A Local Temple in the Iron Age Village?
Reassessing a Building Complex at Tell Mastuma in the Northern Levant

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Between 1993 and 1995, a large building complex was excavated in the Iron Age settlement at Tell Mastuma by the Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo. This paper seeks to reassess the function of that complex both within the settlement and in the broader context of the Iron Age northern Levant, taking a stage further the interpretation presented in the final site report. This has involved: 1) a detailed architectural analysis employing data obtained from the excavation records; 2) a consideration of comparable Iron Age religious structures encountered in the immediate neighborhood of Mastuma as well as across the wider Levant; 3) re-examination of excavated finds from the building and from other parts of the Mastuma, focusing on those of a potentially cultic nature; 4) a consideration of the physical positioning of the building within the Mastuma settlement, and the possible relevance of that location; 5) possible links with the historical record. The essential conclusion reached is that the Mastuma building represented a local “temple” functioning at least in part as a center of provincial control for the local Iron Age polity based at Tell Afis/Hazrak.

Keywords: Iron Age, northern Levant, temple complex, Tell Mastuma, rural settlement

I. Introduction

During the Iron Age (ca. 1200-550 BCE), the northern Levant (Fig. 1) underwent a dramatic transformation in socio-political terms. After the political and economic “collapse” which occurred between the end of 13th century and the beginning of the 12th century BCE, local polities emerged. These polities, which were actively competing and interacting with one another, and are often called today by ethnolinguistic labels based on textual evidence: namely “Neo-Hittite (or Luwian)”, “Aramaean” or “Phoenician” (e.g. Hawkins 1982, 1995, 2000; Sader 1987; Dion 1997; Lipiński 2000; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003,

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Fig. 1. Sites Mentioned in the text and the Location of the Northern Levant.
360-97; Melchert 2003). In the 9th century BCE, the Neo-Assyrian imperial power actively began to involve itself or intervene with these polities. Eventually, by the end of the 8th century BCE, the majority of polities had been transformed into imperial provinces or vassal states of the Neo-Assyrian empire.

Archaeological investigations of this period have of late burgeoned. Excavations at several important urban centers, such as Tell Afis, Tell Qarqur, Tell Ta’yinat, and Zincirli are on-going and revealing hitherto unknown cultural-historical aspects of Iron Age material culture (e.g. Cecchini and Mazzoni 1998; Dornemann 2003; Harrison 2009; Schloen and Fink 2009). Inevitably information derived from the latest work casts a new and instructive light on previous understandings and interpretations, including the topic I wish to discuss here.

This paper seeks to investigate the issue of how, in practical terms, northern Levantine local polities controlled or administrated their territories from the urban capitals: specifically it addresses the role of religious architecture in a rural settlement. The evidence with which I deal relates to Tell Mastuma, a small rural site (ca. 3 ha) located in northwest Syria in the province of Idlib within the Syrian Arab Republic. The site was extensively excavated by a team (of which during two seasons I was a member) from the Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo between 1980 and 1995 (Iwasaki et al. 2009). Approximately 40% of the Iron Age settlement (ca. 1 ha in total) was revealed providing a rare example of how rural town planning operated during the Iron Age II period (Wakita et al. 2000; Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.1).

Between 1993 and 1995, in the southern part of the mound of Mastuma, a large building complex was excavated, labeled “House 4b-1” (Fig. 2). The focus of the present paper is a re-examination of this building’s function, taking a stage further the interpretation presented in the final site report. Based on a fresh examination of both architectural features and finds, the view is here put forward that this building had been a local “temple” functioning at least in part as a center of provincial control by the local Iron Age polity.

In the following pages we shall look in detail, first, at House 4b-1 employing data obtained from the excavation records. Secondly, we shall consider parallel Iron Age religious structures encountered both in neighboring areas and in the wider Levantine context. Thirdly, excavated finds from House 4b-1 and from other parts of the Iron Age Mastuma settlement will be re-examined, focusing on those items of a potentially cultic nature. Fourthly, the spatial location of House 4b-1 within the Mastuma settlement will be considered in an attempt to discern the relevance of its location. Lastly, the historical
Fig. 2. Iron Age II Settlement at Tell Mastuma, Stratum I-2, and the Location of House b4-1 in Block 4.
significance within the northern Levant of House b4-1 will be assessed based on related textual and archaeological evidence.

II. A Building Complex at Mastuma

During the final two excavation seasons (1994, and 1995), the Ancient Orient Museum expedition uncovered a large building complex in the southern part of the excavation area. It was the largest building complex excavated at the site. This complex, House b4-1, is located in “Block 4” of the settlement (Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.2). The structure measured ca. 27 m (north-south) × ca. 16 m (east-west) and the major walls were positioned approximately in accordance with the cardinal points. The central part of the structure consisted of a courtyard (b4-1-4) and behind that an inner room (b4-1-5) (Figs. 3, 4, and 5a-b). These two features were surrounded by a series of smaller rooms. The main entrance of House 4b-1 was located on its southern side where a roughly carved stone threshold remained. Although House b4-1 was poorly preserved due to later pit construction, its size and distinctive architectural features reflected its importance within the Iron Age settlement at Mastuma. But what was this imposing building complex, and what function had it played within the settlement?

The final site report of Mastuma notes that while House b4-1 was by far the largest excavated structure at the site, the finds unearthed were very poor in quality. The report accordingly concludes that “nothing allows us to identify it as a palace, a temple complex, or other public building” (Wada 2009a, 189). Instead it is proposed that the structure probably represented “a residence for a high ranking or influential person” (idem.). The report ventures that the structure had probably had an administrative or communal function also (Wakita 2009, 507). Unfortunately, the analysis is vague and somewhat contradictory. A detailed re-examination of the data is therefore in order.

Although House b4-1 was poorly preserved, it is possible to observe within the archaeological record several different phases of rebuilding or refurbishment of walls and floors. Within Level b, Stratum I-2, House b4-1 preserved evidence of several minor building phases; the number and extent of rebuilding or refurbishment cannot be clearly determined in all locations, however, due to later disturbance. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the final site report, some rooms surrounding the inner room and the courtyard certainly had been transformed over time (Wada 2009a, 189). Here we will re-examine the rooms of House b4-1 based on both the final site report and the excavation record, and propose an alternative architectural analysis.
Fig. 3. Ground Plan of House b4-1 (after Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.61)
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Fig. 4. Plan of the Pillared Room (b4-1-5) and the Courtyard (b4-1-4) in House b4-1 (after Wada 2009, Fig. 4.63, modified by the author).
Fig. 5. (a) House b4-1 from the North (after Wada 2009a, Pl. 4.19, modified by the author); (b) Courtyard and Entrance of House b4-1 from the South (after Wada 2009, Pl. 4.20, modified by the author)
We shall consider first the two main features of House b4-1: the inner room and the courtyard. With the inner room, two floor levels were identified according to the excavation record. Floor A, which is the uppermost level, was partly paved with stones. Beneath Floor A, Floor B preserved a far more complex situation: two parallel rows of four column bases. Between the two central column bases on the west, was placed a large “spherical stone” (ibid. 185, 189). The top part of this stone was flattened and circular in shape and the top of the stone sat markedly higher than the column bases (Fig. 6). Whether it had been set in place contemporaneously along with the column bases or slightly later, cannot now be determined. Nevertheless, since the stone was positioned so close to the column bases and since the top was at a different level, it probably had not served as a column base.

Additional archaeological features were discovered in the inner room, though these were not mentioned in the final site report. Between the two parallel columns in the south, a small oven was unearthed (Figs. 4 and 6). Unfortunately, due to later disturbance, it could not be established decisively which floor level or building phase this was to be associated with. However, several fragments of walls were unearthed below Floor B (Walls A, B, and C in

![Image of archaeological features](image_url)

*Fig. 6. Detail of the Pillared Room (b4-1-5) from the East (after Wada 2009a, Pl. 4.22, modified by the author).*
Fig. 4), in the west and south part of the inner room. It seems that these walls had created a cornered area of a type in which ovens have been found in other houses at Mastuma. Thus, it seems that this inner room had previously served as a domestic or kitchen space before being subsequently altered into a “pillared” room. While the possibility exists that the oven had been used for cultic purposes, clearly it was not associated with the column bases, i.e. Floor B, since it blocks access to this inner room from the entrance.

During Floor B’s period of use, the inner room was surrounded by a thick wall of which only the western portion remained. This wall had a width of at least 2 m, which is unusual for an ordinary room (ca. 1-1.5 m in width). What is more interesting is that the lower inside portion of this wall was covered by stone slabs. These slabs resemble orthostats of the sort employed in monumental “Neo-Hittite” architecture (see Mazzoni 1997), though here they did not carry any decoration. The west wall extended further to the south and connected with a large foundation (ca. 4 m × 4 m) constructed of boulders (ca. 70-100 cm in width). This can be interpreted as the foundation of a tower. If the wall and the tower foundation had been placed symmetrically, then a possible reconstruction of the inner room structure may be ventured: Fig. 4. An entrance to this inner room was found in the structure’s south side, with two flat stones representing a threshold. According to my reconstruction, this entrance was flanked by two towers and such a reconstructed plan has a close resemblance to that of the temple recently found at Tell Afis (see below).

Unfortunately, the east wall of this inner room had been both heavily destroyed and modified, especially by the construction of the walls in Level a, Stratum I-2. Room b4-1-6 constructed in the northeast of the inner room is a particular puzzle. This chamber which looks like an extension of the inner room had two floor levels with partition wall running along the western edge. This wall (Wall D in Fig. 4) is well aligned with the walls of Rooms a4-1 and a4-2 in Level a (Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.62). If this was an earlier foundation of the walls in Level a, Room b4-1-6, then one might assume that it had been constructed later than Floor B of the inner room. The upper floor of Room b4-1-6 was paved with mud-bricks, the lower one with stones. However, a rather different interpretation of these floors is possible. If the stone paved floor represented the remains of the foundation of the east wall, then the overlying mud-bricks are likely to have represented the remains of this wall’s actual upper structure. The reconstruction of the east wall in Fig. 4 roughly covers the area of the stone paved floor. Probably this wall had subsequently been destroyed and leveled to leave a modest height of the mud brick available for re-use as the floor of Room b4-1-6.
Another puzzling point is the wall constructed just to the south of Room b4-1-6 (Wall E in Fig. 4). The wall is constructed of boulders resembling those from the foundation of the tower, but it is aligned neither with the west wall of Room b4-1-6 nor with the west wall of Room a4-2 which was made with mud-bricks. This wall was probably constructed later than the west wall of Room b4-1-6 and earlier than the west wall of Room a4-2 since these were superimposed one upon the other. What is strange is that the wall does not match the reconstructed east wall of the inner room. It is also connected to the entrance of this inner room. A possible interpretation is that the wall had been constructed some time after the destruction of the east wall, but while the entrance to the inner room was still in use. It may have been considered too major an operation to transform the northeast part of the inner room by extending the wall further east. The inside portion of this wall was not covered by stone slabs like the west wall, while the space between the wall and the east row of column bases is much narrower (ca. 40-50 cm) than the space between the west wall and the west row of column bases (ca. 120 cm). These facts suggest that the east wall was not associated with Floor B of the inner room. It is more reasonable to assume that this wall was constructed after the original east wall of the inner room had been destroyed.

To sum up, the following transformation of the east wall of the inner room may be proposed. First, the east wall of the inner room was destroyed and Wall D was built to create Room b4-6-1. Then, sometime later, Wall E was built to connect with Wall D. Finally, Wall F was built on Wall E employing mud-bricks to create Room a4-2.

We turn now to the courtyard. Although heavily damaged by later pit construction, mainly during the Persian period, it is possible to observe some minor changes from the excavation record. At least three floor levels (not mentioned in the final site report) were identified (Figs. 4 and 5b). The uppermost floor level was unearthed in the eastern part of the courtyard which was bordered by the mud-brick wall constructed in Level a (Wall F in Fig. 4). This floor was covered by plaster and pebble mixed soil (called “terrazzo-like” in the final site report. See Wada 2009a, 185). On this floor, attached to the east wall of the courtyard, four bread ovens were unearthed (ibid. and Fig. 4.63). These ovens were positioned very close to each other and we could observe the remains of another oven buried beneath the southernmost oven. Such installations suggest that the area was specifically and continuously used as a kitchen area and mainly for bread baking. Just to the west of the oven area, a row of three large cylindrical stones had been placed. In the final site report,
These stones are interpreted as column bases for a roof intended to protect the ovens from rain (ibid.). Since the stones were placed very close to the ovens, another interpretation might be to regard them as tables for food preparation. The plaster and pebble mixed floor was probably laid in this kitchen area to protect the floor from the water which would have been employed during food preparation. In addition, a solid wall made by two rows of stones had been placed to the south of this kitchen area (Wall G in Fig. 4). This wall was interpreted in the final site report not as a foundation of the wall, but as a pavement or as a built-in table for bread making (ibid.). Another interpretation might be that it represented the remains of a wall establishing the southern perimeter of the courtyard. This is because such ovens are often located in the corner areas of buildings at Mastuma, while in addition the wall aligned with other extant wall remains which created the southern perimeter of the courtyard (see Fig. 3).

To the west of the plaster and pebble mixed floor a second floor level could be observed. This floor was covered by pebble mixed soil. No installations were found on the floor level. At the westernmost end of the courtyard, a third floor was encountered in a narrow trench. Upon this lowest floor level, three bread ovens had been constructed. Thus, the western part of the courtyard was being utilized as a kitchen area similar to the uppermost floor level in the eastern part. To sum up, there were at least three floor levels in the courtyard, and the eastern and western edges were used over an extended period as an area for food preparation including the baking of bread.

Lastly we shall consider briefly the rooms surrounding the inner room and the courtyard. As mentioned in the final site report (Wada 2009a, 189), the surrounding rooms had been subject to constant refurbishment mainly by adding/removing partition walls and laying new floors. In most cases, the functions of the rooms could not be determined. This was due to poor preservation of any floor installations as well as to the fact that artifacts which might have suggested the precise functions of the rooms were rarely collected. Nevertheless, the floors of some rooms in the northern part did preserve built-in installations. Rooms b4-1-14 and b4-1-13, which were in the northwest part of House b4-1, had large storage jars half sunk into the floor. Such a presence may suggest that these rooms had been used as storage areas. Room b4-1-16, which was in the northwest corner, had a bread oven in the angle of the walls, suggesting that it had served as a kitchen area. The room had an opening on the west side.

Room b4-1-18, which is located to the north of the inner room, had a
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particularly interesting installation. The room was oriented along an east-west axis and had a mud-brick paved floor. Two shallow, parallel gutters had been formed in the floor, and at the west end of the north gutter a large storage jar was sunk. Presumably both gutters had originally possessed such a sunken jar at the western end, but the south gutter had been half destroyed by a later pit. Similar installations have been found elsewhere in the Iron Age settlement at Mastuma (e.g. Room b3-1-2 in Wada 2009a, 120, Fig. 4.15; Room b3-7-4 in Wada 2009a, 153, Fig. 4.49; and Room a6-5-3 in Wada 2009a, 253, Fig. 4.118), where they have been recognized as built-in floor installations for making grape juice or wine. The installation in Room b4-1-18 differs slightly from other similar installations by having two gutters instead of one, and by having the floor composed of mud bricks rather than plaster, though in fact these mud bricks had originally been coated with plaster since patches were observed, especially in the gutter area. In size, Room b4-1-18 is the largest such wine installation so far excavated at Mastuma. The room had been later transformed into a storage area (Wada 2009a, 189), and then probably used as a burial place since a jar burial using a large storage jar was found in the southeast part of the room (Fig. 5a).

The above re-examination of the data shows that House b4-1 not been an ordinary residence. The main part of the building consists of a pillared room and a substantial courtyard which had a large kitchen area. The main features of the building complex, the pillared room and the courtyard, were surrounded by rooms, some of which had a storage function and a relatively large wine installation was located to the north of the pillared room. In the next section, we shall consider the parallels which exist for such a building complex.

III. Parallels of the Mastuma Building Complex

To understand the function of House b4-1 and its inner pillared room, we must consider parallels. Unfortunately, in the northern Levant, there are no rural sites excavated as extensively as Mastuma. Thus, for comparisons we have to extend our range to include the urban sites. Bearing in mind always the significant difference between local and urban, we may start with Mastuma’s neighboring sites.

The most extensively excavated Iron Age urban site near Mastuma is Tell Afis, which is located ca. 16 km northeast of Mastuma. Naturally the Iron Age material culture of Afis has a close relationship with that of Mastuma. Afis is well known as the ancient Hazrak, which was the seat of king Zakkar around 800 BCE and the capital of Hamath and Lu’ash/Luhuti (Mazzoni 2001, 99-100; Lipiński 2000, 256-57).
Recent excavations in Area A of Afis, which is situated on the acropolis mound, revealed a large in antis temple (Figs. 7a and 8b; Soldi 2009, 106, Fig. 6; Mazzoni 2010a, 188, Fig. 1; 2010b, 364-66). This temple (Temple AI) measured ca. 32 m × 25 m with its long-axis running north-south. It had two side towers at the southern façade where the entrance’s cut stone threshold was located. The wall’s foundation, which was made of rough blocks, was ca. 2.6 m in width. The building was poorly preserved, but it apparently had a tripartite plan with the floor of the central room covered with hard plaster. Temple AI is regarded by the excavators as the main temple of Hazrak, where the principal deity was a weather god, Teshub/Ba’al (Mazzoni 2010a, 189). The origin of the temple goes back to the Iron Age I period (1050-950 BCE) and at least three main building phases have been identified (Soldi 2009, 108, Mazzoni 2010a, 187-189; 2010b, 364-65). The dating of Temple AI seems to fall within the Iron Age III period (the 7th-6th century BCE). What is interesting is that to the south of its entrance, a large courtyard (ca. 30 m × 15 m) was found (Mazzoni 2010a, 188; 2010b, 365). At least two floor levels covered with plaster were identified.

If we compare the pillared room of Mastuma with the Afis temple, a number of similarities may be observed. First, the two towers of Afis temple are very much like those of Mastuma, though the latter had evidence for only one remaining. Secondly, the thick walls of the temple structures are similar: Mastuma ca. 2 m, and Afis ca. 2.6 m. Thirdly, the main entrance is located to the south, with the long-axis of the entire building running in a north-south direction. Fourthly, at both sites, a courtyard which once had a plastered floor was located to the south of the main structure. On the other hand, two major differences can be pointed out. First, the main cella of the structure at Mastuma preserved column bases, while the Afis structure had merely a plaster coated floor. Secondly, the Afis structure had an independent tripartite plan, while that of Mastuma was a single chamber structure surrounded by a series of rooms.

The pillared room at Mastuma contained no artifacts to directly identify the structure as a temple. However, the several existing architectural similarities to the Afis temple suggest that the Mastuma structure had been planned as such also, if on a much smaller scale (see Fig. 8a-b).

If the pillared room at Mastuma had been the cella of a local temple, can any resemblance to other Iron Age temples in the northern Levant be detected? Iron Age temples in the region are so far known largely from the urban sites, in particular, Carchemish, Tell Ta’yinat, ‘Ain Dara, Aleppo citadel, and probably Hama. These known urban Iron Age temples in the northern Levant may broadly be classified into two styles: the so-called “long-room” (or “Langraum”).
Fig. 7. (a) Temple Al, Tell Afis (after Mazzoni 2010a, Fig. 1); (b) Temple Complex 650, Tel Miqne-Ekron (after Gitin 2003, Fig. 1).
Fig. 8. Plan of Various Iron Age Temples Mentioned in the Text compared with the Pillared Room (b4-1-5) of Mastuma (8a).

style, and the “in antis” style. The former has an axial length longer than its width, and an interior normally separated into two or three parts: a porch, an antecella, and a cella. The entrance is located on the short side. The latter, in anti style, has a broad porch flanked by two antae (Werner 1994, 83-115). These styles are recognized as containing elements of a traditional Syrian temple plan whose origins go back to the Early Bronze Age (Werner 1994; Mazzoni 2010b). Among various examples, a Middle Bronze Age II temple (Temple P2) unearthed at Tell Mardikh/Ebla is worth mentioning in relation to the Mastuma pillared building. It was of in antis style with two parallel rows of four pillar bases in a cella (Fig. 8g; Matthiae 1997, Fig. 14.9). Although the size of Temple
P2 is much larger than that of Mastuma, the similarity in style may imply that the Mastuma “temple” was following an earlier, Middle Bronze Age prototype or tradition.

The earliest examples of the Iron Age temples in the northern Levant have been uncovered at the Aleppo citadel and ‘Ain Dara (Fig. 8d-e). The Aleppo temple reconstruction follows the “broad room” style, in which the cella has a width longer than the longitudinal axis (Gonnella et al. 2005, 89, Abb. 117). On the other hand, the ‘Ain Dara temple, which is dated to the mid-12th to 11th century BCE (Mazzoni 2000, 1048), was of the “long room” or in antis style (Abu Assaf 1990; Werner 1994, 110). The Ta’yniat temple (Fig. 8f), dated to the 9th-8th century BCE, had a long room, but with distinctive porch and two columns, which permit it to be classified as being of in antis style (Haines 1971, 53-55, pls. 100, and 103; Werner 1994, 114-15). The “Storm God temple” at Carchemish is another example of in antis style which comprises a cella and a front portico with two antae at the entrance. A much later example of an Iron Age temple is found at Qadbun in coastal Syria (Bounni 1997, and Mazzoni 2002, 95, Fig. 6). Interestingly, this last was located in a rural area and had an antecella and a cella surrounded by a thick wall (ca. 2 m in width).

The characteristics of these Iron Age temples may be summarized as follows: 1) thick walls compared to the walls of ordinary house walls; 2) a long central room sometimes divided; and 3) a porch at the entrance. Of course, the above contemporaneous examples may not be directly related to the Mastuma “temple” which is not a temple located in an urban context. However, the Mastuma pillared room very much resembles the in antis style, and shares the principal three characteristics.

Broadening our investigation into the southern Levant, it is possible to detect further examples of the Mastuma-style pillared room. The first two are at Megiddo and Shechem (Loud 1948, 102-05, Fig. 247; Wright 1965, 80-102). Temples unearthed at both of these sites had distinctive towers flanking the entrance to the cella. The towers are closely similar to the examples at Mastuma and Afis. Moreover, the Shechem example seems to have possessed two parallel rows of three column bases inside the cella, resembling the style of the Mastuma pillared room. These so-called “migdal” (fortress temples) were dated to the period between the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Thus, as with the similarity seen in the Ebla temple (P2), an underlying Bronze Age tradition may be detected temple structures of the Iron Age found in the broader Levantine area.

Moving into the Iron Age, a building complex strikingly similar to the Mastuma House b4-1 can be found at Tel Miqne-Ekron. Temple Complex 650,
which was unearthed in Strata 1C-1B of Field IV in the Lower town, had the
following main features: a courtyard; a pillared room; and, in between, a throne
room (Fig. 7b; Gitin et al. 1997, Fig. 3; Gitin 2003, Fig. 1). The pillared room,
which represented the main Iron Age temple, was itself surrounded by rooms.
This complex is dated to the 7th century BCE which was the time Ekron fell
under Assyrian control and flourished as an international commercial centre
(Gitin 2003, 283). The size of Temple Complex 650 was ca. 57 m (east-west) ×
43 m (north-south), and it is considered to be one of the largest excavated
buildings of this kind in Israel (ibid. 284).

Although the size of the Ekron complex is much larger than House b4-1 at
Mastuma (Fig. 8a, c), the axial arrangement of the temple and courtyard are
remarkably similar, except for the fact that the Ekron complex has a throne room
between the two. Moreover, the temple of Ekron displayed two parallel rows of
four column bases in the main room (room u in Fig. 7b), the arrangement
already observed in the Mastuma pillared room. The Ekron temple had a raised
cella (room t) at the far end of this pillared room, and behind it two storage areas
were identified (rooms v and w). A room to the south of the temple (room o) had
an olive-oil installation (Gitin et al. 1997, 7). In the case of Mastuma House b4-
1, it too had storage areas and an installation for wine arranged around the
pillared room. Nevertheless, within the Ekron temple and its side rooms, many
prestige objects (in gold, silver, bronze and ivory) and royal dedicatory
inscriptions were unearthed (Gitin et al. 1997; Gitin and Cogan, 1999). The
Mastuma complex produced no such finds and those pieces which were
collected related mainly to daily life (see below). How to explain this? I would
suggest that the contrast is due, at least in part, to the status of the respective
settlements: Ekron was an important urban center, while Mastuma was merely a
rural satellite of Tell Afis where the main temple of the region was located.
The excavators of Ekron assumed that their temple complex had not been
constructed along the line of indigenous Levantine design, but according to the
principles of Neo-Assyrian public architecture (Gitin et al. 1997, 3-4). The
perceived elements of Neo-Assyrian influence were: 1) the courtyard surrounded
by a number of rooms; and 2) the throne room located between the temple and
the courtyard. Based on excavated pottery and other finds, the Mastuma building
is dated to the late 9th to 8th century BCE (Wada 2009c, 373). Thus, the Ekron
complex with a temple and a courtyard may be seen to have an earlier
antecedent: notably at Mastuma in the northern Levant.

The relationship between the Mastuma complex and Assyrian cultural
influence is still difficult to assess, though it is certainly the case that Assyrian
intervention accelerated during the 9th and 8th centuries BCE in the northern Levant (Hawkins 1982, 1995). On the other hand, the architectural style of the Ekron temple was assumed to exhibit Phoenician influence, the best parallel being the Astarte temple in Area II at Kiton (Gitin 2003, 284; Karageorghis 1976, 112, Fig. 16; 1982, 123-127). The architectural similarity perceived between the Ekron and Kiton temples presumably derives from the parallel pillar bases in the principal rooms of each. However, at the moment, it is difficult to assume the existence of any significant Phoenician tradition at the Mastuma complex given the scarcity of archaeological evidence. Although Mediterranean cultural influence within inland Syria, including Mycenaean and Cypriot, has recently been highlighted at sites such as Tell Afis and Tell Ta’yiant (Venturi 2007; Harrison 2009), the scale and extent of such influence in the northern Levant have yet to be fully investigated. Whatever external or internal cultural influences may have been present at the Mastuma complex, they are not as yet evidenced in the material culture.

To summarize, the inner room of House b4-1 at Mastuma does not resemble any Iron Age temple in the northern Levant with the exception of the Afis temple. The two parallel rows of column bases and (two) towers on the southern façade seen in the Mastuma inner cella can be traced back to an earlier Bronze Age tradition. The form of building complex with a temple and a courtyard arranged axially can be found in both Afis and Ekron, though the dating and objects recovered from the complex are different. From all of this we may conclude as follows: that House b4-1 functioned as a rural version of an urban temple complex constructed along pre-existing local Levantine lines.

IV. Selected Finds from/around House b4-1

The objects recovered from House b4-1 mainly relate to daily use, and include pottery, ground stones, clay loom weights, and bone implements. Nevertheless, specific finds from the excavations may, on close inspection, reflect the intended function of House b4-1.

First, let us look more closely at the diagnostic pottery collected from the fill and floor levels. As shown in Table 1, diagnostic sherds were separated into rim, base and handle. From these groups, each category was then further classified into “forms” (Wada 2009a, 93), such as dish, bowl, and cooking pot. The number of sherds was counted according to these forms. As to context, the sherds from House b4-1 were separated into three categories: “inside fill”, “floor level”, and “between (two) floor levels”.

The shortcomings of such a method are obvious. Since sherd numbers
Table 1. Relative Frequencies of Diagnostic Sherds from House b4-1
(based on Wada 2009a, Tables 4.24-4.27)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Courtyard (b4-1-4)</th>
<th>Pillared Room (b4-1-5)</th>
<th>Room b4-1-6 (northwest of the pillared room)</th>
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West Side Rooms
(b4-1-11, b4-1-11SE, b4-1-11SW, b4-1-11NSW, and b4-1-11N)

|                  | Fill (continued) | Total | Frequency | Fill (continued) | Total | Frequency | Fill (continued) | Floor (continued) | Total | Frequency |
| Rim              |                  |       |           |                  |       |           |                  |                  |       |           |
| Dish             | 12               | 2     | 14       | 12%               | 4    | 4          | 8     | 16%               | 8    | 16%       |
| Bowl             | 3                | 11    | 14       | 11%               | 6    | 10         | 16    | 16%               | 16   | 16%       |
| Krater           | 0                | 1     | 1        | 1%                | 0    | 0          | 0     | 0%                | 0    | 0%        |
| Cooking Pot      | 1                | 5     | 6        | 5%                | 0    | 4          | 4     | 10%               | 4    | 10%       |
| Jar              | 1                | 1     | 2        | 2%                | 0    | 0          | 0     | 0%                | 0    | 0%        |
| Basin            | 0                | 1     | 1        | 1%                | 0    | 0          | 0     | 0%                | 0    | 0%        |
| Jars             | 1                | 5     | 6        | 6%                | 2    | 5          | 7     | 12%               | 7    | 12%       |
| Storage Jar      | 17               | 68    | 85       | 85%               | 42   | 12         | 54    | 64%               | 100  | 100%      |
| Unknown          | 1                | 5     | 6        | 6%                | 0    | 1          | 1     | 1%                | 0    | 1%        |
| Total            | 27               | 94    | 121      | 121%              | 57   | 27         | 84    | 84%               | 114  | 114%      |
| Base             |                  |       |           |                  |       |           |                  |                  |       |           |
| Bowl             | 1                | 0     | 1        | 1%                | 3    | 3          | 3     | 3%                | 3    | 3%        |
| Cooking Pot      | 0                | 1     | 1        | 1%                | 2    | 2          | 2     | 2%                | 2    | 2%        |
| Jug              | 1                | 0     | 1        | 1%                | 0    | 0          | 0     | 0%                | 0    | 0%        |
| Basin            | 0                | 1     | 1        | 1%                | 0    | 0          | 0     | 0%                | 0    | 0%        |
| Storage Jar      | 3                | 14    | 17       | 17%               | 12   | 7          | 19    | 19%               | 31   | 31%       |
| Total            | 5                | 14    | 19       | 19%               | 12   | 7          | 19    | 19%               | 31   | 31%       |

North Side Rooms
(b4-1-16, b4-1-17, and b4-1-18)

|                  | Fill (continued) | Floor (continued) | Total | Frequency |
| Rim              |                  |                  |       |           |
| Dish             | 12               | 5                 | 17     | 17%       |
| Bowl             | 3                | 1                 | 4      | 4%        |
| Krater           | 0                | 0                 | 0      | 0%        |
| Cooking Pot      | 1                | 1                 | 2      | 2%        |
| Jar              | 0                | 0                 | 0      | 0%        |
| Basin            | 0                | 1                 | 1      | 1%        |
| Storage Jar      | 7                | 6                 | 13     | 13%       |
| Unknown          | 0                | 0                 | 0      | 0%        |
| Total            | 27               | 11               | 38     | 38%       |
reveal no more than the general presence/absence of particular forms, it is difficult to enter into any detailed discussion of pottery “types” separated into Iron Age sub-phases. Except for those pieces represented by pottery drawings in the final site report, we are able to glimpse only a broad spectrum of pottery forms. In addition, sherd counts do not always give accurate impression of the amount of intact vessels original present in a certain feature. Larger vessels generally break into larger pieces, while smaller pottery types such as juglets, are often found in smaller and more numerous fragments. Bearing such shortcomings in mind, from Table 1, the following observation can be made combining the comments mentioned in the final site report (Wada 2009a, 189, 194, and 197).

First, the pillared room had the lowest relative frequency of large storage jar sherds in House 4b-1 (see also Wada 2009a, 189). Compared to the pillared room, the courtyard had a higher frequency of large storage jar sherds. However, it was markedly low compared to those of the side rooms of the courtyard and the pillared room. Secondly, the number of jug handles was notably abundant in the pillared room, which may indicate the original presence here of a type of container smaller than the large storage jars. Thirdly, for bowl and cooking pot forms, relatively similar frequencies of rim sherds were collected from both the pillared room and the courtyard. Fourthly, there is a large quantity of storage jar rim sherds from the northern side rooms, namely Rooms b4-1-16 and b4-1-18; the former was being a kitchen area, the latter containing a wine installation (see above). The most common forms after storage jars were jug/jars (closed form), and bowls (open form). This trend was generally attested in all side rooms as well as in the courtyard and the pillared room. What is interesting is that the courtyard and the pillared room had relatively high frequency of cooking pot rim sherds (over 20% while other side rooms had less than 5%). For the courtyard, this high frequency is not surprising given the presence of a large kitchen area with bread ovens. The cooking pots in the pillared room may relate to the oven found in the south of the room (see above). Whether the cooking activity in the pillared room was related to religious activity cannot be determined. In addition, lamp sherds were identified in the side rooms, while they were not found in the pillared room. Again whether this lack of lamp sherds is merely the result of chance, or reflects specific activity within a room, cannot now be determined. However, the material at least reflects the different employment of these rooms in comparison to other surrounding spaces.

Room b4-1-6, which we have assumed to be of later construction than the pillared room, displayed a rather peculiar pattern of pottery frequency. The
The majority of diagnostic sherds come from the fill and are classified mainly as bowl, jug/jar and storage jar, forms which are common in other rooms. Also the frequency of storage jar rims is low compared to other side rooms. This may reflect that the majority of diagnostic sherds here are intrusive and derive from a reconstruction of the walls, or perhaps merely that the room had been fully cleared before it was abandoned.

The above observations suggest a marked difference in the quantities and relative frequencies of pottery forms, especially between the pillared room and the surrounding rooms. On the other hand, the pottery types do not tell us very much about the special usage of the pillared room (cf. Wada 2009a, 194). No definitively cultic pottery or objects were identified in the final site report.11 However, two groups of pottery which may in fact be related to cultic activity were discovered in the areas around House b4-1.

One is the large red-painted basin (Fig. 9a-j). It has a distinctive, thickly made wall with projecting rim, often decorated with round impressed marks on the exterior lip. On the body may be observed a raised band with diagonal line impressions (Fig. 9c; Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.99.19); the type has a squared flat base (Wada 2009c, Fig. 6.33.73). What is interesting is that the thick red paint is applied both to the interior and the exterior surfaces. The overall shape probably resembled the “bathtub” form found employed as a coffin in the Assyrian cultural sphere (Stern 2001, 33; a bronze example from Zincirli, see von Luschan and Andrae 1943, Taf. 57b-d). Similar sherds are reported from Bâtiment V, Stratum E at Hama dated to the late 8th century BCE (Fig. 9j; Riis and Buhl 1990, Fig. 81.628), and possibly at Zincirli (von Luschan and Andrae 1943, Taf. 24p).

Sherds of a basin of this type were recovered from the houses from Stratum I-2 in Blocks 3 and 5 (Fig. 9a-c; Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.44.18 (plain ware specimen) from House b3-8, Level c; Fig. 4.53.19 from House c3-8/9, Level c; Fig. 4.99.19 from House b5-7, Level b; Fig. 4.100.13 from House a5-7, Level a). No sherds were recovered directly from House b4-1, but analogous fragments were found within the area of House b4-1 in Stratum I-2 (Fig. 9g, i; Wada 2009c, Fig. 6.33.67, from Sq. 13Hb, Level a/b (plain ware specimen); Fig. 6.33.71 from Sq. 12Ha, Level b). Other sherds were unearthed in Squares 10Gc, 11Hb, 12Fb, and 14Ha, which are located to the approximate north and the west of House b4-1 (Fig. 9d-f, h; Wada 2009a, Fig. 6.33.66 from Sq. 14Ha, Level c; Fig. 6.33.70a-b from Sq. 12Fb, Level b; Fig. 6.33.72 from Sq. 10Gc, Level b; Fig. 6.33.73 from Sq. 11Hb, Stratum I-1/l-2a). Fragments of these basins were recovered from Strata I-2c to I-1. The function of the vessel type is unclear, but
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Fig. 9. Iron Age Basins and Cult Stands
(9a from Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.44.18; 9b from ibid., Fig. 4.53.19; 9c from ibid., Fig. 4.99.19; 9d from Wada 2009c, Fig. 6.33.6; 9e from ibid., Fig. 6.33.70a; 9f from ibid., Fig. 6.33.70b; 9g from ibid., Fig. 6.33.71; 9h from ibid., Fig. 6.33.72; 9i from ibid., Fig. 6.33.67; 9j from Riis and Buhl 1990, Fig. 81.628; 9k from Wada 2009c, Fig. 6.33.81 \& Pl. 6.3.11, and Iwasaki et al. 2009, Color Pl. 5.4; 9l-9n from Wada 2009b, Fig. 5.7.131-133. Drawings of 9a-9i and 9k modified by the author).
elaborate red paint, heavy profile, and the relatively small number of sherds recovered indicates that it was something of an object *de luxe*, not produced in quantity and therefore in its use probably restricted to special occasions.

A definite specimen of cultic pottery was found in Square 11Ha (north of Block 6), Stratum I-2 (Fig. 9k; Wada 2009c, Fig. 6.33.81, and Pl. 6.3.11; Iwasaki et al. 2009, Colour Pl. 5.4). This has the shape of a chalice, with a perforation at the lower part of the vessel; several clay projections had been applied to the lower exterior. The piece has red and dark brown bichrome paint on the exterior surface. Similar “cult stands” or “incense burners” have been found in several sites in the northern Levant, including al-Mina, Zincirli, and Tell Afis (Lehmann 1996, Taf. 30.179:1-2; Lehmann 1994, 114, n.5-6; Soldi 2009, Figs. 12a-12b; ibid. Fig. 13 for parallels). In addition a third cultic form — a bowl shape with perforations and red paint — was unearthed from the pits in Stratum I-1 (Fig. 9l-n; Wada 2009b, 318, Fig. 5.7.131-133). This form does not have projections like the “cult stands” / “incense burners”, but the location of the perforations at the vessel’s carination suggests a specific function. These particular “cultic” sherds are unfortunately not directly linked to House b4-1, but their presence in the vicinity of this structure clearly demonstrates that cultic activities of some sort were being conducted at Mastuma during the Iron Age II period.

V. Location of House b4-1 within the Mastuma Settlement

Before considering the historical significance of the “temple” at Mastuma, let us briefly deal with the special location of House b4-1 within the Mastuma Iron Age settlement. The building is located in the south-central part of the settlement which overall, in Stratum I-2, took the shape of a Roman theatre with semi-circular auditorium sloping down toward the south (Wada 2009a, 98). The presence of this slope was confirmed by the discoveries of “first street” which rose upwards towards the west, and “central avenue” which sloped down towards the south (Fig. 2). The lowest part of the settlement was the South Entrance area. The area in which House b4-1 stood was a relatively flat space and sloped down slightly towards the south. What I wish to demonstrate is that 1) House b4-1 was located close to the entrance to the settlement, and 2) this was an area which offered a suitably flat area for constructing large building complex.

First, the complex’s relationship with the settlement’s entrance is examined. If House b4-1 had been a public building complex containing a “temple”, then it must have been the most important structure in the settlement. But why would such a crucial building have been constructed close to the main
entrance of the settlement? One possibility is that easy access to the entrance had been a requirement of its positioning. During the Iron Age II period, Mastuma was fortified by houses laid out on a semi-circular plan (Fig. 2). Given this arrangement, the further north one advances the greater the difficulty of egress in time of emergency (such as fire, or enemy attack). This of course assumes that the settlement had only the one, southern entrance, but in fact it is highly likely that a rural settlement like Mastuma maintained only a single entrance in order to maximize the security of the settlement. On the other hand, locating an important building so close to the entrance would have left it vulnerable to attack once the entrance had been breached. What we can be certain of is that the location was deliberate. Mastuma was a planned settlement, with major roads and residential blocks carefully distributed. Unfortunately, no other non-urban or village sites in the northern Levant have been excavated as extensively as Mastuma, and so comparative evidence from which we might establish the specific relationship between gate and main public building(s) within such a settlement is currently lacking. Iron Age urban sites such as Carchemish, and Zincirli were often protected by a double fortification system: one defense surrounding the lower town, the other the acropolis mound (Mazzoni 1995, 1997).  

The second point requiring discussion is the statement that House 4b-1 had been constructed on a relatively flat area of the settlement, a level site having probably been required for such a large complex with courtyard without extensive leveling. This is supported by the fact that the “1st street” slopes upwards towards the west; but since building levels earlier than Level b, Stratum I-2 were only partially excavated at this part of the site, in fact it is not possible to absolutely demonstrate this or the precise vertical relationship of House 4b-1 and other building structures at Mastuma. However, the siting of House 4b-1 was certainly planned, in the same way that the neighboring residential blocks were planned.

VI. Historical Significance of House b4-1

Finally, we turn to the historical significance of the “temple” complex of House b4-1. When the settlement at Mastuma was at the height of its prosperity during the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, the capital of the area was evidently Tell Afis/Hazrak. According to textual evidence, Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu’ash resided in and reigned from Hazrak from shortly after 800 BCE (Sader 1987, 216-20; Millard 2000). The discovery of the so-called Zakkur stela from Afis confirms this fact (Gibson 1975, 6-17, No. 5; Millard 2000; Lipiński 2000, 254-
Zakkur himself is considered to have been an Aramaean, and he took over the rulership of the kingdom of Hamath and Lu‘ash from the Luwian-Hittite dynasty residing in Hamath (Hawkins 1982, 403; Lipiński 2000, 252-54). Thus, Hazrak was the newly established capital of the Aramaean dynasty. As recent studies on Iron Age historical geography in the northern Levant suggest (e.g. Ikeda 1979, 79; Lipiński 2000, 280-81; Yamada 2000, 173 and n.339; see also Schachner 2007, 224-25), in the Assyrian royal annals Mastuma seems to find mention by the ancient name Aštamuak, a “royal city” of Hamath. We do not yet have decisive archaeological evidence for this identification, but considering Mastuma’s proximity to, as well as its similarities in material culture with Tell Afis, the smaller settlement certainly had a strong political, economic, and cultural relationship with Hazrak.

In the Aramaic Zakkur stela, the king records the rebuilding of Hazrak as well as other buildings in his territory. Side B (right side), lines 4-10 of the stela includes the following passage:

“I [ built] Hazrach and added [to it] all [ ] defenses. [ ] and I put x x[ ] x x[ ] forts on every side. [I] built shrines in a[ll] my [land ?]” (Millard 2000, 155).

Another translation of this text, although in part now somewhat out-dated reads as follows.

“ … (then) [rebuilt] Hadrach, and I added [to it] a whole circle of [strongholds]; and I established it (once more) as my kingdom, and established it as [my land. I built all] these strongholds throughout my whole territory, and I built temples for gods throughout my whole [land]. ” (Gibson 1975, 5.B. 4-10)

According to both translations, Zakkur seems to have built a number of shrines (or temples) within his territory, as well as re-establishing Hazrak as his capital city. These shrines seem in each instance to be associated with forts (or strongholds). Thus, Zakkur may have established or re-established both forts and shrines in the region surrounding Hazrak. Although the period during which Zakkur was writing is slightly later than the “temple” complex of Mastuma House b4-1, it is possible that this structure is to be recognized as one of those shrines — particularly since the structure’s origin date back to a period when Mastuma was under the control of the Luwian-Hittite dynasty resided in
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Hamath. If Bâtiment III at Hama, Stratum E had served as the main temple of the local polity, then the Mastuma temple may have been initiated for the branch shrine of Hamath.

Recent discoveries at the main temple at Tell Afis indicate that the site had not only functioned as a political hub controlling the Idlib plain, but also a regional religious centre. This is supported by the large and enigmatic mud-brick structure (ca. 20 × 20 m) in Area G on the acropolis mound (Soldi 2009, 103, Fig. 4a), just northwest of the above mentioned temple. If this structure was as we suspect related to the cultic activity of Tell Afis/Hazrak, then clearly a large central part of the acropolis had been occupied by religious buildings. This may, then be the location known as “Apish” which is now considered to have been the religious sector of Hazrak (ibid. 108). Based on the interpretation of the Zakkur stela, it takes no great leap of the imagination to conceive of the “temple” complex of Mastuma as a branch shrine of the great temple at Hazrak, which is assumed to have enshrined the Weather God, Teshub/Ba’al (Mazzoni 2010a, 189).

It is still unclear how the local Iron Age polities in the northern Levant controlled their territories. However, the evidence gathered here suggests the possibility that this may have been achieved by utilizing the religious ties which existed between the capital city and its surrounding settlements. The Zakkur inscription demonstrates the existence of local shrines in the land of Hamath and Lu’ash. If these were older foundations, then it follows that House b4-1 might well have represented a “temple” constructed to worship the state god (s) at local community level. Recall that in the courtyard of House b4-1, many bread ovens were unearthed, and that there was a wine installation at the back of the pillared room. If House b4-1 had been a religious building, then these food producing facilities may be readily identified as facilities for production of food offerings for the god(s).

Mazzoni (2002) has pointed out that there certainly existed local temples located far from the urban centers. She suggests that construction of elaborate religious structures in urban centers largely ceased around the time the local polities lost autonomy following the Assyrian conquest of the northern Levant, though some local temples were evidently maintained and flourished again at the Achaemenid Persian or a much later period. In the case of Mastuma, however, its fate seems clear. The temple complex appears to have been abandoned and demolished sometime in the 8th century BCE (Level a, Stratum I-2), and the site never reoccupied (Wada 2009a, 185, and Fig. 4.62; Wada 2009b, Fig. 5.1). This may mirror the eventual conquest of the land of Hamath and Lu’ash by the
Assyrians (Lipiński 2000, 311-18) which subsequently led to the breaking of religious ties between the capital city and the rural settlements.

**VII. Conclusion**

Although certain aspects of the evidence remain ambiguous, it is proposed here that House b4-1 at Mastuma is to be recognized not only as a “temple” complex, but as a branch shrine of the great temple at Tell Afis/Hazrak. Despite the fact that no decisively cultic objects were found within the pillared room, the reconstructed plan and location of the building complex are compelling. Recent archaeological work at Tell Afis viewed in conjunction with the testimony of the Zakkur stela strongly suggest that such temples provided not only religious but political ties to the capital city of local Iron Age polities. While the local community at Mastuma may themselves have worshipped within this temple for reasons of agricultural and domestic prosperity, and peace, for the kingdom’s capital city Hazrak the structure in all likelihood functioned also as a principal point of administrative and political control. Around Tell Afis, in the Idlib plain, there are a number of tell sites similar in size to Mastuma, all assumed to contain substantial Iron Age occupation. They include, Tell Denit, Tell Kourin, Tell al-Roman, Tell Kafr Nejid (Fig. 10; Mazzoni 2001, 108-109; 2005; Tsuneki 2009). If these had similarly functioned as strongholds in the land of Hamath and Lu’ash, then there is a high probability that excavation will in due course provide further evidence of local temple complexes in rural settlements.

In short, the evidence from Mastuma may be interpreted as shedding important new light, from a local or rural perspective, on the key and hitherto overlooked relationship which seems to have existed in the northern Levant during the Iron Age between religion and political control.

**Acknowledgements**

Permission to access the Mastuma excavation records was kindly granted by the Ancient Orient Museum expedition to Syria. I would like to express my special thanks to Shigee Wakita, the expedition director, to Hisahiko Wada, the expedition field director, and to Keiko Ishida, director of the Research Department, Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo. Needless to say I owe a sincere debt of gratitude to the Syrian Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums for its constant support and encouragement during our investigation of Mastuma. This paper is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Giro Orita, who contributed so much to the development of Japanese archaeological work in Syria.
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Fig. 10. Iron Age Sites in the Idlib Plain and its Vicinity.
The entrance with stone doorpost socket mentioned in the final site report (Wada 2009a, 185 and Fig. 4.61) was apparently not the entrance to the complex. It had served merely as the entrance to Rooms b4-1-1 and b4-1-2. The main entrance to the courtyard was situated ca. 1.5 m to the west of the above entrance, and its threshold had at least three steps. The plan of the building in Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.1 is in error at this point (see also a photograph of the area in Wada 2009a, Pl. 4.20). A triangular space (Room b4-1-3) was probably created in the plan by mixing the earlier and the later walls.

In the final site report, the top level of the “spherical stone” is given as 473.39 m (Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.63). However, according to a photograph taken during the excavations (Fig. 5b), the top of the stone is visibly higher than the column bases.

In the final site report, a possible partition wall was proposed between Rooms b4-1-18 and b4-1-17 (Wada 2009a, Fig. 4.61). However, this partition does not exist according to the excavation records. The feature was in fact a sub-trench.

For summary of the evidence for Iron Age temples in Southeast Anatolia and North Syria, see Werner 1994, 76-81; Aro 2003, 304-307 (“Luwian” related sacral buildings). At Tell Ta’yinat, a new temple was discovered during the 2008-2009 seasons, located close to the previously excavated temple (Building II). See Harrison et al. 2011, 370-372, Figs 4-5. The presence of temple(s) at Hama is still disputed. The excavators suggest that Bâtiment III was a temple (Fugmann 1958, 143-46; Riis and Buhl 1990, 10); Ussishkin (1966), on the other hand, believed that Bâtiment IV was to be recognized as such. See also Matthiae 1992, 124-25; 2008, 209. At Hama, another building in Square O13, Stratum E, just to the north of Bâtiment II, is considered by Fugmann to be a shrine/temple (Fugmann 1958, 202-204, and Fig. 192; Riis and Buhl 1990, 268-70). Matthiae (1992) has suggested that a building from Levels 8-7, Squares F8-F9 at Tell al-Judaidah is similarly to be identified.

Mazzoni 2010b, 362-64 for a summary of the wide architectural variants to be seen in Iron Age temples in the northern Levant. See also Werner 1994.

In Carchemish, the Storm God temple on the Lower Palace area, and the Kubaba temple on the acropolis mound are reported (Woolley and Barnett 1952, 167-175, Pls. 29, 35-6; 210-214, Pl. 49; Werner 1994, 113-14. Mazzoni (2002, 93; 2010b, 363, and n. 24) has pointed out that a building located to the northeast of the Hilani may be an in antis temple based on its ground plan.

According to radiocarbon dating, the Iron Age strata go back to the 10th-9th century BCE. (Nishiyama 2009, 523, and Figs. 10.15-10.16). The dating of Mastuma’s Iron Age strata will be discussed in separate article.

This table is based on the pottery frequency tables published in Wada 2009a, Tables 4.24-4.27.

In the final site report, “for convenience sake” the term “family” was used for grouping those particular pottery forms which could not from their sherds be precisely distinguished (Wada 2009a, 93). In our Table 1, I have integrated this “family” material and other related forms in an attempt to show what general forms existed in a room. For example, those jug bases which in the final site report were separated into “jug family (ring type)” and “jug family (round type)” have been combined as a single group: jug bases. In addition, in the final site report, the frequency of each form was calculated using only rim sherds, and combing the number of rim sherds collected from different levels (fill, floor, and between the floors) as one. This was followed in our Table 1.

The western, northwestern, and northern side rooms show over 60% of storage jar rim frequency, while the courtyard was ca. 40% and the pillared room was ca. 23% (Wada 2009a, Tables 4.24-4.25).

This is an overall impression from the preliminary analysis of small finds in House b4-1. The analysis of small finds from Stratum I-2 from Mastuma is ongoing and will be presented in separate articles.
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12 It should be noted that in the case of the Stratum E settlement at Hama, important public buildings (Bâtiments II and III) were positioned near the gate structure (Bâtiment I) (Riis and Buhl 1990, Fig.2).

13 Tell Denit has been excavated by the Syrian expedition led by S. Sha’ath and the Iron Age occupation was identified (Sha’ath 1990).

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Bibliography


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