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Fig. 1. Ruinhøjen ved Sa'ad wa Sa'aid fra øst.
The tell of Sa'ad wa Sa'aid from the east.

UNDERSØGELSER I KUWAIT

Af P. V. GLOB

Et længe næret ønske blev opfyldt, da vi i foråret 1958 efter indbydelse og på bekostning af Kuwaits regering kunne udvide vore undersøgelser til bunden af Den persiske Golf, for der at søge oldtidshandelens veje mellem Bahrain og Mesopotamien. Ekspeditionens heldige forløb sikredes gennem interesse og stor imødekommenhed fra Kuwaits regent, Hans Højhed sheikh Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, undervisningsministeren, Hans Ekscellence sheikh Abdullah Al-Jábir Al-Sabah og undervisningsdirektør Abdulaziz Hussein. Det praktiske arrangement forestod vicedirektør Darwish Miqdadi, leder af transportafdelingen Ahmed Al-Eisa og administrerende direktør Khalid Al-Musallam, alle undervisningsdepartementet, som vi er stor tak skyldige. Under arbejdet havde vi dels logi på Kuwait gymnasium i Shuwaikh, hvor vicedirektør Jamil Saleh og rektor Abdul Majid Mustafa var vore gæstfrie værter, og på skolen i Zor på Failaka, hvis lærere til stadighed fulgte vort arbejde med opmærksomhed. Under opholdet i Kuwait blev vi også fra anden side hjulpet på mange måder. Lederne af Kuwait Oil Company Ltd. T. L. Jordan og E. Boaden gav os således tilladelse til fri færdsel i oliedistrikterne, hvortil chefgeolog George T. Becker elskværdigt ledsagede os og gav værdifulde terrænoplysninger.

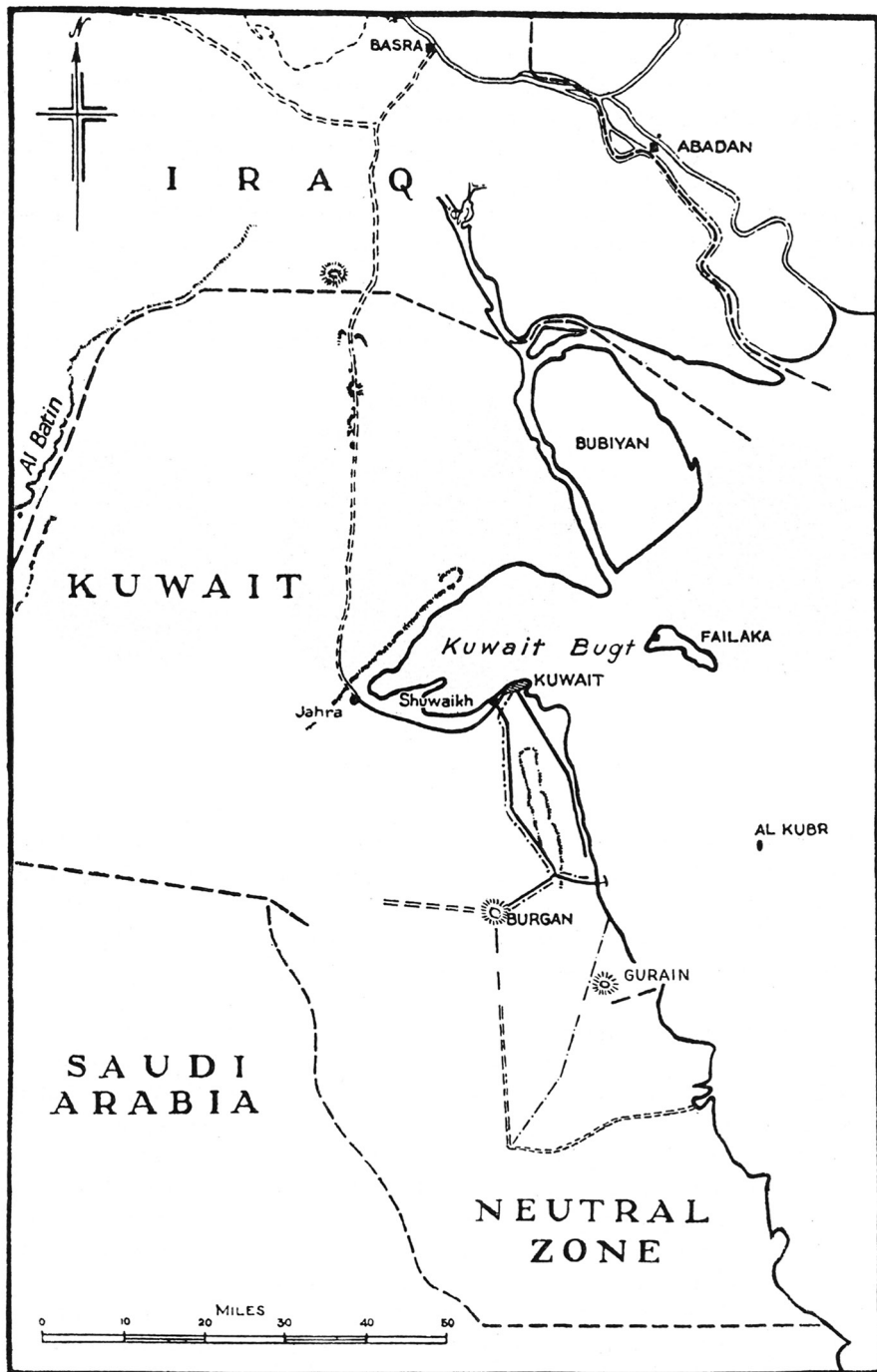


Fig. 2. Kort over Kuwait.
Map of Kuwait.

Kuwait ligger som den nordligste af de arabiske stater ud til Den persiske Golf, har et landområde på c. 15.000 km² og grænser i vest og nord op til Iraq, i syd til Saudi Arabien og en neutral zone. Af dens landområde er den store Bubian-ø uden arkæologisk interesse, fordi den er dannet i sen tid af slam fra Mesopotamiens floder. Syd for den og ved indløbet til Kuwait bugten ligger øen Failaka med beskyttede anløbspladser for både og gode ferskvandskilder, forhold, der på forhånd lod formode, at den har haft betydning for den søgående handel mellem Ur og Bahrain og i det hele taget for sejladsen på golfen i oldtiden, hvilket undersøgelserne på øen da også klart viste. Hovedlandet skæres halvt over af den brede bugt, ved hvis indløb i syd hovedstaden Kuwait by med c. 180.000 indbyggere ligger. Den øvrige del af befolkningen, c. 70.000,



Fig. 3. Seglsten af steatit fra Sa'ad wa Sa'aid. 1 : 1.

Steatite stamp-seal from Sa'ad wa Sa'aid. 1 : 1.

lever i mindre byer ved kysten eller som nomader i sorte telte spredt omkring i ørkenen, der i vintertiden har gode græsgange for får, geder og kameler. Fra kysten hæver landet sig som en bølget slette, brudt af enkelte horste, men når ikke højder over c. 275 m. Vestgrænsen går gennem den brede Al-Batin dal. I tidligere tid var det handel, bådebyggeri og perlefiskeri, der gav Kuwait velstand. Nu er det verdens rigeste olieklender, som kaster glans over landet og giver grundlaget for en rivende opbygning med skoler, hospitaler og universitet.

Arbejdet påbegyndtes i dagene 2-8. februar af T. G. Bibby og undertegnede med rekognoscering, dels på Kuwaits fastland, dels på øen Failaka i indløbet til Kuwait bugt. En stor lettelse i arbejdet var de omfattende undersøgelser, både af topografisk, etnografisk og arkæologisk art, som forfatteren H. R. P. Dickson gennem en menneskealder har foretaget i Kuwait, hvor han endnu er bosat. Han modtog os med stor hjertelighed, gav os mange værdifulde oplysninger og råd. Hans arbejder om Kuwait vil alle dage være grundlaget for fremtidige kulturhistoriske undersøgelser i området¹).

Ved berejsningen af fastlandet fandtes flere steder spor fra stenalder, men det blev et besøg på øen Failaka, der gav de bedste udsigter for større udgravninger. Flere steder blev der fundet keramik fra 3. årtusinde, således ved det ældgamle helligsted Al-Khidr på øens nordvesthjørne, ved Dar Al-Ma'aiyan på østspidsen og ved Sa'ad på sydvesthjørnet (fig. 1). Da ekspeditionens hoved-

styrke, overinspektør, dr. phil. Aage Roussel, museumsinspektør, cand. mag. E. Albrechtsen, sekretær, cand. jur. Poul Rovsing Olsen og museumsassistent Torben Lundbæk ankom den 9. februar, blev den straks sat ind på Failaka, hvor en større højning ved Sa'ad viste sig at være et oldtidsstell, samtidigt med Qala'at al Bahrain, hvori bygningsrester blev påvist og mange fund gjort, bl. a. af riflet keramik som i Barbar-templerne²) og steatitseglsten (fig. 3)³), hvoraf een havde præg på begge sider. En øst derfor liggende mindre højning dækkede græske husrester (se side 191), medens et større tell længere mod øst dækkede et be-fæstet anlæg fra Alexander den Stores tid (se side 172).

Den korte tid, der var til rådighed på Kuwaits hovedland, gav kun lejlighed til orientering i de egne, hvor mulighed for stenalderfund var indlysende. På det lave forland, der følger Kuwait bugts nordside og ind i landet begrænses af den bagved liggende højslettes bratte skrænter, fandtes på flere steder tilhuggede spåner af grå skifer, men ingen af dem var tildannede i former, der muliggjorde en tidsbestemmelse. Flere af fundstederne, der ligger på lave højninger, måske oprindelig øer, som er udjævnet af vejr og vind, egner sig til nærmere undersø-gelse. Også dalen ved Kuwaits vestgrænse, Al-Batin, blev berejst, og her fandtes et par steder tilhugget flint. De dybe slugter, der her strækker sig ind i højdedragene, skulle kunne give palæolitiske fund. I lavningen mellem Burgán-bjergene, hvor Dickson i 1935 fandt mange flintredskaber, der er blevet bestemt som senpalæolitiske⁴), er der på grund af den omfattende olieudvinding der bevirker en stærk udjævning af terrænet, ikke stor mulighed for resultatrig ud-gravning, men på overfladen lå endnu nogle flækker, der passer godt til oven-anførte datering. Fra Burqáns højder kan man mod sydøst og midt i ørkenområdet skimte en stærkt forvitret horst, Gurain, hvor der findes rige forekomster af flint. På nordsiden af Gurain ses overalt store mængder af afhuggede flintspåner, men mellem dem optoges adskillige korte, tilhuggede flintstykker, der tydeligt viste, at man her havde udnyttet bjergets flint til fabrikation af slagflint i nyere tid til flintbøsser, samt til fyrtøj. På sydsiden af Gurain fandtes derimod meget grove flintskiver med grov retouche, dog ingen i så udpræget form, at tids-bestemmelse kan foretages, men mellempalæolitisk oprindelse er sandsynlig. Også på denne plads vil udgravning måske vise sig lønnende.

Investigations in Kuwait.

A long-felt desire was fulfilled when in the spring of 1958 the Danish Archeological Expedition was enabled, at the invitation and the expense of the Government of Kuwait, to extend its investigations to the head of the Persian Gulf, to seek there for traces of the routes followed by ancient trade between Bahrain and Mesopotamia. The successful carrying-through of the expedition was assured by the interest and goodwill evinced by the Emir of Kuwait, His Highness the Emir Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, by the Minister of Education, His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jabir Al-Sabah, and by the Director of Education, Abdulaziz Hussein. The practical dispositions were arranged by the Deputy Director, Darwish Miqdadi, by the head of the transport and supply department, Ahmed Al-Eisa, and the head of administration, Khalid Al-Musallam, all of the Department of Education, to whom we owe our sincere thanks. During our work we were accommodated either at the Kuwait Secondary

School in Shuwaikh, where the Principal, Abdul-Majid Mustafa, and the Vice-Principal, Jamil Saleh, were generous hosts, or at the school in Zor on the island of Failaka, where the teaching staff gave our work continuous assistance and attention. We also received assistance from many sides during our stay in Kuwait and the preparations for our visit. In this connection we express our gratitude to John Muir of the British Council and Tony Bell of Gray, Mackenzie Ltd. The management of the Kuwait Oil Company, through its General Manager, Jordan and Assistant General Manager E. Boaden, gave us permission to roam at will through the oil-fields, where the chief geologist, George Becker, was our guide and gave us valuable information on question of terrain.

Kuwait is the northernmost of the Arab states with seaboard to the Persian Gulf. It has an area of about 6000 sq. miles and is bordered to the west and north by Iraq and to the south by Saudi Arabia and a neutral zone. Of its land areas the large island of Bubian is without archeological interest, as it is of recent formation of alluvial sand from the rivers of Mesopotamia. South of Bubian, at the entrance to the Bay of Kuwait, lies the island of Failaka, with sheltered anchorages for ships and good fresh-water wells, circumstances which suggested in advance that the island had been of importance to the sea-going trade between Ur and Bahrain and in general for prehistoric seafaring in the Gulf, as was later amply demonstrated by our investigations. The mainland area is divided into two by the wide bay, at the southern entrance to which lies the capital, the city of Kuwait with about 180,000 inhabitants. The remaining population, about 70,000 live in smaller towns along the coast or as nomads in black tents scattered over the desert, which in winter provides good pasturage for sheep, goats and camels. From the coast the land rises to a rolling plain, broken by a few crags, but does not reach a height of more than about 900 feet above sea level. The western frontier lies along the wide valley of Al-Batin. In earlier times the prosperity of Kuwait depended upon trade, ship-building and pearl-fishing. Now it is the world's richest oil wells which make the land renowned and provide the basis for an astounding programme of development, with the establishment of schools, hospitals and the university.

Work commenced during the period 2-8 February with a reconnaissance carried out by T. G. Bibby and the writer, partly on the mainland of Kuwait and partly on the island of Failaka at the entrance to the Bay of Kuwait. Our work was greatly facilitated by the comprehensive research, of a topographical, ethnographical and archeological nature, carried out over a generation by H. R. P. Dickson, who is still resident in Kuwait. He received us with great goodwill, and gave us much valuable information and advice. His works on Kuwait¹) will always form the foundation for future culture-historical investigations in the area.

During our traverses of the mainland we found at several sites traces of Stone Age habitation, but it was a visit to the island of Failaka which gave the best prospects for large-scale excavation. At several points pottery from the Third Millennium BC was found, for example near the ancient sanctuary of Al-Khidr at the northwest corner of the island, at Dar Al-Ma'aiyan on the eastern extremity, and at Sa'ad wa Sa'aid on the southwest corner (Fig. 1). When the main expedition party, consisting of Dr. Aage Roussel, E. Albrecht-sen, M. A., Poul Rovsing Olsen, M. A., and Torben Lundbæk, arrived on 9th February, they set to work immediately on Failaka, where the larger mound at Sa'ad wa Sa'aid proved to be a prehistoric "tell", contemporary with the older levels at Qala'at al-Bahrain. There remains of buildings were excavated and many discoveries made, including ridged pottery of the type known from the Barbar temples²) and steatite seals (Fig. 3)³), of which one was double-sided. A smaller mound immediately to the east covered Greek house remains (cf. page 191), while a larger mound further to the east covered a fortified township from the time of Alexander the Great (cf. page 172).

The short time available for investigations on the mainland of Kuwait only permitted a preliminary reconnaissance of the areas where the possibilities of discovering Stone Age remains were most obvious. On the low coastal plain which follows the northern shore of the Bay of Kuwait and inland ends at the steep slopes leading up to the plateau beyond, worked flakes of grey slate were found at several places, but none of them were shaped to forms which allowed of dating. Several of the sites, which are situated on low hills, perhaps originally islands which have been smoothed out by weathering, are suitable for

closer investigation. The valley on the western frontier of Kuwait, Al-Batin, was also surveyed, and here at two points worked flint was found. The deep gorges which here run into the plateau, should give possibilities for Palæolithic discoveries. In the depression between the Burqán hills, where Dickson found many flint implements in 1935, which have been identified as Late Palæolithic⁴), there is little possibility for profitable excavation, as the widespread oil exploitation there has resulted in a considerable levelling of the terrain, but there still lay a number of blades on the surface which would agree very well with the dating mentioned. From the heights of Burqán can be seen to the southeast in the middle of the desert flats a considerably weathered crag, Gurain, where flint occurs in quantity. On the north side of Gurain large quantities of flint-working swarf could be seen, but among them were found several short worked flints which showed clearly that the flint deposits of the crag had been used in recent times for the manufacture of striking flints for flintlock guns and for lighting flints. However, on the south side of Gurain very coarse flint flakes were found with a coarse retouche. None of them had a so definite form that they could be dated, but a Middle Palæolithic origin is likely. Here, too, excavation might well be profitable.

P. V. Glob.

NOTER

- 1) H. R. P. Dickson: *The Arab of the Desert*; Kuwait, London 1956. 2) KUML 1955, s. 188, fig. 12.
3) KUML 1957, s. 143, fig. 13. 4) Dickson 1956, s. 49.