

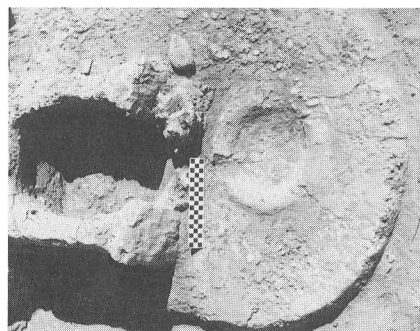
THE CHICAGO EUPHRATES PROJECT

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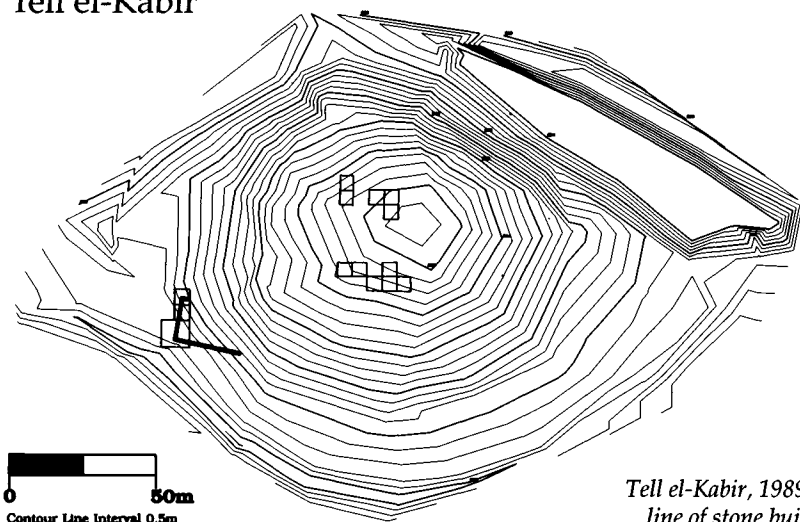
ARCHAEOLOGY

A second season of excavations was conducted by The Oriental Institute in the Tishreen Dam flood zone from late July to October, 1990. This year, work concentrated on the small 2.3 hectare site of Tell el-Kabir (formerly called Tell Mresh) with the purpose of exploring the interrelationship of satellite sites to main sites (i.e. Tell el-Banat Village) during periods of simultaneous and alternating occupation. Anne Porter, a graduate student from Chicago, directed a small team consisting of Joe Baruffi (Chicago), Mandy Mottram (Canberra), and surveyor Richard MacNeill (Melbourne). ▼ In 1989 portions of a stone building dating to the Early Bronze II/III? period were excavated in the southwest corner of Tell el-Kabir. Its size, thick walls, careful construction and straight lines indicate it was a public structure. After it was abandoned, circular storage pits, which we tentatively date to Early Bronze IV, were cut into the stone building. The floor of the stone building was devoid of objects, but the pits contained pottery and figurine fragments.



Horseshoe hearth and circular feature in Intermediate Early Bronze - Middle Bronze building, Tell el-Kabir

Tell el-Kabir



0 50m
Contour Line Interval 0.5m

Tell el-Kabir, 1989. Dark
line of stone building of
Early Bronze III/IV

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An Intermediate Early Bronze–Middle Bronze stratum was encountered while excavating more of the stone building. Six rooms of a mudbrick structure were filled with pottery. The roof had fallen in on some rooms and their contents were well-preserved — two horseshoe hearths, small storage bins, storage vessels, grinding stone, and domestic vessels *in situ*, including a jar with a tubular spout flanked by lions, like a pot at Sweyhat. The mud-plaster surface of several walls was painted with widely spaced white dots.

This ceramic assemblage is of special interest because it contains an unusual combination of forms that are normally attributed to different periods of time: the Syrian Early Bronze IV and Middle Bronze I periods. The assemblage has similarities to the Intermediate Early Bronze–Middle Bronze period III at Kurban Hoyuk and to elements of Early Bronze IV at Tell es-Sweyhat, and Middle Bronze I and IIA at Tell Hadidi. The assemblage may fill a gap between the Early and Middle Bronze Ages that exists between Tell Mardikh IIB2 and IIIA, and it may necessitate moving up some Early Bronze IV dates or moving down some Middle Bronze dates in the Syro-Palestinian chronologies.

Also over 80 burials, usually with no grave goods, have been excavated in two seasons. A small flat (bulldozed) site several hundred meters to the south was examined and planned this year; it dates to the Byzantine-Islamic period. It is probably the true Tell Mresh, while the site being excavated is probably Tell el-Kabir. Many of the burials at Tell el-Kabir may be part of cemetery for the inhabitants of this later site.

During the year an article "Archaeological Surveys of the Tishreen Dam Flood Zone" was submitted for publication as well as a preliminary report on the excavations of 1989. A comprehensive ceramic typology

based on pottery from 1988 surface surveys was completed. Research on the Early Bronze rampart fortifications at Tell el-Banat Village led to investigation of early fortifications and earthworks throughout Syria and adjacent areas.



Intermediate Early Bronze - Middle Bronze building at Tell el-Kabir