



## AREA B – NORTHERN SLOPE

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### Excavations on the Northern Slope

In the season of 2010, work on the northern slope continued. The work was primarily of extending character. At first, eroded material that had seeped into the pre-existing trench had to be completely removed all the way down to the virgin soil.

Directly underneath round building 5, two more building levels, 2.5 m high, of the Halaf period were excavated. Even though it was not possible to reveal the interior structure of the red-brownish piles of debris, round building 5 seems to have been built directly upon older predecessors (**Fig. 1**).

At a lower level, the tops of the walls of an older building level were uncovered. They hint at a modified building structure. In the meantime, we reached virgin soil with poorly preserved building remains of the earliest period of settlement at the northern end.

### Preliminary Summary

For the first time circular buildings characteristic of the Halaf period were excavated in the course of the new excavations at Tell Halaf. Especially developed round buildings with a keyhole layout and a diameter of 3-7 m are typical. The larger round buildings were reinforced on the inside and carried a flat roof.

Besides the great amounts of painted ceramics, terracotta figurines (**Fig. 2**) and stamp seals belonged to the most important prehistoric finds.

Concerning the size of the prehistoric settlement, precise conclusions are difficult to formulate, due to the massive, more recent overlaying constructions. However, by drawing comparisons with other Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites (e.g. Tell Sabi Abyad I or Tepe Gaura), one must not assume that the entire area of the later citadel formed a single prehistoric settlement of about 6 ha. Settlement structures of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic in northern Mesopotamia, as well as the depression north of the «Skorpionentor» rather suggest that the prehistoric

settlement was divided into a number of smaller mounds and that the settlement was organized in groups of relatives.

As studies concerning the production of the pottery suggest (Davidson 1977, c.f. Akkermans / Schwartz 2003: 138), the settlement may still have represented a larger village that served as a center of production for bi- and monochrome painted Halaf pottery inside the Khabur triangle, next to sites like Chagar Bazar or Tell Brak. It is likely that obsidian from areas in eastern Turkey, was probably exchanged here, as well, in order to supply close-by small hamlets with these goods. Aside from the exchange on a regional level, the investigations of the pottery have also produced evidence for exchanges between regions (e.g. between the Khabur area and the northern Tigris area), whereas the greater part of monochrome painted ceramics was surely produced locally.

Clues to characteristic small hamlets are to be found in the area of the later lower town, as in the area of the «Stadttempel», the «Kultbau» or in the eastern lower town (Area G) (**Fig. 3**). They fit the usual pattern of settlement with numerous small settlements and single, larger villages.

As to be expected in the fertile and water-rich Khabur area, botanical remains point at a sophisticated level of agriculture (oral communication Dr. Simone Riehl, Universität Tübingen). Especially emmer and barley are attested, as well as on a smaller scale flax, flat pea and two-row einkorn.

*(Translation: A. Sollee / B. Sollee)*