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THE LOWER HABUR

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE TÜBINGER ATLAS DES VORDEREN ORIENTS IN 1975

By WOLFGANG ROLLIG and
HARTMUT KUHNE

I. Aims and Methods : Realization (W. Röllig)

The task of the staff of the Institute for the Ancient Near East in Tübingen for the «Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients» consists of working on maps dealing with the history of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor from the Fourth to the First Millennium B.C. All available published material concerning the historical geography of these countries is to be collected; the textual evidence will be published in the «Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes.» Preparation of the maps dealing with settlements in Old Babylonian times and during the Assyrian expansion in the Middle Euphrates revealed that the Lower Habur region is well documented in the texts but almost unknown to historians and archaeologists.

A great deal of textual evidence from the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian periods is available for sites located in the valley of the Habur. The texts recently excavated at Mari which include the letters of Yaqqim-Adad, the governor of Saggartum, to Zimri-Lim, the king of Mari, have just been published.¹ All events reported in these texts involved cities and villages in the Habur region between the Euphrates and the Habur triangle upstream. The recently published tablets from the Old Babylonian Tall Rimah² also provided new and useful

information about Saggartum and other sites in the Habur.

A few campaigns in the Habur have been reported from the Middle Assyrian period : in the third and fourth years of his reign, Tiglathpileser I carried out a raid which extended from Suhi to the city of Karkamis in the land of Hatte³. In 1143 B.C., he apparently hunted bull elephants in the land of Harran and in the district of the Habur River⁴. Later, Assurbel-kala (1074 - 1056), on his Broken Obelisk, described a campaign against the land of Arime; the well-known cities of Dur-Katlimu (Dur-Jasidlim) and Sangarite (Saggartum) were mentioned⁵.

The activities of the kings Adad-Nerari II, Tukulti-Ninurta II. and Assurnasirpal II against the Aramaeans in the early centuries of the Neo-Assyrian Empire are already known. The Aramaeans had annexed this region and established their own states, Bit-halupe in the Lower Habur in particular. The reports of the expeditions of Adad-Nerari II and Tukulti-Ninurta II are particularly interesting for they contain a complete itinerary of the campaigns : the first⁶ came from the north and extended to the south as far as the Euphrates; the second⁷, from the Euphrates (Sirqu, i.e., Terqa or modern Tall 'Asara) extended upstream and reached at least as far as Nasibina (Nisibis). Since

sometimes the same sites are mentioned, we have evidence for the daily marches of the Assyrian army. The intervals between the ruined sites in the Lower Habur Valley correspond with the daily marches of the army. The sites themselves can be identified with the rest camps for the army.

Seidmann and Horn were able to reconstruct such itineraries on the basis of the information available from the then known exploration of the Habur Valley³. The archaeological evidence, however, has been scarce and incomplete, particularly with regard to the First and Second Millennium B.C. Much of the identification and many of the suggestions cannot be verified and, therefore, remain doubtful.

Archaeological exploration of those regions we surveyed began as early as 1850 when A. Layard visited the Habur and did some excavating⁹. Although his excavation were of short duration one was surprisingly successful. He found the remains of a provincial Assyrian style palace at 'Arban/'Agaga. Using the short inscriptions, G. Smith¹⁰ was able to identify this large talj as Sad'kanni, at present the only identified site in this region. Later, three travellers (Hausknecht, Blunt and Sachau) reached the Lower Habur, but they were unable to contribute any additional information. In 1887, B. Moritz and R. Koldewey¹¹ travelled from 'Arban to Bsera, but the report of this trip was not published. Baron Max von Oppenheim, however, did describe his quick crossing of the Lower Habur region in 1899.¹² In order to supplement Oppenheim's work, Ernst Herzfeld and Friedrich Sarre investigated many ruins and tells on the west side of the river between 7 and 15 December 1910¹³. They were able to gather additional and more detailed information. The site inscriptions as well as Herzfeld's sketches served as reliable guides for our work. It is amazing how many details Herzfeld was able to record in such a short

time. At present, his book is still considered to be the standard literature dealing with the archaeological remains and the Islamic history of the Lower Habur.

Three additional explorations should also be mentioned. In 1924, Alois Musil was able to provide some useful information about the tells at the west bank of the Lower Habur¹⁴ on the basis of expedition to the Middle Euphrates. One year later, Père A. Poidebard took aerial photographs at certain points along the route¹⁵ and published the results in «La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie.»¹⁶ Poidebard's work concentrated basically on the early centuries of the Christian Era. Sir Max Mallowan conducted the last investigation of the tells in the Lower Habur; he dealt particularly with Chalcolithic and Bronze Age remains. Mallowan's survey, in 1934, included not only the west bank of the river but also a part of the east bank, which had long been disregarded. Only a brief report of this survey has been published¹⁷; the findings did not receive the attention they deserved.

At this stage of research of the Lower Habur region, the following goals have been set up for the preparation of the historical maps :

1. All evidence dealing with the ancient settlements by the river, both literary and archaeological, is to be collected.
2. The cultivated area beside the Habur and, if possible, the adjacent regions from Bsera at the confluence with the Euphrates as far as Haseke and the confluence with the Gaggag River (Hirmas) are to be systematically surveyed. The landscape is totally different north of this point, and as a result, another cultural and historical environment may be found here.
3. The settlement periods for all investigated tells are to be established in

so far as this is possible within the context of a surface survey; well-documented suggestions will be made with regard to their identification.

4. The relationship between the ancient settlements and the present environment are to be noted (i.e. ancient and modern river beds, irrigation works, fords and bridges, roads, etc.).
5. The development and decline of the region through the ages are to be reconstructed as far as is possible.

The methodological considerations required to implement these goals will be described in the final report. The daily schedule then consisted of recording every identifiable tall on both sides of the Habur River. It is possible that we failed to notice extremely small tall, particularly in the south. Since the ground is often covered by river sediment and may have been cultivated for cotton, such sites cannot be easily discerned.

For each tall we undertook the following procedure :

1. We described the site as it is presently found, in terms of its location, modern settlement, etc.
2. We surveyed the site with a theodolite and determined the height in relation to the natural soils as accurately as possible.
3. We collected sherds and other surface finds. The finds were classified according to particular areas of the tall. These carefully selected sherds were then used to date the site.
4. We photographed all sides of the tall, the surface, the environment, the individual finds, etc., for documentation purposes.

Between 16 August and 26 September 1975, 51 tall were investigated. Most of these tall were more or less known prior

to beginning the survey. Fifteen, however, were still unknown. We recorded and measured these tall, which are situated in the region from Bsera to Saddada. The section of the Lower Habur region in the desert below the Gabal 'Abd al 'Aziz and around the Kokab Mountain could not be systematically surveyed due to lack of time. In 1977 we shall carry out another survey; particular attention will be devoted to those areas we have not yet had the opportunity to investigate.

The participants in the survey were Dr. Brigitte Grégoire-Groneberg, Mr. Karlheinz Kessler, Dr. Hartmut Kühne, and Professor Dr. Wolfgang Röllig. The Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées in Damascus generously provided the necessary support for our work, granted us permission to undertake the survey, and provided much useful information. We would particularly like to express our thanks to the Director General Dr. A. Bahnassi, the Director of Excavation Dr. A. Bounni, and Dr. K. Touer for their assistance and personal interest in our project. Grateful appreciation must also be expressed to Mr. Heretani, Director of the Aleppo Museum, and to both our representatives, Messrs. M. Nenni and Assad Mahmoud for their help and assistance.

II. Description of Sites and Surface Finds (H. Kühne).

We visited altogether 56 tall, numbering each place as we surveyed it. We started out with a visit to Tall Krah at the left bank of the Euphrates (see map Fig. 1), which we did not include in our official record, so that they are only 55 places listed below. On several occasions we found more than one tall belonging to the same place name. At the beginning we labelled them with Latin numbers, and counted only one place number. Latter on, though, we gave this up in need for better distinction and gave each of the

«sub» tall a separate place number, adding to the place name «north» or «south» or the like. Of these 55 tall we triangulated 44, thus being able to work out the topographical plans as shown in Fig. 5. Seven tall were not surveyed systematically.¹⁸ On five occasions we found it either difficult (mostly because of modern settlements) or unnecessary to triangulate the places; but we sketched and described them (see list below). After discarding some duplicates, we collected altogether nearly 3500 sherds. By the generosity of the Syrian Antiquities Department we were allowed to take these sherds with us to Germany Tübingen. We also found 31 coins dating from the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic (mainly Umayyad and Abbasid) times.

List of Place Names and Numbers :

(The transcription system of the « Tübingen Atlas des Vorderen Orients » is based mainly on the rules of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 01 Tall Gubn | 25 Tall Raya-Nord |
| 02 Tall Hariza (no triangulation) | 26 Tall Kibar |
| 03 Tall Han. | 27 Tall Fadgami |
| 04 Tall Bsera (no triangulation) | 28 Tall Galal |
| 05 Tall Sabha (no triangulation) | 29 Tall Madina |
| 06 Tall Tal'f | 30 Tall Gayyir |
| 07 Tall Fiden | 31 Tall Haburiya |
| 08 Tall Hegna | 32 Tall Manah |
| 09 Tall Abu Ha'it | 33 Tall Brik |
| 10 Seger (no triangulation) | 34 Tall Knedig |
| 11 Tall Handal | 35 Tall Saddada |
| 12 Tall Masih | 36 Tall Agaga-West |
| 13 Tall Suwwar | 37 Tall Ta'ban |
| 14 Tall Katluma | 38 Tall Tnenir |
| 15 Tall Husen | 39 Tall Ahmar - Süd |
| 16 Tall Seh Hamad | 40 Tall Ahmar - Mitte |
| 17 Hirbat al-Humra | 41 Tall Ahmar - Nord |
| 18 Tall Katari | 42 al-Batah |
| 19 Tall Marqada -West | 43 Tall 'Adla (no triangulation) |
| 20 Tall Asamsani | 44 Tall Umm Zirr |
| 21 Tall Namliya | 45 Tall Rasidiya - West (no systematic survey) |
| 22 Tall Marqada-Ost | 46 Tall Garmiz (no systematic survey) |
| 23 Tall Aswad | 47 Tall Bahza |
| 24 Tall Raya -Süd | 48 Hirbat al-Bahza |
| | 49 Hirbat al-Fadgami |
| | 50 Tall Abu Hamda |
| | 51 Tall Agaga - Ost (Maqbara 'Agaga: no systematic survey) |
| | 52 Tall Barud (no systematic survey) |
| | 53 Tall Mu'azzar (no systematic survey) |
| | 54 Tall Matiyaha (no systematic survey) |
| | 55 Tall Murtiya (no systematic survey) |

General Geographical Observations :

As is well known, the Habur is the largest tributary to the Middle Euphrates¹⁹, carrying water through the whole year. The steadily growing population and rural comities use the water for irrigating the fields by pumping it up to channels which sometimes lead far inland. A rather wide area is irrigated in the later spring for growing crops while in the summer the water is needed for the cotton fields

which cover the lowland of the Habur only.

A surprising experience for us was the fact that the Habur water is salty and is only used as drinking water if nothing else is available. Drinking water is supplied by tank trucks coming from the Euphrates River. Ground water, as well, cannot be used for drinking purposes since it is too bitter. The salt, of course, also affects the fields. A rather thick crust may be observed in almost all irrigation channels. The sherds we collected still retained their salt crust in spite of cleaning and washing. The Habur Valley is cut into plateau; its edges sometimes fall off steeply but at other points slope down gently.²⁰ The width of the lowland of the Habur differs between 50 and about 350 m.; and within this area the river changes its course frequently and meanders strongly. It may not be surprising, therefore, to find some places listed on the other bank of the river on older maps or records in comparison with our observations. This situation bears some meaning when one considers the question of localization and identification of places recorded in the cuneiform documents of the Second and First Millennium B.C. In some instances we were able to trace an old river bed or a former branch of the river on the ground; in comparison with the sketches Herzfeld had drawn almost 70 years ago, some major changes of the river bed are noteworthy (see below). Unfortunately, we are not in possession of air photographs so that we cannot compare our observations on the ground with them.

The change of the course of the river might also had an influence on the economical development of an ancient settlement. In some instances our material may be interpreted in that direction, showing that the absence of pottery of a certain period is due to the decline of that particular place and the founding of a new

settlement close by or to the flourishing of a nearby settlement already in existence. But it is too early to present any results on this question in this report.

As described above, our systematic collection of pottery allows us to fix every locus of a collection on our topographical plans. The exploitation of these data will permit us, we hope, to draw some conclusions on the limitations of the settlements various periods.

Description of Sites :

In the following we shall describe some sites to which tentative results of the pottery analysis are available. The sites are listed in the order in which they were surveyed, that is, from the mouth of the Habur up to Hassaka.

The rather large site of Bsera²¹ (04) itself has yielded, among the numerous sherds of Hellenistic to Islamic age, one interesting fragment which definitely belongs to the Early Bronze Age II period and can be compared with the so-called Abydos ware²²

The most remarkable and so far rather unknown site on the left bank of the Habur is Tall Abu Ha'it²³ (09). It is ca. 20 km. north the mouth of the river and consists of four *tulul* situated mainly in an east-west direction, covering a distance of nearly 700 meters. The largest of them is Tall No. II, measuring about 200 by 250 meters. The pottery indicates a settlement sequence beginning with Tall No. I in the Second Millennium and ending with Tall No. III in the medieval Islamic times. Tall No. IV is an extension of Tall No. II. The whole site is situated in the lowland of the Habur and rises gently to a maximum height of a little more than 10 m. The course of the river is close to the northern edges of Talls No. II and III. Tall No. I is farther away from the river, indicating an older age for this settlement as well

as a gentle change of the river-bed to the north. Tall No. I is also surprisingly regular in form, being a square of 100 m², thus reminding one of a castellum. In this case, though, the tall must be dated to the Second and First Millennium B.C. since no later pottery was discovered.

Approximately three km. north of Tall Abu Ha'it (09) lies the modern village of Seger (10). Our visit there has revealed no traces of ancient settlements, as was already noticed by Dossin²⁴, so that all speculation on the identity of this place as Old Babylonian Saggartum should come to an end.²⁵ The modern village of Seger (10) lies on the upper terrace which, in this area, falls off rather steeply into the Habur.

A rather interesting and so far unknown ancient settlement is situated further north on the left bank of the Habur. It is called Tall Namliya (21) and lies about nine km. south of Suwwar (13) in the lowland of the Habur and within modern-day fields. It rises to a height of ca. three meters and its extension was difficult to determine. The pottery, however, clearly indicates that this is one of the few places which was not re-settled in either Hellenistic or Islamic times. In fact, this is probably the reason for the small size of this tall. The pottery on the site dates from the Third Millennium (! incised Ninive 5 Ware !), the early Second and the early First Millennium B.C. Sites like Tall Namliya (21) are hard to detect, and although we found several, we are not sure that we discovered all of those which exist. Tall Namliya shows two things very clearly : that tall which appear insignificant because of their size, may have been important settlements in the Second and First Millennium B.C., and that these may have formed the nucleus of larger settlements with intensive superstructures, in Hellenistic to Islamic times which may have covered them so completely that only a few sherds may be found on the surface.

The otherwise vast distance between Tall Abu Ha'it (09) and Tall Seh Hamad (16) is now interrupted by Tall Namliya and by Hirbat al-Humra (17) which was also first noticed by our expedition. In spite of intensive work in the area, no other ancient settlements were discovered.

On the right bank of the river, there appears to have been five major settlements during the Hellenistic and Islamic periods. These five settlements are Tall Sabha (05), Tall Gubn (01), Tall Hariza (02), Tall Han (03) and the newly discovered Tall Katluma (14).

Tall Hegna²⁶ (08), identified with Neo-Assyrian Rummunidu by Parpola²⁷ and others (is, as we found out, identical with several other place names : Bersem (which is the name of the modern village near by), Tall Bnegat (this name is the result of a local tragedy), and Tall Tale'e²⁸ (which is the name of a natural hill). Tall Hegna (08) lies within the lowland of the Habur and is surrounded by fields. It is one place which has switched sides in reality as well as in the literature and on the maps at present it clearly lies on the right side of the river. A former river bed, or at least a branch of the river, is easily detectable to the west of the tall. So far, the pottery evidence has revealed no Neo-Assyrian or Iron Age hints so that an identification with Rummunidu must remain very uncertain.

At Tall Talfis²⁹ (06) we found a rather C/ vague hint of Chalcolithic ware as well as Hellenistic/Byzantinistic and Islamic material.

Tall Fiden (07) (see Fig. 2 and Fig 7), often identified with Old Babylonian Saggartum³⁰ and with Hellenistic/Roman Apatna³¹, had been sketched by Herzfeld³². In this case we can, therefore, clearly show that the river has changed its course since the river branch which Herzfeld noticed does not exist any more. The whole area

which he sketched as an island is now used as fertile ground for cotton fields. The southern slope of the lower city («Unterstadt») is today covered with the houses of the modern village; along the western edge and on the northern part of the lower city, ruins of modern houses can also be noticed. On the surface of the citadel brickwork and mortar debris can be observed. In some instances the structure of standing or broken down walls is clearly visible. The character of the brickwork can be compared with Byzantine or Islamic walls as formerly done by Herzfeld³³ (Fig. 8); a remark made by Dossin³⁴ led us to believe that older brickwork was present but we were unable to discover any traces of it. Despite a very intensive search for older pottery, there is scanty evidence for any period prior to the First Millennium B.C. while Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic pottery was found in abundance. One Roman coin was also found. Our impression, therefore, is that the present topography of the tall is mainly the result of settling during the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods. Any hypothetical settlement prior to that age must definitely have been much smaller. As a result, it cannot be confirmed by archaeological evidence that a settlement contemporary to Old Babylonian Saggartum ever existed at this site.

Unfortunately, a similar result was achieved in the case of Tall Suwwar (13) which has been identified as Saggartum³⁵ or Suwwar³⁶ was sketched by Herzfeld.³⁷ Our main objection to his sketch is that the area west of his «natural ditch» is artificial ground surrounded by a large enclosure rampart³⁸. This tall is larger than Tall Fiden covering an area of ca. 400 by 480 meters. It is also higher; Tall Fiden is ca. 15 m. high and Tall Suwwar is almost 20 m. high. Substantial wall debris of clearly late character is visible and we are inclined to think that both Tall Fiden and Tall Suwwar would prove productive

excavation sites for any Islamic archaeologist. The pottery indicates a settlement during the Iron Age, that is Neo-Assyrian times, but any evidence prior to that time is very scanty. Two late Roman coins (fourth to fifth century A.D.) were found on the citadel surface.

Approximately 16 to 17 km. north of Tall Suwwar lies the next large tall, Tall Husen (15) (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 9). Around three km. south of it lies Tall Raya³⁹ (24-25) which consists of two clearly separated tall, Tall Raya - South (24) and Tall Raya - North (25). Sedmann⁴⁰ had located Neo-Assyrian As . . . urih at Tall Raya; our material has produced only very vague evidence of the Neo-Assyrian period on Tall Raya - North, while most of the sherds of both tall belong to the late classical and Islamic times.

Tall Husen (15) had also been sketched by Herzfeld⁴¹, in this case we found his sketch differing from the presently showing topography (see Fig. 3). The surface is covered by almost completely sunken Islamic graves and a rather solid carpet of grass, therefore, very little pottery shows on the surface. Erosion has, however, exposed the top layer which consists of typical late brickwork at several points on the tall. Unlike both Tall Suwwar and Tall Fiden, our collections at this tall showed a rather wide time range, starting perhaps as early as the late Uruk period, but definitely providing material of the Second and First Millennium B.C. Therefore theories associating this tall with Old Babylonian Lakusir (Goetze)⁴² and Middle- and Neo-Assyrian Dur-Katlimu (Seidmann)⁴³ will have to be considered seriously.

Almost opposite Tall Husen, clearly visible, only two km. to the northeast as the crow flies and on the left bank of the river, lies the largest tall of the whole lower Habur area Tall Seh Hamad (16). It is known in literature⁴⁴ because of a

stelae of Adad-Nirari III which was discovered there in the last century⁴⁵. Astonishingly little is known, however, in the way of general archaeological interpretation and only one very hypothetical proposal has been made as to its identity, i.e. Neo-Assyrian Usala⁴⁶. A visit to this site makes it absolutely clear that it must have played an important part in the history of the Habur Valley, and the archaeological evidence confirms this impression at once.

Tall Seh Hamad consists of a citadel and two lower cities («Unterstadt») lying within the lowland of the Habur. The river passes the western edge of the citadel, the first «Unterstadt» lies east-southeast of the citadel and the second «Unterstadt» extends far to the northeast covering by itself an area of almost 720 by 700 square meters⁴⁸. The tall itself rises to a height of almost 22 meters. In spite of the rather solid surface there is plenty of pottery to be found on the citadel. The percentage of Islamic ware is clearly low although the citadel was used as a burial ground not long ago; the present burial area is situated in the «Unterstadt» II. Erosion has cut deeply into the slopes of the citadel uncovering levels of burnt mud brick and also, in one case, a large slab of basalt. «Unterstadt» I has a rather regular outline which suggests that it might have served as a castellum or the like, perhaps during the Roman period. Roman Sigillata ware has been found here as well as on the citadel. A modern irrigation channel cut into the ground just north and west of «Unterstadt» I revealed sections which showed very distinctly that there are several burnt levels indicating a rather long history of the «Unterstadt» I. This is confirmed also by the surface finds in this area. The large «Unterstadt» II seems to belong mainly to one historical period, with only some sporadic areas being covered by later settlements which date to the First Millennium B.C. that is, to Neo-Assyrian times.

Building operations for an irrigation channel have uncovered several intact or almost complete jars, a cylinder seal (Fig. 6) and a torso of a basalt statue which is possibly a lion. All of these finds, the pottery very clearly, seem to belong to the first half of the First Millennium B.C. The archaeological evidence, therefore, almost certainly suggest that Tall Seh Hamad was a major urban center in Neo-Assyrian times; little known Usala does not seem to match the demands required for a place like this. Tall Seh Hamad should be identified instead with one of the larger centers known from Neo-Assyrian sources. Significantly enough it lies on the left bank of the river, and there is no indication to suggest that it ever has been situated anywhere else. As mentioned above, it is one of the largest sites located in the whole of the lower Habur; on the left bank Tall Fadgami (27) and Tall Abu Ha'it (09) are the next largest places within a distance of ca. 30 km. to the north and a little more than 50 km. to the south. The closest possibility of crossing the river in modern times is in the north at Marqaba (19) and in the south at Suwwar (13). These rather far distances are interrupted in the north by Tall Asswad (23), Tall Katari (18) and Tall Marqada - East (22), and in the south only by Hirbat al-Humra (17) and Tall Namliya (21). Of these, only Tall Katari (18) and Tall Namliya (21) seem to have contained Neo-Assyrian settlements.

The newly discovered small site of Hirbat al-Hufra (17), just southeast of Tall Seh Hamad, has a square enclosure rampart with a side length of about 53 meters. The pottery indicates an Islamic age for the main settlement.

On the right river bank we discovered another small site between Tall Husen and Tall Marqada, called Tall Kibar (29). The pottery here seems to indicate a possible settlement during the Iron Age, possibly also in the Roman period and definitely during Islamic times.

About 12 km. north of Tall Husen lies Tall Marqada (19) within the lowland of the Habur and at the point where the al-Hamma Plateau extends closest to the river bank. Tall Marqada (Fig. 11) had also been sketched by Herfeld⁴⁹. It is a rather large site which rises to a medium height only; the surface is interrupted by some lunar-like craters and elevations. It is evident that a settlement existed on the tall until very recent times, but at present there are only two small houses at the eastern edge of the tall. The pottery proves that settlements existed during the late classical and Islamic periods but any evidence prior to that is rather scanty and uncertain. The only proof is of late Iron Age date. Tall Marqada has been identified with Middle- and Neo-Assyrian Dur-Katlimu⁵⁰ and also with Neo-Assyrian Usala⁵¹ while these assumptions cannot be easily confirmed by our material the identification with Arabian Makisin⁵² seems to be certain.

Within a distance of about 16 km. to the north lies the next largest tall on the right bank of the Habur, Tall Asamsani (20). We did not find any ancient settlements between Tall Marqada and Tall Asamsani. Tall Asamsani lies in the lowland of the Habur with the river passing at its northeastern corner and running along its eastern edge. Within this bend of the river the modern village is situated on the slopes of the «Unterstadt». It appears however, that the actual life of this village does not take place here but rather on the other side of the river which can easily be reached by crossing the river on foot or by boat. The river bed itself made a rather «alluvial» impression. This is important when one considers the observation we made on the southwestern side of the tall; an old river-bed is clearly distinguishable here. It is possible, therefore, that at one time the river flowed around the southwestern rather than the northeastern corner of the tall. This means that in considering historical implications one has to

keep in mind that Tall Asamsani may have been situated on the left river bank in earlier times.

Tall Asamsani⁵³ consists of an elongated citadel which rises very steeply to a height of about 30 m. in the northwest and of an «Unterstadt» in the southeastern part to which the citadel slopes down more gently. By the shape of the tall one is inclined to think, especially in comparison with smaller sites, that the river in ancient times must have bordered the northwestern edge of the tall because it is this side where the very steep upgrade is noticed. Since the position of the tall is slightly twisted northeast to southwest one could indeed suppose that the tall originally lay on the left bank of the Habur.

Our surface collections show a settlement sequence from the beginning of the Second Millennium B.C. down to Islamic times. It is surprising that there is not much Islamic glazed ware although there is evidence of characteristic late brickwork (which might, of course, be of Byzantine age as well) and of burials which covered the whole surface of the citadel. At the other end of the scale, there is slight evidence of an occupation in the Third Millennium B.C.

The only identification proposal so far has been made by Goetze who has located Old Babylonian Iyatu here⁵⁴. With the possibility in mind that Tall Asamsani may have been situated on the other bank of the river in the Second and First Millennium, the question of identification must be thought over; our material shows that it was a larger center in the Second and First Millennium, a fact which apparently has not been considered too seriously so far.

Opposite Tall Asamsani, on the present left bank of the river, there is a small tall called Tall Aswad (23), as we were told. It is situated within the fields, on the alluvial lowland and at the southern

end of the village. We were told that at the northern end of the village, within the beautiful gardens which have been planted there, graves with many small finds has been discovered. The material we were shown consisted of fragments of Roman or perhaps Byzantine glass, beads and other completely characteristic pieces and we were told that there had also been cylinder seals.

Following the right bank, we did not discover any tells until we reached Tall Garmiz (46), which is about 15 km. north of Tall Asamsani. Tall Garmiz is situated close to the present river bank within the rather wide lowland of the Habur. We were not able to visit it because an irrigation channel had broken the day before we came so that the fields were flooded.

Following our way up to Saddada we passed the modern village of 'Adla (43). Taking a closer look we noticed that the whole village covers an ancient settlement, the extension of which was impossible to determine. To judge by the pottery the ancient settlement appears to belong to only one period, which is the Neo-Assyrian. There may also have been some minor settlement during the medieval Islamic period; but one may speak with fair certainty of 'Adla being founded during Neo-Assyrian times.

The next large tell on the right bank of the river Tall Saddada (35). Its present situation is rather far away from the main road and the modern village which lies to the north and mainly on the left bank of the Habur. The modern road to Hassaka turns somewhat westward to climb up the hilly slopes of the Gazira; here the road from Mosul, having passed the modern bridge across the Habur at the village of Saddada, meets the road to Hassaka. Tall Saddada is situated within the lowland of the Habur, the river touching the tell only at its southeastern corner at the present time. Here we have defi-

nite proof of how quickly and strongly the river can change its course; when Sarre /Herzfeld⁵⁵ visited the tell almost 70 years ago the river was passing by at the eastern foot of the tell where it would have been expected in regard to the topography of the tell. It is possible though that at one time the river also passed along the western edge of the tell(!) because there is a shallow ditch running along the western slopes on the tell and turning east in the south. The hills west of this ditch and another hill north of the tell are natural formations. The tell itself consists of a citadel, the top of which is approximately square and there are two «Unterstaedte» a northern one and a southern one. The southern «Unterstadt» extend for such a great distance that the length of the entire tell is almost 600 meters. Traces of recent settlements in this area are visible but the old village of Saddada, situated south of the tell, is almost completely uninhabited and in ruins.

The evidence we obtained from surface collections is very important: there is proof of an occupation during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (Early Dynastic Period); there is also proof of the Iron Age, the late classical period and of Islamic times. On the other hand, there seems to be almost a complete lack of material which might be ascribed to the Second Millennium B.C. This seems to indicate a decline of the city in the Second Millennium; can this perhaps be attributed to a major shift of the river-bed? Our archaeological evidence is also contradictory to the present localization schemes: Kupper⁵⁶ equates it with Old Babylonian Qattunur which, in turn, could be identical to Middle Assyrian Qatni and perhaps Neo-Assyrian Qadine⁵⁷; and Dussaud locates Dur-Katlimu here.⁵⁸

Continuing north up the right river bank we discovered two so far unknown sites, Tall Umm Zirr (44) and Tall Bahza (47). Tall Umm Zirr is very small and

appears to contain a late Roman occupation.

Tall Bahza (47) is like Tall 'Adla (43), completely covered by the modern village of Bahza and situated at the edge of the river terrace. Like Tall 'Adla it was probably founded and occupied principally in Neo-Assyrian times. Later on the settlement seems to have shifted to Hirbat al Bahza (48), again possibly due to a change of the river course. Hirbat al Bahza lies within the fields of the lowland and close to the modern river bank. It consists of three «summits» and its surface finds show ample evidence of an occupation during late classical and Islamic times.

We were not able to visit the small site of Tall Rasidiya - West (45).

The site of al-Batah (42) is located on a natural hill. We collected a few flints which indicate that there may have been a flint workshop in the area.

Further north and at a distance of about 14 km. from Saddada lies Tall Ahmar (39-41), a place which really consists of three tells, Tall Ahmar-South (39), Tall Ahmar - Middle (40), and Tall Ahmar-North (41). This very important site is almost unknown so far in literature and has never before been systematically surveyed.⁵⁹

Tall Ahmar-South are lying at the edge but still on the terrace which slopes down to the lowland of the river, while Tall Ahmar - Middle is situated in a valley between the other two and in the lowland. Tall Ahmar-South (Fig. 12) consists of a citadel, the top of which is rather square, and small «Unterstadt». Tall Ahmar-North is smaller and irregular in shape and Tall Ahmar - Middle is the smallest and rather circular.

On Tall Ahmar - South the Early Bronze Age, Uruk and Chalcolithic wares

outweigh some Neo-Assyrian and later evidence. On Tall Ahmar - North and Middle the situation is reserved any evidence older than the middle of the Second Millennium B.C. is very scanty. Numerous flints are scattered on the terrace somewhat southwest of Tall Ahmar-South which indicates a workshop situation like that at Batah. Other flints and obsidian blades were found on Tall Ahmar-South proper and indicate an occupation level during the ceramical Neolithic age.

About five km. north of Tall Ahmar lies Tall 'Agaga-West, also called Tall 'Arban (36). This large, flat and rather regularly shaped tell had already attracted the attention of Sir Austin Henry Layard who dug three tunnels into the steep eastern riverbank edge of the tell. These tunnels are still accessible today.⁶⁰ Other scholars have also visited the tell,⁶¹ the winged bulls which were found by Layard and other indications point very strongly to an identification of Tall 'Agaga with Neo-Assyrian Sadikanni.⁶² The Arabian name 'Arban is probably a derivation of Greek and Roman Horoba or Oraba.⁶³ Our surface collection shows ample evidence of both periods, the Iron Age and the Greek/Roman up to Islamic times. But there are also some indicators of older periods up to the Early Bronze Age.

With Tall 'Agaga-West our systematic survey on the right river bank ended. Our original plans to cover the fertile plain which extends towards the west onto the slopes of the Gabal 'Abd al-Aziz were postponed to the year because we were running out of time. We did make a tour though to take just a brief look at the overall situation and visited Tall Barud (52), Tall Mu'azzar (53), Tall Matiyaha (54), and Tall Murtiya (55).

The only tell which was surveyed systematically north of Tall 'Agaga was Tall Knedig (34). This tell is virtually

unknown in literature but is probably identical with Tall Seh Sulaib on an old map.⁶⁴ It is situated about halfway between Tall 'Agaga and Hassaka, a little off the modern road and not easy to reach. The tall consists of a citadel and an «Unterstadt». The surface collections show an occupation during the Early and Middle Bronze Age while the late Bronze Age is not well represented. There is evidence of the Iron Age and Roman period while Islamic glazed ware is rare. Although the tall surface is covered with modern graves there is no modern settlement in the neighbourhood. In spite of the graves, Early Bronze Age ware was found on top of the tall. A certain type of flint blade point belonging to the ceramical Neolithic was also present. The impression is that the citadel was founded much earlier than the «Unterstadt».

On the left bank of the river and ca. five km., north of Tall Asamsani / Tall Aswad lies Tall Fadgami (27) (Fig. 4 and Fig. 10). Although known in literature⁶⁵ it seems that few scholars have visited the place; Sarre/Herzfeld and von Oppenheim both passed by while Layard apparently stopped and inspected it. Even today it's not easy to reach the tall because the road along the left river bank consists of a dusty track which starts at Saddada, the closest place where one can cross the river.

Similar to Tall Seh Hamad, no one seems to have taken much interest in this large site. There are only two identification proposals: one suggesting Qatni (Forrer), and the other Dur-Katlimu (Musil).⁶⁶ The site itself makes it absolutely clear though, that it must have been another major center in the Second and First Millennium B.C. There is sufficient evidence of the Islamic and Roman Age, material of the Third Millennium B.C. and some very nice examples of the so-called «Glockenbecher» of the late Uruk times. The tall itself consists of a citadel rising

to a height of 22 m. and an «Unterstadt» on which the village of Fadgami was located not long ago. The present village lies rather far from the tall on the edge of the river terrace, while the tall lies within the lowland.

The geographical position of Tall Fadgami provides a reason for the importance of this place throughout history. It is situated at the end of an old caravan route which still exists today from Mosul to the Habur, passing the Gabal Singar at its southern edge.⁶⁷

Approximately two km. north of Tall Fadgami and close to the northern end of the modern village of Fadgami we found another small tall lying within the lowland which the people told us called Hirbat al Fadgami (49). The pottery is difficult to classify but seems to point to late Hellenistic to Islamic times.

North of this small site we discovered of the Wadi Hamda Tall Abu Hamda (50). The surface material definitely indicates an Iron Age settlement; it is possible that this settlement was founded at the beginning of the Iron Age since any definite older evidence is missing. Thus it would fall in line with the sites of Tall Bahza and Tall 'Adla.

About three km. north of Tall Abu Hamda lies Tall Galal (28), so far mentioned only by Musil.⁶⁸ This place, situated at the edge of the river terrace but on it, was occupied throughout the Chalcolithic period and during the Bronze Age. There is evidence for even older material (flints) but anything later than the beginning of the Second Millennium is very uncertain. Nothing has been found to allow conclusions for a settlement during the Iron Age or later. Therefore, the identification proposal of Musil with Neo-Assyrian Qatni becomes very improbable.

A local guide drew our attention to a

few tulul on the eastern plateau which is very close to the Iroqian border. They are all situated along the route to Mosul.

The first tall we visited was Tall Manha (32) which is completely unknown in literature so far. It is a fairly large place (about 300 by 150 m.) within the Gazira and without any modern settlement around it although two houses occupy the tall today. The surface collections show that a major occupation existed during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age while the evidence for the Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age is scanty. The presence of some flints points to a late Neolithic and Chalcolithic period occupation.

The next place we were shown was Tall Madina (29), far off the Mosul route and at the edge of the steppe. The small modern village is grouped around a square rampart of 20 m. length on the side. The pottery is Islamic but a few pieces also seem to indicate an Iron Age level. The coins we were given belong to the time of the Singar Sangids.⁶⁹

We were then led to Tall Gayyir (30). This is a surprisingly circular site with a diameter of 152 m. Two houses which belong to the modern tall. The shapes of the pottery are rather unusual and can hardly be classified at the moment; the general impression is an early to be dated ware (perhaps Uruk period). Some flints are firmly to be dated to the late Neolithic period.

We were finally pointed to a tall or rather an accumulation of several tulul which flint debris, a fact that suggests that these may have been flint workshop sites. This place was situated near the Wadi Haburiya and therefore it was called Tall Haburiya (31). There was no modern settlement in the neighbourhood. We discovered only two completely atypical sherds. A similar place was discovered near Tall 'Adla on the right river bank, and with

al-Batah, we may have found altogether three stations of this kind.

North of Tall Galal, and halfway between it and Saddada, we discovered another tall situated within the lowland of the Habur. Tall Brik (33). This is a rather low regularly shaped tall with its northern edge looking much like a rampart. The center and the southern part covered by a modern village. The pottery is uncharacteristic but seems to indicate an occupation during the Iron Age and late classical times; surprisingly little Islamic glazed ware was found. Tall Brik appears to be similar to other tall in the area which were founded during the Iron Age.

In the area between Tall Brik and Saddada no other tall was discovered. With the investigation of this area round Saddada, our systematic survey of the left bank of the river ended. Aside from a preliminary visit to the left bank between Saddada and Hassaka, including a brief survey of Tall 'Agaga-East, we picked out only the sites of Tall Ta'ban (57) and Tall Tnenir (38) for systematic investigation.

Tall Ta'ban is clearly situated on the edge of the river terrace with a former river-bed lying at its western foot; the river now passes far off to the west leaving a 200 to 300 m. strip of land available for the cultivation of cotton. Tall Knedig (34) can clearly be seen in the northeast. The tall consists of a citadel and a large «Unters-tadt». On top of the citadel the ruins of a Seh, mentioned by von Oppenheim⁷⁰, are still visible. Our surface collections show a clear occupation sequence from the Chalcolithic (?) period down to Islamic times. The Middle and Late Bronze Age as well as the Iron Age are well represented. It is therefore perfectly possible that Tall Ta'ban should be identified with Middle, and Neo-Assyrian Tabite as was suggested by Horn⁷¹ and possibly also with Old Babylonian Tabatum.

Tall Tnenir (38) lies only about 14 km. south of Hassaka within the lowland of the river (Fig. 5) A steeply rising citadel is surrounded in the east and south by a large «Unteéstadt». At the present time, the river passes by in the west leaving a strip of about 60 m. of ground which is used for cotton fields. Close to the western slope of the citadel lies a well which contains salty water. East of the «Unterstadt» lies an old river-bed, on the east bank of which further ruins can be traced on the plain. Several tumuli show up far inland and can be recognized from the road. The river branch was possibly crossed by a bridge of which the supports are still existent. The surface of the citadel and of the «Unterstadt» is covered with pieces of mortar and limestone, and a network of streets and the ground plans of houses can

be discerned.⁷² South of the «Understadt» there is another «suburb» reaching as far west as the present river bank. The «Unterstadt» is surrounded by a rampart which is divided by several rectangular towers indicating a gate.⁷³ Our surface collections give sufficient evidence of Byzantine, Hellenistic and Roman times as well as the Iron Age. There are also some sherds that appear to date Early and Middle Bronze Age. A Byzantine coin of Romanos IV. Diogenes⁷⁴ would confirm the supposition that the uppermost settlement is that of the Byzantine era.

Tall Tnenir (35) has been identified as Thannuris by Herzfeld⁷⁵, a theory which has been confirmed Poidebard and Dillman.⁷⁶ There is no suggestion so far for a localization of an Assyrian site.

NOTES

1. M. Birot, *Lettres de Yaqqim-Addu, gouverneur de Sagaratum*. ARM 14 (1974).
2. Stephanie Dalley, C.B.F. Walker. J.D. Hawkins, *The Old Babylonian Tablets from Tell al Rimah* (London 1976).
3. *Annals* V 33 ff., s. L.W. King AKA 72 ff.
4. *Ibid.* VI 70 ff., s. AKA 85.f.
5. L. W. King, AKA 136 f., cf. also A.R. Millard, *Iraq* 32 (1970) Pl. XXXIII f.
6. *Annals of Adad-Nerari II*, see J. Seidmann, *Die Inschriften Adadniraris II*, MAOG 9/3 (1935) p. 30, 105 ff. see also W. Schramm, EAK 2, 3-6 .
7. *Annals of Tukulti-Ninurti II*, see W.Schramm, *Bior* 27 (1970) 147-160 Rev. line 13 sq.
8. J. Seidmann (cf. note 6), *S. Horn ZA* 34 (1922) 144 ff
9. A.H. Layard, *Discoveries in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (1953) 272 ff.
10. G. Smith. *Ancient History from the Monuments : Assyria* (1875) 37
11. M. von Oppenheim, *Vom Mittelmeer zum Persischen Golf* Vol. 2, (1900) 14.
12. M. von Oppenheim (cf. note 11) 6-26.
13. E. Herzfeld, F. Sarre, *Reise in Euphrat-und Tigrisgebiet* Vol 1 (1911) 171-196.
14. A. Musil, *The Middle Euphrates* (1927) 82 ff.
15. A. Poidebard, *Les routes anciennes en Haute-Djézireh*, in : *Syria* 8 (1927) 55 - 65.
16. A. Poidebard, *La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie*. 2 vols. *Biblioth que archéologique et historique* 18, Paris 1934.
17. M. Mallowan, *Iraq* 3 (1963) 1 ff.
18. In one case we were not able to reach the tall because the plain was flooded. The others were not surveyed systematically because of lack of time. This was ~~hard TR 134; Dussaud, Top. 487; Par~~ survey which is scheduled for 1977.
19. E. Wirth, *Syrien* 110. 421. 427. 429 Bild 6.
20. Musil 82.
21. Sachau, *Reise* 286-8, Sarre/Herzfeld *Reise* 1, 172, Abb. 78-9; Musil 82; Poidebard TR 134; Dussaud, Top. 487; Parpola NAT 296.
22. Amiran, *Pottery*, 59 ff. Pl. 17 : 16.
23. Discovered by Mallowan, *Iraq* 3, 2 Fig. 1.
24. Dossin RA 64 (1970), 19 note 3
25. Goetze, JCS 7, 58 note 51; Kuper, *BiOr* 9, 168; id. *Nomades* 2 notes 1; Falkner AfO 18, 17.
26. Sachau, *Reise* 291; Sarre/Herzfeld. *Reise* I, 176.
27. Parpola NAT 296.
28. Musil 82 and map.
29. Sarre/Herzfeld, *Reise* I, 176; Musil 82 Kupper, *Nomades* 2 note 1.
30. Dossin RA 64 19 notes 3; van Liere AAS 13, 120.
31. Sarre/Herzfeld, *Reise* I, 176, Musil 82 note 46; Dussaud, Top. 483; Dilleman HMO 46. 225, 245 Fig. XI; Poidebard, TR 134.
32. Sarre/Herzfeld, *Reise* I, Abb. 80.
33. Sarre/Herzfeld, *Reise* I, 176.
34. RA 64, 19 note 3.
35. Dossin RA 35, 185 note 2; Kupper, RA 41, 161, Hrouda MDOG 90, 32.
36. *Suru in Bit Halupe* : Parpola NAT 319; Goetze JCS 7, 58 note 38; Musil 86, 204 ff.; Horn, ZA 34, 152; Dussaud Top. 487-8 Kupper, *Nomades* 2, 121.

37. Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I, 177-9 Abb. 81.
38. von Oppenheim had the same impression, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 10-11.
39. Identical with Tall Umeilih on older maps since the modern village nearly is called Umaliye; the inhabitants called both tallis by the same name.
40. Seidmann, MAOG 9/3, 69.
41. Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I, 178, Abb. 82; vgl. auch Sachau, Reise 296, von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 14; Poidebard TR 135; Musil 85, 339.
42. JCS 7, 58.
43. Seidmann MAOG 9/3, 69; Parpola NAT 108.
44. von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 14-15; Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I, 180; Sachau, Reise 292.297; Mallowan, Itaq 3, Fig. 1 Musil 83 f.
45. Rassam. Ashur and the land of Nimrod 1897, 311 ff.; Millard/Tamdor, Iraq 35 (1973), 57 ff.
46. Horn, ZA 34, 153; Millard/Tadmor, Iraq 35, 57 have not dealt with questions of historical geography.
47. The best aerial view is given by Poidebard, TR 135, Pl. 108; the area of the «Unterstadt» II is now partly covered by houses.
48. The modern village centers around the southern edge of the citadel and the «Unterstadt» I the «Unterstadt» II being covered only sporadically by houses.
49. Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I, 180 f., Abb. 84, see also : von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 15-16; Sachau, Reise 236; Poidebard, TR 135, Pl. 109; Musil 85.87.
50. Seidmann, MAOG 9/3, 19; Kräling, Aram and Israel 55.
51. Dussaud, Top 487.
52. Dussaud, Top. 487; von Oppenheim Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 15.
53. cf. Sachau, Reise 296; von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 16; Sarre/Herzfeld. Reise I. 182; Poidebard TR 136; Musil 85.
54. Goetze JCS 7, 58.
55. Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I. 182 ff. Abb. 87; Sachau, Reise 293-296; von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 17.21; Poidebard, TR 136.
56. Kupper, Nomades 2 note 2.
57. cf. Forrer, Provenzen-Teilung 15 Horn ZA 34, 153; Seidmann, MAOG 9/3, 69; Falkner, Afo 18, 17 Anm. 19; Parpola. NAT 283.285.
58. Dussaud, Top. 487; Parpola, NAT 108.
59. For a good picture see Poidebard, TR Pl. 112.1, p. 137; mentioned also by Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I, 184.
60. Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, London, 272.
61. Sachau, Reise 292; Sarre/Herzfeld Reise I, 184-7, Abb. 88; von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 19-21.
62. G. Smith, History of Assyria 37; Horn ZA 34, 154; Olmstead in JAOS 38, 223 note 34; Kraeling, Aram and Israel 54 note 5; of different opinion Dussaud, Top. 487.
63. Dilleman HMO 186.
64. Kgl. Preuss. Landesaufnahme, 1918 Blatt 3b; cf. von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 22.
65. von Oppenheim, Mittelmeer Bd. 2, 16; Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I, 182; for a good aerial view cf. Poidebard, TR 136, Pl. 111.

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66. Forrer, Provinzeinteilung 15 suggests locating Qatni «between Saddada and Tall Fadgami» ; Musil, 199. 99. 205-6.
 67. Musil 85 .
 68. Musil 210-11.
 69. The determination is provided by H. Gaube.
 70. von Oppenheim Mittelmeer Bd/ 22-3; cf. also Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I, 188, Sachau Reise 296. / 2
 71. Horn, ZA 34, 155, Anm. 2.
 72. Poidebad, TR 140-2, Pl. 115-7.
 73. We were not able to complete our survey because a sandstorm came up.
 74. The determination is provided by K. Kessler.
 75. Sarre/Herzfeld, Reise I. 194-5, Abb 93.
 76. Dilleman, HMO 108.203.

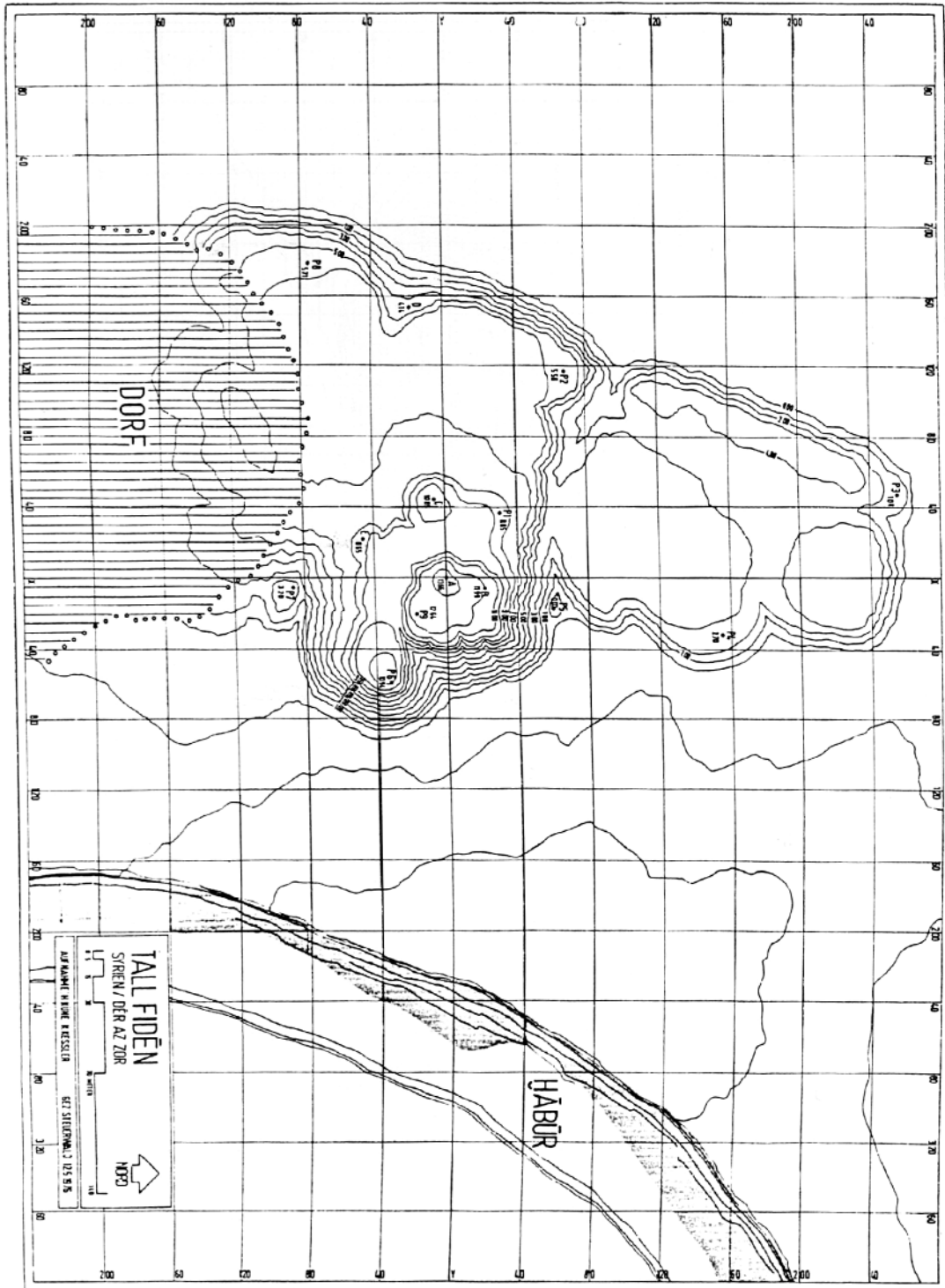


Fig. 2 : Contour map of Tall Fiden.

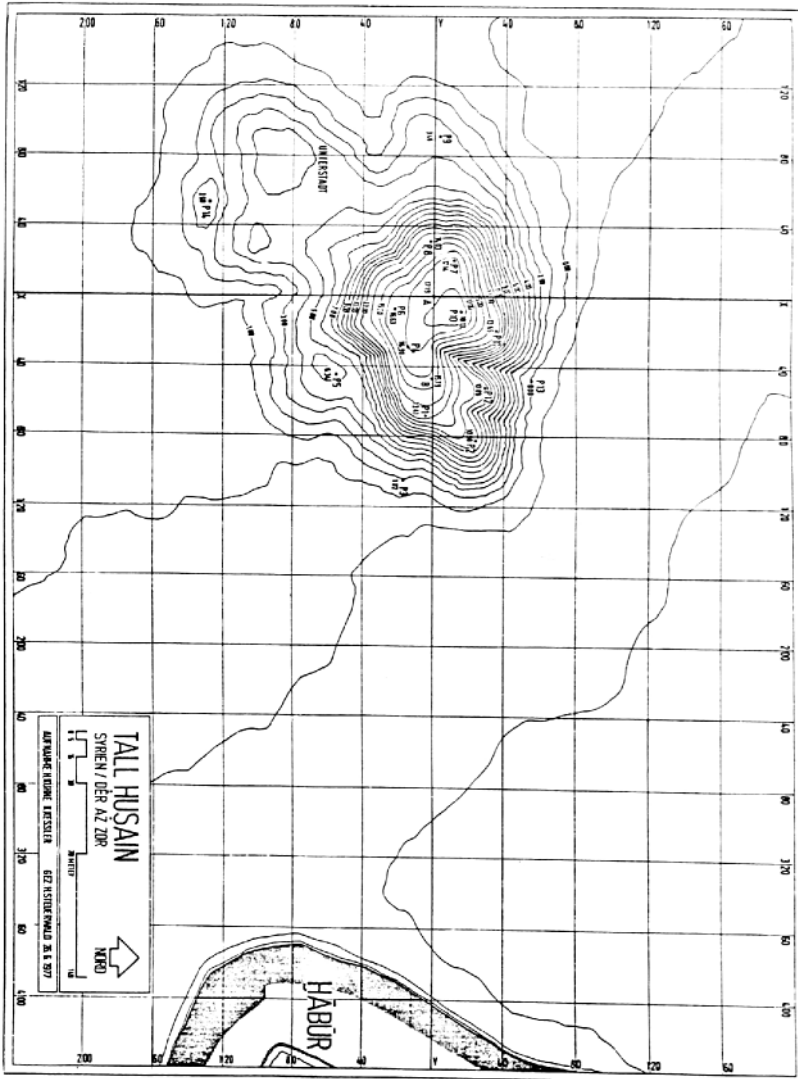


Fig. 3 : Contour map of Tall Husain.

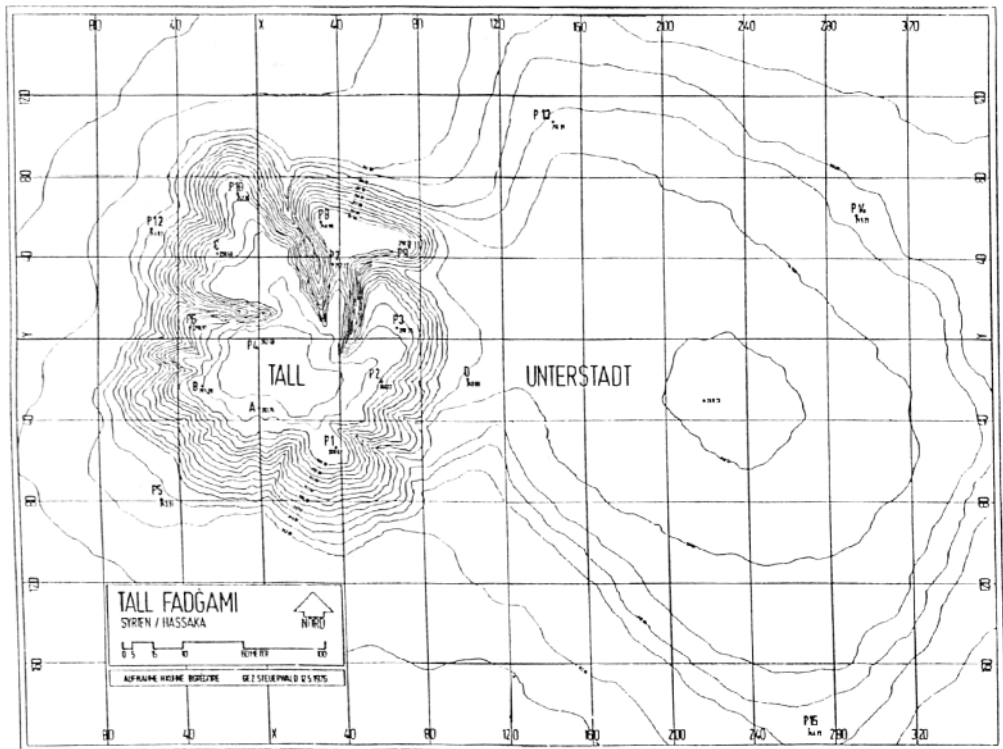


Fig. 4 : Contour map of Tall Fadgami.

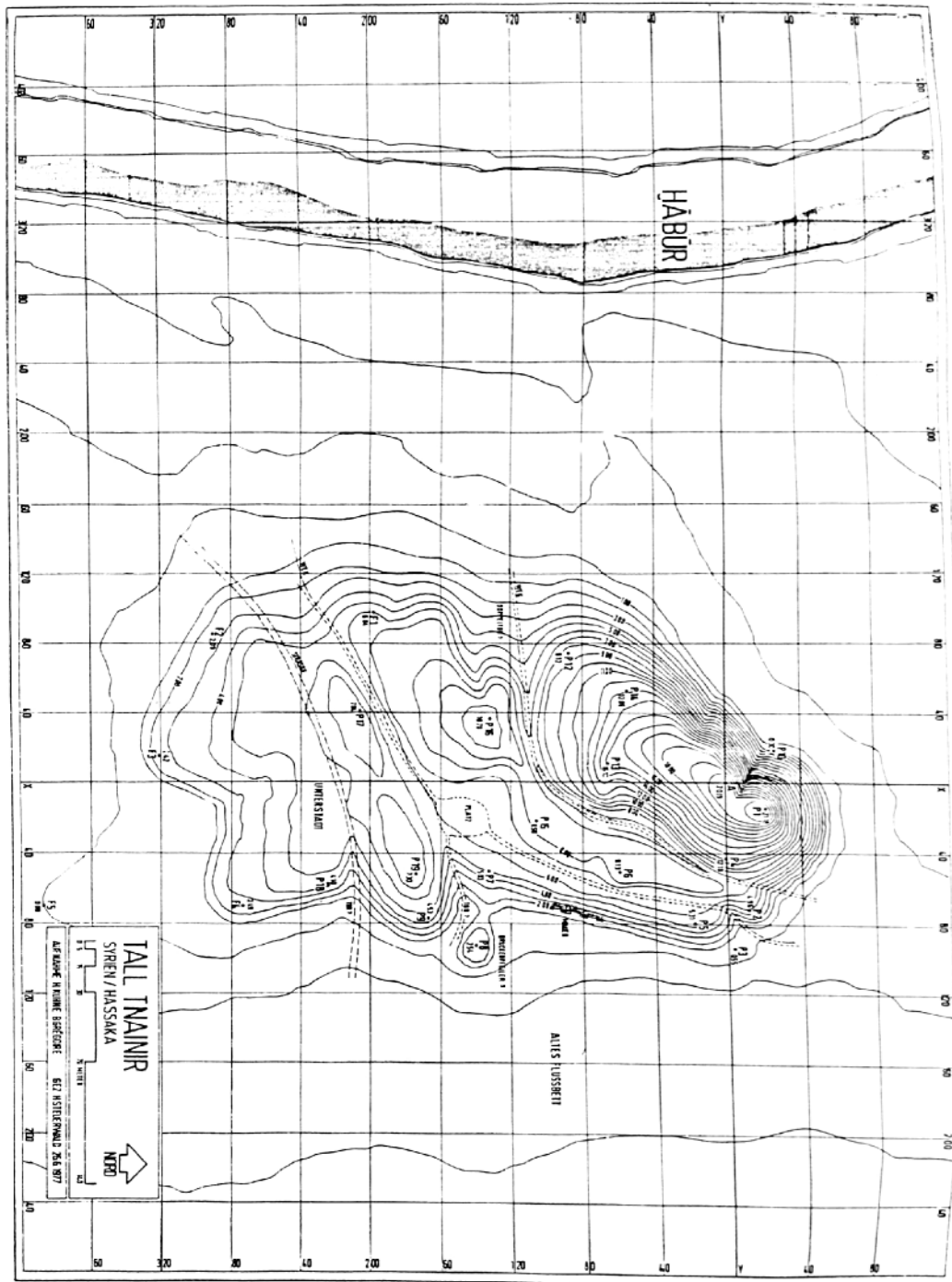


Fig. 5 : Contour map of Tall Tneir.

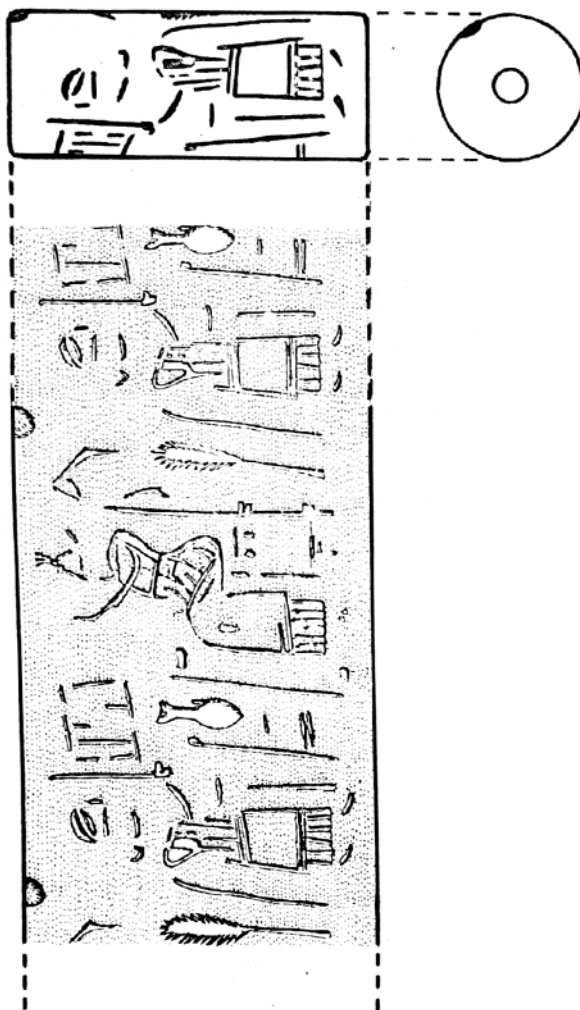


Fig. 6 : Impression of Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal from Tall Seh Hamad, drawn by G. Nember, Tübingen: find spot no. 147.



Fig. 7 : Tall Fiden as seen from southeast.

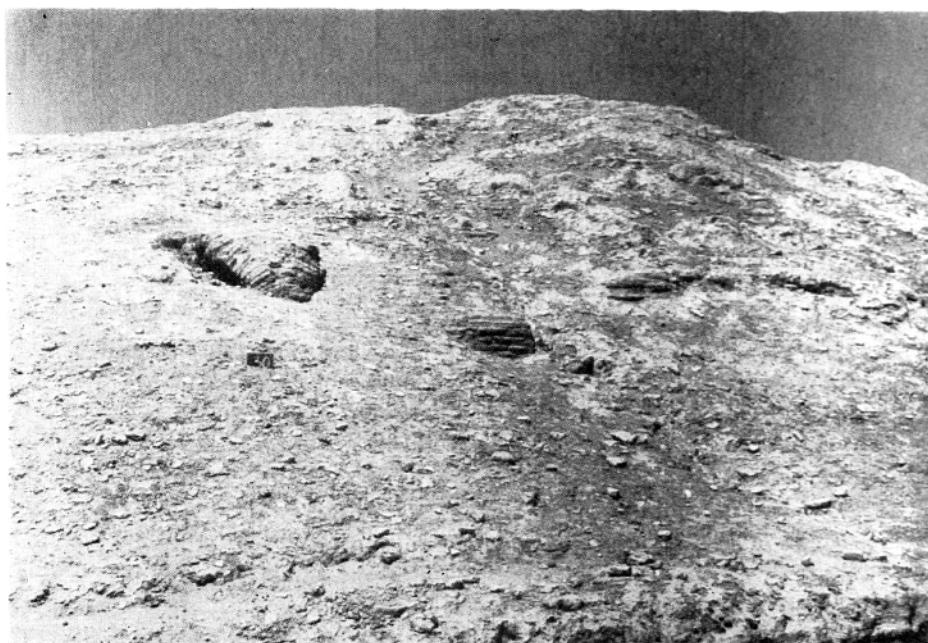


Fig. 8 : Tall Fiden : walls and arches as showing on the surface of the East-slope, probably of Islamic date.

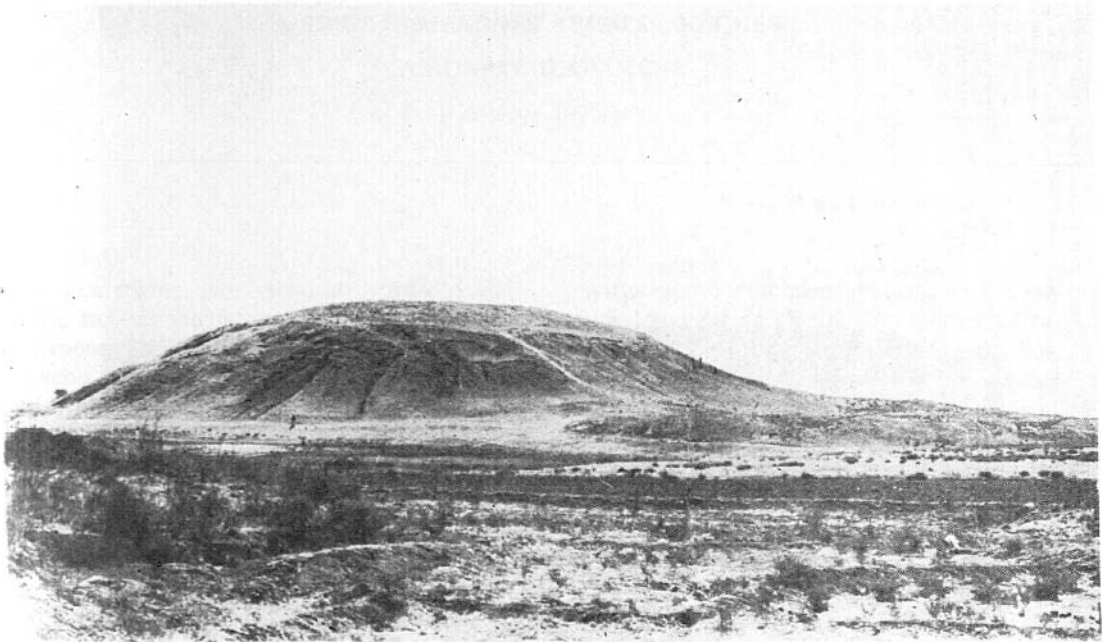


Fig. 9 : Tall Husen as seen from southeast.

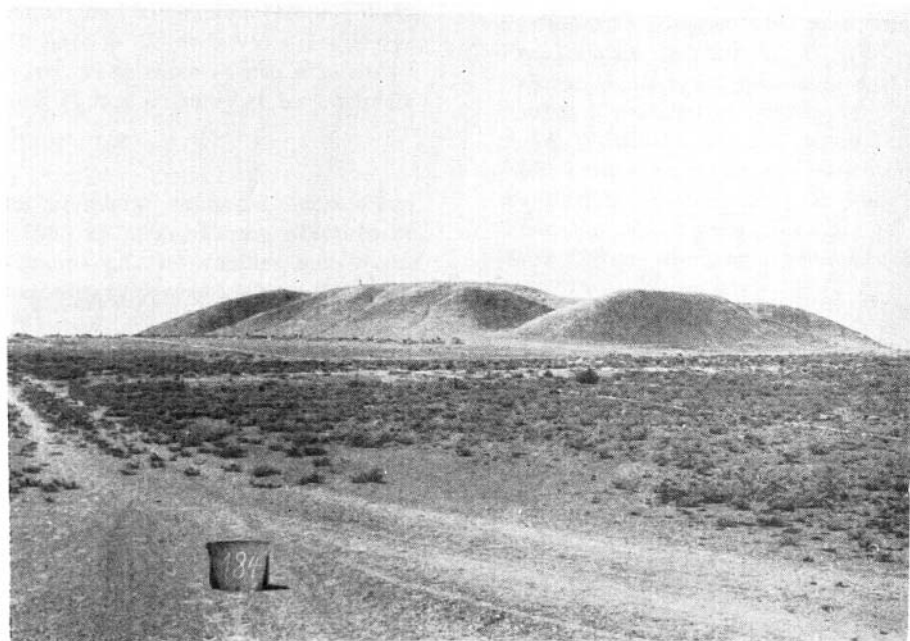


Fig. 10 : Tall Fadgami as seen from east.

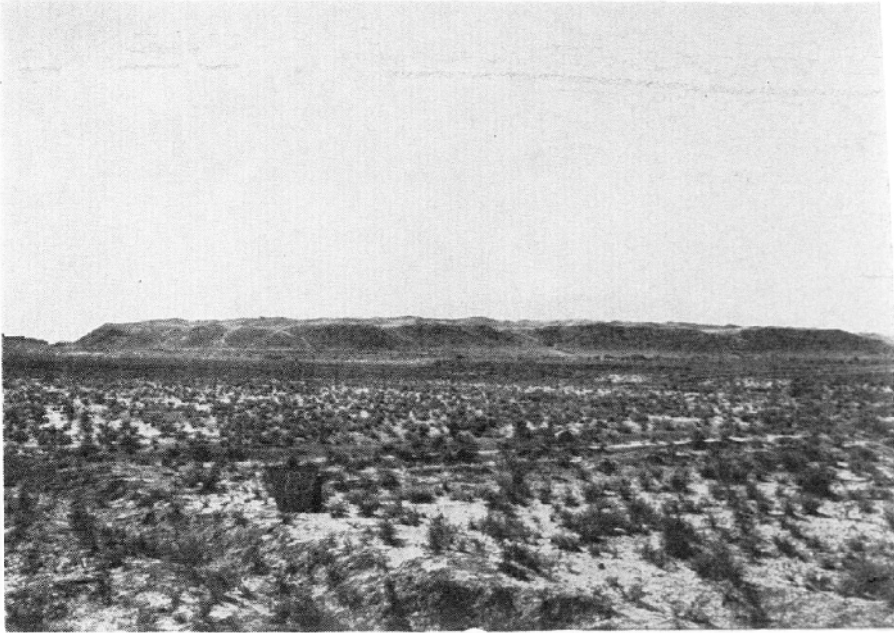


Fig. 11 : Talj Marqada as seen from southeast.

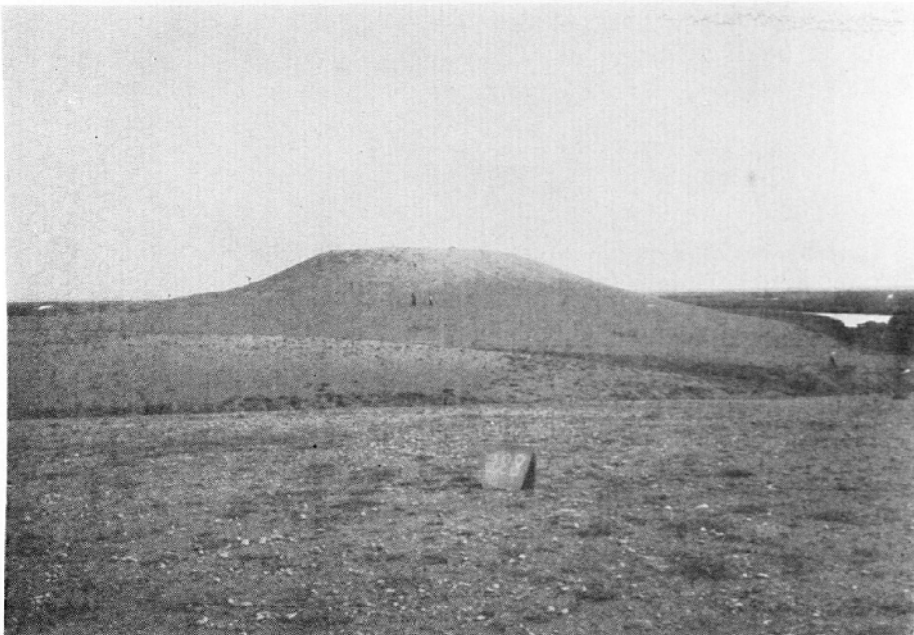


Fig. 12 : Tall Ahmar-Süd as seen from southeast.