



AREA A – «WEST-PALAST» AND MUDBRICK TERRACE

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«West-Palast»

This year, work continued in the squares south of the «West-Palast». Here, walls belonging to an Early Iron Age building were uncovered. These were cut by a younger building (A 7). We know of this from the earlier excavations. Future investigations will have to determine, whether this building is older or contemporary to the «West-Palast». Nonetheless, we can now assume that there was an Early Iron Age building phase that is older than the «West-Palast». The excavation and recovery of grave 16, that had already been detected in 2007 but had not been excavated back then due to time constraints, was an extremely extraordinary event of this campaign.

The grave was situated to the north-east of the «West-Palast» and consisted of a mudbrick box that was set into a pit. A ca. 14-15 year old girl was laid to rest here and she was outfitted with a great number of grave goods. Among them was a necklace that consisted of alternating biconical yellow beads and red carnelian beads (**Fig. 2-3**). Since two parts of the necklace still lay in situ and had not moved, it was possible to accurately reconstruct the necklace. Many other beads of different shapes and materials, like precious stones, quartz ceramic and shell, were found in the area of the torso. Further items of jewelry were made of bronze, iron and bone. Additionally, pottery vessels were part of the grave inventory. They were found together with animal bones at the skeleton's feet. A pottery cup was found in a niche near the skull. The remains of a basket, pigments and a grinding stone were lying next to the skeleton. However, the most important finds are the innumerable small and large fragments of mineralized textiles and other organic materials, which are very rarely attested for the Ancient Near East. In future, they will be scientifically analyzed (<http://youtu.be/Nd3tHt23Og0>). Grave 16 can presently be dated to the last third of the 2nd millennium B.C. by the vessels found within and by comparison with another grave.

Mudbrick Terrace

Building A 3

In future, the excavation area at the mudbrick terrace will be extended in order to establish the entire size of the Hellenistic building, and of the Neo-Assyrian building A 1, discovered in 2006. Two rooms of building A 3 have been exposed so far. In this campaign we discovered indications that the building may have more rooms to the north. Several younger pits disturb the upper levels and complicate work here.

Building A 1

Work in the area of the Neo-Assyrian building was extended to squares 6805 and 6905. Consequently, it was established that room A 1:AA extends further south. Eastwards, a door with a large basalt threshold leads to a neighboring court (**Fig. 4**), which is paved with basalt slabs directly adjacent to the door. On the pavement of the court, a remarkably high number

of artifacts were found in a fairly small area. Most of them are beads (quartz ceramic, carnelian, rock-crystal), followed by bronze objects and iron fragments, as well as objects made of bone.

A small cuneiform tablet was discovered near the doorway. It can be dated back to the transition from the 8th to 7th century B.C. and documents a loan contract concerning silver.

Many Hellenistic pits cut the stratigraphic sequence of the squares on the mudbrick terrace, thereby destroying older contexts. In one case, such a pit made it possible to detect a building level that is older than the «Lehmziegelmassiv». By fully excavating the pit Inst. 12, that unfortunately destroyed a considerable part of the floor auf room A 1:AA (building A 1), two walls, running from east to west, were revealed (**Fig. 1**). These walls had obviously been built before the construction of the mudbrick terrace and were eventually covered by the latter. That older structures are to be expected in this area has been known since the earlier excavations. Back then, the excavators had accidentally found two monumental grave statues that had been covered by the terrace. They had been set up in a small chapel above two grave shafts with cremation burials. For now, it will only be possible to clarify the new evidence by excavating the area to the west of the Neo-Assyrian building (in the area of the great north-south trench dug by Oppenheim in the centre of the citadel). Otherwise, building A 1 would have to be removed first.

(Translation: A. Sollee / B. Sollee)