

Qala'at al-Bahrain . 3



The Western and
Southern City Walls
and other Excavations



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volume 3

The Western and Southern City Walls and Other Excavations

by Flemming Højlund

With contributions by Jesper Eidem,
Judith Littleton, Ashley McGarry and Peter Stein

QALA'AT AL-BAHRAIN
VOLUME 3
THE WESTERN AND SOUTHERN CITY WALLS AND OTHER EXCAVATIONS

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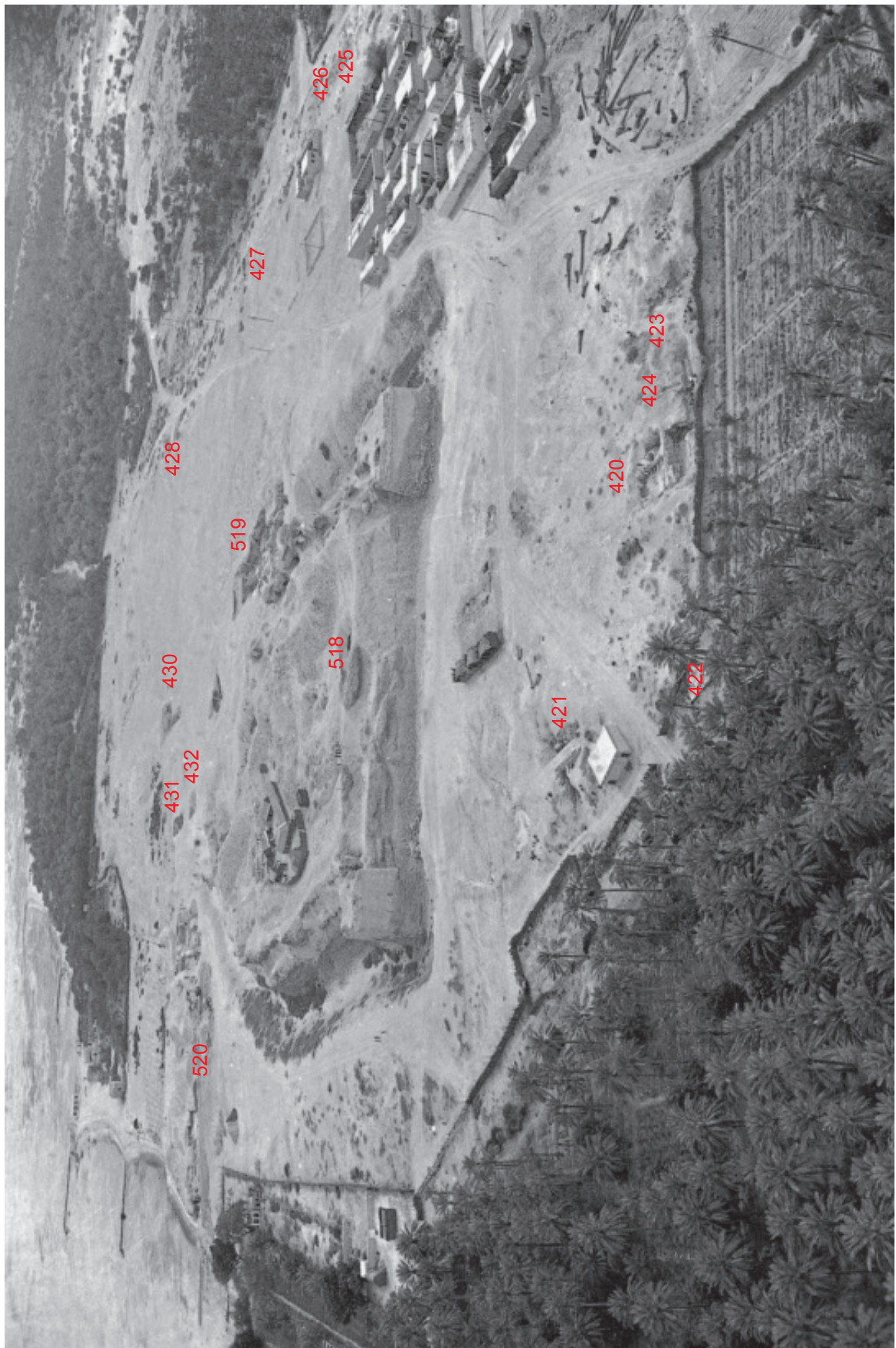


Fig. 1. The tell of Qala' at al-Bahrain, looking E. A 16th-century Portuguese Fort crowns the tell. Excavations 420-428, 430-432, and 518, presented in this volume, are marked, as are the previously published Excavations 519 and 520 (1970).

1. Introduction

During the first campaign of the Danish Archaeological Expedition to Bahrain, 1953/54, the tell below the 16th-century AD *Bahrain Fort* (also known as the Portuguese Fort) on the north coast was identified by Peter V. Glob as the ancient capital of Bahrain and named *Qala'at al-Bahrain* after the fort (figs. 1-2) (Glob 1954 p. 167. 1968). The first sondage was put into the mound in 1954 and excavations continued until 1978, directed by P.V. Glob and Geoffrey Bibby.

The field work was financed primarily by the government of Bahrain, the Bahrain Petroleum Company, and the Carlsberg Foundation, to each of which we owe our sincere thanks.

In 1989, the Carlsberg Foundation decided to support the analysis and publication of the Danish excavations in the Arabian Gulf through the Carlsberg Foundation's Gulf Project. This led to a major study in 1989-97 of the two largest excavations at Qala'at al-Bahrain, Excavation 520 and Excavation 519 (figs. 1-2). The results were subsequently published in the monographs *Qala'at al-Bahrain volume 1. The Northern City Wall and the Islamic Fortress* (Højlund & Andersen 1994, abbreviated as *Qala'at 1* in the following) and *Qala'at al-Bahrain volume 2. The Central Monumental Buildings* (Højlund & Andersen 1997, abbreviated as *Qala'at 2* in the following).

Additionally, the following publications appeared under the auspices of the Carlsberg Foundation's Gulf Project, *The Island of Umm an-Nar volume 1: The Third Millennium Graves* (Frifelt 1991), *The Island of Umm an-Nar volume 2: The Third Millennium Settlement* (Frifelt 1995), *Islamic Remains in Bahrain* (Frifelt 2001), and *The Barbar Temples* vols. 1-2 (Andersen & Højlund 2003).

With the publication of the present volume, *Qala'at al-Bahrain volume 3. The Western and Southern City Walls and Other Excavations*, comprising the remaining excavations at the tell of Qala'at al-Bahrain, the aims of the Carlsberg Foundation's Gulf Project have been achieved. This volume deals with

the following excavations: 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 430, 431, 432 and 518 (figs. 1-2), as well as the surface finds from the tell (521).

Where relevant the published results of the later (1977-) French excavations at Qala'at al-Bahrain will be referenced (Kervran et al. 2005. Lombard & Kervran 1993. Lombard 2016).

I gratefully acknowledge the help and support of the staff of the Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities headed by Sheikha Mai Al Khalifa. I am also indebted to Steffen T. Laursen and to two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments.

In general, the chronology system for the Arabian Gulf set up in 1994 (*Qala'at 1*) is referenced throughout this volume (fig. 3). It covers the period from the late 3rd millennium BC to the Islamic period (periods Ia-b, IIa-c, IIIa-c, IVa-d and Va-d) and was augmented in 1997 in *Qala'at 2* with the subdivision of period IIIb into IIIb1 and IIIb2, and two new periods, IVe and Ve. In subsequent editions the relative chronology's hypothesized relationship to absolute time has changed slightly (Andersen & Højlund 2003 fig. 266. Højlund 2007a p. 12-15, fig. 3).

Emphasis has been placed on the chronology of the 3rd-2nd millennium BC (Højlund 1987 p. 151-161. *Qala'at 1* p. 129-173. Højlund 2007a p. 11-15). This is essentially a *relative* chronology intended to correlate the internal chronologies of several major sites, namely Qala'at al-Bahrain, the Barbar temples, the burial mounds, and Failaka Tell F3 and Tell F6.

The main evidence for approaching an *absolute* dating of the chronology by tying it to the Babylonian Sequence (Middle Chronology) has been: 1) imported Mesopotamian Ur III pottery in Qala'at al-Bahrain periods Ib and IIa; 2) the correlation of Qala'at al-Bahrain period IIa pottery with stamp seals of Arabian Gulf and Proto-Dilmun styles; 3) a horizon of specific pottery types and stamp seals of Mature Dilmun style found in Qala'at al-Bahrain





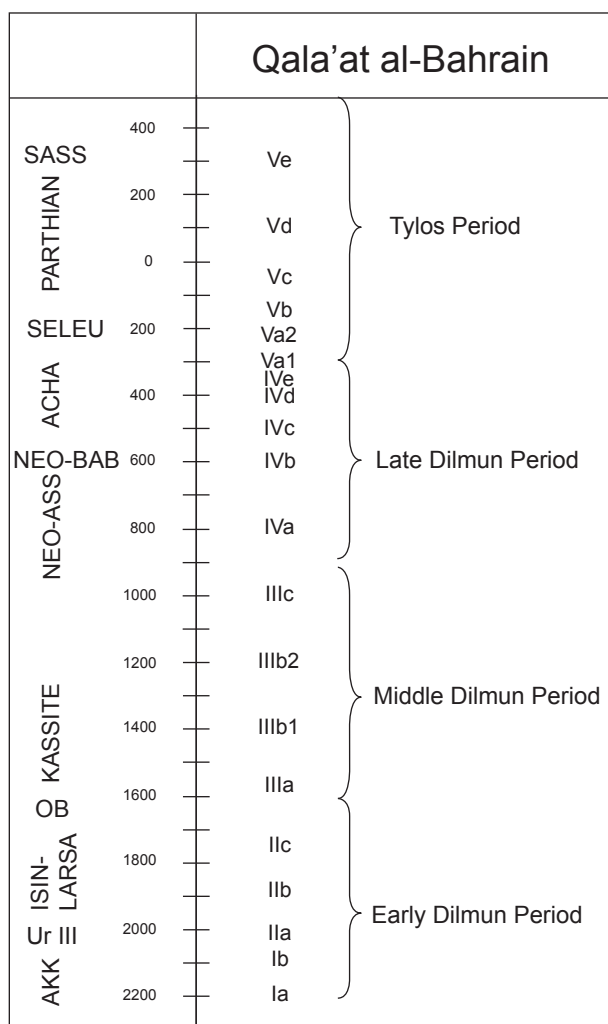


Fig. 3. Chronological chart for periods I–V at Qala'at al-Bahrain.

period IIb, Barbar Temple IIb, and Failaka period 1 and tied to the early Isin-Larsa period by way of a stamp-seal impressed tablet dated to the tenth year of Gungunum of Larsa (1923 BC); and finally 4) Old Babylonian pottery imported to Failaka in period 3A. These four points of reference anchor Gulf Bronze Age chronology, but the absolute dating of the individual periods in the chronology charts (Højlund 1987 fig. 707. *Qala'at 1* fig. 395. Højlund 2007a fig. 3) still has a range of uncertainty of 50 to 100 years.

Radiocarbon dates from the Dilmun area were for a long time rare and of little use because, with a few exceptions, the error ranges were too wide resulting in very broad distributions of probability

(Højlund 2007a p. 155-157). Lately, extensive use of radiocarbon dating and modelling using Bayesian statistics has brought more certainty to, at least, the 19th- to 17th-century BC Gulf chronology (Højlund & Abu-Laban 2016 fig. 5. Heinemeier & Højlund 2016 p. 239-260. Laursen 2017 p. 371-375).

With respect to remains from the Islamic period, I refer to Frifelt's publication from 2001, which includes a survey of Islamic finds from the Danish excavations at Qala'at al-Bahrain, and the publication of the 1977-86 French excavations there (Kervran et al. 2005).

During excavation, all pottery rim and base sherds as well as decorated body sherds were kept. Important selections of pottery and other finds will be illustrated below, focusing on periods that were not as well represented in the previously published volumes on Excavations 519 and 520. Extensive reference will also be made to descriptions and illustrations of material from Excavations 519 and 520 at Qala'at al-Bahrain (*Qala'at 1* and *Qala'at 2*).

With respect to pottery from periods I and II at Qala'at al-Bahrain, reference will be made to the Barbar types (types B1-76), the Mesopotamian types (types M1-M27), the Umm an-Nar types (types U1-12), and the Eastern types (types E1-10) as well as to ware types 1-4 which were defined based on the study of material from Excavation 520 (*Qala'at 1* p. 75-128). Reference will also be made to the Barbar pottery types (Failaka types 1-53) and the Mesopotamian types (Failaka types 54-100) as defined based on material from the 1958-1963 excavations of Tell F3 and Tell F6 on Failaka in Kuwait (Højlund 1987). Additionally, reference will be made to pottery and other finds found in the 2008-2012 excavations in Tell F6 (Højlund & Abu-Laban 2016).

When conclusive, the datings resulting from the examination of pottery from the excavated layers have been added in red to the section drawings.

Survey plans employ a north-oriented coordinate system, and levels denote height above sea level (cf. fig. 2). The datum point corresponds to the present-day high-water mark. The characterization of the sub-stratum of Qala'at al-Bahrain as bedrock covers both beach-rock (*farush*) formations as well as limestone (cf. Kervran et al. 2005 p. 39-40).

Fig. 2. The tell of Qala'at al-Bahrain (with Bahrain inset), 1:2500, contour equidistance 0.5 m above sea level. The Danish excavations are marked.

