THE LOWER HABUR SECOND PRELIMINARY REPORT ON A SURVEY IN 1977

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Introduction

A first survey of the Lower Habúr Was carried out for the «Tübingen Atlas of the Middle East» in 1975. The goals and findings of this survey are laid in the First preliminary Report, which was published in this journal in 1979. As already described on that occasion, it was possible, in spite of intensive work, to carry out only part of the work programme because the task to be dealt with turned out to be much bigger than the available literature had suggested. Therefore, the second survey campaign set out to investigate the still largely unexplored area between Saddáda and Hassaka on the left bank of the Hábúr and between Tall 'Arban and Tall Gúwerán on the right bank, to re-examine a few of the mounds visited in 1975, and - if possible - to inspect settement sites below the Gebel 'Abd al- 'Azíz and trace the courses of old canals. These latter plans could not, however, be carried out as intend ed.

Regarding the methods used in this survey the reader is referred to the description in the First preliminary Report. Through the services of the Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées and thanks to the co-operation of the Direction Générale des Grandes projects in Raqqa we later gained access to maps, which promise to be very helpful in reconstructing the course of the river in ancient times. The participants in this second survey were Miss Kate Fielden (Oxford), Rolf Brockschmidt, Dr. Hartmut Kühne, Professor Dr. Wolfgang Röllig and Dipl-Hans Steuerwald. The Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées in Damascus gave continual support to our work and generously permitted us to transport all of the ceramic fragments collected to Tübingen for further study. we therefore wish to express our special thanks once again to Dr. A. Bahnassi, Directeur Général, Dr. A. Bounni, Directeur des Fouilles, and to K. Touer.

Furthermore, we thank M. Heretani, the Director of the museum in Aleppo, and especially our colleague ans friend Assad Mahmoud M.A., Director of Museum of Dér az-Zór, who bore all the hardships of the survey and who brought us, with untiring dedication, through many a difficult situation.

The survey began on August 13th, 1977, with the base of operations in Hassaka. On September 11 th, the base was moved to Dér az-Zór, and on September 19th the survey was concluded. During this period 86 tells were visited, of which 72 were hirherto unknown. These new discoveries have fundamentally changed the settlement map of the Hàbúr region below Hassaka. Instead of approximately 35 mounds, as listed in older literature (some of which, however. were found not to exist), we registerd a total of 129. Evaluation of the findings, particulary from the pottery, will make it possible to paint a completely new picture of the settlement history of this region.

Description of Selected Sites

In view of the large number of ruins visited in 1977, it seems appropriate to draw

attention to only a few findings of particular importance. This is also justified by the fact that the final survey report is in preparation. We proceed from north to south.

It is not surprising that the area where the Gaggag flows into the Habúr is particularly worthy of attention. Here there is a marked change in the landscape. The flat and very fertile plain of the Habúr tributaries in the north merges into the steppe-like Gezire, whose gypsum plateau is cut only by the river valley with its meadowlands on which crops and cotton can be cultivated under irrigation. From the west there approach hilly offshoots of the Gebel 'Abd al-'Aziz, in whose lower regions rain-fed agriculture is still possible. In the east the Kokab massif, with its lavafields, forms a barrier. Thus, the area occupied by the present-day town of Hassaka has been important from ancient times as a crossroads for north-south traffic, especially since the river here is pushed to the east by a clearly perceptible terrace before it turns in a clear southerly direction. Four tells, separated by short distances, underscore the importance of the location.

Of these, the former tall Hassaka (115) on the left bank was definitely the largest. Its extent can no longer be exactly determined since it has been covered and in large part levelled by the construction of modern market halls on its western side and dwellings on its northern and eastern sides. In the foundation-pits of new blocks of flats, however, it was possible to discern 'strata several metres thick from the Middle and late Bronze Age. The tell, which rises steeply several metres on its southern flank, had a citadel, with barracks, built on it in the last century. Though still in use today, barracks are gradually falling into decay. In a section of the western slope one can easily distinguish an older, smaller settlement nucleus of the Chalcolithic period and the Early Bronze Age from the more recent settlement of the Middle and Late Bronze Age extending further eastward.

A short distance off to the southwart but at the same river crossing and on the distribut the remains of Tall Gúweran seen. This mound, which was originally extensive, is today dissected by the broad main road coming from the south. In addition, a considerable portion of the tell in the west has been obliterated by a second road, so that today all that is left is a small hump surrounded by fields. As the pottery reveals, it was occupied at almost the same periods as Hassaka and can therefore be regarded as a small bridge-head on the other side of the river crossing.

A quite similar situation may be found a few hundred metres east of Hassaka, where the Gaggag flows into the Habur. Again there are two ruins, the large one, Tall 'Abü Bakr (77) on the right side of the river and the smaller one, Tall' Abü 'Amsah (71) on the left side. Both have remains of basalt walls and were thus probably fortified by rocks the lava fields of the Kokab for the purpose of protecting another river crossing. As further evidence for the importance of Tall 'Abü Bakr it can be mentioned that H. RASSASM probsbly dag up a number of reliefs here in 1879, among them "a fragment of black basalt, whereon there were engraved a few hieroglyphic figures, which I brought to the British Museum" (Asshur and the Land of Nimrod [1897] 313). R. DUSSAUD's report of the discovery of an Assyrian relief at this location (Topographie Historique [1927] 487) is presumably a reference to RASSAM and is, at the very least, imprecise. In any event, RASSAM's statement only allows us to conclude that the site was important during the second half of the second millennium B.C.

Further downstream, at Tall Kerma (73/74) and Tall Mullamatar (88), we find a similar situation. On the left bank are the moderately large tells of Kerma, which were probably directly adjacent to the river in former times but are now about 50 m. away. The northern mound dates from the Early Bronze Age, while the smaller southern one, separated from the other by a depression, was inhabited with certainty in Roman times and thus could possibly have been a border fortress. On the right side of the river which in this area has a number of islands and rapids,



Fig. 1: Tall Abu-Bakr as seen from the north.



Fig. 2: Tall Guweran as seen from the northwest.

the presence of the medium-sized Tall Mullamatar indicates that there was probably a ford here in former times. although it is completely covered with tombs, the remains of walls with typical lime mortar are a sign that it was occupied in the not-too-distant past. It is located in a fertile plain which today is under dense cultivation. On the northern side of it stands an orchard and trees grow all the way down to the river flowing nearby.

The next large hill south of Hassaka is Tall Mélebiya (86), which is situated on the right bank and not, as M. VON OPPENHEIM writes (Vom Mittelmeer zum Persischen Golf 2 [1900] 23), on the left bank. the ruins are very extensive: They formerly stretched in a northsouth direction right along the Habur but are now separated from the river by a strip of field on the eastern side. In the southeast a citadel mound rises and merges gradually with the plateau to the north, the plateau, which is crossed by two wadis, rises again at its northrern end drops off steeply at the river, In the mud-brick debris definite traces can be seen of several conflagrations. In addition, wall remains with lime mortar are detectable which indicates occupancy late as in Islamic times. This is also suggested by the pottery, which furthermore provides evidence that site was in use in Roman times as in the Early Bronze Age.

A short distance south of Melebiya, on the same bank of the river, is the huge Tall Msiyah. Although it is mentioned quite often by travellers, it is merely a conspicuously large rise in the river terrace, with no traces of settlement.

Approximately between Melebiya and Msiyah, to the left of the river (contrary to the map of the levant, which shows it on the right side), is **Tall Bderi (65)**. Though important, it can easily be overlooked on account of its low, elongated form and its location on the river plain. With a height of about 12m. and dimensions of roughly 350 x 250m. it is nivertheless a ruin of appreciable size. its total extent might be even greater, for spread about it in a semi-circle at a considerable distance are a number of small elevations which today have farmhouses on them but in former times might have been part of a city wall. The area which they enclose is now covered by dense plant growth, so that it cannot be examined for settlement traces. According to evidence from pottery, the tell itself was occupied continuously from the Early Dynastic to the Hellenistic-Roman period, the late Assyrian period being particularly prominent. In reconstructing the historical geography of this region, therefore, one will not be ale to ignore this city.

Tall as-Sur (70), located about three km. air distance south of Tall Bdèri on the Habur and washed by the river on its western flank, has likewise remained unnoticed until now. The low, but again very extensive, mound whose main settlement probably had a subsidiary town, exhibits the stonework laid in lime mortar which is typical kof the Islamic period. This suggests that it was founded in pottery also indicates that the site was first settled in Islamic times.

Another comparatively recent settlement may be found on the right bank of the river, directly adjacent to the modern road. Tall Dgerat-South (108) apparently the river terrace, which is fairly high here, as protection to the east. Our findings suggest that there is only one settlement level here which, according to the wealth of pottery discovered, belongs to the Byzantine period. The settlement was fortified to the south by a single wall, and to the west by a double wall which is still clearly visible in the terrain. Today the site serves as a cemetery for the village of Dgerat lying just to the north beyond a depression.

Also of apparently recent date is Tall Matariya, situated on the left bank, which is referred to as Tall Umtariya in various publications but which the inhabitants of the region beyond a doubt know under the name given here. Located in the very narrow meadowland along the river, which afterwards broadens around the mouth of the Wadi Ramel, the ruin consists of an almost square citadel and an extensive city area divided by numerous small sinkholes and hills. In places one can discern walls which, as pottery found



Fig. 3: Tall Kerma-South as seen from the south.



Fig. 4: Tall Kerma-North as seen from the south.

among the ruins also testifies, originated in Islamic times.

A short distance further south, directly adjacent to the Habur and on the same bank, is Tall Masnaqa (60), in which a large city complex is concealed. A cone-shaped citadel with hillock in front of it stands to the southwest. To east of it is the Lower City I, whose ruins still reach a height of several metres. This is followed by a wall, forming a rectangle at least 400 m. in length, which marks the boundary of the settlement. It will remain an open question to what extent this area was occupied, since its present-day use as a cotton field prevented it from being investigated. The city was inhabited in Hellenistic-Roman times but exhibits pottery fragments from other periods, in particular the Halaf, Obed and Uruk periods and the Early Bronze Age. Thus we have the desired links to ruins from the same periods further south (Tall Galal and Tall Fadgami).

Finally, attention should be drawn to Tall Fleti (112), which has hitherto gone unnoticed and which can be discerned only with difficulty owing to its position on the hilly river terrace. It is situated opposite the mouth of the Wadi Ramel on the right side of the Habur and has an elongated oval form. Te main hill is surrounded by a relatively level settlement area which, according to pottery evidence, was occupied from the Early Bronze Age to the Islamic period.

Plans to include the territory below the Gebel Abd al-Aziz in the survey had to be abandoned on account of the unexpected number of new discoveries in the study area proper. Tall Murtiya (55) and Tall Muazzar (53), which had already been studied in 1975, were revisited, however, and the investigation there were brought to completion. In addition, the small, almost perfectly round Tall Maraza (76), located to the west in the Gezire near Tall Breg and within sight of the road, was surveyed together with its adjacent mounds. Pottery findings indicate that it was inhabited from the Early Bronze Age up to Islamic times.

It was necessary to coduct follow-up in-

vestigation at a few of the mounds already visited in 1975. These were carried out in the final days of the survey. On this occasion we also visited and examined Tall as-Sin (121), whose extensive burial ground dating from the Late Roman Period has occasionally been plundered in recent years. Therefore, some digging had been undertaken by Assad Mahmoud on this site (see H. KUHNE in AfO 26 £1979\$). In addition, we returned to Tall Seh Hamad (16), for it could already be seen from the opposite bank that a new irrigation canal was being dug in the tell. To our complete surprise, we found ourselves at the end of this visit in possession of 30 cuneifoum tablets and tablet fragments (for a description of the find-place see H. KUHNE in Accadica 10 £1978\$ 16ff) which had been washed out after a rupture in the canal. They made it possible shortly thereafter to date the site of this find to the period of Tukulti-Ninurta I and Salmannassar I and to establish the identity of Tall Seh Hamad as the well-known Dur-Katlimmu.

The position of the finds and the imminent threat of further destruction of the tell at this location made it advisable to begin rescue excavations as quickly as possible with the support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Association) this was done in April/May, 1978. A report on this first campaign is to be found in this volume of AAAS. The excavations, which were already very successful in the first campaign, are to be able to provide the stratigraphy of the site, thereby establishing definitive dating criteria for the whole Lower Habur region. In addition, evaluation of the clay tablets is expected to yield a much better knowledge of the historical geography of the region.

Preliminary Summary of the Results

The two surveys carried out by the «Tübingen Atlas of the Middle East» on the Lower Habur make it possible to paint a completely new picture of the settlement patterns of this river valley. The preliminary analysis of the pottery collections shows that the ceramic Neolithic period is represented at only a few of

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Fig. 5: Tall Mullamatar as seen from Tall Kerma-South.



Fig. 6: Tall Matariya. The citadel mound as soon from the southwest.

the 129 sites, but that the ceramic Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Early Bruonze I periods are also only rarely encountered (recorded with certainty at 25 sites, with less certainty at 12 sites). In the Early Bronze Age widespread settlement occurs (42 sites with certainty), concentrated at first in the north restrited in the south (south of the 36th parllel) to the left bank of the river (Tall Manah, Tall Galal, Tall Fadgami, Tall Katari, Tall Seh Hamad, and Tall Namliya). The middle Bronze Age is likewise sparsely represented in the south, where only 8 of the 25 positively identified sites are located (Tall Manah, Tall Garmiz, Tall Fadgami, Tall Asamsani, Tall Seh Hamad, Tall Husen, Tall Namliya, and Tall Abu Ha'it). This is a surprising result, for through the Mari archives we know of a great many settlements in the district of Saggaratum, some of which, however, might have been small villages whose low remains are today submerged in the alluvial plain. The Late Bronze Age, identified with certainty at only 18 locations, is also encountered most frequently in the north. On the whole, though, it is rather scantily represented, being restricted almost exclusively to the large ruins (Tall Seh Hamad, Tall Husen, Tall Asamsani, Tall Fadgami, Tall Agaga, Tall Bderi, Tall Ta'ban, and Tall Hassaka). This fact should be easier to interpret when the cuneiform texts and the ceramic sequence from Dur-katlimmu have been evaluated. In the Iron Age the river

valley becomes densely unhabited (clear evidence at 46 sites), with the south now playing an equal role. This development continues into the Hellenistic-Roman and Byzantine periods and reaches a climax in the Islamic period, the phases of which are still being worked out in detail. It must be emphasized that a number of the especially large ruins attained their enormous dimensions primarily in Hellenistic-Roman and Islamic times, covering much smaller settlements of the Iron Age. This is true of Tal Fiden, Tall Suwwar, Tall Husen, Tall Marqada, and Tall Saddada.

The results of the survey, presented here only in outlin, will certainly be open to closer analysis and interpretation once the evaluation of pottery and the examination of hilstorical sources is complete. It is already clear, however, that the settlement history of the Habur valley, which the survey now enables us to write, will yield interesting new insights with regard to settlement periods and settlement density for neighbouring regions as well. The unexpected wealth of findings will also make this area a particularly promising field of activity for future research, for one can now take a fresh look not only at the development of early settlements, which has interested us here in particular, but at the expansion of the Roman Empire on the land bridge to Mesopotamia and the very eventful Islamic history of this region.



Fig. 7: Sherd no. 657/2, Tall Hassaka (115).



Fig. 8: Sherd no. 657/26, Tall Hassaka (115).



Fig. 9: Sherd no. 480/16, Tall Kerma-South (74.



Fig. 10: Sherd no. 481/28, Tall Kerma-South (74).

scale 1:2



Fig. 11: Sherd no. 568/6, Tall Melebiya (86).



Fig. 12: Sherd no. 565/27, Tall Melebiya (86).



Fig. 14: Sherd no. 434/34, Tall Bderi (65).



Fig. 16: Sherd no. 445/9, Tall Bderi (65).



Fig. 13: Sherd no. 563/6, Tall Melebiya (86).



Fig. 15: Sherd no. 442/9, Tall Bderi (65).



Fig. 18: Sherd no. 332/22, Tall Masnaqa (60).



Fig. 17: Sherd no. 364/2, Tall Masnaqa (60).

scale 1:2

Description of Sherds

The colours are quoted after: A. Kornenrup und J. H. Wanscher, Taschenlexikon der Farben 2, 1975; the drawings were done by G. Neuber, Tübingen.

Fig. 7: Sherd no. 657/2; site: Tall Hassaka (115); Gray-Uruk-Ware; fragment of hole-mouth-jar; hand-made, rim seems to be wheel-finished; colour of fracture: 5 C 2 (brownish gray); tempered with small pebbles and chaff; firmness: soft; surface colour inside and out: 5 B 2 (orange gray); surface treatment: wet smoothed, traces of smothering; comparisons: S. Lloyd, Iraq 5, 130. 133 Fig. 5 Group VI: 1-2; id. Iraq 7, 3 Fig. 7 no. 14.

Fig. 8: Sherd no. 657/26; site: Tall Hassaka (115); fine Common Ware, EB II-III; fragment of a jar; wheel-made; colour of fracture: 5 B 4 (grayish orange; tempered with fine sand; firmness: soft; surface colour inside: 5 A 3 (pale orange), 4 A 3 (yellowish pale); surface treatment inside: body clay, outside self slip; H. Kühne, Die Keramik vom Tell Chuera Fig. 220.

Fig. 9: Sherd no. 480/16; site: Tall Kerme-South (74); roman Ware; fragment of a bottle; wheelmade; colour of fracture: 5 B 3 (grayish orange); tempered with fine sand; firmness: firm; surface colour and out: 6 D 3 (gratysh brown); surface treatment: originally covered with a wash, of which the colour is given above, the wash has almost completely so that the body clay is visible.

Fig. 10: Sherd no. 481/28; site: Tall Kerma-South (74); roman Ware; fragment of a bowl; wheelmade; colour of fracture: 6 A 5 and 6 B 5 (light orange and grayish orange); tempered with fine sand and chaff; firmness: firm; surface colour outside: 7 B 5 - 7 C 5 (grayish red - brownish orange); surface colour inside: 7 B 5 (grayish red); surface treatment inside: body clay, outside partly burnished.

Fig. 11: Sherd no. 568/6; site: Tall Melebiya (86); Metallic Ware, EB II-III; fragment of a jar; wheel-made; colour of fracture: 4 E 1 (gray); fine levigated clay; extremely firm; surface colour inside and out: 4 D 1 (gray) with a gleam of grayish orange; surface treatment inside: traces of burnishing on rim, outside: wet-smoothed.

Fig. 12: Sherd no. 565/27; site: Tall Melebiya (86); Metallic Ware, EB II-III; fragment of a bowl; wheel-made; colour of fracture: 12 C 2 (reddish gray); fine levigated clay; extremely firm; surface colour inside and out: basically 6 D 1 (gray), on the outside thin stripes (the edges of the corrugation) and most of the inside 6 B 3 (grayish orange); surface treatment inside and out: corrugation, wet-smkoothed; comparisons for Fig. 11-12: H. Kühne, Die Keramik vom Tell Chuera Abb. 41 and Abb. 1.

Fig. 13: Sherd no. 563/6; site: Tall Melebiya (86); Metallic Ware, EB II-III; fragment of a jar; wheel-made, colour of fracture: 5 A 5 (light orange); tempered with fine sand; firmness: firm; surface colour outside: 6 C 4 (brownish orange), inside: 5 A 4 (light orange); surface treatment outside: wash, inside: body clay,

Fig. 13 (cont.) corrugated; comparison: H. Kühne, Die Keramik vom Tell Chuera Abb. 47 (without wash, see Abb. 46 for a specimen with wash).

Fig. 14: Sherd no. 434/34; site: Tall Bderi (65); Nuzi-Ware, LB I; fragment of goblet; wheelmade; colour of fracture: 5 A 4 (light orange); tempered with fine sand; firmness: firm; surface colour outside: 6 B 4 (grayish orange) except for the rim, inside: 5 A 4 (light orange); surface treatment outside: painted with a whitish pattern, inside and rim: body clay; comparison: B. Hrouda, Die bemalte Keramik des zweiten Jahrtausends in Nordmesopotamien und Nordsyrien Tf. 1-6.

Fig. 15: Sherd no. 442/9; site: Tall Bderi (65); Nuzi-Ware, LB I; fragment of goblet; wheelmade; colour of fractrue: 5 B 3 (grayish orange); tempered with sand; firmness: firm; surface colour outside: body clay 4 A 3 (pale yellow) with paint 8 E 2 (brownish gray), inside: 4 A 3 (pale yellow); surface treatment outside: painted stripes on body clay, almost vanished, inside: body comparison: B. Hrouda, see Fig. 14, Tf. 7:5.

Fig. 16: Sherd no. 445/9; site: Tall Bderi (65); Common Ware, Iron Age; base of bottle (?); wheel-made; colour of fracture: 6 B 4 (grayish orange); tempered with sand; firmness: firm; surface

colour: 4 A 3 (pale yellow), inside: 5 A 3 (pale orange); surface treatment outside: covered with a slip, smoothed, inside: body clay; Comparison: A. Haller, Die Gräber und Grüfte von Assur, WVDOG 65, Tf. 3 n, p.

Fig. 17: Sherd no. 364/2; site: Tall Masnaqa (60); Norther'Ubaid Ware, chalcolithic; fragment of bowl; handmade, inside perhaps wheel-finished; colour of fracture: 5 B 3 (grayish orange); tempered with sand and chaff; firmness: firm; surface colour outside: 4 A 3 (pale yellow), inside: 3 A 3 (pale yellow); surface treatment: outside body clay, inside traces of self slip, painted on outside and rim, colour 8 E 3 (grayish brown).

Fig. 18: Sherd no. 332/22; site: Tall Masnaqa (60); Northern'Ubaid Ware, chalcolithic; fragment of far; handmade; colour of fracture: 3 B 3 (dull yellow); surface colour outside: 3 A 3 (pale yellow), inside: 4 A 2 (yellowish white); surface treatment outside: traces of self slip, inside: body clay, painted outside and rim, colour 8 E 3 (grayish brown).

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List of Places Registered in 1977 (Continuation of the list in the First Preliminary Report)

51 Tall Agaga-East (Muqbara Agaga) 52 Tall Barud 53 Tall Mu'azzar 54 Tall Mativaha **55 Tall Murtiva** 56 Tall Ga'bi 57 Tall Ga'bi-East 58 Tall Ragman 59 Tall Ragman-South 60 Tall Masnaga 61 Tall Seh Otman 62 Tall Umm Osir 63 Tall Hasna 64 Tall Matariya 65 Tall Bderi 66-68 Subsidiary talls of Bderi 69 Tall Tlelat 70 Tall as-Sur 71 Tall Abu Amsah 72 Tall Rad Saorah 73 Tall Kerma-North 74 Tall Kerma-South 75 Tall Dahab 76 Tall Maraza 77 Tall Abu bakr 78 Tall Rasidiva-South 79 Tall Rasidiva-North 80 Tall Hinna 81 Tall Seh Hamad-Hinna 82 Tall Seh Hamad-Hinna-East 83 Tall Fallah 84 Tall Fallah-South 85 Hirbat al-Banat 86 Tall Melebiya 87 Hirbat Melebiva 88 Tall Mullamatar 89 Hirbat Mullamatar 90 Tall Gudede 91 Kasr Gudede

92 Tall Huwen 93 Tall Zivade 94 Tall Naga-North 95 Tall Naga-South 96 Tall Naga-West 97 Tall Bwed 98 Tall Msivah 99 Tall Nahab 100 Kasr Nahab 101 Hirbat Nahab 102 Tall Nahab-South 103 Tall Nahab-East 104 Tall Knedig-North 105 Tall Dagaga 106 Tall Dgerat-North 107 Dgerat 108 Tall Dgerat-South 109 Tall Guweran 110 Tall Masnaga-North 111 Tall Masnaga-West 112 Tall Fleti 113 Tall Muqbara Fleti 114 Tall Breg 115 Tall Hassaka 116 Tall Raga'i 117 Tall Kanbar 118 Tall Arisa 119 Tall Snetle 120 Hirbat Snetle 121 Tall as-Sin 122 Tall Muqbara Agaga-South I 123 Tall Muqbara Agaga-South II 124 Hirbat Gamel 125 Tall Krah 126 Tall Tavara-North 127 Tall Tayara-South 128 Tall Da'bil 129 Tall Malhet ed-Deru

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