see Front Matter at the end
see Bookmarks on he side

Urkesh ceramic evidence for function

Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati

Visiting Professor, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology,
University of California Los Angeles
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3872-4162
mkbuccel@ucla.edu

Keywords
Urkesh/Tell Mozan, Urkesh *abi*, platform, ceramic function, quantitative analysis

Abstract
A 14 is a well defined stratigraphic space, adjacent to a ceremonial platform and to the *abi*, the underground passage to the Netherworld. Some significant ceramic assemblages were found there, and an analysis of their function suggests that they were used for storage of dry goods in function of events that would take place in connection with the ceremonial features nearby.

From Mozan to Arbid. It is a pleasure to dedicate this article on Mozan ceramics to Piotr Bieliński, a friend, colleague and a near neighbor.

Urkesh is one of the most distinctive urban centers in the Khabur region, dating from the Late Chalcolithic 3 period in the mid 4th millennium and continuously occupied into the Middle Assyrian period about 1250 BC. Our last season in Urkesh had been in 2010 and the war, which began in March 2011, interrupted any further excavation. However, a complete ceramic analysis of all the body sherds and shape sherds excavated in A14, a significant area south of the outer palace wall—a total of 42,670 sherds—had been completed

before the last season. In other words, the totality of the sherds excavated in this excavation unit had been analyzed, not just a selection, the standard method we follow for all excavation units at Tell Mozan. In this area the two most important phases were Phases 3 (strata 14–10) and 4 (strata 9–4).[1] Phase 3 is dated to the period of Tar'am-Agade and Ishar-kinum, the late Naram-Sin period, and corresponds to the use of the palace building for other purposes than as a royal palace. Phase 4a, immediately following late Phase 3, can be dated to about 2100–2000 BC (period of Atal-shen) with Phase 4b in 2000–1900 BC. In Phase 4, the architecture of the palace was no longer in use, the area revealing scattered occupation and some small tombs. The *abi* and the mud-brick platform, however, continued in use.

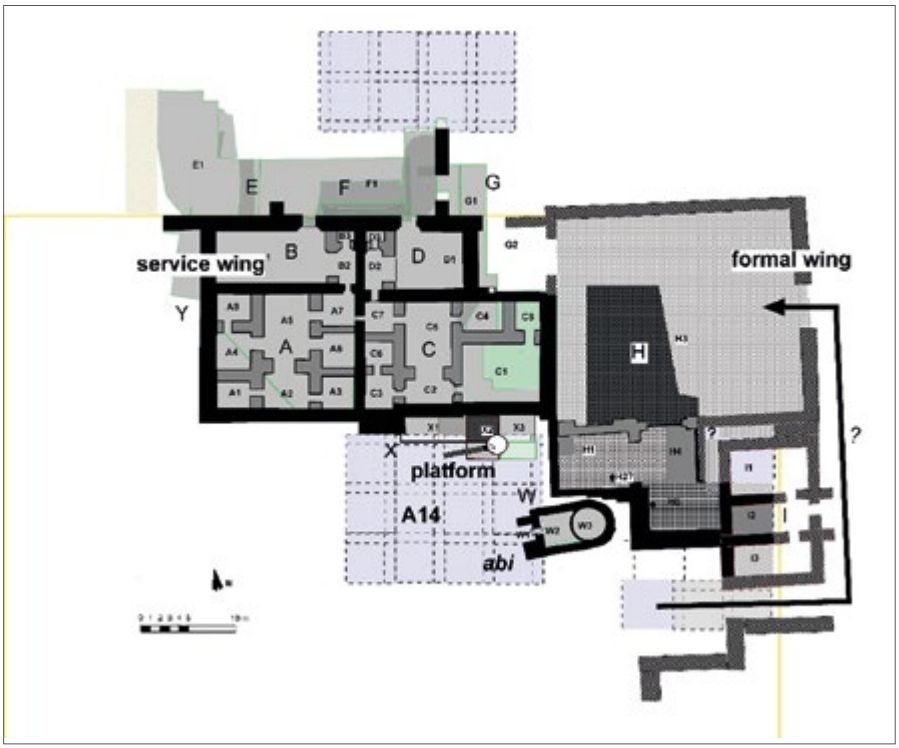


Fig. 1. *Excavation unit A14 next to the abi, the platform with a large drain and the palace (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)*

[1] In this article, phases and strata are those of the sequence AAC, see urkesh.org/phases for details. I am especially grateful to James L. Walker, the excavator of A 14, who is preparing the final published record for the Urkesh website, see urkesh.org/A14.

A14 is an open area bounded on the north by the southwestern portion of the exterior wall of the palace, which included the large mud-brick platform abutting this wall with a large drain embedded in it [***Fig. 1***]. This installation has been tentatively identified as a KASKAL.KUR mentioned in Hittite texts and interpreted as a "water road to the Netherworld" (Kelly-Buccellati 2002). In the eastern portion of A14 lies the entrance to the monumental underground structure that has been identified as a Hurrian necromantic pit called in Hurrian *abi*. The boundaries to the south and west are unknown.

The focus of this article is to evaluate the ceramic evidence in terms of its contribution to the determination of the function of this stratigraphically and architecturally important area in the two phases, 3 and 4. This context appears to have been ritually significant as it is an open area containing the entrance to the *abi* as well as being situated next to an open-air platform and drain. This area may have been a "staging area" for rituals connected with the platform and the *abi*. The analysis of a primary floor deposit (A14a20) within A14 contributes to the viewing of this space as an activity area with a coherent assemblage, since the ceramics were *in situ* on this floor and there were other features related to this floor with ceramic evidence.

While this study focuses on ceramic evidence from the A14 context, I will first describe the methodology used, then briefly summarize the archaeological context and, finally, separately analyze the ceramics. After this I will bring together both the archaeological and the ceramic streams of evidence, so as to avoid circular argumentation.

Methodology

Studies of function based on ceramics have pointed out that the overwhelming primary functions of ceramics coming from archaeological contexts are connected with food: processing, storing, transportation as well as serving and eating of both liquids and dry substances (Rice 1987: 208–210; Skibo and Feinman 1999: 75–76, 100, 104, 167, 178; Sinopoli 1999: 120–121, 125–127). There are by now a vast number of studies on function in the scholarly literature (Skibo 2013, with an extensive bibliography; Rice 1987: 207–243; 1996; Sinopoli 1999, to name just a few). In this literature inferences about function for the most part are based on ceramic technology (van As 2004), ethnographic analogy (Rice 1987: 113–166; Sinopoli 1991: 71–74; Skibo 2013: 10–16; Stark 2003; Henrickson and McDonald 1983), use wear/alteration

analysis (Skibo 2015) and residue analysis (Skibo 2013: 161–190; Barnard 2011; Barnard et al. 2011).

This study focuses on the morphology of the vessels found in a specific context and tries to correlate ceramic form with general functional classes (Henrickson and McDonald 1983; Longacre 1981; Rice 1987: 208–212; Skibo 2013: 28–36). Function here focuses on the broad roles of the ceramics as containers for storage, processing, serving and eating. Transport over significant distances or cooking functions cannot be addressed here for reasons that will be discussed below.

If we hold that the definition of vessel use is different from that of vessel function (use being more specific), then we can discuss here the broader category of function. However within the category of function there are many degrees of specificity which can be based on shape, size but even such questions as "can the vessel be held in one hand, empty or full?" (Kelly-Buccellati and Shelby 1977; Smith 1985: 305; Buccellati 2017: 97–98). However, in this archaeological context the more restricted subject of use for particular vessels is addressed only for one vessel type. In the adjacent ritual context of the *abi*, on the other hand, there are vessels that have been inferred as having a particular use (Kelly-Buccellati 2002).

In describing the methodological approaches to the ceramics discussed here, it has to be noted that, unfortunately, all the ceramics we have submitted for residue analysis have given poor results, more than likely due to the local abundant rainfall and soil conditions.[2] In the same vein, the ceramics discussed here do not give evidence of being used for transport, at least long distance transport, although they may have been employed for transport within a circumscribed area. They are not large vessels, nor were they made with characteristics that would have favored long distance transport (Rice 1987: 199, 226, 237–238; Skibo 2013: 31–34).

Much of the literature discussing ceramic function is based on the study of vessels used in cooking processes (Atalay and Hastorf 2006; Skibo 2013: 63–114). The secondary evidence for these types of functions comes from firing traces such as sooting and firing clouds. However the ceramics discussed here did not exhibit such secondary evidence. An excellent example of a discussion of the ceramics and the archaeological context can be seen from Tell Arbid (Bieliński 2010; 2012; Smogorzewska 2014; Reiche and Smogorzewska 2013). Cooking vessels from Arbid were investigated from the morphological and

[2] Sherds from A14a20 were submitted for residue analysis unfailingly with poor results. For other Mozan ceramic residue analysis, see Barnard et al. 2011.

technological viewpoint as related to their function. Important conclusions related to the production of these vessels and the types of cooking methods could be arrived at (Smogorzewska 2014: 500). The study was further enhanced because a number of these vessels were discovered in a kitchen context. The space was estimated to be large enough for one or two people to prepare food (Reiche and Smogorzewska 2013: 373). The space included two hearths, two large jars which were embedded in the floor, a storage bin and a large number of ceramic vessels. Combining the analysis of the archaeological context and the materials found in the room, Reiche and Smogorzewska were able to come to the important conclusion that the kitchen was not used by a single family, but was rather utilized for preparing food for an extended household (Reiche and Smogorzewska 2013: 379).

Our main evidence from Urkesh for this study is based on cross-cultural ethnographic data, ceramic morphology (shape, size, capacity) and ceramic technology (forming techniques, paste composition including inclusions, firing, surface treatment). However, we are fortunate in Urkesh in that some evidence for ceramic use and ceramic importance in society has come from seal iconography.[3] There is iconographic evidence of food preparation, for example, in large flat bowls, in the second, later seal of the cook of the queen (Kelly-Buccellati 2016: 58–59). The iconography refers to food preparation without fire and usually cannot be tied to a specific activity. However, it does present a number of scenes of drinking from conical cups and there is a distinct possibility that one scene refers to preparation of butter (Kelly-Buccellati 2016: Figs 4.5, 4.7, 4.9). One of the king's seals shows a potter at work indicating the high status of potters in society (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1996).

Studies combining cross-cultural ethnographic data and the morphology of excavated ceramics are useful for generating inferences of archaeological ceramic data, especially the general function of the vessels (Henrickson and McDonald 1983: 634–642; Rice 1987: 237–243; 1996; Sinopoli 1991: 161–170; 1999; Skibo 2013: 67–75). In our data, general functional categories of storage, both long term and short term, are used, although the length of time may be quite short (hours or days) or relatively long (weeks or months). Whether the storage is of liquids or dry goods is also considered. In the literature, storage vessels usually have a wide mouth enabling access to the contents and tend to be low, especially for short-term storage (Henrickson and McDonald 1983: 632–633;

[3] A seal impression from the excavation at Tell Arbid, rolled on a neckless jar, shows two seated figures drinking through drinking tubes from a large jar, clearly indicating the function of this type of jar. For important conclusions regarding the function of sealed vessels, see Bieliński 2009.

Rice 1987: 208–209, 211–212, 224–226). If we look at the primary functional characteristics in the ethnographic literature, we will see that long-term storage vessels, for both dry and liquid storage, are usually heavy when full, thus restricting the amount of movement (Henrickson and McDonald 1983: 633; Rice 1987: 237–242). Liquid storage vessels tend to be tall and narrow to aid in pouring. They tend to have wide mouths, perhaps to facilitate dipping. As can be expected short-term liquid storage vessels tend to be smaller than the long-term forms.

A second type of general function considers vessels used for serving and eating. These are usually low bowls with flat bottoms. They can be small-sized or larger for individual and group eating ("family size"), respectively. Both types of bowls have a rim diameter typically two or three times the height (Henrickson and McDonald 1983: 632). Small and middle-sized bowls could also be placed on top of jars as lids. Cups for drinking can also be placed in this category. As said above, there are a large number of seal impressions from Urkesh with scenes of drinking from conical-shaped cups (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1995–1996: 9–10, 14–17).

In studying the ceramics from A14, the function-related characteristics of capacity, stability, accessibility and ease of movement can be related to the shapes and sizes found in the excavation (Rice 1987: 224–226). Where whole vessels are not available in this data, the overall size is estimated from the rim diameter, especially in the cases where the preserved rim sherd is more than 12% of the original rim diameter. These same shapes and sizes could be, and were, employed in other contemporary contexts for similar or quite different purposes. This should not come as a surprise as it is agreed in the ethnoarchaeological literature that usage of vessels, and indeed, even of sherds of broken vessels, can vary widely from the primary function and even from the actual function (Skibo 2013: 4–5).

In view of an ongoing analysis of the stratigraphy of all the features in A14, the discussion of ceramics in this article is limited to a subset of 792 shape sherds from Phases 3 and 4 out of a total of 8035 shape sherds from all the features in all the strata in A14. In this subset of 792 shape sherds, 157 are bowls (and within this 51 are deep bowls and 106 various other types of bowls) and 131 are jars, including 13 hole-mouth jars and 81 necked jars. There are 76 cups in the subset and the largest number of these are conical cups.

For the purposes of this study, deep bowls are considered as a type of container for dry long-term storage, a suggestion based on the ethnographic literature (Henrickson and McDonald 1983: 632–633; Rice 1987: 237–242); in A14, they have diameters within the range of 16–50 cm, thickened rims and

many have recessed rims for fitting lids. Short-term storage could have been the function of jars, both hole-mouth and necked; only a very few of these jars have a rim diameter of over 25 cm, so here they are all considered as being for short-term use. The largest group is necked, making them easier to carry even filled. These shapes are medium-fired, made with a slip giving a fairly smooth surface and have a base wide enough to make them fairly stable, even when empty. Serving and eating vessels are characterized by a number of small bowls with flat bases, a few medium bowls, and conical cups, which may have had additionally a scooping function. Bowls could have also been used as lids.

The stratigraphy and ceramics in A14: Phase 3

Attributed to Phase 3 is a primary floor deposit in stratum 10 and associated accumulations designated as A14a20. This deposit contained a number of restorable vessels. The floor itself, f213, was made of hardened earth, contained on its northern side by the southwest wall of the palace, the sole known containment for it. After the presentation of this floor material, ceramics in other Phase 3 strata in A14 are compared. In conclusion the ceramics from A14 Phase 4 are discussed.

There are a number of observations that can be made on the basis of the ceramics that were found *in situ* on the floor. There were at least 14 deep storage bowls with diameters ranging from 16 cm to 50 cm, intended for long-term storage [***Fig. 2***]. Many of them were decorated just under their thickened rims, the decoration included one or two lines of rope decoration (the most popular type with at least five examples). Wavy combed lines between an upper and lower combed border also occurred. In one case, the wavy combed border was combined with one line of rope decoration. One deep bowl [***Fig. 2***: A14q828-p2] had traces of bitumen on the interior and the exterior of the rim, probably for sealing a lid in place. Smaller jars, for short-term storage, had globular bodies with rim diameters in the range of 10–31 cm [***Fig. 3***]. They included both a narrow rim diameter and necked type, as well as a wider hole-mouth type with constriction just below the rim. There were at least 24 of these jars on the floor, pointing to short-term storage of dry food in this area. Two of these jars had vertical pierced lug handles [***Fig. 3***: A14.122 and A14.218]. These may have had a ritual function, since very few have been found in other Phase 3 contexts at the site. It does not seem likely that jars for long-term or short-term storage were used for storing liquids as the vessels were medium-fired with a

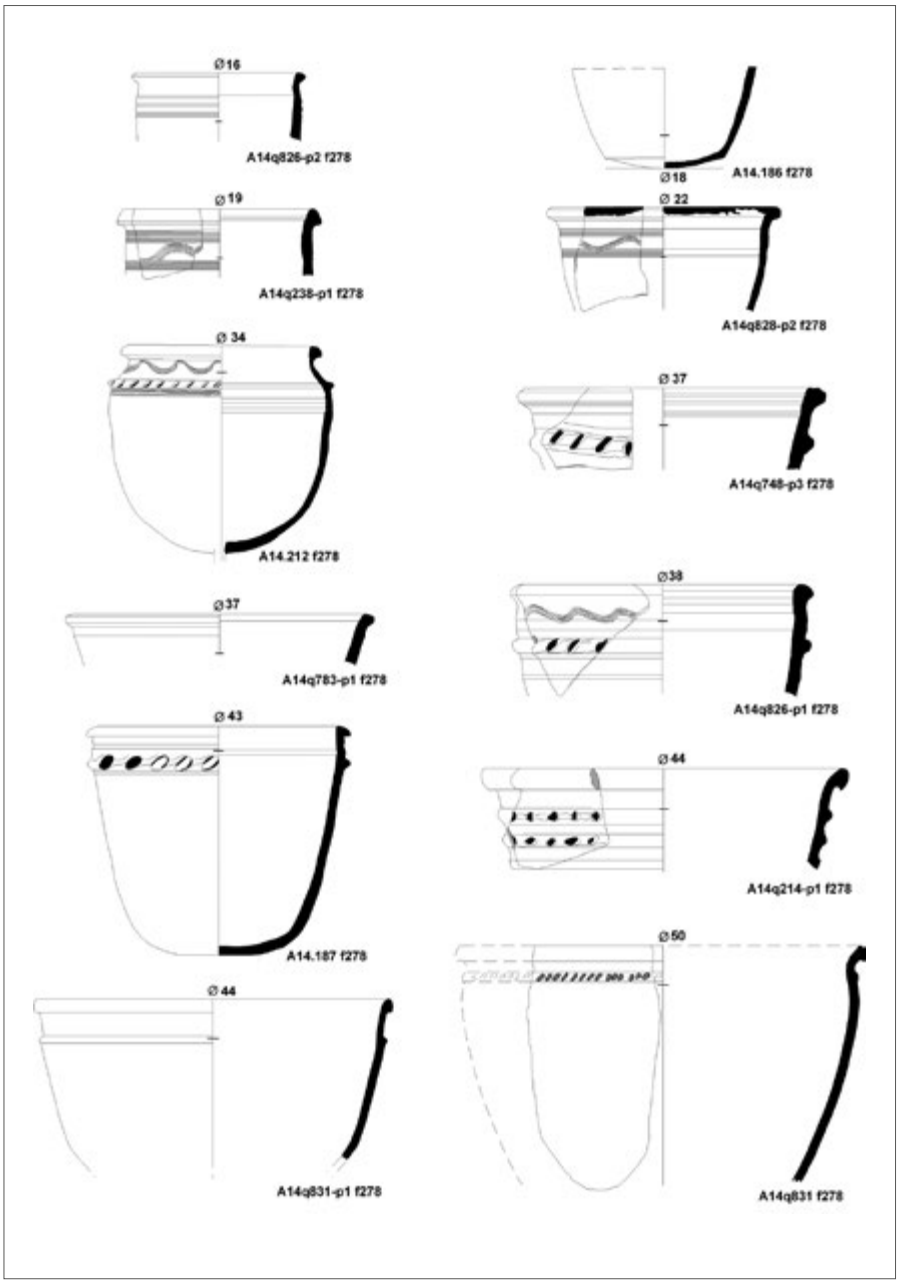


Fig. 2. Deep bowls from A14a20 (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)

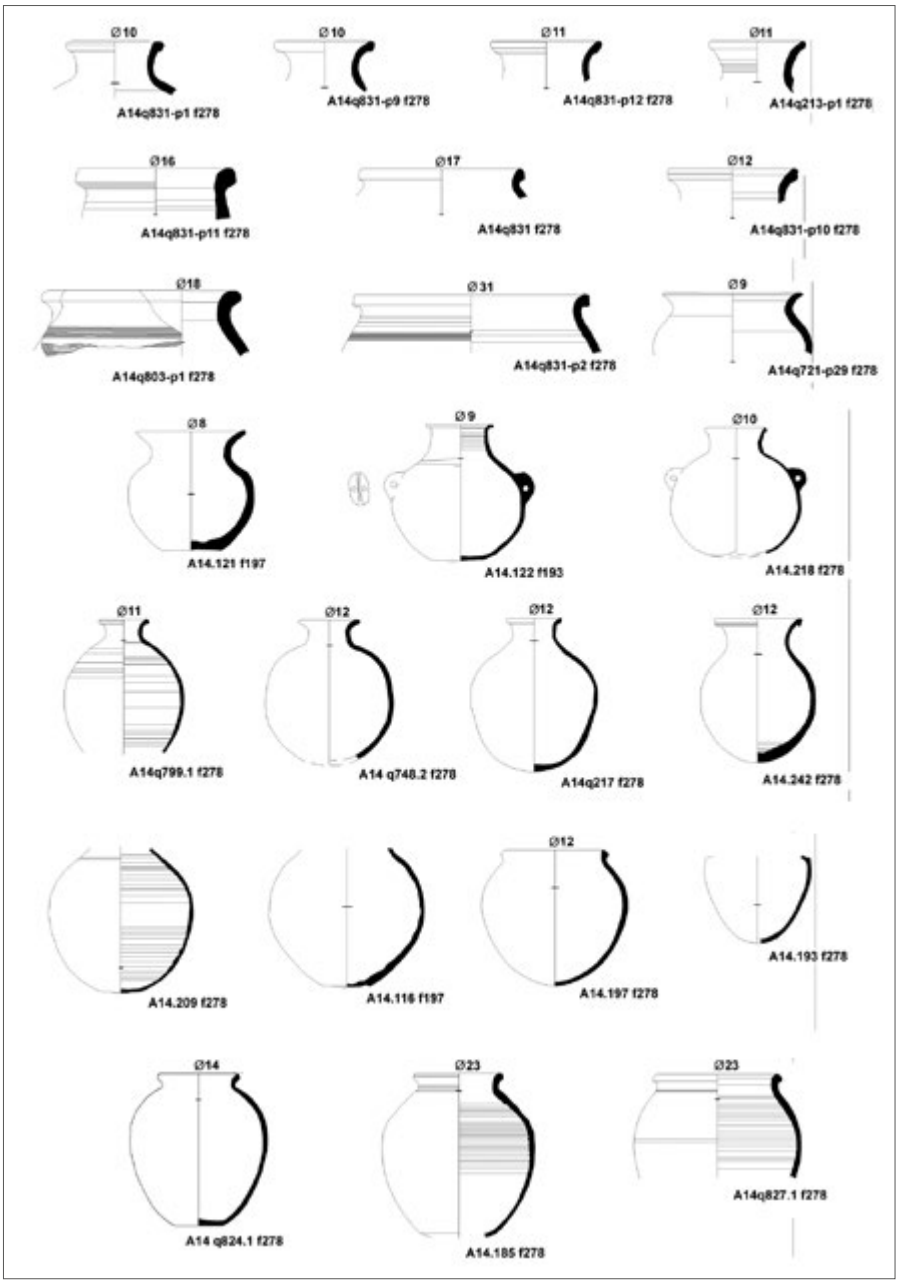


Fig. 3. *Jars from A14a20 (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)*

smooth exterior surface. Liquid would not have stayed very long in containers lacking any kind of interior (or even exterior) liquid proofing of the surface. This is not the case for cups made in Simple ware, well fired and with few, if any, inclusions.[4]

Small bowls were much less common as only seven of them came from this floor; one had a carinated shape and the others had a rounded profile [***Fig. 4***]. The limited number of serving or eating bowls appears to be part of the same pattern of use as the evidence from the jars and deep bowls. Cups were mainly of the tall conical cup variety (at least six), but there were some shorter examples [see ***Fig. 4***]. A tall cup [***Fig. 4***: A14.119] had traces of bitumen paint on the interior and dripped irregularly down the exterior. It may have been used as a container for bitumen applied to other vessels. No cooking vessels or vessels with traces of secondary firing were found connected with this floor.

In conclusion, the A14a20 floor assemblage appears to be connected with long-term and short-term dry food storage, but not with cooking, serving or eating. The conical cups as well as small bowls could have been used for scooping and in the case of the small bowls, for covering other containers. All

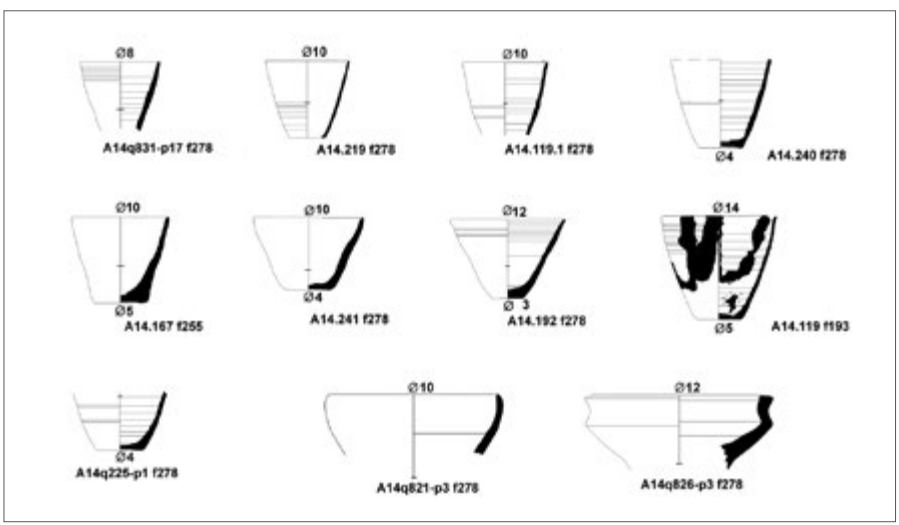


Fig. 4. *Cups and small bowls from A14a20 (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)*

[4] For ware descriptions used in the analysis of the Mozan/Urkesh ceramics, see the UGR descriptive framework at www.urkesh.org/ceramics. In the vessel drawings, the abbreviation "str" stands for "stratum"; the number at the top of each drawing refers to the diameter; the tick on the vertical line indicates the scale (measured at 5 cm from the top).

the forms therefore fit a pattern of ceramics used for dry-food storage. The storage capacity of the deep bowls used for long-term storage vessels was not large, making it appear that the greatest emphasis in the vessel inventory was on a relatively small amount of dry storage.

The analysis of all the remaining vessels and sherd lots in A14 Phase 3 strata provides a complementary picture to that given by the floor deposit, A14a20. These sherd lots were looked at from the viewpoint of the function of the area and the internal chronological development of the types, taking into consideration that the quantity of pottery in stratum 10 was considerably larger than in the other strata [***Figs 5–7***].[5]

Stratum 14 is the earliest stratum that can be dated to Phase 3. There were fewer sherds from this stratum than the other Phase 3 strata in A14. Bowls with evidence of being wiped with a plant on the exterior of the lower body at the end of the forming stage, probably to smooth out any deformities, are found in this stratum. These bowls typically have a flat base with strong concentric circles due to the fact that they were not finished after being cut off the wheel. The evidence from stratum 14 is not sufficient to discuss function or use in this area. However, chronologically, it appears to be close to Phase 2 because of the presence of the bowl type with plant-wiped lower body.

Stratum 13 contained at least five large jar rims and one medium jar. Dry-food storage in deep bowls was present in stratum 13 in the (at least) five deep bowls found. Conical cups are represented by six string-cut cup bases; in five of these more than half of the base was found so the number has a high probability of being correct. The only decoration was observed on a rim sherd with the usual combed wavy and straight line pattern. Two bowl sherds with plant-wiped lower bodies were also found. Unusual in this stratum is one flaring rim pot [***Fig. 8***] and a sherd with pointed base. This stratum then had some evidence of long-term dry storage.

In Stratum 12, the largest number of shapes was recorded for conical cups and bowls with string-cut bases. Small and medium jars were present, but not in large numbers, while there is at least one and possibly two large jars among the sherds. Deep bowls were more common than shallow bowls [see ***Figs 5–6***]. We can conclude that this stratum contained both short-term and long-term dry storage, as well as some indications of eating and drinking usage.

Stratum 11 contained a large number of conical cups with string-cut bases, as well as at least three cups with finished bases. Small wide bowls have both string-

[5] The body and shape sherds analysis from A14 will be published in the Urkesh Global Record database at www.urkesh.org.

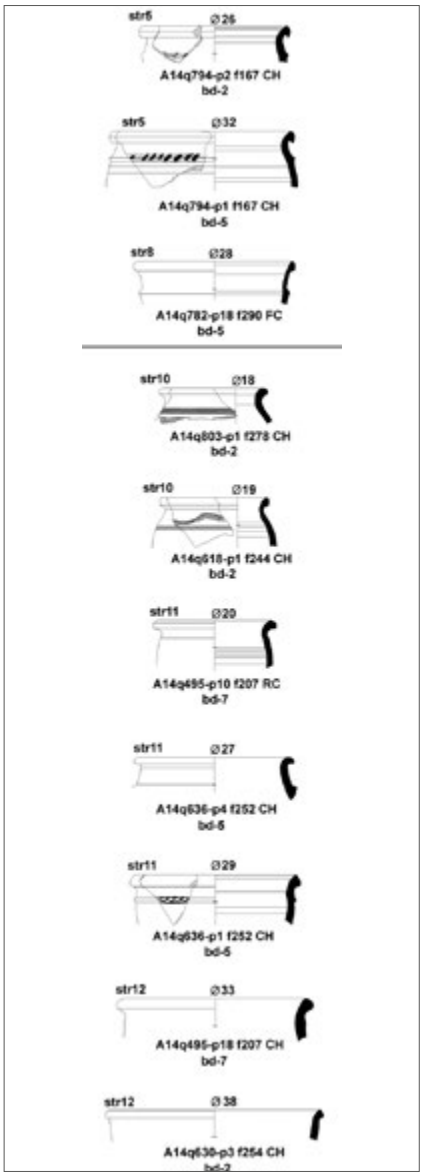


Fig. 5. *Deep bowls with constrictions below the rim from Phases 3 (bottom) and 4 (top); numbers above each vessel drawing indicate strata (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)*

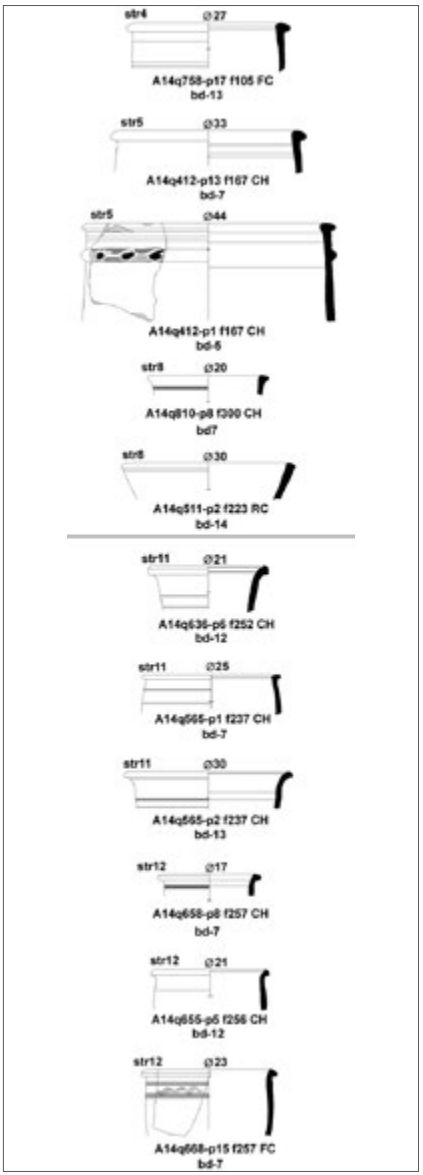


Fig. 6. *Deep bowls with straight sides from Phases 3 (bottom) and 4 (top); numbers above each vessel drawing indicate strata (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies*

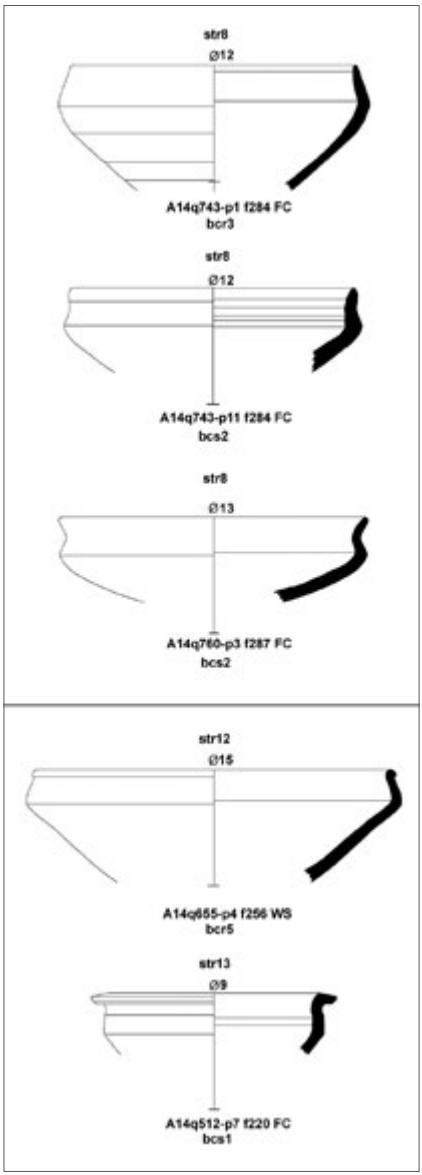


Fig. 7. Carinated small and medium bowls by strata from Phases 3 (bottom) and 4 (top); numbers above each vessel drawing indicate strata (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)

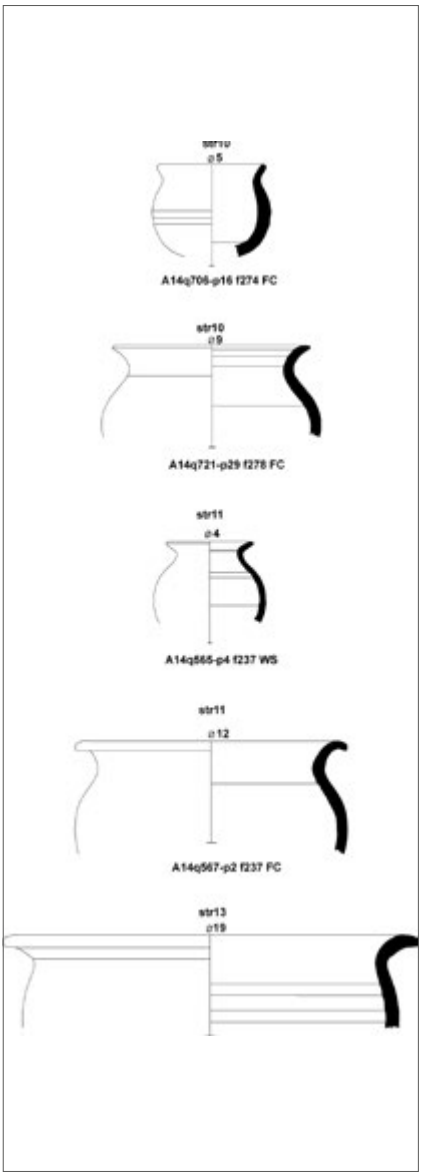


Fig. 8. Flaring rim pots from Phase 3; numbers above each vessel drawing indicate strata (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)

cut and the finer cut bases that have been smoothed. Deep bowls included four decorated vessels: three with template lines on the exterior and one with a thin rope decoration on the upper body [***Fig. 5***:A14q636-p1]. The stratum contained more bowls than jars, deep bowls and a few wide round-sided bowls being the most prominent; both can be associated with long-term storage. Straight-sided bowls have widely spaced template lines [see ***Fig. 6***] and one deep bowl has a groove inside the rim [see ***Fig. 6***:A14q636-p6]. Jars include mostly small and medium examples, but two jar rims may be from jars that are somewhat larger, although not as large as the largest of the storage jars from this period found on the site in other contexts. From the stratum comes an imported early Transcaucasian bowl rim; there are few early Transcaucasian vessels found at the site, but their presence is significant (Kelly-Buccellati 2004; 2018). One short spout just below the rim comes from a vessel of unknown shape. This stratum continues the emphasis on long-term dry storage in deep bowls. It follows the pattern of the earlier strata in focusing on long-term storage with some emphasis on drinking vessels that may have been used for scooping as well as drinking.

Stratum 10 has the largest number of sherds of all the strata. It also is associated with the floor connected with A14a20. Deep bowls can have one or two lines of rope decoration or rope decoration associated with a line of combed wavy lines both located just under the rim [see ***Fig. 5***]. The third type is a three-part band decoration with a line of horizontal combed, a line of wavy combed and a repeat of the horizontal combed decoration continued from stratum 12 [see ***Fig. 6***]. In general, deep bowls without shoulders almost always have decoration on the upper body below the rim but those with a shoulder are rarely decorated. Straight sided bowls can be decorated with parallel template lines both in Phases 3 and 4. These lines are not as closely spaced in Phase 3 as in Phase 4. In this stratum, cooking vessels are represented only in low quantities. The few sherds that are found are from the small globular jars with an outturned rim; they are fire-blackened from secondary firing during the cooking process.

There are no carinated small bowls in stratum 10; the bowls in this stratum have straight rims and straight sides or have in-turned rims and rounded sides. The middle-size round-sided but fairly open bowls, in a 12–14 cm diameter range, may have been for serving or eating by more than one person. The large number of conical cups, either with string-cut or finished-cut bases, may indicate that part of the function had to do with the use of eating and drinking vessels.

As in all other Phase 3 strata, there are few large jars in stratum 10: only one rim sherd of a very large storage jar with a rolled rim was found. The large number of medium jars points to a short-term dry-storage function for this area with an addition of serving and eating vessels.

Looking at just one specialized function, we see few examples of thin-walled small pots with flaring rims in any of the strata in A14 [see ***Fig. 8***]. They first appear in stratum 13, where the sole example is larger and thicker-walled than in later strata. Stratum 11 contained two examples and stratum 10 also had two examples. There were no examples from Phase 4 strata in A14. The small size and distinct shape indicate that it had a specialized function, which did not necessitate a lid as, for instance, a container for perfumed oils would. This pot may have been used for pigments or unguents.

The stratigraphy and ceramics in A14: Phase 4

While we can assess the chronological changes in ceramics from A14 Phase 4 strata, the quantities of ceramics in these strata make it difficult to assess the function of the area at this time. Even though there are fewer sherds in the Phase 4 strata compared to those of Phase 3, the sherds connected with this phase are typologically similar to other Phase 4 contexts. Stratum 9 is a transitional stratum between the two phases. Ribs begin to appear more frequently as decoration below the rim of jars; these jar rims are characteristic of Phase 4 strata in all areas of the site. The remaining sherds represent conical cups, always an important element among the Urkesh sherds from Phases 2–4.

Stratum 8 contains the earliest bowls with rounded carination and the beginning of a proportionately large number of bowls with sharp carination [see ***Fig. 7***]. Fewer small bowls have the Phase 3 slightly in-turned rim. Middle-sized jars appear now with ribs on the rim and template lines on the body. Pointed bases appear, although there was an earlier example in Stratum 13. Fewer conical cup bases were found in this stratum.

In Stratum 5, sharply carinated bowls continue. After a hiatus, deep bowls appear again; they can have a wide or thin line of rope decoration [see ***Figs 5–6***]. One example has a knob on the exterior. Conical cups again are frequent, but now more examples have cut bases. Small bowls continue to have the same shape as the Phase 3 examples, but now the upper body is slightly more inclined. One Simple ware bowl has a sharply incised line ("notch") on the exterior just below the rim. One bottle was also found among the rim sherds. While bottles also appear in Phase 3, they are never common.

Stratum 4 did not contain many sherds. Fine bowls with a notched rim continue as well as deep bowls.

Conclusions: Thoughts on the Function of Area A14

As reconstructed, the amount of dry-storage vessels found on the floor A14a20 is not extensive. It can be inferred that the floor deposit did not come about from servicing the needs of a converted architectural space that had been a palace (a large building, in which greater quantities would have been necessary). It was rather a different context where large quantities were not required. That this context could be connected with ceremonies in the *abi*, or associated with the platform and drain, cannot be proven, but it is clearly a strong possibility, suggested by the open character of the area where this assemblage was utilized. Contributing to this is the presence of a number of whole and almost whole vessels from this floor. Being so well preserved precisely as an assemblage, without protection of a room or an installation like a bin, means that the function was significant enough to guarantee its integrity. Such function could hardly have served any purpose better than the one associated with the contiguous platform and *abi*.

There are significant differences in the stratigraphy of A14 between Phase 3 and Phase 4. In Phase 3, the palace walls were still standing to their full height (even though the palace was no longer a royal residence), therefore they afforded greater protection for the accumulations that were building up against them. This explains the fact that a full assemblage (A14a20) could be preserved in its entirety, and that the overall ceramic corpus is rather homogeneous in spite of being in an open area. In Phase 4, the walls of the deserted palace were already in ruins and the upper parts had collapsed. The area was therefore less protected and more open to external intrusions, although on the whole it remained fairly integrated in terms of the ceramic corpus. It could be explained by the presumed continued use in service of the still functioning *abi* (Kelly-Buccellati 2002; Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2004).

While no clear patterns of the function of the area in Phase 4 can be seen, what limited evidence we have is not dissimilar to the functional patterns of Phase 3. Within a large urban setting with long term continuity in ethnic, political and economic terms, elements of change in the ceramics are less important than the establishment of patterns of long-term usage. In A14, the patterns of long-and short-term dry storage have been shown to exist. In addition, possible patterns of food consumption, both serving and eating, appear to be present, but to a more limited extent. On the basis of the ceramic evidence, it appears that during Phase 3 the function of the open area just outside the *abi* entrance and near the platform and large drain (the *abi* clearly had an important ritual function and it is hypothesized that the platform

and associated drain may have also been important) revolved around long- and short-term dry storage. In other words, supplies of ritual offerings, and perhaps the ceramic vessels, which were part of the rituals, might have been stored near the area where they would have been used. In this case, long-term

Fig. 9. *Ritual vessel from the abi (Courtesy IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies)*

and short-term are not easily definable, as this is an outdoor context. With storage in deep bowls, we may consider that long-term storage may have been a matter of a few days only, especially during the wetter parts of the year. Short-term storage may have been a matter of hours or a day.

Turning to the function of the area in Phase 4, we can add the evidence from the *abi* to the small number of ceramics from the open area outside this structure. The *abi* continued in use in this phase, but because of its function it yielded a number of types not found outside. Among these is a small ritual vessel in the shape of a nude woman carrying a small necked jar on her head [***Fig. 9***]. This vessel has been interpreted as a possible container of perfumed oil, mentioned in Hurrian texts preserved in later Hittite archives (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: Fig. 17; Recht 2014). Other unusual vessels include cups of a green type of Simple ware with vertical burnishing on the exterior (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2001: Fig. 18:7,8). In other early Phase 4 contexts, small open bowls made in this ware are radially burnished on the interior; these are rare in all early Phase 4 contexts and are not found in late Phase 4. If we compare the Phase 4 ceramics from inside the *abi* with those of the outside area, we see that deep bowls are a type better represented numerically on the outside, but never frequent. In the restricted space of the *abi,* it would be difficult to envision any type of storage. To a limited extent, the pattern in Phase 4 may reflect the one envisioned for Phase 3, that is, a continuing dry-storage function for this space along with the possibility of a restricted amount of food consumption in the same area.

References

As, A. van. (2004). Leiden studies in pottery technology. *Leiden Journal of Pottery Studies*, 20, 7–22

Atalay, S. and Hastorf, C.A. (2006). Food, meals, and daily activities: food habitus at Neolithic Çatalhöyük. *American Antiquity*, 71(2), 283–319

Barnard, H. (2011). Archaeological organic residue analysis. *Backdirt*, 2011, 19–23

Barnard, H., Dooley, A.N., Areshian, G., Gasparyan, B., and Faull, K.F. (2011). Chemical evidence for wine production around 4000 BCE in the Late Chalcolithic Near Eastern highlands. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 38(5), 977–984

Bieliński, P. (2009). Some cylinder seal impressions on pottery from Tell Arbid. In O. Drewnowska (ed.), *Here & there across the ancient Near East: Studies in honour of Krystyna Łyczkowska* (pp. 5–11). Warsaw: Agade

Bieliński, P. (2010). Tell Arbid. Preliminary report on the results of the twelfth season of Syrian–Polish excavations. *PAM*, 19, 537–554

Bieliński, P. (2012). Tell Arbid 2008–2009. Preliminary report on the results of the thirteenth and fourteenth seasons of Polish–Syrian excavations. *PAM*, 21, 511–536

Buccellati, G. (2017). *A critique of archaeological reason: Structural, digital and philosophical aspects of the excavated record*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Buccellati, G. and Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1995–1996). The royal storehouse of Urkesh: the glyptic evidence from the southwestern wing. *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 42/43, 1–32

Buccellati, G. and Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1996). The seals of the king of Urkesh: evidence from the western wing of the royal storehouse AK. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 86, 65–98

Buccellati, G. and Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2001). Überlegungen zur funktionellen und historischen Bestimmung des Königspalastes von Urkeš. Bericht über die 13. Kampagne in Tall Mozan/Urkeš: Ausgrabungen im Gebiet AA, Juni–August 2000. *MDOG*, 133, 59–96

Buccellati, G. and Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2004). Der monumentale Palasthof von Tall Mozan/Urkeš und die stratigraphische Geschichte des abi: Bericht über die 15. Kampagne 2002. *MDOG*, 136, 13–39

Henrickson, E.F. and McDonald, M.M.A. (1983). Ceramic form and function: an ethnographic search and an archeological application. *American Anthropologist*, 85(3), 630–643

Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2002). Ein hurritischer Gang in die Unterwelt. *MDOG*, 134, 131–148

Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2004). Andirons at Urkesh: new evidence for the Hurrian identity of the EarlyTrans-Caucasian culture. In A.G. Sagona (ed.), *A view from the highlands: Archaeological studies in honour of Charles Burney* [=*Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement* 12] (pp. 67–89). Leuven–Dudley, MA: Peeters

Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2016). Women's power and work in ancient Urkesh. In S.L. Budin and J.M. Turfa (eds), *Women in antiquity: Real women across the ancient world* (pp. 48–63). London–New York: Routledge

Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2018). Urkesh insights into Kura-Araxes social interaction. In A. Batmaz, G. Bedianashvili, A. Michalewicz, and A. Robinson (eds), *Context and connection: Studies on the archaeology of the ancient Near East in honour of Antonio Sagona* [=*OLA* 268] (pp. 107–124). Leuven: Peeters

Kelly-Buccellati, M. and Shelby, W.R. (1977). Terqa preliminary report, 4. A typology of ceramic vessels of the third and second millennia from the first two seasons. *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*, 1(6), 171–236

Longacre, W. (1981). Kalinga pottery: an ethnoarchaeological study. In I. Hodder, G.L. Isaac, and N. Hammond (eds), *Pattern of the past: Studies in honour of David Clarke* (pp. 49–66). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Recht, L. (2014). Perfume, women and the underworld in Urkesh exploring female roles through aromatic substances in the Bronze Age Near East. *Journal of Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Archaeology*, 1, 11–24

Reiche, A. and Smogorzewska, A. (2013). Ninevite 5 kitchen from Tell Arbid (Sector W). *PAM*, 22, 371–386

Rice, P.M. (1987). *Pottery analysis: A sourcebook*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Rice, P.M. (1996). Recent ceramic analysis: 1. Function, style, and origins. *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 4(2), 133–163

Sinopoli, C.M. (1991). *Approaches to archaeological ceramics.* New York: Plenum

Sinopoli, C.M. (1999). Levels of complexity: ceramic variability at Vijayanagara. In J.M. Skibo and G.M. Feinman (eds), *Pottery and people: A dynamic interaction* (pp. 115–136). Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press

Skibo, J.M. (2013). *Understanding pottery function*. New York: Springer

Skibo, J.M. (2015). Pottery use-alteration analysis. In J.M. Marreiros, J.F. Gibaja Bao, and N. Ferreira Bicho (eds), *Use-wear and residue analysis in archaeology* (pp. 189–198). Cham: Springer

Skibo, J.M. and Feinman, G.M. (eds). (1999). *Pottery and people: A dynamic interaction*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press

Smith, M. (1985). Toward an economic interpretation of ceramics: relating vessel size and shape to use. In B.A. Nelson (ed.), *Decoding prehistoric ceramics* (pp. 254–309). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press

Smogorzewska, A. (2014). Ninevite 5 kitchen ware: morphology and technological characteristic. *PAM*, 23/1, 471–504

Stark, M.T. (2003). Current issues in ceramic ethnoarchaeology. *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 11(3), 193–242

Websites:
http://www.urkesh.org

STORIES TOLD AROUND THE FOUNTAIN

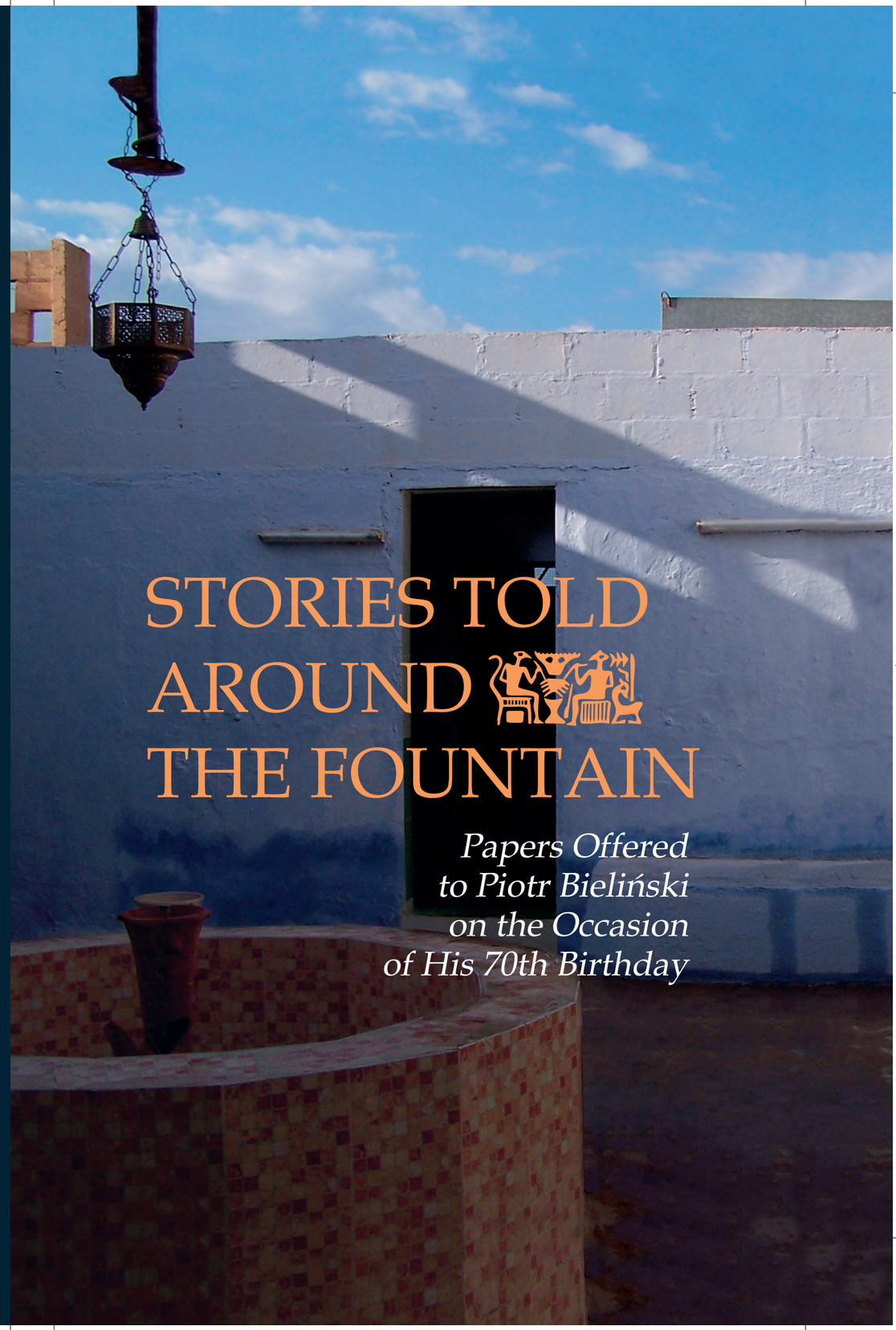
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

POLISH CENTRE OF MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

ISBN 978-83-235-4163-9

www.wuw.pl

WUW



STORIES TOLD AROUND THE FOUNTAIN

Papers Offered to Piotr Bieliński on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday

UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW | POLISH CENTRE OF MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Book chapter title: **Urkesh ceramic evidence for function**

Author: **Marylin Kelly-Buccellati**
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3872-4162

Book: *Stories told around the fountain.Papers offered to Piotr Bieliński on His 70th Bithday*
Editors: A. Pieńkowska, D. Szeląg & I. Zych
Year: 2019
Pages: 285-304

https://doi.org/10.31338/uw.9788323541714.pp.285-304

ISBN/ISSN: 978–83–235–4171–4
EAN: 9788323541714
Publisher: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw (PCMA UW); University of Warsaw Press

www.pcma.uw.edu.pl – pcma@uw.edu.pl – pam.pcma@uw.edu.pl
www.wuw.pl

Abstract
A 14 is a well defined stratigraphic space, adjacent to a ceremonial platform and to the *abi*, the underground passage to the Netherworld. Some significant ceramic assemblages were found there, and an analysis of their function suggests that they were used for storage of dry goods in function of events that would take place in connection with the ceremonial features nearby.

Key words
Urkesh/Tell Mozan, Urkesh *abi*, platform, ceramic function, quantitative analysis

How to cite this chapter:

Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2019). Urkesh ceramic evidence for function. In A. Pieńkowska, D. Szeląg, & I. Zych (Eds.), *Stories told around the fountain. Papers offered to Piotr Bieliński on the occasion of his 70th birthday* (pp. 285–304). Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press; PCMA UW.
https://doi.org/10.31338/uw.9788323541714.pp.285-304

STORIES TOLD AROUND THE FOUNTAIN

Papers Offered to Piotr Bieliński on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday

Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw

Peer-reviewed.

Volume editors: Agnieszka Pieńkowska, Dariusz Szeląg and Iwona Zych
Language consultation and proofreading: Katarzyna Bartkiewicz (French),
Agata Czamara and Iwona Zych (English)
Peer-review process: Agata Czamara
Bibliographic editor: Aleksandra Zych
Image processing: Ewa Czyżewska-Zalewska, Konrad Krajewski
DTP: Konrad Krajewski
Cover and title page design: Łukasz Rutkowski
Photo on frontispiece: Łukasz Wojnarowicz

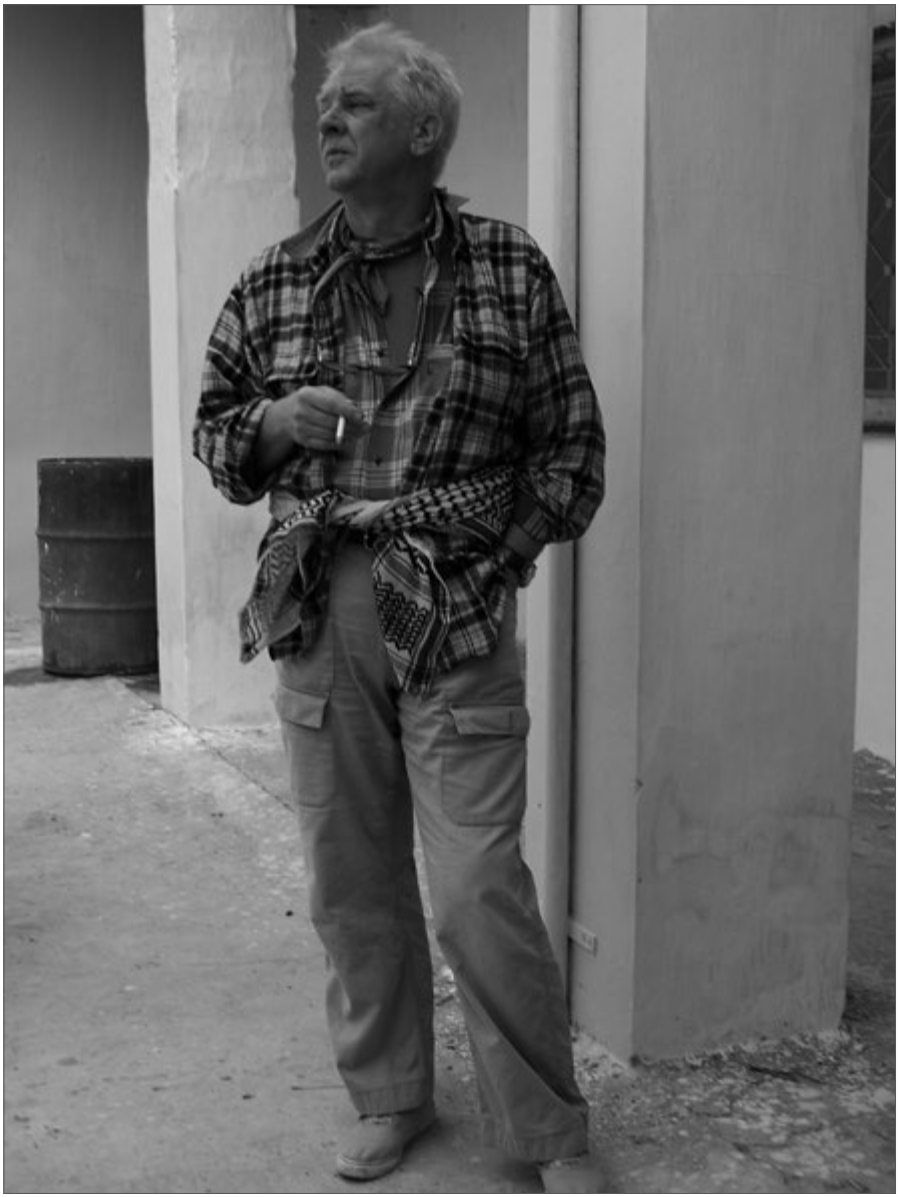
Cover: The fountain in the courtyard of the Tell Arbid archaeological dighouse, 2009 (Photo Ł. Wojnarowicz)

ISBN 978-83-235-4163-9 (print)
ISBN 978-83-235-4171-4 (online)

CIP – Biblioteka Narodowa
Stories told around the fountain : papers offered to Piotr Bieliński on the occasion of his 70-th birthday / [volume editors: Agnieszka Pieńkowska,Dariusz Szeląg and Iwona Zych]. - [Warsaw] : [Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology. University of Warsaw : University of Warsaw Press], [© 2019]

Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw
ul. Nowy Świat 4, 00-497 Warsaw, Poland, www.pcma.uw.edu.pl

University of Warsaw Press
ul. Nowy Świat 4, 00-497 Warszawa, Poland; www.wuw.pl
Printed in Poland: Totem.com.pl



Contents

Opowieści wokół Piotra / Stories about Piotr

Stories told around the fountain