



KUML

ÅRBOG FOR JYSK ARKÆOLOGISK SELSKAB
1954

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Fig. 1. Bronzealderhøje i Bahrains ørken, syd for Jidd Ali.
Bronze Age tumuli in the Bahrain desert, south of Jidd Ali.

BAHRAIN

Øen med de hundredtusinde Gravhøje

Af P. V. GLOB

Hvor den persiske havbugt skærer sig ind i Arabiens nordøstkyst mellem halvøen Qatar og fastlandet, ligger den arabiske stat Bahrains arkipelag, hvis hovedø har givet riget navn (fig. 2). Her findes verdens største højgravfelt, 100.000 oldtidshøje, der dækker udstrakte områder af øens ørkenflader. De ligger i så tætsluttede grupper, at man skulle tro, landets kuplede overflade var et naturfænomen, en boblende og kogende ørken stivnet i tidernes morgen, og ikke menneskers værk (fig. 1). Tilstedeværelsen af den enorme mængde gravhøje på en ø, der ikke måler mere end et halvt hundrede kilometer i nord-syd og kun er en trediedel så bred i øst-vest, hører til en af de fortidens gåder, der yder-

ligere fordunkles ved, at man forhen ikke havde fundet det mindste spor af bopladser. Man var da også kommet til det resultat, at de mange gravhøje viser, at Bahrain har været brugt som oldtidsgravø for Arabiens fastland¹).

Arkæologiske ekspeditioner, der tidligere har arbejdet på Bahrain, har udelukkende gravet i oldtidshøjene. I 1878–79 undersøgte således kaptajn E. L. Durand en af øens største høje, der ligger i en gruppe syd for indlandsbyen Ali, samt flere mindre høje sammesteds²). Andre af disse storhøje blev i 1889 åbnet af Theodore Bent og frue³) og i 1903 af M. Jouannin⁴). I årene 1906–08 undersøgte F. B. Prideaux for den indiske regerings arkæologiske afdeling 67 høje⁵), og i 1925–26 udgravede Ernest Mackay efter anmodning fra »The British School of Egypt« 34 høje, ligeledes ved Ali¹). I begyndelsen af 1920'erne blev endvidere en af en række storhøje ved nordkysten, der allerede er omtalt af kaptajn Durand, udgravet af Major Daly⁶). Andre gravhøje i det nordlige kystområde er senere lejlighedsvis blevet gennemgravet, og fundene derfra befinder sig i Bahrains regerings varetægt⁷). Et større antal høje i en gruppe ved øens sydvestkyst, der ikke tidligere havde været genstand for undersøgelser, blev i 1940 udgravet af P. B. Cornwall⁸).

Da tolkningen af Bahrain som gravø forekom lidet sandsynlig, udsendte »Forhistorisk Museum«, Århus, under ledelse af undertegnede i 1953 »Dansk Arkæologisk Bahrain-Ekspedition«, hvis hovedopgave derfor var at finde spor af oldtidsbosættelse på øen. Forbindelsen med Bahrains regering formidledes af museumsassistent T. G. Bibby, der tidligere havde arbejdet nogle år dernede i andet erhverv. Regeringens rådgiver, Sir Charles Belgrave, skaffede ekspeditionen Hans Højhed Sheik Sulman bin Hamad Al-Khalifahs tilladelse til at foretage arkæologiske undersøgelser på Bahrain, og samtidig blev et betydeligt beløb stillet til rådighed, et beløb, der lagde den første økonomiske grund til ekspeditionens gennemførelse. Den sikredes endeligt ved en stor bevilling fra »Statens Almindelige Videnskabsfond«. Yderligere støtte modtog vi fra de herrer Skinner og Barkhurst fra »The Bahrain Petroleum Company Ltd.«, der muliggjorde vigtige undersøgelser og forlængede ekspeditionens arbejdstid. Andre tilskud modtog ekspeditionen fra Aarhus Oliefabrik og Tuborgs Bryggerier.

Af stor betydning for ekspeditionens heldige gennemførelse var den hjælp og imødekommenhed, vi på mange måder mødte hos Bahrains regent, Hans Højhed Sheik Sulman bin Hamad Al-Khalifah, og regeringens medlemmer, deraf først og fremmest Sir Charles Belgrave. Sheik Rashid bin Khalifah Al-Khalifah og forfatteren James H. D. Belgrave hjalp os ofte med deres store lokalkendskab, medens Temple Hillyard, der i en længere årrække har opholdt sig i det mellemste Østen og selv er arkæolog, ofte bistod os. Under størstedelen af vort ophold gav chefen

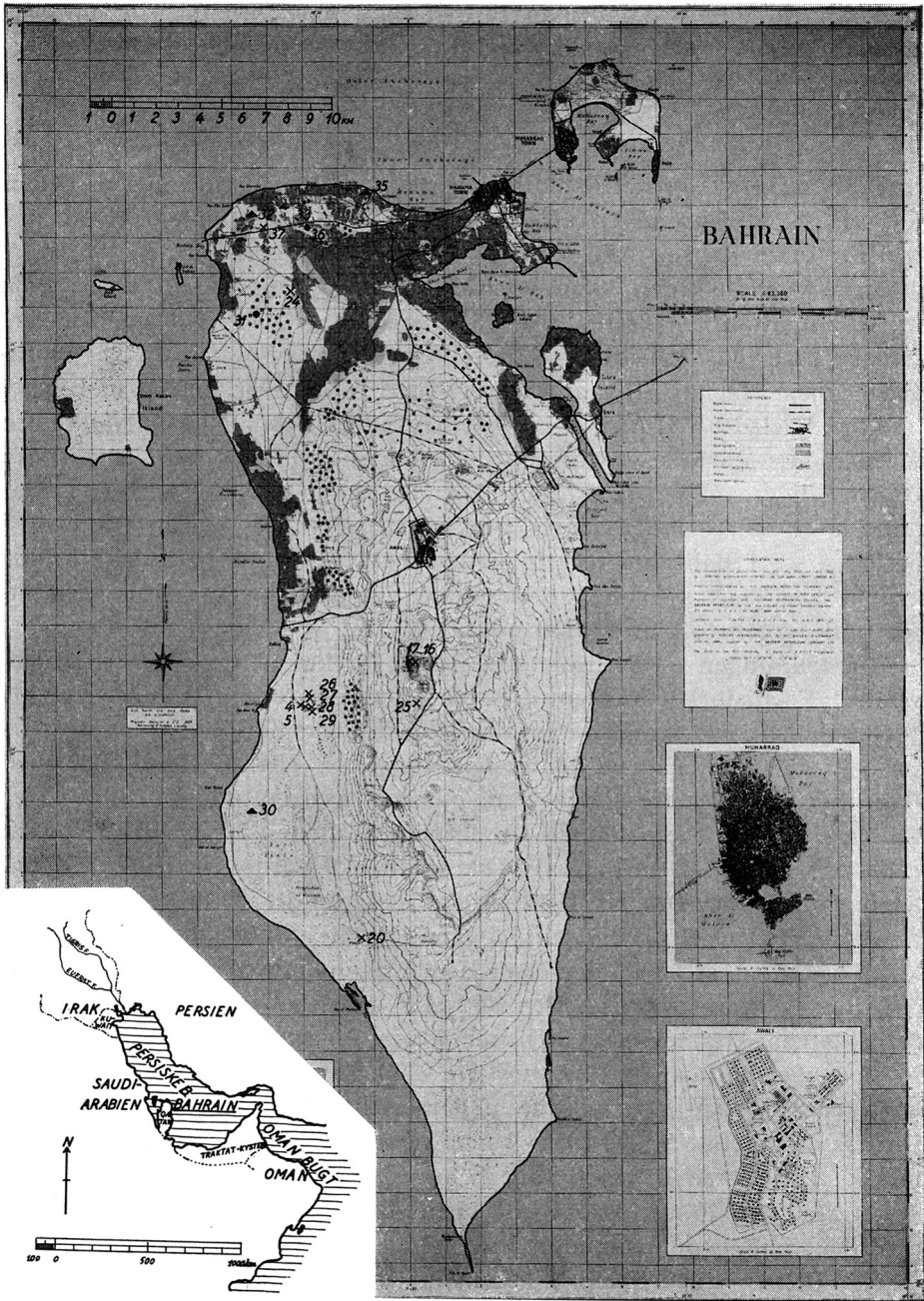


Fig. 2. Bahraíns hovedø med de vigtigste af »Dansk Arkæologisk Bahraínekspektion« fund indlagt. × flintpladser, ● udgravede høje, ▲ andre fundsteder.
 The main island of Bahrain with the most important of the sites discovered by the "Danish Archeological Bahrain-Expedition" added. × flint sites, ● excavated tumuli, ▲ other sites.

for Qatar Petroleum Company, G. Heseldin, og ly i P. C. L.s Guest House, hvis daglige leder D. Brown var vor hyggelige vært.

Efter tre dages flyverejse ankom ekspeditionens første medlemmer, T. G. Bibby og undertegnede, den 5.12.1953 til Bahraíns hovedstad Manama, hvor vi havde hovedkvarter under hele opholdet, der først afsluttedes den 2.5.1954. I ekspeditionens sidste fase, fra 18.3.1954, deltog endvidere arkitekten, mag. art. Kristian Jeppesen. Den første månedstid gik med omfattende rekognosceringer over hele øen. Under disse lykkedes det at finde de første spor af beboelse på Bahrain, flintpladser på Jabal Al-Dukhan, bjerget, der kroner øens ørkenområde, og i de sydvestlige kystegne. Ved en moske nordligt i Diraz opdagedes en stenblok, $0,6 \times 0,65 \times 0,97$ m stor, i hvis overside der var indhugget en snes skålgruber (fig. 3). Disse gruber, hvoraf 7 var fra 8–10 cm i tværmål og 5–6 cm dybe, medens resten var 5–6 cm i tværmål og 1–3 cm dybe, er helligtegn fra oldtiden og kendes i den gamle verden fra Indien til Skandinavien.

Som støtte fra rekognosceringen benyttedes luftfotografier over den nordlige halvdel af Bahrain, optaget af Hunting Aerosurveys Ltd., London, stillet til rådighed af BAPCO. For at fremskaffe sammenligningsmateriale og opmålinger af øens gravhøje påbegyndtes den 9.1.1954 undersøgelsen af to høje i den nordvestligste gruppe, hvor der ikke tidligere var foretaget udgravninger (se side 116). Samtidig blev en gravning foretaget i den øst for gravpladsen liggende landsby Sar, der er anlagt på en højning, hvis sydende ligger c. 6 meter over byens palmedes overflade. Der påvistes her c. 1 meter under overfladen og dækket af et kulturlag en byhorisont fra tidlig islamisk tid. I en dybde på c. 5,32 meter under toppen og på oprindelig overflade fandtes et tyndt kulturlag og bålrester, men ingen tidsbestemmende oldsager.

Den 2. februar flyttedes undersøgelserne til landsbyen Diraz, hvor der gravedes til den 10. marts. Her undersøgtes Ain Sejour, en af øens berømteste kilder (se side 154), medens der samtidig foretoges gravninger i nærliggende højninger, øst for Diraz og c. 1 km syd for landsbyen Barbar. Ved Barbar opdagedes under disse undersøgelser en højning af usædvanlig art, der allerede var blevet bemærket af Durand⁹). Her gravedes fra 18.2.–28.4., og der afdækkedes betydelige dele af tempelanlæg (se side 142). Samtidig undersøgtes tre jernaldergravhøje syd for Budeiya Road (se side 126) og en prøvegravning ved Ras al Qala'a, hvor betydelige bygningsrester, utvivlsomt i Bahraíns oldtidshovedstad, påvistes (se side 164). Alle helligdage blev fortsat benyttet til rekognoscering, og flere nye stenalderpladser blev fundet, samt en anselig køkkenmødding med metertykke skallag af perlemusling, iblandet kulturrester, først og fremmest keramik, mellem Ras Noma og Ras al Jazayir vestligt på øen og c. 1 km fra den nuværende kystlinje. Den stammer

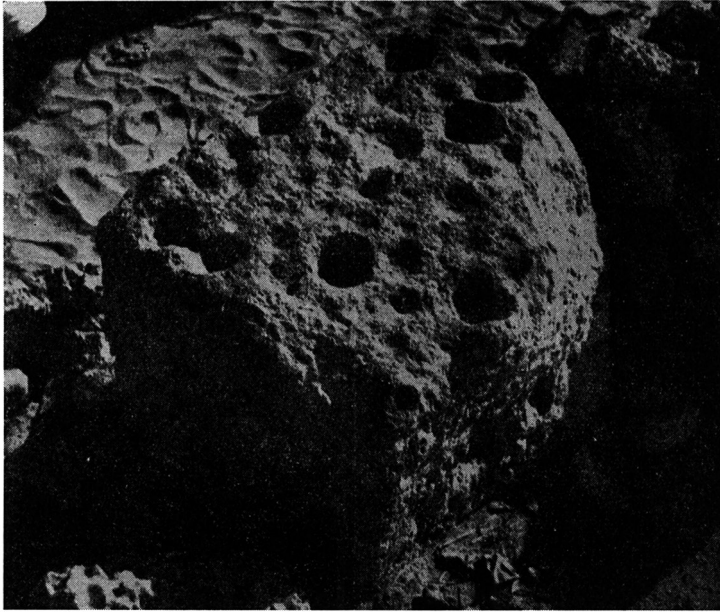


Fig. 3. Stenblok, hvis overside er dækket med skålgruber, beliggende ved moske ved Diraz.

The stone block with its upper side covered with cup-carvings, standing by the mosque at Diraz.

utvivlsomt fra oldtiden og afspejler sandsynligvis et omfattende perlefiskeri allerede da. Lignende køkkenmøddinger blev i 1941 fundet af Cornwall på Arabiens fastland lige øst for Bahrain ved Al Khubar¹⁰). Ekspeditionen sluttede med en udstilling af det fundne i regeringsbygningen i Manama. Udstillingen åbnedes af Hans Højhed Sheik Sulman og blev beset med omfattende interesse af et bredt udsnit af Bahrains befolkning.

Af »Dansk Arkæologisk Bahrain-Ekspedition«s ovenfor skitserede resultater, der i de efterfølgende afhandlinger vil blive genstand for en foreløbig omtale, fremgår det, at den heldigt gennemførte første kampagne med eet slag giver øen en bred forhistorisk baggrund. Når Bahrain ofte er omtalt i den arkæologiske, historiske, geografiske og filologiske litteratur, så skyldes det mindre gravhøjenes enorme masser, end at man i denne ø har ment at finde det sagnomspundne Dilmun, som gentagne gange omtales i sumeriske, babylonske og assyriske billedindskrifter, og hvortil de ældste syndflodssagn er knyttet. Hvor Sumerernes og Babylonernes Noah, Ziusudra og Utu Napishtim, fik ophold og evigt liv, og hvor helten i det oldmesopotamiske sagn Gilgames søgte udødelighed. Siden problemet rejstes i 1880–81 har diskussionen om Dilmuns beliggenhed optaget talrige forskere. Mange placeringer har været foreslået,

men man samler sig nu om to lokaliteter: nordøstkysten af den persiske bugt fra Elam til Ormuz-strædet eller Bahrain¹¹). Siden er særligt P. B. Cornwall gået i breschen for identifikationen af Dilmun med Bahrain¹²), og spørgsmålet synes for mange forskere nu at være løst til fordel for denne ø¹³). Cornwall mener tillige, at de vest for Bahrain liggende områder af Arabiens fastland, Hasa-distriktet, hvor han fortsatte sine undersøgelser i 1940–41 efter udgravningerne på Bahrain, i hvert fald i perioder har hørt til Dilmun-området. I Hasa lykkedes det ham at finde udstrakte højgravpladser ganske lignende Bahrains og at påvise flere anselige ruinbyer, samt flintpladser og køkkenmøddinger, der yderligere knytter de to områder sammen¹⁴). At Bahrain i oldtiden må have været det vigtigste støttepunkt i søhandelen mellem Indien og Mesopotamien på grund af sine rige ferskvandskilder er ofte blevet fremhævet. Disse kilder vælter op mange steder på øen, men også ude i landfoden langt fra kysten. En lokal tradition fortæller, at de skyldes en underjordisk vandåre fra den brede flod Eufkrat. Mod den af søfarere frygtede nordvestenvind, Shamalen, har Bahrain desuden beskyttede anløbspladser.

Det eneste fund fra Bahrain, der tidligere viste forbindelsen med de omliggende kulturlande, var en sten med kileindskrift, som Durand i 1879 fandt indmuret ved en moske, og som nu er gået tabt (fig. 4)¹⁵).

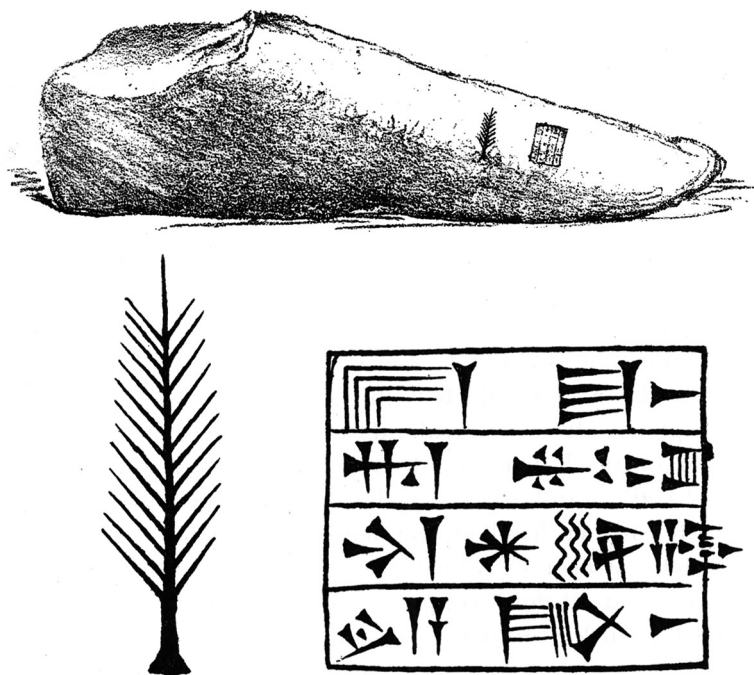


Fig. 4. Fodformet stenblok med kileindskrift og palmegren fundet 1879 (efter Kapt. Durand).
Foot-shaped stone block bearing cuneiform inscription and palm leaf found in 1879
(after Capt. Durand).



Fig. 5. Gipsaftryk af seglsten fundet 1954 syd for Ras al Qala'a. For- og bagside. $\frac{1}{3}$.
Plaster cast of stamp seal found in 1954 south of Ras al Qala'a. Obverse and reverse. 4 : 3.

Denne stens indskrift, der er holdt i en tidløs babylonisk stil, men som sandsynligvis kan henføres til midten af 2. årtusindes første halvdel¹⁶) lyder: »Rimuns palads, Inzaks tjener, Agarums slægt«. Den knytter Bahrain til Mesopotamien, hvor guden Inzak dyrkedes under navnet Nabu¹⁷). Hertil kan nu føjes »Dansk Arkæologisk Bahrain-Ekspedition«s fund fra templerne i Barbar, der viser direkte forbindelse med både Mesopotamien og Indien (se side 148 og 157). Disse forbindelser er desuden gennem et par enkeltfund blevet yderligere uddybet. Således findes i Bahrains regerings varetægt et stenkar med kredsortnamenter af en type, der kendes fra fund i Ur fra sidste halvdel af tredje årtusinde¹⁸), det samme tidsrum, hvori fundene fra Barbar har sine nærmeste paralleller. Dette stenkar er fremkommet ved gennemgravning af en høj c. 1 km sydligt for Ras al Qala'a (fig. 2, nr. 35). I samme område fandt den amerikanske ingeniør ved BAPCO V. Kelly i foråret 1954 i nærheden af en højtomt en seglsten af særlig betydning.

Denne seglsten, der er af gråhvid stealit, er 2,6 cm i tværmål og har på seglsiden et tyrebillede og derover et pattedyr med hanelignende hovede (ko? ged?) samt tre andre figurer, hvorimellem ses en skorpion. Den modsatte side er hvælvet, gennemboret med et snorehul på tværs af tre parallelle streger og yderligere prydet med fire kredsortnamenter (fig. 5). Den hører til den gruppe seglsten, som C. J. Gadd sætter i forbindelse med Induskulturen¹⁹), og som nu kendes i 30 eller 31 eksemplarer, hvoraf de fleste er fra Ur i det sydlige Mesopotamien²⁰). Billederne på seglstenen fra Bahrain har deres nærmeste parallel i et segl fra Ur²¹), der kan dateres til slutningen af 3. årtusinde²²), medens over-

sidens karakteristiske udformning kendes fra flere andre segl²³). De her omtalte fund giver sammen med andre af ekspeditionens resultater en værdifuld arkæologisk baggrund for Urs handelsforbindelser i slutningen af 3. årtusinde, som er veloplyste gennem en række lertavler med kileskrift fra Larsa-perioden, der netop er publiceret i en sammenfattende oversigt af A. L. Oppenheim²⁴).

Af disse tavlers beretning fremgår det, at handelen på Dilmun omkring år 2000 var i hænderne på en gruppe søfarende handelsmænd, Alik Dilmun, der finansieredes af kapitalister i Ur. De varer, der bragtes til oldtidshyen i Mesopotamien omtales i forbindelse med offergaver og tiende, skænket til gudinden Ningal i taknemmelighed for beskyttelse på farefulde sørejser. Det drejede sig om kobber i barrer og færdigt kobbertøj, perler og kostelige stene, klumper af lapis lazuli, elfenben og elfenbensindlagte sager, elfenbenskamme og brystplader, øjenmaling og sjældne træsorter, samt »fiske-øjne«, der sandsynligvis er ægte perler. Senere nævnes dadler i importen. Købmændene bragte som bytte til Dilmun klædedragter, olie og sølv. Men da kun få af importvarerne fandtes på Dilmun, må Bahrain have været en handelsplads, hvortil varerne bragtes fra fjerntliggende steder, der på tavlerne benævnes Makkan og Meluhha. Disse lokaliteter, der ikke nøjere kan bestemmes, er sandsynligvis beliggende på Arabiens nordøstkyst (Oman?) og i Indien (Indusdalen). Netop de omtalte importsager kendes i fundene fra Bahrain. I storhøjene ved Ali er der fundet elfenbensfigurer, forskellige sager af elfenben, samt mængder af småstumper af elfenben og genstande, ødelagt ved forvitring²⁵). Det er overvejende sandsynligt, at elfenbenet stammer fra Indien, hvor på dette tidspunkt de store bykulturer blomstrede i Indusdalen og hvormed i hvert fald eet stykke fra Barbar-templet, den lille lingaformede spillebrik af lapis lazuli, viser direkte kontakt. Hertil kommer de ovenfor omtalte seglsten, samt en særlig perletype, der knytter forbindelsen mellem Induskulturen og Mesopotamien²⁶), men endnu ikke er fundet på Bahrain. Af andre importsager, der nævnes på tavlerne fra Ur, kendes et stort antal brudstykker af bronzekar fra Barbar-templet, hvor også et stort antal småstave af kobber er fundet, måske efterlignende kobberbarrer. Perler er hidtil ikke fremkommet i fundene på Bahrain, hvilket kan skyldes bevaringsforholdene, men her er den ovenfor omtalte køkkenmødding af perlemusling af største interesse.

Denne storhandel ligger hovedsagelig i århundrederne på begge sider af år 2000, men den kan følges tilbage til midten af 3. årtusinde, hvor den måske var i hænderne på storkøbmænd på Bahrain²⁷). Netop til disse århundreder må hovedmassen af Bahrains bronzealdergravhøje sandsynligvis dateres, og derfor er Alis storhøje vel Bahrains handelsfyrsters sidste hvilested. Derefter følger et brud i de østlige handelsforbindelser, der måske afspejles i et tomrum mellem Bahrains bronzealderhøje og

de høje, der i jernalderen opførtes langs Bahrains nordkyst og udenfor de udstrakte gravfelter fra bronzealderen. Sammenbruddet af den østlige handel kunne tyde på, at Indusdalens store bykulturer, særlig kendt fra udgravningerne i Mohenjo-Daro og Harappa, falder i midten af første halvdel af andet årtusinde.

Som det vil fremgå af de efterfølgende afhandlinger, synes »Dansk Arkæologisk Bahrain-Ekspedition«s fund at vise, at der på Bahrain har eksisteret en særpræget kultur, hvis forbindelser kan knyttes både til Mesopotamien og Indien. Derfor indtager Bahrain en central plads i det mellemste Østens forhistorie. Det er kun en begyndelse, der er gjort, men en fuldendelse af de opgaver, der allerede er taget op, vil utvivlsomt bringe afgørende nyt. På Bahrain findes de største muligheder for at udbyde den kontakt, der er mellem Sumerernes kultur i Mesopotamien og Induskulturen. Her må endvidere være de største muligheder for at finde nøglen til tydningen af Induskulturens endnu ulæste billedskrift, fordi de handelsslægter, der rådede på Bahrain må have behersket både denne og Sumerernes kileskrift.

★

Bahrain — Island of the Hundred Thousand Burial-Mounds.

Where the Persian Gulf extends an arm into the northeast coast of Arabia between the peninsula of Qatar and the mainland lies the archipelago which forms the Arab state of Bahrain, the main island of which has given the state its name (Fig. 2). Here the world's largest tumulus cemetery is found, 100,000 prehistoric barrows, which cover wide stretches of the island's desert surface. They lie in such close groups that one would think that the billowing surface of the ground was a phenomenon of nature and not the work of man, that a boiling and bubbling desert had been frozen at the dawn of time. (Fig. 1).

The presence of this enormous number of burial-mounds on an island which measures no more than thirty miles from north to south and only a third of this from east to west is one of the riddles of history, a riddle which was made more mysterious by the fact that not the slightest sign of prehistoric habitation had been found on the island. The solution had therefore been given that the numerous burial-mounds showed that Bahrain had been used as a prehistoric burial island by the inhabitants of the Arabian mainland¹).

The archeological expeditions which have previously operated in Bahrain have confined themselves to excavation in the tumuli. Thus in 1878–79 Captain E. L. Durand investigated one of the largest mounds on the island, which lies in a group south of the inland village of 'Ali, as well as several smaller mounds in the same area²). In the same group of large mounds others were opened in 1889 by Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Bent³) and in 1903 by M. Jouannin⁴). In the years 1906–08 Colonel F. B. Prideaux investigated 67 mounds on behalf of the Archaeological Survey of India⁵), and in 1925–26, at the instigation of the British School of Archaeology in Egypt, Ernest Mackay excavated 34 tumuli, still in the neighbourhood of 'Ali¹). In the early years of the 1920s one of a group

of large mounds near the north coast, which had already been reported by Captain Durand, was excavated by Major Daly⁶). Other burial-mounds in the northern coastal area have since been dug through on various occasions, and the objects found therein are now in the possession of the Bahrain Government⁷). A large number of tumuli near the southwest coast of the island, a group which had not previously been investigated, was excavated in 1940 by P. B. Cornwall⁸).

As the interpretation of Bahrain as a sepulchral island seemed improbable, the Prehistoric Museum in Aarhus despatched in 1953, under the present writer's leadership, the Danish Archeological Bahrain-Expedition, with the main purpose of looking for traces of settlements on the island of prehistoric date. Contact with the Bahrain Government was established by T. G. Bibby, of the Prehistoric Museum, who had previously spent some years on the island in another capacity. The Adviser to the Government of Bahrain, Sir Charles Belgrave, obtained for the expedition the permission of the Ruler, His Highness Sheik Sulman bin Hamad Al-Kalifah, to undertake archeological investigations on the island, and at the same time a generous sum of money was placed at our disposal, a sum which provided the first economic basis for the mounting of the expedition. Its existence was finally secured by a large grant from the Danish State Scientific Foundation. In addition support was received, through the agency of Mr. Skinner and Mr. Barkhurst, from the Bahrain Petroleum Company Ltd., which enabled important investigations to be carried out and the expedition to remain longer in the field. The expedition also received support from the Aarhus Oilworks and Tuborg Breweries. Of inestimable importance to the success of the expedition was the kindness and assistance which we met with in many forms at the hands of the Ruler of Bahrain, His Highness Sheikh Sulman bin Hamad Al-Khalifah, and of the members of his Government, in particular of Sir Charles Belgrave. Sheikh Rashid bin Khalifah Al-Khalifah and James H. D. Belgrave very frequently placed their considerable knowledge of the island at our disposal, while Temple Hillyard, who has many years' experience of the Middle East and who is himself an archeologist, was often of assistance to us. Under the greater part of our stay on Bahrain the manager of the Qatar Petroleum Company, G. Heseldin, gave us accommodation in the P. C. L. Guest House, where our pleasant host was D. Brown.

After three days' flight the first members of the expedition, T. G. Bibby and the writer, arrived 5.12.1953 at the capital of Bahrain, Manama, which was our headquarters during the whole period of the campaign, which terminated 2.5.1954. In the last phase of the expedition, from 18.3.1954, Kristian Jeppesen, M. A., an architect, also took part. The first month was occupied by a thorough reconnaissance of the whole island. During this survey we had the good fortune to find the first traces of settlement on Bahrain, the flint sites on Jabal Al-Dukhan, the mountain which dominates the desert area of the island, and in the southwestern coastal areas. Besides a mosque on the northern outskirts of Diraz a stone block was found, $60 \times 65 \times 97$ cms. in size, on the upper side of which a score of cup-carvings had been hollowed out (Fig. 3). These cup-carvings, of which 7 were 8–10 cms. in diameter and 5–6 cms. in depth, while the remainder were 5–6 cms. in diameter and 1–3 cms. deep, are sacred signs of prehistoric date, and are known throughout the Old World from India to Scandinavia.

To supplement the reconnaissance use was made of air photographs covering the northern half of the island, which had been taken by Hunting Aerosurveys

Ltd. of London, and which were placed at our disposal by BAPCO. In order to obtain comparative material and measurements of the tumuli of the island investigations were commenced 9.1.1954 of two burial mounds in the north-western group, where no previous excavations had taken place (cf. p. 132). At the same time an excavation was carried out at the village of Sar to the east of this mound-group. This village is built on a mound, the south end of which lies about 6 meters above the level of the village palmgroves. Here a building level of Early Islamic date was demonstrated about 1 meter under the surface and covered by occupation debris. At a depth of about 5.32 meters under the surface and resting on the original ground surface a shallow occupation layer with remains of cooking fires was found, but no dateable artifacts were discovered.

On 2.2.1954 the centre of investigation was moved to the village of Diraz, where excavation continued until 10.3.1954. Here Ain Sujur, one of the most famous springs on the island, was investigated (cf. p. 160). While at the same time sondages were made in the nearby mounds, east of Diraz and about one kilometer south of the village of Barbar. In the course of these investigations a mound of unusual character was discovered near Barbar, a mound which had already been noted by Durand⁹). Excavation was carried on here from 18.2 to 28.4.1954 and considerable portions of a temple complex were uncovered (cf. p. 150). At the same time three Iron Age gravemounds south of the Budeiya Road were investigated (cf. p. 137), and a trial excavation was made at Ras al Qala'a, where considerable remains of buildings, undoubtedly belonging to the prehistoric capital of Bahrain, were demonstrated (cf. p. 167). All non-working days were devoted to continued reconnaissance, and several new Stone Age sites were discovered, as well as a large "kitchen-midden" consisting of yard-thick deposits of shells of pearl oysters mixed with occupation debris, principally pottery, between Ras Noma and Ras al Jazayir in the western part of the island about one kilometer from the present coastline. This is undoubtedly a prehistoric site, and probably demonstrates a considerable pearl-fishing industry at an early date. Similar kitchen-middens were discovered in 1941 by Cornwall on the Arabian mainland immediately to the west of Bahrain near Al Khubar¹⁰). The expedition terminated its work with an exhibition of its discoveries in the Government Buildings in Manama. The exhibition was opened by His Highness Sheikh Sulman, and was viewed with absorbed interest by a wide cross-section of the inhabitants of Bahrain.

This outline of the results of the Danish Archeological Bahrain-Expedition is amplified in the following reports. These show that the successful results of the first campaign have given at a stroke a broad prehistoric background to the island. The fact that Bahrain is frequently mentioned in archeological, historical, geographical and philological literature is not so much due to the enormous numbers of burial-mounds as to the belief that this island is to be identified with the myth-surrounded site of Dilmun, with which the earliest story of the Flood is connected, where the Noah of the Sumerians and Babylonians, Ziusudra and Utu-Nipishtim, was granted immortality and took up his abode, where the hero of the early Mesopotamian epic, Gilgamesh, came in search of immortality, and which is repeatedly mentioned in Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions. Since the problem was first raised in 1880-81 discussions of the location of Dilmun have occupied the attention of a large number of writers. Many locations have been proposed, but attention is now restricted to two localities: the northeast coast of the Persian Gulf from Elam

to the Straits of Ormuz, and Bahrain¹¹): Recently P. B. Cornwall has in particular championed the identification of Dilmun with Bahrain¹²), and in the opinion of many authorities the question is now considered as resolved in favour of this island¹³): Cornwall considers in addition that the portion of the Arabian mainland lying west of Bahrain, the Hasa Coast, where he continued his investigations in 1940–41 after his excavations on Bahrain, at least at times belonged to the area included under the term Dilmun. In Hasa he was able to discover extensive tumulus cemeteries closely resembling those of Bahrain, and to locate several large town-ruins, in addition to flint sites and kitchen-mid-dens, all of which further associate the two areas¹⁴). The view has often been put forward that Bahrain must in the past have been the most important station in the sea-trade between India and Mesopotamia, on account of its abundant freshwater springs. These springs come to the surface at many points on the island, and they are also found in the shallows at a considerable distance from the coast. A local tradition relates that they are due to an underground stream from the broad waters of the Euphrates. Bahrain possesses in addition sheltered anchorages against the northwest wind so dreaded by mariners, the Shamal.

The only previous discovery on Bahrain showing a connection with the neighbouring civilisations was a stone with a cuneiform inscription which Durand found in the wall of a mosque, and which has now been lost (Fig. 4)¹⁵). The inscription on this stone, written in the Babylonian style current over a considerable period but possibly attributable to the middle of the first half of the second millenium¹⁶), reads: "Palace of Rimun, the servant of Inzak, of the tribe of Agarum", and proves a connection between Bahrain and Mesopotamia, where the god Inzak was worshipped under the name Nabu¹⁷). To this can now be added the objects discovered by the "Danish Archeological Bahrain-Expedition" in the temples of Barbar, which show a direct connection both with Mesopotamia and with India (cf. p. 148 og 151). These connections are further strengthened by two stray finds. In the possessions of the Bahrain Government is a stone vessel ornamented with circles, of a type known from discoveries in Ur dated to the latter half of the third millenium¹⁸), the same period as that in which the objects from Barbar find their closest parallels. This stone vessel was found during diggings in a tumulus about a kilometer south of Ras al Qala'a (Fig. 2, no. 35). In the same area an American engineer working with BAPCO, V. Kelly, found in the spring of 1954 a stamp-seal in the neighbourhood of the remains of a tumulus.

This seal, which is of greyish white steatite, is 2.6 cms. in diameter. It shows the figure of a bull with, above it, the figure of a quadruped with a head resembling a cock (perhaps a cow or a goat) together with three other figures, among them a scorpion. The reverse is dome-shaped, pierced by a cord-hole which runs at rightangles to three parallel grooves, and ornamented in addition with four circular patterns (Fig. 5). It belongs to the group of stamp-seals which is connected by C. J. Gadd with the Indus culture¹⁹), and of which 30 or 31 specimens are now known, the majority being found at Ur in southern Mesopotamia²⁰). The figures on the Bahrain stamp-seal are most closely paral- leled by a seal from Ur²¹) which can be dated to the close of the third mil- lenium²²), while the characteristic form of the reverse is known from several other seals²³). The discoveries here mentioned, together with the other results of the expedition, give a valuable archeological background to our knowledge of the trade connections of Ur at the end of the third millenium, which is very

fully recorded in a series of clay tablets in cuneiform from the Larsa period, recently published in a comprehensive survey by A. L. Oppenheim²⁴).

From the description given by these tablets it is clear that the Dilmun-trade at about 2000 B. C. was in the hands of a group of merchant seamen, the Alik Dilmun, who were financed by capitalists in Ur. The goods which they brought to the ancient Mesopotamian city are listed in connection with offerings and tithes presented to the goddess Ningal in gratitude for her protection during their dangerous voyages. They consisted of copper in ingots and manufactured articles of copper, beads and precious stones, lumps of lapis-lazuli, ivory and ivory-inlaid objects, ivory combs and breastplates, eye-paint and rare woods, as well as "fish-eyes", which are probably pearls. At a later period dates are mentioned among the objects imported. The merchants carried in exchange to Dilmun articles of clothing, oil and silver. But as only few of the objects traded in are native to Dilmun Bahrain must have been a trading station, to which goods were brought from more distant countries, which are named in the tablets as Makkan and Meluhha. These places, which cannot be more precisely located, probably lay on the northeast coast of Arabia (possibly in Oman) and in India (the Indus valley). Precisely the objects mentioned in the lists of imports reappear in the objects found in Bahrain. In the large tumuli near Ali have been found ivory figurines, and other objects of ivory, in addition to small fragments of ivory and objects decayed beyond identification²⁵). There is every probability that the ivory originated in India, where in this period the great cities of the Indus-valley civilization flourished and with which at least one object from the Barbar temple, the little linga-shaped counter of lapis-lazuli, demonstrates direct contact. To this can be added the stamp-seal described above, as well as a particular type of bead which shows a connection between the Indus culture and Mesopotamia²⁶), but which has not yet been discovered on Bahrain. Among the other objects of import mentioned in the Ur tablets a large number of fragments of bronze vessels have been found in the Barbar temple, where in addition a considerable quantity of small copper bars have come to light, which perhaps imitated copper ingots. Pearls have not yet been found in prehistoric contexts on Bahrain, which is perhaps due to the circumstances of preservation, but in this connection the kitchen-midden described above is of very considerable interest.

This extensive trade lies mainly in the centuries on either side of the year 2000, but it can be traced back to the middle of the third millenium, when it may have been in the hands of merchant houses on Bahrain²⁷). It is precisely to these centuries that the majority of the Bronze Age tumuli of Bahrain probably belong, and the huge tumuli of Ali may well be the last resting place of the merchant princes of Bahrain. Thereafter comes a break in the trade connections with the East, which is perhaps reflected in the vacuum between the Bronze Age tumuli of Bahrain and the barrows which in the Iron Age were heaped up along the north coast of the island and outside the extensive cemeteries of the Bronze Age. The collapse of the eastern trade may signify that the great city-culture of the Indus valley, best known from the excavations at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, fell in the middle of the first half of the second millenium.

As will appear from the following articles, the discoveries made by the "Danish Archeological Bahrain-Expedition" appear to show that there existed in Bahrain an independent culture with connections to both Mesopotamia and

India. Bahrain therefore occupies a central position in the prehistory of the Middle East. As yet only a beginning has been made, but the completion of the projects which have already been commenced will undoubtedly bring new and decisive facts to light. The best possibilities exist on Bahrain for finding more extensive evidence of the contact known to exist between the culture of the Sumerians in Mesopotamia and the culture of the Indus valley. Moreover it is here that the best chances exist for finding the key to the decipherment of the still unread hieroglyphic script of the Indus culture; for the merchant houses which ruled Bahrain must have known and used both that script and the cuneiform of the Sumerians.

P. V. Glob.

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NOTER

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