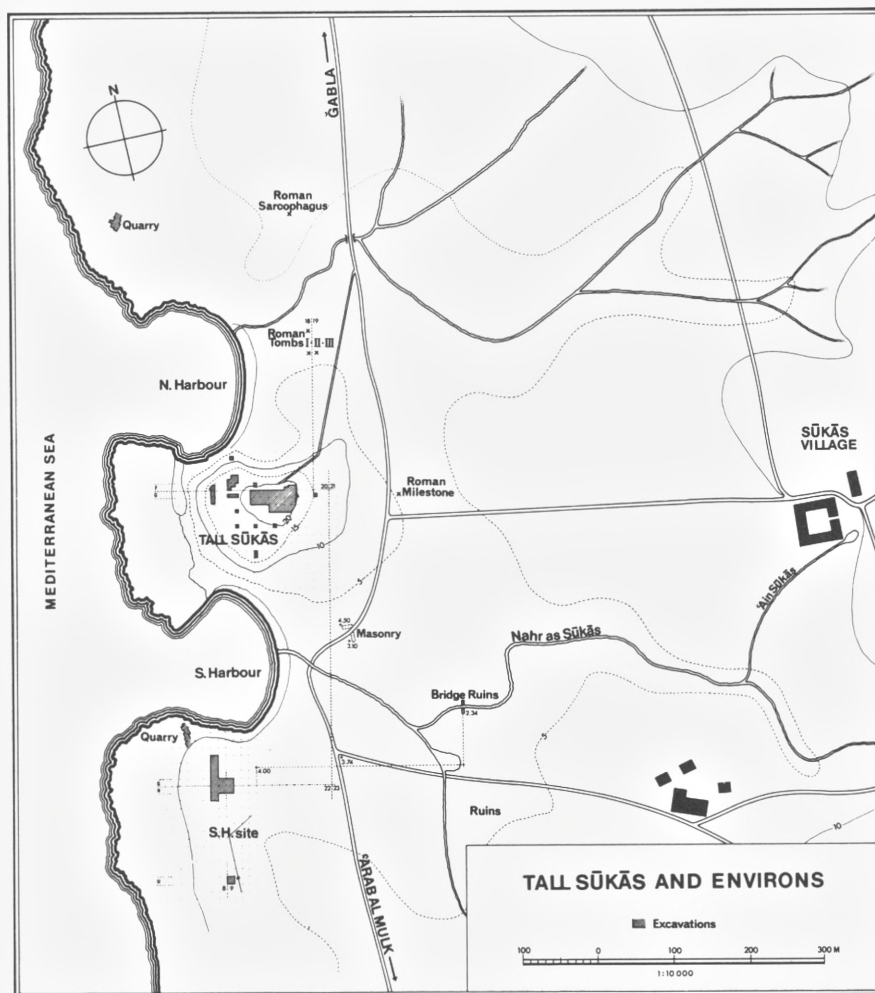


I. Introduction

As already mentioned in the third preliminary report of the Carlsberg Expedition to Phoenicia¹ and in the publication of the Graeco-Phoenician cemetery and sanctuary at Mīna Sūkās, the southern harbour (figs. 1-2),² there was under the sanctuary and the graves considerable

remains datable to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages (Sūkās periods J-H) as well as some material indicating an activity on the site in the Early Bronze Age (Sūkās period L), perhaps even earlier (Sūkās periods N-M) (pl. I). At first we supposed that the Late Bronze and Ear-

Fig. 1. Map of the Sūkās region.
1:10000.



1: AASyr 11/12 1961/2, 134, 140-141.

2: Sūkās VI, Copenhagen 1979, 5-8.

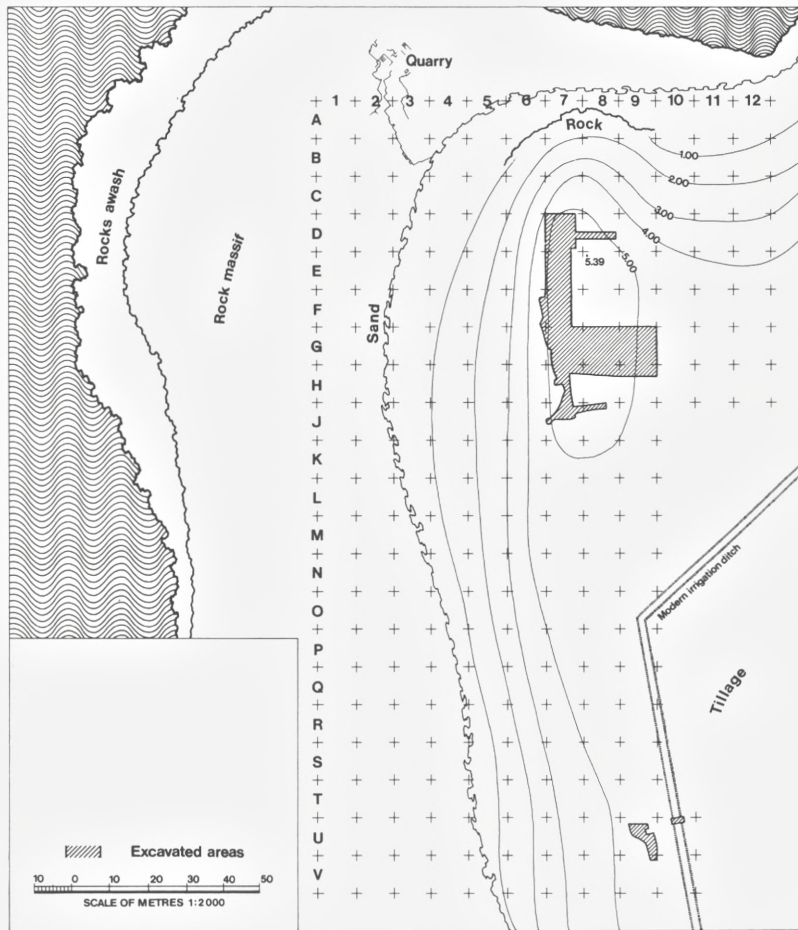


Fig. 2. Plan of the excavation area at the southern harbour. 1:2000.

ly Iron Age remains, pottery deposits of the 14th to the 9th or 8th centuries B.C. (pls. II-V), were parts of a cremation cemetery preceding the Graeco-Phoenician graves,³ and later the finds at the airport of 'Ammān seemed to confirm somehow this view;⁴ but a renewed, meticulous perusal of the evidence from the southern harbour, which is more akin to what we learn from finds in Cyprus, has convinced us

that we have to do with an open air sanctuary dedicated to the same principal deity as that worshipped in the harbour sanctuary of the 6th-1st centuries B.C. The pottery deposits very much resemble those excavated at Athienou, votive offerings in an open courtyard attached to a copper-producing establishment of the 14th and 13th centuries B.C.⁵ A closer parallel is presented by a rural cult place of the Iron

3: AASyr 11/12 1961/2, 140.

4: Biblical Archaeologist 46 1983, 223-229.

5: T. Dothan & A. Ben-Tor, Excavations at Athienou 1971-1972, Jerusalem 1974.

Age, discovered in the neighbourhood of Sol-oi,⁶ which seems to have had its background in the Bronze Age tradition, to judge from a sanctuary at Hagios Iakobos⁷ and the well-known clay model from Bounous.⁸ The absence of bones, which we explained as an effect of the environment, is now easier understood by comparison with the Cypriote finds.

The repertoire of our material consists predominantly of small vessels, amphoriskoi, jugs and bowls which apparently often had contained liquids or sometimes burnt material, e.g. lentils and other seeds, furthermore so-called "fruitstands" or rather incense-burners as indicated by the traces of fire, a so-called "wall-bracket", probably also an incense burner, and lamps, as well as large amphorae, usually broken, incomplete and made brittle from fire. A small number of objects, remains of bull-vases and figurines, a bull and a human being, apparently male, together with the incense-burners, the vases containing liquids, probably wine or oil, the charred vegetables and the sea-shells, help us to identify the god of the sanctuary. Nothing speaks against the idea that he was Melqart, the chthonic deity worshipped in the later sanctuary⁹ and not only corresponding to the Babylonian Nergal, but in Cyprus even assimilated with Poseidon.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the inscription on the amphora SH 79 does not bring us nearer to a final determination of the cult.

No doubt, the centre of the later sanctuary was the Altar Enclosure with the baetylic stone representing the deity in the middle (fig. 3).¹¹

We may suppose that the baetyl was no invention of the builders of the said enclosure; most likely it was an heirloom from an older cult place, and it cannot be precluded that it originally stood next to the Early Bronze Age fire-places found in layers 3 and 5 of the sounding in sector G 7, i.e. 1-1.5 m deeper. In that case the fire-places were primitive sacrificial hearths, and the baetyl must first have been moved from layer 5 to layer 3 and later to a place level with the pottery deposits, i.e. on layer 2, the old surface which could be traced under the entire field of deposits. At that level there were in the sounding no remains of a fireplace; so, the burnt sacrifices must have been made elsewhere. When we considered the pottery deposits' possible relations to the 'Ammān airport finds, Mr. Ingolf Thuesen, M.A., pointed out that the ashlar blocks 1-7 in sectors G 8 and 9¹² might have been the only remainders of a central structure like that in 'Ammān. However, a structure to which the blocks could belong is not necessarily to be imagined as a small temple, a predecessor of the naiskos dated to Sūkās period G¹³. As stated by the excavator, Mr. Jørgen Jensen, the blocks were found lying without any order, i.e. not in situ. K 3 lay immediately on top of the deposited Late Bronze or Early Iron Age Pottery, the others in the very level of the pottery deposits, and they cannot with certainty be referred to the Graeco-Phoenician burials. If the baetyl was transferred to layer 2, there would be need of some sort of sacrificial place instead of the hearths; so, the possibility exists that the blocks were used for a built altar like that of Ba'al in

6: Proceedings of the 7th British Museum Classical Colloquium, London 1989, 68-83.

7: Swedish Cyprus Expedition I, Lund 1934, 355-370 pl. 13, H.T. Bossert, *Altsyrien*, Tübingen 1951, 2 no. 11 pl. 4.

8: *Syria* 13 1932, 346-348 pls. 70-71, *Archaeologica* 88 1938, 118-125 pls. 7-8, Bossert, *op.cit.* 7 nos. 97-99 pls. 36-37.

9: Sūkās VI, 65-68.

10: *Studia Phoenicia* V, Louvain 1987, 397.

11: Sūkās VI, 45-47 no. 24 fig. 143.

12: Sūkās VI pl. II.

13: Sūkās VI, 64-65 fig. 219.

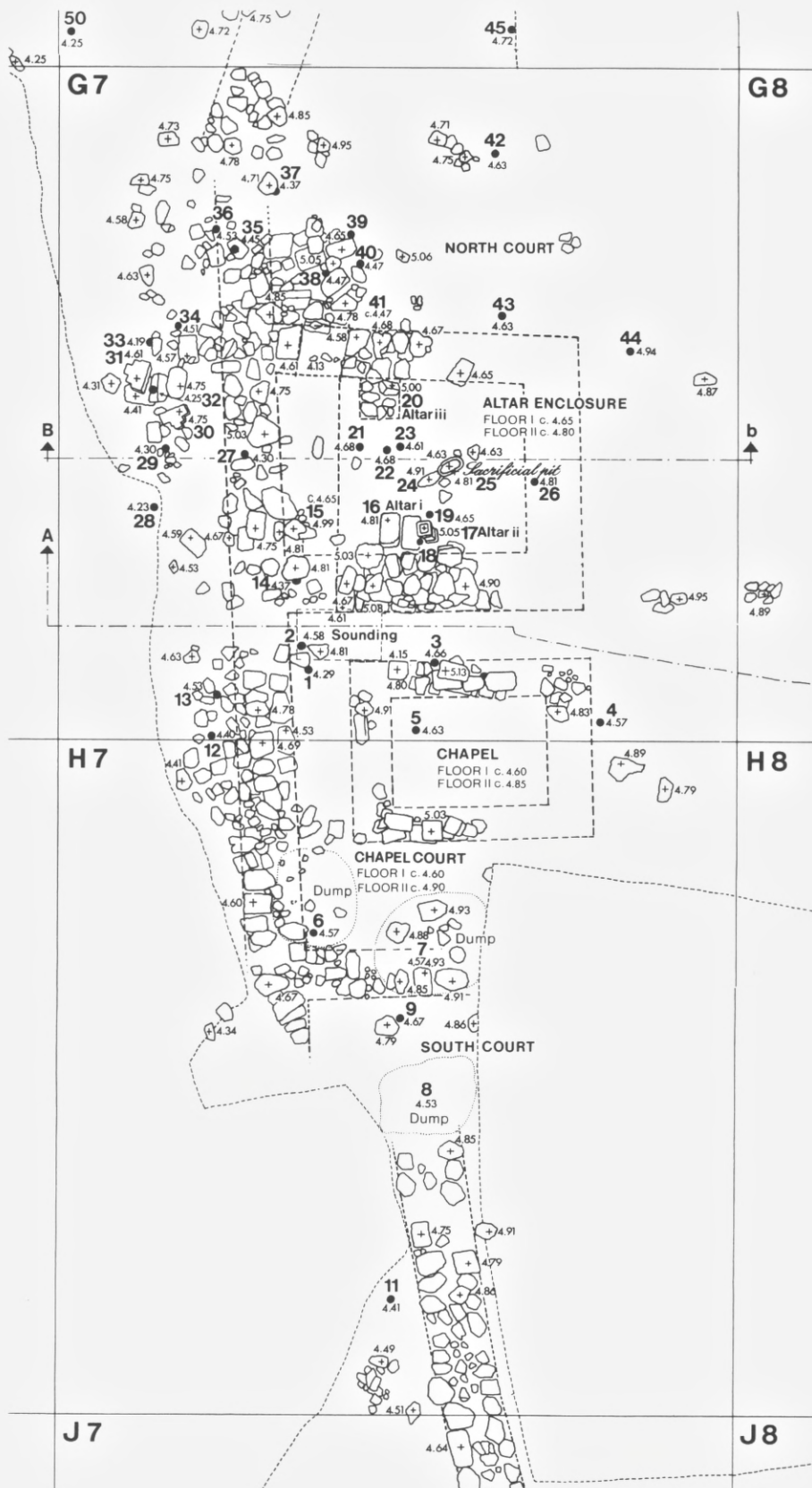


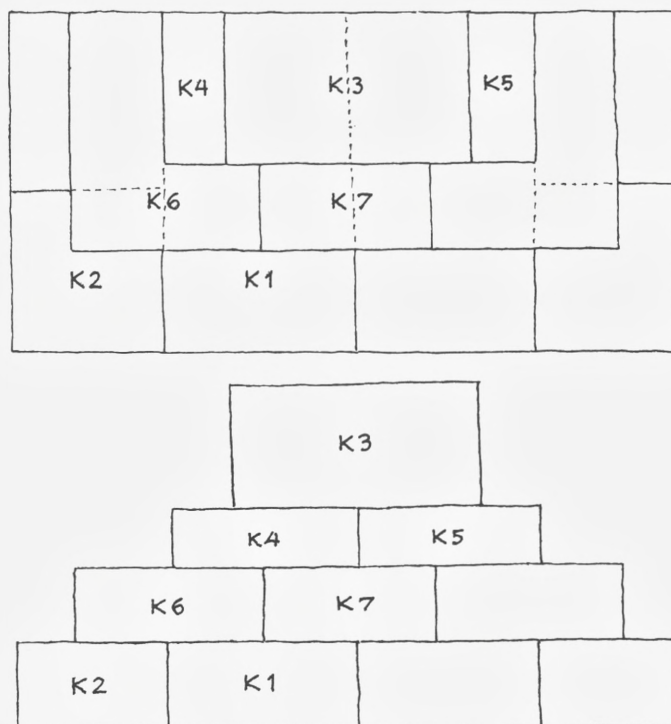
Fig. 3. Plan of the central part of the sanctuary at the southern harbour. A-a and B-b refer to the sections plate I. 1:100.

Rās Šamra – Ugarit¹⁴ or perhaps, on account of the blocks' varying heights, like that of Myrtou in Cyprus,¹⁵ both of the Late Bronze Age. Considering a reconstruction founded upon the measures of the individual blocks preserved, I would, after all, prefer that of a "Würfelaltar" or rather a "Stufenaltar", resembling some at Petra.¹⁶ Such an altar (fig. 4), which may have stood in the eastern part of sector G 7, was probably demolished in the 6th century B.C. when the new sanctuary in G 7 was built.

The Bronze and Early Iron Age remains were found in the weeks August 27th to November 9th 1960. The measuring and survey-

ing of the architectural and more important minor finds in the western sectors were at first done by the Director of the Expedition himself, P.J. Riis; but from August 31st Mr. Jørgen Jensen, archaeological assistant, now Deputy Keeper in the National Museum of Denmark, who had been in charge of the eastern parts, took over the whole excavation at the southern harbour. His report is published in Chapter II. The objects of pottery and other materials are dealt with in Chapter III, by Dr. Marie-Louise Buhl, former Keeper of Near-Eastern and Classical Antiquities in the National Museum, and Professor Benedikt Otzen, University of Århus,

Fig. 4. Tentative reconstruction of an altar with the ashlar blocks K 1-7. 1:20. Drawn by P.J. Riis.



14: H. Klengel, *Geschichte und Kultur Altsyriens*², Leipzig 1979, 88 fig. 35.

15: BCH 94 1970, 299 fig. 170, Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium "The Mycenaeans in the

Eastern Mediterranean", Nicosia 1973, 227-231 pl. 28.6-8.

16: K. Galling, *Der Altar in den Kulturen des alten Orients*, Berlin 1924, 62-63 pls. 11.3-4 and 7-9, 12.10-11.

has written a note on the inscription of the amphora SH 79, Chapter IV. To them all, the Director of the Expedition tenders his sincere thanks, as well as to the members of the Committee for the Carlsberg Expeditions to Syria: Mr. Peder Mortensen, Director of the Prehistoric Museum at Moesgård (chairman), Pro-

fessor Olaf Olsen, Director General of Antiquities, Professor Eduard Nielsen and Mr. Ingolf Thuesen, University of Copenhagen, and to Misses Kristina Winther Jacobsen and Alexandra Nilsson, who made the profile drawings and plans published in this volume.