

The Northern Coastline of Syria in the Persian Period.

A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence (Pl. I)

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To P.J. Riis on the occasion of his 80th birthday

Résumé : L'A. présente une étude synthétique des sites de la côte syrienne au Nord d'Arwad à l'époque perse, à la lumière des découvertes archéologiques. Le dernier tiers du VI^e siècle est marqué par une prospérité accrue dont témoigne notamment la refondation d'Al-Mīna, de Rās Šamra et de Mīnat al-Baiḏa. Après une période de déclin pendant le deuxième quart du V^e siècle, la dernière partie de l'époque perse à partir du dernier tiers du V^e siècle est caractérisée par une reprise généralisée de la croissance économique.

Introduction

The northern coastline of Syria has for many years attracted the interest of archaeologists and historians, who realized that this area was capable of throwing light on the nature of the contacts between the Near East and Greece in ancient times. Several sites have been investigated since C.L. Woolley's pioneering excavations at Al-Mīna in the 1930'ies, chiefly in order

* I wish to thank P. Mortensen, Chairman of the Committee for the Carlsberg Expeditions to Syria, for permission to publish the pre-Hellenistic silver coins from Tall Sūkās and to mention some of the results of the work done by the Danish Expedition in the present context. I am furthermore grateful to Dr. Jan Zahle for helpful advice about the coins and to Helle Salskov Roberts for sharing her knowledge of the Attic pottery from Tall Sūkās with me.

to clarify this matter¹. However, the region is increasingly being seen as an area worthy of study in its own right, and the focus of interest has to some degree shifted from the first half of the first millennium B.C. to the Persian period². The aim of the present paper is to present an overall view of the archaeological material relating to the latter period. The ancient literary sources will not be discussed as such, since there is no reason to duplicate the work done by J.-P. Coquais, who has collected and discussed a large number of relevant texts³. Likewise, the identification of the ancient names of the sites in the region is outside the scope of the paper⁴.

The geographical setting, fig. 1⁵.

The northern coastline of Syria may in the present context be defined as the series of coastal plains between Banyās to the south and Alexandretta to the north. The foothills of mountains mark the eastern limit : the Jebel Ansariye to the south followed by Mount Cassius to the north and then the Amanus range. The mountains form a barrier to the interior of Syria at most places, and apart from difficult paths and tracks, only two easy passages to the inland exist : the Orontes river and the line taken by the modern road from Latakia to Aleppo. The area is more or less identical with the territory referred to as « Northern Phoenicia » by J. Elayi⁶.

The coastal plain is at places less than a kilometer wide, but widens elsewhere to 30-40 km. It may be subdivided into three parts : 1) the

1. C.L. Woolley, « The Excavations at Al-Mīna, Sueidia, I », *JHS* 58, 1938, pp. 1-5 ; P.J. Riis, « Griechen in Phönizien », in H.G. Niemeyer, ed., *Phönizier im Westen. Die Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums über « Die phönizische Expansion im westlichen Mittelmeerraum »*, in Köln vom 24. bis 27. April 1979, *Madrider Beiträge* 8, 1982, pp. 237-260 ; J. Elayi, *Pénétration grecque en Phénicie sous l'Empire perse*, Nancy 1988, p. 9, n. 21.

2. J. Elayi, « Studies in Phoenician Geography during the Persian Period », *JNES* 41, 1982, pp. 83-110 ; R.A. Stucky, *Ras Shamra — Leukos Limen, die nach-ugaritische Besiedlung von Ras Shamra*, Paris 1983 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1).

3. J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados et sa pérée aux époques grecque, romaine et byzantine*, Paris 1974, pp. 1-51.

4. Cf. *ibid.* ; M.C. Astour, « Continuité et changement dans la toponymie de la Syrie du Nord », in *La Toponymie antique*, Leiden 1977, pp. 117-138 ; P.J. Riis, « Quelques problèmes de la topographie phénicienne : Usnu, Paltos, Pelléta et les ports de la région », in P.-L. Gatier et al. (éds.), *Géographie historique au Proche-Orient (Syrie, Phénicie, Arabie, grecques, romaines, byzantines)*, Paris 1988, pp. 315-324 ; P. Bordreuil, « A propos de la topographie économique de l'Ougarit : Jardins du Midi et Pâturages du Nord », *Syria* 66, 1989, pp. 263-274.

5. R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*, Paris 1927 ; J. Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, Tours 1940 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3) ; H. Seyrig, « Antiquités Syriennes », *Syria* 47, 1970, pp. 293-298 ; E. Wirth, *Syrien, eine geographische Landeskunde*, Darmstadt 1971 ; J. Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2) ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 84-85.

6. Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2).

coastal plain surrounding the modern cities of Ġabla and Latakia, one of the relatively few areas of Syria with favorable agricultural conditions⁷, 2) the mouth of the Orontes river, a natural agricultural region with relatively favorable ground water conditions⁸, and 3) the coastal plain to the south of Alexandretta.

The coastal plain surrounding the modern cities of Ġabla and Latakia.

The Ġabla plain, fig. 2, was the focal point of the work conducted by the Danish Expedition to Phoenicia between 1958 and 1963 directed by P.J. Riis⁹.

Banyās¹⁰ to the south has rarely been investigated by archaeologists, and little is known of its history in the Iron Age and Persian period but substantial remains of a fortification have been preserved at **Qal'at el-Qouz**¹¹, 2 km east of the coastline, on the right bank of the river Banyās. M. Dunand has compared its 5 to 7 m thick walls, which are preserved for a length of 600 m, with Persian period fortifications at Byblos and Sidon, and he has picked up a handful of amphora handles dating from the Persian period inside the fortified area. Nonetheless, it is probably best to regard the date of the walls as uncertain, although the sherds indicate that some activity was going on here in the period in question.

Tall Darūk¹² is located on the left bank of the Nahr as-Sinn ca.

7. J. Weulersse, *op. cit.* (n. 5) ; E. Wirth, *op. cit.* (n. 5), map 5 ; Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 1) ; G. Saadé, *Ougarit, Métropole Cananéenne*, Beyrouth 1979, pp. 33-37.

8. Wirth, *op. cit.* (n. 7), map 5.

9. P.J. Riis, « L'activité de la mission archéologique danoise sur la côte phénicienne en 1958 », *AAS* 8/9, 1958/9, pp. 110-117 ; *id.*, « L'activité de la mission archéologique danoise sur la côte phénicienne en 1959 », *AAS* 10, 1960, pp. 112-117 and 130-132 ; *id.*, « L'activité de la mission archéologique danoise sur la côte phénicienne en 1960 », *AAS* 11, 1961, p. 134 ; *id.*, « L'activité de la mission archéologique danoise sur la côte phénicienne en 1963 », *AAS* 15, 1965, pp. 76-77 ; P.J. Riis *et al.*, *Topographical Studies in the Ġabla plain*, forthcoming.

10. Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 128-129 ; *Les guides bleus, Syrie-Palestine, Iraq-Transjordanie*, Paris 1932, pp. 249-250 ; R. Fleischer, « Die Tychegruppe von Balanea-Leukas in Syrien », *AA* 1986, pp. 707-709 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 89. The scarcity of relevant finds could indicate that Banyās did not play an important role in the Persian period. It does not possess a good natural harbour, cf. Weulersse, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 158 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 65, 75 and 81.

11. C. Favre, « Banias (Balanée) », *RA*, nouvelle série, 37, 1879, pp. 223-232 ; Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 127, n. 6 ; M. Dunand, « La défense du front méditerranéen de l'empire achéménide », in W.A. Ward ed., *The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilizations*, Beyrut 1968, pp. 46-47.

12. Riis 1960, *loc. cit.* (n. 9), pp. 112-117 ; G. Saadé, *Histoire de Lattaquié*, tome I : *Ramitha, problème des origines*, Damascus 1964, p. 101 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), p. 98, n. 1 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58, n. 45, p. 59, n. 54 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 90, n. 43 ; E. Oldenburg and J. Rohweder, *The Excavations at Tall Darūk (Usnu ?) and 'Arab al-Mulk (Paltos)*, Copenhagen 1981 ; J. Perreault,

2 km east of the Mediterranean coast. The Danish Expedition investigated the tell's surface and made a sounding, which documented the importance of the site from the Chalcolithic period onwards. East Greek pottery from the 6th century B.C. was brought to light here, followed by Attic pottery, which appeared in a very limited quantity at the end of the 6th century B.C.¹³. The number of such imports increased after 500 B.C., and the larger part of the material seems to belong to the first half, if not the first quarter of the 5th century. Sherds dating from the 4th century and the Hellenistic period were relatively numerous. The available evidence thus suggests that the habitation of Tall Darūk continued without a hiatus through the Persian period. — P.J. Riis has ascertained that **Tall aš-Šlaib**¹⁴ was never inhabited and suggested that the reason for this may have been that the tell was identified as Memmon's tomb by the Greeks. — At 'Arab al-Mulk¹⁵, ancient Paltos, finds from the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age were brought to light in a sounding dug by the Danish expedition and at a nearby slope towards the sea above a semicircular, sandy cove. This was probably the core of the original settlement, the cove serving as the harbour together with the mouth of the Nahr as-Sinn. The latest securely datable Iron Age find is a fragment of an Attic Little Master cup dating from ca. 560-530 B.C.¹⁶. The next finds — chronologically speaking — can be referred to the Hellenistic period. The hiatus may indicate that the site was destroyed and subsequently abandoned either in the beginning of the 5th century, as suggested by P.J. Riis¹⁷, or somewhat earlier : between 560 and

« Céramique et échanges : Les importations attiques au Proche-Orient du VI^e au milieu du V^e siècle avant J.-C. Les données archéologiques », *BCH* 110, 1986, p. 152 ; J. Elayi, « Les importations grecques à Tell Kazel (Simyra) à l'époque perse », *AAS* 26/27, 1986/7, p. 134, n. 18 ; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 315-324.

13. For the datable Attic sherds from the excavation, see Oldenburg and Rohweder, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 51, table 9. About 350 sherds from the 6th century through to the Hellenistic period were also picked up on the surface of the mound, but only the best preserved specimens were recorded in detail, i.e. the sherds : *ibid.*, pp. 54-55, nos. 247-260.

14. Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 101 ; P.J. Riis, *Sūkās I. The North-East Sanctuary and the First Settling of Greeks in Syria and Palestine*, Copenhagen 1970, p. 140-141 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), pp. 58 and 61 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 249-250 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 138, n. 103.

15. Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 132-135 ; Weulersse, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 157-159, 221, figs 26, 43, 49, 71, 77, 85, 154 ; Riis 1958/9, *loc. cit.* (n. 9), pp. 111-115 and 119 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 101-102 ; H. Seyrig, « Monnaies hellénistiques », *RN* 1964, pp. 9, n. 2, 47-50 ; Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), pp. 128, n. 479, 140-141 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), *passim* ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58, n. 44 ; Oldenburg and Rohweder, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 72-81 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 89 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), p. 134, n. 18 ; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) ; Bordreuil, *loc. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 265-269.

16. Oldenburg and Rohweder, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 77, no. 436, fig. 66 ; Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), p. 152, n. 29.

17. Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 4), p. 320. The finds from the 9th to the 6th centuries were

530 B.C. 'Arab al-Mulk was apparently not re-settled until the Hellenistic period.

At Tall Sūkās¹⁸, the Iron Age has been divided into two periods called H and G, separated by a fierce destruction. Period G has further been subdivided into three phases (G 3 dated between ca. 675 and 588, G 2 dated between ca. 588 to 552 and G 1 dated between ca. 552 and 498), each of which ended in a destruction. There was a large measure of continuity between the three subphases, but the architectural remains from G 1, fig. 3, present a poorer picture than those of the earlier phases. The excavator has suggested that period G 1 came to an end as a consequence of military action, perhaps the Greek defeat of 498 at Salamis in Cyprus¹⁹. No architectural remains were excavated which could be referred to the period between the destruction in the early 5th century and the re-settlement of Tall Sūkās in the 4th century B.C. However, the finding of a number of 5th century tombs in the cemetery at the southern harbour of the site²⁰ indicates that some of the inhabitants survived the disaster and continued to live somewhere in the area. This hypothesis is supported by an analysis of the Attic pottery from the site by J. Perreault²¹, which documents that the number of such imports increased between 500 and 475 B.C. A certain amount may even be dated to the second quarter of the 5th century.

of a modest character, *ibid.* p. 318, and this is in accordance with the scarcity of Attic sherds in the sounding, which Perreault has commented upon, *ibid.*, p. 152, n. 29. He explained the lack of Attic finds by the fact that the trench measured no more than 3 × 3 m. However, the sounding at Tall Darūk, which yielded more Attic material, was no larger than this.

18. Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 97-101; Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14); G. Ploug, *Sūkās II. The Aegaeon, Corinthian and Eastern Greek Pottery and Terracottas*, Copenhagen 1973; P.J. Riis and H. Thrane, *Sūkās III. The Neolithic Periods*, Copenhagen 1974; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 66, 76, 83, 151, 172, 240-241, 250; H. Thrane, *Sūkās IV. A Middle Bronze Age Collective Grave on Tall Sūkās*, Copenhagen 1978; V. Alexandersen, *Sūkās V. A Study of Teeth and Jaws from a Middle Bronze Age Collective Grave on Tall Sūkās*, Copenhagen 1978; P.J. Riis, *Sūkās VI. The Graeco-Phoenician Cemetery and Sanctuary at the Southern Harbour*, Copenhagen 1979; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58, n. 43; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 239-244; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 105; M.-L. Buhl, *Sūkās VII. The Near Eastern Pottery and Objects of Other Materials from the Upper Strata*, Copenhagen 1983; J. Lund, *Sūkās VIII. The Habitation Quarters*, Copenhagen 1986; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 320 and 322; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 10, 20, 22-24, 26-32, 85-86, 112, 126-127, 136, 144.

19. Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), pp. 88-91, 127; Lund, *ibid.*, pp. 97-108, 192.

20. Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 30-32 and 65, fig. 221; Lund, *ibid.*, p. 109, n. 1, 194; Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), p. 151, n. 26, has noted that most of the Attic material from the first half of the 5th century comes from the western and south-western part of the mound. However, this means little, since the finds in question were not *in situ*.

21. Perreault, *ibid.*, pp. 145-175. The figures quoted *ibid.*, p. 110, are somewhat incorrect as far as Sūkās is concerned since they do not include a relatively large amount of Attic sherds, which were not recorded in detail because of the poor state of preservation or lack of time.

The re-occupation of the tell in period F marked a clear break with the past, fig. 4. No architectural continuity can be observed, and the new town had a different plan and « other architectural types and building techniques » than its predecessor. The finds indicate that the re-occupation may be dated to the first quarter of the 4th century B.C., and P.J. Riis has suggested that the event took place immediately after the Cypriot king Evagoras had concluded peace with the Persians in 381²². The discontinuity between the periods G and F and the introduction of new building techniques — especially the technique of constructing walls with ashlar reinforcements at intervals — and the presence of new architectural types suggest that the settlers were Phoenicians²³. Five pre-Hellenistic silver coins were found at Tall Sūkās, and all of them had been struck in Arados :

- 1) TS 4553. AR tetrobol. Obverse : figure of male bearded deity to r., human to the waist ; lower part of body fish-like ; fishes held by the tail in each hand. Reverse : galley to r. with eye on prow and row of shields along bulwark ; below winged hippocampus to r. ; the whole in dotted shallow incuse square. Weight before cleaning : 3.54 g. and after cleaning : 2.27 g., pl. I, 1²⁴.
- 2) TS 515. AR stater. Obverse : scanty remains of head of bearded male deity to r. Reverse : galley to r. over wavy lines representing the sea. Weight 10.24 g., pl. I, 2²⁵.
- 3) TS 2118. AR stater. Obverse : head of bearded male deity to r. Reverse : galley to r. over wavy lines representing the sea. Remains of inscription : M'⁴. Weight 10.93 g., pl. I, 3²⁶.
- 4) TS 5583. AR stater. Obverse : head of bearded male deity ; with laurel wreath on head. Hair and whiskers dotted, pointed beard represented by lines. Reverse : galley to r., figure on prow, aphlaston on poop. Inscription above galley : M'⁴. Square incuse with dotted border visible at top. Weight 10.50 g., pl. I, 4²⁷.

22. Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), pp. 92-126 ; Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 109-148, 192-199.

23. Riis, *ibid.*, pp. 124-126 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 105 ; Lund, *ibid.*, p. 194.

24. P.J. Riis, « L'activité de la Mission archéologique danoise sur la côte phénicienne en 1961 », *AAS* 13, 1963, p. 212, fig. 1 ; Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 123, n. 467 ; Lund, *ibid.*, p. 113, n. 15, fig. 108 ; Cf. *BMC Phoenicia*, Arados, 7-9. *SNG Cop Phoenicia*, 3-5 and J.W. Betlyon, *The Coinage and Mints of Phoenicia. The Pre-Alexandrine Period*, Harvard 1982, pp. 84-86, no. 6 (The Third Aradian Series ca. 400-380 B.C.).

25. Lund, *ibid.*, p. 152, n. 2. The coin is very worn, but cf. *BMC Phoenicia*, Arados, 18 ff. *SNG Cop Phoenicia*, 12 and Betlyon, *ibid.*, p. 86, no. 10, pl. 6.7 (The Fourth Aradian Series ca. 380-351 B.C.).

26. Worn. Presumably as no. 2).

27. Cf. *BMC Phoenicia*, Arados, 62-63. *SNG Cop Phoenicia*, 23. Betlyon, *ibid.*, p. 90, n° 26, pl. 7.5 (The Fifth Aradian Series ca. 348/347-339/338 B.C.).

5) TS 2116. AR stater. Obverse : head of bearded male deity to r. ; with laurel wreath on head. Reverse : galley on waves. Remains of inscription : M'. Weight : 10.01 g., pl. I, 5²⁸.

No. 1) was actually located directly below the wall of a room of the so-called Complex IX of the New Sūkās of period F. Perhaps the coin was placed there deliberately as a sort of foundation deposit. Although this hypothesis is incapable of proof, the presence of the Aradian coins suggests that Tall Sūkās of Period F could have been founded from Arados. — Before leaving Tall Sūkās, attention must be drawn to a sanctuary at the southern harbour, which had its roots in Period G 1 and was reconstructed in Period F. The oriental character of the sanctuary and the cult has been demonstrated by P.J. Riis, who has shown that 'Astart and Melqart were worshipped here²⁹.

A hoard consisting of Greek coins dating from ca. 500-490 B.C. has been found in the vicinity of Ğabla³⁰. Here, the Danish Expedition recorded a few finds from the Persian period. They were brought to light in connection with the digging of a drain in an area south of the medieval circuit-wall. The material consisted of a small amount of East Greek pottery from the 6th and possibly 5th century B.C., a few fragments of Attic vases from the 6th and 5th centuries and the base of an Attic black-glazed plate with stamped palmettes, probably dating from the early 4th century B.C. The finds were associated with human skeletons, making it likely that we are dealing with a necropolis. It seems that no finds from the 6th to the 4th centuries were brought to light within the area of the modern town, but this is probably due to lack of investigation. The plan of the modern town of Ğabla has apparently preserved traces of the layout of its ancient predecessor, and the western, irregular part of the town in the vicinity of the harbour may reflect the extent of the settlement in the Iron Age. The evidence is scanty, but leaves the impression that Ğabla may have been an important site in the Iron Age as well as in the Persian period.

The evidence from Tall at-Tūainī³¹ is elusive. The finds made by the Danish

28. Obverse like no. 4) or *BMC Phoenicia*, Arados, 60.

29. Riis 1979, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 33-68 ; C. Bonnet, *Melqart, cultes et mythes de l'Héraclès Tyrien en Méditerranée*, *Studia Phoenicia* 8, Leuven 1988, p. 116.

30. M. Thompson *et al.*, *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*, New York 1973, p. 202, n° 1479. On Ğabla in general, see Riis 1960, *loc. cit.* (n.9), pp. 130-132 ; Seyrig, *loc. cit.* (n. 15), pp. 9-28 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), *passim* ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), pp. 60-61, n. 62-63 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 106 ; G. Saadé, « Découverte de caveaux funéraires à Jablé », *Syria* 62, 1985, pp. 346-348 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 33. On the port, see Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 4), p. 321.

31. E.O. Forrer, in A.M.H. Ehrich, *Early Pottery of the Jebel Region*, Philadelphia 1939, p. 113 ; Riis 1958/9, *loc. cit.* (n. 9), p. 111, no. 3 ; *id.*, 1960, *loc. cit.* (n. 9), p. 132 ; *id.*, 1961, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 134 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 97 ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 106, n. 181.

expedition suggest that the tell was inhabited from the Bronze Age until at least the Late Hellenistic/Early Roman period. However, the larger part of the material dates from the Iron Age, and finds securely datable to the 6th-4th centuries appear to have been scarce.

E.O. Forrer dug two small soundings at **Qal'at ar-Rūs**³² in 1934, in which he found material from the Bronze and Iron Ages as well as finds from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but it seems that no objects securely datable to the 6th-4th centuries were encountered.

Relatively few sherds were picked up on sites in the interior of the Ġabla plain, but the material suggests that some activity was going on here in the Persian period. At **Tall Siānū**³³, at least two East Greek sherds from the 7th to the 6th centuries B.C. were found together with a fragment of a rim of an Attic black-figure cup from the late 6th or the early 5th century B.C. and a fragmentary Attic (?) black-glazed bowl with stamped circle, arcs and palmettes, probably dating from the early 4th century B.C. — Members of the Danish expedition found a sequence of sherds from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Roman period at **Ĥirba Biġaġa**, and material dating from the Bronze Age to the Islamic period was present at **Tall Sirĥāba**. At **Tall Īrīz**, nine sherds dating from the Iron Age to the Islamic period were collected.

In 1963, a small rescue-excavation took place in a tell to the south of the harbour of **Latakia**. Late Bronze Age and Iron Age sherds were brought to light here, and the excavator, G. Saadé, concluded that « the tell was inhabited... from ca. 1200 B.C. to the time of Alexander the Great »³⁴. Two coin hoards are said to come from Latakia : one which is supposed to have been buried about 480 B.C. containing coins from Greece and Lycia, and another consisting solely of coins from Arados. The latter had apparently been buried about 350-325 B.C. — A further coin hoard, which was buried ca. 500-480 B.C., is said to have been found between Antiocheia and Latakia³⁵.

32. Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 137 ; Ehrich, *ibid.*, pp. 1-56 ; Riis 1958/9, *loc. cit.* (n. 9), p. 111, no. 1 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 95-96 ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58, n. 42.

33. Ehrich, *ibid.*, p. 113 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 96-97, n. 7 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 96-97, 106 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58 ; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 4), p. 318.

34. Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12) ; *id.*, « Exploration archéologique de Lattaquié », *AAS* 26, 1976, pp. 9-36 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 106, n. 184 ; G. Saadé, « Un musée à Lattaquié », *Syria* 62, 1985, pp. 343-346. Attic pottery from the 5th and 4th centuries and fragments of the so-called « one-handled (?) East Greek bowls » were found on the tell according to R. A. Stucky, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 126, n. 10. Stucky has seen the material collected by G. Saadé in the vicinity of Latakia, and he informs us that « auf allen Tells mit attischem Import des 5. und 4. Jh. v. Chr. wurden auch Fragmente unseres Typs gefunden. » J. Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 27 and 33.

35. *Coin Hoards* VI, 1981, p. 6, no. 5 ; Thompson *et al.*, *op. cit.* (n. 30), p. 204, no. 1494 and p. 202, no. 1480.

G. Saadé has reported finds of Greek pottery from the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. at **Tell Mar ʿAṭros**³⁶, originally an island, but now linked to the mainland.

The inland site **Qal'at Sahiyun**³⁷ has tentatively been identified by several authorities as ancient Sigon. It is no doubt a place of strategic importance, but it should be kept in mind that no objects from the Iron Age and the Persian period appear to have been found here.

Sherds from the Persian period are said to be relatively numerous in the excavations at **Rās ibn Hānī**³⁸, but imports from Greece are scarce, and the excavators have suggested that the lack of finds of Greek pottery from the Classical period indicates that the site may have been abandoned or impoverished in at least a part of the 5th and 4th centuries. The finds were apparently not associated with architectural remains.

Architectural remains and finds postdating the destruction of the Late Bronze Age settlement at **Rās Šamra**³⁹ have been excavated at irregular intervals since 1934. R.A. Stucky has published the architectural evidence from the campaigns 1971-1973 together with the relevant finds from all of the years. Few of the securely datable objects predate the last decade of the 6th century, and R.A. Stucky has suggested that the settlement was re-founded about 500 B.C. He has reconstructed the building history of four structures dating from the 5th to the 4th centuries B.C. : the original construction phase (Bauphase 1) is followed by three building phases (Bauphase 2-4) in

36. Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 89, 95.

37. R. Dussaud, « Voyage en Syrie, octobre-novembre 1896 », *RAr Troisième Série* 30, 1897, p. 316, n. 7 ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 149-150 ; Seyrig, *loc. cit.* (n. 15), p. 29 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 73, 98, n. 2, 109-110 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 89, n. 28 ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 81.

38. Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 416 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 94 ; A. Bounni *et al.*, « Rapport préliminaire sur la première campagne de fouilles (1975) à Ibn Hani (Syrie) », *Syria* 53, 1976, pp. 233-279 ; *id.*, « Rapport préliminaire sur la deuxième campagne de fouilles (1976) à Ibn Hani (Syrie) », *Syria* 55, 1978, pp. 233-301 ; *id.*, « Rapport préliminaire sur la troisième campagne de fouilles (1975) à Ibn Hani (Syrie) », *Syria* 56, 1979, pp. 217-291 ; J. and E. Lagarce, « Découvertes archéologiques à Ras Ibn Hani », *CRAI* 1978, pp. 45-65 ; A. Bounni, « La quatrième campagne de fouilles (1978) à Ras Ibn Hani. Lumières nouvelles sur le Royaume d'Ugarit, les Peuples de la Mer et la ville hellénistique », *CRAI* 1979, pp. 277-294 ; J. Lagarce *et al.*, « La cinquième campagne de fouilles (1979) à Ras Ibn Hani (Syrie) », *CRAI* 1980, pp. 10-34 ; A. Bounni *et al.*, « Rapport préliminaire sur la quatrième campagne de fouilles (1978) à Ibn Hani (Syrie) », *Syria* 58, 1981, pp. 215-297 ; Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 251-252 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 106, n. 189 ; A. Bounni, « Ras Ibn Hani 1975-1983 », *AOF* 31, 1984, pp. 164-166 ; Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 196, n. 57 ; Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 152-153.

39. Stucky, *op. cit.* (n. 2). A bibliography of the post Bronze Age evidence from the site is given *ibid.*, pp. 1-2. See also Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), pp. 90-91 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 106, n. 187 ; Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 198 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 21, n. 2, 26, 30, 32-33, 81.

which new rooms were added to a core of preexisting structures. The final complex was thus the result of a continuous growth, not of a once and for all planning. R.A. Stucky has characterized the building remains as a rural settlement. The plan certainly has a different character than those of Al-Mīna and Tall Sūkās, although there is a certain general similarity, which is probably caused by the fact that we are in all cases dealing with structures made up of rectangular and quadratic rooms⁴⁰. However, Rās Šamra was by no means cut off from the surrounding world as witnessed e.g. by a hoard consisting of coins from northern Greece and Cyprus, which was found between Rās Šamra and Mīnat al-Baiḍa, and is thought to have been buried about 525-520 B.C. External relations are also documented by the presence of imported Attic black-and red-figure, as well as black-glazed pottery, and also by two Attic coins, two 4th-century coins from Arados and one of comparable age from Sidon⁴¹. The presence of two Greek graffiti on black-glazed drinking vessels probably testifies to the presence of Greeks, but Rās Šamra has rarely been considered a Greek trading post by the scholars⁴².

Post-ugaritic building remains have also been excavated at Mīnat al-Baiḍa⁴³, the harbour of Rās Šamra, where three occupational phases were in evidence, the oldest of which may be dated to the Persian period, but the structures have been disturbed by later activity. The preliminary report speaks of an enclosed area orientated north-west/south-east, large rectangular store (?) rooms, a T-shaped structure with rectangular rooms.

« Un important butin archéologique... remontant à l'âge du fer » was brought to light at Tell Barsouna⁴⁴ and finds, which may date from the Persian period, have occurred at a number of tells in the hinterland of Rās Šamra : at Tell Nahr al-'Arab⁴⁵ and Tell al-Qnâq⁴⁶.

Since 1971, P. Courbin has directed a series of excavation-campaigns

40. For the dates of the building phases, see Stucky, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 7, 13-16, 158.

41. For the coin hoard, see Thompson *et al.*, *op. cit.* (n. 30), p. 202, no. 1478 ; Stucky, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 29-43 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 33. For the ceramic finds, see Stucky, *ibid.*, pp. 105-126 ; Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), p. 152.

42. The graffiti : Stucky, *ibid.*, pp. 27-28, nos. 2 and 3. Nos 4-6 are Semitic. On the character of the settlement, see Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 106 and Stucky, *ibid.*, pp. 156-159.

43. Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 417. S. Abdul-Hak, « Découvertes archéologiques récentes dans les sites gréco-romains de Syrie », *AAS* 8/9, 1958/1959, pp. 83-86 ; Elayi, *ibid.*, p. 106, note 188 ; Stucky, *ibid.*, p. 42, n. 6 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), pp. 90, n. 34, 152, figs. 3 and 49 ; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), p. 252.

44. The site was excavated in 1958, cf. Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 93 ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58, n. 46.

45. Cf. F.A. Schaeffer, « Les fouilles de Minet-el-Beida et de Rās-Shamra, Quatrième campagne (printemps 1932), Rapport sommaire », *Syria* 14, 1933, p. 126 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 93 ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58.

46. Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 93 ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 59.

at **Rās-Baṣīt**⁴⁷. They have shown that the roots of the settlement reach back to the Late Bronze Age. The site, which is probably to be identified with Posideion, revived after a destruction at the end of the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age and the Persian period were well represented here. Remains of buildings from the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. have been excavated on the tell : slightly irregular, rectangular rooms and courtyards⁴⁸. Walls from the 5th century B.C. have also been encountered elsewhere on the Meidan plateau⁴⁹. The excavator refers to the excavated buildings as houses, and a large number of Attic imports has been found in connection with one of the structures, the so-called « maison athénienne ». No remains of cult places have been identified. J. Perreault has concluded that the oldest specimens of imported Attic pottery occur in small numbers in the second quarter of the 6th century. Attic pottery only became abundant after 510 B.C. reaching a maximum in the first quarter of the 5th century B.C. only to decline in the second quarter. After the middle of the century, Attic red figure becomes extremely rare, but Attic imported black-glazed pottery reappears to an ever increasing degree from the end of the 5th century and throughout the 4th century⁵⁰. A single Athenian tetradrachm from about 500 B.C. and three silver obols from Arados dating from the fourth century B.C.⁵¹ have to be mentioned. A certain number of Greek inscriptions have been found, and the excavator has spoken of a Greek presence. However, a Phoenician inscription has also been recorded at the site⁵².

47. A bibliography of the French excavations may be found in P. Courbin, « Bassit », *Syria* 63, 1986, pp. 175-220 ; cf. also Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 92 ; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 252-253 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 106-107, n. 190 ; Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 196, n. 57 ; P. Courbin, « Rapport sur les XIII^e et XIV^e campagnes (1983-1984) à Bassit », *Syria* 63, 1986, pp. 387-391 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 10, n. 23, 20-21, 26, 31, 33, 85-86 ; P. Courbin, « Rapport sur la X^e et dernière campagne à Ras el Bassit », *AAS* 36/37, 1986/7, pp. 107-120.

48. P. Courbin, « Rapport sur la 5^e campagne de fouille à Ras el Bassit », *AAS* 26, 1976, pp. 63-64 ; *id.*, 1986a, *loc. cit.* (n. 47), pp. 199-200 ; fig. 32 ; Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 149-150, fig. 2 ; Courbin 1986b, *loc. cit.* (n. 47), pp. 387-391. Finds of silos and carbonized grain appear to predate the Persian period, Courbin 1976, *ibid.*, p. 64.

49. P. Courbin, « Rapport sur la fouille de Ras el Bassit 1971 », *AAS* 22, 1972, p. 47 ; *id.*, « Ras el Bassit. Rapport sur la campagne de 1972 », *AAS* 23, 1973, p. 26.

50. Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 149-150 ; P. Courbin, « Bassit », *AAS* 33, 1983, p. 120.

51. G. Le Rider, « L'atelier de Posideion et les monnaies de la fouille de Bassit en Syrie », *BCH* 110, 1986, pp. 393-408 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 33.

52. Courbin 1986b, *loc. cit.* (n. 47), pp. 390-391, fig. 9 ; *id.*, *loc. cit.* (n. 50), p. 120 ; P. Bordreuil, « Épigraphe phéniciennes sur bronze, sur pierre et sur céramique », in *Archéologie au Levant, Recueil à la mémoire de Roger Saidah*, Lyon-Paris 1982, pp. 191-192.

A tumulus containing the remains of sacrifices has been found at **Jabal al-Aqra**⁵³.

The mouth of the Orontes River

The most important site in the area surrounding the mouth of the Orontes River is **Al-Mīna**, which has recently been discussed in detail by J. Elayi⁵⁴. The excavator, C.L. Woolley, established the presence of a sequence of ten Levels, and he suggested the following dates for the three Levels of interest here : IV (ca. 520 to 430), III (ca. 430 to 375) and II (ca. 375 to the end of the fourth century B.C.). According to C.L. Woolley no finds could be dated to the period from ca. 550 to 520 B.C.⁵⁵. Level IV was laid out in insulae which do not correspond to the building-plots of Level V, and the buildings themselves were independent of their predecessors. It is now believed that a gap in the continuity of the settlement occurred between Levels V and IV, although Woolley denied this. A considerable continuity existed from Level IV to II : « Level II is little more than a reconstruction of Level III, and Level III reuses a good deal of Level IV ». The houses in all three Levels were insulae of more or less rectangular shape, but the size of the house-blocks varies, and the streets do not adhere to a rigid grid system⁵⁶. According to C.L. Woolley, the buildings vary in detail, but he noted that certain features often recur : a deep courtyard, the short side of which is open towards the street and flanked by store rooms. Many of the rooms were

53. C. F.-A. Schaeffer, « Les fouilles de Rās Shamra-Ugarit, neuvième campagne (printemps 1937), rapport sommaire », *Syria* 19, 1938, pp. 323-327 ; Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 58, n. 41, fig. 2.

54. J. Elayi, « Al-Mīna sur l'Oronte à l'époque perse », in *Studia Phoenicia* 5, 1987, pp. 249-266, with a full bibliography ; *id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 1), *passim*.

55. Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), has discussed the hiatus p. 146, n. 11. He refers p. 148 to the presence of the fragment of a Lip cup dating from ca. 540-530. J. Elayi has kindly drawn my attention to a paper by D.W.J. Gill, « The Distribution of Greek vases and Long Distance Trade », in : J. Christiansen and T. Melander eds., *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on Ancient Greek and Related Pottery*, Copenhagen 1988, p. 180, n. 38-39 and p. 182, Appendix A, where it is suggested that the beginning of Level IV should be dated later than the Persian wars. — It may be true that the earliest material securely known to come from Level IV is later in date than thought by Woolley and others, but for the time being it seems best not to revise the date of the re-settlement of Al-Mīna drastically. D.W.J. Gill's suggestions are influenced by the attempt made by M. Vickers and others at reassessing the date of a large part of the archeological material from the 6th and 5th century, cf. e.g. E.D. Francis and M. Vickers, « The Agora Revisited : Athenian Chronology c. 500-450 B.C. », *ABSA* 83, 1988, pp. 143-167. These ideas have convinced few scholars in the field. Indeed, if the new scheme was to win general acceptance, it would have far-reaching consequences not only for the chronology of Al-Mīna, but for all the other sites as well.

56. Woolley, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 9-10 and 20-27 ; *id.*, « The Excavations at Al-Mīna, Sueidia. II », *JHS* 58, 1938, pp. 133-150 ; Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 194-195, fig. 163.

store rooms for specialized goods, but there are indications that the merchants actually lived in the buildings contrary to what Woolley believed⁵⁷. Some of the inhabitants were buried in cist tombs below the buildings in Levels III and II.

It emerges from J. Perreault's study of the imported Attic pottery that there was a tremendous increase in the number of imports in the first quarter of the 5th century B.C. The number drops sharply in the second quarter, but the large amount of red-figure pottery, which is rather scarcely represented elsewhere, is noticeable. Perreault furthermore states that « A partir du dernier tiers du V^e s. et jusqu'à l'abandon du site un peu avant 300, la figure rouge devient abondante et même envahissante »⁵⁸. J. Elayi has noted that of 114 Phoenician coins found in Level III, 89 originated in Arados and 19 at Sidon (the place of origin of 6 further specimens cannot be determined), and she has suggested that the very high proportion of coins from Arados seems to indicate that Al-Mīna was in some way dependant of the territory of that city⁵⁹. A large group of graffiti from Al-Mīna on black-glazed pottery dating from the late 5th century to the beginning of the 4th century seems to originate from Level III. Of a total of 50 graffiti, 30 could be identified as Phoenician, 6 as Aramaic, 1 as Greek, and 7 were unclassified⁶⁰.

C.L. Woolley noted the presence of two sites on the foothills behind the modern town of Sueidia, where sherds of the 4th century B.C. have been found⁶¹. At the **Sabouni**⁶² hill, he made sondages, where he found pottery from the 4th century, and « a sequence running through Attic red-figured and black-figured wares, Rhodian... to Mycenaean », from which he concluded the site had been « a fortified acropolis with, probably, a settlement at its foot » in the Greek period.

57. Woolley, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 11-15, fig. 3-4 ; *id.*, *loc. cit.* (n. 56), pp. 133-150 and 155-157 ; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 244-246 ; Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), p. 148, n. 19 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 54), pp. 265-266.

58. Perreault, *ibid.*, p. 148, n. 17 ; J.D. Beazley, « Excavations at Al-Mīna, Sueidia III. The Red-figured Vases », *JHS* 59, 1939, p. 1.

59. Elayi, *ibid.*, pp. 261-263 ; Thompson *et al.*, *op. cit.* (n. 26), pp. 203-204, no. 1486, 1487, 1488 ; Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 33.

60. F. Bron and A. Lemaire, « Inscriptions d'Al-Mīna », in *ACFPI*, Rome 1983, pp. 677-686 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 54), p. 258, n. 47 and p. 260. Cf. also J. Boardman, « An Inscribed sherd from Al-Mīna », *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 1, 1982, pp. 365-367. Two fragments of marble slabs with Greek inscriptions were likewise found at Al-Mīna : Woolley, *loc. cit.* (n. 56), pp. 135, 163 (MN 59 from Level II) and pp. 145, fig. 20, 166 (MNN 48 from Level III).

61. Woolley, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), p. 4.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9, 21. According to J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas*, London 1980, pp. 49-50, « There are fragments of pottery, East Greek and Athenian, from Al Mina, and especially from Sabouni... of the middle decades of the (sixth) century... ». These finds were not seen by J. Perreault, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 147 n. 13, but there is no reason to doubt their existence, since it seems clear that Perreault has not had access to all of the material from Sabouni mentioned by Woolley.

The coastal plain to the south of Alexandretta

The coastal plain to the southwest of Alexandretta is to a large extent still a white spot on the archaeological map. A tell to the south of Alexandretta, which has yielded finds post-dating the Persian period has been identified as ancient Myriandos⁶³.

The distribution of the settlements and their territories

The majority of the settlements lie near the coastline, and many possess harbours. Tall Darūk and Rās Šamra are separated from the sea by a distance of a few kilometers, but both are located next to rivers with harbour-towns at the mouths ('Arab al-Mulk and Mīnat al-Baiḏa)⁶⁴. This apparent settlement pattern may to a certain degree be caused by the fact that the archaeologists have concentrated their efforts on the coastal region. However, maps showing Late Bronze Age settlements in the region include a larger number of inland sites. This could suggest that the whole area has indeed been covered by archaeologists, who would hardly have overlooked finds from the Persian period, had they been present⁶⁵. At all events, the evidence from the Ğabla plain show that two major sites (Tall Sūkās and Ğabla) are located near the sea and a third (Tall Darūk) approximately two kilometers from it. The documentation from the sites in the foothills of the Jebel Ansariye seems poor in comparison with that of the coastal ones.

It is reasonable to assume that the agriculture of the Ğabla plain was largely controlled by the sites on or near the coastline : Tall Darūk (and 'Arab al-Mulk), Tall Sūkās and Ğabla. It may furthermore be guessed that natural features such as rivers delimited the territories of these settlements. Tall Darūk may thus have dominated the area to the south of the Nahr as-Sinn (if the northern border of the territory was not the Nahr al-Muilliḥ), Sūkās the stretch between the Nahr as-Sinn and the Nahr al-Burğul, and Ğabla the area from the Nahr al-Burğul to Qal'at ar-Rūs. If this is correct, then Ğabla would have controlled a larger region than that of Tall Sūkās. The eastern limits of the territories are less evident. It seems that a series of sites of minor importance existed in the foothills of the Jebel Ansariye : Tall Sīanū and possibly Ĥirba Biğāğa, Tall Sirḥaba and Tall Īrīz. Tall Sīanū was apparently more important than the rest, perhaps because it is located near a track crossing the Jebel Ansariye.

63. Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 443-444 ; Seyrig, *loc. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 295-296 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 73 and 117 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 107, n. 196.

64. For discussions of the harbours on the coast, see Weulersse, *op. cit.* (n. 5) and Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), *passim* ; M. C. Astour, « Ma'hadu, The Harbour of Ugarit », *JESHO* 13, 1970, pp. 113-127 ; Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 321-322.

65. Saadé, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 57, fig. 4 ; *id.*, « A la recherche des villes et des villages du royaume ougaritien », *AAS* 29/30, 1979/1980, pp. 215-230. Note, however, the remarks *ibid.*, p. 223.

No actual remains are left of the road system of the Ġabla plain in the Persian period, but P.J. Riis has reconstructed a plan of the pre-Roman roads based on the line of the Roman coastal road, which probably followed the line of a predecessor, supplemented with information about old lines of communications supplied by the people living on the plain at the time of the Danish expedition⁶⁶. 'Arab al-Mulk (and perhaps Tall Darūk), Tall Sūkās, Ġabla and Latakia were no doubt linked by a road following the coastline, which continued further north and south. To this should be added a number of tracks crossing the Jebel Ansariye : one starting at Ġabla, another one at Tall Sūkās, and a third at Banyās. These led to the plain of the river Orontes and eventually reached Ḥama. But Ḥama had been destroyed by the Assyrians in 720 B.C. and the place was almost completely abandoned until a new city was founded here in the 2nd century B.C.⁶⁷. In fact, no major sites seem to have existed in this part of interior Syria in the Persian period, and accordingly the tracks across the mountains can only have had a limited importance in this period. Consequently, the trade involving Tell Darūk ('Arab al Mulk), Tall Sūkās and Ġabla must chiefly have been based on traffic moving north — and southward along the coast, or westward to Cyprus.

Access to the interior of Syria was easier from the plain surrounding Latakia, but there is little evidence that conditions here differed markedly from those of the Ġabla plain. This does not hold true for Al-Mīna and the other settlements in the delta of the Orontes river. C.L. Woolley and others are no doubt justified in considering Al-Mīna to be a gate to Syria, and the trade route to the interior of the country is marked out e.g. by the distribution of finds of Greek vases from the first half of the 5th century in interior Syria⁶⁸. Al-Mīna seems to have been the most important locality

66. Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 156, n. 639, p. 161, fig. 56 ; Seyrig, *loc. cit.* (n. 15), p. 9, n. 2.

67. E. Fugmann, *Ḥama II I, L'architecture des périodes pré-hellénistiques*, Copenhagen 1958, pp. 264 and 269. A. Papanicolaou Christensen and Ch. Friis Johansen, *Ḥama III 2, Les poteries hellénistiques et les terres sigillées orientales*, Copenhagen 1971, p. 1 ; G. Ploug, *Ḥama III I, The Graeco-Roman Town*, Copenhagen 1985, p. 13. Less than a handful of objects uncovered at Ḥama by the Danish expedition may with certainty be referred to the Persian period. At Apamea the evidence from the Persian period seems to be limited to an Attic pyxis lid from the second half of the 5th century B.C. Cf. F. Vandenabeele, « Un couvercle de pyxide à figure rouge découvert sur le flanc du tell », in J. Balty ed., *Apamée de Syrie*, Bruxelles 1969, pp. 47-49 ; J.-Ch. Balty, *Guide d'Apamée*, Bruxelles 1981, pp. 16 and 30-31, fig. 24.

68. Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 107. The finding places of Attic pottery from the first half of the 5th century B.C. in Syria neatly mark out the course of the route to the interior starting at Al-Mīna, cf. Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), p. 170, fig. 5. See further Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), p. 257 and the discussion of the evidence by Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 80-91, 204, Carte XXX.

on the northern coastline of Syria in the Persian period. The excavated part of the site amounted to ca. 7000 square meters, but the area of the ancient settlement was originally larger than this. Al-Mīna was thus at least twice as large as the settlement at Tall Sūkās and probably larger than the other known sites as well. Although it is problematic to compare the finds from the excavated sites, because they have not been dug to the same extent, our review of the finds (e.g. Phoenician coins and Greek pottery) from Tall Sūkās, Rās Šamra, Rās al-Baṣīt and Al-Mīna certainly leaves the impression that the latter site was more important than the rest.

The economic foundation : the land and the sea

The fact that most of the important sites are located near the coast, and many are provided with sheltered harbours, testifies to the importance of sea-trade. However, it should not be forgotten that the agricultural produce of the coastal plains was the economic foundation of life in the region in the Persian period — with the possible exception of Al-Mīna. This well-known fact⁶⁹ needs to be stressed, since the study of the relationship between the settlements and the surrounding land has, perhaps, at times been overshadowed by the discussions of the evidence for the long-distance trade. The settlements along the coast should probably be regarded as agricultural centers serving the coastal trade from where the agricultural surplus of the plains (grain⁷⁰, wine⁷¹, olive-oil⁷², timber and other products⁷³) could be exported⁷⁴. This is borne out by Strabo's description of the Latakia-region : « Then one comes to Laodicea situated on the sea. It... has a territory, which besides its other good crops, abounds in wine. Now this city furnishes the most of the wine to the Alexandrians, since the whole of the mountain that lies above the city and is possessed by it is covered with vines almost

69. Cf. Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 189, 191-192, 199-200.

70. Note the ample presence of carbonized grain in the Archaic horizon at Rās al-Baṣīt, *supra*, n. 48.

71. M.-L. Buhl, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 6-23, 110-113, has made a number of interesting observations in connection with the amphorae found at Tall Sūkās and the evidence for Phoenician export of wine and oil is discussed *ibid.*, pp. 123-125. Remains of a wine press were found in the F-period horizon, at Tall Sūkās, Lund, *ibid.*, p. 117. — According to Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 75, the Phoenician wine export was primarily directed towards Egypt, Babylonia and Cyprus.

72. Cf. Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), pp. 167-168, on the cultivation of olive at Tall Sūkās.

73. Riis, *ibid.*, pp. 166-174, enumerates further agricultural and other products, which may have been traded from the region. Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 67-70. For a detailed account of the situation in a region further to the south, see O. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, Indiana 1987.

74. Cf. B.B. Shefton, in Riis, *loc. cit.* (n. 1), p. 256.

as far as the summits...⁷⁵ ». R.A. Stucky's characterization of the settlement at Rās Šamra as a small rural community is in harmony with the situation in the Ġabla plain. Stucky suggests that timber and textiles were the most important export goods from the harbour at Mīnat al-Baiḍa, although he also mentions wine in this connection⁷⁶.

The extent of the territory of Arados

Were the sites under discussion « independent » communities, or under the control of a power outside the area — naturally apart from the Persian overlords ? Ancient authors tell us that the city of Arados dominated a part of the northern coastline of Syria, and the extent of the « péréé » of Arados has often been discussed. H. Seyrig and J.P. Rey-Coquais believed that Ġabla was included in the territory of Arados⁷⁷. P.J. Riis has suggested that Tall Sūkās could have constituted the northern limit⁷⁸, a hypothesis which may find support in the fact the only pre-Hellenistic silver coins found at this site were struck in Arados. J. Elayi has stated that « we are obliged to consider Paltos (i.e. 'Arab al Mulk) as the northern limit of the territory of Arados » while admitting that Tall Sūkās could also have belonged to Arados in the Persian period⁷⁹. — She has recently put forward the idea that Al-Mīna depended on Arados in some way or another⁸⁰, chiefly because of the large number of Aradian coins found there.

Indeed, the best archaeological clue to the solution of the problem may be the distribution of coins from Arados. They have been found at Al-Mīna, Rās al-Bašīt, Rās Šamra and Tall Sūkās in some cases together with a more limited number of coins from Sidon⁸¹. The presence of Aradian coins indicates that these sites were tied commercially to Arados, but the number of relevant coins from the area is too restricted to allow us to conclude with certainty that these settlements were also politically dependant on that city.

The solution of the problem is not made easier if it is imagined that the extent of the territory of Arados could have varied through the Persian period, as may well have been the case. What seems indisputable, though, is the fact that the excavated sites along the northern coastline of Syria, have

75. Strabo VII, XVI 2.9 (751-752).

76. Stucky, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 43.

77. Seyrig, *loc. cit.* (n. 15), pp. 9-28 ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), p. 98, n. 1, p. 110.

78. Riis 1979, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 67, has suggested that the Nahr al-Burgul could have constituted the northern frontier of the territory of Arados. This is in accordance with the statement by Strabo VII, XVI 2.12 (753) ; Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 10-11, no. 15.

79. Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 89, 105.

80. *Id.*, *loc. cit.* (n. 54), pp. 262-263.

81. Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 175-176 ; Elayi, *ibid.*, pp. 261-263.

not yielded evidence of « palatial » buildings, which might be interpreted as possible seats of rulers, and other public buildings have likewise eluded the excavators. Shrines have so far only been identified at Tall Sūkās. The architectural remains at Al-Mīna, Rās al Baṣīt and Tall Sūkās give the impression, that were dealing with the dwellings of private citizens and with store-rooms, workshops and shops.

The ethnic composition of the population in the area

The question of the ethnic composition of the population in the Persian period is complex, beset as it is by methodological and terminological difficulties. A detailed discussion is outside the scope of this paper, but it may be mentioned that the following ethnic components (at least) were no doubt present : 1) descendants of the local population in the area in the Late Bronze Age, 2) settlers from Central Phoenicia, 3) Aramaic-speaking people and 4) Greeks. To these should perhaps be added an Arabic substratum, which has left little or no trace in the archaeological record. An idea of the problems involved is given by J. Elayi's discussion of the difficulty of defining the prerequisites for accepting a given site as Phoenician site. She has concluded that « the only reliable archaeological criterion is the numismatic evidence », whereas the use of the Phoenician « ribbed wall » and the existence of a Phoenician cult only indicates the presence of Phoenicians⁸². Only Tall Sūkās of period F⁸³ and the settlement represented by Levels IV-II at Al-Mīna may accordingly be considered « pure » Phoenician sites, but it seems certain that a number of Greeks and others were living at the latter site as well⁸⁴. The presence of Phoenicians is attested at some sites which are not considered Phoenician as such⁸⁵. R.A. Stucky has argued that the inhabitants of Rās Šamra were mostly descendants of the local population in the Late Bronze Age. Two graffiti testify to the presence of Greeks, but it is concluded that « das griechische Element, zum mindesten in Rās Šamra... blieb... ein Fremdkörper »⁸⁶. — Perhaps it will never be possible to determine the degree to which each of these components were present at a given site, since we have no reliable way of equating archeological

82. Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 83-84 ; *id.*, *loc. cit.* (n. 54).

83. Tall Sūkās of Period F was identified as a « Neo-Phoenician town » in Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), pp. 124-126 ; cf. Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 2), p. 105 ; Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 194, n. 53.

84. Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 54).

85. Cf. the Semitic graffiti found at Rās Šamra, *supra*, n. 42, and the dipinto found at Rās al-Baṣīt, *supra*, n. 52.

86. Stucky, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 158. A Greek presence at Rās Šamra was, however, stressed by Cl. F.-A. Schaeffer, « Reprise des recherches archéologiques à Rās Shamra-Ugarit, sondages de 1948 et 1949 et campagne de 1950 », *Syria* 28, 1951, p. 19.

artifacts with ethnic groups. There will always be a tendency to search for simple solution to complex problems, but are we really entitled to take it for granted that the ethnic situation along the north Syrian coastline was less multi-faceted and bewildering in the Persian period than it is today ?

Conclusion

In sum, we may look at the historical development in the area based on the evidence presented above. It seems clear that conditions changed considerably in the region in the Persian period, and there was also some local variation. No destructions accompanied the seizure of power by the Persians, and the last third of the 6th century B.C. witnessed a growing prosperity almost everywhere : the settlement at Al-Mīna was re-founded and so were the settlements as Rās Šamra and Mīnat al-Baiḍa. The pattern of pottery imported from Athens points in the same direction⁸⁷ : the number increases sharply between ca. 525 and 500 B.C. at Al-Mīna and Rās al-Baṣīt. True, the corresponding figure at Tall Sūkās declines in the same period, but the reason for this may have been that the consequences of the destruction at the close of period G 2 were still being felt. The boom seems to have reached a peak in the first quarter of the 5th century, where the number of imports from Athens culminated at Al-Mīna and Rās al-Baṣīt. However, at the same time there are indications of trouble in the plain surrounding Ġabla and Latakia. Two coin hoards were buried in the area between ca. 500 and 480 B.C.⁸⁸, and the settlements at Tall Sūkās and perhaps also at 'Arab al-Mulk suffered a violent destruction at the beginning of the 5th century. According to P.J. Riis, Tall Sūkās may have been destroyed as a consequence of the Greek defeat in the Eastern Mediterranean in 498 B.C., and the evidence presented above suggests that Sūkās was not the only place affected by this ; but it now seems clear that the site of Sūkās continued to be inhabited after the destruction. Rās Šamra, Mīnat al-Baiḍa, Rās al-Baṣīt and Al-Mīna do not seem to have suffered a similar set-back at this time. However, judging from the evidence provided by the Attic pottery, the second quarter and most of the third quarter of the 5th century B.C. seem to have been a period of decline almost everywhere, although Al-Mīna, and possibly Rās Šamra, were less affected than the other areas. Trade with the interior of Syria seems to have been resumed in the first half of the 5th century through Al-Mīna, and it is quite possible that the Persians had a direct interest in the re-opening of this route.

87. Perreault, *loc. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 153-156 and 174-175 ; L.W. Sørensen, « Geometric and Archaic Greek pottery from Cyprus », *Acta Hyperborea* 1, 1988, pp. 25-30. Stucky has suggested, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 153, that the bloom started slightly later : about 500 B.C.

88. *Supra*, n. 30 (Ġabla) and *supra*, n. 35 (Latakia and between Latakia and Antiocheia). The coin hoard found at Rās Šamra was buried slightly earlier, about 525-520 B.C., *supra*, n. 41.

There are signs of a new prosperity from the last third of the 5th century onwards judging from the sharp increase in imported Attic pottery from then on at Al-Mīna. The economic recovery was apparently strengthened in the 4th century, and the re-founding of Tall Sūkās about 380 B.C. could be viewed as a symptom of this. There can be little doubt that this event was the result of a decision taken elsewhere, possibly at Arados. If Tall Sūkās was actually re-founded by settlers from Arados, as suggested above, it seems likely that this period marked the culmination of the power of that city. Political considerations may have played a part in the decision to resettle Tall Sūkās. P.J. Riis has suggested that « The Evagoras episode must have taught the Persians how necessary it was to have a naval base ready for direct invasion in Cyprus... and it may have kindled a keen interest in the natural harbours on the Phoenician coast opposite Salamis⁸⁹. » The boom seems to have lasted through the 4th century B.C.⁹⁰, and the conquest of Persia by Alexander was apparently not accompanied by destructions and unrest in the area, judging from the archaeological finds.

The evidence for actual presence of Persians and/or influence from Persian art and culture in the area reviewed here seems to be limited to the occurrence of certain terracotta figurines, especially the so-called Persian riders⁹¹. Persian coins have apparently not been found in the region, and no securely datable finds of Persian fortifications have been made with the possible exception of Qal'at el-Qouz near Banyās and the structures at Sari-saki north of Alexandretta, which have been discussed by M. Dunand⁹². It is interesting, seen from a methodological point of view, that if the ancient literary sources had not been preserved, forcing us to rely on the archaeological material alone, few would probably have dared to suggest that the northern coastline of Syria had ever been controlled by the Persians.

The illustrations were drawn by Niels Levinsen

Fig. 1 : The Northern coastline of Syria

Fig. 2 : Map of the Ġabla plain. Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 9, fig. 2

Fig. 3 : Tall Sūkās period G 1. Riis, *ibid.*, 91, fig. 33 and Lund, *op. cit.* (n. 18), 98-99 pl. 30, 105 pl. 31, 108 pl. 32

Fig. 4 : Tall Sūkās period F. Riis, *ibid.*, 126 fig. 44 and Lund, *ibid.*, 195 fig. 162

89. Riis, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 125.

90. For the Phoenician revolts against the Persians, cf. J. Elayi, « L'essor de la Phénicie et le passage de la domination assyro-babylonienne à la domination perse », *BaM* 9, 1978, pp. 35-38.

91. Buh¹ *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 126. Cf. also Stucky, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 69-70, no. 6, 71, no. 9, 85-86, no. 12-15 and 157-158 ; Elayi, *loc. cit.* (n. 54), p. 259, n. 54. E. Stern has observed more or less the same state of affairs in *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538-332 B.C.*, Warminster 1982, p. 236.

92. Dunand, *loc. cit.* (n. 11), pp. 47-48.

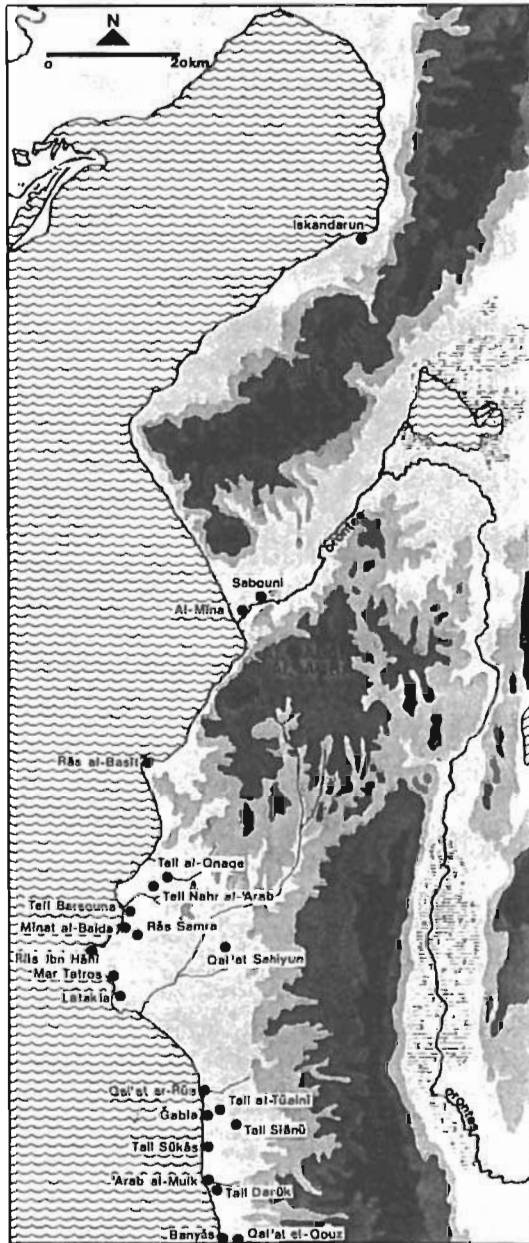


FIG. 1 : The northern coastline of Syria

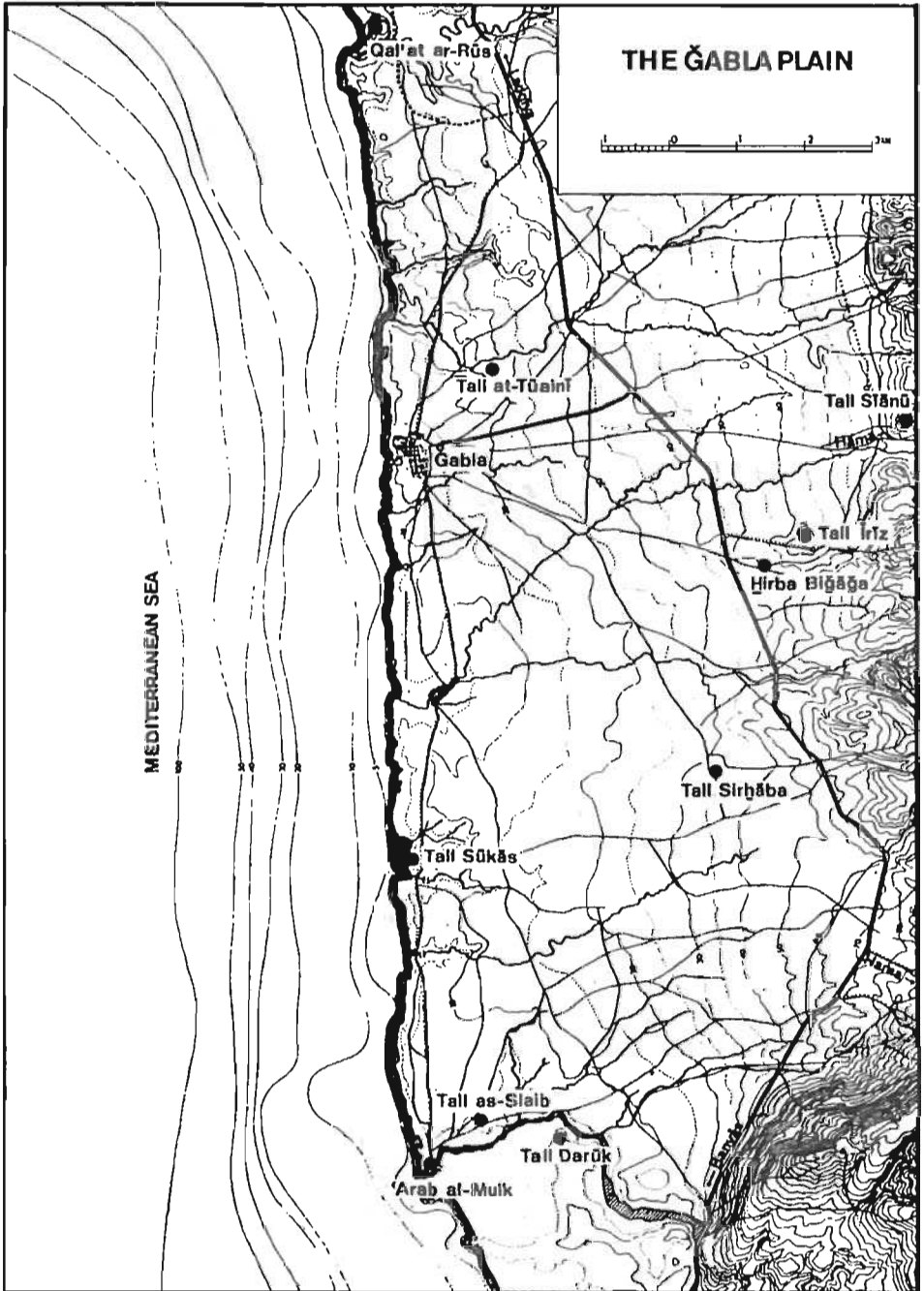


FIG. 2 : Map of the Ġabla plain

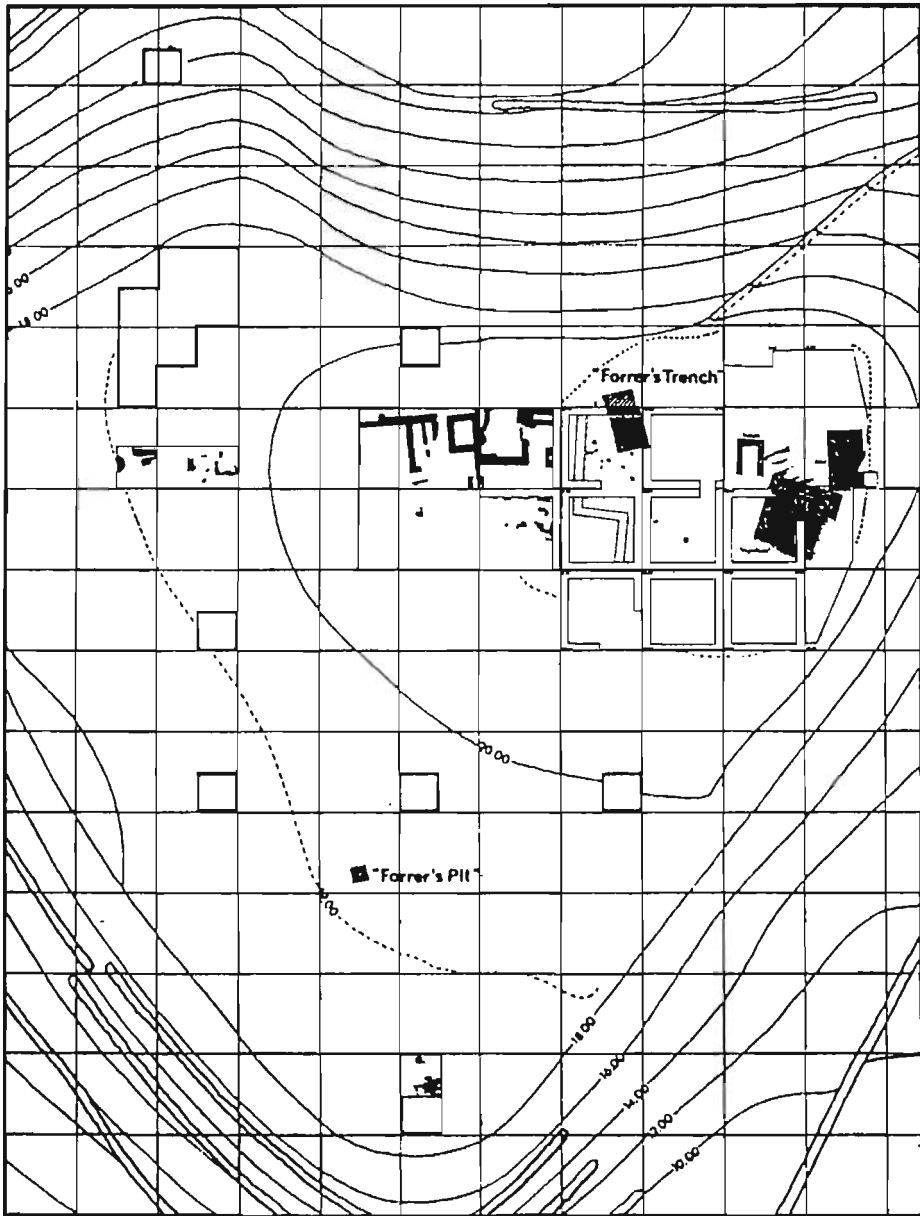


FIG. 3 : Tall Sūkās period G 1

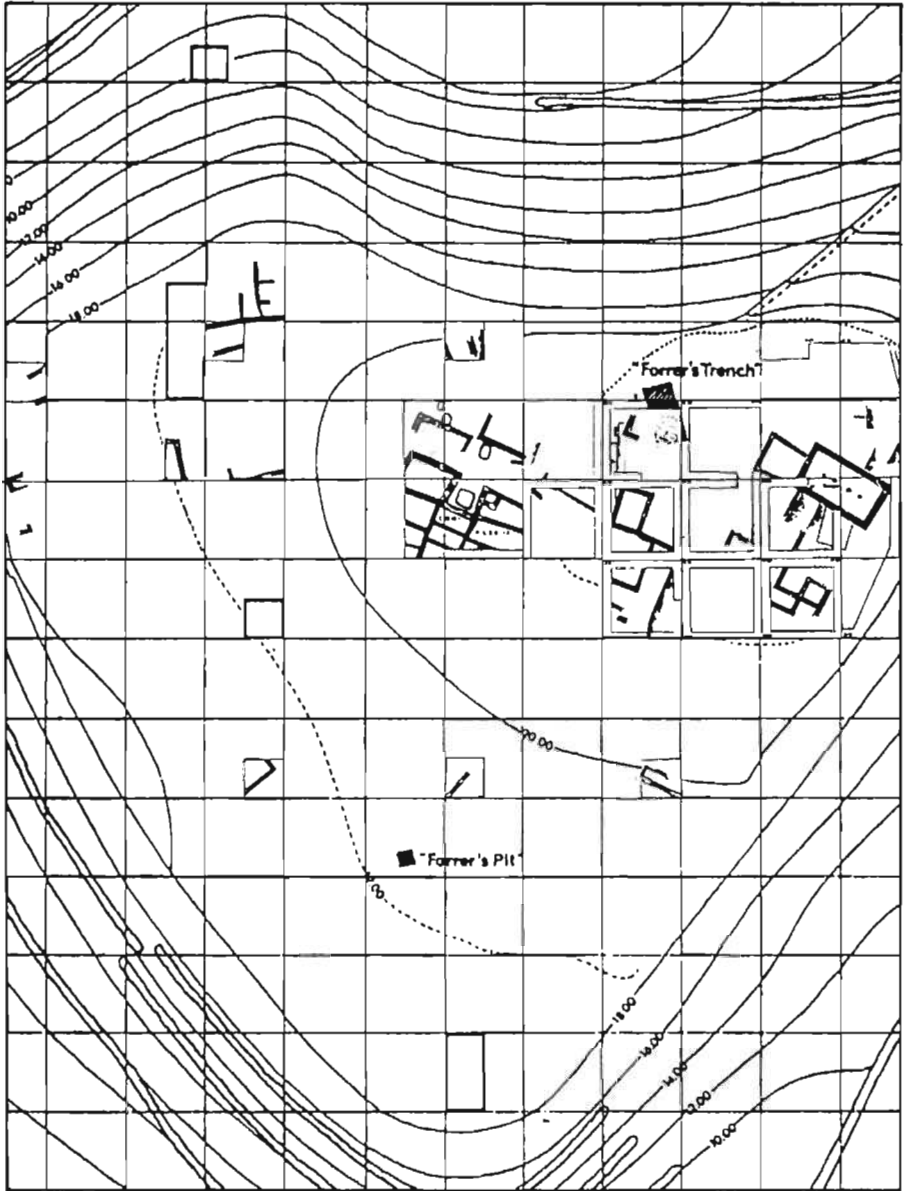


FIG. 4 : Tall Sūkās period F

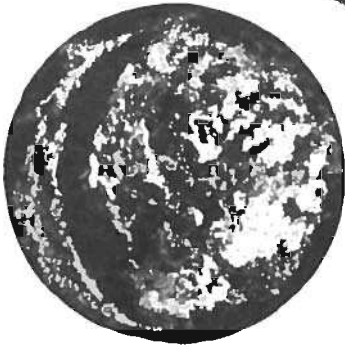
PL. I



◀ 1 ▶



◀ 2 ▶



◀ 3 ▶



◀ 4 ▶



◀ 5 ▶

