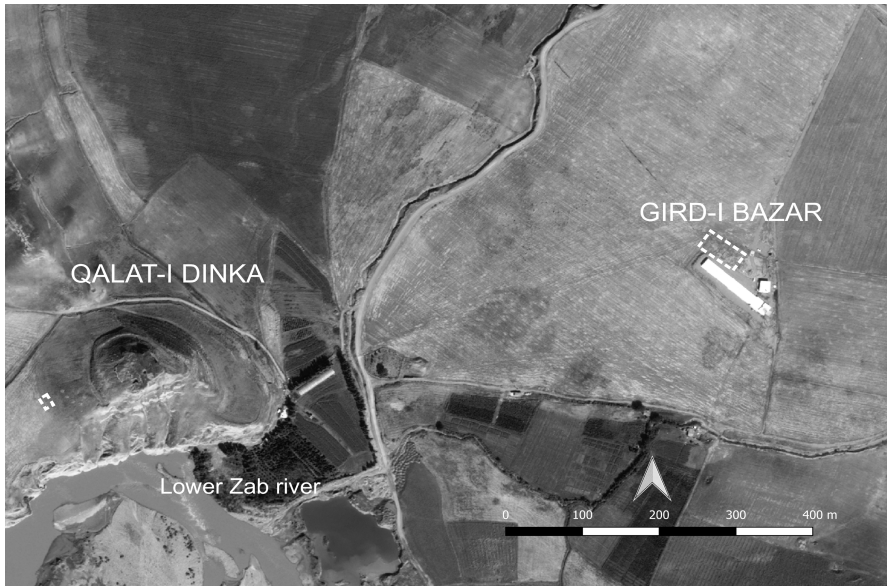


Figure 1: The location of Qalat-i Dinka and Gird-i Bazar

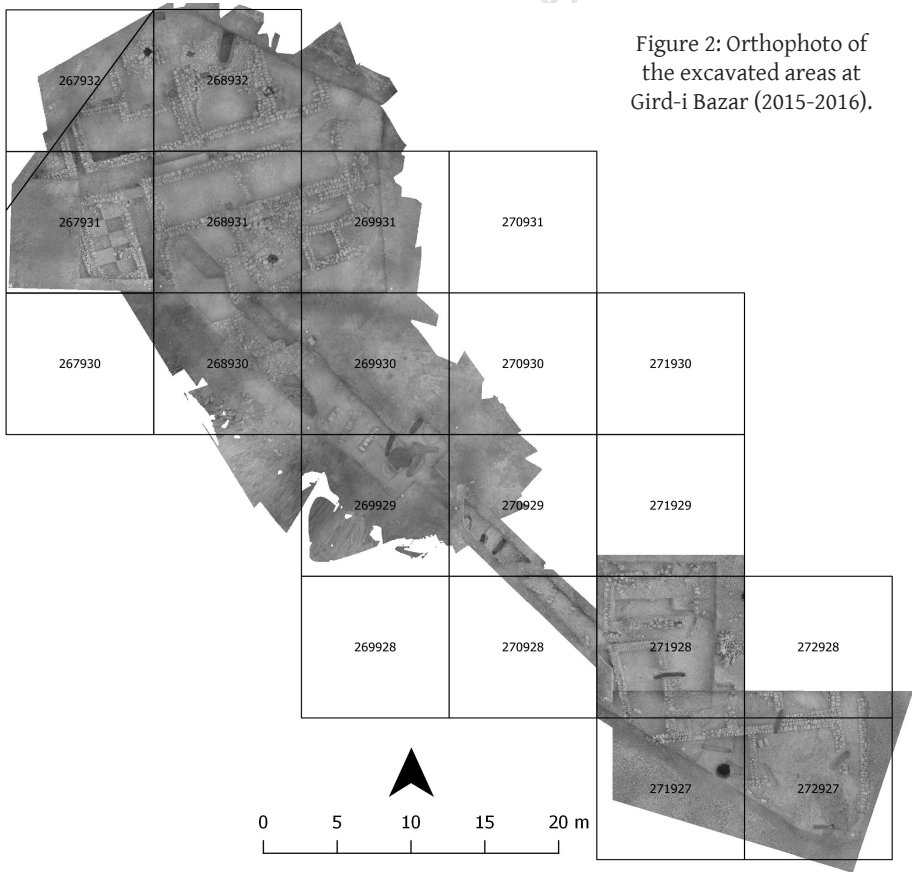


Figure 2: Orthophoto of the excavated areas at Gird-i Bazar (2015-2016).

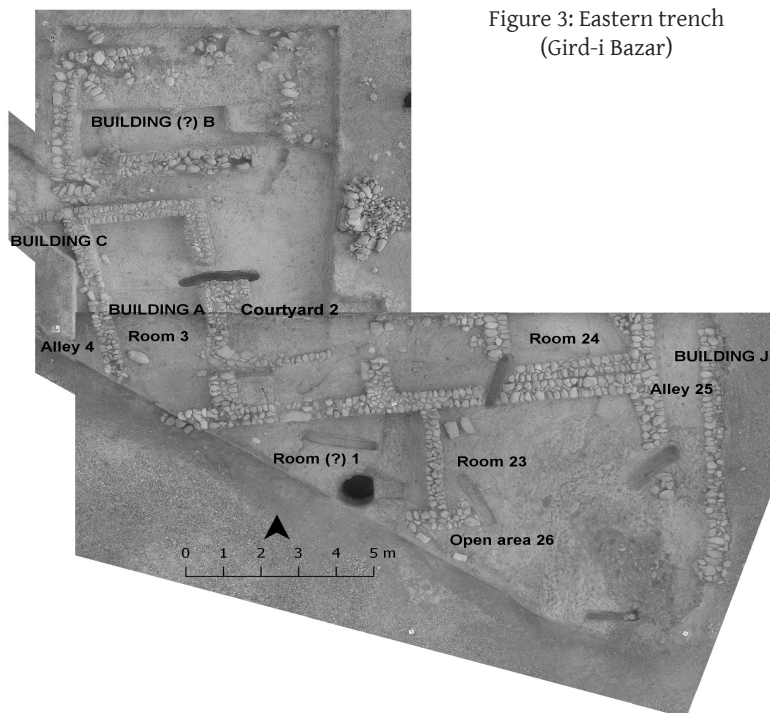


Figure 3: Eastern trench
(Gird-i Bazar)



Figure 4: Western trench
(Gird-i Bazar)

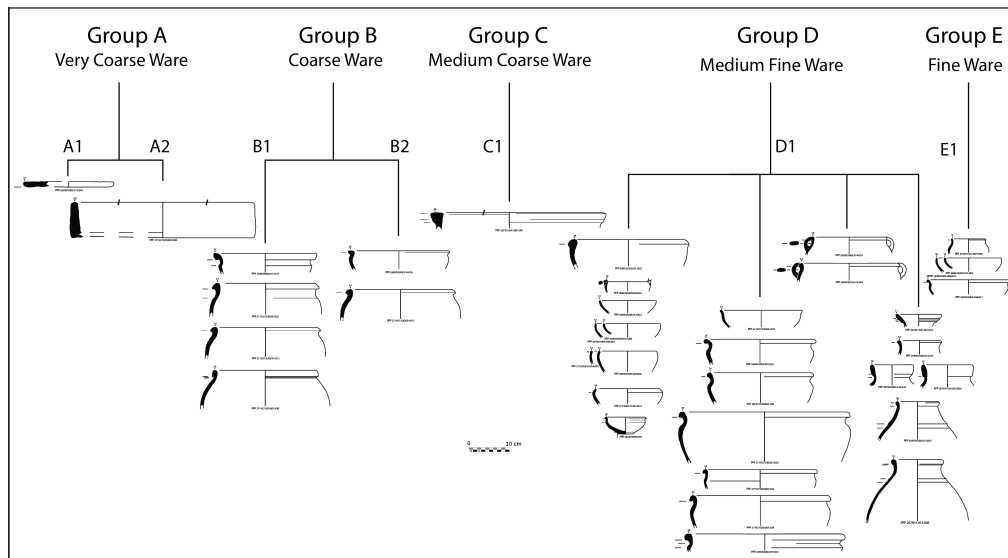


Figure 5 The pottery repertoire from Gird-i Bazar

References

- Moorey, P. R. S. 1994. *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Radner, K., Kreppner, J. and Squitieri A. (eds) 2016. *Exploring the Neo-Assyrian Frontier with Western Iran. The 2015 Season at Gird-i Bazar and Qalat-i Dinka*. Gladbeck: PeWe-Verlag. Free download from <https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/29236/>
- Radner, K. 2015. A Neo-Assyrian Slave Sale Contract of 725 BC from the Peshdar Plain and the Location of the Palace Herald's Province. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 105: 192-197.